

## Alexandre Berlin Memoires

St. Petersburg Summer holidays at the Derevnia and in Europe .....	2
Boyhood.....	26
Leaving Russia for Exile .....	48
Sweden.....	48
London, Paris, Holidays in Europe.....	60
Exile .....	88
Growing up in Paris, Social Life, High Society .....	88
Paris, Marseilles, Paris and Business Trips.....	126
Cruising on Katanga .....	202
Wedding .....	217
Paris, Enlistment, Brittany, Southern France .....	230

### St. Petersburg Summer holidays at the Derevnia and in Europe

I do have some vague recollections of earlier childhood but taking a curl, a real long one, as a present to a neighbour when I had them cut off; sitting on a very large horse in front of my brother; hiding under a beach chair in Finland for fear of a terribly tall and forbidding Baltic Baron who owned the resort - those are memories which can mean nothing to anyone.

A few days ago one of the local radio stations gave a 24 hour uninterrupted reading of *War and Peace*. The book fascinated me every time I read it, from the first time when I was in my early teens to the last when I was well past sixty. Everything connected with Tolstoy excites and interests me. In the mid fifties Mike was coming back from France on the *Flandre* and on dockside, we awaited him. Suddenly the loudspeaker paged Tolstoy "Miss Tolstoy" and a strange thrill ran through me as an elderly lady, stocky and heavy in a nondescript grey suit walked past. We met a niece of Tolstoy's - TolstoyBehrs - several times. The legend had it that Natasha was modeled after Tolstoy's sister in law, an aunt of our acquaintance, who bred dogs and had an apartment full of them on New York's East Side. But what strangely fascinates me is that I still remember, we were living in an apartment on the 5th line (street) on the Vassilevski Ostrov, on the top floor of a steep staircase - it's well gave me regular nightmares - Father coming home one evening and even before kissing me saying, Tolstoy "Tolstoy has disappeared". For several days his name was spoken often, in tones that I now realize were worried and then came the news that he had been found in a station. This meant nothing to me. I was blissfully happy at home and had never dreamed of running away and getting lost and found in a station. This became a reality only many many years later. My

sister explained, or tried to, that he had gone away and was now lying sick in the station master's room in the small station and that everyone was very very sad. Then he died and faded into the subconscious, as I now realize, of the little boy - to appear only now. But there it is, this big event as a landmark in the misty memories.

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Then comes the spacious cabin - white and mahogany on the gleaming river steamer. The wide decks and the monotonous landscape - fields, low hills topped by white churches with bright cupolas, and clustered around them, the dark, wooden *isbas*. (*izba is a traditional log house of rural Russia*)

The dirt roads winding down to the rickety wooden piers to which the steamer stopped every few hours. The bustle on the gangplank, the peasants streaming first off and then on and gathering on the lower deck. Occasionally the village was a town and we would disembark; stroll along the streets - unpaved and without sidewalks, watch the carts move by the crowds of peasants and the open stalls. We bought local wares - at Kosmodemiansk special walking sticks decorated with burnt in designs and I was proud to get a small one myself. Then back again to the island of safe civilization that the steamer represented. Unconsciously I do think this contrast between the surroundings and where I actually was, remained with me all my life as a strong biding feeling of being a spectator, not a live actor of much that was going on around me. Many years later when the fabled Orient Express was stalled in one of the Central European plains, far from everywhere and a gay, if somewhat shady international crowd continued their bad but sophisticated meal in the restaurant car with it's incredibly thick cups and their intricate monograms, the heavy *Christofle*,

gleaming napkins and even the inevitable vase of meager flowers next to the quart Evian with its pink label and everyone looked out onto the dismal scenery, this feeling swept over me again. Decades passed and I was stranded in a taxi this side of the Han river with Seoul lights gleaming in the distance. Around me was a dilapidated Korean village, an unpaved and unlit street, if one may call it that, half ruined low buildings with thatched roofs, dirty children in rags that had long since lost all color, hens and even a pig or two wallowing in a mud hole - the small barge that served as ferry was delayed, and once again memories of that feeling of being outside of my surroundings, of remaining only a spectator, passing through, came sweeping back.

The long sunny afternoons on the Volga so long long ago - with the barges slowly drifting down stream and others, hugging the banks, being hauled by crowds of straining men. Many a time hearing the famous, or by now infamous, Volga Boatman song rendered in an infinity of ways from that unforgettable depth of Chaliapin's bass or some choir of *émigré (refugee)* Russian Cossacks or just plain singers, I would try and recapture the impressions of some songs which I now imagined I had really heard at those riverside towns on the Volga. I can, and that is true, close my eyes and see a certain barge with children and grown ups on board watching us overtake them, looking at us as we waved to them and answering in a strange manner - with a circular movement of their hands. To my question of why they didn't wave back, Emily answered that they most probably didn't know how. I remained uncertain, confused and unsatisfied by such a Victorian answer. For although she had roamed the earth in days when it was not that easy, had had an adventurous life, to say the least, Emily remained somewhere deep inside, the Victorian girl who had once seen, really seen, with her own eyes, the tiny Empress of India - and Emily was herself barely over five foot - emerge from Selfridge's and bow to the crowd.

We passed Nijni Novgorod where we changed to a larger steamer, Simbrisk and arrived at Syzran with the railway bridge crossing the river an incongruous sight in this far away Russian countryside. We were met by several carriages and driven to the local hotel to refresh ourselves and eat something before the long and arduous drive to what we called the *Derevnia* - actually meaning *village* but no other name was ever used for Uncle Kokas's estate which he had carved out of the family acres some ten miles from Bogorodskoe, the ancestral place of his family. The salon of the hotel was all early XX century plush with dark drapes, white tablecloths and a smelly WC - probably not actually a WC with running water as I now surmise, thinking back. There was a washbasin and I was tidied up. It is unbelievable what an amount of tidying up was lavished on me and, thinking back again, I can't imagine that any boy, let alone one of the "good little boy" type to which I belonged, could need such constant attention.

By early afternoon we would all troop down to the big *landau* (*pram*) that had been borrowed from the big house. It was a heavy contraption that we would now call probably *convertible* which could be opened completely, with two soft benches facing each other, upholstered in worn leather. This particular one had been ordered in Paris by *SeeUncleKoka* Uncle's ancestor at the turn of the 19th century when he 'occupied' Napoleon's capital and needed at least four horses to drag it along at snail's pace. It had become a rickety affair and I remember that one of the doors was tied with a piece of string to avoid the risk of suddenly swinging open when we hit a particularly deep rut in the *trakt* for one should not call a road, the wide expanse of parallel tracks which wound its way across the steppe. Dusty and with deep holes amid the grey dried grass, it most probably became a river of mud in the rainy season and totally disappeared in snowstorms. Later on in some early November, Uncle Koka, driving back to

catch the train in Syzran to join Auntie Alia in Saint Petersburg or Paris, got lost and landed with the coachman in the local hospital with severely frozen feet. My brother Misha rushed down by express to bring him back to a decent hospital for treatment -and again the contrast between so called advanced civilization and the primitive existence that had carried over from past centuries impressed the boy I was then.

The cavalcade started out under a blazing sun with us in the main carriage and *SeeUncleKokaUncle*, who had come to fetch us with *SeeMisha* and also a cart with the trunks still further behind in the cloud of dust. I fidgeted and watched the inexistent scenery, empty except for a couple of clusters of *isbas*, (*izbas*) with a whitewashed church, children, hens, a few barking dogs and a peasant woman or two watching us go by. We arrived at a shallow river with a rickety bridge and turned off the main track to cross at the ford, leaving the dangerous bridge to the side. This duly impressed me. By evening we would see from the top of one of the hills the dark patch of garden in the hollow, drive off the tract and around what was supposed to be a fence, to emerge in the still sunlit steppe with its sea of sunflowers and a rather colorful open space with several flower beds behind which loomed the unpretentious white facade of the house, with its several columns, its porch and green roof. Of course today, looking back, I realize that this was a typically Empire structure and hundreds of early American plantations and other colonial structures have made it familiar to all. I have no recollection of the interior - it must have been rather comfortable in a pretentious turn of the century way that Chekov has made famous. The garden was neglected but that only added to its fascination and one could play hide and seek with no one, indefinitely. Which memories date back from which of my visits I can't of course say. They blend in a somewhat blurred picture but ever since I can remember it was always coming back to a familiar place. I would

rush out as soon as I had been dressed in my Russian embroidered shirt, wide *sharovaris*, like *plus fours* of later years, and high boots. Why I had to be disguised in this manner preferably to my other more conventional disguise as a British sailor, furnished by Rowe of London, I don't know. But it was deemed more convenient and *a propos (suitable)*. A rather wide path led to the courtyard and the stables. One passed a small white walled pavilion - actually a guest house because the house wasn't large and it was the Russian habit not to turn away unexpected guests who could come for a day and easily stay months. During our last visit to the *Derevnia*, this was in 1916, Auntie had lodged Austrian prisoners of war who worked in the fields in this pavilion. And as we were thousands of miles away from the war zone, no actual guards were needed. Auntie liked the Austrians and so did I because they were friendly and easy going. I got along so well that I talked them into believing that Auntie had ordered that a small oversized doll house be built complete with a garden, for me to play in. They enthusiastically complied with my request causing confusion in the daily work schedule but very much to my delight.

I would arrive breathless in the yard to watch the carriages being washed, the horses unharnessed and brushed, given their oats and led into the stables. I could then play hop scotch with the coachman's kids and watch the barrel being filled from the well and slowly hauled to the wing of the house containing the bathroom where running water had been installed with this somewhat primitive source of supply. The coachman was a grand fellow - tall and handsome and he wore the most gorgeous satin Russian shirts and a small round cap with peacock feathers stuck around it and had very shiny high boots. He impressed me terrifically and I adored him until the unforgettable incident with his wife. It must be said that, of course, a rivalry existed between the stables of the Young *Barin's* house and those of the main house in Bogorodskoe some

miles away across mostly Dmitrieff owned land and every time we would visit there the carriages were specially shiny, the horses specially well groomed and the coachman specially superb. My great treat was to go watch the grooms harness the horses and then drive, sitting beside the coachman on his high seat, to the house to pick up whoever was going. This time I arrived a bit late as I had had to change, once again, and for the occasion into white sailor suit, to find the coachman brushing his shiny hair and, probably this I don't remember, his beard. He had on his wide breeches and shiny boots and his wife had laid out for him a yellow shirt - he had ordered a bright blue one and she started to remonstrate with him. He turned around and with an oath, which I didn't understand at all not having been exposed to that sort of vocabulary, hit her a resounding blow that sent her reeling across the room. I fled in abject terror howling to the house. Considerable diplomacy was required and I recollect seeing the coachman kissing his wife fondly before we could all get into the carriage and a subdued boy behave as decorously as was required in those far off days.

The main house in Bogorodskoe is, of course, much more vague in my memory. It was larger and older and the garden, quite as neglected, much more elaborate with a much larger pond. The furniture was mainly mahogany. That I know because Auntie took what she needed to furnish both her house in the country and the apartment they had in Paris, from Bogorodskoe where the serfs had produced vast amounts of armchairs, tables, divans and so on, modeled on pieces brought from abroad by the famous ancestor, Ivan Ivanovich (*Ivan son of Ivan*) who had been a minister of Alexander I and a poet of sorts. Pushkin was a great admirer of his and quoted him several times. One single armchair survived the sale of all Auntie's furniture and antiques in Paris when her dress making establishment went bankrupt in the early thirties and she have it to us as a wedding gift. It has had a continuously adventurous career since and is to this



day in our living room having survived World War II. If only it could speak it would have quite a story to tell.

The little old lady who lived in Bogorodskoe was a maiden 'Aunt' of Uncle Koka's and had brought up her nephew, and several other children whom Feodor Dmitrieff, a liberal minded aristocrat of the middle 19th century and Dean of the Moscow University at one time, had had, I understand, mostly out of wedlock. To all who are familiar with *War and Peace* and Bezukhov, this aspect of Russian pre-revolutionary life comes naturally. By the time I met her she was in her eighties and her image is confused with that of my father's mother. She was a very outstanding woman carrying on the tradition of those great 'Russian Women' of the highest aristocracy who followed their husbands to Siberia after the Decembrist uprising. She must have been born in the thirties and the story that, as a child she had known Lermontov, the Russian Byron killed in a duel in 1840, could be true. I also remember in later years, in Paris, Uncle telling Tolstoy - neither the famous Leo or the other well known Alexis, but a third, rather prominent author who returned to Soviet Russia from emigration and died in the early sixties and was a friend of my uncle's, that Stanislavski of the Moscow Art Theater had been a visitor to Bogorodskoe and had used the salon as a prototype for his realistic scenery for *The Cherry Orchard*. Whether true or not, it makes a nice story. The old lady used to play 'patience' and serve interminable tea. I can't believe she approved of her nephew's marriage to a twice divorced converted Jewess, nor could she, even if a liberal, be that devoid of Anti-Semitism, to take to our family. But she was broadminded enough to receive us all and I do believe got along quite well with Mother - very probably better than with Auntie who was flashy, opinionated and energetic, making a clash of wills was unavoidable.

Those months spent in the depth of the Russian countryside in an atmosphere that had barely changed from the late 18th and early 19th centuries

remained a crucial aspect of my development. My constant harking back to a past that no longer exists, my fascination with history and a feeling for Russia, much deeper than could be expected from a boy who left it at 12 and was brought up by foreign governesses in Saint Petersburg spending most of his summers abroad in England, France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. The deep attraction of the Russian liberal intelligentsia, which flowered for such a short time but with such brilliance, is something that, although I could not physically have known, caught my imagination very early. The short terms I spent in the fabulous Tenisheff School - among its better known alumnae today are Nabokov and also Mandelstam, the great poet - influenced me for life. The images of those endless fields, the wide tracks among the *isbas* (*izbas*), the elaborate services in the village church, the immensity of the flowing Volga, the unforgettable fragrance of the Russian woods, even the smell of the country stables, all that has remained with me. Many decades later, in the early fifties vacationing in Carmel Valley, we were walking toward the local stables to go riding and the breeze suddenly brought the self same smell that I remembered from those far off days in the *Derevnia* and the shady garden, the apple trees and the heat of the burning sun on the steppe came back as if they had been gone but a few months and were there somewhere still waiting for me to revisit them.

Probably some actual event is needed to trigger my memories. I have been reading in the press and watching on TV pre-release publicity for the film *Nicolas and Alexandra*. I read the book and the psychological problem of the Empress as a mother and a high strung fool also is interesting. The advance shots and casting make me shudder. I can still remember quite vividly sitting in the big plate glass window of Father's bank on the Nevski Prospect watching the parade for the Tri Centenary of the Romanoff's (*Romanov*). Everyone around me was in a festive mood. I was impressed by one of Father's friends, a colonel

Molostvoff in uniform with quite a lot of decorations, who dropped in, saber rattling, on his way to some function. The famous Horse Guards were wearing their shining armor, their gleaming horses pranced in the sunlight and the streets were crowded. Suddenly there was a roar along the Nevski coming closer and closer and excitement grew. There was a simple open carriage with a resplendent *cosak* coachman with another beside him and in it, two small figures in their round flat caps of the Smolenski Regiment. One was a non descript man with a small beard - a figure very familiar to all of us, The Tsar. I believe he was saluting but it didn't impress me much. Next to him sat a small, pale faced boy very much like me I thought. With big eyes and very intense. I remember wondering how it must feel to be a Tsarevitch and drive through the streets, gay with bunting. Their legs were covered by a grey plaid I think and I wondered if it was hiding the Tsarevitch's legs about which there was so much talk. Then they were gone, followed by innumerable closed carriages and brightly uniformed escorts. It was all over very quickly but the image remained in my minds eye and later on, when I read the details of the boy's death in the cellar, of his sleepless nights of pain, it was that little, rather pathetic figure in the open carriage that always came back from the past. I was to catch one other single glimpse of Nicolas a few years later. The Dowager Empress was living in the Elaguin Palace on the Island and the Imperial Family drove out to visit her. The Kamenoostrovski (*Kammennoostrovsky*) which led from the Troitski Bridge over the Neva to the Island was where our house was situated and the *prospect* (*avenue*) had been cleared. It was empty except for an occasional *gordovoi* - *policeman* - in a black long coat. Then a large limousine - a Delaunay Belleville - appeared shiny and dark with its brass sparkling. Through the window I caught a glimpse of the Tsar in field uniform sitting on one of the *strapontins* (*folding-seat*) facing the front, with several ladies on the back seat. All dressed in black with large hats. I

remember wondering, as a boy would, why the Tsar had taken a *strapontin* and not sat on the back seat where my parents usually sat. That was all. I believe his beard was a bit streaked with grey like Uncle Koka's. He looked small and very unimportant and I was disappointed. There had not been the glamour I had enjoyed some time earlier when we were visiting the model farm in Tsarskoe Selo to have warm milk direct from the cows. While we sat at a table in the perfectly groomed yard, a group of tall, very elegant officers came in, their boots shining, their white tunics radiant and the pale blue sashes of the prestigious Saint Andrew's across their breasts, the Grand Dukes coming from the palace, I was told in a whisper, and I ogled them with undisguised admiration. I was to see some of them in civilian clothes just a few years later - exiles in Paris, those that survived.

The evening of the parade I went to my Uncle Tolia's flat to watch the court coaches - gold and painted panels which I knew from the museum - I believe, dash past on their way to the Winter Palace. That was the only Imperial splendour I ever saw myself but when I read of it much later, I somehow felt it was a much stronger reality because of this passing glimpse.

In the releases about the film I read that Lord Olivier takes the short role of Count Witte, the famous statesman who headed the government that signed the peace with Japan in Portsmouth. How strange it seems to me that that slight, wiry and thin Olivier should impersonate Witte. Already during the war I used to be taken to a vacant lot near our house where a skating rink was arranged each winter. It wasn't a very large rink and not too crowded and I met several nice children with their English governesses with whom Emily struck up friendships. This broke down much of the cast barrier and I got to be a on friendly terms with a nice little Narichkine boy. Whether Emily told his governess that I was the nephew of Professor Hilarion Kaufman, a close advisor of Witte, I can't

say. But one winter day we were called back towards the little house where we put on our skates, and where in the cozy warmth, our governesses chatted while we skated around. Little Narichkine skated straight into the arms of a very big, heavy built man in an enormous fur lined coat, a large fur cap on his grey hair and thick gloves, whom he kissed. I came along and was duly introduced. I took my fur cap off and the old gentleman asked us to show him how well we skated. We both showed off for Narichkine's grandfather. A few days later I heard that Witte had caught a chill, was seriously ill and then I heard that he had died.

I have had a very full life and have been unbelievably lucky to have remained only a spectator in those harrowing events I have lived through - perhaps, with the only exception of an hour of panic in the prisoner of war camp after the downfall of France when I felt for once, that I was trapped and could no longer act as an outsider looking in on events but was actually involved, deeply and irretrievably that moment of utter fear and helplessness I will never forget.

Existence flowed easily for me, much too easily, in childhood. I was shielded from practically everything and only very indirectly told of the world outside. Whether that is good or bad as preparation for future struggles I still don't know.

I can still see myself sitting in my large sunlit nursery with its frieze of English hunting scenes on the wall paper, drawing innumerable Atlantic liners with gaping holes in their sides and immense icebergs looming menacingly around them. That is about all I can recollect in connection with the sinking of the Titanic. It came back vividly to me many decades later as I watched from the window of my club in lower Manhattan, the Swedish liner limp slowly past the Statue of Liberty, her bows twisted from the collision with the ill fated *Andrea Doria*. I remember driving out to auto races near Strelna, the dark blue Peugeot I so much admired, the roar as it came tearing toward the grandstand and then the

confusion of its crash. I also remember watching in some field, a strange contraption of wire, wood and canvas with a motor in front and a shiny propeller and being told that it was Bleriot's aeroplane. We had a young man servant with whom I was very friendly and who helped me in many of my games and he used an expression "*Fact a ne aeroplan*" which was his version of the then current expression "*Fact a ne reclama*", I was curious and asked him why? He answered , "You will meet many many people in your life. Some will use the regular expression but as long as you live, and wherever that may be, you will remember that Ivan used to say it differently. Strangely enough he was right and to this day I remember him for that reason alone.

During the winter season there were many amateur theatricals. My sister and brother both performed, probably badly. There was the excitement of the repetition in costumes on the eve of the show to which I was allowed to stay up and then the stage having not been immediately dismantled, there was the thrill of acting our own plays with friends who came to tea. Among the children I saw often was Feodor Chaliapin's Petersburg family. Particularly his step children, Eddy and Stella Petzhold. She later married the movie producer de Limur. We played in our garden, sliding down the ice covered wooden little hill that had been built for me and also I used to visit them often, tip toeing through the large dark dining room if Feodor Ivanovitch was there drinking and chatting with some friend. I do remember one particular evening when the baby, Marina, having trouble getting to sleep, he came into her bedroom and started to hum Russian lullabies to her. We children silently crept in and listened. I heard him many times since in different roles, thrilled beyond expression by the first *Boris Godunoff* (*Godunov*) I saw at the Marinski, in Petersburg. Thrilled even more to see the familiar smiling bear of a father whom I knew, suddenly appear in the enthralling grandeur of the opening scene of *Boris* in his magnificent robes. I

saw him again and again later on in France in the same role and finally at a recital in Paris where he sang, already in a somewhat husky voice, all the perennial favorites and even *The Flea* as an encore. But it is Chaliapin bending over his little girl's crib and softly humming lullabies that remains as the really unforgettable memory. It is with these same Petzhold children that my most unforgettable memory of the Xmas tree is linked. We went to Finland after Xmas for a short time and someone put candles on a tree heavy with snow among many others, gleaming white in the night, and lit it. The golden glow of those candles shines in my memory every time a Xmas tree is lit and there have been many many in many a different places: from the wondrous ones in my far off childhood, through the tiny one my mother lit the December following Father's death and the one Lia (*Mummy*) had for me in our hotel room in Vannes during the strange eerie interlude of the Phony War when I was in uniform but not a soldier really. We were living a make believe existence which we knew could not, would not last but which we clung to, believing that we were enjoying the very last days of happiness. When I think back I do believe that indestructible optimism somehow was born then and was never quite destroyed although things came pretty close at times.

Those winter months of my Russian childhood went along in a very calm and uneventful way. There were fancy dress parties which came vividly to mind the last time I saw the *Nutcracker Suite*. There were trips out into the country in warmly heated trains for picnic lunches in a chilly *datcha* (*second home, country home*) dining room with a fire occasionally blazing but damp and cold. Late morning and early afternoon runs on old fashioned skis with just a leather strap and no complicated attachments, under which one slipped high felt boots - *valenki* - which as easily slipped out and a solitary ski would go careening down the hill and one had to scramble down and back up again knee deep in the

snow. For mid Lenten holidays, Saint Petersburg used to be invaded by Finnish *veiki* - low slung sledges with lots of soft straw and small gaily decorated horses. One piled on to them and went for a ride to be thrown off into the soft snow if there was a particularly large bump or bad curve.

I was an avid admirer of all kinds of royalty, as most children of my generation were. I used to be thrilled to watch the small sleigh with it's team of gleaming horses covered by a royal blue silken net, the immense coachman, the towering Cossack in self same blue uniform and two tiny ladies in black, the sable cover trailing along - the Empress Dowager Marie returning from her drive. Or later an open Renault dashing by with the Grand Duke Dmitri in the self same car, I believe, in which Rasputin's half dead body was taken from the Yusupoff palace. Every time I read in the Chronicle of S.F. today of Prince Vassili Romanoff, (*Romanov*) I conjure up the large limousine full of boys in uniform, some larger than me, some smaller, which used to drive the *Alexandrovichi* to the islands.

Many years later, already after the war and recovering from the Spanish flu in Beaulieu in the winter of 1920, I met the already old Duke of Connaught. Well, I won't say that I really met him but I was introduced to him by the wife of a Swedish diplomat, Scavenius, who Mother had met in Stockholm and who was staying at the hotel. I joined his circle one evening and he, discovering that I was a Russian émigré spoke in his strongly accentuated English of "poor Nicky." "We had such wonderful balls and sumptuous banquets and then Ferdinand's ADC tried to steal the gold knife and fork and had to be politely asked by a palace official to give them back". He looked at me with pale blue eyes very prominent and somewhat blood shot. He had a large nose, was of medium height and smiled at me in a nice way. At about nine he took out a heavy old watch and mentioned that: "It was a present from my Godfather, Wellington,



you know." And I was fascinated. Waterloo had always seemed distantly historical.

There were in the later years, the theater. The Russian love for it was a lucky thing for me because though I left when I was just over 12 and the last winters were either war or revolutionary, I had the occasion to see more performances than I would have thought possible. *Boris*, and *Life for the Tsar*, *Maiskaya Notch (May Night)* and *Dame de Pique (Queen of Spades)* either at the pale blue and gold Marinski or at another hall. Then also often enough at the Alesandrinka where we went into a special box as Auntie Mania, the wife of Father's brother Tolia was the actress Prohorova. I have a vivid recollection of Gogol's *Revizor* with an outstanding cast at a matinee with the Imperial Box full of young Grand Dukes and Duchesses. Davidoff, Varlamoff, Yurieff, are names that mean nothing now but were famous in old Russian. I was even taken to one of the small theaters to see an operetta that dealt funnily, using mostly folk song motifs, with the tribulations of a dunce, Ivanof Pavel who failed in his exams. It was hilarious and I have often wondered why it was never taken up later on by Hollywood. I went to see the first XVIII century Russian farce, *Nedorosl of Vonviziin*, partly because we were giving a performance of it at school and I was in the cast.

In early summer, mostly after our return from the *Derevnia*, we used to entrain for Europe. I loved those long, well polished brown wood *wagon lits (sleeping cars)* of the Nord Express and the cozy little compartments with their heavy green or pink plush seats, the quaint between compartments and the profusion of brass fixtures and tricky lamps. A night was spent in the spacious Russian train which was always nice because it ran rather slowly and lulled one to sleep. Then came the bustle of Verjbolovo - Eitkunen and the change to the smaller compartment of the European narrower gauge train and the rush through

Prussia by day. I was asleep when we passed Berlin and by morning we would be well on our way to France. I have arrived at the old dirty Gare du Nord so many many times since those far off days that the newer memories have stamped out the old ones. Paris also is a place I have so often come home to so that there are only occasional memories that remain from pre World War I days. The Guignol (*Punch and Judy Show or Puppet show*) on the Champs Elysee was still Proust's one, the carriages on the Avenue du Bois and the horse drawn cabs still outnumbered cars. Auntie lived near the strange elaborate, oriental style dark Trocadero and the gardens around it were nice to play in.

Perhaps my last childhood memory of that Paris dates back to 1914. We were returning in early autumn to Russia from Venice, had come via Paris to pick up Grandmother and her German speaking Baltic maid. Lucy and George took me for a coffee, still called *Viennois* in those early months, to Rumplemeyers and there was excitement because a German Taube airplane had been spotted over the city. The next morning as we were packing I went down and stood in front of the Hotel Edouard VII - the Meurice was closed - and admired a touring Rolls Royce all mud splattered. I politely inquired of the military chauffeur how far had they driven: "About 20 miles" he answered. "Where from ?" "The front." With that I dashed up to announce to Mother that the Germans were coming. This was just a few days before the Battle of Marne.

In Paris I used to sail boats in the Tuilleries and follow either Mother and Lucy or Emily on shopping expeditions. We usually stayed a couple of weeks and then took off for some resort. Once I remember Mother hired a car - one of those two cylinder Renaults that was a less elegant version of what served in Paris as red taxis - the legendary Marne taxis - and with Lucy and Emily we set off early along the dusty road to Houlgate. Mother and Misha went by train. It was a long journey. We stopped for lunch at *Kil.104*, which I was to become so

familiar with in later years, and got into Houlgate without major mishap for supper some 150 miles and probably about ten hours later. It was a thrill but an exhausting one and the very next day we transferred to the much more sophisticated Grand Hotel de Cabourg, which Proust also has made famous.

In 1913 I believe, our open grey Hotchkiss car was shipped to Lubeck and picked us up. That was the year we went to Hendaye on the Spanish border. There was a crowd of us. At least a dozen in our party that took up all the floor. We were there for Father's birthday party that was on September 15 and Uncle Tolia arranged elaborate fireworks on the beach. All the countryside gathered and was somewhat bewildered by the Russian initials of Father in fireworks as a grand finale. We toured France in the Hotchkiss with a Russian flag proudly flying on one of the headlights. I know we stopped in Clermont Ferrand where I was to be a prisoner of war some thirty years later - to pick up new tires from the Michelin plant. Tires then lasted a few hundred kilometers and were dreadfully expensive.

I cannot say if it was that year or the preceding one which also saw us in Hendaye, that President Poincare of France made his state visit to Spain leaving Madame Poincare, as a divorcee barred from the Spanish court, at Hendaye. I dutifully presented her with a bouquet of roses tied with Russian and French flag colors and said something. Later that day, after dinner, she had me come up to the table in the hotel lobby she was sitting at and asked me where I came from, mumbling a few words. The next French President's wife I was to see at close range was Madame Pompidou in San Francisco in 1968.

Lucy was a very pretty girl and an outrageous flirt and we had many young men around us when we went for our walks. Emily was quite agreeable and not a strict chaperone. This brings to mind an incident that year in Berlin where we had landed at the end of our vacation and were to board the train for

Russia. We had been driving around the city and our Russian flag had even impressed the local police to the extent of allowing us to drive through instead of around the Brandenburg Gate where only the Emperor was allowed. I do remember watching his white Mercedes drive by but was so impressed by the elaborate tune played by several horns - I think it was even a Wagner one and was world famous - that I don't remember eyeing the several helmeted figures in the car and missed a glimpse of Wilhelm. Lucy had picked up a couple of admirers who were flyers in the early German Air Force. They invited her to Tempelhoff airfield. Once there Emily was persuaded to take a spin and off she went, boarded a plane which taxied and soared, not very high, up. I was impressed and awed. Then, of course, Lucy was talked into trying to go up also by her beau – Lt. Werner who later was said to have been the first to bomb Paris. So off she went, got in the plane and it took off leaving me alone with a group of very friendly but imposing German officers. I panicked. Flying in 1913 was not taking a 747 across half the world today remember - and I started to howl. No ice creams would stop me and our chauffeur had to be fetched and brought to the officer's lounge to quiet me down. The ensuing promise that Lucy and Emily extricated from me not to speak of their flights with Mother, was certainly not a very educational one. But I respected it faithfully until about 1935. Mother had fits in retrospect.

The year we were in Cabourg there was some German prince incognito there and Lucy used to take me for endless walks along the promenade while he roared by in his white Benz racer and waved. That year we picked up the new Renault, the first six cylinder in Petro. It was a dark brown and black limousine with black steel headlights and trimming which we kept until we left after the Revolution. We made a few excursions in it - one of a whole day to lunch in Saint Germain and it had difficulty in taking the last hill. A trip to Saint

Germain in those days was quite an event. Serge now commutes practically from there every day.

The year Lucy was to remain at Newham College in Cambridge we spent some time on the Isle of Wight. I remember it was the year she had a bad fall from her horse and it stepped on her face. Luckily her bowler had slid down and all she had was a broken front tooth and the most impressive shiner I had ever seen. And I do believe have every seen. We came back to London and visited her in college. All I can remember was her offering us tea in her little drawing room and I was excitedly told to watch out in the corridor while she brought red burning coals from the fireplace in her bedroom to the sitting room which remained ghastly cold.

One of the years, it must have been 1912, we overstayed in Europe. We went to spend a week's rest in Cimiez overlooking Nice after Mother and Lucy had been duly exhausted by shopping. The hotel was nearly empty except for a Russian minister with wife, little girl and staff of servants. I was fascinated by the little girl and every day used to come up to her and ask her to play with me and she invariably answered "not today, tomorrow". I had no idea that I might be undesirable company. That year October 3 new style, found us in Paris at the Meurice and I had an elaborate birthday party with *Guignol* and lots and lots of favors for children visiting the hotel and a few that we had met at different resorts that summer. By the time we got back to Petersburg it was not yet October 3 old style and when my birthday rolled around there was another party and more presents. I have celebrated one more birthday than I'm entitled to.

One of the regular events of these early years I enjoyed particularly was the *Concours Hyppique* (*Horse show*). I was to go often in later years to the Grand Palais in Paris for the Horse show and watch many friends participate in the events which always smacked of pre World War I atmosphere. Horses were

quickly going out of fashion even then and the elegant equipages were rare on the avenue now become Foch. But in my childhood horses still reigned supreme in the streets of St. Petersburg. It was in winter that they gave the city a special charm and it's snow covered streets a quiet that has now been lost. I still thrill to the memory of the small shining sledges gliding silently and fast with the icy wind stinging cheeks and noses. The enormously wide, grotesque back of the coachman wrapped in his innumerable thick padded coats occupying the whole front seat. Occasionally he wore, duly tucked into his wide belts, a small clock in a leather case so that one could know the time. There were, in town few *troikas*, (*a vehicle with a set of three horses*) mostly one horse, with the wood *douga* arch over the horses head or pairs. The *devostchiks* - *cabs* - were run down dirty affairs with cracked leather covers and moldy straw to keep feet warm, a miserable horse steaming in the cold air and incredibly dirty coachman and there were the *lihatchi* meaning approximately *reckless*, all spic and span, as elegant as the best private outfits only a bit more gaudy and the coachman younger, more dashing with their fur caps tilted at an angle and near racing horses dashing through the half empty streets among the slow moving sledges with their high loads of merchandise and an occasional red tram car. In my early years these had not yet been electrified and the pair of horses used to be helped by a third to get the rickety car up the incline of a bridge. Of course all these were replaced by similar carriages in summer after the snow had melted and the ice had come down from the Ladoga Lake crashing against the pillars of the great bridges and carrying away the tracks of road that had led, during winter, across the ice from one side of the Neva to the other. I vaguely remember the narrow gauge railway that used to be set up and that many many years later played such a vital role in the unbelievably tragic siege of World War II but I do remember vividly riding across in a sleigh pushed by a *mujik* (*a Russian peasant*) on very elementary

skates looking with growing excitement at the Winter Palace rapidly approaching as we skimmed along the wide clear ice avenue bordered by pine branches and shivered in the icy wind.

But back to the horse show. We had a closed family friend who had been a brilliant and handsome French Cavalry Officer who came from the famous *Cadre Noir* (*famous riding school*) of Saumur, I believe, as instructor and remained having caught the eye of some very high personage. I do believe he was one of my Auntie's many admirers. I know he taught Lucy to ride and years later, when he had joined the famous Wild Division in his tall *caracul* hat and his tightly belted caftan, made famous in the White Russian night clubs after the Revolution, coming to the indoor *manege* where I was just learning to ride my pony and waving menacingly at me and shouting instructions. He had a blond daughter, a Godchild of Auntie's who used to stay in the *Derevnia* and with whom I played. I never knew or remember seeing her mother. Later, by then in exile, General Bertrene, he played tennis with me at the Racing in Paris. His daughter married a cousin who had been through school in Paris with Bao Dai and when this last named became Emperor of Annam, he had the young Bertrene couple come out to Saigon where they had a great life. As Bertrene had been lucky at one time to have an exceptional horse he had won not only innumerable prizes in Petro but also abroad and was a mainstay of the group of brilliantly uniformed cavalry officers who competed with a lone civilian in pinks and top hat. The names won't mean a thing - Voevodski, Rodzianko - but for me they conjure up picturesque figures, like toy soldiers on horse back, in the oblong ring taking their horses over incredibly high obstacles and the attendant soldiers in their white Russian shirts running up and replacing fallen bars. This childhood thrill I was to experience in Tokyo at the 1965 Olympics high jump finals when the best of the world performed with unbelievable spectacular horsemanship and Oriola, the

Frenchman, won his country's only Gold Medal with the Japanese band giving an unforgettably curious rendition of the Marseillaise that took us quite a few minutes to recognize. During the intermissions between the events, Cossacks dashed in on the little horses and went into wild *djiguitovka* - stunt riding - sabers flashing, bending over to pick up a silk scarf with their teeth while the horses swerved in their crazy gallop. I still have vivid memories of The Guards Trumpets riding out to sound off every event, the special smell of horse shows, the elegant crowd in the boxes and stands and the particular excitement of watching someone one knew riding in the ring. I know that even today the atmosphere is still there at the horse shows of Paris and New York but for me it is the long gone ones of Imperial Russia which had something real, an exercise in horsemanship that would lead to the last crazy charges of the Russian Guards in 1914 and then the futile heroic idiotic ones of the Polish Cavalry against German tanks during the *Blitzkrieg*. Those traditions of horsemanship I witnessed were still directly descendant from the historic cavalries which had ruled the world for millenniums.

There will be returns in these messy pages to events of childhood as they come to mind but as summer 1914 dawned I felt that I was growing up, that I was becoming a boy. Unbelievably innocent and unknowing in practically all life's important aspects but beginning to watch them from the sidelines a bit more consciously. My sister was engaged and we went to the *Derevnia*. George and his younger brother were among the many who saw us off and raced the train to the end of the platform. There was the Volga, the usual drive across the plain, the carefree days in the warm sunshine, the long walks in the woods where Auntie had shoved a rather large stray dog she thought, away with her bright parasol to be met a few yards away by an anxious group from the household to warn her that a rather dangerous wolf had been sighted. This same Auntie awoke the house



on the following night when she noticed a tiny mouse scampering across her room.

We came back probably early June and left for Berlin where Father joined us. The family rented a car and left to drive leisurely to Merano where we went by train with Emily. They never did make it and wired us to join them in Madonna di Campiglio in the Dolomites, then the Austrian Empire in late June. It rained and everybody was miserable so we piled into the car - all six of us - and drove down to Venice and the Lido. My childhood was coming to an end and I was entering boyhood. My memories from then on are no longer fragmentary but continuous and things omitted are things forgotten. From our arrival in Venice to this day, the recollections are an unending flow, interrupted by forgetfulness but no lack of memory.

## **Boyhood**

### ***1914 Holidays in Europe St. Petersburg to 1917***

In late spring of 1914 we returned from the *Derevnia* and left for what we used to call Europe. Not that we considered Russia as Asia but probably Mother, who had spent many years of her youth trying unsuccessfully to cure a bone disease (she limped rather apparently and wore special footwear, which did not hinder dancing in her youth and long walks later in life) did. We stopped in Berlin. I have never been back but vividly remember the Siegesallee with its hideous statues, the zoo and the Brandenburg Tor. We stayed at the Bristol and my parents with Lucy and George, by then her fiancé, left in a rented Benz touring car for the Dolomites. With Emily we went by train to Merano. I vividly remember the lovely flowers in the big garden and as we were awaiting the rest of the family and had a suite and the luxury of dining upstairs, very comfortably,

in the salon. Plans were changed and we went to Madonna de Campiglio. It rained in the Austrian resort and we 'fled' to Venice. I spent the afternoon there some 40 years later visiting St. Marks and climbing up scaffolding to admire the mosaics and then later to watch on the famous piazza, a reenactment in costume for a film of the return of Marco Polo which was a lovely show. But my memories of Venice really go back to that visit in 1914. The slow ride by *vaporetto* (*waterbus in Venice*) from the Lido, sauntering along the narrow streets, eating ice cream on the piazza and even going into some of the dimly lit churches. My evenings, after dinner was over at the children's dining room, were spent in climbing on the roof to watch the sunset over Venice. In later life these memories were often, in a way, revived when I chanced upon a Canaletto or a Guardi. Life seemed carefree and calm but a few days after our arrival Father left suddenly for St. P. and as I later learned, got through Vienna and into Russia by the last International Express. He gave me, as a going away present, a gold piece and I spent it on renting a gondola to take us with Emily whom I called Lovey, across the lagoon in the gathering twilight back to the Lido. It was one of my very first extravagances but I never regretted it and still remember the soft splashing of the ripple against the bow, the gondolier with his oar and Venice slowly sinking into the dusk in the background. A few days later on Father wired instructions. Mother hired a fast motor launch and went to the bank in Venice to cash all her letter of credits into gold. She got half of it and had to enlist the assistance of the Russian Consulate to keep the money as all international transactions were frozen at the declaration of War. We lingered on in the half empty hotel in an atmosphere of worry, uncertainty and unreal calm. Perhaps I liked *Death in Venice* so much in later years because of the memories of these last days of my childhood which coincided with the last days of the Old World which was seeing its lights go out. There were innumerable discussions about which route to take. The excitement

of the Goeben and Breslau German Men of War escaping to Constantinople and making Turkey a probable ally of the Central Powers and therefore George, who was 20, liable to internment was frightening. Finally news came from Paris that Grandmother had been able to get out of some Baden or other and was stuck there with Uncle Leo, anxious to get back. We entrained, all 5 of us, some dozen trunks and just about as many hand valises for France. Trains were erratic and I just remember that we were stopped opposite a train full of mobilized recruits, called to them that we were Russian and they shouted back, "*A bientôt a Berlin*" (*See you soon in Paris*). Paris was no longer carefree. The Germans were uncomfortably close but the stores were open. Rumpelmeyers on the Rue de Rivoli had its *Monblancs* (*a French dessert*) and the *Guignol* (*Punch and Judy show; puppet show*) still gave its shows on the Champs Elysees. We collected Grandmother and left for London. The trip was hectic. We somehow, probably with a bribe from our gold hoard, secured a compartment and huddled in it all night in the dark. George kept spirits up by blowing his nose continuously and then throwing his handkerchiefs out of the window to Grandmother's horror as she was extravagant only on herself directly. London, as I remember, was unchanged. There were still guards at Buckingham Palace, the Alexandra Hotel at Marble Arch was as Victorian as ever with its maids in starched aprons and caps in the dining room. We didn't stay long and took the Flying Scotsman to Newcastle. Mother suddenly realized when already at the station, that our passports lacked Norwegian visas. My first but certainly not last encounter with that unpleasant phenomena of later years. Father's business connection in London who had come to see us off, wired the Norwegian Consul in Newcastle and upon arrival next morning a tall thin gentleman met us. He got into a closed cab with Mother who had all the passports and I sat on the fly seat while he stamped them holding them on his knees with a seal he brought for the purpose.

This simplifying of procedures was to remain a crazy memory in the *entre deux guerres* (*between the two wars*) period when visas became such a vital factor in our refugee lives. We boarded a white steamer, no larger than the one we had taken on the Volga and immediately ran into the most horrible storm I can remember. I was in one of the upper lounges when the first big wave hit and as we were keeled over I rushed down in a panic. I never was a hero born. The night was dreadful, even though we were repeatedly told we were lucky because U boats would not trouble us in such weather. Bergen, which I was to see less than four years later, but what years, was reached next day and a night train took us via Christiania to Stockholm. Here again a decision had to be made. The direct steamer to St. Petersburg, across the Baltic or the long roundabout way via Finland and the Arctic circle. Newspapers were full of stories of escapes from Germany of eminent Russians. How the Kaiser had let the *Danische Katze* (*Danish Cat*), the Empress Dowager, through but also how some young Russians had been taken off a ship in mid Baltic and sent to Germany. I had struck up a friendship in the train with a nice young man who said he was American. We chatted of lots of things and he invited me to take a boat ride near Skansen. He was going, as a journalist, to Germany. Some months later I got a book duly dedicated, called *From Ruhleben and Back*. This being the camp where enemy aliens were first interned in Germany and I discovered that he was a bona fide British spy who had been caught in Berlin and escaped. It now all seems tame but in war time Petro, I was thrilled to have met and spent what he called his last good afternoon, with a real spy.

We finally decided to go via Finland. A night ride in a train brought us to Lulea and from there a small coastal steamer, to Haparanda. there a launch was loaded with all our trunks and baggage and we steamed off to Torneo. In Torneo the local chief of police met us. He had been probably been

having the time of his life meeting important people suddenly traveling through his small frontier township. We set off on foot up the hill, along the main street, to the station. The Chief gallantly giving his arm to Grandmother and leading our procession. A sleeping car had been reserved - Father was the President of the *Herbi Keletz Railway* and was awaiting us on a side spur. We all got in and Mother invited two French business men who had no reservations and two charming ladies to take the compartments which were still available. I awoke early and peeping out discovered to my surprise, the self same scenery of pines I had looked at the night before. George was quickly put to work to get our car hitched up to the express which was leaving. We had been forgotten. I remember that there was no dining car and that we used to get out at the stations for meals - delicious. A few hours out of St. P. - now renamed Petrograd, we all trooped out except Grandmother.

It is not easy to realize that from my only return *home* as a fully conscious individual in autumn 1914 to our departure for exile in spring 1917, only less than three years elapsed. From then on I would go places, would return to my family and friends in familiar surroundings or move to settle in quite different ones, but never again would I return home to a place I was born in and where I expected to spend my life.

In those two and a half years I somehow condensed a life. Petrograd we returned to was the same one we had left. There were more soldiers around. In the wide vacant lot adjoining our house, recruits drilled and sang in those deep Russian voices that were to thrill the world. The first year, at least, war seemed very remote indeed. There was my sister's wedding with all the pomp and fanfare of Peace - the brightly illuminated Synagogue, the flower girls and the boys accompanying them - some like myself, in white sailor suits, my Aunt Mania's nephews in their cadet uniforms - black with shiny buttons and red on their

military caps. Most men in tails, some in court uniform with lots of gold braid and then the reception at home. My uncle Hillarion Kaufman, duly converted and not wishing to go to the temple, was at the foot of the stairs. His Exalted Excellence in white tie and orders gleaming, the dark blue sash of the White Eagle across his breast; the tables of presents and the buffet; driving off to the Finland Station to see the couple off on their short honeymoon. I was very proud that I had long white trousers sticking out from my heavy coat with its fur collar exactly as did our friend Kamerherer Poverje, head of the famous Lyceum...but he had a gold braided uniform. The winter was gay in a subdued way. I got a pony, Lazy Boy, not too small, not a Shetland, nearly a horse and he could be harnessed into a little wicker carriage, also to a carriage or a high sleigh with two seats. I started to learn to ride in the *manege (riding school or riding arena)* and skated on the nearby rink. A slide was built in our garden and I could tear down it on my sledge. There were the visits to the theater I have already spoken of, one also to the Hermitage Museum where I vaguely remember endless halls with pictures. I was more impressed I'll admit by the gorgeous cathedrals - Kasan, St. Isaac with their golden gates and gem incrustated icons, columns of lapis lazuli and malachite; there were small parties at friends houses - including Mummy's where the staircase impressed me enormously and the doorman still more. Spring came fast. Mother took me to Faberge to see the modest Easter Egg that had been made for the Tsarina - just a red cross on white enamel. In January 1915 my parents celebrated their silver wedding anniversary. A frame of the four children was made in silver and white enamel by Faberge which I still have and then it was realized that Alex had been left out and as Uncle Tolia was footing the bill, he made a fuss and I was added in a different format and totally ruining what, in any case, was not a work of art. Father and Mother went to Moscow for a few days. I was hurrying upstairs with a plant for Mother's bedroom when I stumbled and

in trying to avoid breaking the pot, broke my wrist instead, somewhat marring the homecoming gaiety. Lucy had received as one of her presents an enormous white limousine that Father had acquired in the process of furnishing some 20,000 white trucks to the army. It had headlights galore and gadgets both in and outside. It was hideous and Lucy succeeded in palming it off on an enterprising stock broker who decided it would be a good investment to help out the daughter in law and daughter of two prominent bankers. She exchanged it for a nice Renault coupe with blue and red wheels. I heard the echoes of the row - one of the very few which ensued.

I was thrilled to go with Father and choose the chinchilla skins for Mother's stole and boa. They were soft and a lovely grey. Mother refused anything as permanent and really worth while as sables and lived to regret it. Father also offered her an exquisite emerald to replace a rather second quality one that Cartier had mounted for her in a ring with an early version of an emerald cut diamond baguette and which she also refused and exchanged for the redecorating of her boudoir. I had an inordinate love of jewelry and can, even today, remember every item of Mother's rather nice collection: the two strings of pearls, the diamond tiara like a triangular sunburst with a large center diamond, the diamond earrings of which she gave one to George to wear as a ring and one as pendant for Lucy; her diamond bow, the long string of pearls shortened later to give Lucy a necklace, two really lovely aquamarines beautifully set in diamonds by Cartier, pretty large, about two inches square each and of a soft blue, a necklace of baroque pearls set in diamonds and a branch with diamond leaves and many colored pearls like flower buds. The grey one was later on, taken off and Father wore it as a tie pin and I inherited it and Mummy has it now as an earring. Mother had exquisite hands and thin fingers and wore at least half a

dozen rings. They were all to disappear into pawnshops and I retrieved only the one Mummy wears now.

War was brought closer one day when we learned that one of Lucy's beaux, a very handsome British boy, Eric Hill, had been killed. I went to the funeral service at the English Church and was thrilled by the Union Jack and his red and khaki cap and sword on the bier.

We had children's parties at the Kamenkas with lavish food. I do remember little Rosie Beck, one of an English family we knew and with whom I often played and had, what must have been my first totally unconscious crush on this blue eyed, dark haired, lovely eldest girl of my age who became I believe, an actress later in life.

In early spring we went to Pargolovo, a small estate Father had rented near Luga. It was a nice, unpretentious house and Lucy and George had a pavilion on the other side of the road which ran from the nearby station to the village on the hill, a mile or so away. This is where I tried my first solo on a bike. The village kids were a bit rough and forced me off my bike and I couldn't get back on so walked it to the house under their catcalls and jeers. There was a field beyond an orchard on the bank of a river where we bathed and an open air *manege* was set up with hurdles and that is where we rode in the mornings. How George, who had been mobilized in the Red Cross and wore the uniform could spend a whole summer away from whatever work he did, is probably due to the pull of his and our family and the rather easy going attitude towards what all expected to be a short and inconclusive war being fought far away.

Two incidents stand out in my memory connected with Lazy Boy that summer. The running water in the house was supplied from a tank which in turn was filled from a large barrel on a cart which went endlessly all day long from the river to the house. The horse took a dislike to Lazy Boy and one of the



first days I ever rode in the open they had a fight. I clung to the saddle for dear life but finally toppled off and to both Mother and Lovey's horror George forced me back onto the pony. I am forever grateful to him for this. Then, also, one day Lazy Boy bolted and dashed up through the orchard towards the stables. George on his Fortuna couldn't even keep up with us and as Lazy boy dashed into the stables and into his stall, I felt the beam brush my hair. To this day I remember the feeling although I have now been bald for well over forty years. One day I went visiting Lucy and George with my soft brown loving Chow bitch Aza at my heels. Suddenly in the middle of the dusty road a snarling mongrel appeared and barred its fangs at Aza. I intervened at once and the next thing I knew, the dog had bitten deeply into my foot. I looked down and there was a hole, blood hadn't even started yet and I rushed back to the house. George, Misha who was visiting us then and all available men joined in a hunt for the mongrel and by evening I was shown it's bullet riddled body. I am not sure to this day if it was the dog that bit me. Father and Misha drove back to town that evening with the body of the dog and a few days later Father came back unexpectedly and I was bundled off to the station. The Staraya Russa Express stopped and picked us up and I slept soundly in the *wagon lit (sleeping car)*. Upon arrival in Petrograd we drove straight to the Pasteur Institute where I was given the first of a series of anti rabies shots in my stomach. I have no recollection of it being either painful or particularly unpleasant nor do I remember any after effects. Not like the incident with the stove in my childhood when we had a round iron stove in the bathroom and I was left standing while my governess went to fetch a towel. This was not Lovey who was in Japan at the time and we hadn't moved into our house yet. I stumbled and sat down on the ornate pot bellied stove. I kept the design for years and I distinctly recollect that that hurt badly. While I was attending the Pasteur Institute we first lived in Lucy's apartment but soon moved back into our house

with most rooms closed, furniture covered with white sheets and a skeleton staff. I enjoyed it immensely. At the Institute I met the director's son - Djijgovski - who was to become a good friend in school the following autumn. Uncle Tolia lent us his Model T closed car for drives to the Islands and I visited the Kamenkas who were spending the summer near town in a villa. We drove, with Daisy in her pony cart and had scrumptious teas. This lasted, I believe, a few weeks and then we went back to the country. Lucy soon left for town and so did everyone else but we stayed on with Mother for a week or so and took long drives in the countryside with its beech woods and undulating fields heavy with the coming harvest. The peasants were not friendly and I remember that they used to bar the road at each village and the kids would have to be bribed with candy to open it up. Perhaps the scowls I visualize are in my imagination only.

The following winter was uneventful. I studied much more, quite hard, for the entrance exam the next year into Tenisheff but there were more operas and plays to go to and the usual skating, skiing and sledge driving. The Xmas tree was there as usual and so were the soldiers and many ladies, including Auntie Alia, in nurses' uniform. One day, suddenly, Father appeared also in uniform and it was quite a shock. He certainly had anything but a martial appearance but looked nice in his fur cap and he did wear his orders which thrilled me. He went to the front to distribute gifts from some organization to the troops in the trenches. They got stuck in some front line post under a rather heavy artillery barrage and Father, apparently, refused to leave until he had distributed all the gifts and talked to the soldiers. This was considered quite an act of bravery and Father became the only Petrograd banker to get the Saint George's Medal for it. I wouldn't vouch that his friend Colonel Molostrvoff who commanded the Red Cross train on which he made the trip was quite uninvolved in the proceedings but it was nice in any case and I liked the idea that I had a

brave father because I was a bit unhappy that I could not boast of my brother or brother in law who were, although in uniform, pleasantly stationed in the capital.

The winter was rather uneventful. News of the defeats made my parents concerned and worried and although I still had a very pleasant and normal existence in many small ways, the general atmosphere was becoming gloomy.

I remember a small incident which might be historically interesting. One day Father brought home a small slip of paper on which I saw scrawled in a handwriting more childish than mine, a few words *POMOGIE IE, ONA HOROSHAIA* (*help her - she is good*) and was told it was an introduction from Rasputin recommending old Kamenka take on a secretary in his bank. I can still see the soiled, lined piece of paper and the writing going in all directions. The woman got a very good job, of course.

When spring came it was decided that before we went for the summer to Tsarskoe Selo where Lucy was to have her baby, I would spend May in the *Derevnia* with Auntie. We left by the night train for Moscow with Lovey and Misha met us there. He took us around the Kremlin. I duly crept into the Tsar Kolokol, the enormous bell that had fallen and was dented when it had been hoisted originally to the bell tower in the XV century. I admired the enormous bronze cannon and went to the Red Square. We then visited the Hirschman's (Guenia's) large house with its impressive halls and much gilt stucco and Misha had sheets taken off some of the elaborate furniture which impressed me quite a bit. I do not recollect the details of the many pictures on the walls but it was the largest private house I had ever visited. We lunched in one of the chic restaurants served by white aproned Tartars and took a car to their Estate Kulebiakino which must have been but a few miles away. I enjoyed the stay there with the 3 children, their lovely park, the adjoining factory producing needles and had a nice boat ride with Misha and Katia on the small lake. We entrained for Syzran after a couple

of days and arrived safely. I was particularly happy that year at the *Derevnia* as I was alone with Auntie and Lovey and the center of attention. As I mentioned I believe before, there were quite a number of Austrian POWs working the fields and I had a nice time with them. I was also able to ride a bit, bareback, on a horse Auntie said would be mine next time. It all seemed so permanent, so unchanging, those long summer days, the rides into the steppe, the milking of the cows and realizing that Uncle's family had been there for centuries. The peasants were friendly and nice. Much more so than in Pargolovo where we had been interlopers after all. We returned to Moscow and spent a day with Katia's other sister, Bebe Cahn in their apartment which reminded me of Grandmother's and where the atmosphere was not very attractive. When we got to the station it developed that the Grand Duke Dmitri had decided to take the train and several passengers had been bumped off the *wagon lit* to make room for him, his ADC and orderlies. Lovey went up to him, whether she actually said as legend was later made: "You may be a Grand Duke but you are not a gentleman for having taken my poor little boy's compartment" or made a more polite diplomatic approach, I don't know. In any case we got the orderlies compartment at the end of the coach and they slept elsewhere. This impressed Mr. Cahn no end.

We returned to the rather large villa that had been rented in Tsarkoe Selo just next to the Egyptian gate. A rather elaborate structure in ancient Egyptian style which I do believe stands to this day and where I used to play hide and seek with the sons of the old butler who had replaced the younger Martin, a Balt who had been mobilized. I had my pony and used to ride daily in the park with the man in charge of the horses who exercised George's Fortuna, I suppose. One day I saw a cavalcade approaching and was told the ladies were the Grand Duchesses with their escort of officers and Cossacks. We had to clear the avenue and I spurred Lazy Boy to clear the ditch. Instead he kicked his hind leg and to

my confusion and shame I landed on his neck. I did keep in the saddle and didn't make an utter fool of myself in the eyes of the group of horsemen. One did canter back and asked the groom if I was alright.

Those few summer months in Tsarskoe passed quickly and I didn't attach to them the importance I should have for they were to be the last summer vacation in my homeland.

The Kamenkas were living in their newly rebuilt rather large *dacha* (*second home usually in the country*) which had replaced an enormous Victorian one I had never visited in Strelna, a few miles away by a very adequate highway which was kept in good repair as there were assorted Grand Dukes living in Gatchina, Strelena, Pavlovsk and Tsarskoe and visited back and forth. I particularly remember one visit we paid with Mother to the Kamenkas. Their neighbor was the dancer Kshessinskaya who had been the Tsar's mistress when he was Tsarevitch and afterwards had an affair with one of the elder Grand Dukes and by this time, was the recognized mistress of the young Grand Duke Andre whom I was later to see quite often in Paris. He had a son who had received the title of Krassinski and was about my age. In the park of her villa a real fort had been built and he exercised at different maneuvers with the boys of the villa employees and servants somewhat in the manner originally started by Peter the Great. I was invited to join them and we stormed the ramparts, maneuvered stealthily behind bushes, all very thrilling. And when, in 1939, I had to go to very similar exercises in Brittany, training for real in the French Army, I could not banish memories of those boyhood games. A young ballet dancer Vladimirof joined in our fun and I remember the hideous frustration of trying to catch up with him as he unbelievably nimbly weaved himself back and forth across the lawn avoiding the pack of youngsters with grace and speed. I was presented to Vova's Mother on the terrace and don't know if the uniformed gentleman sipping

tea was a Grand Duke or not. We drove back in the evening in the open Hudson Father had recently bought and had a flat tire. Our chauffeur, unable to repair the inner tube, filled the outer one with rags and we limped home slowly. Such primitive repairs could stand up in those days.

We visited Gatchina, Peterhof of which I still remember the facade and fountains. Not all the palaces were open to the public but I remember well the small pavilion with an immense granite tub which Catherine II used as a swimming pool. We also visited the Big Palace in Tsarskoe with its profusion of gilt curlicues and heavy elaborate décor, including the then famous amber salon. I do believe it was never restored after the destruction in 1940. It had *panneaux* (*panels*) of dark amber, amber inlaid doors and furniture and amber tables with yellow upholstery and much gold. Gorgeous and garish and thinking back I can easily imagine Catherine's court both grand and vulgar in such surroundings. I loved roaming or riding in the vast park sometimes pushing as far as the white *empire* palace of Pavlosk nearby or past the Normandy type villa with its manicured lawns of the Grand Duke Cyril.

Lucy was expecting the baby. I was the first outsider to hear of it and ran to the stable, jumped on Lazy Boy and dashed bareback to the florist along the wide avenue near the station, picked up a big bunch of red roses and dashed back holding them up. It now seems an unbelievable picture of a young kid careening through a residential Imperial summer resort waving red roses and this in wartime. But it did happen and gives the idea how distant and unreal for many of the so called privileged, the war could be. If one realizes that the Murmansk route, which was to gain such fame in World War II was used to bring for the two younger Kamenka boys, bright red Indian motorcycles and for Marina an elaborate English pram, to say nothing of supplies of sailor suits for me from Rowe in London, right up to 1917.

We had a party in the garden one month after Mollikin's birth and she lay on a lace cushion on the lawn while we kids enjoyed playing games in the garden. Mummy came up from Pavlovsk where they were spending the summer. As Mollikins was born with jaundice I nicknamed her *Abricot (Apricot)* much to the disapproval of Mother and others.

As autumn approached I became terribly excited as I was at last going to the Tenisheff School. The first month or so we were still living in Tsarskoe and I commuted daily to town with Father. We would take an early train that stopped at the half way station of Pulkovo where the observatory was located and which was to become the extreme point of the Wehrmacht advance again Leningrad in 1941. And after about half an hour, we reached the capital. Father would be dropped off at the bank. I would continue to school.

Thinking back, after attending a couple of French Lycees myself and watching Liz and Mike at several of their different schools I must admit that mine was the most interesting one and marked me for life. The first day there was a religious service with a choir singing and incense which sent me sick out into the hall. And before each class there was an Orthodox prayer. I still remember a few words: '*roditeliam na outeshenie*' (*for satisfaction of our parents*) and we Jewish boys knew the words better than the original Orthodox kids. Everyday they had *Zakon Bogii (religious classes; God's laws)* and all the Jewish, Protestant as well as the Catholic kids spent the time with an extra hour's intermission in the hall way. I had a very interesting history teacher, Gippius, and still recollect how fascinated I was by his explanation about old Russian history and even, something extraordinary in those far off days, his vivid description of everyday life in old Moscovy.

I loved the school and enjoyed it very much. Infinitely more than the tedious hours of home tutoring with a student friend of my brother's or even

the nice music teacher, Martha Toulievna, who taught me piano to the extent that I reached the stage of playing a song, Stenka Razin, by spring. I had to keep my hands horizontal and stiff so that a glass of water would remain on the back of the hand while the fingers performed.

In school the very first day I ran into quite a lot of kidding because my sailor suits with deep *décolleté* (*low necked dress*) in front and the little box, like one that is made of shoe laces, temptingly sticking out behind, to be pulled constantly. Much to Lovey's despair I got Father to have me dressed like the other boys in a jacket and knickers pretty soon. Uncle Tolia had given me a bright patent leather bag for my books which was strapped to my back. I would, with surprise and nostalgia discover the same kind of bags on the backs of Japanese school kids in 1962 and he had had my family name embossed on it. We were at war with Germany and 'Berlin' (for that is the Russian spelling) was not a very fortunate name to carry literally on one's back in a Petrograd school in 1916. I was immediately dubbed *Jid Berlinski* (*The Berlin Jew*) and Father had to replace the bag by an anonymous one after one single day of harassment. I do believe that that was my first encounter with anti-Semitism although I had been told before that I was not to pray when I went with Lovey to the British Embassy Church on the Quay of the Neva nearly every Sunday, as it was not my faith. I met a few boys I became quite friendly with and because of the famous *Zakon Bogii* schedule they were mostly either Jewish or of other Christian denominations. There was one in particular, the son of the director of the Pasteur Institute situated farther up along the Kamenoostrovski Prospect on which we lived. He sometimes picked me up in their one horse little *tonneau* (*wooden carriage*) and dropped me off on his way home past our house. There was also a big and frightening bully Sakharoff. Misha was working at the time in the hospital located in the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna Palace and sponsored by



her. She was one of the older Grand Duchesses, as sister of the Dutch Prince Consort, an admirer of things French and, as I later learned, a somewhat liberal lady along the lines of the famous Princess Mathilde **CAN NOT READ YYY**. I got my brother who didn't have a car but did have a sleigh with two very flashy horses and a big fat coachman, most impressive, to fetch me one day and offer a lift to the already somewhat impressed bully as Misha had a heavy greatcoat and on his epaulettes, the crown of the monogram of the Grand Duchess. When he barked "*Vo voretz*" (*to the palace*) and we sped there to be ushered ceremoniously up the steps and into the palace by a very obsequious janitor, all gold braid and green uniform, duly generously tipped, of course, my bully was so impressed that I was spared further trouble. Not a very elegant way but certainly an effective one to weave a way through what was then considered to be my future life. We had theatricals at school and as the nephew of an actress of the Alexander Imperial Theater, probably much more than because of any ability, I was given a part in the first Russian *Nedorosl* written by Von Wizin in the XVI century. The son of our class religious teacher, a *pope*, was forbidden to come to rehearsals at the home of a Jew and this was more or less the personal extent of my suffering as a minority albeit a very privileged member of it, in Imperial Russia. This will go far to explain why my own deep personal feelings for Imperial Russia are still less tainted with antagonism than even Mummy's who, because of her father's position in the Community, was much more conscious, as a child, of being Jewish.

We had lessons all morning and at midday a meal of kasha and beets and a couple of *bitkis* (*meatballs*). Then when I got home there was high tea with lots to eat and as I had been fortified in the morning with porridge and bread and butter and jam and was to enjoy a large full course dinner, I don't understand how I was able to avoid becoming disgustingly fat as were my uncle Tolia and brother

Misha, for example, and quite a few of my friends. I left them all behind in Russia and had only vague news once of Murochka Shapiro who was a talented musician but saw quite a lot of Nika Jivatovski, son of a wealthy and shady businessman who had an attractive if rather vulgar sister, Sia on whom I had a crush later in Stockholm. I saw him in Paris. In the early thirties Nika appeared again absolutely penniless. He had gone to an English boarding school when I went to Paris. I helped him as much as I very modestly could and he left for the Argentine where he died soon after in abject poverty. I heard political rumours at home because my parents always talked in front of me. We were disappointed with the defeats on the Front, madly elated by the few played-up victories, worshipped Broussiloff and hated the government. So when bread riots broke out and we had to take a round about way via Voborgskaia Storona in my little sledge drawn by Lazy Boy to avoid crowds in the streets, I could be excited and thrilled.

Then one day whispers began in earnest. Rasputin had disappeared. He had been to a soiree at the Yusupoff Palace with the Grand Duke Dimitri. Where had he disappeared? Then came the finding of his body under the ice with the rubber boot near the hole to lead the police to it. I vividly remember the impression that boot made on me and how I felt that it should not have been left behind.

Things were getting worse and worse. The papers were full of horrible conditions both on the war and home fronts. The cold was intense and schools were even closed for a couple of days. Existence went on quite normally and there was much talk of a gala performance I believe at one of the Imperial Theaters and it was debated whether with all the unrest in the streets it was safe to go. New Year's honor lists were published and Father even got a higher rank in that famous structure of ranks set up for the whole nation by Peter the great.

Then one evening after getting back from school, I was packed off to Grandmother's with Lovey and Mother's jewelry to spend the night. Grandmother lived not far away in a nice apartment in a quiet side street, on one of the higher floors. The furniture was old fashioned and the walls covered with the XIX century gold framed Victorian style pictures, the least valuable of a rather large collection gathered by her second husband. In the dining room there was an immense picture of a lady in pale blue, reclining in a Greek temple with doves around her. In the salon where my adored pianola stood, there was a full length portrait of Grandmamma in black with her large diamond brooch and the red ruby, now in Mummy's ring. On the sideboards there were many many silver saltcellars in the form of *isbas* (*izba*) carts, dogs and other figurines with which I and also my brother and sister had always played. The night was quite uneventful and the disturbances which were supposed to lead to the sacking of our house had not materialized. The following days the crowds became more and more numerous. Our cars were requisitioned by roaming groups of students. Rumours grew in intensity. Then came the news of the Tsar's abdication. The day, during which the last Romanov, Michael, like the first one, hesitated. And then the naming of a liberal Democratic Provisional Government. No real bloodshed had occurred. The crowds were jubilant. The soldiers hungry and happy. An empty store on the corner of Kamenoostrovski was rented, benches and tables obtained and samovars lit. And in the smoke and heat, free tea and bread were distributed all around in mugs. I had a thrilling time helping serve the soldiers and workers in the smoke filled room while the maids and Lovey stoked the samovars and washed the cups. I had the job of distributing the sugar which came in its characteristic white cones wrapped in blue paper halfway.

Those days were really exciting. That bloodless revolution made everyone around me happy and optimistic. We did watch on one of our short

strolls, some men scrambling over roofs and shooting down into the streets. But it was a few blocks away. The nice friendly *gardovoi* (*cop on the beat*) disappeared for a while and we visited the nearby Police Station which had been emptied and looted. I can still see the small, white walled cells, their benches and a few articles of personal use, a brush, a pair of boots, left behind together with official papers strewn on the floor and a couple of broken chairs. After a few days the excitement wore down. We tried to go over the Neva to watch the funeral of the victims on the Champ de Mars. I do believe there were less than ten. Then school resumed without prayers and without the religious ceremony mentioning the Imperial Family. One of the more liberal teachers became Director and we had a lecture about the great events we had witnessed and lived. But mathematics, history and other subjects continued to be taught in the same way and we soon settled into the pre-revolutionary routine. Some famous exiles returned and met with much fanfare, driven in the Tsar's Rolls. Breshko Breshkovskaya who had spent several decades in Siberia and the liberal Grand Duke who had been banished from the capital...both welcomed. It all sounds strange now and so very much like all one reads about the French Revolution. There were pictures of the Tsar chopping wood in his garden in Tsarskoe. Somehow the hate for him died down. At least in our spheres. There was much political discussion as most of the new ministers were lawyers and friends of Uncle Tolia or Father, or at least acquaintances. The Jivatovskis bought the Leuchtenberg Palace higher up on our boulevard but I don't believe they had time to move into it.

One day with Eddy Retzhold, Chaliapin's stepson who was my age and a close friend, we bicycled down the Kamenoostrovski nearly to the Troitski Bridge over the Neva and past the Kshessinskaya Palace which had been taken over by some extreme leftist Social Democrats who had returned from exile in

Switzerland. Everyone disapproved of the fact that they had been allowed to cross through Germany to neutral Denmark and then via Sweden and Finland to Petrograd. They were making daily speeches from the ornate wrought iron balcony of the rather pretentious, modern style palace. We stopped to watch with the rather large crowd which had gathered but did not push our way into the front lines as we were afraid of loosing our bicycles and the crowd, mostly factory workers, were a bit rough for such bourgeois protected kids. But I vividly remember the two small figures on the balcony. One in particular gesticulating wildly and nearly screaming. It was only much later that I realized that we had watched both Lenin and Trotsky.

There was less police in the streets and more rowdy beggars but on the whole the capital retained its old aspect. I believe it was about this time that walking along one of the side streets I saw a man come out of a dingy '*kabak*' (liquor store and bar if you want an approximate translation). He had a pint of vodka in a bottle in his hand and we crossed to the other side of the street to keep away from him. The next time I distinctly remember crossing a street for such a reason was some forty years later on New York's East side in the upper nineties. The man put the bottle into his mouth, bit hard, spat out the top with some blood and literally emptied the rest down his throat without gulping. He stood stock still and then suddenly fell like a log. I've never forgotten the sight.

Mother's car which had been requisitioned by the soldiers who had driven around Petrograd with their rifles on the ready and a couple lying comfortably on each wing, had been returned and even Father got her another smaller one. It was a coupe Renault exactly like the one which I used to watch every day drive by with Mme. Pokatilova sitting perched on the seat with her head alone visible through the door windows. She lived in a small stone house a few blocks away from us and years later I was to read about her and how she had

behaved rather heroically in the Legation Compound during the famous Boxer Rebellion in Peking.

Apparently good connections, necessary in Russia as everywhere else as I have learned, were still enjoyed by Father and old Kamenka because Father got some kind of mission to Sweden in spring 1917 and George, who had been working in the Red Cross, one to contact some P.O.W. organization in Stockholm. Misha was no longer in the Grand Duchess's organization. It had been dissolved and he was probably doing not much. Somehow the front was dissolving and more and more stories of fraternization appeared in the papers, much to the disgust of Lovey but probably less so to the soldiers themselves who realized the futility of the whole messy war and believed that the German army would follow their example and also collapse soon. We packed as we had usually done for summer vacations in Europe, no more and no less. I gave a cursory glance at my room where for the last five years I had been happy and carefree. The map of old Europe, so simple except for a rather messy mixture of colors in the Balkans, hung over my bed, the diminutive mahogany divan and table, the model of a tug, pretty large, that Mandelstamm had given me, my desk in the window, the frieze of English hunting scenes and my budding library with its three large volumes of Tolstoy, its Pouchkine, its *de luxe* edition of Griboyedoff's *Gore ot Ouma* (*Woe from Wit*), *Mein Reid* (*Mayne Reid* was a Scottish novelist) which Father liked to read to me and several volumes of the *Bibliothèque Rose*, including Mme. de Segur's books even the one which was censored by the Imperial Government because of the ridiculous personage of General Dourakine. All these familiar and dear sights I would miss for I was sure would be a few months. I patted my little black Chow, Oursik who had replaced the poor Aza after the Pargolovo accident as she had had to have rabies shots and hadn't survived. I made one last trip to the islands driving my little yellow straw cart

and Lazy boy. It was all so very normal that I hardly remember, can hardly picture those last days. I would so love to be able to dwell on every tiny detail. I visited Grandmother who was going to spend some weeks in the *Derevnia* with Auntie where Misha, Katia and Irene with her nurse would also be going, away from possible troubles expected in the capital that summer.

## **Leaving Russia for Exile**

### **Sweden**

We entrained at the Finland Station with the usual group to see us off and amid many kisses and hugs, rode away in our *wagons lits* to Torneo Haparanda and Stockholm where we had been but just over two years before. We passed the familiar stations where we used to go skiing cross country in winter, Terioki where Uncle Tolia had a villa and where we had spent several nice days, and reached Sweden uneventfully. The Grand Hotel had not changed but the war boom had allowed a new structure to be added behind, around a large inner court. The dining room had a view of the Royal Palace and was crowded in the way spy thrillers usually describe neutral cities in wartime. There was the British Embassy table in one of the large windows with several elegant young men dressed in civilian clothes, the table of Prince Koudacheff who had been able to salvage a really important part of a vast fortune, with the lovely Princess, the Prince, his son and daughter (who was to marry a young American Embassy attaché Armour and become a celebrated Ambassadors in her own right years after), then I believe, our table and then the one of the Austrian Hungarian embassy to which it was considered the rule to ignore as enemies. We didn't stay long and Father returned to Petrograd while we continued to Norway. In Christiania, as Oslo was then called, we boarded a small boat and went to the

island of Hanro in the fjord where we had rented a nice and rather primitive villa. We used to have our meals in the main building. There was no electricity and no indoor WC - just a few of cabins with holes and buckets which were emptied daily. I met a rather dirty minded kid who suggested we hide behind the cabins and when they were occupied open the lower latch through which the buckets were removed and tickle the protruding behinds with stinging nettles. I very soon reported my occupation to Lovey who was horrified and forbade it. There was a piano in the main building and Mother insisted that I continue my music with her. She had no patience at all and we had monumental rows. These sessions put an end to my musical exercises and even to my love of any kind of music for several years. There were a few sailing yachts and one of the younger Norwegian boys had a small one of his own on which he took me sailing. I remember particularly one afternoon which was quite rough and as we had stocked up on chocolate bars we were feeling desperately sick when we finally made port hours late. I have never been able to stand with pleasure the taste of rough chocolate since. I had arithmetic lessons and Russian with George who was an alumni of Tenisheff, in preparation for my return to school in autumn and must admit he did a pretty good job. Whether it justified the *vermeil* (*silver gilt*) cigarette box Mother had me give him and which I rediscovered with delight in Paris on his table over half a century later, I don't know, but that was the style of living. There were a few stores in the village and George arranged an athletic contest buying some nice first prizes - cuff links in enamel I had had my eye on for weeks. I had a good chance to win a couple of races but on the very day of the competition a boy arrived from Christiania and took all the first prizes, much to my disgust. For what reason a lanky tall Swedish student was hired to take care of me, I don't know. He supervised my futile effort at swimming and never taught me the



rudiments. We used to do a bit of fishing from boats anchored off shore and caught quite a number of sole.

It was easier to have money sent out of Russia to British subjects so the monthly remittances from Petrograd came to Lovey and we used to take an early motor boat from Hanko to Christiania and spend the day in town. I have a vague recollection of a white Royal Palace on the hill, gardens and shops but being 'blaze' as I was with memories not only of Petrograd but Paris, London and also Venice, I didn't really enjoy it. We stayed for the whole summer. Thinking back, I realize Father was with us but whether it was that he accompanied us on our arrival or came to fetch us in early autumn I don't know. We returned to Stockholm and prepared to go home to Russia. Father had arrived and we were already stocking up on things easier to find at the Nordiska Kompaniet than in the English '*Magazine*' (*Store*) as it was called, on the Nevski, with its poster for Pears Soap at the head of the staircase that let to the display room on the *bel-etage*. A serious disturbance had been quelled that July in Russia while we were in Hanko and even a Russian offensive had taken place. 'Everything' was coming along nicely. Suddenly there was news of an uprising in the capital, serious troubles and Father left hurriedly with the idea that we would follow as soon as things calmed down. Mother was anxious but not distraught. News became more and more ominous. Then Lovey traveled to the frontier to help Grandmother, Misha, Katia, baby Irene and nurse with formalities. It had been decided that it was unsafe to stay longer and that everyone had better sit it out in Sweden. More and more people arrived each day and our small group of Russian children in the children's dining room of the Grand Hotel grew daily. This was no longer a temporary vacation. This was something else. Not yet emigration, not yet final. Those hopes that were to be kept alive for a decade were still very real and based

on political upheavals in Russia - Iudenich 10 miles from Petrograd, nearly all the country still in the hands of the Government.

I was now to spend a couple of years that, in retrospect, appear not only crazy but even immoral. To understand them, and I don't think they should be excused, it must be realized that people were still living in a psychological atmosphere of pre World War I Europe. Bourgeois complacency, if you like it, but also with fundamental feelings for freedom, a feeling for which I retain a paranoiac nostalgia. Wars, and there were several, involved armies and governments. They were not necessarily national and large segments of the populations did not believe they were obliged to be involved. The Russo Japanese War was, as I gathered from talks of my elders, a completely futile, unpopular expedition in which the shady fringes of the Tsarist Court had got involved. Defeats were tragedies but not disasters for most of the populations and the majority in the provinces, in particular peasants, were fundamentally indifferent. Many revolutionaries, and quite a few, were admirable individuals, were convinced that by hastening the end of the Romanov autocracy Russia would benefit. With such a basic psychology, with the conviction that the revolt of the minority extremist Bolsheviks who had seized power in a tiny sector of the country, in the chaos of dwindling military operations and disintegration of the Imperial bureaucracy, the upheavals would be crushed very soon: in any case no later than immediately following the expected defeat of the Central Powers by the Allies and that the liberal democratic regime ushered in by the February Revolution would resume its enlightened reforms. So the times were but a transitory period to be spent as pleasantly as possible. In 1870 the Baron Horace de Gunzburg had, in the same spirit, taken all his family out of endangered Paris to Switzerland for a few months. So here we were, stranded in Stockholm in that unreal atmosphere that make the Memoirs of Coblenz during the French

Revolution so real to me, of a neutral country in peace awaiting the favorable developments both in the West where the U.S. was tipping the balance in favor of the Allies and in the East where different White generals not only held sway in most of the land but were staging continuous coups around the capital itself.

Of course, in retrospect, it was unreal and crazy to watch crowds in white ties and tails, ladies in *décolleté* covered with jewels, carousing in the flower filled inner court of the Grand Hotel for New Year; admiring in the elevator, the incredible thin and tiny celebrated Princess Dolly Radziwill with her escort the ex Kerenski Minister, dapper Tereschcheno, with so many pearls that even those of the Queen of Spain I admired later at the Golf in Biarritz, have left less of an impression.

Father had returned to Petrograd and news was scarce from the disturbed capital. Mother was anxious and worried but looking back, I would say that she was not unduly so. I started to take lessons to maintain the Tenisheff curriculum with a few tutors. Popitch was an interesting pedagogue with advanced educational ideas and was to found in Paris the Russian School which prospered for years. A teacher of Russian and mathematics who resembled Gogol and was fascinating in his lectures about Russian history and Boudikoff, an artist, painter, handsome and cultured who thrilled not only me by his comments on ancient art but also a group of elders in his conferences. We also took French.

Families started to arrive from Russia. A group of former aristocratic and bureaucratic elite fleeing what was in any case no longer the Empire and which all recognized would never revert to the pre revolutionary state. Great names of the past. There was a kind of *Free Masonry* which had always existed among the relatively small group of English governesses, which broke down any social barriers and in this hectic period more easily, of course,

than before. I played with the young Prince Belloselski (who had a beautiful American mother); Kreuz, a step grandson of the Grand Duke Paul (the son of the very attractive daughter of the beautiful Princess Paley he had married morganatically, by her first husband Pstelkorz). This lady was whispered to be the mistress of the Prince Koudacheff and lunched in the same dining room as he did with his family but at a separate small table with her *chevalier servant* (*knight*) Shoubin...a personality of pre war St. Petersburg. There were the Ungern Sternbergs, the Shouvaloffs and on the other hand a few Jewish families. The Handelsmans, the flashy Levinson-Levins and then one day the Mitka Rubinsteins arrived *en masse* (*in a body*). Mitka was a famous wheeler and dealer in Petrograd who had courted Rasputin with financial success and had been so flamboyantly successful that even the Imperial Regime had put him in jail. There was a story going around at the time that his wife, who had proudly pointed to an elaborate equipage at the Strelka (Point) on the Islands around Petro and the very elegant lady in diamonds and feathers as "*our mistress*", had cried tears as large as the pearls of her necklace. Rubenstein was a cousin of Trotsky and the story went that family ties were stronger than political connections and that he had received an exit permit. At the last moment his elder son who had an affair in Petro and did not want to leave started screaming that his mother had a fortune of jewels hidden on her person. The family was held up but later released to join the flow of people fleeing Russia. A few days after their arrival we children were discretely told by our governesses that we were to ignore the bright eyed roly poly boy, Serge, and not play with him. So there we were standing in a group in front of the Grand Hotel ready to go for a walk to Skansen and there was Serge alone watching us. Mitka suddenly dashed out of the revolving door and up to his son and screamed in his high pitched voice with impossible Jewish intonations, "Why don't you play with all those nice kids? Go and play with them

at once." Serge started to explain that we would have nothing to do with him but his father was mad and then and there slapped him hard across the face twice, turned on his heel and disappeared in the Hotel. We were all horror stricken and together with one of the others, I walked up to him and exchanged a few words, trying to act as if nothing had happened and then we all three walked back into the hall together heading for the men's room. There we left him, probably to the mercies of a somewhat mollified father who had watched our progress. Years later Mitka sampled prisons in many European countries. At a lavish party in Paris Chaliapin is supposed to have asked him across the table "Mitka you have sampled prisons in so many countries, which is it the most agreeable?" "The Russian ones" shot back unperturbed Mitka. The Serge in question later moved to New York and continued shady operations with gangsters in his father's tradition. Only he didn't realize that US gangsters had another code of conduct and his murder in his Fifth Avenue mansion remains a mystery to this day. He left his mother, sister in law, who was a Georgian Princess, and a few kids, very well off.

A few months after his return to Petrograd, Father, who had in the meantime, been elected the President of the Banker's Association, a dwindling group as more and more capitalists fled, had given up his Bank to the Bolsheviks and moved from our house which was conspicuous, to the Hotel Europa, was sick with the flu. He was trying desperately to salvage something for his family from his rapidly disintegrating fortune and also, as I understand it, ensure some kind of security for the bank's employees. As I have it, one evening, a former employee who had become an important official of the local Soviet visited him to say that the order for his arrest had been signed and he, the man, was to serve it on Father next morning accompanied by soldiers and take him to prison. He

added that Father had been personally kind and warmhearted and he felt it his moral duty to give him this advance notice.

Father used to say to me that this was perhaps the deepest moral satisfaction he had had in all that crazy period and many decades later when, in the *Wehrmacht Stalag*, a French comrade working at the *Kommandature* (*German High Command Military Headquarter*) came to warn me, as a prisoner of war after the 1940 collapse, that I was on the list of men to be transported that evening to Tannenberg in East Prussia to the work camps there, I remembered this incident in Father's life and felt a similar deep inner satisfaction. Father, with Uncle Tolia and Auntie Mania, left that same night for some place in the outskirts of the city and from there crossed the Gulf of Finland in a sleigh over the ice. They took the train for the Swedish border and as Father and Uncle had Persian diplomatic pouches they were treated even with politeness and Father returned in early 1918 to Stockholm.

After a while it was decided that life in the hotel was unsettling and a friend of Lucy and George, an admirer of Lucy's, Ruben, who had made a fortune and owned several houses, rented us a large apartment on the Blasienholmshaven, a few houses away from the Grand Hotel. It was a furnished one and Mother completed the installation buying quite a few things from local stores. We left most of the stuff behind, selling it probably at a fraction of its cost when we left in 1919 but the white and gold tea service, my *La Fontaine* prints and the clock on my desk as well as a few books still survive.

During our stay at the hotel the French tutor some of us had and my Russian teacher staged a couple of amateur performances. *Les Precieuses Ridicules* in what must have been atrocious French and *Genitba* (The Wedding) by Gogol. I played the roles of Mascarille and Kochkareff. We had elaborate costumes made by professional *costumiers* (*costume designers*) and apparently

my acting was adequate. The casts in both cases were a mixture of aristocratic refugees and Jewish ones. Something that would not have been possible under pre-revolutionary circumstances. We enjoyed the repetitions and had a nice time. Many, many years later we were living in Sevres with Mother and I was eking out a very meager living by working extremely hard at Laiteries Hauser, trudging daily with a heavy bag collecting receipts and checking the quality of products sold and how much the milk had been watered down, when one evening I got a phone call. The person calling introduced herself in Russian as Princess Lieve reminding me that we had know each other when she was Sophie Shouvaloff. She went on to say that some group of Russians headed by a Grand Duchess was putting on a benefit show and theatricals and would I, she remembered that I acted from Stockholm days, take a role. It all sounded quite crazy and unbelievably unreal under the circumstances. I declined.

The first winter in Stockholm was for me, as close to my Petro existence as to have made little difference. We walked with Lovey every day along the Strandwagen, meeting probably more acquaintances than even at home. The wife of Prince Eugene with her two pretty daughters always returned my salute with a smile and often a greeting. Once or twice they stopped to enquire about some trivial thing. I was thrilled. One of the girls became Queen of Denmark and the other was the tragic Queen of the Belgians who perished later in an auto accident, the mother of the present king, and who, had she lived, would have spared her country and dynasty much trouble. I occasionally rode in Skansen. The horse was hardly larger than Lazy Boy but I'll admit I enjoyed it much less. In winter we went to Salsobaden for skiing - not the elaborate sport of today but mostly cross country long runs followed occasionally by *ski-joring*(*a sport where a person is pulled on skis behind a horse carriage*) behind a horse cantering at good speed. I took the train to the Olympic stadium and as most

youngsters, remained on the rear platform which I often shared with the young Princes who had gotten on a few stops ahead of me at the palace. We exchanged a few words about the condition of the ice and so on. The boy, about my age, became Crown Prince and perished in an airplane accident years later which took the life of the actress Grace Moore also. I had English lessons with a Reverend who read Dickens with me and was a typical Victorian pompous, rather strict person and who served tea to Lovey when she used to come and fetch me.

When we moved to the apartment there was a suite for Lucy, George, baby Molly and nurse McCade; a room for Grandmother in the rear and mine next to hers but none for Lovey who settled in town for a while before she decided to return to Russia and rejoin her boy friend there. She would have an interesting life in those revolutionary days and I'll go into it later when I write of her visits to us in Paris in the mid twenties. When spring came we moved to Salstojbaden first and then it was decided that I would join Nika Jivatovski (they had arrived by then) who with Popitch was going on a hiking tour of the island of Gotland. Boundikoff was entrusted with my care. How ridiculous it all sounds when one realizes that we were both 13 by then and not only was Europe in the throes of the horrors of World War I but our own world was collapsing and tumbling down around us. But such was the mentality carried over from the stable bourgeois XIX century. We took a small steamer over night and arrived at Visby, the walled Hansa city on the island with its innumerable ruins of old churches and tiny little houses leaning on the ramparts. We did quite a bit of sightseeing and watched the sunset on the beach. The low city walls were covered with rose bushes pink in the afterglow and a grey Baltic just barely tinted with golden waves. It was incredibly lovely. Next day we set off on foot for the southern tip of the island where there was a bird refuge. By evening I was running a good fever so instead of the excursion I spent the next day in the soft warm bed in the spotless country



inn enjoying Boundikoff's rendition of Greek mythology. We returned to Visby and took a night steamer to Malmo where I spent a day with Lucy and George who were vacationing on a nearby beach. We then pushed on to Goreborg and took the steamer through the canal and some lakes, across all Sweden to Stockholm, slowly moving along the narrow canal and watching the country scenery float by, stopping at the locks and running wild for a few moments in the pine forests among the boulders. I believe even a kid at my age was able to appreciate the relaxation and quiet of those few days. The memory remains vivid.

The second winter, that of 1918/19 I studied harder and spent more and more time at my work really enjoying most of it, particularly the literature, history and languages. I was taking French from an interesting lady - Austrian, who had been governess of the Kamenka boys and had had to go to neutral Sweden shortly after war started. She also tutored me in German and did such a good job that to this day I am still pretty decent in German and have an acceptable pronunciation. She made Goethe and Schiller come alive and it was with her that I first made the acquaintance of the French mainly of the *Grand Siecle* (*Great Century*), which helped me get along when I started in the Lycee Janson in Paris in the spring of 1919.

Of course the Armistice lacked the enthusiasm and excitement that is linked with that day for most of those of my generation. Stockholm was relieved and gay, the English Crown Princess came to the service at the Embassy church to which I went but for us Russians this was still not the end. The Civil War was in full swing and although a wave of happy optimism swept over us all because we were so sure that the English in Mourmanks, the French now in Odessa and even the Americans in Vladivostock would swing the victory on the side of the White Generals. But there also was apprehension among Russian liberals like my parents and Jewish to boot because so many White Governments

were violent *pogromshchiki* (*people who participated in pogroms*). Still hope became more of a reality. We went over to Copenhagen with Father and Mother and I remember not only visiting Tivoli and enjoying the fair but a spectacular show, something Oriental and very lavish in the Russian Ballet style.

Stockholm was rather rapidly emptying itself. There were really so few possibilities in the quiet back waters of little neutral Sweden and so much was happening and due to happen in England and France. Misha and his family, by that time Serge had been born, but as they lived in an apartment in town they were never really part of our daily existence and memories of them are rather hazy, left. Lucy and George and baby followed and then by May 1919 Auntie Alia, who had passed through on her way to Paris in 1918, and as a permanent resident of that city together with Uncle Leo got us our visas. Grandmother, who was nearing eighty had broken her hip on a shopping expedition in the revolving door of the Nordiska Kompalet and was obliged to travel in a wheelchair. A returning French girl of nondescript background was hired to take care of her.

I went once again to the Olympic Stadium to watch an athletic event and saw the famous champion Nurmi run with mechanical precision in the 10 thousand meters - timing himself with technical skill that has now become the rule. We bid the staff - there were still three maids, cook and I think a Mediterranean butler but not the 13 of Petrograd, goodbye. The local French Ambassador, I believe it was Dejean, gave Father an envelope addressed to the Quai D'Orsay which helped us no end at the frontiers. I was very proud to be entrusted with the arrangements and speaking some Swedish, claim I did a decent job. We lost no luggage, missed no connections and Grandmother was carried or pushed from train to ship and ship to train. Again there was Christiania and Bergen. This time I had time to do some sightseeing and the remains of a Viking boat now meant much to me, already interested in history as I was. It was difficult

to believe that they could have crossed seas and even oceans in an open boat with but one sail, rowing for days. This time there was no storm in the North Sea and we had a good night on the Flying Scotsman. It was nice to see things I had known in childhood and I was as carefree and ready to enjoy existence as one can be at that age, oblivious of the clouds, heavy and ominous that were hanging over us and which, when they broke so few years later, changed my life. This was in many ways still a period between a past I loved and refused to admit had ended and a future that was even more excitingly uncertain than I had ever dreamed. A crazy euphoria which I can't even explain, much less justify when I think back.

### **London, Paris, Holidays in Europe**

When we reached London in the morning there was a whole family gathering to meet us; Misha and Katia, Uncle Tolia and Auntie Mania, Volodia Poliakoff with his wife who was a sister of Katia's. Volodia settled in London and became a rather well known reporter on the Times. He had connections all over Europe and early became a friend of Mussolini's. He was a brilliant man, erratic and with a vile temper. He had been very impressed at the inefficient handling of the extreme leftists by democracy in Russia and became an admirer of Mussolini's. After the March on Rome, he was considered for a while the great expert on Italian politics having numerous exclusive interviews with the Duce. Well, all these Russian gentlemen went into a glorious kissing orgy then and there on the platform. The effect on the then still very reserved, nearly Victorian British crowd was fantastic. We settled in the Alexandra Hotel and with the self same maids, the self same menu, it's unchanged decor of velvet and *anti macassars* ( *anti macassars are small clothes placed over the backs or arms of chairs*). This was still a setting I had known all my life and its temporary

character added to the feeling of being on prolonged vacation with a very strong illusion that 'home' still existed somewhere. Its details even more vivid in my mind as I dwelt on each of them.

The next day the Bilibin boy came with Miss Page to visit us. Miss Page was a dear English friend of Mother's, so close that she was even included in my nightly childish prayer coupled with Grandmother and closing the long list after what was probably considered by Lovey to be 'non compromising and interdenominational,' "God Bless". I had last seen Bilibin at home. He was the son of the famous Russian painter by that name and a niece of Miss Page's. We had played Red Indians in the garden and he had put his ear to the ground to listen to the hoof beats of the passing horses. Then I had heard that he had caught scarlet fever, became deaf and had gone to Europe for treatment. He was living in London, studying painting with Augustus John and lip reading with great facility. We went for a long walk in Hyde Park and although there was no problem of communication and he was easy to get along with I had a nervous fit that evening and nightmares galore.

We spent a few weeks in London. My days were taken up with sightseeing, The British Museum, the Victoria and Albert, the Tower, Windsor and Hampton Court. All this with another niece of Miss Pages. Every morning I rode in Rotten Row. It was not as elegant as I remembered it from pre-war days but there were still many women side-saddle, children followed by grooms and men in pinks and top hats. The riding was very tame, occasional canters. One day just about opposite the Hyde Park Hotel where Uncle and Auntie were staying, my horse bolted. I simply couldn't rein him in and was fast approaching the crossing just off Marble Arch where a file of baby carriages with nurses blocked the way. I spurred the damn horse on and we cleared a baby carriage to the horror not only of the nurse but of everyone else and then the beast stopped.

I was shaking like a leaf. A very distinguished old British, at least a Colonel, rode up and with the inimitable accent of his tribe, mumbled “Well ridden Sir.” I could hardly whisper, “Thank you, Sir,” but I did feel pretty elated.

We rented a car and drove down to Brighton where I was aghast by the Pavilion. I was taken to see the still running fabulous musical *Chu Chin* and remember vaguely it's simulated Oriental opulence and easy music. It had run all through the war and had been the favorite of all the men on 'Leave and has gone down in history as the musical of that 'last' war. I also saw a couple of Shakespeare performances – very old fashioned and with the memories of the Alexandrinka still very much alive, I wasn't impressed. Mother was in a hurry to get to Paris where Lucy and George had preceded us so we took off rather rapidly.

The crossing was rough and I felt miserable, as I would many times from then on. I think the only really calm crossing that I ever enjoyed was the one we made in 1969. Grandmother was up and about by then and traveled separately. She was met in Calais by Uncle Leo who had been obliged to evict his long time and very devoted mistress, Suzy, and send her to his country villa in Bois le Roi as Grandmother had decided to live in his apartment and ignored the lady who had been Uncle's permanent lady friend several years, remained his most devoted friend in decades to come, stood by him and hid him in her apartment when the Germans occupied Paris in 1940 and it was from her home that he was plucked after a street accident and disappeared in Drancy and later one of the extermination camps. We arrived at the Gare du Nord with the still usual array of some eight or ten trunks and I was left with Uncle to clear customs while the family went to the small apartment Auntie had rented for us Square Thiers in the XVI. The Custom's Official was friendly and after being told we had no contraband asked us to choose the one trunk we thought could be easily opened. I decided on the one which contained a few elaborate hats fixed to the

sides and would be easy to look through. Mother had told us as she drove away, that there was nothing, “*rien a déclarer*” (*nothing to declare*) but knowing her penchant for contraband, we were both a bit uneasy. Of course the first thing that appeared was a carton of English cigarettes Mother was bringing for George.

Proverbial French excitement to which I was not as yet accustomed mounted and to cut a long story short, we finally had to open all the trunks and at least 1000 cigarettes were found. Uncle abandoned them and I believe avoided paying the fine. We took a taxi to Square Thiers and again the familiar sights of Paris greeted my eyes. There were no longer the horse drawn cabs and the red, small Renault taxis, the Marne one, were scarce. The buildings were a bit seedy, unpainted and the white mansions around the Etoile were grey. The Arc still had a few sandbags I think and of course all was empty underneath. No *Soldat Inconnue* (*Unknown Soldier*) had yet been placed there and no eternal flame burned. By the time we arrived Mother was frantic and furious and still more so when she was told by Leo that the cigarettes had been given up.

We settled into what had been before the war, our usual schedule in Paris except that this time we visited more museums with Mother, and occasionally took the old *bateau mouche* (*passenger streamer*) to Bagatelle. I started even to ride in the morning Avenue des Accacias and attended some classes at the Lycee Janson. My insufficiency in French, the clannishness of the boys and the uninteresting dogmatic teachers, contrasting with the brilliant ones I had had at Tenisheff and my tutors, all disgusted me. I made efforts to keep up with little success.

Mother took me to the opera. Felia Litvinne, all 250 pounds of her, was singing Marguerite in *Faust* from a precariously swinging balcony. Costumes were old, the great gilded hall was seedy. I had memories not only of the brilliant Marinski but of the elegant Stockholm opera where we heard some

good local performances and risked ostracism to listen to two Wagner operas by the visiting Berlin company which had been impressive - except that the unbearably long *Parsifal* had bored me to tears. We went to a few shows on the boulevards. The great excitement was the Versailles Conference and I stood for hours on the Champs Elysees to watch the great and near great drive by. Then came the Victory Parade. Friends of Alia's, the Denisoffs, had rented an apartment on the Place de l'Etoile, nearly opposite the memorial in plaster of Paris, painted to resemble bronze that had been set up at the corner of the Champs Elysees. I vividly remember the two Marshals of France, Joffre in black with the white cross of the Russian order of St. George around his neck and Foch, riding side by side with the group of Headquarters Generals behind. Then the Allies detachments. The British with their characteristic gait, the Americans with their strange hats, the Belgians, Serbs and even a few Portuguese and my heart was heavy at the thought that the Russians who had suffered and fought so hard in the first crucial years, were not there. I felt bitter, cynically disillusioned and an outsider. A feeling I was to suffer so many many times in my life at many a parade in many a place. There wasn't the feeling of being part of it as in Saint Petersburg in 1913 but simply that of an interested spectator. Whatever inferiority complex I have suffered from all through my life first appeared consciously that day. The crowds applauded and roared. The roar swept up the Avenue de La Grande Armee and all around the Etoile as Petain in grey blue on his charger led the French Army in its Victory Parade with the tricolor proudly waving in the breeze. The *Poilus* (French Infantry), the *Chasseurs* (Light Infantry soldier), the colorful *Spahis* (Algerian native troopers) in their fez, the navy detachment in their dark blue with the red pompons like so many poppies, a few cannon but I don't remember any tanks although there must have been some. It lasted hours in the brilliant sun and although I have since witnessed

several 14th of July parades, none left me with such an impression of relief, joy and disappointment. It was, I'll admit, a shattering experience. Shortly thereafter we went to Mont Dore in Auvergne where Father was to take the cure for his asthma. It was there on the tennis court that I first met Tony Schumann and then his family who were to become my second family in France and were responsible to a large extent in extricating me from the Russian colony of exiles and making me as nearly French as I was to become until the Army in 1939 put a finishing touch to my real naturalization. The Auvergne scenery was lovely and I loved hiking in the mountains amid the pines or taking the *finiculaire* up to a nearby summit. We rented a car and made some lovely excursions to St. Nectaire, Clermont Ferrand, which I was to see again under very different circumstance - and many lovely mountain roads. A Spanish Grandee with one of the new Hispano Suizas was staying at the hotel and one day took me for a spin. He drove like mad and I had a great time. There was an attractive girl with her mother, a Princess Broglie, but with some stain on her coat of arms, on whom I developed a real crush. As we passed for Russian nabobs and Mother approved, we had long walks in the woods and danced in the evenings - made up for a costume ball in which I appeared as a Rajah with as many of Mother's jewels as I could collect - to the hotel manager's worry. There was a famous *cocotte* (*loose woman*) of the prewar era - Lilian Greuze - who did resemble the figure in Greuze's *Valse Brise* a bit and wore perhaps the largest diamond I have seen outside of the Crown Jewels in the Tower. We bid the Schumanns a fond *au revoir* (*farewell*) and drove to Royat near Clermont where Father was to take another cure. In the hotel there were a few famous guests - Mme. Adam, a small woman in dark dress and feathery hat, a celebrated author, and one of the surviving de Rezke brothers - the singer - in his Rolls Royce, flashy tweeds *a la Edouard VII* (*in the fashion of Edward VII*) and wavy hair which I believed to be a wig. It was boring as hell



and when Lucy and George joined us and we hired a Berliet *decapotable* (*convertible*) to take us to Biarritz, I was delighted. We stopped overnight in Carcassone and the ramparts, the medieval towers and great walls, the narrow streets with the over hanging houses thrilled me. Biarritz was back in its prewar swing and gay and exciting. We lived at the Regina which was less flashy than the Palais and I played a lot of tennis. I was linesman at several matches and once even umpired a men's double at which two Borotra brothers - the second died early - won a lopsided victory against some local pair. I loved the great breakers of the Grande Plage, the arcades of Bayonne and thoroughly enjoyed this vacation. We couldn't, like in days gone by, go over the border to San Sebastian as visas had become a problem but when the Queen of Spain, in her large brimmed hat, all in white with those innumerable necklaces of pearls, had tea at the Golf, we watched her awed and impressed. Back in Paris we settled for a while at the Hotel Vendome where Uncle Tolia had taken an apartment for us. It was wonderfully located and I was quite impressed and quite scared to be accosted by the numerous whores who frequented the Place Vendome. Mother contacted Mme. Schumann and she recommended that I try and go to the same *lycee* as her three boys - Carnot, on the Place Malesherbes and to this less pretentious *lycee* I was admitted with ease as my knowledge of foreign languages, my head start in mathematics and physics compensated for a somewhat insufficient knowledge of French. But I was really lucky as our French teacher was a Monsieur Font - a dandy, *boulevardier* (*frequenting of the boulevards*) who tinted his hair, wore flashy ties, very high collars and adored French poetry and infused us with his enthusiasm. I scored a bit with him very early because at an assignment, after sweating out several versions of recollections of nature which we had to write, I tore them all up and wrote about the old oak tree on the Islands in Saint Petersburg which was supposed to have been planted by Peter the Great.

I started my essay "*les voitures qui passent me couvrent de poussiere et je reve au passe prestigieux...*" (*the cars that pass by me cover me in dust and I dream of the prestigious past*) It was very high flown and romantic and got me not only a 19 (20 was for God) but established me once and for all as having a real literary future. It was to get me out of many a difficulty in the coming years.

After a relatively short stay at the Vendome, Mother found an elaborately furnished apartment on the Blvd. de la Tour Maubourg, in the fashionable and pleasant Faubourg St. Germain, not far from the Seine, the Chamber of Deputies and the old XVII century mansions. We had a large salon and dining room and hall - lots of Napoleon III furniture and tapestries to match. We lived in grand style as all Father's influential friends were sure of the success of the different invasions then being staged by the Allies and Wrangel's ultimate triumph. All this was to occur within six months and Father had also been promised that a check for over half a million dollars, of which a major part belonged to him, would be honored by the National City Bank. George had been set up in business - trucking - in a joint venture of Father's, old Kamenka's and Lazard Freres in Paris while Misha was in the management of a tobacco firm also sponsored by Lazard Brothers in London with Father and his Russian bank partner, Stifter's backing. At that time we discovered that there was a terrific backlog of orders for Rolls Royces in London and as Father had ordered one and made a down payment it came as an additional windfall when for 500 pounds, the *priority* was sold. We purchased a second hand Delaunay Belville six cylinder 1910 limousine with wicker network body and hired the chauffeur who had been driving us around in a hired car. Lucy and George were leading a very gay life and although Father preferred to have friends over to the apartment in the evenings, we went to several shows. I remember *Dede* with Maurice Chevalier which must have dated from that period and also the Ballets of Diaghileff -

*Sheherazade* in particular thrilled me and as Fokine was a client of Uncle Tolia', we got good tickets and I was introduced to some of the people around the ballet. I didn't understand at the time why the family was far from pleased and quite worried. This gives you an idea of the total innocence of a reasonably liberally educated boy of those days. Every week we used to have a group of kids over in the evening to play games and have rather lavish tea with cakes. Somewhere there is a poem I wrote for one of these occasions and the lines referring to Mummy speak of her as bubbling with fun and gaiety which she certainly was at that time. Practically all the children were friends of Petrogard days. Occasionally a Russian boy in my class at the Lycee Carnot but I hadn't yet cut ties with the so called Emigration. We all used to pile into the car afterwards and had a gay but totally innocent time, depositing the different children at their homes. Symbolically I must mention that one of the days when I asked Sia Givatovski to have their car also as we were numerous, she made some excuse and I learnt from Father that they had exhausted their funds and had had to retrench. It was the first inkling that things could change one day. As I had always thought of the Givatovskis as extremely wealthy and, although I didn't speak of it to anyone around me, the feeling of background security suddenly became uncertain. It needs so little to impress one and looking back I can hardly believe that such a ridiculous situation could have influenced my outlook. But it certainly did. I didn't show any change in my attitude and continued to enjoy the pleasant existence. As usual on January 2nd for Lucy's birthday we had a ball. There was an orchestra, *tzigane* (gypsy), from one of the night clubs and Misha came over from London. The supper was Russian style, lavish and the atmosphere gay with abandon. We had become quite friendly with the Schumann boys and their elder sister with her cousin, who was quite attractive, were invited. They came reluctantly before another ball but were more reluctant to leave as they both told

me years later. I mention this ball particularly because it was the last one my parents gave and although we had many gay and pleasant evenings in our different homes, nothing on this scale was ever done again.

I enjoyed school more and more. We had on the whole a group of rather good teachers and the boys were mostly nice and some even very bright. Two (Seydoux and Garnier) became Ambassadors, a couple Dufour, who had a Russian mother, and had lived in Petro. Also Le Page and of course Portu, successful doctors. There was a mixture of boys from modest and wealthy families - sons of concierges, Henry Lazard, Calmette (the son of the famous editor of the Figaro who had been shot by Mme. Caillaux, the wife of the statesman just before the outbreak of the war) who was a crazy 'playboy' - the term hadn't been invented then and came to class occasionally in a tux. He had one of the first Bugatis and was killed soon thereafter on the Rambuillet road where an old tree bore the marks of the crash for decades. There was an eccentric poet Communist Enoch, ugly as hell and brilliant, a pale dope addict who was kept by an aging *demi mondaine* (*a woman seeking pleasure contrary to more tradinal bourgeois society*). Some will reappear in theses pages and others boys I have forgotten. The old brick building has not changed. It was old then. The great glass covered ceilings over the two double decker halls which contained classrooms and were used for recreation and tennis resembled old style prisons as they appear on TV and the fixed benches with their desks and hollow ink stands dated back to the XIX century. In the first courtyard there was a monument to alumnae who had been killed in the war. A hideous example of the many ornate ones with roosters, laurel branches in bronze and statues of half draped *Republics* that sit proudly in the old village squares of all France. We used to laughingly speculate where they could place our names as the space was fully occupied and the idea that we had witnessed the last war in history was rapidly fading. I would

not say that we were an absolutely disciplined bunch. There was the time we punctured most of the lead inkwells so that the cripple janitor Poleon emptied his can of ink several times until he discovered that it had made puddles on the floor. We put tin foil into one of the main bulbs hanging from the ceiling - no fluorescent light and it was only recently that gaslight had been replaced - so that when lights went on in late afternoon, fuses blew, to be replaced and blown again until we were released from that particular class early. I also recollect the director - Canivinq, accompanying an inspector from the Ministry, both in frock coats and top hats, coming to assist at a class of English at which Pierre Schweitzer, with whom I had caught up by then, and myself were chosen at random to read in English. Both the gentlemen placed their hats decorously under their chairs and sat down. Canivinq's chair gave way and he crushed his topper to our delight. There was a general store at the entrance selling pencils, erasers and also candy. It was possible when one was late, to linger for an instant, buy a pencil, get a bill and rush breathlessly into class after roll call with proof and excuse for the delay. I was regularly late for classes and would dash up in a taxi waving to my friends scurrying to class. Most of my pocket money went that way and also for an enormous consumption of cakes in a confectionary on the corner of the Place Malesherbes. My first few months in class were a very successful period as I was very much ahead and got numerous *Tableaux d'Honneur* (*Honor Roll*) and was chosen candidate for the forthcoming *Concours General* (*General Competition between high schools*). In English, of course. Speaking of English, although my translations of English into French *Versions* (*Translations*) were correct, they usually lacked style because of my insufficient knowledge of French, but my translations of French into English - *Themes* - were perfectly polished productions and in the *exercices libres* my English essays were also perfect. There was a hardworking, pimply pale faced boy with pug nose, pale blue eyes,

clothes somewhat tight for his growing size and visibly coming from La Belle Jardinière or such cheap general store, who studied diligently and was a brilliant scholar. Poirrier was a poor boy, always second in English tests as I breezed easily through. Our teacher, Benassy, who resented my pronunciation and correction given in stage whisper when he made a mistake, once could not resist the temptation of making what was to become a historical statement at the end of a test. "*Premier...malheureusement, Berline*" (*First...unhappily, Berline*) to my disgust and the general glee.

Having come to this point in my reminiscences I realize that I have made a chronological error which means nothing now but confuses the further developments.

From the Vendome we didn't move to the Blvd. de la Tour Maubour but to a non descript apartment at 1 Avenue de l'Alma near the Etoile - typical of those rented then, and probably today, to wealthy expatriates. Louis XVI salon with a marble bust of Marie Antoinette on the marble mantelpiece, a few French prints, gilt armchairs and a few coffee tables, a grand piano, several bedrooms and when I think back, very inadequate plumbing, one old style bathroom with a long narrow tub perched on high legs, loin's paws. In winter of 1919 the Spanish flu was raging all over Europe and the weather was horrible. Popitch had appeared in Paris and in part to give him some means of earning money and on the occasion of a short holiday, we took a guided tour of the devastated regions of Northern France. I remember the impression of utter desolation they made in the grey rainy landscape. The horror of realizing that bodies were actually still rotting in the *tranches des baionettes* (*trenches of bayonets*) under the rusted points sticking out from the ground, the fallen down walls, the immense craters full of muddy water and the trenches like narrow rivulets. Practically empty of people and cattle, the villages were like some phantom scenery after the play is

ended. Reims with its ruined cathedral standing among the rubble reminded me of those gaunt Gothic ruins of Visby destroyed centuries earlier and never rebuilt. Grey stones, remnants of statuary and gaping holes where the famous windows used to be. I could not believe it would ever be repaired and in 1971 the refurbished cathedral impressed me more by the miracle of its reconstruction than by the intrinsic beauty of its structure. I came back with a bad cold which soon developed into the flu and was slowly recovering by January 18, 1920 when my parents gave a party for their wedding anniversary. I was allowed to get up and we danced wildly with an older girl, Ada Dekler, a niece of Stifter's which flattered me immensely. Supper was gay, lots of champagne and by next day I was running a fever of over 41 Centigrade. I remember that Mendelssohn, an expatriate Russian doctor who had been chief of the Russian hospital in Paris during the war that had been set up by Alma de Poliakoff, widow of one of Russia's wealthiest Jewish 'aristocrats', of whom much more later, called into consultation the famous Vidal, after whom some illness had been named. I remember having deeply impressed a doctor in the States when I mentioned that I had been treated by Vidal, a contemporary of Pasteur and one of his important either supporters or adversaries. Medical history should be able to clear that up. He was built like a bull - heavy set, with no neck and a square head, something like Churchill's, and his greying hair cut short in a brush manner, later to be called 'crew cut.' He was not optimistic as the crisis approached and there was little that could be done in those pre-penicillin and other miracle drug days. Mendelssohn hardly left my bedside but when the final crisis came, he was away for an hour. Father called the apothecary from downstairs and the man came in. I vividly remember feeling myself falling down into utter darkness, reminiscent of those nightmares of far off childhood on the Linia. Then suddenly I felt a violent slap on one cheek and then on the other and awoke for a moment. And there was this

unknown face scowling down at me and in the background, Father's. I fell back into blissful sleep and my slow recovery started then. I emerged some six inches taller, thin and pale.

The general railway strike was on and travel to the Midi had to be delayed so we went with Mother to Fontainebleau for a fortnight. We lived in the old fashioned Hotel d'Angleterre opposite the Palace gates in an apartment with walls and curtains of toile de Jouy, a narrow staircase and old rickety French provincial furniture. There was even a small canopy over my bed. I spent my mornings riding in the Fontainebleau Forest. It was cold but bracing and I pictured the many royal hunts which had taken place centuries before in those same woods. In the afternoons I would wander in the chateau - in the great halls with their heavy Empire furniture, the galleries with their Renaissance frescoes and was allowed into the then private apartments which had been occupied by the Pope when Napoleon had had him brought to France for his coronation and where the famous incident of the Emperor calling the Pontiff who was desperate '*tragediante*' (*tragedian*) and being called in turn '*comediante*' (*comedian*). There the Empire opulence had a more *intime* (*intimate*) character and the series of rooms looked nearly 'lived in'. It had been just a century before that they had held their illustrious prisoner and Napoleon had spent those last days before the famous *Adieux* and his departure for Elba. As soon as train traffic was resumed we went to Beaulieu, traveling by coach which to me, accustomed to the luxury of *wagons lits*, was an experience. We shared a compartment with a Mme. Meller, a famous *demi mondaine* ravishingly beautiful and her son who became, I believe, a journalist of some repute. I can still remember my surprise to see how attractive and *soignee* (*well got up, neat*) Madame Meller looked in early morning after a nearly sleepless night on the train. We reached Beaulieu in early spring and the mimosas were already in bloom and weather glorious. It was at



the Grand Hotel that we saw the Duke of Connaught of whom I mentioned something in previous pages.

Although the food was quite adequate Mother preferred to lunch at the Reserve, in the glass gallery overlooking the Mediterranean where the fare was outstanding and has remained so, I am told, to this day. It was a short walk from the hotel which we took every day after my tennis lesson and I enjoyed the *langoustes (spiny lobster)*, the bouillabaisse and other delicacies. Uncle Tolia was staying nearby on his yearly spree of gambling and one day came to lunch and then took me to Monte Carlo to buy what Mother thought was a much needed pair of tennis shoes. We arrived in the store to find the whole staff surrounding a pudgy, white faced young man with black grey hair and sunken eyes who was buying up the place. Our salesman whispered that it was the recently dethroned last Shah of Persia who was to make his mark on the inter-wars Paris night life and whom the father of the present Shah, a non commissioned officer from the ranks had recently dethroned in a nearly bloodless revolution. Uncle who had been lucky at the tables, bought me six pairs of shoes some of which were to last over the financial collapse of the family.

We drove over to Menton to visit the Kamenkas who were staying in one of the villas of Albert Kahn, later to become a foundation, just next to the one still occupied by the aging ex empress Eugenie. When she died not long afterwards, I went to watch her funeral at St. Honore d'Eylau, Place Victor Hugo. There was a large crowd and it seemed then strange for me to realize that this link with history which I loved, had disappeared. This Albert Kahn was a wheeler and dealer and a very successful one. One of his bright ideas which he sponsored some time later, was color movies which we went to watch in his house in Boulogne Sur Seine set in his famous oriental gardens and this in the early twenties, remember. When we returned to Paris I had fallen behind in my studies

and although I had tutoring from a few of the teachers and therefore all possible help and quite some favoritism of course, I was never able to catch up and slipped into becoming a very indifferent student. I continued to go to a few parties but mostly in the Russian émigré set with only an occasional one either at the Schumann's, at the Bernards and other cousins. That summer we returned to Mont Dore for Father's cure but made the trip by car, in the one I described. I was still suffering from the after effects of the flu and the doctors recommended the cure at La Bourboule some 10 miles from Mont Dore where I was driven by the chauffeur, Pierre, every morning and brought back by noon after the hot bath and drink of water. I don't believe it did me any good but I enjoyed the drive, particularly on the way out when Pierre would let me take the wheel. There were four speeds and the gear box required them to go straight in line. No way of going from third to first for example. The car was top heavy and swayed pretty much as soon as we reached 60 kil. (45 miles *per hour*).

We made many more excursions than the previous year, several with the Schumann boys and the required three weeks passed quickly. We then drove to Biarritz, again the Regina and the same round of sea bathing, tennis and occasional excursions into the Pyrenees. Lucy and George with Molly and nurse McCade who was due to leave, joined us and we drove back to Paris. That is when we settled in the Blvd. de la Tour Baubourg, and I got a phone call from Mme. Schumann reminding me that I had been invited to stay with them at La Mardelle, in the Sologne, just beyond Orleans near la Motte Beuvron and the village of Ides. I took the train down and joined the happy group of kids which would for years gather in September, while the elders went out daily for shoots. La Mardelle was an exceptionally good preserve and the day's bag was several hundred partridges and pheasants or rabbits. The house was very primitive and small, no electric light, one small green paneled salon and a narrow dining room

and one shower for everyone except the host and hostess. There used to be about six grown ups and over ten kids so it was quite a problem. Many eminent men of the French III Republic came down for the shoots, Gen. Iasson the then President's Military Aide, quite a few bankers and industrialists but their presence never interfered with our care free gay life, the long hikes with the guns, the games in the evenings and the drives to nearby chateau country or Bourges and Orleans to see the local cathedrals and museums. This was La Mardelle in its primitive state, before it had been enlarged, electrified and fitted with lovely antique paneling from the Lehman collection as well as lovely old prints and furniture. The house retained that charm and simplicity which made it an ideal place to spend the warm autumn months and long, candle lit evenings in an atmosphere of carefree gaiety which cast a glow on the lives of all those who vacationed there as children. The extraordinary easy hospitality which the Schumann parents, and Tante Alice in particular, gave to so many friends and cousins of her boys over the years made the lives of many many of us happier, cleaner inside and some much less restricted.

We were living, still, on a rather grand scale - with car etc. and when time permitted - I was studying rather hard. I went to parties in the Russian émigré group but except for the family and the Kamenkas, I began to gravitate towards the local French. That year the Pereires gave an afternoon party in their mansion on the Faubourg St. Honore and Mummy took me along. This was the first time that I visited the place which I was to become so familiar with in later years. The high gateway, the wide courtyard, the marble hall and the upsweep of the grand staircase with it's ornate III Empire balustrade - bronze and steel, with all it's curlicues, led up to an immense picture gallery that ran all the way from the Faubourg side to the grand salon on the Champs Elysees side. The walls were covered by immense pictures in heavy frames - all the First Prizes of the Salons

of 1850 to 1880. Except for an Ingres and perhaps a David they all looked dreadful and when I knew them better, the Pereire girls used to lament that their great grandfather had bought such horrors instead of Rembrandts as the Rothschilds had. I was very impressed by the lavish, palatial atmosphere and still numerous butlers in livery and with the dark eyed Fanny Pereire on whom I immediately developed a crush. As I had been brought to the party by Mummy and her cousin Beatrice, my credentials were duly established. French society - both Jewish and not - were a bit wary of Russian *émigrés* at that time as most of them boasted of Generals, Imperial Chamberlains or at least millionaires in their fanciful ancestry, with little justification.

Some other cousins of Mummy's, the Ashkenazys, lived in a large apartment on the Rive Gauche and although the two older girls were not at all attractive, the younger one was and the parties were gay, Russian style lavish and food and music was usually good. I liked very much to go and always had a grand time. At one of these parties, Vera - Mummy's cousin who was to become Mme. Valabregue, came with her Russian mother and as they were going on to another party and she lacked a *danseur*, (*dance partner*) much to the disgust of Madame Ashkenazy, they asked me to come along and I accepted. The other ball was the usual French affair - a reasonably good three piece orchestra, supper at round tables served around midnight with mostly cold meats and salads and an indifferent champagne topped by French *Bombe Glacee*. About 100 to 150 people would gather. The girls in light gowns, the mothers in dark satin ones with ropes of pearls, sitting on gilt chairs along the walls and chaperoning their offspring and the young men, mostly in white ties and tails, trying to corner the best dancers or their particular 'flirt' of the month. We waltzed, fox trotted and tangoed until around 2 or 3 a.m. These balls seem so very tame, so very futile and uninteresting looking back except that you could spend a whole evening with

the girl talking of god alone knows what. I was a pretty good dancer, particularly I waltzed well. I had a well cut *habit* (*evening dress*), was reasonably tall and better looking than the average French boy of that set, had perfect manners, spoke flawless English and had been introduced by the de Gunzburgs as belonging to the very restricted group of Russian Jewish acceptable society. I was popular.

A bit later I will resume descriptions of Paris balls of that period and try and bring back the few outstanding ones I attended.

I believe that was the year that Olga married Ignacio Bauer. Your grandmother and grandfather gave a big reception at the Ritz and as Mummy was there I was also invited. It was a very impressive affair in those white and gold salons of the Ritz which Proust was still frequenting occasionally. Your grandmother appreciated pretty women and had invited several. The dark ravishing Niussia Rotvand, Alexandra Soldatenkova - a real beauty whose husband had been during the war, the Russian Foreign Office representative at the *Stavka* - Head Quarters - of the Tsar and in the Empresses letters to him published later, there is a warning against his succumbing to the charms of the beautiful Soldatenkeva - which was her great glory. She had beautiful grey eyes, auburn hair and a good figure, except for rather heavy legs which she hid by always wearing floor length crinolines. Her entries into a room were always spectacular and she made a big hit in the 'cafe society' of the period with many admirers. At that particular evening I remember admiring her sitting on a small divan with the hostess's American cousin, Felix Warburg, who looked enthralled.

I was pretty young to be going out but Lucy and George were taking full advantage of that Scott Fitzgerald post-war crazy Paris and did take me once to the Jardin de Ma Soeur, the chic night club. We all drank champagne, except Auntie Lucy who wanted only to sip some sweet white Bordeaux which was

obtained for her with difficulty and probably at an exorbitant cost. The entertainment was a couple who danced ballroom dances. I still remember that although I adored ballet and looked down on such performances, I was stricken by the perfection of the movement and the ballet precision of each *pas (step)*. Fred and Adele Astaire were taking Paris by storm. After that we went to a Russian *boite (night club)* where the *tziganes* tried hard to resuscitate the atmosphere of that camp near Saint Petersburg where so many wild parties had ended in the ravishing girls running off to marry many a young member of the aristocracy after having been duly paid to for the clan. These girls were not promiscuous. Something they had in common with the real geishas of Japan which so few 'ugly Americans' could understand and which, so many decades later in Tokyo, came naturally to the boy who had been brought up on the tales of old Russia and often retold memories of an elder brother who had spent many a wild night with the *tziganes*. Heavy draperies, semi darkness, ice cold dry champagne, a nibble of caviar and the soft velvety sound of violins in those unforgettable, sad, nostalgic songs, the throaty voice of the now older women in their colorful costumes and many tinkling gold necklaces still held memories of Old Russia gone but so few months ago and perhaps to be recaptured one of these miraculous days. Of course I was too young to know them in Russia but those first years after the Revolution the *Boites Russes (Russian nightclubs)* still retained a shade of the atmosphere and when looking around one would see the distinguished profile of Grand Duke Dimitri next to the slim Gabrielle Chanel or the fantastically handsome couple of the Yussouppoffs (they did go out together) and the somewhat heavy set Grand Duchess Marie among the crowd of heavy drinking English Lords, pale elegant French Aristocrats, dark skinned South Americans and an occasional Kapurthala with a group of hangers on...it was unreal, it was of another epoch, another era but still real enough to be believable

and it is only today, here and now, that I realize that I was watching then the last rays of the Belle Epoque (period of peace and cultural productivity in West Europe before the outbreak of World War I) as Paris in the twenties was striving brilliantly to keep alive.

That year I went to the theater rather often. I won't vouch that all the shows I remember were seen that particular year but do believe that some performances of semi-historical interest were indeed. I distinctly remember a few. There was the musical *De-De* which was gay and lighthearted and in which the *jeune premier* (actor playing the lover's part) Maurice Chevalier first conquered me. He sang in that inimitable Parisian throaty voice of his and although a I now realize didn't give an outstanding performance, he somehow added to the atmosphere of the play a gaiety and charm which were to be his trademark over the coming years. I loved to listen to him and although it was mostly on records in the years to come, his appearance infallibly brought back my youthful enthusiasm. Many years later at the coming-out ball of Eliane Louis Dreyfus I can well remember how he jauntily pranced around and singing directly to the crowd clustered around him in the ballroom, created an atmosphere of intimacy and real gaiety. After the downfall of France, traveling in Savoy, I was in a compartment next to the one which Chevalier occupied with a group of friends and spent quite some time in the corridor watching through the glass door, Maurice animatedly gesturing and discussing with his friends. Then came the war and in the backwaters of San Jose - then a small Steinbeck type of California little town - in our bungalow, we listened nostalgically to old records of Chevalier and little Mike, who was about five would pipe up and squeak *Ma Pomme*. We knew nothing about his activities at the time and even if we had, we would have been probably less critical of his visits to Germany and the P.O.W. camps because memories of the strain of discouragement and miserable boredom that I had

suffered in mine were still fresh in my memory. Years later, when we were living in N.Y. he came, aged nearly eighty, to the Waldorf Astoria and I took Liz. We had our supper at a little table in the immense glittering dining room and there were quite a few tables occupied by elderly couples or fathers with much younger children to whom they were visibly introducing him, like I was, with some trepidation to a younger generation that hadn't know Chevalier. He shuffled out, hardly changed under heavy make-up, his straw hat at that jaunty angle which was his alone...Charlie Chaplin's bowler, Fred Astaire's top hat and Maurice' *canotier* (*straw hat, boater*). His voice was nearly gone but mercifully there was no amplifier to be held on it's winding cord to hamper him as he said, more than sang, a few numbers. His gestures were an *esquisse* (*sketch*) only of the elaborate antics of days gone by but their sober restraint somehow even added to the intimate charm that he radiated. His stage presence was unique and he dominated the immense crowd as he had dominated that bored group of guests at the Louis Dreyfus ball decades earlier. Liz was thrilled and I had a lump in my throat. Just before he died, he came to San Francisco to sign copies of his last book. We stood in line for nearly two hours and when I came up, I murmured "*Merci pour De De*" (*Thank you for De De*) and I do want to believe he heard and that his warm smile and handshake in that queue of over 6000 was a bit less mechanical.

The Kamenkas took Daria (I still call her Daisy as her governess, old Smitty used to) and me to the performance of *Athalie* with the so called Divine Sarah. The play was lavish in it's setting and I was in those years, under the influence of adulation that surrounded Racine and knew most of the lines by heart. Sarah sumptuously gowned was carried in on a golden throne. This did not actually clash with her role of the aging Athalie. Her golden voice was gone but her superb diction remained and I can still hear that sound, cracking at times like damp firewood, as each word of the famous "*c'est pendant l'horreur d'une*



*profonde nuit...*" (it is during the horror of a deep night) didn't come floating from the stage but seemed to be fired with deadly clarity at each one of us. Sarah Bernhardt's face looked more like a skeleton's, the cheek bones prominent and the deep set eyes like blazing holes ringed with mascara, but something was there, something this old woman in incredibly heavy make-up, able only to gesture immobilized on her throne, was able to project and I am happy that my memories of her are linked to Racine's masterpiece and not to one of those indifferent shows she was putting on at the time, not even Maurice Rostand's - that same Maurice who had helped years before, his cousin Mante, build sand castles on the beach of Hendaye for Lucy's baby brother.

Then there was a performance of Pavlova at the old Trocadero, now long gone, replaced by the cold elegance of the Chaillot Plaza overlooking the fountains as they cascade down to the Seine. It was in the gaudy elegance of the heavy dark imitation of a Mosque with its two brick, grim minarets pointing to the sky (Mother embroidered one of my birthday towels with a drawing of it made by Zina Mandelstam) that she was to perform. It was in late spring and my first Bachot was very close but Miss Page who was visiting us, talked Mother into letting me go. I had seen much Ballets Russes that year; had been enthralled by the sumptuous spectacle of *Sheherazade* with the author Fokine once in the principal role and then again with Idzikovski, I believe, inimitably swirling head down and feet straight up in the death throes. Had been deeply moved by *Svadebka* (*The Village Wedding*) which brought back so much of the Russia which was still so alive in me and *Petrouchka*. So the first part of *Gizelle*, although inimitable in its faery grace with a nearly transparent Pavlova floating across the stage impressed me but not more than some of the greatest moments of the famous ballerinas - Karsavina among them - that I had thrilled to. But then came the Swan. It is now over a century ago. I had seen some lovely

performances of the *Mort du Cygne*, (*Death of the Swan*) but there is a moment that still sends a shiver down my spine today. Pavlova had staggered in her dying scene, her broken body clinging with jerky and still exquisite movements to life which was so quickly running away. She turned her back on the public and moved to the depth of the stage, her back quivering and her thin, thin translucent arms hardly moving in their fibrillation and I held my breathe...this was probably one of the greatest moments I had ever experienced. Why compare it with Chaliapin's death scene or that unforgettable thrill that comes every time Artur Rubinstein attacks the (*Chopin*) *Polonaise Heroic*. That moment was and remains unique in my many many memories of great moments. As agnostic, I can imagine only that such must be the ecstasy of a believer.

I don't think that my failure that spring can be attributed to that evening and the ensuing misery of every day during the holidays interrupted by hours of study of mathematics and physics in the small hotel on the Normandy coast where my tutor Mlle. Chamie was staying. At least I do have the compensation and another unique memory. Just before we left for our vacation at Sarlabot where Mlle. Chamie was to come to teach me, I went to fetch her at the Curie Institute she was working at. She emerged with a small frail lady in black, talking animatedly. I stood hat in hand as she helped the lady towards a car. As they passed near me she said something and the lady turned, extended her hand to me and murmured "*avec Mlle Chamie vous passerez certainement, jeune homme.*" (*with the support of Miss Chamie you will certainly pass, young man.*) It was Madame Curie herself.

In spring 1920 when we returned to Avenue de l'Alma from Beaulieu Mother rented for a few months a nice large house in Boulogne, then a quiet shady suburb on the Avenue Victor Hugo. The house belonged to Elinor Glynn, the English author, and I remember one day a pre-war elaborate Rolls driving up

and an elderly lady, in a flowery Liberty silk dress with floppy hat, parasol, washed out blond hair and pasty countenance visiting her home to see how the Russians were treating it, probably. She gushed compliments to Mother and was surprised at the good English she was greeted by. This house was situated opposite the mansion of the Grand Duke Paul where he had lived in exile until the outbreak of the war with his wife Princess Paley, two daughters and a son. Now it was shuttered and slowly going to waste. It was later bought, I believe, by Gulbekian who never lived there and is now some kind of school in a bustling Paris residential district which has invaded Boulogne. Occasionally the Paley girls would come to pick up something and that reminded me of Tsarskoe in 1916 of a group of white dressed ladies of the Imperial family sipping tea on the terrace of a structure that reminded me of the Grand Hotel de Cabourg, so dear to Proust, in that 1910 Louis XVI style so familiar to Parisians. I have only vague recollections of the house except that there was a very pretentious Egyptian style dining room with grey colored *panneaux* of Egyptian style *fresques* (*frescos*) and that my bedroom let out to a small terrace at the end of which was an immense alcove and a couch covered with chintz - soft, with lots of pillows much better designed for day dreaming than study. That year my niece Irene had an operation. They were living now in Onslow Square having moved out of the house on Queens Gate Gardens they had shared with Katia's sister, her family headed by Volodia Poliakoff with whom Misha had monumental rows. The Poliakoff boy, a handsome dark haired boy of about my age had been packed off to some public school and there had fallen ill. Treated by the local village doctor his condition had deteriorated but his father decided to comply with English customs and standards, refused to interfere until Misha becoming alarmed, called the top specialist and drove down to the school with him only to find that they were too late, that the boy died. This sad circumstance and Misha's action behind

Volodia's back did nothing to smooth relations and they moved. Ira's appendicitis operation went off well and Mother, who had gone to London for the then critically dangerous operation spent hours sitting in the quiet seclusion of Onslow Square watching Ira play while she recuperated. An old retired British Colonel occasionally made polite conversation in the semi-private garden and when Mother was due to come home she sent Ira over to announce her departure to the gentleman. Hat in hand he approached Mother to wish her "*bon voyage*" and asked in real Victorian fashion, "And where, Madam, may I be so bold as to inquire where are you heading for?" When Mother answered 'Paris', the Colonel raised his eyebrows and murmured "that city of folly and vice?" I give this small anecdote to describe the atmosphere still to be found in the early twenties in the old fashioned English society - the Forsyte clan...

Every morning the fat chauffeur Pierre, used to drive me from Boulogne to the Porte Dauphine which had its real gates, open but still there. Gates from which the old fortifications still spread in both directions encircling the Paris that had withstood the 1870 siege. At each entry into Paris at that time there was a Custom booth as both gas and game as well as other food products were subjected to a tax upon entry into the city. So each time one drove out for an excursion one had to declare the amount of gas in the tank. This had to be measured with a wooden stick and immediately beyond the *barriere* (*railing, barrier*) in most places, were gas stations with their mountains of gallon tanks so that gas consumed during the drive could be replaced before returning. The little green ticket was duly handed to the green uniformed *douanier* (*customs official*) who so often looked like Van Gogh's 'Postman' as I would realize later on when I became familiar with that picture. One had to say "*pas d'excedent*" meaning that *no excess gas* over the quantity taken out was in the tank and I will admit that private cars were never checked. Molly used to love giving up these tickets

and piping up "*pas d'accident*" (*no accident*) to everyone's smiles. Now, so many decades later, Matthew loves to pay the tolls at the bridges and so it seems that children's natures remain unchanged adapting themselves to changed environment. Pierre used to allow me to drive the long, top heavy Delauney Belleville with its six cylinders encased in a hood which had the form of our familiar garbage cans which line the streets, particularly in New York, until all hours. I learnt to drive really in the Bois, deserted and quiet at those early hours. I had been allowed to sit on the chauffeur's lap and hold the steering wheel of the Marne Taxi type Renault we rented the summer of 1911 and in which we made that first drive from Paris to Normandy along the then dusty highway I was to know so well.

We spent but a few months in Boulogne which Mother loved and she often in later years wistfully used to say that existence would have been different if Father had bought that house even if it had been for the price of her diamonds. Life would have been possibly less hectic and in later years the immense increase in value of the property might, I don't believe it myself, have staved off the financial collapse which her extravagance triggered with the assistance of Father's unlimited softness and indulgence. I spent a few days in London with Misha and Katia at the time. Misha took me to all kinds of really London places including the dismal stuffy Royal Society Club to which he had had himself elected and of which he was inordinately proud. His monocle, bowler and white spats were very much in line with the way men were dressed in London streets then and disappearing from them at a much slower rate than from those in Paris. He had me fitted for a hat at Lock's, and a couple of suits on Saville Row where I had already had had a wardrobe tailored when we arrived from Sweden, much to the envy of Tony Schumann at the time and which I know triggered his love for good clothes which he wore so well in years to come. Then the Berlines came

for a short visit with *niania* (*nurse*) and governess and Serge was ordered *pomersikai nojkoi* (say thank you - making a verb out of the French word - with your foot) at which he would make some vague moment with his baby feet.

It was from Boulogne that we went for a second time to Mont Dore and returned to Paris to the Blvd. de la Tour Maubourg and it's still elaborate set-up for a winter of high living.

## **Exile**

### **Growing up in Paris, Social Life, High Society**

I was remembering all those balls, the *dansants* (*dancing parties*), dinner parties, picnics and other events that took up so much of my time in those years. The chronological sequence is lost and many will be forgotten, I'm sure, but in the *salade Russes* (*Russian salad, hotch potch*) of the following pages I hope to bring out that hectic gaiety, still clinging to the memories of the *Belle Epoque* lived by most of the older generation taking an active part in our existence.

One night recently I tried to count the number of balls I had been to during those years from the early twenties to the mid thirties and lost count after fifty, of course. The usual routine I have outlined with the orchestra - size and quality varying considerably; the buffets - more or less lavish; the midnight supper - more or less sumptuous; the champagne - dryer and colder or sweeter and warmer and the decor - itself more or less attractive. Two costume balls stand out particularly in my memory. They date around the very early twenties because later on I couldn't afford any disguises nor did I feel like such elaborate dressing up unless it was in the free and easy atmosphere of La Mardelle where we had to concoct all the costume out of odds and ends at very short notice with a maximum limit on expenses. I do remember one of the first when I really shocked the elders

in a *Scheherazade* costume wearing only silk pajama pants and a turban of some heavy damask I had found lying around. That year Jean Herman, a childhood friend of Tony's and a distant relative, painted himself red with regular paint and even after hours of scrubbing remained an unholy dark pink for several weeks. Madame Schumann was very fearful of blood poisoning. There was also the time when Madeleine, Lise and the Sane Jean and myself got some geese wings at the village, concocted very elaborate pink breasts, the girls using them as bras and we stuffing our with rags and helmeted and draped sheets, descended the stairs to the strains of the *Walkyrie*. Pierre Bacharach, a talented architect friend of Poulot's and whom we all liked very much, fixed an enormous turban over his shoulders and drew an amusing face on his stomach coming out an oriental dwarf. The Godet couple - she was the pretty Pitchoun ex Gaillard who later married a textile millionaire from the North and he was the part owner of the well known sports newspaper *l'Auto' Nord* - dressed up as Napoleon and Josephine, reversing the roles. But their costumes cost more than the accepted limit.

For my first costume ball in Paris I dressed up in the uniform of a Russian Officer of the Alexander I period – dark green, with cocked hat, real Russian Imperial army gilt buttons picked up at a second hand store. I still had enough hair to have it curled and with my white tight fitting pants made quite a good appearance. The party was at Christian Lazards on the Blvd. Saint Germain and as the parents were unpretentious and friendly the atmosphere was easy and gay. Just a few weeks ago, it is now 1972, we spoke of it with Claude Lazard at a wine tasting event in Golden Gate Park and it certainly seemed unreal to both of us – much more so to me who had long ago dropped all that social life. The apartment was decorated as a *guingette* (*small suburban tavern*) of the XIX century with lots of *lilas* (*lilacs*) and Japanese lanterns. I was very much in love with Fanny who looked lovely in her white muslin crinoline but she was taken

up with some other boy, perhaps Robert Wallich already, whom she was to marry as her first husband and who became a very eminent doctor, treated Mother with admirable skill and devotion and later me also and finally, as Wallis in New York, married to one of the Esmond girls, cousins of Mummy's cousins, made quite a hit. I was peeved and turned to the prettiest girl there. Mlle. Laroche, the striking brunette daughter of the French Ambassador to Warsaw, who in white with purple turban, a plunging *decoltee* and much make-up and some fabulous family jewels came as the celebrated Paiva, the *demi mondaine* of the Second Empire who built herself the *hotel particulier* (town house) on the Champs Elysees which became the Travelers. She finished as a Prussian Princess in an imitation Versailles somewhere in the marshes of East Prussia. She was radiant that evening and lived up to her role and we had a grand time.

One of the fabulously wealthy Poliakovs, Daniel, had married a striking Austrian beauty, Alma de Reiss, and lived, before the war, in an enormous *hotel particulier* on the Avenue.... She had appropriately lavish jewels. As head of the Russian Hospital for wounded in Paris during the war was made a *Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur*, a significant honor for women in those days. By the time I met her, she was still a very striking grey haired beauty and after selling her immense house, had settled in Passy in a smaller one where she gave the best parties I have ever been to in Paris, mixing Russian emigres from Grand Dukes to striking *demi-mondaines* (women supported by wealthy lovers) and artists with the Paris diplomatic corps and chic French who were attracted by the eminence of her long time friend Pierre de Fouquieres, the *Chef du Protocole*, (Chief of Protocol) always distinguished, erect, immaculate and draped in an unbelievably long chain of miniature orders of which he had a fantastic collection unless he was due at some official function when he would put on some of the plaques and actual crosses reminding me of Uncle Illarion in old



times. Early after our arrival Alma, with whom we were very friendly for many many reasons, one of them because she had had an affair with my brother and also was a favorite of all the older gentlemen, my father and your great grandfather included, arranged a benefit performance for the White Russians at the *Cirque d'Hiver. (Winter Circus)* In the intermission young couples sold programs or something. Special sectors of the circus were allotted to each couple. I was in attendance on Eliane Louis Dreyfus who was very attractive, vivacious and had an extremely pretty frock I still remember. A heavily embroidered *fourreau (tight fitting dress)* with a lovely band of warm dark sable edging the skirt, which, of course, hardly showed her ankles. Among those who were there who you possibly know were Daria Kamenka and also Pierre Schweitzer. Of course we didn't stick to the rules and rushed all over the circus selling to wealthy box holders and finally landed with the largest sum collected, much to the disgust of all the other couples, Daria remembering her disappointment to this very day.

The same Alma gave a costume ball in her home. Lucy went as Colombine in a multicolored dress in a diamond design, carried in by four attendants in white silk shirts and *collant (tight fitting)* pants of the same material. The four were Izraztsoff, the attache to the still existing Russian Embassy, George, Fedia (Dima's father) and myself. There were quite a few lavish costumes. The Persian Ambassador attired simply in his official outfit was spectacular. As usual champagne was excellent and plentiful and the supper, prepared by Korniloff, a former chef to some Grand Duke and later owner of the best Russian restaurant in Paris, always catered to all her parties.

Later on there were the famous *Bal de l'Opera* for White Russians organized by Mlle. Maklakoff, the sister of the last Russian Ambassador from the Provisional Government and his hostess. The first one was a fabulous affair. All the Opera draped in different tones of purple and lilac and all the women dressed

in those same hues. Men, except for an extravagant few, were in white ties and tails and the ensemble was breathtakingly beautiful. Some of the older women had only mauve wigs and conventional black dresses but what with the overall color scheme and scintillating jewels, it was an unforgettable sight. I believe it was the following year that the theme was Oriental. A friend of mine at the Carnot Lycee, Jean Paul Garnier (his mother was a well known journalist on foreign affairs and reputed to be the mistress of Jules Cambon, the famous ambassador, also was rumored to be Jean Paul's father) had obtained two tickets. He very honestly told me that I was the friend who showed up best and also one of the very few who had an *habit (evening dress suit)* so he asked me along hoping, and he was right that I would be able to visit a couple of boxes and thus get a better view of the show. Costumes this time were still more lavish and fantastic but the overall effect was less spectacular. I believe that the extremely handsome youngest Prince of Kapurthala was there with his new bride, stepping out of some ancient Persian print, delicate features, immense eyes and tiny nose and she, still daintier and white of skin. They wore, both, silver lame costumes. His turban glistened with real jewels and her sari hid long necklaces of softly glowing pearls. A couple out of fairyland. The Maharajah himself, tall, greying, in a dark *kaftan* with his diamond encrusted orders blazing, presided in a box. Probably such sights still exist somewhere and when I read of the Iranian festivities I imagine them, possibly more easily because the descriptions blend with my memories of the grand staircase of the Opera, with it's gorgeously uniformed *Gardes Republicaines* in their glistening helmets and dark horses tails trailing over their shoulders at rigid attention and all those lovely women in their exotic headdresses, rich kimonos or flowing silken robes slowly ascending the marble steps under the immense chandeliers.

I well remember one of the first Periere balls. We had dined gaily, *par petites tables*, (*at small tables*) in the lovely paneled rooms of Alfred's private suite high up overlooking the dark gardens bathed in what then was brilliant glow of the distant Concord, brightly lit by many many shining lamp posts shedding their soft lights on the Ville Lumiere. We trooped down to the first floor all ablaze and full of large baskets of flowers that had come from the Chateau d'Armainvilliers. The great salons were empty still, the parquets shiny and the numerous liveried footmen flanking the gleaming white buffets. The orchestra was half hidden by greenery. A very uncomfortable blushing Englishman who had taken the invitation *a la lettre* (*literally*) and come around 10 was standing awkwardly alone somewhat subdued. To gain some countenance he lit a cigarette. Old Mr. Gustave Periere in his outmoded black frock coat of another age, shuffled over and in a stentorian voice thundered "*Je suis Monsieur Periere et on ne fume pas dans le salon.*" (*I am Mr. Periere and one doesn't smoke in the drawing room*) At Fanny's orders I rushed over and rescued the poor guy and brought him into our small group which was chatting excitedly awaiting the flow of guests.

All these balls, as I look back on them, were very much alike. The particular ones that stand out differed by incidents, the setting or some special person or group present. In the case of the several Periere balls, it was certainly the impressive salons that had seen so many glittering receptions of the Second Empire that somehow awed even us, the younger generation. How could one forget, when one watched the lovely Margot Periere or Fanny floating by in white tulle that those same mirrors set among the heavy gold frames of the elaborate pictures and immense Chinese vases had witnessed the waltzing of the great beauties of that Paris and the ones of the *Belle Epoque*.

This sense of living recent history and a way of life that was fast dying even in France, was stronger in me than in my French friends because I had seen and lived the collapse of Imperial Russia. I well remember my first visit to their chateau near Gretz, Armainvilliers, set in a park of some 14000 acres with great trees, winding well swept roads, great vistas of lawns and dotted with innumerable pavilions and chalets, many set on the banks of artificial streams or little lakes. The private station, itself an elaborate brick and plaster building large enough to be a hunting lodge, was no longer in use and the old fashioned Renaults, shiny with innumerable brass lanterns, the little crystal vases inside always full of flowers and the old coachmen, turned chauffeurs, in elaborate liveries would drive you for several miles to the heavy gates, then another half a dozen miles to the chateau itself. It was an enormous building some 300 yards long, three stories high in imitation Renaissance with such a profusion of statues, columns, bronze candelabra or animals in the niches of the brick walls, at the end of the curlicued balustrades of the terraces and everywhere on the high gabled roofs, that one was stupefied. If the Paris Opera seems heavily ornate, Armainvilliers was ever more so, the ultimate dream and fantasy of an architect of the 1850s, given a free hand to equal or surpass, if possible, Ferrieres of the Rothschilds. Life size roebuck flanked the sweeping staircases of each wing and if I remember correctly, more elaborate groups, the middle one. On one of our expeditions to the chateau with a group of the younger generation for a picnic on the lawn in early spring, we paid Fanny's younger brother Philippe 5 francs to remain astride one of those statues while we wandered away for an hour or so, just to get rid of the insufferable kid. The heavy doors would be opened by a young liveried footman and one ascended a wide marble stairway to the immensely wide, deeply carpeted first floor gallery running the whole 300 feet of the building with arrangements of potted palms at each end and statues of

painted Negroes in gilt robes holding torches with ornate glass globes brilliantly gas lit in the evenings. Shortly after World War I an estimate for putting electricity into the structure was made but the family fortune had dwindled by then and the half million francs (\$100,000.00) was considered too extravagant. The stairs continued up to a somewhat less elaborate second floor and the immense bedroom with its heavy brocade drapes of dark red, its great bed and ornate mahogany furniture upholstered in deep red velvet. The bathroom was in a hardly smaller room and stood on a platform enshrined in a carved mahogany chest. The fixtures polished silver plated gleamed above wide marble basins. The whole effect awe-inspiring. One would gather in the deepening dusk in one of the great salons, walls covered with Victorian landscapes, stuffed armchairs of dark wood, tables with elaborate gas or oil lamps casting a subdued light that hardly reached the dark corners or high ceilings. Antimacassars on the divans, photos of celebrities from Balkan Kings and Italian tenors, in heavy silver frames and albums heavily leather bound like some medieval volume, full of half faded photos of ladies in crinolines and groups of stiff family groups with boys in sailor suits and girls in white starched frocks, so very much like the innumerable illustrations of most Royal memoirs of the XIX century. One gathered around the table and spoke in subdued voices until the old butler, with white sideburns holding aloft a heavy silver candelabra ablaze with many candles would announce "*Madame est servie*") (*Madame is served*). A procession was preceded by the old man, very dignified and tottering under the weight of the heavy load would wind its way from one dimly lit somber salon through another to the great dining hall. The walls were of ornate Spanish leather with heavy high backed chairs to match and so much silver among the candelabra on the table that the colorful flower arrangements were hardly able to enliven the scene. The food was simple but excellent and the wines from the unbelievable cellar containing

over 250,000 bottles, extraordinarily good. This reminds me of an incident during one of those early spring picnics I mentioned before. Philippe had been told to instruct the housekeeper to bring some unlabeled bottles of Bordeaux from a certain section of the cellar for our lunch on trestles and benches in the park. A few bottles duly appeared carried carefully by the ancient and one of us began to empty them into the coarse glasses we were using. I gulped down half of mine suddenly realizing that I was tasting the best, most softly velvety Bordeaux I had sampled for ages. I turned to Georges Helbronner, a rather insipid snobbish young man who, for some reason unknown to me always tried to be most friendly with me, and asked him his opinion. It then developed that we had been given, by mistake, one of the choicest wines of the one of France's greatest *caves* of the day.

After so      On my first weekend at Armainvilliers I had what I believe to be a classical adventure. me desultory chit chat the old ladies, the young ones had slowly left preceded by candelabra bearing footmen and we wandered out onto the terrace. It was all very poetical in the moonlight. I was given a candle and slowly made my way to my room. I had carefully noted the number. The great house was dark and quiet. On the first floor a single lamp shed indecisive light. I undressed and suddenly realized that, with restraint, had not asked either Fanny or her sister Manise where the WC was. So with candlestick in hand and candle flickering dangerously, I made my way to the only one I knew, on the ground floor near one of the halls, past the silent Negro holding his unlighted torch. As I emerged a draft suddenly blew the candle out and I realized with horror that I hadn't taken any matches. I slowly, in utter darkness, made my way up to the second floor. Roaming about the house around midnight was not something I was willing to explain. It would have been misconstrued very certainly. I reached what I thought was my door and tried it. It was locked and a

female voice inquired “*Qui est la?*” (*Who is there?*) So I beat a hasty retreat. I moved along the endless corridor and breathed a sigh of relief as opening a door I recognized in the faint moonlight, my room. I was making my way to the bed when I heard movements in the corridor. I accelerated and placing one foot on a small oriental rug found myself skidding along over the polished parquet. I desperately tried to save myself, caught the tray with glass, water pitcher and small crystal flask of rose water that was, Victorian style, placed on every night table and sent them flying into my bed. I heard a knock and sliding into the wet, sugary mess under the sheets, steadied my voice to say “*Entrez.*” (*Come in*) There was the butler in long night shirt with his liveried frock coat only, holding a flickering candlestick. He looked at me and inquired politely, “*Monsieur desire quelque chose?*” (*Does the Gentleman need something?*) I mumbled “*Non merci*” (*No thank you*) and he retired. I did my best to repair the mess but many years later in one of our long intimate friendly talks Manise once asked me what was the mystery of my first night of that week-end which had intrigued the servant's hall and most of the family.

I know that this is not the time and place for a detailed account of Manise's life but in this rambling collection of events, I might as well inset it here.

The Perieres were a fabulous wealthy Jewish family of the Napoleon III period who had created many of the French railways. The second generation did nothing. The old gentleman simply settling a million francs on each of his illegitimate children as they came along and the story has it that there were quite a few. By the time I met them, the third generation, Gustave Periere was a tottering old man quite gaga, who loved to pinch his pretty grand daughters and their friends. His tiny diaphanous wife with a *faux-air* (*pretence*) of Queen Alexandra, kept up appearances. Alfred, their eldest son , except for a fabulous

library of many thousand beautifully bound books which lined all the walls of the apartment they occupied on the top floor of the immense *hotel particulier* in Paris, did nothing but run after any and all skirts he could find. Marie, his wife, was a beautiful, dainty small creature with exquisite finely chiseled features, soft dark hair and lovely eyes, a Gomez from Bayonne of Spanish Jewish aristocracy dating back to the expulsion of the XV century. Their eldest daughter, Fanny, with whom I was very much in love, was also small, dark haired, vivacious and dainty. She married Wallich, the doctor, then divorced, had several affairs and married Maurice Petit with whom she was very happy until she died very suddenly around 1969. The second one was probably less attractive, her skin had a slightly olive tinge and she had auburn hair, a very good figure and enormous sex appeal. She fell madly in love with a rather dashing and probably handsome Jules Koenigswarter who was to marry one heiress, become a widower early and then marry a crazy English Rothschild and after World War II, leaving her in New York to get into innumerable scandals with Negro lovers, dope and so forth, become French Ambassador to Mexico. Jules dropped Manise as soon as her reduced dowry was indicated and she then switched to Tony Schumann who was ugly as Hell, charming, appealing and courted her as he did many girls with gusto. By the time all was ready for a formal engagement Tony had taken up with his first and only real love, Eliane Louis Dreyfus. So poor Manise's second romance came to nothing. All the family, including I believe, the younger brother, Philippe, had turned rabidly Catholic, much to the glee of the official church of course. Manise came under the influence of a very handsome and brilliantly intelligent Dominican priest. I have always felt that he held a deep sexual attraction for the poor unbalanced girl. Be it as it may, Manise decided to leave the world and enter Holy Orders. It was a difficult decision and we had become close friends after I had been turned down by her sister and she by my best friend.



I used to call on her late afternoons and we had innumerable long talks in her room under the gaze of her favorite plush monkey. My romantically inclined nature gave these visits a Cyrano undercurrent. I was attracted by her but somehow all the difficulties of past connections, slightly hysterical Catholicism and decaying grandeur of the family were too much for me. I did my best to talk her out of entering a contemplative order and locking herself away for good but she opted for the *Petites Soeurs des Pauvres* (*Little Sisters of the Poor*) which would enable her to do some useful work in the outside world. I visited her several times while she was a novice in the convent somewhere up on Montmartre and we talked of her with Daria, who was one of her few friends. Then came the elaborate ceremony of her taking vows. It was moving for the few friends who had come, remembering her as the charming girl, floating easily among the gaiety of Paris society. I had the feeling of watching the pinning of a frail butterfly when the tall handsome priest in the white robes of his order with gestures more reminiscent of the Ballets Russes than religious ceremonies, brought the 'Bride of Christ' to the altar. The General of the Dominicans, a swarthy elderly man came himself to preside at the ceremony for such an illustrious convert and made a speech. I have somewhere a brochure of the ceremony which her then brother-in-law Wallich had prepared with a photo of Manise in her habit. Some time afterward the priest was transferred, of all places, to Norway and Manise had herself transferred to a tiny Dominican convent in Oslo. When the Germans came the local Mother Superior kicked her out of the convent to avoid any possible problems because of her prominent Jewish name and she found herself stranded, alone in occupied Norway. As I understand it, she met and fell in love with a brilliant handsome young Norwegian very prominent in the underground. The couple was very active until they had to flee. She reached Sweden, he was caught and tortured to death. Prominent Petainiste friends of Manise in Paris, the

Goudchaux, also converted but for several generations and belonging to that small group which held its breath and sat out all the Occupation while friends and relatives went to their deaths in camps, offered to send her money but Manise refused and worked, first as a charwoman and then teaching French all through the war in Stockholm, miserable, alone, having lost her faith, her friends, her country. By this time Germany was defeated. She had somehow come through and was living a bit more decently. (She showed me a small modest watch she had been able to buy with her savings, she who was originally destined to inherit a large part of the fabulous Periere jewels). She refused her family's offer of repatriation and spent quite some time tending children in the rehabilitation camps established in neutral countries, in this case Sweden, to care for orphans found abandoned in the camps. She returned to Paris and in the mid fifties when we went there to my pleasure and surprise I found her married to a member of our clan, Poulot's closest friend Pierre Bacharach, the son of a Jewish Colonel of the French Army who had survived the nightmare of the Dreyfus case. Pierre was a very nice, simple boy with little money but lots of charm and talent as an architect. They were living in a somewhat unconventional Bohemian style in a nice apartment in one of the many still remaining Periere houses on the Faubourg St. Honore, just opposite the mansion Manise had been born in. They seemed happy and we, coming from the unsophisticated atmosphere of the Western United States, found them refreshing after finding so much unchanged and so many of our friends reverted to the old ways of life slamming the door on what had happened - an unavoidable human trait which makes life bearable. I hoped that after all those experiences Manise had, at last, reached a haven but in 1969 I learned that they had divorced. Pierre brought his new wife, an energetic, neat *Parisienne* to meet us and we heard that Manise had retired, alone, to a country house where she was living with innumerable animals, two adopted Asian

orphans and a daughter in law with a baby while her son was in the army, seeing no one, tinkering with antiques. One of the craziest existences I have ever known.

The following morning at Armainvilliers on the immense terrace, we came upon an old great aunt of the girls, a Mme. Javal, sitting in her armchair attended by an equally old maid. I was introduced and she looked me over critically. “*Ah, un danseur de Fanny*” (*Oh, a dancing partner of Fanny's*) she said not unkindly. She was in that year, which must have been 1922 or 23, some 105 years old and I, already historically impressed, looked at this shriveled old lady who had been born under Louis XVIII, seen two more kings and an emperor go. I don't believe the crazy story that Philippe Periere told me that when she was a small girl she had an ancient *nounou* (*nurse*) who had been in the service of Madame du Barry, Louis XV last mistress, as a young girl. But the dates do make it possible. Remember Louis XV not XVI – that same king who as a boy had been picked up by Peter the Great. History is a very recent thing. And when one reaches our ages it is strange to realize how far back one can personally reach.

I continued to study, not very much, and enjoy life as much as I could. I used to go out at least once a week. I still had well cut tails and I used to wear a small orchid buttonhole. It was not to imitate Oscar Wilde but because Fanny liked those flowers and would accept mine. As our crowd would say “one knows whether Fanny Periere has arrived or not by seeing if the smiling Berline still has his orchid buttonhole”. Crazy.

For some reason I remember well the Gustave Goldet ball. They lived still on the Avenue Henri Martin overlooking the Bois but were moving. All the furniture had been moved. The rooms were bare and much bigger than we had known them; the walls with their patches of brighter color where pictures had hung, light bulbs hanging loose from the ceiling, some folding chairs and rickety tables like a *guingette*. The atmosphere was less restrained and somehow

easier and after dancing all night we went out on the balcony and watched the sunrise over the Bois. There was also the much more elaborate and *guinde* affair at the other Goldets where I had too much champagne and realizing that I might make a fool of myself tottered up to Fedia and asked him if he thought I should leave. He had seen my brother quite often in that state in Petersburg and told me to go home. I ceremoniously bid the hostess good-bye and came out into the fresh air to find a long row of cars. One seemed familiar and I got in and went to sleep. When the doorman opened the door for Madame Jean Stern and Simone some time later, they found me fast asleep on the back seat. Madame Stern, who was quite a character didn't bat an eye and got in and had me delivered home, never mentioning the incident. This brings me to perhaps the most glamorous period of my Parisian existence. My flirtation with Simone Stern, was a wealthy heiress, not unattractive but with an immense nose, good figure, excellent legs and a good dancer. She was intelligent and amusing and if I hadn't been terribly afraid of all that money, as I heartlessly told her on one of our last meetings, I might have tried to marry her. I was a penniless emigre not chic enough for the Rothschild connected Sterns and at the height of my infatuation with Simone, I did regret that Father's promotion to Active Counselor of State occurred in 1917 depriving us of the possibility to add a 'de' to our name which would have helped under the circumstances. At which ball I met Simone I don't know but shortly thereafter we both caught measles and had unending telephone talks while recovering. This was before the telephone craze for teenagers and was in a way an innovation. My good English and manners conquered Simone's governess and I saw very much of her for quite a while. She took me to the Stern hotel on the Faubourg, opposite the Elysee, to meet the old grandmother. This imposing small lady had been a friend of the Queen of Romania who was an author under the name of Carmen Sylva, and had herself, under the pseudonym Maria Star, written

some books. Jean Stern, Simone's father, was to follow in his mother's footsteps and wrote a few biographies. They lived in a rather elaborate *hotel particulier* on the Rue Octave Feuillet and had a rambling English country house style place – Blue Star Cottage, I think it was called, in Chantilly where Jean Stern's large racing stables were located. He was one of the prominent owners of his day and his widow carried on the Stern colors – white with blue stars and black cap – after the War until her death in the late sixties. I'll admit I loved the easy luxury of Chantilly and the Paris salons and enjoyed it all immensely. Simone had a bachelor uncle – Lambert – who lived in Paris in an apartment completely furnished in the Modern Style of the Metro then quite ostracized but now, as I understand it, back in favor with Lalique Tiffany lamps and vases, Puvis paintings and lily styled furniture. It was Simone who gave a small dinner inviting only her attractive friends – the word leaked out and caused much wrath. The Baronne Robert de Rothschild, the pretty Van Heukolum girl who had something of a well tended cow about her, Margot Periere, dazzling and a few others. It was there that the Baronne R. broke her pearl necklace and a frantic search for the missing pearls left one missing. As Maxime Solinski, a handsome boy whose mother was a *demi mondaine* of the *Belle Epoque*, and myself were the only 'outsiders' and penniless to boot, I suggested they search us much to Jean Stern's horror. But I was relieved when Simone phoned the next day to say Cartier had missed a pearl while restringing the necklace in a hurry.

It was Simone who had me invited to the Edouard de Rothschild ball in the Hotel Talleyrand on the Place de la Concorde. Which has been copied on the other side of the Gabriel Palaces for the US Embassy. I was terribly impressed as I walked up the wide staircase realizing that Tsar Alexander I had walked these same steps when he stayed there during the Russian occupation of Paris after Napoleon's defeat. I can still remember the profusion of flowering plants and the

innumerable vases of roses, orchids and other fabulous flowers from Ferriere hothouses. At the top of the stairs stood Germaine de Rothschild, very beautiful, all in white with a tiara and necklace of diamonds which took my breath away. She had a bearing of her own and was one of the few really distinguished *grande dames* (*great ladies*) of the French Jewish Society of my day. It was impressive to wander through all the heavily gilt salons and spy on the walls the Vermeers, the Rembrandts that were familiar even to inartistic me. This was long long before I married Mummy who, through her father's sister is related to this Germaine. But it was a relief to find Philippe de Gunzburg with whom I was already quite friendly, roaming the same rooms as I and also quite lost in this ultra chic crowd. The music was excellent and the supper really lavish and as I was quite taken by Simone at the time, I really enjoyed the evening. Now, every time I pass under the windows of the great house, I remember that evening - the bright lights on the heavy chandeliers, the tapestries, the exquisite furniture, the great masterpieces and the elegant crowd - the women in light colored dresses ablaze with jewels with the black and white penguin style background of men. The footmen in knee britches passed around ice cold really good champagne and the supper was outstandingly good. The *pieces montees* (*set piece*) ice cream at each table reminded me of a few elaborate dinners which our chef Andre, Lovey's boyfriend, would make in Saint Petersburg and which I would find again at the many many elaborate receptions in Tokyo in the sixties.

Simone also took me to a very exclusive and chic party at the Estevez - South Americans who mixed French society, the Diplomatic Corps with the Jewish International set and rich Americans, in their small elegant hotel of the Villa Said.

Not long after wards I had to leave for Marseilles for one of my first jobs. By the time I came back I was involved in other problems, work and

financial crises on a scale I had not yet realized and that period had come to a definite close.

Our group was composed of several either pretty or amusing girls and a few young men who have since gained some notoriety. There was among others, the slim, dark haired and hideously ugly Philippe d'Erlanger who reminded me of a frog and has since become a brilliant historian, elegant and distinguished Herve Alphan of *Camelot* fame, several young Rothschilds, also the sons of eminent Frenchmen like Fernand Gregh, the writer and a couple of Millerand boys, sons of the French President.

These balls and parties were occasionally interspersed with the theater. I had little money to spend after the first years but by then I had had the opportunity of seeing quite a few of the Ballets of Monte Carlo productions and some of the dancers, like Lifar, who were just beginning the would gain fame later on. There was the Bernstein and Bataille plays on the Boulevards, witty, cynical, amusing and so well acted. There were also the de Flers and Caillavet comedies, in particular *Les Vignes du Seigneur (The Vineyards of the Lord)* and quite a few musicals: *Phi-Phi* and the *Weissen Roessl (White Horse Inn)* with all its Viennese charm. I remember *Mon Pere Avait Raison (My Father was Right)* in which the two Guitrys played together again after a long estrangement. The older one heavy set and a bit exaggerated in his acting, Sasha full of amusing effervescence and exquisitely pretty Yvonne Printemps with her fabulous pearls. Louis Jouvet in *Volpone* and the unforgettable apparition of Valentine Teissier in the amusing classical comedy *La Carrosse du Saint Sacrement (The Coach of Saint Sacrement)* in the little Colombier which she carried away when she bounced onto the stage in her gorgeous costume and pranced around with Champagne-like bubbly gaiety. Ubu Roi, the Piterffs with their heavy Slavic accents and great acting. At the Comedie Francaise de Max who later moved to

the Boulevards and Cecile Sorel, Briand's great love, who declaimed French classics at the Comedie with pathos and allure to move to the Folies de Paris and after sailing down the brilliantly illuminated stairs among a bevy of gorgeous naked girls in feathers and *brilliants*, (*diamonds*) herself no longer that young but with a panache all her own to inquire "*l'ai je bien descendue?*" (*Did I descend it well?*) There was the visit of the Moscow Art Theater still with the old actors of the Stanislavsky Theckhof period. Unforgettable *Cherry Orchard* with the final monologue of Kachalof to the empty house still echoing in my memory. Chaliapin's performance in *Boris Goudonov* again and the *Khovanshchina* and a special one at the Opera where Feodor Ivanovich sang in the short act of *Boris* at the frontier inn as the unforgettable grotesque monk – both ridiculous and pitiful. A short scene of perfect acting and unbelievably distinct diction with the great voice still supporting a pantomime I can only compare with Chaplin's greatest moments.

A Viennese troupe came to give *La Chauve Souris* (*The Bald Mouse*) and their waltzes carried one away with their dash and abandon. I loved and admired Gabirelle Dorziat who carried herself on the stage with the same aristocratic distinction that she did, as Countess de Zogheb in real life. Marthe Regnier, Simone Simon, a young and dashing *jeune* premier Charles Boyer, the witty Boucher, the elegant Fernand Gravey and young Fresnay, tough Gabin, funny fat Pauley, Bernard in *l'Aiglon*, so much better than the several women I saw in that unbelievably romantic part which remains for all it's cliches a favorite and still thrills me to this day. There was Ida Rubinstein – no dancer but unforgettable with her snake like grace in *Scheherazade*. She was the aunt of the very pretty Riri Mendelssohn, daughter of our doctor and friend, who with her dark eyes, silky black hair resembled an Italian Renaissance Madonna and although married to the Duc de Crussol, was taken by the Gestapo during the war



and died in a camp. Her mother had died in the bombardment of a church in Paris in World War I where she had gone to a concert. The War, our War, was still closely linked to so many of us, to so much of our lives that it remained a reality, alive and ever present until it was doomed forever by the Second one.

There was a Russian couple with two daughters, the Denisoffs, who were great friends of Auntie Alia and Uncle Koka. Denisoff had sold his Siberian Bank of St. Petersburg during the hazy unreal period between the First and Bolshevik Revolutions to a British group for several million sterling (at \$7.00 to the pound, then) and who were living it up in Paris. It was from their apartment that I had watched the Victory Parade of 1919. They had an apartment on the Place des Etats Unis and their parties were really fabulous. I was able to return many a favor by getting my French friends invited to these evenings. Kouznetsova would sing, then Russian Choirs and Cossacks would dance, their lithe bodies swirling madly among the elaborate furnishing, their mouths full of daggers which they would throw across the ballroom to stick out vertically from the inlaid parquets. I do remember once sitting in the front row of guests, cross legged on the floor and watching such a dagger hit a square of ebony, slide off and glide towards us while we watched, transfixed, the cold gleaming steel blade swish towards us, thankfully heaving a sigh of relief as it caught the thin gilt leg of a Louis XVI chair and embedded itself deeply in the wood.

A heavy set man sat Buddha like on his chair watching it all silently through half closed eyes. It was Bunin, the author who was to get a Nobel Prize in later years. Actors, painters like Jakovleff, many, many ex prominent Russians were there and enjoyed the lavish buffet with it's inexhaustible supply of caviar and ice cold champagne to wet one's appetite before the supper of smoked salmon, great *pirogi* (*dumplings of leavened dough*) heavy with butter and endless succulent dishes reminiscent of all those Russian banquets familiar to

readers of Russian literature. Here was something a bit wild that one never found at the brilliant balls of French and International society in Paris in those days, a faint memory of the abandon of the great feasts in the Russia that was dying at that very moment a thousand miles away, dying in the horrors of blood baths and cruelty reminiscent of the Tartars, which for some ridiculous reason, we, born in the twilight of the XIX century believed a thing of the past, only.

The Henri de Rothschilds moved from their mansion in the Faubourg St. Honore which was to become the elegant cosmopolitan Cercle Interallie, to the newly refurbished Muette Palace in it's great garden and gave a ball to inaugurate it. I vaguely remember the great hall, the tapestries and the enormous crowd because they had mixed his actor friends with politicians, authors, writers, the Jewish clan, the international set. Croisset was pointed out to me; there was Borotra and Lacoste, some famous faces and names...Andre de Fouquieres, Lady Mendel, lots of Rothschilds from both sides of the Channel, the stocky Grand Duke Boris with his wife and the shady entourage of Rashevskis, her brother and his American heiress wife. Probably a restricted group, somewhere upstairs was really enjoying itself as we did at the big Periere balls, but the crush was too great. The Baronne Henri was the famous local one (Vienna had one of it's own) who like Catherine the Great, liked handsome young men and as many as possible regardless of their status. There was an anecdote that a dashing South American diplomat *en panne (breakdown)* with his Hispano had sat down on the side of the road and democratically invited his chauffeur to sit down alongside. He took out his silver cigarette case from Cartier, a gift of the Baronne after a two week intrigue and offered one to the chauffeur who blandly took a gold replica from his liveried jacket without a word. She was not tall like her cousin the Baronne Robert, nor did she have the distinction of the Baronne Eduoard, but she was very

elegant, dressed well, if a bit eccentrically and was full of vim and vigor and lively humor. I danced with her once, but that is absolutely all.

We had in Paris, and still have to this day (1972) an old friend, now over 80, Paul Berstene. His father, Berstein, is mentioned in the memoir of your grandfather Alexandre de Gunzburg as a *combattant (veteran)* of the 1870 War. This man apparently worked for the Baron Horace de G. in Russia in the 80s and had a son and daughter, I think out of wedlock. Paul, frankified, his name to Berstene and as a well behaved, handsome young Frenchman was popular in St. P. His first job at which he was a great success was given to him by my father at the bank and he worshiped Father. When World War I came along he was mobilized and went to France as I understand it, as financial arrangements were most generous. He was an admirer of Lucy's, of course, and remained until her death a devoted friend of my mother's, visiting her regularly. Paul, was and is a successful businessman in Paris and after an unfortunate marriage with the daughter of his long time mistress who made him promise to marry the girl on her own deathbed, he had lady friends galore but remained a bachelor until I believe, very recently. He is one of the really old friends of by gone days that remain and who has known six generations of our family, also about as many of the de Gunzburg one. His sister was an artist and married a Russian man who was then one of the thousand or so famous white Russian taxi drivers that were such a characteristic part of Paris between the wars.

They were all 'former generals' who spoke atrocious French and learned to know Paris only after a quarter of a century. But they had charming manners and were great favorites with the French public. I believe this image was somewhat tarnished by the Occupation during which their knowledge of German, as it was taught in all schools in Russia, made them often either willingly or unwillingly assistants to the invader. This sister of Paul's used to have parties in her atelier

with quite a few interesting artistic people and Paul invited me once. It was, for me, a rather unusual experience as there was much music, informal drinking and singing. A French Senator friend of Paul's was very much taken by me and I had some trouble in getting rid of him so what with other parties *en masse (in a crowd)* , my many friends and real work I didn't come back to the soirees which, in their somewhat Bohemian way were, as I now realize, very much worth it. At this particular one a friend of Paul's sister brought her *ami (lover)* – an old protector in the approved XIX century Paris style. He was due at some official function and had come in full uniform with all his orders. Admiral Guepratte, the French Commander of the squadron that took part in the fateful Gallipoli campaign was tall, distinguished, white haired. I was very impressed by this meeting a historical figure.

As I have already mentioned 1921 saw the whole family united for the summer in Normandy, specifically in Sarlabot, a chateau which my parents had rented. It was a typically XIX century structure with enough rooms to harbor all of us including the Misha family which came over from England. I was not having as nice and gay time as I might have as after failing my Bachot, I was preparing for a repeat performance in October. I do remember being taken along to lunch in Deauville during the *Grande Semaine*. There was the usual *Tout Paris (Paris High Society)* with the heavy bulk of the turbaned Maharaja of Patiala dominating any group he might be in and the diminutive Cornuchete, then called *le Roi de Deauville (the King of Deauville)* who owned the place. Some of the famous actresses were there and Mistinguet was showing quite a bit of her incomparable legs, although much less than on the stage of the Casino de Paris. The bag yachts from England and even the USA were in the harbor as well as a few French ones. This was still the time of the great white, gleaming ocean going steam yachts of Morgan, a Rothschild or two, and the dark hull of the three

masted Westminster yachts. An atmosphere of pre-war elegance, gaudy but with some decorum reigned. That year on the terrace of the Grand Hotel de Cabourg I ran into a pale young man dressed elaborately in white flannels as befit the time and place and as he seemed familiar went up to him and politely asked if he hadn't met. We determined that we were both in the Lycee Carnot and would be in the same class the following year, and my life long friendship with Pierre began.

I started on another year of parties and amusements but working a bit harder as I knew I absolutely had to pass that my *Bachot* (exam given at the end of French high school) that autumn as financial worries were becoming more acute. Grandmother had died and been buried in Batignolle and at the ceremony I had had a fit of uncontrollable laughter and had been walked away by a shocked Misha who was a stickler for form.

I don't remember who got me a ticket to the Chambre des Deputes but I do remember that I was impressed by an eloquent speech of a wildly gesticulating Viviani with a decidedly Southern accent. He was one of the most eloquent speakers of that period. That year I made many trips for week-ends to la Mardelle. The place was still its old rustic self without electricity and hardly adequate plumbing and bath facilities but it had that atmosphere of youthful gay friendliness that made it a unique spot, something all who ever spent vacations there during that period always remember with nostalgia. It must have been during that autumn, possibly a year later, that Pierre came down and amused us all with his antics. I can still remember that when Madeleine Bernard, a cousin of the Schumann boys who together with her husband Yves de la Grandiere were to become, after our marriage, probably our closest friends, found a bat in her room and screamed. We tried in vain to get it out and Pierre, in his pajamas, holding a lighted candle in each hand executed a take off on the Ballets Russes, to attract the bat by the flickering lights, out through the open window.

The balls continued - in the lavish David Weill mansion in Neuilly with the old gentleman keeping a watchful eye on his collection of *tabatieres* (*snuff boxes*). At the de Gonnetts - the girls were beautiful - where Fanny had had me invited as she was related to them through the Mirs - he an imposing Senator who had been a friend of MacMahon and lived in the Periere mansion on the Faubourg. I particularly remember that ball because I arrived, bowed to the hostess and leaned against the wall awaiting the arrival of Fanny and her mother. I knew few people, certainly no one well enough to invite to dance. After a while the younger de Gonnet girl came up and asked if I was Alec Berline the *danseur* of Fanny, because one of her great aunts had suddenly died and in the proper manner, this incident came back vividly when I was reading Proust, wasn't coming. I offered to go away but we danced and had a very gay time and it was one of the nicer balls I remember probably because I felt less restraint among a crowd who didn't know me and there was less risk of being ostracized for unseemly behavior if I had too much champagne. Except for a very few houses where I knew the hosts really well I had this inferiority complex and unnecessary fear of being ejected as an outsider for after all this was a society I was crashing, to which I didn't belong by family ties as most of the crowd did. Many years later when I got my caricature from an album Georges Andre Lazare Weiler, the brother of the famous international financier Louis, had made of our *bande(gang)* did I idiotically feel that I had arrived. This George Andre was an excellent magician. Quite a few years later we were going, about ten of us, by train to Ville d'Avray for a garden party at the Ombrages of the Louis Dreyfus, he took all our tickets and as we disembarked handed them to the stationmaster. They duly disappeared and a violent argument ensued until George accused the spluttering man of having them in his own pocket from which he proceeded to pick them out

one by one. This kind of joke, kid stuff but immensely amusing we thought, can perhaps better than long descriptions give the atmosphere.

There was, in Paris, a Russian Jewish business man named Gordon who had retained, or made, quite some money by the time most of the emigration was stone broke. They gave a very lavish ball with quite a sprinkling of foreigners, most of whom would not have come 'in the old days.' There was the amusing, dark, not unattractive Nemiroskaya, who was to make a name for herself with her novel *David Golder* and the actual prototype of the heroine, a cousin of Pierre's, vivacious, pretty blond Brailowskaya who later committed suicide on her father's grave. There was also Alex Ponisowski, the brother of Lucie Leon, a sister in law of my sister in law Katia, Misha's wife, a close friend of mine whom I liked very much. He was English educated and we mostly met at more intimate family gatherings but here we were both in white ties and tails looking down a bit on our hosts in approved snobbish manner. We danced a lot and because of old Russian social standing I was courted by the hosts which only added to my enjoyment. The supper during which *tziganes* played, was really good and the champagne excellent. The talk at our table was particularly gay and probably this was due to Irene Nemirowski and the attraction of the Brailowski girl. We had much, much too much champagne and were all rather drunk. As we filed out around 3AM I was following Alec who was stiffly advancing towards our hostess to kiss her hand and thank her. He bowed low over her ample *decollete* duly paved with scintillating diamonds, then turned white. I visualized the catastrophe of his losing his balance and collapsing into it and made a quick step forward. Catching hold of the tails of his coat I pulled him erect and pushed him, myself bowed, kissed whatever space I could find among the many rings and catching hold of Alec held him erect as we made our very decorous exit. I think Daria Kamenka was at that ball but I do know that several decades later

when I was spending a week end near Santos in Brazil, at the Campos estate of the local Otis McAllister man, Dantas, and delighted to have such a break in what was a rather difficult assignment, in the company of the ravishing Dantas daughter, the talk came up of the nearby Lara estate, a show place, the hostess a French beauty young Lara had brought back from Paris much to the scandal of local society. We all drove out to the great estate with its race horse stables, workmen's village, servants galore and imposing high ceilinged rooms. Senora Lara was charming. She looked familiar and stared at me. We started to talk, in French, of Paris and her slight, very slight accent awoke memories. She spoke of the Volga and her uncle's fleet of passenger steamers. I said I had known the Pollack brothers as I was connected with the Kamenkas. Then recognition came and the former Miss Hishina, who was the younger sister of that Princess Hohenlohe who got into French literature as *Ariane, Jeune Fille Russe (Ariane, a Russian Young Lady)* (A popular novel of the twenties) started to reminisce about the many parties at the Kamenkas and the Gordon ball. Much had happened since then and Alex had perished. I will later explain how. And there in the midst of the Brazilian *pampa* some three decades later, we excitedly exchanged memories totally ignoring the rest of the company. Such crazy encounters were to occur several times in my not uneventful existence.

Father had been to the States on the Aquitania. We had traveled to Cherbourg to see him off with Mother and hurried back to Paris as I wanted to go to a dance at the Cercle Hoche the following day and we didn't go aboard to see him safely installed in his elaborate suite. I always regretted in later years, to have missed the unique opportunity to see first hand, the fabled Cunard liner, and also, until 1941, to have missed the chance of visiting the States in style. That summer I joined Lucy in Hendaye where she was staying alone with Molly until just at the end of my visit when George joined us. The Horace Pourtales were



staying there with their children and the old Southern Belle, as I now realize, Mrs. Hitt, Margaret's mother. There was also the large Romanones clan. He was the Spanish Talleyrand with a limp and a vast fortune, made probably in the same manner. His son in law, the Duque de Pastrana and his son Augustin both paid violent court to Lucy. We made many excursions with the Pourtales and with Augustin in tow also. The Romanones Rolls passed the Spanish frontier without control and we were thus able, stateless refugees with impossible *Nansen Passports* (*passports for refugees after World War I*) to go to San Sebastien to the bullfights or to the Casino in it or in the British Consul's car who was also staying in Hendaye. I remember finding myself with some surprise on a faded photo of a group welcoming Madame Poincare in 1913 hanging in the big hall of the hotel. On one of our joint excursions I was driving Lucy's Citroen coupe, sitting outside, she was with Augustin inside with Molly. A large dog suddenly loomed in front of me and I, fearing the shock of running it over, swerved into a stack of dead branches on the side of the road. Alas, there was a heavy thick trunk hidden under them and we settled high up on it with a crash. Augustin going actually through the leather ceiling. We were all late getting back packed in the Pourtales' car and were met by the whole Romanones clan on the steps of the hotel, frantic with anxiety. That autumn they all came to Paris and Augustin phoned me to call on him at the Meurice. I arrived and sent my name up but forgot that Augustin had a special title of Marques something or other and to my utter horror the old Count came hobbling down to greet me with exquisite politeness and exchange a few words before going back to send his son down. Although he later married, Augustin had a justified reputation of being a homosexual. 'AC DC' as is now said, and I steered clear of him. Many years later when she was fleeing France in 1942 Lucy got a quick Spanish visa and assistance at the border through Pastrana. Margaret Pourtales was carrying on with a Spanish nobleman, Duque

de Durcal, bastard cousin of Alphonso XIII, married to a Spanish heiress and definitely 'Cafe Society' of that period. We inaugurated, with the Pourtales, the Reserve de Ciboure at St. Jean de Luz which was to become famous and all in all I had a wonderful time. I joined my parents in Vichy for Father's cure and remember well that Father told me, at the close of our stay, that after paying his hotel bill his account at Lazard Freres would be overdrawn. I suggested that he tell Management not to present it until he had time to replenish it upon his return and to his surprise they readily agreed. Financial crises were coming to a head. The car had been already dispensed with and the fat chauffeur had gone over to drive Mrs. Kamenka's coupe de ville. The Pourtales were among Lucy's friends, the couple I preferred. They still lived in the Chateau de Praggins on the Lac Lemane, a family place of his and it was, before the American crash, Margaret having talked Horace into investing in U.S. Stock, wiped them out. I saw her last when she came to New York to call on Lucy on her last visit after Liz's marriage and she is still alive, living on the vast inheritance from a millionaire cousin on Long Island. I talked to Horace in 1969 when we were in Geneva and he died shortly thereafter. He was one of the most distinguished and handsome men I knew. The family were hereditarily prominent in several European countries before World War I. An uncle was the German Ambassador to Russia in 1914 and Horace's father in the French Army. Only in Jewish High Society and among the aristocracy on the fringes of intermarried Royalty did the XVII century internationalism survive into the XX century and World War II when Hitler and Stalin took definite care – or nearly so – of the situation. In 1914 Mummy had cousins in five armies on both sides of the conflict.

In autumn 1922 there was a terrible tragedy of Molly's eye infection. It was the first of a real series of moral ones which would occur over the coming few years, rendered more painful by the underlying financial crisis which went

from bad to worse and final collapse. Misha's London chapter was coming to a bad close with the bankruptcy of the tobacco business launched by my father, his partner Stifter and the Lazard Bros.. Father made several trips to London, the business was wound up. Everyone lost money, Father could hardly afford his share and Misha and family went to live in Germany in Baden Baden. His debts in London had to be paid. Katia's jewels were pawned and only running inflation in Germany enabled them to live there comfortably on the reduced allowance. There were many Russian White refugees who became their close friends, in particular Count and Countess Bobrinskoy. The Bobrinskoy descended from an illegitimate son of Catherine the Great and used to be fabulously rich landowners and sugar producers. The Countess descended from the famous Fersen of Marie Antoinette fame. Mother's jewels started to be sold and as the amounts realized which for the tiara went as high as Frs.125,000 – there was still cash around. Father had a scheme for producing fuel for cars from naphthalene which a crazy inventor de Cosmo, had patented and with the financial backing of Push, a Lazard partner, Father was hoping to recoup the family fortunes and living with the illusion that this was only a temporary bad period to be overcome.

That summer the Schumanns had taken a small villa in Villers. M. and Tante Alice invited me to board there and found a nice cheap room at a small local hotel. The Louis Dreyfus had a big villa and our *bande* soon became gay and intimate. The Heilbronn timers also rented a villa and Georges tagged along all the time but never really was one of us. The parents of one of Eliane Louis Dreyfus' s school friends, the Baissacs, who had recently arrived from the Mauritius also had a villa and friendship with Lise dates from those days. Pierre Schweitzer was in Cabourg and used to come over often. As I had met the Louis Dreyfus at the Kamenkas, who were close prewar business connections, I was received more intimately at their place than the others at the beginning. The

Louis Dreyfus used to have important house guests. I still remember well that every evening an English cousin of Eliane's parents, Waley, used to play a two hand card game with a tall, heavy man with thick features and ruddy complexion. The then Minister Maginot who was sponsoring the famous *Ligne Maginot* (*Maginot Line*) that has gone down in history. He had a round faced, pug nosed chubby son our age whom we used to take along and who was most helpful because if police stopped the cars for speeding or noise he could give his name and we would be waved away. There was also the Ambassador of the Russian Provisional Government. The Soviets hadn't been recognized yet I believe. Maklakoff, a famous lawyer and liberal member of the Duma who used to dress in a ridiculous way with a straw hat, high collar and a bow tie on an elastic. There was the story that it had fallen into the soup at the Elysee and the Ambassador had calmly taken it out of his plate, wiped it and replaced it around his neck. The Waley girls gave me my first experience of the easy going English flapper of those years. Gladys, the older one gave me very interesting instructions in advanced petting on the Louis Dreyfus terrace. One evening we boys, after the girls had been duly returned to their homes, continued to the small local Casino and met an Englishman from Manchester, out to have a good time. He plied us with unlimited quantities of champagne and we had a rowdy time. I begged my friends not to take me to my hotel but leave me to sober out on the *digue* (*dike, dam*). They would have nothing of it and Georges Helbronner with Claude Baissac returned me to my hotel, got me past the two elderly spinsters who ran it and into my room, undressed me and left. I got out into the corridor with absolutely no clothes on and proceeded to parade up and down singing, in my off tune manner, uncensored versions of songs both French and English. The hotel was decidedly a family place and it's only masculine guest, a British colonel, was requested to get me back to bed. The next day I was asked to leave and only

Tante Alice's strong intervention and my promise, which I dutifully held, to be in my room by ten, saved me from the disgrace but limited my activities and hampered somewhat my enjoyment. This was the summer that Rostand's widow, Rosemonde Gerard with her Balkan boyfriend came to lunch at the Schumann's. She was a well know poetess. From Villers I returned to Paris and a very easy rather gay period until Lucy wired from Pau of the tragedy. Mother went there at once and when she returned I joined Lucy for a couple of weeks. The worse fears were over and we knew that one eye would be saved but Lucy was miserable and grief stricken. We walked the alleys of the park together and talked. I can date my real intimacy on an equal bases, with her from that date for before then I had been her baby brother and she still remembered our walks in Cimiez in 1912 where we had gone to recuperate from a strenuous fortnight of shopping in Paris before returning to Russia when she told me the stories of all the operas she had seen.

While Mother was away I had rented a furnished flat on the rue Chernowiz in Passy which was modest but quite acceptable. My first try at 'reasonable' budgeting of dwindling resources. We lived there but a short time until Mother found a large apartment with high ceilings, pleasantly old furniture, some good pictures and prints. It was an aristocratic abode on the top floor of a *hotel particulier* in the Cite Martignac, a court opening on the rue de Grenelle, half a block away from the rue Casimir Perrier where Guenia Hirshman, Katia's eldest sister and a famous hostess and protector of artists and painters in Moscow, lived and where the Paul Leons also had a flat. They still had the antique shop they had opened on the Faubourg St. Honore and much Empire furniture. The rooms were low ceiling-ed, walls painted in the Russian Empire style and I was to spend many a pleasant cozy evening in those somewhat stuffy rooms full of gesticulating artists and interesting talk. Samoff, the painter was a close friend

and I heard that Paul Leon had found a job as secretary to a brilliant British (Irish) writer who was turning blind. I met him a couple of times and once, this I clearly recollect, he shared a taxi with me. He was painfully near sighted and somewhat shy with strangers but had finely chiseled features and a soft voice which I seldom heard rise above a whisper. It is only much much later that I realized that I had had the really good fortune of meeting James Joyce.

We would gather also often in our home. The apartment was on a high third floor, without elevator of course. Misha and his family joined us and lived in somewhat cramped quarters until Katia insisted on a home of her own and they moved to Ville d'Avray. If it had not been for the nagging worry about money this would certainly have been a very happy period in my life. I had many good and close friends, some, like Dr. Frank de Portu, even fitted in easily with the family. I had quite a few rather wild nights in Montmartre with Pierre and his cousin Hubert Laffon who was wealthy and had money to spend. The Schweitzers by this time were also encountering financial problems but on a scale far removed from ours. The second car had gone and the butler had been replaced by a maid. There was La Mardelle and its unforgettable atmosphere of warm friendly gaiety for the young. There were smaller parties with those of my French friends who had become really intimate and still quite a few big balls. The one for Eliane's coming out in the sumptuous hotel at the Parc Monceau they had moved to with each table for supper decorated in different color roses and the fantastic entertainment of which I have spoken of in connection with Chevalier. At a ball given in the Ministere de l'Interieure among the sumptuous tapestries, *boiseries* (*wainscoating*) white and gold and lovely furniture from the *Garde Meuble National*, Fanny told me that she intended to marry brilliant young Doctor Wallich and that I wasn't to expect to see her as often nor be invited through her to many parties. Somehow this hurt me less than I would have

expected. I had had a feeling verging on panic at the idea of exchanging my Russian, by now quite modest background for the grandeur of Jewish high society in all its splendor. I enjoyed the role of spectator and feared inwardly that of actor and also had a terrible reluctance to play the role of fortune hunter and marry in any way for money. I was no longer in my very early twenties. I had real friends and was able to enjoy existence. The *haut monde* and its elaborate entertainment were losing their attraction. Whenever I could afford it, when Uncle Tolia had been lucky at cards and would slip me some francs, I could go to the theater, the small ones like the Dix Heures or the Vieux Colombier or the Oeuvre mostly. I studied badly and in spring failed my exams without much regretting it. Other things seemed so much more important and I worried badly at the expense of remaining idle which I knew Father could ill afford now.

We spent the first part of the summer that year in Cap d'Ail. A Russian girl who had danced at the Kamenoostrovski had married an officer and the couple had settled in a large villa which the widow of General Count Benkendorf, of Pushkin troubles fame, had transformed into a *pension (boarding house)*. Part of the time the Brailovskis with their brilliant pianist son, were guests and I remember his long sessions at the piano. There was the Countess's younger sister Princess M – a grand daughter, rather fat but amusing and the stunningly beautiful dark haired Marianna Vesselovski. We fell madly in love and swam for hours in the warm Mediterranean, bathing even when it was very rough (The Benkendorf girl was dashed against the rocks and we got her, a bleeding mess, out with difficulty). Lucy and George with Molly and her nurse, joined us and used to visit Kshessinskaya who had a lovely villa nearby and married to the Grand Duke Andre as Princess Krassinskaya, was gambling away her fabulous jewels, her villa and all she had accumulated abroad over decades of intimacy with the Imperial family. Although Father was desperately worried,

he put away the problems and seemed, at least to me who wanted to believe in a rosy future, to be enjoying the lovely weather. In those days the Cote was empty in summer. Parisians and foreigners still believed it was impossible to live in the heat of summer so far south. From there I went to La Mardelle for a lovely autumn. I didn't shoot having no gun and touchy on the subject of becoming a burdensome guest. Game was very plentiful and on a day of *grande battue* a couple of hundred pheasants or partridges was not an exceptionally good performance with a dozen *rabateurs* (*beaters*) to shoo the birds towards the guns. That year Tante Alice lent Tony, Jean Hermann, Bernard Delelis-Fanien and myself her little city coupe. In those days a coupe had an open drivers seat for the chauffeur and a small closed section with shiny wooden panels in place of rear windows to give intimacy to the upholstered interior. We drove to the chateau country and I first discovered Chambord with its great roofs, the arcades of Chenonceau, Azay le Rideau, Saumur, all those lovely palaces set in the intimately charming countryside which I was to know so well, whose beauty I would later be able to have Liz and Mike admire. That *Jardin de la France* (*Garden of France*) where I have had the unbelievable privilege of returning to even now and which I hope you, my grandchildren, will one day learn to love, not simply as foreign tourists but with a feeling, an understanding for France's greatness, her historical role in Europe's culture and civilization and imagining that countryside when all the chateaux were alive with gaudy plumes and bright hued velvets and amid the still not very lethal smoke of powder, wars were fought with still some semblance of panache, at least for the favored few. From those days comes my love for the really great poets of France, Ronsard, the Pleiades, Orleans, Boileau and each time I recite from memory one of those sonnets, images of that lovely countryside, bathed in the warm glow of my youthful fantasy and enthusiasm, wakes again and I see not only that scenery full of



graceful charm where man has carefully tried to add to nature without harming it, but also see myself there with all my dreams, all my illusions and enthusiasms of those days. I banish the images of war, which caught up with me in those same places, to remember those first impressions, then memories of taking Liz and Mike to the places I loved.

I would like to bring back those long warm September afternoons in the Sologne countryside. The quiet waiting behind thick hedges, the particular smell of the earth and the leaves, the buzzing of bees in the stillness. Then from the woods in the distance or from the furrows just in front, a covey would rise, as the white line of beaters approached with their sticks waving, and head for the line of guns. A subdued report or two and birds would come fluttering down. It now seems rather barbaric although the many real horrors I have lived through should have inured me. Then there was a pleasant thrill and no prick of conscience whatsoever, I'll admit.

This was also the time Tony got his first car, an Amilcar sports model. It was the first and high point of that year as if it had been a 4.5 Bugatti. A fabulous piece of machinery and thinking back a fantastic piece of engineering underlining the basically small progress I have witnessed in more than half a century of motoring. With its **YYY** motor running to the whirl of 8 cylinders, its acceleration to near 200 kilometers on France's narrow highways, I can only compare it with the thrill I had around 1910 when we **YYY** to the Islands in an elaborate, very high and shiny Renault with its slanting hood, with window with curtains, four sets of gas brass lanterns and headlights, upholstered beige interior with jump seats and the inevitable crystal flower vase and speaking tube to talk to the driver, and of course, the crank which necessitated, in winter, a special man next to the driver.

This little *amilcar*, which was supposed to be a regular model became the newest Sport one when we went to fetch it at the plant direct from the assembly line and waited that Saturday afternoon for the last bolts to be fastened. It had an open body – wood like body, a small **YYY** and most of the console were open wires. It did some 75 miles an hour perhaps if one was really very close to the road surface and the wheels were no larger than those of the small wheeled bike of this day, so the feeling of speed was terrific on the bumpy roads, particularly the dusty, narrow dirt ones. Luckily in those far off days, traffic was light. Having reached La Mardelle we drove off for a spin and although I didn't like it, Tony insisted that I drive. I coasted along at 20 kilometers and then pushed her all out...suddenly I felt the steering wheel spin in my hands. There were quite a few cows and sheep returning to the village just ahead and I visualized a real mess. We swerved from the road, grazed two large trees and came to rest without damage in a **YYY** field. We got her back on the road with no trouble and a passing cart hauled us to the nearby village. A rudimentary service station – still with horse shoeing. **YYY** looked under the car and found that the bolt holding the connecting rod from the driving wheel had been lost. We replaced it, tightened it and drove serenely back. This was the kind of simple, cheap repair which could be quickly made in those days. I must honestly admit that around 1957 on a Vermont highway when a bolt came loose on the accelerator pedal of the brand new sport model Studebaker Hawk at 80 miles an hour, I experienced a similar moment of anxiety. the feeling of speed and this tiny beetle kind of contraption was equaled only for me. Then years later, Tony let me drive his racing car around the Monthelry track on a run and again in Hiroshima, Japan let me try out one of the very first models of their rotary Sports car in 1963.

Speaking of the Monthlery racetrack, I remember the inauguration of this, one of Europe's first racing circuits with grand stand. Pierre's father lent us the car – a great big 12 cylinder Packard and we made it in time to watch a few races...no more spectacular than those I had witnessed on the straight stretch near Strelina near Saint P. some ten years earlier, with the dark blue Peugeot crashing and the white Mercedes winning the kilometer dash at around 200 kil. On the way home we got into one of the really great traffic jams, then quite an event, and reached Paris some 30 kilometers away, after well over five hours. That kind of jam I was to see again in '27 when we vainly tried to get to Le Bourget to watch Lindbergh land and had to be satisfied to hear the rumours spread from car to car when his wheels touched the turf. The next day I did go and watch tall distinguished Myron Herrick, the US Ambassador, introduce him to a cheering crowd from the balcony of the Embassy then located Avenue d'Iena. They were both tall lanky Americans. He had youth and Herrick with his white mane, had what is now called charisma to spare.

## Working Life

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### Paris, Marseilles, Paris and Business Trips

The year 1924 saw the start of my working career. I hadn't abandoned my studies and was supposed to carry them on simultaneously with earning, if not my living, at least enough to pay my own expenses. In the end this didn't work mainly because I was much too lazy and spent any free time from my jobs at enjoying life. It must also not be forgotten that in those days the 5 ½ day week was really a six day week and with the French system of 2 hours off for lunch which meant about 1 ½ hours extra transportation and ½ hour for a

hasty, full meal unless it was a heavy lunch, without any relaxing at some friends and expensive taxi dashes to and from work. I had what was then called *des principes* (*principals*) and didn't want to use my friendly connections to get a job. This ridiculous stand I abandoned later on of course. It led me to take a job that was open in the Foreign Department of the Banque des Pays de l'Europe Centrale. This was the successor organization to the Paris Branch of the Great Austrian Imperial Landesbank and my knowledge of English and German got me the job which paid some 500 francs, or around \$50.00 a month. It was located in a former hotel opposite the Continental and the small offices, many with bathrooms used to store documents were a nightmare. I shared an office with an old, he seemed to me and must have been about 60 at the time, character straight out of a Zola novel. He had arrived in Paris during the second Empire from the provinces and quickly spent all his inheritance getting a sinecure through the intervention of an Austrian Prince with whom he had shared Paris night life and several mistresses during his heyday. He was thin, hawk nosed with tear filled eyes. He wore a black frock coat, turning to green with age, striped trousers, spats and a high collar. A long knitted woolen scarf of indeterminate color always covered his shoulders and in winter wrapped itself around his neck. He also, except when he was called to the Director's office, wore a black warm nightcap. He was desperately afraid of draughts and kept the window shut and as this was coupled with the fact, about which he boasted, that he didn't bathe between September and May, you can imagine the results. He had a beautiful handwriting, very elaborate and with innumerable XIX century curlicues. His sole job was to transcribe letters to those high born and exclusive customers the Bank had inherited from it's Imperial parent institution. I remember him spending a whole day on a short note addressed to her Majesty the Queen Marie of Rumania, who required a check in Francs and the letter accompanied the transmittal. He did tell

innumerable tales of his gay days, mentioning parties with Morny, an orgy with Toulouse Lautrec and repeated most of the anecdotes about the *demi-monde* (a class in between high and low societies, usually seeking pleasure) of the preceding 50 years as if he had witnessed them himself. As this was chronologically possible I was never sure if it was true or imaginary but thrilled at the idea of talking to a man who could have witnessed the scenes of Paris then, still, only rather recently past.

I did mostly translating work but learned also how to write bank letters. To give you an idea of the Dickens like atmosphere which still reigned I still recall vividly bringing my first letter into the office of the manager, a Hungarian Brody, with a small Napoleon III goatee and piercing dark eyes. He slowly read my letter, looked up scowled and threw it on the floor saying in his Eastern European accent “*Trops de fautes, a refaire...*” (Too many errors, to be redone...). That was all. I wonder at times what the reaction of an employee today in San Francisco would be to such treatment, but I must admit that the memory of my own helped me very much understand the set-up of the internal organization in Japanese Banks in the 1960ies when I was in Tokyo. The ruthless discipline of unquestioned authority was nothing new to me while many of my young American colleagues in foreign bank offices were aghast and unbelieving. The working manager of the Department was a fat, rather simpleminded rubicund man named Pfeiffer, whose ugly but amusing daughter, then already in her late twenties worked in the department. As she had a crush on me, which I certainly didn't reciprocate, we would often spend a free hour at gay and sometimes amusing banter. The job wasn't bad but the salary and prospects appeared impossible to the Schumann family. They couldn't bring themselves to find me a job in their fast growing bank but did get me a better paid one in a grain company which had been organized at that time by them together with the Lazard Freres

called Cooperative d'Approvisionnement de Transport et de Credit which was intended to trade in grain directly for the Grand Moulins de Strasbourg which the group owned. I learned the rudiments of the trade for a few months and in 1925 was posted to Marseilles. To be sent to a Branch, a few hundred kilometers away for a while sounds routine today but for me, who had been brought up the way I had been and had never left home, this was a break which deeply affected me. In addition to the fact that Father was fighting what I knew was a losing struggle with the invention of the substitute fuel, I was also deeply involved at the time with Nina Williams. She was a cousin of my former tutor Popitch who had remained a friend of the family and was at the time running the Russian School Rue du Dr. Blanch in Paris with some success as many *emigre* families believed in an early return to Russia and wanted their children to be ready to resume where they had left off at the Bolshevik Revolution. At least my parents didn't share those illusions any longer and Father was staking our future on the success of the fuel. Nina had fled to Shanghai and there married an English journalist from whom she was separated but who still helped her financially. She was ash blond, with blue grey eyes and rather heavy set – typical of many Russian beauties. She had a job in some dressmaking establishment and Popitch brought her to several of our Sunday parties. Mother liked her and she remained all through our affair a constant guest at home. In an old fashioned way I was terrified of getting her pregnant and having to marry her. She was some ten years my senior and I was not anxious to settle down to a poverty stricken existence with lots of hard work and no future, but I was very attached to her and hated the idea of leaving Paris. I made the rounds of quite a few of my friends, bidding them adieu as if I was never to see them again. Tragically this was to prove true of Mummy's cousin Beatrice, a very nice, heavy, quiet girl whom I liked very much and with whom we were quite friendly, very much so because we could

talk of her cousin Lia (Mummy) then already living in Amsterdam, whom she knew to be one of my oldest friends.

I found a large room on the Avenue de la Republique not far from the Bourse where the offices were situated. It was a dilapidated salon with dirty white *boiseries*, a tile floor and French windows opening on a balcony. The whole thing on the fourth floor reached by a creaking stairway. A tiny stove heated it and soon after my arrival on a February morning I did find a thin coat of ice on the water jug on the washstand. The furniture was pretentious, dilapidated and only reasonably clean. The mice were few and there were no cockroaches. The second day of my arrival, opening a door by mistake I discovered a bath tub with the elaborate gas heater then the approved installation for hot water in most French bathrooms. The tub was full of miscellaneous junk and the heater out of order. The Corsican landlord, Madame Petrignani, was astonished when I suggested not only paying for the repair but also the extra cost of water and gas which would follow my using the bathroom. Two Swiss boys, the Rueff brothers, rented rooms, the elder was in business and in his early thirties but Jeannot was my age, orphaned and had very little money and some intermittent jobs that kept him alive. Childhood had been pleasant with a prosperous family in Switzerland but his parents' early death had stranded Jeannot near his busy brother in Marseille. He was a pale, dark haired, rather good looking boy and I was the answer to all his dreams of friendship. He followed me around with adoring eyes and we spent all our free time together. I was so completely unaware of Freud and so far removed from any homosexual ideas that it never dawned on me that he was in love with me. For my part, he had no attraction at all. I would work hard in the office and we spent our evenings strolling the streets or sitting at cafes. We found a small restaurant where we used to eat steaks with an egg on top, sunny side up, with potatoes, salad, a pastry, bread, cheeses and a flask of

vinegary wine for 1.25 francs. There was a pal of Jeannots, a dark haired, rather handsome threadbare man who had been a *danseur* and probably worse and was out of jobs. He would join us and very often leave us at the restaurant's door to meet us in an hour or so on the Cannebierre. It didn't dawn on me that he hadn't the money for a meal and went hungry. When I learned it I was shocked but couldn't afford to help permanently. This simply goes a ways to show what, even under the circumstances, a sheltered bourgeois life on the XIX century principles could lead to. Jeannot had, what I now realize was an affair with a fascinating retired captain of a river boat in China. We visited his semi dark studio with innumerable carved old ivory statuettes. He gave me one, a laughing figure in an erotic attitude, the ivory dark amber with age. Years later in dire need of cash I sold it for 300 francs to a dealer on the Rue de Rivoli only to see it priced at 1,500 the next day in the window. This man told us fascinating tales of dashes up and down the Yangtze under bandit fire, warlords and all the *old* China yarns which literature was to make me familiar with but which then came first hand. He it was who talked us both into smoking opium for the one and only time I tried it. The taste was nauseating and I lapsed into semi consciousness only to wake up in my own room next morning with the most horrible hangover I can remember. Sometimes, when Father had a bit of cash or Uncle had won at cards, or Mother sold something, they would send me a few hundred francs and I would take the Saturday train in the evening up to Paris, spend Sunday there often walking Avenue de Acacias in the morning and meeting old acquaintances and then back the same night to be at the office Monday morning...third class, hard seats of course. Once I came up incognito to see Nina who in the meantime had moved to London where she was having an affair with a Russian ex officer from whom she had a baby girl. Her ex husband very decently recognizing the child as his own. The Exposition des Arts Decoratifs was on and Nina had found a temporary



job on one of Paul Poiret's famous '*peniche*.' (*canal barge*) We had a great time and took the *Montagnes Russes* (*roller coaster*) train that screeched up and down along the left bank of the Seine. It was thrilling until the train stuck on the top of one of the highest peaks of the course for three hours while I sweated it out fearing not only to miss my train but that newspapers would take photos and the family realize I had been in town without calling on them. I barely made it. During all this period I not only wrote daily to my mother and a separate letter to my father in Russian, but we exchanged daily letters with Tony Schumann who gave me all the gossip and news of Paris and I tried to amuse him describing life in Marseille. One evening in particular, we were strolling up the Cannebiere, near the Noailles, when we encountered a couple of American flappers, flashy and uninhibited, going in the opposite direction. We followed them and to my horror at the foot of the Cannebiere they turned into the Vieux Quartier. This red light district was, in those days, pretty rough and as dangerous as would be the Fillmore in S.F today, 1972. So I told Jeannot that we had better follow them. They panicked and started to run into alleys and narrow side streets until a gang of rather rough looking *nervi* (*fishermen*) suddenly loomed ahead. We caught up with them and I whispered quickly in English, "take our arms and make believe you're our girls. Please don't worry." We negotiated the group of hoodlums and then brought the girls back to their hotel where a distracted father was calling the police. This gave us, the next day an excellent dinner at the Noailles and profuse thanks. There was, in those days, a street in the Vieux Quartier, which in the evening would be invaded by enormous rats, thousands of which would literally cover it eating up tires of any car parked there by mistake or destroying the contents of any pushcart that might have been left there by mistake. They came up from the docks to a fountain to drink. We watched them one evening from a

window in a brothel on the street and I can still feel the fascinating horror of the sight.

You must realize that in Paris, until just before the war, Uncle Leo lived in a flat on the top floor with no bathroom and several times a week a horse hauled cart with a tank of water under which a wood fire burned would come along. A couple of sturdy men would carry a tin bathtub up to his rooms, place a clean sheet in it and then carry buckets of steaming water for a leisurely warm bath. The water emptied into the gutter, the tub removed and the cost of the whole operation was a few paltry francs. Even when we arrived, large tanks on cars drawn by four horses would move noisily and slowly along the streets at night and stop at houses while waste was pumped through thick pipes out of the houses into the tanks. This was a mode of raw sewage disposal I was unfamiliar with and so were my parents and uncle and aunt. I recollect that one of the first evenings after our arrival in 1919 we were strolling on the left bank when we met such an *equipage (suit)* and I was deputized to inquire what it was. “*Eaux grasses*”(Fatty water) said a polite driver eyeing the ladies. With my then inimitable Russian accent I further inquired “*qu'est ce que c'est cela?*” (what is that?) and the exasperated man barked out loud and clearly “*de la merde*” (shit).

My stay in Marseilles which was supposed to last several years was drawing to a close, but I was ignorant of this. In the meantime friends from Paris on their way to the South, stopped off. In the lycee I had become quite friendly with Henry Lazard of the banking clan. His mother was the daughter of the well known Italian philosopher Lombroso and a very neurotic lady. He had a sister, rather comely but unbalanced, and conceived the idea that this impecunious Russian refugee friend would make her an acceptable husband. I was invited to their elaborate XIX century mansion on several occasions. Before excellent but dismal meals we would visit Madame Lazard in her boudoir where she reclined

on a *chaise longue* (reclining chair) in flimsy lace, pale with burning eyes and either talked in a torrential outpouring of words or was absolutely mute with eyes half closed while we politely kept silent. Of course Henri's plan came to nothing but as he was on his way to Cannes with his father Raymond, he invited me to dine at the Noailles. I took Jeannot along and upon arrival was appalled to find that both father and son were blatantly homosexual in a promiscuous manner and surrounded by a bevy of mincing painted boys. Jeannot who was very discreet, particularly with me about his sexual life and timid to boot, was even more uncomfortable. What should have been and gastronomically was, a very pleasant evening turned out to be nightmarish. An uncle of Madeleine and Michel Bernard, cousins of Tony's, Mathieu Goudchaux, also contacted me. He was a *bon vivant* (one fond of the good life) of the preceding century and enjoyed the kind of entertainment made popular by Edward VII so after a fantastic dinner at the Brasserie de Verdun and one of their somewhat heavy but excellent bouillabaisse, we made the rounds of the more elaborate brothels of Marseilles to hear the girls sing *risque* (off color) songs, dance and cavort, *sans consommer*. (without consummation) I did have introductions to the local Jewish society – the Vidal Naquets in particular and the Valabregues, through Vera de Gunzburg whom was not yet married to George Valabregue (Helene's father) but after a couple of evenings of small talk, some music, orangeade, I drifted away either to go to the movies or spend the evenings with first one and then a second rather attractive girl. The second one was a salesgirl at Boka, the big department store. I taught her how to dress, how to behave in public, a few rudiments of English. Strangely a year or so later, not only did she write to tell me that she had become engaged to a very nice clerk at one of the local banks which was a big step up in her social standing but she owed it to me and even more strangely

her husband added a note to say how much my influence had helped to ease matters with his family for his new wife.

Another meeting that never came off had a strange tinge to it. I got a post card from Beatrice de Gunzburg from London announcing that she would pass through Marseilles with her parents on their way to visit the Aschkenazis in Antibes and had talked them into detouring through Marseilles where I was to dine with them. I was looking forward to this visit as it was a real link with my past society existence and I liked them all. Just about a week before, I got a short note from Mother telling me of the accident in London which had cost Beatrice her life and it was a shock, much greater than it should have been because there was her post card on my dresser and I had been happily planning a reunion in what I then considered my exile.

I realize that I have failed to mention a party at the Aschkenazis which took place some time before they moved to Antibes and I left for Marseilles. From the vantage point of today it might amuse Liz and Mike. The atmosphere was as usual gay and warm and when we sat down to supper I found myself at one of the small round tables at the side of a radiantly pretty Vera de Gunzburg who was carrying on with a very charming and amusing young Swiss man. Although they were both a bit older than I was, my life long acquaintance with Vera made it easy. I remember that when I came home and as I did every night, went in to kiss my parents, I said to Mother "I do believe Vera de G. will soon be engaged to a Swiss man". This was my first encounter with Uncle Paul, who besides becoming my brother in law was to be one of my dearest and truest friend in life.

Early summer Father and Mother came to spend some time with me. I found them rooms at a small *pension* on the coast just outside Marseilles and moved in with them for what was to be, I didn't know it then, my last summer

with Father. We used to bathe together in the warm sea and then I would hurry off to town by tram. In the meantime business of the firm was getting into a mess and as I didn't get along particularly well with the local Greek boss who spent every afternoon siesta locked in his private office with his attractive secretary, when it was decided to cut the staff I was suddenly recalled to Paris. In the meantime my brother, through I don't know what connections had gotten a job with the same firm in Paris, had simply been fired. I left quickly, even before Father and Mother, who stayed on for a couple of weeks.

To give you an idea of what working conditions were in Paris in those days this important, new trading firm, had in its billing department a man who was a phenomenon at arithmetic and could add four columns of figures at a time and do long multiplications at lightening speed. He did an enormous amount of billing as there was no calculator, not even a hand one.

After a while I was also let go but Mr. Schumann, whose bank was holding vast loans, intervened and I was kept on until he could find me better work. As one of my colleagues there was a man D. (I hope to recall his name) who was very active in one of the rightist groups which proliferated at the time and who was to play quite a role in Vichy in 1941. He was an arrogant, bright, intellectually sophisticated typical French intellectual with just enough Anti Semitism to make him obnoxious but not bar him from this Jewish banks financed firm.

Jeannot was desolate at my leaving and repeatedly told me that these had been the happiest months of his whole life. I recommended him to the care of his elder brother and years later when I met him he told me that he had eternally guilt feelings for not having followed my advice as he was the courting a pretty and charming girl whose family owned a famous bathing establishment on the

coast called the Roucas Blanc where we spent many a sunny Sunday and particularly lovely late evenings when the crowds had left.

I came back to Paris in a dismal mood and sat around the office with little to do knowing that my doom was settled. It was very early autumn and there were few friends in town. Luckily for me I could spend the weekend at La Mardelle, driving down there with one or another of the guests or taking the train to La Motte Beuvron where the Model T station wagon, with its two long benches used to transport up to a dozen guns to more distant *battues* would fetch me and at the break neck speed of 20/30 miles an hour drive the 15 odd miles to Ides and La Mardelle.

By late autumn Schumann had found me a job as 'customers man' in a new and fast growing brokerage firm on the Paris Exchange, Guy Amerongen. I had a few customers including old Mr. Kamenka who had still large funds at his disposal and as a Board Member of the then very highly regarded Banque des Pays Nord which he had helped found, a high position and was a very valuable addition to the roster of customers for the new firm. There was also a tall, lanky, incredibly ugly Belgian, Baron Spirlet, who had some money but needed more to keep a flashy mistress. He started speculating and through friends of Uncle Tolia, I got his account. He liked me and so did his lady friend with whom I was unfailingly gallant and he used all the tips he got from his numerous club friends and operated wildly. I was too young to stop him and he lost a real fortune over that year being obliged to retire to his chateau in Belgium practically ruined. I felt pangs of conscience but made quite a lot in commissions, learning to be cynically distrustful of all customers. Men in brokerage firms however decent they might be as individuals it is a nearly irresistible temptation to buy and sell stock for a customer and thus increase ones income. Particularly if he is himself terribly eager to make the plunges, even if some little voice whispers down deep

inside that this is a losing proposition for him. Spirlet took me to dinners at good restaurants, bought a car on some unexpected profit (through a former manager of the auto transport company 'Etoile du Nord' that originally the Lazards, Father and Mr. Kamenka had set up to find an occupation for George and which went bankrupt - the Lazard finally making money out of the real estate years later) and took me along on the only boar hunt I ever went to in the Fontainebleau forest. I remember it was bitterly cold, rainy and we waited in silence for hours until Spirlet let go at some bushes moving ahead of us and later got a slice of boar from the animal some other hunter in the group bagged.

The only advantage, except for the actual money I pocketed at the time, I ever got was decades later in 1962 when I was taking a young American executive around Europe and we were invited to the last formal dinner in Europe I ever attended with liveried butler and man behind each chair, innumerable courses climaxing in a *piece montee*. I asked our very chic host if he knew my former friend, not insisting on our business connections, and was told with appropriate awe that he was a famous old eccentric, impressing both hosts and my American in the process. I worked hard and diligently through the winter and by spring had amassed enough money to pay for a short vacation. Jeannot came from Marseilles and we went to a small resort at Veules les Roses on the North coast where Tony who was doing a *stage (internmanship)* in some bank in London joined us for a weekend. We took a local to Pourville and had a fling at a casino with unbelievable luck for all of us, including myself. We then moved to the Hotel in Pourville from our modest establishment, took in the show with a then quite famous entertainer, Harry Piler, who had been Chevalier's successor with Mistinguet, and lots of champagne. It was *la grand vie (the big life)* with a vengeance. On Sunday afternoon I lost all. When I reached the Gare St. Lazare I gave every penny I had to Jeannot who was going back to Marseilles completely

broke and walked the distance to Ville d'Avray having no money even for the Metro, with my suitcase to the *pension de famille* (boardinghouse for families) where Father and Mother were spending the summer to be near Misha who was desperately ill already in their nearby little villa where they had settled several years earlier. He had a heart disease and would have most probably been saved today but not at that time and not treated by his close friend, a charming, handsome Russian refugee, Doctor Aitoff. I commuted to work and Misha slowly sank. He was 35 years old and lingered on. He had strange ideas. He kept his monocle in his eye regardless of everything (he was buried with it) and with some crazy Eastern philosophical fad let his nails grow to unbelievable length. When all hope was lost after consultation with some great man for whose fee money was scraped together, Mother selling one of her last rings, or pawning it, an Oriental Yogi was brought in who made passes over him and he momentarily improved. Then suddenly in the middle of the night we were called to his bedside. I had been to see him the day before and he looked drawn and grey, more than half gone, no longer the round faced, gay charming Misha who but a month or so earlier had confidentially asked me to phone a French countess with whom he was having a discreet affair – his last - as he remained as great a lady's man as both his Berline uncles had been. He looked at me and murmured with great difficulty “*Bus*” which was his nickname for me and smiled faintly. We arrived around 3 am. and found Misha in a coma. There was no phone in their villa and none in our pension. I started for Paris, half running the 6 to 8 miles. The Grande Rue de Sevres was deserted and shuttered, not a soul, not a light, not a car. I was to relive that nightmarish errand of 1926 in 1969 when I roamed the deserted streets of sleeping Beaume in search of a doctor for Pierre. I believe I ran all the way to the Porte St. Cloud where an all night cafe was open and phoned Aitoff then I called Lucy and George who had returned from their summer vacation. I



took a sleepy taxi and returned to Ville d'Avray. Misha had passed away. Mother was sobbing, Katia in half a faint, Father deathly pale tears rolling down his eyes. Grandmother had died in her eighties which was then a great age, in a private hospital and this was my first experience of death at such close quarters of someone who, although never really close to, I had known and loved all my life. We walked in the garden in the early morning with Serge, hand in hand, and he said very seriously "I am now the man of the family." It took him quite a long time, including Dunkirk and nightmarish POW experiences in burning Berlin during the war to really become that.

I remember those hot days following Misha's death. The air in the small room became stuffy and the Bobrinskoy brought an antique wood chest which had been given to them in India by one of the Maharajahs who had been with Murza Bobrinskoy at Cambridge (that group often mentioned in memoirs of which Yussouppoff and Obolenski were among the most famous) and which contained many different Indian herbs and incense. The heavy, smell nearly made me faint. The ceremony was reduced to a minimum because Misha wasn't at all religious and the tragedy hung heavily over all of us. He had died so very young.

That winter we were living at 222 Faubourg St. Honore, just next to the old Beaujon hospital in an early XIX century house, on the second floor in a low ceiling apartment furnished with modest bourgeois furniture among which the few odds and ends we brought with us looked incongruous and out of place. The owner, an old spinster, occupied two rooms in the rear. What she did for cooking and bathing I don't know but I never saw her in our four rooms. It had a pleasant view of the then Rothschild Foundation's large garden and was near the rue Beaujon where the Schumanns still lived at the time.

A few months later we decided, with Tony, to take Spanish lessons. In the meantime Aunt Alia had opened a dressmaking establishment, like so many Russian refugees, in partnership with Madame Landau, the wife of a Petro lawyer, friend of the family and mother of Andrew who was then and remained until our quarrel some years later, my oldest and only childhood friend. The establishment was called *Helene et Helene*. These ladies invited Madame Rotvand, the great beauty I have already mentioned, to join them in the capacity of society *mannequin (model)* and her excellent taste was a big asset to the firm. Auntie, although no longer a chicken had picked up an ex Caucasian officer, a quite handsome man, much her junior, who handled business matters with the completely inexperienced help of Uncle Leo Nelken. Madame Rotvand was successful in Paris on the fringes of that international society which still makes it's headquarters there. Among her admirers was a Spaniard, Munoz, son of a famous Spanish diplomat and nobleman, the Marquis(or Count?) Viana. Auntie decided that the continued extra marital dalliance was no good for Nioussia Rotvand and so she divorced, embraced the Catholic faith and married Alvaro Munoz in London with Auntie and the famous Spanish Ambassador to France, Quinonez de Leon. The family was far from pleased and it took quite some time to get him into a post at the Spanish Embassy to the Vatican but in the meantime Nioussia was studying Spanish with a Carlist refugee with a complicated and very grand name, several titles and lots of "y". This nobleman was persuaded to come and teach the two young gentlemen. It so happened that our first lesson was on an evening and we were due at a ball later on so I persuaded Tony to put on his tails and dressed myself also, white ties and all. The Senor arrived at 9 PM very correct in a long frock coat, striped trousers, very high collar and an elaborate jeweled pin in his cravat. He also wore gloves. He bowed to us very ceremoniously and didn't comment on our attire but started with the rudiments of

the language. For the second lesson we were, naturally, dressed in ordinary day clothes and were quite aghast when the Senor appeared in tails, white tie and all his orders. He considered that we had done him the honor of dressing formally for his class – he could do no less. The Spanish lessons petered out soon.

My friends and connections were helping me establish a good clientele for my brokers and my take home pay was pretty decent, particularly because Father, in his old fashioned way and although money was very scarce, refused to take anything from me and furnished room and board.

Existence was quite bearable except for constant worries and I had quite a lot of free time to enjoy long weekends at La Mardelle, Armainvilleirs, Frogeres, the Alphonse Lazard estate in the Sologne. Father never really recovered from the terrible shock of Misha's death and that year had a stroke at his office in the apartment of a French lawyer friend near the Etoile. Luckily he had hit his head when he fell and the great bump on his forehead drained away what would have been a cerebral hemorrhage.

In connection with a grandiose idea which Amerongen had for some kind of deal with De Beers stock, he had me prepare a rather long translation in English of a brochure he had written and suggested that I take it to London correspondents as well as personal friends in the banking business, myself. I was hard at work on the brochure when Easter came and it was decided that a whole group of us with Tony at its head would drive down to the Basque coast in two cars and spend the holidays in Spain. I wrote to Aunt Olga who was at the time living in all the grandeur of the Alameda de Ossuna and the Castellana, Ignacio being one of the partners of the Bauer Bank, Rothschild's representatives in Spain. She was giving great balls with King Alphonso as guest of honor and had a great position in Madrid. As a stateless refugee it wasn't easy to get a visa and many years later Aunt Olga told me the fuss Uncle Ignacio made when she asked

him to get one “for on the those shady Russian refugee friends of your – probably a Bolshevik” as he put it then. But they did come through. We drove down to Biarritz and enjoyed the carefree holiday. We made an extensive excursion to Burgos where I watched fascinated, a bull fight and I'll admit I was hardly nauseated by the hideous plight of the horses, ripped open by the bulls with their entrails hanging out to the sand. The color, the nimble grace and precision of the matadors movements and the fantastic enthusiasm of the crowd thrilled me. We made several lovely excursions through the Pyrenees which I knew well and which reminded me of those I had made to the self same caves or castles with the family before the war and immediately after. We bathed in the breakers of the Grand Plage and all the others decided to prolong the stay. I found a friend of one of the group who was driving his sport car, minus windshield, direct to Paris in one day – somewhat a feat in those days. We left early in a cloud of dust and by the time I reached Paris that evening my face was a mess, burnt and covered with dust. I found Father in bed with an anthrax on his neck and suffering badly. He made the superhuman effort to forget his own pain and interested himself in my ridiculous agony which I was soothing with tons of Vaseline and calomine lotion. Two days later he was moved to a private hospital at the suggestion of Aitoff who had become his doctor. Father felt he couldn't afford Mendelsshon any longer although the Professor repeatedly asked me to tell him he would come as a friend. Father was operated on by Dubouchet whom I was to see again in Cambridge, Massachusetts with his daughter, Mrs. Lowell, and Guenia Hirschman in 1941. Father started a normal recovery and even went for a short stroll in the sunny hospital garden. My trip to London which I wanted to cancel was on again and I sailed the Channel as usual in beastly weather. I put up in the gloomy, immense Victoria Hotel and started my rounds. Pierre Schweitzer was doing his *stage* at Erlangers at the time and together with him and a close dear

English friend of Petersburg days, Florrie Lessing, who had had a crush if nothing more on Misha and was very close to both Lucy and myself, we went to see *Bitter Sweet* with Metaxa an excellent Greek tenor and I went wild about this Coward musical. *I'll See you Again* still rings in my ears. It had all the romantic attraction of *l'Aiglon* which I adored and a charm specially English, something the Forsythe Saga has captured on TV in the first episodes - that is, 1971. I did some shopping, spoke to quite a few English bankers who were duly impressed by my accent and met a friend of Tony's from his stay in London, Frank Hartly, born Herz, immensely fat, a very cultured and pleasant man, probably, no I should say certainly, a homosexual. We became fast friends and he piloted me through the city visiting many of the Guild Halls with their Gothic halls, stained windows, gleaming plate displayed on richly carved oak chests and somber portraits hung between heavy tapestries. I tried to squeeze in some tourist attractions between business calls. I got back to Paris rather pleased with myself only to find that an infection had set in and that Father was very seriously ill. A blood analysis was made and then they discovered that he had diabetes. Father lingered on, semi conscious but recognizing us for several days. I insisted and that Mendelssohn visit him "*en ami seulement*" (*strictly as a friend*) so strict were inter doctors ethics in Paris, and he said sadly that if he ever did recover he would not be his old self again. On Sunday, May 15, 1927 we spent the day at his bedside and he fell into a fretful sleep. We were both, with Mother in particular, utterly exhausted and the doctor told me to take her home. Next morning, driving through the deserted streets of Paris about 7 AM, I had a terrible premonition and felt dizzy with anxiety. After an agitated night during which he woke several times and wanted to take a taxi to see his partner Stifter and settle some money problems, Father went into a coma and passed away as we entered the room at 8. In our day and age the death of a father, even deeply loved, has become something

natural and human and now that both Liz and Mike are in their thirties with families of their own, it won't be anything like the shock it was for me at 22, practically alone with Mother, the concern about Katia and the children and only a broken man – Uncle Tolia – to turn to. He was completely lost having depended on his brother completely in all things both practical and moral all his life, totally unable to cope with the problems of existence. To say I was in shock, using a present day expression, is hardly true. Mother whose life had been made a fairy tale by Father, and who in her own way adored him and had been brought up by him to become a unique human being was not only completely destroyed but also morbidly guilt ridden. She blamed herself for all that had happened and the sleepless nights and worries that had hastened Father's death. She adored Lucy but their lives over the last years had been, after decades of unhealthy intimacy and total dependence, drifting slightly apart for practical reasons mostly, and I was to shoulder not only the practical burdens but Mother's break down. That night she had hysterics and one of the nightmares that has to this day followed me is the slap I had to give her and the following hours while she cried herself to sleep in my arms. With Father gone, we faced bad problems. Stifter had little faith in Tolia's abilities without Father around, knowing him well and none whatsoever in any one else but me. We lingered on in the apartment and I continued to collect my commissions but had less and less work to do. Amerongen wanted to expand and asked Schumann to finance him. Schumann asked my opinion and I, well knowing this spelled the end of my job, told him to beware. Two years later Amerongen went into fraudulent bankruptcy and landed in jail. In the meantime he had found out, via the grapevine, that I had vetoed Schumann's assistance and while keeping me on and collecting his part of the commissions and paying me mine, which were dwindling, ignored me. I got an additional advance of a couple of thousand francs from Stifter who was paying

Mother an annuity which was to be repaid, and was, when the Polish Government finally paid for the nationalized railway. There was much unpleasantness with Katia and her family who insisted on getting their quarter of the monthly stipend direct from Stifter and obtained it by polite blackmail. Then they switched the guardianship of the children to an influential, successful refugee lawyer, Baron Nolde, taking it legally away from me which I had to agree to in court. I didn't really mind but was bitter at the way it was done. Mother went with the children and Alexis Leon, their cousin, son of Paul and Lucie Leon, as well as an aging Hirshman with his son Andre, and part time his eldest son Kira, to a small resort called Stella Plage near the Touquet in the dunes. It was a group of old English military huts done up slightly but with some plumbing facilities run by some Armenians who gave edible food. I used to go down for week ends. Once or twice Pierre Schweitzer, in particular on one occasion in a small Bugatti a cousin of Jean Herman, himself a cousin of Tony's and a good if erratic friend of mine about whom more later, lent us. We dashed out in some four hours but took over twelve to get back, the car like all self respecting Bugattis, having trouble every mile or so. Daisy Kamenka was staying with her parents in nearby Touquet where one of George's brothers, Michel, had built them a villa and used to ride over to visit. There was a group of attractive girls on the beach, one became a rather well known actress, and we had fun enjoying ourselves in a simple what today would be considered innocent way. I then returned to a job that was rapidly disintegrating. I had spent a week or so alone with Tante Alice in La Mardelle which was being lavishly remodeled and in her quiet friendly way, she helped me very much not only to take hold of myself but sort things out and plan for the future. We couldn't afford furnished flats and so took one of three rooms in an ancient dilapidated *hotel particulier* dating back to the XVII century and still standing in 1970 on the Grande Rue de Sevres.

We were on the second floor and the main room was high ceiling-ed with nice white *boiseries*. Mother had a room behind and I a rather large one on the side. The back of the flat was actually a basement and the owners garden climbed up the hill. In this basement was the kitchen, a space where a bathtub was placed and a nook, originally intended for the maid but which she occupied only for a few weeks until a room was found for her in another wing of the large building, as there was really no room. The bath was a contraption which may seem strange to readers today. It had a double bottom and was filled through a rubber hose from the kitchen sink. We had only running water, cold of course. Then a row of gas burners were lighted under it and when the water was warm enough the gas was extinguished and one could bathe. A pumping contraption activated by the faucet in the sink emptied the bathtub. I would have my bath in early morning before leaving for town, an hours trip by tram and metro, then later on Mother would have her bath. In early evening Irene and Serge, who occupied a small apartment on the same landing with their mother and a harridan of a *Mademoiselle* (governess) whom they hated and who hated them and whom Katia could ill afford on her meager salary in a dressmaking establishment and her allowance from Stifter. But this person had to be kept as it was the proper thing to do. They would come over in their bright red dressing gowns. After visiting for a while, they would take their baths into which poor Katia would then plunge with relish. Mother took up artificial flower making out of leather, silks and any material to match dresses. Some of her wares went to the dwindling dressmaking business of Aunt Alia beset by financial crises but still holding together and she also sold some in other stores and to private people. She made, in particular I remember, a whole dozen large white lilies in satin and leaves also for a decorator, I believe. She made at times quite a lot of pocket money which



she dutifully spent on cakes for the children at a shop conveniently located at the Porte de St. Cloud.

I continued to see many friends, but in a much less formal way with mostly intimate parties and dinners from which one or the other, already owners of cars, would drive me home. To this period dates my crush on Ginette Trarieux, a very pretty, vivacious and amusing, half but only half Jewish girl, whose father, son of the famous French statesman of that name, was the racing correspondent for the Figaro and a bounder. We got on quite well and he dedicated his book on horses to me who was still working at the Exchange, "*A Alec Berline qui comme moi aime mieux la vie que la bourse*" (*For Alec Berline who, like me, prefers life to the stock exchange*). Ginette was what at the time was considered rather fast but we certainly never went 'all the way'. Ginette had a large family, mostly Jewish, and one of her first cousins, Antoinette Kahn, was Philippe de Gunzburg's first wife and mother of his children. Lucy was living at the time on the Rue de la Muette and fearing that I would lose touch with my friends gave a weekly *cinq a sept* (tea party) for them. There were quite a few pretty girls, Ginette, Margot, Fanny Pereire and also Eliane Louis Dreyfus who after her marriage to a hero of World War I, Jacques Heilbronn, a crazy unpleasant man and after a quick divorce had married her great love of Villers days, Tony. Lise de Baissac, Madeleine Bernard and an assorted group of men, no longer boys, would get together for sandwiches, Porto and small talk in the nice elegant atmosphere Lucy always surrounded herself by and then disperse for dinners. With George away on business trips and nearly divorced from her it did suit her also to have a presentable brother and his friends around in the highly critical society of Paris in those days. I spent quite a lot of time with Ginette and our mild flirtation was going strong until one day when I came to pick her up I found her grandmother waiting to look me over. A real coward, I fled miserably.

In the meantime Lazard Freres had started financing Citroen and had placed one of their trusted men, little Czamanski, a former director of old Kamenka's Azoff Don Bank, as financial watchdog and the still famous in 1970, then young partner Andre Meyer on the Board. Well, to make a long story short what with the introduction, the friendly recommendation of his brother who was the father of two of my good friends, Louis and Yvonne Citroen, and other decent references, I got a really good job in the International Division. Lucy always maintained that Mr. Trarieux who knew Citroen who was a heavy gambler on horses and who favored me as son in law, also put in a word for me. Well anyway, I was embarked on another glamorous period of my working life which was to last about seven years and finish, for no fault of mine, but because of Citroen's personal ambitions, megalomania and extravagance, in near bankruptcy of the firm and my being out in the cold again. But that was years ahead and now I was making decent money, doing an interesting job and working for several men who were to become excellent friends. Jean Guillet was the nephew of the director of the prestigious Ecole Centrale and a crazy esthete but quite a nice guy, with advanced tuberculosis of the bones, no business man but a brilliant *causeur* with whom we became quite friendly and then Roger Nathan, an exceptionally brilliant and interesting self made man of modest extraction who was to make a brilliant career at the Ministry of Finance although only a *Normalien*, save the Belgian gold stock from the Germans in 1941, survive the war in France in hiding, become one of the heads of the Ministry in the late forties, *Commandeur de la Legion d'Honneur*, go into private business with much less success and die leaving his widow Georgette Pfeifer, very well off. At the time Roger was a somewhat eccentric man, playing at being an absent minded professor but performing brilliantly. There was young Weygand, the son of Foch's famous Chief of Staff, later himself last commander of the French army at the time of the debacle.

Brissaud Desmaillet, the son of a general who had the distinction of having introduced the BMC (*Bordels Militaires de Campagne*) into the Army in 1915 and was an amusing young SOB and also Czamanski's youngest brother who was charming with me but, of course, when things got difficult, let me down badly to save his own skin. And I don't blame him with Louis Citroen lurking in the background in another department. My job was directly under the retired Colonel Henry of the II Bureau, but not the Dreyfus Affair one, who was a conscientious, hardworking man with whom I got along well, as I was to with several others of the same type in the States.

I was making enough money to hire a taxi to take me to the office on his way to work every morning which made life easier. I was able to buy some decent clothes, a few things for the apartment which we had furnished for a total of some 5 thousand francs, 25 to the dollar - mostly with amusing rustic furniture picked up in small antique stores in and around Orleans, with Madame Schumann. In particular six very attractive chairs with straw seats and the royal coat of arms, the Lys, on the backs from the kitchens of Chambord which Irene inherited from Mother and for which I paid exactly \$1.00 each.

I used to lunch every week at my Uncle Tolia's who lived with Aunt Mania in a small *pied a terre* which they rented from a Princess Poniatovski on the Rue de Rivoli, high up, under the roofs with a view of the Tuilleries Gardens. It was decorated in a style fashionable in 1913 with lots of frilly materials, cushions, and tables, excellent prints on the walls and a curious *canape* in the tiny entrance hall which could open up into a bath. Uncle was slipping from bad to worse and spending his days at his club trying to win enough to keep up this existence. Then one day I had to phone to put off a luncheon. On that same afternoon I was called with the information that he had shot himself in the Tuilleries Gardens and would I identify the body.

There were, in those late twenties, two Orient Expresses. One, Orient from Paris via Munich to Vienna, Budapest and beyond. The other, more fabulous from Paris via the Simplon to Venice, Zagreb, Belgrade, Sofia and then to Greece and Turkey. The Simplon Orient. Both were no longer composed of shiny wood *wagons lits* but were blue with gold trimmings. The restaurant car had retained it's unbelievably thick pale grey-blue plates, cups and saucers with the elaborate W.G. monogram, heavy crystal wear and ornate Christophle knives and forks, heavy gleaming white damask table cloths and starched large napkins which most of the fat oily Armenians stuck under their chins. My first trip took me to Vienna and Prague, the mountain scenery, particularly in Austria, was gorgeous and when decades later a Viennese refugee enthusing about spectacular California views sadly murmured "if only there was a little Baroque or a Schlosslein..." how well did I understand him, for the landscapes came alive, acquired a cozy charm when one glimpsed among the firs, the onion shaped steeples of the village churches or high up on a rocky crag, the stark ruins of a Medieval castle. I enjoyed the long hours of slow rocking motion, the sudden fleeting lights of tiny stations streaming by in the dark, the outlines of the dark mountains hardly visible on the background of the star studded sky. The little lamps shed a warm, golden glow and the flowers on the tables, among the tiny bottles of wine and the quarts of Evian with their pink labels, looked artificial. Food was generally reasonably good although the cream soups were heavy and as one proceeded through the Hungarian *pustza*, the goulash was too spicy. What really created the atmosphere were the conductors in their dark brown uniforms, black trousers and lots of gold braid on their kepi style headdresses. They knew everything, everyone, spoke all the languages with that universal Balkan accent and, if properly tipped, could and would get you past customs and frontiers without trouble even if you happened to have, like I did, a Nansen passport of stateless refugee.

Just before reaching Vienna one passed close to a XVII century great convent, its windows barely shedding light and the curlicues of its Baroque plastered walls shedding strange shadows. Vienna was no longer the capital of the Empire but its wide avenues, its formal Prater where I imagined the Aiglon had ridden his thoroughbreds among the plumes and uniforms, was still very elegant and had a more intimate charm, even then my beloved Paris. I worked hard at the financial arrangements for the new Citroen branch but did do my best to take in as many of the sights as I could. I stayed at the Imperial, which was a former embassy with a grand hall and a sweeping wide staircase over which an Emperor Franz Joseph, in glistening white uniform looked down on the potted palms, the thick Persian rugs, deep leather armchairs and innumerable uniformed bell boys scampering around, from his elaborate gold frame with a sad *hauteur* (*arrogance*). The dining room was presided over by an infinitely old and doddering *maitre d'hotel* with a shiny completely bald head and with his black tails hanging from his stooped shoulders as from a clothes line. He spoke in a deferential whisper, which added to his strong Viennese accent and my rather inadequate knowledge of German, made communication difficult. I was told that he had served all the Arch Dukes and German petty rulers and had been a special favorite of Edward VII. I went to the Hoffburg, was duly stunned by the fabulous Velasquez, fell in love with Rembrandt's small portrait of his mother and was overwhelmed by the intricate wrought iron gates with their flowers, bows, crowns and ribbons shining black under the high arch. I discovered the Albertina and Durers, new to me, not the etchings in their Gothic black and white intricate interwoven lines but the deliciously warm colored masterpieces, (the bouquet of violets, of which I bought a print then recently issued from, so I was told, original plates), the adorable rabbit. I browsed as long as I could over the great albums which an old liveried retainer would place on high shiny tables for visitors to

examine and admire. I wasn't very impressed by the cathedral, coming as I did from the country of Chartres, Bourges, Orleans and Amiens. I went down into the dark crypt of the Hapsburgs. In the dim half darkness, the disorderly collection of elaborate tombs felt cold to me but the rather simple stone with name *Reichstadt* and, to my amazement, a bouquet of fresh violets thrilled me. I drove out to Schoenbrunn and walked the long, high ceilinged salons with their elaborate gilt sculptures, the XVII tapestries, particularly one of glowing pink background with oval plaques of richly dressed personages amid Baroque ribbons and bows. The view toward the Glorietta, Prince Eugene's palace, high on a hill in the distance, was breath taking. The Rococo grandeur reminded me much more of Tsarskoe than Versailles. I was duly impressed by the camp bed, simple night table and austere desk which had been used just ten years earlier by Franz Joseph. I took an excursion through the Wiener Wald in a horse drawn *charabanc* (*wagon with benches*) with an old coachman who drove us as far as a small hunting lodge of Meyerling where he explained that Crown Prince Rudolf had killed the Countess Vetsera and committed suicide. He maintained that he had often driven the Prince in his *Droschke*, when he was a young coachman. Whether that was true and the song he sang to the small group of tourists in the yard of Meyerling, was really Rudolph's favorite, I have no way of knowing.

The local Citroen agent invited me to dinner at Sacher's where I sampled the famous tart and I went to the opera to see a new performance of a *Night in Venice* which was lavish and the music and voices were really so much better than in Paris. I also went to the small Theater an der Wien. An exquisite little bijou of a hall and the foyer like a salon of some small palace with lovely Louis XV gold armchairs, portraits on the walls and flowers on the side tables reflecting in the high mirrors. I believe the play was *Leinen aus Irlands* (*Linen from Ireland*) and I understood very little but the acting was quite as lively and good

as on the Paris Boulevards. I also saw an opera in another less elaborate theater and on the whole managed to enjoy my visit and conclude the rather intricate deal of insuring Citroen's loans to the agents in Austria rather well. I remember spending a long morning in the waiting room of one of the main 'Herr Direktors' of the then fabulous Credit Austalt which was to flounder soon afterwards in a world shattering crash. Two ancient *hussiers* (*ushers*) in frock coats with long gilt chains hanging around their necks, like *sommeliers* (*wine waiter*) were discussing in an inimitable Viennese accent their chances in a state lottery. The dialogue, which I hardly understood still rings in my ears and was worth all the amusing witty plays then being staged.

I believe that it was on this first trip that there was a Pen Club convention and most great authors were staying at the Imperial or the Bristol just across the avenue, near the Ring. Returning one afternoon late, I fell into an armchair and ordered a whiskey. At the table next to me was a group of elderly people, ladies and gentlemen, unmistakably English and one in particular with a fine chiseled profile and snow white hair impressed me. I inquired of the all-knowing *portier* (*doorman*) who the man could be and learned that "*Das istd der berühmte Englische Galsworthy...*" pronounced with Austrian accent. I had just read the *Forsyte Saga* and could hardly believe my luck.

That time I stayed just over a week and took the overnight express to Prague. The capital of Czechoslovakia had a homely charm that I adored. I stayed but a few days although I did manage to climb up to the Hradschin Castle, roam the narrow streets of the old town, visit the small dingy old synagogue, the oldest in Europe, more of a vaulted basement than a temple, and look at the famous cemetery with it's disorderly mess of tombstones and their Hebrew inscriptions, over 500 years old. The local agent, who also represented Rolls Royce, took me to Margarete Insel where we dined listening to *tziganes*, not the

Russian style ones but the Hungarian, with singing sobbing violins suddenly bursting out in wild abandon. The girl, a young dark eyed pretty creature with an excellent figure, good legs and a radiant smile. She lived in a small room high up in an old building in the old city and the stairs squeaked ominously as I crept discreetly out into the morning darkness and off to my hotel on the Vencesplatz. I lost my way and started to inquire of passers by. Choosing older ones I asked for it in German, knowing well that they had all gone to school in pre war Austria and had to know the language, only to be met with stony stares. I finally broke into Russian. The response was friendly and helpful and although the language are very different, the roots of many words are similar and understandable.

I returned to Paris very proud of myself, bearing innumerable gifts to the family and having saved quite a bit of money from my per diem allowance. Among other things, I redeemed one of Mother's rings from the pawnshop, the least valuable of course. The one with pearls which Mummy wears to this day and which Mother took off her finger and gave her when we came to announce our engagement in 1936. But this story lies ahead.

Although, chronologically, this does not exactly fit in I will continue about several other trips that followed this first one. The next trip took me, this time via the Simplon Orient Express, to Zagreb and then Belgrade and Sofia. This second trip was more exciting than the first. On the platform in Paris I noticed the tall, lanky silhouette of one of the younger La Rochefoucaults, very very cafe society, and his new wife, the actress Alice Cocea who, like so many Rumanians at that time, was taking Paris by storm. She was small, dainty, pretty and vivacious and behaved very *vicomtesse-like*, subdued and distinguished. The train itself was really the 'Balkan spy thriller' type. The first night I traveled with a fat old Turk but he snored so loudly and as I had had such a row with my colleagues at Citroen for having traveled 2nd class, I moved into a private



compartment which was so much more relaxing. The next evening as the train crawled slowly along the coast of the Adriatic, past the big white mass of Maximilian's palace mirrored in the quiet water slightly golden with the last rays of the setting sun, Alice Cocea had found a few noisy, flashy Rumanians and they were having a champagne dinner with all the boisterous abandon of the Eastern Europeans and she was singing and acting up in a way much closer to her heart than the restricted attitude of the Faubourg St. Germain. We had stopped off for an hour in Venice and I had gone out of the station onto the Canal to catch a glimpse of that unbelievable, Baroque theatrical scenery I had faint recollections of from 1914 boyhood.

I stopped off in Zagreb, still a very Austrian provincial town, with wide XIX century avenues imitating the Prater, a few rococo palaces and a brand new hotel just near the station resembling the Grand in Caboug in that style of the Paris XVI *Arrondissement (District)* that was so familiar. There were at least six red and white bell buttons at the head of the bed with elaborate figurines depicting waiter, maid, bellboy, *portier* and so on. I tried them all and finally went downstairs only to be told that it was planned to have them all connected but that, as yet, none had been. This was really symbolic of the Balkans of those years and I mention it in my frustration, as it impressed me and expressed the endeavor to catch up with the West so much better than statistics. I would find the same, frustrating childish effort again in Japan in the sixties.

It was in Zagreb that I had an amusing experience. There were two partners in the Citroen Agency: a short, Austrian Jew, I still remember his name, Breslauer, and a dark, sleek Serb, nephew of the Mayor of Belgrade and a flashy playboy with necessary connections. Together with them, my French colleague Arnaud and myself, had a long and difficult session. Then they spoke to each other in Serbian, outlining their scheme to swindle us. It was close enough to

Russian for me to catch a few essential words and I called their bluff. The dismay of Breslauer was funny to behold. He couldn't understand how I could catch on to every one of the vital points until, a few days later, I told him I was Russian born and he forlornly admitted that he hadn't thought of that possibility. Zagreb had little of interest for my tourist taste but I did take Saturday and Sunday to go down to Dubrovnik and roam the narrow Medieval streets under the great ramparts jutting into the Adriatic and dream of all the armies from Rome to Napoleon's which had fought there.

When I entrained for Sofia on another Simplon, I noticed at the end of the restaurant car a young, dark haired, very Jewish looking young man, with a huge nose, pale face and decidedly undistinguished. There were two older fat, typically Balkan men with him and a younger one who appeared to be a rather differential secretary. The table next to theirs was unoccupied and I was most politely shown to another one when I moved towards it. As we reached the Bulgarian border, a Serbian officer of high rank approached the group and saluted, then withdrew. The frontier was closed because of political tension between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria but the international express was allowed to go through stopping at the actual border to let off the Yugoslavian guards and pick up the Bulgarian ones. This time these were accompanied by several elderly generals, their red stripes and gold braid reminding me so vividly of Russian pre revolutionary uniforms. They all moved towards the group at the end of the restaurant car and saluted ceremoniously. Only then did I realize I was traveling with King Boris of Bulgaria, the son of the famous Ferdinand who I had seen lampooned so often during the early years of the war as he was an ally of Germany although a grandson of the French King Louis Philippe. This unprepossessing young man was to marry the daughter of the King of Italy and die mysteriously in his plane after a stormy visit with Hitler during the war.

Sophia in those days, had much to remind one of pre revolutionary Russia. Most buildings were like those I had seen in Moscow and even the better ones of Syzran on the Volga. They were also mostly rococo stucco two stories high, with ornamental windows. On the main square Alexander II, *Osvoboditel* (freedom giver) sat on his bronze charger. But here it was not freedom from serfdom, but freedom from the Turks that was commemorated. The large cathedral wasn't finished yet and the golden onion shaped domes, heavy Slavic architecture of the Russian church reminded me, in miniature, of the Cathedral in Alexander II's honor in far away Petersburg. The flags were the old Russian ones, only upside down. The soldiers, the tall policemen, wore Russian style uniforms. The inscriptions in Cyrillic and the words I caught from passersby had a familiar sound. I felt I was back home again and my mind wandered to so many many 'might have beens'.

The Imperial Hotel had nothing Imperial except the name. Its turn of the century grandeur was faded, the plush furniture threadbare but the food, although heavy and spicy, was good. The main legacy of Turkish rule were the innumerable tiny cups of sweet Turkish coffee that one drank continuously, a dozen or two a day. This led to a totally sleepless nights. Many decades later the ceremoniously served tea served everywhere in Tokyo at each and every appointment reminded me of those innumerable cups of coffee. Here I was to give the first important bribe of my career and I will admit it was with some trepidation that I sat down opposite the imposing city official behind his old fashioned desk. I had the envelope in my pocket and was wondering how I would pass it along. The man invited me to move up to his side and spread a map on his desk which we both examined. One of the desk drawers remained open. He then excused himself for a moment. I hesitated, placed the envelope in the drawer

and moved back to my chair. He reappeared, glanced into the drawer, closed it and concluded the interview promising the contract. That was all there was to it.

There are two memories of Sofia that stick in my mind. One rather amusing. There was a gala performance at the small opera which Ferdinand had built for the visit of some foreign royalty complete with the royal box surmounted by a crown. What the opera was I don't know but at one point, according to the program, the hero was to appear on horseback. He failed to make his entrance and the aria had to be repeated once, twice. Finally he strode in and began to sing when suddenly in a crash of hoofs the circus horse came charging across the stage with a stage hand clinging to its bridle. The corps de ballet was even older than I had feared and the prima ballerina could hardly raise her leg. She had been a royal favorite but it couldn't have been Ferdinand's as he was a notorious homosexual. I was taken by Citroen's local agent to visit the royal family villa nearby. It was an unpretentious place reminding me of the one the Schumanns had rented near Villers and which are so familiar to anyone who knows France. In the medium size salon with *antimacassars* on the chairs and sofas, there was an old grand piano and on it innumerable photos of royalty in heavy silver or gold frames with appropriate signatures, the only distinctive characteristic of the very bourgeois stucco, white unpretentious structure. It was situated near the famous valley of roses where the yearly crop of flowers for rose extract, then one of Bulgaria's main exports, were grown. The fragrance was overwhelming even in the open but at least bearable which I could not say of the smell of the extract itself in the small stores in town.

We had lunch at unpainted wood tables with benches. The alcohol was powerful and the spices literally tore ones mouth to pieces. In Japan, years and years later, I was to learn not to ask what delicacy I might be trying to swallow,

but here I was somewhat taken aback when I was told that what I had taken for *roggnons*, (*kidneys*) were sheep's balls.

The Sofia skyline which had been dominated for centuries by the minarets of several mosques was now overwhelmed by the mass of the new gleaming Orthodox Cathedral set in the middle of a vast square. I was in Sofia one Easter and it was there that I saw a real Easter procession, something I had missed in the great expanse of the squares around Saint Isaac in Petersburg. The crowd was large, nearly every man, woman and child held a lighted candle in their hands. Then the bells rang out, the great doors opened and the procession emerged, flanked by soldiers bearing torches. The Orthodox priests in their Byzantine robes, heavy gold gleaming with semi precious stones, the officers bearing icons and banners followed by high ranking officers and dignitaries in court uniforms with orders gleaming on their chests and among them my companion of a few days before now resplendent in gala uniform, high lacquer boots shining, striding slowly among his bodyguard, three times around the Cathedral before going back into the edifice. The symbol is that they are searching for Christ who has arisen and I remembered the shocked astonishment of Lovey, when this was explained to me years before and I asked politely "What would they do if they found him?" I sometimes, today, wonder if there wasn't something to my naive enquiry which I did not realize then.

During the following few years I traveled several times to Central Europe, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria. The Balkans were still either kingdoms or feudal dictatorships and life had changed less from the pre war period than in Western Europe. The tall minarets, women with covered faces in flowing robes, even an occasional fez, reminded one that these places had been until rather recently occupied by the Turks and an Oriental flavor persisted in the discussions at the different companies, unless it was the

unmistakable Hapsburg flavor, particularly in the new countries born after the war.

A few occurrences stand out. I can't exactly remember on which trip they actually took place but that isn't really important.

There was the midnight awakening at a small station in Yugoslavia when there was a terrific crash and even a few windows broken in the sleeping cars. I looked out (I had left mine slightly open so it wasn't shattered) and saw great confusion on the platform. The conductor politely explained that a bomb had been thrown at some official boarding the train. There were a few victims but the Orient Express would go on soon. With scrupulous regard for Mother's anxiety if, as I supposed, the news was splashed over the pages of the Paris newspapers, I went to the telegraph office early next morning at the first important station and wired her in French not to worry as I was safe and well. All the news was censored and she panicked, phoned Citroen who knew nothing either and phoned me in Vienna, quite a feat in those days, and I guardedly explained what had happened.

The trip from Sofia to Vienna took two whole days. From Sophia to Belgrade a long bumpy night and CIDNA, the original Air France, was advertising two hour flights between these two capitals. I needed a Bank guarantee signed in Belgrade to close a Bulgarian deal in a hurry and with some trepidation booked a flight in the early morning from Sofia and a return one late in the afternoon from Belgrade. The planes were single engine ones with four passenger seats in the cabin and one in the open, behind the pilot which, with a leather helmet and goggles I duly occupied. We landed from Sofia across the wide river at Zemoun which used to be the Austro Hungarian Empire's frontier town with Serbia and from which they had shelled Belgrade in the opening days of the war. It was now a sleepy little township with tiny rococo stucco houses,

very *gemutlich* (warm and friendly) and still very Austrian. We landed on the small grassy airfield and after a horse drawn buggy drive to the pier, took a small hand operated ferry boat across the wide expanse of muddy water to land under the old Belgrade fort. Its old ramparts still showed holes of many former cannon balls and the original bombardment of 1914. I was able to hold up the CIDNA flight from Vienna to Constantinople which anyhow usually didn't make it in one daylight flying and got back to a French Legation reception and a warm welcome and report in the local press the next day. From then on I often used planes. I distinctly remember one stormy flight from Budapest to Vienna, the Junker in this case seated six passengers in the cabin in a staggered line and with lightening flashing and winds howling enough to drown the racket that the engine and propellers were making, we were being buffeted quite a bit. I felt rather uncomfortable but was holding my own. Across from me a nice Victorian lady was discreetly vomiting into her bag and turning greener at each retch. She was getting desperate as I watched with fascination, unable to look away as her bag filled rapidly. Well I was a gentleman so with all the *sang froid* (courage) I could muster, I took my own bag, bent across and handed it to her with a bow. "Oh, thank you ever so much" she graciously murmured with a genteel effort at a social smile and handed me back her own bag full to the brim. This was beyond my efforts at restraint and I was immediately sick all over my coat front as I had no bag, dropping hers in the process. The Schracks, the nice Citroen agent couple who had come to the Vienna airport to meet me, had some difficulty in getting me cleaned up enough to take me to the hotel.

This was not the most memorable trip. The one that does stand out began uneventfully and we took off and flew high, 2000 feet above the Balkan mountains with the peaks towering alongside, when suddenly the motor, the only one, began to sputter and gave out. We circled a bit and then came down in a

field. I watched, fascinated as the trees bordering it approached rapidly until we hit them with a reasonable crash and the tail of the plane went straight up in the air, all the suitcases tumbling down on our heads. We extricated ourselves as best we could and stood forlorn in the field ankle deep in mud, under a lashing rain. We had landed in a restricted military area next to the closed frontier a few miles from Nish. There was a French pilot, a reserve Bulgarian officer on his way to Berlin, in nearly enemy territory now, myself, a stateless business man and an oily Greek with a very vague passport. After a short while a soldier with a long long rifle appeared and as I knew Russian and the Bulgarian kept discreetly in the background and silent. I acted as interpreter, explaining to the soldier that the "*aeroplan oupal*" (*the plane fell*) which was comprehensible in Serbian as the verb there was '*pal*' as I learned later. He motioned to the railway track a few hundred yards away where a small structure at a crossing was visible and motioned me towards it. So with my leather helmet still on, my umbrella open, attaché case in hand and an elegant city dark blue adjusted coat with velvet collar, my feet in thick shoes, I started off. After a few paces I realized that the soldier was stumbling along behind me with his gun leveled at me and duly cocked. I didn't relish the idea of being shot in the back if he should miss his footing and by gestures and Russian words parleyed him into leading our forlorn group. At the shack we found an old fashioned phone which the railway employee duly cranked to get to the next crossing and advise authorities that "*aeroplan pal*". To our great surprise about an hour and a half later an pre war vintage open car came dashing along the muddy road occupied by a very smart uniformed gentleman with large mustache who introduced himself as Chief of Police and invited passengers and pilot to come with him. An army truck was to fetch our luggage. We were to drive to Nish, rest at the local hotel, be his guests for dinner and board the Vienna bound Orient Express at 9 PM. By this time it was well past midday.



I was gratified but somewhat surprised at his kindness until I learned afterwards that the preceding month on a Saturday another CIDNA plane had come down and the passengers had been clamped into the local jail until the then Police Chief's return from a hunting expedition late Monday morning. By then the distraught passengers who happened to be the Belgian Ambassador to Turkey and his wife and some British or American diplomat, were mad as hell and chancelleries all over the place were searching for them. The local Police Chief, the Minister of the Interior in Belgrade had been forced to resign and our man learned a lesson somewhat in the style of Gogol's Inspector General and we were royally treated. The hotel reminded me of the one in Sizran on the Volga, near Auntie's estate, except that it was much dingier and had not been cleaned properly in preparation for our sudden arrival. I spent the ensuing hours on a wicker chair, bedbugs were clearly visible and avoiding the grey greasy bathtub. By seven we were fetched by the Chief of Police and taken to a dirty, pretentious restaurant. I was to remember it years and years later in Seoul, Korea. We were given a terribly spicy heavy greasy meal of mutton liberally helped down by 'slivovitz' - 100% alcohol. By this time it was 8:30 or close to nine and the Chief insisted that the Express was always late and we should go to the local cabaret. This turned out to be, of course, the best brothel in town and we were given a royal welcome in the plush salon. Among the over painted ladies was an old French whore who had landed there God alone knows how and we struck up a fascinating conversation. With tears in her heavily massacred eyes leaving long black streaks across her painted cheeks who reminded me of Marguerite Moreno, the old French character actress and the real original *Folle de Chaillot* (*Mad Woman of Chaillot*) whom we used to see every day wandering on the Place du Trocadero. She asked after Paris, if the old man at my favorite cafe, the Lapin Agile still sang his songs, did the Cyrano still exist and she spoke lovingly of the old Moulin

Rouge where she had danced the can-can or so she said, and had posed for "*ce nain de Toulouse Lautrec- il etait Comte vous savez...*" (*that dwarf of Toulouse Lautrec - he was a Count you know...*). Time flew, the chief had gone upstairs with one of the younger girls and I was getting worried about my train when a policeman arrived on a bicycle to announce that the Orient Express was due any minute. Madame refused to have the Chief disturbed and sent word to the Station Master to hold the International Express and have my luggage put on board. I was on tender hooks but my host came down beaming. I fondly kissed the old whore promising to drink to her health next week at the distant and unattainable for her, Moulin Rouge, and off we went in the car. At the station the steaming express was waiting with surprised anxious faces in several of the windows looking out to see for whom this unscheduled stop had been made. To the friendly waving of the Police Chief and Station Master, I got into my compartment, ushered in by an awed conductor and fell asleep immediately to awaken only many hours later in the Hungarian *pustza*. The conductor had avoided even the relatively easy formalities at the Hungarian frontier although my papers, including a letter of introduction from the Quai d'Orsay, (which was used as a diplomatic pass), complemented my stateless 'Nansen' passport. I wasn't an important person.

That particular trip was eventful even later. I traveled with bulging suitcases as there was practically no decent laundry service beyond Budapest and certainly no cleaners. So several suits, striped pants for receptions by Ministers and a dozen shirts were *de riguer (compulsory)*. After a few days at the Imperial I was ready to take the evening Orient to Paris, packed early, paid my bill and settled comfortably to a Scotch and soda in the deep leather armchairs of the elaborate hall. I was very pleased because I had had no trouble in packing the suitcases and the suitcases were easy to close. I was relaxing when to my horror

and the amusement of the several other hotel guests, I suppose, the maid and valet descended the wide marble stairs under the eye of Emperor Franz Joseph in his gold frame, carrying on large trays all, and I mean all, my clean linen nicely stacked which I had forgotten and their absence explained the ease of packing. It was now too late to open my suitcase nor did I feel like trying to push all that excess stuff in under the amused gaze of the porter, bell boys and guests. So the *portier* hired a second taxi and I walked the long platform of the Vienna Station to my compartment, past astonished group of travelers followed, as usual, by the porter with my suitcases and also an Imperial Hotel bell boy proudly bearing my shirts, collars and even pants neatly stacked on a large tray. It must have been quite a sight and I did my best to ignore the whole thing. I tipped the boy grandly and spent the next hour repacking in my compartment.

When we reached Strasbourg the following night I was still in a bad mood and when I was awakened by the French Customs insisting on going through all my valises I, in turn, using a long ignored regulation I knew about, forced the man to go all the way back to the station building and put on clean white cotton gloves before rummaging in my things. We was mad and the Express delayed but I gained my point. I was to be reminded of this when during World War II on my way from New York to Kansas City via Chicago, I found that I had been given one wrong suitcase. It developed that it belonged to some general and as I was traveling on the Vanderbilt at 125th Street, the conductor wanted to take it off. I refused to give it up until I had a written assurance that mine was following on the 20th Century, which took some desperate phone calls and a lot of excited and unpleasant comments from all the officials. But I got my way and on arrival at Chicago I went to the barber shop for half an hour and retrieved my suitcase from the 20th Century Head Conductor who, not knowing all the details, thought I must be very VIP and treated me accordingly.

The years from the very late twenties through early thirties were from a business point of view the most interesting and rewarding of my bachelor life. I was still in my twenties, working at an interesting job with contacts with quite important people aboard from Balkan Ministers, bank directors and insurance company management with the added pleasure of feeling myself an important envoy of Head Office at the Citroen Agencies I visited. My basic pay was good and expense accounts quite generous. I got into trouble with colleagues when I started out taking berths in 2nd class *wagon lits* and had to switch to a 1st class compartment to avoid giving 'bad' ideas to management. The group of inspectors was pleasant and interesting. I somewhat resented it when Uncle George joined the staff as his age, experience and connections were such that he had a privileged position but in another field. He also had to travel far to Brazil and South Africa, quite long trips in those pre air travel days and was away for months while I could still keep up my Paris ties between trips and, much more importantly, be with Mother and help her and the family in other, mainly, financial problems.

Here a short paragraph can be inserted about financial conditions of the family. After all the ready cash, Mother's jewels and so forth had been disposed of, The Petrograd Bank which had taken over from the private banking firm of Mawrikij Nelken in 1916, found itself with a few assets outside the country. The over half a million dollar check on the Citibank was not honored and for some reason, I still can't quite understand, part of the large forest holdings which had to be in one of the Baltic states were never given to the owners - partners in the Banking firm and owners of all shares in the bank- Father and Stifter, plus miscellaneous relatives. It was arranged that the foreign assets would be officially split between Father and Stifter with Stifter's promise to give Father his half when collected and that Stifter, a Polish citizen by then, would get the rights to the Herbi Keletz Railway some 300 miles long which was Father's creation.

He had obtained the rights to built it, the finances from foreign banks and was president. So, Stifter started a long drawn out negotiation with the Polish government. Strangely enough it was, at least Stifter so declared, satisfactorily complete in early 1936. In the meantime Stifter advanced a monthly amount, 3/4 of which went to Mother (her's Lucy's and mine) and 1/4 to Katia after some most unpleasant legal manoeuvres on the part of her family. These bordered on blackmail, which I never liked though all the rest felt that Stifter, who retained most of his foreign assets and earned money speculating on the Bourse and was still well off, should have been vastly more generous. Anyhow there was a meager monthly sum available to Mother, probably worth a couple of hundred dollars at present rates, 1972. When I was engaged, Stifter offered to pay out a lump sum or continue allowances and as he had collected quite a bit from Poland, increase Mother's for as long as she lived. This enabled me to collect my share in cash and pay off my debts and finance our honeymoon. What the arrangement was with Katia and her lawyer, Baron Nolde, who she had had named guardian of the children after some nasty legal manoeuvres, I never knew.

All this simply to explain that with my increased income, Mother's annuity and quite reasonable money she made and sold - flowers in silk to go with dresses Auntie Alia was selling at her store or directly to people she was put in contact with - and although most of this pocket money went for presents for Ira and Serge, things were looking up and with Lucy's help we moved into town to a *garconniere* Rue de Lubeck, a street leading from the Trocadero to the Place d'Iena. It was a bit expensive but very convenient and the three rooms were nice, with high ceilings and the street quiet so we could live on the ground floor pleasantly.

I still went to a few balls but mostly spent my free time with Tony and Eliane Schumann and their group, going for trips out of town, to shows or simply dancing to the BBC radio. They were auto mad at that time and the crowd was

composed of many famous racing drivers. Chiron, a world champion, Bouriat of the Bugatti team who was killed in a race, and several others. Eliane did a lot of riding at the horse show and also hunting in the forests around Paris. Her friends and admirers were mostly of the very exclusive French aristocracy, Salignac, Fenelon.

I believe that it was on one of my returns to Paris that I went for the only time in my life to Maxims. It happened that there was a large elaborate ball - I believe at the snooty Konigswarters - and we were having a rather dull time. It was New Years Eve. There were two attractive ladies, somewhat older than Georges Helbronner and myself with whom we tried to dance. One was a widow, Simone See, the other the wife of Henri Halphen (an uncle of the present Edmond de Rothschild), Beatrice. Her husband was outrageously unfaithful and a very 'gay blade'. He had refused to come to the ball and suggested that if his wife wanted to spend the evening with him, she could join him at Maxims where he was having supper with a few of his friends of exactly the same kind...Edmond Porges, Charlie Cahen d'Anvers, and a few others. The ladies decided to embarrass Henri Halphen and invited two bored, decently turned out young men who could not be considered 'gigolos' because of their social standing and background, to accompany them. We were thrilled at going to Maxims with two attractive and chic ladies on New Years Eve and for free. We got there shortly after midnight and the errant husbands - all were more or less inter-related - who were there with their elegant mistresses - Porges at that time was keeping La Brighton a rather distinguished woman with chic (I was reminded of her style by the Duchess of Windsor in later years) - and there were lots of famous *demi-mondaines*. Russian refugee beauties like Lady Abdy, and the Crown Prince of Kapurthala with his Russian mistress Sonia Papova, plus lots of the cafe society of Paris. The atmosphere was gay, chic and noisy and Halphen, after his first

shocked reaction gallantly arranged for a table for his wife and her friends and we danced until the early hours, consuming much ice cold, very dry and good champagne. Halphen had to leave with his wife and not his mistress that evening and must have been really mad at us, but we had had a night to remember.

The next day, New Years, I indulged in what now seems a completely ridiculous custom but which was still faithfully followed by young men of society in those years. Borrowing Lucy's car, dressed in a cutaway and a top hat (in later years they were replaced by a black jacket, striped pants and a bowler), I would make the rounds of nearly all the people by whom I had been entertained during the year. A few I would even visit for a short while, have a light lunch at Mme. Schumann's, spend a quarter of an hour sipping Sherry at Mme. Kamenka's and finishing with the home of the current 'flirt' where young men would gather after the strenuous exercise to drink Port, eat *petit fours* and discuss the latest gossip and scandals. Some of the larger houses had a list one would sign, like the Rothschilds on the Rue Saint Florentin, or the Perieres on the Faubourg St. Honore. Here there was always the thrill of being stopped by the *cordon (cord)* of police around the Elysee where the Diplomatic Corps was visiting the President, and saying one was going to the Periere mansion and being allowed to pass through. It seems unbelievable but at the height of my so called social existence these New Year's calls with calling cards deposited, one for Madame, one for Monsieur and if there should be a grandmother, a third one. These calls numbered up to 40. How I managed to squeeze them into an afternoon I can't say, but traffic in Paris was not what it is today and then there were a few cards that George Helbronner in particular, would leave for me while I did the same for him. It is really absolutely ridiculous when I think back. It was a Proustian atmosphere but then Proust had been dead only a couple of years when I was doing this.

The group of young men working at Citroen in those years was both interesting and pleasant. Some my age, some a bit older. There was Scriabine's younger brother who had headed the Russian Military Intelligence during the First War, Weygand's son, a bright but unreliable young man, Roger Nathan, a brilliant young man just out of *Normal* (the great university then), who was to reach a very high position at the Ministry of Finance, keep the Belgian Gold out of German hands, become *Commandeur of the Legion d'Honneur* at an early age and die in the early fifties. He was full of eccentric ideas which his brilliance forced the top brass to swallow and used to discuss Proust, Gide and their successors in striking short lectures in his office. I was quite close and on friendly terms with Louis Citroen, the big Boss's nephew. So we were allowed to get away with infractions against the rules. With Roger we would take a taxi at midday in summer and go down to the old decrepit Bains Deligny on the Seine, near the Chambre de Deputes, and bathe, but in private enclosures. Water was supposed to be filtered and I'll admit I never hit a dead cat or rat but as to pollution, well my survival makes me somewhat skeptical about much of the present fuss. There was a nice and amusing son of a famous General of World War I, Brissaud Desmiallet. , My direct boss, Guillet, who became a real friend, who was the nephew of the director of the Ecole Centrale, a sickly homosexual but an easy man to work for. Among the many interesting characters was a Captain Henri, nothing to do with the Dreyfus Case one, who was unbelievably efficient. This efficiency was to lead to one of my first experiences in business shenanigans and I might as well tell of it here.

I was in Sofia when I got a phone call, in those days something quite extraordinary, telling me to go to Bucharest in Rumania and check the cars in the Citroen warehouse of the local agent which he had pledged, with Citroen guarantee, to a local bank for loans. It seems that Henri had spotted in a request



for spare parts, the number of an engine of a car supposed to be unsold in the warehouse. I had to rush to the French Legation to get an introduction and then to the Rumanian one for a visa which was granted with raised eyebrows. There was a night train with an old, brown wooden *wagon* lits attached. I boarded it and was told by a greasy and obsequious *controleur (inspector)* that I was indeed lucky, the drawing room compartment had just been refurbished for HRH the Princess Eudoxia of Bulgaria who had been visiting her cousin the Queen of Rumania. It did indeed look shiny, the pink velvet upholstery wasn't too worn, the sheets appeared white and not grey as they should have in that part of the world. I decided to undress and slid under the blankets in my pajamas only to be awakened by innumerable bed bug and fleas so that I arrived on a Saturday morning in Bucharest in a vile temper. I was met by sleek agents and a junior man from the bank who suggested that we all go out of town for the weekend and have a nice time, the agent mentioning that his sister in law who knew French very well was delighted at the idea of meeting me. I insisted on driving directly to the warehouse where we found the bank seals intact. I insisted on having them broken. The bank official protested and I, posing as an important man from head office, which I certainly was not, would advise his bank forthwith that in view of his refusal, the Citroen guarantee was nil and void as of this very day. I had no right to declare this but my bluff worked and after several frantic calls to the bank, a V.P. arrived and we solemnly broke the seals and opened the door only to find a couple of cars instead of the twenty odd, supposed to be there. The warehouse was too large, so the agent had rented only half of it and the partition to close off the other half had been so made that it was easy to slide it and get cars out through the opening. The ensuing row was covered up, a senior man was sent from Paris and I returned to Sofia. I had been so shaken that I spent Sunday in my hotel room and I spent Monday on the phone and at the bank and never really saw

Bucharest or sampled it's night life which had the reputation of being that of a Balkan Paris. This experience stayed with me for life and my suspicion was always easily aroused, in Paris, New York and Mountain View, California, to say nothing of Tokyo in later years.

This pleasant existence and nice work lasted only a few years. Andre Citroen was the owner of the outfit and a great gambler. No amount of financial *leger de mains* (*slight of hand*) on the part of Czamanski could meet the demands of several million francs after an unlucky week end in Deauville and with debts accumulating, Lazard Freres, and their then young brilliant partner Andre Meyer, took a more and more active part in management. Citroen was a brilliant entrepreneur and also an engineer and had built his empire from a small machine shop. Production could not hold up to standards and the first B14 after the spectacular success of the tiny *cinq chevaux* (*five horsepower*) was plagued by bugs. Citroen had, in the early twenties, financed a new invention of *chenilles* (*caterpillar tractor*). It was the invention of the former chauffeur of the Tsar who had made these tracks - like those of tanks - to move the Emperor's cars over the snowy wastes during hunting expeditions in winter. He had been joined by a tall lanky energetic engineer, Haartd, who had helped him perfect the thing and then, in the early twenties organized an expedition from Algiers to Capetown, across the desert and through the roadless jungle. The fabulous '*Croisierre Noire*' had been a fantastic success, giving you, *en passant*, (*in passing*) an idea of political calm and security that reigned all across the Black Continent in those days. The excellent Russian painter Jakovleff had accompanied the expedition and his drawings of different types of natives from Berbers to Pigmies were brilliant. We somehow inherited the wonderful book published at that time with fantastic reproductions and which Uncle Fedia had subscribed to. It was Mummy's 21st anniversary (*birthday*) present to Dima and must be in his library today.

Well, after this success Citroen decided on a *Croisierre Jaune* from Arabia across the Himalayas to Peking. This met with insurmountable obstacles and in the mountain passes one of the two vehicles that had survived had to be left behind. At several points the remaining vehicle was completely disassembled and put together on the other side of the pass after it had been carried across in parts on human backs. Then the expedition was captured by a Chinese War Lord and Haardt reached Shanghai alone, sick and discouraged, to die there from some disease. The flop of this terribly expensive venture only added to the woes of the firm. Then the German III Reich started the commercial invasion of Eastern Europe and the foreign department fell apart. I did conduct a dozen new models from Paris to Dieppe to be loaded there for the official opening of English Citroen at Slough which was, of course, behind schedule. The cars broke down continually and had to be repaired on the side of the highway by flashlight while I kept Paris advised by phone, a feat in itself, and that held up the cargo vessel's departure in Dieppe. All this was being done very discreetly as the cars were supposed to come off the assembly line in the new Slough factory in the presence of French and British VIPs, a couple of days hence. After a hectic two days I finally got the cars on board and exhausted, went to the pier to take a dip before returning to Paris. I rented a horizontally striped bathing suit with sleeves, rather long pants buttoned up to the neck by two dozen buttons in front. The kind of suit I had worn some twenty years earlier but which by that time seemed more than slightly ridiculous. France still clung to pre war customs and would do so indefinitely. The mystic attraction of the '*Belle Époque*' dies - I still use the present tense today in 1972, slowly.

By that time I was fed up with balls and formal parties and much preferred outings like the one which we took around 1932, at Easter. In three cars, two Bugates and a Lancia, a group of about a dozen of us headed for the Midi. We

made it down to some small place on the Esterol Coast, still lovely wild and unspoilt by *camps de vacances* (*vacation camp sites*) in a day and a half. While Paris was still cold and rainy, we were met by warm sunshine and mimosas in bloom. We enjoyed two days of swimming. We had to do this in our underpants and the girls in their bras as we had no bathing suits. It was, as I think back, pretty innocent, no drugs, no alcohol and very little sex, except among the two married couples. We were due at our desks on the Monday morning so we left on Sunday rather early and reached Marseilles late morning. I knew of a small but very good restaurant and we all trooped in to have bouillabaisse. The meal was great but by the time we staggered out it was mid afternoon. We drove the night through and all met for an early breakfast on the Place d'Alma. From there I went directly to my desk on the Quai de Javel at Citroen's but did, I'll admit, very little effective work.

About this time I made one of my last trips to England before the war. In our *bande* there was a Jean Erembert. He was a cousin of Jean Herman, Tony's closest and oldest friend and related distantly to 'everyone'. This Jean had the reputation of being somewhat wild and unbalanced with a vile temper. I'll admit that with me he was at that time, always very attentive, friendly and nice. It was he who had lent Pierre and myself his Bugatti to drive down to Stella Plage for a week end with Mother. He was very much in love with Daria Kamenka and my close, nearly family relationship with her helped make visits easier. He was the first of our *bande* to dash down in his Bugatti from Paris to La Mardelle, the great distance of some 150 miles, just to have after dinner coffee with all of us, including Daria and then dash back again. I was also a great favorite of his and Jean Herman's grandmother, old Mrs. Mainz, who fed us scrumptious lunches once a week. Also in our *bande* were two English girls, one had become close friends of Madeleine Bernard, the Partridge girls. Their father was an antique

dealer in London and first Tony, then his younger brother Poulot, had a whirlwind flirtation with the younger one. The older, Marie, was a tall handsome girl still unmarried at about 25 and, as she had a French mother, eager to settle in France. When Jean's courtship of Daria fell through, somewhat on the rebound, he started to go after Marie. She was dazzled by the prospect of an easy life in Paris, among her close friends and with not bad looking Jean being charming, they became engaged. The wedding was to be in the little village near London where the Partridges lived and in the little local church standing on a typically English green. Jean Erembert was not that popular and talked me into coming over as his best man. My knowledge of English would help. We took the night train and ferry over with suitcases packed with a strange assortment of clothes: tails, white ties and all accessories, also a morning suit, cutaway and top hats and practically nothing else. In my case I was returning immediately and in Jean's, his mother was bringing over the suitcase with his clothes for the honeymoon. Just before we left Marie phoned Jean that no *douches* (*showers*) were available in those still just post Victorian days in London and we hastily bought one Jean packed in his suitcase. When we reached customs at the London docks we were at different ends of the hall. I under "B", Jean under "E". I heard him explain in a loud voice with his strong French accent that the somewhat strange assortment of clothes was due to the fact that he was getting married the next day in England and then he launched into a monologue on the Alliance which embarrassed not only the officials but the other passengers. Suddenly he called to me in French to hurry over to avoid something...his shrill voice dominated the hubbub of the crowd and all eyes turned towards us. Before I could move the Custom's Official was gingerly extricating the *douche* from the suitcase with an embarrassed, flushed face, and a monstrous guffaw went up from everyone around.

We reached the village in mid afternoon and while Jean settled with his mother and brother in the little local inn, I was put up, to save expenses, in the Partridges's guest room. Everything from maids in starched aprons and caps, to the old gardener and the still older family dog were 100% British. After tea there was to be a white tie dinner so after I had dressed I sauntered down and made my way into the library where the wedding presents were displayed. There were loads of them as the girls were popular and I started to pick up silver bowls, antique snuff boxes and even jewels to better examine them. Suddenly I realized that I was being closely watched by a rather swarthy man also in white tie, who came up to me and asked in a lovely Cockney accent who might I be. When I explained that I was the bridegrooms best man he apologized and added "you certainly don't sound like a Frenchie, Sir". As guests were gathering for dinner one of Marie's relatives started a friendly chat with me. We talked for a while, then she suddenly said "You are the bridegroom aren't you?" "No, I'm only the best man". "What a pity" she countered in much too loud voice. This was the second embarrassment of that event and was, looking back, to explain much later, quite a few unpleasant developments. The wedding went off very nicely, with the village choir singing lustily and off tune, the old Reverend making an elegant speech and the wedding party, all dressed up, winding it's way across the village green, past the thatched cottages with their multitude of flowers, in the sunny afternoon to the garden party. I left early, changed into normal clothes and with my two and Jean's two suitcases took the train for London to dine with a friend of Tony's and mine, Frank Hartley (born Hertz) a fat, very cultured homosexual, absolutely charming, always very attentive to Mother when he visited Paris, full of amusing gossip and a real art lover, at his club, the Royal Societies, of which Misha had been member. This brought back, I'll admit, unpleasant memories for Misha had left quite a large unpaid bill there when he left London and it was the

only one Father felt morally obliged to pay, however difficult, leaving the moneylenders, tailors and such, to collect as much as they could from the sale of Katia's jewels. I returned to Paris the same night after having on the whole, enjoyed the trip although I could ill afford even the ticket and insisted on paying my way. Living, as I was in a group of very wealthy people and with absolutely no money to spend I had to maneuver very carefully to avoid becoming a complete 'hanger on'. Tony and also Pierre had known me in the period of our affluence and as I had bailed Tony out more than once when he was short of cash, this had no effect on our relationship to say nothing of the fact that Tony was completely devoid of any prejudices on that score, but for many of the others I had to tread gingerly.

Citroen was having serious difficulties and the recently installed Nazis had started a drive for exports into the Balkans and were squeezing Citroen out. To cut a long, involved and often unpleasant story short, I lost my job. This was by no means pleasant and not an easy problem to solve as our apartment was already somewhat beyond our means. Jean Erembert's father had died and he had bought out his brother and was heading the family firm of transport agents. Langstaff (a very nice Englishman in Le Havre, living it up there with his Rolls and lovely house), with whom, probably because of my English, I was on good friendly terms. Jean very nicely asked me to join him in his firm where he had no one close he could really trust and explaining that a friend like me would be invaluable. Marie, with whom I was on good friendly terms, who adored Mother with whom she could come and chat about England, home, probably advised him to take me. With some misgivings I went to work in the ancient, dingy office close to the Hotel de Ville, in a dark street dating back to the Middle Ages but where the firm was making lots of money. I now realize that very soon Jean became insanely jealous of me, the 'what a pity' remark he might easily have

overheard must have rankled. His marriage was not proving easy and he was giving Marie a very tough and unpleasant time. I had a desk in an unbelievably dirty and clustered office, a roll down type. To give an idea of the modernization that had been made, every letter, every invoice, was placed in thick, black cloth volumes of thin paper with a damp cloth over it. These volumes were then placed in a heavy, large XIX century press and the handle was turned, not mechanically, After 15 minutes the letter could be taken out and it's copy would be imprinted on the thin page of the heavy volume to form daily archives of the firm's activity.

I was slowly learning the transportation business when early in the game one of the steamers chartered by the firm had trouble somewhere in the lower Danube. I warned Jean that in those regions the ship could be locked in for winter by ice and storms. He took my advice badly and when a week or so later I proved right and he had to take off for the Balkans to cut the losses, he made a violent scene. Upon his return he was more and more violent and I was taking all this very much to heart. I began to have violent pains in my stomach - this was about 1933 - and turned to a lycee friend of mine who was finishing his medical studies. Portu prescribed some ghastly bad tasting magnesia and also drops of *belladonna* that stopped pain, asking me to cut down on drinking. I was going through a very hard time at the office where Jean was brutally rude, worried stiff about finances and drinking a bit too much to keep my spirit up. Finally I collapsed and went to consult Wallich, then Fanny Pereire's husband. He put me to bed on a milk diet for a month, the first of what was to be in the following 30 odd years, a regular occurrence. I lay in my room, feeling very feeble but with pains subsiding. Every late afternoon friends used to come to sit on my bed and brighten my spirits. Some years ago I found, but have discarded since I believe, the calendar where I listed those who came to these hour or so gatherings: The Tonys, Madeleine Bernard, Lise de Baissac, Jacqueline Schweitzer, Louis Citroen, Jean Herman



and quite a few others. After about three weeks I was convalescing and anxious to see my then very attractive, somewhat mysterious German girl friend. So with Aunt Alia's connivance, as she lived in the same small hotel, we contrived that Mother would go out for the afternoon and A. would come and visit me. Mother left and soon thereafter there was a ring at the door. I was in my dressing gown and hurried to open it. There stood Mummy with imposing Pop's white beard as background, who had come, not knowing I was sick, to invite me to dine as Mummy was on one of her trips from Amsterdam and I was one of the two young men Pops tolerated, the other was her distant cousin, Robert, now de Gunzburg. I had to explain the impossibility and while we stood chatting for a moment in our little hallway I was on tender hooks that the lady would appear. Not that this would have been a tragedy, but I didn't know Mummy as well then and was, like everyone else, somewhat awed by her imposing old fashioned father. Luckily they left soon with friendly regrets and wishes for a speedy recovery and the lady appeared nearly immediately.

I notice that I have been writing mostly about myself and my life, and some of the events of those decades that might interest you. In those days there was neither radio nor much less TV to make national figures familiar and it was a thrill to see one somewhere if only for a second.

When we lived on the Rue de Lubeck we had as neighbor the Marechal Frenchet d'Esperey and I would often see the old, old gentleman with his ruddy complexion slowly emerge from his house, usually supported by an ADC, and painfully get into his antique car. He was more often than not in uniform. His car, (unlike the tall spindly Rolls, closed shiny *coupe de ville* (town car) of Clemenceau, which one saw in the very early twenties in the Paris streets and which was a gift from the British government), was an old fashioned Renault. I remember watching on the Rue de Rivoli, above the heads of the vast crowd, the

funeral procession of Foch, the six Cardinals following each other with their attendant Monsignors. The innumerable cushions of orders and medals preceded by a French, British and Polish soldier, each carrying his country's Marshals baton. Then I missed the French President but caught a glimpse of the tall King of the Belgians in khaki, and was lucky to see for an instant the tiny figure of the Prince of Wales under his immense Bearskin, tottering along. Paris was full of rumours that he was still so drunk that morning that he could hardly walk. I wouldn't have been surprised it was simply the weight of his uniform and the exhaustion. I had glimpsed him some weeks earlier, bronzed by the sun, a tiny spry figure emerging from Cartier's on the Rue de la Paix and practically running into the open door of his shiny car. After his abdication he had a couple of his cars shipped over but as their British number started with the three letters 'CUL' he had to have the *plaques (license plates)* changed. I watched the much less impressive but enormous funeral of Briand, picking out Chamberlain (Austen) in his shiny top hat and monocle and the mechanical silhouette of Stresemann.

After my illness Louis Citroen was so incensed by Jean Erembert's treatment of me that he had his uncle arrange for me to rejoin Citroen in the domestic department. I came back Quai de Javel and was sent very quickly to Caen to review the financial operations of the local agency. An embarrassed phone call from Louis called me back in a hurry. Management would not confirm the decision of the tottering boss and my hiring was cancelled. Louis wanted to pay my salary out of his own pocket but this I refused. I'll admit that my spirits hit a low. I sat for a long while at the Batignolles cemetery at Father's gravestone, wondering what I was to do next. Thinking back on the rosy past of the childhood and youth and the grim last years. Another friend of mine, James Hauser, whose father owned a chain of food stores and wine stores in and around Paris, originally organized by his university friend Doctor Henri de Rothschild, as outlets for

selling at cost, fresh milk otherwise unavailable to the lower income families in Paris the organization had grown to the chain of stores selling all milk products, eggs, canned goods and new items every week.

My first job was a hard one and only modestly paid. The working hours were from 7 AM to midday when the stores closed until 6 PM to remain open for two hours or so. My job was to make constant rounds of some twenty stores carrying a heavy leather bag. This bag contained the record sheets of sales of each store which had to be collected every few days together with the accumulated receipts and all of this brought to the office twice a week to be checked and money deposited. While in the store the large milk containers had to be sampled to avoid the saleswomen adding too much water to the milk. If they had too much unsold milk they were docked for it and if there was not enough, it meant missing sales, so the temptation to water the milk, particularly just after the visit of the inspector was great. Most of the stores had ice boxes, but in really hot weather the ice had melted by mid afternoon and there was also the extra income from the sale of ice on the side. There were a few old fashioned stores, mostly in the suburbs or poor districts which had only a counter and no ice box which made keeping milk, butter, cream and cream cheeses, a specialty of the company, quite a problem in summer. As there were office meetings rather often and the stores, at least those with good saleswomen, closed as late as possible, the regular day was from about 6:30 to at least 8:30 with just about an hour for lunch. It was hard work, walking the rainy or hot streets but it gave me the opportunity to know Paris at first hand, and not only the elegant XVI or the aristocratic VII *Arrondissements*. There was a store on the legendary Rue Mouffetard, it's open air counters brimming with smelly foods, fish, vegetables, fly covered hunks of meat and crowds of ragged people, characters straight out of the Middle Ages or at least the XVII century after which the street had hardly

changed. The fat '*maitresses femmes*' (*dominating superior women*) calling their wares were the direct descendants of those who had marched in a ragged column all the way to Versailles to haul back Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI and then watched the guillotine in action. There were stores on the crooked small streets of the Quartier Latin where I could imagine the Bohemian artists wandering a century earlier. I used to pass by the Shakespeare Bookstore giving it little notice and too tired to stop. I might have caught a glimpse of Hemingway or some of the others if I had but known. Sometimes I would make a detour by the quays and even though I was in somewhat of a hurry and with little money to spare would look into the boxes of the *bouquinistes* (*dealer in second hand books*). I still have some of my miscellaneous finds picked up for a few francs. The best buy was a first edition of *Les Plaisirs et les Jours* (*Pleasures and Days*) of Proust with it's fancy illustrations for which I paid 10 francs and gave to Tony's mother one year. And I really don't regret it. Worn out I would stop off at a favorite cafe and have a cup of coffee and a croissant as I watched the students saunter by gesticulating energetically, the distinguished old retired generals or civil servants in their black suits relieved only by the little red ribbon of their long coveted Legion d'Honneur. I would stop in front of some old facade, grimy and dark with it's columns, statues and high windows bespeaking of much more brilliant past and let my imagination carry me away from the dreary job of counting the several hundred francs, noting vital missing items on the shelves, sampling milk, clearing wormy Camemberts from the counter and looking, and often finding, cockroaches behind the cans of Libby's Pineapple.

Mummy came to stay in Paris about this time although by then I had graduated from *Inspecteur* to *Inspecteur General de Section*, had a couple of hundred stores to watch and a half dozen or so poor guys trudging the streets with the bags while I drove from one store to the other in a little Peugeot two seater,

greenish brown with a top that I couldn't open. It was a good second hand buy and after putting all my savings into it, I still lacked about 1,000 francs. I borrowed them from Madeleine and Michel Bernard's mother, the Tante Jeanne of Tony and his brothers, a nice but not very bright lady much maligned by her brilliant scoundrel of a husband who although a great success in business and the only Jew in the prestigious *Commite de Forges*, was always short of cash. The family tried desperately to get a divorce for Jeanne before her mother passed away so that at least her large inheritance would be saved. The Lehman collection of Paris went for well over twenty million francs (at 5 to the dollar) and Alice, Jeanne and their brother Georges Lehman kept the cream of the collection . Georges in particular, several Rembrandts, although the Schumanns got the Ter Borch which I still remember, small on it's *chevalet (easel)* in the library and which went at the Schumann sale years later.

The little car which took me on my now extended rounds was nicknamed *Double Creme* after a small cream cheese which was the Laiteries Hauser's best selling item. This little car took me on week ends to the Touquet in later years, for drives in the Bois with Mother and also for drives with Mummy during what was our first engagement and then later on our second and definite one.

As I was saying Mummy was in Paris at the time living with Irene in the *garconniere (bachelor rooms)* on the Place des Etats Unis in Uncle Pierre's and Aunt Yvonne's house, a few blocks away from our apartment on the Rue de Lubeck. Mummy used to come to dinner which Mother usually cooked herself as she had developed into an excellent cook, always saying that if she had known that there was so little mystery in preparing good food she would never have allowed herself to be awed by the chefs in the old days. We would then wander slowly back to the Place des Etats Unis talking of the past and of the future. Mummy left for Amsterdam and came back. This was in early 1934 and Philippe

was by then living in the *garconniere* and had Mummy, Irene and myself to dinner. We had always been good friends and the fond memories of his eldest sister Beatrice lingered. After dinner we heard rumours of disturbances on the Champs Elysees and with memories of the exciting days of 1917 still fresh in my mind, I talked Philippe into going to watch the events. We reached the crowded avenue and moved slowly toward the Place de la Concorde. Then we heard shots and the crowd started to push towards the Seine while passers by struggled to get away into side streets. In the distance more shots could be heard and rumours literally flew from one group to the other. Not being, by nature a hero or foolhardy and with what I considered my experience of such events, I led Philippe into the safety of Fouquets only to find a few wounded lying on the plush benches and being cared for by the waiters and some clients, probably doctors. Slightly bloody napkins lay on the floor and we felt that we had had enough of it and walked away. This was on February 6, 1934 - the riot went down in history.

During these years La Mardelle had undergone many changes. The little candle lit, primitive house filled with rustic antiques had be remodeled. An exquisite little salon with lovely Louis XVI boisseries had been added as well as a large dining room seating over 30 with beautiful oak Louis XV furniture and a big living room with large comfortable leather armchairs and an iron wrought staircase leading up to the enlarged second floor became the main center of the place. We, former teenagers had grown up, many married and Tony and Eliane had brought a host of their flashy crowd with them. There was the very attractive Pitchoun Godet with her husband, editor of the *Auto*, the sport newspaper which sponsored the Tour de France, Detroyat, the most famous acrobatic aviator of his day who would buzz the house and land in a tiny field which we had cleared for him, soon to be followed by the small planes of Michel Bernard and Poulot. The older generation still enjoyed the privilege of the better spots in the shoots -

*battues* - among them Herbet, a diplomat and ambassador, Alphonse Lazard, Gandolphe, a power in the Administration of the Sarre region always full of amusing gossip. We still had our costume balls, somewhat more elaborate and as cars became both more numerous and faster, and also more reliable, we would drive farther afield, to a small lake to bathe, to Olivet to punt on the Loiret, famous for its mention in du Bellay's poetry and occasionally to Bourges to linger in the Cathedral. Perhaps the rustic simplicity was fading away but the care free gay atmosphere, the very un French hospitality, warmhearted and refreshing remained. Later on, in 1936, after the financial reverses obliged the Schumanns to sell the place I remember some of us got the news while we were together on Corsica. We had come by yacht and a few of the party had not known La Mardelle and couldn't understand why the sale of a country house where we had been going more and more seldom in recent years made James Hauser, Pierre Bacharach, Claude Baissac and me suddenly silent as if we had learned of the death of a friend.

Looking back, with an understanding which I didn't really have at the time I now realize that we were mourning the passing of our youth and something profoundly easy going which we had enjoyed there and on which in different ways, from very different vantage points, most of us would look back to with nostalgia.

Tony and Eliane had been going for the first part of their vacations to the family villa at Villers, which by then had been inherited by Pierre and which had witnessed years before the beginning of their romance. I didn't accompany them because I never got on with Pierre Louis Dreyfus and they didn't relish the situation of guests, not free to have around them both the few ever faithful really intimate friends and the passing amusing ones they collected and discarded. With memories of the two summers at Stella Plage during which I had gone to visit the

Kamenkas at the Touquet, I suggested we go there for a weekend. They fell in love with the place, it's lovely beach, the dunes and pine woods and horse riding and the friendly atmosphere of the casino owned by an Algerian, Aboudaram, whom they knew and who welcomed us royally. The next summer they rented a villa - *Heure Espagnole* (which figures on one of Mother's embroidered towels which I got for every birthday), and followed this up by buying a nice large one. This opened a series of spring, summer and autumn weekends at Le Touquet for me. We would drive down on a Saturday. Sometimes Tony would have a group of us driven down in his car while he came with Eliane by train, thus discreetly saving, for the more impecunious ones the cost of rail travel. The first Touquet summer I was still trudging the streets of Paris with my heavy bag, haggling with the saleswomen and occasionally with the clients, wives of small shopkeepers, charwomen and more picturesque Parisiennes made famous by the XIX and even earlier etchings, Hogarthian types, *tricotteuses* (*knitting women*) of the *Terreur* (*Terror of the French Revolution*) who would shriek and stamp, waving arms and insults against the exploiters and then straight from there plunge into the so called high life of those same exploiters, riding along the beaches, sauntering in the halls of casinos and watching the baccarat tables where thousand were changing hands. Later on when I had *Double Creme* which I have mentioned before, I would drive down myself. I remember in particular a rather amusing incident. For all its charm *Double Creme* was a rather banged up, small obviously second hand little car, and in those days that was important. One evening Eliane and her sister in law of that period as she later divorced her brother, were ready to go to the casino while Tony hadn't dressed yet. There was some beau of Eliane's waiting for her. I offered to drive them over in my battered little, dirty car. So in their dresses obviously of *grande maison* (*houses of high fashion*) and covered with quite a lot of jewelry, wrapped in expensive furs, the two very attractive girls whom



everybody knew on sight, squeezed into *Double Creme* with me and we drove off. At the casino we joined the impressive file of Rolls Royces, Hispanos, and other expensive shiny, mostly chauffeur driven cars. When we reached the imposing entrance, the impressive doorman waved me on to the end of the marquee where the unimportant people could discreetly get out and go in by some side entrance. He was dumbfounded when he saw the ladies getting out and came rushing over to help them and wave one of the attendants to take over and park poor little *Double Creme* in the exclusive enclosure.

There were many hangers-on, as there always are and it needed some diplomacy to retain self respect in a group whose incomes and budgets for a single day represented a year's salary for some of us. I did make it a point of spending one weekend with the Kamenkas which enabled me on that particular evening, when I would run into one of the Schumann's house guests who would invariably greet me with astonishment, saying he hadn't seen me either at the race course or dinner, to say I was staying with my family and thus emphasizing a degree of independence. Non exististant, in the States, in 1972, this aspect of existence in Europe still basking in the rigid class distinctions of pre World War I days, was important.

James Hauser's uncle who was manager of the company didn't fail to take advantage of my dual personality. I had several amusing incidents. It developed that the concierge of the Goldet's - she was a sister of Mummy's Aunt Yvonne de Gunzburg - had saved enough money to be a modest real estate owner on the side and proprietor of a building in the suburbs in which one of the stores was located. He lived in a very attractive part of the mansion on the Rue Dumont d'Urville, occupied by the Goldets. Some difficulty arose in the signing of the renewal of the lease and I was sent to get the man's signature. I dutifully rang the bell at the heavy shiny polished wooden gate and instead of crossing the courtyard to the

entrance, stopped at the elaborate *loge* (*lodge*). The man recognized me as a rather frequent guest and informed me that "*Ces demoiselles et Madame ne sont pas la*" (*The ladies are not in*). I then explained to him my mission and he was both astounded and embarrassed. He went into a long story and was all for putting me off when the bell rang again and Mme. Goldet came in from her morning walk with her younger sister, Lucie de Gunzburg whom I knew really well. Lucie was not one to keep back immediate reactions and instead of discreetly ignoring me, she said in her rather high inimitable voice "*Ah, Alec. que faites vous la?*" (*Ah Alec, what are you doing here?*) The flustered concierge quickly signed the lease which was lying on his table and shoved it into my hands. I smilingly answered "Nothing important, not even a social call, just a question I was asking the concierge in connection with my job in the Laiteries Hauser." I'm sure the concierge was much relieved and his welcome when I next appeared in tails and white tie, was particularly warm. Lucie waved at me and passed on without giving it a second thought and the concierge avoided embarrassing questions as to the source of his capital and probably disclosure of the usual *pots de vin* (*tip*).

I have mentioned previously Georges Helbronner, the well connected and rather impecunious young man, one of the four brothers, who was related to all the right people but whose father had died young and left a widow with a social position and not enough money to uphold it. This George after a first unsuccessful marriage with the daughter of one of the Ministers of the III Republic, Klotz, who was very wealthy and some rather unsavoury scandals in their private life, had divorced the girl and married the second of two extremely rich and extremely ugly girls of the upper Jewish society - Oppenheimer (The eldest had been palmed off on his elder brother.) She was not only really ugly but insipid, foolish and a snob. One evening in the glittering Touquet casino I

came upon a miserable George wandering desolate among the gaming tables. He had, and this was an exception for him, been even drinking heavily. He took me by the arm and led me to a small *canape* in the corner of one of the brightly illuminated halls and we sat down. Crowds of elegant, very scantily dressed but heavily bejeweled ladies and their escorts were moving continuously around us as George turned to me and looking at me straight in the eyes said "Can you imagine, I am cuckold." (*'Je suis cocu'* in French is much more alive and amusingly Feydau comedy style). I was, I admit dumbfounded. He went on to explain that things were even worse and that his wife had been having, before her marriage and still continuing to have an affair with one of his father-in-law's handsome young footmen. Luckily she was not pregnant, said George, and then explained his dilemma. His father in law had offered to give him, personally, two Boucher paintings that hung in the salon, as his property if he would forget the incident and also that the footman would be fired and sent abroad with a sufficient indemnity to have the matter forgotten. So poor George didn't know what to do. The temptation was great but some spark of conscience whispered that the thing really stank and was most unsavoury. So he was turning to one of his good friends, whose financial situation must have put him often up against difficult problems and who was gentleman enough not to splash the news over the front page of society columns, for advice. I tried to be diplomatic and finally evaded any answer. At lunch a few months later at the Helbronner's I saw two Bouchers on the wall.

Poor George was so sure that the close connections of his uncle with Marechal Petain would enable him to escape all anti Jewish regulations that he stayed on in Paris under the Nazis and with the help of his Russian, attractive girl friend, started a large and very profitable black market operation. This finally landed him in Dachau. There he continued to operate a black market and was

finally stabbed to death by a group of inmates who could not stomach his collaboration with the authorities.

This was the second time I had been asked for unusual advice. In my lycee days I was very friendly with a brilliant young Rumanian expatriate, Fainsilbert. He painted, acted extremely well in amateur theatricals and not only wrote excellent compositions in our French classes but read them wonderfully well. He even made a god awful portrait of me for which I sat when we lived Boulevard de la Tour Maubourg, heyday of our émigré existence. He came to me shortly after we had passed our Bachots and said that his dream had always been to become an actor and that the famous *Societaire* of the Comedie Francaise de Max was willing to tutor him, sponsor his career and believed in his talent. The only drawback was that he would have to go bed with this notorious homosexual. What was he to do? Again, I diplomatically shirked giving advice. He became a well know and very successful actor on the Paris boulevards. As a foot note, after the defeat, when we were visiting Pops and the Halperins in Orange, we saw in the newspaper that Fainsilbert was touring the region and giving a performance in what then was unoccupied France where he could still act under the as yet, not completely exclusive anti Jewish regulations. We went with Mania to see him and he gave a sketch of a vagabond which he had done after our graduation nearly two decades earlier with much of the same, I'll admit, excellent effect. We went backstage and had a nice chat. He came through the Holocaust alive but has, I believe, since died.

There are some aspects and insights into my life in the early thirties which will be of no interest at all to my grandchildren but as they for an important part of my life, I will jot them down for my children who might get a better idea of me. This was a period with deep contrasts as I have said. I had many practical problems and set backs, set backs in which I felt myself only partly responsible.

Our Rue Lubeck apartment, hurriedly taken in a period of relative good fortune, had to be abandoned for cheaper quarters on Rue Massenet and after the Citroen fiasco, the Langstaff Erembert fiasco the second short job at Citroen obtained by a fluke and lost in an internal struggle within the vast corporation, I had started again at so low a rung on the ladder that it not only appeared a defeat but gave little promise of real success. Mother's health was deteriorating and the modest earnings from artificial flowers which had helped keep her in pocket money were gone. Simultaneously the Schumanns had suffered a financial debacle. It was not to ruin them but they had to abandon the palatial duplex on the Boulevard Suchet into which they had moved from the spacious and pleasant apartment on the Rue Beaujon where we had spent so many many happy hours. The very generous New Years gifts from Mme. Schumann disappeared. In her eyes they been just presents similar to those she gave to her boys. For me those checks represented a substantial part of necessary income. The Tonys although still living on a very lavish scale were wrangling in the courts about Elianes' multi million inheritance and while some years earlier I felt no qualms at being their guest all the time, I now was a bit uncomfortable, hearing complaints about money and hesitated to accept things which earlier were of no importance, particularly as I was no longer so sure that I would soon be earning well and able to repay the many nice invitations I had accepted. In the then approved manner, Tante Alice decided that the best, most satisfactory solution would be a good match. I smile when I remember her long talks, advice and maneuvers which were to succeed so well with her youngest son Jacquot. She really loved and admired me and did her best to try and find me an acceptable bride. I was terribly touchy on the subject of money having had it in childhood, I was tempted by the easy life it could help create but despised it also with a deep disgust for all the compromises it spelled. In most cases Tante Alice spoke of me to prospective

mothers in law and only discreetly broached the subject. I evaded many an ugly heiress and their names would mean nothing today anyhow. I could not always turn her down cold and I'll admit that several of those she had in mind had their attractions. I was really fond of Yvonne Citroen but this was followed by a crush on penniless but very pretty Ginette Trarieux who had a crush on me. I only fled in terror when coming to pick her up one day I found her wealthy grandmother and millionaire aunt (mother, by the way, of Aline de Gunzburg's first husband Dede Strauss) there to look me over. Although I was quite taken with her when she phoned me at Auntie Lucy's one evening some time later to say she was engaged to Petit I snatched all the long stem roses that Lucy had in all her vases and dashed off to congratulate her. I had several pleasant outings and even a few interesting evenings with Jacqueline Seligman, (half sister of Jean Jacque's mother) and we enjoyed each other's company. I didn't realize that her lesbianism was a real reason for her backing away and I in any case I didn't relish the idea. When Jacquot Schumann was courting Henriette and fell in love with Aline, then unmarried, Tanta Alice had a long serious talk with me explaining that if Jacquot married Aline de Gunzburg, she would sponsor my *candidature* for Henriette who was one of the greatest catches of that time, not realizing that I hadn't the slightest intention of marrying money. In the background there always lurked a wonderfully nice and quite attractive girl, Lise de Baissac, Eliane's best friend, with whom we were thrown together constantly. Lise in a position somewhat similar to mine having had a luxurious childhood on the Island of Mauritius and after a couple of grand years in Paris in the twenties, was now penniless and working for a living. We were close and understanding friends and probably we loved each other although we were not really in love. It will seem strange in this time and age to think how completely Platonic our relationship was.

I had a sequence of girl friends and mistresses, of course. As I had no money at all the classical *petite amie* (*mistress*) so prevalent at that time, was not for me. Even though I could have run around with some of the more attractive *mannequins* (*models*) of Auntie Alia's dressmaking establishment and although I did have a fleeting affair with an attractive secretary as soon as I left the grain concern upon my return from Marseilles, I couldn't even afford the modest invitations which were an integral part of existence. There were a few married ladies discreetly courted but all except one was not in our crowd at all. Remember that the pill didn't exist at the time and I was panic stricken to be entangled in a paternity situation, naively so. At one point a very attractive Russian woman, Nina, whom I had met through my erstwhile tutor Popitch, then directing the Russian School in Paris, fell in love with me and we had a torrid affair. This was, by the way, I now realize in the mid twenties, as I came back from Marseilles several times to spend the night with her in Paris and it was with her that we got stuck in the aerial railway of the Art Deco World Exhibition on the banks of the Seine. She went to London, took up with an ex Imperial Guard Officer, had a baby whom her decent English journalist husband decently recognized. Nina returned to Paris, registered under a false name at the Hotel Regina Rue Rivoli, burnt all identity papers, covered her bed with lilies and committed suicide. It was only by a freak coincidence that the celebrated official doctor of the Ministry of Justice, himself was at the Paris morgue and recognized the unknown body brought there as that of Nina whom he had often met in society. This was several years after our affair but I'll admit it shook me up very profoundly.

So, by day I trudged my heavy leather bag in the dingy picturesque little side streets of old Paris, arranged cheeses on counters which I had had scrubbed by a reluctant saleswoman, listened to innumerable stories of woe which could

have come straight out of Zola and then in the evening or weekend, acted the young man of leisure and means. There was an attractive dark eyed friend of Eliane's a consummate horsewoman whose husband, a millionaire owner of a chain of department stores with political ambitions, with whom we had a short and very discreet liaison. Her husband probably knew it but was occupied elsewhere so I was invited to stay with them in their country place near Fontainebleau where he was trying to run for Deputy. We took a long horseback ride in the forest of Fontainebleau and I was reminded of the many solitary but refreshing rides I had taken there after my serious illness in the early twenties when we stayed there for the first weeks of my convalescence. Although I thoroughly enjoyed the company of Yvonne, and even more so the night after we returned to Paris together leaving her husband at his campaign, it was mixed with nostalgia for all that was now gone and that naive, slightly ridiculous, Lermontov inspired sentimental youngster, who had dreamed quite unrealistic but charming dreams a decade earlier.

By 1934 I had met again, after a long interval, a completely changed Mummy. She was no longer the impossibly fat giggling girl with unattractive clothes but a sophisticated, very attractive and enormously charming young woman, chic and distinguished. I had considered her more or less a childhood pal. I had a few, one of whom was Daria and another Katia Hirshman. They peopled scenes of gay and lovely childhood and I somehow in no way considered the possibility of marriage with them. This attitude changed completely when Mummy came to Paris in 1934 and we then, I really believe fell in love, or probably realized that we had been meant for each other. Mummy was willing to face all the difficulties of marrying a penniless refugee with a job that hardly kept him afloat and little prospects of future successes. Pops, on the other hand, was not at all happy with the idea and Fedia had mixed feelings on the matter. I



suppose, having known well in his youth my play boy brother, he was afraid I would not make a good husband. There could not not have been the disappointment lurking in the depth of his memories at Lucy's rejection of his proposal in far off Saint Petersburg, coupled with the inevitable complicated situation which would arrive if his sister were to marry the brother of his cousin's mistress. Lucy had by then an affair of more than ten years standing with Robert de Gunzburg. She and George, who was in Syria, were virtually separated. Robert was of course, a married man, brother in law of Fedia's Uncle Pierre and one of his bosses. He therefore invited me to his hotel room and gave me a stern lecture on irresponsible marriages when the bridegroom hadn't the means to support a wife. Of course, I should have been more discreet in my answer but I lost my temper and threw back at him his probable disappointment at having been turned down by an heiress in Saint Petersburg, reminding him that money had not been mentioned by my father nor had it when he had befriended Fedia and brought him back from New York in his suite on the Aquitania when Fedia miserable in the USA, didn't have the means to get back to his family in Paris. I mentioned that his apparent success in his career was due to family help and not merit and added quite a few nasty things. We parted more than coolly and I promised not to see Lia again. Looking back I suppose the poor man was under pressure from both his father and Robert who didn't want any complications added to those already existing in his life. I saw Mummy off to Aix les Bains, unfortunately some friends of the de Gunzburg family were on the train. And that was that. I turned to my extremely attractive German mistress of the moment, an adventuress who never explained her presence in Paris at the time and had stories of fantastic times in Berlin with white Mercedes and diamonds while living very modestly in a small hotel, the same one Aunt Alia had taken refuge in when her dressmaking establishment crashed. I think looking back, that

she must have been a member of the Fifth Column of those days which we all ignored and laughed away.

Unfulfilled ambitions, dreary days, hectic and unreal intermissions with my high living friends, worries and uncertainty made me want to escape to something different, to be a success somewhere, never mind where. I don't remember exactly how I met the master of the Scottish Lodge of Freemasons which was affiliated with the '*Grande Loge de France*', not the politically active and notorious Grand Orient, which had won the bitter battle for France from the church at the turn of the century. I joined the Lodge. I enjoyed the pomp and ceremony of the meetings, I didn't mind the secret rituals and at times childish exhibitionism. I searched for and found a warmly understanding friendship, moral support, values that were not monetary, a group of very diverse people from Russian princes to British commoners, people I could commune with without any reference to social position (mine was equivocal) job, fortune or anything else. Their gatherings refreshed me and at the Lodge meetings I could be myself. I rose rapidly in rank. I didn't become a Master but I did graduate beyond the third degree and would most probably gone much further if I hadn't married and found fulfillment and answers to most of my life's problems.

To avoid having Hauser saddled with a *Confederation du Travail* (the equivalent of CIO/AFofL), the company quickly suggested the creation of a company union. To management's surprise I was elected as one of the representatives of the saleswomen and found myself in the curious position of bargaining for employees against management while the boss's son and future boss was one of my closest lycee friends. I stood up for many reforms and earned the lasting hatred of many members of the management (in particular and recently hired outside man named Macari, who was to play a most unsavoury role under the Occupation) but remained a friend of James Hauser. The many stores used

to be open every day and even on Sunday mornings but after the *Front Populaire*, (*Popular Front*) the new laws required that the saleswomen get one day off every fortnight. This called for a complete inventory of the store at the beginning and the end of the holiday which was virtually impossible. I negotiated an agreement that if the saleswomen were in accord, in writing, to dispense with the inventory this would be acceptable. The arrangement worked saving everyone time, money and trouble. My last fight at Hauser's before I left for the army was to force management to shoulder a nominal, for the company, loss that had occurred during the absence of a saleswoman and during the presence of her replacement. I did win. There were official representatives sitting in and the vacations applied also to the affiliated farms from which milk was collected for pasteurizing and distribution to the stores. Thanks to ice boxes, milk could be kept for 48 hours and deliveries to stores could be suspended for a day and the city bred, official delegates suggested that collection from the farm could also be suspended. The question came up of what to do about the milking and in a very tense atmosphere, after several hours of discussions, one of the official delegates suggested blandly that milking should also be suspended for a day every fortnight. This broke the ice and in the general hilarity that met this suggestion from a city dweller unaccustomed to farming, I was able to suggest a complicated formula under which the requirements, inapplicable of course, could be conveniently buried.

My life was continuing at this time rather uneventfully, all considered. When I had a little money I would join friends and go to a show. Sasha Guitry in the *Amour Masque* with the then charming Yvonne Printemps, witty and brilliant. De Flers' *Vignes du Seigneur* with Boyer. I think acting an Englishman and saying but one word "oh..." but unforgettable. Sasha again in some comedy, a few good films including *Madchen in Uniform*, the Lesbian implication seemed very risqué to us. The *Blue Angel* with the unforgettable young Marlene Dietrich

and her husky sexy voice. I took Marina and Irene to Chaliapin's last season in *Boris*. I wanted them to have memories of those great moments. There were weddings, perhaps one or two balls where I dragged myself. There was quite a bit of excitement connected with Daria Kamenka's wedding to Jean de Cayeux. Tongues wagged about his *particule* and the fact that they had made art trips in a group without chaperons. How childish it sounds. Marina met Jean's best friend, Jean Jacques Falco, a dashing, slightly crazy, wealthy bachelor and he fell in love with her. It came as a happy surprise because Marina had not only lost one eye from an infection in a train many years ago, but also had scars from her auto accident.

This accident I don't think I have spoken of. Lucy used to spend the summer months in Hossegor, then a quiet little village, hardly a resort, in the pine woods near Biarritz. I used to drive them down in her car and then in autumn go down again by train, help them pack and drive them back. This particular year I was really busy at work so I suggested Lucy leave driving herself and I would come down and meet them in Limoges on a Saturday and drive the last few hundred miles. They would spend the first night in Bordeaux. I reached Poitiers in early evening, went out to buy flowers and awaited their arrival. Around six a phone call came in from Angouleme that two ladies were in hospital after an auto accident and according to information their destination had been the hotel in Limoges where they were expected. I was frantic. As I was with Citroen at the time, I got a local agent to lend me a car and driver. Trains would have brought me to Angouleme about a hundred miles away, next morning. When I finally arrived both Lucy and Marina were resting comfortably. Two of Lucy's dogs, Scotties, were with her, one had disappeared. After a day's rest we boarded the Sud Express which extended its stop in Angouleme, although the Queen of Spain's special car was attached to it. At the Gare d'Orsay, Pierre with Mother

were able to get through the strict *service d'ordre* (*police contingent*) set up for the Queen and we all piled into his Model A Ford. The doggie turned up at a farm some days later and was duly shipped to Lucy.

Marina was having trouble with her only eye and went with Lucy to see a great man in London. There followed several trips during which she underwent delicate operations without anesthetic which she bore with what i can only describe as heroism.

I remember in particular, one of Lucy's returns, alone. She had been blocked in England by raging storms. Hers was the first crossing and when the Train Bleu steamed into the Gare du Nord awaiting friends were allowed to go onto the platform. A couple of passengers were carried on stretchers. Lucy came staggering along and just as she reached me, really green in the face, her bag opened and everything fell out. We gathered it up hastily and got into a taxi. Lucy pale, moaning. At the Place de l'Opera she mumbled in Russian open the window and was violently seasick.

Jean Jacques after seeing the ordeal Marina was going through begged her to stop and set the wedding date.

It was the first close family wedding since 1914, over twenty years earlier. At the Mairie du XVI where I had witnessed so many similar ceremonies, I was one of the four witnesses. The only one without a Legion d'Honneur. There was Robert Falco, of the *Cour de Cassation*, the French equivalent to the Supreme Court and Jean Jacques's stepfather (his father had been killed early in 1914). Mr. Levi, (now Lautier), Shoura Kamenka and myself. The old Kamenkas had been talked into staying on in their big apartment Rue de Monceau to give the reception there. There was a big crowd. The tall distinguished Grand Duke Andre, Pierre de Fouquieres, *Chef du Protocole*, and a lot of Gunzburgs. Marina was radiant, happy and Mother looked wistfully pleased. She had come out of her mourning.

It was a gay and happy affair. George had come from Lebanon to give his daughter away and as the separation between him and Lucy was friendly and amiable, they received the guests together. I have no recollection of the religious ceremony but knowing old Mr. Kamenka and the Levis I am sure there must have been some blessing, at least as much as the fatherly one administered to Daria and Jean in the same salon by Boris Abramovitch (*in Russian, Boris son of Abram*) Kamenka.

There is not much to tell of that winter. I was in the difficult period of my Hauser job, rather miserable and unsettled by the fiasco of our engagement. As holidays grew near and I had saved some 1,000 francs, I had the choice of a cruise and 48 hours in New York on the Normandie, III class, or joining James Hauser who had chartered a small sailing yacht for a Mediterranean holiday. I am lucky to have found memoirs of that cruise and here they are, a bit corrected to avoid repetitions and an excessive romantic style.

### **Cruising on Katanga**

August 9, 1936: At sea between Porquerolles and St.Raphael.

Night in an old wooden *wagon lit*, III class, polished mahogany 1913 style. Memories of the Nord Express. Breakfast in the restaurant car, not very clean, noisy but with Noel Coward sitting opposite at the same table for four. Toulon, blue sky, blue sailors, a dream after grey rainy Paris. Street full of boisterous crowds. A bus ride along dusty cactus and olive trees lined roads to Hyere. The usual town of the Midi, palms and pink houses. A bouillabaisse to get into the atmosphere and then a winding little road amid rocks and glittering sea line to Porquerolles with its little market place, rococo church, small cafes and tiny port. Unreal, like a stage setting for some *Cavaleria Rusticana*.

My first glimpse of the *Katanga*. A two masted, shiny black schooner, smaller than expected. Below a tiny galley, a miniscule cabin with two bunks. In the lower one I was often to feel like in a coffin. A main cabin holding three and a diminutive toilet. As all seven (James Hauser, Genevieve, now his wife, Renee a friend of hers, Claude de Baissac, Pierre Bacharrach, Andre Behr and me) spent most of the time on deck, it doesn't matter. *Comfort* is not *moderne*. We are camping in an impossible mess of things strewn everywhere. The air heavy with the smell of olive and motor oil. Two dark, unshaven, rather sinister looking crewmen who sleep aft and stay there. The others are all burnt a bright red and I take precautions to avoid their fate. In the afternoon we bathe in a cove with soft sandy beach and return to dinner. Claude is an outstanding cook and we stuff disgustingly. The sky overhead is velvety. Other yachts twinkle around us and a gramophone is playing in the distance. The kind of picture cheap novels draw for weary city dwellers. We finish the evening with a pastis in the cafe on the village square full of *Marius* and *Olive* playing *belotte parle* (a bowling game) gesticulating wildly and talking with Mediterranean animation. I slept moderately, hit the upper bunk when I awoke at midnight and Claude snores like a walrus. We got up at 5 AM to watch the red sun rise over the rocky coast and the soft pale blue mist lift slowly. We are now under sail in brilliant sunshine, blue waves lapping the bows, the gramophone playing old tunes, the Cote d'Azur slowly sinking into the sea behind us, its palms, red rocks and white villas disappearing into the sea. Gin, a Scottie far from pure bred is the only one really unhappy. James in *lederhosen* and floppy hat can't be described. Claude at the wheel in a bright feminine pareo, '*petit Bach*' miserable from sunburn, a pirate style scarf around his head, Andre in the remains of grey flannel slacks. The mess of clothes, papers and rubbish has now reached the deck.

August 10th: mid-Mediterranean

Yesterday Saint Raphael, a second class resort with a fair in full swing on the quay. I had a lovely swim in the gathering twilight, the sinking sun covering the waves like a cloth of gold. A large, somewhat dilapidated white steam yacht, the *Tenax*, was anchored in the bay. It belongs to Michel Detroyat, a famous aviator (who was to acquire notoriety as a collaborator during the war). He invites us on board for after dinner drink's. After our meal on deck under the stares of inhabitants, we put on some clothes to be presentable and are fetched in a Chris Craft which rushes us at what seems like 50 kilometers an hour to the yacht. She is more like a seagoing houseboat. High ceilings, cabin like rooms, very unmaritime furniture. We spend a very 'Elinor Glynn' evening, champagne, whiskies and bridge in the smoking parlor with the radio on. We return zig zaging across the harbour.

Sailing early. An oily sea with not a breath of wind. the burning sun above, haze over the horizon and a school of whales glimmering and sending up sparkling sprays. We are under way with the auxiliary motor. In the afternoon the sky grew ominously dark, the wind freshened and we are under sail again. André is full of yarns about yachts becalmed for weeks and as we have bread for one meal and no more fresh milk, they acquire a special flavor. We make plans for the future. Pisa, Florence, the Italian Riviera become possible realities. The weather is lifting but I am under the impression that we are in for a night at sea. A thrilling experience. No land, not a sail in sight.

#### August 11: Calvi, Corsica

As dusk changed into night still no land in sight, stars disappearing one after the other behind clouds. The night watches are designated and I go down to my 'stateroom'. The heat from throbbing engines, gas fumes send me back on deck. In pitch darkness the sea like a block of shiny coal. Then engine fails and we begin to roll in absolute silence. A hissing sound to starboard. Behr is a bit



flustered as it draws nearer. A might splash as we rock more violently. It is a school of whales come to investigate. Baby's back shines a yard away then mamma's sonorous hiss and they are gone. A light appears in the distance and a steamer passes. Our engine starts up. I scuttle below only to be called in what seems to me a minute. It is 4 AM and an indistinct light filters through the heavy clouds, we hoist sails as the breeze stiffens and I sight a lighthouse. Dawn breaks as we hoist sail. In the misty distance a fantastic coastline reaches high, mountains soaring out of the sea their snow clad peaks glimmer pink in the rising sun as the atmosphere clears. Many an hour passes before we make land. Claude comes on deck unhappy at having been woken up from a complicated dream, red in the face and puffing. Details of the coast become discernable. On a rock, grim walls surround the medieval little town of Calvi clustering around a white church. Its pink, yellow and brown stucco houses gay with bright washing, southern skies as background. We advance slowly as the bay unfolds. To the right the stronghold half covered with silvery green cactuses clustering on its terraces, giving some life to it's barren grandeur. Straight in front a sandy beach, treeless heights, the mountains reaching the sea in a sheer drop on the left. Two white yachts at anchor, lazily, in the bay. A charming, palm covered quay where we find room between a sleek racing yacht *Blue Crest*, spic and spam and a weather beaten ketch. White washed facades behind a row of palms, narrow winding streets their steps leading to cozy little squares full of dark eyed dirty kids in bright rags and then the quiet 'high street' where you can buy a newspaper five days old and where a Madonna like postmistress smilingly passes out your mail. We bathe in the warm, transparent water of the harbor and have our lunch which costs Claude a bucketful of sweat, under the awning on deck.

Under the cool arches of the barber shop a slim bronze imp in dirty white overalls nonchalantly lathers one's face, then the barber engages you in long

animated conversation. Now, to the strains of a good pianist, floating from an open window, we are writing letters on deck before going for our swim, the little town dozing dreamily. In the evening the sky is clear, the mountains outlined like *ombres Chinoises* (*Chinese shadow puppet show*) the wind has abated, the yacht rocks quietly, lights begin to shine from other boats.

Yesterday, after admiring the sophisticated meal partaken on the luxury yacht '*Audacieux*' by old Bunau Varela - the French Hearst of Panama scandal fame and his very young girl friend, *maitre d'hotel* in white gloves, iced grape fruit *et tout et tout* (*and everything*), we had our less elegant meal on a single plate but with a variety of courses, then coffee on the terrace of a cafe under the palms and a few drinks with three amusing girls in a quaint bar, low ceiling, English chintz, Corsican rustic furniture. good music. Hosts very *Monparno* (*Artists from Monparnasse in Paris*) artists and chic, not at all *patron de bistro*. A few dances and unearned rest in the warm night.

Morning, brilliant sun over the little town, all narrow streets, corners and well worn stone stairs. Vain search for fresh milk. The only Calvi cow is pregnant. Back to the part where the wind freshened anchors drag. Gesticulating natives, anxious officers on board the big yacht, innumerable, mostly wrong ropes, pulled in all directions and we are invaded by a horde of port loafers who scream a lot and help little. The engine is started and in mid bay we make fast to a buoy. This leads to discussions with a Naval *pinance* and violent petty officer. White shiny crests cover the harbor. Yesterdays three girls and those of us who had remained on land arrive for lunch. We shed clothes and dive overboard. I'm victim of a somewhat nauseating experience which the others enjoy. While vainly trying to clamber back on board, mouth wide open, swallowing water, I suddenly realize that I am two inches from the toilet outlet and somebody is pumping out for all he is worth.

The lunch, with innumerable *pastisses* (*aniseed alcoholic drinks*) is a great success. Back to town and a ramble over the citadel, pink, orange and white houses with tiny gardens, like diminutive patios, endless vistas of the mountains under a post card blue sky. Every corner with it's raven black haired graceful children is like a painting. As night falls we get back on board. Little villages glimmer like golden stars clusters on the mountain side and the ghostly rays of the lighthouse play on the breakers.

### August 13: Calvi

This fateful day started splendidly. The bay like a mirror, pink in the rising sun, not a breath of wind. Out of our bunks into the warm waters then up on deck and back to our mooring at quayside. Sparkling white, the *Robur* slowly glides into port and makes fast alongside . We exchange greetings with Jean de Rouvre and leave for the rocks where we spend a few hours diving into the clear blue sea. We get back to find that the wind has freshened and after lunch we move to a balcony of a little bar overlooking the harbor. James and Andre soon leave to watch from the front row, a violent discussion between de Rouvre and the owner of the ketch which is beginning to feel the *Robur* pushing it. Strong words punctuated by pure *Meridonal* gestures and locals invade the *Katanga* to participate in the action. Bach, Claude and me watching, amused, from the balcony. Suddenly we realize that a scuffle is in progress. Jame's request to the locals to leave is answered by a punch in the jaw. We hasten to join the scene of action pushing our way through a crowd. A truly animated pushing game ensues while we clear the deck but the quay is full of the professional idle population of Calvi which continues to abuse us. Claude and Andre go back to finish their coffee at the bar and next...well next is pandemonium. I catch a glimpse of Claude hurling a little Corsican through the air. James is using his arms like a windmill. I approach in time to see Andre hit on the head with a stick and fight

on bleeding profusely. Bach, held by three savage looking local gangsters while a fourth is punching his face into a bloody mess. I loose my proverbial calm and hit something soft, am hauled back, kick savagely. Bach is somehow freed and the brave inhabitants fight on at the uneven odds of some twenty to one with such harmless things as hammers, stones and spades. But no knives or revolvers. The *Robur* to whom we owe all this excitement decides to put out to sea and we have to go aboard the *Katanga* to avoid being smashed to matchwood in the maneuver. She sails off and *eau oxygenee* (*sparkling water*), alcohol and plasters help us to make ourselves presentable again. The town is full of gossip. A nice mainland French boy who wanted to help, has been taken back to his camping site in an ambulance. The local head gangsters, patent leather shoes and revolvers all complete are in the cafe and while we laugh it all off, their looks are pretty ominous. We are not so sure they won't all return tonight to finish the incident and we sail as soon as feasible with mixed memories of Calvi.

#### August 16: Girolata Bay

The *Katanga* is rocking gently in this cove some twenty miles from Calvi. The late afternoon sun is playing on the ripples of the transparent waters. Bright red rocks and in the far end, a silvery beach under eucalyptuses. A diminutive Medieval castle rises grey and lonely on the left. A few tumble down earthen brown fishermen's cottages cluster amid giant cactuses.

After leaving Calvi we had sailed along the coast. Great rocky mountains, bright red and brown rise from the sea to many thousand feet, a narrow line of white foam, tiny dark trees and not a human dwelling in sight. This lunar scenery basks in the inferno of a blazing sun. On a promontory, ruins of a round watch tower. Imagination runs wild. What pirate lived there marvelously alone? The waves lick the black shiny yacht as she plows her way gently under sail. In a

cove the *Audacieux* lies lazily out at sea, a three masted vessel under full sail in like a picture from bygone days.

I must go back to our excursion to Ajaccio yesterday. A fantastic winding mountain road, 1500 turns for some 40 kilometers, high up along the corniche through savage Corsican scenery. The Cote d'Azur is artificial and tame. The grandeur of Northern fjords with Southern spice giving it a violent flavor, like some curry. An overpowering smell of the *maquis* (*piece of wild bushy land in Corsica*) mixed with lavender takes one's breath away. I recollect that Napoleon used to say he could guess he was nearing Corsica from this land breeze. I never could understand why Corsican bandits were impossible to catch on this small island. Now the question seems in reverse for could any forces without local treachery bring to justice anyone hiding in the overgrowth on the mountain sides and deep crags. (The Resistance during the war was to prove this point quite well.) The bays and creeks are navy blue in color and the water so clear that the bottom is visible through some fifteen feet.

Ajaccio is a dirty little town lacking the rustic charm of Calvi without offering any advantages of so called civilization. It's dirt is of a quality superior to that of the Vieux Port in Marseilles. It's population as dark as in Calvi with just that horrible varnish that the outer world can bring. The monotony was broken on the day of our arrival by a political demonstration and we were hardly thrilled by the landing of a big seaplane from the mainland in a silvery spray. I would be reminded of it many many years later in the Bay of Rio. Napoleon's Museum is dingy and uninspiring. We were happy to leave, this time by the interior. The mountains even more majestic, the gorges deeper. As we rise to over 3500 feet the air is cooler. Soft, fluffy southern pines appear and here and there ruins of small Medieval castles on the mountain tops. The view stretching for a hundred miles, the valley melting into the haze in the distance. We come

down through shady woods which remind me of Mont Dore in Auvergne or Aix les Bains, to the plateau from which rises the steep hill crowned by Corte. Houses tall like Tibetan monasteries cling to the sheer rock. Every few miles a tiny village with its rococo church on the square. Then suddenly we rise again to a pass and gasp. An immense plain surrounded by rocky hills outlined black on the mauve and green of the evening sky, a few villages on the slopes, windows already glimmering in the twilight and in the dim background, the sea, still lit up brilliantly by the setting sun. We pass through Isle Rousse in the gathering dusk and reach Ajaccio with lights both in the windows of the quaint houses and on the yachts in the bay. Although dead tired we go to the bar and find it has been invaded by a crowd from the Russian camping site nearby. They dance and sing creating that unforgettable atmosphere which I love nostalgically.

August 19: Bay of Porto, Pointe de la Castagne

Evening is falling, scenery we have gotten used to still leaves one breathless, the light playing on blood red rocks, silvery beach, eucalyptus grove. We have been here two days after a run under sail from Girolata. Yesterday we tramped to the beach through the maquis and returned to wash up for the first time with soap in an icy mountain stream. Last night a downpour, great drops, and we were obliged to all sleep below in stifling heat, five of us already plus the two who had lodged on deck, Claude and Andre. Practically asphyxiated. Weather clearing we lay exhausted on deck. Now we leave for the Isle Rousse en route to Livorno.

August 21: on the high seas.

It is extraordinary how much blue there can be in one place, blue sea, blue sky, and absolutely nothing else, as we ply our way under full sail from Corsica to Spezia. We left Isle Rousse which, with its pines is reminiscent of Le Touquet. No native charm but better stocked stores. As the wind freshened we put into St.

Florent, picturesque with the usual stucco houses, market place, dirty kids, image like old women in black on the doorsteps, white donkeys dreamily straying from one porch to another. No visible activity. We weighed anchor at 4 AM. It was still dark, the stars shedding a faint silvery glow. Sir Ernest Chilton's castle, an imitation of Balmoral on a smaller scale, looks unreal on its solitary rock. The grey early dawn changed to brilliant midday, through extraordinary green then gold, pink and gold again. The mountains lost in clouds. At 8 the engine failed and we began to roll heavily, were all miserable and seasick. Then we hoisted sail and slowly made our way towards Spezia on the Italian coast. In the late afternoon I had a bad shock, experiencing for the first of three times in my life, utter panic. The second time was years later when one night I awoke in the German P.O.W. *Stalag* and suddenly realized that I was utterly helpless and the very next day could well be on my way to East Prussia and the fate that surely awaited me there. Many many years later on the operating table in San Francisco still fully conscious after the first administration of anesthetic I distinctly heard the surgeon say: "He is now ready and we can begin." This time I followed our usual procedure. I was alone on deck, the wheel set, the crew in their quarters aft and all the rest below. I dived from the deck and intended to come and catch the dingy, trailing some fifteen feet behind the stern, then pull the rope and climb back on board. When I came up I was horrified to see that it had just passed me and I was absolutely alone in the water, with no land in sight and sure my absence wouldn't be noticed till an hour or so later, and I was and still am an indifferent swimmer. It looked grim indeed when suddenly Bach appeared from below. I called out and he heard me in the stillness. He didn't lose his head and detached the dingy which floated slowly. I clambered aboard while the *Katanga* heaved to and with its engine running, returned to fetch me. I needed quite a lot of alcohol to revive my spirits.

August 25: Bay of Portofino

A miniature Riviera, tiny port, encased in mountains studded with turn of the century white villas, a stage set piazza cobbled. with quaint little cafes, yachts in the harbor, one rather old fashioned which we learn was Puccini's with his son on board, the classical winding road along the *corniche* (*coast road*) where we are driven by Serge Landau, a playboy bachelor who is there with Bernstein's (the famous French playwright) dark eyed, tall slim daughter and a friend of hers. Lights glimmer on the coast and out at sea, open air dancing on a small terrace overlooking a silvery beach, cypresses, laurel trees in bloom. Italian women, elegant, well groomed, less painted than our French girls, the men dark, handsome, dressed flashily - a bit unreal.

We are at anchor after a leisurely sail along the coast from Lerici where we arrived 3 days ago. This was a little, old fashioned port with *ristoranti* (*restaraunts*) on the *piazzetta* (*piazzas*). Alas, our arrival was followed by long interrogations in stifling heat by suspicious authorities. One lacks a passport, one is a stateless refugee, one British from the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius. We taxi through the dirty dusty street of the Spezia naval base, grey battleships lying in the roads and silvery Savoyar overhead. Most dusty offices and off at last through the countryside familiar from Italian paintings from Primitives to late Renaissance. Each side road leads to history: Parma, Lucca, Carrarare, Pisa, Empoli. The grotesque violent Condottieri seem to be still lurking in the great castles, spilling blood on ancient marbles and playing with death as life's greatest farce amid the hills of Tuscany. Along the flat coast, past Castello Rossore with its royal villa hidden in a forest of giant cedars. Through a youth colony, a gleaming white tower eighteen stories high, Mussolini's monument to Italy's youth. Looking back now how ashamed one is to have brushed aside the Ethiopian rape and all the restrictive laws brushed conveniently under the carpet.



But in those care free days, we hungered to hope for a new Renaissance under the history heavy skies of Italy. It was all to come back to me a scant three years later when I cowered in a field under a hail of bullets from planes with Italian insignia on the wings, only thus to learn that we were at war with her in France's hour of defeat.

The *autostrada*, (*thoroughway*) shiny black boarded with pink and red blooming laurel trees, running through scenery leaving the impression that one is gliding past and is not part of it. An impression I had had long ago on the Gotha Canal as we moved slowly through Swedish dark pine forests watching them from the shiny deck of our white steamer. The light from brilliant sunshine turns golden, the sky turns green and a mist rises as we enter Florence.

Visbi, on the Island of Gothland in the pale Baltic, ruins of legendary Hansa, the narrow Street of the Alchemists in the citadel of Prague still vibrating with mysteries of the Middle Ages, the Petit Trianon fragrant with Marie Antoinette *douceur de vivre*, (*sweetness of life*) all had atmosphere. But here the whole city, the entire place is bathed in it seeming to have stepped straight out of history when Italy awoke to the glories of Rome and antiquity. One can so easily imagine bejeweled swords clashing on Cellini armor and a splash of blood streaking a Donatello. The chaos of sensation is indescribable. The white charger and gaunt features on the Emperor of Byzantium, Gatzert's frescoes in the Medici Chapel with peacock feathered wings of angels putting to shame the colorful imagination of Bilibin's illustrations I had admired from childhood. Michelangelo's unfinished *Day* in the Medici funerary monument. The Uffizzi, gorgeous tapestries on a white background, primitives whose hieratic grace carries the cold tradition heavy splendour of Byzantine icons. The Lippis, the light grace of Botticelli and suddenly a deep change in front of Leonardo da Vinci. All are familiar from the Louvre and many other museums but here they are at home,

alive and a real part of the city. Michelangelo's *Self Portrait*, like a sculpture on canvas, Perugini's boy with a wistful appeal of his dark eyes and Raphael's *clair obscur* perhaps richer even than the one that had enthralled me in Rembrandt's small portrait of his mother in Vienna. Santa Maria Novella, a little church with unforgettable cedar wood intricate ceiling. Santa Croce and its beautiful Della Robias, the Donatellos and Giotto's polyptique. Bejeweled splendour of stained glass windows bringing memories of Chartres, Carcassonne and the Sainte Chapelle. Fiesole's *Madonna*, Lippi's *Saint Bernard* and the square in front of the Palazzo Vecchio. The palace facade, somber with a tiny balcony. Michelangelo fountains, palace facades along narrow streets, somber palaces, the quaint Ponte Vecchio with its shops bringing memories of Venice.

The heat was fantastic and we could hardly enjoy a meal on the Piazza Olia. The evening of our arrival unable to sleep, I wandered alone along the river bank, dreaming and imagining history.

Now we are driving back through gathering dusk. The landscape straight from all those paintings we have admired. Pisa, flood lit in green, its fabled tower and Basilica more breathtakingly lovely than even the Duomo of Florence and back in the soft, velvety night to the *Katanga*, to sail early for Cannes.

Sweet little Porto Fino, the filthy docks of hot Savone, unpleasant memories relived only by the image of the Spanish cargo tramp with sailors, etched on the sky singing their songs as they danced the *fandango*. We left all that behind as we watched the Italian Riviera unfold. San Remo's great luxury hotel basking in the bright sunshine. A great forest blaze sending up flames high into the sky under a heavy pall of smoke. The *Conte Biancamano* passes close its wash pitching us off our feet and plates and glasses flying across the cabin. From the hazy distance another great liner appears, her bows cutting deep into

the waves, her white funnels gleaming, all 50,000 tons of the *Rex* which is so very soon but a speck in the distance.

A Cape, outlined dark on the skyline. France, Mentone.

August 29: Cannes

We anchored in the evening in the empty port. Renee left at once by the night express for Paris. James and the others took a taxi to the Casino at Monte Carlo. I sat on deck dreaming. The next morning we sailed by Cap Ferrat and admired the lovely gardens of the sumptuous estates: Albert Cahn's where I had visited with the Kamenkas to whom he had lent one of his villas, Eliane's mother's, Madame de Jouvenel, now widow of the *Haut Commissaire (High Commissioner)* in Syria and Ambassador in Rome, and more familiar landmarks. Then Cannes with its port full of yachts. Next morning I decided to announce the return of foreigners to the Authority. Claude thought it a good idea and we searched for an hour until we found the little stone house of the Harbor Police. When they realized that we had put into Mentone without any formalities in that age of closed frontiers and war jitters, they were aghast. Our poor *Katanga* was invaded by *gendarmes (police officers)* and James, returning from a stroll Rue d'Antibes, couldn't get back on board. They searched for cigarettes and other contraband, deaf to our explanation that if we had wanted to smuggle anything in, it would be by now in Paris with Renee. Excitement died down by lunchtime when Lucy and George, who were in Cannes, joined us for the only meal I cooked on the whole cruise, much to Claude's disgust when he realized that I knew how and could have spared him many a sweaty hour. That same evening I hurried back to Paris and dreary work.

1936 was a momentous year for me. I had been drifting miserably since our engagement had been broken off, undecided, still carrying on a desultory affair with my German girl, seeing a lot of Lise de Bessac unsatisfied with future

prospects of my job, very short of money and worried by Mother's failing health. Father's partner from Russia, Stifter, who was financing the family in part, was watching his reserves dwindle, or so he said and I for one believed him. Prices were rising, problems of Serge's education were reaching a real crisis stage, Auntie Alia's dress shop was going bankrupt. It had been a rather glamorous affair as long as Anna Semionovna Rotvand, the St. Petersburg beauty I have mentioned, was their society saleslady. She had, in the meantime, with Auntie's blessing, divorced and married the youngest son of the erstwhile Spanish Ambassador to Russia, Count Viana, Alvaro Munoz. The wedding had taken place in London with Auntie and the famous long lasting Spanish Ambassador to France, Quinones de Leon, as witnesses. By the way, she was now wife of the Counselor to the Spanish Embassy to the Vatican and it was through her assistance that as a stateless refugee I had obtained an Italian visa.

## **Wedding**

That summer Aunt Irene had married Uncle Bob. As he was practically as penniless as I was, Pops had made a generous settlement on Irene and with his, at times even exaggerated, sense of fair play, had given Mummy a similar amount. She was in Paris, at the Vuillefont in spring and we met for the first time in two years. She said she was now independent and ready to marry even in the face of family hostility, in particular that of Robert de Gunzburg who had been carrying on a long lasting affair with Lucy and didn't want family complications. I had strongly advised Mummy, now an independent young woman of means, to forget me, take a world cruise and meet someone else, being still more touchy about marrying her for her money.

In early autumn she was back in Paris with Ellen von Marx. She insisted I join them for dinner as I didn't know her dearest friend Ellen. When I came to the hotel she was alone and told me that Ellen was waiting in a nearby restaurant for us to join her. We didn't say much, just looked into each other's eyes and knew we were fated for each other. After a while I decided Ellen couldn't be left waiting any longer and we joined her. She calmly and sweetly said "*Alors vous etes decides?*" (*So you are decided?*) without even a question in her voice and we drank champagne a *trois*. We left Ellen and went to Rue Massenet to Mother who looked at the little Lia who she had known all her life, took off one of her remaining rings, the one with the row of pearls, which I had redeemed from the pawnbrokers upon my return from my first trip for Citroen and put it on Mummy's finger, kissed us and we drove out into the Bois in my little, dilapidated Peugeot *Double Creme*.

Our so called first engagement with Mummy and in general our relationship was carried on quite outside the *bande*. Mummy was living in Holland and when in Paris moved mostly among her family and a few close friends, a set both quieter and also more exclusive than the Tony's group. In '34 Pierre Schumann, whose business activities were complicated and unrewarding as his father's fortune and ethics declined, was having an affair with a vivacious flashy and nice young half Uruguayan half French girl, Helene and their ultimate intention was to get married and go to Uruguay where her family was very prominent. I wanted one of my two closest friends to meet Mummy and with Jacqueline Schweitzer we made an evening of it, but Pierre although very friendly with all my intimates was not really one of them and also was indiscreet. There was also Alma Poliakoff who, having sold the small *hotel particulier* to which she had moved after the Revolution, had spent her remaining fortune, sold her fabulous jewels and moved into an apartment. She had as guests a Madame

Lopato with her daughter Lucie, wealthy refugees from Harbin. The girl was studying singing and Alma had ideas she could be a match for me. She later married a brother of Mrs. Andre Harley, Nathalie, becoming connected with the Leon clan indirectly. She later divorced, leaving the Harley's with a boy to look after, Delano, who we were to see years later in Princeton, and now(1972) runs one of the most exclusive restaurant night clubs in Paris where Alma occasionally sings. Alma still gave gay and lush parties catered by the then famous, Russian chef and restaurant owner Korniloff and when in Paris, Mummy would be there, Alma remaining one of Pop's glamorous old flames. I well remember shortly after our forced break up, a party at which she suddenly showed up. I politely stayed away, carrying on with a very glamorous pretty Riaboushinski girl. daughter of the famous merchant prince of Moscow and collector, and his beautiful third wife or mistress. Mummy tells me she was miserable. I was gay but unhappy.

There was also one amusing break. Jacquot Schumann, the youngest of the three brothers, had married, as you may remember, Henriette Halphen. A nearly Rothschild, a daughter of a very snobbish art patron Mme. Halphen, extremely wealthy and who looked askance not only at her new son in law but much more so at his family and group, not without justification. One day I suddenly got a phone call from a completely baffled Jacquot who told me that to his utter amazement his mother in law, who had some famous pianist staying with her, invited me to dinner. When I arrived at the party, with its many footmen in livery, in a decor of palatial Louis XIV, XV, and XVI, I was introduced to Ania Dorfman whom I heard of from Mummy and who had just arrived from Amsterdam where she had stayed with them. After dinner we sat on a small antique settee and talked in Russian animatedly all evening about Mummy, vastly intriguing all the guests.

This situation was to come to my mind many years later when upon arrival at Kansas City, Missouri, I was taken to a big elaborate reception given by the local Jewish high society in honor of Miss Gisela Warburg who was touring the country on behalf of the Appeal and both of us homesick for White Plains, New York and families, fell into each other's arms and spent the evening talking of them much to the disgust of the hostess and her important guests. But here again, Jacquot had nothing to relate and no rumors originated.

A third case and which did cause some questioning which I brushed aside referring to common childhoods in St. Petersburg, occurred at Masha Porges' big ball in her mansion on the Avenue Friedland or Hoche. Masha born Brodsky, a cousin of Paul and also Vera Valabregue and had married chic, dissolute Edmond Porges, reigning in pre War Paris and giving lush, exclusive parties. (She was, or I believe still is, a half sister of Kissia Spoliansky's late mother). She had a handsome and distinguished son Michel, one of the very few good looking young Jewish gentlemen in Paris with Guy de Rothschild and Philippe de Gunzburg. (He was to be wed for a short while to Eliane's divorced sister in law, a South American beautiful Dolo). I never liked him but he came often to La Mardelle. He had a lovely sister whom Michel Bernard was in love with. Masha gave one of the last coming to think of it, the last, great Parisian balls I went to. The setting was impressive, great staircase banked with flowers, excellent supper, brilliant crowd, many pretty girls and elegant women in beautiful jewels and dresses from *Grandes Maisons*. Mummy was in town and when she was invited was, as usual, reluctant to go. This must have been about the time of our first engagement and before Fedia's veto. She called me to ask if I was invited and as I was and Pops had allowed her to go out with only two young men while in Paris, her cousin Robert Leovi, now Gunzburg, and very eminent President of the important *Acieries de Pompey* and me, we came together, danced together and left together,

setting tongues wagging. Mummy had a very attractive golden brown dress, satin and voile which suited her well and she looked her best. We enjoyed ourselves and only criticized the abundance of *agents de police* (*policemen*) herding guests.

The next few weeks were hectic and are hazy in my mind so there may be inaccuracies and mistakes in the sequence of events. I believe Mummy phoned that same evening to Amsterdam and I don't know the reaction. She did not care a hoot. On my side everyone was happy for most, Mummy was someone they had known and liked since she was a little girl. For Katia, my brother's widow, there was a snob appeal and practical satisfaction that I, at least, was going to join a stable, prosperous family. Tony and Eliane came the next morning to Rue Massenet on their way to some out of town expedition and although absolutely aghast, Tony a tiny bit resentful that I hadn't spoken of anything earlier, were happy. Eliane suddenly remembering that she had been to school in the same class as Mummy, Madeleine, by then de la Grandiere, Lise de Baissac, some fifteen years earlier. There was a painful visit to Lise who had always believed deep down inside that I would overlook the complications of her situation depending as it did so much on Eliane's generosity and loving Mother, Lucy and the family deeply, was heartbroken. I did feel conscience stricken for year and it was only when she married after the war, an old admirer of hers, Gustave Villameur, then a very successful architect in Marseilles, whom her snobbish crazy mother had turned down as an unsuitably poor artist decades earlier, did I really relax. Lucy was happy and had, apparently succeeded in influencing Robert de Gunzburg in the interval. I visited the Halperins. They had expressed doubts about my Jewish faith. Basically they were right as I am practically an agnostic, with a personal faith of my own, if any, but as a pamphlet was to prove later, pamphlet introducing Horace de Gunzburg and the whole family to the Jewish community of St. Petersburg in the middle of the XIX century, written by



my grandfather in his capacity of Learned Jew to the Imperial Government, my credentials were undisputed. They were warm but reserved. Mummy's stay lasted a few days. We kept quiet, went to dine with Ellen who was there, perhaps a show and in traditional fashion visited family graves both at Batignolles and the elaborate one at Monparnasse where we stumbled, of course, on some acquaintance, the mother of Jacques Bardac who will appear later in these memoirs, with her granddaughter Mlle. de Martel, but hid, I don't know how well behind another monument. Then Mummy left for Holland where I was to join her for a week end very shortly and I plunged into work that I had, of course, neglected. My salary, however modest, was now even more important to me if that be possible. There was a financial break which I believe I have mentioned. Stifter having received a first large payment for the railway from the Polish Government, was able to give me some money. I paid off a few outstanding debts and had cash enough to pay my way to Holland.

My first visit to the Pieter de Hoochstraat was uneventful. I was not more impressed by your grandfather's white flowing beard than I had been as a little boy long ago in Petro where he and old Langshoff, Father's important German business friend and patron in the early days, were two of the gentlemen I felt in awe of, as long as I can remember. Mania, who had known me as a little boy welcomed me as she used to on the Millionaya and Olga, who was living there with Ignacio while the Spanish Civil War was on, was like an older loving relative. Fedia was cordial and Willy, effusive. I visited and loved Mummy's cozy atelier where she had spent the happiest, I believe, hours of her Dutch period. There was lunch at Ellen's, a visit with the de Vries. I still felt towards Irene as some big brother. She remained, and perhaps remains to this day, a baby sister. Bob was not well already and I couldn't fathom him at all although I found him pleasant. Mummy's lanky, tall, angular friend Ank Van Harinxma, a very

aristocratic Dutch girl who shared the atelier, was nice but strange. There was a family dinner at the Pieter de Hooch, the kind that would become familiar but which by then, after more than two decades, had faded from my memory and which I had only very occasionally participated in at the old Kamenkas.

I had to break some kind of glass and did so with Russian vigor, being used and even famous among my friends, for this. I should have stamped on it I believe. Anyhow it was all passed over and I returned to Paris and hard work to await Mummy's arrival with Olga to buy her trousseau. I was in a daze. I was thirty two, had been on my own although living with Mother for ten years and was facing a major change in my existence. I didn't know if Mummy would throw out my friends to whom I was deeply attached. I realized that the somewhat crazy, easy going existence of the Tonys would not blend with anything we could either afford or really wanted out of life. I didn't know what the outcome would be with Lucy because of Robert de Gunzburg, feared that Katia would want to take advantage of some of the wealthier members of the de Gunzburg clan. I did know that Pierre and Yvonne had helped Aunt Alia stave off a disaster of her dressmaking establishment some years earlier but was on the whole apprehensive and extremely touchy. Mme. Schumann was genuinely delighted. I was making what she considered a perfect match and was in love, something even her Jacquot hadn't achieved. She was somewhat wistfully pleased, regretting only that she was no longer mistress of La Mardelle and the palatial duplex on the Boulevard Suchet and able to shower gifts on me.

I believe that before Mummy's arrival Pops made one of his regular trips to Paris and invited me to dinner at a Russian restaurant with all the Halperins. This was a novel and quite unexpectedly difficult first experience of going to Parisian restaurant with your difficult, impressive grandfather which I was to become familiar with and learn how to handle. Pops was unhappy that I refused

to call him Sacha and not very appreciative of my nickname for him. In this particular case there was gentleman at a nearby table with a large and bothersome dog. At one point Pops called the *maitre d'hotel* and in stentorian voice ordered him in Russian "*Ouberite etou sobaku i ieio hosijina*" (*Remove this dog and his owner*). I was ready to sink into the floor. It was pretty rough but my life time association with all the family did help. The old Baron called on Mother as graciously as he would have in St. Petersburg, very dignified and gallant. Then Anna came to call on her but this was easy and simple as they had been in contact off and on in Paris and Mother remained for Anna, her mother's friend who had been kind and friendly in the old glamorous days.

Vera was in town from Basel. The family was somewhat afraid of her. She was certainly the most intelligent and forceful of Mummy's sisters and as a Swiss millionairess, independent of everyone, putting everyone into their place whoever they were, with undeniable aplomb. She came to our tiny flat in her heavy sables and pearls, very nice and polite with Mother who had known her so well as a little girl at Schaffe School. Mother had prepared tea which was to be brought in by the old, round faced, potato nosed, fat, white haired widow of an Imperial general (who had probably married his cook) who was our *femme de menage*, (*maid*) Olga Petrovna. After a very few moments Vera rose and said she had to go. Mother looked at her and simply told her to sit down. This was the only time I have seen Vera nonplussed as she, with the expression of a little girl caught in the act of misbehaving, meekly sat down again.

Mummy arrived with Olga but I couldn't take part in her shopping as I was busier than ever at Hauser's and there were the ritual dinners given by the family. We had chocolate soufflés six times a week. Pierre had always been very kind and nice to me when I was at their place with their eldest daughter Beatrice who had died in that accident in England and with whom I was particularly friendly.

He had always spoken Russian to me and I sometimes wonder if he had not thought at times that I might one day marry Beatrice who was Mummy's closest cousin-friend then. I myself at times wonder what fate had in store for me if she hadn't been killed as I was also very fond of her brother Philippe with whom, although we saw little of each other, I got along very well.

There was a dinner at Jean de Gunzburg's who had married Madeleine Hirsch. I had known her as an older unmarried girl, a relative of Jean Hermann's and her crazy brother who drifted in and out of our *bande* at times. Jean Hermann had married not the heiress everyone expected him to but a charming Czechoslovakian girl, Izka, who he had met and fallen in love with during a business trip to Prague and who was a 'nobody'. I got along very well with both as I had got along with Jean's parents, his immensely fat mother, ugly duckling of a sister who had married a Corsican pharmacist and his old witty and amusing grandmother, Mrs. Mainz from Frankfort originally, I believe, whom he shared with Jean Erembert. Madeleine Hirsch had married the bachelor Jean de Gunzburg, much older than herself who was not wealthy but charming and rather good looking. He had spent some months in Russia at the Milliona while awaiting to be drafted into the Russian army as all the Gunzburgs were Russian subjects and held on to this because their Hessian title had been duly confirmed by the Tsar. but it was not official in Republican France. The Jean de Gunzburgs were impossible snobs. The story had it in Paris that Madeline had had crowns embroidered on her husbands pajama pockets. The Louis Hirsch Bank was flashy and they spent a great deal but Madeleine's fortune was incomparably smaller than that of either Lucie or Yvonne de Gunzburg. Her son has corrected matters by marrying a Bronfman girl of Seagram millions and also their shady reputation as former bootleggers. The Jeans also gave an elaborate dinner, inviting the Hermanns which flattered Jean and Izka no end. The dinner at the Roberts was

a tiny bit strained naturally but Lucie liked Mummy a lot and me quite a bit from our first years in Paris when I was flattered to dance with an older lady, particularly at an Ashkenazi party...and Lucie is a good soul. There the food was excellent and the 25 Avenue Bugeau was as palatial as the mansions of the Sterns, Halphens or even lesser Rothschilds, contrary to the Pierre's apartment in old Mr. Deutsch de la Meurthe's old house on Place des Etas Unis, on the Avenue d'Iena which was spacious, comfortable but had no grand style. There Aline, who was to finally marry my kinsman Isaiah, was particularly warm and friendly to her late sister's dearest cousin and promised to come to Amsterdam for our wedding. We dined again *a trois* with Mother as we had on the Rue de Lubeck so often during what we call our first engagement in 1934, and with quite a few of my friends, the old Schumans and Mme. Bernard, Madeleine's mother. Mummy had always like the *impossible* and crazy Madeleine, her school mate, and was quite taken by her quiet, nice, calm distinguished husband Yves de la Grandiere.

I know we went to a show or two and drove around in the evenings in the Bois in my little *Double Creme*. I know I quite agreed that Mummy should have the dark blue velvet wedding dress from Worth which suited her so well and raised a couple of old fashioned eyebrows. So many girls had been wedded in white according to custom although their right to this was under a cloud.

We were quite reasonable about presents and gave lists of silver to Odier, the famous silversmiths of the days of Napoleon and crystal to Baccarat who had a representative in Amsterdam where Mummy's Dutch friends could choose. I was astounded when I discovered that my colleagues, not bosses, had collected so much for my wedding present that we could order the Chinese green and white service for 24. The old Kamenkas gave us our tea service specially ordered with the same green. There was silver from less wealthy members of the family from their collection of heirlooms, nice checks to enable us to buy a comfortable

second hand Peugeot which we promptly baptized 'Blue Bird' soon after our marriage.

There was a short interlude which I will skip and add on later to be read when it wont matter any longer.

I was still very self conscious and I believe it was at this period that Mummy was dining at the Cabaret Restaurant near the Champs Elysees with Pops and asked me to come and fetch her. It might have been earlier. I still recollect with a shudder coming down the steps into the basement where one of the *salles* was located to find an enormous table presided over by Pop's white beard at which there were Sioma, Anna, Vera, Paul, Horace , the twins and I do believe Fedia alone or even with Willy. I fled with Mummy completely aghast that such a clan gather still existed.

Our wedding date was rapidly approaching. We had been engaged in late October and I wanted Mummy to be married before she had passed thirty, so December 17th was decided upon.

Mother, of course came with Lucy. I invited Serge and Irene and the Falcos were to arrive direct from skiing in the Alps. Aunt Alia could not afford it, neither could Katia. It looked as if it would be a de Gunzburg wedding with a small contingent from my side, when my friends decided to make a holiday of it to Pop's utter horror. Two days before the wedding Fedia and Willy gave a family dinner. Mother had decided to participate as little as possible and had delayed her arrival until next day with Lucy. The Fedias' small place did not allow them to invite Serge and Irene which I resented a little and the Falcos hadn't arrived. After dinner we went with Mummy to meet the Etoile du Nord Pullman from Paris bearing Eliane and Tony, Michel Bernard, James Hauser, Jean Hermann and Daria with her husband as well as Kostia whom old Stifter insisted should represent him at my wedding. Aline, at that time Strauss, was on the same train

with her parents and I was told later that they all had a gay and grand time. This invasion from Paris into quiet Amsterdam certainly changed the atmosphere of our wedding and made it a gay and unforgettable event for me.

Next day I went out and ordered corsages for my friends and the young ladies from Paris. I believe Serge and Irene, who had not been abroad since childhood (except for a scout jamboree in Hungary for Serge), took the opportunity to visit the Hague and Harlem. There was a big luncheon in Ellen's spacious apartment with an extraordinary service of Saxe porcelain and excellent food and champagne.

That evening there was a big party and dancing at the Amstel Hotel. Eliane, Daria, Mollikins came to Mother's room to show their dresses and at that moment I do believe Mother was a bit wistful, but stayed in her room. We danced and had a grand time, more of a gay party than a wedding.

Next day we all trooped to the City Hall where I was astounded to hear the Dutch official go through the whole ceremony in excellent French. We came back to Pieter de Hoochstraat where Mummy, Mania and Olga had been preparing things for a lunch *par petites tables* after the religious ceremony. The house, which was not big but had quite elaborate first floor salon, was a mass of flowers the likes of which I had never seen. The Dutch love flowers and lavish care on them with fantastic results.

We sat on two armchairs, men in top hats, I wearing for the first and probably last time, *tallis* (*fringed religious garment*) given to me by Pops. On one side sat Mother and Anna, on the other your impressive grandfather and...the actual head of my family, Serge, then nineteen, incredibly handsome in top hat and black jacket with striped trousers he had borrowed from Yves de la Grandiere, very serious and composed. When the Rabbi began the prayers several of my friends, Tony, Michel, James and Jean Jacques among them, all very un-Jewish,

suddenly had a *fou-rire* (giggles) at the sound of unfamiliar words in a strange tongue with inimitable Dutch accent. It has remained an unforgettable memory for all participants and only a year ago in Paris Michel reminded Mummy of it. The lunch was excellent and gay. How we managed to all squeeze in at those tables I don't know. Poor Bob couldn't attend as he was just recovering from one of his lung ailments.

Ellen's uncle Robert had lent us, or was it her father, his Rolls to take us to the City Hall and back to Pieter de Hoochstraat. Mummy packed. I don't know how, and so did I, then saw Mother and Lucy down to the taxi in the hotel hall on their way to the afternoon train then I came back to the Pieter de Hooch and in Ellen's car with her nice, quite distinguished looking butler/chauffeur, left for the Hague and a light supper of strictly non Kosher lobster, and ham. The next morning we entrained for Brussels where we expected to spend a few days. Vera Maase, a daughter of Guetia Goldschmidt, a cousin of Paul's and also the aunt of Ilse Verhoogen, who was getting married and there was a family gathering. Vera had been ill and had sent dainty little Tanya to represent her at our wedding. She had recovered enough to come to Brussels with her mother in law to be at the wedding. A somewhat different clan had gathered there including many of the Amsterdam guests. After our morning arrival at the Palace Hotel we did go to meet the Basel train. Mummy was anxious to see her sister. When it steamed in and two ladies disembarked so heavily clad in formless but gorgeous sables, I asked Mummy if Vera was expecting, she looked so fat and ungainly. It was my first of many tactless remarks on the family. In the afternoon we went to the museum which I didn't know. George Valabregue, by the way, gave us a lift in his taxi as cabs were not easy to find. I was terribly impressed by the collections and the big square, as far as I can vaguely recollect. What I do remember was that when we returned to the hotel, the large and impressive hall was lined with



stiff armchairs, each occupied by an impressive old lady of the clan, into which group Vera fitted perfectly. I was acquainted with some of them, had to bow and kiss hands of every single one and after running this gauntlet, upon our return to our room, I told Mummy that we were taking the first train to Paris although I had arranged for a few more days holiday with the office. We wired Lucy and Mother and were in our nice little *garconniere* Avenue Kleber barely 48 hours after our wedding. It was on the ground floor, two large rooms and no kitchen. Mummy inaugurated home cooking in the bathroom. The place was like a flower shop. The Parisians, family and friends outdid themselves particularly in azaleas. I was to be reminded of this unbelievable profusion of flowers in one room when, in Tokyo in 1965, I was hospitalized and all the Japanese banks, businesses and friends showed me their interest not entirely sentimentally friendly and often with ulterior motives, by sending me so many baskets of flowers, orchids in particular, and quaint bonzai trees that my neighbor the Cardinal Primate expressed curiosity saying, I was told, that he had never seen so many flowers and the poor little Japanese nurses aids took nearly half an hour daily to clear the sickroom of them in the evenings.

## Married Life in Paris 1936

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### Paris, Enlistment, Brittany, Southern France

We had supper the evening of our return to Paris with Mother. Lucy joining us. Mother's health was rapidly declining and after her last heart failure Dr. Wallich had prescribed daily outings in a wheel chair, having in mind the nearby Muette. We found a young, energetic Czech woman who on Mother's order would rush her at a fast pace to the nearby small local department store which

Frank then was. Mother would jump out of the chair, rush in and buy some trifle to be rushed again to a pastry store on the nearby Avenue Mozart where she would jump out again to buy some wild strawberry little tarts which I adored. This was her daily schedule, until Monsieur Frank himself suggested that the front large store doors be opened for her and she be wheeled into the shop to make her daily purchases without leaving her chair. This was somewhat of an improvement.

The story of Mother's acquisition of Dr. Wallich (now Wallis of New York) is perhaps worth telling. He was the son of a famous medical Professor, young promising *Medecin des Hopitaux* in Paris where according to century old custom, all great doctors took care of poor patients each morning before their very lucrative private practice. Robert had married, as you may recollect, Fanny Periere but, although they had two sons already, the couple was drifting apart. Fanny eager for gay social life and Robert engrossed in his work. He was a great success, particularly since he had tried, alas without success, to save Pierre de Gunzburg's youngest boy who had caught simultaneously two major illnesses while on military duty in the *Chasseurs Alpains*. At the time it was rumoured that Robert had an affair with a famous and outstanding French actress, Marguerite Jamois whose role as old whore, knitting hopelessly and repeating "*je passe une maille*" (*I knit a stitch*) remains one of the unforgettable performances I have seen. I was a constant guest at the Wallich dinners which Robert often left for urgent cases. Once, I remember, to literally save an American woman who upon arrival at the Ritz, had swallowed a whole bottle of Brandy, starved as she was for good liquor by Prohibition. Mother had been knocked over by a street car and was rather slow in getting over the shock and the internal injuries. One day Robert in the process of examining the many poor women at the hospital, in a good but naturally perfunctory manner, came upon an old lady and looking at her file, saw the name '*Berline*'. He asked her casually if she happened to be related

to his good friend Alec and was astounded to learn that she was his mother. He immediately sent her home in a cab, visited her that very evening and terribly impressed by her, took wonderful care of her until she died several years later, probably about ten, without every accepting a penny belying his reputation of being money hungry. His reputation was further confirmed when he divorced Fanny and married one of the Esmond girls, niece of both Yvonne and Lucie and one of France's greatest heiresses, the Esmonds combining a vast Indian fortune with that of the Deutsch de la Meurthe.

For American readers today (1972), this second wife was an aunt of the Uzielli boy who married the Ford girl in the late sixties in a blaze of society glory and Anti Semitic snobbery. To further complicate clan matters Giorgio Uzielli, the boy's father, a cousin of Fanny Pereire, after divorcing Sybil Esmond, who was to marry a famous French general, Bilotte, married her cousin Monique Leven, a daughter of Robert de Gunzburg, mother of the Landau with whom Liz is so friendly. This will give you some idea of the inbred complications of Jewish Society in Europe.

Our new life quickly settled in a lovely routine. I still worked hard. We usually met at Mother's in the afternoon. We mostly had something to eat improvised on a *rechaud* (heater) in the bathroom of our *garconniere*. Occasionally we visited the family, lunches at Pierre's and less enthusiastically, Kosher at the Halperins who went out of their way to serve me milk on a glass platter with the meat meal which is apparently permissible. We saw not much of the *bande* (gang) an occasional dinners, but more or less regular lunches at the old Schumann's and quite often evenings with the Le Grandiers with whom we both got along well as their way of life, although on a higher scale, was closer to ours. A very complicated contract with three Trustees, Pops, Fedia and Pierre allowed us to spend my salary and an equivalent part of Mummy's income. It

was all complicated as most extras required approval from Amsterdam but Pierre took it as a joke and smoothed any possible angles.

We had arrived back around December 19th and on the 24th Mother had her last tiny Xmas tree with us and Lucy. I was happy for her and Mummy took it all wonderfully well although traditionally she had followed Jewish holidays, except in Russia where there was a tree for the staff on the Millionaya. On January 31st there was a New Year's party at Pierre's at Garches. It was also Fedia's birthday and they were there with Willy. Mummy looked stunning and Pierre found that she had the best back in Paris which I understand was old Kuffner's opinion Liz 36 years later. There were quite a few lovely women at the Garches party. The present Baronne Elie de Rothschild, then still unmarried, Mummy's stunning Austrian cousin Nanny Habig, the Baronne d'Almeda who was to marry one of the Warburgs later on. it was strange for me who had always enjoyed such parties somewhat as an outsider, to feel I really belonged to the clan and Mummy, who had hated them when she had to go, duty bound, as the out of town cousin, unmarried and rather lonesome, felt, I believe, more secure and carefree to enjoy herself. The atmosphere was simple and nice. We both knew quite a few people and as a just married couple were made a fuss of and enjoyed it, expecting it to become a tradition which was not to be.

As I was working hard, we went to few shows. Paul came and invited us to see the exquisite musical *Les Trois Valses* (*The Three Waltzes*) of Sacha Guitry with him, his lovely wife Yvonne Printemps and the dashing, handsome Frenet who had played the aristocratic officer in the *Grande Illusion* (*The Grand Illusion*). This arch romantic story of three episodes with the same waltz, the first when the dashing count rejected the young singer, the second when it was half and half in a XIX century setting, a *La Dame aux Camelias* (*The Lady of the Camelias*) without the death scene and the final one with Yvonne as a great

Hollywood star dropping the impoverished aristocratic Frenet was fantastic. A lovely film was made of this which we were to enjoy in that unreal intermediate time during the *Phony War* in Vannes. It reminded me of Noel Coward's *Bitter Sweet* which I had loved in London in '27. We could not get three seats together and I watched with disbelief Mummy in the orchestra pit with Paul, hardly able to realize she was my very own wife. Pops used to come to Paris every month and take us out to dinner at his old haunts. Excellent if somewhat stuffily old fashioned restaurants, but also occasionally to the very chic and elegant Relais Plaza in the hotel. I particularly remember sitting next to a solitary, fat, red faced Earl of Derby, one of England's highest born, most influential statesmen of that day.

We went with Alma de Poliakoff to an excellent concert. I had not been a music fan and except a recital, mostly politically important by Paderevski in the early twenties with the old Kamenkas, and a quite unique concert directed by Koussevitzky who gave some then modern music and to which we had gone with my parents, plus Chaliapin's final recital where the old man, shortly before his death, was still able to electrify his public by his singing, practically with all his voice gone, there was little music my life. Jacqueline Schweitzer played the piano very well, studying at the *Conservatoire* and we had many a long evening session in her studio room in the large, lavish apartment with sumptuous Empire furniture they still occupied which Mme. Schweitzer, who refused to use their doubtful Portuguese title of Baron, now ran with one maid and cook instead of two footmen as had been the case when we arrived in Paris. Jacqueline had a friend Madeleine Grovles, the wife of a conductor who played wonderful *clavecin* and regaled us with an unforgettable evening of Mozart. I was unmusical while Mummy had enjoyed it really all her life.

After a while we found a small apartment in the depth of Auteuil, a bedroom, a den which was intended as nursery if and when..., a small salon and dining room. It was furnished very much like all our subsequent either large or small dwellings and many of the pieces of furniture are still with us. The bedroom was golden yellow and I well remember stopping off one morning early to find the wall canary color to my horror for although Pierre Bacharach, then a bachelor, architect and decorator was keeping an eye, in a friendly manner on things, such horrible errors occurred in Paris in those days. Mme. Schumann had given us sliding door *placards* (*cupboard*) from their big apartment which narrowed our corridor very much. When the time came to move an old desk of Father's which had traveled with us from far away Stockholm and had narrowly been pushed into the den and now had to give room for Liz's cot, it was stuck and had to be removed to Serge's via a crane and the six story window.

We gave little dinner parties. Friendly cordial relations had been re-established with a much relieved Lise de Baissac who came often as did Gavrik who had come to Paris from their exile in Antibes with her mother, Aniuta, and sister Mouks. The younger sister, Yvok, the only attractive one, had died suddenly of a probable brain hemorrhage and the brother had been already packed off to Buenos Aires with his mistress, of the Ash's former maid whom he later married and with whom he had the daughter, Teresita, who was to come on a visit to New York much later on.

I was shocked and Mummy not surprised that high living had finally succeeded in breaking up the Eliane-Tony *menage* (*couple*). They were boy and girl friends involved in the horsy set. Tony, his family bank after years of bad business having been sold to Sir Victor Sassoon, had been much influenced by my example and refusing to live on his wife's enormous income, spending the difficult settlement of Charles Louis Dreyfus' fabulous estate, had taken a job in

an old family shoe affair of a mutual pal from Lycee Carnot days, Bernard Delelis Fanien where he conscientiously filled a subaltern job, he who had been a bank V.P., the boss' son and whose salary now hardly paid for the upkeep of his horses. The *bande* split, there was no more La Mardelle to bring us together. Some took Tony's part, others Eliane's. Poor Jean Herman was again in a fix as he had been after Eliane's first divorce from Jacques Heilbronn, his cousin. Lise kept up warm friendly relations with both which was not easy and we who had drifted out of the *bande's* crazy existence kept up relations with Eliane and saw much of lonely Tony who had started an affair with his future wife, Gin. Yves de la Grandiere liked Madeleine's old friends, the talented young Jewish boy Gollfuss who played such good piano, dear foolish Princess Rima Eristoff, the Count and Countess de Naleche, Lize's friend and colleague in her office Marina Karpoff who had a very chic *amant* (*lover*) and a charming taxi driver husband, in real Russian style but he (Yves) also was not enthusiastic to continue the Sunday rather bohemian parties at Tante Jeanne's on the Square de Longchamps, so we saw a lot of each other in a quiet way.

Here I would like to insert a short interlude. Among the boys Rene de Jouvenel, Eliane's mother's stepson(I don't know if he was a son of the famous writer Collette to whom Henry Jouvenel was married for a time) and who was to marry, also not for long, Eliane's younger sister Arlette, who was a hippie, *avant la lettre*, (*before the word existed*) and with Communist leanings to boot. He brought along a German refugee non Jewish young man, Von Koster. According to the story this Bavarian aristocrat, whose father had been a Chamberlain to the famous Ludwig II of Bavaria and had many amusing and fascinating stories about this crazy homosexual monarch, Wagner's protector, to tell, had fled Germany, lived for a while in Persia and drifted into left wing journalism in Paris. He had married a French girl whose son he had fathered but she never appeared and lived

on the Boulevard de Batignolles. Koster was fascinating and charming although I personally had my reservations. I believe, just after our engagement he did have a short lived affair, on the rebound I would like to think, with Lise. Pierre Louis Dreyfus, Tony and the others helped him. When war broke out he was interned for a while at the Paris Velodrome d'Hiver, the scene of the famous six day bicycle races so popular with both the *Haut Monde (High Society)* in boxes in the pit, with champagne and caviar, and with workers and pimps from Montmartre in the bleachers. All Germans in France, mostly innocent Jewish refugees, like young Rathenau the son of the wealthy Weimar Republic statesman who had been shot by right wingers and thousands of others with families, were temporarily locked in until the strings they were able to pull got them free one after the other, except the poor guys who were there when the Germans arrived and went directly to Auschwitz if they happened to be Jews. Well Koster was there and much to her disgust Tante Alice Schumann, at the demand of Tony, who was already at the front with his tanks, brought him blanket, food and other necessities and sent money to his wife and child. Then came the *Debacle (the sudden and tragic defeat of France)* and Tony was in Cannes, anxious to smuggle himself into Paris for a short visit to settle affairs and get some cash for his parents who had fled to the Midi without any money, before joining de Gaulle in London.

Tony had a very temporary affair with a little owner of a boutique on the Croisette who was to go to Paris and whom he entrusted with bringing him back to the unoccupied Midi, some clothes and things which he, always fastidious, missed. The girl disappeared for over a week and Tony was desperate that he had caused her to be picked up by the Gestapo. When she showed up it was to say that she had been released by the Colonel commanding a whole district of occupied Paris by the name of Von Koster who, when he found out she was carrying Tony's suitcase asked her to tell Tony he could smuggle himself into



Paris where he, Koster, would give him all regular papers to travel back and forth between the zones. Tony, only half believing the story, joined a couple of friends, the Henri de Costiers, she was a beauty queen and at the border he left them to walk across and join them on the other side. When he arrived in Paris he went to Koster's apartment Boulevard de Batignolles where the Colonel who had known through his efficient secret services of Tony's passage of the border and arrival, was awaiting him, tactfully in civilian clothes. He gave him all the papers needed and also promised to warn Tante Jeanne, who had refused to budge from her apartment, when she would have to leave in a hurry for Vichy where Yves de la Grandiere was working in the Finance Ministry in his subordinate job. He would also protect Eliane's apartment as well as Tony's bachelor flat. He kept his word before he was shipped to the Eastern Front after one of the Nazi purges of their Paris administration but, at last news, survived and was running some kind of factory in the American Zone. One of the most extraordinary examples of Fifth Column I knew of, nearly first hand.

Returning to our Paris life in 1937. Pops took us to restaurant meals which he was always generously was willing to pay for but which he followed by his usual tip of 20 francs, an amount dating back to his bachelor days in the late XIX century. I had to quickly and discreetly supplement these tips by slipping waiter, maitre d'hotel, sommelier and grooms, very much more devalued francs. I never understood his reasoning but covered up for the deficiency with pleasure.

An uneasy spring was coming. Mummy had spent many many happy and carefree vacations with Ellen and her children in the little castle Lengberg, in Nikolsdorf bei Lienz, some hundred miles from Salzburg in Austria. This tiny medieval castle had been picked up for a song by the wealthy Dutch Banker, Paul May, head of the old private banking firm of Lipmann Rosenthal,

whose brother Robert, a famous homosexual, was a childhood friend of Pierre de Gunzburg. He was head of the Amsterdam Jewish community I believe. This castle nestled on the flanks of a pine covered chain of mountains above a delightfully comic opera village overlooking a narrow valley with other similar castles perched on mountain tops in the distance. It had real romantic charm, no electricity and only since the Queen of the Netherlands had rented it for a restful vacation some years earlier, did it have adequate telephone connections with Lienz and through Lienz the rest of civilized Europe, as we like to think of it. Ellen with the children used to escape there regularly and her father would join her with some old cronies shedding in that *gemutlich* (warm and friendly) Austrian atmosphere, his cares and becoming a genial, charming, gay and witty host. Years before Ellen had gone there taking Mummy along and ever since it had become a tradition. Mummy preferred it's secluded charm to formal cures with the her father the Baron in Aix and other spas where a lot of decorum had to be exercised between sessions at the bathing establishment, prim games of golf, and drives with old ladies in chauffeured cars, ladies the Baron had known in his youth. Mummy told me lovely tales of Lengberg and longed for me to see it. As I wistfully regretted that she had never taken part in our carefree weekends at La Mardelle, now irretrievably gone, I agreed. Mother's health was precarious and I didn't want to go nearly three days travel away by Orient Express and local trains. We had settled Mother in a small run down, what we would call 'cabin' on the half pond, half lake of Vesinet with Olga Petrovna. Lucy was due back from the Midi and we decided to make the Lengberg trip in a novel way, by plane, which would take us but four hours. We were to leave Le Bourget around 9AM, arrive in Salzburg around 2PM and take a local so called in Austria, *Bummelzug* (a kind of railway) to Nikolsdorf, another four or five hours. In case of

emergency by driving to Salzburg from Lengberg, taking but about 3/4 of an hour, I could catch a plane and be back in the Vesinet within less than a day.

We were not supposed to put down in Nazi Germany but I did take a transit visa for safety. I went on an early inspection tour and Marna Karpoff with her husband picked up our car at Le Bourget around 9. We took off for Basel in a luxurious DC (neither 1, 2 or 3, just DC) and made a steep and hazardous landing in Basel. I had experience in flying from my Balkan days and was a bit flustered. Here we suddenly changed to a Junker and landed in Munich, much to our disgust. Passengers were invited to visit the town but we sat in the airport lounge not feeling either comfortable or happy. Margot, Lady Asquith, who was on the same plane also refused to budge for our 2 hour stop over. When I got back to the plane all the Paris, London and Dutch newspapers and magazines I had been advised to leave in my seat and was taking to Paul May, had disappeared. We arrived in Salzburg about half an hour before the little train was due to leave and I hurried the taxi through the town to the station where we breathlessly boarded the train. It remained standing for another hour and then started slowly with lurches on its rickety old car that winds its way along the single track through fantastic mountain scenery, with high mountains, occasional castles or baroque monasteries and the winding narrow mountain stream in the lush green valley. At one point we stopped at a station to await the train coming in the opposite direction. A pretty blond girl in short dirndl with multi colored ribbons in her hair paraded along the platform carrying a huge tray with small plates of luscious wild, fragrant dark red strawberries topped by inimitable Austrian whipped cream, like little snow capped mountains. She must have had fifty of these little plates and each time she passed, I would buy a couple. Mummy soon lost interest but during our stop over I cleaned her tray and ate all the delicious strawberries. We continued on our way slowly in the dusk and soon

moonlit night. The mountains more romantic, the valleys mysterious and the little villages like sparkling gems. Then at our request, the train stopped at the tiny shed which served as station for Nikolsdorf and where Mummy had promised we would be met by one of the cars from the castle as we had wired our arrival. Our suitcases and we had quite a few, we quickly put on the platform and the train pulled out, its red light disappearing behind a bend. We were alone under a gorgeous moon with Nikolsdorf twinkling a mile or so away. No car. We left most of the suitcases and with two small ones or possibly even a rucksack, trudged across the fields under the bright moon towards Nikolsdorf. Mummy said that the castle was not far off but at this time, across the moat, with heavy doors closed and blank stone walls we would have difficulty in attracting attention so had better spend the night in the little adorable picturesque inn on the village square. When we arrived there was a gay party going on, a wedding with singing and dancing quite in the style of the *White Horse Inn* musical which had been the rage in all Europe. The smiling fat, shiny innkeeper met us and was all over us in his delight to see the charming Baroness de Gunzburg from the Castle knocking romantically at his door with a young man. Mummy quickly disillusioned him by introducing me as her husband, probably to his regret. We spent the night in incredibly soft beds, smothered in fluffy thick light eiderdowns and the next morning, after excellent coffee with milk and a variety of *brotchen* (*traditional German bread rolls*) stalked off to the castle. We were greeted with joy but no one could understand how we had arrived the previous night, our wire being dated in Paris, so far from anyone's mind was the idea that one could travel by air and save a whole two days.

I found Paul May not only fascinating but gay, witty and very warmhearted and realized what Ellen had inherited from him. It appears that in business he could be cold and unpleasant, particularly with equals and superiors

as well as colleagues, but in Lengberg he was carefree. There was an old friend of his staying there and two of his nieces, a German refugee I believe, Bettina and Kitty Hartog, who you all know. The very next day we drove in Paul May's large and Ellen's small Packards to the Grossglockner pass at well over 10,000 feet with snow and a glacier. The drive was gorgeous, the scenery impressive but strangely at that altitude I didn't feel too well, where as years later both at the Tioga Pass and in Montana at some 16,000 feet I was not incommoded at all. We made lovely excursions in the charming countryside with its quaint villages, mountain lakes and ruins. We even bathed several times in the lakes. Mummy had had me buy an old fashioned bathing suit. It was considered slightly indecent by Dutch standards for a man to wear only trunks in the presence of a teen age girl. We have come some way since. We made a real expedition to a hut up in the mountains above the village where the Wiener Singer Knaben (where the famous Viennese Boys Choir had it's school) and Ellen with a guide was to make an ascent up a glacier the next day. We reached the little hut at the foot of the glacier in late afternoon. Little Robbie (Van Marx) who was a little stinker, seeing me on the bench with my boots off, (I didn't have real mountain boots but wore old ones I used for shooting and walks at La Mardelle) came up to me innocently and then in his heavy cobbled ones, jumped on my stocking feet. I was pretty mad but restrained by Mummy. We had a gay and cozy meal in the wood paneled kitchen and went to sleep on wood bunks. I awoke at night with an acute attack of mountain fever gasping for breath and Mummy nearly risked a night decent but I held out. We watched Ellen take off for her glacier, roped to the guide and then we descended. I was mortified to meet half way, two elderly English ladies in normal walking shoes with large straw floppy hats and parasols who politely inquired how much further they had to go for lunch at the hut.

Time sped by rapidly. We took long walks in the fragrant pine woods, sat in the sun on the ramparts transformed into a terrace, enjoying the view or reading. The meals prepared by a local peasant woman who was an excellent cook were really excellent. The big dining hall and later the spacious living room bathed in the golden glow of many candles, (there was no electricity) were cozily warm and relaxing. The world and its political turmoil seemed far away both in space and time. When it is realized that the Austrian Anschluss was months away and Hitler already raging in next door Germany, this summer interlude takes on a dream like quality. In this month there were two incidents which went into family folklore but by now the actors are gone and they are hardly worth mentioning. One morning Bettina was supposed to catch the train in picturesque Lienz and I offered to drive her there with Paul May and Kitty Hartog in the big Packard. When we arrived we were early and Mr. May said "*Alec faites un tour*". (*Alec, take a tour.*) As there was a baroque fountain in the middle of the square in front of the station I started to drive in circles around it. After a few laps the locals crowded around to gape at us, and laughing gaily, we drove around and around - the important Herr Direktor from the Schloss Lengberg, his foreign guests in their large American car.

The other applies to a couple from London, distant cousins of the host but also cousins of that Lessing family in London from St. Petersburg, whom I have already mentioned. Mr. Lessing was an avid walker and took difficult paths for his regular daily two hour hike. One of the mornings when the heat had left me prostrate in an armchair, he arrived breathing heavily. I politely asked him how he was and with that inimitable accent which usually originated in Frankfort and could never be lost, not even by King Edward VII or his brother the Duke of Connaught, whom I had even talked to as you may remember,

Lessing sinking into an armchair puffed "I shvett und I shvett und it trips ant it trips..." We buried ourselves in our respective books with haste.

Only too soon the time came to leave. We were to spend an afternoon and a night in Salzburg and take a morning plane to Paris. It was the height of the season and Salzburg, like a stage set, was basking at the foot of the great medieval castle in which Reinhardt lived. The street was as gaily elegant as the Rue d'Antibes in Cannes but much more picturesque with its flower bedecked Austrian cottages and the crowd mostly in *dirndl* (*peasant skirt*) and *lederhosen* (*leather shorts*), even fat sweating dowagers and tycoons from New York. *Falstaff* was being given that evening with the usual outstanding singers conducted by the legendary Toscanini. Seats had been reserved for the whole festival years ahead but Mummy suggested I simply try the box office and lo and behold, we got two seats in the balcony. From the first notes of the overture I was carried away as I had never been by an opera. There were those unforgettable moments of Chaliapin in *Boris* but this was something altogether so much more brilliantly vibrant and at such a fantastic tempo that I had hardly realized it when the curtain came down and it was all over. We trooped down into the foyer where we met many people we knew and Mummy's family. Among them were Jacquot Schumann with his wife Henriette and his mother in law Mme. Halphen. She took us all to a supper of *Forellen* (*fish from streams*) and strawberries at the most exclusive and chic restaurant. 20 hours later I was in a Paris food store checking overstocked items and instructing the saleswoman how to dispose of some while I helped the inspector, remembering I had been one a scant couple of years before, to load some into *Double Creme* and cart them to another store in another suburb. The contrast, as usual, was big but now I felt I would be moving up and I had a home in which I could dream of the future with Mummy and not only living in memories of a past, glamorous and gay but gone forever.

That Xmas we had our first Xmas tree. Mother came. Although she did have a tiny one of her own the next day but the 24th had switched to our home and Mummy took over so fantastically easily that I couldn't imagine it could have ever been otherwise. This was to be Mother's last Xmas. I don't remember where we celebrated New Year but it wasn't with the clan.

We had made in early spring, at Jewish Easter 1937, our first visit to Basel. The house was a ponderous but also as warmly hospitable as it would always be through the years until 1971. Katia and Tanya were pretty little girls, Peter a nice quiet boy, Volo a baby. Vera and Paul took us along to a concert in the home of a famous patron of the arts connected with the Hoffman Laroche family, I believe, where her conductor youngish husband had his own chamber orchestra. The walls were hung with fabulous Impressionists I could hardly take my eyes off to listen. The heavy set Swiss ladies sat primly straight backed in their chairs dressed in dresses which left the Parisian I was, aghast. I then understood how Vera could, a short 300 miles from Paris, succeed in looking twice her age in ill adjusted, heavy formless dresses.

I simply adored my new brother in law. So warm, sentimental and kind, the older brother I had never had, for Misha, ever since I could remember, was not an active member of the household. Later on, although we were sentimentally close, I could in no way depend on him, knowing that his follies were costing Father not only the remnants of his fortune but his health and finally probably his life. George was a gay companion of my childhood but by the time I needed him, he was either in such a mess that he could hardly keep afloat himself in all ways or had gone to distant lands. I was never in awe of Vera. She had spent a week or so with us in the Normandy Chateau of Sarlabot after her mother's death and before she married Paul and I had known her as a nice, quiet, somewhat diffident young girl on her best behavior in 1921 and this reflected on



her image even in the rather grand decor of the Rue St. Jacques. The older Dreyfus couple were still alive and we dutifully visited them in a more elaborate version of the 34, higher up on the same street. Paul's father was a warm, nice old gentleman with snow white hair and his mother, who was a sister of Mummy's Aunt Clara de Gunzburg nee Brodsky, had always been exceptionally kind and nice with the young Russian refugee *danseur (dancing partner)* of her daughter and nieces. She was warmly nice and spoke to me in Russian. She was among the long series of older, and now younger Russians who complimented me on my Russian. I had learned it from Father who spoke it particularly well and even taught it to Mother who knew it slightly. Her mother tongue being English with some Polish for family discussions. Mother finished by speaking a very outstandingly pure Russian. When I came to Paris I spent much time with Aunt Alia's husband, Nicholas Dmitrieff who had grown up surrounded by the very best Russia could produce in its *intelligenza, (intellectuals)* in the Moscow home of his father, Dean of the Moscow University or at the knee of his maiden aunt who, herself, was a type of Russian woman so well described in *Russkie Jentschini, (Russian Wives)* the wives of exiled Decembrists who had joined their husbands in the Siberian mines, for Siberian labor camps are not new to Russia.

We had moved from our *garconniere* on the Avenue Kleber to the Avenue Leon Heuzey deep in the XVI *Arrondissement*, near the Seine, the Quai Louis Bleriot where Lucy and the Falcos lived. Lucy had a studio apartment which anyone who has seen Rue de la Faisanderie, her Cannes apartment, Boulogne and now Alfred Bruneau, can easily imagine. The disposition of some pieces of furniture might be different, some pieces are missing, some new, but the *cadre (atmosphere)* is the same.

Our apartment was situated on an *impasse* (not a through street) in a rather modern apartment house on the top floor. One luxury that Mummy

insisted upon was electricity in the kitchen. She was badly scared of gas fires in the stove and water heater. I will admit I readily agreed as over the years the gas water heaters of the old fashioned bathrooms of those days backfired constantly and Mother, Auntie Mania, Katia and innumerable friends, mostly ladies, had been badly burnt at one time or another. There was a small hall leading into a living room. Furniture there was comfortable; sofa, armchairs and most of the smaller pieces from Mummy's *atelier*. It opened into a dining room, seating six. We had picked up four chairs and an armchair, two of which we later lost in transport to the USA after the war, with their little gold columns which we had painted green and the oval mahogany table. We were seldom more than four. Serge, fighting a losing battle in some kind of special school until he left for the military service, would come in of an evening. The la Grandieres, Tony when his separation and then divorce from Eliane came along, a few cousins of Mummy's, Gavrik in particular, or others visiting from abroad. The rear of the apartment was occupied by my den which was to be a nursery and our small bedroom done in golden yellow with the *coiffeuse (dressing table)* (Liz now has, the two little armchairs, the rustic French XVIII century commode and already Mummy's *Nude* on the wall, raising some eyebrows even then. We had Mummy's paintings on the walls and the green screen between the *salon* and the dining room. I would say that in fact through thick and thin, except those years when we did not have our furniture in the States during the war, our *cadre (space)* has changed but little. In our many many homes, big or small, we clung somewhat I believe, to that first one, trying to hold on to all those memories of the past which in other times would be associated with specific places, making these items less necessary to continuity however elusive, stability. Our first maid was a teen age Breton girl, totally untrained, rather pretty with a strong Breton accent. She was totally inexperienced and we had to have her aunt in twice a

week to do the real job. Her room was just above the future nursery and we had a bell installed to summons her when she was suddenly needed. When Liz arrived, she left. We couldn't really leave the baby in her care and we hired a good looking, large reliable and nice Augustine, an Alsatian girl who would stay with us until the train pulled out of Canfrano toward Spain on our departure for exile, again, this time for the States.

The Halperins would come over for bridge. We would insist on Pops having at least one meal at home when he was in Paris although he liked to go to the good old restaurants which he had known for decades, some from childhood as he had been born in Paris in the de Gunzburg *hotel particulier* (town house) on the Rue de Tilsitt at the Etoile.

Ellen came for a short visit, then Ank van Harinxma. She stayed a while but as she had lots of cousins in the Faubourg St. Germain, was seldom there in the evening when I got back from work. I do remember a hilarious incident which only goes to show how far respect for authority and high sense of ethical duty can go. There was a high custom duty on dresses from Paris for the Dutch, unless they had been worn. The eve of Ank's departure, after we had retired to our room and she to her packing, I suddenly heard the regular tap tap of her heavy walking shoes, called *sensible* in England, on the corridor floor. I opened the door slightly and peeped out. There was Ank, in her walking shoes, thick stockings, no make up, her hair undone, nearly disheveled and in a very *decoletee* (low necked) evening gown, seriously frowning, walking up and down. I was a bit taken aback until she explained that if she kept this up for another hour, she could, at the frontier, swear she had worn the dress for a whole evening at least.

The general atmosphere became more and more ominous. The Anschluss, the flow of German refugees and the stories of Jewish persecution. I

felt more and more uncomfortable as a stateless refugee. I had tried, some years earlier to become a French citizen. When I was a boy I could have afforded both the two years loss of time and the cost, but my parents still clung to the dream of a return to Russia which they both loved deeply even though they knew and realized its dismal shortcomings. Later on, with the family depending on me so much, I could neither afford the time or the cost. When I was 30 and over age for military service except for general mobilization I tried again. I couldn't succeed. After we were married I made a new effort. This time I had the pull. A friend of mine with whom, or better under whom, I had worked at Citroen, Roger Nathan, whom I have already mentioned, held a high position at the Ministry of Finance and recommended my application. There was another, probably even more effective assistance which needs some explanation.

Among Auntie Alia's customers, who, like so many, became her devoted friend, was a talented and very attractive pianist 'Yeyette' Bouquet. Her husband was high up in the administration of the Suez Company and she was carrying on an affair with a prominent French politician Camille Chautemps, several times Prime Minister and nearly always in power. How much he had helped Monsieur Bouquet's career can only be guessed and how much the said Bouquet knew is also open to question. There were three children. I do believe Chautemps met his mistress in Aunt Alia's *Salon de Couture (Fashion House)* but in any case Auntie advised Yeyette to divorce, force Chautemps, who was a grandfather by then, to do the same and marry him. This rocked not only Chautemps' party and the political world of France but even the country. Monsieur Bouquet was left with the custody of the children so blatant was the case. Yeyette was at her wit's end about how to find someone to care for the children when Auntie Alia thought of Emily.

Emily, after her first few years as part time governess for me, had gone to Japan with her husband Hayashi, the secretary valet of the Ambassador to Petersburg, Count Motono. Her first years in Japan had been pleasant. As an English woman in the then just opening Tokyo, she had a good life. She used later to relate how friends took her visiting one of the Imperial Gardens and suddenly met a gentleman accompanied by a suite. Her friends bowed low to the ground but Emily simply politely saluted the great Japanese reformer, Emperor Meiji. When Hayashi came upon hard times, life as the wife of a younger son in a Japanese household of those days became unbearable, as I now easily imagine it must have been. She called for help from Mother who contacted the British Consul General and she was whisked out of Japan and back to St. Petersburg. Shortly thereafter my English governess, Miss Every, who was an utter Victorian type fool, returned to England for a goiter operation which was to prove fatal and Emily, who I called *Lovey* returned, this time as a full time governess and helper to Mother with the running of the household which Mother hated. She stayed with us in Stockholm but then decided that under the circumstances she wanted to return to Russia and rejoin her boy friend who was chef in our household, Andrei Bogdanoff. She taught English in Russia and used to come to Europe nearly every year on vacation. She had kept her British passport on Father's advice. Her story merits a special chapter which I hope I will one day be able to write. When we were married she had wired us from St. Petersburg, by then Leningrad, and it did seem strange to receive congratulations from what was for us another world, that of our lost childhood, gone forever. Emily was included in the British subjects expelled from the USSR in 1937 and was in England languishing in an atmosphere which had become quite foreign to her with '*her boy*' and his family and dear '*Madame*' and all those she really loved so near in Paris but yet so far as working permits were practically unobtainable.

When Auntie Alia hit on the idea that she would be ideal for the Bouquet children all the red tape barriers and bureaucratic regulations disappeared before *Monsieur le Ministre* Chautemps' need of an English governess for his now stepchildren and Emily arrived in Paris. This naturally created a much closer relationship, indirectly, between us and the new Chautemps *menage (household)* than would have been the case and when Auntie mentioned my endeavors to become a French citizen Mme. Chautemps had her husband's *Chef de Cabinet (Chief of Staff)* also join in the efforts. This time they were successful actually in '38; (you can check the date of the decree) when Mummy, myself and Liz became French.

Coming back to my story. By Spring 1938 Mother was very sick and we installed her in another pavilion in Vesinet. Lucy was due to occupy a villa in the South where her friend Marguerite Pourtales with daughter were to join her in July. So I decided to take an early vacation in June. Pops was delighted at the idea of joining us in the South of France and I decided to take advantage of the newly arranged facility of taking one's car along on a flat car attached to the Express, at a nominal fee. We hit on Val d'Esquierre in the Var, not far from Beauvallon because the lovely luxury hotel with elevators, badly needed by Pops who was already walking with difficulty, had pre-season reasonable prices. Pops had a lovely room with a fabulous view of the Mediterranean, a private terrace and bathroom. We had a nice room opposite with a view of the hills and no bathroom. The car traveled well and we spent a restful, lovely time making short trips to St. Raphael and the interior. I bathed. Mummy did not as she was already advanced in her pregnancy. I remember an amusing incident. Pops considered it his brotherly duty to call on his sister Aniouta in Antibes. This was by the standards of those days, a much too long drive for a lady in her 6th month or so and we were both adamant. We had visited

with Aniouta when she had come to Cannes with Mouks and had made Pops mad by ordering a quarter bottle of champagne on the terrace of the Carlton before midday. It took some time to find one of the waiters at the hotel who could drive and did, Pops to Antibes and back and I considered our duty done although I did like both Aniouta and Mouks. This goes to show how complicated things could be that have since become so easy.

We had a lovely vacation, visited Lucy just installed in her villa the day before we left and returned to a hot, sultry Paris and my work. Mother's condition got worse. Mummy insisted on joining me daily for a visit to Vesinet. Mother, on the other hand worried about what it would do in her condition.

One day when we came out of the pavilion Mummy said "I'm afraid it is the end and you must wire Lucy to come". We drove home and sent the wire. Lucy wired back to the Falcos to meet her at the airport the next morning. Poor Jean Jacques with the warped sense of values of all that lovable group raised hell with us for having wired without consulting him and Lucy's daughter. Thank God it was Mummy who was on the phone and tried to explain that after all Mother was my and Lucy's concern primarily. Mummy also talked me out of an enormous row with Jean Jacques whom I was ready to put in his place in no uncertain manner and whom Mummy excused as being overwrought and inexperienced. Lucy arrived late July, probably the 31st and on August 2nd she phoned me from Vesinet where she spent all her days and nearly all nights, that all was over. It was a terrible shock for me. I had not only lived with and for my mother ever since Father's death in 1927 but it also brought back all the tragedies of those years in addition to the deep disappointment at the thought that Mother would not know my first child. The funeral was extremely simple as Mother was a total agnostic and refused any rabbi of any kind even if only for traditions sake. I can't remember if Serge was there but among the bearers of her coffin through

the old overgrown garden from the pavilion to the hearse were myself, Jean Jacques and old Uncle Leo, her younger brother. A few close friends gathered as the coffin was lowered into the grave, stood for a moment and slowly went away. Lucy returned to the Midi and we to our usual life without the daily visits to Mother.

The baby's arrival was approaching and the world situation was getting more and more ominous. Czechoslovakia had disappeared and Danzig was surely on the list. Things were so grave that we were advised to reserve a room in a hospital in Angers for Mummy's confinement. Then came the crisis. I went to Pierre de Gunzburg for advice. He first sent me to their private bank to collect in cash all the money in Mummy's account in Amsterdam and then advised me to move to Versailles beyond the bridges which would be bottlenecks if ever there was an evacuation of Paris. We settled in the Hotel du Trianon, a lovely hotel at the edge of the park which was beautiful in those brilliant warm autumn days. It must have been a general idea of the de Gunzburg clan because Lucy who was in Paris, also moved there. I used to drive out on my inspection tours from Versailles and I'm sure that never before did the stores in Versailles get as much attention. I had been promoted to *Inspecteur General* with six *Inspecteurs* under me and about 200 stores to oversee. The ultimate idea was that at some later date Hauser would open a chain in Morocco and I would manage it from Casablanca unless, and this I kept to myself, I found another job in Europe. Then came Munich and here, I must admit a sense of relief. I did not dwell on the future probabilities of war, on French betrayal of their allies and on the encouragement this would give Hitler in his follies and persecutions. That we would soon be personally involved hardly seemed possible. Our naivete was childishly selfish and unrealistic. Even a few years later, while in training, lying on uncomfortable straw in the loft of a barn during the Phony War and scanning



the Figaro, I read of a gala performance of some French orchestra in Amsterdam and imagined with some envy Ellen and her father in evening dress enjoying it. A few scanty months later Paul May had killed himself as the Wehrmacht entered Amsterdam and Ellen with her children was fleeing in the hold of a dirty trawler across the Channel under a hail of bullets. When the news came of the accord between Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain and Daladier, we were dining, three of us with Serge who had come to Paris on leave. Lucy ordered a bottle of champagne and we drank it, grateful for the respite, wanting so badly to believe that the famous 'peace in our time' was not an illusion and that the nightmare would somehow, God only knew how, would be averted. The brain said 'no' but my whole being, my heart, my thoughts so taken up with the coming baby said 'maybe' with fervor. I ask for no forgiveness for my selfish, irresponsible, foolish illusions to which I clung.

For us the main event in the coming month was the birth of our first child. Elisabeth (for my mother) Beatrice (for Mummy's cousin and friend who had been killed in that accident in 1925), Rose for her other grandmother. We steered away from the fashionable doctor who was delivering all the clan babies and turned to an excellent professor. Sadly enough this man was called away to Italy for a birth in the Royal House of Savoy and left us in the care of an eminent colleague, so unethical that when I finally sent him the check, I made it out to and mailed it to the original man with a word of regret. I well remember the evening before Liz's birth. We sat quietly around the fireplace in Lucy's studio and chatted after a quiet dinner. Then we went home at about 10 PM. I drove Mummy to the Clinique Boileau at dawn, probably around 4 AM. Liz does have the honor like her grandfather in 1863, to have been born in the most glamorous city in the world, Paris. But Mike steals a point by being the only French born member of his generation in both families. It lasted all day and into the late

afternoon. I recollect with undying rage and frustration hearing the eminent professor telling the nurse that he had *un diner en ville* (*dinner engagement in town*) and if nothing happened soon would induce birth. So Liz was born on Saturday, October 15th at 7 PM which happened to be the anniversary of my brother's death in 1926. It was a long wait and I went through all the usual problems of a father in such events, except that Mummy made no sound and played it all down terrifically when I was allowed to see her. There was the usual procession of relatives. I can remember my Auntie Alia who seemed to know what she was talking about, say that Liz would be a very attractive woman and then fed up with all the people around me saying the baby had so and so's eyes, so and so's nose, ears, face, hair etc. looked at her carefully and let fall "Yes, but she has my toes."

Of course there were the visits from all members of the clan, old and young, with gifts. I distinctly remember that a day after her birth as I was sitting in the room, a knock came at the door and was followed by a delivery boy from the famous Prunier dripping wet in a black shiny raincoat, dirty and unshaven bearing a large can of caviar from Paul for which they were famous, as famous as they were for their oysters. I was horror stricken at such a lack of hygienic control in the sophisticated clinic but we were both delighted at the caviar which we adored and which was considered a fortifying easy food for regaining strength in old Russia and I now remembered that when news from the USSR had them feeding aviators caviar during the war I was not a bit surprised.

There were two Prunier restaurants, one near the Madeleine and one Traktir on the Avenue Victor Hugo near the Etoile. You could eat there but there was also a counter to buy the caviar, famous oysters and smoked salmon which were the best in Paris. I remember once coming into buy something and being followed by Sasha Guitry, the French Noel Coward, in a vast checkered over coat

and flamboyant tie. He acted out his purchase of a few dozen oysters as if he was on stage, examining each one, gesticulating and improvising witty remark as he went along. It reminded us all of his famous act in one of his celebrated comedies which I believe I saw him in with his first wife, an accomplished actress, preparing a reception and upon the *maitre d'hotel* announcing that the *petits fours* (*small pasteries*) had arrived ordering the man to "*faites entrer les petits fours*" ("*Have the little pasteries enter*") with his inimitable panache, the panache that had made his famous father whom I only saw in later years in *Mon Pere avait Raison* (*My Father was Right*) (which celebrated the reconciliation of the two actors around the lovely dainty Yvonne Printemps), the unforgettable original *Flambeau* of Rostand's *'l'Aiglon'*. Sasha had a Russian name because had been born in Saint Petersburg where his father was acting in the usual French season at the Theatre Michel, a smaller theater which, alas, I never visited. They happened to live near my parents and Mother used to tell me of the handsome *niania* (*nurse maid*) all dressed up in her Russian costume with a high glossy *Kokoshnik* (*Russian headdress*) and rows and rows of multicolored beads carrying the French baby Sasha around. These colorful *nianias* were still common in our childhood and I had one called (God knows why I remember her name) Anna Kojevina who repeated over and over again that two of her nephews *nianiu abojaiut* were being nasty to her. This was probably my very first sentence as she left when I was still a tiny baby to take care of Yurik Rotvand, the only son of that beauty I have spoken of and who became a good journalist. The rumour had it that the older Guitry had caught the eye of the Grand Duchess Marie the Elder, widow of the Tsar's uncle Vladimir, and mother of Boris, Cyrille and Andre (whom I have mentioned as husband of the dancer Kshessinskaya and a guest at Mollikins wedding). This Grand Duchess, who was the grandmother of the lovely Marina, Duchess of Kent through Helene, *Grande Duchess de*

*Russie (Grand Duchess of Russia)* and *Princesse de Grece (Princess of Greece)* was one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen with the grace and distinction that went so well with her title and made one think of the glamorous queens and empresses of history. Anyhow, Guitry was ordered out of the country at a few days notice and when in a play on the Boulevards, already after the war which I saw, he had made himself up to resemble the Grand Duke Boris, whom I had often seen at Alma de Poliakoff's parties, a few dowagers raised their eyebrows.

I will always remember that unforgettable performance of Sasha at Prunier's, even more than his roles in the several plays I saw and in the last one *Mozart* where he had that perfect line "*Beethoven etait le plus grand musicien, mais Mozart alors? Mozart etait le seul.*" ("*Beethoven was the greatest musician but Mozart, well then? Mozart was the only one.*") He didn't sing in this exquisite musical comedy which he authored but taught Yvonne Printemps to sing and their duo, he whispering and she singing is one of the highlights of my theatrical memories on the gay, light side.

Paris theater, except for the official one, which has been reborn since the war, was flourishing both on the boulevards and in the smaller theaters like the Vieux Colombier with Valentine Teissier of which I have spoken. There was, Dullin, les Pitoeff, the distinguished Gabrielle Dorziat, Boucher, Jamois and so many others whose names will come back to me soon, reviving memories and meaning so little.

Speaking of the theater, an incident relating to movies in the early twenties comes back to me. It was the era of the silent film and Russia's great leading man, Mosjoukine could come as a refugee to France and remain an attractive actor. Uncle George's oldest brother Shoura (Alexandre) had financed an important production company called *Albatross* (which lost a lot of the

Kamenka millions) with a studio in the suburbs of Boulogne I think. Fanny Pereire was an enthusiastic admirer of Mosjoukine and I arranged for her, her mother, her sister and myself to attend a the screening of '*Kean*' which was being produced at the time. There was no absolute silence such as we would find in Hollywood in 1947 or '48 when we visited Paramount Pictures to watch several hours of the shooting of a 30 second long incident in some elaborate film which so enthralled both Liz and Mike. Everyone talked and moved around. Mosjoukine in his role of Hamlet, thrilled both girls by speaking broken French to them and autographing large glossy photos. The scenery shifted, the rather drab crowds of extras and not very colorful costumes for the black and white film as no color existed yet, impressed me less than backstage at the Alexander Theater in St. Petersburg where I had been taken to congratulate my Auntie Mania for her performance at the matinee of the maid in *Gore ot Ouma* (*Woe from Wit*) by Griboedoff, a Russian classic. The first scene finds the maid on a chair winding up a grandfather clock and which had the little boy I still was, pipe up "*that's Auntie Alia*" in the stillness of the theater. Shoura Kamenka went on to become the Grand Old Man of French cinema, shooting many Franco/Russian films after World War II, particularly one on the performance of the heroic French fliers of the squadron *Normandie Nieman* on the Eastern Front. At a reception in the mid sixties, at the French Embassy in Tokyo for an important delegation of French movie people and attractive starlets, I mentioned his name to the most important one and soon became the center of a group of excited producers and directors with whom I was able to speak, as of a living memory, of the heroic days of *Albatross*.

We had a young nurse for a few weeks and then Mummy took over. Liz had a bad rash ad slept the first week in one of the drawers of the *commmode* (*chest of drawers*) filled with yeast to absorb humidity. Today pollution is the

big thing in 1972 but even in those days water was considered so bad in Paris that Evian was used for her bottle. My schedule permitted me some free time in early afternoons and we would walk in the nearby Bois, drinking something, I most probably milk, at the Ferme d'Auteuil with real cows which still existed near the racecourse. A throwback to the old days when Auteuil and even Passy were rural suburbs of the city and which reminded me a bit of the fancy farm in the park at Pavlovsk near Tsarskoe Selo in the 'old days'.

We had a Xmas tree and showed it to Baby whose eyes sparkled at the candlelight and I, sentimental Berline that I am, dreamed of all the candles of the trees in the past, some so blissfully happy and some a bit pathetic, and of those to come. I never expected to watch young faces light up to the glow of 'real candles' and enter so many childhood memories all over the world, even as far as distant Japan, as the people with the 'real' Xmas Tree.

We had received our French Naturalization Decree and needing no more visas planned on a vacation in Holland and Belgium and Switzerland. I could take my holiday early in 1939 or later, around September/October. I decided to choose May. We had exchanged our nice second hand Peugeot for a brand new 201 model, the smallest and cheapest but the first new car we bought. We took off early one morning Mummy holding *Bousi Bousi* as I had nicknamed Liz, on her lap and drove through Belgium. We avoided Brussels and passed the great monolith of the monument at Waterloo. Came the time to warm Bousi's bottle and an attractive clean country house, not far from the highway, came into view. I stopped and went up to the front door and rang the bell. As soon as the maid opened the front door I realized that this was a good class brothel. I asked if I could warm my baby's bottle and after the initial surprise the Madame herself came out, followed by all the ladies to coo over the darling little thing and watch, fascinated while she had her bottle. By 4PM after crossing all Belgium and half

of Holland we were in Amsterdam and Mania. She was the Gunzburg family's legendary nurse who had joined the household at the age of 18 or 19, had reared all the girls after Olga who was already about 2 or 3, remained with the family through thick and thin. She fled Russia with them, moved to bring up all Vera's four children, then went back to Amsterdam to care for Pops, also Nadia. She took over and Mummy felt safe for Bousi and really relaxed shedding the responsibility. Mania was to care for Mike for a short time and after the war, of Sasha. I have often had the temptation to write to Reader's Digest about her. She was the most unforgettable character I ever met. Mania was simple, unpretentious and infinitely wise with a selfless devotion to all her children because they really were her children, adored by all of them and then by all the husbands of her girls. From contemporaries of Rosa Sigismundovna, your grandmother, from all different backgrounds and social strata, through all the friends of her girls and friends of her girl's children, in many lands and at many times in life, she was universally admired and loved. I have never heard a nasty remark about her. In 1962 I took a young American business man around Europe and to this day, in 1972, it is of Mania whom he saw only a few moments in her last year, that he speaks. She spoke, properly no other language but her down to earth lovely Russian and got along in German, French and Dutch, God alone knows how. Irene owes her life to her inimitable care, and Katia Dreyfus hers when she called for an operation one midnight. Mania was the living incarnation of those wonderful, selflessly devoted *nianias* of whom all Russian authors have spoken with love, from Pushkin down to our day. She spent over half a century with the family and quietly slipped away around 1963 in Holland. She was discreet, unobtrusive and thoughtful. I remember one tiny incident. On one of my first visits to Amsterdam we arrived at Easter, the Jewish one. There was no bread around the house to comply with the complicated Jewish dietary rules except for

the little she had in her room. She knew of course, that the Berline household in St. Petersburg and Paris was not Kosher and although deeply religious in the Orthodox faith, admitted our liberal ways, as she understandingly admitted and understood all. So Mania came to me in our room and quietly told me that she had bought and was keeping in her cupboard a few of those delicious little Dutch breads I adored. Not in the least important, but warmly thoughtful.

So here we were in Amsterdam, the care and worry about Bousi lifted from our shoulders and ready to enjoy a holiday, care free, refusing to give any thought to the gathering political clouds which we clearly saw around us. We went to an unforgettable recital of a young violin prodigy, Menuhin, accompanied by his very young charmingly dainty sister. We visited Mummy's friends, spent a night in the impressive luxury of De Breul, the lovely estate the Mays maintained near Amsterdam. A tall brick building with white window panes and mouldings set in a lovely park amid great trees and soft, velvety lawns. There I met for the only time Ellen's mother who, although she never left her silken boudoir, was extraordinarily up to date on the world, dressed in exquisite house coats of old fashioned lace. Paul May ordered a bottle of really extraordinary wine. We called on Ellen's Uncle Robert in his smaller but more artistic lovely old Dutch estate with its fabulous collection of old silver which I believe both Liz and Mike were to see the remnants of in his still exquisite apartment in Amsterdam in 1948. Then we took off for a few days trip through the countryside which Mummy loved and which she wanted me to love also. We caught, if only a glimpse, of that cozy clean and charming Holland which with memories of World War I neutrality, seemed still to have a chance of retaining its sanity and quaint purity in a more and more troubled Europe. It was not to be, but medieval Middleburg with its tower, the narrow roads among the dykes, Haarlem and its



tiny houses reminding me of that little one kept like a shrine in St. Petersburg which Peter the Great had had built in memory of his carefree days in Holland.

Then we drove to Belgium. I enjoying the simple passage of frontier after decades of complicated formalities. We went to Bruges, strolled the lovely quiet streets, saw a fantastic exhibition of Van de Weyden with those inimitable greens, the charm of the Beguinage and drove on to Ghent. Ghent was a disappointment but still with a few old houses of high Middle Ages beauty all covered with gilt sculptures. We returned for a glimpse of Bousi who was thriving delightedly in Mania's care and took off for Strasbourg. Serge was doing his military service in nearby Haguenau. We admired the pink cathedral, the square and had dinner at a restaurant with a crocodile hanging on the ceiling which still exists today. Next morning early we were awakened by the concierge to say *"Un militaire est dans le hall depuis quelques heures"*. (A soldier is in the hall since a few hours) Serge came up, soaked in a warm bath and we took off for an excursion in the mountains and a lunch with the famous river trout and dry Rhine wine. We took Serge to his barracks and left the next day for Basel. Irene came out to meet us in Colmar and we - or at least I, was thrilled by the strength and coloring of the Grunewald Triptyque. A day or so in Basel with the family, cozy, gay and nice and then on to Geneva where there was an exhibit of the masterpieces of the Prado, sent to Switzerland for safekeeping by the Republican Government and after the revolt of General Franco, Guerin and a few years of horrible civil war during which Germany and Italy assisted the traitors, and England and France stood by, uncertain and helpless. Franco had won and the pictures were now going back to Madrid. The show was breathtaking. The gorgeous Velasquezes. Here it was that I saw for the first time my favorite painting - Goya's Royal Family. It appealed to my sense of humour, it appealed to me by its stark realism and all it had to say and its composition and coloring.

I literally fell in love with it. Later on in 1955 flying from Tangiers to Paris I had a two hour stopover in Madrid and instead of taking a car to the Escorial which I had just admired from the sky, I chose to return to the Prado and once again gaze entranced at the great canvas. We then went on to Annecy, in the French Alps and stopped at the Abbaye de Talloires, then only beginning to be known. We stayed at the *hostellery* (inn) which was empty and were given the Abbot's room with the painted ceiling, sculptured furniture and Elizabethan high four poster bed. We rowed on the lake, had meals on the warm sunny terrace and after a couple of days via Bourges and its great cathedral which held so many memories for me, returned to and then went to Nogent Sur Marne, near the Bois de Vincennes where we had rented a villa with a garden so that Bousi could be out of town with me having no more vacations coming that year. It was a typical tall brick building like so many of the Douanier Rousseau paintings and the lawn was shady. Nogent was in my territory and my endless inspection drives could continue nearly as easily as from Paris. We were visited by Gavrik then working in Paris with Philippe and a few friends in particular my Uncle Leo for what was to be the last time. Dressed in an old cutaway, straw hat and tennis shoes he was terribly impressed by Mummy and kept calling her "*Madame*", the poor old man.

As I have already mentioned he had spent the last thirty five odd years in Montparnasse, living the classical pre World War I Bohemian life except that as the Bank grew, his monthly checks increased. He met many many interesting personalities. Remembered Oscar Wilde, Lenin, Trotsky and many painters and poets, to say nothing of innumerable pretty models. All the time still carrying on a life time affair with a Suzy who was young, pretty and really devoted to him but whom he had promised Grandmother never to marry. While Auntie had her dressmaking establishment, he tried to work there and his handling of accounting was one of the prime reasons for the bankruptcy. Not that

he was dishonest, but simply arithmetic and figures, except feminine ones, were a closed book to him. When he liquidated all he had after the final collapse, he gave the money to Suzy who set herself up as a *Salon de Coiffure (Beauty parlor)* with her current boy friend in attendance and her mother and Uncle Leo in the role of parents. Uncle Leo was known to everyone in his district and loved by all for his past generosity and kindness. The poor man spent a lovely day with us on the lawn, playing with Bousi, with awe and went away promising, if only we allowed it, he would make such visits as often as he could. When we parted at the gate he was deeply moved and said how he felt his life had been after all, useless and empty. I consoled him and promised to make all efforts to make his last years sunny. When the Germans occupied Paris, he stopped going out, remaining incognito in the apartment. His only outing was to the corner newspaper stand which he made in his dressing gown and without any Yellow Star as he hadn't dreamt of registering, never having been to Temple since his Bar Mitzvah, I am sure. As luck would have it, a Wehrmacht Staff car hit him at the curb and although neighboring concierges tried to have him carried up to his apartment, Suzy unfortunately was out, the German officer, (during this period when they were courting the French) insisted on driving the poor man to the nearest hospital in his car. There his identity was established rapidly and from there he went directly to Drancy. Suzy tried hard to contact him but he disappeared for ever and I will never know if this easy going, bon vivant perished in a camp or died there. He was the closest relative that I lost in the Holocaust.

Back to Nogent in summer 1939. Emily was in Paris with the Chautemps, (he was a Minister at the time), and all the children. News in the papers grew more and more ominous every day. Evacuation from Paris which would certainly be bombed to smithereens in the first days of a war, was everyone's concern. I remembered Zina Mandelstam, now Madame Vigoureux

and her photographer husband in the small forgotten village of distant Lot et Garonne, Lavardac, where Mother had spent a pleasant summer. I wrote her. With memories of Auntie Alia's hospitality in Russia, Father's help for her father in exile while he still could and fond memories of the whole family, she enthusiastically replied that if ever needed we would be welcome. Then one day Emily arrived excitedly to say the Chautemps family was leaving for their property in Blois, taking Auntie with them. That was enough for me and it being a Friday, we left early the very next Saturday in the little 201 Peugeot, loaded with necessities and also all the silver and photos. This was an idea of Mummy's that has resulted in our having picture records of old days with us to this day. We drove all day. At one point there was an ominous noise in the motor. A road side mechanic, one of those French geniuses who could make a car run with some string and a few old fashioned hairpins, made elementary temporary repairs and by Saturday late evening, completely exhausted, we landed in Lavardac.

## War Years

As we had sped through the familiar French countryside, warm and sunny on this summer day, I vaguely remember thinking of many many past rides from our dusty trips along the white roads with row after row of century old trees lining the highways, still, for all practical purposes unchanged from the history laden days of past centuries in forgotten days of *before the war*. Then our trips along the narrow back asphalt ribbons that had replaced them in the Delaunay Belville with me holding on precariously to the wooden steering wheel while the high wicker decorated rear swayed precariously when we reached 40 miles an hour and far in front, beyond the glossy cylinder of the hood the gleaming brass of the radiator rim and the *Royal Automobile Club* insignia shone in the sun. Those were the earliest twenties when we were so reluctant to recognize that the pre war

world had gone and particularly for us. Then came the crazy thirties when, piled into Bugattis we rushed along the same highway now at well over 100 miles an hour, weaving dangerously between the immense two wheeled carts on their way to Les Halles, in the middle of Paris. These carts were still a familiar sight with their mountains of fresh vegetables in the streets of Paris, in the outskirts in early evening, in mid-town at midnight and then empty on their way home when I was returning from some late party. As the well known landmarks flashed by and although I was concentrating not only on the actual driving but on the many immediate problems ahead, and my imagination quite an active part of myself in those days, was running wild, I still had flashes of recollections. In the dust we crossed the arched stone bridge across the narrow river from Barbaste to Lavardac proper, turned left and came to the heavy, XVIII century building on the river bank, set off just below the highway. It had been the warehouse of the really old water mill nearby. The mill's half ruined medieval little tower was visible a few hundred yards away. It had been in the days of Henri IV the gay *Gascon's* (*boaster, braggart from Gascony*) favorite place for his innumerable peasant girl rendezvous, a few miles from the modest town of Nerac where his energetic mother held her Protestant court. Those were the days before the Saint Bartholomew night, before the *Guerres de Religion* (*Wars of Religion*) his final entry into Paris which was worth the Catholic Mass he attended to become the most popular ruler of France. So popular indeed that legends of his escapades were spoken of in the countryside as if they had occurred a few decades, not quite a few centuries, earlier. This was a phenomena which I had, of course realizing it much less, encountered in Auntie's *Derevnia* on the Volga in the 'old days' when peasants in their seventies and former serfs of course, spoke of Pougacheff, that brigand under Catherine the Great who less than a century before their births had

caused panic in all the Empire and won for his peasant revolt following which although described as savage hordes in our textbooks, a hidden appeal.

The second floor used probably to house the miller's family, and its tall French windows gave the facade a certain distinction. It was now occupied by the owners of the place who had probably inherited it from not so far distant ancestors when it had been sold at public auction during the Revolution in 1790, now a century and half ago. The ground floor must have been modified since as there was a row of rooms, high ceilinged, rather dark because they looked out upon a narrow courtyard, where the owner's half witted brother fed the chickens and did some gardening. The place was damp, cool in summer. The Vigoureux occupied, I would say, half a dozen rooms, two of which they rented to us together with a much smaller one on the staircase which Augustine, the maid, was to occupy. We also had the kitchen with its wood stove at our disposal. These details are probably a bit wrong and Mummy can give more of them as she lived there longer than I did and also spent many more long waiting hours within the walls. Zina Madelstam Vigoureux had unearthed a XIX century cot in the attic and had 'prepared' it for Bousi but Mummy after one look at its frayed dirty hangings decided to keep the baby in her little carriage. Not the high, shiny polished dark blue one but the folding one we had taken along and which was to be Bousi's bed for years to come and then Mimi's cradle until we left France.

The next day I rested a bit, exhausted both physically and mentally. War had not yet been declared, not even general mobilization and the radio was still humming with occasionally optimistic ideas while Hitler took over Danzig and prepared the Polish Blitzkrieg. We took a walk the next day in the afternoon to the wood on the Nerac road and then back to the village square and I'll admit we were not in a very happy mood. Monday morning I drove over to Nerac, opened an account at the local Credit Lyonnais Branch, (the one in Barbasté was open

only one day a week when the fair was held there), took a safe deposit box into which we put the silver and mother's jewels, what there was of them, and with a look at the sleeping baby and into Mummy's brave dark eyes, I dashed away. I drove pretty fast and in the latter stages, against the flow of traffic as people were already leaving the capital.

I reached Avenue Leon Heuzey rather late in the evening. Augustine had been supposed to close down the villa in Nogent and prepare the apartment for me but had gone to visit her family in Alsace instead. So I walked into our home where the furniture was covered with white sheets or covers, without a single little thing on the tables to give it life, an empty Frigidaire and an unmade bed. I sank into the armchair in the salon and put on the radio. It was then that I heard probably not for the first time, but for the first conscious time our Chopin Etude (*Tristesse*) and sat there for hours with worries for the present, fears for the future, anxiety for all those we loved and memories crowding out the hopes from my mind and heart.

Next morning Augustine appeared and was relieved that I did not fire her but rather understandingly agreed she had done the right thing. Existence, the animal comforts of day to day; eating, sleeping, bathing returned to their normal form, to become increasingly weird, unreal and strange as the atmosphere grew heavier and heavier.

Instead of simply ignoring my day's absence from work I honestly reported it and was invited into the new general manager, Monsieur Mascara's office. He started to rave at me and I tendered him my resignation on the spot. Many inspectors had already been mobilized and control of the 1000 odd stores was rapidly breaking down. An expert with a car was a God send and he calmed down meekly at once. I had always hated the man and his later behavior during the occupation, confirmed my opinion of the individual.

Much later on after my escape from the *Stalag* (*German prisoner of war camp*), he learnt from one of the former post cards we were allowed by the Germans to exchange between zones, that I was out of camp. To avoid having to continue to pay my salary which had been regularly coming in after my mobilization as was the practice for all men on active duty or POW, he had an official notice sent to me inviting me back to my post in Paris, well knowing what it would mean for a Jew to return to the occupied zone and one who in addition had escaped a *Wehrmacht Stalag* and in case of non appearance, advising me I would be considered as having resigned and my salary would be stopped. Probably after the war, I could have obtained the back pay especially after I had decided not to come back as *Directeur Commercial* as James Hauser invited me to - this during my 1947 visit, but I never did anything about it and no one volunteered to pay me anything.

I worked even harder than usual as there was much to do to keep the sales women from panicking and returning to some home village, in general, keeping things rolling. It was early autumn and most friends were on vacation. I did have a few meals with the Halperins. I believe I lunched with Paul and also with Fedia who came to town but all that is more than hazy except one particular dinner at Paul Berstene's with Tony. Tony was leaving in a few days for his tank corps. I was awaiting mobilization but we were both very optimistic, full of hopes for a rapid end to the war the kind of optimism I should have known better not to share after what I had seen in 1914/17, but we were optimistic. Berstene was his usual courteous self, old fashioned polite with a strange tinge of obsequiousness toward the son of his former boss and husband of old Baron Horace's grand daughter, that gentleman who had been his father's boss in the late nineties. It was served by Rosa, the Czechoslovakian maid whom he had inherited from Mother when we moved to Sevres after Father's death and who



felt herself a *family retainer* and was overwhelmed to see *Monsieur Alec* again. The meal was not particularly good although Rosa had made it a point to prepare my favorite dishes. I clearly remember Paul lecturing us on the coming catastrophe. He described vividly all the tragedies that would befall us, the defeat, Hitler's Europe and only in the far far distance, perhaps a glimmer of hope. We were both incredulous and stunned and walking back to the Etoile together we shared our disbelief. When we met again in Cannes after the collapse, we both spoke of that evening.

I distinctly remember on the Sunday that war was finally declared, walking up the Champs Elysees with Gavrik. The crowd was anxious but not in the least panicky. Loudspeakers blared the news and we looked at each other thinking, I'm sure the same thoughts, 'again'. Nothing much changed and I was still a civilian. We wrote each other letters and I longed desperately to be with Mummy and Bousi. We were approaching October and I decided to go down to Lavardac for my birthday and not to await Bousi's. I could not face the 3rd alone in Paris I believed. There was a toy shop on the Avenue Mozart quite near to the Muette and there I got Sizi, Bousi's big teddy bear. The owners were refugees and we were to see them years later in Kansas City. I had been sending every few days the last *Champagne Fingers* from Huntly and Palmers which were Bousi's favorite sugar cookies and fully approved by her excellent young and nice pediatrician who was the pupil of the famous man who we had gone to after she was born. I decided to stop in Blois for lunch at the Chateaux where I would see not only *Granny-Lovey* but also Auntie Alia. Just before I left I got my mobilization order to report to Guingamp on October 15th so I decided I would leave the car in Lavardac. I'll admit it was with a heavy heart that I saw the towers of Orleans cathedral and later on the familiar facade of Blois. I kissed Lovey and left her to her numerous chores and went for a short stroll in the garden

with Auntie Alia. We walked hand in hand the well tended garden paths, remembering things past and talking hopefully of the future. Auntie said that it was after all a God send that Mother had been spared the anxiety. Little did we imagine what kinds of anxieties and worse she had been spared. Auntie who had done her bit actively as a nurse during the first war and was, I know, somewhat unhappy that her nephews had stayed at home, was now proud that I would be serving and worried at the risks Sergie was running in the front lines. She suggested that I try and become an interpreter which with my knowledge of languages was a natural and advised me to mention it to Chautemps at lunch as he was a Minister at the time. I flatly refused which was not bright of me but turned out to have been a providential decision. Had I been an interpreter my fate would have been quite different and probably in the end worse. We kissed, for what was to be the last time and went in to lunch. Chautemps, a small, thin, dark man with bright and intelligent eye who gestured, as all Frenchmen do, and spoke in a soft and exquisite French, was very kind and nice to me. He enquired as to my mobilization and I expressed satisfaction with my orders. He did not mention the war after that but told me smilingly that what with Auntie's stories and Emily Brett's about 'her boy' he felt he knew me very well. I answered that I was sure they both exaggerated and asked him to change the subject to which he wished me well and was called to the phone. That was my one meeting with this controversial French politician of the III Republic whose vacillations at critical times cost France so dearly and who with his brilliance, wheeling and dealing and even shady operations, his amorality, and nevertheless deep sincere patriotism and blind belief in France's inherited greatness, was so typical of all the men who lead the country to defeat and their beloved freedom loving Republic to collapse.

By evening I was in Lavardac and we spent a quite 3rd all three together, anxious, troubled and infinitely sad. It was the first collapse of that dream world which I had hoped for which fell so many times in my lifetime only to survive because of Mummy, her love, understanding and patience, her acceptance of anything that came, whether good, bad or indifferent, possibly an understanding reached during the fateful year she spent in Russia under the Bolsheviks, probably also an inherited *tenue* (bearing) and *noblesse oblige* (nobility obliges) from both her parents.

The last days as civilian I do not remember. I settled some affairs, made some arrangements for Mummy to have cash, saw Tony off to war, lunched at several relatives, both Mummy's and mine, did some paper work and inspection of stores which I could easily reach on foot and prepared for my trip to Brittany and induction in the *48eme Regiment d'Infanterie* (48th Infantry Regiment) based in Guingamp. I had made it a point of having my military papers marked *Francais* because I knew that the change of status could not have caught up with me and that as one who had not done his military service at the usual age of twenty I would be included with a group of freaks and stateless refugees. Lucy had returned from Biarritz and we went shopping together as we had done many times to the Trois Quartiers, I believe and I bought a suitcase which was to reappear later and even, it was a cream plastic one, followed us to the States and you may even remember it.

After a reasonably comfortable night I was splurging and knew that even Pops would not have the heart to criticize and traveled first class. I reached Guingamp in the morning. The tall, heavy, many windowed barracks building, typical of Empire days which I knew well and was to find later in Vannes, Clermont Ferrand and elsewhere, fronted on the square with its cobbled streets, some vague monument and a Romanesque church as well as several cafes. These

were overflowing with civilians and a few soldiers in the ancient *horizon bleu* uniforms of the First World War, the new khaki ones were issued only to the 'active' meaning soldiers actually in war, the training and auxiliary forces using up old stuff. One of those unbelievably idiotic economies all armies indulge in. I was turned back at the office and told to return in a few hours. My first meeting with the world wide principle of all armies - 'hurry, hurry and then wait'. As I sat dismally sipping a Vermouth *a l'eau*, (*watered down*) another dark haired rather pleasant civilian asked me if he could join me and introduced himself as Tarassoff. We broke into Russian immediately and I found out he was a nephew of a famous Armenian oil millionaire whose family I had met in Paris. His real name was Torossian and he was a brilliant engineer in an aircraft factory. As the only one able to assemble properly the instrument board, his company had asked to keep him but he was called up anyway and was to do basic training and exercises in the Breton countryside while his small aircraft factory was stalled in its deliveries. He had a brother who was a budding writer and who had changed his name to Troyat. I was to read most of his books and years later, when he came to Mills college in Oakland to lecture when we were living in San Jose, Sasha Tarassoff asked me to look him up. I drove to Mills, picked him up and took him to the original, I believe, only Trader Vic's in Oakland for an excellent dinner and animated talk. When he was elected to the French Academy I wrote him and got a very nice answer. I don't know if his letter is in any of his books Liz has, is hidden in one of mine or was lost. He is no great author but some of his books are quite good. One in particular dealing with a Russian refugee family for which he used his own aunts and uncles, much to their rage and disgust, is quite interesting.

We, Sasha Tarassoff and I, chatted animatedly of Paris, of our prospects in the immediate future, until we once again came to the regimental office. There

was the usual red tape. It has been so well described so many, many times that I won't try and repeat it. I was issued the most unbelievable *bleu horizon* knickers and vest that can be imagined. The sleeves came to about four inches from my wrist, the collar was so wide I looked like a skeleton, the knickers had large patches and I had heavy, worn out military boots and a pair, it wasn't a pair, as the shades of blue were different, *bandes molletieres* those narrow bands of cloth so familiar to soldiers in the first war, plus a small cap and an ill fitting helmet of the old 1914 style. I was also given some other items of linen and toiletries which I quickly discarded, keeping my own. I left my suitcase with my civilian clothes and a few other things at the office where I would pick it up months later when I left for the front, hand it to Mummy which, as I now realize, explains why the suitcase survived. As we had had an excellent lunch at the local restaurant we hardly touched our evening meal and putting our sleeping bags on the our respective cots lay down for our first night as soldiers in the smelly, dirty and noisy barracks. You must realize that I was by 1939 thirty five years old, bald and certainly not military looking.

The next day we entrained into passenger cars of a railway that ran to Vannes where we spent the night. The city with its ramparts, old cathedral and picturesque port was attractive and much larger than Guingamp. We had a couple of hours off and went to the local hotel which I was to know so well, had a bath and dined in a room upstairs not brave enough to go into the officer filled dining room.

The barracks in Vannes were so similar to those in Guingamp that I would have been willing to believe they had been transported during the night like some theatrical props. The next morning a narrow gauge railway took us to the village of Colpo some ten miles away. A chateau, very unattractive Napoleon III style, built to resemble a Renaissance building, overlooked it from a small hill. It

housed an orphanage and had been the property of the de Courcy family. The old Countess de Courcy was born Fuld and was, therefore, a niece of the Baron Horace de Gunzburg. This tickled my historical sense and when I later discovered her tombstone it leaked out, deeply impressing both my superiors and the locals. This chateau also had connections with the famous niece of the Great Napoleon who plays such a vital if fanciful but somewhat true historical role in Rostand's *Aiglon*. We were lodged in the loft of a vast barn where the straw was thick and newly spread, so relatively clean. The plumbing was non-existent and after we had forced our comrades to relieve themselves no nearer than the field a couple of hundred yards away it was really no problem. We had as Sergeant a Parisian what we call *gouape* type, not quite Apache. He had been a typical gutter kid whom an aging whore had picked up and taught manners. Whether she left him some money when she died or he had simply stolen it from her I never really knew but he had married a sweetheart in the approved sentimental manner and had set up a watch repair shop in the XV Arrondissement of Paris. With cunning he had bought, as jewelers were alone allowed, as many gold bars as he could and buried them. He was to make a fortune later and always was a good and trusted friend whom I became genuinely fond of. Our group was composed of Robert, a very nice tall dark somewhat thick set Breton boy, Poder, who had missed his military service because of illness and whom his notary father finally got transferred to an officer's school, a Czech refugee in his late twenties, a couple of Jewish *machers* (*Yiddish doer*) of indeterminate nationality, very doubtful honesty and really amusing funny and witty. One was named Blackman, I recollect. There was also a typical little Jewish refugee tailor from East Prussia near Poland, Eckman, who looked as if he had stepped straight out of a Jewish novel, was deferentially polite and basically honest in his thieving way. In the company there were a few really extraordinary characters. There was a former

Apache, a pimp who, during his military service in the Navy had stabbed an officer. As this was done to protect himself against the officer's homosexual advances he was not shot but condemned to the infamous '*bataillons d'Afrique*' - military disciplinary battalions. This man had been called back at the mobilization from his activities in the Montmartre gangland and stole absolutely anything he could lay his hand on with a charming naiveté. When I learnt this, we had an immediate heart to heart talk and I told him anything I had was his for the taking with the sole exception of my toothbrush and offered him all my belongings. From that moment on we were close pals. He never took anything and protected my things from all the other thieves. There was another former sailor who landed in our *Compagnie d'Instruction (Training Company)* God know how. Also a flabby immensely fat Armenian who had been a lady's hairdresser and was certainly a pansy. He had the bad habit of reading penny novels after lights were out but instead of doing so with a flashlight preferred a candle. What, in a loft with one ladder and a thick layer of dry straw was not our idea of a safe occupation. After he had ignored repeated requests to desist, the wilder group caught a large rat, gorged it and placed it snugly in the depth of the Armenian's sleeping bag. Lights went out and someone blew his candle out and he had to slip into his bag in total darkness. What followed was impossible to describe as in the light of our flash lights, he danced wildly howling and imploring anyone who would, to get him out of his bag and entice the rat out also. There was another guy of indeterminate oily Mediterranean origin who proudly wore on his dirty light blue vest, an elaborate exotic order given him by some Bey of Tunis or other for services rendered, I presume. These medals were envied by our commander, Captain Le Gac, who had no medals or decorations of any kind and was a frustrated provincial school teacher, a coward, happy to be in the far rear but frustrated all the same, and fearful of the snickers he believed to

hear behind his back. The very young *Sous Lieutenant* (*sub lieutenant*) was so impressed by my baldness and probably, uniform notwithstanding, dignity that often he would forget himself and when addressing me politely say "*Monsieur*".

The very first evening, as soon as we were released from chores, I went into the village and to the local *bistro* (*small medium priced restaraunt*) I quickly discovered there was a large room on the second floor where local banquets were held and immediately rented it. We thus had a place to go in the evening, where we could wash. A red cheeked Breton girl in her early teens whom I nicknamed *Palotte* would bring us a pail of warm and a pail of hot water and Madame would prepare those fantastic omelet's with, really 40 eggs, which I watched her make carefully and learnt the rudiments of the omelet's you all seem to enjoy. This semi privacy, good food and liquor made our evenings bearable and exercises in the fresh open air several hours a day in the mild autumn climate were neither unpleasant nor unhealthy.

In the big hall downstairs, in front of the flaming oven an ancient grandmother in some indeterminate black clothes inherited over the generations most probably from pre Revolutionary days, used to sit and endlessly feed a dirty baby. She would take whatever food there was in her own mouth, masticate it with her toothless gums and then, well more or less, spit it into the baby's mouth. After my first shock and utter disgust I realized that by mixing the stuff with her own saliva she was making it digestible for the infant and wondered how far back in the ages this custom could go.

The first week went by rather slowly and by Saturday I had a yearning to go to Paris and see at least Lucy, if not Mummy and Bousi... Week end passes for the neighboring town of Vannes were not difficult to obtain. They were white whereas those for Paris which were pink were given out only exceptionally. A group of us including Robert and Tarassoff got passes for



Vannes, then dipped them in red ink and added 'Paris via' in front of Vannes. This method was from then on regularly applied. We missed the Saturday express in Vannes and I hired a taxi which raced us to a station where we could catch one. All this in wartime remember please. We landed in blacked out Paris rather late and nobody knew where to go so I took a taxi to the California Hotel where both Mummy and Pops stayed regularly and where the night porter obviously knew me well and appreciated my tips. When I rang the closed large front door he came to it and seeing a group of unshaven badly uniformed soldiers shooed us away with a vigorous "*pas de soldats*" (*no soldiers allowed*). I took my cap off and came as close as possible to the glass door. "*Monsieur, que faites vous dans ce costume?*" (*Sir, what are you doing in this costume?*) The man was stunned but let us in immediately. We got a large room, bathed, shaved and rested a bit until we could start phoning family and friends. When I went to see Lucy who was staying at a small hotel near the Trocadero as her studio was closed, she was staggered. he just couldn't get over it and my utterly impossible appearance. I phoned Mummy in Lavardac and went to lunch at the Shumanns. Tante Alice always practical, went to the basement and extricated a blue fancy uniform that one of the boys had worn about a decade earlier during their military service when the army was not yet in khaki. This I took back with me and Eckman in his spare time, adjusted it for me. So although I did look ridiculous in the ancient blue uniform, I did look presentable as it fitted me and was well cut. That evening after dinner, probably at the Halperins as I was well behaved, I went out into the darkened streets to find one of the ghostly cabs still around. The first week of the war we were all expecting bombings and spent nights in the cellars, in deck chairs with flashlights, but this didn't last.

At last I spotted a taxi and stopped him and opened the door. Simultaneously a lady opened the opposite one and in the darkness I recognized

a well known Russian Émigré author of comic stories, Teffi. She wrote in the local Russian newspaper and was responsible for two particularly appreciated jokes, puns which will be appreciated by those who know both Russian and French. Her favorite expression was "*que faire - faire take*" which was current Russian expression said with an exaggerated Armenian accent meaning approximately, but without the pun 'what's to be done - let's do it.' Her naming the summer season known to Parisians as "*saison morte*" (*slow season*) *saison mord*" (*season of mugs*) as applied to ugly, became a household word in the Russian colony. I had met her at my uncle Tolia's and Aunt Mania's in the twenties. (By the way, after Uncle's suicide Auntie worked in an office for a while and then went to England at the invitation of a titled British millionaire bachelor. When she finally realized he had no intention of marrying her she also committed suicide. Strangely enough my London friend Hartley had a cousin who was at the same house party and told me details of her suicide without realizing she was my aunt. Well Teffi with her strong Russo Armenian accent asked me to let her have the taxi and was a bit surprised when I answered her in pure Russian. We compromised and she dropped me off at the station just in time.

I repeated such excursions regularly the first weeks. Once meeting Serge also on leave from the Maginot Line where things were as quiet as everywhere in the West. There was the Sunday when Tony and a few friends were in town. I was the only one in blue and the only private. After a movie, we all trooped into a pastry shop on the Rond Point des Champs Elysees which was packed full. The group of officers, obviously on short leave, entitled us to immediate service and a choice table in the middle of the crowded salon. We gorged on pastries and as we were preparing to leave a fat, flashy, bejeweled lady noticed it and moved quickly to our table calling loudly to her meek insignificant husband, bashfully standing at the door "*Kom Adolf...*" That did it for me and in

the best and loudest German I could muster, I suggested she be a bit quieter. She was a bit surprised. On another occasion I had an experience which might have ended unpleasantly. Yvonne and Uncle Pierre were at the Ritz and I went to visit them. He was, at the time President of the Ritz. We had drinks in their suite and I relaxed a bit after having been shoed into one of the back elevators because of my uniform on the way up. Then in came an old friend of Pierre's, Admiral 'Pumpy' Howard, resplendent and beribboned. We switched to English and he was astounded to hear that I was not in the Interpreters Corps and insisted on taking down my name to see what could be done. I begged him not to explaining that my presence in Paris and at the Ritz in particular was highly irregular. Then Pierre suggested we go down to lunch. I was completely at a loss as to what I should do. I had hoped for a private visit in their suite. But with Pierre and the Admiral leading the way, we all trooped down to the dining room which was packed with allied officers, chic woman both in civilian and military clothes, flowers, choice food and impeccable waiters. To my further horror we were ushered to a big center table, just next to the exceedingly chic Duchess of Windsor and her party. She looked stunning in some kind of khaki uniform. I had never seen her and had only once caught a glimpse of the Duke as he emerged tiny, sunburnt from Cartier's and into his waiting America large limousine. I was on tender hooks and even more so when Pierre waved cheerily to a small thin dark man in unobtrusive clothes who took a corner table against the wall and I recognized Mandel, the former assistant of Clemenceau at that time Minister of War and the only energetic and efficient man in the Cabinet. He was typically Jewish in appearance and for those who know him, in a way reminded me of Pierre Schweitzer. Shortly thereafter Pierre was handed a little note and turning to me said "George Mandel wants me to bring the soldier at our table to meet him after lunch." I was completely panicked at the consequences of such an interview

even if it might have meant a transfer to a choice position. The consequences for our good captain, my friends and possibly myself if red tape was not cut rapidly enough were too horrifying to contemplate. I excused myself and followed a waiter into the kitchens. I explained my need to disappear to the famous headwaiter of the Ritz, Olivier, explaining I was Pierre de Gunzburg's nephew out on an irregular pass and was whisked out of the hotel by the back entrance. I, much later in New York, explained all that had happened to Pierre who was naively, blissfully unaware of anything having gone wrong and thought I was simply fed up with the party and wanted to get away.

The general routine in Colpo had settled down and a class of N.C.O.s had been set up. Most of us were following the courses and recently I found my class book which described the use of tanks in terms applying to World War One and this after the Polish Blitz. Much of the rest was as irrelevant and outdated as possible and tragically ridiculous. Somehow my escapade at the Ritz reached the Captain's ears and he called me in and in a friendly manner suggested I have a khaki uniform made for when I was on leave so as to be less conspicuous.

Mummy had been joined by Augustine who had nothing to do but was kept on in case Mummy was sick or could join me for a day or so. All these extravagances were fully approved by the family as I was a temporary 'hero'. Then Mummy decided that she had had enough of Lavardac and that Colpo was as safe and far away from the front as it was and she might as well join me, live in Vannes and see me on week ends and perhaps even once in a while during the week. I took rooms for us in the hotel and excitedly awaited their arrival. It was wonderful to have them both near me even if I would be seeing them only occasionally. The French population had been going downhill for quite a few years and it became the policy of the government to grant as much leave as possible to married soldiers in the hopes of arresting this trend. The day Mummy

brought me to the outskirts of Colpo, early in the morning, I was called to the Captain's office and he told me that if I was absent at any exceptional night call, he would be the one advised and if I was regularly present at the morning one at 7 AM and the evening one at around 6 PM and he knew exactly where I was and I didn't wander around Vannes to be caught by the military police, he saw no reason at all for me to sleep in the barn instead of comfortably at the hotel with *Madame Berline*. This chummy nice arrangement was to last as long as Mummy was in Vannes and even when she left. I took a room in a closer much smaller township of Locmine and spent my nights in solitary comfort until the outbreak of the real war.

The hotel in Vannes was full of officers. There was a Polish tank battalion whose picturesque colonels in their strange caps and great capes used to drink themselves into a stupor with excellent Cognac regularly at their table. A nice elderly colonel, in Vannes on some auxiliary post was the senior officer present and called me to his table after I had jumped up and stood to rigid attendance when he came in and reported to him asking permission to remain. He, in a most sociable and gallant gesture towards "*Madame*" advised me to take a table in a corner, close to the door, occupy a seat with my back to the dining room and ignore everything, preferably coming in late when all were seated and awaiting the departure of most officers before sneaking out. This friendly arrangement also lasted as long as the Vannes interlude. It was amusingly interrupted only once. The local movie house was giving the film of the *Les Trois Valses (The Three Waltzes)* that exquisite musical with Yvonne Printemps and Fresnay we had enjoyed so much with Paul in Paris. We wanted to go and as Augustine was going down to dinner early, as she always used to, we mentioned to her that we would like her to come back up rather sooner than usual for us to have an earlier meal. Time went by and she didn't appear so Mummy suggested

I go down to investigate. I found her in animated conversation in the hall with a handsome *commandant* (*commander*) and went to the desk asking the proprietress to go up to her and tell her Mummy was anxious to see her. Madame was surprised and pointed to Augustine just a few feet away and it was only when I called her attention to the fact that she was with a *commandant* and I was only a *Soldat de II classe* (*Private*) that she understood my predicament and got Augustine away from her officer. After I had left, Mummy would remain in bed as there was absolutely nothing to do in Vannes and Augustine would take the morning stroll with Bousi in her buggy. We realized the success she must have had with the many sailors in the old coastal town when on Sunday, Bousi would call out eagerly *Pompom Rouge* (*the French sailor's cap*) every time one of them passed. One of her very first words. This reminded me of another old family situation. Shortly after we arrived in Paris, Nurse McDade left to go with some Egyptian family, duly rewarded by a diamond broach from Mother's jewel box. One of the first 'au pair' girls came to join Lucy and George's household. She was an attractive girl, a lady from an impoverished family. Mollikens, barely six at the time, was enthusiastic at the sight of the sky blue caps with gold braids of any officer of the famous cavalry regiments we would meet in the Bois. And we thus realized that the girl had come to Paris in the footsteps of a dashing French Lieutenant. She married him later and became a Vicomtesse of something or other.

We continued our routine in Colpo and soon Xmas came around. The Captain wanted to do something for the poor orphans in the chateau simultaneously ingratiating himself with the rather attractive Directress of the place. So he offered the Xmas tree decorations with colored lights. We were paraded on the square and anyone with any electrical knowledge was told to step forward. Tarasoff did so and the Captain was mad at him, believing his leg was

being pulled when Sasha told him he was a graduate of a well known electrical engineering school. In any case, he was given the job and also told to choose a couple of qualified assistants. Sergeant Robert was naturally one and as he was really *debrouillard* (*very resourceful*) as only a Parisian *gosse* (*kid*) could be, it was natural. I qualified because I could take them to Vannes to pick up anything we might lack and the Captain, who had promised to foot the bill of materials, knew only too well that if I was along, his bill would be nominal. This gave us three whole days of freedom from routine and not only amusing work but visits to Vannes for lunch and afternoon drinks with Mummy or without her. When the time of the party came, Mummy contributed to the presents and I did not hide, to her disgust, her family connection with the former owners. When I brought her to the fete we were given seats in the front row next to the Captain and I shared in the applause to Sasha for his outstanding work and the two day pass as bonus we got for the job. Mummy found a tiny pine tree and a few candles and even some decorations so we lit it on the 24th and again I didn't miss my Xmas Tree. It was both lovely and a tiny bit poignant as the future was so unreal and uncertain.

Holland with the war so near became an unpleasant place and the cold winter was not good for Pops who was past 80 by then. Fedia decided to ship him to the south of France. Ignacio was returning to Spain and Olga would be going with Pops as well as Mania. Bousi was also having continuous colds in the bad Vannes climate and it was decided that Mummy would take her to Antibes to Aniouta Aschkenazi's for the winter months as, in any case my training period was drawing to a close and I would soon be on my way up to the front.

My personal position with the officers was further enhanced by the fact that Louis Citroen, a Captain in the Tank Corps, was quartered in the immediate vicinity and he came several times to visit us in Vannes with his then

girl friend, driving back to Colpo to shake hands with his junior colleagues and the Captain. He recommend his friend to their good care. Not that the friend needed it in the least. Louis was one of the very first to join the underground. He died suddenly in hospital at Toulouse, officially of typhus but more probably of self administered poison to escape torture by the Gestapo who were on his trail and had identified him not only as the nephew of André Citroen but as an active Resistance man.

Then finally my medical dossier caught up with me and I was suddenly put into the military hospital of Vannes for X-rays and a check up for my already active ulcers. In the meantime a routine had been set up by the Captain for his weekends which he took in a nearby Breton town where he had his family. The train bringing him back just missed the morning bus from Vannes to Colpo and to avoid returning on Sunday evening, Le Gac would have me pick him up at the station and bring him to Colpo, even before the bus arrived. This was a perfect set up except if, God forbid, the Germans started something on a Sunday and there was no captain to take urgent measures about us all until Monday morning. This, in infinitely smaller and even more, infinitely less vital ways came to my mind a few years later when in White Plains, the awful surprise of Pearl Harbor burst upon us. In any case, here I was, unexpectedly in hospital and Mummy in receipt of the usual confirming wire from Le Gac about the train he was arriving on. She met him and explained the situation. He made some futile polite suggestion of taking an nonexistent bus and was happy to be driven to Colpo by Mummy who thought he would have himself deposited at the outskirts of the village. But he had himself driven directly to his office at the other end of the main street. I must have had a good reputation as a decent guy for except for much good humored kidding, I met with no resentment among my pals or even other soldiers. By that time I was outrageously flirting with the



attractive blond nurse and she told me that my file contained enough X-rays to send me directly to some auxiliary office job if not straight out into civilian life and back to my Hauser job. This was a tragedy indeed as, this sounds corny today, I was really anxious to do my bit and take part in the real fighting which we were certain would begin any day. I talked the nurse into misfiling my X-rays in another file and came out of hospital with a clean bill of health. We celebrated with Mummy, the nurses and some young doctors, in her apartment with quite a few bottles of champagne.

So now, early in the new year 1940, we entrained to meet Pops in Paris on his way to the south of France. We spent a few hectic days in the still 'phony war' Paris. I returned to Colpo and Mummy went along with Pops, Olga, Mania and Augustine, and of course Bousi to Antibes. She would stay with the Ashkenazys and Pops and Olga would stay in a hotel. Pops was traveling still in style, in his large Buick convertible. The unreal quiet of the front was like some strange unbelievable theatrical performance going on, with Poland crushed and except for the scuttling of the Graff Spee (*heavy armored German cruiser*) off Montevideo, no allied successes. Most of the talk was about the Duke of Windsor's elaborate auto caravan at H.Q. or the latest scandals with Madame de Porte, Daladier, the Duchess d'Uzes, Reynaud and the Chautemps ménage. Some foreign Jewish refugees were moving on to the States.

Here I must mention an unimportant evening which was to change into one of my most harrowing memories later on.

In our company most of the more wide awake ones were awaiting promotion to N.C.O. The others when training actually terminated in its ridiculous childish outmoded way were put to work building a large wooden hut, a hall, in the center of the village. Sasha was rushing the electrical installation as his transfer back to the airplane workshops was due any day. One evening after

work and before returning to Locmine, where I now lived in a tiny *auberge* (inn), I came upon a fair haired, blue eyed boy with round face and rosy cheeks. He was a quiet and decent kid from the Sarre. As German as one could be but the son of a father who had opted for France when the Sarre was returned to the Reich in one of those hardly noticed capitulations that marked all the period between the wars. Everyone called him *Boche* (*disparaging term for a German*) and he was lonely and miserable with no news of his family and parents. I took pity on him and would occasionally take a glass of Vermouth with him and talk to him in German, his native tongue. It seems strange today but at that time it was only a show of natural individual humanity. We talked of the big hut being built and I voiced the question of who was going to use it in this far away, God forsaken Breton village. "But the *Wehrmacht* of course and quite soon", he said. I couldn't believe it as he launched into a tirade about the overwhelming might of the Panzers which would sweep to the Atlantic coast in but a few days of Blitzkreig. Was he a Fifth Column spy? Was he voicing a conviction he had after watching his homeland rearm for the Millennium of the III Reich? I was never to know but some months later when this talk in the quiet of a Breton evening came back to me in my *Stalag* prison, I thought and wondered.

We had our last exercises in the rough terrain of Brittany. I saw a hamlet with stone huts, no windows and an open hearth, black with the smoke of ages and suddenly Medieval daily life of the peasants from the pages of history books came unbelievably alive and the famous revolt of the *Royalist Choans* in the 1790s, was reality. Here again history, century old history, lived in the countryside and the people, as it had done on the banks of the Volga. The unbelievable squalor and misery of that hamlet without water, with torches for light, earthen floors and peasant in rags speaking hardly any French in the III Republic in 1940, seemed some crazy nightmare.

It was during this time that the incident of Eckmann ordering the company to "Attention...please" occurred. One weekend I drove all the way to La Baule where my lycee friend Frank de Portu, now a doctor and Italian citizen, therefore a neutral, had moved. We spent a nice day reminiscing about the past and playing on the beach with his two boys. I was to run into the eldest, more than unexpectedly, at the time of my heart attack in Tokyo in 1965 and carry his youngest daughter at her baptism.

There was a weekend that was too short to travel to Antibes but during which I was able to make it to Biarritz. The place was crowded with refugees like at the time of World War I and Lucy was there doing some kind of war work and thriving on it. She was always at her best during an emergency. Gerry had just been born and the Falcos were somewhere. The situation was a bit tricky as the de Gunzburg clan were all gathered at their beautiful, large, Villa Elloria and Lucy was in town at a hotel. Daisy de Gunzburg, whom you know, was staying with her brother and although disapproving of the situation, (she herself had had more than one similar experience with her husband Chevalier de Bauer of Brussels, from whom she had finally divorced), tended to be more understanding. She worked in the same organization as Lucy. Jacqueline de Gunzburg was with her in laws as her husband Guy was somewhere in the army, and was not feeling overly comfortable with her unpleasant father in law. Lucy left me to spend the afternoon with Robert de Gunzburg and Jacqueline drove me out to the Golf. We had a pleasant time but it did seem unreal and I was anxious to be either with Mummy and Bousi or with the army. I was relieved to be back after the weekend and afterwards took only a short overnight leaves in Paris or even simply spent the weekends in my room.

While Mummy and Bousi were in Brittany with me and the weather permitted, we made a couple of interesting excursions on Sundays. Gas was not

rationed so we were able to visit Brittany which I knew little of. We took Francois Poder along and Bousi maintains, that although she was not two, she has some memory of being carried by him through the elaborate halls of the Chateau Jocelyn, the family fortress of the Rohan. This medieval structure had been added to during the XVI, XVII, XVIII centuries and with Fuld money further embellished, alas, during the XIXth. Some tricky explanations as to family ties gained us entrance to the closed palace. We admired the Celtic ruins, the *menhirs* (*monumental stone standing alone or in a group in a village square*) and the small Romanesque churches, the Bay of Quiberon and the sunken roads along which the Royalist guerillas of the Chouan uprising would escape the Revolutionary armies. When I read of Breton separatism it sounds strange in retrospect. When I was there, there was none really. It is in Brittany that the great Clemenceau went to solitary exile to be buried standing up in his grave facing the ocean after an ungrateful France voted out the 'Tiger' and chose instead, the already half crazy and superficial politician Deschanel. But when I hear of Brittany as the forgotten province of France, I must agree that even in those days, it seemed far far away from the mainstream and life, remote, retarded and miserably poor.

In late April the results of our so-called training came through and I was promoted to *Corporal Chef* which was a grade higher than expected and carried automatic promotion to Sergeant when sent to the front. François Poder was the other *chef* and promotions of corporal came to all the group except for poor Eckmann who took it in good spirits as he did everything else. Just to show how deeply the camaraderie established in Colpo went, after the defeat when he was hiding in Paris from the Gestapo and deportation, a group of black marketers, some from our Colpo company, smuggled him beyond the border. Then later on, to a little village and when I went back in 1947 and we had our reunion, there was little, ridiculous Eckmann, deferential as usual and effusively grateful to

Mummy for having sent him 50 francs when he wrote a nice, but not very encouraging letter while I was on the missing list, to tell her that he had last seen me stumbling across a field and that shell fire having been only sporadic he was sure that I was alive.

We were due to return to Guingamp so I got a week's furlough and traveled to Antibes.

I realize now that there must have been one trip more either to Paris and back or to the south of France because I have the vivid recollection of traveling in uniform with a life size doll, *Bebe Beau* as it became known, much to the delight and amusement of the other passengers who for a moment or so thought I was carrying a real baby.

By this time I had had a khaki uniform made by the Vannes tailor much to Eckmann's regret and looked presentable although still rather strange. We passed through Nantes and its rampart and after a rather bad night on the hard benches of III class, which was the only one to which I was entitled, arrived in Marseilles. There the famous Train Bleue was just pulling out for the Riviera. I ran up to the *controleur de wagon lits*, (*controller of the sleeping cars*) a legendary figure in all Europe and slipping him a 100 franc note, suggested he take me in the sleeping car. These men were 'physionomists', nearly as infallible as the Casino attendants and he ushered me into an empty compartment saying that the occupant was at breakfast and that he would find me some place as passengers disembarked. I lay down and fell asleep only to be awakened by an unmistakable Oxbridge drawl saying in English "Who the hell is this bloody dirty soldier?" I recognized Somerset Maugham and drawled back in my best imitation of a Cambridge accent "This bloody soldier is fighting a war (which was stretching the point a bit) and I'll be happy to leave you to your comfortable

solitude" Or words to that effect. He mumbled something about not knowing that I was a Britisher and apologized to my retreating back in the corridor.

In Antibes things were nearly normally peaceful. Bousi was mad at my arrival and when I accompanied Mummy on her usual walk in the morning, howled with unsuppressed jealousy. I was in *mufti (plain or ordinary civie clothes)* and as I was in my thirties and bald, risked little from the Military Police. We went to Cannes in the Buick to visit the very attractive Madame Gunzburg, Margarit Pavlovna. She was the widow of a well known Moissei Akimovitch Gunzburg, who liked to say he was a relative and whom Pops tolerated, doing so partly because of his wife's beauty and partly because of his generosity to charitable causes. He had had his moment of celebrity because he organized the difficult supply of coal for Rojdestvenski's squadron on its long trip from Kronstadt on the Baltic to the fateful disaster at Tsu Shima during the Russo Japanese War. This was no mean task as coaling ships had to *rendez vous (meet up with)* with the squadron at discreet neutral ports and coaling had to be done in 24 hours to comply with the rules of neutrality. The millions he made on this basically patriotic job remained abroad and after the Revolution, he helped all his old Navy friends, now taxi drivers or restaurant attendants, as best, very generously. Olga and Pops lunched with Margarit Pavlovna and we had an excellent bouillabaisse on the wharf. The next day we were due to lunch with the old Van den Berghs in their palatial villa on the coast. He was chairman of Lever Brothers already one of the giant corporations of the world and practically owned it. The other guests in the dining room, a glass enclosed veranda overlooking the blue Mediterranean, was the local Dutch Consul and his wife. The atmosphere was electric as news had just broken of the German bombing of Rotterdam and invasion of the Low Countries. The Consul was frantically trying to phone the Hague or Paris to find out the fate of Mr. Van de Bergh's son and their families.

Mummy was desperately worried about Aunt Ellen and Aunt Irene. But we all kept up the decorum which was such a part of old style living. That stiff upper lip that had enabled the bungling British to hold on to their Empire for over a century. The liveried footmen served exquisite food on the gleaming white embroidered table cloth, the silver gleamed and the tall crystal glasses reflected the flow of rich, deep colored wines.

We hurried away as I expected a wire from Colpo canceling my leave and calling me back. I had just started a mouthful of dentistry with the Antibes dentist and had a few deep cavities prepared for gold inlays and filled with temporary plastic. Sure enough the wire was there and I frantically called the dentist to say that I could take the next day's express provided it was before 6 PM the hour at which the wire had been delivered instructing me to be en route within 24 hours. He obligingly cancelled all his appointments for the next day and I spent my last day of leave in a dentist's chair with Mummy looking on with a sad smile while the doctor filled my teeth with gold leaf inlays which lasted to this day and always evoked surprise and admiration when any man looked into my open mouth, be it in Kansas City, New York, Berkeley, San Francisco or Tokyo, and even once in Seoul. After some five hours we were both exhausted and I bid the family farewell in a daze asking only that Mummy go at once to Lavardac should the treacherous Italians go to war so that at least one of us would know where the other was and communicate directly or indirectly. I reached Colpo as the company was entraining for Guingamp and as a last favor the captain gave me a pass to rejoin them in my car and avoid leaving it stranded in Vannes. I reached Guingamp late and found the Sergeant Lucien Robert had taken an incredibly dirty room for the two of us above a local bistro and had also included me in the couple of hundred volunteers who were going up to the front to join the *404eme Regiment de Pioniers*, knowing well how anxious I was to see action.

We were then issued new well fitting very complicated khaki uniforms, new military heavy boots which I was to break in during the long marches at the cost of innumerable blisters and a heavy double back rack, part of which could be detached, containing not essential thing such as a second pair of boots and extra shirts etc. Also a bag into which we stuffed our vitally needed personal belongings, tooth brush, razor and so on. We were then given leave to dine in town. The place was overcrowded with groups leaving hourly to rejoin regiments called for reinforcements. The news from the front was bad but that didn't stamp out our optimism. It had been the same in 1914. We had a boisterous meal with lots of wine and retired to a blissfully dead sleep. Next day was to be devoted to further briefings, preparation of our gear including the cleaning of all eating utensils heavily covered with mineral grease to protect them against rust. Any scrap of which made food inedible. This was to be the last day in Guingamp and we were to leave early next morning. Although an atmosphere of enthusiastic patriotic fervor still reigned and we all felt we had to put up a good front, inside we were rather miserable and apprehensive. You can imagine my overwhelming joy and surprise when suddenly Mummy appeared. She had decided as soon as I had wired her that I was leaving for the front, to travel, the disorganization of the railway system notwithstanding, to see me once and incidentally pick up the car and drive it to Antibes. She can better describe both the trip and her enquiries from soldiers of the 48<sup>eme</sup>, finally found a familiar one and located me. Robert discreetly disappeared, spending the night in the barracks and we were alone in the dirty Bistro for our last day and night together. The shots were beginning to react and I was in a hazy euphoria. Mummy scraped my eating utensils with the serving girl, some kind of soap and cold water and got them into perfectly clean state. We had a bite *a deux* in the *bistrot* and next morning I awoke as practically all our group, with 40 centigrade temperature and a splitting headache. I tottered



to the barracks. We were supposed to march martially through the streets carrying our brand new incredibly heavy bulky bags. No rifles were issued to us as we were supposed to pick them up when we joined the 404<sup>eme</sup> somewhere in the north, near the Maginot Line. All I had as weapon was a big, very fancy, plated, shiny knife with numerous blades which Mummy had bought for me at Hermes during the day we spent in Paris when they were on their way to Antibes. I treasured it and it went with me through the whole campaign and internment and I was mad when I realized, as we were leaving Lavardac for the States, that I had left it on the kitchen table just a couple of minute earlier. I rushed back but it had already been stolen so this token weapon which was the only one I had during the whole campaign, except for one night when I was on look out duty and was given a rifle which I fired, probably ineffectively, at some dark shapes I hardly distinguished at a distance of a hundred feet or so, among the trees in the nearby wood from the farm where we were spending a night. But this was to come later.

Now, hardly able to stand, dizzy from high fever, we were in the yard of the barracks. The prospect of marching through the town was bad enough but doing so with our heavy equipment was beyond our possibility. An officer whom we knew took it upon himself to go and ask permission for the NCOs medically incapacitated for a short while to avail themselves of the offer of Mme. Berline to take their heavy bags to the station in her car. Permission was granted and we somehow marched to the station with Mummy in our little 201 piled high with khaki bags. She was able to come to the railway cars and idiotically I decided the NCOs would use the benches in the caboose and not the straw covered *40 hommes - 8 chevaux*, (*box car that carried 40 men and 8 horses*) those small wooden red freight cars with four wheels that were then still in use and after which so many clubs in the States are named reminding now old men of those

unforgettable days when they went to *Gay Paree*, to save the French in 1917. After a couple of hours of acute discomfort and under the pretext that we should be next to the old fashioned second class passenger car occupied by the officers, we were able to move to a simple freight car and lie down on the straw. We crawled slowly through familiar countryside, not gay at heart but putting up as gay a front as we could, expecting a pretty bad war ahead but certainly not yet dreaming of the confusing nightmare of disorder, defeat and panic which was to be our lot in the coming month until our dismal surrender.

We reached Austerlitz station then mostly reserved for freight, and moving slowly, circling Paris, were shunted to the yards of the Gare de l'Est. From there I phoned Irene and Katia who taxied out to bid me good by and also Anna, who notwithstanding the Sabbath, came out to do the same with one of the twins. Horace was already at the front and Sioma would not bring himself to break the Sabbath rule for such sentimental reasons. I only begged that they would contact Mummy. I was hoping that she had made a successful dash across France, alone in the little car, from Vannes where she spent her first night, then down the coast to La Baule where the de Cayeux family had taken refuge and then across from Bordeaux to the south coast. I was later to learn that she had made it. It was no easy feat and in the mad scramble many accidents occurred. Jacqueline d'Alsace, the daughter of Alphonse Lazard, a nice girl whom I knew very well as they had a property, Frogeres, next to La Mardelle, had a fatal one.

We slowly steamed out of Paris toward Morhange and the Maginot Line, We disembarked in a quiet village just behind the lines and were ordered to await news of our *404eme* which had moved since last contacted. Robert had immediately hurried to the village and taken the best room in the best *auberge* in the place, much to the officers' disgust. We spent the evening and night watching the flashes of artillery fire in the distance and listening to the shattering noise as

planes droned overhead but in the intervals, the countryside appeared incredibly quiet and calm. The civilian population had nearly all been moved from the vicinity of the *Ligne Maginot* (*Maginot Line*) early in the war so the roads were deserted, the farmyards mostly empty and in the eerie stillness, war seemed even more unreal. Next morning we actually marched to one of the entrances of the imposing *Ligne* (*measure used by French before the metric system*) and spent the whole day in the safety of one of the immense halls underground while the canons blasted overhead. Then our regiment was finally located near Paris in Mouchy, a lovely chateau in the Chantilly Forest which I vaguely remembered from my rides with Simone Stern through the countryside. We entrained again and the confusion in orders, our useless travels began to make me apprehensive and worried. We passed through Paris again, this time for hardly an hour. I did succeed in phoning both Irene and Anna, but not seeing them. We landed in Mouchy and were quartered in the park, near the chateau. By this time confusion was general and our captain, a notary in a provincial town in private life, talked very humanely with me. He was completely demoralized, lost, and did not know how to handle the emergency at all. He was prepared to handle routine red tape and now in this unbelievable mess, he was panic stricken with only one fundamental idea, to prepare all the necessary forms in proper quantities and send them on their way to the different *bureaux* (*offices*) which, by this time, we both realized must be not only in complete disarray but no longer in any known location. This was the first of many officers who completely lost their heads unprepared for emergencies they lost all control of the troops and a semblance of discipline was maintained either by a few NCOs or simply out of force of habit. From that night in the park of Mouchy, I realized that what I was in for was neither a brilliant victorious campaign nor a long and hard fought battle but a complete rout, an unbelievable disaster of historical proportions. I didn't even

have the time or energy to think of my own personal risk so overwhelmed was I by the indescribable change from a disciplined, if easy going and even at times humane army, into a dazed crowd of dispirited peasants thinking only of their ruined harvests and homes and with but one major thought - to get out of it and back home where they felt they were needed more than in this horde with pitiful officers clinging to exterior signs of rank only.

The couple of weeks after Mouchy which ended in the courtyard of the Clermont Ferrand barracks are, to put it mildly, confusing even for historians trying to describe them. For me they are an accumulation of short incidents, sometimes tragic, sometimes even comic but without real sequence. We apparently marched out of Mouchy on our way to l'Isle Adam, one of those charming wooded suburban places around Paris where in the twenties we had picnicked. The roads were clogged with retreating troops and civilian refugees. We were in a hurry to cross some particular bridge, this I do remember. I had been put in charge of a *compagnie* (*company*) of Breton men from the 48<sup>eme</sup> under the erroneous impression that I was a seasoned NCO from it. Luckily for me among the dozen or so men there were a few who had known me in Colpo and also, for totally unexplained reasons, Eckmann. The pace in the hot summer day was terrific. Why, we without arms, were being rushed to some unknown destination was part of the mess. Occasionally a German plane flew overhead but no bombs were dropped and what hurt most were the wild rumours that slid up and down our column. "The *Wehrmacht* was in front of us", "local farmers had seen tanks", "motorized groups were speeding to overtake us". This was not even a blitz but a few spearheads of the German army sinking in the morass of fleeing people in the millions actually. We made it to that bridge and I caught a glimpse of a grim faced Polish machine gunner calmly waiting to open fire when the enemy appeared. We climbed up the bank and into the cool semi darkness of

the forest where we bivouacked for the night, subjected only to the continuous din of heavy artillery fire of what was later to be described as the battle for l'Isle Adam but which for us, was only a long sleepless night with shells whining above and exploding nearer and nearer. The different companies settled down for the night and as we were not administratively part of the battalion, we were told to occupy a small clearing some distance away. I set up a watch and was pleased, why pleased I now realize was idiotic, that I had done so because a soldier awakened me at about 3AM to say that the company was leaving. We rapidly rejoined them and got into the line of fire. A small shell burst on a nearby truck which promptly disintegrated, its dashboard hit me in the leg and I sustained what was later not recognized as a wound but was the total scraping of the flesh off both legs to the bone. It was distinctly unpleasant and painful. We were now some thirty kilometers from Paris and rapidly approaching those suburban places where some of 'my' Hauser stores were located. I recollect that when we stopped for a short rest I deployed my men in a strawberry patch and we gorged ourselves with warm, fragrant strawberries. This kept us in a better mood than the rest of the battalion who were thirsty, dead tired and hungry. There was hardly any semblance of formation and Lucien Robert simply left his company and joined me. We discarded, or at least I did, the first, upper half of my double rucksack in the ditch then the second, keeping only my bag slung over my shoulder. We left the road and ran across an open field and were subjected to some desultory fire, God knows from whom. This was the last I saw of Eckmann until 1947 and caused him to send Mummy the hardly encouraging letter she got later.

One of the really ridiculous incidents of this short active military involvement occurred here. We were resting under some trees and I watched two elderly ladies, dressed in old fashioned finery, pushing a dilapidated high wheeled ancient pram piled high with the usual objects carried away in a hurry from small

quiet homes as those that lined the byroads of France near the larger cities in those days. These poor old souls must have been retired small shopkeepers who had probably been set up in business long long ago after the end of some romantic entanglement by a generous protector as was the custom in those Zola days in France. Seeing my bald head and probably sensing in me, although I certainly didn't look the part, dusty, unshaven and dog tired, as a *Monsieur* (*gentleman*) they approached me to ask my advice on what to do and where to go. I asked them how far they had traveled and learnt that in two days they had covered about ten kilometers. I then suggested they return to their suburban village, take care of those chickens and rabbits that had not already been stolen by friendly neighbors left behind, and await events. The younger but only slightly younger of the two then expressed fears about the brutality of the onrushing Huns. I had the heartless frankness to say that they had nothing to fear. They thanked me profusely and turned around. As we were preparing to resume our dismal march one of them, after rummaging in the pram, produced a medium size bottle, carefully wrapped up and came over and offered it to me as a token of their gratitude. It looked like a priceless treasure from bygone days and my comrades, expecting Cognac, urged me to accept. I was, to put it mildly slightly upset to discover a large bottle of Guerlain Eau de Cologne, those elaborate ones with the bees that are still sold today (1972) and which I recognized with disbelief a year or two ago on the dressing table at Gavrik Ashkenazy's in New York. I opened it, freshened my face, neck and hands. Robert did so too and we dropped it in the ditch with disgust. A symbol of futility.

By this time we had reached, God knows how and why, Enghein. Its shuttered casino on the small lake looked like some discarded scenery backstage. Our colonel then asked if anyone one had any idea of the area and I volunteered to get the column by side streets, into Paris.

There remains physical mystery for me. During training in Colpo I had collapsed after a twenty kilometer march and been offered, by the young polite lieutenant who used *Monsieur* when addressing the old soldier, to return in the truck. After my return to Lavardac, war over for me, I decided to take Bousi for a nice long walk to Nerac pushing the buggy along the straight, flat road. After 5 or 6 kilometers I collapsed and was happy to get a lift from a passing cart. During the retreat we averaged 60 kilometers a day and when we were transferred, as POWs from one place of internment, made over 40 kilometers in our debilitated state. This has convinced me that the human being is capable of almost anything when in real need.

We crossed the Seine and entered a deserted Paris marching slowly up the Avenue de la Grande Armee. A heavy pall of smoke hung over most of the city. It all looked empty, silent, except for many many pet dogs miserably roaming the streets abandoned by their fleeing mistresses. Just before we arrived, and as I was leading the column along a narrow side street, I passed one of the typical, small, Hauser stores, painted white with the dark blue sign and gold lettering. The saleswoman was on the doorstep and recognized me asking what she could give me and saying apologetically that there had been no deliveries for over a week, as if I would scold her for the empty shelves. She ran after me and handed me two large cans of Libby's asparagus, the most exclusive and costly items in her shop and, just to give you an idea of my state of mind, I told her not to forget to charge them to me at headquarters and she indignantly refused. I had the company march through side streets. I have no recollection of having passed the Arc de Triomphe, nor the Avenue Foch with its familiar mansions but I remember that by evening we were on the road to Versailles, approaching the Cote de Picardie which I knew so well. We stopped at one of the deserted little restaurants in Ville d'Avray and made ourselves as comfortable as possible in

wicker armchairs. We were so exhausted that I didn't even dream of calling either Paris or even the nearby Chateau des Ombrages which I knew so well from the days Eliane lived there before her marriage and where her brother Pierre had had such a colorful wedding with his first wife under a canopy of fragrant white flowers. All that seemed, and really was, worlds away. Next morning we continued through Versailles and I caught a glimpse, which I believed would be the last in my life, of the great palace in the distance, cold, empty, watching yet another historical event pass by its elaborate stately walls. We continued in the general direction of Orsay. The countryside was so familiar. In those days every little pavilion, every small park, picturesque village square, were friends I had seen millions of times either from cars speeding towards Orleans and a vacation at La Mardelle or later from *Double Creme* as I traveled the roads on my rounds of suburban stores.

We were quartered for the night in a small farmhouse. The cook hurried to prepare a sumptuous meal of chickens collected in the yard and with its heavy cream sauce and much butter, it was the last sumptuous meal I was to enjoy for quite a time. The theory behind it was that it was useless to leave anything behind for the *Boches* and hungry as we all were, we were delighted to go along with it.

The previous night I had had a long heart to heart talk with Lucien Robert. He had decided in the practical way he had learnt from childhood, that this show was a lost cause and decided then and there that being just a few miles from home, he was simply going there and to Hell with *La Patrie*, (*Fatherland*) duty and regiment which was making a stand on the Loire near Gien. We could do not good, our officers were all complete wrecks both physically and morally and he would have a much better chance safely hidden in his small Paris flat for a while, while all the gentlemen sorted the mess out. I could hardly find a word



to say against this eminently reasonable, if unpatriotic plan of desertion. We talked of this when we met again at our reunion upon my first return to Paris after the war in 1947 and he reminded me how ridiculously wrong I had been with my idealism. I often wonder, and as things have turned out, I still don't regret my stand that night.

The night in the farmyard was the only one during which I carried arms. Even at this late date, after getting the order to stand guard and protect my sleeping comrades, I had some difficulty in explaining to the officer that I could hardly do it without a gun.

Just before, a few kilometers before we turned off the main road to the hamlet and the farm, and as I was staggering along, I had been offered a lift by a man with his daughter in their car. They were fleeing south as were so many officers and generals in their staff cars with *Madame*, her pet Pekinese and jewels while the young ADC followed in another staff car with the general's, younger and more attractive mistress. I can vouch for seeing this not once but quite a number of times. I advised the occupants not to continue but return to their chateau as I had by then realized that all of France must be rapidly overrun and that the safest place for civilians was in their homes and not on the roads which were now being strafed by enemy planes.

When morning came we were ready to march. But not the Colonel who had upbraided me for coming in late after having traveled the last kilometer in a car. The colonel, a small fat man, no more than 5 foot 5 inches, in his forties, was awaiting the proverbial orders. A small German reconnaissance plane circled low over the farm and although most of us had hidden in the barns and no one used his rifle in any futile attempt to confirm our presence, the carts, field kitchen, a couple of cars and a group of officers gesticulating in the open certainly gave us away. With some premonition of coming disaster, I told my men that they

should be prepared to make it for the ditch as we would most certainly come under fire once we started out. By midday we formed into columns and marched out into the open along the road. It was beastly hot and I was exhausted so I sat on the bench of the field kitchen at the rear of the column with the friendly cook. After a while the immense boiling pot made my location a real hot seat and I got off and marched alongside. As I had predicted a few moments later we came under fire of light artillery. My last glimpse of the rolly polly Colonel was him literally rolling in the dust towards the ditch, somewhat undignified an image to carry away with me. I also dived for the ditch and at that moment the shell hit the kitchen wagon, sending it, the two horses and the cook up into the air with a crash. I realized that with it my bag with my last belongings had disintegrated.

After a while, and a few more shells, when all quieted down, we came back on the road. The two horses were dead and the cook lay on the road in a pool of blood. A dozen or so soldiers were screaming and moaning. Somehow we got them into a nearby house and made them as comfortable as we could on beds, tables and couches. It was here that I was surprised to watch a nice young men with whom I had become really friendly over the last hectic days, plunder the *cave (wine cellar)* of this friendly house in their own country and under the pretext that they were saving it from the *Boches*, empty all the wine and liquor bottles they could find. This shocked me a bit but when they flung them through the closed windows, smashing the glass, pouring the last drops on the carpet and swiping a few miserable knick knacks still on the mantle piece, I really was disgusted.

The ambulance staff decided that there were some too seriously wounded for them to be able to take care of and after examining the special military map, the officers discovered that there was a field hospital not too far away. But as the main roads were all clogged by refugees, secondary roads would

have to be used. Here again, I was called upon as being familiar with the countryside which these Bretons didn't know at all. I was given a truck with a driver and piled the poor wounded, six of them if I remember correctly, into it, took my place next to the driver and we set off. The side roads were nearly empty and only the miserably moaning cows which hadn't been milked for several days, proved that not everything was calm and in order. These miserable beasts had made the peasant soldiers particularly mad. They felt no special compassion for the fleeing city folk in their outlandish clothes, in their dusty cars, many with 'B' for Belgium to show how far they had come from, with thick mattresses on the roof to 'protect' against strafing *Stukas* (*German two seated dive bomber*), but the utter useless death of valuable cattle in such a beastly way, angered the century old traditionalists.

When we reached the small country house in the empty countryside I found only a couple of exhausted nurses and a few dog tired NCOs. The doctors had been evacuated and had left the place. Only those too badly wounded to be evacuated remained to be picked up by the advancing Germans. There was a mother with her little boy who had been slightly wounded and who was trying to get to some place in the outskirts of Orleans where her family lived. These two I warmly picked up and the woman sent Mummy a post card to say on what date she had seen me well and alive. All this was to be in the last half of June. We had been the last troops to leave Paris as the Wehrmacht entered the capital from the other side, as I was to determine later. By now completely disgusted, I set out with my moaning load for Orleans. We had to use the main road for a few kilometers and I witnessed the utterly useless exodus of civilians. I saw the still elegant *Parisiennes* pushing prams with some belongings and still rosy cheeked little children dressed daintily trotting alongside on their way to Orleans a 100 kilometers away where they would board the train for the calm of

some family farm in the south or so they believed. Several times I was obliged to refuse a lift as the truck was full and the front seat with the driver, myself the woman her wounded boy also. At one point I remember hearing the characteristic screech of the *Stukas* and as we parked on the side of the road under the trees, getting out and moving into the nearby field, I was no hero. As I watched the planes swoop down I saw the red, green and white *cocardes* (*knot of three colored ribbons, rosette*) of Italy and realized that they must have come into the war to share in the spoils. We had been listening to the radio and had no news of the declaration of war. I was later able to piece together the time and confirm that this strafing was done before actual declaration of war. Not a very pretty thing.

All the distances were small and looking back much was squeezed into a very few hours. By mid afternoon we reached Orleans and drove to the hospital which I knew well. An air raid had just ended. The station, goal of so many pitiful refugees on the road I had just seen, was still blazing brightly as were several other buildings. But not the cathedral. We drove up to the closed doors of the hospital and I had myself admitted. In the vaulted basement where the fading light filtered thinly from arched windows at street level and a few blue electrical bulbs shone miserably, I found rows and rows of cots with blood covered men moaning and Sisters of some order, in their medieval costumes, calmly moving around, giving drinks of water, helping with fallen pillows or just simply holding a yellow, bluish emaciated hand. A little old man with a small goatee and a blood covered white coat looked at me sadly and said that all the medical staff had been evacuated and that he, a retired civilian doctor, was doing his best for the dying soldiers until the German Red Cross would come and take over and that there was absolutely no possibility of taking on more wounded for whom, anyhow he could do nothing. He suggested the nearby Chateau de La Ferte St. Aubin which I knew well, as a possibility. So back I went to my truck

and to the by now utterly disgusted driver and talked him into pushing further. The lady and her son had left us and I found out only when I arrived at Lavardac that they had reached their destination.

Again on the road we were strafed and again instead of remaining at my post with the wounded, I lay down in the field. I found myself next to a mother with a baby she was feeding and a little girl of some 3 years who was howling in utter fright. As I lay there I noticed a butterfly lightly flitting from one flower to the other, oblivious of the strafing and not too distant explosions of shells. I did my best to call the little girl's attention to it and she finally watched it, fascinated, and calmed down. I had, I'll admit a lump in my throat as I imagined Bousi at this very moment possibly lying in some field also under fire. Luckily this was not to be and by then she was in Lavardac and in the comparative safety and quiet of the unoccupied zone of France, far from the disaster area. When, at last, we reached the chateau I was told that they would accept the wounded and went out to supervise their unloading. At that very moment a bus from some orphanage in the outskirts of Paris arrived and the nurses were taking out the pitifully bruised and bloody bodies of the poor little children who had also been strafed. Gaping wounds on little arms and legs made me physically sick and I stood fascinated watching the really horrible scene.

Once I was through with unloading my wounded, knowing the countryside, I decided and talked the driver into going to Gien which was a city on the banks of the Loire where I believed the regiment to be. I was not far wrong because in answer to Mummy's enquiry, a card came to Lavardac from authorities saying that there was no news of me but that the regiment had sustained casualties at Gien. We have it still. As we were driving out of the gate I suddenly realized that one of the Louis XV gatehouses had been rented by an old bachelor and

connoisseur of antiques and now half ruined - a man who belonged to the 'Proust-Montesquiou' set in Paris and was charming.

Prior to moving to the small pavilion he had lived near La Mardel in a chateau adjoining a juvenile detention home and it was said that his choice had been dictated by the proximity of a supply of young and unscrupulous companions. Be this as it may, he had always been friendly and I was dirty, tired and hungry and I knocked on the door. An old butler in striped waistcoat, black trousers, shiny shoes and immaculate white apron opened the door and shoed me away. I gave my name and Etienne came running down, dressed for a shoot in the country but his somewhat flabby round face, bearing the expression of an unhappy baby. He said what a pity it was that I had not come a bit earlier as Tony had stopped by that very afternoon with his tanks to have a bite and it was a shame that we had missed each other. As if we had had an appointment to lunch with Goujon in unbelievably distant peace time. Once the door closed and behind the shutters in the half light, the paneled salon with its satin Louis XV armchairs, its exquisite marqueterie pieces of furniture, crystal chandeliers and even vases of flowers among priceless bibelots, seemed fantastically unreal. Goujon told me that his mother and sister were visiting him, not wishing to stay in Paris, but were a bit tired and would I excuse them for not coming down. All this polite society small talk after what I had just been through struck me as both pathetic and comic. He then asked me if he could do anything and I asked for something to eat, explaining that I hadn't had anything in the last twenty odd hours. He was apologetic and saying he had practically nothing, ordered the butler to bring "*un léger quelque chose pour Monsieur Berline*" (*Something light for Mr. Berline to eat*). I then mentioned the driver and he added in his inimitable distinguished way "you will also give Monsieur Berline's driver something in the kitchen." All this was so utterly unbelievable that I could hardly do less than play along. I

washed up a bit, enjoying for a moment the clean toilet and was brought a lovely silver tray with some bread, cheese, a slice of ham, I believe and an outstandingly good bottle of vintage Bordeaux. All this was served on a little inlaid Louis XV table, with Sevres china and elaborate silver. Here too, in answer to Goujon's polite request for advice "you who have had the experience of the Russian debacle..." what he was to do with himself and for the ladies, I again advised staying put and after the war learned that all had gone well. I'll admit that in giving this advice I didn't realize that if it had been given to any of my similar Jewish friends it would have been fatal. In Goujon's case it all turned out fine. I do believe that during World War I, international high finance, Royalty and the Church, transcended boundaries and a 'Freemasonry' (not the real thing but as a symbol) existed between enemies. During World War II the only one that survived was that of homosexuality and thinking of the quasi miraculous escape of Ellen van Marx's uncle Robert May, of the Falcos who were recommended to the local chief of Police in Megeve after the collapse, by Lucy's closest friend Gilbert Allize, to this man who had been one of his dearest boy friends, and who did warn the Falcos when the Gestapo was raiding the place, I have come to believe in homosexuality as the remainig *camaraderie* (*clique, coterie*).

Back to my peace time interlude, a short, unreal *entre-acte* (*interlude, between the acts*) in the hateful tragic mess. We were back on the road again, the driver now a bit awed and unfortunately much less openly chummy. We spent the night in Chateauroux where the Germans were awaited momentarily.

We had passed several villages and when we arrived and went into the small restaurant we found the place full of fleeing officers and their ladies. The atmosphere was panicky and I even took on a Captain who indicated that the Germans were but a mile away. I contradicted him and even though I was only

an NCO, nothing happened. I made a short trip to some still open shops, one in particular with a Jewish name, and bought some things, handkerchiefs, a shirt, toothbrush, safety razor and a few blades, soap. The man would absolutely not take any money. He was fearful of the Germans and I, having lived in the army the last 10 months, did not realize fully what the Nazis would do. We were low on gas and with luck I located a depot, a civilian one, which had some 10,000 liters in its tanks and hadn't received orders to blow them up. At the local station where we drove to try and get some information about our regiment, military trucks were stalled without gas. I got the *Commandant* of the Station to believe me and when he checked that there was that much gas still available, he only said that if I had been his assistant things would have been different. I was flattered by his words but not happy. The station was in a turmoil as there was a Belgian Hospital train stalled a mile out on the tracks. The *Commandant* asked me to go and check. It was ghastly. There were four or five locomotives that had, one after the other, run out of fuel and the trains had been traveling without power, light or water for six days with helpless medics watching the wounded die. I located a small switch engine and had the whole thing slowly shunted into the station where ambulances got the wounded off. The *Commandant* asked for my name, rank and regiment and insisted he was going to have me promoted. It sounded weird in the mess that was reigning. We continued to Bourges and then on the road met a few trucks of our regiment with a Captain. We stopped them and asked for instructions. It was one of the most ridiculous things I have even done. Such blind adherence to discipline. We were ordered to join the convoy which was on its way to Clermont Ferrand, of all places, which was the Depot of the 404<sup>eme</sup> R.P. and where they were to pick up reinforcements and bring them back to the regiment then nearby at Gien. All unarmed. We tagged along. By evening we arrived at the barracks and I made a second error. Instead of leaving



'my' truck in the square and going in to inquire, we drove into the barracks. As soon as we were inside the iron gates closed and we were told that Clermont had been declared *Ville Ouverte (open city)*. No soldiers were to leave the barracks and we were to await orders. So there I was in a dirty, half empty barracks, alone, under practical house arrest by my own superiors, awaiting the arrival of the Wehrmacht. Utter frustration as I wandered around, scrounging for a plate, a cup and anything I might find.

I have forgotten to say that when we reached the outskirts of Chateauroux I stopped at a small house and asked to be allowed to wash up. My long underpants had stuck to my wounded legs and the blood had caked. Tearing them off was not pleasant at all. The woman kindly tore up an old sheet and I was able to bandage my bleeding legs. Again I will say that it is hardly believable how pain is numbed when the human body and even more so, the spirit are overwhelmed.

Back to the *casernes (barracks)* in Clermont. The local administration was fearful of having an NCO from an active fighting unit on the premises and I was immediately transferred, on the thick old registers, in triplicate, to an auxiliary unit stationed there. I was mad, as this would make, I knew, finding me that much more difficult. I was actually a member of the 48th R.I. (Infantry) detached to the *104eme R.P. (Pionniers)* and now re-detached to some Auxiliary. Trace of me would be lost. But probably it did help when I was listed as POW by the Wehrmacht later on.

The next morning we watched in silence as the great gates swung open and six Wehrmacht motorcyclists, in shirt sleeves, came to make all 4,000 of us, officers included, POWs. The Tricolor slowly came down and we really wept in frustration, corny as this may sound. Just a few days ago, here in San Francisco in 1972, in late August a documentary film was given *Le Chagrin et la*

*Pitie (The Sorrow and the Pity)* of Ophuls, and I was stunned to discover that out of the 2 million of prisoners, the film of our massing in the Clermont Ferrand barracks square had been chosen. There we all were but in those few seconds I couldn't focus on myself. But the memory of realizing that I had thought about it that next morning after the actual surrender as we were being massed for transportation and had even turned to a neighbour to say that there was a movie crew taking pictures. I told him that we should neither smile with relief or cry with disgust depending on how we felt, was a strange feeling mixing the two sensations.

The next morning we were marched to a train of *40 hommes-8 chevaux* and packed some 60 to 80 in each for a trip we didn't know where to. As the train crawled out through our own countryside we watched from the wide open doors, in the outskirts of the cities, vast fields of brand new military equipment, trucks, field guns, tanks, mountains of packing cases, all awaiting to be taken as booty by the victors. Very frustrating.

The usual rumours about our destination were running wild and I'll admit they were not encouraging. Tannenberg had a rather sinister sound to one who had heard of the horrible debacle of World War I. When we reached Moulins and were ordered to disembark there was a lift in our spirits. The guards were benevolent. They certainly didn't want two or more million POWs messing up things. We were marched to the central market, one of those glass and steel girder constructions familiar to all French towns, epitomized by the great Halles in Paris. Part of the space was simply cordoned off and we were told to bed down. Early next morning the peasants started to bring in their produce and the *halles (markets)* opened for business. We were assured that we were not POWs, that an armistice was due and that it would be followed by our immediate release; that the country was in chaos and escape would be followed by regrettable

shooting. This goes far to explain why so few did escape into the landscape. We were able to buy goods from the other part of the market and the prices charged to us were low. Rumours fed us also and the day passed rather quickly. There was surveillance and somehow very little correspondence was smuggled out. Those letters mostly got lost in the completely disorganized postal service. Next morning we were marched to a nearby village which had been cleared of all its inhabitants. The few officers in our group made a great fuss and insisted on being lodged separately, in the better houses. This caused violent resentment, particularly because most of the soldiers attributed, with justification, the collapse to their cowardly incompetence. I was lodged in an old harness shop. It smelt of leather and dust accumulated over the centuries. The floor was brick and there was nothing available to soften it, not even straw. I quickly made the discovery that the most painful part of my body were the heels which really hurt badly and the few dried tree branches I finally substituted for a mattress hardly helped. I can't say if the starvation diet to which we were subjected was due to the unexpectedly large number of prisoners which had overtaxed the German organization or their realization that starved men are so much easier to manage. We stayed some ten to twelve days in Decise. During all that time we were fed every twenty five to twenty six hours a small bowl of greasy water in which occasionally one could find a sliver of horsemeat or fat and small slice of black German military bread with a very meager percentage of flour and much *ersatz* (*a bad substitute*) including straw. This piece we used to cut up into half a dozen cubes which we would eat every few hours when craving for food began to get out of control. I later heard from a pal whom I met in the *Stalag 54* in Fourchambault that some groups had their own supplies of food with them and the fortnight or so we spent in Decise was, for them, rather pleasant. I went through the usually and often described stages of hunger. The first,

overwhelming desire for food, then the feeling of light exaltation and finally listless semi animal boredom which I thought must be how animals really felt. I have often been asked what I did during those days, how I slept, what I talked about. Except for the first few days when we tried to wile away the time playing bridge a bit, then a march to a nearby small lake in the woods during which I was able to buy two eggs from an obliging peasant girl and which I sucked with delight, our daily march through the deserted village to the kitchen compound to get our rations, the scrounging by peasant POWs for vegetables in the tiny patch behind the store and the unending chant of a few of the Algerian prisoners who kept to themselves and clustered around an elder, there is really nothing to tell. Hours went by slowly. I dozed and awakening, munched on the tiny cube of dark brown sleazy substance - ersatz bread. One of us had found a old dilapidated village hearse in the barn and had moved in, sleeping on the softer black felt support, usually reserved for coffins. His paraphernalia was carefully stored all around him, tooth brush, soap and so on. You can imagine his horror upon returning from the food distribution to find the hearse gone. It was being used for a local funeral and the poor guy spent the whole day anxiously awaiting its return, miserable at the thought that he would loose all his vital possessions. It was brought back in late evening. The corpse had been driven to the cemetery surrounded by a cake of soap, a pair of socks, a bottle of *eau de cologne*, a toothbrush, safety razor and a few other odds and ends.

One day we were told the extraordinary news that some food had been left over and staggered towards the large iron pots. There was practically nothing left and the POWs scraped the bottoms of their pots with their *gamelles* or even their hands under the ironic amused gaze of German officers. I will admit it needed some will power not to join in the scramble and return to the harness shop empty handed and empty bellied.

The few officers who were held in the village arrogantly refused to even talk with us and started a real row about our not saluting them when we met on the road. I was among those who insisted that we should salute German officers but were not obliged by the Geneva Convention to do so with regards other prisoners whether they were officers or not. I appeared to know what I was talking about and the ugly mood of the soldiers helped to force the officers to drop their requests with which they were bombarding the amused Wehrmacht staff. Luckily the weather held pretty well. We were continuously being told that we were not really POWs, that as soon as the final armistice was signed, we would be sent to our homes and that trying to escape at this stage was to court a volley of rifle fire and probably death.

The youngsters who had snake danced through the halls of the Moulins market on that earlier night, singing gleefully at the news of the Armistice while we bit our lips in dismal frustration, were still full of hope and believed we would be home by September. These were the days Mummy listened to the radio; Churchill's great speeches, de Gaulle's call to France and the quiet tired voice of Petain calling for dignity and calm in defeat. I was lying in the corner of the village store, miserably hungry and despondent.

After some weeks we were told one evening that the next day we would be given double rations - not that that was really much but it was enough to start rumours. We were to be moved somewhere else. Bright and early next morning we were given our bowl of soup and two slices of bread and told to line up for a march to Fourchambault, the enormous railway depot on the outskirts of Moulins where there were enough corrugated iron hangars to house ten thousand men. The whole march was only some 40 kilometers but in our debilitated state it was a real ordeal. I have read descriptions of the famous *Death March* and although ours cannot be compared with it, it was bad enough for me to realize

what the real one meant. Only the wounded and the old veterans of the 1914-1918 campaign, who had been mobilized in the auxiliary, were to ride in carts. The rest of us marched with no rests all day and well into the evening. It was tantalizing to see the fields, the farms, the church steeples in the distance, liberty near and unattainable. Wehrmacht motorcyclists with sub machine guns roared up and down our long column and a few guards prodded us along with bayonets and curses. I got into trouble only once when a guard, in German French told us that the British were licked and the war had ended. I turned to my comrades and said, in French: "Don't believe him. The British are not done yet." I thought the German would hit me hard then and there but something went wrong ahead and he hurried away. One of the younger Arabs was carrying a small suitcase and a passing officer ordered him to open it and it did contain some things the kid, who must have been all of sixteen, had stolen. He was immediately hustled away to the rear. There was one of the occasional volleys fired and we didn't see him again. I have no proof but it was rumoured that men, particularly Blacks and Arabs from the colonial regiments were being shot under any pretext. The heat, the sun beating down upon us, the absence of water and our miserable condition after those weeks of complete starvation, told on us and the prodding increased. We entered a small town. (I have a letter from the mayor sent to me thanking me for mailing a parcel of food shortly after the Liberation for the children of this town). The first floor windows were shuttered and the streets empty as our miserable convoy staggered through. But from the second floor open windows women and children threw us fruit, loaves of bread and best of all, sugar cubes. I was lucky to catch a few and can assure you that the effect of a lump of sugar can give a lift stronger than a cocktail when the body is completely dehydrated and falling apart. I can remember hearing a little kid shouting to her mother to give some food to that poor old old man. I was in my mid thirties at the time and

looked back to see who the *vieillard* (*old man*) might be until I realized to my utter surprise that I was the old man. Unshaven, with hollow cheeks and encrusted in dust I must have really looked like some miserable scarecrow.

We reached the vast yards by nightfall and were allocated to different hangars. We simply collapsed on the ground and lay like so many corpses for the night. The next morning bright and early we were given spades and told to dig narrow trenches for the latrines. Every few days after this, new trenches were dug and the planks moved. By the time I got out, the camp was running out of space and I don't know what was done later. Another crew was detailed to set up thick poles about ten feet high and barbed wire was strung. During the first 48 hours it would have been relatively easy to simply fade into the landscape and I have never forgiven myself for having advised two nice young students, one rather frail, not to try and escape and risk the fire of the guards. I still sometimes see their faces staring at me as the train taking them to labor camps in East Prussia slowly pulled out and they waved.

I made it my business not to tell the *Kommandatur* that I knew German and paraded as a milk delivery man with carpentering as my hobby. Some men who were professionals took me onto their team and I would climb a ladder and sit on the roof with a hammer and some nails while they worked. At their signal I would start hammering until the patrol had passed. All the men knew I was Jewish, not only some of the men from my former regiment, the 48th, but others also. But not a single one of the group ever let it out and I was therefore left in the general camp and not consigned to the special hangar where all the Jewish POWs were concentrated and given the more difficult and unpleasant work and under no condition allowed out of the camp as some were, under guard, for work in the fields or later, considered for transfer like the mailmen, railway men and other those providing vital services.

The few weeks I spent in *Stalag 54* are of course, a much longer time in my memory than many other shorter periods. I can't remember the sequence of events and will relate only a few vignettes.

There was the time when, on the roof I was busily reading a book when the danger signal was given. I went to work with gusto with my hammer and out of the corner of my eye I saw a typical German officer approaching, monocle, shiny boots and immaculate well fitting uniform. Trotting at this side was the usual little Alsatian interpreter. He stopped at the foot of my ladder and I missed a heartbeat. I could distinctly hear him tell the interpreter to ask me who I was. I must have presented a rather incongruous sight with my bald head and clumsy work. I waited for the question and replied in the usual way only mistaking my outfit number and realizing too late, that if this was checked it might lead to further unpleasant inquiries. Then I was asked my profession and I replied "milk truck dispatcher", thinking "driver" would sound patently false. The officer looked me over slowly and turning to the interpreter said "*kann nicht sein*" (*it can't be*). I couldn't agree more and dislike the implications. Luckily the officer was not interested and strolled away but he turned around once again and gave me a long look. I read his thoughts and hoped for the best. Nothing happened.

I kept as close as I could to the camp hospital which was French, and its staff. I not only enjoyed the company of the young doctors and nurses who were so much more interesting than the other run of the mill soldiers and NCO prisoners, farmhands, factory workers and still worse small bourgeois. We had nice long talks of an evening, about books, music. The staff had even some coffee, a better *ersatz* than we. When the head nurse went on a trip to Paris I suggested she contact an old family friend Paul Berstene who had, I was sure, remained in Paris and ask him, on my behalf, for a donation for the Red Cross



which, I felt, would be in part well used for the camp's needs and in part, probably for her own. How much she got I don't know but she was very friendly all the time. It was through the hospital staff and a medical certificate of my *lycee* friend Frank de Portu, that I got to be examined by the camp German medical commission. We were led to the hut by an elderly German reservist who remembered a few words of French from World War I and told me with envy that we would probably be released soon and go back to our homes while he had been away since the Prague invasion and feared that he was in for many more years of war. This was the first and only inkling I had that some Germans realized that the French Blitz was not the end. The German doctors examined me rather thoroughly. As my circumcision had been performed medically it didn't matter. My name sounded really French and when one doctor asked how it came about that I had been born in St. Petersburg I had the presence of mind to say that 1904 was the height of Franco Russia alliance and my father was in Russia for business. To my relief I was given a certificate of *Wehrdienst Untauglichkeit* (*inability to bear arms*) which was not only the first step for any possible release as I hoped, or possible detachment to an outside group but was to prove a vital factor, later on, when I applied to Vichy for an exit permit. The French could grant it without reference to the Germans, which might have led to enquires.

A few days after our capture we had been given short form post cards to send to our families. The mails worked extremely well because even though I was to remain in the *Stalag* for just over six weeks I got not only post cards from Mummy and a long letter from Serge from his camp. I was desperately sorry to have to use this letter as toilet paper but that couldn't be helped and in the several years to come, while Sergie's fate was unknown, I was really miserable at having destroyed what I believed to be his last letter. I have received a few, not too many, from him since. How Olga and Ignacio learnt of my address I don't really know.

Ignacio was in Madrid from which he sent me a friendly and innocuous post card. This caused great excitement at the *Kommandatur* where I was called to explain. I said that it was a friend I knew casually and that some mutual friends had probably mentioned my whereabouts. My POW friends in the offices helped to give an impression that this story was true and the matter was dropped. I cursed Ignacio inwardly and was both touched and pleased that the family knew I was alive and relatively safe. I didn't realize then that anti Jewish measures were being taken and as we were but a few miles from a loosely guarded border I naively wrote to Uncle Sioma in Vichy to ask one of the twins to bring some money for me to the *Kommandatur* as I was running low in funds. I didn't imagine how ridiculous my request was.

When we had arrived, the first *echelon*, (*first grade*) at Fourchambault there were no bunks and we made long rows of inclined boards to sleep on. I discovered a large shiny black hood, used to protect fragile equipment stored outside and appropriated it. This made an excellent blanket for four of us. I had located another Poder who had also belonged to the Guingamp 48th and was a young notary in Brittany and a very interesting engineer, Echavidre from the Michelin factories. Who the fourth was I don't remember. Echavidre told me many many interesting stories of the Michelin empire, in particular about their laboratory which even as illustrious a visitor as the King of the Belgians was not allowed to see and which had been hidden from the Germans (I believe they never got into it). He spoke glowingly about a new patent for a tire using steel reinforcing fibers. Remember that this was in 1940 and the 'new' invention has burst on the astonished world only thirty years later. This, already then, made me wonder how many inventions are lying unused in the secret files of the giant companies waiting for 'appropriate' conditions to be launched.

The large hangars were somewhat segregated. There was a medium sized one housing special security risks and Jewish prisoners, more severely guarded, given less privileges than one for the Arab and Black colonial soldiers. One of the hangars came to be occupied by a group of artists and students who had mostly been in the auxiliary and who, I now realize better than I did at the time, were mostly homosexuals. It is strange to think how far from our thoughts this aspect was, these talented boys had decorated their hangar and even arranged individual tents made of odds and ends and even with an occasional flower pot with a begonias. Some had musical instruments and to wander over and listen to concerts was one of the distractions we could enjoy. I was reminded of them listening to the street groups performing in 1972 at the corners of San Francisco and in the Cannery and Ghirardelli centers. I particularly remember a young Polish boy who had a violin which he played really very well. I happened to have a chocolate bar in my pocket as I had some cash left and would ask members of the groups sent out into town to do urgent repair work, to buy bread, sardines, chocolate and other supplements for our very very meager fare. There were still some supplies around and POWs were given preference. I gave a bar to the violinist and he played *Tristesse* of Chopin for me. I wallowed in real Berline sentimentality and felt very sorry for myself.

I believe I have already mentioned in connection with my dive overboard from the yacht in the Mediterranean, about the few moments of abject horror and panic experienced in my life. This was when the second incident occurred and I still remember the wave of anguish and terror as I realized how utterly helpless I was to do anything about my fate. My futile efforts about the medical certificate and inquiries about out of camp assignments began then, as an antidote to the helpless fear that I felt engulfing me. Now thinking back there was a fourth case. When I was having my attack of angina pectoris, alone,

unnecessarily alone, in our Tokyo apartment in 1965. The moments of unbelievable searing pain when I felt as if a red hot iron band was slowly crushing my breast would be replaced by an all engulfing wave of anguish and the feeling that the next heartbeat would be the last. And the black, endless abyss which I had started to fall into in 1921 during my serious bout of Spanish flu in Paris and from which I had been rescued by the neighborly pharmacist who slapped me violently in the face and brought my dive to a sudden stop, would take me again, this time finally.

There were lighter moments. A carton of large sandwiches arrived from the Red Cross, the first and only gift to the camp. I went into the matter of criticism of the Red Cross here. There is much too much to be said of its inefficiency, lack of organization and complete collapse. But there were, at that time in France two major excuses. The job was unexpectedly great and well beyond anything the Red Cross could handle and a large contingent of volunteers were Jewish and therefore unavailable, even at that early period. When the sandwiches arrived, it was discovered that they were intended for all our hangar, about 300 men and there were only about 50 sandwiches. The disappointment and muttering had already begun when I hit upon the idea of arranging a buffet of small European style sandwiches - what were called 'canapés' in the States. And then talked the hospital into giving me a liter of alcohol which we mixed with some, very little sugar and concocted with whatever wine and liquors available, duly watered down, a 'cup' (*punch*). I then cut up the sandwiches and we had, what reminded me of a pre war XVI Paris Arrondissement *reception*. It didn't alleviate our hunger but the general atmosphere was relaxed for awhile.

At one point a company of the Wehrmacht was stranded in Moulins. Rumours had it that the British had cut the railway in a bombing raid and they had to march all the way through the sprawling camp to an exercise field. They

sang lustily and as long as the songs were German marching songs, we could only gloomily watch them. But on the second day they went into the *Horst Wessel* (*Nazi German National Anthem*), arrogantly. When they were returning they were met by a wall of stony faced POWs who started to hum the *Marseillaise* (*French National Anthem*) with mouths shut. Our anthem drowned their songs and the next day we were all mustered to watch a bonfire of mail received and destroyed in reprisal. As it didn't go beyond that and no one was put in the closed railway freight car to suffer in unbearable heat under the blazing sun in the 'prison stockade' we couldn't really complain.

After our initial period of starvation and continued hunger rations, we were mostly listless and apathetic. Much more easily managed which led me to think that perhaps this was efficient German psychological warfare. In any case, when a group of several hundred POWs who had been kept on a nearby estate where the locals had fed them well and even lavishly, arrived full of complaints and ideas about their rights under the Geneva Convention. We warned them that they would soon calm down and actually after a week or two of camp diet and the general atmosphere brought them down to our low level.

Occasionally planes would fly over the camp and some specialists were able to identify them as British. This gave those who wanted it, a great moral boost.

One of the men who worked on repairing sewer damage in town had been able to buy with one of my last 100 franc notes, a can of ham and on July 14th we had a supper, some ten of us, to 'celebrate'. I told the men of the old Jacobite tradition of drinking to King James III (The Stewart pretender) who was in exile in St. Germain in France 'over the water', holding glasses over a large bowl of water placed on the table. And I insisted for some naively ridiculous sentimental bravado to do the same this time. They complied with smiles, some

indulgent, some skeptical, but both Francois Poder's and Echavidre's smiles were sincere they told me.

By this time squads of POWs were leaving for occupied towns, the railway men first then the postmen, as the Germans were trying to get things going in their territories. We were also receiving visits from families, mostly of course, those who lived in the vicinity and came to see their men bringing clothes and food. A fantastic black market developed and the Germans worked it to the hilt. A neighbor of ours in the hangar told us that his wife had stored several dozen excellent pairs of silk stockings and also that they had a well furnished wine cellar. The energetic Frenchwoman, what is called a typical *maitresse femme* (today's women's Lib, I realize they have invented nothing new), by small bribes got to Dr. Alef, who signed my medical certificate, and bribed him into granting her husband a medical release. She triumphantly bore him away. A can of sardines helped to close the guards eyes and could be useful if one had to go out after dark to relieve oneself. Otherwise there was the risk of being shot even without challenge by a sentry.

I was slowly with the help of the hospital staff and my friends at the Kommandatur working at getting included in a group that would go to Paris, be quartered in some barracks and under guard, deliver milk and food in army trucks with a German guard sitting next to the driver, to the German organizations quartered all over the city. Drivers who knew Paris well were required and my qualifications were reasonably good. I realized that if I ever got to Paris I would have to stage a disappearance but I thought I could do that through my former shady companions from Colpo who should be back in their Montmartre haunts. I didn't know or realize that I could have gone straight to the *Prefecture*, (*Police headquarters*) obtain false authentic papers there and travel, in those early days,

by *wagons lits* to Cannes. This was explained to me much later on the Croisette by an acquaintance who had used the stratagem.

One morning at this time a train of freight cars pulled slowly into the camp. It contained, we were told, Algerian POWs who had been taken early in the war and sent to East Prussia to work in the lumber mills. They hadn't survived the local climate well and deaths proving uneconomical, it had been decided to replace them by French POWs. I was mobilized by the camp hospital to help unload the train. When the doors opened we recoiled in abject horror. I don't need the descriptions of the frightful trains of Jews condemned to the extermination camps because the poor Algerians had traveled for weeks without food or water in locked cars and what emerged were hardly human beings. Many already decaying bodies were strewn around. The filth and stench was unbearable. We carried the bodies out and helped the men to the delousing center. Then we started to clean and disinfect the cars but before we had gotten far we were told to leave and local French POWs, among them many friends, were packed into the dirty railway cars, doors locked and the train of miseries slowly pulled out of camp as we watched with horror and disbelief as well as justified fear. I vainly tried to interest my hospital friends in the atrocity that had been committed but their response was cool. I couldn't afford to antagonize them if I wanted, coward that I was, to get out.

Then one morning a friend from the *Kommandatur* came running to me to tell me that a new train was expected then and there and that I was on the list of those supposed to be shipped out to East Prussia that same evening. This was bad news and I don't know how I kept my head but I hurried to the hospital and then with a young doctor, to the *Kommandatur*. The list of duly certified POWs declared unfit for military duty by the Germans and to be shipped for auxiliary duty with the *Wehrmacht* in Paris had already been drawn up for that

day. My French friend suggested that he replace the last name by mine but as this, even though I was sure shipment to Prussia would be fatal, I had the decency to balk, not very energetically I'll admit, but enough to have him add my name to the already typed list just over the *Kommandant's* signature and issue me a certificate telling me to be at a certain gate at 1 PM. I spent the rest of the morning in some anxiety wondering if my assignment to the departing train for East Prussia would be processed and I be given an official order to embark. Luckily around 11 AM we were ordered to muster in the open space in front of our hangar at 3 PM for roll call and the new assignment. I prayed that no one would check the two lists that morning. I had no appetite for whatever was given us at midday and carrying my belongings in my bag sauntered to the gate with Francois Poder. Then I hid behind the corner of a nearby hut while he kept watch. When the group I was listed on arrived and the gate opened he came to warn me and we hurried to the gate. He gave me a last wan friendly smile and didn't wave to avoid catching the attention of the guard Sergeant. I hurried slowly to the gate as the last man of the group was passing through and showing my paper indicated in French to the sentry that I was to be included in the group now already starting along the long straight avenue leading out of the camp which ended in a transversal one some hundred yards away. He didn't know French and I risked using some German words to explain that I was part of that group. He looked dubious but let me out and I hurried after the others. I caught up with them just as they were reaching the end of the straight avenue and as luck would have it, the guards, only a couple of them, were up front. As the group turned left into Moulins and the station, I turned right then ducked into a lane and a few moments later was alone. The town, as in all France, was overflowing with soldiers already discharged never actually taken prisoners, all in uniform without insignia so my



attire was inconspicuous and taking by-roads, I slowly made my way out of town and towards the station.

I now had the German certificate of unworthiness to prove I had been simply released for medical reasons. It bore the indication 'Lavardac' as residence. No *Department (Province)*, which would have indicated that it was located in Lot et Garonne in the unoccupied zone and no certificates for released military, or very very few, were issued for places outside of direct German control. My friend at the Kommandatur had arranged to avoid indicating the *department* and suggested to the German checking lists that because of my occupation it must be some suburb of Paris. This was swallowed by the man and helped immeasurably in my 'escape'.

I arrived finally at the station in late afternoon and presented my document to a friendly old German who was ready to allow me on the platform when a young military Police Corporal with the badge hung around his neck on a chain, stepped up and expressed doubts about the document being sufficient. He suggested that they phone the camp *Kommandatur*. Here I left all pretence of not knowing German and said that having worked in the *Kommandatur*, knew it was already closed and that I would simply spend the night in the waiting room and present myself next morning early for checking my situation. Before anyone could interfere I had picked up all my papers and disappeared in the crowd. It was the closest call I experienced.

Now a station employee, Alsatian, came up and whispered that he had realized my papers were not in order, that there was a train for the free zone around midnight, that all offices were closed then, that police control of passengers was very sketchy and that I should come at midnight to the yards and he would smuggle me onto the platform. I left but didn't relish the idea of strolling around Moulins, then the border in its German part, all evening to be

challenged by patrols and probably arrested. I knocked at a door and asked if I could spend the evening in the hall where a dark grandfather clock was ticking monotonously. I was given a high back upholstered armchair and sat for some five hours watching the clock hands slowly, slowly creeping around to midnight. I was given a plate of soup and some bread by the servant who refused the payment I offered with my last 50 franc note. I left quietly at 11:50 and was relieved to find the railway man waiting for me. He led me through the yards and across tracks to the deserted platform just as the slow train from 'occupied' into 'free' zone was drawing in. It was composed of ancient cars with compartments running the whole width of the car and no corridors and was nearly empty. I boarded an empty compartment and opening the door on the opposite side slid out and crouched under the car. I heard the police squad open the door and examine the empty compartment then slam it. I climbed back intending to hide on the floor as near the bench as possible so that the second cursory examination which my railway friend had told me occurred from the outside only just before departure, would not divulge my presence. I found that an old woman had come into the empty compartment. Although she realized what was afoot and insisted I remain there, I didn't want her involved so I climbed out and into the next, empty compartment. I put out the flickering ceiling lamp and stretched out. Hours and hours, but it was only minutes later, a flashlight lit up the compartment for an instant, its beam missing me and the train jerked out slowly. I looked at my watch. I knew that in about 20 minutes we would be in the Free Zone and waited for half an hour before getting up and sitting down. I had extricated myself and was on my way to Lavardac.

It was only several days later that I learnt of the absolutely harrowing coincidence with Mummy. Mummy had decided that she would avail herself of the permits given to POW wives at that time and visit me bringing warm clothes

for the coming winter, food and money. She traveled under very difficult conditions to Vichy. Propper y Calejon was then Spanish Ambassador to Vichy, France. He was the husband of 'Bubbles' Fould Springer who used to live in the same house as the Pierre de Gunzburgs and was a close friend of Beatrice and also of Mummy's. I knew her and her brother Max very well. There were two other younger daughters, one of whom married Price Jones, the British author, and died young and the other married Elie de Rothschild. But that is another story. Propper had been very decent and issued Spanish visas to all fleeing Jewish friends at the border near Biarritz at the time of the collapse of France and remained one of the few influential neutrals who then still had something to say to both sides. Propper told Mummy that the official permits to visit prisoners had been discontinued. Mummy was disappointed and before returning home to Lavardac, where with Grandfather, Olga, Mania, Bousi and Augustine were and where she had finally landed after leaving the Cote d'Azur. She had done this to comply with my request not to remain there if Italy attacked but go to Lavardac so that at least one of us knew where to contact the other, went to a bistro on the very border. The friendly woman there hearing her story suggested she simply walk out the rear of the small building and she would be in the other zone and could get to the camp and probably if not see me at least give the things for me to a friendly guard. Mummy opened the door but hesitated as had agreed she would not leave Bousi if I disappeared. Then forlornly she closed the door and made her way back to town and the station in the free part of the city. Little did she know that at that very moment I was sitting in the hallway in the other part of the same town waiting rather impatiently for midnight to leave and join her.

As the rickety train slowly made its way through familiar landscape I began to realize that I was no longer a POW and that that chapter was closed. It hadn't yet dawned on me that we would be facing many difficulties and

problems very soon and I was concentrating on the thought of seeing Mummy and Bousi. At Nimes which we reached many hours later I had to change trains to cross France to the West. The railway system in France had been built somewhat like a star, radiating from Paris and in many cases it was much quicker and more comfortable to go from Bordeaux on the Atlantic to Grenoble in the Alps via Paris. Express trains were so much more modern, quicker and better. When the center of this railway star was cut off it became a difficult problem to move until some months later, schedules and routing had been changed. I got off a bit stiff and unconsciously looked around for the *Feldgrau* (*a variety of green*) uniforms. It was a real relief to find none and even the unchanged bureaucratic NCO who had to stamp my vague documents, although unpleasant and ridiculously pompous, was a welcome sight. I was back in France. The people were much more friendly and in a small way showed, in those very early days after the defeat, a solidarity particularly towards the miserable soldiers of defeat, that was heart warming. I must say here and now that I, personally, never met with anything but friendly understanding and decent conduct. This was in the very early months of course and I can well believe that under the strain of the occupation all that changed. A year or so later in Agen when I was filling in some papers connected with our leaving for the States, the *Chef des Gendarmes* (*chief of police*) who was interviewing me hemmed and hawed and finally inquired whether I was Jewish, apologizing for the question. This was in the most liberal and free minded part of France and in 1941. I do not want to infer that collaboration didn't exist but I must admit that I met with a minimum of hostility. I must also admit that after over 20 years of being a *sale etranger* (*dirty foreigner*) as the French always reminded me, this short period as a citizen and former POW, even with growing restrictions against Jews, remains the warmest chapter of my French life.

After the rather involved formalities with the military I spent my last francs on a difficult long distance call to Lavardac. The phone was upstairs in the apartment of Mme. Carlier who owned the house and it took some time until I heard a familiar voice say "allo". To my shame I'll admit that I thought it was Mummy and as excuse I can only offer my excitement, bad connection and similarity in voice, accent and manner of speaking of all the sisters. It was Olga. I learnt of Mummy's trip and not realizing the problems I was creating told Olga I would get off at a station called Port Ste. Marie. I don't remember anything of the long slow trip and Mummy must have been a bit shocked when I got off. I had lost over 30 kilos (not pounds) and was unshaven, dirty and probably haggard.

I had tried not to grow either a mustache or a beard in camp for Mummy's sake and shaved with cold water and practically no soap. After a few weeks my last razor blade was no longer a blade and I used to shave one cheek a day to keep up a general appearance. An old car with some gas still scrounged somehow took us the last few miles. There was a bit of gas in the tanks of our little car and in the tank of Pop's large Buick which, registered in the Netherlands, could neither circulate nor be sold. I drained that tank and I'll admit sucking it through a rubber tube was not pleasant. Our reunion was very cozy and warm and as food was still reasonably plentiful and the local butcher was a decent man, I was fed copiously and my strength slowly returned. Money was running short and Pops was very strict about such matters. Generous but insistent on correct and proper accounting of every franc. Our walks became longer, a bicycle was bought for me and we drove around the lovely countryside. The good *confiserie* (*confectioner*) was still open a couple of days a week and made delicious little gateaux of egg whites, some sugar and fruit. The genius of the French to *se demerde* and make do with nothing was at its height.

We listened to the BBC occasionally and in the warm autumn afternoons sat in the sunshine. War news was uniformly bad but somehow it was an anticlimax for me. The local Doctor, Docteur Vallat, who had been a military doctor in WWI asked me to join the Anciens Combattants Council then in Lyons. They wrote that they were hounding Jews but Vallat assured me that as long as he was president, the local group would never discriminate and I joined. I started to get news of friends and family, in particular of Lucy who had escaped from Biarritz to Cannes where those refugees, mostly Jewish, who hadn't escaped already through Spain, were living pending visas for abroad.

I went on a visit passing through Marseilles where I started to look around for a job as money was really scarce. The Cannebiere was overflowing with refugees and atmosphere reminiscent of the first years of the Russian emigration with privileged people spending lavishly on black market restaurants, shady characters traveling back and forth to Paris from the Free Zone, international organizations, Jewish, Quaker and others, working hard on getting miserable victims who had already fled once from Hitler out of his reach. Some friends cooked up vague projects for enterprises in which I might find work but it was all unreal. I continued to Cannes. Most of the French de Gunzburgs were there either getting ready to leave or simply waiting for events. The Croisette was thronged with still elegant women and oily, bronzed men with an occasional familiar figure. The black market was thriving. Robert de Gunzburg gave a big dinner on the terrace of the Victoria where they were all staying. Guy hadn't escaped yet, Alexis was still away and Yves who was to be killed in the assault on Strasbourg by Leclerc's army in 1944, had disappeared. Although the relationship between Lucie de Gunzburg and Aunt Lucy was, to put it mildly strained, under the circumstances this was overlooked. I recounted some of my experiences and Suzanne See, one of the two pretty women we had gone to

Maxim's with, joined us. Little by little my closest friends appeared. The Schumann parents were in a small hotel and Tony was there with Francoise. Eliane was with her then husband Gadala, not Jewish, in their chateau. Max Fuld was there with his sister, Uncle Pierre and Yvonne were anxiously waiting for their U.S. visas. Fedia and family had been caught in Switzerland by the debacle and had taken a bus direct from that neutral country to neutral Spain and then on to Cuba and the States. I remember being a bit shocked that Fedia hadn't stopped off to bid his father good bye but looking back I now realize that it would have been an unnecessary crazy risk.

I returned to quiet, calm Lavardac completely disgusted with what I had seen. Disgusted with the petty interests and the atmosphere of unreal decadent existence in this cadre of international intrigue on the brink of the hideous volcano which had already erupted and spewn the motley crowd towards their usual play grounds. Political rumours were rife. Laval was intriguing like mad. His chief secretary was a Russian refugee of my generation, Sokolovski, who although christened at least once, was a first cousin of Aunt Katia and a 100% Jewish in the eyes of the Nazis. This led to some optimism. Guenia and all the clan had fled to Vichy but Lucie Leon who was working on the Herald Tribune still publishing as neutral, in Paris, obtained a permit to return and then got both her son Alexis and her husband Paul back to Paris; Alexis for his bachot against strenuous advice of her brother Alex Ponisovski. This was to prove a godsend for us and a tragedy for them.

Shortly after my return from this first trip both disgusted, disheartened and worn out, we had to register as Jews. We did so as *noblesse oblige* and as there were other refugees both Russian and from Paris in the village who knew who we all were. No discrimination was as yet made except that non Jews couldn't hire me and Jews were loosing control of their businesses. We wrote to Paul

(Berstene) to please liquidate our apartment and send all the furniture and stuff to our old friend Delelis Fanien who lived in an old family mansion and where our things could be easily hidden in the attic where centuries of junk had already accumulated. Paul emptied our flat and moved our belongings the day before the Germans froze all Jewish flats and rents and occupied the places. That same day, in early afternoon I got a friendly phone call from the manager of the Credit Lyonnais in Nerac that he had orders from Head Quarters in Paris to seal all Jewish safe deposit boxes. I rode my bike as quickly as I could and emptied our box of silver, jewelry and papers which I locked in a bureau in our room. Once again, locals had been kind.

Ignacio, as you may remember, was back in Madrid and although one of his brothers, Freddy, had fled to Mexico with the government, the other had been shot by the Reds. His sister in law Marita, a pure Spaniard, was well regarded by Franco. As he had not been politically involved he was able to do some legal work and so Olga decided to join him. This made it a little bit easier as her room could be used as a living room.

I started forays in the neighbourhood and in a little medieval walled village discovered to my utter joy, several large cans of ham and some other pretty useful things, even some soap although the cake of lather soap didn't prove very useful. One day a cart came selling all kinds of noodles. I hadn't the cash and it took some hectic persuasion to get a few thousand francs out of Pops who couldn't understand at all why I wanted to buy some 20 kilos of macaroni. Thank God he believed me and this kept us reasonably well supplied for over a year. Mme. Carlier, who had supplemented her income usually by producing several dozen cans of home made *pate de foie d'oie* (goose liver pate) made her last annual trip to the market and I was able to buy a couple of these expensive *pates* and was also able to have Felix Valabregue in hungry Marseilles, send me cash to get



everything I could lay my hands on for him. Madame Carlier still remembering her usual troubles in disposing of her production was delighted and so was Felix.

As a French citizen demobilized soldier and still then, member of the *Anciens Combattants (Veterans)*, I could travel freely around the country and living in a small village, was on no list of any German or French police, yet. Pierre de Gunzburg invited me to Cannes and asked me to go and meet Paul Dreyfus at the Swiss border which he could cross for an hour, and get some papers from him as well as confidential details. We went by car with an assistant of Felix Valabregue who also had business to settle. It was an unreal, pleasant drive along now empty roads and we were stopped only a couple of times by *gendarmes* who had nothing to say. Paul crossed the border and lunched with us in a tiny cafe. It was crazy, extraordinary, heartwarming to see Paul. The visit was unbelievably short because Paul who was such a prominent Jew in Switzerland wanted to be back in his homeland before anyone high up in Vichy or the German authorities, realized he had crossed into France. We talked business and he left. I was convinced I wouldn't see him again.

I returned to Cannes and reported to Pierre who left a few days later, lavishly refunding me for my expenses and paying for my trouble. This landfall solved immediate needs. Shortly there after we sold our car and this also helped. Alex Ponisovski was traveling with forged documents back and forth between Paris and the Free Zone and was able to cash a check for us and bring us some much needed cash. There was the time I had brought one of the large cans of ham with me and wanted to give half of it to Lucy and half to Lise de Bessac also then staying with some friends in Cannes and preparing, as a British subject, to leave for London. I tried with makeshift instruments to open the can in Lucy's bathroom which had innumerable taps for salt, warm and other (?) water all stone dry. I succeeded in cutting myself deeply and blood gushed all over the tiles. I

couldn't call the management as the ham was strictly black market in Cannes. Jeanette's then boy-friend (although she now denies it) who was a waiter, came along and the blood was stopped with a tourniquet and the room cleaned. Lise got her ham.

Tony had ordered some clothes in Marseilles when he was demobilized and also, as I have related, received some from Paris so he passed me on a suit and a pair of shoes. I had only one old dilapidated grey flannel suit, and my great coat which I had had dyed dark blue that Mummy had picked up with my suitcase in Guingamp where I had left it in storage when I joined the army. I usually wore my old uniform without insignia in the village but by now it would have been somewhat conspicuous in Marseilles and Cannes. By now I realized that except for some crazy *combinazione* connected with *Gazogenes*, the contraptions then built on to most cars which produced gas from wood burners, started by a French family living temporarily in Lavardac, there was no hope of work and no money to survive for the several years I realized the war would last. We never admitted the possibility of British defeat and the Final Solution, for ourselves.

We started to correspond with Fedia who was by then in the States about coming over and he wrote back that affidavits had been issued. I went again to Marseilles to check at the U.S. Consulate but nothing had arrived and I came back rather disillusioned. Autumn was setting in and the damp cold weather in Lavardac without a really good doctor, no hospital facilities and living quarters rather unsanitary, was no place for Pops to spend the winter. The Halperins who had fled first to Vichy and then to Lyons scouted around in the Rhone Valley and Anna located a decent, reasonably priced hotel in Orange where although food was scarce there was still enough to feed people. Pops and Mania left, traveling comfortably in *wagons lits* for the Hotel des Princes where Anna and Sioma

joined them. The boys remained in Lyons. Gorik was working and the twins were finishing their baccalaureates. Life in Orange was as nearly normal as it could be. Climate was pleasant, the hotel decent, service adequate and as company there was an old Duchess Leuchtenberg-Beauharnais, a relative of the Tsars, descendants of Napoleon's step son Beauharnais who had married into the Imperial Russian family and gotten the German title. One of the Duchess's sons was in the *Wehrmacht*, the other had been in the French army and was, I believe, with the British by that time. She was a charming *grande dame* and her maid from Russia, became Mania's bosom friend. After a while all three of us traveled to Orange and visited with Pops. Aniouta who was still living in Antibes in her villa, undisturbed, with the girls came to stay with her brother and in the crazy, wildly chaotic atmosphere of Europe in early winter 1940, in the dining room of the Hotel des Princes in Orange Pops presided over dinner, scanty but acceptable, surrounded by Aniouta, Anna. Sioma and ourselves plus an occasional guest passing through as if nothing had happened at all and we were back in 1920. Yes, all had fled their homes, the future was bleak and uncertain but hadn't this all happened before? And we were all still there witnesses after a world shattering cataclysm, riding out a new storm.

It was a curious period. There were rumours that some eminent Jews who had fled, in particular the old David Weills and my friends the Jean Sterns had returned to France so as not to loose their nationality and had been given assurances by Petain. And strangely they survived. A lot of business was being done in all kinds of black markets and thanks to Alec Ponisovski who was commuting to Paris from Grenoble officially, we got some of our funds out just before accounts were blocked. I traveled to Grenoble. In the same railway car, in the compartment next to mine on the trip from Lyons to Grenoble, there was Maurice Chevalier and a party of friends. Once Horace (Gorik) got me a bed for

an overnight stop in Lyons in a hotel and with two other people in the room. Another time I slept on the floor in the waiting room of the station and had to undergo delousing upon my return to Lavardac. I hadn't had lice in camp. I had headed a group that had forced our companions to disinfect the hangar after some new arrivals, the carbolic had stunk to high heaven, but we were spared those unwelcome visitors.

Vichy where I had gone, lived in an atmosphere of unreality. I believe I have written that around Xmas (i.e.1940) Madeleine de la Grandiere had phoned about a house she wanted to buy and just as I was setting out on a bicycle to go and join her and help in formalities, Yves appeared from camp. They came, all three for Xmas and camped in Lavardac and we used to get up twice a night to keep the coal stoves burning with wood we collected in the nearby forest. We discovered that Mummy was 'expecting' and made desperate efforts to get to the USA before the baby arrived. There was the usual bureaucratic snafu, whether willful or not I don't know. The French required a US work contract before granting an exit permit and the US regulations made long before to avoid exploitation of indentured emigrants, required that no work contract be signed if one was allowed to immigrate. The ancient building in Lavardac, unhealthy, damp and cold from which we 'evacuated' Pops to Orange was no place for a baby and we were lucky to find a small villa, reasonably modern, situated in the village, just behind the local *Gendamerie*. It had all the modern amenities except that these didn't work because of lack of power but its clean rooms, several sunny, small garden and comfortable bathroom without hot water of course, was a vast improvement. There was room for everyone and later Auntie Lucy. came to stay as did Mania, Marina, Jean Jacques and Gerry, Philippe de Gunzburg with his wife of those days, Antoinette, from nearby Agen where they had bought a property to sit out what all naively expected to be the *status quo*. It sounds crazy

when one looks back on it now but even after the horrible defeat somehow those who had not been yet arrested expected to weather the storm. Don't ask me how.

The Chautemps had left for abroad with Emily but that is another story which I will try at some later date to reconstruct from what she told me when we met. We stopped off in Marseilles after a visit to Orange for Liz to re-check with her eye doctor and Lucy came in from Cannes. We lunched in one of the larger restaurants on the still intact Vieux Port. At one point the U.S. Ambassador still accredited to Vichy, Admiral Leahy, came in and all those present stood up and cheered. The States were still neutral and sympathetic. The food was good but not plentiful and we were very confused when Liz, then just over two, trotted around after her meal and snatched grapes and I do believe other morsels from nearby tables. Our own food situation in Lavardac was not yet really critical. At least neither Mummy who had starved through a year of Bolshevism as a small girl and I who had so recently also starved in POW camp didn't think we should grumble. I had purchased half a cow with a local Russian refugee from World War I who couldn't afford to buy one and offered me to go 50/50. He gave us milk, butter and also vegetables, occasionally eggs. The only egg laying cow I have known. Pops was sarcastic and asked which end we owned. We were grateful. Our former landlady, I believe, gave us an old hen, half starved to supplement our menu. Neither Augustine nor I could bring ourselves to cut its neck and it fed on the meager leftovers until one day, lo and behold, it started laying eggs and until we left laid one a day for Bousi. We finally took it along on the roof of the overloaded *gazogene* when we left and deposited it at the Barsalou, Philippe's property where we were supposed to spend the day and spent also the night. Later, much later, I learnt that it had survived also there and had disappeared only after the family had left, Antoinette and the boys for Switzerland and Philippe for the Underground.

The local doctor didn't want the responsibility of Mummy's baby in the very primitive conditions of the village and recommended Agen and its hospital. A cousin of Jacqueline de Gunzburg, Mlle. Jeanne Marter, a personality of Agen, who had headed the literary life of the town for years and was the intellectual glory of local society, a very kind old maid who had helped us all in many many ways. As the family had lived in Agen for generations the local authorities protected her and her old parents from all the anti Jewish rules to the very end of the war which they survived, at least she did. Mlle. Marter got us two rooms in a dirty little hotel. The only half acceptable one was requisitioned by the German-Italian Armistice Commission and we didn't want to even try and move into some small room in it for obvious reasons. We moved to Agen in mid May at Dr. Valat's suggestion and of course had to wait the 'usual' three weeks. It rained nearly every day. Bousi could, occasionally spend the day at nearby Barsalou with her cousins, taken there and brought back in a little pony cart. The pony was aptly named Shell. But we dared not move away out of immediate reach of the hospital. I made elaborate arrangements to order one of the local cabs, horse drawn, to be available at a moments notice. We received from Lisbon, from old family friends the Oulmans, a small parcel containing a chocolate bar, a box of sardines and one other item. These could be sent by first class mail and came easily without endless formalities. Thanks to this supplement, some supplies brought from Lavardac and the meals at Barsalou which had its own farm, Bousi could supplement the hotel's very meager and very unappetizing menu but we had little to eat and what there was was very bad. I worried about Mummy in the last weeks of her pregnancy. In between showers we used to walk the streets of rather unattractive Agen and spent the days reading in our dingy little room and playing, as best we could with Bousi. At last, one night, Mummy awoke me at about 5AM to say it had started. Of course no cab could be

contacted and we set off for the hospital on foot. Every hundred meters or so when the pains got unbearable Mummy would sit down on the suitcase on the promenade under dripping trees on the banks of the Garonne river as we made our way to the hospital. The surgeon who was to take care of Mummy was there waiting for us. He was a nice man and probably not a bad surgeon but inexperienced in gynecology. Mummy was installed in a rather large and pleasant room and the doctor left for his rounds leaving behind a wonderful old nun (the hospital was run by her order) who stroked her and massaged her for a very short while until she suddenly told me to hurry and fetch the doctor. I rushed out into the corridor and having located the man, rushed back with him into the room to watch fascinated as Michel emerged, *cliche wise (breech birth)*. I was told to fetch the water from the nearby nurses' room and so was actually allowed to participate in Mike's birth. The old nun carried him away and I settled down to wait for Mummy to awaken. A few moments later the doctor beckoned to me from the door. He then told me that the old experienced nun had noticed that Mike had club feet and had called in one of France's great specialists, Professor Allenbach who had been evacuated from Strasbourg to Agen at the outbreak of the war. This was a real miracle. Allenbach told me that he had never had the chance to correct such defects less than an hour after birth with all the bones still quite soft and malleable and asked my permission to proceed.

The next day Lucy arrived. We had to walk from the station and she hated the dirty little hotel even though Jeanette brought her own sheets. And Charlotte the Scottie was unhappy. So after a visit to Mummy she took off with both maids and Bousi for Lavardac and we followed her a few days later. We duly registered Michel Paul at the local Mairie (*Town Hall*) and had the circumcision performed by the doctor. The local Jewish performer, a butcher in private life, just made a slight incision. There was nothing deeply religious in the

proceedings but somehow during those days while we felt extraordinarily privileged and protected, recognition of being a Jew was a 'must.' On a historical scale Bergson, who was deeply Catholic in his convictions I have been told, refused to be converted. It also gave pleasure and satisfaction to poor old Pops and without abandoning my personal agnostic ideas interlaced with my very own interpretation of the existence of something more than just the chemical processes of life, I had a strengthened awareness of tradition and it's deep real value.

As an amusing footnote, Michel's birth was recorded in the local newspaper between the sale of livestock and cancellation of some local fairs. When we reached Hamilton, Bermuda, some months later on our way from Lisbon to New York, the *Excalibur* was boarded by British police and all our papers and documents were confiscated with the promise that they would be sent along later to New York. Everything duly arrived in the States with the exception of that Agen newspaper. I couldn't for the love of me imagine why they would need it and what vital information was included in those six month old pages. Much much later casually discussing underground procedures with the Polish ex head of the organization in France during the war, Count Stanislas Lasocki in San Francisco, I mentioned it and he then explained that planting such realistic things on parachuted agents helped them justify their cover. It also explained why gifts of old French clothes with their original labels were accepted with such satisfaction by the authorities in Kansas City in '42. Along the same lines, one of my good old *Lycee* friends, Jean Guerrand (whom I called Gaston to differentiate him from three other Jeans in our group) told me that during the war he had continued to produce leather bound calendars and more important the actual paper inserts and these were smuggled to London, again to prove when discovered on an agent, that his cover was genuine, that he was really a bona fide resident of France and not a recently parachuted enemy. Such small details could,



and often did, mean the difference between life and death and romantically crazy as it may now seems it was all real.

Gasoline, or petrol as we still called it speaking English, when we dared, was not in very short supply and *gazogenes* appeared. A wood contraption with tanks, tubes and fumes was placed either on the rear *porte baggages* (*luggage rack*) if cars were old enough to have one, on the roof or on a trailer and the gasses thus produced, propellered with much coughing and sputtering, dilapidated cars at 20 to 30 miles an hour. A Lavardac garage man, a Communist it was rumoured, had fixed one on his car and this enabled us not only to return to Lavardac in style, finally leave it regally but, more important for me, to fetch every week, Professor Allenbach in nearby Agen and return him to town after he had manipulated poor little Michel's limbs, straightening them out continually. When we reached the States, the top man in New York at the time, Dr. Leo Meyer, was astounded at the results of the treatment and then had special braces, rather primitive metal ones, made to hold Michel's feet in the proper position. He wore them for months, poor baby, inaugurating this method of treatment in the States, Meyer having heard of it a few weeks earlier at an international convention in Canada.

Spring then summer came to Villa Jean Theodore, as our little place was pretentiously called. We had, as I have already mentioned, visits from friends and relatives and I made a few trips. I had concluded that there was no future at all for me in France and was frantic to get away to the States as money was beginning to run low. Visas to Switzerland were practically unobtainable and particularly for French citizens in *good* standing, as we were and also Switzerland appeared to offer only a temporary refuge but no possibility of gainful work and I didn't want at all to live on Paul's bounty. Guenia Hirshman and her youngest boy Andre obtained affidavits from Koussewitzky who was by

then conductor of the Boston Symphony and whom Guenia had sponsored when he lived in Moscow, a penniless was it bass player decades earlier. I begged Guenia to check again at the Consulate in Marseilles. S till no news.

There was a Russian couple living in Lavardac who were very vulnerable and they moved to a small shack deep in the woods, far away from any habitation. The Lavardac Gendarmes promised to warn them of any police raid so that they could hide in the thicket. We visited them in their little hide out which was very primitive and quiet and in those warm, still quiet days of 1941 summer, peaceful even a bit romantic. Zina Madelstam Vigoureux, who herself had lots of trouble later, told me after the war that the couple and their baby had survived. I was convinced deep in my mind that for some reason or other the Germans would overrun all of France and that the fiction of a neutral *Zone Libre* (*Free Zone*) would disappear suddenly one day and with it our relative safety. The anguish and anxiety of those months now sound unbelievable and at times I can't imagine how we were able to live and even enjoy quiet happy days while Bousi frolicked in a tub in the yard and Mimi slept under a tree.

To be certain not to forget it I repeat, the incident of the arrest of all Russians at the time of the invasion by the Germans in July '41 and my hurried trip to Pop's side in Orange. There were political intrigues in Vichy. Flandrin reappeared for a short spell and we became, God alone knows why, more optimistic. Rumours of imprisoned foreign Jews in camps in France filtered down to us. Carlo Melchior's half sister was involved I seem to remember. Still people were living in the 'Free' zone normally and my friend Roger Nathan, an important civil servant at the Ministry of Finance who had spirited the Belgian gold reserve to Portugal and from there to the Congo, was in Vichy holding down some kind of tiny job in the evacuated ministry. Most of the villas on the Riviera were still occupied by their Jewish owners, the Louis Louis Dreyfus, Madame

Henri de Jouvenel (Eliane's mother who having been Ambassador to Rome with her husband was under special protection of the Italians) and several others. The big hotels were overflowing with wealthy Jewish refugees from Paris and the day to day existence was continuing. The Croisette was elegant. Some stores had kept both their Paris and Cannes shops open and although there were fewer and fewer things, the windows were still attractive. Some of the International Set were either leaving in a leisurely fashion or remaining to keep the black market prosperous. The South Americans in particular were privileged as even the Germans courted some of them. The British were in a strange semi neutral position - Mers el Kebir, had been a terrible shock to us all and even a staunch Anglophile like myself, had some difficulty in trying to explain it when the news was given us in POW camp, the bitterness remained.

Apparently the traditional Anti Semitism of the State Department and in particular of most of the American Consuls in Europe had been publicized to the limit by the few lucky ones who had arrived in the States and the White House removed visa granting powers from the consuls and left them only to execute direct orders of State in Washington. As we learned later, Fedia immediately went to Washington where he still had friends from his old days in the Provisional Russian Government Embassy and the Berlin visa was the first to be cabled to the Consulate in Marseilles who immediately relayed the news by wire. I rushed to Marseilles, obtained the notification and then to Vichy to start proceedings for the difficult exit permit. What friends helped I never was to know for sure but some time later I was called to the *Agen Gendarmerie* for an interview. I arrived the preceding evening, checked with Jeanne Marter who told me that the officer who would interview me the next day was a childhood friend of hers and that she had spoken to him about us. I got a tiny windowless room in one of the unrequisioned hotels. I strolled around and picked up a heavy

volume, a French translation of Moby Dick, of all things. I spent the evening, then the whole night and most of the morning reading it and in my memory the great novel is inextricably intermingled with my own anxieties, fears and resolves. The interview was, as I have already said, as easy and decent as I could hope for. When the officer finally came to the question of why I wanted to leave and the vital point of my Jewishness, he went as far as to excuse himself for enquiring and added that, alas, it was the Government bowing to the Germans. I returned to Lavardac now still more excited and worried. Would we make it before some event which I was sure as looming ahead, interfered?

By this time Pops had obtained his visa and although it was decided that Michel was too young to travel and Mummy not yet sufficiently recovered, we went with Bousi to bid him good-bye. We traveled by comfortable, if a bit old, Wagon Lit complete with Sizi, the teddy bear, and I had a moment of utter panic when I awoke in my lower bunk in the night to find myself alone. It was a great relief, to put it mildly to find that Bousi had simply slipped into the space between the bed and the wall and was sleeping peacefully, half smothered in the deep crevice. I slept a little the rest of the night.

After some both short and very long weeks notice of exit permission arrived from Agen simultaneously with confirmation that the *Anciens Combatants* were excluding Jews, except for very special cases. This certainly didn't apply to me who had figured on a list of Free Masons published a few days earlier, luckily a day or so after, I believe, the exit permit had been granted. Perhaps the connection was never made in the ministries. Olga had moved heaven and earth and obtained a transit visa for Spain and then Mummy had the brilliant idea that the Spaniards would appreciate it that she couldn't travel alone with a baby and would allow Mania to bring her and the children to Madrid, officially to return to France but practically to remain in Spain under some kind

of unofficial arrangement with the police. The Spanish Consul in Marseilles had danced at the Alameda de Osuna in the days of the Bauer grandeur and was both gallant and cooperative and seized on this pretext to wire Madrid for permission for Mania to come with us. (The actual permit came only after we had left but Mania was thus able to go to Spain where she spent the war years with Olga in safety. She might not have been arrested in France but the ordeal of a lonely and hungry life under constant threat and far from all the family, would, I am sure, have been fatal to her then.)

It now remained to obtain the Portuguese transit visa. A cousin (again) of Mummy's, David Zlatopolski was working then with HYAS in France. This US Jewish organization was helping get Jewish refugees out to anywhere from Nazi overrun Europe. Later he was to behave rather heartlessly towards his mother, Sonia, and indulge in some shady transactions both in the States and later in post war Europe but I have always defended him as he was really helpful and did his very best to get us out, and succeeded. When, after Pearl Harbor he was seeking a short deferment to draft as he was setting up a diamond industrial polishing plant needed for defense, I was able to send him, from Kansas City, an invitation to come and seek work at Rodney Milling Co., also a Defense Contractor, which delayed his call up for the necessary time. He obtained tickets on a ship bound for some Latin American country, steerage, at a cheap price, with the understanding that we wouldn't use it but pass it along to penniless refugees waiting in Lisbon and on the strength of this ticket, we were promised the vital Portuguese transit visa. All this most probably sounds crazy to you but even in our case it was very very important and in many other cases it was a matter of life and death as the Vichy police were becoming more and more Nazified and harassing foreigners and Jews and shipping more and more of them into central Sahara to labor camps. I resigned from the *Combattants* combining, I wont plead

I was either brave or decent, a moral obligation with a minimum loss of convenience.

### *Leaving for America*

We decided to spend the last weeks in Cannes to be able to leave at a moment's notice when the Portuguese visa arrived after having had the US and Spanish ones and the French exit duly stamped on our passports. I was told as a last gesture of the US Consul that the babies would have to appear in person. The only thing I asked was to find out what had happened to our original visas. The Consul's answer when I visited him for the last time was "sorry, your files were misplaced." Luckily I don't generalize on principle and although I have had many many a proof of State heartless and disgusting behavior I was to have many close and dear friends in the Embassy in Tokyo during the five years we spent there. It is true that citizen *Davidka*, as he was called, was also able to obtain \$3,000.- for us at official rate from the State Bank upon presentation of our passports. I don't know how much more those passports enabled him to get for the flourishing black market, but I don't care.

We bid tearful farewells in Agen. I was not surprised at our old friends but the locals reaction from storekeepers through *gendarmes*, the doctor and our *garagiste*, (*car mechanic*) touched us very much. We sent trunks direct to Lisbon. It seems hardly possible that baggage traveled still more or less normally and even through Paul in Basel, we were able to insure the shipment. It was composed of the things we had brought with us from Nogent when we first fled in '39 and also the contents of two or three trunks of clothes that with the help of Auntie Alia and Paul Leon, it had been possible to send from Paris to Lavardac when our apartment was closed and the rest went to Delelis-Fanien. One trunk was lost in transit but insurance paid for a few suits, Mummy's lovely velvet coat and some other things. This crazy contrast between so called normal

existence and details reminiscent of pre war days mixed with the horrors of the day remain inexplicable to this day and I read with amused disbelief the exchange of complicated letters concerning insurance that passed between Lavardac and Basel in those autumn days when really our fate was hanging in the balance and the world was tottering on the brink of collapse, while Paul and Alec discussed details of insurance and Pops commented on premiums. By the way, everything arrived safely except my binoculars. Goetz a relic of our days of grandeur which were lifted from the case. That is why Tony, after the war, sent me his which he used at the Mans races when he was not competing.

Suitcases for all of us, the bicycle which was to be a parting gift to Augustine, bottles and diapers, a crate with the hen and a duck acquired in the meantime, Augustine, Mummy, both children and myself left Lavardac early for the Barsalous where we were to spend a quiet day, lunch and then entrain comfortably for a night trip by *wagon lits* to Marseilles, spend only a few hours there, pick up our US Visa and continue on to Cannes where Lucy would await us in the evening. Ah, yes, there was also the English cot that had come from Paris for Michel and the folding pram on the taxi. The cot was to remain in Barsalous and serve both Philippe's boys. The taxi left to replenish his supply of wood and we spend a cozy last day. The Barsalous was then a jumping off spot and the Guy de Rothschilds had preceded us a few days earlier. We were to catch up with them in Lisbon but they left by clipper plane just as we arrived. As train time drew near, I became frantic. The taxi didn't appear and there was no way to join Augustine at the station in Agen by pony cart even though she had all the luggage. She was bright enough to phone and we arranged to meet her in Marseilles the next evening while she made arrangements there for a room through Felix Valabregue who was still living comfortably in their house with sisters, nephews and his mother. One of the couples were to be plucked later by

the Gestapo while they passed their kids over the fence to neighbours but in late '41 all was still approximately normal, especially for privileged old established citizens.

The *gazogene* taxi fetched us next morning and we entrained at Agen. In Marseilles, overcrowded by refugees, we got the small hotel room with one double bed and squeezed into it, Mummy, myself on the outside to stop the children from falling off. Next morning we got one of the very few taxis and drove to the U.S. Consulate. As we had the Consulate letter telling us to pick up our visas we didn't have to queue up and went straight up. The American secretaries and even the Consul were all impressed by the tiny baby and we met, for the first time the warm, personal, friendly attitude of Americans as individuals as opposed to the officialdom and quite different, if not exactly the opposite, to French and many other European countries. Michel was not fingerprinted but Liz was and a very short while later we were on our way to the station to catch the midday train, at least the four of them. I stayed behind to settle a few dollar matters. This was when the Consul told me that the delay in handling our original affidavits was due to misfiling which could have proved tragic in other cases. I don't know if he was lying to cover up the generally well founded rumours of Anti Semitic opposition to refugees then prevalent in the States.

Cannes in those two weeks or so which we believed would be the last in Europe in our lives, had a still more unreal character. Cannes like some luxury liner sinking in the Atlantic still had the trappings of luxury. The playground of Cafe Society. The hotels still looked like some immense sugared pastry cakes, the yachts still spick and span, swung nonchalantly at the quays and the chic crowd strolled along the Croisette. With her Swiss passport and the immediate risk of an invasion of Switzerland improbable in this late 1941 with the *Wehrmacht* dully engaged in the URSS and the Allies still without the USA



not even dreaming of a second front in Europe, Vera came from Basel to bid us good bye. Her aunt Madame Huymans (the widow of the Belgian statesman) with a brother Herman Goldschmidt (Ilse Verhoogen's father) came to see her from their exile in Montpellier. We also saw the Aschkenazis who were still in their villa in Antibes. I traveled to Nice to visit with the ex Viennese cousin Nanny Habig. She had been a celebrated beauty in Austria and had married the non Jewish hat maker on the Ring much to the family's disgust. She had a brother in law in Paris with the occupying Wehrmacht and many friends in the international cafe society. Her two very attractive daughters were not with her and it was mainly to bring news of her to her younger one Maria, then in Lisbon in rather complicated circumstances involving international spying intrigues, that I went to see her. She still had the real Viennese charm that had so impressed me decades earlier when she swept in in glistening white with an enormous pearl chocker, blond and every inch a princess from a Viennese musical. She was being promised fake Latin American papers by shady ex diplomats from Banana Republics making fortunes in the then so flourishing visa black market and was reluctant to try and get out in a less *panache* (swagger) manner but basically less comfortable. She was to be picked up later by the Gestapo and although her brother in law and the Prince Rufler of Lichtenstein made efforts to get her off the train, she disappeared for ever.

Tony's mother came from one of the nearby resorts with Jacquot Schumann to bid us good bye. She cried bitterly and remembered how she had scoffed at my fears just before the war. I was never to see her again. Tony had already left for London and Poulot, the middle brother, was somewhere underground. They both got out of France, into Switzerland and lived out the war with the help of Uncle Paul who applied his theory that there were but two possibilities, either the Germans would loose in the end and then all the many

many friends he was helping would pay back easily or the Nazis would win and then it wouldn't matter anyhow. He proved right and didn't lose any money for his bank on the loans. I was terribly worried about Lucy. She was just the type of person the Gestapo would enjoy picking up and I was not yet prepared for her to cross mountain passes on foot with smugglers in the night, which was to be the route taken into Switzerland by all the Halperins, Aschkenazis etc. and into Spain by Jean Jacques Falco and a host of friends and acquaintances later on.

Finally after some two weeks I got the news that our Portuguese visa had arrived. We were living on the same floor in the hotel with an old lady, a great hostess of Berlin in the twenties, Aunt Ellen von (later van) Marx's aunt, Mille Friedlander Fould whose mansion on the famous Parizer Platz had been the center of lavish diplomatic entertainment. Her daughter 'Baby' Goldschmidt Rothschild had let for the USA with just enough Old Masters and Impressionists to keep her in comfort. Many uncharitable people said she had chosen them and not her mother whom she let behind. Mummy toyed with the idea of suggesting that she join us but decided against it as we really had too many problems of our own to cope with. The old lady was able to die peacefully in her hotel room in Cannes and her old, personal maid hid her fabulous jewels in a *pelote (ball)* of wool and the famous 'Baby' got them back, intact after the war as well as her mansion on the Rue de la Faisanderie, villas galore and the remnants of what was once one of Europe's greatest fortunes. She is enjoying her 'old' life to this very day (1972).

We left the remaining provisions to friends and relatives of Tante Yvonne (the Proppers) and the Aschkenazis and Lucy and traveled to Marseilles where Mummy with Augustine and the children changed trains for Toulouse and Pau. They were to spend the night in Toulouse in a brothel there. These establishments were very much in favor at the time as the best havens. Even in

occupied France they were immune from police raids and usually well provisioned. The rooms were generally clean and the ladies were very brave and helpful. There are endless tales of their heroic and generous behavior involving friends and connections.

I picked up the visas and the \$1000.- we were officially allowed to take out and traveled direct to Pau the next day. We spent a day there. Old Tante Daisy (well she was over sixty already and that did seem to us and even if she is still thriving and well today in 1972, at 91) was stranded in Pau. Her nephew Alexis later picked her up and brought her to Switzerland where she joined the immense clan there who were living in more or less normally pleasant physical circumstances depending on available money. The next day we took the rickety little train to Canrance on the Spanish border. The talk in the overcrowded compartments was all about people being taken off at the last moment and as I was only a few weeks beyond my 37th birthday and 36 was still in the age bracket where men were not allowed to leave, I was not quite sure of anything. There were also rumours that the *Gestapo* had a secret arrangement with Franco to pluck refugees in Spain itself and this was true and applied to cases in which the Germans were anxious to get their hands on someone excluding only those whose prominence would have created trouble for Spain among the still important neutrals. We weaved our way through the gorgeous scenery of the Pyrennees and came to the small station. Augustine bid us a tearful farewell and waved to us as the train slowly pulled out on its way back to Pau. We walked the platform and crossed the Spanish border and Mummy was in Olga's arms. Olga handled all the formalities and we were very soon in our comfortable compartments in the Spanish *wagon lits* on our way to Madrid. We were out at last but still in a somewhat unpleasant and unstable atmosphere of a very pro Nazi Spain with quite stringent food rationing. My feelings were terribly mixed. Here I was

again leaving, in comfort, my country for a second time. With thoughts of our first exile very much alive I felt that this departure was again for good and that never again would I see not only so many whom I loved and cherished but France itself to which I had given all my youthful enthusiastic devotion and admiration and where, although there had been quite a few trying times, I had spent practically all my life and where I left so many hopes, dreams and memories.

Next morning we were in Madrid in Olga's comfortable nice large apartment with a couple of devoted and helpful maids in warm attention. Olga was terribly disappointed when she learned that we were going on that same evening. She had been dreaming of a nice quiet visit with Mummy, cut off as she was from all the family to which she was so devoted. But I felt we should push on and that it would be ridiculous to risk detainment at this late stage of the game after all the efforts and heartbreak that our flight had cost. The stories of *Gestapo* power in Spain haunted me. I drove with a rather reluctant and unhappy Ignacio to the railway station where his status as a former railway director (dating back to the days of glory) helped in getting us seats but not sleepers in the night train to Lisbon. We then returned home and I, to keep somewhat out of the way of the crowded apartment went to the Prado and looked again at the paintings I had loved so much at the Geneva show barely two years ago, but how far far away. I stood before my favorite Goya (The Royal Family) admiring the genius of the biting satire, the hideous caricatures, the fabulous blues and the decaying grandeur of the unforgettable group. Lunch at Olga's was more than plentiful for our standards but one did feel that there were restrictions and that much work had gone into providing us with a real meal. That afternoon, leaving the children asleep with the maids, we called on Ignacio's mother, Rosa Bauer (Iggie Ephrussi's aunt by the way). She was one of the remaining *grandes dames* who had reigned in London, Paris, Vienna and other capitals of brilliant pre World

War I Europe. She had been hostess to Royalty in her palaces in Madrid and La Granja and in the historical Alameda de Ossuna with its famous park and frescoes by Goya where Olga had given great balls. She had been a friend of Infantas and the sister in law of the Duke of Bayena whose son had been a close friend of Queen Mary, the diplomat Duke to whom one of her very last letters was addressed. This white haired lady now living in what to her were very reduced circumstances received us in a salon quite large to my eyes, full of antiques, large photographs of royalty in gilt frames with crowns duly inscribed affectionately.

Tea was served on little tables with elaborate lace doilies and very gallant old Spanish beaux in attendance, high collars, flowing ties, fancy waist coats, unreal, polite, small talk and tiny sweet cookies. Olga's sister in law, Marita, dropped in for a hasty visit. She was not Jewish and her husband had, therefore, to leave the banking firm before the crash and was therefore better off. Her whose husband had been that brother of Ignacio's who had been shot by the Reds which gave her a privileged position in Franco's Madrid. This enabled the family to ignore the exiled brother and his family with the remnants of the Republican Government in Mexico. I have a vague memory of a vivacious attractive woman. I asked after my acquaintance of long ago, Romanones, and this didn't go down well because although he was married and father of a family, he was also a notorious homosexual.

We returned for an early and hasty supper and then boarded the train for Lisbon. Madame Munoz's son Rotvand was in Madrid and wanted me to take a manuscript of some book he had written to the USA and I regretfully declined feeling badly about it because I had known him so well in those long departed days in Saint Petersburg, played with him in our garden on the Kamennostrovski and his mother, the friend and former partner of my Aunt Alia's in her dressmaking

venture, had been helpful in getting my Italian visa in 1936. But, and this is not to my credit, in those days the average people felt mostly that their duty was to their family and that they shouldn't take any risks. I wonder how I would have behaved had I been an Aryan and faced with saving Jewish friends in Nazi occupied France. Probably I would not have lived up to the behavior so many expected and so many received from very brave and decent people.

The dining car on the Portuguese train was our first taste of freedom and plenty, plenty of soft, white bread, coffee, milk, jam and somehow an atmosphere of friendliness in the country with its centuries old tradition of British Alliance.

The scenery was not spectacular and thinking back some of the rolling hills in this very late autumn were like California. Old de Gunzburg family friends, the Oulmans, had got rooms for us in a *pension (boarding house)* in mid city. The town had a few lovely baroque churches, some spectacular views and a square that reminded me of the Place Vendome in its XVII century ensemble. Although this was only a stopping point on our route, somehow here one felt beyond the reach of the Nazis. We visited an old friend of Pops, a former 'flirt' of his, the old Madame Ulman, nee Bensaude. Her salon was also somewhat like old Madame Bauer's in Madrid; very cluttered and with lots of photographs. But here in the place of honor was the famous brooding one of Churchill with his bull dog scowl. Perhaps this portrait and even more so, the prominence of displaying it, gave me a deep feeling of relief. Lise de Baissac was in town and had been there for awhile awaiting passage to England. She was despondent as a sailing ship had just sailed for London without her and several more weeks loomed ahead. This was the very depth of the British despair and its finest hour. Mummy was never jealous and on one of the evenings Lise and I went to a cabaret to listen to those haunting songs that probably dated back to the Arab occupation

of the land as some melodies in Russia might date back to the Tartar domination. We talked of the so unbelievably recent past. Lise had left her mother behind. Eliane had promised to keep her supplied with money but was probably unable to do so. Her brother was with the British underground in eminent danger of a horrible fate. All our friends were dispersed and lost. Paris was beyond our reach. We were certainly in the mood to appreciate the sadness of the music. We believed we would never see each other again nor any of those who were dear to us. The sailing ship on which Lise was supposed to have sailed was torpedoed with the loss of some 300 lives, mostly women and children but Lise did reach England, joined the British Secret Service and was parachuted into occupied France several times and came out of it to marry Gustave Villameur by then an eminent architect in Marseilles. Her mother had chased him from their Paris home in the early twenties as an unsuitable match. We were to meet again in Saint Tropez in 1955 in their lovely little studio overlooking the part then already fashionable but not yet over run by gaudy crowds of tourists in the frenzy of post war Europe. She baby sat while Mummy and I made a short sightseeing trip of Lisbon but I'll admit we were too anxious to enjoy it. We motored down the coast, past a very elaborate, very Baroque cathedral to Dafundo where the Oulmans had a lovely country house with an enclosed courtyard with brightly painted frescoes. I was to be reminded of it when I saw the California missions years later.

There was a Spanish ship, pretty large and overcrowded waiting to sail. It has become a legend of those hectic days and I might remember its name later. Everyone in crowded Lisbon who could not fly by American clipper plane was clamoring to get on board. Oulman, among other things was the representative of the American Export Line and had been for decades. The State Department had ruled that no refugees were to be taken on board, no immigrants

and only either U.S. citizens or tourists, as if this last category was available in those days. We discussed our trip with Albert Oulman and I told him that I felt sure the U.S. would be involved in the war very soon and that we preferred to be aboard an American liner if it came while we were afloat, and not risk the Spanish ship taking refuge in a friendly Axis port like Bordeaux which would mean that all our efforts had been in vain. We were quite ready to travel in dormitories, steerage, as all shipping space was, we thought, at a premium. But after the initial rush of Americans when Lucy's great friends the Herbert Hazeltines, slept in one of the salons in the overcrowded liner just after the downfall of France. He was a handsome, tall distinguished American gentleman, one of the very few I met, the famous animal sculptor who created several horse monuments including the legendary *Man of War* as well as several things in the Field Museum of Chicago and at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. There was space and Oulman got us a comfortable, large cabin with private bath, two beds, a small divan which made a nice bed for Bousi and where there was room for a cot for Michel. It had a semi private little deck of its own. Michel, Baby Berline, was the youngest passenger on board this Excalibur, a ship just over 10,000 tons but quite luxurious. Paul mailed the Oulmans some \$2,000.- or so that had remained in Mummy's account in Switzerland but as the day of sailing approached it hadn't arrived. Albert Oulman phoned from neutral Lisbon to neutral Basel and talked to Paul who asked him to pay us the \$2,000.- if it hadn't arrived by the time we sailed. I said a few words to Paul across occupied Europe, heard his voice, cheerful and brave, for what I also felt might well be the last time, and bid him good bye. We then had a local doctor vaccinate us and the children and issue very flowery and impressive certificates. Remember that Michel was only 5 months old and Bousi had celebrated her 3rd birthday. She had begged, as a present, for an apple which the very efficient *maitre d'hotel* at the hotel got for



her on the black market. About a week after our arrival in Lisbon we embarked and settled comfortably in our cabin. I went on deck while poor Mummy was busy with the babies, to watch us cast off. Lise waved from the quay and as the heavy ropes dropped into the water and the link with the old work was broken, I felt an emotion much deeper than I had expected. For most of the passengers this was a temporary break. For the Russian refugee family, yet another move like the one that had taken them from Russia to Germany, from Germany to France, from France to Portugal and all other feelings were overshadowed by the relief of escaping the internment first in the infamous French camp of Zurs in the Pyrennees which led so often to Dachau. For me it was something both easier but also deeper. I had voluntarily made an effort to break with the Russian Émigré colony. I had done so in great part because I wanted to be at home in France, more particularly after Father's death and also because I was deeply disgusted by the general attitude after we lost our money and did not enjoy the feeling of being an 'ex Saint Bernard' as *émigrés* were known, wanting to be accepted for myself. I had succeeded with my French friends and during the war had at last broken down the barrier and was no longer the *sale étranger* both courted and despised by the French for centuries. I had really become assimilated thoroughly, but strangely, it was not the assimilation of the Jew in Western Europe but the assimilation of a foreigner in France. Memories flooded back and I relived the first faltering days at the Lycee Carnot, the slow process of losing my accent, integrating into French society not only in my social life but in my work, in my daily life. All this with the background of the difficulties and heartbreaks hadn't been easy and now at the age of 37 it was all slipping away and I was once again to 'start' afresh. The main thing that helped me to keep my spirits up was the realization that the alternative was some kind of Dachau and many a time when friends were to ask me, particularly in the first difficult months

in Kansas City, how I liked it, I could not refrain from answering very truthfully that I could avoid thinking of the alternatives and then, of course, there remained no questions to be asked or answered.

### *Sailing for New York*

As soon as we were out of Lisbon we hit a violent storm. Three of us were sick. Sea sickness is a horrible experience and only Michel escaped. It was not easy to walk the length of the pitching cabin with a crying baby while all you felt was a desire to throw up and lie dismally and suffer like poor little Bousi. It quieted down a bit and we went with Bousi to the half empty dining room for lunch. I read 'melon' on the endless menu and decided that such a fresh, cool fruit might be something I could get down. Imagine my feelings when it came in the form of strange pickled sour slices with a sugary flavor. I hurried back to our cabin. Mummy packed poor, green faced Bousi in warm clothes and sent her on deck in the hope that fresh air and sea breeze would refresh her. She was brought back in a hurry by the friendly Russian lady. She had been violently sick.

The first few days were a nightmare which overshadowed everything else. The safety on the still brightly lit up ship (it was Excalibur's last such crossing before it was armed and all lights were dimmed as it slid silently across the Atlantic) in the comfort of our nice stateroom. A few days out we discovered that the Immigration Authorities wouldn't recognize the vaccination certificates obtained with difficulty and unpleasantness in Lisbon and we were all vaccinated again by the ship's doctor.

There were a few families on board, some Latin Americans, a Persian diplomat going from his post in Berlin to Washington, who spoke amusingly of his troubles in Germany where his very pronounced Semitic features and prominent nose had got him into several very unpleasant incidents with the Storm Troopers and had led in the end to his being escorted everywhere by a German

policeman as body guard and wearing a large button with Iranian colors. I spoke to him of seeing the last Shah of the previous century old dynasty, a pasty faced fat young man in his exile in Paris and on the Riviera in the twenties and gave him the advice to claim diplomatic privileges and skip all formalities when we reached New York.

About 5 days after leaving Lisbon, with the sun shining, the skies blue, we came into Kingston Harbor in Bermuda and watched the charming colonial city unfold among its luscious vegetation with the Union Jack proudly waving in the warm fragrant soft wind. The quaint cabs with the horses in straw hats reminded me of Italy and looking at the bustling activity of the quays, we vowed with Mummy that if only fate smiled on us, we would come back to enjoy this lovely island. And so we did many years later. British officials came on board. The ladies had been told that only such jewels as they were wearing would be left to them, all the rest confiscated. In Mummy's case, although she was wearing in addition to her own rings an immense emerald cut diamond of Philippe de Gunzburg's wife, Antoinette, this was not exaggerated, but a Madame Hayem, a very wealthy American, married to a Frenchman, who was on board with two children including a retarded son (and we were all afraid he wouldn't be allowed in not knowing that with the proper affidavit from her wealthy American parents there was no need to worry) put on all her lavish collection of jewels, including many heavy diamond bracelets and a necklace, over her sweater and raincoat and I wondered how naive the British could be. They were most gracious and polite. It was pretty ridiculous as they went carefully through all our things. French people were not quite enemy aliens but neither were they neutral or allies like the Dutch, Norwegians and so on. We were not allowed to land and all our money was supposed to be confiscated. I had rolled our several thousand dollar bills in one of Michel's powdered milk, or baby food cans and to my horror the customs

official would have to pick that particular can. I told him it contained only baby food and he put it back into the little black hat case which I have to this day.

Our documents were all taken from us. Then they went on deck to call a journalist who was waiting in the next door stateroom. As soon as they were gone from our cabin she brought her voluminous dossiers to us and went back on deck. They returned with her and thoroughly searched her cabin which was naturally empty but did not trouble to go through ours again. They had easily allowed us to remain below to care for the babies and not locked our stateroom after the search so it was all really a farce. A French family that was carrying a very valuable collection of snuff boxes did have them confiscated and the impresario Kachouk, Chaliapin's last impresario had quite a lot of trouble with his impressive trunk full of clippings which were vital to his trade, even though the Mountbattens, in Lisbon at that time, had given him a letter of introduction. We sailed at last along the coast of Bermuda with its white flower smothered bungalows under palms in lovely weather, later under a velvety star studded sky towards New York.

### *Arriving in New York and Ellis Island*

I was on deck although by then the wind was raw and weather cold and grey. The skyline even in those days, without the many new skyscrapers which have since been added to its grandeur, was terrifically impressive for a European. There was no Narrows Bridge of course, neither the two fabulous towers of the Trade Center on lower Manhattan and the Empire State Building dominated New York from far away mid town. We docked and there were Fedia, Willy, Yvonne, Uncle Pierre, Aline and also 'Granny' who had come from Washington. We were all called into the main salon and short, new to us, thermometers were stuck into our mouths. Bousi immediately bit hers off but luckily spit it out. She was given a second one which I promptly took out discreetly so that she didn't show the

temperature which she probably was running. I didn't take the precaution for myself and was horrified to learn that I had fever and owing to a Typhus scare, we would not be allowed to land but after a night on board would be taken to Ellis Island. We waved sadly to the disappointed family and went along with the Russian family and Kachouk to dine dismally in the empty dining room and then to bed in the silent empty liner. With all service gone except for a skeleton crew, it was dismal and the disappointment, a nasty anti climax.

We crossed New York Harbor the next morning on a tug boat and passed the Statue of Liberty. Although there was a slight irony in the proceedings, we were so deeply and really relieved to be safe that it only now, as a full blown citizen, that I savour this. There were no accommodations for immigrants who were not either sick or undesirable at that time on the Island so Mummy, Bousi and Michel were sent to the detention center. As I piece the story together, their reception was the usual one in police stations and sheriff offices all over the country. They were supposed guilty until proof to the contrary could be produced. The first night they were locked up and Michel's baby food was left behind in the immense recreation hall as well as his diapers. How Mummy made out I still don't exactly know. The first day they were let out under guard for only a short walk and the flood lights remained on all day keeping Michel awake and howling most of the time. The inquiry about whether she was Jewish or not produced a nasty impression on Mummy who was to learn only some time later that it was to determine, first which community paid for the meals and secondly if they were to be Kosher. Non Kosher Jews were frowned upon of course. A lawyer who came to interview Mummy was also received with suspicion until it developed that he was from the Community to see to it that Mummy wasn't mishandled by authorities. After a while, when the individuals involved realized what the situation was, all this changed and personally they all

became most friendly and cooperative. The guards offering extra walks to the children and so on.

In the meantime I was whisked up to the spotless hospital and into a room with Kachouk who started to unload his endless supply of good jokes intermingled with reminiscences of Chaliapin some of which I still remember. In particular there was a story of last *tournee (tour)* in the States. They were at the Muelbach in Kansas City, that rather old fashioned gaudy hotel I was to know later with its marble hall, potted palms, deep leather armchairs and heavy shiny copper ashtrays so dear to Harry Truman. The American impresario was a tricky man and Feodor Ivanovitch sent Kachouk to the hall to collect the fee direct at the box office and phone the confirmation after which he would come for the concert but only then. Kachouk watched money pouring in and after he had taken his \$3,000.- in small change, phoned the hotel. Time went by and the full house was getting really restless. Kachouk described all this in vivid terms and conjured up the amusing scene brilliantly. At last the harassed impresario sent Kachouk scurrying back to the Muelbach desperately afraid that Chaliapin had gone off to get dead drunk as he sometimes had been know to do. Kachouk found Chaliapin in white tie and tails calmly laying out a solitaire on one of the little tables under the eyes of impressed guests. He rushed to Chaliapin to hurry him to the hall and in the taxi asked him to explain this strange behavior. Chaliapin said that he had come to the entrance to the hall and was refused admission as he had no ticket. No remonstrance, no explanations in strongly accentuated English could convince the Missouri old doorman that this was the performer without whom there would be no concert. Orders were orders and no one without tickets would be allowed in. So Feodor Ivanovitch returned to the hotel convinced that with time someone would fetch him as he was, after all, needed for that evening. This is but one of the many many stories Kachouk told me during the endless hours

between luscious meals, in a nice clean white room with a fabulous view of the bay where we spent over four days both in perfect health after the very first visit of an amiable doctor.

This young medic after examining my tonsils advised me to have them out then and there saying in a very friendly manner that it would all be free and wouldn't take more than a week or so for recovery. He was confused by my refusal to remain even an hour more than was absolutely necessary. After a day, Emily who was used to deal with difficult bureaucracies and still imbued with the supremacy complex dear to Victorian Britishers in foreign lands, talked her way into the hospital where she explained that 'her' boy was subject, when excited, to rises in temperature from childhood and convinced the young resident doctor. She also went to visit Mummy and bring her some, not the correct naturally, baby food for Michel. We had arrived on a Monday morning and by Wednesday afternoon were free to go but then it developed that the Thursday was Thanksgiving and offices were closed so we would have to wait until Friday for Fedia to be able to fetch us and carry us off.

Very important people had been mobilized to try and obtain the release at least of the family, or at worst of the five month old baby, but regulations, and well founded ones, forbade the separation of families as many had lost each other in the hectic days of the XIX century immigration amid unscrupulous entrepreneurs and ignorant poor emigrants. So I stayed put with occasional visits from Mummy and I was reasonably comfortable and happy. Poor Mummy was really having to bear all the trouble and inconvenience of semi incarceration. Luckily at least, Bousi hadn't shown her fever and was not locked up in the children's ward which could have been a traumatic experience as Mummy with Baby Michel could not have joined her. She was more impressed even than I was when we were all given the turkey and trimmings of the Thanksgiving dinner.

This was the first one in our lives and a memorable one although there were to be many hospitable ones in Kansas City and San Jose and then San Francisco as well as the specially colorful ones set in the immense barn at Putney, Vermont. This was to become a dearly prized tradition.

We were much less fundamentally disturbed than the family by our stay on Ellis Island as we still had in mind the alternative we had imagined so often. After flirting with the nurses Kachouk who wasn't that old became the favorite of the young impressionable nurses. Mummy's plight and very apparent innocence (there were a few women with vaguely fake documents and shady pasts in the detention center) won over the guards and we both on our own learned how kind and hospitable an individual American is.

Year and years later, Wanda Szigeti insisted that we come and visit them in Palos Verde in their lovely house overlooking the Pacific which had been Paul Muni's home and help her rebuild Joska's morale shaken by a detention of three days in Ellis Island after a European tour during the McCarthy era because years earlier he had played for the Spanish Children's Relief. At that time it was considered dangerously subversive. I well remember that afternoon with excited and moody Szigeti anxiously relating his experience to us and members of the Budapest (or another) Quartet while some black listed musicians sat around and commented on the horrible situation. Our children swam in the big pool just outside the wide French windows and I related as funnily as I knew how, our own experience of Ellis Island which then loomed menacingly as nearly a new Drancy (the large apartment building near Paris where refugees were lodged, where nothing tragic really took place but which became just a stopover for so many on their way to Dachau, Belsen or Treblinka and where poor uncle Leo had disappeared).



We left Ellis Island as Friday came at last and Fedia arrived to fetch us. I found him harassed, nervous, tired and on edge. This didn't help in our relations and made for an atmosphere of tense, worried existence interrupted by artificial friendly small talk when the Pierres, the Roberts and so on were around. It was only four years later when he was suddenly carried away by cancer that we realized that the illness must have been undermining him already and together with the heavy burden of his financial responsibilities for all the clan, his anxiety for the family still in Europe, was, I do believe, to hasten his end. The same awful strain was to affect Uncle Paul also, I am sure, bringing on those depressions and hectic spells which were such a tragedy and which might well, I think, have remained under the surface had he had the quiet uneventful life of a Swiss private banker with a large personal fortune in a calm, capitalistic Europe such as the XIX century had known. Hunt cottage, on the Warburg estate which Frieda had placed at Fedia's disposal in White Plains was a lovely unpretentious old white colonial style house. Much of the furniture was old American now probably priceless and trimmings from Felix Warburg's yacht Carola. There were dogs, cats (one of which nearly smothered Michel as he lay in his buggy on the terrace in the sun) three children, four grown ups and a 'couple' who changed from time to time leaving usually unexpectedly just when the Sunday flow of visitors. These included the family, who were also Fedia's bosses who would come from New York for lunch and bridge while worn out, exasperated Fedia and Willy were only yearning for a quiet weekend with their children. They were desperately trying to put on a warmly friendly face for the sister, her difficult husband and two babies who had suddenly landed and whom they felt it was their sacred duty, having saved them from a concentration camp, where so many were disappearing daily in Nazi Europe, to give food, shelter and comfort. In the last they were not quite successful.

As soon as I had recovered a bit I started to travel to New York to seek a job and also discharge the errands I had for friends and relatives. One of these was for Alec Ponisovski who had asked me to visit Peggy Guggenheim in her studio. She was married at that time to the painter Ernst. The studio was immense. There were two great Danes and a tall, very German Ernst who impressed me unpleasantly reminding me of the Wehrmacht officers I had come in contact with. The ebullient, ugly Peggy who was full of energy, life and ideas, insisted on showing me her pictures which she had brought over and which, to my completely untrained eye, were unimpressive. I had lunch with the trustee of the Guggenheim estate who cried on my shoulder saying how the two sisters who had only some \$6,000.- a month to spend were ruining themselves on art and in such time, yet. It is ironic that these follies were to make Peggy the richest of that generation of Guggenheims and her priceless collection, a unique one.

I went to see old Uncle Max Warburg, the former great man of that family, one of the founders of the Hamburg Amerika Line, the banker friend of the last Kaiser who had remained in Hitler Germany long after his less eminent coreligionists were already being persecuted, sure that Hitler, who he must have financed in the early days, wouldn't touch the eminent, real German great capitalist. Now he was a disillusioned, bitter old man with old world manners of gracious politeness. He shared a small office down town with Robert de Rothschild whose two sons, Alain and Elie were POWs in Germany. The Rothschilds through the King of Sardinia and the Pope had started maneuvers to get them released from the fortress in which they were confined with other French officers and sent back to France. Max had me, as the first former POW he had seen, meet the Baron who I had last seen at Simone Stern's party for only pretty women which had caused such a row in society but which had been quite an event and had left memories of brilliant elegance. I reminded Robert de Rothschild of

this and then insisted that as POWs his sons were as safe as one could be with that name under the authority of the *Wehrmacht* at the time and cautioned him against having them released into civilian life where they would come automatically under the Gestapo and what I was convinced was certain death. I told him of the well known lawyer Masse who had been a colonel and had been released on Petain's personal intervention to return to his home with a German orderly carrying his bags. That evening in occupied France's so called Free Zone he was tired, happy to be at home and relaxed after the rigors of the fortress where he had been held and promised to take the train early next morning. At midnight the Gestapo picked him up and he had disappeared. I would like to believe that my report had influence and that the two young men were left quietly in their POW *Stalag*. Elie was to marry by proxy during his captivity Liliane Fuld Springer, one of the younger sisters of 'Bubbles' and become the brother in law of the then influential Spanish diplomat Propper I have already spoken of. They both survived and are together with Guy at the head of the French House of Rothschild.

We traveled as little as possible to New York but did go to have Michel examined by Leo Mayer who, as I have related, designed special shoes for him. We had a deeply emotional reunion with Aunt Ellen van Marx. Both her parents had committed suicide as the Germans entered Amsterdam and she had crossed to England under fire in the hold of a dilapidated coal carrier. She was now getting along in very modest circumstances. She and Aunt Olga are among the very few people I know on whom outside circumstances had no effect. She was as modestly calm and pleasantly relaxed as she had been in her lovely apartment among priceless antiques or in the great Breuil Chateau in the countryside near Amsterdam. That lovely brick house set among its manicured park with lovely centuries old trees where I had watched the old couple, Mr. and Mrs. May in their

discreet distinguished luxury. There was also Aunt Helene Kuffner with her daughter Vera also living modestly and I believe in the same apartment as she lives now. Their welcome was warm and hearty as was that of Peter Dreyfus who came up from Harvard to see us.

On the same large estate where Aunt Frieda's grandchildren and Dima and Macha rode along the many walks of the large park, there were several houses. Delabar cottage lodged the Meyer clan. Olga, her nice old husband Adolf, her rather high strung daughter Gisela, as well as her boy friend the 'other' Meyer whom I didn't like although he was always very pleasant with me and Olga's young brother Carlo Melchior also looking for a job but preparing as a Dutchman and bachelor, to join the Dutch forces in Canada. We used to travel by morning train, Fedia and Meyer in Pullman and we in one of the coaches. This was the start of my lasting friendship with one of Mummy's favorite cousins who having been brought up in Holland where his stepfather George Melchior had moved as early as the immediate post World War I period (to return only temporarily to Germany and probably without his fortune left behind in Holland and who was, brother of one of the German negotiators of the Versailles Treaty). He was the pessimist who had predicted to an aghast and incredulous me in Paris shortly after our marriage, the coming catastrophe. He was hardly at all German and therefore acceptable which can't be said of many of the others. There were lots of relatives and friends in Delabar and we were welcomed on an completely equal footing. Never the less, the German atmosphere, Olga's equivocal situation between her husband and her lover and a rather strange relationship between the lover and her daughter, made it a bit difficult to appreciate even for the necessarily broad minded man that I was. Frieda's daughter Carola and her husband Walter Rothschild (no relation) who was president of the Abraham and Strauss store, had

us in to an unreal, strangely unbelievable dinner in black tie after which we watched TV which we were to see again only years later after the war.

I was convinced that the US was coming into the war, that it was not a matter of whether but only of when. This exasperated poor Fedia who had enough troubles as it was. I vividly remember that Pierre, Yvonne, Fedia and I believe Robert de Gunzburg were playing bridge on the sun porch on Sunday afternoon and I was kibitzing, when De, Willy's daughter then about 13, came tearing down the stairs from her room to shriek that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. Fedia dismissed her with a curt "impossible" while I ran back with her to listen to the news. It had come and I was both astounded, stunned and despondent that the States seemed as blissfully unprepared as we had been after all the warnings of the many Blitzkriegs all over the world. To this day I don't understand how Pearl Harbor could have happened and still less how the Philippines could have been surprised twenty four hours later.

Nothing really changed for us except that I advised Fedia to take immediate delivery of the new car he had ordered and raked my brains even more to find a way to get Lucy out of France.

## **America**

### ***Kansas City***

I finally hit upon the idea that George, from whom she was at the time separated but on warm friendly terms, as an important executive of the Iraq Petroleum Company in Lebanon could through his company obtain the financial affidavits needed while the Haseltines and their friends could give the so called 'moral' ones. Herbert explained that they now had only money from the family trust and were penniless. This was also the time we tried a similar procedure for

Jean and Volo Halperin and one of their wealthy cousins, Candeli, considered the suggestion but in the meantime they were to flee on foot over the Alpine passes to Switzerland, extorted in the middle of the night by the guide into surrendering extra money. The plan with George worked and cables, contacts and talks occupied some of my enforced leisure and gave me an illusion that I wasn't just sitting around aimlessly.

One of Fedia's friends and former customer of the Dutch Bank mentioned that there was an Isaiah Berlin with the British Purchasing Commission in New York and that he originated from Riga. I did know that one of the family branches had gone to Riga where they had made a vast, much larger than ours, fortune and at Mummy's prodding, called on Isaiah. We fixed to have lunch together. He impressed me as an interesting, brilliant young man with much to say on America, it's people and customs. He was, I believe, the first one to tell me that Americans hated causing pain in whatever form possible. Dentists forced anesthesia on patients and business men used the formula "don't call me, we'll call you" following an enthusiastic and warmhearted welcome. I didn't pay enough heed to this analysis and it was to cause me then and later many many illusions and shattering disappointments. We determined that officially he descended from a cousin of my rather eminent grandfather, having been duly adopted by him after his own father's death but that probably he was also really the son of a bachelor millionaire. We had several pleasant meetings and I never realized that he was much more than a purchasing agent in the States until much much later. Strangely enough he was to join the Clan by marrying after the death of her first one and the divorce from her second husband the younger surviving daughter of Pierre de Gunzburg, Aline.

Together with some preliminary talks with the Bank of Manhattan Co. about recuperating some of Mummy's money which for technical reasons I was

able to push more forcibly than most other refugees thanks to a detailed certificate with stock certificate numbers stating that actual shares in vaults in New York were Mummy's property although registered in her Paris bank's name. This gave me some illusions of activity. As to the search for work, it was proving absolutely fruitless. The local 'Family' had used up most of its available entrees for German family refugees already there ahead of us and on the whole, except for some outstanding exceptions, most refugees with or without so called connections, found friendly warm charity and absolutely no assistance whatsoever.

Although both Mummy and myself do not like Germans having been brought up since 1914 to hate them (in Mummy's case this was even more exceptional as she had close German relatives but then again, we in the Berlin and Berline family, although I had a Polish mother and was to have some very dear Polish friends later on in life, despised and hated Poles), I will readily admit that Eric Warburg was the one who twice in my life was instrumental in getting me jobs. This time he put me in contact with a refugee committee in Boston. The second time was to occur twenty years later when Fritz Hellman of the Wells Fargo Bank found himself in Hamburg dining with the Eric Warburgs and mentioned how worried he was by a crisis that had deprived the bank of its first, recent and only, foreign representative in Tokyo and Eric mentioned that I, after a business fiasco or two was floating around looking for a job again. Upon his return to San Francisco Fritz, asked Gilstrap to contact me. Gilstrap in the meantime had lined me up as his own candidate for the job which then, rather easily was offered in 1962. Now in '41 I traveled to Boston and later to Canton where I was warmly received by the local secretary of the Jewish organization in his home and promised help. This was Marie Kessel's brother and the little Kessel boy who we were to watch with horror and anguish slowly die of cancer in Kansas City, half paralyzed, a few years later, played cops and robbers in the

living room somewhat to the surprise of the still very European formal man I was. We partook of what I thought was a typical American supper of barbecued hot dogs followed by barbecued marshmallows with innumerable Cokes to wash it down. I nearly threw up. I went to Cambridge where Guenia was living with some friends, the Lowells, (Mrs. Lowell was the daughter of the ill fated but charming surgeon who had performed father's fatal operation) and spent an evening with them. I also visited Peter Dreyfus in his rooms at Harvard. I hadn't been in a college since Lucy's stay in the other, original Cambridge. We had a cozy and nice evening in his rather cold and uncomfortable room and chatted late into the night of many many things. I was the first person he had seen for ages who could give him first hand reports of his mother. After all it was hardly more than a month earlier that we had seen Vera.

I visited several firms, all most warmly polite and non committal and returned rather discouraged. I was seriously toying with the idea of going to London to join the Free French even though Fedia was strongly opposed. I can't blame him for not wanting the extra responsibility of a penniless sister with two babies in addition to all his burdens. Fedia, still influenced by his experience in the State Department was convinced that Petain was the only hope and Vichy, regardless of its temporary Anti Semitism forced upon it by Hitler, the only real government of France. He even made me apply for the remittance from France of some funds via the Vichy Consulate not realizing that anything we could have obtained, which we didn't, would be no real help. I recollect that after a few days I told him that I had some \$4,000.- in cash in my bedroom and wanted to open an account and deposit them. He, working with all the family millionaires and was mainly busy getting special clearance for additional funds from their blocked accounts above the allowed \$500.- a month per person, explained in detail that anything I deposited would also be immediately blocked possibly even toying



with the idea I lend this ready cash to wealthy members of the inconvenienced family. This with my very independent character, I didn't even want to consider but I did call to his attention that if I deposited the \$4,000.- immediately in mid December, the \$500.- released every month would by January 1942 have exhausted all our available money. It took him a few moments to realize how ridiculous his opposition was and the old Fedia, springing to life for his one and only time, laughed heartily.

A few days later a gaudy envelope with an immense blood red heart engraved on it arrived. It was from a certain Mr. Bresky whom I hadn't been able to see in Boston, asked me to visit him in his suite at the Ritz in New York. Mummy laughingly said that we would land in the heart of America, the far away cowboy, Western frontier settlement of Kansas City where Bresky's flour mills, the Rodney Milling Company, were situated. Fedia poopooed the idea. I visited Bresky who was non committal but promised to speak with his general manager Myers in Kansas City. I didn't realize until much later that he was the real boss of the outfit and the talk would be only a formality. There was a question of salary. The available job of assistant office manager carried a \$180.- monthly salary and as I was reluctant to consider Kansas City for such an amount he suggested possibly sending me his personal check for \$50.- every month until raises would have made local salary acceptable. I didn't realize either the implications or the tax aspects of such an arrangement and put it simply to friendly generosity. Xmas was rolling around and Mummy, much to Fedia's disapproval, set up a tiny little Xmas tree in our room which we lit with a few candles. Many years later both Willy and Macha were enthusiastic guests together with Tante Yvonne at a much more lavish Xmas tree on Park Avenue during the few years I was a successful and well paid executive in a great firm.

A few days after Pearl Harbor Carlo Melchior and I went to register for the Draft. It seemed a bit strange for me to register once again for the self same war and memories of Guingamp came vividly to life. Early in the year 1942 a letter came from Kansas City confirming that the job was available. At this last moment Fedia panicked a bit. Kansas City was God knows where for all the European refugees and the well heeled ones in particular. He finally introduced me to the senior partner of the firm where he had a desk, Dominick and Dominick on Broadway overlooking the Church. The white haired distinguished gentleman was very very 'Groton - Yale' and raising an eyebrow murmured in that accent which mixes characteristically Oxbridge and Boston, in the accent in which most probably the Cabots speak to God, when they condescend to do so as after all he is a Hebrew, he murmured "Kansas City, oh, yes, you will probably see quite a lot of cattle on the hoof on Main Street". This typical Easterner outlook really floored me and I imagined taking Mummy and family in some covered wagon from a Western station along streets reminiscent of Syzran. It was not encouraging but an definite improvement on my then situation.

Eric had me to lunch with a German refugee Hans Habe, author of "A Thousand Will Fall" which was quite popular at the time. I don't remember the name and when we compared notes about the collapse, Eric suggested we keep in touch and the man also thought I could supplement my income by a few talks of my experiences. Nothing came of it but I did add to our reduced income by giving conferences both in Kansas City and in some of the smaller outlying towns around it. It was an experience to arrive in the late afternoon at a small station, to be met by the president of the local Chamber of Commerce and whisked in a shiny car to a hall decorated with flags, sit on the dais, nibble on chicken salad, or at best small steaks (after all we were in cattle country) and with the ice cream slowly melting in the plate in front of you, after a high flown introduction where

the ghost of the poor murdered Tsar floated over dismal French defeated soldiers and then images of the Bataan death march all mixed up in a patriotic outcry for the slogan 'Buy Bonds' to launch into some vague recollections of those harrowing weeks that were nothing really to speak of and were both miles and lights years away from the mid Western plains. Or there were some conferences to groups of 'us girls' in less patriotically decorated halls in Kansas City itself and talks about our great ally the eternal Russia. I still wonder how, after such enthusiastic out linings of the war effort of Russia, I was still to get all necessary clearance first to check the invoices for vital shipments of flour to training camps all over the land and later, more sophisticated electronic gadgets to military units, gadgets I was never even remotely to understand technically. After the end of the war I was even unable to properly translate the comments of Joe Jennings to a visiting Russian engineer who must have gone home with very little information worth anything after viewing our small haphazardly built plant in San Jose.

Well, I bade good bye to the family with relief and to Mummy, Michel and Bousi with sadness but less apprehension than when I embarked for the front barely two years earlier waving to bravely smiling Mummy on the embankment overlooking the Guingamp siding. After a night in a Pullman, which brought back memories of several Laurel and Hardy films I had enjoyed in the old days, we came to the immense Kansas City station. It was as gaudy and marble covered as the old Grand Central and hardly any smaller. The original Harvey's (where this chain started) restaurant, a row of taxis, the high monument nicknamed the 'grain elevator' and a brisk drive brought me to the second best hotel in Kansas City, Philipps I believe, quite good and certainly no Far West saloon, just opposite the Muelbach where I had decided not to stay to avoid being ostentatious. The price difference was minimal. I took a taxi to the mill and was duly introduced to management. I liked the simple, outspoken and friendly Brownie at once and

Myers proved to be warm, simple and nice. I was introduced to a young and pleasant German refugee engineer, Ernie Roth (his parents were still Rothholz) and we got along famously. After the first day in the office we stopped off in some kind of restaurant to have an early light (thank God) dinner as when I reached my hotel I found an invitation to dinner from the Kessels, the sister of the man I had seen in Canton. I felt obliged to accept this second meal and went down to the hotel florist to buy some flowers. The saleswoman was warm in her welcome and called me 'honey' much to the surprise of the still somewhat class conscious European I was in those days. It reminded me of my first expedition shortly after our arrival, to Bonds with Mummy and Ellen v. Marx (I put only the 'v' as I'm not sure if they were still 'von' or already 'van' in those days). After buying a light suit with the famous two pairs of pants for all of \$19.50, I discreetly asked the sales man to show me some underpants only, blushing to hear him call across the whole store to a saleswoman, "show the gent some underpants" and she picking up a pair with elaborately embroidered ants saying to my horror, "this is the very latest style, 'ants in your pants', you wouldn't understand."

Thus began several months of solitary exile in Kansas City my impatience growing from day to day as Fedia stalled Mummy's departure feeling he might require her to confirm certain terms of the release of our funds. As long as it was a question of releasing Mummy's stock I put up with the delays and made the best of it but when I realized that Mummy was being kept in New York for eventual assistance in similar suites which later would release the clan millions, I balked and started a series of letters which Mummy says were among the most unpleasant she had ever received. I admit that I explained that if this was to last she might as well settle in White Plains while I left to join the Free French in Europe. It all lasted over a couple of months.

In the meantime I was getting slowly and with some difficulty accustomed to American business characteristics. A few funny incidents and few curious ones stand out. I was shown around the new office building nearing completion and Ernie Roth ushered me into the ladies' powder room. To my surprise I found a row of about half a dozen toilet seats against a twenty foot wall without separations or doors. I knew the inauguration was due next day and wondered about how the job would be completed. Ernie explained that no more partitions would go in as such a set up enabled the girls to chat amiably and gossip while sitting on the seats. The easy intimacy of the whole thing took my breath away although I should not have been surprised as I had spent many weeks crouching on two rickety planks over a long trench with some fifty other POWS. The swarm of enormous flies and the odor were still vivid in my memory.

There was an elderly little German refugee accountant with an overbearing but basically decent Aryan wife who had followed him in their flight from Hitler. Probably his former cook still impressed by the rise in class her marriage represented and partly dictated by fundamental decency. One morning a representative came along to have us all sign up for the Group Life insurance, then far from being universal. The premiums were modest and the maximum \$3,000.- so I quickly signed up. My colleague wanted to consult his wife. When he found that the decision was due immediately he opted for the minimum of \$1,000.- but I insisted that he should take the \$3,000.- as such an amount in 1942 represented a small capital not to be ignored. In the meantime I had taken a room with a widow, Mrs. Metivier whose husband had been of French extraction. Then I put on as much 'Russian charm' as I was still able to do. This helped me get for a very modest amount not only breakfast and dinner but a lavish paper bag of sandwiches, cookies and fruit for lunch, all my shirts laundered and buttons sewn on, plus a very warmly friendly atmosphere. By the way, she had us all to

Thanksgiving in 1942 after we were all reunited and helped me in many ways to prepare the apartment I later rented. I can still see her helping to stuff feathers into square cushions for our beds as our European pillow covers wouldn't fit the standard elongated pillows and she had sewn the new ones. The cloud of feathers brought back memories of the Calvi Harbor when plucking wild pheasants we had bought from poachers as they were out of season, we were angrily hailed from a very chic nearby yacht where the cloud of feathers were ruining an elegant cocktail party on deck for the Prefect of all people. Well, back to my story. That evening we walked home, mine being on the colleague's way and stopped off at a drug store. He was fearful of his wife's reception and I consoled him. We were both hot and breathing heavily, and enjoyed an enormous ice cream shake. The next day was Sunday and when I got to the office Monday morning I was horrified to learn that he had had a seizure Saturday night brought on by excitement, heat and ice cold drink and had died. I phoned very moved, to his wife and was stunned when all she could say with a gush of gratitude was that she was inheriting \$3,000.- without paying a single premium instead of a meager \$1,000.- and could join a sister in California who had a small beauty parlor in which she would be able to invest the money. In connection with the poor little man's funeral there were two more contretemps. The first occurred when I insisted that Brownie drive back home to pick up a hat for the service in the synagogue only to discover that it was being held in a Reformed one and we were the only two with our heads covered. Finally the coffin was brought to the side of the newly dug grave surrounded with bright green silky artificial turf much to my bewilderment and then I found I was one of the four pall bearers. Expecting with some apprehension the effort of having to lift the usual double coffin with its heavy lead lining I heaved my end up with a mighty haul only to discover it was simply wood and weighed just over 150 pounds. This unbalanced the whole

procedure and the others dropped their corners toppling poor little Herr whatever his name was, over to the consternation of the attendance and mild hysterics of the widow.

One of my insights into American psychology both employer and employee occurred at that time and left an indelible mark on my understanding of US psychology. Brownie confidentially announced that one of the secretaries was to receive her pink dismissal slip that evening with her weekly envelope which strangely for me, used as I was to help prepare the exact cash in notes and coins for every sales lady in my group of stores in Paris with the final check. In the cafeteria at midday the girl explained that although her fur coat was neither worn out nor even half paid for she had acquired a nice new one and showed it off. Everyone was gay, most pleasant and friendly with her and Brownie who was really a very nice and decent, self made honest office manager and several other employees concerned with the payroll were aware of the pending unpleasant surprise that awaited the girl. When I inquired why they had played along with her they all explained that they didn't want to hurt her feelings and spoil her enjoyment much as most American dentists always give you anesthetic whether it is really needed or not, just to avoid pain. Many many times in later years I was to come home from interviews at which I had been flattered and promised God alone knows what in the immediate future only to face disappointment when nothing materialized. This is, I believe, very characteristic of the States. It is not lying or dissimulating falsely. It is just trying to make things as pleasant as possible, shirking probably the painful reality for the passing glow of friendly pleasantries. Basically it is only now, decades later that I realize the full implication of "don't trouble to call us, we'll call you." I went through six long agonizing months of it later on in Berkeley. After a dozen warm receptions and as many conditional promises it was very discouraging. It was Bardac who

insisted he could give me only vague hopes of a possible job did come through. Well, the girl must have been better prepared to the American attitude and also much more sure of getting another job in these first hectic war years because she showed no resentment and said her friendly good byes that evening with smiling unconcern which I took for great dignity and courage.

I was to discover yet another aspect of American Mid Western business attitudes in those days shortly afterwards. There was some Chamber of Commerce banquet to which very much to my flattered surprise, Brownie took me. We were all in dinner jackets, black ties and the meal was lavish. I could hardly believe that after so many examples of phony wars, the States could take WWII with such ease. There were a dozen round tables in the big ballroom of the Muelbach. After the meal and quite a lot of drinking it became boisterous and an old elderly man started the rounds on all fours, standing up as he reached each table and begging doggie style, for a glass of champagne and barking amusingly. His round face under it's crown of white somewhat disheveled hair, was getting redder and redder as he moved along. Everyone was giving him drinks, somewhat to my horrified surprise. I couldn't believe my ears when Brownie told me he was the President of the Kansas City Power and Light Company. I was only convinced he wasn't pulling my leg when we visited the man in his palatial office a couple of days later and the dignified old gentleman condescended to receive us and examine, shrewdly, our requests. I now realize that I had been brought along as a well connected with Eastern high banking circles which was intended to impress him.

We became very friendly with the Kessels to whom Marie's brother in law had written after learning that Bresky had obtained the job for me. I told Lawrence that with my experience of coming shortages of home appliances which were bound to come, that I wanted to buy immediately a stove, washing



machine and refrigerator. He recommended a semi wholesale store and told me to give him as a reference for credit facilities. When I told him that I intended to pay cash, having the money with me, he explained that it would be a mistake and that to establish my good reputation and good credit rating I should buy things on credit and pay then promptly. Otherwise, if I offered to pay cash, and worse still in greenbacks, I would immediately become suspect. It was not easy for a European to realize this new and strange approach but I followed his advice and a few years ago, in the seventies now, we reminisced about it and discussed all these new strange things I had to learn and did, only much too slowly and reluctantly to be successful in the end.

I had found in a medium residential district, an apartment belonging to a local Jewish real estate operator. It had a screened in porch, a living room, dining room, two bedrooms and a bathroom and appeared in good condition and the rent was \$40.- a month so I took it and started to furnish it assembling garden chairs from Sears and beds with the unstinting help of Ernie Roth.

In the meantime there occurred an incident which was to have indirectly a lasting influence on the final outcome of our Kansas City years. Lawrence advised me to pay a courtesy call on the local 'Rothschilds' the Uhlmanns who were grain millionaires and were doing a lot of good for penniless refugees arriving from their native Germany from which they had come a generation earlier. I called and we talked of everything and nothing while I discreetly hid Mummy's family connections. I politely declined assistance in the form of discarded clothes and furniture and placed myself in a new, impossible to classify group. I was neither obviously a European millionaire who had brought great amounts of money with him and not only didn't need assistance but could even become a competitor, nor was I a penniless refugee whom one was morally obliged to assist in all daily problems. And they did so with generosity which

hardly any West European Jews had shown to their German relatives and friends under similar circumstances, I must insist. There would be no Thanksgiving turkey to send and consequently no flattering gratitude to accept. Some days later Lawrence told me that the Uhlmanns were giving a dinner party and later a reception for a Miss Gisela Warburg of that eminent clan who was touring the country collecting money for the Jewish Relief Fund and he explained that, of course, I couldn't be invited to dinner but he might arrange an invitation for the evening reception for the hoi polloi. I agreed.

Gisela, who was Eric's sister and was to marry Judge Wyzanski, later Chief Justice of Massachusetts, an eminent and very interesting man at the time slated for Roosevelt's Supreme Court. She had been on the rough road for months, was fed up with her job, her tireless efforts and loneliness. So I came up to the receiving line and the opulent Mrs. Uhlmann asked me to remind her of my name and then turned to the important guest of honor to say "Here is a recent arrival from Europe" to which Gisela burst out "Alec, what are you doing here ? When did you get here? When was the last time you had news of the family? As soon as this line is over we must sit down. I want news of you, Lia, the children, Mother and everyone." As the French say *tableau (striking visual scene)* In a few moments Gisela had maneuvered me to a small couch in a corner and was not only inquiring about everyone but pouring out her heart out to me while many of the important Jewish grand dames waited to have the honor of a private talk with a Warburg. This incident not only didn't endear me to the Jewish community but created a strangely false situation for us. We were obviously not in need of charitable assistance, nor were we wealthy enough to participate in Kansas City Jewish social life.

Shortly thereafter news got around to one of Kansas City's real *grande dame*, Mrs. Haskell, the widow of a Missouri governor, wife of the then editor of

the Kansas City Star and life long friend of that famous Mid Western journalist, White, who I never met but who appears in so many memoirs of the period. She was an ardent Francophile and together with her long time friend, Mrs. Thornton Cook, whose husband owned the Hibernia Bank (and personally somehow avoided involvement in any Prendergast schemes then winding up their troubled *epopee (epics)* in the courts and City Hall) that I might be a useful addition to their small exclusive club, the 'Causerie Francaise' (*French conversation club*) . Mrs. Cook took an instant liking to me which she later extended with enthusiasm to Mummy and also the babies (she was the donor of those Colonial silver spoons which both Bousi and Mike must still have). Every Sunday she would gather friends around an immense fireplace where we sipped beer, ate pretzels and talked. I did my best to help the conversation particularly it's French side. There must be a couple of middle aged executives named Cook today whom, at her insistence, I taught how to properly kiss ladies' hands in the European manner. There were few amusing eccentrics, a retired Naval Captain Puglsey whose daughter was on the staff of the local radio station - more about my interview with Mariska Puglsey later - and a very nice liberal Californian couple, Calvin and Doreen Townsend (he was in charge at the time of a local plant called Aircraft Accessories, part of some larger combine) with whom we sympathized very much. Mummy came seldom as babysitters were both difficult to get and expensive but when Granny joined us, she also came to these gatherings which, we were to learn, were absolutely 'restricted' in the then approved Mid Western manner.

Finally in early spring we were reunited. Our life in Kansas City was on the whole uneventful. The first year Emily came to visit us from Washington. In the meantime Chautemps had disassociated himself from the Petain regime but had not succeeded in joining either de Gaul in France or the other anti Vichy

groups with which Washington was then ardently flirting, and the family fortunes had declined drastically. Emily decided to leave the Chautemps and take a job in Kansas City which she eventually did, but this is her story which I hope one day to put down also.

In the meantime we had established contact with the family in Spain and Switzerland where more and more of the clan was gathering. But absence of news of the de Vries in Holland and Lucy in Cannes was more than worrisome.

Letters took ages and ages as they passed through both Axis and Allied censorship and we would remain for weeks without news. Here comes a queer incident concerning censorship which sheds a light on conditions at the time. Sioma, Anna's husband, had several relatives in particular a sister living at the time in Philadelphia with her daughter, a rather talented poet who was to become head of the Russian Department of the Library of congress, Lunia Lachman (as usual in the clan, a sister in law by marriage of Olga Lachman's, one of Mummy's first cousins). This Mrs. Greenberg had left behind a son in Paris who had been picked up by the Gestapo and died. She was unaware of this tragedy and her family in Europe kept it from her by feigning impossibility to communicate. One day, at the office, I got a phone call from the FBI and I will admit their invitation troubled me very much as I was still very much under the influence of police control conditions. I was politely received by a young man who enquired if I knew anyone by the name of Milia - Sioma's brother. To cut a long story short, he handed me a cable and asked me to explain its meaning. It read: "Please contact Lunia have her give Clara good news of me Sioma Anna and boys and ask her to wire you their news which please then transmit to me by wire stop please avoid informing Clara that we are in direct contact as wish to avoid corresponding with her which might lead her to question about fate her son if necessary ask Fedia reimburse you costs Milia"

After deciphering the cable I went into the lengthy explanation of the situation which must have sounded crazy to the young Mid Western agent but which he accepted in a very friendly manner, particularly after he had checked with Brownie at the office who I was. I then had the bright idea of giving him a detailed geographical picture of all the clan at that time with first and family names of everyone I could think of both abroad and in the States and their relationships. When you realize that this included everyone from the twenty odd people in New York, the crowd in Switzerland, my family in France, Syria and Algiers plus Irene still in Holland and even the Guy de Gunzburgs in Brazil, you can imagine what a dossier it formed. But there was an advantage. All cables to the immense refugee colony in New York was automatically held up for a week to eliminate up to date news and then passed through the overloaded mill of the local censorship whereas there was little traffic from overseas with Kansas City and many a time Mummy was able to give Fedia news from the family which would reach him only weeks later. I can't refrain from adding nastily that this was rarely a two way street.

The first days after arrival Bousi sat disconsolate watching the children play in the street but hardly a week later she had joined the group and was speaking a few words of English. We found a French lady, war widow from World War I, I believe, a Madame Harding, who had a kindergarten and Bousi was soon spending several hours a day there.

I knew that the necessary papers had been sent to France for Lucy and also that she had arrived in Lisbon but was stranded there. We were in occasional phone contact with Herbert Hazeltine who had had enquiries from the State Department until one day I got a call, again, from the FBI who asked if I had a sister Lucy Kamenka. Her age, details of her whereabouts and some family information which could pin point her. I suddenly realized that she must have

mentioned her year at Newnham College at Cambridge to emphasize Allied connections and said so. The man thanked me and in answer to my question about her told me not to worry at all and added that I would possibly have pleasant news rather shortly. That same evening Lucy phoned us from Baltimore where she had landed and after being detained for a few hours while confirmations were made, as I now realize, with me and Hazeltine, released and was at a local hotel. I delightedly cabled George in Syria.

Our so called social life was very quiet for obvious reasons and I was lonely, bearing up much less well than Mummy. We did go to a symphony concert which was good, listened endlessly to the broadcasts of Toscanini's Sunday concerts. This was when I started to appreciate music as I hadn't had either the time or the means to go to many concerts before we were married and we had had but a couple of years before the war broke out. I remember a recital by Kreisler. He was a rather stiff gentleman with a heavy gold watch chain across his waistcoat, a square face and his playing, he was far far beyond his prime, was unimpressive. As all recitals during the war, his started with the Star Spangled Banner and it sounded not only uninspired but rather wooden in tone. Jasha Heifetz, by contrast, playing with the local symphony was breathtakingly glorious. I have never since heard a violin which gave such absolutely pure music from which the instrument, in some miraculous way, was absent. The sound floated untouched in space. Mummy suggested that she would phone Heifetz whom she had entertained in Amsterdam and who had started his career on a scholarship of your great grandfather and he and his then glamorous Hollywood star wife, invited us to tea in their hotel room. It was an unforgettable afternoon and Heifetz contrary to his reputation, was charming and brilliant. I suppose that it brought back memories to him also and was a relaxing interlude between gushing ladies' receptions in an alien climate. This afternoon actually

inaugurated a series of meetings with great musicians which would leave unforgettable memories and enrich my life.

As a fantastic contrast, my boss Louis Myers and his wife invited us to black tie dinner in their mansion to meet a Boston couple, owners of Brownie Shoes, whom they wanted, or more probably Mrs. Myers wanted, to impress with Mummy's family connections. We all gathered for drinks and after a few, one of the Boston women decided to show off her purchases of the day that were frilly silk panties and pranced around holding her skirt up. Now with *hot pants* this is very tame but in the Myers' elaborate salon to us, somewhat staid Europeans, it was quite a shock. After a heavy meal with much drinking, a large goblet of brandy was passed around every guest taking a large sip. I needn't tell you of Mummy's reaction or Louis Meyers' embarrassment. When one of the remaining Bostonians left the table to lie down, dead drunk, on the sofa the evening slowly disintegrated. I couldn't refrain from stretching a point a bit when without indicating that it was as a guest of Guenia Hirschman who was staying with these close friends of hers, that I had actually dined and spent the evening, not slept there, at the Lowells. I now realize the effect of that name dropping on the Jewish nouveau riche couples and that it must have slammed the door definitely on a personal relationship with Mrs. Myers.

All in all our years in Kansas City were pleasant and basically uneventful. In the first little apartment which we rented I distinctly remember one of those household incidents which make life with two small children always exciting and looking back, very much worth while. Mike then just about 1 year old was dutifully sitting on the toilet seat in the bathroom and I was watching when suddenly the whole plaster ceiling started to buckle and collapse. He looked up and the first slab of ceiling hit him on the nose which started to bleed and he to howl. I snatched him in my arms and retreated while the rest of the ceiling

collapsed in a crash. Luckily the bloody nose stopped bleeding and there was no other harm to his then angelic round face. It is only now when I have learned much about American lawsuits for damages that I realize why the landlord had the ceiling repaired immediately and was even polite for a while although he was a well know real estate speculator of dubious reputation. He did cancel our lease as soon as he could by settling a sister in the apartment for a while to comply with war time regulations and the putting some old furniture into it and renting it furnished for three times what we were paying. In the old days in Europe mortgages on their homes were not usual taken by the 'right kind of people' and I was reluctant to consider buying as Myers suggested, hoping probably thus to ensure my permanent employment in the mill. I had a long talk with Fedia in New York as I felt responsible for Mummy's money and he agreed that we use a couple of thousand as down payment on the cost of a \$4,500.- house on Karnes Boulevard. It was just beyond the limits of the ghetto in a nice residential district on the bluff overlooking the stockyards (from which when the wind was right or wrong, a distinct odor floated up). The financing encountered some difficulty as long as the detached garage sagged badly but to my utter amazement a truck was hired, ropes were used to straighten the structure and a couple of boards consolidated it. As we had no car it was not used, but the bank was satisfied. We had a nice front lawn, a porch, living room and dining room as well as kitchen downstairs, four bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs, one of which we fixed with a washstand so the Granny could occupy it and a large basement which was relatively cool in summer with temperatures well over 100 and where Mummy washed and spent her days with Mike while Liz was first at Mrs. Hardings nursery school and then later at the French School of Notre Dame. I do believe that those few months left their mark on Liz for good and I must say that the Mother Superior was very accommodating agreeing to my proposal to pay a



nominal tuition the balance to be paid to the Head of the Order in Paris after the war which eventually was duly done.

Two more incidents connected with Mike come to mind. One was the cutting of his silky blond curls by his sister. They never grew the same again and for a while he was a sight. The second is a more vivid incident. While we were passing through Madrid Olga had given, for Liz, one of her lovely collection of Spanish shawls. This one, a XVIII century one with bright colors on a golden yellow background had a lovely fringe. How Mike got hold of the shawl and scissors, I do not remember but one day he was being really good and quiet and after a while I went up to see what he was playing at so nicely to find him sitting in a cloud of glittering golden strands and calmly trimming the fringe. The horror left me speechless but the fringe was too thick luckily that it is hardly noticeable.

We met a very nice and interesting couple, the Labunskis. He had organized the local music conservatory and really awakened Kansas City to music appreciation although there was a good symphony orchestra. His father was a composer before WWI and the Labunski boys had lived in St. Petersburg. Victor had been an admirer of Lucy's and a guest both in our home and at the elaborate dinners at Father's partner Stifter. Wanda Labunski was the daughter of a famous Polish orchestra conductor, Mlynarski and her sister was married to Artur Rubinstein, the pianist. Their home, both their boys were away first at college then in the army, was the center of interesting gatherings, musicians on tour, local musicians and few cultured refugees, among them the Reisner couple with who we became very friendly. It was to the Reisner's small apartment that Victor and Wanda brought Artur Rubinstein for the first of a series of unforgettable evenings with this unique musician and perhaps the greatest *raconteur* (*story teller*) of our times. When I read of the brilliance of Voltaire as guest and host which was such a major aspect of his genius and made him the

man he became and gave him the influence he was to exercise over all Europe, it seems unbelievable until evenings with Arthur come to mind. Those fabulous fireworks of small talk, amusing anecdotes, hilarious descriptions of his lonely travels across the US, (he had to play in Kalamazoo so that his family could live in Paris as he said years later). Deeply interesting criticisms of music, art and the many famous people he had met in his spectacular career, help me to conjure up the evenings at San Souci where Voltaire enthralled Frederick the Great. Rubinstein's mimicry of the fathers' waiting room in the Beverly Hills hospital where he was anxiously awaiting the birth of one of his younger children. The excited young father who uses the pay phone to announce his first born to his parents and radiantly comes out of the phone booth to announce that his nickel (phone calls were then a nickel) had dropped back from the machine; his description of his crazy dash back from some God forsaken place in several small planes to Nella's side as she was having a baby to be met by her anxious request that he immediately without any delay fetch her new mink coat the nurses had left behind and which she needed then and there in the hospital. These stories seem stale and foolish without that twinkle of brilliance that Arthur could give them.

Soon after we arrived the orchestra conductor changed and Kurtz came with his then wife, daughter of the Sear & Roebuck Rosenwalds. Kurtz was also from Petersburg and his gold watch came from the same Pavel Boure as the one I inherited from Father and Mike has now.

After I left for California some years later Mummy spent an unforgettable evening there with Heifetz, who was also a fabulous pianist and she often talks of his performance that evening at the Labunskis playing an intricate piece as if one of the notes on the piano was missing and skipping it regularly. She told of how Heifetz, Labunski and Kurtz toyed with musical phrases trying to catch each

other recognizing the piece from a few notes. This kind of entertainment in the large cities is reserved to the lucky few, the elite of the world and our migrations to out of the way places did give us the opportunity to meet and see some very very unique personalities.

I traveled to New York in the hopes of getting something more interesting as a job and even visited a man in Saint Louis which I only remember as a terribly hot and unattractive Kansas City only larger, for what should have been an ideal job in the organization which was to buy Europe merchandise for large department stores. As usual nothing came of this and I continued to work at Rodney Milling. I don't remember and will have to check whether I have already mentioned one of the most fantastic coincidences of my life. Rodney Milling had worked for the Army and Navy and at an elaborate ceremony received the coveted 'E' for excellence. The General, the procurement officer in Chicago, who gave the award had spent some time at the Ecole Militaire (Military School) in Paris after World War I and when I was introduced to him, spoke to him in French. He enquired about my background and finding out that I was a Russian refugee asked, out of the blue, if I had known among the million then in Paris, a charming young couple who entertained marvelously, the George Kamenkas, after which he never let me go.

Fedia had invested a small amount in a lumber venture in Tennessee and Mummy with Liz joined them there for a couple of weeks vacation. It was, alas, to be the last time Mummy saw Fedia.

The nice interesting couple, Calvin and Doreen Townsend had left for California and said when they were departing, that that was the only place in the U.S. we could enjoy living. I had lunched with Myers and politely, in a European manner, explained to him that I could not continue at the salary they were paying. I know he appreciated my work but I did not know then that he was actually the

straw man for Bresky and dared not do anything without his approval. He also, and Bresky in Boston, decided that I had nothing else to do but sit tight and did not respond. One evening, out of the blue, Calvin phoned from California. It was a dreary slushy cold day in November after a ghastly hot summer and a series of flues with which both Liz and Mike, one after the other, never simultaneously, were constantly stricken. Calvin begged me to come and help him in the organization and finances of a small business in electronics that he had helped a nephew of Doreen's set up. I was taken aback by the nonchalant way of phoning such an offer from the other end of the States and as I had some vacation coming, promised to fly out and talk with him. I got bumped off a few flights by priority holding colonels and finally settled for a night in the club car of the Super Chief. It was running jammed packed. I first enjoyed watching a group of stars including Bob Hope and Jerry Colonna but as they retired to their staterooms one after the other I would have given the world to get some sleep. At last at about 2AM the attendant put up their beds and as a well trained European, I expected one of them to offer me his bunk for a generous tip which I was willing to give. But soon they were snoring comfortably as I drowsed fretfully in my armchair until Bakersfield where I had to change trains. I couldn't for the love of me understand why there was no direct way to get to San Francisco. I was lucky that in the Pullman that morning there were few passengers and I took a bedroom and to the attendants surprise had him make up the bed and sleep through all the trip to Oakland. The Townsends met me there in their car although gas was rationed and through sunny still rural California with flowers in bloom in all the little gardens and with temperatures in the 60s and skies blue turning slowly to velvety black as evening came, we drove to San José. The route was along a nice highway among innumerable fruit orchards and little white ranch houses smothered in bright colored flowers. A dream.

## *San Jose*

I now come to a period much closer to today, a period in which Liz and Mike played an important role and which they remember, probably better than I do.

The warm welcome to the Townsends in their nice house in the wooded foothills of what was then still, a sleepy, quiet little San Jose; the exciting bustle of the ramshackle Jennings little factory with its many corrugated iron buildings spread out among the flowering prune trees of the Barnel ranch (Doreen's parents) and the rosy perspectives of existence in California led me to phone Mummy and ask her if she would be willing to move. The pay was better, prospects rosy and the climate good. I, somewhat reluctantly followed Calvin Townsends' American advice and wired Rodney Milling my resignation for the end of the year. Next day I traveled to Berkeley via San Francisco with which I was immediately enchanted. It had, even for the cursory glimpse I had, so much charm, life and animation. The double line of street cars along Market, all the many lines of cable cars, the palms on gracious Union Square dominated by the facade of the St. Francis, the baroque buildings of what was then a miniature Wall Street, the breath taking view from the Top of the Mark which dominated the skyline. I was also delighted to catch a glimpse of the Valabregues who promised to be a warm link with distant family and the fact that Helene would, after all, as had been planned in the old, unbelievably distant days of pre war Bois de Boulogne, become Bousi's playmate. It was therefore in a very bright and gay mood that I returned to Kansas City. This time in a Pullman berth via the Overland and Chicago. I was really deeply moved by the reaction to our departure of the many friends we had made in hospitable Kansas City. The Reisners gave me a warm introduction to a couple of their cousins of whom they spoke enthusiastically even though they had some reservations about the extremely leftist ideas and

bohemian life these cousins were supposed to be living. My pupils in my Russian classes at the university were warmheartedly disappointed and I had, the rather rare for me, feeling I was going to be missed. My boss Myers admitted how much he regretted not to have acted more energetically after I had spoken to him. He was to commit suicide several years later when just after his election as president of the Jewish community he was implicated in a tax scandal of his patron Bresky of Boston. Brownie, the office manager took his first and only vacation during the remaining month because, as he said, this would be the last time he could leave the office without worry. Mrs. Herbert, for whom I had gotten a job at Rodney which she kept for some twenty years was really sorry to see us leave. Both the Grandes Dames of Kansas City, Mrs. Haskell and *Grand Mere* (*Grandmother*) Thornton Cook gave parties for us and the Labunskis had all their musical friends in to bid us good bye. I spent a lovely evening with Mrs. Haseltine, that unforgettable character who had talked Mummy into letting Bousi start piano with her. She remains one of the most cultured, deeply artistic and quietly brilliant personalities I have ever met and although she had practically never left Kansas City, she was fantastically well read and had original interesting ideas on all subjects. She was, of course an extraordinary 'musicologue' and probably had we remained in Kansas City and Bousi at Notre Dame, she would have led her far along her musical road.

For once there was no objection from New York. It was only later that I realized how ill Fedia must have already been at the time and San Francisco although distant by three days travel, seemed much closer and civilized to the New York clan. For the European one, a few thousand more miles meant nothing and somehow I succeeded in communicating my new born enthusiasm to Basel. I left behind when I entrained on December 31, 1944 poor Mummy who although surrounded by friends was left to sell our house, ship our things and travel with

the children all alone to California. Granny kept a stiff upper lip in the appropriate British manner. She had found a rather well paid job in a large drug store, made many devoted friends and in particular had a very nice elderly admirer who was decently well off and very eager to marry her with the enthusiastic approval of his family.

I arrived in San Jose on January 1, 1945 and took a room in a small house in one of the outlying districts, one of those little white, two story wooden houses which covered the landscape in those days and which today are nostalgically referred to as *Victorian*. I then went to a car lot (no new cars were available because of the war nor did I have the means to buy one) and found *Babar*. She was a 1932 straight eight cylinder Buick limousine, exactly the style of those flashy limousines of the bootleggers of the late twenties with plush upholstery, curtains with tassels on the rear window, thick wooden wheels and very roomy. I paid about \$250.- for it because it used up gasoline at 12 miles to the gallon and only because Jennings was a war plant could I afford the luxury of the necessary gas rationing cards to run it. It was to be one of the great, adorably kindly hidden disappointments of both Bousi and Misha (as I called him then) who having heard we had a car expected at least a 1943 streamlined model and were confronted with the archaic enormous bus like vehicle when they arrived in San Jose. It was to become a member of the family, deeply loved and cherished not only by all of us but also by many of our friends; the Verhoogens, Reisners, Valabregues and even Uncle Paul who was to drive it at over 70 miles an hour on his first visit to us in 1946 just after the war. It never let us down. We made many a lovely excursion along the narrow lanes of rural Santa Clara Valley amid the flowering fruit trees skirting the iron flat trays along the road shoulders with their prunes slowly drying in the sun.

I worked hard, often late hours but didn't mind it at all because there was nothing else to do and it made me feel a little bit less guilty at having left Mummy all alone to face the problems of moving from Kansas City. I went by train to San Francisco and was really quite pleasantly surprised to find Erwin and Else Reisner both interesting and warmly friendly. I took the electric train over the Bay Bridge to Berkeley and had an excellent family lunch at the Valabregues who I was delighted to see. We exchanged stories of our experiences and George went out of his way to be charming. There was a couple of their cousins there, the Darius Milhauds. I knew he was a diplomat and *avant garde* composer, fat with a pasty colored face, moving with difficulty. She was bright, amusing and charming and I had seen her at a reception in Paris with her first husband Pfeifer who was a cousin of Mme. Roger Nathan. I did not remind her of it. I couldn't forget how, during one of the hunting lunches at Forgeres, Mme. Alphonse Lazard's American born mother, talking of artistic life in Paris constantly spoke of that composer, you know, Marius Dalhaud. As he was a Meridional it was a natural mistake for her and hilariously funny for us. We then went down the road to see a couple of Paul's cousins, the Marxes, who were both sophisticated and very Parisian and I enjoyed the atmosphere. I had gotten in touch with a former governess of Mummy's, a Fraulein Wilhelm who had married a Russian named de Civray and after a divorce had settled in Berkeley where she taught Spanish and French in high schools in Oakland. We met in the lobby of the old Claremont. She had possibly seen me on the Millionaya but I had changed, had no recollection of her but somehow recognized her at once. We had a very animated visit speaking of old St. Petersburg and Lucy, Anna, the parties, sleighs and old Russia.

Lucy had just left the States for the Near East to join George. After she had finally arrived in the States, George had joined her. They had visited us in



Kansas City (and George had given Mike a cowboy outfit, it's hat to remain Mike's headgear for years to come.) When it was fixed that she was to rejoin George in Homs, traveling back skirting war torn Europe via Lisbon and we were going to California, we decided to see each other for one last time as we Berlines sentimentally thought, halfway in Chicago.

I took Bousi along on the overnight trip. We shared a Pullman. Lucy was coming over from New York and we met at the famous ... East where the only rooms available were the Royal Suite which we took for the day. The taxi drew up at the hotel and the imposing doorman helped Bousi, all of six years old, out. A bellhop took our suitcase and Bousi refused to hand over to him her big teddy bear, Sizi, who had had the honor of being searched for hidden treasure with thin needles by British custom officials in Hamilton, Bermuda on our trip over and she marched grandly into the hotel. Lucy joined us as soon as the 20th Century came in and we had lunch. Then we all trooped down into the enormous empty grand ballroom where Bousi performed on the piano to Lucy's enthusiastic and very astonished applause.

This brought back memories of our visit to the Muelbach Hotel in Kansas City where we spent some unforgettable hours with Ania Dorfman exercising on a bad straight piano for her evening concert of that day.

We went back to our suite. Bousi went to bed in the enormous bedroom for her rest while I had one of those long, sentimental and moving talks with Lucy which we were both convinced would be our last. Wasn't the world at war? Wasn't she sailing a U boat infested Atlantic and a war torn Mediterranean for a dangerous Lebanon on the brink of war itself? While I would be traveling to that far distant, fabulous San Francisco which loomed like some Cathy of our childhood books of travel, far far away on the shores of the hardly real Pacific Ocean.

After a few months Mummy had, not without hardships, difficulties and endless problems succeeded in selling our Karnes Boulevard house at a very good price and I started actively to look for something for us. From the leftovers of a war project, the contractor had built a small house outside of town, just below the elegant foothills and conveniently near a school in the half slum, half rural ranch district of Alum Rock. The house had a nice living room, a kitchen and two bedrooms. As no bath tubs were available the contractor had, with some left over tiles, built a small sunken bath. The street was not paved, there was no sewage. There was only a septic tank at the back, a vacant lot on one side and a rather decrepit shack occupied by a Portuguese family, the Pachecos, with two children. He was a trucker. I was asked by the local postman to chose a number for our post box. The living room windows were large French metal framed ones, the others small wooden ones. There was a nice fireplace and a floor furnace in the short corridor. It was clean as it wasn't even finished, whitewashed and nice. Not a tree in sight as the builder had uprooted all the fruit trees of the ranch. I do not remember what furniture I bought except the bunk bed for Bousi and Mike or how all was organized so perfectly that all the things from Kansas City arrived nearly simultaneously with Mummy and the children. The place was conveniently near the Townsends, not far from our rural plant and one of its workshops on Alum Rock, a few blocks away from Pala School and the primitive shopping center...now all this is sophisticated sprawling San Jose housing development The town had 50,000 residents against it's nearly half a million today. Large orchards made the Santa Clara Valley appear snow covered in spring when one looked down on it from the winding Mt. Hamilton road and Saratoga. The neighbors were simple working folk except for a couple of retired French people, the Carles. He had come to California at the turn of the century as 'chef' and had opened the palatial cuisine for the Fairmont Hotel in San

Francisco. Her sister had finally married a French painter, Labaud, who was established in San Francisco and after his death had opened a gallery with a compatriot and friend, Mme. Salinger. She was the mother of Pierre Salinger, President Kennedy's press man. There was also a very nice couple, the Centers, with a boy about Bousi's age who had a great crush on her and who had the great luck of having 8 grand parents, all four original ones having divorced and remarried which for our European ideas was somewhat strange. There was a family named Beagle living opposite with a very pretty daughter of Bousi's age who idolized Mummy. (I believe she finally landed in a brothel in Gilroy) When the two girls dashed through a closed glass door, it was Mummy who had to go with her to hospital to have lots of stitches put in while Bousi, although bleeding profusely has only a tiny invisible scar above her eye which was protected by the glasses she wore at the time.

At the plant there was a Russian refugee lady from Harbin who was married to an Irishman, O'Neil. He, representative of Imperial Tobacco, had been taken by the Japanese and was interned in Shanghai while his wife with her twin sons and a sister had been stranded in the States. The boys were nice and we saw quite a bit of them. On Sundays we would drive out to the seclusion of Stevens Creek where we would picnic in the shade while the kids waded in the stream. Today, 1973, it seems hardly possible in the middle of the great shopping center there.

Szigeti, the famous violinist who was a good friend of Paul's gave a recital which was, as usual, fantastically interesting and seemed somewhat too good for the rather primitive hall. After the concert as he had no friends to go to probably, he came to our little home and Mummy prepared the first of that series of evening receptions which were to become the highlights of our stay in San Jose. Probably the contrast between what those artists expected and the civilized atmosphere at

home into which the Townsends blended well, was a surprise. Our real friendship with Szigeti, which was to last many years, dates back to those days.

One day the local newspaper announced a production of *La Boheme*. With memories of what badly given opera with second hand singers, out of tune orchestras and primitive scenery could be like, we hesitated but finally decided that I would take Bousi. The orchestra was the San Francisco Symphony then at its height under Pierre Monteux, conducted by Merola, the legendary San Francisco Opera conductor with Licia Albanese, Ezio Pinza, Salvatore Baccaloni, several other stars, the decors from San Francisco and one of the best performances I ever heard of that opera. As we were expecting something quite different, the contrast alone took my breath away and I believe that this first opera performance had a lasting effect on Liz. For me it ranks with Boris at the Marinski with Chaliapin, Falstaff in Salzburg conducted by Toscanini.

Some time later Artur Rubinstein was to give a recital and I wrote Victor Labunski and asked if we could ask him to supper. I phoned him at the St. Francis and he accepted, provided he could bring along a dear friend, a pianist originally from Australia, settled at the time on an old family ranch with her husband, a real old California Dubrow. We knew Artur never ate before a recital and could and would be in a horrible mood and trembled at the prospect. We all went to the recital and Mummy who had played hostess to him in Amsterdam prepared an outstanding supper. We even mobilized our friend and neighbor, Carle, who, tickled to death at the idea, prepared a dish of fish *en gelee (in aspic)* which was quite *haute cuisine*. Rubinstein was deeply devoted to his late father in law, the well known Polish conductor and director of either the Warsaw Opera or Conservatory and to his mother in law, a real lady if there ever was one, who had been caught in Warsaw by the German advance and was blocked there by the then not very friendly URSS. That evening he had just received a cable that she

had finally escaped to Stockholm so he probably was even more personally involved in his playing than usual. When he reached the Polonaise, he gave a rendition that to this day when I try and relive those moments, still make my back tingle. The hoof beats crashed out and the finale was more than breath taking. When his big black rented Cadillac arrived at our little home in the sticks both Artur and Muriel Dubrow and the very superior driver, were somewhat taken aback. Although Pieter de Hoochstraat in Amsterdam was not the imposing mansion of St. Petersburg, it was a *hotel particulier (town house)* and Pop's beard and bearing had left quite a different impression on Artur. He was somewhat quiet, distant and cold but after a while the excellent food, decent wine, quite Europeanized talk bringing back memories thawed him. And then we were given a sample of those fireworks that are world renown. In many languages and limitless manner, he talked, shared hilarious anecdotes, descriptions poured out in an unforgettable stream and they both stayed well beyond the scheduled time while the driver was being given food by our obliging neighbors instead of waiting out in the cold. We were to spend many more unforgettable evenings with him after fantastic concerts but this one remains forever in my memory. After all how many people could say to him that on my side four generations and on Mummy's three had admired him and on Mummy's side he had known Bousi's grand father. All this not in St. Petersburg, not in Paris, not even in New York but in San Jose. We didn't know then that a fifth generation would admire him and that when he kissed Lucy years later in New York, he would be acknowledging the applause of my grandmother for the *wunderkind (child genius)* he had been and Mummy's father's warm Russian hospitality in artistic Amsterdam in the between war years.

Very soon after our arrival and although war was still on and so was gas rationing, the Townsends took us to the coast at Santa Cruz where we were to go

later so many many Sundays to picnic on the beach at Capitola, away from the crowds, swim in the breakers and enjoy Playland. We stood with Mummy on the heights overlooking the ocean and said to ourselves, well we had reached the end of the road, from the shores of the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic, across sea and ocean and two continents, we had come to the terminal. "We can't go any further" Mummy said and I laughingly retorted "Well, we might cross the Pacific to Asia" which seemed crazy and impossible in the days just preceding Hiroshima. The day we landed at Haneda in Tokyo for 5 years we both remembered that day.

We stayed in San Jose for two years. Today these seem uneventful ones with little to tell but they were full of those small events which fill one's memory. When we arrived war was still on and even when Mummy joined me, for us, on the West Coast it was far from finished. Probably Liz will remember how children were warned against picking up anything as the Japanese were sending balloons from the Kuriles to California carrying explosives. Years later in Tokyo I found out that this warning which then and immediately after even more so, sounded ridiculous, was well founded. This was the closest the children came to W.W.II since we had left Europe. We were busy sending packages to France containing food and sometimes other necessities and I suppose Liz and perhaps Mike remember this. In later years it will be a live link for them with the war in Europe.

Then came the news of Hiroshima and those hectic last days of the Pacific war. We talked long and emotionally about what the new atomic age would mean to the future of mankind and although I realized that this was quite different from the Grande Bertha (*super heavy howitzer*) bombing of Paris from 50 kilometers away which had so impressed me during W.W.I, this was something quite different, but we didn't actually fully realize what it meant.

Our existence had been calm, day to day with the heavy clouds lifting slowly one after the other. Lifting for many who were dear and close to us but in the remote distance like the end of W.W.I had been remote for the youthful refugee from civil war torn Russian still in the throes of bloody revolution on November 11, 1918 on Blasienholmshaven in Stockholm. Shortly after our arrival we had arranged a small children's party for Mike's birthday in our little yard with the few kids he and Liz already knew. There was a rather difficult kid in the neighborhood, Leroy something or other, who subsequently probably became a junior delinquent, something we were not yet familiar with. He hadn't been invited and in revenge set fire to the adjoining empty lot, dry and highly inflammable by early June. We had our first experience of neighbor solidarity in California when everyone turned out with garden hoses, buckets and spades to put out the blaze well before the small local fire department truck finally appeared. The party then opened up for everyone and the lavish cake and lots of ice cream which we feared would be left over, disappeared quickly. Somehow this little fire really integrated us in the neighborhood.

I well remember the news of FDR's death. We were all stunned and Doreen more so of course than we because she had been so active and deeply involved in the New Deal. Calvin was away and Liz even went to spend the night with her as she was emotionally utterly broken.

We never dreamed at the time that just about 15 years later we would have to fight hard to get Mike to accept an invitation from Eleanor Roosevelt to a party she was giving for Grania Gurewitch, the daughter of her doctor and friend, who was at Putney School with Mike at the time. I don't think today he regrets having been at Mrs. Roosevelt's, having spoken to her and been served some simple dish which she had prepared for the group of youngsters before sending them off to

dance in a mid town hotel. Even if he does not like me reminding him of this I do believe it will be amusing and interesting to his children if they ever read this.

We did our best to keep culturally alive in San Jose. We missed few concerts and when Piatigorski came to town I took my courage into my hands and phoned him at his hotel, speaking in Russian and referring to a few mutual friends in Paris and elsewhere. I asked if he would come to supper. To my delighted surprise he accepted. After his deeply moving performance - it was only then that I understood the real beauty of the cello, it's deeply moving lower notes singing with an amplitude I do not believe the violin capable of. He came with his friend and accompanist and we had the usual nice friendly evening. He was married already to Jacqueline de Rothschild and knew many of Mummy's family and my friends in Paris. We chatted of Europe, of America, of music and I remember that when I said what a real privilege it was to meet the greatest cellist he answered in Russian "not as long as Pablo Casals is alive." A group of amateur musicians from Palo Alto gave a performance in the open air theater at Montalvo, that lovely estate at the foot of the Coastal Range. I must admit I was quite elated when Mrs. Haseltine from Kansas City sent my letter to a musical journal in Chicago for which she wrote a series *The Serendipity Trail* and it was published. Popper wrote me a nice letter. Me in the role of music critic. I think Mother would have enjoyed the joke.

When peace finally came it was to the sound of the whistle of the engine on some tracks nearby. We didn't go to San Francisco for the wild celebration but drove into town and watched the crowds singing.

We had had the visit of Ernie Roth, the German refugee engineer who had welcomed me so nicely in Kansas City and whose parents had been so really warmhearted in their hospitality to us. Ernie had been drafted but never got overseas. He married his girl friend before he left Kansas City and divorced as



soon as he got back, marrying again soon afterwards. The couple with their three daughters visited us later in San Francisco and we saw the old folks once again in Rochester where they had moved, when we drove there to 'deliver' Mike to the young Italian teacher with whom he was to hike to Kitimat one summer when he was at Putney. The Rotholtzes were simple, nice warm people. Then Fri Frou, the Mrs. Civray I mentioned earlier, drove down to see us and Vera Valabregue with Helene from Berkeley.

One day we had a call from an old couple, the Hutchins, living in luxurious retirement at the Fairmont in San Francisco. Hutchins was an engineer and worked for the famous and notorious Lena Goldfields in Siberia, which were a Gunzburg family business. As a young couple they had visited Russia before W.W.I and had been received at the Millionaya, then later Mummy received them at the Pieter de Hoochstraat so it came somewhat as a shock for Mrs. Hutchins to find us installed in the slums of San Jose, quite Wild West still. They were impressed as Mr. Hutchins told me later, to find that the atmosphere in our little living room was as European and civilized, and that the silver tea service, the few prints and knick knacks and our attitude hadn't changed and they felt themselves miles away from the dusty dirt road outside with its chickens, blazing sun and ragged kids, straight out of a Wild West movie set. Through them we met an old retired couple from San Jose and I used to go and lunch once a week with the old gentleman at the de Anza. He tried his best to get me a better job at F.M. and even took me to lunch at the Bohemian Club with an old friend of his and the boss of F.M. Nothing came of it as nothing ever came of all my friends' efforts and the jobs I got were mostly on my own except my two really bad ventures, UCB and Carad.

Shortly after the war was over Paul flew to New York and phoned that he was coming to visit us. He understood we were living between S.F. and L.A. and

as the flight to L.A. was shorter, was going there and for me to pick him up. It took me some time to explain to him used as he was to Swiss distances, that we were 60 miles from S.F. and even less from the airport and 350 miles from L.A.

He was in high spirits with the awful load he had carried on his shoulders all the war years lifted. When we later learnt the tension they were all living under with the Swastika visible from the upper floor windows, all the selfless efforts he made in favor of refugees from overrun countries, how he had practically single handedly talked the Swiss Government into opening the frontier to fleeing Jewish children and old people, how he had risked his family bank to keep literally hundreds of people alive, I must admit that I, who was non medically qualified and somewhat of an outsider, can well understand that he cracked inside under the strain and that latent mental illness became really violent. I still am convinced that if he had lived the quiet calm peaceful existence of a respected Swiss private banker, he would have been taxed probably with nothing worse than eccentricity and nothing would have come to tarnish the memory of this wonderfully warmhearted, charming, gay and genuinely deeply good man. When he died I lost not only a brother in law, but a real friend one of the dearest I had and I will admit that if I have failed in many many ways, I have been unbelievably lucky in my friendships.

Life in San Jose was quiet and looking back on 1945 from 1973 unbelievably rustic. We would take the old El Camino Real and through the string of small towns get into the San Francisco. We would visit the old Hutchins couple in their suite, full of old Russian silver goblets and photos in particular the old one from the newspaper showing the Nevski crowd under fire during the first Revolution. There would always be candy or some little gifts for the children. We would drive to the Reisners' old house and leave the children and do some leisurely shopping on quiet Union Square at the City of Paris, the White House

or O'Connor Moffet's and sometimes drive down through the dirty, rundown waterfront and its backstreets to the little fisherman's wharf with its boats and a few unpretentious Italian restaurants. In 1946 the brother of Tarasoff came to lecture at Mills College in Oakland. He had Francofied his name to Troyat and was a budding celebrity. I drove all the way from San Jose and when I offered to dine with him in the college dining room he begged me to take him out of the dismal compound and away from the ghastly food. I took him to Trader Vics in Oakland, then a small, unique place and insisting that he was a well known visiting French writer, got us a table in the small overcrowded restaurant. We had exotic food and amusing conversation. He told me of the rows in the family his book on the refugee family had caused. Too many of his uncles and aunts recognized themselves. He wrote me a note when I congratulated him on his election to the French Academy and remembered that evening well. I don't know in which of his books I slipped his autographed letter.

Pop's health, he was past 80, wasn't that good and he had lost Fedia without seeing him so he insisted that Mummy try and come and visit him. Granny took three weeks vacation from her job in the drugstore and came to stay with us and Mummy left by TWA Constellation for the long and complicated flight across the continent which took about 15 hours and via Gander and Shannon to Paris and Basel, another 15 hours. We did a little sightseeing while Emily was there. Showed her the mighty redwoods, visited the blimp moored inside the enormous cavern of a hall which still stands near the Bay. Just as Mummy was due to return there was a new problem, a pilot's strike and she was marooned in Paris. We were much more frantic than was justified and also anxious that Emily not jeopardize her job. Mummy got a ticket to sail on the United States from the Ritz *portier (conciierge)* (but the strike was over and she took off on one of the first planes out of Paris.

You must ask her to describe how they flew into Shannon to find the place overcrowded by stranded VIPs; how they were driven through rustic Irish countryside in a downpour to a small hotel which she discovered was in Tipperary that legendary place for all those who remember the song of W.W.I; her night in the local inn with the ladies wrapped in their mink coats gingerly holding on to their jewel boxes from Keller or Hermes. She finally made it to San Jose, not in the least rested but happy to have seen Pops, the family in Basel and also Paris.

The San Jose lot was a small one and the neighboring one was up for sale in four parcels at \$300.- each. As usual we missed making some money but Mummy did talk me into buying one of the lots which gave us a nice yard and facilitated no end the sale of our house in 1947 at a profit. As there were absolutely no trees we asked the Townsends what grew rapidly and they advised castor beans. The first year, by mid summer we had a thick row of these plants well over 8 feet high but not knowing that they proliferated, were in a mess when a small forest of them over ran the new lot. In the rainy season our floor furnace went out and our septic tank, not built for four daily baths, ran over. Mike, who was all of four years old, climbed under our house to see what was going on and explained that three of the concrete blocks on which the wood foundation was supposed to stand were actually hanging in mid air as the soil had been washed away. I still am impressed by the observation of the four year old budding architect. We had to have a deep tank built to get the water away from the floor furnace but didn't indulge in a pump which was a very expensive item at the time as I was earning \$300.- a month and Jennings Radio was in very straightened conditions during the difficult period of conversion to non military production. We were visited by a Russian engineer and I served as interpreter. He must have smiled at our rustic installation and I wonder what Washington, not yet in the McCarthy hysterical era, would have thought of our showing him hospitality. But

Stalingrad was still only a couple of years distant. When I think back and realize that Jennings Radio was doing some \$10,000.- gross a month we were on the verge of bankruptcy and that the limited partner, an English accountant from Berkeley was ready to sell me his investment for the \$5,000.- he had put up and that in 1962 when they would sell out to ITT, he got \$600,000.-, I sometimes feel a bit ashamed for having deprived Mike and Liz of the advantages such money could have given them. Paul, when he was there, suggested that we settle on a small ranch which we could buy for \$50,000.- in Milpitas. He would lend me the money for it. We declined. Some years later it became the Ford plant and was sold for over half a million. This explains how easily many many Californians without much experience or cash came out of that decade millionaires, which we did not.

The atmosphere in San Jose was still very 'American Small Town' and in later years it may amuse the California children to know that their father as well as their aunt Liz, marched proudly with all the local school children in the parade for the inauguration of the Alum Rock Avenue bridge spanning the freeway.

It was also still the 'Wild West'. Mummy called me frantically one Sunday morning to say that Mike was under fire from Roy and his new BB gun. I found Mike in the road collecting spent BBs which Roy was shooting at random with his new gun. I phoned the San Jose Police Department and discovered that as we were outside of the city limits only if, and after an accident could I appeal to the sheriff's office. Although I had seen quite a few Wild West films this actual personal contact with such primitive conditions a few miles outside of sophisticated San Francisco was a shock to the European I still was.

Business converting to peaceful production after the end of World War II faced difficult times and an future uncertain. I had begun to get news from Paris, from family and friends and even an offer from the Laiteries Hauser to become

*Directeur Commercial (Director of Commerce)*. We were undecided feeling that San Jose was really a bit too much of a back water and with only restricted prospects. From the financial point of view we were badly mistaken, from the cultural one, not at all. Mummy insisted that the uncertainty was bad for all of us and I took a leave of absence in 1947 and flew to Paris for two months. When I look back on the flight and realize that it took me over 24 hours to reach New York with I'll admit a few hours in Kansas City, Missouri, to visit the Labunskis, the Rothscholtz and Reisners. Then another about 20 hours to reach Paris. The plane was impressive, a Constellation. It vibrated and the noise was terrific compared to 1973. I looked out at the ice bergs around Newfoundland, sat on the wooden bench in the little shack in Gander apprehensively thinking how unpleasant it would be to get stuck there for a few day as often happened; dozed fretfully until Shannon. There we staggered off the plane and into a warm and cozy dining room of the airport early in the morning. I was offered an 'Irish Coffee' with its mountain of thick whipped cream and drank the scalding beverage without realizing what it was. I was immediately warmed up and delightedly accepted a second and then a third cup. We were off again and soon the coast of France appeared. I'll admit the familiar landscape with even several well known and recognized buildings moved me deeply. Jackie and Mollikins were at Orly to meet me and I do believe somewhat surprised that I should be in such high spirits after such a long trip. They didn't know about the Irish Coffee. Jackie had reserved a room for me near the Madeleine. Paris was still drab, dirty, like an unshaven man after a long night. Few cars, still some gazogenes and to remind me of how the really rich, chic Paris aristocracy got along during the war, I could watch a shiny coupe drawn by a prancing horse with coachman in top hat and livery, straight out of Constantin Guys, drive up to the barber shop on the Boulevard Malesherbes and an old gentleman in old fashioned bowler hat and

beige coat being obsequiously helped out for his daily shave. Bery Wall, with his two chows was missing, the benches on the Champs Elysees were drab and paint peeling, traffic was sparse but the windows were already full of lovely things and Paris was still my Paris and pulled hard at my heart strings.

Here I was back and with no fixed idea as to our future. There were many many absent. Auntie Alia had been found in the Chautemps apartment where she was living as housekeeper, lying in the salon. She had been doing her usual calisthenics and had had a heart attack a few days before. Paul Berstene who had spent his time quietly doing business with all and sundry including the Resistance, had arranged a decent funeral for her. Uncle Leo had, as I already mentioned, disappeared in Drancy. Paul Leon, Katia's brother, had been advised by his wife Lucie, who was back at the time on her job at the Herald Tribune at a time when the U.S. was still neutral, to return to Paris from Vichy where the family had taken refuge. Paul had very kindly supervised the move of all our belongings to the attic in the Delelis Fanien private house the day before authorities froze all empty Jewish apartments and then had been picked up by the Gestapo for listening to the BBC on our radio which we had been happy to lend him. Alex Ponisovski had finished up as adviser to the Prince of Monaco and felt safe only to be picked up a few days before the Allied invasion. His wife had learned to her surprise that the British had vainly tried to save him sending a submarine to pick up this important secret agent of theirs. Louis Citroen with whom we had dined so cozily in Auray during the phony war and who had so warmly recommended me to my Captain Le Gac, he being a Major, had 'died suddenly' in hospital when the Germans were closing in on him. His cousin, Loulou de Saint Andre had perished from disease in a Syrian hospital. George Helbronner was gone as I have related earlier. I was deeply moved by the absence of Madame Schumann. There was the usual lunch which Robert gave in their

apartment for all the family. Most of the Kamenka relatives I used to meet at their Sunday gatherings had gone. George's aunt had been pulled from her bed and dragged away. The other Helbronner brothers except one, were gone as well as many of the crowd both Jewish and not who had danced in those unbelievably remote twenties. The lovely Riri Mendelsohn who had married her friend the Duc de Crussel, had been picked up title notwithstanding, but those that had survived were quickly, too quickly for my taste, returning to normal. I visited the Stifters. He was immobilized in a wheel chair but alert in mind and very, very sentimental. It was his and Pop's advice later in Basel that I followed in declining the offer of the job of Commercial Manager at Hauser's. James had married his girl friend Genevieve with whom we had cruised in the Katanga, transferred all his fortune to her and then divorced. She had behaved very decently and had remarried him after the war so he had recuperated his millions. The job sounded good, the salary at the then going prices was reasonable but there too many loopholes in the contract giving him the possibility of firing me and Stifter was adamant that inflation would render the salary quite inadequate in a few years. As the last straw James suggested they would finance the expenses of my car if I brought it over, on condition that I had the firm's name clearly painted on it. This was one of those details that I refused to swallow or even discuss. It confirmed that that crowd had learnt nothing and hadn't changed. This didn't stop me from lunching at their elaborate apartment in the XVI and bringing their children their first Hershey bars. I was ushered in by a white coated butler and to this sedate butler's horror and surprise when Genevieve came in I picked her up in my arms and hugged and kissed her as in the old days.

Katia had survived as had Irene. Irene had done much resistance work in Paris with Bibka Merle d'Aubigny, Mummy's cousin and wife of the great brain (bone surgeon). Serge was in Montmelian with Alla and their baby. I traveled



there overnight to the tiny Savoyard village where Serge had become supervisor of the check point for Italian and refugee labor coming to France to rebuild the ruins, once again, after just over 25 years. I was deeply impressed by Alla, still very much a subdued URSS student girl and her ability to adapt to France, her courage in the face of 'family' ostracism, far from home and with the terrible memories still fresh in her mind. I felt real affection for her and deep respect. I believed that if the new Russian civilization had been able to create such youth, it had achieved much discounting the Stalinist terror in which we only half believed.

There was a gay and joyful reunion both at Montparnasse and Montmartre with some of the Colpo group who had survived, headed by Sergeant Robert who related with relish how he had left our column at the Paris gates, gone into hiding and how his little jewelers store had prospered thanks to the gold he had kept hidden. I didn't visit Frank de Portu. He had divorced and also had spent the war years as doctor of the Italian Mission in Pairs. The feeling against any form of collaboration was still too raw. I had a glimpse of my old tutor Popitch but didn't approach him as I had learnt that he had expelled all Jewish boys from the school for Russian Refugees that Uncle Tolia had helped him so much to found. Looking back he had little choice but feelings were still too painfully near the surface. I had an interesting visit with my old friend and boss Roger Nathan at the time a very big shot in an elaborate office in the Ministry of Finance located in the Louvre, Rue de Rivoli. And then of course I saw very very much of the Falcos. Mariel was in her pram and Francois was a chubby little baby boy. They were living near Paris in St. Cloud. Our reunion with the La Grandieres was very real and very warm. They had survived quietly and Tante Jeanne had been advised to join them just in time by the German Colonel Koster of whom I have spoken at length. The Guerands were frowned upon by some of their old Jewish friends

for having sold expensive bags and saddles to the Germans, from Goering down. *Gaston* justified his actions by explaining that it had enabled him to keep nearly a hundred skilled workers from being drafted by the Germans under the pretext that they were working on the *Reich Marshal's* (highest rank in the German Military) special orders. As I liked them both I was willing to overlook his conduct which in retrospect seems only normal and human. There was a slight cloud in my reunion with the de Cayeux as Daria, to obtain non Jewish documents had sworn that she was not her father's daughter and the old scoundrel of de Cayeux had bribed himself into pure Arianism and bought dirt cheap many Jewish firms and had not only spent the occupation in ease and plenty but had made a fortune. Daria never brought the matter up really but I do believe her hints that during those years she spent many a sleepless night alone with her conscience. Pierre's mother, frail and ailing met me with tears in her eyes and Jacqueline was still quite normal apparently although both times I saw her, quite drunk. Aunt Anna and Uncle Sioma had returned to their dismal apartment and Sioma was miserably uncertain of what to do. We had a rather sad dinner and spoke sadly not only of the past but of the future and his usual pessimism, intelligent but Jewish negativity, discouraged me deeply. When I came back to the hotel near the Madeleine where Jean Jacques had lodged me I was horrified to find that I had lost my passport, a French one. It was not too difficult to replace but the U.S. return visa was a priceless treasure. After a sleepless night I was fantastically relieved when Sioma phoned that he had found it between the cushion and the side of the armchair I had been lolling in all evening.

I was busy much of the time and dined or lunched mostly with old friends or the Falcos. I didn't relish eating on the terraces of the restaurants under the gaze of starving people both old and young who shuffled by. The black market was flourishing and the Jean Hermann's even had a desert of strawberries and

whipped cream which Jean and Izka remembered I loved. I went to Batignolles and stood as I had done so many times before the stone slab. I knelt down and put my cheek to it and drifted into the past memories when I used to put my head on Father's shoulder and forget all but the overwhelming love that enveloped me. I realized that I had been unbelievably lucky and that all the trials and tribulations I had gone through were really child's play when compared to all that so many others had gone through. That realization stayed with me and when in later years things seemed hard to live through I tried always to live once again that half hour of deep, real relief smothered in sentimental nostalgia for what might have been. Nostalgia which had been my constant companion on the off since 1917.

I traveled to Basel which was unbelievably unchanged. I didn't sense the atmosphere that reigned in the house nor did I realize what was happening to Paul. On the surface what they had gone through although infinitely worse than anything we had experienced in our little tribulations, seemed little indeed compared to some of the horror stories I had learnt in Paris. Pops was as pale and cadaverous as he had been when I left him nearly seven years earlier but was dying with a dignity of a *grand seigneur* (*great nobleman*) which impressed me profoundly. He also, although I realized that it was costing him sentimentally dearly, advised that we remain in the States. The future in Europe looked bleak to him in the coming decades when both of you would be growing up.

I returned to Paris and a lovely long weekend with the Falcos. A long visit with Tony and Gin and flew off in a TWA Constellation to New York. I spent a night curled up on one of the circular benches at La Guardia remembering the nights I had spent on the floors of stations in France after the downfall and came back to sunny San Jose with its flowers, its blue skies and all of you with the decision to remain in the States and cast my lot with the New World. Some

disappointments, a few heartbreaks have come my way but I never regretted it and at this writing with the heavy cloud of the barely avoided catastrophe which would have seen me finish my days in a USSR police state even more ruthless than the one I was born in, I have never regretted it and believe I was right. I thank Mummy for making the decision to send me to Paris to realize that my life was no longer there and to have sacrificed so very very much to build our life here. For it is she who did the real deep building. I really only furnished the facade, sometimes a good one, sometimes less so.

### *Berkeley*

We started to come to Berkeley more often searching for a house and also a job for me in S.F.. Things were going from bad to worse at Jennings Radio. Where, when I arrived there had been an atmosphere of creative activity and even if, at times somewhat crazy moments of triumph in achievements, there was a crisis. Military orders had ceased and the adaptation to civilian production was painful as in most small companies all over the country. The very middle class Englishman, Neild who had put up some \$5,000.- and was one of the two silent small partners was also experiencing difficulties in his job as CPA and taking a more active part in the accounting operations. The banking ones were predicated on the personal guarantees of the Townsends and the personnel had been reduced to practically nothing. From a turnover of nearly \$1.5 million we dropped to hardly \$100,000.- a year. San Jose was still less attractive after Paris and as we watched you grow up we felt that we owed it to you to bring you into a more 'civilized' atmosphere.

We had been coming to lunch more and more often with the Valabregues, Mummy's cousin Vera who I have mentioned, her husband Geroges, a cousin of Uncle Paul's, and their three girls. From the far off days we had thought that Helene who was born a couple of months before Liz and living near us in the

XVIeme would grow up together. Georges had been working in Paris in a business financed by Uncle Pierre together with Philippe de Gunzburg and there was talk of my joining it but I had apparently a decent future at Hauser and because of Georges' reputation of being, to put it mildly, difficult, nothing came of it. He had in the meantime during the war, been spectacularly successful producing oil from grape seeds, a local raw material much needed while outside sources were cut off. He offered me a position with his small company and although Pops voiced strong reservations, as the location in S.F. was ideal, the work interesting and the pay the same as at San Jose, we decided that having gone through W.W.II experiences, even Georges had changed and I accepted the job. Cal Townsend was, I know, sorry to loose me but aware of his business, even relieved that I had found something else as Jennings could not afford my salary and even less, increase it as I required. Doreen felt somewhat let down but we remained on warm friendly terms.

We finally located Cherry Street. For the young generation I will describe this home more in detail We spent seven years there, the years of school, childhood and early youth so vital in the life of both Liz and Mike and on the whole, with its ups and downs, those I look back upon with the deepest feelings of love.

It was situated on a one block street just below the foothills in South Berkeley. It was already then an old shingled house, painted white with a green roof. It had a nice wood paneled living room with a fireplace and a second, smaller room, a den of sorts, on the street. It was said that the den which connected also directly with the kitchen and garden behind had been built so the original owner could sneak out when his wife was having company. At the rear there was a nice, also wood paneled dining room next to a large kitchen and a back storage space where we could put a washing machine. There was also a

WC downstairs. Upstairs there was a large master bedroom with a fireplace which made it really cozy, a bathroom and two nice rooms looking out on the garden connected with a glassed in sun porch where extra beds could be put up. Mike often slept there when we had visitors staying like Uncle Paul and Aunt Vera, Vera van Marx (now Metcalf), Tanya Dreyfus (now Blum) and for what seemed much too long a time Daisy de Gunzburg already then an old lady but still today (1973) quite spry.

The garden was quite large and as it connected with several other gardens on all sides, it was lovely. There were two plum trees which gave so many plums each autumn that it was a problem to dispose of them. Emily used to make jam. Neighbors got as many as they could pick and still we were literally smothered in plums. There was also a fig tree. We watched the figs ripen but were regularly beaten to them by the birds. This fig tree had a legend attached to it. A former owner, a judge, had rendered some severe sentence of strict morality and the disgruntled victim of his prudery had sent him two fig trees to show him how he felt about it. There was a dentist, McPherson with three little girls living opposite and it was a short walk to Emerson (Elementary) Primary school with no dangerous streets to cross. It was also close to the Valabregues who lived in a more chic neighborhood behind the enormous Claremont Hotel, so that Helene could be easily in daily contact with Liz. Commuting to S.F. was not difficult and with the reasonably slow, clean, electric train which I could board early and therefore find a seat, the trip was even a pleasure. Arriving across the Bay Bridge to S.F. was a daily delight and in all the years I never, I believe, saw the city with the same light bathing its then still uncluttered skyline with its many green patches of trees dominated by the Top of the Mark Hopkins Hotel and the dome of City Hall which reminded me of so many similar ones in France.

It was at one of their Sunday lunches that the Valabregues introduced us to the Milhauds. She was vivacious, amusing and gay and he, although nearly an invalid, now more than a quarter of a century ago, charming and witty. His *accent Meridional (Southern France accent)* giving an extra zest to his talk. There was also a couple, Marx, distant relatives of Paul's. Jacques, the real charming cultured European *homme du monde (man of the world)* with not a nasty drop of blood in his veins and his brittle, chic and attractive American-Swiss wife Elsie. They were both a bit older than we were at the time. They had two sons. One away somewhere and the other Cyril who had just returned from active duty with a bomber squadron in New Guinea. Both boys had changed their names to March. Cyril was a graduate of the French agricultural school and a chemist, and worked in George's office. Cyril, 'Cookie', as I called him became one of our closest young friends. There was also a strikingly lovely girl, Mona, younger than the boys. She married a Beaumont. She was a talented painter who lives in the Bay Area, now with two grown sons. We saw less of her.

For nearly a month I commuted by train from San Jose, just over an hour and a half and then a nice long walk from Third and Townsend to California Street. At the San Jose end there was a long long drive of several miles to the station. Georges had bought for his company a small Peugeot car, the same model as the one we had left behind in France and occasionally I would make the trip in it until it had a minor trouble and was immobilized for three months while parts came from France. This made me leery of foreign cars in the States unless supported by a real network of agents. Our neighbors, the Pachecos, Liz and Mike were very close to their kids who were the same age and very nicely brought up, offered to move us in his truck with the assistance of some cousins and so I made the trip from San Jose to Berkeley clinging part of the way to some piece of furniture as I perched on our bed. We honored by the local news sheet which

expressed regret at our departure. I will admit our departure was a cultural loss at that time to our small community mostly composed of Portuguese farm workers, our retired French chef and his wife, a few occasional families of young executives like the Center family, stranded in the dumps because of lack of housing.

By the time school opened we were more or less settled down in Berkeley and our next door neighbor, an old lady who was to everyone's surprise very friendly to you children, was very soon to be moved by her son nearer to his home as she had had a stroke and was replaced by an exceptionally nice young veteran, his wife and their three girls, the eldest about Mike's age, the other two younger. The Schencks were to become among our dearest friends in the States and their lives continued to be linked closely to ours...but more about that later.

Very shortly after our arrival Gavrik Ashkenazy who was working for ORT came to the Bay Area for a convention and met an interesting and very nice lady, originally from St. Petersburg who had married a Russian, Chlenov and who had an attractive fair haired girl, a bit older than Liz. Mrs. Chlenov well remembered the de Gunzburg girls in Petro and was delighted to find us and we started to visit back and forth often. Just at that time a friend of theirs from Berlin where they had been refugees, a pianist Liberman, came to the Bay Area to assist the pianist in residence at Mills College, Egon Petri, who had been his colleague and teacher in Germany. Sasha had left his sick wife Stefa, behind and come to the USA without a penny on borrowed money to seek a fortune and, as I write this today, he has found it. His is one of those success stories of America one reads about but in his case we lived it with him from a tiny room in a private home in Oakland on Pampas Avenue near the college to his lovely house in North Berkeley with its pianos, his car and as pleasant a life as money can buy both for him and Stefa. He was, and still is, a really good friend, amusing, funny, charming and extremely



talented. Until just a few years ago Artur Rubinstein, they knew all the musical world of pre war Europe on a personal friendly basis, was said to have recommended Sasha to already successful professional pianists as the best teacher he knew and the only one capable of helping him surmount technical problems. Sasha became one of our weekly guests and I would drive him back to his Oakland home along the winding narrow roads that still linked Bay Area towns in those pre throughway days. He had us meet old Egon Petri, his formerly beautiful wife and their interesting and handsome daughter. Petri was stuck up and cold for my taste, nothing of the easy charm of Szigeti or the brilliance of Rubinstein, a formal German professor type.

Shortly after we arrived Mummy decided that Liz should have real piano lessons like those of Mrs. Haseltine in Kansas City from someone cultured from whom she could get not only the knowledge of piano technique but understanding of music and culture for which we had been starved. Through the Piatigorski's accompanist who had dined with him at our house in San Jose, she was introduced to an exceptionally brilliant pianist, not only a musician but one of the outstanding personalities I have ever met, Tanya Ury. With a Russian background, nurtured in those few decades during which Germany had been a real center of civilization, she was not only handsome, well dressed and groomed even to my Parisian fastidious eye, but extraordinarily intelligent with a quick mind and a range of interests that ranged from science, she discussed atomic theory on nearly an equal footing with Emilio Segre the famous Nobel Prize winning assistant of Fermi, but history with professors of University of California, art in all its forms and of course music. Her husband Walter, a quiet and calm man is probably the only German, Jewish or not, with whom I feel absolutely at home excepting probably Mummy's cousin Carlo Melchior. But then Carlo was brought up and lived in Holland and except for his family has

nothing German. The phone call to Tanya developed the fact that she had heard of the surprising refugee couple in the outskirts of San Jose from her close friend Mrs. Dubrow whom we had entertained with Rubinstein. Tanya agree to take Liz on as a pupil at a nominal fee and became the major influence in her life while the Urys became our closest friends in Berkeley and we spent some of the most thrilling, interesting evenings of our lives in their home in North Berkeley with it's stupendous view of S.F.. We met many many interesting people in an atmosphere as culturally stimulating as any could have been in the old world. Renee, their daughter was a sweet nice girl, several years Liz's senior and is now a happy mother. Alas, their son Michael who was the closest to a genius that I have ever met, was deeply unbalanced. He caused both Tanya Walter and certainly himself, great worry, frustration and pain and finished a suicide still in his early twenties. As he was a close friend of Mike's I fear that this was one of the terrible shocks Mike had somewhat too early in life and which scarred him deeply.

Shortly after we moved in Emily came to visit us. She had made a life for herself in Kansas City which was not unpleasant but when she saw us happily settled in Berkeley she couldn't bear it. I lived up to a childhood promise to build her a house in my garden. This was a mixed blessing at times for Mummy I know. Having by fate escaped a mother in law (Mother was a sick person when we married and in any event no longer able or willing to intrude in our lives as she had disastrously done in that of Lucy and George), Mummy was suddenly saddled by an old governess who remembered how she had curled Mummy's hair for dancing classes and still wanted to run the nursery by now non existent. On the whole Mummy's kind patience won out but there are days when I feel pangs of conscience for having saddled her with Emily. Both of you decided in the

absence of elderly relatives to call her 'Granny' much to the confusion of our acquaintances and the disapproval of visiting family, including Lucy.

I have now reached a chapter in my life where you children began to take an active and independent part and which is probably more alive in your memories than in mine so I will restrict myself to some *vignettes (sketches)* that remind me of those happy years during which I should have realized even more than I did, how unimportant practical problems really were and that is it unnecessary to sacrifice too much to fight for their solution.

Yes, there were some seven years on Cherry Street in Berkeley.

There were evenings when I could come home from work in San Francisco by the nice, rather leisurely electric train to be met by all three of you in old Babar and we would drive to Tilden Park or the still very rustic Old Tunnel road and in the quiet evening dusk picnic on the slopes with the glow of nearby and distant Oakland and S.F. lighting the sky.

There was that unforgettable atmosphere of small town America of the early years of the century still lingering on Cherry Street and the happy group of neighbor children, the Schenck girls and baby, the McPherson girls, all playing on the sidewalk, much to the disgust of the unpleasant lady next door.

After a while we discovered that most of our belongings which had been moved from our Paris apartment by Paul Leon (Aunt Katia's brother and James Joyce's secretary) who kept only our radio which landed him in a German Concentration Camp and ultimate death, had survived in the attic of a house belonging to the Bernard Delelis Fanien, a friend from Carnot and had been moved from there to a warehouse. As we had a small amount blocked in our French bank after paying the Sisters for Liz's tuition in francs, we had much of the stuff come to Berkeley in crates. The crates were a big success and all the neighborhood kids played house in them. We were a bit disappointed as four of

our dining room chairs were lost leaving us only the two and the armchair we now have. A whole crate of empty preserve jars was shipped but in any case we did get some pieces. Mummy's pictures and screen, most of the old antiques that been in Mummy's *atelier (studio)* and the dresser from La Mardelle which Tante Alice Schumann had given us as a wedding present. Also the mahogany armchair which was all that was left of Aunt Alia's furniture and is historically interesting because it was made by the Dmitrieff serfs, copied from French pieces that the famous Minister Poet Ivan Ivanovitch Dmitreiff brought back from Paris in 1815. It helped give our Berkeley house a European atmosphere and I, sentimentally, was happy. Much stuff remained in France and we recognized it with amusement in both Marina's and Serge's places in later years. I also got most of my books and Mummy's and these together with what Irene sent us when they recuperated the confiscated Dutch things, has formed the basis of my small library which is dear to me and in which there are a few quite interesting books, several autographed. *The Russian Encyclopedia* is incomplete because Emily was expelled from the country and her monthly present stopped abruptly of course as she had subscribed to it for me. A year after we settled down Emily came to visit us and I was able to keep a promise and build her a Sears & Roebuck prefabricated cottage which was lovely for her but did ruin Mummy's rather large garden.

We used to have a few guests to Mummy's excellent dinners, some friends from Europe or New York. It will amuse the kids and the two of you will remember I am sure particularly Mike in whose room she lodged for over two weeks that Daisy de Gunzburg stayed with us. As she is 91 this year (1973) by the time this is read it will be a link with long past history as she was born in 1881 and was the daughter of one of the celebrated Paris beauties of the Second Empire. Henriette de Gunzburg was rumored to be the mistress of Napoleon III's

half brother and famous Minister the Duc de Morny. I remember seeing the really stunning Henriette in the twenties all in white with snow white hair and still a very attractive *grande dame*. (You can look her up in the family record and see who her grandchildren were.)

I had quite some problems getting settled in a job. The one I started out with with Georges Valabregue went sour. A director in his company, a Mr. Martin, finding that I had been treated shabbily gave me a job in the accounting department of his company but his sons eased me out soon and I spent six whole months searching around with introductions from Siggy Kempner which were very flattering but, as I have realized since, less than helpful. There were many positions in which I do believe I could have done a good job in the foreign field such as with Levi Strauss or with the Wells Fargo Bank which at that time found me too old for their pension plan which sounds somewhat ridiculous as they took me for the Tokyo job some ten years later. I have the vivid memory of a consideration of a position at a Columbarium to help collect outstanding debts of nearly a million dollars in Oakland. Mike was delighted I didn't get it. I was however received very graciously and conducted around the premises which included a 'real cement gothic' chapel as I was told. One of the drawbacks of my application was that I was unable to play incidental music. The large glass conservatories with their rows of 'safe deposit' style closets along the wall with glass doors containing elaborate urns some with cages containing pet canaries of the dearly beloved which were kept until they in turn died, with palms, rattan furniture and fountains reminded me in a macabre way of our 'winter garden in St. Petersburg but on a larger scale. The owner explained that I would have to be very tactful with the delinquent members of the family as they were, he reminded me, all potential customers. To say something I mentioned that it was a situation somewhat similar to that of a surgeon after he had once performed the operation

and there was no going back but it was explained to me that if delinquencies went too far there was always the possibility to flush the ashes down the sink, polish the name off the urn and use it again. I pride myself with a sense of humor but it was put to a hard test.

Finally I visited a Frenchman by the name of Jacques Bardac. I discovered that he was the brother not only of one of Proust's famous friends but also of Leon Bardac who was a partner in the Schumann bank. This reminded me that when I was first introduced to Leon, Bardac meaning brothel in Russian, I blushed crimson and when he added that he had been to Russia I was even more uncomfortable. Well, Jacques was for once very non committal, no flowery compliments about how well suited I was for the job that had so many many times brought my hopes high only to be followed by disappointments. So I left in a rather dismal mood, particularly as my six months of unemployment checks were expiring in two weeks. So you can imagine my relief when he phoned ten days later to offer me the job. I stayed with the Banque de l'Indochine some seven years. In the summer of 1953 the Bank of Indochina broke a century old tradition and gave a 'native' (they were the National Bank of Indochina) a Home Office contract which apparently assured me of permanent employment only to be shown the small print in the long elaborate document and offered a similar position in one of their New Guinea offices when they suddenly decided to close the San Francisco Bank and Agency. Permanency has never been my lot. I spent a rather interesting seven years doing all the work as Bardac was exclusively the public relations man with his attractive young American wife Marie Clare whom he married in Peking during the war to get her out of camp where all Americans were interned while he, with a Vichy French passport was free. The Bank of Indochina really got out of the war very well as all it had in German and Japanese occupied territory was linked to Paris and free to operate while the rest was

transferred to the jurisdiction of the London Branch and under Free French rule, operated merrily and fruitfully. Originally there was not much to do as the office had been set up to siphon money out of China and that was overrun by the Reds with the fall of Shanghai in 1949 but I did make a few good friends among local bankers and had some amusing incidents. One day, for example, an old *pere* (*Catholic priest*) in a worn out hassock brought a check for \$6,000.- from the Shanghai Branch just before the city fell and asked for \$1,000.- notes. I got them with difficulty from Crocker and he then proceeded in my private office to put them into a money belt. He was staying at the YMCA, traveling by the then rather indecorous Greyhound Busses on his way to Rome where he would deliver this black market currency to the head of his order in the Vatican. I was reminded of the incident when the Cardinal Mindzenty was accused by Hungarian Red Government officials of operating illegally in currencies.

Through friends, we met when Mummy was searching for a piano teacher for Liz, Tanya and Walter Ury in particular and also through a teacher of piano at Mills College, Sasha Liberman, whom we met at the Chlenovs, we became involved with many interesting and brilliant musicians. Mrs. Chlenov had been a Miss Slosberg in Petrograd and knew the de Gunzburg mansion and who they were. She had been introduced to us by Gavrik Ashkenazy in San Francisco then for an ORT convention shortly after we had moved from San Jose. Tanya herself a really wonderful pianist was an extraordinary personality. I would say a Renaissance, universal one, knowledgeable in all fields. Segre, the Nobel Prize Atomic physicist and major assistant to Fermi, whom we met there said that her comments when he showed her around his complicated laboratory were unbelievably thorough and understanding. Tanya was tall, attractive and radiated vitality and charm. Walter was quiet and probably because of his foreign education one of the very very few Germans Jewish or not that I got along with.

They had a daughter rather colorless and overwhelmed by her scintillating mother and a son Michael a near genius who cased them no end of trouble before he finally committed suicide in a lonely hotel room somewhere in Mexico. They had a large house in North Berkeley and an enormous living room with two grand pianos and a picture window with a view of the Bay, the two bridges there were in those days and San Francisco laid out at one's feet. After concerts in particular Tanya would gather some friends and usually after Rubinstein's he would come for a lavish buffet and after a while launch into some of those unforgettable monologues which those who have listened to him will never forget. As I believe I have already said in later years reading of Voltaire's successes in French and other salons, I visualized it more clearly with the image of Artur telling with gestures and accent his many any stories. Labunski and his wife Wanda came to the Bay Area and stayed a few days with us. They came to the Ury's where Sasha Liberman joined us. Not only did they discuss music in a brilliant and original way but they played pieces to emphasize a point. Labunski went in for some little known Chopin and although he was no match for the others as a performer, it blended into the atmosphere. Tanya played and so did Sasha. His *Mephisto Waltz* was the only thing I ever heard him play although we saw very much of him and he was a real friend.

Tcherepnin, a composer and probably only a very second rate one (not the well know one but his son) as well as Labunski's brother also a composer and the Petris were among the guests. Egon Petri had been a pupil of Busoni's and of the group that succeeded Listz. He knew and remembered most of the giants of the turn of the century, Paderewski (whom I had heard only once as an old man at a charity performance at the Challet in Paris in the early twenties when I didn't appreciate music at all), Anton Rubinstein and the rest. He was a rather cold personality, making you think more of a retired military man than a pianist but



his technique was extraordinary and his sober playing strikingly good. Alexander Schneider (The Budapest Quartet), both the Paganini and Griller Quartet and another one, (The Hungarian Quartet), in which Moskowski, an excellent violinist Mummy had known played. All these men, their personalities hazy now in my memory were not only very cultured and talented musicians but brilliantly interesting and with Segre, and several other musicians or scientists and doctors as background formed an atmosphere we would certainly never had the occasion to meet in Paris and that, for us, was the advantage of the relative backwater of Berkeley. Of course we continued to see the Milhauds also and attended many student concerts at Mills College in those days, interspersed with recitals by Petri and others were unforgettable. This also enabled us, after concerts in San Francisco to go backstage and meet musicians like Stern, Monteux with his roly poly figure and that endearing accent *du midi* (from the south of France) he never lost in French, Szigeti and many others.

Jumping ahead in years I remember when the first Israeli Symphony Orchestra made its *debut tourne* (*first tour*) in the States and they came to play in the old gym in Berkeley under the young, wildly gesticulating Bernstein. There was a violinist who had known Mummy in Petro days and he came to lunch and spoke of the exciting experiences of playing with all the visiting conductors who came to Israel. We decided to go to the next performance conducted by Koussevitzky on the following night in the S.F. Opera House. It was an unforgettable performance and Liz was so thrilled she wanted to watch him come out of the stage entrance. We waited around for a while and as it was getting late I sent in my card saying I was related to Guenia Hirshman who had been Koussevitzky's first sponsor in Moscow and whom he had helped bring to the States where for many years she had been secretary of the Boston Symphony. Word came out that we could come in. Koussevitzky flushed and feverish with

his eyes blazing was sprawled in an armchair, his sable lined 'shouba' opened on his rumpled white shirt. He asked me if I was by any chance a relative of Misha Berline whom he had met in London in 1920 when he was a just escaped and was penniless conductor on his way to the States and when I said I was his younger brother and that he had died a long time ago, he said I must be Elisaveta Mawrikiyevna's son and how charming and nice she had been. It was quite a shock for me as all the musicians who had any recollection of 'old' days whom we had met with the possible exception of Viktor Labunski who had danced with his brother at the Stifter parties in Petro and had been, as all the young men of his group, mildly in love with Lucy, were friends or former protégés of the de Gunzburgs. The period of the 20s had already disappeared for me in a hazy make believe, unreal world of the past, brushed aside by deaths, financial ruin and changes that had wrought much more havoc with my family even than with Mummy's which with so many foreign relatives established aboard had weathered the storm a bit better. Koussevitzky spoke with me of that distant past and to his wife's delight relaxed, calmed down and she was able to take him home. He was already a sick man and died but a few weeks later and it had been I believe, his last concert. Perhaps I'm off by one concert but not more and in later years his wife, whom we saw at many concerts in New York always remembered that evening when greeting me.

I believe we heard all the great musicians of those days who played in S.F.; Serkin, Piatigorski, Heifitz, again Szigeti, Elman, Horowitz.

After a short and stormy stay in Georges Valabregue's office during which I met and became very friendly with young Cyril March (Marx, a relative of Uncle Paul's and son of Jacques and Elsie Marx). I left after a particularly unpleasant incident. I always remember Georges' very badly French accentuated English. One day his secretary, an English girl, took a call for him in one of the

three offices (he had brought the process of making oil from grape seeds which had been spectacularly successful during the war shortage period and then had slipped to zero) and he took up the receiver and started talking. The receiver in his private office was off the hook. He continued to talk and turning around in his best his Francofiled English said to his secretary "Please, Miss S. will you go in my office and hang". He was quite peeved when we all burst out laughing. I worked for a while in a ladder firm Martin.

Among the many interesting evenings in Berkeley, one stands out with particular vividness. It occurred after I had been with the Banque de l'Indochine for a few years. One evening Jacques Bardac, the manager, asked me if I could do him a favor. He explained that they had a big dinner party and that an acquaintance from Peking had shown up and would we have him to dinner. He mentioned that it was a Jesuit Father discoverer of the *Peking Man*, an archeologist of note traveling in the company of his lady secretary, Teilhard de Chardin. I had no idea at the time that we would be having probably the most famous of our guests. I phoned first Mummy and then the Verhoogens with the correct idea that a dialogue between the young and brilliant Boy and this other scientist would be fun. Boy told us immediately that Teilhard was also one of the outstanding philosophers of leftist ideas of our age and that his continuous battles with the Vatican were world famous. His endeavors to entwine Marxist ideas with church dogmas had caused major world wide theological problems. I picked the odd couple up at their hotel. The lady (we met her husband in New York in later years) was of medium height and more plump than not, dark haired and rather attractive. Teilhard was thin, tall with something of an El Greco silhouette, a long angular face, deep set eyes and a general air of aristocratic distinction. If I remember, his eyes were blue grey and his rather sparse hair *poivre et sel* (*salt and pepper*). He had an infectious smile and exquisite gestures reminding me of

the handsome Dominican Father who had captured and completely conquered Marie Louise Pereire and enticed her into a convent in the far off pre war days.

Theilhard was charming to both Liz and Mike who had waited to see our guest as they always did. Mike who was quite small had a most animated conversation with him and at his request brought down his recently acquired kitten for Teilhard to pet. I can't recall what all the discussions were but Boy Verhoogen was really brilliant and having spent hours in the UC library reading up on his works, able to draw out Teilhard into a sparkling discussion. We all sat spell bound realizing that we were witnessing an extraordinary intellectual fireworks. Perhaps his nearly Communist theories were anathema to the Vatican and I for one felt that even the minimal restraints he placed on them were not really quite sincere but realized how an extraordinary *causist* (conversationist) could defend Evolution to the hilt, still maintaining a deeply religious conviction going to the very depth of the soul and disregarding any and all artifices that over the centuries the Church had woven into the original Christian foundations. Teilhard's personal behavior had made him a very controversial figure in Church circles and his extreme ideas had caused him not only to be banished to the U.S. but had placed an interdict on much of his work. Listening to him expounding his ideas, meeting the interesting thrusts of Boy's questions and observations, I realized that the individual we were listening to would have, in another age, been not a Galileo but a Calvin. I can still hear his voice over the years, his perfect French the language it is such a joy to play with, his gestures and his sparkling eyes. Perhaps in the distant future it will amuse Liz or Mike to tell their grandchildren that they had had in their late childhood the privilege of meeting one of the really brilliant minds of this century.

Once I am on the track of outstanding personalities I think I would also mention Helen Keller, the deaf and blind great lady who by her spirit and her

mind had conquered the hardly believable handicap to become one of the outstanding women of our age. Our friends the Lowenfelds invited us to the inauguration of the Deaf and Blind Pavilion, the first of its kind in the States which would be opened by Helen Keller. He was head of the Berkeley School for the Blind for many years and did a fantastic job in bringing back into the main stream of general existence innumerable deaf and blind, or simply blind children. They would otherwise have spent an existence of isolation as had their predecessors for not centuries but millennia. The gathering was quite exclusive and among others we were introduced to Warren, then Governor who made the impression of a hearty and slick politician, whose liberal record made him very attractive. He did not impress me as a great man would have done and his later mishandling of the Kennedy Enquiry should not have come as an unpleasant surprise. We all listened in silence to the high pitched very monotonous voice of Helen Keller as she gave her speech, luckily her assistant repeated most of it because although all the words, all the syllables were there, the delivery was slurred and misty and at such a low pitch that hardly any of it could be understood. A few weeks later Lowenfeld showed me a letter she had typed herself to them to thank them for taking her to Muir Woods. I have often taken friends from aboard to see these great trees and each time I am deeply awed by the primeval grandeur of these giants of another age when the world was young and free. I have read many a poetic description of the redwoods and the sun rays like so many shafts of light breaking through the soft shady gloom, but the words of Helen Keller who could neither see nor hear the breeze as it floated softly among the branches, only feel the inner vibrations of these giants of prehistoric days was the most moving, the most deeply felt reaction to the spellbinding mystery. Years later entering the Milan Cathedral and looking up to the massive row of immense pillars that support its prodigious nave I thought of redwoods both those in Muir

Woods and those in Yosemite as well as the miles and miles of giants along the Coast and realized once again their miracle.

In my memoirs of Kansas City I told of the incredible coincidence of the general who came from Chicago to grant Rodney Milling the *E* having known Uncle George and Auntie Lucy in the twenties in Paris. I was to meet with yet another coincidence of this kind in San Francisco. Mummy had inherited from her mother a rather large if imperfect diamond which had been mounted shortly before she married by Boucher in a heavy platinum ring. When the question of buying Liz a piano came up Mummy wanted to sell the ring and invest the proceeds in the piano. I who had seen and well remembered my mother's tiara, pearl necklaces, broaches, rings, bracelets and so forth disappear one after the other in Paris, was very much opposed to the idea but I decided to placate Mummy by establishing at least, the value of the ring. Walter Ury gave me an introduction to a semi retired jeweler who had in his youth been world famous and was perfectly honest. Mr. Levison had been born in the Bay Area in the last decades of the XIX century and his parents, of German extraction, had sent him to Hamburg to finish his studies, local facilities at the time being judged inferior. Mr. Levison received me with old world charm and after examining the ring gave me a rough estimate of its value which because the stone was large but imperfect and cut in an outmoded manner worth much less than it's appearance. Mr. Levison at the end of our meeting asked me the usual question of 'which city in Germany I came from' and I, as usual indignantly replied that I as well as my wife had been born in St. Petersburg. To this old Mr. Levinson responded by saying that when he was a young man he had spent some time in Hamburg, had been on close friendly terms with the Warburg boys and even was usher at Felix's wedding to Frieda adding that at the time he had met and become friendly with two Russian young men. One being Sasha de Gunzburg adding that at the time

the said Sasha had courted and married Rosa Warburg with whom he was in love himself. I then had to explain to the stunned Mr. Levison that the diamond he had just appraised had belonged to the self same Rosa Warburg and that her daughter, Helene, was my wife and that we lived in Berkeley. We saw him at several concerts afterward and he came to dine at Cherry Street one evening and went along to the concert at the old Berkeley High gym where they used to be given before the elaborate hall was built. In connection with these same Levisons an old San Francisco Jewish family another rather amusing incident occurred. Uncle Paul had given an introduction to a young man from Basel, Pierre Rhein, vaguely connected with the Bank's manager Blum. This young man had become engaged to a Miss Mitau, grand daughter of the San Francisco Zoo Fleischhakers. An elaborate party was given in their home on the Peninsula and he asked us as a favor to come so that we could write to Basel and give his mother details. This coincided with Aunt Ellen van Marx's visit and she came along to see Palo Alto, the Mission at Santa Clara and decided to wait out in the car while we made our appearance at the reception. Just as we were getting out of the car she said that perhaps we might find out if an old Mrs. Levison was still alive. Just before the outbreak of World War I her father with a friend had made the trip up the Nile and had met a couple of that name from San Francisco. They had exchanged very interesting letters all during the war and then, after a while, Paul May lost sight of them. I believe after the husband's death. We knew practically no one but stumbled upon our arrival on then young Levison, a nephew of our friend whom we had met several times at the Kempners and at concerts. We put the question to him and he was flabbergasted because it was his parents who were the couple and that his mother, in her middle eighties then was alive and had Paul May's correspondence in a bound volume she often showed her sons and grandsons. Mummy and Aunt Ellen were duly invited to lunch with her and she

spoke of really old San Francisco, of her aunt who came by wagon having a sister join her by sailing ship to marry a bachelor brother in law and lots of other details of San Francisco's past. When we returned from Japan in 1967 and settled in town she was still alive and celebrated her 100th anniversary but has, of course died since. Her son is now the retired senior partner of the insurance firm we deal with. *'Le monde est petit' (it's a small world)* especially when 'International Jewry' and/or Royalty is concerned.

In addition to their yearly camps, Casadero for Liz and Forest Knolls for Mike, we used to take them for short vacations in California and they both came to know the State in the late forties, still retaining much of its old atmosphere in those days, probably much better than most of their friends in school.

One of the years it must have been around 1950, we drove slowly down highway 1 which in those times was still narrow, the view of the Pacific as fantastic as ever. Fewer buildings and in between quiet, picturesque little Carmel and Santa Barbara, practically not a single motel. We drove down to San Diego. The zoo fascinated not only both the children but both of us and when we revisited it in 1972 it was still one of the most extraordinary I have ever seen. The giant lizards really made one imagine that some real beast had served as model for the medieval dragons. I was impressed by the enormous hands of the giant gorilla, so very human but also so unbelievably large. It reminded me of the often repeated story of my brother Misha who had become member of the London Zoological Society taking the then 4 year old Irene for a long visit in the empty gardens. To his horror she put out her little hand towards the ape who snatched it through the bars. It held on to it but luckily the keeper who was following them, threw it a banana and it let go. This is an anecdote which in time might amuse the Paris Berlines. From San Diego we went to Pasadena which at that time was an exclusive residential suburb of L.A. Mike had never stayed in a



real hotel so we splurged and stopped at the Huntington. Mike was surprised and frustrated when bell boys unloaded the car. Mummy still tells the story of Liz, in her very early teens, offering to go down to the hall first to buy stamps, then post cards then anything else until she admitted it was to go up and down in the elevator with the cute uniformed bell boys. Although they were both at the time I believe taking dancing lessons at Miss Tinkhams in Berkeley in very East Coast formal style, Mike refused to take his sister onto the dancing floor in the restaurant in the evening. The next day we went to the Huntington Library, We had an introduction from Uncle Bob's colleague, Director of the Legion of Honor in S.F., Tom Howe who had worked with Bob in the salt mines after the war recuperating the art treasures confiscated by the Germans all over occupied Europe. The librarian took us around and explained how the library worked, showing us both the Gutenberg Bibles and the Caxton Bible which are among its greatest treasures. Looking at books and rare bindings under the eye of a specialist who can explain what to watch out for is an experience long to be cherished. We then went along to the museum through the lovely park which reminded me of the beautiful parks of the Riviera. For us it was a great thrill and I suppose something of a revelation for the children to wander through the tall ceilinged hall and see Gainsborough's Blue Boy with his curls and wistful smile, mischievous Pinkie and innumerable Lady Hamiltons and other rather cold but still attractive Lawrences. These picture may have a post card lack of real genius but their stately grace remains enchanting, like some Musset somewhat *recherché* (*elegant*) poetry. There was a small building with Mrs. Hutchinsons's collection. A few lovely Primitives which made me nostalgic for the past and those unforgettable hours at the Memling show in Bruges in '39, so many years ago and in a world that seemed even further away than it does today when it has simply dropped into history. During that visit we called the Szigetis who were living in

the lovely villa on the Palos Verde peninsula built by the actor Paul Muni with a lovely large pool (then rare) and a fabulous view of the coast and Santa Monica. Wanda insisted we come even though Joska had just returned from an European tour. He had had a nightmarish experience for an artist as high strung as he was. You must remember that it was at the height of the McCarthy era and L.A. was one of McCarthy's pet enemies. We had lived through the University of California loyalty crisis and the horrible problems of conscience that it caused for so many young professors with families to support torn between their principles and 'appeasement' which still remained a very dirty word in those far off days. Joska had played at a concert for the benefit for Loyalist Spanish Children's Relief and had been black listed. He had been suddenly forbidden re entry and confined to Ellis Island until friends in Washington and the outcry of the press liberated him after a few days. As you will remember it was, in our case the alternative being Dachau, so we had not been so deeply shattered by the unpleasant experience. Szigeti, Wanda said, needed company and with the children in the pool our visit would do him good. When we arrived we found some members of the Griller Quartet also having tea in the large living room with many Russian *objects d'arts* and therefore specially appealing to us, and a picture window on the pool with the Pacific beyond. Szigeti unburdened himself and described at length the moral shock of prison and I believe it helped him. I can still see his harassed face and piercing eyes and as some of the other guests described the tragic plight of so many many of their friends, the whole horrible tragic farce of the hysteria of those days came to the surface. For us, steeped in the horror tales of Europe under Hitler and realization for what so many of our luckier friends had been through, it was a ghastly and infinitely sad experience. This was unreal as that luncheon at the Van der Berghs in their villa in Nice overlooking the Mediterranean with liveried man servants, flowers and exquisite

cuisine the very day Holland was being overrun by the Wehrmacht and their sons with families as well as Ellen with her family were fleeing to England in small coaling vessels. The same time that Ellen's parents quietly committed suicide in their lovely great country house amid their art treasures and memories of cultural existence which could still be living in the old world between the wars. The memory of that sad afternoon in Palos Verde remains with me forever giving the McCarthy era a personal touch it would otherwise never have had and although the pain and anguish were very deep indeed, I don't regret the experience as I don't regret the experience of my short and dismal war weeks and long dreary *Stalag* one either.

The next day a Public Relations vice President of the Bank of America took us in his Cadillac (a special thrill for Mike who had never been in one before and that was in those days, the symbol of luxury and high living) to a movie studio to watch a filming of some very short scene. I believe with a very young Kim Novak (Piper Laurie). I can't remember the stars he pointed out to Liz and Mike in the cafeteria but the long hours of screening one minute of action in a hotel lobby with a crowd of extras, the complete stillness then the few minutes of hectic activity then everything frozen again. I thought back to the day I had taken the Pereires to a Pairs silent studio, back in the early twenties to watch the handsome Mosjukine play Kean, the actor, and how amateurish and small and simple it had been. This was unimaginable waste, of time, energy, talent, mechanical ingenuity carried to the extreme limit and I was both appalled and impressed. With the wage scale and other costs, the big productions had to close and when I read of Hollywood's problems years later in the Wall Street Journal, I always thought back to that fascinating afternoon. All three or four hours of filming for a couple of minutes which very well might be cut and I better realized the inevitable had to come to that unbelievable waste.

It was during that trip that we took the children across the border into Mexico to Ensenada. For us the poverty glimpsed along the road only reminded us of the poorer aspects of Europe but for Liz and even Mike it was quite a shock to see real misery, dirt and I still remember Liz's horrified reaction to a sore covered stray dirty miserable mongrel on the dusty street of Ensenada. She had never seen such a sight.

By the following summer we had sold Babar the old 1932 straight eight cylinder Buick which not only we, but most of our friends, even today remember fondly. I saw it only once after the sale, on the Bay Bridge and the net price we got for it after deduction of license fees was \$7.-. It is true it used a quart of oil for every 10 miles after the 250,000 which she had done. The successor was a much more modest Pontiac bought from our friends the Ostwalds. That summer we drove up the Redwood Highway, the miles and miles of gigantic trees were really impressive and the car narrow enough to pass through the great tree hollowed out for that and which I believe, has since died. We visited old Eureka and its gingerbread mansions and a saw mill and then drove through the California Alps along a narrow winding mountain dirt road to Shasta Dam, terrifically impressive and along to Larsen. Bears on the road were quite numerous and two cubs very appealing but I refused Liz and Mike the pleasure of stroking them as I had noticed mama-bear duly perched on a ledge above. Lassen National Park was a huge success. We drove to the bubbling holes and I admit they impressed me much more than did the crater of the great volcano on Kuyshu Island decades later. The deer and fawns came close and in the evening we sat and watched the great bonfire under the starry skies while folk songs were sung. We rented horses and rode up into the higher reaches along winding trails and across clear mountain brooks. We came back via Feather River Canyon, it's scenic beauty somewhat marred for me by the fact that our engine had blown a

gasket and we had to limp along at 30 miles an hour which didn't save us a ticket in Marysville for speeding. It was a 'quota' place where the local highway patrol kept the budget steady that way. While our car was being fixed on a Saturday by the local garage, the owner drove us out to Lake Almanor where we spent a lovely day basking in the sun. The attitude in California in those days was really friendly and when I think back on the attitude of the garage owner driving us some 15 miles so that we would not lose a whole day of vacation in his dusty hot little town, I wonder if it would be a friendly today. Around that time Uncle Paul and Aunt Vera came to California together this time and we all drove down to Monterey via Ben Lhomond and the coastal range. By the way Celeste as the second car had been baptized broke down some ten miles from Carmel and the tow truck fetched us, raised the front and hauled us along the narrow road to Monterey although the hood was high up in the air, we all remained in the car much to Aunt Vera's horror. The garage in Monterey lent us a car for free to take the visiting relatives from Europe along the 17 Mile Drive and through Carmel. Hertz and Avis were unknown in those parts in those days and when I offered the garage owner to pay for the lovely car (his own) the garage man had lent us, he refused vehemently.

By the time we had arrived in the Bay Area the famous ferries were a thing of the past except in the first years the one from Santa Fe Depot in Oakland to San Francisco and also, as there was no Richmond Bridge yet, the one from Richmond to San Quentin. This half an hour ride to Marin was one we took often as Mike's summer camp in Forest Knolls was nearer that way from Berkeley than either of the existing bridges. Those ferry rides were always thrilling and leaving the car deep down in the hold we would climb on deck and really feel we were sailing the Bay.

Along Market Street there were a double row of street car rails and the clanging old street cars would roll along two abreast to meet the other pair coming down to the Ferry Building which then still dominated that part of the waterfront, its tower rising high above dilapidated old brick warehouses and the uncompleted elevated highway. By that time I was working as number two man in the small office of the Banque de l'Indochine, San Francisco situated on the first floor of the Crocker Building at the corner of Montgomery and Market at Post with an excellent view for all parades. I remember how thrilled Liz and Mike were to watch the 1948 centennial one with its flags, military bands and majorettes who still shocked the old fashioned Europeans we still were, strutting before the Stars and Stripes and detachments of Marines. I recollect the Daughters of the Golden West, all well in their fifties and weighing each, at least 200 pounds in flowing robes of light gauze marching bravely. They were in front of the Chinese High School girls in elaborate kimonos who participated in the parade in total ignorance of the treatment their own grandfathers had received from the great robber baron builders of the railroads when they were imported, pigtailed and all to do the real tough coolie job high in the Sierras. In those late forties that was a yet not history but memories of very recent wild days and the Japanese were slowly emerging from their concentration camps and drifting back to the strawberry patches on the coast and their farms. Strawberries which we adored, then became once again for a while, cheap and plentiful. When we went to Chinatown it was already a tourist attraction and the only one but the alleys were dark and smelly and when Mike disappeared in one to buy some forbidden firecrackers, it was a bit scary. But somehow in an amusingly innocent way and for us who had in our childhood seen such utter squalor alongside easy living, it didn't have that jarring note so full of hate, contempt and deep antagonism which hangs so heavily today (1974).

From the Top of the Mark the view was absolutely unobstructed by anything and stretched far away towards the ocean and the still winged windmills, the ship 'Gjoya' of Artic expedition Amundsen fame which still sat neglected near Ocean Beach in Golden Gate Park and which perhaps even Matthew and Alex and Lucy still remember when I took them some four years ago to see before it was shipped back to Scandinavia.

Fisherman's Wharf was a real fishing port in those days like some of the little Mediterranean ones. A few excellent Italian Restaurants, local crab in season only at \$1.- each. This reminds me of the story my *Lycee* friend Jean Guerrand-Hermes used to tell. He was sent by his firm in the late twenties to San Francisco to sell saddles to polo playing Peninsula customers. There were a couple of young French bachelors to complete the gay trio which was feted by all. Before their departure the three very broke young blades decided to repay the lavish hospitality they had received and invited their chic friends to one of the little Italian fishing restaurants they patronized when not invited out. They had 'mamma' hang Japanese lanterns, prepare mounds of spaghetti and lots of crabs. They obtained, either through connections at Christian Brothers (who maintained production all through Prohibition of 'altar wine') or the French Consulate or better still some friendly bootlegger cousin of the Italian restaurateurs, as much Chianti as they could. They, with the younger generation of Italian fishermen and their girls playing music in the old country manner, threw a party which so says Jean (known to a few now dead friends as Gaston, to differentiate him from a couple of other Jeans in our *bande*) started Fisherman's Wharf as a center for more sophisticated pleasures than the overflow from the International Settlement, whose wrought iron arch over Jackson Street still hung alluringly over the street in those days even though the wild life of the street itself had long died down by then. Even I remember that archway in the late forties.

It is hard to believe that the gleaming skyscrapers, elegant plazas and reconstructed stage scenery style brick buildings have so rapidly replaced the run down waterfront we knew when we arrived.

The French Bank where I worked had been set up to channel the funds moving away from doomed China of Chiang Kai Shek and I remember one missionary in his worn black cassock green with age, all patched up with a dirty white beard who appeared one day in our office with a check for \$6,000.- issued by the Shanghai office and asked for 6 thousand dollar bills. I had to go to the Crocker which sent over to the Fed for this and then handed them to the old man saying "do you really want the money in cash?" and he asked me if he could have my private office for a minute to stuff them into his money belt. He was sleeping at the Y, traveling by Greyhound (not the easy ride it is today) via New York where he was to pick up more cash to add to his already heavy load and then on to his head quarters in Rome. When some years later I read that Cardinal Mindszenty, had been charged by Hungarian authorities with illegal currency operations, the old missionary came to mind and I thought to myself that the Communists must have had a point in their accusations.

From the same bay window of the bank we watched the triumphant return of McArthur under a deluge of ticker tape, with his son like some crown prince sitting in the car as the crowd roared and I thought of 1913 and that other parade along the Nevski in St. Petersburg. I had recently been naturalized and my first vote had been for Gahagan Douglas and for Truman. The betting along Montgomery was heavily in favor of Dewey and I risked all of \$10.- quite a sum in those days as I was earning \$500.- a month plus \$50.- for expenses, to win nearly \$80.-.

Visiting musicians, local professors like the well known one Fischl with fiery eyes and black beard came to supper and talk. Sasha Liberman was a



constant visitor and dear friend and full of amusing stories of the musical past both legendary and recent which he would tell in an inimitable way stumbling over the words as he slowly learnt English. His first lectures at Mills were translated painfully from Russian into English over the phone during interminable calls. I was never good at translating and to this day remember being stomped by *sorokonojka* - *mille pattes* (*centipede*) in French which he needed to illustrate the independence of each finger contributing to the whole movement of the hand over the keys. His lectures won him real success and his is one of the legendary stories so characteristic of Europe's imaginary USA of the XIX century. He did arrive penniless in 1947 owing his family a couple of thousand dollars and today (1974) owns a lovely house in the Berkeley Hills, pianos, a car and they lead a comfortable life with accumulated social security waiting in the wings and stocks in the bank. It is true that Artur Rubinstein said of him that he was the best teacher alive for pianists, barring none and around 1972 opened his dressing room door to him alone to ask if he could still perform.

A few blocks from Cherry Street was St. John's on College Avenue where the reverend placed the hall at the disposal of Mike's first cub scout troop. We had many evenings there with the neighbourhood children and their parents, parties for Halloween (one in particular to which Mike went as a robot in a costume made of discarded cartons and only tiny holes for the eyes. I still remember the shiver of horror when we noticed on the other side of the hall filled with dancing kids one of his pals carefully preparing to stick a long nail into the hole. I knew Mike's eye was exactly behind it and grabbed the boy just in time. We had Xmas parties. I remember waiting impatiently for the Santa Claus costume to arrive, pad myself, issue forth and distribute gifts and quickly return backstage to give up the costume that was making the rounds of most Berkeley school Xmas parties. I am saying all this because there was then in that part of

Berkeley, an atmosphere slightly reminiscent of *Our Town* and neighbourly small town USA of the XIX century which will be history very soon.

In a somewhat complicated manner we met George Placzek, one of the scientist of the now historically famous Manhattan Project. He had married a Dutch girl, Andriessen who Mummy had known and his brother's widow, Else Placzek, a sister in law of the head of the School for the Blind that I mentioned in connection with Helen Keller. To make matters even more complicated, the girl had married a colleague of his, the scientist who carried the 'heavy water' out of Norway under the Nazi's noses, Hans Halban. This Halban after his divorce was married for a while to Mummy's cousin Aline who finally settled on becoming Lady Isaiah Berlin. Well this Placzek came several times to dinner. I found the little man very much alive, interesting and good conversationist. He was very dubious about the possibility of peaceful use of atomic energy and believed it was economically unfeasible in this century. His wife related the story that has been often repeated of colliding during the war with Hans Bohr, the great atomic man, in the elevator and in answer to her greeting his shocked reply, "but Madame Halban I am not Bohr, my name is Jones" to which she had the wit to answer, "Dear Mr. Jones, I am not Madame Halban, I'm Madame Placzek." It was at the Placzek's house that we watched the coronation of Queen Elizabeth on TV. It was a very impressive spectacle and although many lavish films have upstaged it, the realization that we were watching the real thing with real personages in the real Abbey, somehow came over. Many years later standing on Park Avenue we watched the Royal Rolls brightly lit inside, drive slowly by, the Queen in white furs with her bright tiara gleaming on her soft auburn hair, a radiant smile and really this rather unattractive woman glimpsed for an instant created an atmosphere of fairyland.

There was and for all I know still is, a young professor of Romance languages, a distant cousin of Uncle Sioma's, Yasha Malkiel who had a very nice and energetic mother whom we enjoyed very much. The old lady made excellent chocolates for sale and gifts. She was very proud of her eminent son whose education had been paid for by the slow disposal of her diamonds. He married a charming and brilliant girl who was ever more eminent in the field of linguistics but died young of cancer. We had Yasha to dinner with a professor Fischl who it now appears from articles I read after his death, to have been quite famous in Near Eastern history. It was the time when Israel still hoped for an accommodation with the Arabs and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was intended to be an integrated one as well as the hospital. I can still see him gesticulating wildly, his dark jet black beard a flutter as he discussed the merits of pre Arabic Spanish literature.

Probably it will seem hardly possible to imagine the terror which gripped us all when two of the next door Schenck girls and their mother Kathy caught polio simultaneously. There was no Salk vaccination yet to say nothing of its successors. Some kind of shots were given to Liz and Mike (Gamma Globulin) but I, for one, with my rather unbridled imagination spent some very tough nights.

Europe was far away and my job although far from being interesting or satisfying was quietly routine and enabled me to pay bills. It was an unbelievably French atmosphere in San Francisco's tiny office. I remember to this day the crisis that occurred when we received a letter for the Mother Superior of some convent in Canada. How was response to the letter to be concluded? What was the correct protocol for the salutation? Bardac although an Ambassador's brother in law was stuck. Lagarde then Consul, had no answer. The Washington Embassy was queried by long distance. I concluded matters to Bardac's horror and I suppose also relief by writing in English. We had the visit of Laurent, the

dynamic President of the Banque de l'Indochine. He sat behind Bardac's desk in that worthy's private office while Bardac was sitting at a folding card table brought over from their apartment. I was called in to give some figures and comments. "*Monsieur le Directeur, veuillez prier Monsieur votre Adjoint de se faire donner par la comptabilite le chiffre, je vous prie.*" (Sir Director, please ask the Gentleman, your Assistant, to ask the Comptroller for the number, I beg you.) So here we were the three of us alone in a small office, I was actually of course the accounting department (with an assistant) who carried the figures mostly in my head but protocol was duly respected. That same evening the self same Laurent came across the living room at the Bardac cocktail to shake my hand, asked to be introduced to Mummy and was French charming. All seemed serene. At last the B.I. breaking with a century old tradition gave a contract to a 'local' and made me a member of the permanent head office staff. We even drank champagne with Aunt Helene Kuffner and the temporary man who replaced Bardac, on vacation at the time.

Then Laurent died suddenly. His successor who was in Japan at the time extricating the bank from an impossible mess which cost them hundreds of millions also died and the bank landed in the hands of a domestic man - de Flers (the son of the famous playwright whose plays I had so much enjoyed - with Boucher in a bit part in the *Vignes du Seigneur* comes to mind) took over. The decision was taken to close the office in a hurry. Some 15 years later a Board Member of the bank at a dinner in Tokyo confirmed that it had been one of the biggest blunders they had made. I fought hard for decent severance pay of three months salary for the staff insisting I would have to testify against the bank if it got to court. I won. In the fine print of my imposing contract there was a clause that permitted the bank to offer me an equivalent position in another branch. They mentioned, if I remember correctly, Numea and I resigned. The search for

a job started all over again. There was an opening, this was in 1953, at Wells Fargo but I was too old at nearly fifty. I mention this because it was in '63 that I went to Tokyo for them. Gilstrap who by that time had replaced old Leuenhold introduced me to Sprague J.B.S.Johnson of Otis McAllister at that time a dynamic coffee importing firm rapidly approaching the number one position in the world. We talked a bit. Johnson hardly mentioned salary and only promised I would get enough to live on comfortably and pay for the children's education and would get some title "so those East B...don't keep you waiting in the anterooms" as he put it. All he needed was Mummy's approval. We hesitated long and worriedly. It might appear to all of you that this was a break that could not be refused and in fact it worked out that way. In the last fifteen years we had had quite a few tribulations but also stability, even a mediocre one, in an atmosphere both pleasant and not really in a backwater. Your children were completing your studies in the self same school district where you had started effectively if not actually, our friends and the Bay Area which was so easy to love were serious considerations.

### ***Princeton and New York***

A couple of weeks later I landed in New York intending to spend a few days in the company suite at the Tuscany and started on my hectic career as Otis Finance man in the East. Crisis following crisis and very early in the game I went against all the rules and stood my ground against Johnson. I know that that was the action that made me definitely in his eyes. He was at that time a real U.S. tycoon. Brilliantly successful with a mind that skipped from one project to another, inventing, creating, merging with a mixture of ruthless drive and childish naiveté. A few years later emerging from a meeting with David Rockefeller he turned to me and asked anxiously "Alec, how do you think I behaved?" Very soon at one of his early visits, he asked me if I found the Tuscany okay. I said of

course but that I was searching for something cheaper. "I can't have you waste your time on that. Just stay put." His attitude towards titles was similar. A few months later at India House at lunch, sitting between Dubois, V.P. of the just merged Chase Manhattan Bank from which I admit I had obtained a line equal to both lines of the formerly separate Bank of the Manhattan and Chase, Johnson (I was the only one who called him Mr. Johnson to the end, never Sprague as many junior executives did) said "I am flattered to be sitting between two V.P.s." That's how I learnt of my new title. This was a period I enjoyed in my work. It was at times crazy but always very much alive, very active and needed constant, what is now called P.R. proper handling and attention to detail. As I was occupying an eminent position I was welcomed by the family accordingly although I'll willingly admit that they had always been warmly friendly but membership in the Broad Street Club, friendly contacts with top bank executives, helped.

Mummy was winding up things again alone in Berkeley and coming out after the end of the school year. I had found Pierre Schweitzer in one of his successful periods and slipped into a pleasant existence based on some 12 hours of office due to the time lag with S.F. Dima had been to Middlesex following quite a few Warburg boys and I wanted to see the establishment. Liz's very first boyfriend, Mike Mahoney, now I believe a journalist, was there on a scholarship and I mentioned it to Walker, a V.P. at Morgan from whom (unsuccessfully) I was endeavoring to obtain a line of credit. He asked me down to their place in Connecticut for a weekend and to drive over to Middlesex for the game on the Saturday. It was my first and only U.S. very Scott Fitzgerald style weekend. A large house, lawns, horses, servants, Louis XIV,XV, XVI and XVIII furniture, Sargent portraits, the works. I brought along a hamper of French cheeses that I never saw again and we had a nearly formal dinner and my first game of Scrabble. The wine was good and I probably got good marks from the host and the butler

for commenting on the Burgundy's velvety bouquet. It was served in crystal. We left early next day and it was bitterly cold. My hosts had several hip flasks and during the drive and the whole game they never stopped drinking. I fled to look for Mike Mahoney whose miserable look confirmed my worst impressions and my decision never to see Mike in that kind of setting. We drove back and stopped at a roadside place where we waited for hours at the bar, and more drinks, for a table. I gave them a decent menu, the food was Hilton Hotel unimaginative, and the best wine I could choose which was lost on my host after his dozen or so drinks. Much to my relief, Mrs. Walker asked me to drive and upon arrival home we went to bed. The place reminded me of the Breul, the Paul May estate in Holland but the opulence was visible, skin deep only. When I came down next morning for breakfast, ready to catch my midday train back to town, I found my host at his 3rd Scotch and soda. I left with relief. It must have been mutual because at one point my hostess must have realized I was Jewish even though I was French and had difficulty recovering from the shock. It was a vignette that came to mind watching the film *The Great Gatsby* a couple of days ago(1974).

The following several months, until the family joined me after school recess, were taken up with a lot of spadework mostly in control of cash flow and P.R. with local banks. Although I talked daily and at length with California I made very few long distance calls home. They were expensive and we were used to being careful with money as I had hardly earned enough and we knew that expenses would rise in the coming years and I was far from expecting generosity from Johnson. We used to dine nearly every day with Pierre in a small restaurant which served lots of *moules marinieres* with a glass of wine for about \$1.- I saw several films which I don't remember, and also a recital of Dame Myra Hess. She was no long young and her playing was devoid of any 'fireworks' but it had a depth and sweep that was so calmly noble that it carried one away. On one

weekend I took a visiting executive from the Coast, a fat little man from Czechoslovakia, to an open air concert of Sir Adrian Bolt. His conducting was very precise, very uninspiring and the roar of planes overhead often drowned the orchestra.

Even in those days, now 20 years ago, I learnt that New York City wasn't the easy going California of that period. I remember dining one evening on the West Side with some friends of the Libermans. The weather was balmy and around 10:30 PM I decided to walk to my hotel, the Tuscany, on the East Side and directed my steps towards Central Park which I intended to cross. I was startled to be stopped by a policeman and frankly, it was still an unpleasant experience for the European still alive in me. He was most polite and asked my where I was going. I naively explained and with the 'education' I have acquired since I can well imagine his reaction. He advised me to walk to Central Park South and then across to the East side or take a bus. The park was not safe at night. I was shocked and impressed.

Poor Mummy was having even more to do than I when I abandoned her in Kansas City. The only advantage was that my increased salary was at her disposal, per Johnson's instructions and I could live on my allowance plus free hotel. It was a pleasant feeling that I hadn't experienced for many many years and I was only disappointed that Fedia wasn't alive to watch me having made good. I saw little of the family.

Mummy supervised Mike's Barmitzvah with Walter Ury's help. It was a dirty trick to play on her but I had been deeply impressed by the fact that Uncle Leo, Mother's brother, who was a complete agnostic like her, had perished in Drancy as a Jew as had many friends and in particular Paul Leon, Katia's younger brother, James Joyce's secretary whom we had allowed to take our radio when he so kindly liquidated our apartment in Paris just before Jewish residences were



confiscated. It was lucky that we had no money to spare but poor Paul paid dearly with his life for listening to the BBC on our good set and being a Jew to boot. I felt that if such prices were to be paid one had, at least, to have some realization of who one really was without going to the extreme of Uncle Sioma who said that if the Germans had occupied Paris on a Saturday, he would have sent the family away by train but would himself not have traveled on a Sabbath, whatever the risk.

We had about the time my job seemed secure, exchanged our Pontiac for a small pale blue Studebaker - a 'compact' *avant la lettre* and in this Mummy drove across the USA in two weeks of sightseeing, taking along a nice French girl, Michele Perrigot who had been recommended to us by the Guerrands. They saw Glacier Park, the Bad Lands and Mummy still says the trip across the vast continent with its fabulous scenery was well worth it. Johnson suggested I pay a visit to Toronto and our office there about the time you were due in Niagara Falls that was very characteristic of him. I was therefore able not only to see the impressive falls but drive the last 900 miles. In the meantime I had rented a rather specious and nice house in Princeton, near the Institute of Advanced Studies. The owners had a lovely library and the house was attractive. Pierre drove me out several times in the nice car he had at the time and helped with the renting. I contacted an old friend both of mine from Stockholm Grand Hotel days and of the Ashkenazy 'girls'. Nata Dobry, ne Handelman, who after lots of misfortunes had landed in Princeton having liquidated a chicken farm when her husband left her and was now part owner of a knitting shop. She had always been a nice, warmhearted girl and was to be a Godsend to all of us during the months we spent in dearly beloved, lovely, charming Princeton. It had an old world charm, a university atmosphere, lots of open space, great trees and lovely stately buildings. It was far enough from NYC not to be a suburb and near enough, I thought to

commute. The high school had an excellent reputation because of the Ivy League University and Liz in her senior year and Mike in his first year were together again in the same public school after years of separation following Emerson Elementary. It would have been an ideal spot to remain in and I often regret that we didn't stay there but in those days there were only the trains, no Greyhound buses and once the three leaving around 5 to 6:30 PM had left, there was nothing out of old Penn Station before nine. Invariably when I got back from lunch I would have a message that the Old Man wanted to talk to me and would be back at around 2PM S.F. time. It never was before 3 or 3:30 which meant sevenish in N.Y.C. and by the time I got home it would be well past ten PM and I lost all contact with Liz and Mike. That is why we decided to move to the City. In the meantime summer heat was a new experience for them and we were back in Kansas City MO weather but bearable because we could and did occasionally escape to Asbury Park or other spots on the Jersey shore for a Sunday on the beach. Mike acquired a gun and we did some practice target shooting on a range. He was more miserable at the restrictive atmosphere of the East than Liz but found a job with a summer theater helping with the scenery as stage hand (The Macarthur Theater). We went to several of the performances which were good and one in particular I remember was hilarious and Albert Einstein, very shortly before his death, dressed in his strange non descript manner roared with laughter which we saw sitting only a few rows behind him.

We spent a pleasant enough summer that year in Princeton. The Wheeler house was large and situated near the Institute of Advance Studies so we could watch the amusing Hogarthian silhouette of Einstein hurrying across the lawn. When autumn came it was a new and lovely sight after all those years of season less years in California and we went in search of a house for the winter. Professor Wertenbaker had been consultant for the reconstruction of Colonial Williamsburg

and had had a small brick replica of one of the homes there built for himself on Prospect Avenue. It was filled with real American colonial furniture as well as quite a few reproductions, of course. It had a wavy brick wall in the flower filled garden, copied on the much longer one at the University of Virginia, I believe. By raising the price to cover any possible damage by Mike which he didn't commit) we got it and enjoyed it very very much. G. and Pierre would come for the weekend, Boy Verhoogen was our first house guest, Uncle Bob came visiting his old friend the famous art professor Panovski, Uncle Paul arrived from Switzerland and Willy came down from New York. Dima was in his Senior year I think at the time. (junior year.) Pierre helped Liz to perfect her driving and get her license. We did quite a bit of target shooting with Mike. It brought back memories of my very meager experiments with a gun at La Mardelle. One of the reasons I was an easy guest had been that I didn't shoot having reached the approved age after our financial collapse and therefore before I could have a gun or practice, despite my distinction as one of the best target shots in Colpo. We had several real storms with thunder, lightening and crashing trees. I'm not certain that Mike for all his 13 years wasn't a bit terrified by the first one he ever experienced in his life. Liz seemed to take rather easily to the change for her senior year although I did feel guilty at having taken her out of the Berkeley School system after all those years. Mike's adaptation was more difficult and complicated although he met a couple of very nice twin boys, the Goodhearts, who lived close by. The parents were cultured and pleasant with a Russian Jewish background and we spent, I remember, one fascinating evening at their house listening to the crazy author Velikovski explain his theory of *Worlds in Collision*. With space exploration into the distant future, it sounded even more impossible a theory than today (1974) but I can still see him waving his hands wildly and nearly shouting in a rather East European English, how, referring to Galileo's

fight with the Inquisition and bringing up unexplained mystery after mystery how easy it was to close ones eyes and call everything nonsense. It seemed quite wild but very interesting at the time and I wonder now what a new civilization in twenty thousand or so years will say about us if we are wiped out by a new atom blast.

Winter came and with it snow again, deep and soft. We skated with Mike on the pond for miles and thinking back I am rather satisfied that I was able to do so at age 50. Work was interesting, challenging and productive and my efforts on behalf of Otis McAllister were successful. I had entered the few years of practical success after decades of mediocre achievements, the price was returning home mostly after the children were in bed and asleep after the long trip and we started to consider the possibility of moving to Manhattan.

I found out that 'Yani', Tony Schumann's exe's son, Didier Heilbronn, whom I had know so well as an amusing and wide awake kid, was with Louis Dreyfus in New York City and due to return to Paris Head Office, disposing of their apartment. I contacted him and asked for an option sight unseen on 1175 Park Avenue.

In the meantime we had been searching in vain for an apartment. Here I must add a small anecdote which might in later years situate the atmosphere of those days. Johnson phoned one day to say a friend of his related to old Mrs. Otis, wanted to get rid of his apartment and that he was willing to buy it for us. Mummy mentioned the address to Willy who said "but that's a restricted house and no Jews allowed." I relayed the message to the Irish secretary, Mary Manion (sister of a Chicago banker) whom I shared with Johnson and she blew up saying that all that was in the past like Irish discrimination and wouldn't believe it. I suggested she check and she said that she knew the elevator man, also Irish, well and would clear all this up in no time. Next day she sheepishly came to me to

admit that to her horror I was right. I called JBSJ in San Francisco. He reacted violently. Said he'd buy the apartment in his own name and we could move in come Hell or high water. I had quite a time explaining that he would be in California, I would possibly be away quite often on business as he had planned and that with both you also in college or school, Mummy alone would have to face ostracism and unpleasantness. I suppose he also checked with his friend and the matter was dropped. This was the only time I came in direct contact with visible Anti Semitism. But then I don't play golf. I am sure many jobs were closed to me and I broke into banking by a fluke and with my Frencofied name to which I held owed so much because it had helped in getting me out of the *Stalag* and fooling the Wehrmacht for one thing. I passed. Although I never denied my background and with Mummy's family in NYC that wouldn't have been easy if I had wanted to, which I didn't.

So we visited 1175 and found it much too grand but JBSJ had insisted that there be a full time doorman with a teen age daughter around even in those days NYC had a lousy reputation. The apartment was really nice with the main room overlooking upper Park Avenue. The dining room and hall were spacious, the two large bedrooms with bath between them or Liz and Mike, nice. Ours with its bath attractive and there was a servant's room with bath which served as a very convenient guest room. The kitchen was large and how poor Mummy got along with practically no help I still don't know. As a consolation to any future younger generation, those years while I was making what at the time was a good salary of \$20,000.- with club, garage, apartment and so forth paid without raising any eyebrows, and we went out very seldom, had no permanent house help to speak of, Mummy bought very few cloths and made nearly all Liz's wardrobe, it was the only period we really dipped into capital and after it was all over I felt very

guilty and only when I got my Wells Fargo bonus after I retired following our five years in Japan, could replenish our funds.

That summer of 1955 I had a complete trip across all Europe to make. Johnson, his usual self, suggested that I take my vacation before embarking upon my tour and take the family. We went first to Paris and lived in a residential hotel next to the Place Victor Hugo, now minus its hideous bronze statue. Removing many of the horrible late XIX and early XX monstrosities from Paris Squares, was one of few satisfactory actions of the Germans. The horrendous Defense with its balloon comes to mind. It was our first trip together and the first since the post war ones in the late forties. We had a grand time. Versailles, *bateaux mouches*, museums and friends to say nothing of family. We even gave a big cocktail party in the hotel apartment as we had one very large room, two small ones and a bathroom. Most of my old friends came. Tony was alive as was Roger Nathan whom we visited in their lovely old-fashioned low ceiling apartment with its book lined walls, Louis Philippe furniture and faded faux air of a Proust decor, high up in an ancient building on the quay overlooking Notre Dame. Lucy was still in Lebanon with Uncle George but we spent a lot of time with the Falcos and also the young Berlines, already back in Ville d'Avray by then with Alla miraculously adapting herself to France. We had a picturesque wedding reception in Garches for Daria de Cayeux's eldest daughter. It was very reminiscent of pre war days for me and as I had been out of it in the States, even a bit strange. We rented a car and took off for the Loire chateaux, already bathed in *Son et Lumiere (Sound and Light)*. We had been stunned by that at Versailles and to this day I remember the facade bathed in silvery light with Boyer's voice commenting on the history I knew so well. Then the glow of all the tall windows of the *Galleries des Glaces (Hall of Mirrors)*, then darkness except for one

window and the voice saying "*Le Roi est Mort*" (*The King is Dead*) as it too went black.

We saw Chambord and its fantastic roof, Blois with *Son et Lumiere* again, and then down towards the Midi, the Cathedral de Papes at Avignon, a contrast with the splendour of my favorite cathedral at Bourges, squat and airy in its intricate lace like stone. Down to Cannes where Lucy was waiting for us and a few days in the sun on the crowded beach with the fireworks on the 14 juillet. Liz had graduated that year from Princeton High. There had been a nice party with the boys in white tuxedos. Mike had visited lots of schools as we had decided that NYC wouldn't be right for him after Berkeley and Princeton. Some of the Friends schools were attractive but seemed strange to me. I also spent two solid hours waiting for the results of a test at George School near Princeton together with Oppenheimer and his pipe. We chatted but had our minds on our boys and I don't remember anything particularly interesting.

Here are some vignettes from that summer of 1955 which in so many ways was the peak of my existence. At last I had achieved a measure of success in my work. We were traveling all together, the four of us, through the Western Europe I had spent my youth in and which I loved deeply and which was linked with all worthwhile memories of my life - good, bad and indifferent. I had shown the vistas of Versailles and its endless facade to the children. Shared with them the grey charm of as yet uncleaned Paris under its specially limpid blue sky, watched as so many times before the Loire flow sluggishly past the chateaux, bringing back memories of far far away days when from dusty roads and the back seat of the open lumbering Hotchkiss I had admired them as a boy, had visited them again in mute admiration with many different people dear and close to me and had bid them all I had believed, a final farewell under the hot skies and misery of 1939. I had stood again on the Cannes Croisette and this time with the four people

in the world dearest to me, in an atmosphere of pleasure, happiness and fulfillment. We had danced with Liz in Juan les Pins under the bright stars and listened to the banter of Bris, the *chansonnier* (*cabaret performer*) I had so often enjoyed at Suzy Solidor's and his jokes (*asportif et artiste a la fois*) and Liz was thrilled to be taken for my very young *petite amie*. We had once again had bouillabaisse on the wharf like that last lunch before the collapse in 1940. It was a dream come true and I savored it trying hard to engrave it in my memory and my heart to live it again in years to come.

We parted company I to travel to London and Scandanavia via Germany on business, Liz for her first stay in Rome and Mummy and Mike to join Paul and Vera in Switzerland. I stayed at the Hyde Park where Father used to stay when on business trips to London to confer with the Lazards, Pusch, his friend and old Lord Kindersley. I traveled by rented car to Sevenoaks to visit the Sassoon cousins, actually Spielmans and Edgar gave my chauffeur a basket of home grown vegetables, all this was "as it should and could have been" if there had been no 1914, I thought. There was Hamburg and the Atlantic Hotel, Copenhagen and the Grande Bretagne where I had stayed with Father and Mother on a short visit in 1918 and the in Stockholm the old familiar Grand Hotel. I was even recognized - not myself of course - but the porter remembered the clan from 1917 and even the number of our suite and mentioned that Count Kreutz (who had been in our group of children in 1917) had come there recently from Berlin. I walked the quays by night, slowly reliving my youthful strolls when I had still felt on vacation with a real home there in the background not far away in Petro, as yet attainable in those early autumn days of 1917 or so I imagined and I realized what it meant to have a real permanent 'home' somewhere in the background of my wandering existence. I even renewed contact with some friends, the Aschberg 'boys' whom we had known and skated with and with whom



Nata had kept in touch. They took me out to Salsobaden on the fjord and to their yacht on which I spent a lazy Sunday afternoon. I went to the museum to look up some of the old favorites I had admired as a boy, Charles XII and a sphinx like picture of a woman hideously XIX century which had fascinated me. I looked up at the windows of the apartment we had lived in on the Blasienholmshaven overlooking the port and Royal Palace and thought so much of what 'might have been'.

In Hamburg, I dined with old Fritz Warburg and his nice simple wife. He was half paralyzed already but intelligent and bright and I remember him saying what a fool Eric was not to have taken family name for the bank. Eric did this some 25 years later. It was a nice to be received everywhere as the important man from the States I'll readily admit. We had a short reunion of a few days in Holland with Mummy, Liz and Mike and a memorable dinner all together with Mania and the girls also in a chic restaurant somewhere in the country where the legendary incident of the wine occurred. I had ordered good French Burgundy and was unhappy when I tasted it to realize it had turned to vinegar. I hated to make a fuss because Mike was very self conscious of all our European attitudes and fuss but luckily the *maitre d'hotel* noticed my grimace, tasted it himself and with profuse excuses replaced the bottle. We parted again, the family off to England and me for a final few days in Paris where a cable awaited me ordering me to Tangiers. It was my first and only taste of Africa. The Minzah Hotel was very nice, service legendary, pre war standards and the gardens a real dream. I wandered in the Kasbah, a bit frightened but thrilled and felt myself back in the exciting atmosphere of the Orient Express and Vienna in '28. There was a small country club with a pool where I spent an free afternoon. The following day Air France suspended flights as there was trouble in Morocco and the hall of the hotel was suddenly invaded by swarms of French families from Casa Blanca with

children, nurses, retainers. My appointments were also canceled so I took a taxi back to the country club. It was nearly empty and the driver suggested, for a few hundred francs, waiting for me. I lolled nearly alone by the small pool, lunched there on a *langouste* (salad, fruit and a small bottle of champagne and in the late afternoon drove back to find Tangiers in an uproar, military all over the place and the big doors of the Minzah locked. I got in through a narrow back street winding its way among high walls below the garden and an ancient *potern* (*doors in ancient fortifications*). Riots were sweeping the bazaars and we were blocked in the hotel for 24 hours in the approved Somerset Maugham setting and Phillips Oppenheim (a thriller writer of the early XX century) atmosphere. I finished my business calls rapidly and took the plane for Madrid and Paris.

We flew over the impressive grey mass of the Escorial at low altitude and I was impressed not only by its heavy somber mass but by the arid setting. I had a few hours to spare in Madrid and instead of driving to the Escorial, went again to the Prado to bid a fond admiring 'hello' to my favorite painting of all - the great Royal Family of Goya - its biting caricature wit, its sweep of blue and those unforgettable masks grouped in stiff perfect etiquette. Then back to Paris for a short stay with the Falcos in Saint Cloud with baby Mariel in her carriage (I believe still Liz's) and toddling 'Jambonneau', fat little Francois. Then a cozy dinner near Orly with Mollikins, Jean Jacques and Tony. I didn't realize this was to be my last with him. Then the long long flight to New York. A most uncomfortable night, an afternoon of Scotch and sodas in Aunt Ellen's apartment with Robbie van Marx and then another nearly twelve hours later to San Francisco and my report.

That autumn we settled in 1175 and Mike went up to Putney where we visited him for an unforgettable Thanksgiving. We stayed in a little French inn. The owner had been in the regiment I had been attached to in Colpo and we had

not only outstanding meals but a warm welcome. Putney was great. The atmosphere warm and friendly with none of the formality I had hated when my parents had taken me to visit Rugby in 1919. The other parents were mostly pipe smoking liberals and the gathering at the turkey dinner real New England. We took Mike and a couple of his friends, including a girl or two I think, to dine and it was a revelation for me to listen to the teen agers discuss enthusiastically some Quartets being played by their orchestra. Mike proudly pointed out their best football player who was also their star cello performer he informed me. Miss Hinton, the founder of Putney still lived in her house on the grounds and the present head of Putney, pipe smoking Rockwell, was very unconventional. The great excitement was that Serkin came occasionally to see his girls and had, I believe, performed and that Mrs. Roosevelt would give the address that spring for commencement as her physician's very attractive girl, Grania Gurevitch (we knew the two brothers through Helene Kuffner) was there.

Christmas in Manhattan was exciting. Park Avenue became a necklace of golden lights of Xmas trees every night and the Grand Central Building towered like a brightly illuminated Xmas tree itself at the end of the Avenue. This was long before the towering RCA glass and steel rectangle overshadowed it. The illuminations were fantastic and *West Side Story* the great hit. We had a gay and pleasant Xmas party with the Ashkenazy girls, old Tante Yvonne de Gunzburg, the Willy clan, Cyril March, not yet married, Pierre and our usual real candles to everyone's horror. Liz was at Elmira college. An old fashioned all girls place in upper New York. I had had the characteristic experience of American fathers of those days of driving her up with the equivalent of three trunks of clothes in the car. It all looked attractive but somewhat old fashioned and out of date.

During the following years and in no chronological sequence at all, a special evening comes to mind and one in particular. Mrs. Dubrow who had

originally accompanied Artur Rubinstein to our supper in San Jose had, during our years in Berkeley become a quite special friend and was also a close friend of the Urys. Together with her old California family charming husband, this expatriate Australian singer had held open house in her rambling old ranch in Marin and we would quite often make the trip from Berkeley mostly using the ferry, to join friends, the Griller Quartet in particular for an old fashioned early dinner. Sometimes we would gather fruit in the warm sunshine in their orchard. So when she came for a visit to New York we were anxious to see her. She suggested taking us to a show with Richardson (Cyril Richard) and then introducing Liz to him but that never came off. What did come off was a dinner she asked us to give for her and Ruth Draper, a long time friend. The two old ladies were punctual and quite Edwardian in their manners. I can still visualize Ruth Draper her deep eyes sparking and her voice with its many inflections rising and sinking as she told us stories of her past experiences and incidents in her theatrical life. How sorry I am not to have written them down. The ladies gone, we noticed that she had left her black gloves and the next day Mike carried them to her hotel with a bouquet of violets. She answered by a short and charming note which I still treasure and we were looking forward to taking both Liz and Mike to her next unforgettable show when we were stunned to read of her sudden death some 48 hours later. That dinner must have been her last evening out, reminding me of that Koussevitzky concert in SF which had been the last he conducted. Looking through old papers I find a short essay in French which I had written some two decades earlier after being deeply moved by her performance. The corrections and comments are by Roger Nathan the brilliant *Normalien* (student in the highest college of education in France) under whom I worked at Citroen in the late twenties. Here is an abridged translation.

***Ruth Draper***

It is useless to try and criticize, in the usual way, the complex but simple performance of an evening with Ruth Draper. The stage of the now defunct Daunou, a small, intimate theater, blends across the ramp with the whole, the essence of what is now admired as Art Nouveau and which in those days seemed a bit cheap. On the stage beige draperies with pink shades, an imitation Louis XIII rustic table, department store kind, and a chair.

A woman appears. Of what age? Age is not important in Ruth Draper's art for we will have, soon, before our eyes an old peasant in her seventies, a young Jewish girl from Brooklyn both true to life. Now we watch a young matron of 35, Jewish, rather large, with those great eyes, in a silk gown of warm brown, other details are so unimportant to the whole. The first play is called *Three Meals*. She comes in, young, happy and full of life. She sits down to table, picks up an invisible cup of tea, butters a non existent slice of toast and it is as if this was the rehearsal of some modern play and one somehow searches for an instant the Other, that so well imagined young husband in a hurry catching his early breakfast and he comes really to life as she coyly escapes his fondling. The curtain goes down and then rises again. Ruth Draper has aged, the lines of her face have hardened, the eyes sparkle less, she reads her newspaper hardly answering old Harry and it is the usual monologue of the aging. Now in the third act, she has become the grandmother surrounded by her grandchildren for whom she slowly with soft gestures, prepares their *tartines* (*sandwiches*) with a nearly motherly care. Suddenly her voice rises and she turns to Harry to scream at him for he, having aged, is deaf. The charm has operated and we see the aged husband as clearly as if he too was on stage and we actually see him on the stage in this scene of slightly ridiculous old family bliss. The table loaded with goodies is there, grandma helps little Johnny, scolds Mary and deftly wipes old grandpa's tie on which he has spilt something. In the *Tree Generations*, before a severe but

benevolent Judge, the old Polish Jewish refugee pleads in her broken English, her speech rolling along like one of those ancient prayers in a Synagogue, heavy with the memories of past pogroms and full of the fear bred by centuries of persecution. She sits down and stands up as her daughter, the voice more shrill,, the accent less pronounced, the aggressiveness still tempered by memories of childhood terror before authority the traditional respect still alive. She in turn is replaced by the sexy grand daughter, arrogant, full of life and energy, with a chip on her shoulder of course, but so sure of herself, fighting for her man and using all her appeal against the aging judge. She is making her mother suffer and she is desperately sorry to be doing so but she wants to attain that goal, her chance that the New World is there to offer her.

Will I describe the Balkan diva, *femme fatale* (*seductive woman*), both understanding and a bit maternal in her attitude towards her young English poet lover. Then she becomes the fury in her violent dispute with her impresario for her real lover's next contract, singing his praise in what is her mother tongue which no one but herself can understand. Felix will go to 'Londra' or otherwise, she wont sing. That is her final ultimatum and under the flood of invectives the impresario capitulates with a gallant hand kissing gesture and all is calm again.

Now we have a room full of men in formal attire, ladies, flowers, refreshments and the hostess turns to each in turn in his own tongue bringing the guest to life as she mixes her Danubian French with guttural English. How one would like to follow her as she moves followed by the so real group of guests towards the other salon and disappears.

The *Italian Lesson* presents us with an American matron reading Dante in that very special accent that reeks Park Avenue and Southampton. The divine reading is interrupted only by...the dinner to order, the friend to invite, the children who troop in, Johnny mustn't drink her perfume, mustn't cut heavy string

with her delicate nail scissors. She is simultaneously dictating letters to her perfectly discreet secretary organizing her day. At times one is even a bit ashamed to be peeping in so indiscreetly behind the scenes into the intimate existence of this lady. And although I have never been in the States, I somehow know it, the inner workings of the precision instrument in its race for riches. I watch fascinated the marvelous organization which weighs down on our old European backs, that eternal rush of social events to which the woman abdicates in a such pitiful and grotesque manner.

(Now that I have lived here over three decades and think back on that one short monologue, it is probably the best answer to so many unanswered questions that we, 'Overseas Parents' like Liz called us once when she was tiny, eternally surprised and ever wondering, put to ourselves).

I have left for the end the *Small Wayside Railway Station*, cold, windy and oh so dreary somewhere in the Middle West because after that act I have no more to say. All the railway men, the bums, the red necks, come alive as they drink, play up to the barmaid, pinch her, joke with her and tell her their miseries while she dreams of her Jerry, her one and only love. And when the crackling phone line brings the news of the wreck in which her Jerry has just perished. We suffer not for her but with her. We witness, helpless, the organization of first aid. The barmaid becomes a guardian angel arranging for everything from hot drinks, doctors and first aid and all this in the atmosphere of her own heavy, unutterable grief, like a hot summer day under the heavy clouds of the coming storm. She sends a kid to fetch new sheets, the ones she has are soaked in blood, Then she is caught up in the animal force of Jerry's bear hug as he, miraculously escaped, picks her up and crushes her in his arms and she is cradled after the long hours of anguish and we want to laugh and cry at her deliverance.

What is there in this unique art of Ruth Draper? Her imagination becomes our imagination and creates other characters more real than if they were actually on stage with her. It remains an unforgettable experience.

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Now that I have filled some pages with memories of an evening many years ago in that Paris of 'between the wars' in which one could escape from reality and did so, but at what a price, let me resume a bit about New York during those seven years.

At first we were alone except for the week ends when Liz would arrive traveling with friends in a sleeper overnight from Elmira and fill the apartment with gay activity and innumerable phone calls or Mike would land with a group of raggedy friends playing at being bums and invading all the rooms, sleeping in their bags and bringing with them a sniff of that sophisticated, brilliantly interesting active, creative life which reigned in Putney. I can well imagine the horror created in the staid halls of Schroder's on Broadway when Mike had himself announced to the then V.P. Bill Bethune and was sent up in the private elevator to the Management Floor with its discreet English prints, its thick carpets, polished desks, quite distinguished secretaries and Brook Brothers executives, as the group of rather uncouth young boys clad in jeans, thick plaid shirts and heavy boots emerged into the august silence of the long room. I can well imagine that the impression created was never to be forgotten.

We went to shows and recitals, but could, even in those days, afford few. I remember particularly one night when a colleague, Bee, who lived in Connecticut, could not reach the city because of the blizzard suggested we take their seats at the Met that evening. He told me it was *Rosenkavalier* and we got there late by subway and sat down as the overture started. It was familiar but sounded quite different. I raked my very limited musical memory until the



curtain rose on the first act of *Boris*. Luckily it was a fantastic new experience as it was the original Mussorgsky version with emphasis on choirs and crowds and no longer the Rimsky one which was, after all in many of the occasions I had seen it, except, perhaps the first time in Petrograd in 1914, simply a setting for Chaliapin's great performance. There were all the concertos Rubinstein ever played given one or two a week on consecutive weeks with Wallenstein conducting a good orchestra and Artur at the height of his career. But is that so? Rubinstein always astonished one when he was each time, just a little better, a little more moving, a bit more astounding than expected, played them all Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Chopin, Grieg in a manner one felt and knew was unique and would remain an unforgettable memory to be told and retold in years to come as the great performances of Anton had been wistfully related to me by Grandmother in her stuffy, plush drawing room under her portrait where she stood very regal in black satin, her diamond brooch with Mummy's ruby in the middle, shining on her décolleté.

As I am in musical memories I do want to tell of one particular recital that has, probably, some historical significance. It was a recital for Stravinsky's anniversary and his piano concerto for 4 pianos was performed with him conducting and Sessions, Copeland, Britten, Lucas at the keyboards. To tell you the truth I can't very well remember the music nor was the performance outstandingly brilliant enough to stick in my memory but I will never forget the distorted shuffling figure making his slow way to the podium as the audience stood and applauded wildly. The four composers had, themselves, been received enthusiastically and the atmosphere was electrified. Stravinsky straightened up and seemed to grow shedding years and infirmities and the strange sounds floated over the spellbound hall. Everyone seemed to realize that the four performers represented all that American modern music could offer and their homage to

Stravinsky had a meaning beyond the actual moment. All the great works seemed to accompany the notes in a dim background of memories. When it was all over the public went wild and that historic moment lives in my memory so much more vividly than many other musical experiences which I should remember.

It reminded me of the atmosphere in S.F.'s Synagogue when Mihaud conducted from his armchair, which he had reached so painfully, his Jewish religious piece. There too I recollect nothing of the actual music, I don't even remember if there were choirs, it was the great hall, the awed crowd and the feeling created by the composer's presence.

Further back, in the old, pre war days the *Messa Solemnis* of Beethoven which we drove with Mummy's friend Ank Van Harinxma to hear in the Chartre Cathedral. The great arches seemed to vibrate to the great waves of sound soaring up through the ancient stones. There again, the setting, the fervor that seemed to be an actual presence added something beyond the reality to the moment.

It was on our way to or from Chartres that we visited the Chateau de Maintenon and that the often told incident occurred. I don't remember if I have mentioned it so will repeat it here. We were led through innumerable vast salons richly furnished with portraits and elaborate pictures covering most of the walls. A long gallery contained XIX century portraits of all the important Noailles dukes and marshals, that family having inherited the estate. We were led around by a very pompous old butler with white sideburns dressed in an old fashioned frock coat. As we reached the main salon he stopped in front of a large portrait of the Marquise de Maintenon, I believe by Larailliere, and in the awed silence dropped the unforgettable "*Ceci est la Marquise de Maintenon, qui etait, comme qui dirait, la nurse des enfants de Sa Majeste*" (*Here is the Marquise of Maintenon who was, as one would say, the nurse of the children of His Majesty*) ignoring with supreme aristocratic tact her morganatic marriage to the *Roi Soleil*. (*The Sun King Louis*

XVI) For the Noailles head butler she remained forever Madame Scarron whom the Mortemart Marquise de Montespan had hired to care for her bastards. How Proust could have relished such an experience.

At the time, in New York, we were seeing quite a lot of Ania Dorfman, the pianist who had had her hour of supreme glory playing a concerto with Toscanini and whom Mummy had welcomed in Holland and I had been summoned to meet at Madame Halphen's as you may remember. We went to several of her recitals, spent evenings at her apartment not far from 1175 and I remember one January 1st chauffeuring her to deposit gifts at several of her friends. She took us one evening with, if I'm not mistaken, Madame Horowitz, to Segovia's studio and the great man played his guitar with quivering sadness while we all sat silent drinking and savoring the melodies. It was all very XIX century and I visualized the old salons of those days with the great musicians playing to a select group of that *monde (world)* which Proust did capture after all.

During those years in New York we 'did' many many of the exhibitions which were, and are, a priceless advantage of Manhattan. I recall the Chagal stained glass windows, deeply moving, brilliantly colorful and perhaps, if not the only, in any case, the very very rare modern ones that can compare to those innumerable Medieval *rosaces (rosary stained glass windows)* and narrow windows filtering ruby red, sapphire blue, emerald green sunrays on the grey or pink stones of Gothic cathedrals all over France, some in England, some in Italy, carrying their jewel like brilliance into the somber lives of the Middle Ages.

The summer following our trip JBSJ, having through my intervention with Siegmund Warburg, reached the real owners of Hard and Rand, the oldest coffee firm in the States, and been able to buy up that firm. It was on this occasion that I signed the largest check of my long career, for \$1,250,000.- I remember and having been made a Director of the newly acquired firm reached the pinnacle of

my Otis McAllister career. JBSJ decided that along with the Treasurer of our outfit and its Comptroller I should go to Brazil and in Sao Paulo, Victoria and Rio de Janeiro help the transition with the local executives, our worried suppliers the Lebanese merchant Jabour and the local bank (which was to crash spectacularly a few years later) Scatini's who were, by the way Gianini (Bank of America) cousins. It was an exciting and interesting experience although flying in those days, even though JBSJ insisted I take a berth, a rather trying one. Looking back the noise and vibration of even such giants as Constellations, was tough to endure for over 24 hours with hardly a break.

We took off from Florida where we boarded a Braniff plane for the flight to Lima via Panama where we were to stop off and where I was to deliver to the local manager some confidential and probably shady documents. After a good meal, as good as they came in those days before they could serve hot, and a few drinks I climbed into my Pullman style bunk and pulled the curtain. A very short while later the Captain ordered set belts and a steward came to strap me in. One flew at just about 10,000 feet in those days. We hit the storm an hour later and among several unpleasant memories of my existence, the time spent lurching up and down, sideways with deep sickening air pockets, retains a position of unforgettable importance. I was airsick and scare stiff. After a bumpy landing at Panama (I always regretted that bunk because I could have caught, at least, a glimpse of the canal otherwise) and a hasty interview with the harassed local manager, I refused to get back in bed and spent the rest of the night reasonably comfortably sitting in the seat and watched the sun rise slowly over the coast and the gleaming lights of Lima go out one after the other.

The stop over in Lima was very short and we took off in early dawn for one of the unforgettable flights I ever made. We remained at about 12,000 feet as we left the immense expanse of the Pacific behind and headed for the Andes.

Far, far away above hazy mountains I watched with wonder the gleaming white snowy peaks - many years later Fuji San reminded me of it - of what I believe was the volcano Misti and then in the dawn we flew rather low over the desolate simmering expanse of legendary Lake Titicaca and a cloud of pink flamingoes rose from a cove. The sun's rays played on the shining water and we headed for the great Andes. In those days one flew at 10/15 thousand feet and the great peaks rose to many thousand feet above us on both sides of the lane, the bleak walls towered to the invisible sky far too near the wing tips for comfort. Far down below the cluster of buildings marking La Paz, its main street ending in a larger structure, somehow accentuated how tiny, how artificial this human inhabited spot was in the desolate grandeur. Once out of the gorges we were soon flying low above the limitless emerald green jungle. Somehow the thousands of miles of inaccessible wilderness of palms gave an impression of remoteness from civilization and all humanity that I hadn't felt looking out of the plane towards the Sahara when we took off from Tangiers some time earlier. Realistically it does not matter into what wasteland or expanse of empty water one crash lands but the fear of finding oneself alive in the great unknown of the Amazon basin was more real.

The flight was long and dreary and I was relieved when we landed at last in Sao Paulo, a city which reminded me of the few large U.S. towns I had seen by that time with some modern skyscrapers and very little character. I was met by some local people and driven along a nice mountain highway to Victoria where the main offices of Hard and Rand and their warehouses were located. It was exactly the kind of place I had always imagined South America to be, a sea front lined with palms, a rather elaborate old fashioned hotel of pre World War I days, its stucco peeling, a rundown imitation of the Casino of Monte Carlo, set in a luxurious tropical garden with immense orchids growing wild and bright

hued parrots perched among flowering bushes. The warehouses were run down, the offices dirty, the laborers miserable and sinister and the local executive staff bored and sweating among the flies under slowly revolving fans.

The local general manager was a Senor Dantas, a fading example of the dashing Latin American millionaires dear to European late XIX century operettas. Exquisitely polite and charming, a widower with a very attractive young daughter, nearly a spinster in her very early twenties. On the next Saturday we drove quite a few miles out beyond a 'frontier town', Campos to their lovely unpretentious estate. The drive along a dusty road, its red cloud following us in the emptiness, the primitive villages and the peasants in rags brought back memories of Balkan excursions in the '20s and further back the long, hot drive from Syzran to the *Derevnia*. The rooms were attractive in their 'anti macassar' Victorian style and reminded me of Grandmother's apartment in Saint Petersburg. Some landscapes in heavy gilt frames, plush and velvet covered dark furniture and the subdued glow of oil lamps and candles.

Next day we drove out a few miles to visit a much more elaborate estate of the Lara family. White stucco, well tendered lawns, stables, servants quarters with neat little houses for the married ones, still 'smelling' of 'slave' put patriarchal atmosphere. Senora Lara was stunning and dressed in Paris from head to toe. The Senor was dark, wiry, in gaucho attire and shining riding boots. All very true to style. We started to talk with Mme. Lara standing on the terrace in the shade, sipping long cold drinks and I sensed more than detected a Russian intonation to her pure Parisian. She finally mentioned that she had traveled the Volga in her childhood on ships of her family and suddenly putting two and two together I asked her name - Pollak. It all came back to me. They were millionaires of the 'old days', intimate friends of the Kamenkas and 'everyone' - the two lovely Khishina girls. The eldest having been his mistress, finally married for a while

Prince Hohenloe and served as the prototype of Claude Anet's successful novel *Ariane, Jeune Fille Russe*. This was the younger one we had danced and supped with so often in the Rue Monceau of Uncle George's parents. Our recognition was mutual and joyfully enthusiastic. We had been scheduled to pay a courtesy call on the important owners of the estate but remained all day exploring her thoroughbreds, the children's clinic and school, the lovely gardens, all the while talking, catching up with family gossip, all this in breathless Russian to the frustration of the rest of the company and impressing the somewhat envious but condescending Dantas whom I was able to assure that the Senora's family had, in fact, been wealthy beyond their wildest imagination and still was in Europe and discreetly skipping the fact that they were Jewish. We kept up a Xmas card contact with the Senora for years.

A few days later we left for the short flight to Rio and landed in the bay on the small Santos Daumont airport. The flight was bumpy, the plane a dirty DC3 and my companion, the Otis Treasurer was horrified by the cockroaches that peacefully climbed the cabin's walls. He assured me that he had believed that they did not survive at the 3000 feet we were flying and with my somewhat disgusted blessing spent the rest of the trip squashing them, one after the other, on the wall in front of our seats.

It must be an unforgettable experience to enter the Rio de Janeiro Bay from the ocean but a low flying approach was still unbelievably impressive. The *Pain de Sucre* (*Sugarloaf*) rising straight out of the bay, the *Corcovade* with its immense Christ, arms outstretched, blessing the city, the great palms lining the promenade, the elaborate - here shiny - rococo buildings reminding one of the Cannes Croisette or Promenade des Anglais in Nice, and its mosaic designs on the broad sidewalk, all ringed with high mountains lush in their winter greenery and the empty beaches like a silvery setting for the small breakers and the noisy

Latin crowds. I had wanted to stay at the famous Copacabana which was then ultra modern and just out of town beyond a wide tunnel, set among Miami Beach type skyscrapers. We had a noisy, small room without a view and moved the next day to the old fashioned Victoria, in those days on the very waterfront, overlooking the fabulous bay and the expanse of the wide promenade, nearly empty in the winter sunshine of the July afternoons. The city had much much more character, or should I say European flavor than Sao Paulo and the rickety street cars clanged along, people hanging like grapes on the outside, reminding me of our dear little old cable cars of San Francisco. There was an old Spanish very elaborate cathedral with more curlicues than I remembered even in Vienna and an old quarter reminding me of Lisbon or old Marseilles. I took the *finiculaire (cog railway)* up the Sugar Loaf and looked down fascinated on the city in the growing darkness of the coming evening as the lights went on. I also went up to look out over the ocean from the foot of the great monument.

One evening the fabulous Lebanese Jabour invited us to dinner at their white stucco villa at the foot of Sugar Loaf with a view across the bay on Rio from the wide terrace jotted with imitation antique marble statues and richly hued plants in enormous Japanese porcelain jars and Victorian garden furniture. The salon, with a white and gilt grand piano, Louis Quatorze imitation furniture upholstered in Aubusson was also new. It was the dream of the old man in his miserable Kasbah childhood come true. In the twilight we were served by innumerable man servants endless canapés with a profusion of fresh caviar. The corpulent, black clad ladies with just enough black satin showing among innumerable diamond broaches and necklaces kept to the background except for a States educated niece who did the interpreting and her mincing pansy brother. I didn't feel like scotch and asked for a sherry. My two colleagues asked for the same. Dantas had come along but his daughter must have refused to condescend



to a visit. The wait was long and it grew dark, with only a few elaborate candelabra with candles lighting the scene. I had consumed a dozen caviar canapés and felt thirsty so when I was presented with a rather large glass, long stemmed bohemian colored crystal, I delightedly took a gulp. It was cherry brandy. I strangled but was able to warn my colleagues who sipped theirs and I did little honor to the very elaborate meal until we reached the luscious fruit.

This incident reminds me of the one that was to occur a few months later in New York. A very handsome young coffee broker who was making a small career for himself via his boss's wife in an important firm and ended by being the 'African Coffee King', as he had cornered the representation of most French African country's crops then just coming into the market, was most anxious to show off his position to his mother, a real reserved French *bourgeoise* (*middle class*) who had come to visit him from home. At a dinner where among the guests were a Hollywood producer of typical tycoon type in his late fifties who was at his 8th Miami style wife or mistress, a bit younger and with a very lifted face, the local manager of the Messageries Maritimes and I believe another couple. The lights were dim, candlelight of course, and the hired French maid very Boulevard farce type. With the fish she served a bottle of Chateau Yquem which looked appropriately old, although I somehow noticed it's greenish hue. The movie magnate swallowed his glass without blinking before the maid had reached the host, having started with Mummy. Then Mummy's neighbor the Messageries Maritimes man turned to our host and said "*je crois qu'il y a erreur, goutez donc.*" (*I think there is a mistake, taste it please*). What had happened was that our host's family was in the olive oil business and shipped him gallon cans of oil, like George Valabregue used to give us during the post war shortage in San Jose when he was producing grape seed oil. This oil was then emptied into old wine bottles and stored. One of these bottles, found by Madame Mere that morning, had been

put to cool in the ice box and had been reverently extracted and served by the maid. Luckily I hadn't been the first to drink because I would have certainly thrown up, only the Hollywood man after eight or nine scotches with little soda noticed nothing and even probably benefited by the mistake.

Well back to Rio. The manager of the Otis Subsidiary National Paper and Type living in Rio took us the next Sunday to Petropolis, the summer residence of the last Emperor Pedro of Brazil. The drive was gorgeous, the profusion of orchids, innumerable varieties of palms in the lush jungle, and bright great cacatoos screeching in the branches above. We had an excellent Viennese lunch in a roadside restaurant run by a refugee - Tangiers, Petropolis - to be followed later years by our meetings in the Orient. Where hadn't Hitler's hand scattered refugees from Central Europe? The palace was a medium size unpretentious Victorian country house. More elaborate than the Coburg villa near Sofia with its innumerable silver framed royal photographs I had visited in the twenties, but not up to the more elaborate residences of my wealthier French friends, like the Pereire's Armainvilliers. There was a small throne room and a diamond studded crown, really glittering but certainly nothing to compare with the Tower Treasures in London. It seemed strange to find this piece of XIX century royalty lost in the tropical jungles of sub equatorial Brazil.

The big excitement of the moment in society was the purchase by an extremely shady millionaire who called himself Chateaubriand and with whom I had drinks in Sao Paulo, of a collection of paintings which he hadn't paid for and which were being held up by creditors and customs in the States. The collection that did finally reached Brazil had a few outstanding examples of Goya and a probably fake Rembrandt and I saw it in New York before it finally left for Brazil. Chateaubriand was dark, swarthy and I imagine Onnasis must be something of his type. Among my friends in Paris the somewhat questionable but very

knowledgeable art dealer, old de Cayeux, whose son married Uncle George's sister, my oldest living friend who wrote rather well, historical books under the pen name of Olivier about Russian Tsars and Tsarinas, is the closest I can come to a valid comparison. (Rumors had it that the old man was neither 'de' nor Cayeux nor Senarpont but Daria's breathless friends were disappointed when the Mayor in Paris gave no indication of the original name if there is one, at the wedding.)

There was a few more weeks of work to do, contacts to be made with local banks, commuting between Rio, Sao Paulo and Victoria and getting the local staff organized and salaries adjusted to human levels. I remember one evening in Victoria after work we all piled into the sub manager's old U.S. car and drove out to the port to have a very Maugham style cocktail party on the deck of a freighter in the cool night under a myriad of stars with little light bulbs twinkling dreamily overhead. On our way as we were speeding along a hardly lighted street we suddenly landed in a 3/4 ditch that had been dug in the middle with no warning light visible. The shock was quite something and we finally reached the steamer rather groggy and needed quite a few drinks to restore our spirits. Getting the spare parts for repairs to Brazil in those days was quite a job via black market but was managed. I returned directly to San Francisco where Mummy and Liz had been visiting living in a furnished apartment lent to them by JBSJ and Liz having one last and disappointing reunion with school friends. I am not sure but I do believe that was the year Mike spent the summer working on JBSJ's ranch in Watsonville where he had unforgettable experiences with the ranch hands and a way of life which I sometimes envy him for although Mrs. Johnson had him sleep in a room over the garage, for all the rest he led the life of the field help and was, as he now says, accepted by them. We returned to New York and the last interesting and pleasant year for me with Otis. JBSB had decided that I needed a new car and gave me 'carte blanche' so I indulged in the one and only crazy

purchase of a car as I had dreamed of and got a Studebaker Hawk with a 250 horsepower engine, pale yellow and black which did 100 miles per hour easily. We went to the store with Mummy and Pierre and just took the car, no question of price. The next weekend I drove out to Putney to show it to Mike. The countryside was at its golden best and breathtakingly lovely and we had an excellent lunch after which I conscientiously took off for New York City. I was tooling along at well over 80 and made the inexcusable mistake to start and overtake a truck on a slight incline. A car was barely visible in the distance coming at us so I put on the gas and jumped to 100 easily when suddenly the gas pedal went dead. I just had the time to go for the left shoulder and apply the brakes and stop as the car dashed by swerving like mad. I was towed to the garage in Brattleboro and there it was discovered that Studebaker had forgotten to put the second bolt on the steering rod or failed to tighten it. And this in a luxury model priced at well over \$4,000.- which was money in those days. I had it fixed, gave real hell to the salesman but didn't dwell on the incident at home at that time.

We did go to a few concerts and shows that winter and entertained the Jabours who were in town for Xmas. In this connection there were a few rather amusing incidents. First JBSJ phoned that they wanted to see *My Fair Lady* on Xmas Eve regardless of cost and Mary Mannion was really shocked when I had her pay over \$300.- for three seats. Then the Ackerman's the top man in charge of Otis in New York, white haired rather flashy but handsome man with a wife who had taught Goren Method bridge (they were both life masters) gave an elaborate dinner at the Empire Room of Rockefeller Center. Neither Mummy nor I really enjoyed this 'expense account' entertainment which we were to see so much of in later years in Tokyo, but it was amusing to watch the dining room. I'll admit that a gasp went out when Marilyn Monroe came in a clinging black simple

dress, with no jewels, her hair hanging loose over her bare shoulders followed by her then husband ugly but fascinating Arthur Miller. Their table was close to ours and it wasn't easy not to stare. She had a fascination I have seldom if ever seen in women although I have seen quite a few stunning beauties in my old Paris. The next day we took old Jabour to the Chase Bank and as he promptly deposited a million, he was invited to lunch. The old man accepted for himself his nephew and the young rather flashy girl some 30 years his junior whom he introduced as his wife. A call came through from Herb Patterson that same afternoon saying "no ladies, for God's sake." I asked Mummy to do something. She remembered that Jacqueline de Gunzburg had spent several years in Rio during the war as Guy was looking after their Matte (crude mixture of molten sulphides) business, so spoke Portuguese and phoned her. *The place* that year was the Pavilion and Jacqueline divorced but carrying the title bravely, enjoyed getting a table and ordering whatever she wanted. The lady was most impressed and quite disappointed when bringing her old husband and his nephew to the restaurant that same evening was politely turned away. The Jabours had some hundred pounds of extra weight when I took them to the airport and the old man couldn't understand that the Customs man wouldn't take \$100.- or two to clear him. I had only my personal check book and certainly no \$1,500.- on my account so it was somewhat complicated. Luckily, it was before closing hours and I was able to get Herb Patterson to quickly instruct the man in charge of my account to tell the Panam people who were phoning simultaneously that I was okay for that amount. It was one of the many hectic moments that finally landed me in hospital in Tokyo years later.

That same year I refused to take the Otis Balance sheet without explanations to the New York banks and my fate with Brit Johnson, JBSJ's son and president was sealed. The old man hung on to me as long as he could and

gave me jobs first in American Instant Coffee which he had bought from General Foods I believe, now in New Jersey, and where I stayed for a year or so as Treasurer still retaining my title of VP in NYC and as I later learned, not only Director of Hard and Rand but V.P. of several semi phony subsidiaries in Latin America. The trip to Morristown daily was rather tiring but not too bad in the Hawk and the road mostly lovely. The group there was pleasant to work with. I had been a labor union enthusiast always and the jurisdictional strike with two unions insisting on doing the work on the tower which was being built for the rather primitive instant coffee production at the time, Duncan coffee owner of A.I. a subsidiary of the temporary JBSJ empire, was an eye opener. We agreed to pay both the teams only to get the tower ready for Xmas rush orders but it took the Duncan lawyer several trips to Washington D.C. and the two union headquarters before the local ones were ordered to accept our offer and work resumed. By that time LBSJ had bought Scull in Camden New Jersey and it was running into bankruptcy. I started commuting to Philadelphia and finally located a nice motel on the freeway at Cherry Hill, empty in winter, where I spent Monday and Wednesday nights working in Camden four days a week and coming home for Tuesday night and the weekend. It was heavy going as San Francisco had leased the services of a local computer to do the accounting at night from information furnished by us and very soon we were in a complete mess. I phoned the Old Man and over everyone's head had us revert to old style accounting, cleared up the picture, refinanced the company locally and then helped negotiate its sale as we were already in bad trouble.

In the meantime the lease for 1175 Park had expired and Brit didn't want to renew it for me. I made no fight and we moved to a much smaller apartment at 1120 where poor Mike had to sleep in the living room. Something I have always felt guilty for but which he doesn't resent as Putney was the most

unconventional and expensive prep school in the U.S.A. He was having a fascinating time both at school and during vacations. This will be his story and I hope he doesn't forget that through the Gurevitch girl he got to go to a party at Eleanor Roosevelt's where the lady herself served the boys and girls dinner and then sent them off to dance. I don't know how we talked Mike into renting a tuxedo for the occasion.

Chevalier came for his first *tournee d'adieu* (*Farewell tour*) since the war at the Waldorf and we went *a deux* with Liz. She was thrilled and I'll admit that old as he was already he shuffled across the floor with his *canotier* jauntily perched on his head murmuring his old favorites in his inimitable manner which brought back memories and was a real thrill.

During the following years in New York I became more and more involved with downtown and its luncheon clubs (I was a member of the Broad Street) and many of the banks which have now disappeared in mergers which I deplore. In the so called smaller banks like Schroder's, Brown Brothers and the branches of foreign banks, personal relationships were easier to establish and maintain and I look back on the first years in New York as ones of challenging and interesting periods of my life. Herb Patterson who was to be the youngest president of the Chase Manhattan and Henri Blanchenay became real friends and we enjoyed discussing economics and politics. This was to prove a real asset when I arrived in Tokyo years later.

One particular lunch for some 200 people stands out in my memory because I was seated close to the rostrum and Cardinal Spellman, who played such an important role in U.S. political life and in particular in our involvement in Viet Nam where he championed the Catholic privileged minority, was guest of honor. I have a vivid recollection of the small, pudgy man with a sparkle in his eye. He reminded me, the old French *Lyceean* brought up on the image of

Richelieu, more of a shrewd wiry business man of whom I had met many, with a somewhat James Cagey and movie star appearance, than a spiritual leader. He talked business, finances and I somehow couldn't believe that his construction plans, education and even charitable ventures were based on high spiritual motives.

I had, as I have said, started flying commercially in the so called heroic days of 1928 and when the possibility arose of making an ascent in a helicopter about 1957, I was delighted. The tiny cabin encased in transparent Plexiglas gave a complete view both up and down as well as on all sides. The impression was of rising in an elevator without walls anywhere. Years later when I took the outside elevator of the Fairmont Tower and watched S.F. unfold under my eyes, I remembered the eerie feeling of going straight up into the sky over Manhattan and the skyscrapers sink slowly out of sight. We flew out to the Statue of Liberty and hovered a few yards from the windows in her tiara from which excited tourists waved to us then returned slowly towards Manhattan island with the Empire State Building still dominating the skyline.

We did celebrate one of Mike's birthdays by going to a matinee of *My Fair Lady* which was then in its first year. Morehead, an excellent Irishman substituted for Rex Harrison, the creator of the role but Julie Andrews was in the lead role and the rest of the cast was original. I still remember her appearance dressed for the ball and the black and white picture of the Ascot races. We used to listen to the tunes many an evening at the Carlyle Hotel with Feyer at the piano and particularly his rendition of *My Fair Lady* tunes in the different styles of Mozart, Liszt, Beethoven and others in his piano parody. We also went to *West Side Story* and its ballet was what remains in my mind. Those two musicals rank for me with the *Fledermaus* with the Vienna troupe, and the lovely Guitry operetta *Mozart* with exquisite Yvonne Printemps, Noel Coward's *Bitter Sweet*



which I saw in London in 1927, the *White Horse Inn* and *Phi-Phi* at the Salle Wagram. I have already mentioned the adorable *Les Trois Valses* with Printemps and Fresnay and further back, Ivanov Pavel in Petro his witty parody of exams could and should I believe be revived one day for its easy tunes and eternal nonsense of examinations and failures that has a universal and nearly eternal appeal I am sure. These light shows brought entertainment without touching any deep social problems except perhaps *West Side Story* which I think is a necessary breather in the continuing tension of our days.

Mummy had known in Amsterdam, Ania Dorfman, an outstanding pianist who I had met before my marriage, as I have related, whom we had seen in Kansas City and who now, it turned out, was living not far from us in New York. She used to come to dinner and was usually amusing, witty and had many anecdotes of Toscanini with whom she had played. One evening she invited us to join her at the Horowitz's. Mrs. Horowitz was the daughter of Toscanini and we all went from there, probably about five or six of us, but not V. Horowitz the great pianist, to visit Segovia, the incomparable guitarist. I have a vague recollection of his studio. It somehow reminded me a bit of Ernst's studio that I had visited to bring Peggy Guggenheim, then his wife in 1941, news of her sister who was such a great friend of Alex Ponisowski a brother of Lucie Leon of whom I have already spoken. Only this time instead of paintings all over the place, there was this concert grand, low armchairs, cushions and thick rugs. In the half light Segovia played for hours, soft, immensely sad Spanish melodies which somehow brought with them the scent of old Russia. Now, every time we read an amusing story by Natasha Stewart in the New Yorker (she is Ania's daughter), this lovely evening comes back to me, nostalgic, softly sad and beautiful.

Problems with my job were becoming acute and after the Scull, Camden interlude I switched from the actual Otis group to Lorch. This rather shady

business man didn't really need me but did need the Old Man and took me on to analyze the problems of quite a few medium size chains of food stores he had in the state of New York. I traveled to Atlantic City, Albany, Rochester, Vermont and spent a couple of days analyzing the messy situations. Usually it was a former family affair that had come on hard times and which Lorch had bought with a loan from American Can & Can as possible outlets for them and which he tried to squeeze into rentable enterprises. Some of the people in charge were the former owners, basically decent Yankees and the role of outsider and SOB come to consummate their downfall was more than unpleasant as I personally agreed with them and not with my employer. I was on no staff, paid directly by Lorch's secretary and given no information about the real background of what was going on. Now reading of 'Watergate' I can better imagine all the shenanigans that were going on and was as anxious to get out of the outfit as Lorch was basically of getting rid of me. We had had to move out of our apartment and with Liz, talked Mummy in remaining not only in the same part of town but on Park Avenue as I believe I have mentioned. 1120 was much smaller but in a much more sophisticated building but we stayed there only one year and Carlo had to pay a couple of thousand dollars to get us out of the contract. Probably if we had bought the place and rented it, we would have been in the long run much much better off but as in so many cases before and after I had an irresistible urge to wipe the slate clean. Liz became engaged around this time shortly after her long visit to Europe where she stayed for quite some time with the Falcos, saw many of my old friends and had a great time. But this is her, not my story.

I came to California where Charlie Dreyfus was sure I would I would find a job and was lent a broken down Ford by the Urys and lived at the Marx's on El Camino and finally a few days at the Verhoogens. Siggy Kempner found a company which needed close financial supervision and cash which Paul lent me.

I never realized that this loan was to be without interest. I managed to collect interest on it so that when Paul finally passed away, as I had collected practically the full amount of the loan and invested interest, it came as a windfall. Carad was located in the Stanford Industrial Park and I enjoyed the first few months of work. I had driven across the continent in five days with one day spent flat on my back in Salt Lake City recovering from a bad attack of dysentery which hit me as we were crossing the desert from Chattanooga. I had taken a young Dutch student with me whom I had found through an ad in the Princeton newspaper *Nata Dobry* had picked up for us but his driving was so poor that I preferred to drive myself except the few miles when my constant stops due to the dysentery forced me to get out into the prickly cactus desert. I have memories of stifling hot desert highways and 'frontier' towns straight out of Western movies, sleepy ones on the fringes of the South which, though we hardly stopped, reeked of Faulkner so much that their memory remains to this day. Salt Lake City with its immense auditorium which I managed to visit late in the afternoon and the dead expanse of the Lake impressed me very much. After climbing to snow levels in the Sierras, this was in mid July, we drove via Reno to the Bay Area and having left my student in Reno I arrived late in the evening at an inn near the university in Berkeley having done the 900 odd miles in one day which in those days when there were stretches without thruways was quite an accomplishment. I don't know why but I have the impression that it was there the cable telling me of Tony's death waited for me. It was one of the deep real shocks and then the Charlies were there. We came up to town to see where we could find an apartment. After a fruitless search we stopped in front of 1068 Filbert that we had on our list and I didn't want to even get out but Mummy did and signaled to me. It didn't and doesn't look much viewed from the street but the living room looking out on the Bay with its kitchen opening out onto the same view and the

bookshelves and everything also brand new at the time and dirt cheap was a miracle. We phoned the Charlies who lived really three blocks away and they came tearing down and Charlie wanted to lend me the check for the down payment then and there. We moved in quite soon and it was ideal. The Charlies, the Cromwells next door and downtown ten minutes away. Charlie gave me space in his office and I started looking for a job once again. I didn't realize it was going to be the last one in the States and the last one but one in my life. A firm had been set up by a man named Rush. Paul Davies, the great man of the Pacific Steamship Line, (the President Liners), who was in a way about five years ahead of his time because just a few years later the interest of U.S. businesses in Europe sprouted and affected the American business scene. It was an investment outfit and interesting to work for. Shortly thereafter Liz was pregnant and the company's main customer wanted to send a V.P. to contact insurance firms all over Europe. I was to organize the trip and accompany Don Manuel. We left for New York just before Lucy's birth and Mummy stayed behind while I continued to Paris. The first days I stayed in a small hotel but then moved to the Meurice to join Don. I hadn't stayed there since 1913 when I had had such a lovely birthday party with a Punch and Judy show, lots of kids I had met previously in Hendaye and some children of Aunt Alia's friend, a young Montefiore boy I have spoken of etc. It was strange to be in the Meurice in Paris with its slow moving elevator, real service and all that super luxury I had left so far far behind. I got Don to see all the right people much thanks to Horace Halperin (Gorik) who was at the time representing Samuel, the British banker, in Paris and we left for Brussels after a delightful dinner at Place des Vosges to which Jackie invited us. Brussels was also a success and we were invited to some very chic Belgians through the Cortwandts for dinner with liveried servants *et tout*, as I hadn't had since Armainvilliers. As it was a weekend I dragged Don to an empty Bruges,

fairy tale like in the winter fog with only a few black silhouettes in the Beguinage. We stopped off at the Hague and Irene took us on a conducted tour of the Mauritius when it was closed to the public and then on the Hamburg where Eric made the honors of the Warburg bank and showed us all the ancestors in their in gold frames on the walls. Then down to Munich which we reached during the Carnival and watched the costumed fat German *Mousquetaires* (*Musketeers*) dancing with rosy half naked dolls. I did drag Don again to the Pinakotech in the evening and its Rembrandts in the artificial light were glorious. He was impressed by the miles and miles of pink flesh of the enormous Rubens'. We stopped off in Basel and Don was duly impressed by the Rue Saint Jacques where we were given the royal treatment of an impressive lunch and then along to the Hotel Ruhl in Zurich. We were both awed by the old Rolls that the hotel used to pick up passengers at the station in those days. Air transportation, it seems hardly believable, wasn't yet quite the thing in 1962. Don and I'll admit, me also, were thrilled to sit next to the actor David Niven in the dining room for breakfast and then we went on to Milan where the necessary fuss was made by an old friend of Paul's' and we met all the right people again. From there we went to Trieste arriving in the evening. I arranged all the appointments for the next morning and we took the 1 PM train to Venice. The trip along the coast rekindled old memories and Miramar was still there in its artificial Victorian splendor. We had a room in one of the great hotels on the Grand Canal and I had a gondola take us there. I hadn't been back since 1914 and those few hours brought back more vividly than I had dared expect memories I had believed forgotten. The charm worked and Venice conquered Don and me again. We climbed the special wooden galleries to see the mosaics of San Marco and in the square watched, fascinated, a film company shoot 'The Return of Marco Polo' in costume. It was artificial but fantastic like it would be years later to watch the storming of the

great temple in Seoul, Korea by hordes of Mongols in XII century costume. We had time to roam the narrow streets, dine in an outdoor restaurant just off the Piazza, spend a blissful night in Venice before leaving for the Riviera and a couple of days with Lucy and George and then the Milk Run Panama flight of over twelve hours via Barcelona, Lisbon to New York City where I saw Lucy just under a month old.

Work in S.F. was rather desultory and nothing much doing. Rush had some good ideas but was not only a decade ahead of the 'gold rush' of American and other investments abroad but had neither the connections, ability or capital really needed. What was certain was that he didn't really need ME and very soon I was again looking for a job without realizing that this, more or less 18th, would be my last paying job.

The ultimate offer came about in a rather amusing way. The Wells Fargo man in Tokyo had made a monumental PR blunder compounded by mishandling the then Chairman, Ransom Cook. They were without anyone to run the recently opened agency in Tokyo and my old friend of Indochine days, by then soon to retire, head of the International Division, Gilstrap, spoke to me vaguely about possibly recommending me for a job abroad, without enthusiasm I agreed to listen to what they might offer when Fritz Hellman, who was in Europe would return. As I learned later he was dining with Eric Warburg who was the cousin who had maneuvered my first job in Kansas City, Mo. in their property near Hamburg where I had but recently visited and introduced Manuel, a prospective multi million dollar investor to them, had lunch in their stylish dining room at the bank and been subjected to the usual long lecture and presentation of the gallery of Mummy's ancestors in their gilt frames. I had mentioned to Eric in an aside that my present job seemed only moderately satisfying. So when Fritz cried on Eric's shoulder about personnel problems which awaited him in San Francisco,

my name was mentioned as a possibility. Gilstrap met Hellman with the suggestion that he had a possible candidate and Fritz responded by saying that he had one also. It developed that it was the one and same 'me' and I was offered the job with acceptable salary. I'll admit we were very loath to leave and I promised that if Liz was to have another baby Mummy would fly back to be with her. The alternate solution was more job searching without a salary and I had just gone through the Carad fiasco and didn't feel like even trying to enlist Paul's help in any way. To cut a long story short after a few months of very vague briefing in S.F. where no one knew anything about Foreign Agency management and only Gilstrap, anything about Japan, (but he was pretty busy with routine matters, understaffed as we were in International) and absolutely no talk from the returned agent, we closed our very cozy apartment where we had hoped to finish our days, close to the Charlie Dryfuses who lived but a few blocks away in our dear S.F., with Mike in Berkeley, Emily there in a 'home' and some by now old friends who we liked and, flying to New York, stayed with Liz and Hal and visited family and friends there and in early October took off for Tokyo.

### *Tokyo*

After a rather long flight we landed at decrepit, dirty little Haneda where the red tape formalities were as complicated as I had known them in Europe between the wars and drove for nearly an hour in the Bank's old Chevy with chauffeur and the representative through dark, narrow streets and completely crazy traffic with occasional glimpses of kimono clad women, delivery boys reminding me of pre revolution peddlers, students in uniforms exact replicas of those of old Russian *Gymnasts*, black with straight collars, buttons down the front and characteristic caps with visors. The crowds were so dense that it seemed impossible. The Okura Hotel had just been completed and was the epitome of Western luxury with the added strangeness of Oriental service and swarms of

uniformed bell boys, white coated waiters, kimono clad maids. We tumbled into our beds and thus began our nearly five year stay in Japan.

Both of you have visited the country and probably the kids will do so one day and it is neither interesting nor worth while trying to improve on the many many impressions of Japan both in foreign and local books. I will try and remember some of the highlights of our stay. They wont be in chronological order and will come as my sluggish memory conjures them up. I will try also to give some glimpses of the life in 'Western' Tokyo between 1962, the year we arrived and 1967 when we left. I will try and remember the dozen or so visits we made to the few Japanese homes where we were received and also try and put down my recollections of the many interesting people we either met or listened to at concerts and lectures, from political figures such as Nixon, Brandt, Malik, Park of Korea, Spaak of Belgium then Munch, Rostropovich, Nureyev and Fontaine, Ashkenazy of course Artur Rubinstein, Ray Lev, Ozawa before he had become famous, and the personalities we saw like the Emperor and the Imperial family of Japan, Beatrice of the Netherlands with her father, the present Queen of Denmark and many of the top personalities of the financial and industrial world, diplomats both American and Foreign. I don't believe I will have the time to describe it all because these five years, although they were full of heartbreaks, worries, disappointments and frustrations were certainly excitingly interesting and we had front row seats in a short period of Japanese history when it was emerging at break neck speed from post war ruins towards the euphoria of crazy prosperity in an atmosphere unique in the world, blending the East with what was most garish in the West, capitalism, patriarchal like mid XIX century Europe with still remaining whiffs of feudalism which had collapsed, artificially, barely a hundred years earlier.



Tokyo when we arrived was still a beehive of narrow alleys bordered by wooden shacks and tall walls behind which the Japanese hid their lives as they had done from time immemorial. There were no sidewalks, hardly any lights and over ten million people. A mass which overwhelmed us and was more than the Western imagination could grasp. I can only remember that on our home leave while we were strolling in the World Fair grounds one day with Liz and the family amid the usual crowd she asked me what impressed me most and I answered *the emptiness* which she couldn't believe. After the wide straight expanse of the grand approach to the Meiji shrine on a holiday when literally a million people strolled towards its impressive terraces amid the tall trees of its park, the European or American crowds, the Champs Elysees on the 14th of July, 1919, the Bourget the day of Lindbergh's arrival, the *Marsovoe Polie* the day of the funeral of the first victims of the February Revolution in Petro - all these were but little gatherings by comparison. I had watched demonstrations in Petro, Paris but the march past of the May Day demonstrators along the Aoyama to the Diet which lasted uninterruptedly from 8AM to 8PM during which over 3 million filed past ten abreast, can give, perhaps an idea of the scale of an Asian crowd. There still was in the very middle of Tokyo the tall immensely impressive ramparts of the Imperial Park with its wide moat with swans cutting it off from the city. There were many many parks opened to the public after the war; a few side malls; some modern buildings still limited to about ten floors because of earthquakes. There was the garish Ginza with its department stores and fabulous neon lights. There were a few hotels including the bizarre Imperial, a squat structure of heavy stone put up by Frank Lloyd Wright at the turn of the century, with its ornamental pool, which had withstood the Great Earthquake and the bombing, its hall still but no longer the only meeting place of Westerners and its narrow nearly underground arcades with luxury boutiques and the crazy traffic. So much had been said of

the *kamikaze* (*suicidal*) taxi drivers that I could only remind tourists that the speeds at which they crazily wove their way along the wide boulevards or the narrow alleys not rarely exceeding 30 miles an hour, that resulted in the inevitable head on collision, a nightmare for all visitors, but that left the Japanese executives fast asleep with their heads resting on the immaculate antimacassars unperturbed. Western Tokyo was a small town in an ocean of low wooden buildings with an occasional island in some distant unexpected corner of the city and the relatively few rebuilt buildings and the even fewer which had withstood the bombardments, like the Insurance Building. This was one that McArthur had saved and where he had had his headquarters, its grey modern style facade reminiscent of similar structures of a similar time in Paris, London and historical remnants in New York.

We soon moved to our apartment on the Aoyama Dori, a small place, inconvenient and furnished like so many hotel rooms in provincial U.S.A. but sufficiently high up and with a balcony so that there was, what was called in Tokyo, a view of the trees of the Imperial Park. From the bed room, if you hung out in the right way and looked past the post office dormitories across a rather wide area you could see wiry telegraphists endlessly played ping pong with fascinating dexterity. There were no factories in the vicinity and quite a lot of greenery including the Canadian Embassy garden and a small park, remnant of the Takeouchi Mansion where T. San whom we met later on, had walked with his attendants in his childhood. We changed some of the more garish upholstery to neutral beige put a few engravings on the walls, and in the narrow room transformed into a dining room, our silver. In our bedroom we hung some of our old family photos and it was quite acceptable. We had both had so many many experiences with *meubles* (*furnished*), I in Stockholm and Paris immediately after our arrival from Russia, that this worried us not at all. Our friends even

found that with time and flowers Mummy made it cozy and gave it a *cachet* (*official seal of distinction*) which few of the apartments of our friends', to say nothing of the Western suites in our Japanese acquaintances houses, which always reminded me of French provincial doctor's waiting rooms or worse still, salons of brothels, were able to match.

The schedule was practically easy. The car would pick me up in the morning. This was a very impressive part of the show for most of my colleagues but for me brought back memories of Petro and my early departures for the Tennisheff School. Many years later my young friend Herbie Patterson who for a time had been made President of the Chase Manhattan Bank by David Rockefeller, told me that the limousine was worth many sacrifices to his colleagues but to him who had been driven to his summer job at his grandfather's factory AMF in the chauffeured Rolls, was not worth any compromise and this was one of the reasons he hadn't held on tight to the job. Then the two secretaries, dressed in European dresses, would bring in the mail. There would be a few phone calls, some dictating, a visit to a local bank where one was ushered into a Victorian waiting room where an old *hussier* (*doorman*) in livery, incongruous with his slanting Asian eyes but for all the rest exactly like his counterpart in The City, some Paris private banks or still decorous New York banking houses like Brown Brothers or Schroeder's' in those days, would take your card and carry it away on a little silver tray. Some time would elapse and a young bilingual junior executive would come to offer tea, small talk and fish for information. The nicer, the friendlier one was with these juniors, the easier the relationship would be both immediately and later on when this junior had become a senior. Then a second, slightly senior man would come in. They were all dressed alike, dark suit, white shirt, dark tie, shiny shoes. He would lead you into the august presence of the President or Chairman, be it the legendary Satoh of Mitsui, roly poly pixyish

Horie of the Bank of Tokyo, tiny Sakai with exquisite charming manners, tall aristocratic Hamaguchi, (his father had been murdered in the 1920 wave of political assassinations) or plump Matsudaira of that feudal clan, of dapper Matsuda still dreaming of the Paris where his father had been ambassador. There you would sit always one more Japanese than visitor and discuss the problem. When it was complex one and a team from abroad was involved, a couple of Japanese would carry the ball for a while then fade into the background and actually dose while another relay stepped in. These visits would be followed by lunch either at the American Club or in the more informally pleasant atmosphere of the Press Club or finally in one of the better restaurants. Back to the office to read the second mail, rest a while, have a visit from a colleague and then go down into the basement to the barber shop for a shave, a massage of the neck, which was extraordinarily relaxing. Then off to a reception, lavish buffet, a crowd of nearly a thousand and careful visits with local banking friends under the suspicious eye of both other Japanese bankers or Western friends. "What was cooking?" Then the wait for the car. *"YON SAN YON NANA"* remains like a refrain in my memory, the number, and then *"IRIE SAN, WELLS FARGO GINKO"* and off to a second reception where the same Westerners were having their third scotch and soda. It was an amusing game not to mention where you were going as you left the first party so that the friend wouldn't be embarrassed if he hadn't been invited to the next one and then the contrived surprise at meeting him again. Then home and in my case, because of my age and later health, a quiet evening at home with occasional dinners at friends, mostly embassy people or bank reps, or with visiting firemen in black tie and then to bed. From the States it looked really great but it was ridiculously exhausting. One had to watch every word, every handshake both your own and of all the others. So often there was more accomplished at a cocktail than in the office and my drawback was that I didn't

play golf. Then also, steeped in the old European banking tradition I knew a bit better how to handle the local bankers who still held fast to old, now outmoded in the States, traditions and manners. How many of these receptions did I go to during those five years? Probably well over 500 and all with the same crowd, in the same hotel ballrooms, with the same buffets, the same drinks, the same waiters unless a PR man had imagination, a sushi table, Hawaiian kiosk or Indonesian corner. The Wells Fargo receptions were usually not overly lavish but Mummy supervised the first one and the flower arrangement was exclusively golden brown chrysanthemums, the Bank's colors, and a ice sculpture of a coach which reminded me of the ice truck at the dinner celebrating the conclusion of White Truck Deliveries contract signed in 1915 with the Imperial Government and financed by Father's bank. We also removed all soft drink bottles clustered on side tables that most Japanese receptions of that period had. I did my best to have no more that 3/400 people to avoid a crush and more waiters than needed to serve the guests. We never distributed any souvenirs nor did we push the advertising. I tried and I believe succeeded in making our receptions meetings of interesting business men with a few ambassadors (never Reischauer who left that job to Emerson his chief of Mission) and U.S. Embassy personnel.

No particular reception stands out in my memory today although some must have been more lavish than others and the abundance of smoked salmon or French Champagne at some French ones must have been exceptional. I do remember the last real Xmas ball to which we went which Rennie Martinuzzi whom we liked enormously, (she was a niece of Gibson, the painter of Gibson Girls fame, and wife of the exceptionally brilliant and charming Leo Martinuzzi who made such a success of his tenure as head of the Chase Manhattan Bank) arranged in the old Peacock Room of the now defunct Imperial. She had all the tables covered with deep red cloth, exhumed old green pre war liveries of the

Imperial Hotel for the waiters and had the hall decorated in red and green with a great Xmas Tree and a large band with much floor space for dancing under subdued lighting. Among the hundreds of parties, large or small, this one alone stands out for me bringing back memories of the great balls in Paris in my youth. I read that the French balls continue to this day but can hardly believe it, so unreal it all seems.

Many travelers to Japan who have spent but a few weeks there ask me if I have visited this or that spot and I have to explain that we spent our five years there not on vacation but that I was working all and every day. The vacations were spent away from Japan but we did visit Kamakura and its immense brooding bronze Buddha. Once during the very first year we drove down by car and lunched in the Japanese Inn crouching most uncomfortably on the mats before the low table and eating with chop sticks sushi, sashimi and I, as little raw fish as possible.

We went many times to Kyoto and stayed at the old Myako Hotel with its excellent service and typically Europeanized restaurant serving indifferent meals. My first trips were by regular train and often overnight to Osaka, in short, narrow sleeping cars over rough tracks. These trips taking some seven hours until the Bullet Trains were inaugurated and the trip could be made in comfortable Pullman cars in well under 3 hours. I won't go into detailed descriptions of the temples for their memory is already a bit blurred but I have a vivid recollection of the Katsura Imperial Villa both modest and extraordinarily luxurious in its details. It is strange to use the word 'Democracy' for ancient Japan but the differences between the privileged and the common people seemed less in Japan than in the Europe I remember. The world of difference between the pavilions around Tsarskoe, (including the one with its granite pool carved out of a single immense block), and the little isbas (*izbas*) I caught sight of near Peredoslkoe or

Auntie's estate on the Volga , or the even a greater difference between the pavilions around Paris to say nothing of the Petit Trianon and those hovels with earthen floors, open fires, thatched roofs, no windows, unbelievably thick stone walls and narrow doors where peasants still lived in Brittany in 1940 and which we saw on our exercises in the countryside around Colpo during World War II and where a smoking wooden torch was still the only light in the heavy smoking atmosphere where people and cattle huddled. in contrast when I visited some old Japanese farms (there is one that was transported to Tokyo or Yokohama I believe, to one of the parks) their simple coldly sober interiors, their paper walls, *tatami* (*rush grass stiffed with rice straw mats*) floors and their emptiness was the same as in the Imperial Villa. Of course the wooden beams were of choice precious woods, the screens exquisitely serene, the *tatamis* softer and impeccable and the vistas onto the manicured gardens in their miniature imitation of lost grandeurs of Chinese scenes. These were wonders with their bonsai trees strangely distorted and in season, flowering bushes or cherry trees above murky ponds, but in the farmhouses the motif was repeated, in cheaper material, smaller and much less elaborate but still Japanese gardens and the quiet solidity of these frail buildings had the same spirit of aristocratic continuity, rigors of the climate hitting peasant and prince alike and polished wood the basic material for all. In the whole five years, in hundreds of temples, barefoot on the polished floors, passing and instinctively caressing the softness of the lustrous balustrades, never once did I get a splinter in my hand or foot and I knew that never once was any instrument, except the human hand used on any of those century old surfaces.

What we loved more than anything else in Kyoto was to roam the narrow streets catching a glimpse here or there of a garden behind the tall walls, watching the fantastic multicolored carps in the ponds of the Silken Pavilion or having the driver stop at some little shrine crazily perched behind its Tori. There was and

certainly still is, that temple perched on stilts high above the valley, its wide balconies seeming to float in mid air above steep mountain scenery lifted from some ancient screen or panel drawing, although I realize it was the other way around; the long low stone walls of the Zen temple compound where Mike spent a few weeks on his first visit, the unbelievably varied textures of the Moss Garden, the endless courtyards of the Imperial Palace where for centuries the Emperors roamed listlessly and alone in the twilight of the Shogun's power in an eternal exile in the midst of their country, ignored but revered.

We were really lucky to drive over to Nara and its unbelievably soaring wooden temple halls with Professor Muss who explained and gave meaning to so many intricate details of the carved beams and Buddhas of the temples. Of course I remember the deer in the park or the Great Buddha, larger than the one in Kamakura but hidden in its temple in the half light of the winter afternoon.

These sights have been described many a time and why linger? Today they form a composite picture full of a very special kind of charm which carry me from the little restaurants around the Heian Shrine in Kyoto to the ramparts of the lofty keep of the Nagoya Castle; Kobe and the hillside in autumn from bright lustrous red to soft yellow with its myriad of hues of brown and bronze; Osaka both ugly and fascinating with the neon lights of Dotonbori and its garish bars and stores open at night spilling their bright lights on the street thronged with crowds but in the absence of cars, strangely reminiscent of Venice with its narrow river and many bridges making the illusion even more real.

In Tokyo the year we arrived in '62 the only Western outdoor atmosphere in the stifling humid heat was the American Club pool as unreal as anything imaginable with its rowdy unruly American kids, its American business men drinking, drinking and again drinking whiskey, gin with an occasional Japanese



cold beer, flabby red faced and noisy and their women playing at exclusive country club life back home where most of them had never set foot.

Among the interesting memories of our five year stay in Japan are the Press Club and other hall's luncheons followed by talks of prominent people. We heard Willy Brandt then still Mayor of Berlin, youngish, ruddy faced, stocky with reddish blond hair and a friendly expression, talk in excellent English with hardly any precise accent but with the usual German precision of the problems of his city which then loomed large. There was a wiry, brilliant Malik with his Oxbridge accent and Spaak by then quite an old man who started off with an interpreter but took over himself after a couple of mistranslations in French in an accented good English to give one of those analyses, coldly brilliant and exquisitely logical that reminded me of my old Lycee days. We also heard Nixon. He was at the time touring the world for Peps Cola and made one of those insipid speeches with just enough flag waving to nauseate you. "High School Valedictorian and a bad one at that" as one of my colleagues on the Board of the American Chamber of Commerce summarized it.

The Japan Society was still under the presidency of Yoshida, the elder statesman whom people called the Japanese Churchill. Although he seldom spoke, just shuffled in, thick set, walking with difficulty with canes and refusing help in climbing to the podium, I realized how the simple presence of a personality could impress an audience. We always enjoyed Ambassador Reischauer's brilliant, Harvard style talks. His understanding of the Japanese was as perfect as he had gone through high school in Tokyo and was married to a charming Japanese lady. He always spoke in English and I remember that at one of the conferences after a somewhat difficult passage duly translated by the official translator of the Ministry, he bent over to him and in an undertone corrected his Japanese. One day, having caught him at an Embassy reception I

asked him if he was really completely bi lingual. He explained that of course in his off the record talks with ministers he often used Japanese but as Ambassador he had to speak English. That he was bi lingual in most of the Japanese languages even, I believe in Noh the Court ancient one, and most other dialects but that for example he would avoid venturing into complicated financial discussions with MITI as he didn't consider himself sufficiently well versed in the technicalities of that jargon. I mention this only to explain how extraordinarily complicated the language is and how many many interpretations can be easily given to a word making communication, as we understand it, more than difficult not only between a Japanese and a *Guijin* (*foreigner*) but even between two Japanese. This reminds me of a business problem I had one day. The renewal of a contract was at stake and Japanese Ministries were not cooperating. It was supposed to be quite routine and even our friend and attorney Dick Rabinowitz was puzzled, until it suddenly dawned on him that it might, a remote possibility, be that one of the official translators in general rather anti American, had used one word instead of another in translating the name of the required document. When this was brought to the attention of a department head, he reviewed the matter, changed the one single word and with face saved, granted the permit. I mention this to explain what my otherwise routine job was often about.

In my day feudal Japan had not quite died out. A long drawn out negotiation had been concluded and my counter part had been sent out of town leaving the remittance of the actual document to a young executive, once the presidents' signature had been obtained. Time was running out and the President could not be disturbed by the young man and I, in desperation called a V.P. (in Japan this means something) with whom I was friendly calling his attention to the time differential and explaining that I was adamant and money would not be at their disposal if I didn't have the document within an hour. I got it from a

sheepish young man. My very Japanese assistant Shimizu, who proved later to have been the archetypical old style Japanese false to the marrow of his bones, in our Western way of evaluating people but probably quite right in his own manner of behaving, came to me the next day. He said that the responsibility for the misunderstanding had been put on the poor young man's shoulders, that in old days he might have even committed hara-kiri (which I doubt) but that the mark against him was quite enough to jeopardize his whole career. We had to invent something and I gave a luncheon for the V.P., the executive who had gone away and insisted that the young man be invited. As we passed the table of my bank representative colleagues, I made it a point of introducing him and in my usual expression of gratitude, stressed the efficiency of the young man's work. I may have gone a bit far but Shimizu told me that the young man had had an evening on the town to celebrate his escape from censure.

Shortly after our arrival I had a hemorrhage and passed out at a cocktail party. Luckily it was in our building so I was brought up to the bed and put on a terribly strict diet. I felt that I had let Helman down and before I had really recovered, accepted an invitation to go with Lia (Mummy) to Hiroshima to the launching of a large, for whose days, cargo ship which we had financed. The trip down, although pretty long in those pre bullet train days, was uneventful. We visited Hiroshima in the early morning winding up at the nightmarish museum. It is an unforgettable experience of utter horror, the complete destruction of human beings is something that cannot be described. There remained a footprint, that was all. And in the lush surroundings, Hiroshima was still a burnt out barren desert with small, artificially reared rose bushes incongruously blooming and the stark ruin of the tower half hidden among already growing cement modern blocks of structures. To say we were shaken is to put it mildly and after a short lunch at the hotel, we repaired to the docks. The actual launching had to be postponed

because of some labor problem which we had to make believe we didn't even notice and we walked the literally miles of empty space of the completed vessel. Then we all grouped ourselves around the president for the usual picture taking and I again passed out to regain consciousness in the small infirmary of the shipyards. Luckily as it proved, nothing was actually done and we entrained at once for Osaka, spent a night there and arrived in Tokyo next late afternoon and I to bed for several weeks of recovery. After that and until my operation nearly a decade later in S.F. which put an end to my ulcer trouble which had plagued me for over 30 years, I had to be careful both in what I ate and what I drank. Contrary to legend, this did not spoil my relationship with Japanese executives and officials, perhaps it gave me the reputation for being stand offish among colleagues who didn't hesitate to go into liquor up to the beyond five or six Scotch and sodas before dinner.

Some months later upon the return of the ship to Muroran on Hokkaido, I was invited to fly there for ceremonies and made my first trip to Hokkaido, one of the few newcomer bank reps to do so. I was very impressed because there I found wide open spaces by steep gorges, rugged parks and mountain passes that are completely missing in the huddled center of old habitation in the Japan. I was overwhelmed by the local fish market having found the ? time literally ? of fish I had never laid my eyes on. We drove out of Sapporo to a mountain lake along miles and miles of fields and up into mountains high as those of Northern California. Not a temple or a *torii* (*gate in front of a Shrine*) in sight. We landed in Noboribetsu the famous resort and I had my first experience of a real Japanese public bath. There were two entrances but they converged into an immense hall full of steam with hot water marble lined pools. Most men held their small towels discreetly like fig leaves and the women whose breasts were not large, held theirs also mostly in front. I must admit with naked kids streaking among the crowd

and splashing in the pools that the fact that I had had to wear glasses raised no eyebrows. The atmosphere was of a family outing and the absence of clothes made it much more simple and uncomplicated. Swimsuits would have added nothing to the reserve and what with somewhat formal behavior of the gown ups and the gay abandon of the kids, the fact that this was mixed naked bathing was completely lost.

Here I would like to digress once again. Years later in Hakone we had been invited with both Shimizus to make a tour and spend the night in one of the large hotels, guests of the V.P. of a company and his assistant, both with wives. Lia and the V.P. wife had the Japanese ladies went to the ladies' section and we trouped, all four of us to the men's section. By now I was used to the steam, the heat and the stone lined pools. As we emerged all four of us holding our towels discreetly, the assistant directed us to a smallish square pool of hot water. After we had duly washed, rinsed and soaped off, we plunged nearly to our necks into the water and settled each on our haunches in a corner of the small pool. I relaxed and paid no attention to what the V.P., a lean man in his fifties, was saying to his assistant and what Shimizu San was listening to. When it was over I expected to hear the translation of some remarks on the scenery or the heat of the natural springs when to my utter amazement, Shimizu translated a request for a rather large loan from the bank. I had discussed business in rather strange places, under different conditions in my life but I'll admit I was taken aback to find myself talking bank loans, stark naked with three other men in a large bathtub.

To resume by description of Hokkaido. I was only sorry I hadn't been able to take Mummy along as it was in summer and the escape in one hour of easy jet flying from the damp, smoggy heat which already reigned in Tokyo to Hokkaido where the temperature was at least 20 degrees lower and the breeze refreshing, was really wonderful. I remember waxing enthusiastic about Hokkaido in my

report and insisting on its potential. The administration was having great difficulty at the time in getting people to leave overcrowded southern Japan for the open spaces but rugged winters of the big northern island. The development of Hokkaido had been neglected for centuries and it was still a frontier, the only one Japan had after its wartime losses.

The city of Sapporo was, at the time of my visit, still quite primitive. During my first visit we spent the night in a *Riokan (Country Inn)*, as the hotel was not yet completed. On my second visit I was able to put up at a Western Hotel but had to wade through long stretches of mud before getting to the front entrance. By now, I understand, and since the winter Olympics, it is as advanced as any other large Japanese city.

When we went on our infrequent visits out into the country, off the usual tourist circuit, things were still rather primitive and it was easy to imagine what Japan looked like in the XIX century. We spent one quite unforgettable weekend with a friend, Robin Curtis (who perished tragically shortly thereafter butchered by a young hoodlum with whom he had had a passing affair and who came to him to ask for a relatively small amount of money). We drove some 100 miles out of Kyoto into the hills, along narrow winding roads and landed in a village. All the inhabitants wore kimonos or peasant dress, the single street was unpaved, no electricity or any other amenities. The tall fence hid an exquisite small garden and the old peasant house was lovely with soft *tatami* floor, polished wood, smoothly sliding partitions but the main room had been transformed into a large, Western style living room with an immense open fireplace, comfortable deep armchairs, low tables, some magnificent Japanese prints on the walls and great big, rustic ancient Japanese farm utensils with their soft velvety patina used as lamps, scatter tables, stools and chests. It was a strange setting this mixture of archaic primitive Japan with all the comforts of an English country cottage. It

seemed unreal and I will never forget that long evening by the burning logs with the stars bright in the deep sky looking in through the open wall, up beyond the landscape, straight out of an ancient Japanese drawing.

As the Japanese so very seldom received at home most of the entertaining was done in clubs and restaurants. Mummy set up the pattern of having people in small groups to dinner. A very charming lady, a Viennese former skating champion who had married an attractive Japanese playboy, grandson of the pearl king Mikimoto, Fritz Nishikawa had spent all the war years in Koriuzawa and remained in Japan. She knew everyone and got us a former embassy cook, Ono San, who catered excellent dinners amusingly mixing his English explanations with French cuisine terms. He used to bring along his tiny wife and a very nice efficient serving woman. This last must have had an affair with some influential married man because her sons were attending one of the good universities but we never learned her last name nor the names of the boys. Occasionally a *boy* helped to serve and as the transformed second bedroom held only eight our dinners were cozy.

With the years memories have faded and few if any of our receptions stand out except one. Charles Munch was conducting as was then the ritual, the Beethoven Ninth with a Japanese orchestra, and had come with his niece. We had been introduced by Aunt Katia's sister Guenia and he agreed to come after the concert. We gathered a small and musically inclined company for a late supper. Everyone was having their food on their knees in the living room but a small table for four had been set up in a corner for Munch. I was host, there was Aiby the Manager of the Banque de l'Indochine. He had been a military *attache* from France before the war and spied outrageously. He had tried to escape from a prisoner of war detention camp during the war and had been condemned by the Wehrmacht to be shot. He was reprieved at the last moment on the personal

intervention of his former German colleague in Tokyo who at the time was German Ambassador and had cabled Berlin to repay God alone knows what debt of gratitude between fellow spies. Also at the table, the Swiss Ambassador de Rham and Munch. Mummy had failed to mention the rank of the people in her introductions to keep things simpler. The talk got around to de Guiringaud, a very intelligent but somewhat pompous French Ambassador at that time and the *Maitre (master)*, with the weight of his prestige, the straightforwardness of really big men (he was a first cousin of Albert Schweitzer and resembled him very much) turned to de G. and said with a broad grin "*de G. c'est un c.., n'est ce pas?*" (*deG, he's a c...no?*) De Rham with all the diplomatic discretion he could master smiled and said, "*comme je suis un peu du métier il faudra, Maitre, que vous me pardonniez de ne pas répondre.*" (*as I am a bit of the profession, you will have to excuse me master, if I do not respond*). It was so very 'Proustian salon' that both Aiby and myself both burst out laughing but couldn't explain what it was about until later as there was the American Embassy official, Emerson and I believe the Yugoslav Ambassador there. (This last one was a former resistance leader whom Tito had sent to Norway and then Japan. A rough, handsome young man Rolovic with a very refined very bourgeois lovely wife who had been educated in a French Convent school. The mixture of this couple was strange and fascinating. To digress, when he was named to Stockholm, a few months after the attempt of Ambassador Reischauer's life in the U.S. Embassy, he spoke of his transfer with real relief and was assassinated in Sweden the following year by two Macedonian extremists.) After supper Munch was in excellent spirits, like Rubinstein after his recital long before in San Jose and explained that he had conducted *La Mer* many many times but had never quite achieved what he really believed he wanted and gave us scintillating, brilliant lecture on the piece analyzing its inner



meaning, Debussy's intentions and his own never ending search for the real answer.

I will not go into details of our cruise in the Inland Sea which has been described so much better than I can ever hope to do. We crossed Kyushu the next day in a bus full of Japanese tourists with the guide in smart semi uniform dress singing folks songs endlessly at the top of her voice only interrupted by lengthy explanations in Japanese to the gawking honeymoon couples and older ones celebrating some anniversaries. We were the only large, bulky, incongruous Westerners aboard and there is a faded snapshot of our group somewhere. Mount Asa was semi-dormant so we went down into the crater but I will admit it impressed me less than the bubbling Devils Hole in Lassen or even the steaming geysers of Noboribetsu. I remember we arrived in Beppu in the late afternoon after some ten hours on the ship from Kobe, resting in the a specious stateroom which my banking friend in Kobe had insisted taking for us. We were by then accustomed to Japanese customs and had our hot baths and then in kimonos furnished by the hotel, squatted on our terrace in low armchairs and watched the port slowly sink into darkness and then a brightly lighted excursion steamer glide in under the moonlight.

On our return by train, we followed the shore and we passed the immense steel mills, fantastically impressive and so much more up to date and modern than those I had seen in Gary, Indiana as I drove by a few years before and I remember thinking that the fabled American advanced technology was fast slipping from our grasp.

This was again brought to mind when I was invited to the launching of a tanker in Nagasaki. We flew there by chartered plane, low over the Inland Sea and I got an even better understanding of it from a few hundred feet up than when we sailed by it. My memories of that visit are mixed. The unbelievable efficiency

of the organization, the dozen cars awaiting which took us in a prearranged couples to our hotel where in our rooms our suitcases awaited us, the usual banquet with flowery speeches and raw fish and sake, the young executives awaiting us in the hotel to take us to the night spots of the town. Knowing it was on their expense account and was a unique opportunity for these young men, I accepted to be led down the steep street to a small place where I soon left them to have a really good time at company expense and I strolled in the night back up to the hotel with Nagasaki scintillating below. The next morning the launching was very early because of the tide and my neighbor, a Navy engineer, marveled at the method used. We then trooped back to the hotel to have warm sweet Japanese champagne at 9:30 AM with lots of raw fish hors d'oeuvres and cold 'hamaneggs' for those who wanted it. This was followed by an excursion by launch around the Nagasaki harbor, a visit to the Memorial of the Atom Bomb which, because of the configuration of the town in a rather narrow valley with many hills, did less damage than in Hiroshima but remains one of the unexplained American 'atrocities' for me after the success of the previous bomb. We visited the so called *Madame Butterfly* house which had been the residence of a former foreigner, one of those legends for which actual monuments have been found like all the Medieval relics so venerated in the Middle Ages and the boy at the dyke in Holland. I have a vague recollection of the town, the setting lovely, the place somewhat like a smaller Kobe with very little 'old Japan' remaining even then. We flew back in our chartered plane, again practically skimming the Inland Sea and I will admit this was one of the highlights of my 'executive' role.

We went several times to Nikko. Its gaudy temples set among redwoods reminded me of the Paris Opera compared to Chartres, as the temples of Kyoto and Nara compared to those of Nikko. This doesn't mean I did not like the baroque splendour among the dark gigantic trees. We stayed at the foot of the

hills among which nestled the lovely lake. In those days there was only one winding road and cars had some difficulty when meeting and had to park on special shoulders which could be rather impressive if the oncoming bus was really large. We went around the lake in a motorboat and the scenery was fantastic. Our first trip was by car, the old Chevy. It was a dreary long drive among typical Japanese small vegetable patches, one street villages with old fashioned houses, the tiny gardens hidden from view by high fences. All our succeeding visits were by comfortable train. I have one rather characteristic memory of an incident. We were preparing to go up the steps to the temple compound with its famous three monkeys, its white and gold elaborately sculptured pavilion. The wide staircase was steep and empty when we started up. When we were halfway up and Mummy was on the other side from me, a real tidal wave of black uniformed schoolboys came down like a waterfall and we were both engulfed. We stood our ground not without difficulty and luckily were tall enough to be able to see each other over their heads. I never before had realized the irresistible swell of an Asian crowd so well.

In the programmed tour there was a visit of an old farm house like the one in the Yokohama Park and visiting those empty but clean rooms, severe in their simplicity and with as little body comfort as in the Imperial villas like the lovely one, Katsura in Kyoto, a strange democratic leveling aspect of social existence in old Japan struck us again. In the days when peasants huddled in earth floor, windowless hovels while the Louis' of France basked in their mirrored halls the Devine Emperor shivered like his lowliest farmer in his austere surroundings, physically in some way, his equal.

I will return probably later to other Japanese incidents but want to digress to write of South Korea. When I first went there in late 1962 even the Walker Hill elaborate western style compound hadn't been completed and I set my foot

for the first time on mainland Asia. However much Tokyo and even its surroundings had prepared me for Asia, this was quite another thing. The Seoul was miserable, its unpaved streets dirty, its few Western style buildings drowned in a sea of wooden constructions with here and there a dirty stucco facade. The streets, all of ten, were swarming with kids, healthy looking but unbelievably bedraggled, making way reluctantly for the few former military jeeps painted black which served as taxis and the still fewer cars, including the one of the Bank of Seoul, a dilapidated Chevy used to fetch VIPs at the airport. All the rest of the relatively dense traffic was by oxcart or push carts pushed by men and women. There were even very few bicycles not surprising because of some steep hills but probably mainly due to simple lack of money. There was a semi compound in midtown, a low rambling building of early 20th century of a WWI Europe, the Shosen. It was reasonably clean, the service was excellent, the food unappetizing but served in a spacious high ceilinged dining room with quite clean tablecloths and also reasonably clean plates and cutlery by waiters in clean white linen jackets. It was quiet and the wide corridors with frayed carpets were empty. This building was set in a rather large compound surrounded by a high wall with well tended gardens and a pavilion. Without leaving it one could go through the back entrance into the newer, flashier but utterly detestable *Bando*. This building was more modern, much dirtier, had a noisy hall and housed in small dirty rooms most of the medium foreign offices in the city. There was a constant flow of shady characters, occasional whores, dirty cleaning women in its noisy corridors. The bar was unattractive, the food as bad as at the *Chosen* but much dirtier and a smell of garlic pervading the whole. Seoul, in those days, had a garlic smog and if as occurred sometimes, one went directly from Haneda to a Tokyo cocktail party, friends would come up, sniff and inquire "How was it in Seoul?" I detested the place and tried to stay there as seldom as possible but on my dozen trips could

not always avoid it. In addition to other inconveniences there was a major risk of theft from badly locked rooms and nearly always an indiscrete knock, pretty loud, in the middle of the night by some girl or pimp to enquire if one desired company. The only redeeming factor was an old blind masseur whose hands had an eerie relaxing effect and after an uncomfortable flight from Tokyo, I much preferred this to a double Martini which in any case, I couldn't take.

There was much less of artistic interest in Seoul than in Tokyo. The museum had some fabulous, very early bronzes and primitive earthenware. Amusingly, one of the reasons that the Chase Manhattan beat most other banks in opening its branch, was the promise by David Rockefeller to have one of the family foundations replace the leaky roof in the museum. The massive gate in midtown was impressive and the day we saw the great temple we were surprised and lucky that a historical film was being shot and warriors and simple folk stormed the building in their colorful medieval multicolored costumes. The brilliant bright hues of the women's ample skirts give the much needed color to the drab streets, and in the early sixties most women wore native dresses unlike Tokyo which came to life with kimonos only around New Year. On one of my early visits I was stuck over a weekend, I got in touch with the Tourist Bureau to visit the Tomb of the Nine Kings, close to Seoul about which we had heard. When we finally, on a subsequent trip reached the spot with its huge grey statues, impressive mounds in the rugged mountainous countryside, it was terrific and impressive, giving a feeling of what Mainland China then out of bounds to us, was like. But tourism when I first tried it was non existent and although I tried hard, I was finally taken only to the Tomb of the Ninth King across the river and not nearly as impressive. It did result in an unforgettable excursion. We first drove north by narrow mountain roads, well 'trails' would be more exact, to an old crumbling fortress with endless stretches of brick walls and a fabulous view

of the river and the valley. Then back towards Seoul and down to the river, upstream from the only bridge. Here after a long wait the taxi drove down onto the small, narrow, wooden ferry which was already full of dilapidated trucks and a crowd of peasants and which promptly sank lower into the water, a fare foot from the surface. A small outboard engine helped by oarsmen propelled us across and we disembarked on a muddy bank. A wide trail led to the village up on the banks and old Russian country scenery of 1910 came back to life. The wooden buildings were decrepit and of no interest, the patches of stucco peeling off, chickens and piglets roaming the main street and bullock carts waiting patiently for the ferry to town. After a rather bumpy ride and the uninteresting visit to the mound of the tomb we were back in time to miss the ferry. It was growing dark and the wind had freshened and it was cold, the river carrying still some large chunks of ice. Ice had broken up at Seoul level just a few days before. By the way, this was the first frozen river I had seen, since the long forgotten days of the Neva.

I was due to dine at the American Embassy in Seoul with the Doherties who had been recently transferred from Tokyo where we had met them, but there I was with Seoul tantalizingly near and definitely inaccessible. It was a strange feeling to be marooned in a tiny Korean village barely lit by a few meager lamps and see the bright neon lights and the skyline which was hardly impressive when one came from Tokyo but was still very civilized when seen from a bench by the wide muddy river in the growing darkness. Here it was that I had one of those fleeting glimpses of the inner barbarism of the population. Two small boys in rags, not over six or at best eight, were having a real brawl and fighting like wild savages. When blood began to flow the women put up a wail and a big heavy set man came along, separated them and literally flung them in opposite directions to a distance of some ten feet. They landed stunned and lay motionless as he

strode away. As soon as he was some feet away and his back turned, up they got and started for each other's throats. He swung around and came at them, they ducked but he swung hard with both arms at their heads. Blood spouted from mouth and nose and they flew through the air like two dislocated rag dolls. landing feet away. No one moved. I sat fascinated as some women slowly approached, picked them up like lifeless bodies, and carried them to a pool of water nearby and dumped them in. They both seemed to recover and blood still streaming rushed away down the street. I had an unpleasant sickening feeling. The ferry arrived and again loaded so that the deck of the little barge was practically awash and we made our way, this time without even the help of the outboard to the other bank. I was nearly an hour late so dropped the idea of changing into more formal clothes and told the taxi to drive directly to the embassy compound. Once inside I was in the U.S. with manicured lawns, bright clean buildings, a warm well lighted American rather sumptuous living room, immaculate 'boys' in white jackets and ladies, direct from the beauty parlor in good, well not Bergdorf Goodman, but say Macy's evening gowns. Some of the men were in black tie and I was at pains to explain my adventure and excuse myself. The evening was both interesting and pleasantly civilized. It could have been at any of the Tokyo Embassies and certainly more sophisticated than any dinner party I had been to in the States. It was very Somerset Maugham, Colonial Old Days, perhaps a bit 'Ugly American' for my taste after that hour in the primitive village just a mile away, but warmly friendly and refreshing as the food was an excellent change from the stuff - cat or fowl? - I had been eating for several days at the hotels. This was in the pre Walker Hill days of Seoul, before that compound of lavish modern, clean hotels and recreation buildings with sparkling dining rooms, quite elaborate floor shows, flow of Scotch and even French wines, immaculate dinner ware and regiments of white coated 'boys'.

During our five years in Japan I made a dozen trips to Korea, the nearest I got to China and Northern Asia, a couple of them with Mummy. I tried to stay as short a time as possible. There was nothing really attractive. On one of our trips with Mummy we dined with the Browns, AID in their bungalow which could have been Kansas City, Mo. except for the profusion of Oriental art. They were close friends of Serge's and a very nice couple, much younger, with kids. On one trip I made it direct from Osaka on a local line for the inauguration of the Foreign Exchange Bank. It was then the only bank which took over what had been the exclusive right to foreign exchange which had been vested in the Bank of Korea after the scandal under Sygman Rhee. It was a strange mixture of criticism and underlying admiration that one could feel among the people for old deposed dictator, Park, his successor, was a benevolent dictator, still apparently unsure of his power and Parliament was pretty vocal. Students demonstrated rather openly but then ghastly memories of the North Korean occupation were still vivid and the people simply ignored the ? word missing **YYY** . I remember how struck I was by the complete separation of the two Koreans, so different from what I had seen in Germany in 1962 a brief year before. I returned with the assurance which I voiced, that no joining of the two Koreas would be possible for at least a generation mainly because of the violent hatred of the Northerners by the Southerners, to be matched only by that of both for Colonial Japan and its ruthless rule of exploitation. We gathered in a very cold and dismal hall to listen to speeches by Park who made the impression of a rather undistinguished medium rank executive with no charisma, and by a few others about Korea's bright future. The 'miracle' was just around the corner seemed possible mainly because of the tough hardworking and at the time devoted intermediate echelon of the bureaucracy and business with which I had interesting contact. I even succeeded in arranging for the Ransom Cook, who



was the Wells Fargo Chairman to make the trip in one day. Leaving in the AM from Tokyo, meeting the banks, then visiting the museum bronzes which Ransom wanted to see as he had just been made Trustee of the Brundage Collection at the de Young in San Francisco. Then back by the late afternoon plane with the Cooks continuing on to the States that same night. The Secret Garden in Seoul was lovely but not more attractive than the many Imperial Parks of Tokyo which had been opened since the war. The flight from Osaka was not only scary in a DC3 unpleasantly bumpy and with dirty upholstery reminding me of the Varig flight between Santos and Rio in 1956 but even customs procedures were more difficult than in Western nations and I never tried it again recommending against it at the Chamber of Commerce in Tokyo of which I was, that year, V.P.

As I am in any case not following any chronology, I might as well write of our excursion through South Korea with Mummy which we made on our last trip in 1967. We made a trip North to the demarcation line and the famous Pan Mun Jon compound. The road was not much better than the narrow mountain ones we had traveled in the more remote corners of Japan but the scenery was grandiose and unbelievable rugged. There was thick underbrush and few woods and the countryside was sparsely inhabited. It reminded me of the wilder parts of Corsica and the more remote corners of the Massif Centrale (*mountains and plateaus in south central France*) on a grander scale. Then came a few strands of rusty barbed wire and better roads. Incongruously off the road in a small cluster of tall pine trees a white flagpole carried the blue and yellow Swedish flag, with my youthful memories it was even more unexpected. It was the time where the UN was still nominally in charge and the commanding general was a Swede. The road widened and we met a couple of jeeps with undeterminable soldiers and then reached a cluster of wooden barracks, some green, some brown. We had to wait quite a time because formalities were pretty strict at that moment

because a defecting officer had been hustled over the border by the CIA in a burst of fire just a few days earlier. Now all was rather ominously calm. We walked, keeping all close along the sidewalks with their painted lines in the middle of the roads, like traffic lines in the States. A loquacious cheerful petty officer of the US Navy kept up a fast spiel explaining that if we wandered into the North Korean buildings or even onto the other side of the road we might be arrested and that no mechanism was available for immediate release. In the distance, at a corner, I glimpsed a North Korean officer, his uniform and peaked cap exactly the Russian style I had known in childhood. We went into the conference room with its line cutting across. From one of the windows I glimpsed just a few feet away, some Korean cleaning women who kept their faces averted, in the barracks next door. We were told that when the delegates wanted to phone, I understood, each other, they had to use not only their particular phones but their special switchboards and calls by a UN representative to another next door would be routed via Peking and I believe Hong Kong Seoul and the P.M.J. It all seemed theatrically unreal but at the same time strangely encouraging. If a painted line could really separate for decades two warring countries, it was some kind of minor miracle. As to guerilla infiltration and skirmishes, if they reoccurred they could not be stopped in this wilderness of rocks, gorges and streams.

We returned to Seoul with mixed feelings. In those days the Park regime was somewhat benevolent and the economic miracle had started. Traffic was so heavy already in midtown that overpasses or underpasses had to be used. The horde of beggars against which I had been warned on my first trip and which had actually nearly torn me apart when I ventured outside the gate in the evening, had disappeared. The windows, in particular those of the Banio Arcade which had been a really unbelievable caricature of the old Imperial Hotel Arcade with only worthless trinkets for sale and *papier mache* (*paper mache*) shiny shoes and

nylon bright colored flimsy dresses mostly for local whores, had been replaced by quite acceptable Japanese merchandise even expensive cameras and jewelry.

One evening we were given tickets to a school show in the big auditorium seating several tens of thousands and I must admit the different performances, many folklore dancing and singing were impressive and very well done, quite up to U.S. standards. The kids all looked well dressed, fed, bright and healthy, perhaps tougher than their Japanese counterparts.

I was going to say that we had a dinner given by the Suhs whom we had entertained in Tokyo where he had been for years the ostracized Korean Bank Rep, in a mid town Korean restaurant but realize that this must have been on another occasion. Korean houses are necessarily built like the ones I had known in Europe with thick walls. The heating was provided by piping under the floor the hot water then flowing into the bath. Sitting in low ceilinged rooms, on the kind of tatami which was really hot in the stifling atmosphere got to me and I passed out, luckily for me before they had served the Kimchik mixture of garlic meat and cabbage I believe which would have in any case made me sick. A quite efficient young local doctor came, took my pulse and pressure and sent me back to the hotel and a worried Mummy ordered a wheelchair at both airports and Western put us into spacious first class.

On this last trip we had decided to travel down through Tegou to Pusan and fly back to Seoul. We took a rather old fashioned train dating back to the Japanese days. The scenery was very bare and hardly any trees grew on the slopes of rugged crags. I mentioned this to our young student guide and he explained with ill contained rage that the fiendish Japanese had cut down all the forests, needing wood during the war. The hatred was still strong and very much alive in '67 and I thought sadly of the several hundred thousand Koreans stranded for several generations in Tokyo where their forefathers had been taken as conscripted labor

during the war. There they were the object of continued Japanese deep rooted racial discrimination. Discrimination in Asia and in Japan in particular is even more deep rooted than in our world. The poor *Eta* who had been emancipated in the Meiji era over a century earlier were still complete outcasts, although indistinguishable from other Japanese and only identifiable by their place of birth. I have read that only recently (1975) there was still trouble. During our stay an Eta secretary committed suicide after the boy's family learned of the origins of the university graduate whom their son wanted to marry and absolutely forbade it. Everyone concerned being quite Westernized upper middle class people.

We reached Tegou in central South Korea and our guide got us a very good and well suspended car and we drove off to make a long tour of several hundred miles with visits to a few very interesting and lovely shrines but in grander scenery than those we had admired in Japan and of a more Chinese style, stone and not wood. At one of them we got the two earthen bowls which were used by Koreans for their rice for several thousand years and buried with them. This custom lasted far into the XIX century and there is hardly any way of determining their actual age except that the hand made local ones of centuries ago give a special sound when struck, a sound the modern factory made imitations do not render. I made my choice at the gate of a temple and let our guide make his as he explained that he could resell them in Seoul at a nice profit. I even advanced him money to buy his two and then pulled the nasty trick of switching our two against his two, much to his chagrin but he couldn't protest very much as he had recommended the initial choice. So our two bowls should be relatively old, say a couple of hundred years and of real local hand manufacture.

After all these years I have only vague recollections of the temples and statues we saw. Mummy did go up to a shrine where I couldn't follow her, to see a famous Buddha which at a certain moment at sunrise turns pink in the rays of

the sun but she saw it in daytime. The temples were smaller and of an earlier age than most Japanese ones and as tourism had not started they had retained some of their original atmosphere.

There was one small incident that has remained engraved in my memory. As we drove along the fertile valley we saw what I can only describe as a large anthill in the distance with a thin line of ants moving slowly up and another a few yards away slowly down. As we approached I realized that they were not ants but women carrying loads of rocks in special baskets on their backs, up the mountain towards the building site. There must have been actually thousands in this continuous slow moving line, not a tractor not a Caterpillar in sight, pure and unadulterated human labor, the same labor that had made the pyramids, the great limitless flow of Asian man power. Even today as I watch the gigantic shovels automatically sweep up tons of earth and rocks at different building sites I always see in my mind's eye the thin dark line of bent backs moving with monotonous rhythm up the steep incline each carrying its load and the stark slow centuries old grind of human endeavor leaving me deeply moved.

We visited a brand new oil refinery and the lovely Western overseer explained that his Korean crew had learned their jobs a couple of years ahead of schedule and that now in the whole sprawling refinery only a half a dozen Americans remained, even a few of the brighter young Koreans had been sent to the Philippines to teach the local labor force. The energy, the toughness and the perseverance of the Koreans impressed me but I could well imagine the brute savagery of their inner natures that had made them the most hated soldiers of the wars in which they fought on all sides.

The roads were acceptable and empty of traffic. Again, tourists were something rare and in the small villages the innumerable children stared at us. Here and there a shell pocked wall reminded one that a war, and one that had

nearly been a bloody defeat, had swept the country a few years ago. I won't dwell on details of the temple compounds, the funeral mounds, shrines and towers we visited, mainly because my memory of them blending with memories of many other temples in Japan, on Okinawa and elsewhere, has become dim. I do recollect that Pusan itself made a dismal impression on us as Taipei would some months later. Dingy, mostly concrete buildings without any style and crowds of drab dressed people with here and there the bright patch of a local woman in national dress. We were to spend our last night in a western style hotel some miles out of town by the sea. As we drove along the long boulevard we noticed at intervals, soldiers. Most of them were sitting on their haunches, smoking and chatting with groups of locals but a few had been offered chairs and sat comfortably at the open doors of shops or homes, their rifles propped up against the wall again surrounded by locals on their haunches also engaged in talk. We inquired of our guide who asked the driver and we were told that President Park was coming to spend the night in our hotel and that his cavalcade was due in a short while. Remembering the strict police security measures at the National in Havana and was not very happy but when we arrived the lobby was nearly empty, the hotel a second rate and no special security checks were made either of us or our suitcases. A floor seemed to be reserved for the presidential party but with no more fanfare than for any VIP anywhere. Our guide disappeared to spend the night out. We were supposed to pay for his room and he intended to spend a free night with a friend in town who worked at some local company. We had dinner in a half empty dining room and retired early. Next morning we were supposed to leave by plane early and I fretted that our guide wouldn't be able to pass through the police cordon which naturally must have been drawn around the hotel compound although we hardly saw any soldiers on guard anywhere and the police was as usual, present but not excessively apparent. Right on time our young

guide appeared and not alone but with his friend whose English was even more rudimentary. I paid the bill and with the two young men carrying our bags we emerged from the main entrance where quite a few shiny black American cars were parked. No more and no less than for an embassy reception in Tokyo. The *portier* excused himself and lead us across the front lawn to a side entrance where our taxi was waiting and that was all. I know from what I read in the papers (1975) that the regime has become oppressive and that the rumblings are louder. Probably some eruption or other will end the unnatural peace that we saw in 1967 but I remain convinced that in those already pretty far off days, some solution could have been arrived at.

We arrived in Japan in early October and, fed up with the internal complications at the bank and not getting along at all with the then head of the of the International Department I had myself recalled by the end of July 1967 so for all practical purposes we spent five years in Japan. We had two home leaves. The first was early in 1964 and at that time we made it all around the world traveling east. Mike had come out in the summer of 1963 after his family troubles, in a very bad frame of mind. He stayed with us a week or so and then went down to Kyoto where he lived in a Zen Temple compound. We visited it and the Head some time later and were deeply impressed by the man, his old fashioned charm and the quiet and repose of the park and its pavilions and temples. I can well imagine that deeply troubled one cannot not yield a bit to the atmosphere. A month or so later Liz and Hal with Lucy, then a year old, arrived for a month's visit. We somehow squeezed into the apartment and it was lovely having them. Seeing them in Tokyo gave me a feeling that although I was thousands of miles away, it wasn't impossibly far and on another planet. Liz and Hal made a short trip to Kyoto and Nara while Mummy took care of Lucy. We all spent afternoons on weekends at the American Club. At that time the only

pool in town, except for a few Embassy and private ones. The life guards were nice young Japanese kids who were having quite some trouble with the rowdy little American kids to the point that I suggested and it gave me the reputation of being a strict old fashioned parent, that parents be barred from the club after a certain number of infractions to the rules which the young life guards were unable to enforce. How nasty the kids, spoilt brats, could be I discovered years later when one of the guards turned up as masseur after my heart attack and used to come and give me a good massage daily and help me with my shower. This exercise was recommended and was the easiest and then cheapest way to get it. I even got the boy a job with Toyo Kogyo which the bank had financed and through him got a glimpse of the atmosphere of middle class life in Japan still, in those days, very patriarchal and traditional, exterior western manners notwithstanding. We made a few nice friends mainly among few young couples for whose kids we played the role of surrogate grandparents. The rather artificial atmosphere still reeked of occupation, old fashioned colonialism and the excitement of the Japanese economic miracle then in full swing but still in its infancy. This was completely based on American support and therefore made us very privileged people.

The closer friends, Japanese of more advanced age, old enough to have lived the war, admitted that they would not have behaved as decently as the first wave of American troops had when they occupied an enemy city and the 'rape of Nanking' proved it amply. We were repeatedly told of daughters and wives being rushed to ancestral villages in the mountains at the time of surrender to evade wholesale rape. The first GIs, those who had fought the bloody battles themselves, behaved, we were told, very decently and humanely. It was only the later arrivals from training camps in the States who lorded it over the population and brought in the resentment that has indubitably grown as the memories of the



war, the guilt feeling of many for having started it in China and Pearl Harbor (although why this came as a surprise after an exactly similar attack during the Russo Japanese war remains a mystery to me) faded with the years. I wonder what the world will be like when, and if, this is read in later years but in the early sixties I can say from experience that there wasn't any deep ingrained hatred of us in Japan. The famous wall of incomprehension between us and the Japanese is something inherent to their whole culture, their completely different moral and ethical standards, in their way much more strict than ours and the complexity of their languages. I put 'languages' in the plural on purpose as there are so many different languages: children's, business, art, Imperial, to name but a few. I remember that I asked our first maid who was a real lady who had come on bad times, mainly because her half ruined father had left the bulk of the fortune to his *geisha* (*Japanese entertainer*) and her widowed mother was harboring her elder married sister, son in law and their children who had been expelled from Manchuria where he had had a good job, to tell me how a very simple ideograph was to be read aloud as I had had it read to me that Sunday. She asked me by whom I had had it read. The sex of the reader and his/her social status affecting the manner in which the simple sign was read aloud. Setsuko San was very sweet and attentive to Lucy and it might amuse Lucy to know that her name was one of the first Lucy mispronounced after mama, papa and I believe Babi. The barrier exists not only between Japanese and Westerners but among the Japanese themselves and their communication is by innuendo and nuance with all possible vagueness which allows for honorable loopholes in behavior, both business and everyday behavior. In all those five years I can count on the fingers of my hand the times we were in a Japanese house. The size of homes, the arrangement of Japanese quarters so sparsely furnished and used by day as living rooms and by night with the futons brought out as bedrooms. In fact we ordered a futon for

Mike as although his generation was already taller than the old Japanese, his size was impossible to find ready made and he slept comfortably in the living room which was quite natural to everyone. Perhaps the deepest change that those five years wrought in my set up was in my attitude towards death. I somehow got an inkling into the simple very matter of fact approach of the Japanese without all the mystery and horror that Christianity has built into it. It is an event like so many others in life and to be taken as simply as any other. That is probably why I have come not to fear death but only the process of dying, I think. Well, we'll see when the time comes if I can force myself into the Japanese attitude. I certainly hope I can.

While we were in Japan a few events occurred which had historical repercussions. I well remember that one evening we went to call on Dan and Lucille Koshland. He was one of the top men in Levi Strauss and we had met him off and on during our S.F. years. He had since his wife's death remarried a very interesting and brilliant woman who had been politically active. As he was a Board Member of the Bank, we had received instructions to take care of them and they in turn had been told that the banks' rep was at their disposal. Naturally they were not eager to have a rep as they represented to themselves he would be, intrude on a personal vacation and invited us the last day of their stay. They were surprised and very regretful at having contacted us so late. We spent a nice cozy evening with them at the Okura and they kept us to dinner. We dined many times with them after our return to the States both in Burlingame and at their clubs in town. The next day was not a business day but we were to take them in the evening to Haneda. Suddenly early AM at about 7:00 Lucille phoned me and I realized through my half sleep that she was terribly disturbed. She asked me if I had had the news and then told me of the assassination of JFK. It was unbelievable, a horrid shattering blow and the nightmare seemed unreal. We

spent the whole day in their suite listening to the radio and remembering not only Camelot, the hopes and dreams that the sparkling young couple had awakened all over the world but many other deaths of heads of state.

In my case it involved memories of the anxiety heavy in foreboding days while Imperial Russia, then in her death throes, awaited news of Rasputin's body being recovered. Then there was the stunned horror of the assassination of Alexander of Yugoslavia in Marseilles and Foreign Minister Barhous left to bleed to death. There was also the assassination of President Doumer by a crazy Russian Gogouloff which caused a panic in the Russian émigré society who feared lynching. (not that the word was familiar to me in those days) and stayed locked in their homes. That evening the Stifters had a large bridge party and as many players were absent I was put at a table with Princess Brassoff, the widow of the Tsar's brother Michael, in fact the last Romanoff Tsar for a day until he abdicated, who was till beautiful and terribly moved because it brought back memories of her husband's disappearance. I also remembered the shock of FDR's death when we were in San Jose but this time it was different. The wave of grief, of disbelief, the feeling (possibly unfounded ) that a dream had been destroyed and unreasoning fear, all this gripped the world. Possibly this horror had a greater impact in the States but it was impressive to see the tear stained faces of school kids. To have Japanese stop one in the street and say with real emotion say 'we are solly' was even more impressive.

I remember there was service in the old Catholic Cathedral and we went at about 10 AM arriving early at about 8:30 to get seats. To see the endless lines of black clad uniformed students patiently waiting in the dismal grey, rain spattered, cold yard was really moving. As the Ambassador stayed only for the first service and three were scheduled we had arranged to have the Gardners (he was at the time Economic Minister) who were due to preside at the 3rd, join us at around 2

PM for lunch. They showed up after 7PM. Four or 5 services had to be scheduled to accommodate the waiting crowds of Japanese. For once the Japan Society Meeting still presided over by old Yasuda who spoke a few words in his cracking half whisper, was moving. JFK's faults had somehow faded in their long journey over the Pacific and one really felt that the world was crying its sincere grief for a shattered dream, for once and for a fleeting moment without an *arriere pensee* (*second thought*) .

Some time later I was in a small town some miles out of Tokyo at a local bank luncheon when one of the young local executives came up and told me that Ambassador Reischauer had been stabbed in the Embassy. As our good young friends the Pelikans were on the Embassy staff we had all the gory details later. How the crazy student had reached the familiar embassy hall, how Reischauer had walked out unattended, as usual and been stabbed. How Bob Pelikan had improvised a tourniquet first with his tie and then a secretary's scarf, when blood wouldn't stop; how the Ambassador had been rushed to the nearest Japanese hospital where a stunned staff stood around and in traditional awe waited hours until the chief surgeon was located and could take care of the exalted personage; how they probed the wound for the top of the knife until the assassin confirmed it had been chipped off the previous evening and how the Ambassador insisted on remaining in the Japanese hospital under local medics and refused to go to Yakuska; how the now required numerous blood transfusions were made in Japanese blood leading him to say that his ties to Japan were now sealed with blood; how this resulted in hepatitis from which it took him many months to recover. This confirmed, later on, my doctor's insistence at not having local blood transfusions for me. I won't debate either the role JFK had played and could have played had he lived. I won't either discuss the indignation of our younger generation in the States when we brought back from abroad the plot theory. All

I can say is that for a fleeting moment we lived a world wide nearly unanimous moment of shared horror and pain.

Thinking back I realize that in my life I experienced three times sheer panic. Once when in 1936 having dived overboard from the yacht in mid Mediterranean only to discover I had missed the trailing rope in the empty sea and was noticed by Pierre Bacharach emerging at that precise moment on deck. The second time in the cot in the hangar at the *Stalag* when I awoke and realized that I could do nothing but absolutely nothing to avoid shipment to Germany and certain if not death a horribly awful fate and lastly when suddenly my attack of angina came on and I lay writhing in pain, expecting my heart to stop for well over 4 hours until the pains subsided enough for me to drag myself to the phone and call Dr. Fair who came along in less than half an hour and drove me for my six week's stay in the hospital under the warmly efficient care of the legendary Mother Mary and her both foreign and Japanese staff. The banks and local business firms literally filled my small room with baskets of flowers, mostly orchids. I remember a very amusing, in retrospect, incident. I had been allowed after a few days to dispense with the bed pan and could ask and use, the commode. So I rang the bell and asked the little Japanese nurse for it in a hurry one day. Then I waited and waited then I rang again and repeated my request very urgently. "Coming velly soon". Another long, ghastly wait, another by now panicky appeal and then the nurse appeared proudly carrying the movable telephone. I got my commode soon thereafter from the head nurse who was a foreign Sister. On the whole the service was outstanding. It was amusing that the hospital had no air conditioners so I got permission to go home where there were some but on condition that a male nurse, in this case a graduate medical student come and stay at the house for a few weeks so that in case of need there would be someone to move the 195 pounds I weighed at the time. My

talks with this young man gave me an insight into Japanese psychology I would never have had otherwise. He repeatedly told me that he didn't believe in all the customs of the old religion but on one of our first outings to the Meiji Shrine he asked to be excused and quickly went to the long grilled box in front of the temple threw his 100 yen offering and dutifully clapped his hands 3 times. To please his parents and also to take out some eventual insurance? He was helping me along on one of our first walks when I suddenly noticed a small boy who had fallen and was bleeding profusely. I asked the would be doctor to leave me and help the wounded kid but was told that it was not his business and he could and would not interfere. He must have been quite bright in his way because he was getting very good grades and assignments abroad later on but the primitive development of this nineteen year old medical student in all other fields particularly those like history, philosophy literature, where I could judge a bit was, at the time, not beyond junior high school level.

These years in Japan with their mixture of local and western culture, the still patriarchal, half feudal attitudes was a fascinating last experience before retirement and if I regret the heart attack that complicated things so much for Mom and has also had its effect on these last years, I don't, in the long run regret the experiences that followed it.

We did realize how terribly far away Japan had been before planes and even more importantly phones and how utterly cut off one had been only a very few decades earlier. There remained the unbridgeable wall between the locals, a wall that exists I do believe, even between individual Japanese due to the complexity not only of their languages but of their script. Never the less, now ten years later, if I need something done in Tokyo where I spent five years, I do believe that a few friends will happily go out of their way to render a service

while after more than twenty years in Paris, I doubt very much that, with a very few exceptions, I can hope for such efforts on my behalf.

The first home leave we took we traveled west to S.F. and then on to N.Y.C., Paris, Basel, Rome where we had never been, Athens and Angkor. Rome was everything we had hoped for and more. The first impression of that special terra cotta color of the buildings and then suddenly the monuments and fountains so familiar since childhood was breath taking. We stayed at a small *pension* and had time in those few days to roam the streets, climb to the roof of Saint Peter's and even dine in the semi velvety darkness in the squares under either massive Middle Aged walls or ruined columns of a long lost Rome. The many layers of civilizations from antiquity to the hideous wedding cake style immense monument to modern Italy, gave the historian in me a thrill I hadn't felt anywhere else. The Vatican Museum was perhaps less impressive than we had expected and the Sistine Chapel was so crowded that one could hardly breath much less concentrate and feel it. The immense statues under the dome of Saint Peters when one was up there were so different from what they looked like when seen from the square below. There remains unforgettable memories of some of the smaller convents, a couple of still erect columns at a street corner, and the two hands hardly touching each other on the ceiling, the Creation, so often reproduced. It was strange to see the Swiss guards in the flesh at last after having admired them in so many illustrations over the years! We made a few, very few, excursions in the immediate vicinity and stayed barely five days but I am forever grateful to have been able to see Rome which for one steeped in history like I am is a memory that gives reality to much of what remains otherwise, I believe, much too theoretical history.

We flew to Athens and I was pleased that the room overlooking the Parthenon, at the Grande Bretagne, I had ordered awaited us. Flood lit in the

distance here again a group of monuments one had 'known' all ones life and never seen. Our first visit to the Acropolis was somewhat of a disappointment because the guide was a very efficient Germanic girl who interfered with our enjoyment by her insistence on precise details and forced us to move from one temple to another in the sequence and at the speed she had set. This only confirmed our distaste for group tours and reminded us of those in Kyoto where efficient guides rush the bewildered tourist through the minimum requirement of two dozen temples when a leisurely stroll through just a couple would be much more satisfying. I remember a Japanese banker saying that after all, he had been disappointed at having made a long trip to see Chartres when it was quite like Notre Dame in Paris. To our Western eyes the difference is deep and complete but to him, it was nearly non existent and I'm sure that in our case, except for a few very exceptional temples, like the Venice style one on Miyajima, with its many canals bridged by bright red bridges and its monumental Torii, which seems far out at sea at high tide, are so very much alike.

We drove through the rugged Greek scenery to Delphi and spent a night there marveling at the deep blue of the sea glimpsed as we drove by. Then off again for Beirut, flying over unimpressive Cyprus, a green and rocky island in the deep waters of the Mediterranean seeped in history and at the time already nerve center of yet another crisis as it had been so often during the last millenniums. We changed planes and flew on to Bangkok over the vast Indian sub-continent in the night. Changed planes and landed in the small rather primitive airfield outside Pnom Phen. There we changed to a DC3 and flew low over an unexpected lake and a thick equatorial forest to Seam Rap. We arrived in the one story, very comfortable high ceilinged Auberge du Temple late in the afternoon and after an excellent French cuisine dinner went out to look at the unbelievable facade of the Temple of Angkor Vat basking in the indirect light of



white floodlights. This too was a familiar building bringing memories of the *Exposition Coloniale (Paris Colonial Exhibition)*, where a replica had been built. The real thing, behind its wide open space, its stagnant canals, thick tropical nearly black forest framing the elaborately sculptured walls under that specially black soft sky with its specially bright stars which one finds in those parts, took our breath away. We had feared that coming direct from the glories of Greece which we had loved and admired ever since childhood and had read about in so many of our favorite poems, this Oriental jewel would be never the less to our Western eyes be let down. It was not and those five days driving along the narrow straight roads, like those in the Parc de Versailles, to suddenly find a grey ruin pushing its elaborate sculptures through thick glistening greenery or tortured roots, was breathtaking. I am happy to have insisted that we visit a temple a few miles from the *auberge* by elephant. We hired two, one for me and one for Mom and Chantal Rouffard, a charming, attractive Belgian girl, specialist in the field with whom we had become very friendly in Tokyo.

It is quite a different thing to ride around a zoo than to sway on the back of an elephant as it gingerly and carefully stalks along a narrow mountain trail with the thick foliage hiding everything from view so that, after a zig zag when one is just some ten feet away from the one behind and below as one climbs, not only does one see nothing but sounds are completely muted. We passed a small village of a few huts on stilts and when later on I read of the strafing of hamlets in Cambodia by our air force it was not only sad but so very very futile. The immense smiling bas-reliefs on the tower of Angkor Tom, the long row of statues and the miles of stories they told, like in some ancient 'comic strip' in intricate relief on the endless walls of the temples were all unforgettable as was the colorful ancient dance given in front of the floodlit grey facade of the main temple in honor of visiting Yugoslav dignitaries. What remains perhaps even more

vividly is the endless rows of headless statues, making the fascinating collection of the Guimet Museum in Paris, an inexcusable criminal desecration and then at the end of one of those straight narrow roads ruins of a small temple with tortured thick roots literally tearing into and destroying the remaining walls. A symbolism which one can hardly ignore. The discovery of this immense complex of temples must have been an overwhelming experience for the French and after all it was not so long ago. The work done in restoring without actually rebuilding anything was stupendous and it is terrifying to think what has become of this unique treasure as the jungle once again, and for how long this time, takes over.

We arrived late in the evening in Bangkok and early in the morning took a private launch along the canals with their bustling activity, boats over laden with multicolored fruit darting from one hut to another, naked glistening bodies of graceful children swimming like so many fish in the murky water. We were lucky to be alone in our launch and could therefore avoid the tourist shops with their trinkets and float into the smaller, so much more real and natural canals and realize the throbbing Asian life that still continued in those times behind the scenes and which we are told, are now gone. When we got back to the hotel we were told our plane which was to have delivered us to Hong Kong in early afternoon and allowed us to catch a glimpse of the fabulous port and the Hill, was many hours late so we took a tour, visiting the colorful temples, the reclining immense Buddha, the Emerald colored one admiring all those multicolored domes, gilt, shining bright walls incrustated with pieces of porcelain. It was impressive but lacked that sense of permanency, the calm dignity of the quiet Zen compounds of Japan, the majesty of the fortress moats in Osaka and even Tokyo or the rugged grandeur of the ancient ruins of Korea and the timeless beauty of Angkor in its jungle. We only caught a glimpse of the lights of Hong Kong harbor and those of the city rising above it through rain clouds when we stopped over

for an hour at midnight but I don't regret that we exchanged the usual tourist stop over for still in those days charming bustling Bangkok.

When I made my first trip to Okinawa it impressed me most unfavorably. The outskirts of Naha, an endless garish shanty town with horrible neon lights, mostly dusty thoroughfares and a few pre war tiny dilapidated stone structures pretentious but peeling like some Balkan railway stations, were hardly anything the US could boast of after more than 10 years of occupation. A few modern relatively large but already dirty buildings housed schools or formed the university campus. The students mostly wore tattered black uniforms, non descript trousers and were bare foot, carrying their shoes in their hands with their books. The hotel was situated on the outskirts of the town and was then like a second class motel in the States. A few miles away was the army of occupation camp and compound. Neat elegant bungalows set in immaculate grounds of trimmed lawns with sprinklers gaily and continuously watering the green grass, quite elaborate markets and then the inevitable greens of the golf courses and the pools. The contrast was hideous and made me sick. I wondered aloud later on, to the horror of the American Club dining room in Tokyo, where the hordes of kids now busy shining shoes would go once they had graduated from a semi American curriculum school or worse still university. I had sensed the deep ingrained disdain of the main island Japanese for exploited islanders, treated for centuries as despised second rate citizens and squeezed out of all the better jobs even if they came to the Capital or large cities on Kyushu, Honshu. The memories of World War II were much more alive there in 1963 than in Japan where the occupation had ended. I was driven around the north shore and high cliffs from which the remnants of the Imperial Army had jumped to their death in mass suicide. I was shown the deep cave which had been flushed out with flame throwers and its sole occupants, some hundred high school girls and Red

Cross volunteers had hidden from bombardment. My last direct contact with World War II had been in burning Orleans in 1940 and the screech of the Stukas over Isle Adam during strafing and I'll admit I slept badly wondering what was hidden behind the polite smiles and elaborate old fashioned bowing bankers friendly words.

Sentimentally the Japanese were making great headway for unification and when it came it brought with it all the old abuse to which the islanders had been subjected, but alas, their memory of U.S. occupation was also the same colonial exploitation and the Okinawans probably preferred to be mishandled by their own than by *Gaijins*.

In early 1966 we had a few days free and I talked Mummy into joining me for a week end on a Pacific Island, choosing Ishigaki Jima, just off the coast of Taiwan. We visited the lacquer ateliers wondering sadly why so much craftsmanship went into such hideous cheap designs but were told that our GIs preferred them to the simple traditional ones in black and red. It was the same thing as it had been in Nagoya in the *cloisonné ateliers (workshops of enamel arts)* where I watched fascinated the intricate procedures, the placing of thin gold wires in intricate designs, the filling in of empty spaces with thick layers of color, all done by squatting figures either incredibly old or very young, still in traditional garb moving their elongated hands in stylized, ballet like movements delicately handling thin paint brushes.

We took off in a dilapidated DC3 of the famous or infamous, CIA line America, the only link between the numerous islands and landed in a rough field with a tiny hut, different from the others only because it had a radio antenna and not a very large one, on its roof. The *Ryokan* was far from the luxurious one we had sampled in Kamakura, Nagoya or Kyoto but the only tourist car, a dilapidated formerly staff car, took us along winding roads under already heavy skies through thick tropical growth to a beach lifted

directly from a Gauguin but empty and windy. The endless fields of pineapples and the hunch backed buffalos gave it the *couleur locale* (local color) which I sorely missed. It rained all night and of course, the walls were barely protection to damp cold winds. The little town didn't have the picturesque charm of the villages we had visited in Japan but its dreary little wooden houses, narrow streets, total absence of traffic, all gave us a vivid impression of how provincial Japan must have looked early in the century. Next day we went to the airport and waited patiently for the daily plane. We heard it through the clouds long before it finally landed. The pilot, about 55 years old, weather beaten six footer out of a Hemingway story or a Maugham novel with those steely grey eyes one reads about with a thrill, suggested that he deliver something on an adjoining smaller island and then fetch us. Reluctantly I agreed and we sat dismally on the wooden bench in the hut listening to the rain for an hour or so. It was getting on in the browning dusk when the noise of the approaching plane once again reached us. It circled and then over a very primitive walkie-talkie the young Japanese boy guarding the airport exchanged weather information. Visibility was very restricted and he told us that the pilot was very sorry but wouldn't be able to land. We were returned to the Ryokan in a dismal mood, wet, cold and unhappy at the feeling that we were stranded on the island and this only a few months after my heart attack. We spent the evening in the small western style apartment with chairs and a table in the kitchen of a young English speaking bank junior executive and his very bright, also English speaking insurance company wife. They were basically more westernized than their main island equivalent and had dreams of being transferred to Tokyo and making a career in the Bank. They had both gone to US schools on Okinawa and were prepared for it even better than most of their counterparts in Tokyo but in the then still cast ridden of the capitol and I can't imagine it has really changed since, their chances weren't good. I did my best to report enthusiastically on them to the foreign department head when I got back and hoped fondly that they would give him a chance and are perhaps today successfully working at one of the bank's

affiliates in the States. Nest day the weather lifted a bit and we were able to board the rickety DC3 and returned to Naha piloted by the same fascinating old pilot.