The Book and Life of a Little Man

reminiscences of Frederick S. Mendel
since severed, has grown into Inter-continental Packers Limited, fourth in size and sales in the Canadian meat-packing industry.

Mr. Mendel's contribution to Canada goes far beyond his business activities. He encouraged the city of Saskatoon to build an art gallery to which he contributed both funds and a portion of his outstanding collection of modern art. Fittingly the building has been named the Mendel Art Gallery.

Canadian life has been immensely enriched by personalities like Fred Mendel. Standing but five feet one inch tall, he is a little man only in height.

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The Book and Life of a Little Man

Reminiscences of
Frederick S. Mendel

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"If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
in Twelfth Night
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Mendel's narrative is more than a business success story, though he explains how he and his partners created the world market for canned hams, how he established an industry in Australia, and how he finally chose Canada as his home and the scene of a new career. That he should turn out to be among the survivors of Nazism is not surprising in view of the ingenuity and enterprise of his life story. He was the little man on the go in Germany in his business of buying and selling livestock, shadowed but never submerged by the evil tide of anti-Semitism that in time claimed fourteen of his close relatives and many of his friends among its victims. He never wavered from the old-fashioned tradition that, as eldest son, he assume the burden of family leadership. He did so through heartstirring years when, as he writes, "I could have been killed sixteen times by the German Nazis." He moved through perils and he survived. "My wife Claire," he writes, "down through the years never thought I could fail her." He lived to see the tables turned on Adolf Hitler, that fearsome modern Haman, "enemy of all the Jews".

"Fritz" Mendel was born in Recklinghausen, western Germany, first going to a little Jewish school and then to prep school, or gymnasium. His native Westphalia was not a hotbed of anti-Semitism but he grew up aware of the tensions of caste. He was drafted into the army, which sent him home in the first year of the Great War. He lost a partnership in a livestock commission firm because of anti-Semitic intrigue against him and became associated instead with a Dutch firm dealing in cattle and meats. He fled Berlin in 1933 and launched an extraordinary expansion of bacon and ham production, first in the Free City of Danzig, then in Poland, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria.

Fred Mendel's book was begun as a chronicle for his grandchildren and continued as a search for reasons in the policies and events that destroyed men and property across Europe. He survived while millions perished. The time interval from his birth in the Ruhr region of Germany to his life in the pleasant ranch home in Saskatchewan spans the modern era of human history. His memoirs contain a flash-
back of his days of duty in the Münster garrison as Kaiser Wilhelm II’s smallest soldier; he was a moustached private assigned to horse stable detail, standing five feet one inch in height. His business career survived the German inflation of 1923, which poisoned politics and paved the way for Hitler, and he made a fortune in gold coins that Berlin bankers were paying for Czarist ruble notes to ship to Russia, where the moujiks spurned the Kerensky government’s currency but would part with livestock and grain for notes bearing the portrait of Czar Nicholas. He flushed that fortune into a sewer, fearing penalties for hoarding. He left his racehorses behind in Europe, though one unbeaten favourite came to the New World with the returning U.S. army. He became a collector of paintings and persuaded the City of Saskatoon to build an art gallery, to which he contributed funds and which was fittingly named after him.

Fred Mendel’s memoirs include a fascinating background of sophisticated society in a Europe that can now be recaptured only in the pages of history. He departed from Vienna and Budapest with the Gestapo at his heels and became an industrialist in Canada. He has joked, in explaining his restless passion for travel, that his life is a fresh version of the legend of the Wandering Jew. In his late years he has been able to view the past philosophically and, finally, to write with no desire for revenge or hatred in his heart.

Aside from touches of super-melodrama, his story is an account of free enterprise set against an incomparable background of larger historical events. Private enterprise, to Mr. Mendel, is the sound system, but not if it is run by irresponsible people. He speaks of the spirit of his business organization, and of his grandsons who are entering into his family business. Business to him is an activity dealing in ideas, the paramount concern being not to accumulate money but to use man’s creative capacity to build and add to the livelihood of the people engaged in it. The only business in which he ever engaged was the buying and selling of livestock and the related industry of meat packing. The remarkable rise of his company has won acclaim in Saskato
Foreword

As I've grown older I have been urged by members of my family and my friends to write my memoirs. I have taken a long time to do so. I began making notes of what I could remember of experiences at different times, in different countries, when I was recuperating from a coronary attack that occurred shortly before my sixtieth birthday. I had time to think about the past, not knowing what the future held. I began to relive events that shaped my life. I became engrossed in episode after episode, and I wrote several hundred pages during my convalescence, many of them during a trip to Australia to see to business interests. Time is a great healer but memory is something that cannot be wholly obliterated.

The day came when I set myself to putting my notes in order. I discovered that my handwriting, which has always intrigued and often eluded my family and my associates, had become elusive even to me. The hand that for half my life or more has used a flowing German script finds difficulty in the curt curves of written English, sprinkled with German words. So I set to work with a tape recorder.

Fifteen years have passed, and in my eighty-third year I have at last completed my book. Without the help of others to transcribe and translate, I might have given it up. The lapse of time allowed me to revisit some scenes and refresh my memory, and that has given me a longer perspective on events that bridge the years and the distances of a long life. Some experiences I cannot relive even now without the taste of tears in my throat.

I was born in Germany on December 18, 1888, a time and place long ago and far away. The second Kaiserreich has long since disappeared in the wake of war; and my birthplace, Recklinghausen, which I remember as a pleasant provincial city, has grown to be an important cultural centre in the great economic complex of the German Ruhr Valley. Indeed, I served in the army of Kaiser Wilhelm II in the First World War, and lost a brother as a result of gas poisoning in that conflict. I was driven to escape from my native land even as the flames of the Reichstag fire in 1933 heralded the dawn of the dark age of Adolf Hitler. My eldest sister, her husband, and their little daughter, and many other relatives and friends, are numbered among the six million wretched victims of the Nazis and their bullets and gas ovens.

I am not qualified, as a reader will soon discover, to write the history of the times and events through which I have lived. These events brought great happiness and unbelievable tragedy. They scarred the lives of many millions. My grandchildren will have to read other accounts to understand the full scale and depth of the human story that serves as a background to the lives of all who were and are members of my generation. I hope they will do so and begin to understand the headlong history which is their heritage, as it is for all children of the twentieth century.

My story is the sum of the experiences of a little man, some of which I confess I have tried to forget on earlier occasions. I am short in stature, and a man of five feet one inch rarely has any occasion to look down on others. But looking up is not an attitude that gives one a sense of inferiority. I choose to tell my story as an account of the ups and downs of a single lifetime. Perhaps a man's memory retains more of the pleasures than the sufferings. That is
the way it is in my case. If a reader expects to hear an instant success story from me, I am afraid he will be disappointed. I take pride in what I have accomplished and I cannot find reason to regret the follies that sometimes led to the edge of disaster. I cannot explain the indescribable changes of a life span that has now stretched beyond the expectancy of most men. I know that hope rebounds in the human heart in a time of adversity, and I have learned that miracles, on occasion, do happen.

My life has been rich with incidents and I have enjoyed many interests far beyond the sphere of business. From the time as a boy when my father brought me a pony, Titi, I grew up to love horses. Eventually I had racing stables in Germany and in Hungary and owned a number of magnificent thoroughbreds which won great races in international competition. One such horse won the Hungarian Derby in Budapest, almost on the eve of the Second World War; an owner whose horse lost spit in my direction while many friends showered me with congratulations and the stewards awarded my horse the prize. I quickly learned to scorn the crude behaviour of the Nazis, before their dark record of inhumanity was widely understood.

My daughter Eva is the artist and poet in our family, and I am grateful to her for arousing my interest in art after we had fled from Europe. The hours of my fond passion for fine horses on the racing tracks of Budapest and other European centres were numbered, as the curtain fell upon the era in which I was born and lived before the Second World War. I was able to transfer a lost love into a new passion for paintings. I have never used a palette or a brush, but I have acquired a collection that has included celebrated modern artists — impressionists, les fauves, cubists, and abstractionists. Eva’s influence is apparent; as a young girl in Europe she became interested in the paintings of Paul Cézanne and Pablo Picasso. Perhaps it is poetry that best records the memory of events that stirred emotions. Some of the poems that Eva wrote have remained through the years within the power of my recall, and she has supplied verses so that I may include some of them in my book.

Hitler’s shadow was spreading across Germany when I went to Australia in 1936 and founded a packing-house industry. It continues today under other ownership. I came to Canada in 1939 and established a plant in the prairie city of Saskatoon, the headquarters of our industry. We have plants in the three Western provinces of Canada, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. There was nothing left by 1940 of the large packing industry in Poland, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria that I founded in partnership with Poels & Company. We had a substantial business in bacon and hams in the markets of Britain and the United States, and in the overseas export trade. It was all extinguished by the outbreak of the Second World War, never to be recovered by me. I came to the New World unable to speak English. I was determined to shut the memory and the language of Germany from my mind. I found, as I began to write notes for a memoir of my life, that I had lost the ability to think in German about my European past.

I have been able to put down some record of my personal experiences and my thoughts and sentiments regarding them. I borrow a prelude from Pagliacci: "Das Spiel kann beginnen." Let the show begin.

Frederick S. Mendel
Acknowledgments

For help in recording material and preparing my manuscript, I am indebted particularly to Cyril Stackhouse, my former secretary, who lives in retirement in Calgary, Alberta, and to Mrs. Idabelle Melville-Ness, of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, who taped and transcribed many sessions of conversation with skill and patience. The final formation of my manuscript required a minor miracle in itself, and it was supplied by my friend Burt Richardson, the Toronto editor and writer. His professional help, plus the warm understanding of a quarter of a century of friendship since his days as daily newspaper editor in Saskatoon, made my memoirs into a book. Many relatives and business associates have given invaluable assistance in recalling and verifying episodes and details of this book.

F.S.M.

TO MY FATHER

Your life is now an open book,
For all to take a second look.
You have seen beauty, horror, light.
You’ve often stayed awake at night.
You have known joy, you have known sorrow,
At times you thought there’s no tomorrow,
Have known the range of human feeling,
And even danced upon the ceiling.
You’ve lived for love, you’ve lived for reason:
You’ve been a Man for every Season.
And here you are at eighty-three,
Fruitful and sturdy as a tree
That’s not too rigid, not too tall,
No storm could ever make it fall.
Sound and resilient to the core,
You’ve weathered much. You’ll weather more!

1971

EVA MENDEL MILLER
I stood shivering at the fresh graveside of my father on a grey, cold January day in 1912 — shivering from the weather in Recklinghausen, from trepidation and fear for the future.

My three sisters, my two brothers, and I had mourned the burial of my mother in the same cemetery only two months before. The six of us ranged from Emma, who was eleven, to myself, age twenty-three years. It was my duty to carry on my father’s business and to provide for the others. I think often of that unhappy day.

Events moved quickly for us. My father had been a local wholesale butcher in Recklinghausen, and I had worked with him since leaving school at fourteen years of age. I was well able to carry on his business. The state of his affairs became clear when I received a letter of condolence from Hans Dall, a highly regarded livestock commission buyer in Hamburg, which referred to my late father’s debt to him of ten thousand marks! No doubt I would see my way clear to pay it off! My first problem was upon me.

But first there was a full week of family mourning, according to the Jewish custom of Shiva. Our little family of six orphans spent most of those days on a wooden bench which was covered with a large black cloth. For me, it was a time to contemplate my new burden of responsibilities.

My parents’ little house — das kleine Häuschen — was crowded with relatives who gathered to pay their respects and with local friends who came to express their condolences.

My mother’s brother, Herman, who had come from southern Germany only a few weeks before to attend my mother’s funeral, cut short his visit again, as he had before. He was the only member of our mother’s family who came to the funeral. As he departed, he said, in the south German dialect: “Du wirst es scho schaffe.” That is to say: “You will surely make it.”

Then there was Uncle Carl de Klein and his wife, Rosalie, one of my father’s sisters. Carl had been employed by my father for many years. He was a tall, dark-haired man, who received a gold coin of twenty marks a week (about four dollars at that time). On this he not only brought up his family of three sons, but also managed to save a tidy sum through the years. He and my aunt died only a year or so after my father.

And there was Aunt Emma, married to a man named Herman Mosbach, a junk dealer in Iserlohn. Another aunt who was there was married to an Italian Catholic, named Vigna. She was not too highly regarded by some because she had married outside our faith. But I liked her and I could not understand why she should be almost ostracized by her relations. Her son, Paul Vigna, my cousin, was my playmate and friend.

My father’s younger brother, Uncle Jacob, also turned up. He was a peddler who made a living selling trinkets from one end of Germany to the other. He visited us once a year. My father tried to persuade him to settle down in our small house, but he would spend only a week or so with us and then, without giving any notice, disappear again.

There were letters of sympathy. To everyone it was a foregone conclusion that I, as the eldest son, would take over and continue my father’s business. There was never a doubt about that in my own mind.
It was Uncle Joseph Misch who made it possible for me to go on. He had a furniture business in Herne, a city larger than Recklinghausen and about five miles away. My Aunt Jette, his wife, was my father's oldest sister, and they had three children, two boys and a girl. The younger son died, but my cousin Willi Misch studied medicine and practised near Berlin. He migrated to Britain after Hitler came to power and recently died in his ninety-third year.

As a doctor, Willi believed that as a person grows older he should eat less and less. He not only prescribed this advice for his patients but practised it himself, and this may have contributed to the family longevity. His sister, my cousin Elsa, is still alive in London, England, and is over ninety years of age. Her father lived to be eighty-seven. It was mainly on Willi's advice that I worked to reduce my early weight of over 200 pounds down to my present 140. In this regard, he was well ahead of his time.

As a young boy I visited Uncle Joseph and Aunt Jette frequently, travelling for two hours in a bus pulled by four horses. This was a pleasant adventure. I was fascinated by their large furniture store and the good meals. These two good people were the only relatives who offered me assistance in the critical days after my parents died.

Uncle Joseph accompanied me to Hamburg-Altona to call on Hans Dall in his office in the Schanzentrasser and arrange a settlement of my father's account. Hans Dall suggested that I pay one hundred marks a month with interest, which he would add to the amount owing. And so I signed one hundred notes, each for one hundred marks plus interest. There was never a thought in my mind but that I would meet this obligation. I sat down and signed the notes. It took a long time to write my name a hundred times.

When we returned home from Hamburg, Uncle Joseph realized that if I were to make a go of the business I would need some ready cash to carry on and improve it. He generously let me have five thousand marks, the greater part of his savings. He trusted me, he said, to repay the money and he was confident I would succeed in business.

Having learned my first lesson in finance, I continued the Mendel wholesale meat business.

I believe my ancestors came originally from Spain, moving first to Holland and then to Germany, in order to escape the horrors of the Inquisition.

My father, Robert Mendel, was born in the village of Ahlsen, near Recklinghausen, in March 1860, and died in January 1912. My grandfather, Abraham, had been born in the same village in 1824. He died when nearly seventy years of age. My great-grandfather, Salomon, was born in Ahesen in 1794 and died there in 1886, at the age of ninety-two years.

After the Second World War, I again visited Ahesen. In 1946 I made inquiries about my ancestors and discovered an old register in the possession of a priest of the Roman Catholic parish. It was a registry of Jewish people who had lived there. It included the names of all my ancestors born in Ahesen. He directed me to the location of the old Jewish cemetery, now incorporated in a farm. When pressed, the farmer admitted that for some years the cemetery had been ploughed over. He was able, however, to produce the tombstone of my great-grandfather, weathered but readable. I had it moved by my late friend, Heinrich Henne, to the new Jewish cemetery in Recklinghausen, where several gravestones of my ancestors are collected, and which is located in the Haltenerstrasse, near an old restaurant called the Eier Franz.

In my boyhood days Recklinghausen was a lovely city on the fringes of the Ruhr Valley. It is still a fine community, with one of the finest art museums in West Germany. On recent visits I found that it has grown and changed since my time there. Few of my old friends remain, and most of the old ties are broken. I visited the cemetery and a few of the places I knew as a young man, but it is not the same.

Recklinghausen was an old Festung, a fortress. Even to this day parts of the ancient walls are still standing. Out-
side of Recklinghausen to the north began the Hart, a lovely forest which stretched about five miles toward Haltern, the next town of any size. Today this forest area is partly industrialized, but Recklinghausen has never lost its beauty. It was hardly damaged by the two world wars. In my youth, many of the people were coal miners.

Recklinghausen has never developed the heavy industry that is traditional to large cities in the Ruhr Valley. It has retained much of its earlier charm. Seventy or eighty years ago it had, of course, its so-called society, which consisted of a few bank managers, some executives of the coal mines, and the owners of some of the larger business enterprises. Jews were certainly not included. The social club was the Engelsburg, a building that had once been a little castle and that today has become a hotel and restaurant. Those who were allowed to join this club felt very important, and though I do not want to offend the memory of anyone in my home town, I often felt that they would love to take their hats off to themselves all the time. There was a great uproar, I remember, when on one occasion the club accepted as a new member a bicycle and automobile dealer. He soon set at rest the doubts he had created, for he became as snobbish as any older member.

My father was twenty-seven years of age when he married my mother. She was born at Sinsheim in South Germany near Heidelberg, about 180 miles from Recklinghausen. There are differences in character in people from these parts, and in the accent of their language, too. The Westphalians are serious people, rather of the Prussian type. The South Germans show the French influence and, in fact, my mother had French blood in her veins. I do not think that these differences will ever disappear. Even to this day they still continue, though the distance between them has been shortened by modern transportation and communications.

It was my mother who often provided the lighter touches in my childhood, and she seemed at times to speak to us in a language different from that of my father.

As the first-born of the family, I was called der Bocher.

In our faith, the first-born bears certain religious duties and responsibilities. We were not orthodox Jews. In my early childhood, my parents were poor. Many times we sat down to a goat-meat meal, which I thought was very tasty. We had no luxuries but we had something to eat.

We lived in a run-down, rented apartment, near the market place, close to St. Petruskirche, the oldest Catholic church in the city. It had a spire supported by six columns. We called it the church of the six "poles". A romantic adventure for children of the town was to climb up the stairs to the spire. My friends and I did this many times, to look out over our city and the nearby forest. In our imagination we travelled to that strange and different land beyond.

Our closest neighbours were the Hülsmanns—Louis and his unmarried sisters, Marie and Antoinette. They kept a small grocery shop in Kunibertistrasse, and Louis, who was a bachelor in his forties, made wooden shoes in a little workshop in the yard behind the store. These wonderful people were devout Catholics. I was awed to discover they said grace before every meal and again before rising from the table. As a lad I visited them often, arranging to arrive when they were about to eat the dessert, which we usually did not have at home. They were always kind enough to give me a generous serving, which was for me a great delicacy. Louis sold the sawdust and chips which came from the wooden shoes. I helped him pack sacks of this material, priced at five Pfennige. Sometimes Louis allowed me a few pennies for myself. He did not think that his sisters provided sufficient variety for his meals and he felt he needed a bit of a change. So he got me to buy him raw meat ground with a cleaver. I prepared it for him, mixing in salt, pepper, and onions. We had to watch that his sisters did not learn about it.

Our landlady, Mrs. Faszbender, lived in the same building as we did. We children thought of her as a very old woman who looked like a witch. Close by lived the widow of the owner of the postal service, Mrs. Schiffer, who seemed to us to represent high society. She was a short, fat lady and she had the money to dress well. We admired her air of dis-
tinction. I never saw her smile. It seems to me now that in those days people did not smile at all. Life was serious and confined.

It was only in my earliest years that I can remember my mother as an active person. She was slight in build, with fine features, a wonderful woman. She became crippled when I was young and remained so for the rest of her life. For a long time she moved about only in a wheelchair. But she was always patient and never complained. Before I went to school, I did what I could of the housework. I used to start the fire, bring in the wood and water, help prepare the meals, and wash the dishes.

My father had a great struggle to keep his business going. With a sick wife and six small children, it is not surprising that often he became stern and moody. It was difficult for him to live a normal life and once in a while he took a few drinks. As I remember, I marvel at the burden that was his. He was strong in character. I know that he loved mother and all of us. He rarely showed his emotions, always giving the impression that he was a strict, firm man. But within this stern exterior there was a man of purpose, of humour, of unexpected emotions, of human capacity, and, sometimes, of human failings.

My father had a passion for music. Whenever there was an opportunity to hear opera and he could spare the money (and sometimes when he couldn’t) he went to hear and enjoy the music. He was quick to catch the melodies. He would travel to nearby Essen or Düsseldorf, or even distant Cologne, to hear operatic performances — Flotow’s Martha, Bizet’s Carmen, Tchaikovsky’s Undine, Verdi’s Aida, Weber’s Der Freischütz, and Wagner’s Tannhäuser. He came home whistling the airs, a picture of a happy man. When Enrico Caruso made his first appearance in that part of Germany, my father spent money for tickets and travel to hear him sing. It was more than he could afford, but he felt well repaid.

My mother insisted at all times that we must wait for my father and that no meal should commence until he was seated at the table. Often our family would wait for him to come home. Sometimes I would have to go out and search for him. I would generally find him in one of the taverns with his friends, singing together and enjoying their relief from the pressures of the daily struggle for existence.

He was a superstitious man. If he started out with his horse and buggy to buy livestock from the farmers in the surrounding country, and a black cat crossed the road, he would turn back and do nothing for the rest of the day except have a few drinks at Steinbeck’s or at Wagner’s, taverns near our home. Sometimes the sight of an old woman — a dear old lady perhaps in her eighties — was sufficient to halt him and cause him to turn back.

When I was six years of age, I was sent to elementary school. It was a Jewish school with mixed classes of both boys and girls. Our teacher, Simon Tannenbaum, took his teaching duties seriously. He was an orthodox Jew, and to him, Hebrew, arithmetic, and geography were the most important subjects. My younger brothers, Emil and Adolf, my three sisters, Klara, Lilli, and Emma, and later my daughters, Johanna and Eva, studied under Mr. Tannenbaum in the same little school. He was also the cantor in our synagogue.

For the most part, our neighbours were coal miners. I played with their children, who were dressed like myself. Our clothes were well worn, patched and even sometimes turned inside out, with holes in our shoes and stockings. But we did not seem to feel the cold. Perhaps we would not have been happy in really good clothing. Among my playmates were the Sauer children, whose father, Heinrich, was a coal miner. He made extra money from wrestling when the little circus came to town. He was a hero among the boys.

When I reached the age of ten, I went to the gymnasium (high school). My father wanted me to have a good education and be, as he said, “ein gebildeter Mann”, with advantages his parents had not been able to afford for him; his ambition had been to study and become a doctor.
Unfortunately, I was more interested in unloading livestock and going to the Hart forest than in my studies. I was leader of a small gang of Jewish boys, eight or ten years of age, all schoolmates. When other boys in the town called us names, such as Jude Mendel, Jude Stein, and so on, we went after them. I had a rope such as my father used to fasten cattle, and I tied a knot in it. Our tormentors ran away when they saw me coming with it. My closest friends, Alfred Friedenberg and Ewald Frankenberg, and I decided to form an orchestra. My father handled goatskins and one day I sold some to a junk dealer, Herr Bier. With the money I bought a toy violin, a trumpet, and a drum. We began to practise, but when my father found out, I had to return the instruments and take the money back to Herr Bier to get the goatskins. That was the end of my short musical career.

I was a disappointment to my father when the director of the gymnasium visited our home and reported that there was little use in my continuing as his student. I was difficult to manage. I played many pranks and I was not a serious student. I had burned an eraser in the school, causing such a foul odour that classes had to be dismissed. During a cold spell I had piled bricks at the school door and hosed them so they created a frozen obstacle and no one could go in or out of school. He suggested that I be sent back to Mr. Tannenbaum. So I had to start all over again. I think I had always been Mr. Tannenbaum's pet student, as I excelled in his three favourite subjects, that is, arithmetic, geography, and Hebrew.

One cold night, when my father came home from a trip, he told Emil and me that he had bought two big horses. He sent us to the station to bring them to the barn. What a pleasant surprise it was when we found that the two “big horses” were lovely little ponies. These ponies were a great pleasure for us. Every year he bought a barrel of wine from the Rhineland, which he put in bottles. Sometimes, it is true, my father did too much tasting on these occasions, but he took pride in having a few bottles of wine in his little cellar. Every fall he bought a stock of potatoes and put them in the same cellar for the winter. He also got some cabbage, which he sliced up for sauerkraut. I remember when I had to take off my shoes and socks, take a foot bath, and stamp down the sauerkraut in the barrel.

I would not say that the old days were better than today for children, but my sisters and brothers and I created no problems of importance for our parents or for ourselves. We six children played our games with our friends. We made toys, bats and balls of tightly rolled twine. Perhaps, to one who has become a great-grandfather, the memories of childhood are all sun and no shadow. We had no luxuries, and by today's standards we lived in semi-poverty, as did many other children in our town. A few children had toys that had been bought at the shops, but not us. My father's gift of ponies for my brother Emil and me is fixed in my mind as an event of supreme joy that lasted a long time. I have watched seven grandchildren grow up, all of them showered with toys when their rooms were already loaded with others received before. I myself could add nothing to their happiness by gifts.

I retain a pleasant memory of days when, as a boy, I worked for my father. We unloaded cattle from railway cars, and there was a coach for the men who travelled with the livestock to look after them. I enjoyed travelling in this car and, lying in the straw with my friends, would eat a lunch of sausage, a piece of bread, and a bottle of milk. Days were long in their hours of work, and there was little time left for play. I remember a boyhood which provided happy days, the happiest of my life.

My chestnut pony, Titi, was an intelligent animal, and he often ran away from his little stable. He was known in the neighbourhood as Titi Mendel. He always came home but sometimes he was picked up by a farmer and I had to pay ransom for the vegetables he had eaten. Titi was a fast runner and I would ride him in races in the country. The other pony, Moritz, never could run as fast as Titi. When we left Recklinghausen for Berlin I gave Titi to a friend.
who did not treat him well. Titi was about twenty years old then. I should never have given him away, and I can cry when I think of it.

Before I left school, it was impossible for us to stay on in our old, broken-down apartment near the church. At the same time, it was almost impossible to find another home for a man with a sick wife and six children. Bernard Clossenmann solved the problem. He was a friend of my father’s who was in the coal-trucking business (his whole equipment consisted of two horses and two wagons). He let us have an apartment in his house on the Hillerheide, about two miles from town. One of his drivers, a little doubled-up fellow, drank schnapps and was drunk most of the time. One evening he asked me to come into his indescribable room in the stable, where he was lying in some filthy straw on the floor. Suddenly he jumped up and said, “Help me to catch those white mice.” I told him that I did not see any white mice, but that I could see many rats running around. He said that he could see only white mice. He was suffering from delirium tremens. He died a few days later.

When I was fourteen years of age, I left school and joined my father in his business. I did some buying from the farmers and some selling to the local butcher shops.

Every Sunday I went through the city, collecting the weekly accounts from our customers. My father was well satisfied with my work — at least I guess he was, for he never showed it. This was the old-fashioned way of bringing up children. We did not get patted on the back for what we did. I certainly did not get much praise. Sometimes I got spanked. Though I did not always know why, I felt no doubt that I deserved it. Perhaps I had a guilt complex because once in a while I took a few Pfennige from my father’s pocket to buy candies or fruit drinks.

It never occurred to me that my father should pay me wages. I thought that I was just doing my duty. Sometimes I overheard him complaining about me to his friends. They would tell him that I was a good boy and had business sense. I knew he was proud of me, but that he did not want to show it.

As time went on, my father’s business improved. We left the Hillerheide when he was able to buy a house for six thousand marks (about fifteen hundred dollars) on the outskirts of Recklinghausen. It was at Bruchweg 37, a house which still stands. We called it das kleine Häuschen, the little house.

But it was really not much of a house, one bedroom for the three boys, another for the three girls, and a bedroom for my father and mother. There was a small kitchen and a little sitting room, in the centre of which a trap door led down steps to the cellar where we kept our vegetables and father’s wine. The house was sparsely furnished, but my father loved company and entertained his customers, who bought beef and pork from him. I remember one special customer, Max Niesel, who was a small man, very neatly dressed. He usually came on Sunday to pay his weekly account and always carried a small brush with which to clean his suit and hat. Other customers who came were the Bieder brothers, Hermann and Gustaf, and Heinrich Wentzmann, Johann Kurze, and Jan Mahlberg, the latter a good-looking, tall man. They got together with my father for a drink. When they had more than enough, there were arguments involving the cost of meat and the prices charged by my father, although he had a difficult time making a living. But soon they were all friends again, with no hard feelings. Near our little house was the city abattoir, where we handled our business. The director, Josef Krekeler, was a shy, friendly man. My father’s best friend at one time was Josef Beste, who, I think, drank more and sang more songs with him than all the others. But later on he turned against my father. I do not know the exact reason for it, but I suppose it may have been jealousy when he went into the business of competing against my father.

When I was about sixteen, I decided to leave home to find a job somewhere else. But I did not get far. After being away in Hamburg and Berlin for about a week, I became
so homesick that I could not bear it any longer. So I came back home, slipped into my bedroom without being seen, and lay down to sleep. Later, my father came in and saw me. He took one look and used only one word, "Feigling" (coward). He was happy that I had come back, but he sought to impress upon me the need for courage and persistence in doing the things I wished to do.

When I was seventeen years old, I went on buying trips with my father to Hamburg, to Husum, and sometimes to Berlin. In Hamburg, we went to his favourite hotel to stay overnight — the Hotel Du Nord, owned by Wilhelm Tiede, near the stockyards. It was not a luxury hotel but it served good food and had good rooms. I still remember that it was the Hotel Du Nord where my father introduced me to oysters on the half-shell. In Berlin, we stayed at a hotel near the Alexanderplatz railway station.

My father always drank half a bottle of red wine with his meals, especially at Schumann's Hotel in Husum. I thought the food was wonderful, especially the lamb stew. Once, when he was not feeling well, he sent me alone on a buying trip and I have reason to remember when the bill came in from Schumann's Hotel. It showed a charge of seventy-five Pfennige (then fifteen cents) for half a bottle of red wine. Wine with meals, it seemed, was a privilege for grown-ups, not for teen-age boys. Neither wine nor tobacco interested me much. As a boy, I never cared to smoke, and even later, when I was a soldier, I never dared to smoke in the presence of my father. This was not from fear, but from respect for him.

On one occasion, when father sent me alone on a buying trip to Hamburg, I went to the bank and got fifteen thousand marks in one-thousand-mark bills. The bank teller told me to be careful, as the notes were new. I was to buy livestock. I arrived in Hamburg at night about ten o'clock and planned to go to the Reeperbahn, a district of coffee houses, night clubs, and brothels. I thought it would be better not to take this large amount of money with me, so I gave it all to an elderly friend from Recklinghausen South, asking him to keep it overnight. The next morning he gave me the wallet, but I did not count the money. Then I went out to buy livestock, and after I had paid for what I had bought, I discovered that my money was one thousand marks short. I was in a panic. I could not accuse the man of taking it out of the wallet so I went home and confessed to my father what had happened. I well remember his counsel: "It is very hard on us that you should have to lose one thousand marks. It is not even my own money, as I borrowed it from the bank. But maybe this will be a lesson for you. This man may have been dishonest or maybe not, but he could have kept all the money and told you in the morning that you never gave him any at all. There would have been nothing you could have done about it. And it would have ruined me completely." This is one of the lessons I learned early.

Despite my increasing responsibilities, life as a young man of eighteen or nineteen years of age was agreeable and interesting. But there were two misfortunes I had to accept. My mother suffered a disability that left her more and more crippled. My oldest sister, Klara, helped in the household, while the other sisters, Lilli and Emma, and my youngest brother, Adolf, were still attending school. The other problem was that my father was not a well man. He suffered from diabetes, with the result that more and more responsibility fell on my shoulders.

When I reached the age of twenty-one, I had to report to the draft board and the day came for my physical examination. As much as my father hoped I wouldn't be drafted, I was looking again for something new and wanted to get into the army. I wonder today why I did not give more consideration to staying on in the business. It must, as always, have been some restlessness and looking for new challenges and greener pastures.

During the examination, the doctor measured my height and found that it was 152 centimetres. The lowest height accepted was 154 centimetres, so I just missed the lowest category. The doctor was writing each recruit's height on his chest and on mine he wrote "M/M", for "mindest
"Mass", the lowest figure. I was greatly disappointed. Tears came to my eyes and I begged the officer on duty to let me join the army. He told me he could use me in the "train", that is, the service supply battalion, where the training was for one year compared with two years in the infantry and three in the cavalry. My father received this news with mixed feelings, but he was pleased that I would be away for one year only. I was happy that I had been accepted as a soldier.

I had to report for duty about two months later and, needless to say, no part of the issue uniform — not even the underwear — fitted me. All my uniform had to be altered, and I called myself the shortest soldier in the whole German army. I lived with about a dozen others in a barracks room and all my belongings had to be kept in one small locker. My nearest neighbours were two nice farm boys. They felt pity for the little fellow from the city and were always helpful. We became good friends.

After a short time I became very homesick but finally I accepted my lot as a soldier and tried not to take training and all else connected with it too seriously. I was on good terms with everyone. I looked forward to my first leave and was happy to get to see my family.

After my leave of absence was exhausted my thought was "How can I make it possible to visit my family soon again?" One day, I was in the barn where the horses of the officers were stabled, and I noticed a good-looking grey horse, which was for sale. I suggested to the horse's owner, Oberleutnant Becker, that I would like to buy the horse if I could have time off to ride it home and stay with my family for a week. The officer agreed. When I arrived home my father was delighted to see me, though I was counting on him to give me the money to pay for the horse. We soon found out that the animal was lame. Though it involved some financial sacrifice, my father said it was worth it to have me home for a short visit. When I went back to the garrison, I paid for the horse, which I had left with my father.

My one year of military service ended in the fall of 1911.

Shortly after my return home, the first tragic event took place in our family. Our beloved mother died, at the age of fifty-one. My father survived her by only two months. The cause of his death was diabetes, for which there was then, before insulin was discovered, no known cure. He was fifty-two years of age.

The day came on which we buried my father. We six children were at the cemetery with Simon Tannenbaum, who also functioned as the rabbi. He addressed me personally and said, "Fritz, today you are father and mother to your brothers and sisters. Your duty is to look after them and bring them up and I know you will do this. Your parents will be watching you and the good Lord will bless you for it." In the years that followed, these words were always with me and I tried as well as I could to live up to Simon Tannenbaum's injunction. I am sure that without the responsibility I assumed at that time I would not have lived such a happy and full life as I have done.
YEARNING

Hear in the rumble of railroads
The yearning of my heart,
For faraway morning glories
Are calling me, calling me: Start!

To roam is the perfume of being,
Of being beyond time and space,
Of feeling and sensing and seeing
The pulse of the whole human race.

E.M.M.
A Private in the Kaiser’s Army

Two years later Germany was at war and I was called for duty on the fourth day after war was declared. Hundreds of young men of my age were reporting at the same time and place. Our reserve garrison unit assembled at Münster, about forty miles north of Recklinghausen.

The Wachtmeister (desk sergeant) recognized me from my previous service three years earlier, and he gave me a position as clean-up man in which I had to use a broom to sweep up the leaves and keep the premises clean. This went on for several months. I came to be looked upon as a comical figure. Everybody from the NCOs up to the colonel laughed when they saw this little fellow. I played my part as a clown. I saluted one and all with my broom.

There came a day when I got a bit tired of this funny business. I thought I should get another job, or at least a promotion. The desk sergeant told me a transfer was possible since one of the captains needed an orderly, or batman, and this suited me. The captain was a reserved, elderly man who lived in a private apartment near the barracks. In private life he was a wealthy manufacturer of fine cutlery in Solingen. I became his orderly and went every morning to his rooms to brush his uniforms and shine his shoes. These duties took little of my time so I had the rest of the day to myself until the time came when I had to be back in barracks, usually in the evening. My captain voiced no objection when I requested permission to go home almost every weekend, to see that my sisters were getting along all right, and to do what I could to keep our business going. Because both my brothers, Emil and Adolf, were in the army, as well as I, and Uncle Carl had died in 1913, there was no one else to attend to business matters.

The landlady who rented a room in her apartment to my captain was amenable to my suggestion that, for a small sum, she should take charge of the captain’s boots without his knowledge. Soon I had nothing at all to do as an army orderly. The captain made little demand on my time. I was excused from most drills and parades. One day I received permission to live outside the barracks, as some other soldiers did. In fact, I rented a room from my captain’s landlady, in the same premises in which he lived. An officer and his batman living in handy, rented rooms off limits, outside the barracks! It seemed to be unprecedented in the German army. My captain had talked about this cozy arrangement in the officers’ mess. He was the envy of his fellow officers. I enjoyed a brief fame as the orderly who went in and out of the barracks as he and his officer wished.

Most important to me, I could go home more frequently. Whenever I could, I bought cattle in the surrounding district and then shipped them to Recklinghausen when I could go there and sell them to our customers. I was keeping the business alive with difficulty.

We had a family tradition of army service, and it was not surprising that all three of the Mendel boys promptly entered the German military service at the outbreak of war in 1914. Both my father and my grandfather had served three years each in the Prussian army. As for me, I had had dreams in my boyhood of being a soldier. My brother Emil had gone into the army in 1913 to take his compulsory training, so that he was already on active
service in 1914. My younger brother, Adolf, volunteered in 1914, leaving only our three sisters at home. During my time as an army orderly in the garrison in Münster, I had only one overriding wish. That was to go back home and carry on my responsibilities as head of the family.

In the years after my father died, and prior to the outbreak of war, I reorganized his business completely. I was making a success of it. Our family of six children carried on happily. We left our parents' little house soon after my father's death and rented an apartment in a new house owned by a friend in the Henriettastrasse. It had three bedrooms, a kitchen, and a living room, and it was located not far from the city abattoir where I conducted most of my business. We could now afford a maid.

At that time, Emil was employed with a grain firm in Düsseldorf, to which he had been apprenticed when he left school. He came home regularly each weekend. We were all fond of Emil, a handsome man with the black hair and olive complexion of a South German. He was known in the family as the “Sinsheimer”, that is, the boy from Sinsheim, the village near Heidelberg where our mother was born. Emil bought stylish, even elegant clothes. My sisters called him der Feine, that is, the man of distinction. He wore shiny, pointed shoes, which I told him were too narrow for his feet. He was handsome as a boy and as a man throughout his lifetime, even when his thick, black hair had turned white. Our sisters said that when they got married their husbands should be “as good-looking as Emil and as smart as Fritz”. They were right about Emil’s looks, but I think they overrated my intelligence.

I went on weekly buying trips, on which I became acquainted with cattle buyers from many other cities. In Schleswig-Holstein the cattle fattened on grass during the summer, and sales were held from June to October. On Mondays I usually went to Husum for a day or two, and then to Hamburg and sometimes, though not often, to Hanover. By Saturday I would travel to Berlin, where the cattle market was held on that day. I would travel back to Recklinghausen Saturday night, in order to sell livestock on Sundays. During my absence, Uncle Carl would look after business, and after his death, my younger brother, Adolf, helped out.

During these trips I was always in the company of other buyers from cities like Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Freiburg, Düsseldorf, Essen, Dortmund, Cologne, Gelsenkirchen, Bochum, Münster, Osnabrück, Elberfeld, and other cities. We travelled by train, and there was an element of class distinction among the buyers. Some refined, educated men travelled second-class; some travelled third-class. We played cards together, a game called “skat”, and we talked about cattle and women. One of my friends who always had a smile on his face was Albert Levy, a hunchbacked man who undertook to introduce me to brothels in Hamburg. The brothel girls liked to pat his hump for luck. I remember the two Eschenbach brothers from Elberfeld, a pair of aristocrats, blond and fine-looking men, gentlemen of the old school. Their sons, Carl and Willi, became my friends, and Willi at one time became my partner. There was Herman Knigge from Bielefeld, and Herman Hertz and his partner, Baruch, from Essen. Herz’s sons were friends of mine. All these fine, decent people who worked hard for a living are gone now.

I extended my buying trips at times north to Copenhagen and as far east as Königsberg. I felt like a king and travelled second-class, often in a sleeping car. I did not miss many opportunities to attend stage performances and variety shows at the Hansa Theatre in Hamburg and the Winter Garden in Berlin. I went to dance halls and I began to see the night clubs as well, when time permitted. Everything seemed to come easily for me, without particular effort. But I always came home for the weekends to sell the livestock I had bought during the week.

I was very strict with my sisters and would not allow them to go out with boyfriends. As for me, I had some affairs of passing fancy, but my three sisters, for their part, did their best to protect me from any harm. There was an entertainment place in Recklinghausen, the Villa Franca,
to which travelling singers and dancers occasionally came on tour. One day I met one of the Villa girls, about twenty years of age. I thought I was quite an important fellow when she joined me after the show for a drink. This happened a number of times, so I invited her to spend one free evening with me in Dortmund, a larger city fifteen miles away. We spent the evening together in a cabaret, the Jung Mühle. While we were there, she told me she was expecting a baby. She did not tell me who the father was, nor did I ask her. I did not know at that time much about girls in general and I thought it would be a nice gesture to give her one hundred marks, so that when the baby was born she could look after it properly. So we went back to Recklinghausen and I figured I had at least helped someone in need. When I got home about one o’clock in the morning, my three sisters were waiting up, each one with a broom. They must have heard something about my escapade, for they gave me a good thrashing. It seemed to me that I had acted unwisely, and yet I was truly innocent. I had not even kissed the girl.

My hobby was going to the races at Horst Emscher near Essen or the tracks in Dortmund or Düsseldorf. I always found the time for the race course or the cabaret, so I would not miss anything that might give me pleasure. I lived the life of a good spender before the war, and I encountered people who sought to take advantage of me. Two brothers who were butchers induced me to gamble on their horses. I gave them the money to bet but I never won. For several months I did not suspect them. Then I found that they were not placing the bets, since their horses were not capable of winning. They took the shortcut to fortune and put the money in their pockets. But this did not stop me from becoming part-owner of a horse named L’Amour, a gelding that seemed capable of winning. In May of 1914, L’Amour did win the Spring Handicap at Cologne.

My business flourished to the extent that within a few years of my father’s death I had paid up his debt in full. I got my notes back, and I repaid the loan from my Uncle Joseph. My eldest sister, Klara, proved to be a good manager of the household. She insisted that our younger sisters should attend a fashionable pensionnat to acquire good manners and to study music and learn French. So Simon Tannenbaum was proving to be right. The good Lord did bless me, and we were a happy family. That is, until the Great War came.

My life as a soldier, I remember, was neither difficult nor unpleasant. On Sunday I sometimes went to dinner with friends, the Rosenbergs. They were hospitable people who lived in an elegant apartment near the station in Münster. The father was a livestock dealer, a gentleman whose home was open to young men from the barracks, whom he invited to spend a few hours of leave from army life. I was interested in the Rosenbergs’ daughter but never plucked up enough courage to ask her to go out. The two sons later became doctors in the army. Within six months, our battalion received orders to prepare to go to the Western Front. I was fitted out with equipment for active warfare. One day when I was standing outside the barracks, Lieutenant-Colonel Geck, the commander of our battalion, came up and said, with a twinkle in his eye, “I see you are all fitted out to go to the front. In what capacity do you want to go?” I told him I would prefer to go as a lieutenant. This made him laugh to think that a private without any previous promotions should have the nerve to suggest that he might be promoted from private to lieutenant at one jump. He gave me a look and said, “I will see,” and walked away.

A few days later our battalion went on a route march in preparation for active duty. I was one of two men detailed as riders with a four-horse team pulling one of the supply wagons. The rider of the right-front horse was Hermann Bender, a farm boy. I rode the horse behind him next to the pole. Owing to my being so short, I always had a little box to serve as a step when mounting the horses. It was difficult to keep this little device of mine a secret, so it was a subject of comment in the whole battalion.
Hermann and I brought up the rear of the column. After some hours of riding under a hot sun, we became tired and thirsty. We were on a country road with blackberry bushes on either side. I called to Hermann to stop so that we could eat some berries. So we got off our horses and had a good fill. Then we remounted and tried to speed up to reach the rest of the battalion, which was well ahead. However, before we caught up with them, Colonel Geck recognized us and called out: "You damned loafers, I will have you both put in jail with rations of bread and water." However, the days passed by and nothing happened. Our commanding officer must have seen the funny side of our escapade. Soon afterwards I was posted on the board as a lance-corporal, which was a welcome surprise. This was my first and last promotion in the army.

After training for a few weeks at the barracks, our battalion got orders to leave for Hiltrup, a small village a few miles away. I still did not give up my private room on the Augustastrasse in Münster. Soon after this my company received orders to be ready to entrain for the front. As I got ready I was not happy to leave behind my family responsibilities. My two brothers were already on the Western Front and my three sisters were alone at home. My business was not being attended to. Yet I was too proud to request an exemption and afraid to risk the ignominy of staying behind when my comrades went to the battle areas. Instead I became ill. My trouble was rheumatism, an ailment that followed me in later life.

I received permission to leave the Hiltrup barracks and I returned to my rented room and went to bed. I felt that I was a deserter and was hoping that a miracle might happen to get me out of this predicament. Since I was absent from my detachment, I feared I would be arrested.

My captain, who lived in the next room, reported that I was sick in bed in my private room. I had a visit from a medical sergeant sent to examine me. He was not at all sympathetic. At first he said he would get me into a military hospital to determine if I was really sick or only pretending. I told him I could not move in bed, let alone walk to the hospital. Then he decided that he could do something of advantage to both of us and asked me if by chance I had any brandy. When I produced a bottle of Hennessy he said, "Now I will rub some of it on the place where you feel the pain and then we can both drink what is left in the bottle." The medical sergeant visited me two or three times daily and I always had to provide the brandy, some to use as a liniment and some for both of us to drink. This suited us very well. He told me that he himself was sick and would not be going to the front.

One day he said: "What shall I do with you?" I said, "You know I am not any good for active service, anyway." "No," he said, "you are no good for the Fatherland as far as going to the front is concerned. So I will report you are not in fit condition and should be discharged to be sent home." This was the best news I had heard for a long time. It was better news still when I heard that my unit had left Hiltrup. I was left behind when the battalion went to the front.

I reported to the hospital in the barracks for a checkup and after my examination was declared *untauglich* (unfit for military service). The papers were prepared for my discharge and I was advised that I would be better employed as a civilian supplying the army with meat than wasting my time in uniform as a misfit.

As a private in the army of Kaiser Wilhelm II, I developed the view, which has never left me, that militarism is a wasteful and senseless policy. At the time, I made no attempt to give expression to any such viewpoint. I served in uniform during most of the first year of the 1914-18 war, rose to be a lance-corporal, never saw the front, and received a discharge for medical reasons just in time to get home to save my business from going completely down the drain.

In the army, we were all seized with a patriotic excitement that generated great energy in most of the men. I know that I devoted my whole energy to carrying out whatever I was called on to perform. We all shared the
impression that the German Fatherland was in desperate peril from France and Belgium and other nations of the West, an opinion I did not revise until later when, as a civilian, I travelled in neutral countries buying meat for the German army. I came to realize that we were dominated by the power of false propaganda, as it can be manipulated by a modern government.

As a soldier, I came to realize that I did not convey a very strong impression that I would make good soldier material. The officers of our reserve garrison battalion came to accept this view. The military value of my service dropped steadily, in their eyes. A routine discharge was justified and I had plenty of personal, family reasons to accept it myself.

As a Jewish soldier, I did not encounter any problem of anti-Semitism in the Kaiser’s army, though Germany was a country of exaggerated class and religious distinctions. In peacetime, very few Jews could hope to become officers in the German army. During the war, few Jews were selected as junior officers. But there was certainly no lack of patriotism among Germany’s relatively few Jewish citizens. Many Jews under draft age did join up voluntarily, and many of them lost their lives in the end, as did my brother Adolf, and also my wife’s brother and many other relatives and friends of our family.

I learned only one good thing in the German army. Under penalty of severe punishment and a jail sentence, no soldier could make a complaint, whether justified or not, until twenty-four hours after the occasion that caused it. The reasoning in this was to allow time for the soldier to cool off. This is a good rule not only in the army; it should apply in civilian life as well. Apart from this one lesson, I could not see why healthy men should be called on to waste three or more years of their lives.

It is a satisfaction to me, especially in view of my later experiences with Hitler and the Nazis, that I can look back at the German army and its militarism from a humorous point of view. I would concede that my view might be different if I had lived in a democratic country where there was some real liberty to fight for, and where human beings were treated as such. But in Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II there was certainly no genuine democracy. If my views make me a rebel, then I am proud to be one.

I did not have a very lengthy or distinguished military career, yet I know that many German Jews did. They had great patriotism. They were repaid for it with treatment that was even worse than that received by my ancestors during the Spanish Inquisition before they left Spain hundreds of years ago.

So much for my army life.
ON SEEING MY FIRST
FRANZ MARC

From the lighted window
Of a gallery
Blue and purple horses
Buck and leap at me.

Untamed spirits soaring,
Earthly like the ground.
Strength, no frame can hold you.
Nature, never bound.

Berlin 1932

E.M.M.
3 The Home Front Cracks Up

How good it was to be out of uniform and back home reunited with my sisters. In the year I had been in the army, many things had changed. The old Germany was surely passing away, and a new, exciting Reich was emerging amid great storms of patriotism. The German army was winning everywhere. Belgium was occupied. Victories were announced almost every day. The daily Recklinghausener Zeitung posted news bulletins in its windows. There was great excitement as the word spread that still another victory had come to our wonderful boys at the front. From the Eastern Front came news of advance after advance. The German army, we believed, was invincible and would triumph over all our enemies. The great battle of Verdun in 1915 kept everyone in suspense for days, and then the news was certain. Germany had scored her greatest victory, and France was defeated. The French were calling in a new leader named Clemenceau to save the situation. The war entered the long attrition of trench warfare in which the pendulum never swung far to either side. That is, until Russia crumbled and collapsed. That was in 1917, and in the same year the United States of America came into the war. In Potman’s coffee house in Recklinghausen, we saw all these events come and go, as we discussed the war news each morning. No one doubted Germany’s ability to win.

For myself, the business of buying cattle was becoming more and more difficult. Many bureaucratic restrictions were introduced in 1915 to control and regulate food supplies. Government regulations made it almost impossible to carry on a business, especially the business of finding livestock for the butchers of Recklinghausen. My business career had reached a pause, a lull, perhaps even a dead end. It was in virtual stagnation. So I had plenty of time on my hands. Most men of my age — I was twenty-seven in 1915 — had been called up, and even many in higher age brackets. I spent a good deal of time with a small group of older men who met at Potman’s café to discuss the war news. We were all great philosophers and strategists. We weighed afresh every day the rumours that swept the town from time to time. There was Isaac Bachrach, the bachelor-lawyer-philosopher. There was Franz Plantenberg, the conductor of the Eintracht, the male chorus. And there was Dr. James Frankenstein, the dentist, piano player, and singer. We often started with the war but ended up talking about music. These three were all over age for the army, and we spent a large part of our free time together, sipping coffee made by Mrs. Potman, a charming lady who often joined in the discussion.

We were joined, too, by Max Winckelmann, the owner of the Deutscherhof, the leading hotel in Recklinghausen. Winckelmann was a big man, six feet four inches tall, and a connoisseur of Rhine and Moselle wines. Another man who came to our table frequently was Hermann Hansen, the former chef of a railway dining car. He had married the daughter of the proprietor of a Herberge (rooming house of the kind known in America as a flophouse), which Hansen operated after his father-in-law died. He had been ambitious to cut a better figure in society, so he invested the profits from his rooming house in a new hotel. In order not to lose his best source of income he built rooming-house accommodation at the back of his Central Hotel,
and under the same management. Flophouse clients went in one door; genteel patrons of the hotel went in another. But the project failed. Hansen found he could not have his cake and eat it, too. His hotel clientele did not relish an establishment that was part flophouse, and his flophouse clientele went elsewhere. He went broke. Even so, he remained cheerful. He was an expert in making Napoleon tarts (Schnitte). “A man,” he would say, “may be a great general or a wise philosopher, but not everybody can make a Napoleon tart.”

Then good fortune suddenly shone on me, an unexpected miracle. Hans Dall of Hamburg, to whom I had paid my father’s debt, wrote me to come to Hamburg and see about a business opportunity. He had been authorized by the military command to buy up all pork sides available in Sweden and Denmark. He offered me the opportunity of participating in these purchases. With Richard Kraul, his nephew, I took on the commission for the two countries and it was fairly lucrative. I soon thought of extending the purchases to Holland as well, and I took another partner, named Ludwig Lyon, from Oberhausen, a city close to the Dutch border. He was a gentle, thin man with a long beard. His wife, a heavy-set lady, travelled with us on our business trips. I travelled through the neutral countries, staying at such luxury hotels as the Grand Hotel in Stockholm, the Amstel Hotel in Amsterdam, and the Hotel Angleterre in Copenhagen, not to forget the Oranje-Nassau in Arnhem, the Victoria in Rotterdam, and many others.

I was on my feet again. I had no trouble in getting the necessary finances for these large orders from Herr Direktor Heitman, manager of the bank in Recklinghausen which later merged with the Deutsche Bank. Hermann Heitman, a big man with a long moustache, and his second-in-command, Walter Grevel, provided me with ample financial credit. At that time, I found, the German mark was at a slight discount in the neutral countries. That was my first lesson in the effects of inflation on the German currency.

When I visited the neutral countries, I found that the people disliked the Germans, accusing them of starting the war and overrunning Belgium. I was depressed by this attitude. At first I could not believe it. As I talked more and more to these people, who were quite intelligent, I was persuaded by their opinions. In the end, I was convinced that Germany did start the war.

Meanwhile I lived well. I had the best of food. It was possible for me to take home many delicacies for my family and my friends. In Germany, the people began to feel the pinch of war. Food became scarce. Meat was in short supply. The wealthy people were able to buy food on the black market, which began to flourish.

In 1915 I first met my future wife, in Krefeld, a city in the Rhineland. Claire Kaufmann was living with her widowed mother. She was a pretty blonde and I fell in love with her. We became engaged. My sisters received the news with understanding and welcomed my fiancée into the family. We celebrated our engagement with bonbons, fine foods, and other presents brought from neutral countries.

There is a little story I should tell about how I picked the day for our wedding. Claire and I had been engaged for some months, without any mention of a date for marriage. Claire’s mother, Mrs. Kaufmann, and her uncle, Max Gompertz, a manufacturer of hats and caps, began to drop hints that it was time for us to set a day. We were very much in love and saw no reason for haste. The pressure was put on me. Max urged me to announce a wedding date; Mrs. Kaufmann said that we should get married by July at the latest. I agreed and I chose the last day of that month.

We were married on July 31, 1916, and spent our honeymoon on a Rhine river steamer going from Cologne to Coblenz, then to Mannheim and Heidelberg. We visited relatives in Sinsheim. At that time of the year, salmon from the Rhine was a great delicacy, combined with bottles of Henkell Trocken champagne. Despite the increasing sense of war strain in Germany, our honeymoon was a great joy.
I bought a fashionable house at Paulusstrasse 8 in Recklinghausen — the only house on the street, incidentally, that was destined to be completely destroyed in the Second World War. My fiancée had had an excellent education. She was artistically inclined and had a flair for interior decoration. During our engagement she had ordered Chippendale furniture from Stadler of Paderborn, considered the leading furniture makers in Westphalia.

My three sisters remained in the apartment on Henriettastrasse. We all became preoccupied with the war. My wife and sisters were busy sending parcels to the Western Front, to our two brothers and many friends. My wife had two brothers, one on the Western and the other on the Eastern Front. We were happy, but conditions in Germany deteriorated rapidly. I was afraid that the war was not going well.

The time came when the general food situation affected our own home. I could no longer bring food across the border from neutral countries. Parcels were searched by the customs officers when I re-entered Germany. When we were expecting our first baby, I tried to bring in a pair of little shoes. The customs people took them away from me. The situation was becoming more serious and the only plentiful food was a few vegetables. My wife ate a good deal of rice in order to keep up her strength during her pregnancy.

Conditions inside Germany were becoming hectic. My activities as a purchaser of meat in the neutral countries came to an end. The neutral countries put embargoes on shipments of meat to Germany in order to conserve supplies for their own needs. My own business in Recklinghausen was steadily dwindling away.

Conditions became worse. By the time our baby, Johanna, was born on June 14, 1917, hardly anyone still thought that the war could be won by Germany. The entrance of the United States on the side of the Western Allies was a severe psychological blow.

The German High Command became desperate about the supply of food, especially meat, for the fighting forces, and there was not much left for the home front. An organization was set up with headquarters in Düsseldorf in the Rhineland with the power to buy or confiscate everything that was available to feed the army. I became busy again, making cattle purchases for this organization. My job was to buy cattle along the Dutch border. Most of the cattle had been smuggled over the border into Germany to sell for high prices, despite the efforts of the government of Holland to prohibit exports.

This work did not last long for me. Meanwhile, the internal breakdown in Russia culminated in the Bolshevik Revolution. It did not help Germany much, but it did provide me with a bizarre sideline to my business activities. On one occasion, when I was visiting Berlin, a banker acquaintance introduced me to two Russians who wanted to buy ruble notes issued by the Czarist régime. They told me that ruble notes were available in Holland. Russian farmers, it seemed, when selling their grain and livestock, would accept only these old rubles with the Czar's picture. They would not touch the new currency of the Kerensky régime. The bankers in Berlin were paying gold coin for Czarist rubles.

This was a new venture for me, since the only business I had known was buying and selling livestock. I got in touch with my connections in Holland and discovered that the Dutch bankers were pleased to sell ruble notes at any price. I secured suitcases full of Czarist banknotes, which I shipped to Berlin. When I turned the rubles over in Berlin the buyers paid me in gold coin, carefully packaged in little rolls of fifty pieces each. Needless to say, this was the most profitable venture I had ever undertaken in my life, and I became wealthy, as the saying is, beyond my wildest dreams. I stored the gold coins in the attic under the roof of my home. I felt like King Midas, but at the same time I was a most unhappy man. What could I do with this gold? It was against the law by then for anyone to retain gold coins in his possession.

In spite of the shortage of consumer goods, there was plenty
of entertainment for the people who could afford to pay for it. There were many cabarets — intimate night clubs — where you could eat food at high prices. The entertainment included sophisticated chatter on topical events by such comics as Oscar Hermann Roer with his monocle. There were numerous dancing acts with scantily clothed girls. The *nouveaux riches* consumed champagne in Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Essen, and Cologne, while the war was being lost.

The races continued at Horst Emscher near Essen and at all the more important race tracks. It was unbelievable that many people were in a position to spend money on such things, while the mass of the German people suffered. I look back at my own life in those days and wonder that I could enjoy these amusements. It seems we must go through great suffering ourselves to understand the sufferings of others and feel any desire to help them. The German people had never known democracy, and the strict régime smothered the instinct to rebel.

I remember one occasion when I came back from the horse races in Hanover, travelling in a first-class sleeper. The coach was filled with soldiers, including officers coming back from leave to return to the Western Front. Many of them stood in the corridors all the way, dead tired. As I entered my compartment an officer asked me if I would let him lie down on the floor. I offered him my berth, which he gratefully accepted, and I lay down on the floor myself. It gave me a great deal of satisfaction that I could do this for him. I could not get this incident out of my mind. I am not ashamed to admit that, when I saw the young boys singing on their way to the front, I shed some tears and could not understand why these fine lads had to be sacrificed.

I am not ashamed either to say that I was not a patriot, because I felt then, and still feel today, that all war is wrong. If all the top officers in the army from the generals down, all the politicians, industrialists, and war profiteers, could be the first to be sent into action to serve under fire, there would be no wars, and other ways would be found to settle disputes among nations.

With all the ruthlessness, corruption, and open bribery that marked the First World War, it is astonishing that exactly the same thing could be repeated twenty years later. How easily people forget all the miseries they have gone through and how difficult they find it to learn from past experience.

It is not surprising to me that the Germans lost the war when I remember the injustice of the society that the German soldier was called upon to fight for. The men were regarded only as cannon-fodder. After the war was lost, some soldiers laid their hands on their officers, stripping off their epaulettes and heaping insults upon them. But one must remember that many officers as well as soldiers had lost their lives for the Fatherland, and petty revenge is not the way to correct social inequities. There is one fact that I would like to emphasize: The Jewish population in Germany during the 1914-18 war was only 400,000; yet the percentage of Jews killed in action was high in comparison to the population as a whole.

When the war finally ended, the people of Recklinghausen were jubilant for a time. The town was full of rumours about military and economic conditions. Most citizens were close to the end of their resources, and they had had enough war and trouble. Only the very wealthy people had escaped the severe impact of war, and there were not many of them in my home town. The wealthy people, too, had been proud to send their children to the war, though they escaped the economic suffering visited upon the poor, who were the large majority of Westphalians. Everyone felt a sense of relief when the end came, though it was mixed with apprehension about what the defeat would bring.
THE IMPRESSIONISTS

Infants of Visual Joy,
How sparkles the Earth
Since you gave it Breath.

How vibrates the air,
How swells the fresh fruit,
How melts sky to ground,
How tingles my Being.

The Juice of Life runs over.

E.M.M.
4 The Great Inflation

The war of 1914-18 did more than change the political structure of the old Germany. The Alte Kaiserreich became a republic. Germany suffered a relatively mild attack of revolutionary violence, which, however, did not extend to quiet cities like Recklinghausen. But business never did get back to prewar ways and habits. The economy of Germany seemed to suffer a slow fever that, as we found out in three or four years, was the forerunner of the great galloping inflation of 1923.

In Recklinghausen, people soon resumed old ways and old thinking. They resented militarism and rejoiced that the war was over. Most of them seemed to be all for socialism and democracy. The Spartacus party, which was radical socialist in character, took over in many cities in western Germany and initially there was some street violence. Soon British and French occupation troops kept the lid on. The Spartacists of Recklinghausen certainly were not militant, and the new working-class politicians did little harm to anyone. Undoubtedly I myself looked fairly well nourished, but they did not molest me in any way. The Allied occupation forces were billeted in private homes in many cases. We ourselves had one or two pairs of French soldiers in our home. My friend Otto Cosman, a local merchant, found out the hard way that some people have long memories. He was one of the first to wear a red carnation to exhibit sympathy with the new socialist régime. Later, when the right wing became stronger, they boycotted his clothing store, and he nearly went broke.

The Kaiser abdicated and went into exile in Holland. All or most of the ruling heads of central Europe disappeared. Inside Germany, the generals, the industrialists, the Junker class, all these and many others simply retired from the scene. They went underground, as we might say today, while the German people pursued an experiment in socialist government that extended from the Reichstag to city halls across the country. In our part of Germany, we had few demonstrations and none of the riots that occurred in Berlin and other big cities when the Spartacists transformed themselves into the German Communist party and sought to take over power from Friedrich Ebert, first president of the postwar republic and the leader of the Social Democrats.

In the early 1920s, Germany was sowing the seeds of its future troubles. It was not very long before the old masters of intrigue started to blame Dr. Ebert and his Socialists for the loss of the war. Some of my readers will remember der Dolchstoss von hinten (the stab in the back). Newspapers such as the Rheinische-Westfälische Zeitung accused the Socialists of being responsible for the defeat by the Allies. This propaganda was financed by the big coal and mine magnates and high financiers. The same accusations were being made all over Germany. In Berlin, I recall, the Deutsche Zeitung, the organ of the wealthy landowners and industrialists, sang the same refrain. As always in Germany, no one did anything about these accusations. The government at the time was inept and inexperienced. It made its blunders and the bureaucrats took their little bribes.

The seeds of anti-Semitism were nourished by the same press in its campaign to destroy the Social Democrats. In Germany, whenever anything went wrong, some people
always blamed the Jews. The Jews were, in fact, very much in the minority. On the eve of the Second World War, the population of Germany was more than 60,000,000 and of that number only 250,000 (according to Nazi figures) were Jews, and not a single one of them was among the high-ranking executives of German industry or big business of any kind. In my home town of Recklinghausen, with a population of 30,000, there were only twenty-five Jewish families, and only two or three of them were fairly well off. They owned small stores.

One pleasant event in 1919 was the arrival of our second daughter, Eva. I was waiting in the living room with some friends. Many bottles of champagne had been consumed. My wife wanted to have the baby at home and only the midwife attended her. When a little girl was announced I was disappointed at not having a son, but since then I have never entertained any such regrets. Our two girls have given us great pride and pleasure during the whole of our lives.

I was slowly rebuilding my old business. I had two families to care for — my wife and two daughters in one house, and my three sisters in another with my brothers, Emil and Adolf, who had come back from the front. There was not enough in my business for three brothers, so I suggested to a friend, Heinrich Henne, the representative of the Düsseldorf stock exchange at the Deutsche Bank in Recklinghausen, that he should open a private banking business with my brother Emil. I financed this project and they opened an office in Duisburg, an industrial centre in the Rhineland. The younger brother, Adolf, had suffered the effects of an Allied poison gas attack on the Western Front, which was to contribute to his death at an early age. He stayed home and joined me in the business. We saw much of Emil, who made his weekly visits to Recklinghausen as he had when he was learning the grain business in Düsseldorf before the war.

I began to indulge my growing interest in race horses, a love that remained for many years. In 1919 I bought two yearlings, Menico and Allamund. They developed very nicely, especially Allamund, with whom I won the Gross-Hansa prize in Hamburg in June 1920. This was a great success, which I remember as one of the happiest days in my life. I celebrated my victory in the Hotel Atlantic for several days. The purse was considerable, and I also won a substantial bet on the race, at odds of 35 to 1. The bookies were not able to pay me the full amount.

What a wonderful city Hamburg was, and still is. I loved this place. Our favourite restaurant was the Schumann Oyster Cellar, where we could order lobster and caviar. Mr. and Mrs. Schumann were attentive hosts to myself and my friends, many of them horsemen and trainers from the racetrack. I remember the old and successful trainers such as George Arnell, Jimmie and Charlie Cooter, and Peter Trollsen, who came from England, as did the famous Mills family who were the leading trainers of trotting horses. This group of trainers and jockeys of English origin, some of whom married into German families, was ostracized later under the Nazi régime, to which it was firmly opposed.

Allamund's trainer was Peter Trollsen, and the horse won several races for me. I bought more horses and built up a racing stable. Later I selected as my own trainer Anton Horalek, a Czech, whose nickname was Pan.

I began to feel that I was involved in a risky and costly sport. I was spending more money than I could afford. As I look back, I realize that I was beginning to feel the effects of the great postwar inflation, which was building up to its peak. I was gambling more and more on my horses. Sometimes they won and sometimes they lost. I was one among many of the nouveaux riches who piled up fortunes in various businesses at a time when money was steadily losing its value. Many individuals started to build up a racing stud and the price of race horses soared, as did the price of everything else. The sure sign of a serious inflation is the anxiety of people to turn their money into tangible things such as real estate. There was a feverish hunt for things to invest in, such as Aktien (shares) and stocks. There seemed to be plenty of money around; in fact, there
was too much money and it was worth less and less. Finally, this led to a complete financial breakdown, and the government turned to Hjalmar Schacht, a banker who became commissioner of currency in 1923. He replaced the inflated mark with a new Rentenmark and was able to stabilize it.

A good deal of American money began to appear in Europe, but I believe most of it was lost in the great German inflation, so that for a long time many Americans regarded Germany as a not-so-sound place in which to invest. After the First World War, many rich Germans bought U.S. stocks for the first time, and the great inflation wiped them out. When the same inflationary pattern seemed to be building up again in the boom and depression crash of 1929, there was widespread fear in Germany that history was repeating itself. For myself, I avoided stocks and real estate. Livestock was something I knew about, so I invested one million marks in cattle. I wanted to build up a holding of one thousand head. I figured that a thousand head of cattle would always be exactly that, a thousand head of cattle. This was my inventory in a business I was thoroughly familiar with.

Also, I soon had from fifteen to twenty race horses. After Allamund won the Grosser-Hansa stakes in 1920, Leo Levin, a gentleman from Breslau in Silesia whom I had met at a race course in Berlin, offered to buy the horse. I told him I was not selling my best horse alone, but would sell my entire stable. When I got back to Recklinghausen, Levin wired me an offer of RM 1,000,000 for all my horses. He suggested that I meet him at the Central Hotel in Berlin. I went to keep the appointment and he produced two cheques, each for 500,000 marks, with the guarantee of the Reichsbank. I was relieved to sell my race horses, even if the money was inflated. Unfortunately for Levin, Allamund never won another race. In the end, it did not matter to Levin, who was one among many who went broke. For the time being, my racing career was at an end.

The slow cancer of inflation undermined the lives of everyone and destroyed the security of the entire middle class of the country. Hostility towards the Socialist régime grew steadily, and this was exactly what the upper classes were looking for. Many new laws were passed and enforced as harsh and desperate efforts were made by the government to preserve the value of money. I had reason to take notice of one new law in particular. It ordered everyone to deliver all the gold they possessed to the authorities. If anyone was found hoarding even a single gold coin, he could be put in prison for a long term, even for life, and the ultimate penalty was death.

I had reason to feel a growing alarm because I had nearly a million marks in gold coins hidden in the attic of my house, a hoard representing my venture into speculation in Russian rubles after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. Finally, I could stand the gnawing worry no longer. I was in a complete panic and convinced that if I continued to withhold this gold from the government it would cost me my life. Without saying anything to my wife, I got out of bed one night, took the gold coins, and began flushing them into the water toilet. The toilet became plugged. I had to clear it from time to time. I persevered until there was little left of the gold that I had hidden away for so long a time. I thought that this was the best way of disposing of it, foolish as it seems. My wife woke up and came to see what I was doing. She tried to save as much as she could and she fished some coins out of the toilet bowl. But I got rid of most of the gold. That is how I lost one fortune. In other words, easy come, easy go.

In my business, I had to watch carefully day by day so that I would be in a cash position to buy in one week at least the same amount of livestock I had bought the week before regardless of changing prices. The prices went up sharply as money steadily lost its value and profits were not enough to keep pace. The time came when the people in my office did not count the marks any more. It took too much time to count millions and billions in notes. We put them all in sacks and sent them to the bank, where the clerks did the counting. Eventually money lost its value altogether, fulfilling a prophecy made some years before by Herman
Heitman, our local banker. Heitman had predicted, after the end of the war, that the German mark would go the same way as the French assignat in the French Revolution, that is, become worthless.

Who were the sufferers? The little people of Germany, the small businessmen. When Johanna’s sixth birthday arrived, her Aunt Emma, my sister, gave her a present of fifty marks. Our advice, which she has never forgotten, was “spend it quickly and get candy for it. Tomorrow you may get nothing.” I remember that I had a life insurance policy at that time, and it became worthless in terms of the rapidly diminishing value of the mark. Insurance on houses and property became worthless. Pensions lost all value. My attitude to insurance, to stocks and bonds, and to all forms of financial investment changed as a result of the lesson of the great German inflation. I can understand the desire of the individual to possess a little piece of land where he can raise a cow and some vegetables. There is true worth for many people in the small plots of land which one sees in the outlying parts of cities, cultivated and tended for flowers and vegetables. Such plots are a hedge against inflation, and in my own case, I am happy to live on my ranch in Canada, not far from Saskatoon, surrounded by 250 acres of land.

The German inflation of 1923 was a time when people could buy hardly anything with their income. Unemployment rose sharply, and there were cases even in normally prosperous Recklinghausen of actual starvation. It was at this time that the Mendel family suffered a tragedy in the death of my youngest brother, Adolf. He had never fully recovered from the horrible experience of gas poisoning on the Western Front. Once again we were all assembled at a graveside in the little Jewish cemetery in Recklinghausen, with tears for our brother.

It was a time of sweeping changes in German politics. The Reich Chancellor, Matthias Erzberger, the leader of the Centre party, had tried to keep Germany on a middle course. However, he was murdered, the first of several such political assassinations. He was not forceful enough to suit the right wing, which was steadily taking control of Germany. Another shocking murder was the assassination in 1922 of Walter Rathenau, the foreign minister. Rathenau was an educated, cultured Jew with liberal ideas, who in private life was president of the great German public utility, Allgemeine Elektrizitätsgesellschaft (A.E.G.). He had been controller of raw materials during the war, and was minister of reconstruction in the Hindenburg Program. His murderers, young men from a right-wing organization, received light prison sentences of only a few years and were pardoned shortly after. The days of the Weimar Republic soon were numbered, but as long as it lasted the strong man was the minister of defence, Gustav Noske, who suppressed the Communist Spartacus party in 1919-20. He was known as a Social Democrat, but he never was a genuine socialist. He played both ends against the middle and was reputed to have sold out the police. He finally was dismissed by the Nazis.

I began to think about leaving Recklinghausen. These were uneasy years in German politics, full of economic troubles. I decided to accept a partnership in a large livestock commission firm in Berlin and left the Recklinghausen business in the hands of my partner. He was Heinrich Ifland, a fine, hard-working man and a steady friend. He ran the business successfully for many years and ultimately took it over entirely.
THE WANDERER

Wander, wander, wander,
North, East, South and West.
Smell sweet Oleander.
Never any rest.

People, horses, cattle,
Castles high in Spain.
Through the world I rattle,
Seeking peace in vain.

Will I find my Eden?
I'm a haunted man.
Poland, France and Sweden,
Catch me if you can.

Wander, wander, wander,
North, West, South and East.
Smell sweet Oleander.
Life is but a feast.

E.M.M.
5 The Last Gay Days of Berlin

When Emil announced that he intended to move to Berlin, I was sure it was a case of *cherchez la femme*. I was right. There was a lady mixed up in his plans, as we soon discovered when we all were settled in a large apartment in Berlin. She was a charming widow, a Mrs. Fuchs. I am sorry now that both Claire and I sought to discourage the course of true love. We made an English pun about her name and called her “Mrs. Fox”. Often we referred to her in French as “Madame Renard”. Claire would call to Emil as soon as he came home that “Madame Renard telephoned”. We teased him endlessly. We made so many joking inquiries about her reputation that Emil must have felt that we did not accept her as a woman to be introduced into the family. Today I regret this. He was very much in love with her and I am convinced that he would have been happy with her. As the *Bocher* (first-born) of the family and as Emil’s closest confidant, I should have been more understanding about his love affair. No two brothers ever were closer than Emil and I. The case of “Madame Renard” was one in which I was unfair to him and unthinking. It taught me the lesson never to presume to interfere in another’s affairs of the heart. I have followed this rule with my daughters and their children. As for Emil, he gave up Mrs. Fuchs and in time recovered.

My own decision to leave Recklinghausen had been forming for a long time. I wanted to enter a wider world of business opportunity, and the means to do so came to me with a partnership in one of the oldest livestock commission firms in the country, F. W. Zinck & Sohn, an establishment that had operated for 125 years in Berlin. The firm was well known to all in the cattle and meat industries, as it had at one time been what one might call the top of the establishment in the livestock commission trade. In the early days, before my time, the Brothers Zinck came to the stockyards in top hats and gloves to sell cattle to the wholesale butchers. Each deal was confirmed by a hand-shake. I followed this custom but without the top hat and gloves. A normal week’s turnover in the early days would be 10,000 hogs, 1,500 cattle and 1,000 calves, and several thousand sheep. My friend Karl Eschenbach, who had been a partner and still retained an interest in the firm, told me of impending changes. I took over his interest and entered into an equal partnership with the remaining member of the firm, Thomas Ingwersen. After a period of relative inactivity, I was looking forward to Berlin.

In addition to handling livestock, we were also agents for meat imported from Denmark. I had to be on the job at five o’clock in the morning, sometimes earlier, to be there when the retail butchers swarmed into the market for their day’s supplies of meat. The sale was usually completed by seven a.m. It was an unhappy life for me, lacking the friendly comradesship of the livestock dealers in the western cities of Germany, to which I was accustomed when living in Recklinghausen as the base of my travels and business missions. Methods of doing business were rougher and based less on trust, or so it seemed to me. The Berlin stockyards were the scene of hard bargaining and dog-eat-dog methods. There was an element of bully-boy types that easily switched aprons for the brown shirts of National Socialism. There was a phrase that described them—“the big bellies” of Berlin. As a small man engaged in livestock
dealing, I began to feel that the Berlin cattle market was not the most congenial place for me.

Later, there was not enough business to keep me occupied, and as a member of the firm, I found that my partner was firmly opposed to any changes in policy, a characteristic that later led him to welcome the rise of National Socialism under Adolf Hitler because it promised discipline and control inside Germany. It should not be forgotten that, while Hitler was at first a laughingstock when he appeared as a political figure, a man who had gone to jail for rioting and rowdy behaviour, he was yet able to win the silent admiration of countless middle-class Germans. When the Nazi rowdies had taken possession of the streets, it was too late to do anything about it. I do not know what became of my erstwhile partner in the cattle brokerage business, either during the war or afterwards. I remember that when I first went to Berlin in 1927 I was unhappy and often idle. I became homesick for Recklinghausen and my old life in West Germany.

We moved into an apartment of ten rooms near the Zoo at Goethestrasse 1, at the corner of the Steinplatz, a fashionable location in Berlin. I had gone a little bit overboard, and we were not able at first to furnish such a luxurious apartment fully. My wife was always able to make any place, large or small, comfortable and homelike, but we had at least two large rooms too many. They were used for a time mainly as a place for two little dogs that our little girls had acquired as family gifts.

Within a year after transferring to Berlin, that is, in 1928, I entered into another new business association, and it proved to be a turning point in my life. I became a partner of the Antwerp firm of Poels & Company. The Poels family was Dutch. The firm specialized in importing livestock from the Argentine, and it handled frozen beef as well. My friend Karl Eschenbach told me one day that Poels & Company expected 500–600 head of cattle in Hamburg by steamship from the Argentine, and he asked me to consider handling some of them. I met the head of the firm, Jan Poels, who lived in Holland and was a member of parliament. I had arranged credit with my bank connections sufficient to finance the entire shipment, and I bought it from Mr. Poels. We settled the deal with a handshake, the price being twenty-eight English pounds per head, delivered in Hamburg. The bankers who backed me were Sponholz, Ehestad & Schroeder.

I spent a week in Hamburg, since the cattle boat was delayed by storms. The cattle, when they arrived, were in poor condition. Jan Poels told me that, in view of the circumstances, he was prepared to reduce the price. I told him that I was prepared to accept his original figure without deduction, at least until I resold the cattle, at which time I would see whether I had lost money and was justified in asking him to cut the price. As it turned out, we both made money on the deal, and that was the beginning of a long friendship and a rewarding business association. All our dealings required nothing more than a handshake, in a mood of mutual confidence.

Poels & Company consisted of Jan and Henry Poels and their sons. They were dealers in livestock and meats, and it was I who suggested we should go into the production of bacon in eastern Europe. I had a friend in Schleswig-Holstein, Jens Boyskow, a livestock dealer, who had commenced in a small way to cure bacon and ship it from Husum to London, where there was a ready market. He produced Wiltshire sides of pork, cured and wrapped in burlap, for shipment by boat. Jan Poels had a cousin in London, a meat agent who reported that a good market existed in London for bacon and that the British taste would be well satisfied with a Polish product. Thus it was that we launched a business venture that would introduce modern packing-house methods into eastern Europe. Henry Poels, Boyskow, and I went to the Free City of Danzig and opened up a bacon plant, at a location we selected near that city's abattoir. That was our first plant. Poels & Company held fifty per cent interest in the venture, and I held the other fifty per cent. We appointed Jens Boyskow as our partner-director in charge in Danzig.
After opening in Danzig in 1928, in the same year we established plants in Poland at Dirschau (Tczew), Konitz, Naklo, Torun (Thorn), Poznan (Posen), and Lublin. I made many trips from our home in Berlin to establish and manage these enterprises. In 1930 our company opened two plants in Hungary, one at Papa and the other in Budapest, where later I established a home. Our partnership extended into Rumania and Bulgaria.

I was happy, once again, to be on the move in search of new frontiers. Our business, entirely outside of Germany, was expanding rapidly. An event of historic significance to the meat-packing industry took place when I was able to acquire the international patent rights to the Beisser process of curing hams, which made possible the famous tinned Polish ham.

In 1929 Georg Beisser, a butcher in Hamburg, perfected a curing process that revolutionized the preserving of meat. The old method was to preserve it by pickling through immersion. Beisser introduced the curing fluids through the vascular system so they worked from within through normal physical channels that were already there. This ensured equal preservation throughout and eliminated the waste and untreated areas which were left by former pickling processes, particularly in curing hams. The Beisser process was largely responsible for establishing the Polish ham as a superior product that was accepted widely. I purchased the patent rights from Beisser for the eastern European countries, Australia, and Canada. The date that Georg Beisser filed his patent in Ottawa, Canada, was January 3, 1930.

In partnership with Poels & Company we created a meat-packing empire in eastern Europe at a time when conditions in Germany became, from my point of view, more and more distressing. The day came when my brother Emil went broke as a private banker. He had a stock exchange seat and had speculated in shares. Now he worked for me and went to Poland as my representative in dealing with our plants there. I travelled many times to various plant locations, often accompanied by my wife, Claire. I realized how useful it was for me to have international connections. Hitler was emerging as a political figure, and the more I knew about the Nazis the less I liked them. I could foresee the danger of having all my eggs in a German basket. As I look back, I remember that a fear of Nazism grew in my mind. The handwriting of the future began to appear on the wall.

Danzig, where our first plant had been opened, was a new Polish port created as a “free city” under the terms of the Versailles Treaty. Near by was the pretty Baltic resort of Zoppot, which Claire and I visited often for a day or two of relaxation. There was a fine liqueur called Danziger Goldwasser, and a most famous delicacy was smoked Baltic salmon, served in small pieces strung together. To me one of the attractions of Zoppot was the casino, and I liked to go there to play roulette. I had an identification “carte” for admission to the casino, and I frequently reported to Claire that the train had been late or that I had missed it, while all the time I had been engaged in playing roulette. One evening when I showed up at the casino I was informed that I had been barred and could not enter. I could not understand the reason and I returned home disappointed. It was some ten years later that Claire confessed that she had gone to the casino authorities with our two small daughters and unfolded a harrowing account of how their father was spending too much time and money at the tables. They barred me.

My partners, the Poels family members, may have considered that I was moving and expanding the business too quickly. But they seldom opposed suggestions I made for opening new plants. The man with whom I dealt for the most part was Big Harry Poels, so called because there were several Poels men named Harry and each had a prefix for purposes of identification. Big Harry was six feet two inches in height. He and I spent much time together. He kept a record of all our dealings in a little notebook. In this way he had instant command of the necessary figures covering all our many transactions in each and every plant. One wonders if there is not today too much bookkeeping
and unnecessary duplication. Big Harry could give me in
a moment any information about prices and the financial
status of our affairs, even when we were operating at one
time as many as twelve to fifteen plants. He did not like
to work early in the day, and usually started in the after-
noon. He would sometimes spend the whole night putting
down figures in his little book. Needless to say, we also had
a complete system of bookkeeping at every one of the
plants.

Big Harry was a character with a tremendous joie de
vivre and a great capacity for liquid refreshment. I remem-
ber one time when we were together at the Hotel Bazar in
Poznan with a competitor named Drews. We three went on
an eating and drinking spree. I could not keep up their
pace. We consumed in two hours a tremendous meal with
quantities of vodka. After that we emptied three bottles of
Hennessy brandy. I poured most of my share into a flower
vase standing on the floor near me. I went back to my hotel
but within two hours they returned quite sober. Harry and
Drews awakened me and nothing would do but for me to
rise and start all over again.

On one occasion I was staying at the Hotel Europejski
in Warsaw and Big Harry arrived from Antwerp. I was
expecting him for dinner in the elegant dining room. It was
a cold winter night and Harry, bundled up in a heavy over-
coat, charged into the dining room. Two waiters stopped
him at the door since he had not removed his overcoat. He
threw them both aside with hardly an effort and shouted,
"I want to see Herr Mendel." He marched to my table and
we dined together. Big Harry was a fine friend and a big-
hearted man.

I remember the years from 1927 to 1933, when I lived in
Berlin, as a time of happiness and often gaiety for the
people of the great city that was the capital of the German
republic. Berlin was a cultural centre, with its famous Ber-
liner Opernhaus, Deutsches Theater, museums, and a great
array of places of entertainment. The best-known cabarets
were the Cabaret der Komiker and the Chat Noir, but there
were many others where fine actors and singers performed.
On the lighter side there were entertainers such as Willy
Prager, Rudolf Nelson, Curt Bois, Kurt Robitschek, and
Clare Waldorf. Berlin was a meeting place for wealthy
landowners of eastern Germany and the captains of in-
dustry and finance from all parts of the country.

At that time, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg was
the white hope of the monarchists and the Prussian officer
class. A great soldier, von Hindenburg had led German
armies to many victories and then to final and disastrous
defeat in 1918, which he survived as a figure of strength
credited with having averted a sweeping revolution in the
postwar years, when it seemed possible that Germany
would follow Russia in a Communist revolution of its own.
The field marshal became president of Germany back in
1925, though he had been designated as a war criminal in
the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

Germany never learned the painful and costly lesson
that the generals are not to be trusted with political mat-
ters, and this applies even to corporals, as with Adolf Hit-
ler, destined again to lead Germany to defeat and disaster.
It was von Hindenburg who, on the advice of his son, Colo-
nel von Hindenburg, opened the door to Hitler, first by dis-
missing Chancellor Heinrich Brüning in 1932 and then by
appointing Hitler as Chancellor of Germany in January
1933. It was the terrible error of a senile old soldier who
was suffering from progressive physical and mental degen-
eration. The fact that the aging field marshal's powers were
fading became apparent and it was a subject of comment
and jokes in the coffee houses. Von Hindenburg had
reached the stage where he could not make a speech with-
out an aide at his side to prompt him when he lost his way
in a prepared manuscript.

On the stage and in the cabarets, at least, the entertain-
ment was sophisticated. It was a relief to be with people
who could make a joke about Hitler and other rising Nazis.
Many performers were from Austria, and some of them
were Jewish. There was freedom on the stage, or at least
no interference from the authorities. The fun and jokes
were not forgotten when the Nazis came to power, levelling charges that the theatre exerted a decadent influence on German life. Storm troopers and a sense of humour do not go together.

But that was later. The years before Hitler were a wonderful time in Berlin. People came from all over Germany. Business and pleasure was the order of the day. The outsiders enjoyed themselves and so did the Berliners — die große Schnauze (big snouts) — who spoke their own dialect. There was much to see. In one of the theatres, a company was performing Kurt Weill's sensational Die Dreigroschenoper, and its melodies were hummed in the coffee houses. Elisabeth Bergner was playing in Fräulein Else by Schnitzler. Emil Jannings and Marlene Dietrich appeared in the famous film The Blue Angel. The most famous German actor of the day, Albert Bassermann, was to be seen frequently. That was before he refused to give up his Jewish wife as a price for remaining on the stage in Germany. There was Richard Tauber, the great tenor, singing Lehár's immortal operettas with Gitta Alpar, the sensational Hungarian-Jewish soprano. Her actor-husband, Gustav Froelich, saved his own career by divorcing her.

The Deutsches Theater under the great producer Max Reinhardt was flourishing. Bertolt Brecht, the dramatist and poet, was writing plays for the Berlin stage. The celebrated actor Hermann Thimig drew large crowds, and his sister Helene, the wife of Max Reinhardt, was a sensational success. Conrad Veidt had established himself as a star on the Berlin stage before his career as a movie star in Hollywood.

This great period — just before the advent of Hitler — for the arts and theatre, for actors and singers, had its counterpart in the field of literature. Thomas Mann, Germany's greatest writer of the twentieth century, had published his novel The Magic Mountain in 1924 and it was still read and discussed for some years thereafter as a revealing introduction to Freudian psychology. His earlier great story, Buddenbrooks, about the rise and fall of one family that led German business life, was still widely read.

The rising Nazi party attacked art and the theatre as well as books, so there was a continuous political controversy in Berlin over decadence in the arts and letters. One could see new paintings in the dealers' galleries by Franz Marc, George Grosz, Paul Klee, and many others. Käthe Kollwitz, the lithographer of the poor people, was much talked about, and so was Heinrich Zille. But George Grosz, a caricaturist who savagely indicted the bourgeois society that was turning to National Socialism, went farther than anyone else in his political comment, and he fled to New York. Modern art was much discussed in the cafés, but the moment that Hitler gained power, anti-culturalism became an official policy and most of the artists and musicians sought new places to live, in Switzerland or abroad. The leading German landscape painter, Max Liebermann, a friend of Kaiser Wilhelm II, survived the Nazi revolution. He said Hitler was right to forbid Spiro to paint! Liebermann died soon after, when he himself had been forbidden by the Nazis to paint. The most oft-told story in Berlin in the early 1930s was that the Jews had made a dreadful mistake — they should have bought more of Hitler's paintings and he would have been satisfied to remain an obscure painter!

I went often to Bartz's tavern in the Mittelstrasse, a Bierstube where we ate sausages and drank Pilsen beer. For luncheon there was Peltzer's in the Wilhelmstrasse where diplomats and industrialists gathered. The inevitable result was that my weight rose to 220 pounds — for a man of five feet one inch! Favourite restaurants that I blame, in retrospect, were the Cabaret der Komiker, the elegant Koenigin bar, Kempinsky's, and above all Horcher's, the restaurant that moved completely to Madrid after Hitler came in. I knew the grandfather, the father, and the son, each of whom directed the restaurant at one time or other.

My love for horse racing came to the surface again. I bought good yearlings and again was in luck, for I won many races in Berlin, in Dresden, in Leipzig, and else-
where. My business took me often to Hamburg, a city
whose people were influenced by ideas and opinions from
other countries in the way that an international port
generally is. My trainer and I often joined other trainers,
jockeys, and writers from the sporting pages of the newspa-
pers at dinner. In sports, at that time, no one asked
about another's pedigree. We talked about horses, their
blood lines and records, as people do at race courses all
over the world. Such people make money easily and lose
it easily, and they are not hard to get along with.

But unemployment was once more becoming severe in
Germany. A wave of nationalism swept the country and
dark clouds were gathering. One dared not express liberal
ideas without being looked upon as an enemy of the people.
This was frightening, something I cannot describe. In a
time of increasing economic stress and rising inflation,
anti-Semitism was growing in politics and society. People
began to discuss an obscure book by an obscure author:
Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf. It was a new testament for the
people, and a sense of change was in the air, though few
thought that Hitler would ever come to power. There was
a good deal of upper-class gambling in the stock
market.

When my circle of friends reassured me that there was
no danger for me, the fact that they did so began to seem
ominous. Some said Hitler referred to Jews from Russia or
Poland or the Balkans, and that Jews whose ancestors had
lived in Germany for hundreds of years had nothing to
fear. Many who believed this paid bitterly for it. In
Germany there was a distinction between Jews born in
Germany and those from the East, the latter being called
Ostjuden, or Galicians. When my eldest sister, Klara, mar-
rried Sally Starer, a man who came within this description,
some of our friends did not approve. She and her ancestors,
they said, for many generations had lived in Germany, so
why should they mix with eastern Jews? I myself was not
free from these prejudices, yet I knew that people from
Poland, Russia, Rumania, and so on are in no way inferior
in intelligence and culture. The opposite is true. For their
part, some of them referred to German-born Jews as
"Jocke". I'm sure that was not flattery.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Jewish population
did not believe that danger threatened. When gathered
together, they laughed about it, and said: "This is all
crazy talk." How wrong they were! My old friend Egon
Fürstenberg, owner of the Rosenheim gift shops on the Kur-
fürstendamm and on the Leipzigerstrasse, certainly did not
believe that he would ever be ostracized, but he was. Herr
Friedheim, a big landowner and breeder of fine race horses
and a committee member of the famous Union Club, was
murdered by the Nazis. His father was a converted Pro-
testant and his daughter had married a non-Jew. If we
had read and understood Mein Kampf, in which Hitler
called for the ostracism of the Jewish race in Germany,
we would have grasped the danger. But I did not want
to believe it. I carried on and lived pleasantly, gave parties
and brought in musicians from the Koenigin bar and other
night clubs to play, to dance, and to enjoy life. It was
an escape. It was not normal living.

For many years we had visited the Sudeten German
resorts of Carlsbad and Marienbad, the great Czechoslo-
vakian spas, and we continued to do this each year though
the rise of Nazism became evident. The mask began to
fall off the faces of the hotel staffs. We began to encounter
anti-Semitism wherever we went. Once, when I had fallen
ill and was confined to bed with pneumonia, a young man
came to the door and insistently asked to stay for one
night. We put him up in our house, sheltering him at
personal danger to all of us. Reading in bed during my
convalescence, I ran across a prophecy by the German-
Jewish poet Heinrich Heine. He had written in the early
part of the nineteenth century that there would some day
be a hideous spectacle in Germany that the world would
remember for a long time to come. Heine predicted that
a world conflict would come, in which humanity would
suffer as never before. He wrote this when in exile from
Germany. He left me with even gloomier thoughts than before.

A reign of terror gradually got under way. Siegfried Gutkind, the husband of my second sister, Lilli, did not come home one day from his wholesale business. We could not find out where he was. All we could discover was that the Gestapo had picked him up. He came back a day later, but he was a broken man. He had been savagely beaten. He could not tell his wife and family what they did to him. It was so terrible that I cannot repeat it or put it down in writing. A hard-working and kind man who would not hurt a fly, Siegfried survived, and later he emigrated to Australia where he lived to a ripe age. He came originally from the Poznan province of Poland.

My illness caused a deep depression in me. I lost interest in life. People and things looked different to me. I was disillusioned. Taxi drivers whom I knew became reluctant to drive me home. They would not give a “Heil Hitler”. I felt that I was without friends. I thought my world was coming to an end and there was no purpose in living any longer. This was the first serious illness of my life, at a time when the ordered existence of my days was falling to pieces. I knew I had to leave Germany to escape the collapse of all my affairs, to escape even death itself.

The Central Hotel bar, near the Friedrichstrasse station, was one place where I met almost every day with a small group of friends who owned race horses or simply were interested in racing. We discussed horses, track performance, and winning chances, but no politics, for that had become too dangerous to talk about. Our little group included one or two sports writers and an advertising salesman named Wichmann, who spoke in a high-pitched voice. He was always broke and I loaned him money often—which he never repaid. He was the first of my acquaintances to wear a swastika pin under his coat lapel, which he displayed surreptitiously at first and then openly. Bartenders and waiters suddenly became open Nazis, as if at a signal. My barber in the Habig men’s salon, where the customer was charged three times the going prices because of the high-class clientele, used to show me great respect as he shaved me. But when he started wearing a Nazi badge I felt that he was a danger to me, as I might get my throat cut for what I thought of Hitler. Butchers, storekeepers, bookkeepers, and even teachers became a sort of advance guard of National Socialism, and it was popular among them to boycott Jewish doctors and lawyers. They were the people whom Hitler called a super-race and whose ugly, overweight wives he called “these wonderful and beautiful German women”. Propaganda conditioned them to hate anyone who was better dressed than they. It takes so little to arouse the lowest instincts in most people that I have never been able to respond to demagoguery in politics, regardless of race or party, with anything but a shudder.

How is it possible that people could sit with you and laugh together, enjoy your company, and suddenly become fanatics and talk about the “Führer”! Even today I cannot believe it. Many opportunists, of course, were climbing on the Nazi bandwagon. Social Democrats suddenly became members of the Nazi party. They would not hesitate to denounce you if you said something against the Nazi party. I remember the day when one man in the bar, whose drinks I had paid for for many years, pointed at me and said: “If anything should happen to the Führer, we will kill you all off.”

I saw Hermann Goering and Josef Goebbels—the Klump-foot—and their wives at a big movie house, which was showing a film that glorified the Nazis before they came to power. I walked down the stairs from the balcony beside Goebbels and looked at him closely. He was, of course, not in power then, but his reputation was becoming known and it was enough to arouse in me an urge to hit him.

An organization of horse owners who were not members of the Union Club met in the Hotel Kaiserhof once a month. One afternoon I was there in the lobby with two or three acquaintances, including the man who had once threatened
death if anything happened to the Führer. He told me there was a man waiting to see me, across the lobby. Unsuspecting, I walked up to this man. It was Adolf Hitler, whom I recognized from his pictures in the newspapers. At the time, Hitler lived at the Kaiserhof. I was frozen dumb. I looked at him, without any sign of recognition. I said nothing, and neither did Hitler. I turned away, and shortly left the hotel. I do not remember ever seeing again my so-called friend, a man with such an inhuman sense of humour as to send me to introduce myself to Hitler.

I had made up my mind it was time to leave Germany, and I believe we were one of the first Jewish families to do so. My wife's brother, Walter Kaufmann, was manager of our plant in Poznan and he came back to Berlin to see us almost every weekend. We had moved to a smaller apartment at Niebuhrstrasse 75, where Walter arrived one day late in February 1933. He said that he had passed the Reichstag and it was burning. When I heard this news, I took it to be a signal that we must not remain any longer in Berlin. I told everyone in the family to be ready to leave the next day.

On the last day of February 1933, we left Berlin for Poland, my wife Claire and I, my two daughters, Johanna, 16, and Eva, 14, my sister Klara, with her daughter Hannelore, 8, and my wife's brother Walter. My sister's husband, Sally Starer, was already in Poland. My sister Lilli Gutkind did not leave at that time. The seven of us took small suitcases packed only with necessities as if we were going on a vacation. We went by car to the Schlesischer station, Berlin's eastern railway centre, and we boarded the train for Poznan. The children were shivering. It was a damp winter day.

As we left, Franz Spanier, my wife's cousin, said: "In a few months all this hocus-pocus will be over, and you will all be back." Soon afterwards, he himself had to escape to Holland and he never returned to Germany.

We sat in a compartment for the trip of 150 miles. We had passports all in order to cross the border. The conductor came into our compartment with the new Nazi salute, "Heil Hitler." We sat quietly and did not speak. He checked our tickets and left, with the same words, "Heil Hitler."

Few people will ever understand such nightmares as we had to go through. Finally, we reached the border. Our passports and belongings were checked and we entered Poland. We travelled to Poznan and went to the Continental Hotel.

And so ended a chapter of our family history. Our ancestors had lived in Germany for many hundreds of years, as truly German as anyone. They had to struggle to succeed all their lives and they lived as decent and law-abiding citizens. Many of them served as soldiers for the Fatherland and many were killed on the battlefield. Our only crime was that we were Jews.

One note needs to be added. My sister Klara, her husband, and their little daughter were murdered by the Nazis when the German army occupied Poland in the early days of the Second World War.
MUNICH, 1938

Plague-like oppressors mow,
Mow down humanity,
Like grass, helpless.

No one announces plagues,
No one announces roaches,
No one announces doom.

Where is the Giant Hand
That sweeps away invaders?
Where are the noble friends?
Promises, Promises, Promises.

E.M.M.
6 Poznan and Budapest

We were safely out of Berlin and out of Germany. We were not without means, as I already had business interests in the Polish Republic of Marshal Josef Pilsudski. Four years before our flight from Berlin, I had established factories in Poznan and elsewhere in Poland for producing bacon and hams, under my partnership with Poels. These enterprises were flourishing. The canned Polish ham that we produced was already known and favourably received in the British and American markets.

Yet we had been uprooted and we did not know what the future would bring. We felt like the people in Grand Hotel, a movie about people surrounded by uncertainty. We hoped to return soon to Germany. Every morning we expected to read in the newspapers that things were getting back to normal in Germany, but nothing happened. My brother Emil was already in Poland. He and Paul Vigna were in charge of marketing by-products from our Torun plant, about sixty miles northwest of Poznan. They came to visit us almost every weekend. We had endless discussions. At times, we had ten, twelve, or fourteen people in our rooms in the Continental Hotel, talking about Poland and what was happening in Germany. What should we do? We still believed that Hitler’s political hold on Germany was precarious. We became increasingly tense. We wore on each other’s nerves.

We met people who had just come from Germany on business and we eagerly sought information. One Jewish business man from Berlin had his passport stamped with permission to travel. He bragged about it, and I think I envied him. He enjoyed what, at the time, seemed to us to be a high privilege, one we hoped would come to us when better times returned. Hopes are easily aroused that a change for the better is on the way. A French Jew from Alsace-Lorraine arrived to travel back and forth in Poland to buy potatoes. He felt that he was superior to the rest of us. Then there was a man from Vienna, a salesman who sold powder for exterminating insects (of which there was no shortage in our hotel). He almost persuaded my brother-in-law, Sally Starer, to take the agency to sell insect powder in the Poznan district. My wife, who is allergic to insects (especially Polish ones), urged him to make the deal. But Sally decided the people of Poland were used to fleas and would not pay anyone to exterminate them.

I visited our factories in different parts of Poland and in Danzig and they were going ahead very well. Our Beisser-process hams were highly successful. The method reduced the curing time from two months to seven days and eliminated the losses during shipment which resulted when the old-fashioned method was used. Our new Polish canned ham could be cured and shipped with a tremendous saving in time. It represented a new technique that revolutionized the curing of hams and created a product that quickly and justifiably became popular in our markets. This new method had been patented in nearly every country in the world and, as I have mentioned earlier, I had bought the rights for Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Hungary, as well as Australia and Canada.

After a few weeks of hotel life, which seemed to be wearing everyone down, we moved out of the Continental and
I would not go to our apartment, but only to the races, and I would catch a train leaving at two o'clock early the next morning. I would be back in Poznan, I said, not later than noon the following day.

I went to bed early. My whole family was sitting around my bed, hoping against hope that I would come to my senses. I went to sleep about nine o'clock, with my mind made up to waken at one o'clock. This discipline of the mind worked, because I did waken at one o'clock. My family, fully dressed, were waiting and watching. They were surprised when I woke up because, they said, they had given me sleeping pills in my glass of milk. They did not expect that I would open my eyes before morning. Nothing now could stop me. I went to the railway station and they all came with me to wave a tearful farewell.

After crossing the border, I arrived in Berlin in the early morning, proceeded to the Central Hotel, and then went to bed for a few hours. I telephoned Pan Horalek and said I would come out to the race track. I tried to avoid running into anyone I knew and I wanted only to see the second and third races, in which my horses were running. I would then disappear quietly, staying in town until it was time to take my train back to Poznan the same night.

I did not remain unrecognized. A few people said "hello" and I sensed that they did not wish to be seen with me. A steeplechase jockey named Frantzke saw me and said, "Oh, Herr Mendel, it is good that you are here." He said he wanted to have a word with me. It had been reported to his group in the Nazi party that I had made remarks about the Führer. "You know," he said, "such remarks are very dangerous for you."

I saw right away that this was blackmail. I said to Frantzke that I had always known him as a friend who would want to help me. "Is there anything that can be done?" I asked. "Will 20,000 marks settle this?"

"Make it 30,000," he said.

"Money is no object," I said. "Just say what you need to fix this up and on Monday, when the banks are open,
I will get you the cash.” We arranged a meeting where he would receive the money. He was pleased that it all seemed so easy.

I did not wait for the races. I walked all the way to Berlin from the Hoppegarten race track, several miles through field and forest, all the time hoping and praying that I might arrive safely back in Poznan. Back at the station I caught a slow local train immediately, one that took double the time of the train that I had intended taking in the morning. And I arrived home safely, not interested in knowing whether my horses had won or lost. I knew that I should never attempt to go back to Germany while the disease of Nazism was rampant there.

How relieved my family was when I reached them. I arrived at the Continental Hotel just in time to make the decision that my eldest daughter, Johanna, should undergo an immediate operation. She had taken ill with appendicitis, and the senior surgeon was not available at the hospital. My wife had been distraught over my absence, so it fell to me, on my return, to make the decision that an assistant-surgeon would have to perform the operation. We felt that Johanna’s life was saved, for she had been suffering seriously from peritonitis. It was two months before she recovered fully. I had returned home at the right time, but my adventure in Berlin took its toll of me. My doctor checked me over and discovered that I had a strained heart. I felt the effects of my foolish and dangerous trip and narrow escape for some months.

For the most part my life in Poland was uneventful, though I was never free of a feeling of uneasiness. My business went smoothly and it kept me well occupied. Yet we heard alarming stories about the way some of our friends were being persecuted and humiliated in Germany. Poznan was not an easy or a comfortable place for us to live in. It was at that time a typical German city situated in Polish territory, as it is today. It had been a part of Germany before the First World War. Johanna and Eva attended high school, each being the only girl in a class of thirty-five boys. In Poland, the girls’ schools did not bother to teach Latin and French, which we wished our daughters to study. The school was unfriendly and strange to the girls. We all soon came to regard Poland as only a temporary stopping place.

Through my business visits to one or another of our plants, I came to know Poland well. We established a packing plant in Lublin, a city of 100,000 with a large and very poor Jewish population, the poorest that I ever saw. The city had built a new abattoir with American capital a few years before, and the plant we opened near by became technically and economically one of our best ventures. Our manager, Pete Labeur, a Belgian, was aggressive and somewhat ruthless. When I visited the plant I found that the poor farmers who brought pigs to sell resented Labeur’s attitude toward them. They were for the most part poverty-stricken peasants, driving little sleighs through the snow to carry a few pigs to market. Most of them, without shoes, had their feet wrapped in burlap in the cold winter. For a meal, they brought with them a piece of bread, onions, and a thick slice of fatback. I could understand why poor peasants revolted against inhuman living conditions. I sent my brother Emil to Lublin to see what he could do to improve our relations with these farmers and to create a more friendly atmosphere. In those days there seemed to be in Poland absolutely no human understanding between the peasants and the townsfolk, particularly those in business. I learned the lesson, which has remained with me, that one cannot mistreat the farmers or the working people.

I had been in Hungary many times, and it was Hungary I began to think about when I became convinced it would be better not to stay too close to Germany. So I decided that we should move our home once again, this time to Budapest, if there was a possibility of establishing myself there in my own line of business.

The first time I appeared on the Hungarian horizon was in the early 1920s soon after the First World War. I dealt with Grof Brothers, a leading commission company.
on the Budapest livestock market, through whom I purchased numbers of all-white Hungarian cattle which had exceptionally long horns. I shipped them to Germany and sold them to the butchers.

My next contact with Hungary came when Herr von Norman, an official representative of the Hungarian government’s Export Institute, called on me in Berlin to urge me to visit Hungary and contact Stephen Winckler, the secretary of agriculture and chairman of the Export Institute. I did so, and Winckler turned me over to Baron Imre Biederman, the president of the Hungarian hog-breeder’s association. I received the full support of the Hungarian government, though another bacon processor was not entirely friendly to my intention to open a plant in the country to manufacture bacon for the United Kingdom. As a first step, I was directed to get in touch with the hog-breeder’s association of Trans-Danubia in Papa, which is about a hundred miles from Budapest. The leader of the hog breeders was Dr. Lajos Patkai, a prominent farmer of the district. The president of the association was a colonel of the hussars, Elemer de Szabadhegy, whose son Istvan was an aide-de-camp of Admiral Horthy, Regent of Hungary and a famous horseman. Another man I met was Dr. Desider Sulyok, the leader of the last opposition in the Hungarian parliament. Sulyok was an exceptionally brave man who opposed the Nazi régime when the Germans occupied Hungary and later fought against the Communist takeover of the land in 1948. He died in exile in the United States.

I was a frequent guest at Dr. Patkai’s lovely country home, truly a little castle, with butler, maids, and cooks whose aim was to please the “foreign visitor”. Mrs. Patkai’s supervision of culinary activities produced fabulous Hungarian foods, such as partridges and pheasants and Fogase, a fine Hungarian fish dish, all served with vintage wines. The wines came from vineyards owned by Magda Patkai’s parents, the Szaszes, whose country home was in Badacsony. They carried on a wine export business to most countries of Europe. It was at Dr. Patkai’s home that I met Mrs. Szasz, who, when she learned I was looking for an assistant, recommended her son Paul. That was the beginning of an association that has lasted through the years. Paul Szasz then was twenty-seven years of age, a university graduate in agriculture and a linguist skilled in several languages. Paul joined forces with me and, in 1933, when we opened our plant in Papa, he and I went to the country town of Sarvar and purchased the first lot of hogs.

I employed Joseph Freibert, a loyal, conservative man, as accountant in our plant. Every morning he would inquire, “Sir, how is your honourable health today?” Poor soul, he perished in Auschwitz, along with our veterinary, Dr. Papai.

I moved my family from Poznan to Budapest and rented a villa in the Menkina Janos Utca 11, a district in the Buda part of the city. We lived there during the years from 1934 to 1939. Budapest was a city of gaiety and good restaurants. There was the Margareten Island, the Gellert hotel with a swimming pool that produced artificial waves, the Kis Royal, and the Ritz bar. Night clubs such as the Moulin Rouge and the Parisien Grill were thronged with people. We could forget the miseries of the past. From Budapest it was not difficult to make trips to other countries. I went to Antwerp to see my partner, Harry Poels. After Jan Poels died, his eldest son, Little Harry, became the senior member of the Poels family. He was a very able man. Another son, Franz Poels, who worked with me, remains a good friend today. I often made trips to London and Paris, without going through Germany. Lajos Patkai used to introduce me: “Meet Mr. Mendel, the world citizen.” Brother Emil, meanwhile, was busy in Poland and we saw him and his wife from time to time. My younger sisters, Lilli and Emma, were still living in Berlin, and no serious harm had come to them, except that Lilli’s husband had been so seriously mistreated by the Gestapo in 1933.

I expanded my business activities, first with a plant in Budapest itself in 1935. In the same year we opened a plant
in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, and in 1936 one in Timisoara, in Rumania. As our business expanded I entered into business arrangements with meat packers in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, and in Czernowitz, in old Galicia. I had business interests on a wide scale. I was always on the go, and I kept as far away from Germany as possible.

Early in 1934, Paul Szasz and I went for the first time to the race track in Budapest, and in the next half hour I claimed a filly, Zula, from a race that had just been run. Paul was surprised that anyone should buy a race horse so quickly. He told me later that my wife Claire had said, “My Fred has got the eyes for discovering miracle horses.” Zula won a big race in Vienna a year later.

I could not resist the attraction of owning race horses. I was fortunate in associating with the right people, securing the right trainer, Elemer von Jeszenszky, a former major in the hussars who had been manager of the famous racing stable owned by Count von Wenkheim. I can still see von Jeszenszky riding a grey pony every morning. He had a fine eye for picking good yearlings. Usually we bought them from the stud of von Wenkheim, as well as from that of Prince Odalesky. I had as many as twenty-two horses in a short time.

I took great pleasure in getting out around four in the morning to our training stable at Alag, near Budapest. That was the time when we would see the horses exercised. Afterwards we would talk shop with the other trainers and owners. One of them was Eugene (Jenö) von Horthy, the brother of the Hungarian regent, a great horseman and a friend who later saved my life from the Nazis.

One of my favourite horses was Fürstenbrauch, who won the 1936 Hungarian Derby for me. I bought this horse as a yearling from a breeder named Salasey whose greatest aim had been to own a horse that would win a Derby, though he never succeeded in doing so. Fürstenbrauch, a black horse, was offered at the yearlings auction. No one would make a bid on him. I saw the horse later and fell in love with him. “Who owns that dark yearling?” I asked my trainer. He said I could have him for 1,500 pengő ($350-$400). So I said, “I will take him.” Fürstenbrauch came in second in the Czechoslovakian Derby, won many other races, and finally won the Hungarian Derby, one of the great thrills of my racing career. On that occasion, Carl Brauch, a leading man in the sausage trade, congratulated me in a telegram which said: “The victory of Fürstenbrauch is congratulated by Wurst Brauch.”

Horses trained in my stable included many winners, such as Puiczur, winner of the 1939 Hungarian Derby. My horse Credo won the Austrian Prize in 1938. There was also Melvyn, a filly that was never beaten, and Henricus, the winner of six big races, and many more. In one year, my total prize money was 220,000 pengő, ahead of all the great Hungarian stable owners, such as Admiral Horthy, Duke Festetich, Prince Odalesky, and Anton Dreher, the beer magnate. Count Rudolph Erdody, the president of the Hungarian Jockey Club, jokingly remarked that he was getting tired of shaking hands with me, for the custom was that he should congratulate the winner in each major race.

At the Belvarosi Kavehaz restaurant in Budapest there was a long table where owners and other racing figures could be found most evenings around six o’clock for dinner and discussion, which ranged over the news of the racing world, not of Hungary alone. There were cavalry officers and industrialists, owners of thoroughbred race horses, and experts in training them. I remember General Richard Rapaich, who had just returned from representing Hungary at the accession ceremony for King Edward VIII in Britain and who had won in London his full and elegant regalia as a general of the hussars. There were the Duschank brothers and Count Steve Markovits, a former hussar officer. There was Baron Georg Wolfner, an industrialist, and Baron Henry Guttmann, one of the most knowledgeable racing enthusiasts I have ever met. Not long before I went on a trip to Australia, he discussed with me the various horses that had run in the Melbourne Cup the year before and the entries for the current year. What
happy and enchanting days those were in the race-track milieu of pre-Nazi Budapest!

I have often reflected on the fact that my fondness for racing horses caused my life to be in danger on two, and perhaps more, occasions. My passion was fast horses, not, as with some, fast women. This is a delicate subject — the ladies. Being German born, I always took women more or less for granted as good housewives and good mothers. Looking back, I find that the few adventures I had involving women had great importance to me. I had closer relationships with women than with men. My wife was generous in letting me live, as she said, the life of a married bachelor, and in those days I spent most of my time with my business and at the training stables.

I have lived, of course, through an era which has brought remarkable changes in the status of women. I noticed some changes when we first moved to the United States, and a year later to Canada. My wife adapted herself quickly to the freedom and equality enjoyed by American and Canadian wives. She discovered that she had the same rights as a man. She developed feelings of jealousy — something I had never experienced before — for the time I spent in my business. All at once she wanted to know what I did, where I went, and so on. During our life in Europe I had been pleased to take her with me on most of my trips, but in the New World she had had to accept the fact that a man cannot always take his wife with him on business trips. The point I wish to make is that, when I was a wandering Jew, driven by events beyond my control, my wife shared my experiences. As a woman she gained liberation from a European background. I pay tribute to her for the manner in which she shared the rack and faced the storm which resulted from being married to me.

We all loved Budapest, but the rising power of the fearful Nazi system in Germany was never far from my mind's awareness. I began to feel that Europe was no longer a safe place. I wondered where I should go. I liked France but it was too close to Germany. I would choose London and England ahead of almost any place in the world, but the English Channel was narrow. I was turning matters over in my mind, and one day in 1936, I said to Claire, "Let's get packed and make a trip to Australia."
THE NAZIS SURPRISE US IN AUSTRIA

(on my birthday, March 11, 1938)

Oh God Almighty, loving and all-wise,
We are dissolving slowly without hope.
You see us not. On us the sun won't rise.
You give us nothing but a thorny rope.

Eternity, for us you are too great.
Have you forgotten all who pray and suffer?
Oh give us tokens, blinds,—at least a buffer.
Do hurry! Else it is for us—too late!

E.M.M.
Finally We Leave Europe Behind

Claire and I sailed from Cherbourg on the S.S. Queen Mary and landed in New York. I had, in fact, made an earlier business trip to the United States, but New York was too big for me. My English was nil, and a lack of the language of America's great city led to many awkward experiences. We went on to Chicago, and it was the same there. The one day that we spent in Chicago was June 19, 1936, the day that Max Schmeling knocked out Joe Louis in twelve rounds. I wondered that it was possible for the people to get so excited because a German boxer won over an American. We dined in a restaurant frequented by German Americans, listening to the fight on the radio. I heard these Americans shout "Heil Hitler" and sing Nazi songs. It created dismay in my heart.

We went on by train to San Francisco and had time to visit Los Angeles before sailing on the S.S. Mariposa for New Zealand and Australia. That was the first time I saw California. It was a land of bougainvillea and the scent of honeysuckle and orange blossoms. There were small fields of poinsettias along Sunset Boulevard, and Beverly Hills and other suburbs were smaller and less crowded than today. When I saw the beautiful homes for sale in Beverly Hills and Hollywood, I had an urge to buy one. When I did some years later, it was in the cool air closer to the Pacific Ocean. At that time I was anxious to visit Australia to study the possibility of opening a packing plant there. I was determined to visit Canada, as well, on the return trip. The desire had formed in my mind to locate far from Europe and from Nazi Germany, if it were at all possible to find sanctuary from an engulfing tide.

We spent a few days in Honolulu at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Then we went on to Suva in the Fiji Islands, and to New Zealand, where we visited George Mills and his wife, Patricia, old friends of ours from England. We sailed for Sydney, where Percy Basche, the representative of our London agents, A. J. Mills & Company Ltd., met us. I made short trips to Melbourne and other places and made up my mind to establish a plant in Australia. All in the space of three days I cabled my partner, Poels & Company, in Antwerp to forward £10,000 to establish financial backing, rented a small cold-storage facility in Sydney, and obtained premises for another new business, a ham-canning plant. In less than one week we were on the S.S. Monterey on our way home back across the Pacific Ocean.

We landed in Vancouver and took the Canadian Pacific train east through the Rocky Mountains and across the prairies. The thought never crossed my mind that some day I might live in Saskatoon, a prairie city at that time with a population of 40,000. I did feel that I had accomplished something. If Hitlerism should spread further throughout Europe, I now had a place where I might go to live and work, and maybe have some race horses. As everybody knows, there is plenty of racing in Australia and New Zealand.

When I had departed from Berlin I had left behind my horse Rücker that won the Berlin Prize at long odds. Rücker was known as the "Kanüle wonder", because he breathed through a Kanüle (tube) in his throat. Paul Szasz had gone from Budapest to Berlin to see the race
and he made more than enough money to cover expenses by wagering on Rückert, whose pedigree went back to a famous English sire. I had two three-year-olds entered in the 1936 Hungarian Derby, Fürstenbrauch and Credo, the latter ranking as favourite since he had won all his previous stake races up to 1800 metres. Von Jeszenszky recommended Fürstenbrauch, too, since the Derby was 2400 metres, or about a mile and a half. We had run Fürstenbrauch in the Czechoslovakian Derby, where he was ridden by an apprentice, who started out strong and led all the way until the last few metres when the horse tired and was beaten. A famous jockey, Geza Janek, saw the race and advised me that Fürstenbrauch had not been handled properly and should not attempt to lead all the way. So I insisted that Fürstenbrauch be run in the Hungarian Derby, and I instructed our jockey, the famous rider Albert Klimsch, not to run in front until the race was nearing the end, and then Fürstenbrauch should make his move. That is what happened. Fürstenbrauch won by two lengths. All my horses at that time were running under the name of my daughter Johanna.

I was so excited that for a moment I thought another horse, Caruso, had won. Caruso’s owner was sitting beside me in the box and I congratulated him, but my daughter Johanna, who had not taken her eyes off Fürstenbrauch, jubilantly corrected me. Following the custom, as winner of the Derby I presided over the banquet to which were invited members of the Jockey Club, which included many aristocrats, including industrialists and diplomats. I made sure Salasey, Fürstenbrauch’s breeder, was there, since his ambition for thirty years had been to win a Derby.

The Derby dinner at the Ritz Hotel in Budapest included twelve pounds of caviar sent by our Sofia and Timisoara plants from the Black Sea, goose liver, vol-au-vent, sherbert, cold roast beef, and Hungarian cake. Dancing girls came from the Parisien Grill, clad in jockey uniforms with the colours of the participating stables in the Derby.

I commissioned the celebrated Budapest artist Ignatz Konradi (who had painted a portrait of the famed Kentucky horse Man O’War) to paint Fürstenbrauch and other winners from my stable. He painted the scene at Alag race course when von Jeszenszky and I watched several of my horses exercising. It is one of my prized possessions and it hangs today in the Mendel Salon of the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon along with other paintings I donated to start a permanent collection. My filly, Melvyn, had a man’s name because on the day I bought her as a yearling, I asked Johanna to suggest a name. She had just been to the movie Ninotchka, featuring Melvyn Douglas. So she answered “Melvyn”. The filly ran and won many races and was “captured” by the American army. I had lost track of her and then I learned later that she had been brought to the United States, and that she had to be destroyed because she was suffering from a contagious eye disease.

With two teen-age daughters to look after, Claire was naturally busy much of the time in Budapest with her dressmaker. She took pride in seeing that Johanna and Eva were well dressed, and so did I. When the girls wanted to go to Vienna to study, we took an apartment in the Modenaplatz. Johanna became a pupil of Max Reinhardt, the theatrical producer who had been forced to flee from Berlin and who, for the time until he moved to New York, operated a school of dramatic art in the Austrian capital. Eva studied painting in the Kunst Gewerbe Akademie as a pupil of George Czato. Claire spent a good deal of time with her daughters in Vienna, and I visited them often.

The pace of life in Vienna was a change. At the Schaarzenberg coffee house one could read the newspapers and people seemed to sip coffee endlessly. An inexhaustible flow of news called for comment and the reports were examined and re-examined in the Vienna coffee houses.

At a time while everyone still hoped Hitler would be a passing phase, a story circulated about Wertheimer, the director of the famous store in Berlin. He was sitting in his office one day when the doorman rushed in and cried,
"Heil Hitler, the dog is dead!" Wertheimer quickly handed out cigars all around, until he learned that it was his own favourite dog that the doorman referred to, which had just been killed by an automobile in front of the store, and not the dog he had thought it was.

I recounted the story of the five little men who lived at the Grand Hotel in the Friedrichstrasse in Berlin, where I had stayed frequently many years ago as a young man on business visits. The five were brothers who had made money in diamonds in Johannesburg and had returned home. They were all the same size, indistinguishable in appearance, and they were plainly not far apart in age. In the dining room they sat at the same table every day for luncheon and for dinner. One day, someone noticed there were only four of them. One had disappeared, and the four remaining wore black armbands for a few days. Soon there were only three left. Time passed and there were only two. Finally the day came when there was only one and then there was none at all. Older people who had known them and spoken to them said, "Everything they had to say had been said before."

That was precisely like the daily exchange of views in the coffeehouses of Vienna when the Nazi clouds were closing in. Invariably when any fresh development of news was reported, the question was: "Is that good for the Jews?"

An old friend from London, Simon Hartog, was visiting Budapest at that time. He reassured us that there would not be war, even though the whole world saw what was happening in Germany, but the possibility of war was in my mind. Hitler and Nazism were in full control. The storm troopers were free to seize whatever they could lay their hands on, to kill anyone they regarded as an enemy. We had listened to the radio broadcasts in Germany and we were familiar with the Nazi propaganda. In Hungary there was the Pfeilkreuzer Nazi party which had many sympathizers. There are people who will sympathize with any dictatorship, those who think they can get something for themselves out of it and can take something from others without being punished. They feel it is good to be on any bandwagon, these nobodies who cannot succeed by their own efforts. In politics or industry, in the professions, in the army, or wherever they may be, they are all of the same type. I can smell them. They are the danger element in any democracy. When I heard people say, "Well, we don't want anything to happen to you, you are decent people," I was suspicious. I was told that I was a good Jew. I resent such a remark. As it had been in Berlin before, so it was in Budapest.

Nazism spread slowly in Hungary. There were no racial laws in effect and we were still free. Our business in Poland and other nearby countries flourished. In the evenings we had friends in or we attended theatres or went dancing. Our life was pleasant, but at the same time I felt we were living dangerously. I felt that we were shadowed by clouds that grew darker. "This cannot last," was my thought.

The time came when Neville Chamberlain met Adolf Hitler and we were promised "peace in our time". I could not believe it. More than ever, I felt it was time for us to get out. Where to go? That was the question. We would need to be prepared. We would have to have visas. There were not many countries that were friendly to people who wanted to save their lives. There were some countries in Europe that were quite helpful, for instance Holland or Belgium or France or Denmark or Sweden.

I was in touch with my two married sisters in Berlin, Lilli and Emma, and suggested that they and their families come to Budapest. They had to leave most of their belongings behind. I told them we could not stay in Europe much longer and they should choose a place to go where they would be safe. We discussed things endlessly, and they decided to emigrate to Australia. I was able to arrange visas for them and their husbands, and for Lilli's daughter. They made their home in Sydney and became good Australians.

Meanwhile, my brother Emil and his wife had moved to New York, where we had had sales representation and where we had our own sales office at 29 Broadway. Emil
looked after the selling of our hams and other meat products from our various plants in Europe. Claire's brother, Walter Kaufmann (who adopted the French version of his name, "Marchand", later in France, and "Merchant" when he finally reached Canada after the war), was our manager in Poznan, and I asked him to transfer, with his wife, to Timisoara, Rumania, to join the staff of our plant there. I was always worried that family members might not be able to move if I left.

Poland was becoming increasingly anti-Semitic and Rumania was certainly a safer place for them. Walter had married a schoolteacher, Lotte Asch. They found Timisoara a cosmopolitan, though small, city; it became thronged with refugees during the war when part of Rumania was occupied by Hungarian troops and, on the east, Bessarabia was occupied by the Russians. They moved to another address in the city, and later, when German troops were retreating through Rumania from Yugoslavia, they fled to the countryside. Timisoara was bombed during the war by the British and the Americans, and later by the Russians and by the Germans. Finally it was occupied by the Russians in 1944, and the Rumanian Communist government took over all private industry, including our packing factory, in 1947. Walter and Lotte Kaufmann finally got to France as displaced persons in 1948, where they lived until Canada admitted them in 1951. Broken in health, Walter Kaufmann (Merchant) died in Canada, and Lotte is at the present time a staff chemist at the Intercontinental plant at Saskatoon.

In the years after 1936, the dread infection of Germanic politics was spreading in eastern Europe. For me, it was a time when one place after the other became less secure. I could not concentrate on business. I could hardly resist a sense of panic when I thought of my wife and daughters, as we heard fragmentary news of what was happening to Jewish people in Germany, where we had many friends. I was not happy with the way things were going politically in Austria. It was obvious that changes were taking place. The little Chancellor, Dollfuss, had been murdered in 1934 by the Nazis, and Kurt von Schuschnigg, his successor, had established a semi-Fascist government. The German pressure was increasing and it was about to overwhelm Austria. The air was full of talk about Anschluss, that is, union with Germany.

March 11 was Eva's eighteenth birthday, so Claire and I travelled to Vienna to visit the girls and to attend the birthday party. Johanna was playing the part of Titania in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, which was to open on March 16 at the Schönbrunn Schloss theatre.

A day or so before March 11, I said to my family, "This country is not safe any more. I wish you could all come with me today and get away from here." But my wife and daughters did not want to leave. They did not think the political danger was immediate. Women do not like to leave their possessions behind them. But they agreed that I should leave.

I left by train at night, not waiting for Eva's birthday party, or Johanna's opening in A Midsummer Night's Dream. I headed for Paris rather than Budapest. When I reached Innsbruck on my way to Switzerland, I noticed some changes, nothing really definite except that there were more Nazis than I had ever seen in Austria. When I arrived in Paris the next morning after passing through Switzerland, the news came that Hitler had marched into Austria. Here I was in Paris, while Claire, Johanna, and Eva were in Vienna. I telephoned to them, and when I heard Claire's voice on the wire, she said incoherently that she knew I had left her and that she would have nothing to do with me any more. She rang off. I felt a terrible shock. I telephoned through again and she said, "Can't you stop phoning? Don't you understand that I don't want to hear of you any more?" I realized that our apartment was under police surveillance, and learned later that the manager of the apartment house was there at the time, discussing the expected search of the building by the Austrian Gestapo. I did not try to telephone my wife and daughters in Vienna again, but I got through to Paul Szasz in Buda-
pest and found that they were already in touch with him, planning to go back to Hungary.

The day of March 11, 1938, Eva's birthday, is a day that Vienna will long remember. I had left for Paris just twenty-four hours before the German Nazis marched in. After waiting to see that it was safe, Adolf Hitler paraded his troops through the streets on March 15, celebrating the conquest of Austria without firing a shot. "We heard the sirens of the police cars all day," Johanna told me. "War planes were flying over Vienna hour after hour." The noise and uproar demoralized the city's population and the Germans took over a subdued but startled community.

Johanna went to the rehearsal of A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Reinhardt Seminar. The manager, Hans Niebuhr, told the company that political changes were occurring in Austria but he planned that the play would go on, and that all the players should be there. He asked Johanna especially — who was Johanna Mendel — and she told him not to worry, that she would be there for the opening. "I'll be there," she said, as if wild horses could not drag her away. Yet Johanna asked Titania's understudy, a Hungarian girl nicknamed Kisici, to be prepared to go on. Kisici was fully prepared to play the part.

The evening of her birthday, Eva went with some friends to a cabaret performance and came back to describe the acts, among them a Jewish performer who made fun of Hitler, aping his gestures, while the crowded audience laughed and applauded. It may have been Vienna's last laugh, for the streets were filled with people watching the arrival of German troops as the girls returned home.

My wife and the girls wisely decided to remove from the apartment anything likely to incriminate them with the police or the Nazis. Claire was busy checking through letters and documents. The girls checked all the books and made a bundle of ones which they thought might be regarded as political and anti-Hitler, and Eva took them to the Stadtpark to leave them under the bushes there. Some of them may have belonged to the American writer J. D. Salinger, who was a frequent visitor to Johanna's and Eva's apartment. Many corners of the park were littered, other people having had the same idea as Eva, to get rid of books. She met her friend and art instructor, Erich Schmid, who also was disposing of compromising material. In the park people whispered the latest rumours to each other. Eva and Erich talked about the increasing number of German troops on the streets. Eva returned to the apartment with a magnificent gift from Erich, a selection of his watercolour paintings which she prized highly. She had to leave them behind in the Vienna apartment with other treasured possessions, never to be seen again.

In the late morning of the next day five or six Austrian police, several in civilian clothes, accompanied by police dogs, arrived at the apartment house. They were plainly making a thorough search of the neighbourhood. It was Johanna who opened the door and let them in. They said they were looking for guns and ammunition and would search all the rooms. Just then the telephone rang, and Johanna coolly walked over and pulled the telephone cord out of the baseboard. The police gave my wife the Hitler salute and asked, "Where is Mr. Mendel? We have to pick him up." Claire said she did not know where her husband was, which was true, and she added that she and her daughters had nothing more to do with him, as he had left them. The police checked the apartment from end to end, and one of them said, "We will have to take all your valuables away for examination."

They took furs and jewellery, with no one objecting until Claire noticed one of them pick up a ring she valued highly, a six-carat solitaire white-blue diamond that I had given her as a wedding gift. Claire told them, "Very well, you can take this ring, too, though it's only costume jewellery. It has no value to you and it's something I would like very much to keep. If you want it, take it, but if you have the least bit of feeling, let me keep it." The men had a long discussion and then one of them sheepishly handed the ring back to Claire.

Kisci, who had decided to stay with the Mendel girls, chimed in boldly, "Why do you want to take everything
from these people? I know them well, and they are decent people.” So Claire was able to keep her valuable ring, but
the show was not over. One of the policemen found a book
of Johanna’s that he regarded with suspicion. It was Eric
Cohen’s Man Against Hitler. When the police accused Jo-
hanna of possessing a subversive book, she burst into tears
and denied that she had ever read it. Still arguing among
themselves, the police took the book away, telling Johanna
they would come back in a week, at which time they might
have to arrest her. With that obvious hint they left.

The Mendel ladies decided to leave Vienna on the very
next train for Budapest. Johanna plugged in the telephone
and called Paul Szasz to tell him what was happening and
to expect them at the railway station. They took a taxi to
the Vienna station and left with a crowd of travellers. But
the train stopped at the Hungarian border, at the Heggies-
Holm station, and after a stop that seemed to last for
hours, returned to Vienna. They saw Paul Szasz across the
barrier but could not speak to him. Finally, back in Vienna,
Claire, Johanna, and Eva returned to the apartment, hop-
ing that no one had noticed that they had tried to leave
Vienna. They went to the Hungarian embassy, where of-
nicials reassured them that, though train connections were
in confusion, they should try again in a day or two.

A bizarre incident occurred at that time. I had given
Johanna a Mercedes automobile, which she kept parked in
a garage in the Karntnerg. When she went to get it, it
was gone. Someone had stolen it. The girls learned years
later that Johanna’s little car was found badly smashed
from crashing into a tree on a Vienna avenue. The driver,
a high Gestapo officer, killed himself in the crash.

It was Johanna’s friend Kisci who finally got Claire and
our daughters safely out of Vienna. Kisci stayed on with
them in the apartment after the initial, futile effort to get
through to Budapest by train. A day or two later she said
they should be ready to leave Vienna the next morning
on an early train, and to follow her instructions carefully.
“Be at the station two hours in advance,” she said. “I can

assure you that everything will be all right.” Mysteriously,
she would not say why she urged them to leave so early.
They all set off by taxi for the railway station, but Kisci
stopped the driver and got out two blocks away. That was
the last time they saw her. It was six a.m. and the station
seemed deserted. Claire, Johanna, and Eva arrived at the
station and they found a porter to carry their luggage.
They presented their German passports to an official seated
at a high desk where he was checking documents and tick-
ets. He studied Johanna’s German passport at length and
asked if they were all Germans. “Yes,” said Johanna.
The official called another man, who asked them to follow him,
with the porter bringing up the rear. They walked through
long passageways and tunnels until they reached a place
where an empty train was standing. “There’s your train,”
he said. “You can get on board.” No one else got on the
train until later when it moved to a passenger platform.
Finally, at departure time, the train filled up and left
Vienna, carrying them all safely to Budapest without inci-
dent. What a relief! What a narrow escape! By that time,
the Austrian authorities were searching passengers getting
on trains, removing all persons they could identify as Jew-
ish. For many Austrian Jews, the trek to concentration
camps had already begun. I could never bring myself to
blame Claire and our daughters for delaying too long in
Vienna. Claire was anxious not to leave any of her belong-
ings behind, and in effect she kept on packing until they
nearly “missed the bus”. I shudder when I think of their
narrow escape.

Poor Kisci! She had arranged everything through her
boyfriend, who was an architect and a prominent Nazi.
Kisci married him later and they went to Argentina to
live. Johanna tried to keep in touch with her by letter for
some time. The letters were returned. The sad news came
from a relative that Kisci had committed suicide.

I could not rest in Paris. I could not contact my family in
Vienna, and I wondered what was happening to them. I
met many refugees and felt like one myself. Numbers of
Germans could usually be found at the Café de la Paix, or walking on the Champs-Elysées. One could see the hopelessness and fear in their eyes. They were like hunted animals. I discovered with a shock that my German passport, though valid, had no pages left in which to stamp visas for border crossing. One night on the Champs-Elysées I saw a distraught émigré walking up and down, and we fell into conversation. We went into a café to have coffee and talk, and I told him about the passport situation which was worrying me. He had blank pages in his German passport, so I offered to buy some of them from this poor man. We had difficulty trying to fit blank pages into my passport, but somehow I was able to make a presentable appearance of it. I needed the pages so that I might get away from Paris and return to Hungary. Some of the page numbers did not correspond. I knew what a risk I was taking, as a German Jew in possession of a passport that had been tampered with. But I had to take the chance.

I frequented a coffee house on the Champs-Elysées, the Café George V, where I met two brothers from Gelsenkirchen whom I had known in Germany, Simon and Moritz Haase. We discussed what might happen and what we should do. Simon committed suicide later, and his brother Moritz left Paris to emigrate to Johannesburg, South Africa. I could not stand Paris any longer and decided to face the hazards of travelling to Hungary with my doctored passport. In fact, I encountered no interference at all and arrived by train without incident. I had an emotional reunion with Claire and our daughters.

I was convinced that we should leave Budapest, and I began at this time to make arrangements to travel to the United States. Johanna had left the key to her apartment in Vienna with Kisci, who was to send forward the luggage they had packed but had not been able to take on the train. I got in touch with a friend and arranged to have the furniture, including carpets and paintings, shipped to New York. We never saw them again. I had a number of paintings of my race horses and some German and French works, and some of them were in the Vienna apartment. Others in Budapest I was to leave with Paul Szasz, to keep until he could forward them later.

In the autumn of 1938 came the Munich crisis, in which Prime Minister Chamberlain of Great Britain reported he had obtained from Hitler a guarantee of "peace in our time"; but that was only a day before the Germans occupied the Sudetenland as the British and French abandoned Czechoslovakia to her fate. I insisted that we all go to Sofia, where Ivan Balabanoff was our representative in Bulgaria, and where we seemed to be safer than in Budapest. However, as a few days passed and the news was neither good nor bad, we went back to Hungary. There was no peace in my mind, but it was a time for a short lull in the advance of Nazism. During the winter of 1938-9 I decided that we would move to New York, after spending a few weeks on the French Riviera. The New York World's Fair was opening in the spring, and I decided it would be a good time to go. We had no difficulty obtaining American visitors' visas.

We lived for a few weeks at the Hotel Ruhl in Nice, a building now torn down. Needless to say, Johanna and Eva were delighted with the holiday. They met their friends the Venturas, from Vienna. Johanna's friend, Elly Ventura, had been studying drama with her at the Reinhardt Seminar, and Eva's friend, Rita Ventura, was also an artist, a master student of Henri Matisse. The girls' father was a jeweller in Vienna, and they were on their way to New York. There was a flower carnival in Nice, where Johanna met a handsome young officer of the French air force, Lieutenant Jean Guy Côme. I saw that the children would have loved to stay in France.

But the time had come when we had to be finished with Europe for good. We sailed on March 30, 1939, for the New World from Cannes on the Italian liner Conte di Savoia. I did not have to worry about money, at least for a time. It turned out that it was impossible to salvage much of my fortune in Europe, but I did not yet realize that. I had confidence that as long as I was alive with my family in
good health, nothing could happen to us. When we sailed, I left behind us a large interest in the many plants I had established. We left behind our relatives and friends, our homes, my racing stable, and the land of our forefathers. When I had been in Paris, I had taken the opportunity to discuss my situation with our agents from London and with my partners from Antwerp. I told them that I could see the handwriting on the wall, that some day war would break out and I did not want to be caught. I was certain of what was going to happen, but they could not agree with me. They tried to persuade me to change my mind. For my part, I could not convince them. My friend Simon Hartog, director of our agents in London, shared the view of many people in England that they were safe with the Channel as a protection. So I agreed with my partners to leave everything as it was and to make no changes in our business or in our plans. Our trip on the Conte di Savoia was pleasant enough in view of everything. With the family together, I was leaving Europe first-class. I could accept an unknown future with a sense of relief that we had escaped perils that seemed certain if we stayed.

We were leaving not only Germany, but all the other countries we had known — Poland, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Austria, Belgium, Holland, France, and Hungary. We had bid them au revoir. I did not know what we would do in the States, where we might settle down. I was confident that I could create a business again at the age of fifty-one and build a new life with my wife and children.

In retrospect, I think of Budapest with warm affection, tinged with a sense of tragedy. How gay and romantic, how full of sun and happiness seem those few years when we lived in Hungary. Wars and revolution later swept over the land and swept away the world of music, of fast horses, and of business ventures that I knew so well. Most of those people I have mentioned are gone, with many thousands of others, and only a memory remains of the most aristocratic and most reactionary society of our times. Hungary entered into an alliance with Nazi Germany in 1941, declaring war on Soviet Russia and, later in the year, on the United States. Despite German defenders, Hungary fell to the Russian armies in 1945 and Admiral Horthy accepted an armistice which his German allies repudiated. Horthy himself fled to Bavaria and later was captured by the Americans. Many Hungarians were not as fortunate even as that. The Germans deported thousands of them to Germany as labour internees. They rounded up 600,000 Jews in Hungary and shipped most of them to Auschwitz where they perished.

Dr. Lajos Patkai, the man who helped me open my first packing plant in southeastern Europe (that is, in Papa, Hungary) and his wife and son, Laci, were included among those 600,000. So were the parents of Paul Szasz and other members of his family, to a total of thirteen. Paul Szasz’s wife, Mary, lost her father and mother in a different way. They were taken by the Germans to the quay side of the Danube River, where passengers and goods now embark for the busy river traffic, and there they were shot through the neck and killed. So indeed were Mary Szasz’s first husband and his family.

Paul Szasz himself was arrested in my plant in Papa and incarcerated in a Gestapo concentration camp in Budapest. He told me later he kept asking for information about the horse races, as a means of establishing contacts outside the fence. He finally was able to reach the Portuguese embassy. “Some good friends,” Paul told me, “masterminded my escape from the camp to the Portuguese embassy, which was beyond the reach of the Gestapo.” With diplomatic papers, a small group travelled to Germany and reached Switzerland. “Some trip for a fake diplomat,” as Paul described it. Paul and Mary travelled from unfriendly Switzerland to the hazards of France, which was partly occupied by the Germans. They lived in Lyons for a year, and then in Paris for three years. Paul Szasz went back to Budapest as soon as conditions permitted when the war was over, but left Hungary on the eve of the Communist takeover. He
joined me in Canada and then was active with my Mayfair Ham and Bacon Company in Australia for eighteen years, until moving to Vancouver, British Columbia, with Intercontinental Packers.

Meanwhile, to turn back in my story, we were sailing for the New World on the Conte di Savoia.

STRANGERS IN NEW YORK

Fortress of Fame, Cathedral into Bank,
Where is the Air? Why only Black and White?
What is the Sense? Is life an empty Frame?
How does one breathe in Dungeons without Light?

Strangers are all. No One to take you in.
Puppets wound up, not caring where You go.
Doors spit you out. How can you find yourself?
New York is staging “Rome before the Fall.”

1939

E.M.M.
8 Interval in New York

New York is a fine place to visit, but I never thought of it as a good place to live. When we arrived in the early part of 1939 I could not shake off the feeling that I was on a temporary visit and that we should all return soon to Europe, if not to Budapest then to another city, possibly Paris.

Waiting at the dock was my brother Emil and his wife Dorothy. In all business and family affairs, there was always a close relationship between Emil and me. They were eager for the latest news from Europe. I was anxious to sit down and talk our way through all the problems of my business at a time when the drift to war was apparent, at least to me. There was no doubt that the structure of our network of packing plants in the eastern countries was becoming increasingly insecure.

New York was one of our chief sales outlets, next in importance as an export market to London. Our sales company was called Interpack Hams Incorporated. I went every morning to our office at 29 Broadway. We were still, in 1939, able to import freely our products from various European countries. We had a considerable stock of canned hams on hand. The news from Europe grew steadily less encouraging. Most of our factories in the various countries were still operating and I received weekly reports, but no remittances of funds, from our plants in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. They were able to do business as usual. We had good representation in Mills & Company, our agents in London. My friends, the Poelses, were not in any way molested at that time. They were still able to travel through countries that were coming under Nazi influence, and, I remember, the news I received from them was optimistic. They shared a fairly common view in European business circles, one which lasted until the very days that Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, that Hitler would refrain from starting a war. This viewpoint, I must note, was also fairly common among the people I met in New York.

In Poland and Hungary, Poels & Company was the registration of our factories. I remember that Harry Poels suggested that I should avoid at all costs going to Poland or appearing active in the management of the plants, so that ownership need not be disclosed. In general, we had good contacts with the governments in these eastern European countries, as we needed to have. I learned that De Lara, the agent of Mills & Company, who had lived in Argentina and in Russia, sought to cut me out of the business entirely. My friends, the Poelses, would have none of that. De Lara was an opportunistic man I disliked. He travelled in a big Hispano Suiza car with chauffeur. This was a dreadful time when, from one source or another, the news reached me that one associate or another in business had turned to active membership in the Nazi party. I received several tips not to return to Poland except at the risk of landing in a concentration camp. At a later stage, when the German armies occupied western Europe, the Poels family faced the accusation of being unfriendly to the Nazis, and they paid substantial fines to avoid going to prison. I reimbursed my partners to the extent of fifty per cent for this business expense.

I kept in touch as closely as possible with Poels in Antwerp and with our London agent, Mills & Company, who sent one of their directors to New York at that time to join
me in our office at Interpack Hams Inc. He was Joseph G. Hopkins, who served later on loan to the British Purchasing Commission in Washington, D.C.

Our business venture in Australia had not been working out well. We had lost our original investment and my partners of Poels & Company wished to close it. I took over their interest in the Mayfair Ham Company that I had established in Sydney. I could understand their dissatisfaction but I felt that Australia was an opportunity I could not ignore. I wanted to create and build up a business as I have always done, not stand by for miracles. While I like miracles, I do not have the patience to wait for them. As an associate of the Poels company, everything that I established with them up to that time had been successful and they were accustomed to success. For them, Sydney was too far away. On that last visit I made to Paris in the summer of 1939, I told them that I was not prepared to give up the little establishment in Sydney. I gave them my reasons. I said, “You are non-Jewish and you feel that no question arises of your survival. Hitler is not after you. He is after me. And I need places where I can go and where I can work. The present situation in Europe may be only temporary and things may straighten out by themselves, but I have to look outside Europe.” They accepted my offer and were happy that they did not have to worry about the only business that we had started together in which we lost money.

When I came back to New York, I told my family there was no use hoping that things might change for the better in Europe. They were bound to get worse. How right I was, but how difficult it was in the summer of 1939 to bring myself to face the brutal truth — my little empire of meat-packing factories in eastern Europe was crumbling and would surely disappear. One door after another was slamming shut. One report after the next was bringing grim news, and often the only news was silence. I tried not to ponder the dire consequences to me and my family of what I came slowly to realize was the complete ruin of my busi-

ness, profitable and lucrative as it was. I had enough fragmentary news about what was happening to the Jews in Germany and other countries to convince me that I must turn my back on Europe, that we were lucky to be alive and to be in New York, in the land of the free.

There were long, anxious discussions, mainly between Emil and myself, about the situation we faced and the possibilities of the future. I soon realized that New York was not going to be a permanent residence for me, and that the business of importing hams from my European plants was likely to become precarious.

I could hardly speak a word of English on the day we landed in New York. Emil had a comfortable apartment on the East Side. My wife and daughters and I had settled down in the fashionable Carlyle Hotel on Seventy-seventh Street, a residential hotel reputed at that time to house more wealthy widows than could be found in any medium-sized city in the United States. My introduction to the New World was the discovery that it was shockingly expensive to live in a five-room apartment in one of the fine hotels of New York. But the city itself was a vast community of unfailing interest, far different from any other place in which we had lived.

Claire and Johanna enjoyed New York, though I realized that Eva found it a bit difficult to adapt to America. As for Johanna, she continued her studies at the Theater School in Carnegie Hall. Eva continued her drawing at the Art Students' League. She wrote poetry and I remember especially her poem describing the first impressions of New York, by a girl of twenty. For myself, I was not made for sitting in an office all day, and I pined for something more active and creative. I was too worried and preoccupied to enjoy New York.

We decided on a course of action regarding the Australian plant, which was now entirely under my control and which, according to all the news I was getting back, was going through bad times. The plant manager, Julius Weiss, a Hungarian from our Budapest operation, needed help to cope with the difficulties. I considered going there myself,
but in the end I decided that Emil should go. I must give my brother great credit for doing a marvellous job in Sydney. He devoted his time and energy to eliminating losses. He made a fine success from a small beginning. Soon he had opened a second plant, in Bendigo.

We were like people in a little boat in the middle of the ocean. I could see that many European immigrants and refugees — professional men, lawyers, doctors, and many others — were not able to make a living in New York at that time. They had to qualify under American regulations to continue their professional work. In many cases, their wives had to work as maids or waitresses, or in any available job. I pay my respects to these wonderful women who worked and kept their families together. I know my wife would have done the same. I had heard for myself, in London and Paris, how little attention a good many people gave to what was going on in Germany. Hitler had become the master of Austria, just as he had got his way in Czechoslovakia, and in Germany the situation of the Jewish population was desperate. In New York the reality of what was taking place in Europe, as Hitler’s star rose higher, seemed hardly to have penetrated the fool’s paradise that was American opinion, at a time when world war was only a few weeks away.

I was restless. I could not tune in to the feeling of the big city of New York. We were handicapped, of course, because we were in the States only on visitors’ permits. We were not actually immigrants into the United States and we had occasional difficulties. Things could always be straightened out, I found, and the U.S. officials were understanding and sympathetic. They extended our permits to stay.

I felt that we could not afford to continue to live in the Carlyle Hotel. We moved to a large new apartment house on Fieldstone Road, in Westchester, not luxurious but good enough. We furnished it, and hired a coloured driver, Philip, and daily I went to the office. It was this chauffeur who identified me to his friends as “Fritz Mandl, the husband of Hedy Lamarr”. Emil had bought a farm in New Jersey where we used to stay over long weekends. I felt this way of life could not go on, and I would have to make a move. Big cities have made me uneasy. I don’t know why exactly. They seemed to overwhelm me. I liked to live in a city for a while, but wherever it was — London, Paris, Berlin, Budapest, New York, Vienna, Warsaw, and many other cities, including Sydney, Australia — I could never feel at home. I liked the country. I liked the people in the country. I liked the smaller places.
RENOIR

Songbird of Joy,
Your love-song vibrates
With sunshine, rainbows, nectar.
Spill in jest
Your web of rapture.
Saturate the world
With shimmering light.

E.M.M.
9 Budapest Revisited

I had not forgotten the race horses I left in Germany and Hungary. It seems incredible that I still could own horses in Germany, though to be sure they were dwindling in numbers, and they still ran in the races and won some of them. They were not barred from the track because they had a Jewish owner. I was surprised that the German authorities let my horses run under my old pseudonym — after they were registered in the name of Walter Kaufmann, after my wife's brother, a stable name under which I won many races. Rückert, one of my horses, became one of the top handicap runners in Germany. But the time came when they would no longer permit Jewish owners to run their horses. At the German tracks, the authorities simply would not post a Jewish-owned horse as a winner, unless the horse won by several lengths. Many a second horse came up as the winner. My horse Credo won the Austria Prize in Vienna, but all he got was mention as having run a dead heat. I was not there to see him run. I received regular reports from my trainer in Germany, Pan Horalek, who kept me informed about how things were going with my stable.

In May 1939 I received a cable from my friend and trainer, Elemér von Jeszenszky, in Budapest that my horses were doing extremely well. Henricus was a 1939 Derby favourite. He had won all his races as a three-year-old. Jeszenszky was convinced that we had another Derby winner. My famous horse Melvyn, a three-year-old filly, had won a number of the top races, and she was ready to run in the Hungarian Oaks, the top race for three-year-old fillies. In June 1939 I decided, come what may, I would fly to Budapest to see Melvyn run in the Oaks and Henricus in the Derby. I also wanted to see Puczur (given the nickname of my stable manager), a horse neglected in the betting odds.

When I told my wife and children, my brother and his wife, and my friends that I was going to Budapest, history repeated itself. They were appalled. They said, "It's impossible. You cannot do it. Why do you want to risk your life again just for your horses?"

I argued there was no war yet. I said, "Hitler is not in Hungary, there is still the Regent Horthy and his brother, the General, who is my friend. I have many friends in Budapest so there is no risk as far as I can see." I proposed to take the then-new Pan American transatlantic Clipper from Baltimore to Lisbon, with stops in Bermuda and the Azores, and then fly to Rome and on to Budapest. It seemed to be a trip without danger. "Nothing will happen to me," I said. My excuse was that I wanted to see my horses run again, but I also urgently wanted to see what my business situation was in eastern Europe. After Budapest, I would go to Paris to see business associates and old friends, and then I would come back to New York. "You don't have a thing to worry about," I told my family.

I must admit I was nervous when I boarded the Clipper in Baltimore for Lisbon. I had flown often but this was the first time I had crossed the Atlantic by plane. I had my valid German passport with a few empty pages still left in it. I had a good conscience. The first unexpected development came in Bermuda. I did not realize that Bermuda was a British possession. On account of weather conditions we had to stay over. Suddenly I thought, "My God, a German passport with no return visa, if they keep me here what
will happen?” For the first time I felt that I had taken things a bit too much for granted. We had to give our passports to the authorities and we went to a hotel. It took a full week of waiting while the sea remained too rough to take off. I was prepared every day for something unforeseen. It must have been the kind of fear a refugee feels when he has no more security, no protection. I feared that my passport was not one hundred per cent in order.

I met a man who spoke German, a banker who had lived in Holland for many years. At that time I did not know anything about golf, but he asked me if I would have a round with him. I said, “Yes, I will carry your bag.” I had to talk, and I told him that I had a German passport. So he told me that he had a German passport, too. Though he was not a Jew, I felt a little comfort in finding that others had their fears, too. The refugee complex filled my mind so that I began to analyse people, and I singled out one man among the plane’s passengers whom I was convinced was a German Nazi even though he spoke English, a language I did not understand well.

I met a Frenchman on the plane and I thought to myself: “This man could be a Jew.” I expressed my hatred of the Nazis and spoke in no uncertain terms. Then afterward, on second thought, I began to look around to see if perhaps I was in the hands of enemies. During the stop later in the Azores, the Frenchman asked me if I would have a walk with him. He said, “I know that you are a Jew who had to leave his country, but I advise you not to talk about it or you will be in danger.” He told me that the man I disliked was from the Argentine, no doubt with close connections in Germany and surely a Nazi sympathizer. “You never know,” he said, “what can happen to you. Someone might denounce you no matter in what country you may be, Portugal or Italy. If you go to Budapest, you may be in great danger.” I thanked this man for his friendly counsel. He said he was not Jewish himself but he sympathized with me.

Finally we boarded our plane again. I had convinced myself that I might be kept behind and that I might not receive my passport. But there was no difficulty. My name was called; I received my passport and I boarded the plane. When we had to spend a few days in the Azores because weather conditions were poor, I was a little bit more relaxed. Finally, we arrived in Lisbon, spent one night there, and then went on by another plane to Rome, with only two or three passengers. I had forgotten that Italy was Fascist, that Mussolini was a partner and friend of Hitler. There was little anti-Semitism there, and it was not open as in Germany. When I came to check out of Rome, I felt the same uneasiness. It seemed much more dangerous in Rome than in Bermuda. I went on to Budapest by train.

I took an apartment in the Hotel Hungaria. I called one friend and then another and soon I became again a member of the coffee-house group of horsemen, trainers, riders, and owners who gathered every afternoon to drink and gossip about our horses. Admiral Nicholas Horthy was still the regent, and his brother was my friend. There was my trainer, von Jeszenszky, and Paul Szasz, and many others. Of course, I found a few had changed and had clambered aboard the bandwagon of the new era. One such person was Major von Issyecz, an Armenian who looked more Jewish than ten Jews. I think that non-Jews who look like Jews feel the need to emphasize their non-Jewishness. I was pleased that most of my friends were still my friends and that we could talk together about horses. I again saw the artist Ignatz Konradi, who had completed a fine picture of my horse Fürstenbrauch. Without delay, I asked von Jeszenszky and von Horthy if they could arrange through the regent to get my papers in order, for my life actually depended on it. This they did.

Almost every morning at four o’clock I went out to Alag, the training track, to watch the horses exercise. That is always the greatest pleasure for an owner. I watched Henricus, my entry for the Derby which was the favourite to win. I watched my lovely Melvyn, the filly that my daughter had named after her favourite movie star, Melvyn Douglas. I watched Puczur, which had run second for
the Millennium Prize and which I was also entering for the Derby. I had news from Germany that some of my horses were winning races there. I tried to forget what might happen to me in Hungary under the influence of the Axis.

I heard from our managers that business was still good in our plants in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I could not transfer any money out of these countries, but I had enough to live on comfortably. I could assist friends in Hungary who needed help and I forgot the worries of business and the danger I was in. I gave myself up to my love for horses and the fascination of the racing season that was in full swing in Budapest.

The day came for the running of the Hungarian Oaks, the distance being one and one-eighth miles. Melvyn won, and my friends showered me with congratulations. Luck was with me.

Then came the Derby. On the day before, we gave our two horses, the hot favourite Henricus, and the forgotten one Puczur, their first exercise together, along with a sprinter over the distance of five-eighths of a mile. I had not seen these horses for a year and did not know how they would run. Some horses run well in the morning and poorly later on in the day. Henricus was not a good morning horse, but I was surprised by his slow time. Puczur betted the time of the favourite, Henricus, and was also faster than the other, older horse, which was a very good sprinter. As any horseman knows, a three-year-old horse that can run with a good sprinter must be truly good. The best horseman I ever knew, von Jezzenszky, said after the exercise, "I know that you think Puczur is the better horse, but forget about it. You will see Henricus is going to win the Derby in a canter." I took the view that history would repeat itself and the favourite would be beaten, just as Credo had been beaten in 1936 by my black horse, Fürstenbrauch, whose record had been blemished by defeat in the Czechoslovakian Derby when he had been ridden badly.

When Derby day came, the betting odds were even on my favourite, Henricus. On Puczur the bookmakers were giving odds of fifteen and twenty to one. They had forgot-

ten that Puczur, although beaten in the Millennium, had proved himself as a three-year-old of class. I told my friends, "I can't help it, I saw the trials and I am going to bet Puczur." Von Isseckutz and other owners were sure their horses were going to win. Henricus, as it turned out, could not go the distance and Puczur won the Derby easily. The favourite had been beaten. History had repeated itself. I should add that Henricus became a great hurdle horse and later won the Alag Hurdle Prize.

There were a few remarks. Some people complained about a favourite that did not win. But I must say that on the whole Puczur's win was popular. When the horses came back I received many congratulations. But Major von Isseckutz, whose horse was nowhere in this race, spat in my direction to express his opinion. He was a poor loser and a good Nazi.

That was enough for me. My visit was poisoned. I cannot truly express what I felt when a man who had been a friend and had shared my company and many joys with me could act in such a manner. I think that greed and envy and prejudice show up as main elements in the real character of such people. Now my only thought was to get away as quickly and as quietly as I could. I could not know for sure who was my friend and who my enemy. The poison was there. I kept my plans secret. A few of my intimates asked when I would be leaving but I told them that I was enjoying my visit in Budapest. One close friend said, "You don't fool me. You are preparing to leave this country and I don't blame you; I would leave, too, but I cannot." People said they could not leave, but all of them could have done so if they had made up their minds to it. The choice was to give up material things. To save one's own life and the lives of one's family, any sacrifice of possessions is justified. I had come to the conviction I must leave all my business interests all over Europe, and I thought only of getting away. I told this to many friends and urged them to leave, but most of them stayed and paid bitterly for indecision. They were good Germans or good Hungarians and they could not
believe what was going to happen. At times I did not believe it either, but my course had been determined.

I made my departure with the certainty in my mind that I would never return. I was frantic to get back to a land of safety, the United States. I said to Paul Szasz and Elemér von Jeszenszky, "Take over my horses and whatever you do will be all right with me. They don't belong to me any more." A few days before I left, Prince Odalesky asked me if I would buy some yearlings, as he had always kept a few for me. I told him, "Yes, I will see your yearlings and maybe I will buy a few." I knew I would not come back to Budapest, but my friend was not in good financial shape. I would take two or three horses and pay a good price. One morning I went out with Elemer to look over the yearlings. I selected two or three horses and I gave Odalesky a cheque. Those I had selected were, I think, the poorest yearlings I have ever purchased. I turned down some horses that turned out to be winners in the race classics a year or two later. But at that time I had other things on my mind than selecting yearlings that might win races as three-year-olds. It did not matter, as far as I was concerned, whether Odalesky's yearlings were worth buying or not. I was not going to have the pleasure of seeing them trained for the races in the years to come.

I bade farewell to a very few intimate friends and I left Budapest for Paris on the Orient Express in the month of July. I arrived safely after a journey without incident.

I went to the Hotel Astoria, where my old friend and a fine horseman, Otto Weinberg, was staying. We went to the races at Longchamp, Auteuil, and Saint-Cloud. These were places where I loved to go. I felt that I was in a safe country, but my wife and family quickly let me know they were not happy that I was staying in Europe. Otto Weinberg and I went down to Deauville for the summer racing meeting there. To my surprise, my eldest daughter, Johanna, arrived in Deauville one day. She had been sent by her mother to get me to return to New York. She said I had always escaped and luck had been with me, but "we felt something has to be done to get you home safely this time. Ma sent me to pick you up."

"All right," I agreed, "Let us finish the racing season in Deauville and then we will go."

Johanna was not easy to convince. "Father," she said, "you finally are going to get caught."

The atmosphere in Deauville was nervous. We went to an auction of yearlings and no one showed interest in buying. One night I received a phone call from New York from my brother Emil. He told me that Germany and Russia had made a pact of friendship on August 24, and that it meant war. I could not believe it.

I thought the world must be coming to an end. Whoever would dare to attack a united Germany and Russia? This would be the end of democracy in Europe.

Deauville was quickly deserted. I went back to Paris with Johanna. Large numbers of American visitors were trying desperately to get back to the United States. And I was in Paris with no return visa! What should I do? To secure boat accommodation was nearly impossible. Johanna met her boyfriend, the French air force lieutenant, Jean Guy Côme, in Paris, and I surmised that that may have been one reason more why she had come over from America. He told us one evening that we must leave France. "If you don't," he said, "you will be interned as enemy aliens and I could not bear to see Johanna and you in such a situation."

Again I was in need of a miracle. I telegraphed Paul Szasz in Budapest to ask him to see Jenő Horthy and von Jeszenszky and urge them to do everything possible to get me travel papers for entry into the United States. After what seemed an interminable time, I received a telephone call to proceed to the Hungarian embassy; there I was quickly issued with an official identification document, approved for travel to the United States. The date was August 31, 1939. I went to the United States embassy immediately and found hundreds of people waiting for visas. I gave my name and I got my visa in no more than half an hour. I thought this was another miracle.
Now came the problem of getting a passage. I suggested to Johanna that as a young and charming girl she should try her luck at the shipping offices. Johanna had the return portion of a French Line ticket which she had purchased in New York. But the French Line had no accommodation; in fact, it had no ships available at all. She went to the Canadian Pacific Steamships’ Paris office and found that the Empress of Britain, from Southampton, would pick up passengers for Canada at Cherbourg. But no accommodation on it was available. An obliging official, however, arranged to book Johanna in a double cabin on a sharing basis with another lady passenger, and he found space for me in a double cabin shared by a Frenchman who would catch the boat at Cherbourg. When I complimented Johanna on her charm in dealing with shipping people, she explained that perhaps her tip of $200 had something to do with her getting the cabin accommodation.

Before taking the train to Cherbourg we spent a pleasant evening with Jean Guy Côme, Johanna’s French lieutenant. It was the last time she saw him.

We were the only civilians on the train, all the other passengers being French soldiers in uniform. No one knew that the outbreak of war was only hours away, but everyone regarded it as a certainty since the German army was known to be mobilizing on the frontier of Poland. We reached Cherbourg to find that the arrival of the Empress of Britain from Southampton was delayed. We had reserved accommodation in a hotel, and while we were there the Second World War started, with Germany’s attack on Poland.

Our new problem was to pass the French border examination when the time came to board our ship. We would have to produce passports in proper order. My own did contain a genuine American visa. When we were going on board a porter came to pick up our luggage to be carried to the boat. He gave us a look and said, “Why do you look so worried?” He was of Hungarian descent and had lived for many years in France. I decided to confide in him and tell him that we were Jewish and had been born in Ger-

many. I asked if there was anything he could do for us. He said, “Give me your passports.” I gave them to him and he went away. He seemed to be away a long time. But he returned within an hour and said, “The passports are stamped. You will have no trouble and God bless you.” He used the word maszlof which means “good luck.” I gladly gave him a tip. We went on board and the ship sailed.

We were on the high seas, and we thought our troubles were behind us. We humans have a capacity to forget perils and regain hope. Perhaps that is what makes us human beings.

Johanna had a cabin with a charming Australian woman, Mrs. Dora Goldstein, who later on became a close friend of my relatives in Sydney. I saw her often when I visited Australia. In the cabin with me was a Frenchman, Mr. Dreyfus, one member of the famous Paris banking family. The big white ship was crowded with Americans returning home. At night it showed no lights. There was danger from U-boats. From the first day passengers were required to wear life jackets at all times. Though we had our visas and were on a Canadian boat, I could not suppress the fear that something would go wrong. The ship stopped at Gibraltar and I heard my name called on the loudspeaker. But it was only a call from a friend. Most of the talk on board was about the war. There were rumours of danger from submarines. On the last night out, the captain told us that the S.S. Athenia had been sunk, to the north of us near the Irish coast. The story spread that the unfortunate Athenia had been mistaken by the Germans for the Empress of Britain.

We arrived in Quebec, went through Canadian customs without difficulty, and were soon on our way to New York. At Rouses Point, New York, on the American border, my wife and Eva were waiting for us, with Emil and his wife. The U.S. immigration officers held a hearing before deciding to allow me to enter the United States on condition that I put up a bond of $1,000. I did not have this amount in cash and the official refused to take my cheque. It was late on a Saturday night. How could a stranger like me get
$1,000 in cash? Fortunately Emil had a friend in Schroon Lake, near Albany, to whom he telephoned. Emil’s friend had a summer hotel, and he raised the money from his till and by borrowing from guests staying at his resort. Emil drove to the hotel and returned with a thousand dollars in small bills. We handed it all over to the bonding official and got his receipt. We were once again in a free country, but I never saw my $1,000 deposit again.

DISCOVERING ART

Never knew my eyes would find
Such beauty, colour, light.
Joy caressing day and night,
Stretching wide my mind.

Writhing fields like Vincent,
Milkmaids like Corot,
Ponds that sing of Monet,
Roads like Vlaminck glow.

Skies alive with fables
That Chagall created,
Cézanne’s fruit on tables
Make me feel elated.

Patterns play in flowers,
Dewdrops float in air.
Visions paint my hours.
All the world is fair.

E.M.M.
Back in New York, I found that the war had already begun to change many things. It soon brought my business to an end, for the simple reason that it was impossible to bring in shipments from our factories in Europe for the market in the United States. There was nothing I could do about that.

In due course, Joe Hopkins was appointed by the British government to its purchasing commission in Washington. We visited back and forth. I had difficulty in getting an extension of our permits to stay in New York. I fell into the hands of a crooked lawyer who took our passports and would not return them unless I paid him his fees, which were by no means small. Then our friends put us in touch with a helpful lawyer in Washington, who arranged an extension of our visas to stay in the United States.

There was nothing for me to do in New York. I did not doubt that there might be plenty of opportunities for me in time, but I turned my eyes to Canada, where I already had a business connection in Montreal with the Wilsil Packing Company Ltd. We still had some stocks of our European products in New York, but they would not last long. We had to arrive at a decision of some kind. It would not be long before our funds were exhausted.

I had to face a difficult reality, and it was then that I decided that Emil should go to Australia and I would go to Canada. For several years we had had an arrangement with the Wilsil company in Montreal to use our Beisser patent for canning hams. We had sent a few of our employees from Hungary, who were familiar with the process, to assist in the Montreal operation. Then my friend and partner, Big Harry Poels, had sent his son and family to Montreal to supervise the production of hams. In short, not only had I set up a useful nest egg in Sydney, but I also had a contact in Canada.

I set about making arrangements to emigrate to Canada, and we soon moved to Montreal. I still kept the office on Broadway so as not to lose contact with New York entirely. We were on the move again, as though I were in the German stage play Little Man, What Now? We decided to rent an apartment and wait for a while to see how things went. My wife chose the Trafalgar Apartments on the Côte des Neiges road. Meanwhile, Johanna stayed on in New York in our apartment there, which we intended to close later.

Montreal in 1930 was a city with an increasing number of refugees from Germany, Hungary, and Austria. It was similar, in a way, to Paris. The immigrants stayed together, spoke their native languages, and hoped that things would change. I decided I would learn the English language even though at first I could hardly make myself understood. Claire had learned a little English in school and could speak French, a language in which I could make myself understood. I asked her to give me lessons in English but she often fell back on her native German. So I announced one day that from then on I would not understand any more German. I would only understand English and I would answer only in English. I said to her, “If I don’t know the English words, I will ask you. But let us stop speaking German.” I hated Nazi Germany. I did not want to hear the language any more. But I also wanted
to learn the language of the country in which I had decided at the age of fifty-two years to make a fresh start in life.

We had some amusing struggles with English. I would say to Claire, though I could not speak one sentence in English, "I do not understand your German, so you must speak English to me." This made it possible for me to learn enough English to make myself understood. This is the best way to learn a new language. I avoided people who always thought about the past, who often said, "That's not the way it was in Germany." I did not want to hear this. I wanted to get acquainted with the people in Canada and understand them. German was useless to me.

As the war went on, I was finding less and less to do. In our New York office one day I told my friend Joe Hopkins that I could not stand it any more. "I'll go crazy," I said. "I cannot speak much English, so please help me to find something. Do you know anyone in Canada who knows the conditions throughout the country?" I said I felt I had had enough of the big cities. I am more at home, I said, in smaller places, with average people rather than "big shots". I said I preferred to associate with people who had to struggle and work. That was my philosophy of life.

Joe Hopkins had a wide circle of acquaintances, especially in the food business, and he did not fail me. He had a friend named Landrith in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the manager of a dairy co-operative. He called him on the telephone and reported that a building was available in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It might be a proposition I could do something with. I checked over my resources and found that my cash assets had dwindled to $100,000.

The location in Saskatoon, it turned out, had been a company founded in the 1920s to assemble motor cars, the Derby Motors Ltd., which had failed. Later on, a co-operative packing enterprise had taken it over, and it in turn had had to close down. The plant was empty and I could buy it, I was told, or make almost any deal I wished if I would take it over. So one cold winter night late in 1939 I left Montreal by Canadian National Railways for Saskatoon.

Representatives of the co-operative company, G. H. Barr, K.C., and Mr. Adair, met me and took me to the Bessborough Hotel. I remember the weather was about thirty degrees below zero. I had experienced cold in Poland, but this was the worst I had ever encountered. I was pleasantly surprised, however, with the comfortable Bessborough Hotel. There were many empty rooms and not many guests. We had dinner that night in a large dining room and our party seemed to be the only guests. The following morning we drove out to see the plant. I realized the people who represented the co-operative did not expect me to be interested in the obsolete, run-down plant. There was nothing in the building except a few machines that were out of working order. It was not as bad, however, as some of the buildings that I had converted into plants in Europe. I had hope and imagination, and deep in my heart I thought that this could be my own place to build up for the future. The members of the co-operative did not know how easy it would be for them to make a deal with me. Within twenty-four hours after reaching Saskatoon, I had secured an option to take over the co-operative's place on a rental-purchase basis. I offered to make a deposit of $5,000, to be forfeited if I did not take up the option. Later on I was told that they thought I was out of my mind to throw away $5,000 in this manner.

I spent three days in Saskatoon and saw headlines in the local daily newspaper: "New Packing Plant", "Great Investment", and so on. The Chamber of Commerce was making some good propaganda for itself. I left Saskatoon feeling that an inviting opportunity was open to me. I went back to New York and told Joe Hopkins about the deal I had made. "I will be running a new packing plant in Saskatoon," I said, but I admitted, "You can only do these things if you are a great optimist." As quickly as possible I got in touch with Poels & Company in Antwerp and invited them to go into partnership in the Saskatoon venture. The answer was no. I had expected that
they would not be interested in Canada, for they had already given up their share in our Australian business.

My plan at first was to pack hams in Saskatoon in the same way as I did in Poland and other European countries, and ship them to the United States. I intended both to buy hams from other packers and to kill hogs in our own plant. With two employees from our plant in Papa, Hungary, who had gone to the Wilsil operation in Montreal, Henry Achs and Andy Simon, I went to Saskatoon and gave them the ideas I had in mind. I set June 1940 as the opening time. I invested most of my liquid assets in restoring the building so that we could at least make a beginning. I became very hard-pressed for cash to finance the current expenses of the new business.

I made several trips back and forth from Saskatoon to Montreal on Trans-Canada Air Lines. I got to know the T.C.A. planes well, first the small Lockheeds and then the North Stars. Flying was nothing new to me, as I had flown in early European services of the Fokker and Junker days. I told Claire that just as soon as I had made preparations she and Eva should move out to Saskatoon, though Johanna would remain in New York to continue her drama studies.

My whole attention, as year 1939 ended and 1940 began, was devoted to marshalling my resources to finance the opening of my new packing plant in Canada. I came to a decision that, in spite of all the risks and dangers, I would make the hazardous journey back to Hungary, which was not engulfed in the war raging in western Europe at that time, and bring back any funds that I might be able to move. I could see no alternative, for I needed the money. I knew that the way was open to a traveller, because I had made the trip by air via Lisbon only a few months before. That is how I came to make one of the most hazardous journeys of my life, a winter crossing of the Atlantic by ship early in 1940, when routes of travel to Europe were closing down one by one.

I was keenly aware of the dangers that I might en-
counter, but the trip itself turned out to be uneventful—so uneventful, in fact, that I cannot recall even the ship or the route we took, except that Claire's cousin Heinrich Sonnenberg, of New York, was a fellow passenger. To an experienced and seasoned traveller it was just another trip, unmarked by adventures that might have prevented details from fading from my mind, which, in any case, was preoccupied by hopes and fears about business. When I reached Rome, there was Paul Szasz waiting for me. Paul's uncle, the Cavalier Atzel, owned and operated the Hotel Imperial there and he looked after us. We dined and talked at length and then went on together to Budapest.

Few people knew about my return to Hungary. I went to my private office, where my secretary, Miss Friedman, welcomed me. The daughter of a celebrated theatrical director and producer in Berlin, this wonderful person helped me in many ways, and it was a great sorrow for me to learn of her death a few years afterwards. On the day of my return to Budapest, we chatted about office affairs. I told her a little about New York. Suddenly there was a knock at the door, and Miss Friedman answered it to find two detectives inquiring whether I was there.

I was panic-stricken. Miss Friedman was very upset, and I could see that she was almost in tears. There was nothing for me to do but go along with the police. When we arrived at headquarters, Paul Szasz came in haste, and for one dreadful moment such was the overwrought state of my nerves that I turned on him and berated him bitterly, to his utter astonishment. Paul told me about this later, but I confess I cannot remember things I said then. I remember that it was Paul who calmed me down and spoke to the police. It turned out that my offence was that I had entered Hungary without permission, forgetting that the requirements were not the same in Budapest as when I left. The time we spent in police headquarters seemed to be hours.

Finally Paul asked permission to use the telephone to call my friends, von Jeszensky and His Excellency, General von Horthy. These names made an obvious im-
pression. I telephoned them both and it was not long before I was free. Another of my miracles had happened. I was going to need still more. I quickly realized that my hopes of obtaining funds from my business were in vain. I stayed very briefly in Budapest and travelled without difficulty through the Balkans. I got safely back to Canada.

I began to feel the effects of nervous tension. I consulted a heart specialist in Montreal, who sent me to the Royal Victoria Hospital for observation. He informed me that I had a serious heart condition and that I should avoid heavy work and worry. This was bad news, indeed, and I felt greatly depressed and began to doubt whether I could carry on. I left the hospital in low spirits. The doctor's advice to "take things easy" was the last thing I wished to hear. It was like a sentence of death to me at a time when my life was crowded with pressing problems and almost insurmountable obstacles. Just at that time, France surrendered. I remembered vividly the hopeless refugees I had known in Paris. I felt the world was coming to an end, and that Germany would be the master of Europe and would dominate all the world.

As I was driving in a car in Montreal, I heard the famous June 4, 1940, speech by Winston Churchill relayed on the radio, in which he spoke of the great British disaster at Dunkirk. "We shall fight on the beaches," he said, "we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender." Who can ever forget the immortal words that rallied free men everywhere in the world. My spirits soared. My hopes rose once more. Winston Churchill gave me a new lease on hope in my own private dark days, and I bless his memory.

In this frame of mind, I left Montreal with Claire and Eva and arrived in Saskatoon early in June 1940. They were delighted with the Bessborough Hotel, the château-like establishment operated by the Canadian National Railways on the shore overlooking the South Saskatchewan River. It was a comfortable home for us for several years,
ARTIST

Tortured Mind,
Plucking apart the hours,
Gnawing on roots of being,
Tugging on veils of death,
Daring to reach for Stars:
You make bearable being a mortal!

E.M.M.
II Citizen in Saskatoon

I soon discovered that in Canada, the land I proposed to adopt as my own, some things were different. The first Canadian bank manager I dealt with was the late Ernie Jones of the Bank of Montreal in Saskatoon. He was understanding and helpful, but a long way from head office. When I asked for and received a loan, he asked me to sign notes. He explained that his own power was limited and I could borrow only under Section 88 of the Bank Act, whatever that was. The banks I dealt with in Europe had had confidence in me and had always accepted my personal pledge. I told him I had never signed notes for a banking debt in my life and I refused. But I soon decided that in Canada I should do as the Canadians do, that conditions were different in different countries. In short, I signed. Indeed, I signed notes several times after we started operations.

I adopted the name Europa Brand Ham for our product — the same name I used in Europe — and we shipped our hams to the United States. There was a very good demand for them. Everything was working well — but not for long. One day I arrived in an agent's office in New York to be greeted with the shocking news that the Canadian government had put an embargo on all shipments of meat destined for the United States. It was a serious blow, for my new business had been established on the assumption that we could export canned hams to New York and elsewhere. It was the first of the wartime controls that we had to learn to live with. I had considerable stock on hand, having bought raw material from other packers, and suddenly I could ship nothing more to the United States. I was forced to sell hams back to the people I had bought them from, and to suffer a considerable loss in doing so. I was back where I started except that I had lost $80,000.

This was one of the most difficult business situations I have ever had to face. Complete collapse of my business, it seemed to me, could not be avoided. I could see no other result and I could hardly bring myself to face such a possibility. The plant in Australia had begun to improve and its business gross was running about $200,000 a month. Should I drop everything in Canada and go to Australia? The situation in Canada, however, began to clear up. The British government had sent a mission to buy quantities of bacon in Canada, and in order to meet the emergency the Canadian government took over complete control of meat supplies in the country. Intercontinental was allotted a weekly quota of 20,000 pounds of bacon, a small carload in terms of shipments from the plant. I remember the comment made by Dr. George Miller, the government bacon inspector: "It is not enough to live on, and not enough to die on." But 20,000 pounds of Wiltshire sides a week was a start and it became a foundation of future expansion.

I soon got an introduction to horse racing in my new country. I met Dr. Fred Salisbury, a Saskatoon dentist, whom I recognized as a kindred spirit. He had two or three horses, and we discussed racing in Canada and the United States. I bought two yearlings from him and made a trip to Kentucky to meet a trainer who would take charge of my horses. I thought that when my yearlings were sent away from the cold winters in Saskatoon to a
famous horse country like Kentucky, they would perform wonders. I was wrong. They never won a race. Fortunately for me, someone exercised the right to buy one in a claiming race. The other one I was never able to sell, and I had to give it away. That was the beginning and end of a racing career for me in the New World. It was an expensive episode, and my old obsession with race horses has remained cured except for an occasional afternoon at the track.

I replaced my old hobby with a new interest in paintings. Perhaps it was a logical transition. During our short stay in Montreal I had met several people who were interested in art. My daughter Eva became acquainted with several artists, and I met Dr. Max Stern who had opened an art dealership, the Dominion Gallery. I purchased from him my first picture in Canada. It was an oil painting by Franz Marc, a German artist who was famous for his blue horses. The one I bought depicted two pigs painted in very modernistic style. I see it as a symbol of the fact that as an émigré meat packer in Canada I built my business on bacon for Britain. At the same time, I bought an early Feininger, painted about 1908. It is a memento of the days when I had a compulsion to buy pictures that I could not afford. A third picture I bought was by Vlaminck, of his Cézanne landscape period.

When Emily Carr died and Dr. Stern had been authorized by Lawren Harris to dispose of some of her work, Eva recommended her paintings to me. I bought several and I consider that Emily Carr was a great painter. The new hobby slowly took possession of me. I became, as I had been a horse addict, a painting addict. I had a good guide and teacher in Eva. There were several wonderful paintings on the market in Montreal that I would have liked to buy. Eva confessed later, "Pa, if I had known you were in such bad financial shape, I would not have encouraged you. You did not even have money to afford the ones you bought."

Eva got in touch with artists in Saskatoon, painters like the Prairie pioneer Ernest Lindner, the younger Bill Perehudoff, and others. She urged me to buy their paintings, and I must admit that I have had pleasure from possessing some of their works. Claire had renovated a suite of rooms above the offices in the packing plant and we established residence there. I enjoyed hanging the walls with paintings, and our little collection began to be known. Meanwhile, Eva felt she should do something for the war effort and applied in Ottawa for a job as interpreter-censor in the Royal Canadian Navy's intelligence service. She was happy that she could do something for her new country. We missed her during the years that the war continued.

My Saskatoon business had become established under war production conditions, but I was constantly running into financial and other problems. Late in 1941, the lack of working capital to carry on my expanding business began to make things very difficult once again. I said to my manager, Jim Dryburgh, that I thought the worst was going to happen, that I thought I was finished. "I'm coming down," I said, "with my nerves on edge and I think that the banks are not prepared to finance us any further." Then I discussed with Jim the possibility of closing down. Who would lose money if we did, I asked.

Jim replied, "If we close, it's not the bank that will lose. It will be nobody except you."

I decided to see if I could find some help in the East. I said to Jim, "You look after the business. If you can hold on, fine; if not, I give up." I said to my wife that we should go away for a short trip. We went to Toronto, where I got no encouragement at all. An incident that added to my gloom came when the Canadian Meat Board inspectors in Montreal rejected a carload of bacon we had shipped from the Saskatoon plant. It was sent back. So we repacked it and shipped it east again. This time it passed inspection at every point and went on to England.

Claire and I proceeded to New York. I wandered through art galleries and, at Etienne's, on Fifty-seventh Street, I bought a Max Liebermann painting for a few dollars. I was hoping for a miracle, and this time I really needed one, very
soon. One Sunday morning, when I needed somebody to talk to, I went to call on a doctor whom my brother and I had financed in establishing his medical practice in New York. I rang the bell and when he answered, he was furious. “How dare you ring the bell so early in the morning,” he said, “without phoning to warn me you want to pay me a visit!” I was stunned. I went back to the hotel like a beaten dog. It was Pearl Harbor day, December 7, 1941.

The next day my office in Saskatoon telephoned to say that I had an urgent call from Toronto. I put through the number and it was J. H. Tapley, the president of Swift Canadian, one of the leading packing concerns in Canada. “I have been looking for you,” he said. “Can you come and see me in Toronto?” I didn’t ask what he wanted, nor did I build up my hopes. But, of course, I went. Only a week before I had had a very disappointing conversation with the head of another company. How could a man of your age, he had said, expect to start a business and succeed? Leaving Claire in New York, I went to Toronto and learned that Swift was interested in taking over our plant in Saskatoon, but Mr. Tapley would have to refer the matter to his head office in Chicago if I was willing to sell. He said he was prepared to suggest a price that would cover my investment and provide a handsome profit. He needed a week or so to make an offer.

With that, I went on to Ottawa. I asked myself whether I had come to Canada to sell out. I knew that if I ever liquidated, then I would never start over again. I conferred with a lawyer friend, Peter Bercovitch, who sat in Parliament for a Montreal seat. I was in his room at the Château Laurier Hotel when Winston Churchill made his famous speech to the Canadian Parliament in which he said that anyone who thought he could wring Britain’s neck would find it was “some chicken, some neck!” I told Mr. Bercovitch that I was in trouble financially but I did not want to sell my business. We discussed the situation. Suddenly I had new hope. If my business was worth a good price to Swift, it was worthwhile for me. Bercovitch helped me draft a message to Mr. Tapley: “I regret to withdraw my offer to sell.” I went to Montreal, where Tapley contacted me. He came to see me and at the Mount Royal Hotel we discussed the situation. I was sure of myself and I declined to sell out. Mr. Tapley said, “Well, Mr. Mendel, there is nothing more I can do.” He had mentioned the possibility that his company might build a packing plant in Saskatoon. Some years later he reminded me of my reply that “if you want to build a plant, I can’t help it. Then I will have to live in the shadow of a Titan, and that is not too bad.” It was a reply that he admired. We remained good friends.

With a sense of relief, I was buoyed up by the knowledge that my small business had good future prospects. I went to the head office of the Bank of Montreal and saw the assistant general manager, Otto Sharp, who had supervision over the bank’s business in the West. He pointed out, “You have no working capital and we cannot finance you any further.” I urged him to consider my need for more funds. Finally, he began to yield. He said he was prepared to accept my word but if I ever disappointed him he personally would never recover from the blow. With a sense of relief, I thanked him and left, with the knowledge that I had surmounted difficulties that had seemed certain to crush my business career in Canada. I went back to Saskatoon a new man.

The struggle to keep going was not quickly won but we shipped large amounts of bacon to Britain and our business grew stronger.

None of us among the originals of Intercontinental Packers will forget the dark months of the Atlantic submarine war, so far away yet so close to home. We knew there must be great losses being incurred in the sea war. Month after month, the Atlantic convoys to Great Britain were subject to heavy U-boat attacks. We did not know what the losses were, but we did know that large shipments which included some of our carefully prepared and packed bacon were being sent to the bottom of the ocean. The news had a depressing effect on all of us, but we worked with determination and a will to win.
Though I was a stranger in a new land, I was fortunate in the people I hired in the early 1940s. The prairie people had gone through the hard times of the so-called Dirty Thirties of drought and depression. They were pleased to see a new industry that would give them jobs. I built up a staff to work the plant and I found men who could buy hogs. I remember a postcard from a young man in Regina who introduced himself as being twenty-two years of age. He wrote: “I understand you are looking for a shipping clerk. I do similar work at a plant in Regina. My wages are $22.50 a week. If you can better that, let me know and I am prepared to join you.” That is how I hired James Dryburgh, whom I promoted to managerial duties only a few months after he joined the firm. Jim is an energetic man and he possessed youthful temperament. One day he lost his temper and banged his fist on my desk. I said nothing, knowing it is no good to talk to an angry man. I gave it twenty-four hours of thought, as I had learned to do under rules in the German army as a private many years before. Jim was twenty-three years of age at the time, and the war was attracting most of the young men around Saskatoon. I said I realized that he was troubled because we had asked for a deferment of his military service. “We claimed you for this company,” I said, “because we are making bacon for Britain. Many young men are going overseas and possibly it doesn’t look good to you that we asked for your exemption. I can work a little harder and you join the forces.” He said he understood me. Two weeks later he was in the Royal Canadian Air Force, in which he served with enthusiasm and distinction. After the war he came back and later I sent him to Australia as my general manager there.

Shortly after we started up in Saskatoon, I was able to send Julius Weiss, our plant manager from Sydney, Australia, back to his job there. Among others who helped get the plant started was Young Harry Poels, who had come out to our agency in Montreal before the war. Henry Achs, who still remains with me, and Andy Simon were the two men who had worked in our plant at Papa, Hungary. Henry and Andy remained in Canada, but Harry Poels went to Australia soon after the war ended, to take charge of production there, and subsequently he returned to join his father in the family business in Belgium.

Many of the young men who joined me in the very first months in Saskatoon have remained with the business. They and I went through the difficult years together. I met a young man in his late twenties at the stockyards one day. He had his own commission business. He was selling hogs to me when I asked whether he was prepared to join Intercontinental and take charge of organizing our livestock supplies. Not a man to say yes easily, he said he would think it over for two weeks. He accepted and joined our organization. That was Gerald Willows, who became general manager of our Canadian business. Gerry was a great addition to our management team, and it was a sore tragedy when he died in a hotel room in Phoenix, Arizona, on a vacation trip in 1960.

Dr. George Miller, of the Canadian Bacon Board, was a frequent visitor to our plant as the official inspector assigned to it. One day I asked him to let me know if he came across men of ability and knowledge of the packinghouse industry who might be interested in joining Intercontinental. That is how I met Con Legger. Con is six feet three and a half inches tall, a giant beside me at my five feet one inch. At Dr. Miller’s suggestion I got in touch with Con in Calgary and arranged to go there and meet him at the Palliser Hotel. He was in no mood to discuss things calmly, for he had had a bitter experience with a recent employer. But the result of our talk was that, when I invited him to come to Saskatoon and join my firm, he accepted. He became a pillar of strength to me in the early days in Canada, and we have been friends for many years. He is the type of man an organization needs, and rarely finds.

I could mention many more men who joined me in the early months in Saskatoon, when I was a newcomer in a new land, and remained to help in building up a fine
industry. I have been fortunate in having associates who have taken departmental and executive responsibilities. I cannot name them all. Life, I used to say, is a struggle, and my remark became a salutation that many of my associates repeated in their conversations. "How's business?" one would ask. "It's a struggle," another would reply.

By purchasing plants in Regina, Red Deer, and, in 1964, in Vancouver, I have expanded the operations of Intercontinental Packers. I have followed a policy of modernizing each plant, and I am proud of my four Canadian packing plants. At the Saskatoon plant we converted an ugly dumping ground to the west into a beautiful park. But a few years later we needed the space in order to expand the plant, and that was the end of most of the park. On the east side of the plant we added a cafeteria for the staff, to accommodate five hundred people. It became a community centre for our people. We were able to provide a meal or a cup of coffee for the farmers who brought livestock to our plant. Our staff New Year's parties were held there, attracting more and more guests until the space became too small and we had to discontinue these affairs.

Our living quarters in the upper section of the office part of the Saskatoon plant remained as an apartment for entertaining visitors and friends, after I purchased a home on a tree-lined street in the city and we moved into it. With Eva as my expert guide, I added to my art collection with several Emily Carrs, a few beautiful pictures by J.M. Maurice, some A.Y. Jacksons, and some J.E.H. MacDonalds, David Milnes, and Franz Johnston. Many of these hang in the Mendel Saloon of the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon. Claire redesigned the space in the plant that had been our living quarters and filled the walls with paintings. We called it our gallery. Many people heard about it and asked to see my collection, which became known well beyond the limits of Saskatoon.

Saskatoon is a warm and friendly community in which I made many good friends. Many luncheons and dinner parties were held in our suite of rooms at the plant. I was pleased to be able to entertain business visitors to Saskatoon to lunch, often with the city mayor and other leaders of the community. Of course, I needed guidance in matters of Canadian and Saskatoon customs, and the ideal person to consult, I found, was one of Claire's friends, Mrs. Miriam Shields. I owe a great debt to Miriam for help in overcoming obstacles and arranging social occasions which gave me much pleasure and many new insights into the people and the land of Saskatchewan.

On one occasion, I was invited to the head table at a dinner meeting of the Canadian Meat Packers Council in Toronto, where I was called on to introduce my friend Professor Grant MacEwen, of the University of Saskatchewan. He is as tall as I am short, and we made a remarkable contrast standing up there together. Feeling handicapped as a speaker by my difficulty with the English language, especially before an audience, I became very much mixed up in what I was saying. Grant came to my rescue and straightened everything out in an amusing way. We have laughed about the incident because Grant was then, and still is now, one of the leading raconteurs of Canada. He has gone on in a career that led him to the office of Mayor of Calgary, Alberta, and Lieutenant-Governor of that province.

The same contrast of the tall and the short occurred when the University of Saskatchewan conferred honorary doctor's degrees on Professor Kenneth Galbraith of Harvard University, an ex-Canadian six feet six inches tall, and on me at the same convocation.

Another wise and helpful friend was the late Arthur Moxon, the dean of law at the university, and still another was the late Judge V.R. (Vinty) Smith, who had a distinguished career in law and in the public life of Saskatchewan before his elevation to the bench. A friend of judicious understanding is Emmett Hall, a fine lawyer who became a justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. A close friend was still another lawyer, the late Nat Schaeffer. For more than a quarter of a century my friend-
ship has endured with Burt Richardson, who was editor of the Saskatoon daily newspaper, the Star-Phoenix, and who became editor of The Telegram in Toronto. From these and many others, such as Sid Buckwold, Dr. Abraham Hoffer, Murray Adaskin, and Blair Nelson, I learned the ways and intricacies of Canadian life and I acquired the outlook and loyalties of a Canadian.

I acquired, as I say, Canadian customs. A taste for wine or a glass of champagne when the occasion arises is something I already had, but it is not, I found, a Canadian habit. I have done my part to change the Canadian taste to include wine. The consuming of spirits was something that I knew only from visits to England as a young man, when whisky tasted like bad medicine to me. My late friend Alex Smith, the Saskatoon manager of the Bank of Montreal, was my mentor in matters of whisky. I found it was not such bad medicine after all, though I have remained a moderate drinker. It has been a rule of my life that banking service is not something to be decided on a basis of friendship, and I have never sought close social relations with bank officials. Alex Smith was the exception, and I honour the memory of his friendship.

When the day arrived in 1944 on which I became a Canadian citizen, I celebrated with friends in the true Western Canadian style. And then when the war came to an end a year later, what a day we had! Not everyone could understand its significance for an individual like me. It meant having the chance to travel again, with the wonderful security of a Canadian passport. It meant that I could enjoy all the blessings of being a first-class citizen of a first-class country.

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PICASSO

How does one grasp you,
Gay-hearted Paradox,
Dissector of joy and pain,
Inscrutable you!

Wisdom of centuries
In this one breast.
Create in colour, shape;
Prophet of the Absolute.

Oh lift us from this earth
Otherworldly sorcerer.
Lead us into the grave splendour
Of your ever evolving visions.

E.M.M.
12 Reflections on Human Relations

The sense of being a refugee endures for a long time. I lived in Germany when its people allowed hatred and racial prejudice to become the basis of public policy, under Adolf Hitler. I escaped with my life by slimmer margins than I understood at the time. To the problem of racial prejudice there is no easy answer. It is abroad in some countries and communities today, and it is the greatest force for evil in the affairs of men. The defence against it is for free men to recognize it freely and to realize that it leads to disaster.

While I still lived in Berlin, I was forced out of one business because a partner objected to having a Jew associated with the firm, F.W. Zinck & Sohn. I would probably have left the company in any case, since I also had a partnership with Poels & Company at the time and it was much more promising. At the Zinck firm, business was slow and my partner, Ingwersen, asked our bankers to force me out. The three partners of our private bank, which specialized in services to livestock and meat industries, were Sponholz, Ehestaedt, and Schroeder. They asked me to resign. I replied that they were betting on the wrong horse, and the senior partner, Schroeder, agreed with me later. But he was outvoted and so was I. I was somewhat relieved, as Ingwersen and I were not compatible. Later I lost track of him completely. One of the bankers owned the meat-trade journal of Germany, Allgemeine Fleischer-Zeitung, which is still published by his son and which I still read. I was happy to devote my entire time to doing business with Poels & Company, an association which, as a reader will know, turned out to be mutually profitable. It endured for a dozen years.

The spread of prejudice through business relationships has the same result as it has in political and social relations. It is an evil and destructive thing, against which intelligent people should be always on the alert. We should know it, be able to recognize it, and oppose it. This is the simple, perhaps only, way to deal with racial prejudice. Is there any other way?

I must be frank in admitting that for a long time I held a feeling of bitterness in my heart towards Germany. It is gone now. In the Germany of today, I hope that the younger generation will have more wisdom than did their parents and grandparents who were in their twenties when Hitler came to power.

I was born a German, and so were my father and forefathers, after they migrated from the community of Sephardic Jews that contributed so much to the arts and politics of the kingdom of Spain in the days before the Inquisition. My father was certainly a liberal-minded man. We lived in a mainly Catholic community, and perhaps ninety-nine per cent of the customers of our meat business were not Jews. As a young boy, I was referred to as “Jew” Mendel, for it was the custom to refer in that way to the children who went to the Jewish school. It was impossible for a Jew to become an officer in the German army, or to sit as a judge. There were few Jews in German industry, but there were Jewish doctors and lawyers and some small businessmen. Two of my closest friends were Jews, Isaac Bachrach, a lawyer, and James Frankenstein, a dentist; another friend was Franz Plantenberg, a fine musician and
conductor. We were always together. When I look back I can remember how great a shock it was when suddenly I became an outcast.

It is not in the victim but in the perpetrator that remedies must be found for racial prejudice. In the case of the German Nazis, racism was a system of lucrative pillage based on the legal opportunity to meet competition by killing your competitor. Selfishness and greed are very powerful forces in human behaviour, and when legal protection for the individual breaks down, these forces dominate society as they did in Germany in the Nazi era. The Nazi doctrine permitted some Germans to kill and loot other Germans, a fact the Nazis obscured by making the Jews the scapegoat. Nazism was a system that permitted the Nazis to steal and murder, and it was a system devised and adopted by those who, in taking advantage of it, demonstrated that they themselves could not succeed competitively by standing on their own feet.

Racial prejudice is something that grows unseen and almost unnoticed at first, and it traps its victims. In Berlin in 1932, just before Hitler came to power, one never knew who was or was not a Nazi. Porters in the apartment blocks became Nazi members. So did bartenders. The rumours started. Then my sister’s husband, Siegfried Gutkind, who was in the wholesale business, was picked up by storm troopers and badly beaten. He never recovered fully, and neither could my sister Lilli ever forget.

Poor Klara and her husband, Sally, and their little daughter, Hannelore, were murdered in Poland, and I never knew what the circumstances were. They were the first of many of our relatives who were murdered by the Nazis. Four of my aunt’s family — that of my father’s sister — in Iserlohn were murdered, and so was my wife’s mother, Mrs. Louise Kaufmann. Her brother-in-law, Leo Leven, and his wife and son were sent to a concentration camp. Leo escaped, but his wife and son died in the gas ovens. Leo got away from Germany and went to Australia, where he lived until his death a few years ago. Many of our cousins on both sides of the family were victims of the Nazis. It is understandable if a spirit of bitter revenge lingered in many Jewish hearts. I can remember what my friend Jack Goldenberg, Q.C., an eminent lawyer in Saskatoon, told me about the Nazi gas ovens in the early years of the war. I could not believe it. But it was true.

During visits I made to Germany and other parts of Europe soon after the war, I was able gradually to gain a perspective on the events that destroyed so much of the Germany and the Europe I had known. Not only the Jews but countless others had suffered greatly. I went to London first and saw the terrible destruction in that city. I was deeply shocked. I admire the courage of the people who could endure so much mindless carnage. Then I went to Paris, which was not much damaged. I entered Germany and went to Essen, a city I had known well. Essen is the city of the Krupp industries, the makers of armaments. It was the worst-bombed city of all. It was almost totally destroyed. I could feel no sorrow. My mind was closed to sympathy and logic. Hitler, I felt, had started the war; the German people had supported him; they had massacred many Germans, including relatives of mine; they deserved to suffer; they deserved to lose. I felt a sense of satisfaction with the unbelievable destruction of Essen. It took me years to develop a truer and more understanding perspective of the events that cost me and members of my family so dearly.

There were many Germans, I discovered, who had hated Hitler. I went on to Cologne, and then to Frankfurt and to my old home town, Recklinghausen, which was hardly damaged at all, except that the house where I had lived when first married had been destroyed. It was hit by blind chance in the bombing.

I visited many places and heard the story of many wartime experiences at first hand. I spoke to the two remaining Jewish people in Recklinghausen, Mrs. Selma Aaron, a widow, and Herr de Vries, who later became president of the small Jewish congregation when the community
was restored. I heard of some of my friends who had gone to the gas ovens. I heard, as well, many stories of heroism, in which Catholic and Protestant women had hidden and protected their Jewish husbands. Many non-Jewish husbands had stood fast to protect their Jewish wives and their families. They are unsung heroes who were ready to stand bravely against the Nazi terror, and I salute them.

It was Hitler who raised up the doctrine of hatred among the German people. It was one man who attained an hypnotic control over the minds of intelligent people, over a whole nation of 70 million people in which the Jews numbered about 250,000. How could 250,000 determine the course for 70 million people? We must remember the poverty and depression in Germany following the first war. Inflation was a most destructive force. It was the German inflation that brought Hitler to power. But Hitlerism was the fault of the German system of government, which was not able to look after the needs of the people. The lesson to be learned from Hitlerism is that it is the people who suffer from inflation, that is, those on pensions and salaries who must receive an income in a stable currency.

Of course, Hitler stirred up the German people with promises of living space. He took Austria and then the Sudeten part of Czechoslovakia. He promised the German people everything. He even made ugly women feel that they would be beautiful as Nazis. He exercised the hypnotic powers of a demagogue. The Hitler record proves one thing surely and that is that free people will have to learn to deal with demagogues. The first step must be to develop the power to recognize the demagogue as an evil to be scorned and treated with contempt. I find that I have developed an automatic recognition of and resentment to demagogic behaviour in politics and in everything else. That is one thing I can give Hitler credit for. It is a good attitude to have. I don’t see that the Germans should suffer a sense of guilt. What good does that do? There are some things that cannot be forgiven, and that is that.

I went back to Germany with my wife in 1966 to celebrate our golden wedding anniversary. We went to Düsseldorf and stayed at the Park Hotel where we had gone on our honeymoon. It was a happy occasion and the people were very nice to us. Germany is a beautiful country and I feel sorry now that anyone should bear a sense of guilt that he feels must be expiated. I have no hatred, except that I despise people who join in movements based on hatred and prejudice. The individual must stand firmly and bravely, as many Germans did to their credit in recognizing the evil of Nazi terrorism, against monstrous political aberrations, knowing that the power of human love and the sense of justice are the marks of truly civilized men.

I can claim to have developed an insight into social relations which has become a dominant influence on my thinking. This goes back to my years as an employer in eastern Europe, which unhappily I have not revisited, except for Hungary. Packaging plants provide employment for a relatively large number of workers, and in countries such as Poland and the Balkans no labour unions existed in my days there. The power to control labour rested entirely on the side of the employer. I fully agree that such power cannot be held entirely by one side, but at the same time, it cannot be held entirely by the other.

When I started my plant in Canada in 1940, there was much unemployment and wages were low. I hope Canadians never see conditions like that again, for many people urgently wanting work came to my plant and asked to work for any sum I cared to pay them. I could scarcely believe it and I would never tolerate any such arrangement. My rule is that we should pay what we can afford, and possibly that is the reason I have had, over the years, a satisfactory relationship with my employees. When union organizers started to organize labour in the Saskatoon plant, I did not resist them. I made the statement to an organizer that if I had been a labourer I would have joined the union myself. In Europe I had
no experience with unions. The first time we signed a labour contract was when our plant in Australia was unionized. I was not often present when labour problems were discussed with the union, but on one occasion when radical elements were making our operations difficult, I asked for a hearing and received it. I do not believe that harmony is possible without some procedure of that kind. So I came from European countries that were mainly without unions, and from Australia, which is a highly unionized country. I arrived in Canada with some understanding of labour needs and I feel that trust and confidence are important. I feel badly if it is not possible to shake hands with people who work for me, as there is always a need for understanding of human relations in the contacts between employer and employees. Such contacts cannot be carried on in a cold and bloodless way. Strikes, and threats of strikes, in my opinion, are outdated. A strike to back up demands that cannot be met is a threat to destroy an industry in which the people affected would be deprived of their livelihood. It creates an atmosphere of fear for owners, endangering the entire enterprise.

In the business system as I knew it in eastern European countries before the war, I saw that labour was being mistreated. At the same time, I believe that labour has an obligation to supply a full day’s work for a full day’s pay. Labour must not take away from the builder of an industry the pride of creation and the satisfaction of providing people with a decent income. I have often had the pleasure of knowing that grandfathers, fathers, and sons, in succession, have chosen to work in our enterprises. As long as I live, I hope that will be the case and that it will be the experience, too, for members of my family who, I hope, will come after me.

To build an industrial plant is an accomplishment not only in bricks and stones. To make it produce takes people who can work together. I have always believed that ownership is wrong when it takes advantage of workers. Often enough I have had good reason to lay off people in difficult situations when our company experienced heavy losses so that it was not able to meet obligations. Our union has, at such times, offered to work for less money, but that is something I have not and will not accept. I have appealed to union members to put more effort into the work to help us weather the storm. We have overcome our troubles.

I understand that management spends sleepless nights to keep an organization intact; I went through that many times. The workers who put their lives and efforts into an organization are entitled to security. I have no sympathy with the “get rich quick” method of management, and I am sure that many people in management positions share my views and outlook. If they do not show it, perhaps they do not have the opportunity to do so. Many employees have the same fears that I have. My philosophy is that anything that hurts me in the role of employer, or hurts Intercontinental Packers, hurts everyone connected with the firm.

My guiding rule in industrial management is that our plants should be as efficient as anyone else's. We have always met competitive wage demands and we have always paid competitive prices to livestock producers. Small grievances should certainly be settled among the parties concerned without wasting time and effort in long hours of dispute. Yet an atmosphere of reasonable discussion is absolutely essential in labour-management relations, because it is related to the continuous production that provides good working conditions, good wages, and security.

When I started in Saskatoon, I did not have an automobile. In 1940, my associate, Henry Aches, had a Ford car and I rode with him. Later he turned it in for an Oldsmobile. I first bought a car of my own in 1950, ten years after coming to Saskatoon, and I still possess the 1953 car I bought later. But most of my employees drive cars. One plant in Saskatoon has a parking lot for 700 cars, and I believe that our Intercontinental people own from 1,500 to 2,000 automobiles. I reflect upon such a situation
as a measurement of social progress that people enjoy in a
country like Canada. In the first years of Intercontinental
Packers in Saskatoon, the bus fare from the city to the
plant was five cents, compared with twenty-five cents in
1971, and many workers walked a mile or two just to save
the fare. An automobile in almost every workingman’s
family is not the only, nor perhaps the best, yardstick of
well-being. But it indicates that Canada is far different
from any of the countries I knew intimately as an entre-
preneur. It measures the advantages that Canadians en-
joy, and I hope that Canada shall always maintain the
free and productive system that provides the people who
make up the backbone of a country with their share of
the production of wealth as a right to enjoy.

As for myself, I have been tempted to sell out at times.
But my satisfaction in knowing that our organization is
very efficient and provides livelihood for several thou-
sand people dominates my mind at such times. In regard
to wealth, I have never had much money in my lifetime.
It is money, of course, that one uses to satisfy indulgences,
such as buying a fine race horse or a painting, but mainly
I have made money to put it back into the business. I
come back inevitably to think of the people I am associated
with, the employees in our plants, and my responsibility to
them. This is part of my philosophy of life and of business,
the same business I have been in all my life — meat and
livestock — which was my father’s business.

MY DREAM WORLD

_Turn off the clock, forget the time!_
_Of joy and happiness let’s chime!_

_Of mountain views and sailing ships,_
_Of thoroughbreds and woodland trips._

_Of freedom songs and gypsy strings,_
_Of dinner gongs and airplane wings._

_Of artist’s visions far away,_
_Of beauty, each and every day._

_Of kindness, friendship and affection,_
_And for God’s creatures man’s protection._

_Turn off the clock, forget the time!_
_Of joy and happiness let’s chime!_

E.M.M.
13 Miracles Are in the Mind

At crucial periods in a man's life, the occurrence of miracles seems to be the only thing that averts disaster and saves the day. I have had my share of good luck, but there is something more than luck that is required. I could have been killed at sixteen different times by the Nazis, and that may be a record for one little man's lifetime. I could have been the poorest man on earth in terms of worldly success. In all of this, the lesson that life has taught is that one should not be overcome by fear and give up.

One experience that came to me confirmed my attitude rather late in life. It happened in 1958 not long after I had suffered a heart attack that placed me under strict doctor's orders to avoid worry and pressure. I had a long convalescence and I had plenty of time for such things as reflecting on my experiences and attempting, as a beginning, to put them down on paper as a memoir for my grandchildren. About three months after my recovery I was using a cane whenever I walked anywhere. One day, as I was making my way slowly along Burrard Street in Vancouver, I stopped for a red light and noticed a man walking with difficulty with a cane, a woman helping by grasping his arm. I watched him and the thought came to me that I must look like that. I walked across the street straight and I have never used a walking stick since then. I decided I would not appear to be a sick, old man. I received some insight that made me do it. It was my life saver, and I feel that that is a miracle that I experienced. I was never afraid of my heart attack again.

In my home I have awakened at night, sleepless, and gone into the living room to switch on all the lights in order to look at my paintings. Each one has an association in my mind; each provides its own response to colour and evokes the memory of happiness at one time in my life. In 1962 I sent a collection of sixty of our paintings for exhibition in Australia, where they were presented in Sydney, Brisbane, and Adelaide at the David Jones Art Gallery in each city, and at George's Art Gallery in Melbourne. "Small but excellent examples of great artists," reported the Sydney Morning Herald. The collection contained pictures by Pissarro, Rouault, Vennard, Utrillo, Nolde, Poliakoff, Buffet, Chagall, Derain, and Ernst, and, as the Melbourne Age's critic wrote, "a lovely, very restrained Les Pêches by Braque", "charming Le Havre by Dufy", "a vital Woman with Hat by Otto Dix", "the boldly patterned Harbor Bridge by Feininger", "a sensuous satire The Blind Man Sees by Grosz", and Franz Marc's Pigs. The Age said, "There is much in this collection to admire, ponder over and examine many times."

When the time came to open the Mendel Art Gallery, with which the City of Saskatoon has combined a magnificent conservatory, I had another experience that illustrates how the power of the mind is something a person can use. I was called on to deliver a speech in the ceremony declaring the gallery open. A few days beforehand I suddenly felt a sharp pain in my leg that almost crippled me. I went to my doctor, who diagnosed it as a thrombosis. I spent three days in hospital and I was advised I should remain quietly in bed for some weeks. The day before the Mendel Art Gallery was to be opened I told my doctor I was feel-
ing better and that I was leaving. I did leave the hospital, took a taxi, and went to the opening and delivered my speech. I never had a pain of that kind again.

At the same time, I believe in doing what the doctor orders. Two years later — in my seventy-eighth year, in 1966 — I had a serious operation in Houston, Texas, where the famous Dr. De Bakey treated me surgically for an aneurysm. I went to Houston by myself, telling my family only that I planned to have a medical checkup. Two days before the operation, I telephoned my daughter Johanna, and she and Eva, with Eva's husband Max, came to Houston. I came through the operation very well and ever since I have adopted a strict physical routine. I follow a course of exercise and massage and I walk several miles a day, which I often combine with golf. It was Joe Kaiser, who manages our house in California, who came down to the Houston clinic and took me home, and provided the care I needed. I took a vacation of seven weeks and recovered with a simple routine of walking for exercise for three hours a day.

Moderation, of course, is a good rule for the individual. Two types of people are no good for an industrial organization, or for themselves — those who drink too much and those who eat too much. For the first type I can think of only one approach, and that is to lay down the law that they must not drink. For the other, my approach is to make a substantial wager that they cannot reduce their weight to a certain figure in a certain time. I am always happy to pay off bets of this kind that I have lost to my associates.

I go to bed early, as a matter of habit from living a life in which my day runs from seven o'clock in the morning. After dinner in the evening I rarely sit and talk. I often go to bed by eight o'clock and fall asleep, though I sometimes read for a while during the night. I like to read biographies and the history of various countries such as Russia, Great Britain, and America. I prefer books about people who work and create and build up businesses. The creative person is the one who attracts me. I respect the men who work to build a business from a small start and people who have a special flair for carrying through a career, whether it is in art or business. Men who talk business all the time and never seem to relax from it are not my type. I am not at ease in their company.

A belief in God is something that I respect, though I am not a churchgoer myself. I attend service at the synagogue only rarely. My father held old-fashioned beliefs. He was reformed orthodox. I believe that a person must have God within himself, and I pray often in my own way. To some people prayer is a need, arising from tradition. I like to visit many churches and cathedrals in cities around the world, drawn by the quiet and relaxing atmosphere. I may go, as well, to a fine musical concert or spend hours viewing the pictures in an art gallery.

For myself, I would never denounce my Jewish religion, and I hope that some of my grandchildren and great-grandchildren will adhere to the Jewish faith. I am not unaware of the great contribution made to science and the arts by Jews, but the fact that a person is Jewish or non-Jewish matters not at all. The future of Israel, for example, is not wholly a Jewish concern. The Jewish people have suffered much through the years, as a nation and as a people. Now they have a homeland and they are entitled to it without an environment of hatred and fear. I support Israel financially and in every other way. Israel is fighting for survival, and much more is at stake for the future of the world than a handful of Jews fighting against extermination. The murder of 6,000,000 Jews is enough bloodshed and no more is needed from people who long for security and peace. It is not only the Jews who are involved in the grave consequences that hinge on the future of Israel.

The world, of course, is interdependent. That is something a man learns from his children and his grandchildren. Each one is an individual, and a family, like a nation, is a group of individuals. My younger daughter, Eva Miller, is an artist and poet. She has three fine daughters, Susan, Linda, and Debby. Her husband, Max Miller, is a specialist in tropical diseases and chairman of the department at Tulane
University in New Orleans. He is a man of marked intellectual power who has had a wide international experience. He is engaged in an important research program in his chosen field in the Caribbean area and South America.

My elder daughter, Johanna Mitchell, is my successor as president of our family company. She was married to Cameron Mitchell, the movie and television actor. It was not truly a surprise to me when, one day in New York in 1940, I discovered that they had eloped and married without telling us. At that time Cameron was in the cast of the Lunt and Fontanne production of Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew. The son of a Protestant minister, Cameron has appeared in many movies and television productions. He was in the cast of the Broadway production of Death of a Salesman, starring Lee J. Cobb. My view was that, when our daughters wished to marry, I did not care if they chose husbands who were poor or rich, Jew or Gentile, of any race or colour, as long as they were good human beings. Johanna and Cameron were married on August 17, 1940. When I found they were married I was on a business trip to New York, and the three of us had dinner together and spent the evening in talk. On July 4, 1941, our first grandson, Robert, was born. At that time, Claire and I spent a week in New York and were happy in our grandson, as we have been in all our grandchildren. Johanna's family includes, as well as Robert, two other sons, Frederick and Charles, and a daughter, Camille. Johanna and her husband are now divorced.

I enjoy the friendship of Johanna's former husband, Cameron Mitchell, to whom I owe the discovery of the game of golf in the early 1940s. I am the greatest duffer the game has ever had, though I play as much as eighteen holes almost every day. Golf has become a preoccupation with me. It is part of my program of exercise. I have been able to improve my game by leaps and bounds. One thing about golf is that it is an international game. I carry my clubs with me virtually everywhere I go. At one time, I used to keep one set of clubs in Saskatoon and another in California, and still others in Paris, London, and, as well, Australia. I have played golf in a great many countries. Now I carry my favourite clubs with me almost everywhere I go.

Golf to me is not a competitive game, so that I save my energy for other competitive things. I usually play alone. I have never established a handicap and I do not count my strokes. At courses where I am a member, there are caddies who know me and my game and I just go around the course, like a lonely bull. I don't enjoy golf as a game in which to beat the other man.

A great place for a putting green and a practice fairway is a ranch in the country, and I have developed these extra attractions on my ranch near Saskatoon. My decision in later years to make my home on the Saskatchewan range, where the sky and horizon add dimensions to existence, was an outgrowth in part of my desire to experiment in feedlot operations to finish cattle for the packing plant. My view now is that the best and most economical method of feeding and finishing livestock is right on the farm under the eye of the farmer, who can do it profitably and, when the time comes, can load his animals in his truck and deliver them to the packing-house yards. My ranch has become one of the places I like best, as a way of life to offset the cares of business of the stress of city life. One reason I like it is the skill with which Julianna Mandl, who learned to cook in her native Austria, manages the meals and other household activities. The attraction of life in the wide-open spaces will, I think, always exert an influence on people in the big cities.

This leads me to include mention of Ben, the friendly steer, a resident of my ranch. A few years ago I noticed that a handsome Charolais-bred steer among 175 or so animals on the way to slaughter had taken a conspicuous liking to my stock supervisor, Bill Turner, to whom I defer in matters of golf since he was once a club assistant professional golfer. As a duffer of the links I like to associate with people such as Bill, who has great knowledge of the game. Whatever it was, Bill caught the eye of Ben, the friendly steer who is the colour of light chocolate. When Bill entered the
barn Ben would trot up to him, showing affection and following him wherever he went. Ben obviously had some kind of crush on the human race. Impulsively I decided that we would keep Ben as a pet, rather than send him along to the plant with the others. Ben became my friend, as well. One day I noticed a dwarf heifer among the cattle, and I thought she would be nice company for Ben. She was not very attractive, but I sent her over to Ben's stall. He was not overly impressed by his new feminine friend. We called her Dolly. A few months later Dolly died a natural death and Ben became a widower. The conclusion of the story is that Ben has grown to weigh more than a ton and takes no notice of me any more. I think he still loves Bill, but I was the one who saved his life.

There is a restless quality in my life, and I have been an incessant and inveterate traveller as a result of the demands of the packing-house business in which I have been engaged. I have not lost the attraction of visiting places I have known, though not many friends remain. I am a wanderer. In London, England, I stayed at the Savoy Hotel, where I have been going for fifty years or so. There are hotel staff people there who still remember me after many years. The headwaiters at the Savoy Grill know where I like to sit and what I like to eat. To feel at home is important. I go to the art galleries in London and look at the paintings. I play golf, touring the links with a caddy as a visiting player. Once in a while I go to the races at Ascot or Kempton Park.

In Paris I have stayed at the Hotel Prince des Galles for many years. I usually get the same room overlooking a quiet courtyard where there is good, fresh air. I have noticed many changes in Paris. I used to go frequently to the Chez Louis restaurant, whose owner was a Czech. The son carried on the business, which attracted many Americans who were travelling in Europe. The food specialties remained of a high order, but the business fell off and the Chez Louis is gone now. It did not suit modern Parisian taste. I avoid the Parisian places that exist through snob appeal. The tourist traffic has changed. Hotels today need to fill up their rooms, and it is a good thing that masses of people can travel today who could not formerly afford it. Perhaps 150 people will arrive together at a European hotel by bus. Suitcases are littered all over the lobby. The older ladies' feet hurt, the men are slumped in the lobby chairs. The younger people are excited, full of energy and on the go. It is mass production in tourism, and that is the world today.

One distinction of European restaurants is the wine. One glass of wine gives happiness and contentment. I am a wine collector. I have a little wine cellar in our California house, all good wines and vintages from France and Germany, Australia and America. I have seen the quality of wine in North America improve steadily. There are good Canadian wines today, and in fact in most countries. I place Burgundy and Bordeaux wines of France ahead of them all, after which come several German and Australian wines. In Canada I am a good customer of the liquor boards, which are the exclusive vendors of wines, and perhaps they should give me a licence to run my own wine business. I am a co-founder of the outstanding Beverly Hills restaurant the Bistro, in Canyon Drive. I am thrilled to think that I am one of the founders of a noted and flourishing restaurant, but the profits I make from the investment I usually spend in a few evenings when I visit the Bistro. Yet I enjoy being a part of it, meeting another one of the founders, Billy Wilder, the cinema director, and many people of the entertainment industry. Kurt Nicholas, the Bistro's president, is the former head waiter of Romanoff's, and it was Kurt who conceived the idea of a new restaurant when the late Mike Romanoff closed his.

A man's philosophy of life and the business of living undergoes changes from year to year. I believe that we are on the threshold of changes far beyond anything we have yet seen, or imagined. I hope that young Canadians share the sense of anticipation and excitement that I myself feel
about the future, which is theirs, not mine. Life indeed becomes a tangle of new ideas to be tested against the hard standard of one’s experience.

One certainty is that the entire pattern of relationships by which men conduct their business dealings and affairs of economics will change. In fact, it is changing now in advanced industrial countries, of which Canada is one. The country that I discovered, adopted, and came to love in that distant eve of the second great war of my lifetime has been transformed beyond belief. We are still groping for right answers, but I see the coming age as one that permits the full and rich expression of human nature. The only barrier is in man himself, for he may throw away his opportunity. Writing in my ranch home in Saskatchewan, which has become a base at last of a restless life, I can see the summer horizon so far away that it seems like forever. The prairie sky is a high ceiling where clouds trail curtains of thin rain here and there, and I reflect that this spectacle of colour and line has waited through a million Saskatchewan summers for great painters. Here is the subject, so let them come.

Our social and industrial community has moved beyond old limits, and the danger is that men have lost control of the economic forces by which they live. They seek endlessly for new reforms, new constitutions, new methods. I must confess that though I narrowly missed being a victim of political doctrine as it was conceived in a Nazi régime, and though I survived while that régime became dust in history, I have taken no part in politics. I do not believe that man’s salvation is a political problem. Politics is necessary only to preserve a society of freedom, in which we may always find alternatives to a policy of destruction of lives and property, such as a reader finds to be a dark accompaniment of much that I have written down. I am the eternal optimist.

I would not change my life for any other. It is not a career that has enjoyed any guarantee of security. One needs some conflict, some struggle, for success. It is enough that the industry I have created in Canada shall go on. It is
Das Spiel ist aus. The show is over. I ask myself what I would do if I confronted today such situations as I have lived through. My answer is that I would say to myself and to my children and to all my grandchildren: "There is now no place to go." When I lived my life there was somewhere in the world a place to live one's life, to be free to create and to build, to suffer and to enjoy, to love and to be loved. Today I celebrate my eighty-third birthday — 18. 12. 1971. On 18. 12. 1888 I came into this world, into an age of tremendous discoveries and such changes as there had never been before. But it has been a world of great misery and destruction. Many new discoveries remain to be made in the near future, which will mean less sickness and an increase in the life span of the individual. The young people of today confront a future full of opportunity to build their lives as they desire, and I give them my blessing in the way they must go, with the hope that history may not repeat itself and that solutions can be found to make a better, more understanding world.