Ilona
Károlyi Széchényi

The Pendulum Swings

American Hungarian Literary Guild
Astor, Florida
1980

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 80-67340
Printed by Catholic Publishing Company
1739 Mahoning Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio 44509, U.S.A.

Introducing the author

This book was not written by a professional writer, and does not claim literary qualities as such. Its author is a painter, who expresses herself in lines and colors, without the need of words.

Born in Hungary in 1898, Countess Ilona Károlyi Széchényi studied art since her seventh birthday. First at home with private tutors, then at the Royal Academy in Budapest, and the Academy of Creative Arts in Munich, Germany.

Since leaving Hungary under duress in 1945, she traveled extensively, exhibiting paintings in London, the United States of America, Brazil, Argentina, Uganda, Switzerland, Austria and Germany. Countess Károlyi Széchényi now lives in England, where she teaches painting.

Her most famous portraits include those of Albert Einstein, Prime-minister Count István Tisza, Archduke Albrecht and Archduchess Anna, Countess Claudia Rhédey (Queen Mary's grandmother), the famous surgeon Prof. Lajos Ádám, Bishop Miklós Széchényi, Prince and Princess Lichtenstein, the famous Swiss writer Albert Steffen, Atahualpa Hupanki, the well known Argentine guitar player, Lord Rothermere, owner of the Daily Mail, Rudolph Steiner, author Elynor Glynn, the famous architect of "Brazilia", P. Niemeyer, etc., etc.

Besides the portraits, her landscapes, still lifes and horse pictures prove the great versatility of her talent, sustained by the indestructible resources of her spirit that upheld her in spite of misfortune, grief, loss of home and homeland.

One of the known art critics of South America, Mr. F. Kez wrote about her works in 1951:

"The style of her portraits are characterized by an impressive ease and grace, which make us recognize behind the strict interpretation of the subject's character the suggestive personality of the artist. Her technique bears the tender and delicate marks of the Munich school, but now and again it seems to melt into lighter tonalities, reminding one of the touch of the French masters."

"Her still lifes and landscapes are fresh, colorful, and bold. The artist is impelled to reflect nature, but her inner feelings and exper-

iences are automatically added to it, and this is exactly what makes her great..."

However, it is not her excellence as a painter that made the publisher decide to print this book. The reason goes way beyond that.

This book represents history, in a unique way. Not from the viewpoint of the historian, the diplomat, the statesman, the conqueror or the simple onlooker, but from that of the victim. It represents the agonies and the struggles for survival of the innocent in a havoc of evil confusion. The tears of all mothers who have ever prayed for the lives of their children midst an apocalypse. The fears of all wives for the safe return of their husbands who have fallen into the hands of cruel enemies. The choking grief of those uprooted from their beloved homeland by the forces of evil, and thrown aimlessly into an indifferent, foreign world. But it represents also the stamina hidden deep in the human soul that makes the believers build new lives on barren rocks, and enrich mankind with values salvaged from the ruins of the past and transplanted into the consciousness of the future.

Indeed, THE PENDULUM SWINGS.

Some fall off at the extremities, due to gravity and inertia. Others swing back, holding on through sheer courage to the faith in good which overcomes evil.

This book is a colorful memorial to those who had the fortitude to make it.

Albert Wass

Author's Forward

Urged and encouraged by friends and newspaper people to put down my recollections on paper, I protested — "in this century almost everyone's life is interesting and has a touch of drama!"

Nevertheless, impulsively — one sunny afternoon I started to write. Language difficulties rocketed sky high immediately, words seemed to jump into my awareness in all other languages except in English.

But the real headache was how to begin — where to start?

Memoirs — usually — start with dates, birthplaces, details which many a reader will skip, being generally boring. So I decided against that method of approach and will, therefore, give you just a few relevant details now.

I was born in my grandparents' home in 1898 and lived with my parents in Hungary for 25 years.

I married Victor Károlyi in 1923 and had 3 children — Lajos (Louis), Sophie-Christine (Ditta) and Anthony.

After the second world war the Russian troops invaded our country. We left in 1945 and shared the tragic fate of thousands of emigrants in poverty, hunger and frustration.

My poor brave husband was taken prisoner in Austria by the American Occupational Army and sent back to the communist Hungarian Government under totally false accusations in 1945. He was sentenced to 3½ years in prison and when he had served his sentence and was released, miraculously organised his escape through the Hungarian border to Austria and joined us in May 1949.

Our daughter had just married Major Bill Edwards and followed him to Uganda. Lajos, very lonely and young, married Ilona Tellér and emigrated to Brazil with two babies. It was a personal fate to relative freedom. We joined them there, my husband Victor and our youngest son Anthony in 1950.

Without means it was not easy to live in Brazil and to adapt ourselves to that vast country, to the climate, to the people. My job was by far the easiest being a professional painter; soon the high prices for portraits enabled me to visit my Mother and brothers in the States.

During my long life I painted portraits in Hungary, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, England, Africa, Brazil, Argentina, and the United States. I met thousands of people, famous personalities and obscure ones, some good, some bad, but they were all God's children.

I acknowledge with gratitude the help and encouragement I have received not only from my family but also from my friends Muriel Pickard, Marian Goddard and John Brewer, who read the book before publication and made valuable suggestions.

I also wish to thank warmly Mrs. Marene Morgan for so efficiently and speedily carrying out the difficult task of the typing and correcting, without whose help this book may never have been published.

Now I am 81 years old. What I have written is the absolute truth in every detail and so I hope it might interest you.

I dedicate this book to all who have been through similar trials and tribulations.

Chapter I

The counts Széchényi of Sárvár Felsővidék were one of the ancient lines of Hungarian nobility. Many a valiant soldier, great diplomat, statesman and noble prelate had written their names in Magyar history. The glory and welfare of their country was ever placed above personal interest. A race of honest, noblehearted, hospitable people, they seemed to have lived up to their family motto, "Si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos", "if God is with us, who is against us", and to the white dove of peace holding a green branch in the main centre of the family coat of arms.

One of my ancestors was St. Elizabeth, 1207-1231, born of the House of Árpád, married to Ludwig Landgraf of Thüringen. Her father was King Endre II of Hungary, great-grandfather (4th generation) of Isabelle of France, wife of Edward II, 1284-1327, of Caernarvon — Queen Mary Stuart's ancestor.

Nine generations ago Ferencz Rákoczy, the great-grandson of Sigismond Rákoczy, King of Transylvania, 1544-1608, and his wife Ilona Zrinyi, was a descendant via the House of Aragon of William the Conqueror.

On my mother's side I am a descendant, according to the English and Scottish genealogist, of Alpin, King of Kintyre, father of Kenneth McAlpin, King of Scots who died in 859. I am grateful to Fate to have such ancestors.

My father was born in Somogy, in the south-eastern corner of Hungary, one of the six sons of count Ferenc Széchényi. He was 27 years old when he married Countess Christa Wenckheim, in 1872.

I was born in 1898, in the year our poor lovely Queen Elizabeth, Empress of the Austro-Hungarian empire, was murdered in Geneva on the lake shore.

My parents spent each summer abroad in Belgium, Italy, Austria and in the northern mountains of Hungary. From these places I have a few recollections, blurred bubbles swimming on grey sea, but the atmosphere, colour and smell, the emotions of those times live in my memory like vivid lights. I cannot recollect the birth of my brother Feri in Budapest, where we occupied a ground floor apartment in my grandparents' house, he was just there, and a part

of our happy everyday life. I can feel my sister Toinette's firm hold on my frock, hidden behind the stone parapet, all lights ablaze, watching spellbound the arrival of countless carriages and state coaches, gorgeously dressed ladies and gentlemen with glittering decorations and splendid uniforms, mounting the broad marble steps to the white-and-gold ballrooms.

In 1906 we moved to Póstelek, the county of Békés. It was a large house with 85 rooms and seemed a home full of light, colour, peace and harmony as indeed it was and would remain so forever in my memory. Smooth lawns, flowerbeds and little shady patches of shrubs and trees spread out in the park. The little pond reflected patches of vivid coloured perennials and weeping willows.

I was an emotional child, breaking my heart with grief, or bursting with pleasure. No golden middle ways for me, always extreme in feelings, thoughts, interests, arts, joys. I had to be kept firmly within bounds. This made me long for space, action, change and liberty. I wanted solitude, and I wanted to be free in the woods so full of mystery, in the wide planes, brown in autumn, white in winter, green in the spring and a golden sea in summertime. And I wanted to be alone to enjoy the vibrant song of innumerable nightingales, but freedom from the nannies and governesses was a rare luxury for us. In spite of this ours was a happy, healthy outdoor life, with horses, dogs, winter and summer spots, cosy hours of rest in the evenings by a sparkling log fire. But everything had to be strictly regulated; a schedule for lessons and recreations, meals, sports and Sunday excursions.

In those times, children of the aristocracy were seldom sent to boarding schools, but were taught by teachers of all nationalities, who stayed with them in the country houses. I think I was a studious child with a lively interest for almost all subjects. We studied in the Hungarian language, but had to speak, read and write fluently in French, German and English; we also had lessons in music and painting and Italian.

I was often ill, but it was lovely to lie still in the cosy bedroom and listen for hours to Mlle. Mathilde playing the piano. I would compose romantic stories lasting for days, invariably with happy endings. Above all, I loved drawing and painting; it was not a childish hobby, it was a necessity. Lying on my back, oblivious of my surroundings, picture after picture would surge up before my mental vision, dramatic and monumental, finished to the last detail of line and colour, but of this I never spoke, fearing to be ridiculed. I was a

secretive child, building up a life of my own, hiding it under a quick joke.

A collection of mountain crystals, amethyst, beryl, topaz, and opals, stood on a shelf under glass. On rare occasions we children were allowed to take them out and play with them — delightful, thrilling moments and full of temptation; and one day the temptation was too strong; I stole the amethyst, I fingered it in my pocket, hugged it in my sleep for two long unforgotten days, and then, biding my time, with burning tears of regret and shame, standing periously on tip-toe on the back of a chair, watching doors and windows from the corner of my eyes, I replaced it.

Animals played a big part in our life. The huge Dane proudly walked near the baby's pram, a tame fox played hide-and-seek with us in the stable and courtyard; a baby wild boar with white striped back and corkscrew tail, stood on short hind legs and pushed the plates with his wet nose to get the best bits from the table; the black and white retriever, ponies, donkeys, horses, stray does found and fed on bottle, white rabbits with round eyes and long pink ears, billy goats and even hedgehogs were amongst our pets.

The 2nd of June was my birthday. From times remembered, dawn invariably found me awake on that day, watching round spots of the filtered sunrays dancing on the blue wall, the lively twitter of birds, the various sounds of gradually awakening life. And when the big clock in the state drawing-room chimed seven in booming imitation of London's "Big Ben", dear little Manyi, housekeeper, nurse, and mother's right hand for fifty years — noiselessly opened the padded doors. She brought me the three loveliest rosebuds, lemon, yellow, pink and red with fresh dew-drops like tiny diamonds nestling in their hearts. She wished me the best of luck. After a hasty breakfast at a quarter to eight I was solemnly ushered into my parents' presence. There on a table stood various gifts amidst a wreath of flowers, unforgettable sunny mornings, when my small personality seemed so important to me and to everybody else.

A happy atmosphere of peace, love and complete harmony surrounded us. We filled our lungs with it, and our nerves and blood responded to it ever after. I had a secret pride and unbound admiration for my father, so tall, so handsome, so kind, invariably good tempered and impartial, ready to listen, to joke and to play with us children, but his blue eyes could look steely and forbidding, his deep voice command and thunder; he expected obedience from everybody. Centuries of intellectual education and breeding were stamped on his personality, but above all he was good — good and kind al-

ways towards everybody. "Noblesse oblige" he used to say and he lived up to tradition, to ideals of unselfish nobility, respecting and admiring all that was pure, honest and good in every man. He taught us time and again to find the personal qualities, never to judge by appearance, never be unjust and rash in your opinion, there is good and evil in everyone. Find the qualities, choose the honest, and be careful to find the right friend.

We were brought up strictly and rules in our daily routine were broken only on rare occasions. My sister Toinette and I shared the same bedroom, Mlle. Mathilde had the room next to us. We had a sitting room of our own with two writing tables and many bookshelves. Feri and Charlie, the two boys, shared another bedroom in this, "the children's wing".

Mlle. Mathilde was our French governess — kind, but impatient, flaring up with French temperment, she taught history with chauvinistic pride, watching with tight lips our inexperienced fingers tumbling through eternal arpeggios and chromatic scales, during our music lessons. She left when we were grown up; she had sacrificed to us many years of her personal freedom and happiness, in fact the best part of her life. Returning to her own beloved country she died suddenly, Hungarian words and our names on her lips.

Fraulein Else was the German governess — patient, even-tempered and romantic, she hardly ever scolded; she begged us to be obedient and good with tearful light blue eyes. We were all very fond of her too. Born in Dresden she could teach me many things about those famous art galleries and we had delightful hours of drawing and painting together. She treated us, during the 18 years with us, as her own children.

There were many nurses and governesses who came and went after short periods of several months or years, for different reasons. Kind Mlle. Cecile Bourgeot left us for the secluded life of a cloister. She presented me with a small red leather booklet, "*Livre des sacrifices*" and for a short period I diligently marked my good deeds, counting them rapturously each evening. Rescuing a bee from the window sill, keeping my mouth shut for five minutes, picking up my sister's hanky, all these small acts included in my lists, no wonder that there were dozens!

Dear tiny Miss Deerham, with the crooked finger and a face like a shrunken apple was with us only during holidays. I loathed those English lessons, walking up and down slowly under the green trees, reciting endlessly "I have ten fingers" the first four words I grasped at once, fascinated by this gesticulating, but rigid little

finger of her right hand. Another English teacher arrived; she stayed for a very short time, but the poor creature was the butt of endless jokes years after. Very long arms reaching down to the knees; she was actually like a bunch of bones tied up in parchment. Her age was absolutely indefinite and could not be found out, she was born in a leap-year on a 29th February. She raced with us and long-legged Mr. Bokros, my brother's teacher; she nearly beat him, her flat feet shod in tennis shoes flying over the green lawn. Father came home one sunny afternoon, and saw something wet and dark dangling from a first story window, like a long snake reaching down to his study window on the ground floor. It was Miss Rose's hair, incredibly long; her only ornament she wore plaited and wound high over her forehead like a regal dark crown. She was a poor, funny peculiar creature, indeed, but we learned English very quickly with her.

Miss Josefa and Miss Yolán taught us grammar, marking notes in red ink, charming and efficient. But when my brother Feri was ten years old we girls learned from tutors also. First came fat Mr. Csáder with one brown and one blue eye (like father's retriever), then arrived skinny, tall Professor Hutlász, stroking a fair toothbrush moustache and thin lips, his mouth the exact shape of a black box, when he said: "Oxenstjerna Axel, chancellor of King Gustav Adolf." He could be so pleased when I knew the historical dates, but I felt slightly repentent having scribbled them one and all with ink on my nails.

Toinette, golden curls reaching nearly to her slim waist, beguiled everybody with her sweet charm. She liked to play with dolls, I played with everything except dolls. There was mystery in each little pebble of leaf, a breathtaking beauty in the blue and yellow rubber ball.

Our days passed in the sunny south wing, in the three playing grounds of the park and in the woods. Our parents took the liveliest interest in the estate, managing and supervising everything personally. They were never idle, always busy with the many various problems concerning farming and harvest prospects, cattle breeding, forestry, irrigation, the best breed of table poultry, etc. The question of too much rain or not enough rain was a constant topic and cause for joy or worry. They were too busy to have noisy children around them all day, but we never felt them remote and could always turn to them for all our problems. It was understood that we should keep quiet as long as mother and father would talk, read or write, but we could enjoy their company in certain hours as much as we felt in-

clined. We were never thirsty for affection and understanding because we had plenty of it.

I used to watch Father riding home on his white thoroughbred stallion, from his inspection at dawn, and flew out to see the ritual of his dismounting. He would talk to the lovely horse and pat his glossy neck. Daru would nuzzle Father's pocket with his velvety nose, extract gently a piece of sugar or dry bread, nibble and crunch it, long white tail swishing lazily, then Father would give him a flap with his white suede gloves and he was led away by the waiting groom. From early May till September our greatest joy was being taught to swim as babies in a few playful lessons from our parents. The pool rang with splashing and screaming. Feri was the best swimmer among us children; he used to sit at the edge of the pool, moving pink toes lazily in the water, golden curls hanging limply, blue eyes dancing, and then heaving himself up with a little grunt, he walked to the edge of the board and dived, swimming under water like a sleek baby seal; he bumped his head unexpectedly into frantically scurrying blue, red or striped tummies. Our baby Charlie partook in our aquatic games, carefully watched by all of us. At half past twelve, maids and governesses started to coax and scold us to come out of the water. Then followed hasty scrambling with damp bodies into frocks and trousers, to be in time for lunch.

Meals were a merry family gathering, from the age of five we were allowed to lunch and dine with our parents, a very relaxed state of affairs in those days when many children were banished to the nursery for most of their childhood. It began somewhat ceremoniously; we all gathered in the green smoking room and presently the double doors were opened. Butler Jani, whose grandfather already belonged to a faithful dynasty of family servants, announced, bowing towards my mother, "Your ladyship, lunch is served." Father offered his arm to her, we all followed them pele-mele through the red and white drawing room into the dining room, but here the spell was broken, we told our stories laughing and gesticulating. Butler and footman enjoying the jokes with us, breaking into occasional hearty grins and whispering good advice to us children as to the best bits served on silver trays. Favourite dishes were passed three to four times, meals stretched out timelessly, we were all happy and unconstrained. Mother and Father went out driving or walking each afternoon. We enjoyed ourselves according to age and season. During summer and winter holidays many friends and relatives came to stay with us. The big sunny house rang with merriment. All the guest rooms were occupied, beautiful saddled horses

pranced impatiently in the courtyard, victorias, coaches, and carriages driven round and round by liveried coachmen, and in winter jingle-belled sleds flew over the silent alleys on the sparkling soft snow. Christmas was of course the peak of the year. We spent it alternately at home or in Okigyos, with our grandparents and often twenty to thirty relatives.

On the 24th of December at five o'clock, girls dressed like little dolls, big bows in our hair, boys in dark suits with white collar and cuffs, holding hands according to age and size, we gathered in one of the reception halls and sang Christmas carols in tremulous voices. Three times little bells rippled, the double doors swung open, we stood breathless and well-nigh spellbound before the enormous tree, blazing in candlelight, a glittering silver star touching the ceiling far above us.

Yes, those were happy, carefree times, full of rejoicing, not only to us, but to the whole staff, and to the many families living and working on the estates. They had been born there and they all took part in our Christmas rejoicing. Employees got a money gift amounting to one month's salary, hundreds of parcels were distributed to the children, containing warm underwear, coats, caps, stockings and sweets. Trees were erected for them too in the servants' quarters, and in the schools and in the parish. We all helped, played with the children and talked to everybody. Yes, those times were peaceful and joyful times. We sang in the choir during service in church, we gave rehearsals in French, German and Hungarian, we bent over huge jig-saw puzzles, watched parents and uncles playing an occasional game of whist, and sat for hours reading picture books and novels. These were our "tame" moments but we played hide and seek, burglar, racing, and many other games, galloping madly through endless passages, up and down staircases and belfries, hiding in rooms, in cellar, attic and turrets, screaming, bellowing, whistling, exciting each other into hysterical hilarity.

Grandmother Christine Wenckheim lived for her big family, her crowded household duties and innumerable welfare organizations. My grandfather Frigyes appeared to us children rather like a world apart; his life, his interests, his incessant occupation behind shut doors was mysterious. He would have conferences for whole mornings and afternoons with the agents of his various estates, and long talks with members of the family. He was interested in every detail of our life, but in his presence we tried to be very good, we watched him smoking long scented Havanas, listened to him talking about his grandfather Count Radetzky, who was fieldmarshall of the Aus-

trian army, which fought and won the battle against Italian insurrection of 1848-1849. It was for him that Johann Strauss composed the famous march. My grandfather seems to have been very pessimistic, warning his family and his friends of coming grave events, wars and social calamities. His death in 1912 was the first great shock and grief in my life. It was unbearable to see my mother cry, without being able to help her. I have but dim memories of our visit in the summer months in Somogy-Tarnóca, because our Széchényi grandparents died when we were very small. They adored us and spoiled us accordingly.

Grandmother Francisca was a delicious energetic little old lady, charming to look at, full of liveliness, ever active, knitting miniature socks and enormous shawls for all her poor, cutting tiny square pieces of bread during meals and taking them in a little white basket morning and night to feed her chicken. I was her constant shadow, trotting behind her I watched the Orpington hens pecking and cackling, the proud cockerel strutting to and fro, pointing out with shrill cries the best tidbits to numerous wives. There surely is order and chivalry in such a poultry farm! Poor Grandfather Francis was pushed in a big basket chair, he was an invalid for the last years of his life. He and Grandmother died within a short time of each other.

Spring was in the air. All the little birds were twittering in the woods, tiny green buds burst out on the branches, the willows waved golden tips into the silver pond on that April noon 1912. We had just finished a merry lunch and were sprawling about on the comfortable green leather couches and chairs. The butler came in with a telegram, handing it to Father on a silver salver. Telegrams were an event in our quiet life. Mother look up inquiringly. The telegram was from Count Miklós Széchényi, Bishop of Nagyvárad, announcing his first visit for the next day, inquiring whether he might stay for the night. The bishop had been recently installed into his new diocese. He was formerly abbot of Jak and bishop of Győr; being Father's first cousin, they had spent their childhood practically together but had not met for years now. Next day we watched the big black limousine glide slowly through the front entrance, with pleasurable excitement. Bishop Miklós, a tall man of 54 years, in simple purple-edged black canonical attire, stepped out of the car and heartily shook hands with my parents, stroking our faces one by one with paternal gentleness; his brown eyes very bright and steadfast looking straight at everybody in turn. He had come alone, only with his valet and a chauffeur, two faithful servants with him more or less since his childhood. Lifting his head he gazed with inter-

est around him remarking: "You have certainly built a charming nest here" and he added "not a very small one either."

Tea was served in small porcelain cups, scones and cookies handed around on silver trays, slightly strained conversation went on for a while. When the footman had cleared away everything, uncle Miklós got up from his seat to study Mother's lovely portrait hanging above the mantlepiece. He remained standing facing the window, his back against the carved oak fireplace. I sat as quiet as a mouse and watched him, blinking through dancing sunrays with slightly shortsighted eyes.

Flashes of ruby, gold and orange weaved bright patterns around his head and slightly greying hair. He had an expressive face, full of dignity, lit up by feeling and harmony. A large ruby ring sparkled on his finger as his right hand firmly held a heavy plain golden Crucifix, hanging from his neck on a golden chain. It struck me that this golden cross did not look like an ornament but like the plain significant sign of faith. Spellbound and slightly awed I continued to stare at him. The bishop smiled at me, but I was too engrossed in my thoughts to realise it. He turned to Father and said: "Your daughter Ily seems to study me with the critical eye of an artist!"

I jumped, and nearly upset the small table beside me, catching the ashtray in its slide. "Yes? Excuse me, I was not listening," I said tactlessly in my haste to apologise. Everybody laughed, and somehow the slight tension was gone, but I was dreadfully ashamed of my blunder. Conversation had drifted to old times and presently Father asked uncle Miklós with a twinkle in his eyes whether he still remembered the big monkey in the zoo? Feri inquired in a stage whisper what the monkey had done.

"Ask uncle."

"Please Uncle Bishop, what did the monkey do?"

"He punished me because I was naughty."

"The monkey punished you?!! You were naughty?!!"

"Yes, very naughty. I was not a bishop then, but a little boy, and went to the zoo with your daddy who was also a little boy. We were eating sweets packed in nice blue and red paper. The big monkey, a baboon, who was also red and blue in some parts of his body, watched us, blinking lazy yellow eyes. I took a candy out of its packing and pushed the paper between the bars. The big monkey folded his long hairy fingers around it and calmly sat back.

"Oh, what a stupid monkey" I said to Daddy and turned to go, but the baboon jumped up, reached out an incredibly long arm through the bars and smartly slapped me on my back."

We all roared. It seemed so impossibly funny to imagine this stately bishop being slapped by a monkey. Father's thoughts had definitely drifted back to childhood and happy summer months spent in company with his cousins, in the beautiful mediaeval mansion of Vörösvár.

"We were a wild lot of children," he said with conviction. "God knows how we escaped some violent death. Brother Rezső was the oldest and wildest ring leader, and often involved us smaller ones in mad pranks." Uncle Miklós laughed heartily, inhaling his Turkish cigarette. "Yes," he said, "he wanted to kill his teacher with a shotgun, he must have been about eleven years old then. Luckily the Hungarian tutor saw him taking careful aim through the attic window and shouted a peremptory warning. "Don't be frightened," was Reszö's answer, "I won't harm YOU, I only want to shoot *that* dog." As a matter of fact both tutors were sitting on the same bench in the garden.

Mother laughed dutifully and said, "How awful."

We knew the story by heart, having listened to it and many others as tiny children, when Daddy used to come to kiss us good night and was obliged to tell a story each evening. My favourite was the one of Ernő, another of Father's brothers, who did not feel like learning, and hid in the huge red lacquer china vase. He remained there for hours and started to shout at last only when he got hungry, but couldn't get out alone. He couldn't get out at all, the big vase had to be broken.

I was again silently daydreaming. Suddenly I heard Uncle Miklós say, in the middle of a conversation I hadn't followed, "The young generation is a mystery and a revelation nowadays. It is wrong to make fun of them and equally wrong to take them too tragically, but they must always be taken seriously." He looked at me. I stared back bewildered, he had said exactly what I had thought in a dim, incoherent way myself. Feeling slightly giddy and asthmatic, I sometimes had trouble with my heart, I quietly left through the big door. The house, the park, the pond and the woods were bathed in a glorious glow of fading light, transfusing all visible things with a misty veil. I turned towards the darkening woods, inhaling instinctively the sweet fragrance of spring and walked on and on, for once oblivious of time. Ding, dong, ding, dong came a faint echo and died away on the air. Startled I listened, it was the seven o'clock bell calling the staff for supper. "Good gracious, I am at least two miles away and dinner is at eight." I trotted home as fast as I could, hoping fervently to slip in unnoticed. No luck — of

course, Mlle. Mathilde was calling me frantically through the window, maids rushed up and down corridors to look for me. When I flew in dishevelled and panting, Mlle. lifted hands to heaven, "Ili vous etes folle" — "You are mad, where have you been?" I just squeezed her and pulling the screen with a jerk in front of me, undressed as fast as I could, throwing every item into the deft hand of the giggling little nursery maid. Mlle. sailed off in swishing tafetta skirts muttering impatiently. I was ready in seven minutes. The kind watchful eyes of little silver-haired Manyi watching me. She had scurried in to tell me, "Hurry up honey, your mother has gone to the drawing room already and she said you should try and look tidy and powder your nose!"

"Blast," I said, hunting vainly for a little silver chain and heart-shaped emerald charm in the very untidy dressing table drawer.

"And little girls shouldn't use bad language," she added strictly, but with a twinkle. I whirled out of the room, doors held obligingly open by hovering maid and valet and just caught up with everybody before they sat down to dinner. One reproachful glance again from Mother made me sit up and hold my tongue all through the tiresome meal, taking occasional glances at the bishop over Father's shoulder.

Our guest was rather silent. It took all the skill, humour and tact of my parents to keep up the conversation. They missed our lively prattle, but thought it better to check any attempt at conversation from our part. Toinette was also doing her best to keep the ball rolling; she was 16 years old. Without being beautiful, according to the accepted ideas of physical perfection, people who came once within the charmed circle were drawn by her irresistible attraction. She was exquisitely feminine, slim, tall and subtle. She had small hands and did everything without haste, without noise. Whether she merely arranged her naturally wavy golden hair, or tied a few flowers together, whether she touched the black and white keys of the piano or danced on tiny feet in billowing white muslin, she was always graceful, lovable, merry, and ever in love.

I admired her and I loved her and I often quarrelled with her, we were utterly different.

Dinner was over, liveried footmen pulled chairs away, a short prayer was said by the bishop and offering his arm to my mother, we marched out solemnly, two by two. I heaved a sigh of relief and was going to find a solitary corner, when Uncle Miklós addressed me a direct question. "Your father told me that you have an artist painter here next summer. Do you already know who he is?" "Well I — I don't know yet, but I hope it might be Mr. Burckhardt. We

saw some of his paintings at the Winter Exhibition of Budapest, they were beautiful," and I added, "at least I thought they were beautiful both in color and composition."

Uncle Miklós said, "You were right, he was a pupil of our great painter Bencur, his compositions are always strong and he has taste in colours too." He paused a moment, "But you won't neglect your music, will you?" He said this as if he knew how many struggles and tears music had caused me. I always adored music, I longed to play it perfectly, but I felt physically incompetent to be both a painter and a pianist as well. I had to choose and I had decided on painting, because my love for colours, my imagination, my interest in every shining, moving, living thing was stronger than my delight in sound and rhythm, but there was something else too, I felt that the way music was taught in those times with the continual wearysome finger exercises was not the essence and meaning of it at all. I was grudging those lost hours of my day. Time was a gift and days were unbearably short to me. There were scenes and crying on my part and gentle firmness on my mother's part. My lessons went on. All this surged up in my mind again, I gulped and said stubbornly, "But why? I want to be a portrait painter."

"God gave you talent for both painting and music, they are valuable gifts, you must not neglect them, it would be ungrateful. It will be a great pleasure to you in the future." The bishop said this quite simply and I felt very small, trying to swallow my childish rebellion, painfully aware of his kind searching eyes and my ridiculous mentality.

"Will you play something now?" said the bishop, and he added, "Don't be shy, it will be alright, I love music, you know I play myself, but only when nobody hears it!"

There was a fleeting gay little light of complicity in his eyes. Toinette was already standing in front of the big Bechstein looking through her notes; I sat down to accompany her and began to play. Rubinstein: "Die Traene", Toinette sang in her soft soprano arpeggios swelling into fuller melody, floating and surging into a flood of rich and dulcet glorious harmony and then growing softer and softer like a light breeze fading into space. The bishop was standing behind us, he had followed the notes with his eyes. His smile was eloquent praise; we went on with all the songs from Brahms, Schubert and Grieg he had chosen from the stack of notes scattered on the table. From then on I never questioned my parents wanting my piano lessons to continue and in later years music was a source of help and comfort to me.

Chapter II

28th June 1914. It was a brilliant, hot summer morning. Father, Toinette, Feri and I had come home from riding. Swishing black leather boots with my little silver-topped riding crop, I took the steps quatre-a-quatre, hastily changed into a bathing suit, hurried to the swimming pool. Fraulein Else called after me, "Don't forget, that Mr. Bruckhardt expects you at eleven o'clock for painting." I swung around reproachfully, "Frauli, do you think it likely that I could forget my painting?"

Lying flat on the gently rocking water, I thought how funny time is supposed to be the same to everybody, but why does it seem so terribly slow to me, whilst the "Old" people complain incessantly about time passing too quickly? Everything seems so different to us "Young" people. I never thought of myself in terms of "child." I felt grown up inside, my thoughts just "acting" young according to my age. Now and again I made sketches of my face studying it impersonally and critically. It was a face inclined to caricature, the eyebrows like one stroke of the brush in sepia, brown eyes with dancing yellow specks slightly slanting upwards in the corner; I had seen such eyes on photographs of Tibetan shepherds; lips too small and chiselled to be interesting and a nose so retrousse that the nostrils were positively like two vertical lines. It was altogether a funny face. Drama, tears, sadness would clad it like a badly fitting hat. I loved beauty and harmony in everybody and everything and passionately longed to be beautiful myself, but as this was impossible I tried to accept my face philosophically.

Instinctively I learned to keep smiling. Looking back upon this slightly childish mentality now, I think it was due to the critical eye of the portrait painter in me. My features did not harmonize with sadness. Disharmony in nature is unnatural; there is nothing ugly in nature really, except disharmony. This was my philosophy, but in time I came to notice an interesting psychological phenomena too, if we are lonely and hurt and keep smiling, if we are sad and desperate and keep smiling, if we are deadly tired, ill and desolate and still keep smiling, some inner strength, light, help and harmony will gradually overcome everything, light will disperse dark shadows

— do you know why? Because we have to keep smiling consciously and not automatically and so my funny face kept smiling. It was my second nature to joke, even when I felt like crying, but this life seems to be a valley of more tears than joy. The darkest clouds are there to be the background for a sparkling rainbow. The dazzling sun baked our backs and presently the bathing pool was ringing with laughter — we were blissfully unaware of the ghastly drama walking the streets of Serajewo.

Mister Burckhardt was working already, when I hastened to join him in the studio. I just sat down to watch him. He had a brilliant technique, a light but firm stroke, dark transparent shades and very strong colourful lights.

"Will you remark the contrast between light and shade, it is most important," he said, "you will never obtain vivid impressions without it, but you will get depths and strength with it."

"Could you tell me, Mr. Burckhardt, how to paint dark places transparent?"

"You have hit upon the stumbling stone of artistic painting. Try and use your oil colours as if they would be water colours; you know what makes water colours vivid, don't you? By taking and mixing the colours as dark as possible, paint once and don't go over it again with your brush if possible."

"Yes, I see, the most important thing is to mix the right dark shade on my palette, paint on my canvas and not touch it again if possible."

"Exactly, and don't use black too much, it makes shadow dull and dead, especially mixed with white. I prefer to mix dark ultramarine, carmine and a little ochre, it gives a dark impression with just the right transparence." He continued to paint.

Presently he said again, "If you paint a portrait, forget the details but don't ever forget anatomy, the bone structure, the forms and shades and lights. For goodness sake don't be weak and chocolate-boxy, nature is never weak, it is always strong, definite and purposeful."

"Try to convey something in every line, in every colour, in every form! Above all, never be aimless, it's always best to paint after a model, but if you have none and you want to bring an idea, a vision, an imagination on your canvas, a perfectly clear picture must be formed in your head before. You have to feel it in your bones, you must see it, sense it, smell it, hear it and work without interruption. People who can't miss a meal, who can't forget their daily routine are no artists."

There was an urgent knock at the door. "Lunch is served and would you please hurry, countess Ily, your parents are seated at the table already," announced the little maid.

I grinned at Burckhardt, "We jolly well forgot time, didn't we, but aren't you hungry?"

"I am famished!"

We both hastened down to the dining room, apologizing and cautiously wiping stained fingers into the damask napkin!

I stole a glance at Father who watched Mr. Burckhardt from the corner of his eyes, repressing a mischievous smile under his moustache. Our artist was a great and gifted painter, but his manners were not quite appropriate to his surroundings.

His room was situated on the first floor above the terrace and once he had spat out of the window. Servants were just laying the table — we used to take our meals there on summer evenings — and the poor little maid had chanced to stand just under the window at the wrong minute. She gave one furious yell, "The painter spat at me!" and hurried indoors to make righteous complaint. Silent hostility reigned ever after on the part of the staff towards the "painter", but Mr. Burckhardt blissfully ignored it. He was above everyday details in his life!

Father was called to the telephone, he came back in a few minutes, his face pale and grave. An instant hush fell heavily — a shiver of cold trembling, forboding filled the room. He lifted his hand and said in a strangely empty, slightly hoarse voice, "The heir presumptive to the Austrian Hungarian Monarchy, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife have been assassinated in Serajewo. They are both dead. No details are known as yet." In leaden silence the big mahogany clock gravely boomed five times, reverberating from the walls and dying away into silence.

"How do you know it? Who rang you?" Mother asked.

"The bishop rang up from Gyula, he is going straight back to Nagyvárad, he will stop here for a few minutes . . ."

"Feri, ring the bell for the butler, Charlie darling, go to the nursery and you two girls go and comb your hair," Mother said.

How can Mummy think of these trivialities in such moments, I mused. I was too young then to know that these trivialities are the best antidotes against too much emotion.

A car honked repeatedly. Slipping into my dress hastily I rushed to the hall. I stopped and waited for my sister. We both went in together. The bishop got up in the middle of a sentence and shook hands gravely with us.

". . . and I fear this tragedy will lead to war," he said, pressing outstretched fingers of both hands against each other, a characteristic gesture when his mind was troubled. "Berchtold, minister of foreign affairs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire is bound to send an ultimatum to Serbia and presently all the Slavic nations will be up in arms."

Father said, "Russia must be the leading power behind all this; a small country like Serbia wouldn't dare to provoke the Austro-Hungarian Empire."

"You are right, but I can't help feeling that we are far from being as powerful as before, the Monarchy is splitting; its various nationalities grouped under the sceptre of our wise old monarch seem to have arrived at a major crossroad; they will have to decide whether to remain constituents of a solid block fighting eventually for mutual boundaries and civilization, or to follow refrectary nationalistic aspirations."

"Yes," Father interposed, "To be swallowed up by the driving Asiatic powers. How terribly shortsighted they are, all these Croats, Serbs, Slovens and Czechs; they lived in a unit that had given them strength, freedom, prosperity and security and now they will shake off these bonds to exchange them for what? To be drowned in the Slavic sea!"

The bishop said, "Our beloved little country is truly the martyr country. We are Europe's granary, we give her our work and honour, we are the "avant-garde" of western civilization, we have fought Tartars and Turks for a thousand years, we give our last drop of blood for the right cause and still we are ever misunderstood, friendless and alone. — We live in a rich, lovely country, but we are between grinding millstones of East and West, we are driven and forced automatically into their conflicts. Each time we build up our ruined homes like busy patient ants we are mutilated and crushed again. It is truly a tragic destiny."

Yes, I thought to myself, our beloved country, once a vast kingdom extending well-nigh from the Mediterranean Sea to the Baltic shores, has written her name into history through suffering and innumerable sacrifices. Now we are people of twenty-one million souls, will it be our fate again to fight and to die in a war we did not provoke and do not want?

The heavy silence was broken by Mother, "Our lonely, aged poor King and Emperor has to survive another tragedy in his life — it is bound to hasten his death."

"Yes," the bishop said, "the first tragedy was his brother

Maximilian shot as Emperor of Mexico, then the mysterious tragedy of Mayerling, then our beloved beautiful Queen Elizabeth stabbed to death in Geneva by the madman Lucceni, and now this double murder."

There was silence again. "Do you know any details uncle?" Toinette asked half whispering.

"The first messages in such crises are generally unreliable. I was rung up by the secretary of state, it seems that a first attempt was made this morning through a bomb wounding several people. The Archduke complied with his wife's entreaties to leave Serajewo at once, it seems she had been nervous and full of foreboding all along their journey. The cars were ordered to take a short cut route to the station, but when the driver was obliged to slow down at a turning, a man jumped forward and fired several shots. The Heir to the throne died instantly, shot in the neck, and his wife died a few minutes later."

He stopped speaking and in the silence a long drawn low rumble could be heard. Obscurity glided into the green room, where the last golden sunrays had danced in fitful patterns. (The butler came hurriedly to shut the windows.) Billowing black clouds rolled up over the sky tumbling over each other like storm tossed waves, vicious-looking ochre patches sailing across the dense darkness, sure sign of hail, a blinding lightning, fierce and ecstatic struck down zigzagging, followed by a shrieking blast of storm, driving dust and dry leaves, shaking the tops of black firs and bending big trees like reed. Deafening thunder split the air and a swishing white cloud of rain and hail poured down on the thirsty earth. We were all standing and watching in complete silence. Large sparks of hail flew off the windowsill battering on tiles and parapets like weird drumming covering everything in a fluorescent white veil, rivulets of foaming water cut the sandy drive; the flowerbeds of flaming red Salvia and Canna Indica were crushed to pitiful muddy pulp. The storm passed as swiftly as it had come, leaving fields, forests and flowers bereft of their glorious summer garments, but the low rumbling of thunder continued through the whole night. In July 1914 the first world war broke out. The Hungarian Prime Minister, President Count István Tisza solemnly and insistently protested against declaration of war in the name of his whole government — but of course in vain.

Hundreds of thousands gave their lives from patriotism and obedience; hundreds of thousands of parents relinquished their sons for the battlefields with bleeding heart and a brave smile on their lips. Mother's three brothers were drafted and went to the RUSSIAN

FRONT, many cousins, friends and relatives went to the war and some of them never came back. The summer was over, the swallows had left, autumn storms swept last rustling dry leaves from their branches. The childish carefree days were gone forever and irrevocably; misty dense fog hid the feeble light of pale sunrays. Uncertainty, dread, fear throbbed ceaselessly under casual smiles and polite talk. Gradually more and more women in deep mourning passed beneath the dark impending skies, long black veils trailing like fitful shadows behind them. Time threatened to stretch in fatality and doomed destiny. Occasional faint rays of hope seeped through a dumb sense of stupefaction. We waited in awe with bated breath for a miracle to stop humanity gliding into an abyss of terror, hate and self-destruction, but the miracle never happened.

On a dreary November evening in 1916, 87-year old Emperor Franz Joseph, tired, sad and lonely, bent his head and died. Mother, Toinette and I were in Vienna at that time. The news spread in a few minutes, everybody shivered.

In December of the same year, Charles Habsburg, Emperor of Austria and his young wife Zita Bourbon-Parma, were crowned King and Queen of Hungary in Budapest. The whole nation was moved to its depths — all hearts flew out in new hope and trust towards this young monarch, who was inspired by noble thoughts, pure indomitable faith, a golden impulsive heart, acting on the spur of the moment and carried out of himself, rising to the occasion inspired by a million hearts, the blasts of fanfares, the rolling of drums and the tolling of solemn bells.

Little Otto, the Crown Prince, watched his parents intently, making a touching picture with his curly head above miniature white and gold uniform. The ceremony was over, Charles had knelt to pronounce his solemn oath, the Cardinal Csernoch, together with the Prime Minister, Count István Tisza, had placed the heavy crown on the King's head amidst the golden thunder of the organ.

The King left the coronation church and mounted on a snow-white stallion, the heavy golden bejewelled thousand-year old crown on his head, the golden mantle of St. Stephen, first king of Hungary, pressing his shoulders into the shape of a glimmering triangle, and the sword of the holy king at his side.

When the truly dazzling procession had passed and the last retreating figure had vanished from the coronation church, the huge iron bound portals closed silently. Sunrays filtered through stained glass windows in roseate, amethyst and golden shafts, piercing the

towering Gothic arches, crossing and recrossing above the nave, lighting rows of empty benches and turning all draperies into a blood red sea.

Chapter III.

The First World War ended with the Peace Treaty of Versailles which, alas, laid the foundations to World War Two. It is beyond all doubt that the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and forcing the sovereign into exile was a grave political error, committed by the victorious powers after the First World War. This unique economo-political confederation linked by the Danube, was the balance of peace not only in central but in the whole of Europe throughout centuries. Destroying it with inexplicable and incredible political shortsightedness, the victorious allied powers provided a fertile soil for German aspirations towards the East and West and Communist penetration into central Europe. Criminally mutilated and absolutely powerless, Hungary was driven through a pro-soviet minded puppet government into a communist reign of terror.

Hundreds of patriotic men of every class were persecuted, imprisoned, tortured and murdered. The first victim and martyr was Count István Tisza, the Prime Minister, he was shot dead on the threshold of his own villa in Budapest. People learned by bitter experience the difference between the bombastic fallacy of communist propaganda and the ghastly reality. Many people fled, especially from the western part of Hungary, to Austria, Switzerland and France.

My parents were not inclined to leave their beloved home; many relatives and friends, living in the wide plains called the heart of Hungary, were more or less of the same opinion and stayed. For a year and a half we never once left Póstelek, but anxiety, continual alarming events, and misgivings never left us either. It was very conspicuous to live in a big house, looking out to the east on miles of level fields through rows of blinking windows, turned to dazzling reflectors in the curfew and surrounded by dark mysterious woods from the west, south and north. My parents were never involved in politics, they were loved and respected by all the families living on their estate, by the villagers of Póstelek, by the farmers in the neighbourhood and by many thousands of people they knew in the cities and villages of the country. We had many servants to look after the house, garden, stables and estate, so did others who had large homes.

It is often said that Hungary was a reactionary feudal country. Nothing is more remote from truth than this statement, which is based exclusively on malevolence and lack of knowledge. What they called feudalism was, perhaps, the existence of the landed aristocracy tightly interwoven with a patriarchal fraternity, which was certainly as happy a state of human relationship as any. The people who served these "Feudal" lords were glad to know that their children could, if they wanted to, work for employers who considered them as members of a large family. Not only the boys and girls of our servants but the children of the peasantry and small landowners came eagerly to work in these "Feudal" houses and estates. They learned lots of things which proved to be very useful to them in their future. All these people knew only too well that apart from their adequate salaries, they and their families were looked after in a way which could bear comparison with the most up-to-date social welfare state. The services and aid of midwife, doctor, drugs for the sick, priest, as well as schooling, were gratuitous, the old persons enjoyed pension, which was spontaneously given by the landlord. Obviously there were exceptions, but by and large this pattern of cooperation worked very well.

Maybe it was our fault that we did not boast about these facts! Anyway, the fact remained that generations and generations were born, grew up, lived, got old and died happy in the same place and in employment of the same landlord. (Had life been so unpleasant to these people they could have sought other work and occupation, be it rural or industrial.) This was the atmosphere and probably the immediate and principal cause of our relative security in those critical times.

Father organized a civil houseguard with men of the staff, the coachmen, foresters and gardeners; it was most touching how they, one and all, volunteered for this unpleasant job, full of responsibility, danger, and eventual unpleasant consequences. They all took turns with Father and my brother from sunset to dawn, two by two, walking like diligent nightwatchmen, smoking innumerable pipes and cigarettes, inspecting gates and doors, straining their ears towards the dark wood and roads leading to the highway, lifting frozen faces to the star-studded sky, tired and shivering in the chilly dusk. Thus was the flimsy security provided, we tried to sleep. Day and night the woods were ringing with shots of the communist soldiers shooting at hares, pheasants and roes with their military rifles. Hungary was full of game at that time, it was unsafe to go for walks. Sometimes clamouring crowds of armed ruffians invaded the garden

with undisguised hate and lust. One could see at a glance that all they wanted was an excuse to use their murderous weapons.

"Let us try and treat them kindly, after all they are human; most of them have been soldiers living in damp trenches, fighting for dear life and we are all bound together by common interest in the soil. They hate us probably because they do not know us, and they were fed on lies, like so many people nowadays who judge without knowledge," Father said. It seemed a sound idea and was followed.

We talked to them and gradually the dark frowning lears relaxed into sulky but human faces, harsh voices dropped into the familiar idiom. They were still denser than mud, darting sullen suspicious glances to right, left and behind them, but accepted a hospitable meal, served to them on long tables in the gravelled courtyard.

I even remember one of them shaking hands with me with a burst of laughter (more like the bay of a dog than the voice of a human being), pumping my arm to demonstrate his hearty friendliness, calling out in a loud cheery voice, "Long live the royal republic!"

The tension was broken somewhat by the occasional visits of young friends from other parts of Hungary but mostly by our nearest neighbour and cousin Charles Wenkheim. Cheerfully juggling on a high dogcart, coaxing his fat chestnut mare "Rosinante" into a livelier trot, he used to appear and tell us long stories about his experiences on the battlefields in Russia, he came home with a severe heart failure, his pipe had been shot out of his mouth once, but his stories were always cheerful. He was a dear, kind-hearted man, intent to cheer us up, but as the weeks and months passed, hostility and hatred increased through flaming Communist speeches all over the country, and efficient propaganda, defeat in war, economic crises, revulsion against injustice in general and the unjust mutilation of our territory, a growing malnutrition, especially in the towns, were leading to riots, to appalling poverty and complete chaos, and this was exactly in line with Béla Kun's regime, nourished on Marxist theories, with the vested interests in disaster. This is always the real aim and purpose of Bolshevism all over the world.

Day after day appalling news reached us in our self-inflicted exile, until our inactivity seemed well-nigh unbearable. The sanity of rural life, the beauty of nature, the chance to think for the sake of thought in the uneventful days, our beautiful home, our woods, animals, sports, occupation, everything seemed unbearable to me at least, in the breathless suspense of expected tragedy.

And on a chilly April dawn, the suspense was over!

Father and Feri had just come in from their night watch and were going to rest after a hot cup of tea, when news came that an armed gang was on its way from the neighbouring town to collect hostages and prisoners among the landowners. Hastily scrambling into coats and stuffing some food into their pockets, they left by a side entrance and were hardly gone when the gang appeared, clamouring for "The count" with threats and swearing. This went on all day long, it was a long day! We were sitting in the day nursery making various suggestions what course would be best to take. A stray bullet whizzed through the window pane, passing an inch from the place where Toinette was sitting, her fair curls glittering in the sunshine. Somebody got up and pulled the blinds. Telephone messages followed in rapid succession, the estate agent, the secretary, the head gardener went to Gyula and Békéscsaba, the two nearest towns, and returned rapidly, their faces solemn with responsibility and repressed anxiety. Danger loomed larger, it seemed obvious that we ought to leave our home, but the thought of Daddy and Feri somewhere in the wood, unarmed and all by themselves, made us reject immediate flight. Hours dragged on, they seemed endless. Dusk was creeping in through the shutters when a new gang appeared, there must have been about fifty. Coarse looking men. We watched them. After a long heated argument with poor Jani, the butler, they departed once again.

We decided to go to the servants' quarters, and found them a pathetic little group of shaking figures, mostly women. A solitary lamp was burning in the passage, the door leading to the back entrance was shut and bolted. The wind was whistling mournfully through chimneys and windows.

"We seem to be in a bad place here, now," Mother said, "but I decided to stay here for another night. The Communists are hunting for hostages, as you have seen for yourself, and will surely return. Would you prefer to leave the house and join your own families? It might be better for you," she explained, "and we do not want to expose you to unnecessary fright and danger. When these bad days are over, with God's help, you can all come back to us if it is your wish." Mother stopped speaking, we smiled reassuringly into all those kind, good, faithful, frightened old faces — nobody spoke. Suddenly there was a loud sob, the pink-faced fat little nursery maid grabbed Toinette's hand, kissing it she said, "Én nem hagyom el a conteskákat" — "I will not leave the little countesses." I gulped convulsively in an effort not to cry. This seemed to settle the question for everybody. The few men left hurriedly to start their night watch. The cook hastily prepared cold supper for any eventuality.

It is amazing how empty and changed a big house can become in such situations. Pleasure, joy, harmony, security will turn to sorrow and anxiety, terror and hostile silence. There was nothing to be done, we went back to our rooms. We tidied drawers, burned letters, put hastily collected odds and ends in leather handbags, we just couldn't sit still any more. Supper was an endless irksome ordeal. Scarcely had we left the dining room when in walked Daddy and Feri, they pretended to be cheerful, but they were both pale and hungry. We helped them to peel off wet clothes and boots, they scrubbed their muddy hands and faces and sat down at last to their first substantial meal in twenty-four hours. Feri, placid and rather stout, rubbing sore places of his flesh, heaved a sigh of relief, "Ah, it's good to sit on a soft dry chair again, with a full tummy!"

There was sudden commotion outside, fierce bellowing, banging and drumming, shots in quick succession split the air. The door was wrenched open, Jani the butler haggard and dishevelled staggered in, followed on his heel by Feri's valet, Gyuri. Both panted, "Meneküljön méltóságos Gróf Úr — gyorsan, gyorsan" — "Flee your Lordship, flee, flee!" For a breathtaking minute we rushed about, helping to dress them feverishly, stuffing bread, cigarettes and matches, handkerchiefs and scarfs into their pockets. Meanwhile the racket continued from the main entrance hall and staircase with hollow reverberations through the entire building. It was difficult to know which way to turn, which exit to use. Father whispered a few instructions and resolutely turned towards the winding iron stairs to go down and out through the basement door in the south wing, but the door was locked, the key could not be found. Moved by a sudden determination, he turned on his heels and both he and Feri tiptoed noiselessly through the whole length of the cellar to the north side. There was another exit seldom used and probably locked too, but it was worthwhile trying, besides there was nothing else they could do for the shouts came from every other side. They did not meet a soul and thank God the door was open! Biding their time, groping their way cautiously through dense fog they left the house, the sentinel was crouching a few yards further away, but he didn't notice them in the thick fog. If the key to the south exit had been found Father and Feri would have run straight into the two other ruffians posted out there. We tidied the study and bathroom and went back to the green drawing room, panicky but bracing ourselves for further events. Charlie, a slim boy of 13 now was absolutely collected and quiet too, he was pale and bit his lips occasionally, but gave no other sign of nervousness. From roof to cellar the house

was searched for Father; we could hear thundering steps, hoarse shouts and banging of doors. A pine log burned crackling in the fireplace, casting a ruddy glow through the room. Guards with a machine gun were posted in the vestibule. We just sat and waited. Without warning, almost soundlessly the door was pushed open, Toinette stood up swiftly and blocked the door, her long blue peignoir and light curls made a vivid contrast to the dark panelling. Like a little fairy queen she stood regal in her look, bearing and attitude. Her clear contralto split the silence, "What do you want?" A pistol barrel was thrust forward, but there was no answer. Her flashing eyes held them spellbound. The foremost man suddenly pushed forward gruffly, a whole gang of armed men staggered in, filling every place, bumping against the furniture. They stood and stared, nobody spoke. We stood up too, but at last one of the men, square, small, flat nosed, an enigmatic glint in his narrowed eyes, spat out a single harsh question, "Where is Mr. Széchényi?"

"He is not at home," Mother said distinctly.

"He is not at home you say?" he roared, shaking his fist like an infuriated madman, "where is he?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know?" he mimicked, "don't you? Well I know and I will go and get him."

A blasphemous oath died on his lips at the sudden clatter of horses hoofs making hollow echoes in the courtyard. The 'big ben' began to chime midnight. For a fleeting second cowardly panic distorted his features, turning round abruptly, kicking viciously at a chair, he stormed out of the room. The other men followed him sneering and muttering foul oath, dragging filthy boots on the carpets. They filed out one by one and were gone at last. We sat down weakly, silence hit the room. The wind banged open doors to and fro, the rooms looked frosty and desolate, ablaze with the glaring lights, emphasising the dark mist outside.

Charlie spoke suddenly, "Mom, I was terrified, that they might take you or the girls as hostages."

"I don't think they would do that — as yet. Communism hasn't lasted long enough in Hungary for that kind of procedure."

Charlie said again, "I wonder why that brute looked scared when he suddenly rushed away."

"Didn't you hear the horse's hooves outside . . . maybe they got some urgent message concerning the rapidly advancing Rumanian occupation troops, and that scared them . . . but listen, darlings, we must go away from here, it's really too dangerous. . ." Her voice

fell . . . we couldn't speak . . . she got up and left to give orders to pack immediately. Meanwhile, we made our own comments, voices hardly above a whisper, "We can't leave by carriage, everybody knows us, we would be far too conspicuous."

"Let's go by lorry."

"That's quite a good idea, we can squat in the hay, protected by the high wooden sides we'd be well enough hidden." Mother came back presently and said, "Yes, we will leave at dawn with the little stable boy whose everyday schedule is to fetch hay with the lorry from the farm, but we won't go to the farm, he can take us right into the station in Gyula, and from there we can walk to our friend the Doctor, they won't mind, and as far as I know, they have been expecting us for days."

It was a chilly, dreary night of heavy fog, half melting into rain.

"Let's go to the chapel once more, children," Mother said. As we knelt silently around Mother in the lonely, tiny, cold chapel, I heard soft shuffling noises close behind, and noticed with warm affection that one by one each of our faithful and loving household staff had joined us in our prayers. The chapel was, I realised, filled with so many friends. Then we groped our way back through the green room and Father's study to the children's wing. The lights had all been turned out. We were terribly tired. Steps along the corridor again, we felt breathless and weak, numb and tingling all over, the sounds of steps came closer but they were light, firm steps, my eyes dimly recorded the little marble teddy bear, baby paws all soft and shiny, lying near the window on the floor, his stump nose broken off. Then there was a mild knock on the door, Feri's young valet came in swiftly, his small shape topped by a head twice too big for his size, wriggling with gleeful excitement, his ginger hair tousled and damp, merry eyes darting to and fro. "They are gone, scared by the news two horsemen brought. I followed them as far as the gate, I was near enough to hear a bit of their talk but I couldn't make out the meaning of the message. They were in a rage, that our Lordship outwitted them again." He giggled and then he added, "But they will be back tomorrow at dawn!"

He was an honest, clever faithful young chap. Mother's eyes rested on him brooding and pensive, "Listen Gyuri," she said, with a sudden decision, "we know where the counts are — they must be very anxious, cold and hungry by now, could you . . ." He interrupted her impetuously, but his voice was cool and even, "Your Ladyship, let me go to them at once, I will tell them that we are all alright." Turning swiftly he was gone but I ran after him and to the

kitchen. Presently a rucksack was filled with food, dry clothes and a rug. Mother's letter tucked safely in his breast pocket, Gyuri turned up his collar, pulled down his broad brimmed cap, stepped out into the garden path, broke into a trot and was swallowed instantly by rain and fog. Straining my eyes I watched and listened but there was no other sound but the rush of rain. I felt like smiling but my lips were drawn tightly over clenched teeth. We were all deeply touched, desperately sad, frightened and dead tired. Nobody slept. The sky turned from black to slate grey and split in two by vivid orange shafts; there was a lull in the air, a faint breeze, the interminable night was over.

Gyuri, drenched, proud, hungry, happy had returned bringing a verbal message from Daddy. We really felt like hugging him! Then we all stealthily left the house without a word. Thoughts kept running around in our minds like scared mice in a trap. Those were grim and bitter hours.

The big house loomed square, tall, deserted and dead in the dreary dawn, between shrubs and trees dripping with millions of glittering tears. One solitary bright little spot in the courtyard, very vivid and completely out of place; Gyuri had insisted on staying behind, dressed like a tramp, a bright red scarf round his neck, an old revolver tucked in his belt, he looked comic and pathetic and every inch a hero. He waved, we waved, we kept looking back. He ran his hand through his hair and the ginger crisp hair stood up between his fingers. This was the last gesture we saw from him. We had to walk down the curving sandy main road; we had to pass the stables, and the iron gate and standing close in front of two lorries was my little black pony "Holló," waiting between narrow gauged rails. We all climbed in, squatting down on the hay, completely covered by the tall wooden side planks. One of the young farm hands climbed up in front clucking his tongue, proudly whirling a crooked harmless whip, like a master of ceremony. The wheels made nasty squeaking noises as the two antediluvian shaped wagons gently swept into motion. Holló trotted between the iron rails. It was his daily morning routine now to fetch the hay from the farm. Yesterday, today, tomorrow was to him like any other day, but the juvenile coachman knew better. He had been chosen for this delicate job to "save us" and his ruddy round face was beaming, he was exceedingly proud of himself; his open shirt kept flapping in the chilly morning breeze but he seemed warm in his exhilaration, but we shivered in the hay with coats tightly buttoned.

The little black cross-bred half pony, half Arab, had been my

riding horse for years, it was a slim-legged, noble little horse, he had bolted once with me, jumping over two vicious looking harrows, I hung on to him for all I was worth. At last we were caught up luckily by the riding master, racing after us on his huge thoroughbred. A good old farmer leaning on his spade followed the chase with placid eyes. He was reported to have said, "The little miss countess flew like a swallow." He must have had an artistic sense of colours, the horse was black, my riding dress white! Now, dear little Holló was old and tired and quite reluctant to turn right at the junction; with a mild toss of his long mane he signaled a longing for his usual breakfast, but trotted on obediently with tiny steps towards the boundary through winding avenues, under acacia trees, between diminutive hamlets. Huge wagons lumbered past us slowly driven by teams of oxen, rocking large forked horns on their sooty thick heads, the puszta seemed to be deserted. The sun was a vicious looking blood red plate, mirrored in oozy mud and wet cobblestones. We got off the lorry at the station in Gyula and began to walk. The small town was yawning itself to languid morning life, shops blinked under half open shutters, little dogs, busily scratched off tenacious fleas, three fat girls passed us, their round eyes staring, big baskets on their arms. Women were sweeping the wet streets in front of open doors, eyeing the roads anxiously, two nuns hurriedly passed by, brushing the whitewashed wall silently with waving black veils. From the rear end of the side walk a middle-aged man hurried toward us. There was a sultry defiance in his bearing, his hand clutched a heavy club. He seemed to be the only man in town. Mother glanced at him over her shoulder and quickly turned her head away.

"Don't look at him children," she whispered, but it was too late. He stopped dead in his tracks, his mouth dropping open in surprise, damp hair over his low forehead, redshot eyes squinting. He had recognized us, there was no doubt about it. We didn't stop, we went on, we walked past him and then we realized that there was fear and panic written all over his features. He jerked his head around after us, turned on his heels and began to run. After a short walk we arrived at our friends' home where we expected to find a refuge for a few days. The little villa looked comfortable and peaceful. We were greeted with touching joy and anxiety. Melodrama lurked in every mind. Coaxed and coaxing each other, we tried to swallow some food, the telephone bell tinkled, our host was called away several times, one could hear distant shots, the staccato barking of machine guns and the droning of planes in the distance. Minutes dragged on, we peeped out of windows into the unusually

deserted streets. Our hostess went to her kitchen, we were thankful to be left alone, half asleep from nervous exhaustion and the drug of fear.

Where was Father? Where was Feri?

An hour before noon, excited little shrieks in the garden, dragging steps halting in front of the porch, a clear treble from somewhere, "The Count, the Count!" and again, "Here they come!" They both walked in, drenched to the skin, Father's face ashy pale, both pairs of blue eyes red-rimmed from lack of sleep. Speechless from joy, hugging each other we all sat down exhausted and relaxed.

Slowly sipping the steaming hot broth, Father said, "We got off luckily last night, but we saw behind us lights blazing in all the windows, we heard the racket. It was hell!"

"Wasn't Gyuri a good sport to come and relieve our anxieties?" Feri said, he was proud of his young valet. "His optimism and funny cheerfulness was as warming as a hot water bottle." We fell silent, thinking of our last glimpse of Gyuri, the ginger crisp hair standing out stiffly between his fingers, red scarf blazing in the misty dawn. Mother quickly changed the subject.

"Go on darling," she urged. "Tell us something about yourselves now."

"Well, after good little Gyuri left and we had changed into some dry clothes, Feri managed to sleep a bit and about five o'clock I was just going to wake him, the dense darkness had vanished, when I heard faintly but distinctly peculiar noises. Presently I could make them out. The woods around us were all alive with men breaking through bushes and bracken, it was an organised hunt, closing in on us rapidly from all sides. We were trapped. It was an unpleasant situation! Feri woke up. We could distinctly hear voices and what they were shouting. We could locate the places, peeping out cautiously from our hiding place, we tried to find a proper tree to climb but the fir trees seemed too fragile, all the other trees were without leaves." Feri grinned, "My heart was trip-hammering, the whole wood seemed to shake with fierce bellowing closing in on us swiftly. I was ready to fight, to run, to DO something; we were tense like violin strings; several shots rang out exploding like bombs, I jumped. A weird sudden silence followed and gave me goose flesh. Daddy gripped my arm very hard, we listened with bated breath, nothing happened. We looked at each other. For a second I felt my mind whirling away. Daddy shook me gently with a finger on his lips and . . ."

"What happened, go on for heaven's sake."

Father said in a quite hushed voice, "About five hundred steps from where we hid the whole gang stopped, gave up the hunt and after some brief palaver, hurriedly left towards Póstelek."

We hadn't shed a tear through all this ghastly night, we hadn't cried when we stole out like thieves and fled from our own home. We all cried now. The telephone rang, our host got up, blowing his nose vigorously in a futile attempt to hide his own emotion. He returned instantly, "Póstelek is calling, Gyuri is on the 'phone, he wants to talk to Rosa, but . . . who is Rosa?"

"It's me, it's me!" Feri scrambled up and ran to the 'phone. I giggled hysterically. "Oh, thank God, THANK GOD."

After what seemed to us an endless incoherent palaver Feri came back beaming. It seemed that Gyuri was well and in highest spirits. In fact all was well. Weary from the unsuccessful hunt the whole Bolshevik gang had turned up about seven in the morning, planning another search through house and garden, but they were welcomed all alone by Gyuri, wearing his conspicuous red scarf. He invited them at once to a couple of stiff drinks but no food and when he had thought them sufficiently drunk he staged terror and fright. He told them a secret message that the enemy Rumanian troops had already invaded one of the larger towns in the near neighbourhood and begged his "red comrades" to hurry and save their lives. Pushing, scrambling, staggering, supporting each other, the whole savage relentless crowd had turned to a pack of drunk, scared, pitiful creatures, intent on flight, freedom and security. "And when we realized our miraculous escape," Father continued, "we cautiously left our hiding-place, walking in the cover of trees, in ditches and side roads. It was a tedious job, we hid each time we saw people in the distance."

"We walked six hours, Father, didn't we?"

Our hostess said, "You should change now into some dry clothes and shoes."

"And so we should — but —"

"It's alright darlings, we brought a suitcase full of things for both of you." Father gently kissed Mother's hand, "You thought of everything my dearest."

All morning ink coloured clouds hung low from the sky, the wind swept distant rumble of fighting through Pergola. It was a strange Spring day.

We felt protected in adversity and were inclined to walk on tiptoe and talk in hushed whispers. Darkness had changed to hope and light!

Chapter IV.

The First World War was over, the Communism was over, our dismembered little country was nothing more than a throbbing bleeding heart, without vitality, with hardly a breath of life, once again suffering for the ruthless evil of others, and once again we proved that our faith and power of endurance, our persistence and vitality were distinct characteristics and qualities of Hungarian character. We built up ruined homes, we toiled and we worked.

Humanity had shaken the powers of heaven and created confusion on the earth, the whole world was changing. Unselfish hearts were compassionate and aware of the growing confusion, wrought by the elements of evil which threatened disaster. All the past suffering and the sorrowful foreboding preyed upon them physically as well as mentally.

After years of seclusion, constraint and relative loneliness, our home became a centre of parties and mundane life. Friends and relatives crowded in and out from the neighbourhood and from all parts of the country, but one of the first to come was Mother's sister Mariska Nádasdy. The hot July sun was blazing dazzling white when she arrived, the carriage stopped, she stepped out, tossed off her black veil, picked up her black skirts and slowly pulled off her black gloves, she gave us all a tired smile. Three little girls and four little boys scrambled out after her, all the seven children in deep mourning. Their father never got to Lourdes, he died in Paris, dragged from hospital to sanitorium for years, unable to make the journey home alive during the war. We did our utmost to coax some life and spirit into her as she lay day after day under the shady oaks, listless and tired. They left in autumn, when the harvest was over, the fields were ploughed and the climbing ampelopsis shed blood-red leaves one by one. Little Tommy, christened after his father, waved both his little hands in farewell, French fashion, singing in his flute-like treble, "Ils sont dan les signes les moineaux, ils sont dans les vignes, ils ont mangé les rrraisins, ils ont crrraché les pépins," rolling his "r"s adorably.

Soon after little Tommy died from diabetes in a few days and again there were but three male members left in the Nadasdy family.

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"Are you going to Almásys to Gyula tomorrow?" Charlie asked me.

"Yes, I am, why?"

"I would like to see that picture of yours finished, hurry up, and what is the matter with you? You look perfectly seedy."

I laughed. "Charlie, you are getting grown up. Don't worry. I, . . . I don't know, something might be wrong. All my inside feels like mashed potatoes."

"You poor dear. Go and see doctor ... in Gyula tomorrow." But next morning I didn't feel worse, except that I disliked the jolting of the carriage, driving across country on the uneven roads. I was very keen to finish my copy of a lovely Benczúr picture of Three Cupids playing in a garden, deliciously painted grapes, melons and pineapples.

The Almásys were our near neighbours and relatives living in a large house, the picturesque old ruin being inhabitable. I was busily painting the pineapple when suddenly a fierce pain made me double up. Palette and brushes slithered and scattered to the floor, oily paint smearing over the chairs and table. Cold sweat poured down my forehead into my eyes, blurred by tears of pain. My face went greenish blue, teeth chattering with cold. I groped my way to one of my cousin's room and tried to steady my shaking limbs. Denise was one of count Dénes Almásy's eight children and she was count István Tisza's niece. She had been present when he was killed, jumping forward to protect him and was gravely wounded herself. Brave, intelligent, efficient she had worked all through the war in a nursing home. I couldn't have a more adequate help just then and needed it badly. I was operated the same night with an appendix nearly perforated, nursed by Denise and the whole family most kindly for three weeks.

Painting in Gyula, the little town with an up-to-date hospital and excellent specialist surgeon, had most probably saved my life. I had many visitors. Bishop Miklós came from Nagyvárad. To see him was quite a shock, he looked aged and ill. Half of his diocese was annexed by Rumania, he had endless difficulties with the authorities, it was a task to meet the exigencies of his flock, to build churches, to find adequate priests, to visit the parishioners, to cross the borders, it was a deadlock situation in every direction, a delicate, intricate and critical position. He was the stumbling block in the eyes of the Rumanian nationalistic aspiration. His poor heart got weaker and weaker, but his strong spirit was set to ever-increasing labour, with scant peace and no earthly reward. I could picture him,

lonely and sad in this huge, beautiful residence, with all the bells from adjoining cathedral tolling and booming in the dreary dawn and all day long, till Vesper and Angelus, rows of empty state rooms echoing his solitary steps, gazing up into the deepening glow of the sky, down to a silver winding stream which, turning crimson in the light, looped and garlanded the old city as with festal knots of rosy ribbon, gazing on the trembling tops of tall poplar trees fringing the park. The echo of the last bell would die away on the air, but his sad heart went on swinging and hammering to a relentless rhythm no human body could endure for long.

I wasn't very quick to recover and the constant care, the restrictions imposed on my movements were jarring on too sensitive nerves; hectic longing for parties and carefree company had gripped my generation, I suppose. We spent a glorious season in Budapest. I can still recall one particular ball in the Parc Club.

The crescent-shaped ballroom was all ablaze with light, laughter and music. The human mind always assumes something of the atmosphere of its environment; being very sensitive to my surroundings, these parties in the Parc Club in Budapest gave us a sensation of floating, bubbling and frolicking joy. Toinette and I had been away for so long that our re-appearance was a pleasurable event between old friends and we danced incessantly. It was a radiant May night, two gypsy bands played alternately langorous Strauss waltzes, fiery Hungarian Csárdás, foxtrots and tangoes. Everyone was in high spirits. Elderly dignitaries and two archduchesses sponsored the ball. All the parents sat around on satin sofas and uncomfortable gilded cane chairs. They were watching us good-naturedly through tortoiseshell lorgnettes, enjoying each other, the music, the motion, the laughter, the rare hours free from care. I felt eager and excited. Both Toinette and I were dressed alike as usual, in night blue Tulle gowns sparkling and shimmering with silver-blue paillettes. Music swelled through the night. It was like a fairy tale scene, bright with hundreds of crystal chandeliers, colour and elegance. Over bobbing, fair, dark bewigged and bald heads across the room I saw a tall young man standing on the threshold. In spite of my shortsighted eyes I recognized him by the typically powerful broad forehead, it was George Károlyi, slim, fair, charming, elegant and polite, he came to offer me his arm to the quadrille, the traditional dance of ballrooms all over Europe in those days, reminiscent of the "Polonaise." Maybe a hundred or more young girls in colourful bright toilettes, stiffly correct black-tailed men stepped, bowed, glided and whirled to a slow enchanting rhythm of music, growing

gradually faster and faster, rising to a fantastic crescendo of final drums, blasts and fanfares. Then there was scrambling and shuffling for small gilded cane chairs, ranged in big circles, leaving a large empty space in the centre. To the languorous notes of "Two lovely black eyes" repeated maybe a dozen times, everybody humming and swaying in rhythm like pendulums in endless untiring motion, a tiny Shetland pony trotted in, pulling a carriage of gorgeous red roses and shell pink peonies. A burst of cheers and applause greeted this spectacle. In a matter of seconds the flowers passed into the hands of clamouring eager gentlemen, hurrying up and down, sheepish smiles on their lips, hunting for their "dames de coeur", to present them with tokens of their respect, admiration or love. Toinette was immersed in flowers, she was a lovely sight, beaming happily. I had eyes for everybody on that carefree night, it was not the overtone of supercillious amusement or even caprice on my part, it was just simply an intoxication from the atmosphere, after years of care, sorrow and terror.

Many a serious conversation had preceeded this night, was it right to "dance and sky lark" when the grass had hardly grown over thousands of fresh graves? When the world had hardly recovered from the war? When flags of our beloved little country were still at half mast? But psychologically there must always be a balancing of accounts. When all the forces of human nature have been spent for a long time on a particular task, strain, suffering and restriction, the longing for peace, joy, recreation and "sky larking" instinctively seemed to be right.

My last partner was George Károlyi, we were sitting after a long dance. I said, "I am planning to go to Munich."

"To Munich, why?"

"To paint. I have already written to the Academy, but they replied that my drawing of nudes are not good enough. They advised me to wait and work!"

He said, "What a shame!"

"Not at all they are quite right, I have no practice in drawing nudes, never did any in my life, you can't get models in the country!"

"What are you going to do about it then?"

"I simply wrote back that I cannot wait. It's no good postponing things and being undecided about it. Besides I trust that my practice in portrait painting will help me through all the other problems as well, once I am there."

"You have dynamite in your veins my dear. I heard you painted a flag, through lack of material, on your own Hungarian gala dress,

and presented it to Regent Horthy with a fiery speech, when he marched into the county of Békés after the Rumanian occupation."

"Yes, I painted a flag," I said, becoming serious suddenly. "You were abroad during those ghastly times under Kun Béla's terror regime and then later, when nearly all Hungary was occupied by the Czech, Rumanian and Yugoslav forces — it is difficult to explain the pent-up thirst for peace, order, security and what the Hungarian colours on a banner meant to us. Our troops in their olive green field uniforms, standing there on that day meant just all that to us: order, peace, security, new hope, new life!"

Nicolas Horthy was born in 1868, became a naval officer, was for years A.D.C. to the Emperor Francis Josef and then admiral of the Austro-Hungarian fleet in the war. Poor young Emperor King Charles having been forced to abdicate, Horthy was called from his home in Kenderés to be Regent of Hungary in 1920.

Admiral Horthy was known for his valiant, undaunted courage in the navy, his name had been on everybody's lips. I was meant to give a speech to greet him, a short one, but it ended abruptly because I was too deeply touched.

"And now it's high time for you to step a dance with me again," said a voice behind us, it was Tamás Esterházy. The blazing lights were turned down, subdued shadows in the crescent-shaped ballroom. Sobbing, wailing tender mellow Hungarian songs floated through the air, accompanied by flute, cymbol and cello.

Sitting in a wide circle, humming the well-known tunes softly, all the faces looked like pale paper stars and flowers seen through frosted panels of a shop in the winter twilight. Tiptoeing to some empty chairs, we sat down, instantly the small dark czigány-primás, the band leader, began playing our favourite songs. I heard Toinette's voice, throbbing above the others but I could not see her. We were all engulfed in that penetrating wave of sound, lifted to deeper fuller music through our own hearts. It was like a growing blossoming impulse to mutual trust, harmony and faith; all these people were united under the spell of nostalgic songs our ancestors had sung hundreds of years ago. Then from one of the open windows the liquid song of a blackbird touched the sensitive ear of Berkes, the primás; he lifted his baton in the absolute hush, the pure treble of the little feathered songster floated through the pale misty room. Taking his cue from the last throbbing note a single violin continued to wave its languid melodious arabesque, one by one the other instruments fell in, whispering, fluting, drumming, rising to an enchanted crescendo of Strauss waltz "The Blue Danube." A solitary

pair began to dance, gliding in slow rhythm, training rainbow coloured veils in the gradual acceleration of their revolving circles. It was Toinette, a little vestal priestess performing her moonlight dance . . . or was it a little Bacchante dancing to the merry flute of Pan?

Chapter V.

Victor Károlyi and I had known each other since our childhood. We got engaged in April, the date of the wedding was fixed for the 16th June 1923. Uncle Miklós was to officiate. His health was declining and we were all anxious about him.

Charlie knocked at the door, "May I come in?"

"Of course, my dear."

"Ily, what's the matter with you?"

"Nothing, why?"

"For you to be lying unoccupied on a couch on this radiant June morning twenty-four hours before your wedding? You must be ill!"

I laughed, "Charlie, you are a solicitous dear. I am fine. And what's more I was not idle, I was working hard. Yes, I was going through the cupboards of my memory, sorting things, tidying them in neat little parcels, dusting shelves, throwing odds and ends away. A great event like marriage calls for a mental spring-cleaning."

Charlie said, "Oh, I feel sort of funny at the thought of being left alone as the sole owner of the children's wing — I will be lonely."

"Oh dear, don't talk of it, I know! You'll have to be the sunshine of the home, with Father so ill and Mother without us girls."

His sensitive hands wearily stroked his forehead — a gesture out of keeping with his seventeen years — he was altogether too sensitive, too serious, too sophisticated for his age.

Pointing to a painting on the wall, Charlie said, "I am fond of this old white-haired chap, he looks so aloof. Do you think you could leave it here for me?"

"My dear, of course, if you like it. Do you remember this old boy called Szabó working in the gardens? His face was — I always thought — too refined and out of place there, but everybody teased me for too much imagination. When Burckhard the artist came, I painted Szabó, we talked a lot, of course."

"Of course," Charlie interrupted with a smile.

"Yes, well we got to be good friends and he told me that his name had been Chabot, his grandmother fled from France during the Revolution in 1794 and died in Hungary. It was a strange pathetic story."

Charlie said, "Your letters from Munich, when you worked at the Academy were funny."

"Daddy adores your stories. Remember your first lessons at the Academy?"

"You mean my examination in front of 27 grown-up men and 2 fat women — would I ever forget it!! When the model walked past us all, absolutely naked, I nearly fainted. Of course one gets over this shyness at once. It's like looking at a lifeless picture, a statue, everybody draws, paints, the professor corrects, walks from easel to easel. A colleague of mine came up giving me unasked for, but very sound advice, 'Take care you are drawing her manly buttocks.' He was right, I corrected it quickly, but you see it had been my very first attempt at drawing a nude. But I passed my exams all right! Those times in Munich were wonderful, but extremely strenuous; I painted standing 4 to 5 hours, there were courses on anatomy and drawing in the afternoon until 6 p.m., and nearly every day I went to parties. It was a gay city in 1921!"

"Did you hear of a man called Adolf Hitler, son of an Austrian painter, who is supposed to have created quite a stir in Munich, in fact in all of Germany?"

I said, "No, I didn't, I was much too busy with my own personal thrilling adventures."

"But there was quite a row after one of his public speeches in the famous tavern called 'Bierbrauhaus' — with police and wounded and —"

"Oh, my dear, there are, and there always will be, people talking in taverns and rows and police!! I really prefer not to know anything about them. I was in the 'Bierbrauhaus' once. If you are young, you have got to see these things, the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty, etc, etc. Well, anyhow, I went to the 'Bierbrauhaus' with a couple of friends and asked for a glass of water — I dislike beer, filthy stuff — the waitress, her eyes round like saucers, 'Wasser?' 'Ja, Wasser!' She rushed away, I never got that water and consequently never went back."

"After your studies in Bavaria you came back and went to the Academy in Budapest, now tell me why — did you really prefer it?"

"No, I did not, but for reasons you might easily guess, I put another interest before painting."

Charlie warmed my heart with his grin, "Forgive me, it was a silly question. I remember trying to find out once why Victor Károlyi developed such a touching interest towards us boys — day after day he used to drop in for one thing or another in Budapest. Sitting

aside on the chairs, his handsome dark head held high, rolling his eyes, he watched the doors, making us roar with laughter over his stories picked up in the Barracks."

I said, "He was serving his military year at that time, it was in winter. I remember the long autumn months preceding them, when you were all here and I was alone."

"Yes, I remember and you stayed with Uncle Dénes on the Gellért mountain in Budapest and were nearly kidnapped," Charlie said.

"No, not kidnapped — bashed across the head with a club — nearly! That was a strange Sunday. I had come from Mass, lunched with Aunt Ricka — Tomy Esterházy came — I was playing the piano in one of the upstairs rooms but the butler seemed to have something on his mind and told Tomy. I was not at home. He left, everybody left, the butler came to tell me that the cold supper tray was on the dining-room table and then he too left. I forgot time; it was dark when I went down to the first floor. One solitary lamp burned in the dining room — the doors were wide open to the suite of drawing rooms gaping empty and dark. I began to eat — I felt a funny twitch of nervousness — I jumped up and resolutely closed both wings of the door. I didn't step into the next room. That was my luck! I sat down again. I heard hard breathing through the keyhole, my scalp trembled like wind moves ripples over a smooth lake. The wooden parquet creaked — I nearly choked over a bit of bread — the creaking continued, diminished and stopped. What in the name of heaven should I do all alone in that big house?"

"Poor girl, what did you do?"

"I whistled! You see, all Auntie's silver was stored up in those cupboards — I had to stay. I was terrified and hung on to that weak thread of sound, very silly! Over and over again I whistled the tune 'Es klingt so spanish, so hindostanish', but couldn't for my life remember how it went on. Later on, blustering old Uncle Dénes came home and found all his cupboards ransacked, his clothes had gone but no more valuables had been stolen."

Cars were sounding their horns. The first guests had arrived. I got up. We stood on the terrace in dreamy silence in the setting sun.

Victor was a strikingly handsome figure with his powerful head and dark wavy hair, dressed in the spectacular ceremonial dress, golden braid, white brocade "dolmány" and a cherry coloured sable-trimmed "mente" frosted with spangles; his velvet sheath sword hanging from a heavy jewel-studded golden chain. His left hand

firmly held a fir-trimmed aigrette-feathered cap and tiny star-shaped spurs tinkled on his buck-skin boots. His right hand jerked open the door, "Ready darling? It's ten o'clock." Everybody fussed busily in my blue bedroom.

Picking up gloves and prayer book I swept helpful diligent hands away. "Ready," I said. "Coming." But suddenly I couldn't move — everybody had scuttled away. I stood looking out on the round cosy terrace under its canopy of green leaves and flower cascades like transparent mauve wings. Between dark firs and silver conifers, rose bushes, graceful Yuccas and shell-pink peonies, a large tent was erected. A two-winged altar stood at one end, festive green and white garlands hugged tall posters and were spanned crosswise over rows of chairs. Blazing sunshine melted to golden mist under the awning, the crimson carpet and the ivory tinted dry sand. Behind the foliage a small organ was hidden — sunrays danced on its black and white keys.

"Let's go."

We were very punctual, the clock struck ten as we joined the waiting crowd in the drawing room and on the pillared terrace.

I tried to collect my wits, slightly scattered and aflutter. The rich confusion of colours impressed me again as a rare sight and gift. Bridesmaids wore ballroom length knife-pleated salmon tulle, ruched scarfs knotted into pert transparent berets. The bridegroom and most all male guests wore their gorgeous ceremonial suits.

"I dislike this mediaeval spectacular pomp — I feel dressed up like an actor on the stage," Victor grumbled moodily.

"But darling," I tried to argue, "tradition is the strength of the history."

"But you don't wear national costume either."

"No, I don't, but — you inherited this dress, mine has been — changed into a flag!! Besides, I prefer to be quite simply dressed in white satin and veil on my wedding day," I finished somewhat lamely, bending to pull my train from under his spurred boots.

Charlie, ever correct and helpful, came to our rescue and handed me the wedding bouquet. I buried my nose in the lilies and snow-white roses. Emil Széchényi, holding his flower decorated staff as best man, bowed formally. He raised my gloved hand to his white moustache, darting mischievous eyes on Victor. "Congratulations, my dear Victor, when a man as young as you decides to get married it may happen that it is the last decision he is allowed to make. But, as you have chosen to wed a dove, I think that there will be two probabilities in your married life — either your wife will be wrong or

you will be right!" He laughed good naturedly, everybody crowded around us.

Stately and tall, a figure of elegance and grace, my mother-in-law asked: "Emil, are you giving good advice in order to console yourself for no longer being in condition to set a bad example yourself?"

"Sophy, your ever-ready wit deserves a proper answer, but may I suggest that it is postponed until after the wedding?"

His white hair glittered in the sunshine like a silver helmet; his face was full of merryment as he turned to father and whispered something into his ear. Mother, standing very quiet in trailing pearl-grey satin, enjoyed the situation, smiled gently and cast an observing eye on everybody. My mother-in-law put a hand on my arm. She said in English, "My dear, this is the greatest day of your life. Never again will you be so important; make the best of it and try to remember every detail." She often talked in English, having spent the best part of her early youth in England. Her father had been ambassador of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to the court of St. James and I thought — no matter what she wears, whether soft clinging tea-gowns, homespun tailored suits or elaborate shimmering silks — Victor's mother always looks like a picture by Reynolds or Gainsborough. As I am writing these pages now, I remember her so vividly on that lovely summer morning, I was groping for the appropriate words so that I could speak to her — I found it too hard a task altogether.

A bust in marble was made of her after her death. There was no epitaph on the statue, but it was written with letters of love in the hearts of those who had known her intimately, 'She lived, loved and died for her family.'

And presently we walked in solemn procession down the flight of broad stone steps through the garden to the golden tent.

Bishop Miklós stood stately and venerable, clad in the robes of his ecclesiastical dignity. I was the last to enter between Feri and Charlie, Toinette's tiny daughter Orsi, a little ball of white and pink, proudly carried my satin train and lace veil.

Victor and I knelt down, the organ played softly.

It was a solemn moment; we knew what we felt; we meant what we said; yes, it was a solemn moment! I could not vent my emotions, remembering Victor's words, "If you start crying I will pinch you" and he would have done it.

"My dear children," began the Bishop, but alas I cannot remember one word of the speech he delivered with kind love.

He paused and gave us his blessings. He looked very tired and slowly left the tent with Father.

I gulped, stealing a cautious glance behind me. I saw them both followed by our family doctor, his moustache bristling anxiously. Baby Orsi, sitting on a tiny stool, placidly scratched her satiny tummy, turning her fair head — crowned with a wreath of rosebuds — from right to left, thoroughly enjoying herself.

Toinette and Feri began to sing Gounoud's "Ave Maria."

Six months later Count Miklós Széchényi, the last bishop of Nagyvárad died, grief hastened his death. "My poor children, my poor diocese" were his last words. And surely the escaping eternal soul of Christ's faithful servant was caught out of all earthly surroundings and up to a heavenly place filled with echoing sweetness, divine harmony and love. And so he passed from death to eternal life.

His grave stood ready in the vaults of the last church he had built in the vicinity of Nagymágocs. The great ebony crucifix with the Saviour's carved alabaster body had been designed and ordered by himself years ago; the church was decorated with pictures painted by the artist Count Jenő Széchényi, his brother.

Chapter VI.

On the large fourposter between rosy curtains, cushions and sheets, windows open to the starlit sky, I hugged my first-born baby to my happy thankful throbbing heart. This is the greatest miracle, I thought for the hundredth time, there is no doubt about it!

There was a quick knock at the door. It was my father-in-law, Count Imre Károlyi — a well-known figure in the haute finance, in the Hungarian and Austrian society, in political circles. His brilliant intellect, sharp wit, his cultured mind, his breathtaking activity, his impatience and his good heart hid an often uncontrolled temper, had made him few friends for life and many enemies. He was accustomed to ignoring objections, and what's more remarkable, he got away with it.

He had motored down in breakneck speed from Budapest and now he came in on tiptoe to congratulate me. He was proud, happy and exceedingly uncomfortable. He adored children, they adored him and terrorized him. But newborn babies were decidedly not in his line.

Consuelo, his only daughter, my sister-in-law, was hugging the baby already with touching possessive eagerness and admiration.

I asked my husband for paper and pencil. "I want to write a telegram to Mother and Father." Then they all left me but I couldn't sleep. My thoughts drifted to Father whose health did not improve — he was in Nauheim for a cure. Mother and he had come to see us before they left.

The most enchanting picture of Hungarian countryside stretched in front of me; beyond the park fields ranging from olive to emerald, rows of large walnut trees, fruit trees in full bloom, lilac and berberry hedges — extensive woods spread out like two wings right and left as far as one could see. The gravelled roads wound in and out between dark pines, poplars, yews, chestnuts and oaks in vivid patches of flower beds — jasmin and hibiscus bushes. The large crescent-shaped lake reflected sweeping willows, swamp cypresses, clusters of Japanese bamboo and the graceful columns of a small Venus temple on the opposite shore.

On gently sloping lawns between stone parapets, clipped taxus

hedges, stood a fountain — four white transparent jets of water splashed jewelled foam and rainbow-coloured halos on a group of Charatids; graceful stone statues and four marble benches adorned the velvety grass.

A tiny brown lizard zig-zagged on the green moss-covered stone, blinking into the sun; doves cooed in the tall chestnut trees hiding their fluttering joy under the cool canopy of the leaves.

The air was filled with mysterious stirrings and sounds; hidden fledgelings, chattering sparrows, swamp peepers, the clap-clapping of storks, the short bark of a frightened roebuck, nightingales thrilling vibrant long-drawn breath, hundreds of swallows cut the sky with the metallic blue wings, signalling to each other, diving down and touching the silver water in their lightning speed — the blue broken cup of a robin's egg lay in the grass. The beauty of nature is a joy of the senses, but its deepest beauty lies not in its sheen and colour but in its order and meaning.

Do we ever try to find out this meaning and order? What does it convey to our brain — to our heart? Too often we go to her, oblivious of her beauty, her secrets, her warnings, her example. Why?

Can it be that the keen emotion of our hearts, our strange yearnings, our thoughts, our impressions from we know not whence, should be wrought in us only to begin and end in themselves? NO, that CANNOT be! Surely they have escaped from some higher sphere — they are reflections of eternal harmony whispering of angels, fathomless, lost maybe in the vast perplexities of life and light, but eternal in the divine law of creation and evolution. Dimly I thought, there is no beginning here on earth, and no end — it is a whirling spiral tending and rising even higher and higher — immortality! The word split across blue emptiness, followed by a feeling of prayer, which dwelt in me like inner sweetness, life and sound. Those were, most likely, my thoughts on that drowsy April afternoon waiting for my parents. I burst out singing and whistling.

In dazed dreamy happiness I thought of all this on that May night. The little baby sleeping blissfully in a haze of sky-blue frills, ribbon and lace. I gazed at him, his features were modelled to a perfect replica of his father.

The longest summer day was approaching. Victor and I were up at seven riding every morning, covering fields and woods before the heat of the day. In the afternoon we played tennis, we drove, we swam, we strolled in the park. My schedule was ruled by baby and Victor spent many hours in the office and inspecting work in the

dairy farm, in stables, in factories, in the fields, woods and extensive fruit plantations.

Nagymágocs was situated in the most fertile part of Hungary, an estate of some 4,000 acres. It was a bit of paradise on earth. The park fruit plantations, fields and woods were full of roes, hares, pheasants and partridges, the ideal surrounding to an ideal country home. Three separate complete farms had been built on the estate in the course of years, a beautiful little Gothic church, two schools, attractive comfortable buildings for employees, doctor, priest, vet, school teachers, midwife, machinists, etc. Tile-walled, concrete-floored stables and barns for cows, horses, hogs, poultry, storing and drying of fruit, cereals, red pepper, besides four different factories.

There was freedom, wealth, contentment and a buzzing activity everywhere. As we went for rides, drives and walks day after day, I marvelled at my husband's experience and knowledge. I learned to know the faces, the names, the intricate life of such a modern farm.

We spent hours visiting the housing developments, the factories, the dairy farm, the stables — looking at the threshing, haystacking, feeding of stud horses and cattle, the fat hogs grunting in placid somnolence under their layers of fat — the pigs were driven through a cleansing pool each evening.

Victor had long talks with the forester and head game keeper about plantations, conservation of wild life, shooting and game breeding. The majority of the birds were wild, only the eggs found, while mowing the fields, were hatched artificially. With adequate care and 'know-how', the 'bag' had been increased from 200 to 300, to 2,000 brace. We watched the mother hens surround the tiny pheasant chicks, rushing about in the clover, like spotted brown balls, hardly bigger than a nut. We watched roes, hares and wildfowl. We stopped innumerable times to talk to farm hands, drivers, gardeners, labourers. Victor knew all their names, remembering details of their private lives. They greeted us lifting their hats in the friendliest way. There is pride and dignity in the Magyar farmers. Work is regarded as something inevitable, but they do not live to work, not to make money — they enjoy their daily life. They are exceedingly fond of animals and proud of their farms. There is no servility among them and they are always ready to grant a favour. One of their most outstanding qualities is their so well known hospitality. Hundreds of labourers had drifted from surrounding areas to Nagymágocs and found steady employment. They settled down to become members of the Károlyi estate.

Towards half past seven we trotted briskly homewards through

scented shrubs and forests. The horses' hoofs thundered over paved macadam roads, flanked by red blossomed chestnut trees. A sharp turn through the wrought iron gates of the southwest entrance brought us with almost startling suddenness, the first view of the manor, which was completely swathed in dark ivy. I never passed that gate without being overwhelmed by that view. The old porter stood at attention at his lodge and three times the little bell pealed sharply.

Chapter VII.

A little village northeast from Budapest, in the mountains, is Telkibánya; ages ago it was a small settlement of miners who dug for gold. The gold was scarce; the people had increased in number but diminished in worldly goods. The village had changed little in the past hundred years.

Half-timbered, thatched, ramshackle cottages, hidden by a confusion of climbing vineyards, elder, gnarled old apple or plum trees, broken fences and toothless wooden gates, manure piled high in front of tiny dormer windows blind with dust. Houses running down on either side of the street circling a hill like a crumpled, creased necktie. A desperately forlorn poverty-stricken little village, surrounded by gorgeous woods. These woods were partly bought by my father-in-law. We bought a piece of land a hundred yards from the main road above the village, built our new home on it and hoped to settle down for life.

The reason for poverty, misery and unemployment during the first decade after World War I was beyond doubt the senseless and morally unjustifiable mutilation of the country by the "peace" treaty of Versailles. Hungary lost two-thirds of her territory, 90% of its raw material and over 30% of its Hungarian population was delivered to the impatient chauvenistic terror of the newly created Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Great Rumania. *The population, millions and millions of people were never asked to what country they wished to belong!!!*

There was one exception — the plebiscite in Sopron — with the result that the town remained as it had been throughout a thousand years — a Hungarian town! But in all the other parts of the country, which were simply distributed, as so much merchandise to the recently created Small Entente States (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Great Rumania) the Hungarian population was persecuted in such a way that tens of thousands had to leave their homes and come as refugees to the now poverty stricken, dismembered mother country.

Whoever will take the trouble at seeking out the truth will see, very soon indeed, that these were the causes of the then well-nigh unsolvable social problems in Hungary.

In 1929 our third baby was born in Budapest, in the home of my husband's parents. It was a regal, lovely large building, windows looking down on the Blue Danube.

I loathed the idea of hospitals, the delivery rooms, mechanical devices, anaesthesia, dozens of howling infants and the sordid sickening smell. Giving birth is a normal physiological function and I wanted my cosy surroundings, my own peace and solitude. I wanted to marvel at nature's greatest miracle; I wanted to hug my baby and my feeling of gratitude towards God for the greatest, purest joy on earth — Motherhood.

Large, fat and placid — a heavy but exact replica of his brother Louis — the little baby boy was christened Anthony. Our little daughter had been born in 1926 in Póstelek — her name Christine-Sophie promptly abbreviated by her brother to the sweet nickname of Ditta.

In 1929 in a sparkling frosty December noon we arrived in Telkibánya and settled down.

Cosy is a shop worn word, but it describes that new home of ours perfectly. It nestled between woods, with a wide view over gently sloping hills and a range of mountains fenced in and half concealed by ramblers and ampelopsis; the broad drive cut out into the mountain was spanned by climbing roses — a profusion of colour cascading downwards in summer like a carpet of vivid shades.

But on that bitingly crisp winter day, a bright crackling log burned in the big stone fire-place in the living room; all the fir forests of the carboniferous age blurred the frosty double window panes; the old furniture exhaled an indefinable smell of pine and smoke. Our ears were ringing with the solemn silence of the snow-covered earth and the 'stay-at-home' feeling enfolded us like soft eiderdown.

Baby Anthony slept blissfully in his blue cradle. We loved to have him around us. Louis was playing with a little pop-gun — he never lost his fondness for guns, shooting, sports. Ditta was wandering from window to window dragging a teddy bear by one leg after her — she was like a dainty doll. Darting wide awake glances too and fro, keeping up a fluent baby talk, interested in everything — asking a thousand questions. Her sudden silence made me look up. She had scrambled onto the arm of a sofa, pressing her button nose hard against the frosted window pane, and was staring out on the white road, watching two figures intently.

An old woman passed there, slight and shrunken, clad in a ragged rusty black coat, her grey hair tucked loosely under a brown scarf, frail shoulders bowed beneath a big load of soggy branches,

her thin small leathery face seemed moulded by life into a mask of sorrow. A child trotted at her side — with shoes worn through at the toes — a slovenly little waif of maybe six years, fingers blue and swollen by frost, snarled blonde curls hanging limply; she carried a big armload of branches too.

I watched them for a second with a stab of anguish. Ringing the bell hastily, I gave orders to call them back, to give them food, to make a note of their names.

With this picture stamped on my mind and heart, we began our life in Telkibánya and soon both Victor and I started our work; there was plenty of work to be done which provided jobs for the surrounding population for years — cutting timber and replanting the barren mountain sides, building new roads, narrow-guage railways; Victor was in the forest from dawn until late in the evening. I went from cottage to hut, from village church to stables — visiting, talking, inspecting, making friends with all those forlorn, poor people who lived from day to day in sordid appalling misery-borne apathy.

But the children — so many of them — could not be called unhappy, in spite of everything they had found their key to happiness by living close to nature. Little houses were scattered everywhere along the river banks, deep into woods and meadows.

When you want to make friends, first thing is to conquer mistrust by listening. Well, I listened for hours, for days, making mental notes, collecting details and gradually working my own understanding into the necessary foundations of sound plans.

1. There were cases needing immediate care such as aid to the ill, warm clothing and more food.
2. There was the question of proper housing and job security and
3. the problem of raising the standard of living.

When all the data was collected, written and filed, we sat down and did some thinking, talking and calculating. Then began a veritable campaign of 'talking business' with authorities, the mayor, the doctors, the preachers and the teachers. We did not want to raise funds to organise welfare committees and address mass meetings to indulge in highfaluting propaganda. We simply told what we had seen, what we knew, and what we wanted to do about it ourselves, in our vicinity. We suggested the same methods being studied, supervised and eventually adopted in other areas in Hungary similarly neglected. I cannot ever remember all the obstacles now; but I can say that in three years we had a daily public mess hall for children, nursing mothers and crippled and the old. We had kinder-

garten where children up to six years were fed and looked after for as long as their parents were working. We had a medical advisor twice a week and a trained young midwife. We had yearly competitions for the nicest cottage fronts and gardens. We had turned the tiny village, with its pure country air and lovely surroundings, into a summer resort where tired city people could restore their shattered nerves and brains in the cheap, clean, quiet 'best rooms' of tiny cottages.

This programme was so successful that it became a nation-wide movement under the sponsorship of my brother Charlie — it proved to be a blessing to the whole country.

On a crisp, spring morning I was wading through ankle-deep mud on the village square. It had been raining heavily. Colourful pictures appeared in my mind — what would this square look like if it had proper drainage, paved pavements, stately pines, flowering bushes and smooth green lawns? Straight to the mess hall I rushed. Maybe 120 people were there, seated in front of long, low tables eating heartily — they were mostly women. I told them about my daydream: "Now, my dears, would you like such a village square so that all the carriages and motor cars would stop so that the people could admire it?" The answer was unanimous.

"Could you all come with your tools? I am going to fetch a carpenter's tape and I will ask my husband if he will help by erecting a barbed wire fence so that the trees and plants will be protected from the cattle and pigs. Could we begin at once?"

The answer was not quite as unanimous, but in 2 weeks the job was done. We women and the children started the work and one by one the men followed.

The secret to help is to have human understanding; to lift the spirits and to give a good example. What we had done, hundreds of people were now doing in their homes in Hungary. I feel it is my duty to mention this because in our age of intolerance and hate, people are easily misled either by untruthful reporting about aristocracy or by purposely picking the evil side of things to write about when, in fact, there is good and bad everywhere. There are certain writers that, although they loved 'palling around' with us aristocrats in pre-war days, are, today, taking advantage of the post-war inclination to criticise and down everything that has to do with it. Just, perhaps, to seem up to date or belonging to the so-called intellectual group! Unfortunately, for them, they are defeating their own purpose, for, in the long run, art in literature shall be their real

critic. Art demands its work to be not only witty and entertaining but edifying and aesthetic. Certainly not destructive!

Huddled on a damp patch of soft green moss, the little fawn, who had already found the world surprisingly cold, suddenly found himself all alone in the woods. He was brought to us and fed on a bottle. His wonderful little face and his wobbly toothpick legs were a constant happiness to our children; he got strong rapidly and followed them like a dog. But soon he developed a startling antipathy — or was it sympathy — for our fat cook, Vörös Mari. He butted her when and where she least expected it. Vörös Mari did not like it; she had no sense of humour and tried to frighten the little buck with a wet rag or with rattling pots and pans. Finally she came to complain about him.

"But Mari," I said, "You are such a big, strong woman — you can't really be frightened by that little buck? He may be irritating but he is strictly vegetarian — he won't eat you!!"

"But your ladyship, it's poor taste for a buck to try to gore a woman when she least expects it and from behind too!"

I got quite apoplectic in my endeavour not to laugh.

Weeks passed, the roebuck's horns grew longer, his playful behaviour towards the cook had changed into grown up demonstrative hate. And, whichever way she happened to sit, stand or walk, he charged her viciously.

Louis, who was eight years old, having long passed the age where nannies could control him, agile, active and ready for every imaginable mischief, equipped with a hunting sling-shot and a pair of old binoculars, walked past the kitchen door at every odd moment with the fawn tamely trotting at his heels. They both stopped behind some tree or briar bush, biding their time.

Peeping cautiously to right and left, poor cook waddled out of her kitchen. Instantly the buck danced around, charged and hit the flying, screaming woman where she was fattest; he then made a sharp turn with further tactics in mind and gave the wretched woman another well aimed shove, if she was not quick enough to avoid him!

It was fun to watch, but really it wasn't funny at all! The growing roebuck was put on a carriage and taken far away into the forest to find his own free life. He was, we all hoped, happy, but we missed him and Louis felt as lonely as a solitary whipporwill for a couple of days.

It doesn't take long in good game country to realise a life-long passion -- our eldest had inherited his father's love and skill for

hunting and shooting. The forests of Telkibánya were alive with stags, roes, foxes and wild boars. It was a never ending joy and thrill to stalk and roam about for hours and to live in the log cabin. Even five year old Ditta accompanied us dressed in tiny leather pants. In spite of warnings and punishment, both children poked and pawed about in the moss and grass under dry bracken and leaves. It was a constant battle. Poisonous snakes had been found. We were always full of anxiety and fear.

Walking home one day through the pine woods, 30 yards from the house, Louis bent to pick up a stick from the road. I screamed a warning but he had shied up and away in the same moment. The 'stick' wriggled hastily away over the water-washed sandy road. It was a poisonous snake. I killed it with my iron-topped walking stick feeling like good old Azra when she had bumped her nose against a slimy road. And 'a propos' our dear dog poor faithful Azra had been lured away by all that game once too often — her mother's wolf-wild blood made her hunt for three days in the snow-covered mountains. Being miles and miles away from home, a game-warden most likely mistook her for a hungry wolf and shot her. But we never lived without dogs. Our pet was now Bodri, alias Bingo, a small white curled Hungarian puli — faithful, adorable and intelligent, blinking through white fleecy fur with a blue and a black eye.

Shepherds and cattle hands of the Hungarian Puszta (plains) have made prodigies out of this breed; they know hundreds of sheep or cattle by name. "Bring me that black 'Queenie' or 'Juli' or 'Riska' they would tell their dogs and the little animal obediently trotting or lying at his master's heels would break away and pick out 'Queenie,' 'Juli' or 'Riska' from hundreds of its kind, barking and bounding against its nose or hind legs, chasing it in ardent rage towards the master.

Bingo was day and night with us; as a fluffy puppy he had been house-broken by instinct. I painted his portrait, we kept up a mutual lively conversation; he 'posed' for hours and never moved. He was the best model I ever had!

We had a tiny impudent Dachshund, stubborn and mad with the hunting instinct, his name — Kilian; he flush-pointed everything with feathers and would have attacked an elephant. Once Victor shot a stag miles and miles away from home; it was dark and we had to hurry home. Kilian sat in front between us in the carriage. Without warning, the little rascal jumped off the seat and bolted away like lightning. It was useless to look for him. Trusting his good sense we came home. Next morning, when the game keeper went to

fetch the stag, he found the little dog tightly curled up against it, defending it like a lion. But I was always accompanied by little Bingo, whether walking or on horseback. He would be no good, of course, against charging wild boars and such — on the contrary — his field manners concerning big game were far from perfect. But we were never without each other. Once, stepping out briskly on a narrow path between steep rocks and a gurgling well, under thick bracken and spruce, a faint noise caught my ear — the shuffling of many tiny feet and several deep grunts. The bright patches of sunlight on the shade dazzled my eyes. I couldn't see a thing but I knew that it was a wild boar with her piglets, not five yards away from us. These good mothers can get very annoyed with intruders. I grabbed up Bingo and started to pussy-walk away on the deeply furrowed path, peering back towards the sound. Stepping down a foot further than you expect, does something to your sense of balance. It was too late to check my momentum — I fell forward. Bingo let out a yelp and practically took to wings. My hands shot out to check my fall and I slithered, pawing the mud. Then things happened fast; white-striped squeaking little piglets came running, tumbling over each other and, like a black ghost, the big boar shot out of the bush, grunting and snapping, glinting ferocious jaws which fitted together like scissor blades. She rushed straight at the place where I was but I was not there anymore — I was hightailing after Bingo who had been watching the scene anxiously from a safe distance. Maybe it would have been better to break into some loud melodious singing instead of tiptoeing away but I decided to try that method the next time. In any case I was going to ask Victor for some advice. Now and again, even experts can get into trouble, as you will see.

On a bright winter morning, Victor went out to stalk a boar. He was dressed in ridiculous long white pants over brown breeches.

"What are you dressed like that for?" I inquired.

"I want to be less conspicuous in the white surroundings" (there had been a heavy snowfall).

"Good luck," I said, and he left.

About five miles from the house a frozen brook marked the boundary between dark woods in a hollow. Victor was crossing it gingerly (rather difficult in iron nail-studded boots) when a large wild boar catapulted down the slope and charged him. It happened so suddenly that there was no time to shoot. Victor belaboured the furious beast with kicks and blows from his rifle butt, defending himself as best he could but the big black animal lunged ferocious-

ly and bit completely through the thick rifle carrying strap. The boar then turned impulsively and ran into the forest. Victor shot him in the afternoon and found a nasty wound on his back, previously inflicted, which accounted for the poor beast's 'unboarlike' behaviour.

* * *

Sweet little Ditta was barely six years old when she developed a mild inflammation of appendicitis. We rushed her to Budapest and she got over the operation in three days — there were no complications. On the fourth day she was taken into the garden and was chatting happily, thoroughly proud of herself. I had been with her in the nursing home day and night — I left her now with her father for the afternoon. When I came back I found them both upstairs again, Victor was in a highly ruffled temper.

"What's happened?"

"Ditta refused to get into the elevator, refused to be carried up the stairs. She walked up to the second floor!"

Yes, I thought, that's our little girl, all right. She would always know her own mind and would give her parents a few hard nuts to crack in the course of time.

In the autumn, Victor went to his third and last training course combined with maneuvers. He left by car; I had accompanied him to the premises of the steep path below our house waving him a last farewell. And then it happened! I was struck by a frantic thought — Louis is riding, he has had an accident, now — this instant, the car is gone. How am I going to get him to a doctor quickly enough? Turning on my heels I raced up through the wood — panting I reached the main road just in time to confront the little yellow pony — tail up, mane flying, in a right smart hurry and *riderless!* "Csillag," I called hoarsely. He slowed down in front of the bridge. I grabbed the reins, turned him back and in a 'clock-tick' was galloping past the house, up and through the pines, curving around the spruce. There, in the open, under a crooked birch, stood Louis. Thank God he stood! His pants were torn, he was not happy, but he was perfectly all right. And that was the one and only occasion when I had a good mind to give our first born a good spanking. I didn't. I felt too glad and too weak. But he deserved it, for he had disobeyed. He had taken along the prohibited riding crop to which Csillag was allergic (he was ticklish!) and he had inadvertently touched him with it. The pony shied and Louis, of course, was thrown off. But

Louis had begun to know his own mind and he tried to use it on every occasion.

One morning I was seated at my desk. I suddenly heard my little boy raise his voice; I cocked a sharp ear. Aghast, I heard him announce with calm energy —

"Mr. Teacher, I will give you a slap in the face" and the mild answer —

"But dear little Louis, you must not say that!"

Full of wrath, I marched in.

"Get up, Louis!"

His sparkling brown eyes dilated but, slightly shaken, he got up.

"You are going to apologise *at once* for what you have said — and don't make faces! Take your medicine like a man!"

Louis apologised in a stubborn stage whisper.

"And now, turn, march into that corner and face that wall. Stay there until Mr. _____ calls you."

There followed a heart to heart talk with Mr. _____ in the adjoining room. He looked much more dejected than Louis. I had a hard time smothering a grin at his reaction to my instructions to be more strict with my son.

They say that no horse gets anywhere till he is harnessed and no life gets anywhere till it is focused and disciplined. I agree with this, but it is certainly no easy task to discipline children nowadays and especially one's own. Louis and Ditta had continual fierce fights with feathers flying; they were as wary as a pair of bantam roosters. It was no good preaching to little boys to be gentle with little girls because that particular little girl was worse than a scratching kitten! She bit into her brother's back once, right in the midle over the spine. Her sharp teeth had left their tiny purple marks, but occasionally, her winning gentle smile, quick bright response and driving power behind any idea, would melt her brother's wrath and they would be allies in doing mischief. They both loved the country life; Louis especially for his hunting instinct, Ditta for its mystery. My husband and I had endless talks, arguments and mutual plans about bringing up our children, giving them the right example and education and we both agreed that they should go to public school.

And so, I set out to find that school and organise things. On a hot August evening (Victor had been gone a fortnight) I drove to the station. After the suffocating heat, the cool strong breeze felt delicious. From nowhere, black clouds blotted out the star-spangled sky. A howling gust of wind filled our eyes and nostrils with dust. Barely 6 yards from the highway, the river Hernád gleamed, the

water was the colour of oil, agitated ripples running over it spasmodically. Without preliminary lightning, a blinding blue-white curtain zig-zagged and dropped over us, tiny hissing flaming balls jumped all over the horses and through the carriage. A wrenching blast of thunder split our ears; the terrified horses bolted, fiddle-footing, jerking at the bridles. Both coachman and footman struggled with the reins. Hoof-driven clods of sand whizzed by our heads. At last, the horses were reined in and calmed down. We halted. We were all shaking. The good old coachman wiped his forehead, muttering shakily under his moustache —

"Jumping Jehosaphat, this lightning hit us like milltails of hell!"

Jóska had been the Bishop Széchényi's faithful valet for 20 years. He was now our trusted servant. He had insisted on coming with me to the station and peered anxiously at me.

"It's quite all right Jóska — I was scared stiff for a second though — but let's hurry on to the station now."

"But your Ladyship, we were nearly killed! Luckily, the river sucked in the lightning."

Maybe he was right but maybe that lightning jumped over us because the water was there. I was in no mood to think and argue at the time. I was in a nasty mood altogether and I felt like crying for three days — in fact as far as I can remember, I did!

Chapter VIII.

Those days and years from 1929 to 1939 seemed like a kaleidoscopic wheel with thousands of events blending into each other. Constant travelling, much painting, many guests, continual bustle and the ever increasing rhythm of life.

Victor's three brothers — Ferenc, György, Gyula and his sister Consuela — were married; so was my brother Charlie.

We had bought a villa in Budapest and spent only the summer months in Telkibánya.

The two elder children went to public school. We were caught in the whirl and bustle of hectic city life and had to attend to many social duties. But nevertheless, we could enjoy blissful hours of peace together at home. Built on the Gellért Mountain close to the mediaeval fortress called Citadel, our villa had a roof garden and the most fascinating view over Budapest and its surroundings.

During the day, Victor and I had our own personal occupations and duties to attend to, which meant that we hardly saw each other.

I spent many hours with the children giving them as much love as possible. I studied their characters, their physical and psychic development and I learned from them, as least as much as they learned from me. I knew many parents whose life with their children was filled with giving them orders and as a result most of these orders were simply ignored. How on earth are we adults to expect perfection from children when we ourselves are far from it? Examples in faith, purity, patience, understanding, tact, honesty and consideration towards each other will be the best education! Over and over again, I saw that praise, approval and admiration are far stronger weapons than punishment. Children from 1 to 7 years of age are like clever little monkeys — mimicry is a strong instinct — in fact, it is their proper way of learning. It depends entirely on their surroundings what they will find to mimic.

Try and talk to your children — deaf with bellowing fury — in a whisper. It works like magic most of the time. You see, children are always curious and they will stop screaming instantly expecting a whispered secret. It is up to us to make our whispered words interesting, for instance, by telling them that a tiny black devil jumps

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into their mouth if they are in a temper and scream. If they stop having tempers the little black devil will instantly change into a tiny, tiny fairy with rainbow coloured wings. Children adore stories. Let us invent and tell them as many as we can; let us fill their little hearts and boundless imaginations with the rapture of elves and pixies, nymphs, nyads, sirens, cupids, Pan with the flute, man in the moon, giants and gnomes.

Before they go to sleep, let us give them vivid little stories of the Holy Virgin and Jesus Christ; stories containing kindness, unselfishness and truth must invariable have a happy ending; but bad fairies, fiends, demons and witches should get appropriate punishment. Perplexed parents will be happily astonished to see how all this will blossom out later and make our babies into unselfish, considerate and dependable adults, solving many a sad problem of their own in the right way.

Some of you might ask — but why stuff children with so much nonsense about non-existent fairies and devils and such like — fibs? Let me tell you — they are *not fibs!* In our world of complete materialism and mechanical mindedness, humanity will have to find out through mistakes and suffering that there is a driving, compelling, *living spirit* behind everything. Suffering is crystallized wisdom! Through this wisdom humanity may learn to seek and to see *the living spirit behind everything.* Thoughts, feelings, actions reflect these living super-sensory powers — they will become as real and tangible as tables, chairs, yes, as our friends or enemies. Let us not deny the unknown, at least let us give it the benefit of the doubt; we have much to learn yet. Let us give our children the chance to rise above pure matter. Later on, they can decide for themselves what to believe, what to like and accordingly, how to live their personal life.

Adults are childishly, conceitedly illogical and unjust so often. They use vile words upon dropping a china cup, but they thunder 'shut-up' impatiently when their poor little boy reacts in his childish way to the breaking of *his* cherished possession. They slap him smartly for lying, and at the next moment lie, with a perfectly honest expression, to the police officer who stops them, inquiring as to whether they know that the speed limit in that area is only 30 miles per hour! This, after complaining audibly, the moment before about the police trying to handicap drivers with so many restrictions on speed. Do not let us pitch our expectations too high towards our children and expect them to have perfect manners — have we got perfect manners in front of them? In spite of their parents, many

children grow up into adults of quality. And this, of course, brings us again to the question, "Do you know why?"

Through my lively interest in our children and in course of time, towards hundreds of others, I found out countless secrets and treasures in children's hearts, of their spontaneous actions and reactions of their individuality and talents. I maintain that every child has some outstanding gift for one thing or another — often, several talents — dwarfed by selfish, careless, disinterest in their surroundings, but can anybody tell me why a small lively child will invariably ask the most unanswerable questions at meals in front of half a dozen guests, making mother blush furiously?

Of course, a great method of education is sense of humour, and this can be applied to grownups as well! Archduke Albrecht was sitting for his portrait. Before he left he bent down to look closer at some detail of the full length, life-size picture, when to my horror Louis directed a well-aimed smack at the Archducal posterior. My guest laughed. He did have a well developed sense of humour; indeed, as after the next sitting, when I suggested he stay for lunch, he informed me with a grin that I had already sent him an invitation which he had accepted two weeks ago, I had completely forgotten.

When Louis upset the cup of cocoa on the yellow brocade in the Regent's palace, nobody laughed; alas, neither did I! A sense of humour can be developed in much the same way as you learn to cultivate an appreciation of art. Boys will rate higher any jokes than girls. Queen Victoria was 'not amused' when, inquiring after the health of his wife, the aged, deaf Admiral cupped a hand round his ear and bellowed back, "Thank you your Majesty, I had her just turned over to have her bottom painted" — speaking of his ship, of course. This story may or may not be true, but good old Queen Victoria is often quoted by her "We are not amused." Probably she was but a woman in millions who are better judges of what is funny and what is not. As she is — or should be — the censor of joy and sunshine in her home — a really good wife will find much at which to laugh, this being proof that husbands too are sometimes the butt of a humorous situations. Maybe we women are illogical creatures, after all, who are apt to say when a man can't see the joke, "Darling, you've lost your sense of humour," and if the husband has mislaid something and has looked for it fuming and raging, we might ask, "Where did you have it last?" We go there and there it is! Psychologists agree that there is limitless enjoyment in life through a sense of humour. It certainly helps us to regard and value things in their

true perspective — it gives us strength and spirit too — if we begin by ourselves, which is not easy and should be learned in our earlier years.

And last, but not least, creative activity should be the basis of children's recreation. Movies, radio and television will make a small child tired and grumpy because these activities move too rapidly for him to accompany them with the physical action which his age requires. These were my experiences in those years. Our three children were an unending source of happiness to us. My diaries, recorded in 14 books, are all lost or burned. I cannot recollect everything and now I quote two lines in a poem —

"Think of things they used to say,
Think of each happy yesterday."

City life also brought its social perils. The children were invited to many parties and spent their days in the free atmosphere of school where they had to hold their own with hundreds of city bred, more sophisticated children. We tried to dress them similarly, in dark green leather coats and helmets in winter, navy blue and light grey outfits in spring and white in summer. I watched them often, waving a cheery goodbye, speculating over their beaming, happy faces, their gradually expanding interests, their present and future life.

Goethe was right; human life flows in the metamorphosis of giving and taking.

This is what tiny Anthony must have thought when collecting for a charity at a party; having put his own penny into the plate, he calmly walked up to a flower shop and bought an expensive bunch of carnations for his nannie with the collected money!!

Anthony was a placid child. Crowds didn't disturb him. He was scarcely 5 years old when he performed at a charity benefit. Before a huge crowd he stepped out calmly, a tiny dot at the foot of a towering golden curtain in his white and purple costume. He whipped out a miniature sword and shouted at the top of his lungs, "No, no, never!" — meaning that Hungary would never relinquish territories which had been lawfully hers and then as he left, on the waves of frantic applause, stuffed cookies serenely into his mouth. He adored sweets (and still does!) but always knew when to stop eating them. Once we had to attend an old neighbour's birthday party. The tea table was loaded with Anthony's favourite delicacies — he gorged himself to his heart's content. Presently, the old host stepped up and kindly urged him to take some frosted sugar candy with whipped cream.

"If you want me to be sick all over your table, give me some more," Anthony retorted.

Once an iron bar fell on his head, the skin split and he bled profusely. Alarmed, I rushed him to the hospital, they put in 3 stitches and he never let out a murmur, explaining cheerfully —

"Mom, do you know why this happened? Because my head is too big!"

He smiled that adorable placid smile of his and looked at me, no, not *at* me, *through* me. His eyes were the colour of sunrays through a bit of green glass, with flecks of yellow, orange and brown around the black pupils. They were strangely compelling eyes, as though all his being had come to focus in them (and this is also a peculiarity he did not lose in the course of years). His physical power, his placid domination of situations, and his eyes had characterized him right from childhood. He often caught severe chills, invariably ending up with a mastoid infection. His ear drums had to be lanced; twice I spent a month with him in Belgium hoping that the invigorating salty air would cure him. I watched him for hours, playing in the tawny sand, busily trotting to and fro with his little pail and shovel. He did not make many friends. The gesticulating children with their fluent French conversation bewildered him considerably. Having 2 hours between trains in Cologne, I went to the famous cathedral with him. I suggested —

"Darling, make a nice prayer to Jesus in this church you've never been in before," as we tiptoed to the altar. Presently we came out.

"What did you ask of Jesus, my darling?"

He turned, eyes beaming with trust, toward me.

"I asked Jesus for a hot water bottle!"

Needless to say, his prayer was fulfilled but mine, alas, was not.

Little Anthony fell gravely ill and this time he needed an operation. Victor had gone home, reluctantly, while I stayed at the hospital at Anthony's bedside, watching his restless hands, his wistful face, his head swathed in bandages. He was in great pain; presently I thought he had dropped into a light slumber but no, he looked up again.

"Mom, go and lie down. Just now you can't help me and you must sleep; poor little Jesus endured so much pain when bad men poked nails into him, I can also suffer a little. Give me my teddy bears, please."

Half-choked with sobs, I groped for the toys on the glass-topped table and then lay down obediently. I watched him, balancing the

5 tiny brown, black and white teddies on his knees. When he was well enough, we went back to our sunny comfortable house; there he spent his days on the terrace amongst scented many-coloured petunias, watching the humming bees and birds in the trees, while I played to him on the piano for hours. He loved music; he had been soothed by music as a tiny baby and, by and by, he began to sing songs of his own composition, giving them names. He would lift one finger commanding —

"Now listen, I will sing 'Here come the soldiers'." He tapped rhythm with hands and feet; at other times, it was a sad little tune he had called 'Churchyard Song'. Just then, his hands were too small, but when he was 7 years old, he began to learn the piano and he loved it. Once he made me furiously uncomfortable by calmly announcing to his teacher, "My daddy says your room smells like a badger's den," but the good lady had plenty of humour and laughed heartily. It was true that her room lacked expensive perfumes but she was very poor, worked hard and gave every spare moment of her long days, in spite of frail health, to helping others and half a dozen cats.

Chapter IX.

Through all those years, I painted a good deal, preparing exhibitions, mostly portraits, of the Counts Géza Andrássy, Lónyai, of Professor Ádám, the well-known surgeon of Kánya, our Foreign Minister, of beautiful Archduchess Anna, Princess Kinsky, Countess Széchenyi, eight portraits of children with horses, dogs, and does, and a large collection of charcoal drawings of game and landscapes. One spring, the Agricultural Minister gave me a commission for an almost life-size portrait of the Regent Horthy Miklós on horseback. He had been painted often, his powerful features and characteristic personality were a fairly easy task for every artist, but I had a difficult problem nevertheless because he, instead of sitting on a horse, sat astride on a gilded bow-legged padded brocade chair. I made many studies of the beautiful horses in his stables; painting for weeks in one of the reception rooms in the "King's Palace", doors flanked by motionless guardsmen in their gorgeous red, white and gold uniforms, I enjoyed complete peace and solitude. Through open windows I could watch the changing of the guards and listen to the fanfare of trumpets announcing the arrival or departure of the Regent. Sometimes Mrs. Horthy, the Regent's wife, would come in, a picture of elegance, grace and beauty. I watched her tapered fingers, her tiny feet, her almost overwhelming femininity and was very sorry not to be able to paint her too.

Once, trying to find my way in the labyrinth of this huge building to see a friend, wife of an ADC, I lost my way. Hearing voices I knocked at a door to inquire where I was. A gruff peeved voice gave information, adding, "Look where you knock, before you knock, we are the Crown Guard!" Bewildered, I looked about and sure enough above that door I saw the sign now. Shortsighted as I was I hadn't noticed and was deeply ashamed of my blunder.

To us Hungarians that 1000-year old crown is the symbol of deep reverence and significance of historical tradition and faith towards kingdom.

The Austrian Chancellor, Dollfuss, came to Hungary. A reception was organized in his honour at the Prime Minister's Palace.

From across the dozen or so feet that separated us, the French

Ambassador squeezed his way to greet us. Tall, fair, a face full of wit and placid good humour, he looked like the product of an encounter between a distinguished British Lord and a charming Chinese; there was actually not the slightest sign suggesting a Frenchman. He had lived in China for many years. We shook hands cordially and smiled at each other. I asked, "You seem to have some interesting news up your sleeve?"

"And so I have; Madame David Neel is on a lecture-tour and is due in Budapest next week."

"Madame David Neel? —"

"Don't you know who she is?"

"No," I said honestly.

"She is a writer, the only European woman who has lived for years beyond the Himalaya in mysterious Tibet, and has seen the Dalai Lama, the God King himself."

My eyes dilated, "Oh! But I must meet her — I must —"

"That's exactly what I came to suggest. Will you both join me next Thursday and come to her lecture? Afterwards we can dine all together at the Embassy." Victor was leaving for Mágocs, but I accepted with alacrity. There was a sudden hush. Through the large double doors, Dolfuss, the Austrian Chancellor walked in with the Hungarian Premier and other members of the Government. All eyes swept towards them. Murmurs ran through the room, glances were exchanged. Behind me somebody whispered, "I say, but look at the Chancellor, I never knew he was so small. He looks like a boy."

"Yes, but a darn clever boy!"

Next day the Austrian Chancellor visited the Hungarian capital and was shown the Agricultural Museum too. Regent Horthy's portrait was pointed out to him, and as he turned to greet me, he said, a mischievous smile on his kind, open face, "Such a small woman and such a large picture!"

Several months later in 1934 he was murdered by Austrian illegal nationalists in his own Chancellory in Vienna. He died, a patient smile on his lips. He too was but one of many martyrs of this "Cali Juga" Dark Age.

* * *

Madame David Neel, very small, very tranquil, timelessly old, stepped out on the platform, and surveyed the audience with steady bright eyes. For an hour and a half she talked, with occasional glances at a bit of paper. Her words were the painting of so many

pictures of the well-nigh impassable glacier-covered mountains, the arid deserts and windswept high tablelands. Tibet, this vast country nearly one-third as large as the United States, is the cradle of age-old secrets and knowledge. Its people unquestionably obey 200,000 Buddhist monks, and above all their Ruler, the Dalai Lama, who lives in his red and white palace a life of celibacy and complete seclusion. "He is guarded from women," Madame David Neel said, and then proceeded to describe the Palace, that architectural wonder, built in giddy heights with more than a thousand rooms. Every single stone and beam of wood had to be carried up by hand labour. There followed descriptions of the Lama's gorgeous red robes, the nobles wearing bright yellow hats, red and gold robes and three to five inch ear pendants made of turquoise, gold and pearls, either in one or both ears. Their religion and their superstitions, their family life and work were discussed. When the lecture was finished we went to the French Embassy. It was a beautiful palace where our little Anthony was born and where we had spent many happy years before it was acquired by the French Government. Madame David Neel joined us and after a lively meal, half a dozen guests bombarded the poor little French lady with the usual questions. Our eyes met often, her face reminded me of my dear little grandmother, Széchényi. In her simple black silk frock, she looked slightly out of place in those mellow sage green and ruby-coloured velvet surroundings, the panelled oak walls, dark and rich, the vast grey marble mantlepiece, the elaborately carved furniture, and the floors covered with soft Persian rugs. A smart young French woman with a lily-like complexion and bright bronze hair, swathed in a huge silver fox cape and clinging honey coloured satin, sat near her, keeping up a merry prattle. The French Ambassador, watching silently, seemed to enjoy the vivid mental and physical contrast of these two ladies as much as I did. A flagrantly virile Italian-looking beau stared vacantly at the young lady's throat, and a cantankerous old sourdough made me jump with his hoarse laugh at completely "malapropos" odd moments. "What do they eat, those Tibetans?" he wanted to know.

"Mostly bowls of rice pudding, Yak cheese, barley bread, and maybe thirty to fifty cups of thick Yak-butter tea per day."

Hugging his goblet of "fine champagne", whiskers bristling, the old gentleman barked with conviction, "Tibet won't see me!"

The young lady in satin asked with a vivid, bewitching smile, rolling her "R's" between lisps, "Madame," she said, "You saw the Dalai Lama? How did you manage, being a woman?" Madame Neel

answered the smile, but not the question. The host tactfully intervened with another question, "The present Lama is very young, I suppose, he cannot be more than thirteen or fourteen years?"

The young lady pressed her point, "Does the Dalai Lama wear a pigtail?" Madame David Neel said, with a twinkle in her slightly slanting eyes, "On every picture I have seen he wears a most picturesque pointed hood with gilded brocade designs."

I began to be slightly impatient and asked in my turn, "Did you ever meet members of that sect who melt the snow by sheer will power?"

"What's that? What do they do?" the Italian-looking beau asked, grinning, snapping his lighter.

"No, I haven't," Madame Neel answered me, "But I know all about them through my Tibetan foster-son." There was a slight stir, but luckily everybody refrained from commenting on that incredible bit of news, this little French lady having a Tibetan foster-son. Seemingly unaware of the reaction she had created, she followed up my question by explaining, "There is more on earth that can be achieved by super-human spiritual knowledge, by gradual practice and will-power than people in Europe know or believe. This sect, of which Countess Károlyi spoke, strives to heighten and alter bodily heat through certain physical and mental methods. A test of will-power consists in sitting down completely without clothes in the snow and melting it. Some develop such heat that the snow melts around them in large patches, attaining a diameter of four to eight yards, maybe more."

The young lady said, "It must be terrifying to live in a country where people are so superstitious."

"Not more than anywhere else, Europe might be a far more dangerous part of the world just now." But following her own thoughts, the young lady said,

"I have read that the Tibetan people plough their fields in zig-zags from one corner to another to trap the demons."

"This is true, but you see, their way of thinking and their knowledge of nature's hidden laws are so different from our way of thinking and living that it cannot be understood easily. Superstition in many cases hides a wealth of wisdom; it is like old myth and saga, now condemned as childish ignorance."

"What about Tibetan morals?" the old gentleman asked again, with a sour smile.

"When a girl marries a commoner she is often automatically the wife of his brothers as well. Rich men indulge in polygamy. It is

supposed to be an act of "courtesy" for the host to share his spouse with his guest or friend."

Madame David Neel went on, "Tibet is a wonderful country, in spite of certain facts rather gruesome to the western mind. Their dead are carried high up in the mountains where, amidst great ceremony, they are sliced to pieces and tossed to the vultures, but — let's be logical — this is only a question of habit and tradition." Then she added briskly, "And surely it is of no interest to the dead body itself at all. Je vous assure," she finished with a sweeping gesture of her energetic little hand, "Western civilization could learn much from the Eastern world!"

It was late. We said goodnight. The Ambassador asked me to take his car and accompany Madame Neel. I was pleased to be alone with her for a short while, and we both sat side by side in complete silence and harmony.

At her hotel, she asked for my address. "This meeting of ours is neither futile nor purposeless," she said, kissing me fondly. I felt sad to part from her. The black limousine purred swiftly up the broad curve which led to the Gellért Mountain. I didn't feel like sleeping and went up to the roof garden; above me the sky was pierced with countless twinkling stars. Far down below a myriad of lights danced, reflected in the lazy rippling waves of the Danube.

In early August Madame Neel sent me one of her books from Tibet and much later a letter came from a Monastery on the Tibetan frontier. Since then I have never heard from her.

Through a friend and connections I was given Madame David Neel's address on the French Riviera; she apparently lived there and was more than a hundred years old. I tried to contact her without success.

* * *

In 1934 Victor was elected Member of Parliament. He was known as an outspoken and uncompromising opponent of Communism as well as of the political mentality which was blind enough not to foresee the danger of this evil, stretching its claws toward the whole Christian civilization. In that year we lived in a perfect turmoil of social activity. One afternoon István Gárdonyi came to see us. We were leaning over the balustrade of the roof garden. "I've been waiting to see you, couldn't you have come days ago?" I said, my voice seemed to astonish him.

"Why are you so peevish?" István asked.

"Peevish? That's the wrong word, I'm utterly depressed. I don't like politics, and I dislike the thought intensely that from now on we are involved in them."

He was silently brooding for a while, "I suppose you are bound to feel that way just now, but Victor never had political ambitions. He will never have any, if I judge him well."

"Perfectly well."

"He entered the election campaign for high and noble patriotic reasons," István said, "and got into Parliament without a political machine, fat campaign funds and the help of the powers that be; he was elected strictly on his own merits in his own constituency. All this proves that by those laws and forces we might call "carmic" (Fate), he was meant to follow this road!"

"Yes, you are right, I feel the same, but nevertheless, I am anxious and unhappy about it. To begin with, Victor is not, never was, never will be a diplomat; he is far too outspoken and rough and will make lots of enemies, but even more important to me is the fact that politics with a capital "P" is ever and anon a structure of lies, ruthlessly crushing individual nobility. I admit that it is every patriotic man's duty to take part in his country's life, but it means living in the Limelight and society hardly ever gives you credit for honest motives, only for dishonest ones."

We fell silent for a long while, watching the perfect view — church spires dominating the skyline, the huge river Danube a silver ribbon winding its way between a blurred sea of houses, misty pearl grey in the afternoon glow. The green cupolas of the Royal Palace sparkled like jewels, rows of windows reflecting the sunrays in blinding shafts. Far below to the South the city trailed clouds of smoke and dust towards the Hungarian plain. Glancing at my wrist watch, I jumped up. "Oh my! I nearly forgot the time. We are invited to the Edelsheims' fancy dress ball tonight, are you going?"

"Yes, I am."

"And what will you wear?"

"A Tibetan Lama's robes, and what will you be?"

"Charlie Chaplin."

"Charlie Chaplin! But what's the idea?"

"The idea is because it will be funny — tiny moustache, bowler hat, shapeless trousers and all, let's laugh while there is time to laugh!" And we did laugh. It was funny, judging from the photograph taken of me as tiny Charlie Chaplin standing near pretty Countess Geraldine Apponyi, tall in her billowing costume and elaborate piled-up high wig. The same tall young girl, Geraldine

Apponyi, later became the wife of King Zog of Albania, a very beautiful Queen indeed.

* * *

Mr. Onni Talas, the Finnish Ambassador, was known for his lively interest in art and music. His parties and dinners at the spacious villa formerly owned by my uncle were invariably attended by many artists. He had bought one of my large-sized landscapes and several other pictures. Sitting in the lofty dining room the table spread with cream-coloured lace and glittering crystal, porcelain and Vermeille, I vividly remembered my solitary supper and the burglar watching me through the keyhole. It seemed so remote now, and quite incredible, surrounded by all that gay crowd. Mr. Talas was a kind and charming host, with all the qualities of a diplomat and with one more rare attribute, he struck me as very straightforward. The Finnish and the Hungarian people always had much in common.

All the members of the Corps Diplomatique, as we had heard repeatedly, preferred Budapest to many other Posts, for its beauty, gaiety and atmosphere, for its music and culture, and ... elegant women. Budapest was a gay city, full of intense energy, active restlessness, and eternal youth. A pessimist was as unwelcome as a mirror after a very hard night.

On that particular evening, Victor, the newly elected Member of Parliament, was surrounded by a little group of interesting people, talking about political events. Archduke Albrecht joined us. I had recently finished his portrait. He said, "You know so many English people, you know their habits and language, I would like to ask you to help me to entertain five English M.P.'s of the Conservative Party, who seem likely to attain offices of importance, to see for themselves the Hungarian situation of this time." They were: (1) David Lord Burghley, later the Marquess of Exeter, (2) Alan Lennox-Body, later the Rt. Hon. Viscount Boyd, who held various ministerial positions including Colonial Secretary from 1957-59, (3) Lord Douglas Clydesdale the Duke of Hamilton, (4) S.P.L. Thomas, later Lord Cilcannin, First Lord of the Admiralty, (5) Col. Anthony Muirhead, (6) Hamilton Kerr, later Sir Hamilton, Private Secretary to Harold Macmillan. The Archduke entertained us lavishly, he organised some wild boar shooting in the North of Hungary and wild goose shooting on the Hortobágy-Puszta. "I want them to see various parts of our country, and then we will all go down to my place in Óvár."

So it was settled. And we all had two delightful weeks.

Douglas Clydesdale was a skilled pilot and was the first to fly over Mount Everest. He had flown over from London in his own little two-seater, in which I had the pleasure of flying with him after the wild boar shooting in L_____ to our home, where we were joined by the others.

We then spent several hectic days in Budapest, and proceeded from there to the Archduke's country place. Our British guests were so worn out by the Archduke's idea of "showing them Hungary" that the charm of the countryside was completely lost to them during our drive and they slept peacefully, their heads bobbing against the car or my shoulders. The occupants of the other car weren't any livelier either. Archduke Albrecht used to entertain his guests in a grand style and was a host full of wit, and we know that those gentlemen will always remember Hungary with nostalgia; they were all sportsmen. If there was ever a paradise on earth for outdoor sports, especially shooting, certainly Hungary was it. Game of every kind in unknown quantity to Westerners could be found in this blessed country before the first World War. Bear, red deer, fallow deer, mountain sheep (mouflon), chamois, roe deer, wild boars, wolves, foxes, roamed the forests, and the quantity of small game, such as pheasants, partridge and wild fowl, was beyond imagination. This is what an English guest, Michael Harmsworth, wrote in "The Field" about the shooting in Hungary, under the title of "Pheasants at Tót-Megyer":

"To those, like myself, who must have spent many a dreary Saturday hoping against hope that the day's shooting would bring the Syndicate's season's total up to a thousand pheasants, the 'bags' of Tót-Megyer must appear as a fairy-tale told in rather bad taste. This estate, which is a property of the Count Louis Károlyi, is part of the land which Hungary has recently had returned to her from Czechoslovakia and is situated about twenty-five miles North-east of the town of Komárom. I had the honour of being invited to shoot on January 6th for one week. I say 'honoured' as I am sure no sportsman would disagree with me when I say that to be asked to what is considered the finest pheasant shoot in the world is an honour of the first order in the world of sports. I don't wish to bombard my readers with numbers which, to the majority of them must appear fantastic, but allow me to succumb to temptation and say that the record bag was 26,000 pheasants in one week to seven guns and although I cannot say that I participated in such mass destruction, our party managed to shoot 2,316 (cock pheasants only) in one day, also to seven guns.

The numbers killed, astounding as they are in themselves, cannot compare with the amazement one experiences on a first visit to this great sporting centre. Tót-Megyer presents itself in winter as the worst possible pheasant area that I have ever seen, appearing as an entirely barren waste, covered in snow, with only three or four woods of doubtful protection and value, placed within two or three miles of each other, and yet, for reasons totally unexplained, these wastes are bespeckled as far as the eye can see with game. Pheasants, partridges and hares congregated in such numbers as I must believe is never seen elsewhere on earth. The pheasants are entirely wild birds, the breeding of pheasants being considered in these parts, not as an English necessity, but rather as an English extravagance. With the exception of a few necessary and local details, the sport is conducted on very much the same lines as in England; the proportions are naturally different, but the fundamental arrangements are precisely the same. The beaters, instead of being 40, are 400, the number of guns used per person, instead of being two at the most, are three, and at times I found all three guns so hot that it was necessary to suspend operations for a minute or two, my trigger finger also suffering from a painful water boil. To avoid headaches, I found that all my Hungarian shooting friends had taken the precaution of lacing small objects, called 'killnoise' in their ears, although shooting with nothing greater than 16-bore guns; and in one case, that of Count Victor Károlyi, with a 20-bore gun. Victor Károlyi, incidentally, is the best pheasant shot I have ever had the pleasure of watching. As far as shooting is concerned, Hungary is still the centre and the most important part of Europe."

* * *

In 1934 I went the first time to London to finish Sir Oliver Duncan's portrait, begun in Budapest, but left unfinished through our little Anthony's operation. In the following year Victor and I spent many a delightful month in London with all of our friends. Ever since we were children we had dreamed of England. This pot pourri of centuries tradition and of mediaeval charm, its unique countryside and cities, its vast residences, and thoroughness in her activity. When we both got off the boat in Dover and had wormed our way through the customs, sitting in the boat train, staring at the racing green pastures, dotted with placidly grazing sheep, sipping delightful English tea, and stuffing ourselves with crisp hot toast, Victor looked at me, his beaming face making my heart warm

with happiness. We were entertained in London, and spent wonderful weeks in the country. Victor rode to hounds with the Cottesmore, Belvoir and several other packs in the South. Fox-hunting is actually the most exciting sport in the world. Galloping across country on the trail of an elusive little fox, giving every chance to its incredible skill, cunning and speed. Often the fox is more pilot than prey, compared with the many pink-coated sportsmen, when the wind cuts like a knife, when horse and hound are drenched with rain ... and the fox, a wise old guy, has long gone to earth. He might, for all we know, grin behind his whiskers and think, "Why didn't you stay at home, you pink-coated fools?"

Col. Muirhead said, "Fox hunting becomes the means whereby we live in a world of dreams, transcending the limitations of time, speed and of daily living. We are detached from what passes for reality, overleaping obstacles with our noble mounts like a four-hoofed Centaur." And then he added with a far-away sadness in his usually cheerful eyes, "A day might come when no one at all will be able to afford fox hunting, but that would mean a national calamity to England."

Staying with our dear friends, Col. Birch-Reynardson and his wife Diana Ponsonby, in Adwell House, we met a litte girl of thirteen years, Deborah, daughter of Lord Duncan, Governor of South Africa. She was nervous in the dark and left her door ajar when she went to bed, but she used to ride to hounds all by herself on her pony. Victor, riding Col. Muirhead's huge thoroughbred mare, had lost his way in the fog. To his dismay he met the little girl, all by herself. "Do you know your way home?" she was asked.

"Oh, no I don't."

"But how for the love of Mike are you going to get home?"

"My pony knows the way alright, it will take me home." And so it did. It was dark, the wind was moaning dismally, when little Deborah trotted home, wet, tired, and thoroughly happy. We spent a lovely weekend with kind Col. Muirhead and his guest, Lord Swinton, Minister of Aviation. He was but one of the many outstanding personalities we met in those times.

We visited Parliament and spent hours in the House of Commons, listening to speeches. I remember my shock at the sight of so much paper just thrown carelessly away on the floor!

We went to Wakerley Manor, near Stamford, to stay with Lord Burghley, the famous hurdler, and his charming gentle wife, Lady Mary, sister of the Duchess of Gloucester. We went with them, of course, to visit Burghley House, which is open daily to visitors.

Interesting note, in the vast kitchen was the original Rembrandt, occupying an entire wall.

I painted many portraits, one of them of Mrs. Elinor Glynn, the well-known novelist, was a complete failure, but I will always remember the hours I spent with her in her comfortable flat. Her huge living room was an orgy of blues, all shades — sapphire, baby, electric, royal, from ceiling to floor, the walls, the thick carpets, the gilded Louis XV furniture, the huge lacquer-painted screens, settees, davenports, wing chairs, tiny footstools and benches, smothered with square and oval embroidered and frilled cushions, all in blue. After some time, one's eyes felt as tired and drooping as those of a kitten overfed with sweets. The one and only striking spot of vivid difference was Elinor Glynn's own gorgeous portrait, her incomparably beautiful hair, the colour of caramel and liquid copper, her green eyes (I never saw nor painted such strikingly green eyes) and the dazzling creamy complexion, painted by De László. It hung over the mantlepiece, a magnetic centre for admiring eyes. Elinor Glynn used to greet me in trailing black velvet, followed by two enormous cinnamon coloured cats, long bushy tails proudly erect. She had insisted on being painted in front of a mirror, sitting on a high kitchen table, as if it were a gilded throne on a pedestal. I tried hard to make her relax and be natural, but she refused to be influenced. A striking, noble, witty, self-centred old lady she was, tender and passionate and undaunted by age and adversities, kind to her friends, sincere and dominating, with a philosophy all her own and a strong gift of telepathy. In possession of some subconscious knowledge, she would startle people out of their placidity by her uncanny remarks. "In your former life you were a priest in Spain in the time of the Inquisition," she said to a lady guest at a cocktail party. There was a shocked silence and then a roar of laughter; she didn't mind it. Elinor Glynn acted all her life, but she acted naturally and at odd moments was in herself, the "naked truth".

One of the many country homes where we stayed was Sefton Park, property of Sir Oliver Duncan and his mother, though less imposing than Burghley House, it had a great deal of charm and lay intimately in the midst of prosperous farms and orchards, quiet pretty villages and brick cottages, with oak frames and thatched roofs. Roses and morning glories clustered about the dormer windows of the L-shaped white building, framed with bouganvillea and rhododendron. Little old Lady Duncan, dainty and fresh, greeted her guests at the porch; the lofty rooms gay with colours and sunshine. The Duncans were not fond of sports but fond of social life and

entertaining, their home was never without guests. Each morning a smooth black Rolls Royce drove me to Windsor where I painted Mrs. Rex Behnson. Throughout those days, lively preparations were made in the garden, where an enormous tent for dancing was put up, later the scene of a ball in honour of the Duke and Duchess of Kent. Mrs. Rex Behnson was a tall, handsome American woman and though I had some difficulty in understanding her at first, she helped me with kind patience to make a success of the portrait. In spite of the beautiful weather, I was constantly tired, the result of chronic sinusitis. I was fast breaking the world record, I think, of having had the walls of my nose lanced 72 times and I didn't like it!

The portrait was ready and the ball had been a great success. Taking leave of Oliver Duncan and his mother, and of all our friends, we hastened home to have two windows carved the shape of a medium-sized postage stamp left and right side of my nose into the sinuses.

* * *

For two decades, Hungary had applied in vain for justice, but Washington, London and Paris were not interested in undoing the wrong they had done by mutilating Hungary, cutting off thousand-year-old roots ruthlessly. Our Governments fought with weapons based on truth, chivalry, and the noble creed of 'noblesse oblige' — these weapons seem to have lost some of their strength in the course of years; nevertheless, at last, after twenty years, the opportunity to redress arose, but was offered not from the United States, England and France, but from Germany and Italy. They found it expedient to return part of Northern and Eastern Hungary to the Mother Country in 1938, 1939 and 1940. Germany and Italy acted as arbitrators and their decision was voluntarily accepted by Hungary's neighbours.

When those millions of Hungarians in the North and East were reunited to the Mother Country, they were wild with exultation and all Hungary rejoiced. Banners waved, military bands paraded in the streets, green boughs, red, white and green buntings (the Hungarian colours) hung from flower-decked windows, flags waved gallantly, bells pealed incessantly when the Hungarian Regent Horthy marched into these regions at the head of Hungarian troops. Lord Rothermere, who had led a press campaign for years for Hungary's just cause, was present at these festivities in Kassa in Northern Hungary.

We met him and his nephew Michael Harmsworth, and then Lord Rothermere had asked me to paint his portait in Monte Carlo.

Shortly before I left in 1939 Victor and I attended a New Year's Party. Some friends of ours complained about severe influenza and symptoms of burning eyeballs and swollen eyelids. On the 4th January I left Budapest in a snow storm, very keen to see the blue Mediterranean shore. Next morning my eyesight was nearly gone; instead of two eyes, I had two blue-green plums in my head, I felt ghastly and looked even more so. No, I couldn't stop in Monte Carlo and create alarm. I went on to Cannes and hid for three solid days behind dark spectacles. Luckily I had the prescription of a wonder-drug and was soon fit to see and be seen. Depositing my luggage in the hotel at Monte Carlo I went to the Villa Roc Fleury, a little gem of white marble and sloping gardens, with a view to end all views, on the brilliant splendour of the white and gold city, sparkling emerald green Monaco, olive groves rambling down from the edge of the Alp Maritime, at the azure blue Mediterranean. In this frame of white, green, gold and blue, a solitary old man walked up and down, in his dark coat a vivid contrast to nature. This was my first impression of Lord Rothermere and of his home as I climbed the steep marble steps. He was a big barrel-chested man, powerful, solid, virile, intelligent and thoughtful. He could be charming and most attractive, with a winning simplicity; it was a matter of mood with him to start conversation with some kind question, but more frequently, he would argue, pounding friend and foe alike into silence and submission. It was not long before I realized that I would have a difficult task. In the course of years, I had learned to paint without proper studio light and the necessary space, but with the model playing poker, arguing, and gesticulating, turning his back to the only window, portrait painting becomes guess work. I trusted to my lucky star.

Each evening a merry crowd would drift in and thoroughly tired from my day's work, I felt content to sit and pick up scraps of lively conversation. All the ladies were lovely, richly dressed, sparkling with jewels, with an indefinable look as if somebody had "cared for them" recently. Some of them talked slang that would have disgraced a stable boy — supposed to be very chic. A platinum-blonde girl sat demurely between her mother and Lord Rothermere; her ethereal expression of lily-like innocence, her delicate straight nose and small round chin in striking contrast and disharmony with strong sensual lips. She would have made a perfect model for a "vamp", I thought, amused by the young girl's cleverly hidden but keen interest in the conversation carried on by a lively Frenchman. Stroking his fair moustache with nervous fingers, this particular guest punctuated his talk with expressive gestures, and it occurred to me that details

of his extra-curricular love life met with unqualified approval of almost everybody, but myself. But no, our host had a smile which seemed to make his face ache, "Mon cher Conte," he said, "your tongue overrules your tact!" He was slightly vitriolic in this condemnation. Conversation stopped just as long as a bat would take to dart in through the window, circle around and disappear as it came into pale velvety blueness. Somebody giggled. "Well, my lord, why are you so critical?" Watching him with an ingratiating smile, thick black lashes fluttering over two honey-coloured eyes, a slim dark beauty leaned across and flipped his hand with her red suede gloves. The platinum blonde beauty got up and drifted gracefully away; presently a tall attractive woman joined her and they both sat down in a bay window, half hidden by velvet curtains, completely engrossed in each other. Her mother turned to me, starting a polite conversation, "How are you getting on with the portrait, Madame? Are you satisfied with it?"

"No, Madame, most decidedly not, I ..."

"Nonsense!" interrupted Lord Rothermere, "The likeness is there alright, it is a sober strong picture," and turning to the young black-haired beauty, "She is flattering me most outrageously."

"Nonsense! You can't expect to get good work with a model who follows your course of conduct; and do you call it a 'flattering' portrait when your eyes are neither parallel nor similar, they actually squint as yet, and your underlip juts out like a saucer?"

He laughed one of his rare good-natured laughs. "No criticism can kill good work," he said with seventeenth century gallantry.

I felt suddenly sad, old and lonely myself. Heavy dark curtains blocked out the fading light to enclose the occupants of the room in privacy and suffocation. Suddenly I recalled the Austrian Chancellor, poor little Dollfuss with his boyish, mild face, and the pure atmosphere he had created in that crowded ballroom. I wish I could open these windows, I thought.

The host was talking about Churchill. "I was asked to dine with him just a few days ago in Cannes. He still is an optimist; he'll neither pimp nor bribe but think it's possible to get along in this world with a clever brain and honesty; he is mistaken! There are no more free law-abiding citizens, using their brains and personal courage combined with intelligence, there are but human cattle, compelled, driven and hounded into action, whether ruled by Democrats, by Kings, by Dictators — it is more or less the same system, cleverly conceived under propaganda, bombastic phraseology, crude lies, and eventually most ruthless methods. Everything that is not for-

bidden is obligatory." And he added, "We might be drifting again towards the next War."

"He's right," I thought, and asked, "Can you tell me why the Western Powers are so blind towards Bolshevism?"

It was so dark now, that I could hardly see Lord Rothermere's features. His voice sounded low and flat, "Because out of our frantic volcanic lives, gropings, and selfishness, we are not capable of clear sight, we are heading towards the next war, the United Nations may win that Second World War, but in their winning, they might reap their own destruction for the future; Great Britain will certainly lose her world power and position. War is like cancer, fatal, before it shows, and sure of the victim before he feels the symptoms."

"A second World War may well end in Bolshevizing the whole world, don't you think?" There was no answer to my question. People began to fidget and move about.

"I'm going to tell you something," my host said quickly, "Keep it secret," and with a scornful wave towards everybody in general, "These hysterical fools would clack their tongues at once in bedrooms and in the Casinos!" He took a deep breath, "I have information and sound proof that Europe is on the threshold of war, I am having all my valuables packed and sent away from here to France."

"To France? Do you think they will be safe there?"

The French lady with the thick black eyelashes, an ingratiating smile on her lips, her cream-coloured lamé gown rustling over impatiently tapping feet, looked up and said, "Shall we go to dance now, or do you think you would prefer the Casino?" Rothermere's eyes travelled over her, and then she looked straight at him, delicate features speculative and predatory. It was she who looked away first with flaunting unconcern.

Presently we were dancing to some soft music. Gallantly shepherding the lady with the lashes through the jostling, swaying crowd, Rothermere looked like a tired old ship, rocking gently to and fro above the crowd, his big eyes seriously intent.

"You're having a pleasant evening, Madame?" the middle-aged Frenchman whispered, dusting an imaginary speck off his sleeve, pulling at immaculate cuffs. He looked languid, with dark puffy rings under his eyes. His sharp austere features were lined and creased, and in almost strange contrast to the soft puffy pads of flesh, which overlay his face. He kept up a fluent talk and waltzed perfectly. "This crowd must offer a welcome study of characters to an artist," he said, "but life at Monte Carlo is so circumscribed, so

monotonous, we are all used to it and to each other, we have nothing else to do but to poison each other with a variety of vices and our sharp tongues; not much excitement and novelty after a while, I can assure you."

I didn't answer, he didn't expect one. I thought that it takes no more than a quick glance to see that he had spoken the naked truth. He continued by doing witty, grotesque and cruel imitations of all the people I had met there; pointing to a tall middle-aged woman whose chin slanted down to a sinewy neck; her bulging pale eyes smiling down at her small partner, their bodies fitting together in the dance as best they could in the prevailing mode.

"Isn't she divine?" my partner said, "Just married to that bow-legged little monster. She is supposed to have said to him once, 'Waltz faster dear, it's a foxtrot!'"

I had to laugh, but had the feeling that most of his humour was culled from popular magazines; nothing was genuine in this man, not even his wit. "And over there, that well-fed silky fellow whose mouth looks as if he were belching gently ... he just recently came out from a hospital after a successful operation, and now he will marry that sweet seventeen young innocence with the impressive collection of rubies."

The music stopped, the dancers were clapping their hands, but he went on, talking fluently, in beautiful sing-song French, "Kindly look at that dowager with the imposing bust, terra-cotta wig and those emerald earrings, pulling the lobes of her fleshy ears to the shape of an appendix ... can you see her, just across the room in front of the window on the arm of that pink-cheeked Adonis? She is the widow of one of the richest stockbrokers of the world. A couple of days ago she won 200,000 francs at the Casino; she maintains owing her luck to her monkey; the poor little beast has to sit on her lap all night ..."

By the time he was through with his slanders I felt completely disillusioned and sorry for everybody in that room, including the speaker. He must have been, no — was — a permanent self-disgust and hardly likeable to anyone. "Why on earth can't you get out of all this and go away?" I asked him. His weak jaw contracted painfully, "I have no strength, and I have no money. I have no health and I feel as old as Methuselah; we all feel like that, each one of us, and we are all obsessed by the thought of death; fear is as contagious as plague." In spite of the heat I shivered. Rothermere joined us, a friendly little smile pasted on his lips. "Don't you think this ballroom is deadly dull? Let's go over to the Casino."

Turning with some alacrity to go, glancing back, I just caught the French Count's sarcastic words to an intellectual looking highbrow with spectacles, "I like those new glasses on you, they make you look one hundred per cent more intelligent."

The Casino halls and rooms were brilliantly lit, crowded, dense and throbbing. It took us some time to find places, but presently we all sat down and were lost in the stupidly hypnotizing nerve-racking game, watching the smooth, pink, white, yellow and green chips pushed to and fro on the green cloth, the swooping relentless motions of the croupier's arm, and listening to his singing, "Faites vos jeux ... rrr ... r ... ien ne va plus" ... reverberating, echoing all over the place. My right-hand neighbour, a wrinkled old man, was winning constantly, his bony fingers piled the stakes methodically into an ever-growing pile. I was anxious not to knock against it with my elbow. Several people stood behind us, watching and playing too. Suddenly there was a lightning swift motion — somebody had leaned over our shoulders and the whole pile was gone, grabbed away. I looked up startled, and whispered frantically to the old chap, who seemed deaf. I said again, "Somebody's taken your chips," nudging his arm. He gave an impatient jerk but continued to watch the table. He looked up when the game was over, hunted for his pile of chips, then turned and glared at me furiously. I was speechless and tried to explain. Without a word or another glance, he just turned away and continued to play. Although I had the luck to be winning a little, I became thoroughly disgusted, got up and strolled about. There was a slight commotion in the rooms, every eye turned towards the door and followed a solitary man walking across the red carpets. His small, slightly pathetic features were exceedingly familiar. It was the Duke of Windsor. I had been in London during those memorable sad days of his Abdication and had listened from the Hungarian legation to his last speech, sad and dramatic. It was a dreary, chilly night. Leaving England a couple of days later, on my way to the station, traffic was held up by the signal lights, a huge black limousine glided up near me and I noticed several official looking gentlemen in gold-braided uniforms. One of them was the new King, looking tense, tired, kind, and unsmiling. When the light changed, traffic swept us on. I had witnessed a glimpse of England, its grandeur, simplicity and trust in its century-old tradition. I was rudely snapped out of my reverie in the Casino by a shrill feminine voice, calling to the Duke of Windsor. I looked, but could not see who was the source of the voice. He was surrounded by a whole crowd of chattering people. It was only later that I got a glimpse of

the Duchess, when I left. Serpentine in her tight slim dead black sheath, she gave an impression of extreme smartness and sophistication.

Next morning I found Lord Rothermere too restless to sit for his portrait. "It's just alright as it is, I don't want you to make another brush stroke on it."

I looked at him, somewhat astonished, and then I said, "Oh yes, I will." "Oh no, you won't."

"Don't you want me to sign it?"

He grinned, we said goodbye, I left for England the next afternoon, with a bunch of fragrant violets still fresh in their dainty cellophane box. After the sunny Riviera, Paris was dark, dreary and bitterly cold. I shivered in my fur coat. Beckoning to a veteran taxi driver I told him I had just two hours between trains. I gave him all my French money and asked him to show me Paris. He was instantly aglow with pride and good will. Using his motor with a minimum of mechanical consideration, we rushed about, oblivious to his taximeter, both enjoying our one hour and a half tour. Sitting side by side, companionably, a worn old rug over my knees. The pale matutinal winter sun was just rising behind Notre Dame, reflecting her feeble rays in the mirror of the Seine. Granite lions dozed by the towers of Saint Sulpice; from end to end we saw that unforgettable city with its monuments and squares. We cut through the Bois de Boulogne and catapulting through tiny crowded streets, we landed in Place Pigalle. Place Pigalle has its own reputation, but I mildly wondered what hidden attractions the taxi driver thought it necessary to show me there. In front of a ramshackle old porch, rickety wooden steps climbing into darkness, he stopped the car with a flourish. "Et voila, Madame, c'est ici, ou je suis né ..." (and it's here Madame, that I was born); he watched my face intently in the mirror.

I was sorry not to have more francs in my pocket, but it was high time I climbed out and we shook hands heartily. We were both sorry to say goodbye. I arrived in London and was greeted by Michael Harmsworth, his usually rosy cheeks were brick-red from the biting blizzard. We motored down to his home in the country, quite an unusual sight, England covered with snow. I spent ten delightful calm days with him and his charming wife in their tiny cottage in Sussex, painting both their portraits.

Meanwhile, the grey clouds of world politics gathered to an ever-darkening storm. The newly appointed German Ambassador, Ribbentrop, greeting King George with the strictly Nazi "Heil

Hitler" salute, right arm shooting up, had created an unexpected disgust and shock all over Great Britain. Pebbles thrown in ponds cast wide circles. However, I met the usual merry unconcern wherever I went, and found the same everyday routine of cocktails, dinners, and parties, both in England and at home too. Most people scoffed with contemptuous disdain and intolerance at every argument; they ignored the growing tension and poisoning of the political atmosphere. But we couldn't understand how people could ignore that something terrible was happening again behind curtains and locked conference room doors. The foundations of all our lives were beginning to rock with dull subterranean rumbles, but music and laughter drowned them out. Something uncanny was in the air.

Nevertheless, in Spring 1939 I went back to England once more, for my exhibition in Old Bond Street Arlington Galleries. Victor was too preoccupied and busy to accompany me. My exhibition included a collection of portraits painted in the last two years in England, Italy, France, Belgium and Hungary, and of a series of smaller compositions. Much had to be done. I rushed about in frantic haste; pictures had to be collected from different owners and from the Customs House. A frame maker had to be found, invitation cards ordered, addressed and sent out, and there was nobody to help me just then. Have you ever been in the Fish Markets in London? I have, and for all intent and purpose I hope never to see it again. Slippery back streets, reeking with garbage and oil, men in nondescript overalls, carrying boxes of fish on the broad brimmed hats, hard from dripping and dried oils. All faces showed mild disgust and resentment. In the centre of all that smell and filth, stood the Customs House. I plunged into its cool cleanliness, but felt quite inadequate to cope with the problem of collecting 35 pictures in custody there. Shunted from one department to another, signing and showing innumerable documents, I finally finished, a half an hour late for my next appointment. At the door stood a six foot tall porter, resplendent in gold-braided scarlet coat and tricorn, but ludicrous in contrast to the grey oily surroundings. "Can you tell me the quickest way to get to the subway?" I asked, adding "I am in a hurry."

"Turn left, first street to your right, third left corner," he said crisply, and then, looking down at me from his imposing height, a good-natured smile on his smooth jovial features, "You'll always be in a hurry in your life." (I hope he is not right!)

I had plenty of time to sit and do nothing for two weeks during my exhibition at the Arlington Galleries in Old Bond Street, which

did not make me happy. One early afternoon I was engrossed in answering the questions of some visitors, when from the corner of my eye I saw Mrs. MacDonald, owner of the Galleries, plunged in a deep curtsey. Queen Mary walked in all alone, swathed in mauve, pink and blue, even to the furs, her white hair crowned with a toque of velvet flowers. Tall and stately, she acknowledged my hasty curtsey with a kind smile and slowly made a tour of the Galleries, stopping at every picture. She talked to me about her grandmother, the Hungarian Countess Rhédey, and her tragic death at the early age of 34, thrown from a horse, and subsequently trampled under the hooves of cavalry. "For this reason, as a little girl, my father never liked me to ride." She was particularly interested in Archduke Albrecht's portrait. Before leaving the Galleries, her Majesty chose and bought a small picture entitled, "Reconciliation", depicting two little budgerigars and graciously accepted my gift — the portrait of Countess Rhédey.

Chapter X.

The stallion raised his great dewy muzzle, dilated his nostrils and sniffed the air delicately, then he turned his glossy neck and gave his rider what seemed to be a friendly grin. Large soft eyes gleaming, as he reached for the sugar in Louis's hand. He took it daintily, the big teeth crunching, flipping his long tail over sleek flanks, rippling in an effortless flow of muscled power.

Rider and mount made a fine picture on that radiant July morning. Victor and I kept glancing at our first-born with pride. Perfectly at ease, his dark eyes sparkling merrily, the tall slim handsome boy of 15 made us realize that the years had sped by swiftly, almost imperceptibly, and soon we would be classified as "the older generation". Ditta, astride on her pony, fair curls whipped by the wind, nostrils aflare like a tiny retriever, trotted briskly between us. Nothing escaped her alert interest. She was a dancing, spritely little flower in Nature's wonderful garden, finding something to admire in everything.

Barely out of baby frocks, she began a collection of herbs, learning their medical uses. In time she helped many a sick person with that acquired homoeopathic knowledge. Quick to grasp, full of dare-devilry, stubborn like two mules and aglow with interest and mischief, she was always the "Miss Bossy" in her class, but above all, she had a golden heart and everybody was inclined to spoil her, most of all her father. Adored by all her teachers, she organized rehearsals, took care of smaller children, made jokes, played the devil and posed as the Holy Virgin in trailing blue draperies, bending over a baby doll with rapt joy and adoration. When little Ditta's heart was sad, her body tense with repressed tears, she would smile and smile and smile, and often enough we knew only in years to come what had caused her such bitter sorrow.

Our children's school was far more advanced and up-to-date than any of its time, doing a remarkable job of teaching the children according to their personal possibilities, initiating them to higher morals, within reason, conforming to their age and capacities. There was a fine subtle sense of purity and vivid spiritual atmosphere in that school; behind and above all this was the directress, Miss

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Emma Domokos, the living example; we had become very good friends in the course of years. She startled me one day by asking me to come to an Anthroposophic lecture; I said, "I haven't got the faintest idea what it is." On a sunny afternoon the lecture was held in a private house by Miss E. G._____, Anthony's piano teacher. I found Bálint de Bárdy there too, whom I had met before.

Explaining that Anthroposophy means "human wisdom", that it is not a creed but a science taught by Dr. Rudolph Steiner, based on the gradual development of new human capacities, Miss E. G. _____ gave us one of her clear and interesting lectures. She went on for one hour and then stopped speaking. I fell back into surroundings I had forgotten completely. When everybody had left except my dear friend, the Directress of the school, and de Bárdy, I asked Miss E. G._____ "You've known me for years, why did you never speak to me of Anthroposophy?"

"Because you didn't show any interest, you came often for your little boy's lessons, there were books in front of you ..."

"But Miss E.! I came to see you and to talk to you, it would have been impolite to start reading, wouldn't it?" Her whole face lit up with a good-natured smile, "Maybe, maybe, but you will make up for the time you think was lost, you were listening with ears, eyes, heart and brain, and I was very glad to see that."

"And so am I very glad. When will you give your next lecture? And where? And can I come?"

"I am lecturing weekly, and I have private courses too, you are always welcome."

It was soon settled, and I left, accompanied by de Bárdy, a close friend of the family, who was a novice and just as keen to hear more about it as I. Listening and reading Anthroposophy was, from the start, such a happy "plus" in my life, that I longed to pass it along to everybody; but soon, I found to my utmost dismay, that some people talked about the 'subconscious', the 'super-human', 'reincarnation', playing with these words like a juggler with so many balls. The worst were the majority who scoffed at everything which had not come into the realm of their previous knowledge, or was not to be grabbed, pawed about, and torn to pieces. I used to have long talks with de Bárdy. You could tell him anything, knowing that he would immediately comprehend; his brain was as sharp as a razor blade, his sense of humour knew neither bound nor restriction, without ever being spiteful or mean. He edited his thoughts before speaking them, ... I tried hard to profit from his example! Picking up the thread of conversation, he said, "Isn't it incredible, how

quickly we recognize changes in ourselves brought about by Anthroposophy? Were you present at one of the lectures when the audience was asked to speak about their personal experiences?"

"Yes, I was there, astonished that everybody complied, but even more astonished at what they said!"

I glanced at him, I saw his shrewd eyes crinkle merrily in the corners as he observed, "Well we know, don't we, that many adults are liars, but at least two-thirds of those good people there confessed they had learned to tell the truth."

Bálint said, "When I am reading Steiner's books, I feel such a fool, not to have realized by myself what he reveals with so much common sense. Take, for instance, his explanations about thought being reflections of living spiritual powers and a kind of 'SUBSTANCE', living in our Etheric bodies. We transform this 'thought substance' into images, and spread them, not only over the Earth, but into that sphere called the Etheric world, from which 'thought substance' originated, and there our 'images' are kept for us, just like a deposit in a bank."

I said, "But what made me sit up was that these concrete thought pictures have a peculiar quality, they attract and reject each other with subtle force. It is easy to understand, that a thought, clearly and exactly repeated and formed here will be similar in substance to the original, and consequently it will attract through its magnetic power the original thought. In this way it will be intensified."

He had been looking down towards the City, but just as he turned to me the evening bells began to chime, and we both stopped to listen to their compelling waves, soothing, sad, strangely in harmony with the fading light of the turquoise, orange and golden sky.

"Can you sense," he said, "the thoughts of that city down there, its destructive powers? You are lucky to live up here on your mountain top, far from the 'madding crowd'."

"Indeed I can, and indeed we are! But let's go back to what we were just talking about. What would be the reaction to a lie, whether it be in words or in actions?"

He groped for a correct word so hard, that he scowled. "The live power of the thought will draw towards it that former image from that 'deposit' in the Etheric world, but being distorted to a lie, those positive forces will have changed into destructive powers, and the two forces will clash against each other with a more or less devastating power."

"Remember Dr. Steiner's words? Two such clashing forces have

exactly the same effect up there in the Etheric world as the bursting of a bomb here in the physical world." Lin grinned, "Whoever grasps this new Science and can accept it as positively as the knowledge of electricity, radio, magnetism, will think twice before he speaks a lie, even a mild one."

"Maybe he will stop lying altogether, realising the destructive effects he creates in that Etheric world from which flows creative life into the world and into himself," I said hopefully. "So often I go over this new knowledge in my mind, each time it seems to become clearer and more logical.

The world and everything that lives in it can appear so small if thinking is vast enough. Take married life for instance, that most sacred union of two people, with its occasional puny and egocentric quarrels, ... the 'damn that woman, she drives me mad' sort of attitude, or the wife in tears because she has been treated unjustly. It's hard to accept those jarring adversities of everyday life, even with a strong religious faith, but if we know that disharmonies are but reactions of our own committed acts, now or in former lives, in order to 'test us' and set right the balance, giving us an opportunity to act with love where formerly we acted selfishly, this will make suffering seem logical indeed."

"Undoubtedly," Lin said, "But of course, most people would say that it is stark injustice of Fate to be punished for deeds we cannot remember."

"What would you answer to those suggestions?"

"Well ... I would appeal to the adult common sense and reply that children have to be punished to gradually learn to discern between right and wrong, so must humanity try to reach that state, where she will choose between good and bad from her own free volition. Man will gradually develop new senses, through them he will be able to remember his former lives, but he must be harmonious and strong enough first to be able to support these spiritual worlds without losing his own Ego. It is one thing to accept suffering for instance, when it is upon us, knowing that it is the reaction of our own wrong doings, but it must be hard indeed to see and know the lawful reactions of our sins to come long before they are there! Because actually, that's what it means, to have those subtle senses; in the spiritual world there is neither space nor time — man will be able to remember his past, good or bad, but he will likewise be aware of his future, good or bad. When I first read this in Steiner's books, I must admit, that it gave me goose flesh, but even then I saw the overwhelming logic of it."

"Yes, and I am positive that what we do, what we say, what we feel, is of dynamic importance in these worlds in which we live and which we influence, for good or for bad, according to our capacities."

"But Lin, isn't humanity just like black crows though," I smiled ruefully, "who hack their white sisters to death because of the difference in their plumes? Every new thing, every new idea, so often meets the same end!"

"It's that mob mentality," he assented. "Mankind needs to find the courage to be individual!"

"Lin, are you, too, always trying to find out the 'why's' of life?"

"Of course," he exclaimed, whirling around his own axis and spreading his arms abroad. "Do you know why the sun shines today, why it will not shine tomorrow, why we live here and not in Honolulu, why you have got the gift to paint, and why I see, smell and hear everything in sound and music? Do you know why some people seem destined to suffer in this world, and why some human devils enjoy apparently every single minute of their vile lives? Do we know why whole nations seem to be destined to die, to be reborn again from their own blood and ashes, while others rule the world with egocentric ruthless power and wealth?"

"Do you know why the sparkling diamond was formerly black coal and dust? Why are the earth, the stars, the moon, the sun? ... Shall we ever know the reason why?"

I looked at his glowing face, "If we try to fulfill our duty here on earth, I suppose we will gradually learn the answer; Anthroposophy can probably solve more riddles in this line than the Oracle of Delphi ever announced to the world."

"The first duty is always to seek, never to stagnate," Lin asserted with conviction. "And apparently we are both on the right track, thanks to our lucky star." And he pointed to a bright star twinkling in the luminous green dusk.

Chapter XI.

Dawn came in the silent stillness and then the radio started bellowing, creating a shuddering ripple all over the world. News bulletins announced the beginning of World War II. Radio stations, newspapers, and governments were swamped with frantic calls; cars and vehicles careened through the city streets; our telephone began to jingle. Victor dashed to answer it, still in dressing gown and slippers. The demoniacal eternal spirit of man-slaughter was striding in the world again.

Dogs sense all these hundred-fold things. Poor little deaf Bingo had ambled out through carelessly left-open gate; he was run over by a car. Half-dead he crawled back to lie at my feet, discoloured blood oozing slowly from the ghastly wound, one eye was completely pulled from its socket. I rushed him in the car to the office of a friend, a famous eye specialist, and through careful operation he recovered, but remained blind in one eye for the two remaining years of his life. When he died we lost a faithful friend and never forgot him.

I will not even try to write in detail about the following years; the volcano had blown its top again and floods of concentrated tragedy and annihilation poured over the world. Time and hope were suspended, death lurked everywhere. Humanity played an infernal nocturne as she had never played one before, using her gradually acquired wisdom of nature's laws to pervert them into destructive weapons. All over the earth men and women were kept from despair through sheer force of spirit; fear of death led many towards a supernatural support, but alas, there were hundreds and thousands who chose death voluntarily, rather than face life.

Governments and powers fell back on a well tried procedure. They chloroformed their people with bellowing propaganda, covering up successfully the holes in hollow systems. Ear-splitting, nerve-jangling, heavy-handed waves fought their way into brains and hearts, smothering them with a net of blatant flimsy lies. Invading bombers flew over helpless countries like falcons circling over their prey, and armed forces fought their way through throbbing life, razing cities, killing thousands with fire and steel.

For two years Hungary tried to remain neutral, tossed to and fro in a whirling sea of poisonous smoke and flame, forced and rushed at last again towards fateful destruction. There were those who volunteered and went to the Russian frontier and there were those who had but one aim, to stop war with all means in the futile hope of gaining protection from the western powers. In this ghastly opposition, the nation split in two, grovelling in darkness in that mighty struggle between East and West.

In 1941 Germany invaded Yugoslavia, crossing Hungarian territory to do so. The Hungarian Government was placed in a terrible dilemma; she had rejected Hitler's peremptory wish that German troops use Hungarian railways when the war between Poland and Germany broke out; she succeeded in partially rejecting Hitler's desire that German troops cross Hungarian territory to occupy Rumania; but now, she was told by Germany that if she wished to regain the Southern part of her country, still under Yugoslav dominion, she must take part in the liberation of her own people. This time the answer seemed obvious — what could we have done? If anybody thinks it's just or reasonable to criticize the Hungarian policy in this situation, may I ask the following? If Texas and Arizona or Cornwall or Devon would have been occupied and annexed against the will of their people by a foreign country, and another foreign country — a big power — would have restored these parts to the United States or England respectively, by arbitrary decision, (which was the case with the Northern and Eastern parts of Hungary) would any decent American or Englishman have declined this restoration, or in the case of the liberation of our Southern brethren by marching with the German Army, it is easy to criticize, but the right to criticize others should be based on a sound knowledge of facts. Unfortunately, this knowledge of Central European problems, I am extremely sorry to say, was certainly lacking in those who shaped the policy after World War I and in those who judged poor little Hungary's actions in World War II. Through our helpless little country, German troops, tanks, artillery, aeroplanes and ammunition thundered towards the South. Succumbing to German pressure the Hungarian army accompanied the Germans into Yugoslavia in that fateful spring 1941. After a few days of painful vacillation, we joined them with our own troops, but with this decisive step, Hungary was engaged again in a struggle for life, and this meant the possibility of war with England and the United States too. This tragic situation was the cause of Prime Minister Count Pál Teleki's death; he gave his life in mute protest and noble sacrifice, an epitaph

of terrible yet glorious martyrdom to his own suffering nation. Despairing, he was found dead by his own hand. "I want to be buried at dawn, and I do not want anyone to follow my coffin," was his last request, but even in death a Premier belongs to his nation; he was buried from the Parliament Buildings in black pomp and deep reverence, followed by his afflicted family, the Regent Horthy, the newly appointed Premier Bárdossy, and thousands of mourning people. When the funeral procession slowly wound its way through the silent streets, sirens began to wail frantically, a sudden dead hush fell over everybody, the bier halted, far away the droning of engines cut through the complete silence; Horthy gave the order and the procession moved on again, and presently all clear signs were given. A squadron of fleeing Yugoslav planes had flown over Budapest, on their way to Moscow.

Our son had by then spent 3 years in the Royal Cadet School in Pécs in the South of Hungary. Military authorities decided to give these cadets a practical training and demonstration and sent a detachment in the wake of the two armies into Yugoslavia. It was there that Louis got his "campaign ribbon and the cross called Tüzkereszt — Baptism under fire".

But we were worried. In July, 1941 we found ourselves also at war with Russia. In post-war days the question was often put, "Why did Hungary join the Germans in the war against Russia instead of remaining neutral?" The answer is that we knew only too well from our own experience what Communism was and this experience taught us to combat it in every possible way, if we wanted to survive. And about our possible neutrality? This would have meant immediate German occupation and exploitation of the country with no advantage whatsoever. As to the idea of eventual hope of having our independence guaranteed by the Western powers — no offense meant — but after the example of Poland many were those who had their doubts about the value of such guarantees motivated by conflicting sentiments and driven by the desire to help. Both Victor and his brother Ferenc volunteered and left for the Russian front. With them went many an able man. Everyday life had to go on, but it got ever harder. There was a shortage of food, not from lack of production, but because we had an agreement to share our food stocks with Germany. Air raids were expected. I spent as much time as possible with the children in the country; but I was always restless there for lack of news. Meanwhile, the war took its toll of dead and wounded, its prisoners of war, condemning men, women and children to a fate which civilization would have thought impossible to bear

and to live through. There was no security, no peace, anywhere. All through Europe governments were faced with insoluble basic problems of terrible casualties, both in city and country. They accused each other of unbelievable atrocities, and, as likely as not, both sides were speaking the truth. In war, the hurting instinct of the brute cracks the thin veneer of morals and civilization, and I fear there are many soldiers who cannot deny having felt a surge of excitement in the frenzy of battle, in hitting their human target; and, just as a lascivious brute, having smelled blood, tears and devours everything in its reach, so will man-hunt make a savage brute out of man himself. Women and children in the fields, hearing the distant drone of fighters, tried to scurry to safety, but on those wide Hungarian plains, shelter of trees and shrubs and ditches was often impossible to reach. Down swept the grey phantoms, roaring and splitting the air with barking machine guns; the colourful moving spots were just a good target to practise on! In thirty seconds the man-hunt was over; the deadly fighters screamed skywards, and in the fields sobbing, moaning women lifted the mangled bodies of their children. Others lay wounded or dead on the ground. I, myself, saw a little girl, a leg torn away and her entrails protruding through a great hole in her abdomen. I held her hand and looked into her eyes; I shall never forget those eyes! She had been out in the pasture, tending a flock of geese. Whether the bomb which killed her was, in her case, discarded to lighten the aeroplane on its homeward flight, rather than with intent to hit her, the result was terrible and the same.

Weary, desolate sadness crept into every heart.

"Oh God! What will happen to us, to civilization, to tortured humanity in this world-wide plague of ferocious madness?" Lin exclaimed, running his fingers distractedly through crisp hair. "What would we do without religion and our Anthroposophic science!?" It was like a groan, torn from the depths of kindness in his heart. He was lonely in those days; he had a sister, whom he loved dearly; they had had the closest of fond friendships, but through different political opinions, they had drifted apart. Her husband believed the inflated stories, shared, alas, by millions at that time all over the world, that Communism was a far lesser threat to humanity then than it had been in 1918.

This fratricidal struggle was our history's chief tragedy, for a thousand years, as is common in every small country, crushed between vast Empires, powerful and ruthless in their dictatorship and struggle for world dominion. And so, fathers repudiated their

sons, brothers their brothers, all in the vain attempt and with a patriotic desire to help their nation, slowly bleeding to death again. Our days were full of acute anxieties and new problems. We could not think ahead, and the far time was the time of yesterday. Calendars were useless, we just tried to do our duty "today". Women had to brace themselves to carry three-fold loads in this war. Theirs was the anxiety, the loneliness and the duty to carry on, helpless and impotent, because of a bloodshed which had been planned, prepared and executed by men.

"Lin, if the world were governed by women, it would not be in such a shocking mess now!" said I impulsively, making him smile in spite of himself.

"Oh dear, keep your illusions, I'm of different opinion; the world is governed by men ... but men are governed by women!"

I said, "Oh, do you think so? I don't! But if you are right, then men are being governed by the wrong women!"

We were walking along the embankments, the waters of the 'Blue Danube' looked sluggish, yellow and dirty. A brisk wind had whipped up the waves, little steamers ploughed their way from shore to shore, puffing black smoke, whistling shrilly, lowering their funnels to enable them to glide under the "chain bridge"; they seemed so fussy and in their trim importance, doing things to attract attention; but their black smoke did not dissipate skywards; it writhed and glided over the buildings like a lazy reptile.

"Any news from Victor?"

"Yes, thank heaven, he was alright at that time, but that was days ago. I must read you a part of his letter. It seems that he was leading a small patrol cautiously through the darkness of no-man's land, suddenly a Russian aeroplane swooped down playing the beam of his searchlight on those barren fields; they tried to hide as well as they could in clumps of grass and brush, and — can you believe it — they were not spotted."

"The Russian pilot must have sneezed just then and shut his eyes." Lin said.

"Lin, did I ever tell you why Victor volunteered for duty? He came home one day, casually, like any other day, and he told me what he wished to do; he asked me whether I had any objections, adding, 'I love my country and I feel like doing what is in my power from free choice and not from obedience to others'."

Lin turned his head away, and asked in a slightly muffled voice, "What did you answer?"

"I gulped and then I said he must decide for himself. If he felt this to be the right course, I didn't want to put obstacles in his way. Looking back upon it I feel that he did well; but without my acquired knowledge of Anthroposophy, I certainly would have tried to influence him against it."

Lin said, "This is hard to do, but easy to grasp, of course. Personal freedom is the way towards free decision and this is exactly what humanity must learn. We should not be driven into anything against our will and judgment, nor held back from it by others ...

"Where is Louis? Is he still in Pécs?"

"Yes, he's about to graduate from military school, but he lost sixteen pounds for no apparent reason, and of course I am worried. Ditta's quite happy in her farm-technical school, she was rather upset by the prevailing atmosphere here in town now, and so we thought it wiser to let her go to the country, and I must admit she was perfectly right; those nuns in her school are wonderful — they ride bikes, they run their own farm, they've got outstanding artists and professors teaching and lecturing; they know how to diagnose the younger generation's problems correctly; they are sound, efficient and helpful in every way."

We were gazing down into the yellow foaming water, which slapped at the stone parapet.

"Your little daughter is a beautiful child," Lin said, with his usual kind honest abruptness.

"Thank you, yes she is attractive and extremely personable, with a lively wit of her own, a downright quick intelligence and an uncanny ability to gain her own ends. She is kind and human, feminine and cajoling, stubborn and competent; and those blue eyes of hers could melt a tank! She is a specialist in dominating her surroundings; I remember the occasions when she helped at our dinner parties and sat primly between M.P.'s and Ministers, old generals and tiresome cronies, listening to conversation which could hardly have been interesting to a girl of fourteen years. At the end of the party I felt confident that she had won all hearts, for old gentlemen would kiss her hand gallantly, and assure her of their devotion. Her eyes would crinkle merrily, her head tossing long fair hair flying, and then she would hurry up to her room to make lightning-quick sketches in pencil and water colour."

"It strikes me," said Lin, who adored children and could listen to (and about) them for hours, "that the younger generation is far quicker to mature and it seems as if they all have outstanding talents nowadays."

"Yes, but they are foolhardy, and apt to risk running into all sorts of difficulties, pretending to know 'everything'."

"Maybe they do know more than we!" Lin observed.

"Certainly they do, they came into this world with a far greater spiritual subconscious knowledge. Every single one of them has a terrible responsibility towards the future as, of course, we all have. Believe me, I spend sleepless nights, trying to figure out which course would be best, how to help them, what to tell them, how to do my duty towards them."

Across the river hundreds of tiny lights flickered up in the green dusk, we climbed into Lin's black roadster and wound our way back up the Gellért mountain.

Budapest was a sad, dreary and dangerous place now. Just then a blast of music came down from upstairs, Sinding's beautiful "Spring", it was Anthony playing the piano.

"I'm going to Switzerland the day after tomorrow." I said to Lin.

"You are — why?"

"On business."

"On business! You?"

"Yes, it's silly, I agree, but you know that we sold Telkibánya, and bought that soap and chemical factory in Nagykároly, one of my tedious jobs now, since Victor is away, is to prove my talent in business."

We both laughed, "I have none of course! But I might do better in making business connections in Switzerland."

"I'm not so sure that I approve your travelling through Germany, with those continual air-raids, and what about your visa?"

"I got it without much difficulty really. I am inclined to think that Fate has some purpose in this, everything went so smoothly and without my hardly raising a finger."

Everyone was shaking their heads, except my Anthroposophic friends; they all envied me.

I left Hungary on the 4th June 1942. Vienna was my first shock. This town, once famous for its beauty and easy-going laughter, had a mournful bedraggled look; sloppy women porters in slacks and bobbed hair, sweated and grunted under their heavy loads. Children and old women very poorly dressed, hurried furtively through empty streets. An occasional military lorry clattered through; hundreds of wounded men, bandage-swathed or on crutches, crowded in the cafés and gardens. Without much hope, I tried for a private compartment on the train, luckily at the last moment I got one. I

offered to share my space with a middle-aged woman, travelling alone, and she accepted sleeping that night in the upper berth. In the morning when she left the train at Munich she gave me a little package secretively, with a touching smile, "Here are a few coffee beans — and they are real!" We arrived at three o'clock in the afternoon at the Swiss frontier, by which time the train was completely empty. I was the only woman and one of four passengers to cross the Swiss frontier. Five German customs officials grabbed my luggage; I had to answer many questions. They glared at me and sent me with a woman attendant and instructions to undress for a complete examination. But the good fat Frau had a far better flare for character analysis, she saw at a glance that I was no criminal in disguise, but orders were orders. Meanwhile, the contents of my bags had been scattered all over the examination table. One of the five uniforms seemed to have made a brilliant find — he pulled out a piece of paper from my wallet which contained designs of little pigs, a stork and a cat. I stared at it stupidly — whatever could it be? Then I recalled and tried to explain as best I could that I had made these drawings for a little girl whose father asked me to visit his sister in Munich and advised me to which hotel I should go on my way back. Quite unnecessarily he had drawn a map of the local streets. The tiniest twinkle in his eyes, but features in strict lines, the "Herr Zollbeamter" clipped off the map, cutting carefully around the little pigs and their companions, folded up the paper with methodical care and returned the sketches, less map, to the exact place in my wallet where he had found it. At last I was through, and the five clicked their heels, and actually smiled, flanked by the jovially-smiling good Frau.

The Swiss did not smile, they didn't care a hoot what I had in my luggage, but they wished to know whether I had had typhoid fever recently. "No," I replied firmly, and I could then walk into that happly little country where peace, order and cleanliness were a tradition. I was swept into this glorious, enchanted atmosphere, sniffing the fragrant air, staring at the soldiers marching in the boulevards with their "I'm proud I'm Swiss" expression, sipping tea and coffee I hadn't tasted for years, looking out of the windows of the train, apparently unchecked by speed limits, thundering through tunnels, across country as tidy, swept and brilliant as a jewellery shop. Listening to "Switzerdutsch" — a language we think we understand without ever grasping a word. I went everywhere, talked to everybody, and telephoned day and night, for the mere joy of trying to find out what would be forbidden ... but everything was

permitted in that democratic little paradise. There was no black-out, the towns flared in light and luxury, elegant cars purred in the streets, on the promenades near the lake smart women in satins and furs walked up and down. Negotiations had gone according to schedule and far better than we had expected. I liked the Swiss at once, they are simple people, but no banal simpletons, they are shrewd and wise but not cynical. They are selfish but in a healthy, natural, honest way. They have their own philosophy and dry wit. They are united in a mutual antipathy, making a democratic success of their country nevertheless. They are not lazy, but can always spare time for simple rejoicing. They adore their country, they are proud of their homes, they sympathize with their wives, and they spend every Sunday afternoon in the company of their children. Neither time nor events seems to change them; I can't imagine them altering the routine of their every-day life. Many a time have I seen them smiling inwardly at foreigners who displayed a regrettably puzzled clumsiness in their bouts with the strands of "Fondu", a mixture of wine and melted cheese which is the national dish. And at last came the best part of my stay in Switzerland. Three days in Dornach, by Basel. In the still noon I walked up the steep hill towards the huge building called "Goetheanum", centre of the Anthroposophic science, looming silvery white between the green meadows and fruit trees in full bloom. Like a gigantic, glittering block of granite, glowing like amethyst, it seemed to be a part of the surrounding mountains; overwhelming in its majestic simplicity, strength and balance, impelling a recognition of nature's laws from time immemorial, dominating the present with a magical power of harmony in its flowing lineant curves, completely new in shape, structure and style; a symbol of man and his century is this building, constructed entirely of concrete, stone and cement — grown out as it were of the rocky earth, but drawing one's vision skywards. I sat down on a marble bench to gaze with awe and admiration at this last monument to Rudolph Steiner's genius. Another "Goetheanum" had stood here formerly, designed by him, built and carved entirely in wood, it was the victim of an arsonist's work on a frosty night in 1923. Dr. Steiner had watched his life's work go up in flames; instantly he sat down to work and in a year and a half the plans were ready, the vast new building began to take shape, but this time in a fire-resistant material. Unfortunately, he died in 1925 before he could see his plans completely realized. From this new "High School" of free science, Anthroposophy, a source of human wisdom pours out into souls and hearts, a well from which philosophers, geologists,

doctors, teachers old and young, adults and children, can seek strength, help, hope, knowledge, comfort and understanding of life. For three days I watched the crowds of visitors, from all parts of the world, arriving in cars or on foot. Striving to collect as many lasting impressions as possible, I was happy indeed to meet Mr. Albert Steffen who carries on Dr. Steiner's work. Mr. Steffen was one of a council of four in the administration of the Anthroposophic Society for many years. In 1940 I had become a member of the Anthroposophic Society, and was now overwhelmed by Mr. Steffen's personality. He was a writer, his books, his dramas, his poetries known in many countries. He advised, encouraged and warned ... I attempted to learn as much as I could from this wise minister, charmed to see the gracious domesticity of his life with Mrs. Steffen, the gentle little Hungarian wife, friend and companion. Those three days had given me a deep insight into what Anthroposophy means to the individual, and through it to a whole community. Practically everybody in that village and environs are Anthroposophists, and I had the feeling that I was on another planet, an island of peace, honesty and kindness. I left Dornach obviously under the impression of what this new human wisdom could give to the world, if man would but live up to it.

On my way homeward, I stopped in Munich for a day to visit several schools and universities and I was shocked by the prevailing atmosphere, dire hardship, overtime work and alarming lack of everything I had loved there. Houses and whole streets were in ruins, the once so clean, so happy city, centre of art, was a poverty-stricken area inhabited by gaunt, weary, suffering citizens. War was glaring from all corners. Hardly knowing what to do with my time, unwilling to go back to my sordid hotel room (which I had been lucky enough to secure with the prevailing and increasing housing shortage), I decided to have a look at the place of my happy days, the Academy of Fine Arts. It was in ruins, the little Pension Fortuna with its clean gay rooms, chintz and small piano had turned into a dirty place indeed, which, as it was now, would be better for me not to remember at all. I slowly turned into Kaulbach Strasse, a quiet street, barely more than six yards in width. It was empty, dirty and apparently dead, in the rapidly fading twilight. I had walked in that street maybe a thousand times and knew the neighbourhood as well as my pocket. Recollecting Munich as it had been then, a sparkling crispness in the air, hurrying to the Academy, with maps, canvas and brushes, in ankle-deep snow ... trams, cars and vehicles coated with layers of whiteness; the sky was blue, the city was white, and

all the brand-new tramcars were painted sky-blue too. I shut my eyes to better remember it all, and nearly bumped into a grill half torn from its foundations. It had covered some shaft or vent from which issued a sluggish current of tepid musty air. Along the stone-paved sidewalk, waiting in a line, were parked three magnificent black cars, their polished surface gleaming. Flanking the porch, doors spread wide, showing a red-carpeted staircase, stood two giant S.S. guards, motionless, expressionless, dark statues. A rapidly increasing group of simply dressed pedestrians stood waiting, gaping, and I decided to do the same, half expecting to be waved away by the policemen. I felt conspicuous, rather silly, and interested, but strangely enough the policeman was not interested in me at all. Some little children turned up from nowhere with bunches of flowers and were allowed to line up in front of the first car. Said a wrinkled little woman at my elbow, "Our Führer comes now." Suddenly everybody rushed forward with frantic joy, shrieking, yelling "Heil Hitler". Nobody took any notice of me, I could have thrown a bomb. I was pushed and squeezed ahead, coming to a jerky halt not four yards from the porch. My spectacles had slid and I tried in vain to push them back into place, squinting frantically, because I was seeing two Hitlers standing at the foot of the red carpet; they were both wrapped in long brown capes, brown uniform and belt. Swastikas seemed to dance and wave all around them. At last I managed to straighten my glasses and the two blurred Führers melted into one man, who bent to speak with each child, shaking hands with them, telling them to take the flowers to the soldiers in the hospitals. Straightening up, he gave the usual salute, heels clicked, the cars moved away noiselessly. The crowd dispersed — only the little wrinkled woman stood there, a forlorn smile on her pale lips, rubbing her eyes with gnarled fingers. I walked along the street, through the bare neglected gardens; on the saffron coloured sky a black cloud spread dark wings, framed in a dazzling double rainbow, and pierced by the last glowing sunrays. I had never seen such a sky before in my life — it was so theatrical, so fantastic, so gorgeous, and threatening, that I stopped, and gazed and gazed and gazed. Day and night, joy and sorrow, gentleness and inhuman wrath, threatening clouds and rainbows, this is life.

Chapter XII.

In the course of years, a succession of tragic events occurred in our families. Ferenc, Victor's eldest brother, lost his young wife Vera, followed by the death of Paulette, wife of Gyula (Victor's youngest brother), daughter of Regent Horthy. On the 20th August 1942, on St. Stephen's Day, on our great national feast, gallant and brave young Steven Horthy, who had been recently appointed by Parliament as his father's successor, died a tragic death on the Russian front, and on the 2nd September, Gyula, my brother-in-law died.

Air-raids over Budapest followed in rapid succession. Sirens shrieked, the city was lit up and bathed in scorching white light by the "Stalin candles", as people called them. The roaring of fighters, deafening explosions, blasts of cannons in the air, shook the earth. Pyramids of fire and smoke surged everywhere, writhing burning serpents and tiny human specks danced to and fro in the blazing hot hell to be flicked out by a mighty crash and roar of the victorious flames as they sprang and leapt up into the black sky.

Night after night we could witness this gorgeously ghastly firework, from the top of our villa. Slowly the crimson glare would spread toward the plain miles and miles over the hills to dissolve into the burning dawn, but for days the ruins of factories and buildings kindled in a ruddy glow. The war went on, the world lived years that seemed weighted with the history of ages. Nursing in their flaming womb the embryo of Satan himself. Years — which if we are able to live through the sufferings with courage and faith — may help and decide the very eternity of after glory, but which, if we fail to comprehend their mission, pass ... taking with them, maybe, a last opportunity for possibilities that shall not be granted to man in this existence any more. Such were the years that appeared to reflective minds who lifted their groping souls toward super-human life, ever-searching for the reason *why*.

* * *

"Why did you not transfer money and property to some neutral country during the war?" we were queried again and again. It may

seem incomprehensible, perhaps, but there was in our eyes, an unwritten law of patriotism which forbade us from sending private property out of Hungary in time of war and to use freight cars or other means of transportation for personal gain. We did think of it, there were plenty of measures we could have taken — we just didn't take them. Asked and urged officially to accept a tempting position of Minister in Sweden or Spain, Victor refused point blank. Hungary had been occupied by German troops on the 19th March 1944, the Government was completely powerless to act freely in such circumstances; Victor's principles forbade him to lend a hand in any political activity whatsoever. Nominally, he was still a Member of Parliament, but having returned from the Russian battlefield, disillusioned and sad, filled with pessimistic forbodings, he stopped taking active interest in any political activity.

We had sold Telkibánya years ago, but to live on the mountain top in Budapest in war time was not very comfortable. Not being a particularly patient man, Victor made many an enemy of those who were otherwise his friends; irritated beyond words with helpless frustration, he shared the fate of all those who were working and giving their best for what they believed to be a decent purpose — to save their country, but they found themselves balked by what they thought was shortsighted ignorance or sinful grave error. So we had left Budapest and went to Mágocs and stayed there.

My poor parents-in-law were very ill. Hardly ten months after the death of Victor's mother, we buried his father. The war went on ... dramatic events increased.

We lived in the beautiful country in Nagymágocs, ours was a tiny island of peace, a haven of temporary rest, and every day was another gift granted by Fate, to be enjoyed and never to be forgotten. Everything that was thought, felt, said and done assumed a magnified importance. But as the months passed we knew that the final developments toward ultimate disaster was approaching relentlessly, influenced by forces far beyond the control of human minds. Hundreds of aeroplanes flew over us. There were no sirens to wail a warning to our village, but at the slightest droning sound, throbbing in the air, all work stopped in the fields, men, women and children hurried to seek shelter. On a peaceful morning in early July, Victor and Louis were up and out since dawn; Ditta had left for the village to organize her Kindergarten and I was burning letters. It was no pleasant task; summer temperature had run high and the bright fire radiated gusts of torrid heat, tongues of blue and red flame licked the fireplace with each bunch of paper thrown into it.

Letters that should never have been written and ought immediately to be destroyed are the only ones worth keeping; I had many of them and to make matters worse, a new big parcel had arrived lately from Mother; they were my letters to my parents written in the course of twenty-five years. We didn't care to leave them behind to be read by everybody else who might break into our homes. For two days I never stopped burning those letters, while in the adjoining room Anthony was thundering away on his piano. I loved to listen to him, as I had hardly any time now to play myself. With hands as big as a shovel he could run over the keys with a butterfly light touch, his beaming face alight with rapt boyish pleasure. But then, he would jump up to disappear for hours and was sure to return in greasy smeared trousers from a lengthy talk with the local electrician in the estate power house. His room was scattered with notebooks, music scores, wires, tools, radios and frightening objects hitting you or giving out terrific noises. He revelled in mechanized devices, lights going out with the opening of doors, warning bells beginning to buzz (when Mother opened her own door!). On that particular day I was startled from my tedious letter-burning job by a wailing siren at my elbow; no, it was not as near as that, it was in Anthony's room, but anxious faces appeared at windows and I could see people scattering to shelter everywhere in the park. "Stop that infernal noise at once," I shrieked at the top of my voice, "What a senseless thing to do!"

Reluctantly the new invention was put out of use, but my fright was mild in comparison to the shock of one of the maids who had started to clean Anthony's den next morning; inadvertantly touching some trailing wire with a wet mop, the siren started screaming, and she got a strong electric shock. Jittery with fright, the prim little maid rushed out and away, making a silent vow to never set foot again in that "hell's kitchen".

A few days later Russian troops broke through the Carpathian mountains. Hungary is a small country, and once those mighty protecting natural boundaries were broken, could be run over by a modern army easily. We filled two trucks with trunks, boxes, silverware, pictures and carpets, and had them sent away into the western area. This could not be done unnoticed, and so we made the town of our faithful people on the estate to know what their wishes would be in case of invasion. My husband offered all necessary help, including vehicles for those who felt they would prefer to flee.

One of those kind-hearted women, whose crippled little boy had been in my constant care, said, "Don't leave, if the enemy comes

you can hide here and we shall take care of you." One evening, her sick little son asked to be lifted from his cot to the floor, "to be nearer to the earth" he said, and at dawn he died, still near to the earth he loved so well.

Days and weeks slipped past swiftly and furtively like so many glittering grains of sand in an hour-glass. There were mysterious echoes in the big house, looking bare and stripped without pictures and carpets; steps and voices made hollow sounds. We smiled and talked and pretended not to see each other's agonizing distress. A little emergency suitcase stood packed and ready in each bedroom, filled with all the most valuable, useful and necessary items, ranging from jewels to warm underwear, from socks to cakes of soap, pistols, sewing things, paint and brushes, favourite photographs, books and radio tools.

The enemy troops advanced slowly, they were not more than 200 miles from us now. An urgent telephone message made me hasten over to my mother, who fell suddenly ill and weak and had been given the last rites of the Church, but to my great relief, her excellent heart and vitality conquered once more. I urged and begged her to leave her solitary home and come and stay with us, and preferably to go to Charlie's in Budapest, or my sister Toinette's country home in the north, but she refused. I felt I could understand her; she adored Póstelek. That year produced an especially large crop. The golden fields swayed and rippled in luxurious abundance. The branches of tens of thousands of fruit trees bent and nearly broke under their load of purple, amber and vermillion. Apples, pears, plums and peaches grew larger and were more delectable than they had ever been. And then, without the usual merry singing and laughter, harvest began. The fields were stripped of their golden carpets and rows and rows of symmetrical shocks ranged in the well-nigh shadeless plain ... but then the crops gradually rotted on the ground ... all hands, all vehicles had gone to help and check the advancing deadly enemy.

We hastily transformed our home into an emergency hospital; rooms were stripped and cleared. Beds stood in rows, surgery was equipped, we all lent a hand. One of the footmen said with deepest scorn in his voice, "There will never be order in this house any more." I quickly turned to hide my tears, which I could not repress. This particular man servant had a touching aggressive sense of tradition and pride in our home and whenever I told him to open blinds that used to be kept shut, or to make any slight alteration in his twenty years routine, his moustaches used to bristle aggressively with silent

disapproval. Actually, hardly anybody seemed to realize what was ahead of us, events shaping into permanent disaster, with tragic finality.

On a radiant golden, strangely hushed, September dawn, distant rumbling shook the earth; the telephone began to buzz persistently, cars raced westward, blowing thick clouds of white dust through the iron gates along the emerald green lawn, dotted with coral coloured flower beds. Through the night Russian tanks and troops had made a sudden over-riding advance, they were barely eighty miles from us now and about fifty miles from Póstelek, my childhood's lovely home. Between urgent news, a message came from Mother, she had caught dysentery, had a high temperature and was absolutely unable to move. Frantically I called up Charlie, he couldn't leave his post in Budapest, but made instant arrangements for a Red Cross ambulance to go and fetch Mother. In all our area the ambulances had been commandeered by the Army. A slowly moving procession of fugitives in cars, carriages and military vehicles well-nigh blocked the roads. There was no pretending any more. Everybody acted automatically in grim silence. Our car stood in front of the East entrance and was packed to utmost capacity, ready to leave at once and we tried to say farewell to as many of the faithful hands and friends on the estate as we could, we felt they would rather remain. Our children had lost all light-hearted youth; they helped wherever they could; they were just wonderful. The long hours dragged on, messages poured in from everywhere, we felt reluctant to leave. I was in constant touch with Póstelek, torn between an overwhelming desire to rush to Mother and my natural duty to stay with husband and children. At last news came that the ambulance had arrived and Mother was safely packed in with a maid and trunks, and had left her home in time. We decided to stay on for another day or two if possible. The main road began to clear now, those who had braced themselves to flee had gone. The faint rumbling in the air grew to a persistent tiring noise. Victor kept in constant touch with the authorities. Through the wide-open gates, many a fugitive had come in for a night's shelter or food. Big baskets full of sheets, towels and rugs were sent to the village doctor, and Ditta, eyes too bright, and quite dark, lips compressed, silent and efficient, distributed clothes and underwear to her little charges in the Kindergarten. Louis was continually helping his father, running errands, telephoning, organizing, his slightly slanting brown eyes so hard and sad that I could hardly look at him; a strangely old, bitter line curled his lips. Absently he fondled the ears of his retriever, who

followed him everywhere, bumping into his legs, thrusting his wet nose into his master's hands. Anthony had shut the lid of his piano with finality. He was in the stable courtyard practising to drive military vehicles in and out of the garage, tinkering with reticent engines, lending a hand to mend blown-out tires. Of all the afflictions of those last days, meals were the most difficult to go through without too much show of emotion. A butler silently handed us the dishes; around the large table we sat hastily gulping down delicious food that seemed to stick on our tongues. In a silver bowl, red roses sent intoxicating perfumes. Whenever a door opened, the drone of aeroplanes, the rhythmic thunder of cannons filled the room. We hurriedly left the dining room and dispersed, each to his favourite spot in the garden, but often not even knowing where our legs would take us. Our minds went cold, our bodies went numb and strange, we dragged burning eyes away from the cherished landscape. It seemed a long, long way to walk down to the rose garden; the gorgeous flowers were soft to the touch of my lips; crickets chanted briskly in the grass; above in the blue sky, droning bombers spread dark wings, anti-radar silver threads floated in the air, white clouds trailed lazily. "Wouldn't it just be luxuriously divine to lie down and sleep and sleep, maybe never to wake again." A little shiver ran down my spine, what a preposterous thought — it frightened me into instant action. Turning resolutely, I hastened back to the house, crossing the dim cool hall, I mounted the dismally creaking oak stairs. At the top a heavy oak door was ajar. I pushed the wrought-iron handle, the door slowly opened on its hinges — I stood stock-still for a second. Ditta was kneeling there on the brocade praying stool, her golden head hidden on her arms, her shoulders slight against the polished grey marble walls. The chapel was as cool as a vault, faded flowers hung limply from a tall crystal chalice, green and rose lights danced on the two lovely white marble statues, and over the grey marble altar, a gleaming black marble cross loomed large. Alone she knelt in the thick silence ... long minutes passed. Presently we realized that it was too cold ... a car horn tooted persistently ... somebody downstairs ... voices ... maybe more than one car, yes, several cars and carriages. We hastily powdered our noses and went down. A new transport full of wounded had arrived. Haggard young faces peered with anxious sunken eyes over blood-stained torn uniforms. We moved out into the sunshine and helped automatically. Suddenly I started — good gracious, was it possible I had forgotten to inquire if Father's beautiful portrait had been taken away. I rushed to the 'phone, after a lengthy wait a faint voice answered hoarsely.

"Hello, who's speaking?"

"Póstelek ... P ó s t e l e k ..."

"Hello, Jani ... J a a n i ... can you *hear* me? How are you there?"

"We are alone as yet ..." (Silence)

"*Could* you manage to pack and send away Daddy's portrait?"

"No ... her Ladyship wanted to have it done, but we couldn't do it ..."

"Listen, Jani — hello, can you *hear* me?"

"Yes ..."

"If I tell you *how* to manage, *could* you find someone to bring me the picture?"

"I don't know, but I could try."

"Please ... *please* try," and I explained quickly the manner of packing. Suddenly we were cut off ... "Jani ... God bless you!" I shouted, hoping he could still hear. Much later, dulled and tired we slept, but at the nape of our neck a black shadow tugged and tugged persistently. Next day was the last day, a cool and brilliant dawn. We stood with heads raised, looking out towards the East, listening with bated breath, and the pounding of our hearts. Yes, ... above the occasional deep rumbles, staccato barking of machine guns could be heard distinctly. At noon a messenger arrived from Póstelek, handing me a well-wrapped parcel. (It was Daddy's picture.) I could hardly thank him coherently. After a good meal, he hastened away and I could only hope that he reached safely his own home and family. I unpacked the precious roll. Nothing was wrong with the picture, but now, kneeling on the floor in my bare room, I fixed two blankets tightly over the handle of a broom, the picture was wrapped in a linen sheet and rolled over the stick firmly, with the painting turned *outwards*. On top of this several pieces of curtain were tightly rolled and the heavy parcel was ready. I went out hastily to the car and managed to shove it in somehow. "What are you doing there?" Victor called out of the window, with the telephone receiver in his hand. "Storing Daddy's picture in the car." He joined me, his face a stern set mask. "That will do now, my dear, we will be a heavy load and I definitely don't want the car to break down on the road. So, please, no more parcels ... and listen, darling, ... I ... I got the latest news just now ..." He couldn't finish what he was going to tell me, I had understood. Mustering up a fairly casual voice, I asked, "Shall we start after lunch at three o'clock?" He could only nod, and we went into the cool hall, hands clasped. Our emergency luggage stood ready, the lids snapped shut with a dry click. The last lunch, a complete failure, was soon over. Victor accompanied by

Louis hastened once more to the estate agency to give his last warnings and instructions to whoever wanted to leave now. Several officers in charge of the wounded, who were housed with us, came to shake hands gravely. With a last look we slowly turned away from the hall to go down the passage to the side entrance. The whole household followed us, the housekeeper said in a choked whisper, "I have tucked ten pounds of rice under your Ladyship's place in the car. I know you like it, you *must* take it please." I shook my head, but didn't feel like arguing just then, and turned to hug her and the silently weeping others, and presently we all squeezed into the car, Ditta with her little grey dog on her lap, Louis's young retriever fidgeting in ecstatic joy on hind legs betwen us, his long pink tongue lolling. Victor made a last-minute check of the car, his hawk eyes caught the sack of rice. "What's that?" he asked, his voice sharp through repressed emotion. "Rice," I said. "No," he said, and with a whoosh, the sack of rice went flying; rice was very precious in those times ... frantic arms reached out to save that precious sack. This little incident was the last straw by which we hung on to keep smiling, waving a last farewell, taking a last look at everything and everybody. When the car slowly rolled out through the wrought iron gate, a peacock shrilled at us, standing on the green lawn, his tail a glowing wheel of blue, gold and green, on his long neck and small head a tiny crown waved and sparkled in the sunshine.

* * *

We reached Budapest about three hours later. "Hannah! Please keep your nerves, we must finish packing here too!"

"But how can I keep my nerves, when I can't find my spectacles?" my dear maid Hannah retorted. She was almost crying from sheer exhaustion. We had been packing and sorting things for two days in our villa in Budapest, between continual air-raids, and it seemed high time to get ready now. We were leaving in a westerly direction the next afternoon.

"Where did you last see your spectacles?" I asked practically.

"Nowhere, no ... yes! I don't know! *How* can I remember everything?" She waddled up the stairs and vanished into her own little sanctum, mumbling peevishly, and presently talking to someone — but to whom? I sat down, rather hysterical myself; suddenly there was an excited scuttling, down came Hannah, as fast as she could, her good fat face beaming. "I found them, I found them!" she exclaimed unnecessarily, continuing in the same breath, "You know,

St. Anthony always helps me, and now I had started scolding him," (so *that* was the other party to the conversation, I thought) "and my thimble fell off my finger and rolled under the bed. It wasn't easy to fish out that thimble, but ... *can* you believe it? There lay my spectacles!"

"I can believe it, Hannah, your *faith* will lift mountains, so it certainly can enable you to find a pair of spectacles too!" Silly tears sprang to my eyes, what a genuine good soul she was, and tomorrow, we would also have to part from her. She was going back to her family in Vienna; we dared not take her with us into exile and an unknown future. Continual goodbyes from relatives and friends made our daily lives as painful as a raw wound poked with salt-tipped probes. Next morning Hannah left, I went to see Mother again, in the nursing home. I found Toinette, Feri, and Charlie with her too. She was as cheerful as usual, but shockingly pale and haggard. An hour of our precious time with her was spent in the basement, and then the air-raid was over. We all tried to figure out best plans concerning the immediate future. I was aghast and sad to hear that Toinette and her husband refused to leave and their children shared their views. Charlie and his wife hadn't made up their minds as yet and talked about Mother staying with friends at one of the neutral embassies in Budapest. Feri had come from his estate Aranyos, on the south-western Hungarian-Yugoslav border, he was silently listening. We were frantic and pleaded and begged, "If you value your life and your freedom, get out of Budapest and away, even from Hungary ... communism is slow torture and death!"

Worn out by conflicting emotions, at last we four brothers and sisters kissed Mother goodbye and went to share a farewell lunch at the Hotel Ritz. Toinette and her family left for their country home, Feri stayed with us for another day, sharing, thank God, our views. Charlie and his wife were to stay on for a while in Budapest to assist Mother to go to her sister in Western Hungary. They intended, eventually, to join her.

Feeling beaten, I climbed the hill to say goodbye to my Anthroposophic friends. Autumn was almost upon us, seasonal storms had swept many leaves from their branches, unkempt gardens looked cheerless and dreary. All about me were the dry and dead leaves, sifting to the damp ground. A solitary tall black form came towards me through the trees. It was Clare de Nerandia, the most beautiful woman of Budapest society. She was famed for her eccentricities, and exclusive parties. Her glowing skin, rich chestnut hair made a vivid contrast to her simple black wool frock and moiré scarf. She

was a riddle to evrybody, her restless loneliness and yearning, apparent only to those who could look behind the dazzling mask.

Now she walked through the park and straight into my arms. "Oh my dear! I am so glad to meet you! In a few weeks I shall be dead ..." her voice was just above a whisper. I stood helpless, not knowing what to say, staring into those strange speckled tawny eyes. Bare branches beat a dry tattoo over our heads. She was composed, with that aloof coolness which people thought to be pride, a tiny nervous knot danced under her left temple. We sat down on a bench, I squeezed her slim, black gloved hand. "Tell me, what has happened?"

"Nothing, as yet, but I may as well tell you the truth; before a Russian soldier has the opportunity to rape either me or my daughters, I shall kill them and myself!" I smothered a gasp of protest, and tried to speak lightly, "You are being childish and dramatic, my dear. Why not simply pack up your family and your trunks and come with us towards the West? Thousands of people are doing it, facing exile for the time being ... and ..."

"It's useless to argue," she interrupted, "I have decided." There was a quiet finality in her soft voice, and my brain went cold. God Almighty, how could I help her? We had become close friends lately, she had attended many an Anthroposophic lecture with me, showing a keen open mind and interest. I reminded her of everything which Dr. Steiner had said concerning suicide and its ghastly consequences. Dusk came suddenly; I was exhausted. She looked cool and serene, and we clung to each other in a mute parting embrace. She turned towards the city and soon vanished in the gloom and trailing sooty smoke; I walked up the hill over winding streets, dragging my feet. Geraniums clustered under glass panelled windows, flaming red in the pale sunrays. When the Russian troops entered the town, hammering at closed doors, women and children hiding in cellars, Clare poisoned herself in the presence of her family.

We took a last look at Budapest from our roof garden, hurried through the petunia-scented pathways, squeezed into the car and slowly wormed our way downwards over shattered asphalt pavement, between smoking ruins, along the barge-lined river embankment and streets flanked by gradually diminishing rows of houses; the open sky was like blue silk above us. We sat mute, absorbed in our own thoughts. A succession of three terrific blasts shook the earth, windows rattled, people stopped dead in their tracks, or began to run, frightened faces peered upwards, chicken clucking and cackling rushed for cover, dogs barked, a cat streaked through the cobble-

stoned street, children clutched at their mothers' skirts, a tot squatting in the dirt whimpered and rubbed mud all over his pitiful little face. We had stopped, listening ... an uncanny silence was over the town. After a while we drove on, the motor purred gently. From the trans-Danubian plain we looked back, a ruddy glow brooded over the skyline, a blood-red moon climbed up behind black pine woods, luminous fiery snakes rippled over the motionless mirror of the big Hungarian lake, Balaton. Later on we knew — the bridge connecting the Margit island with both sides of Buda and Pest had been blown up by some short-circuit and careless German manipulation in fixing the mines under the bridge.

Nerve-wracking weeks followed in my brother-in-law's home in Zalaszentgrót, where many of us who had fled from eastern homes already, were gathered. George and Kathleen lived in a beautiful large house not sixty miles from the Austrian border, and were trying as best they could to make ends meet. We were still in the compass of that terrible year 1944 that dealt our stricken little country its mortal blow and sealed the death warrant of countless innocent millions. Hungary would soon have recovered again if English or American troops had occupied her in time to check the USSR monster in its relentless drive towards Western Europe. For it is not Hungarian courage, spirit and faith which died, but the life around her.

* * *

On a dreary wet dark October evening, Kathleen got a telegram. Her eldest brother, Nádasdy Ferenc, had died on the battlefield in the heart of Hungary. In the course of years, he and his two brothers had married, a little boy was born to one of his brothers, and now there were but three male Nádasdys in the family again. But a summons to the Army was a summons, and a death in the family was no excuse; the second brother was called up too, and nobody knew now where he was. Their poor mother came to stay with us in Szent-grót. Victor's sister, Consuelo Horthy, was there too, with her daughters; after fruitless negotiations with hostile German troops which surrounded the Royal Palace, Regent Horthy gave himself up, by that act saving many lives. He was to be taken prisoner and transported to Germany.

One by one, friends and neighbours began to disappear and in many cases nothing more was heard of them. Many of them were at a loss as to *what* to do, and outdid each other in the use of too terrible

imagination, they sought security by going *back* to Budapest where they hoped to be less conspicuous. In this most unreal phase of war, many sound-minded persons completely lost their sanity and ran blindfolded to their doom, and it was utterly useless to try and argue with them. Others performed a kind of hesitation-dance, running to and fro in gradually tightening vicious circles, to be trapped unawares in the jaws of the striking monster. By the end of November Russian troops had occupied more than two-thirds of Hungary, firece fighting was going on all around the Lake Balaton. Continual devastating air-raids paralysed everything, both in towns, villages and on the highways, where column after column of hungry frozen people tried to reach security, stunned with fright and fatigue. The siege of the Capital lasted 52 days — it was Hell, people lived in damp cellars, died from thirst and bombs, scratched away stones and mortar in streets at night in order to bury their dead. Blood-curdling drama, crude reality, reigned under the earth, shaken to its depths by the fighting going on, on the surface. Street by street, the enemy fought its way. The pitifully small, heart-stirringly courageous Hungarian defenders and German troops, 49,000 in all, were matched against a horde of 2,500,000 invading Russians. When at last the battle was over, a new nightmare began. Little girls and women, young and old, were raped; many thousands died either on the spot or through infections that could not be cured, for lack of drugs. Brave women fought to save others. They barred the doors, they talked, pleaded, and shot. The drunken Russian retaliated with machine guns, some soldiers died, women died. Lost children and howling dogs hid amongst the ruins and froze to death. In spite of officially issued orders to lay down their arms, the Hungarian troops had fought on. Their gallantry in harassing and hampering the advance of the enemy saved thousands of people from certain death, who, utilising the precious days saved for them by the Hungarian defenders, were able to flee to the west.

All that happened in Hungary in those ghastly days, weeks and months in the country's public life is so tightly linked with politics that I do not wish to write about it.

By the end of November we all left Szentgrót in cars, in horse-driven coaches and even on horseback. Winding our way on the roads between barren fields, to make a last halt half a mile from the Austrian frontier. Victor had obtained the necessary 24 permits for border-crossing with much difficulty. There was not much point in staying any longer, so we decided at last to leave Hungary; some of our party crossed the Austrian frontier by train, George and his

family went ahead to secure lodgings in the vicinity of Gratz. Mother, my brother Feri and his family, and all of us, started in two cars smothered in rugs and luggage. Victor drove ahead, Louis drove behind in the second car. It was the 17th December, 1944, dark clouds, like floating rags, covered the grey sky. Pelting rain blurred the windows. A yellow curtain of mud splashed over the cars, zig zagging down the panels. The barriers of the frontier loomed in front of us. There followed the usual red tape. Wind and rain came in through the doors of the car when the officials opened them for inspection, but luckily we did not have to get out. Doors were slammed shut, customs men in their wet, rain-glistening overalls, waved us on, the barrier lifted slowly, its red, white and green stripes (the Hungarian colours) showing in washed-off patches. Silence ... heart hammering, lungs bursting, slowly, slowly, wheels began to move, slithering over the "rain-running" road ... faces like pale masks Ditta's profile sharp against the window ... two glittering pearls ran down my niece's white cheeks. The wind moaned and whistled, the windscreen wipers swished a clean half moon on the glass pane, ticking like a relentless clock in empty space.

Chapter XIII.

A battered, huge, clumsy mediaeval castle loomed grey above us — the cars panted up the steep hill and came to a halt in the courtyards. We were but another crowd of homeless wanderers seeking shelter, cold, hungry and tired to a point of mental and physical numbness.

Huge rooms disfigured by the rows of mattresses. Coats, skirts, trousers and hand towels hung limply from hooks and antlers. Half empty knap-sacks and handbags piled up in corners, tables and a hopeless jumble of brushes, cream jars, spirit stoves, baby bottles, cheese and bread wrapped in greasy paper — a sock or two trailing on chairs or floors. Stone flagged passages once polished and shining were coated with mud and dust. More or less everybody had contracted a bad cold, rheumatism or some nasty sores. The rooms were ice cold; there was no hot water; pipes were frozen. We lost our way in the dark passages and staircases in the huge two-story building. Three little pet dogs, nervous and unhappy, trailed barking between our legs and had to be carried down. The children were crying from sheer exhaustion, and we adults were peevish with one another in our futile endeavour to keep from breaking down. On the fourth day of this our first halt, our Anthony had to be rushed to the hospital in Gratz to have a second mastoid operation immediately; he was very ill. I sat at his bed day and night; he had to be wheeled down to the air-raid shelter sometimes twice a day. It was a large modern hospital; the sick and the staff were exhausted. For two days we 'eye-flirted' with an unexploded bomb, squatting like a black moon in the snow-covered meadow in front of the hospital; windows had to be kept ajar so they would not break in case of an explosion (glass was hard to get). The windows were large, our rooms were small, we shivered like wet dogs. Christmas came and so did new air-raids.

Meanwhile, a frantic search was made for new lodgings — somewhere. Consuelo, with her daughters, György, Feri and his two boys, travelled towards the West, through frightening air-raids, in over-crowded trains and suffered physical and mental agonies. This went on for two weeks; at last things shaped out a bit. A hunt-

ing lodge of some distant relatives was found near Salzburg for Mother and Feri's family; Victor, György and Consuelo rented rooms in Obersdorf, a tiny Godforsaken village. Anthony was barely recovered when Victor came back to fetch us. In two rooms of three different diminutive Austrian cottages — half stone, half wood — we unpacked some of our belongings. Through the snow-covered steep winding streets we went to meals in the little Gasthaus, warmed our empty tummies with meagre soup tasting of dish-water and composed of boiled beet roots and one potato and, on rare holidays, some baked sweetbread tasting like melted rancid candles. Vegetarian food in the smallest quantities might be wholesome for some but it definitely does not improve healthy people's minds. We tried to forget it, toiling all day long, but we were very hungry indeed. The food shortage grew, and so did the number of fugitives who swarmed all over Austria and Southern Germany; ration cards were hardly the size of an envelope and the numbers for eggs, sugar, meat and fat, could be found on them only through a magnifying glass. The good Austrian people had utterly lost their sense of humour and good-natured manners. We couldn't blame them for it; years of war and the Nazi regime, on top of it all the tens of thousands of hungry distracted fugitives, certainly did not improve matters.

They were kind enough to us and we did our very best to be grateful to them for lodgings and food but, alas, we were conspicuous, much too conspicuous; rumours began to spread of who we were, how rich we were, what hidden treasures we had with us and so on and so forth. We couldn't blame those simple-minded people who had probably never seen foreigners before. The number of suitcases, handbags, sacks, bandboxes, jars and baskets of 16 people made mountains of luggage but, at the last minute, we had secured two wagons on the Austrian border. In spite of air-raids, these two wagons arrived in the course of weeks, had been unloaded and the luggage distributed between 24 of us. Yes, we were very conspicuous and this meant trouble. More than that, it meant threatening danger, I felt it in my bones. I kept repeating it. Nobody believed me.

With endless arguments I convinced Victor and we set out towards the west to hunt for new lodgings, permits and ration cards.

We couldn't go by car for fear of the car being commandeered by the Germans and also for the lack of petrol. Travelling permits were also difficult to obtain. At last we started our wanderings. To my joy and utmost relief, we met my brother Charlie and his wife and finally found a small inn high up in the mountains on the Swiss

border. Weeks had passed. Victor's permit had expired; he had obtained prolongation till 15 March but now he hurried dutifully towards the East, to Hungary again, in spite of obvious signs that, to us Hungarians, war was definitely over, the Russians being but a few miles from the Austrian border. We stayed behind in Obersdorf to wait for him. From the nearest town, official looking individuals came for our motor cars and the two small ones were taken away. The third larger one was left with us with explicit orders that it was not to be used or taken away. But, one dark frosty night, we 'stole' our own car — the boys drove it away and hid it.

I hastened once more to Fuschl to see Mother and Feri and his family. Meanwhile, two official-looking individuals came to arrest Louis, probably for evasion, a draft order *may* have been issued in Hungary but in the confusion never reached us. Outwardly composed, Ditta met them, showing them a postcard that her brother had written to her sometime ago. It was not dated and was evidence of her affirmation that he had gone West. During this conversation, Louis escaped through the window and disappeared for the rest of the time, hiding in the snow-covered woods, and cottages.

It would have been a senseless suicide to enlist into our beloved Hungary when government and army had collapsed.

I felt certain that Victor would turn up in a short time, and he did. Looking a shade thinner and more harassed, but satisfied to have done his duty to the end; he had actually crossed into Hungary to witness the last tragedy of a brave Army bleeding to death. He had come away, hitch-hiking, walking, hanging onto railway carriages with thousands of others. We got moving at once, Louis fetched the hidden car and, with a trailer packed high and swaying behind us, we were off. We left behind carpets, pictures, trunks filled with silverware, rugs and bed clothing in the care of our host, the local baker. György and Consuelo were to start with their families as soon as possible after us, by train.

There followed ten days I might describe from *my* particular point of view, as perfect happiness. That ghastly sense of foreboding had left me; we were together; we were free. The pale April sunshine chasing away the mist-formed 'ghosts' had touched the pasture with delicate green tints. We drove leisurely through scented black pine forests, brilliantly blue mountain lakes, towering alpine snow peaks, over cascading rivers and we stopped at any little cottage for a night's shelter. This sort of life had a compelling attraction in spite of scarce food — completely lacking gastronomic qualities — and bedrooms deprived of all comforts.

At that particular time all order was fast vanishing; what is everybody's business is nobody's business. We blissfully ignored prevailing rules concerning permits and we had lots of fun. But our poor car was in a battered state — petrol was worth a kingdom and once our trailer collapsed. Anthony was left at a smithy with it and we drove on to the next village for the night. When we returned for him, Anthony said:

"I overheard two policemen who think we are hoarding petrol. They are waiting for you somewhere around here."

"Jump out, Louis, quick, stay here with Anthony, I'll be back," called Victor and down we raced, away from that hostile surrounding. Several turns we made, we drove through a little wood, stopped at a haybarn, scrambled out, shoved all our luggage into it and both Ditta and I, plus the little dog, settled down in the damp hay. Victor drove away. It was truly a comic situation. We hid like thieves, peeping out through the slats of the barn whenever somebody drove or passed by; we firmly held a woolen scarf over the dog's bewildered eyes and nose. At last our three men joined us; the policemen had done some poking about but, having satisfied their curiosity, without results of course, had gone on about their business. The trailer was ready for service once again and two days later we crossed a junction of two highways; there stood a German sentry, legs spread sturdily, solemn and motionless, he held up his hands and we stopped

"Turn right, go to the town hall and deliver your car!"

We gasped! Victor began to explain in crisp words and finished up by adding, "My wife is ill." This was not the high conception of ethics — I had recovered days ago from an attack of asthma and felt perfectly fit again. The young sentry, a vacant kind of state in his blue eyes, suddenly waved —

"All right, go on!"

Victor stepped on the accelerator fast and we were as jubilant as children. I thought: why? why? Why was this young soldier so spontaneous and human?

We went on, stopping at odd places, hiding and ducking under trees for hours during air-raids. We had two days rest in a lovely little mediaeval castle in the Inn valley and finally climbed the last steep piece of road to the Gasthaus Adler above Bregenz at the German/Swiss border in Fluh. This little nest seemed away from all the world, just a few scattered cottages, thatch-roofed and snug between hedges and gentle-sloping green pastures. The air was pure champagne; cows blinked placid white eyelashes; bells tinkled gently. Far, far below, human spots scurried in the little town of Bregenz

We could see the Lake Boden, a great shining mirror, marking the frontiers between Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Cars crawled on their way like beetles on the winding white roads in all directions. It was good to be there. We should have stayed there but people in exile succumb either to an overwhelming lazy inactivity or they will be driven to nervous restlessness and active movement. I had but one fervent wish, to relax and wait developments.

We had watched the slow advance of Allied Forces through the German plain; along the glittering lake we saw a tiny steamship ploughing its way, with last German fugitives from Constanz, the air-raids had thundered over Bregenz and Lindau, leaving many ruins and burning houses. Tanks and artillery marched over the roads and fields, little white flags appeared everywhere, defeated groups of the German army came dead-tired and tattered, throwing away guns and ammunition in their wake, all over the woods. The war was over. In a little pool a 'panzer-faust' — a German bazooka — lay for days, its muddy fist like a pale face gleaming between reeds. Austria was gradually occupied by French, American, Russian and English troops. It was cut up into military zones like a loaf of bread and Vienna was to be ruled alternately by the four powers — one of the most preposterous and impossible devices ever born in the political or military mind. Some kind of order had been restored in both Germany and Austria but there were ever new edicts and instructions which bewildered the wretched civilian population. We wanted to go to Switzerland but lacked the necessary visas and affidavits. Victor went to one of the military check-points — he was recognised by a German N.C.O., their paths having crossed on the Russian front — what a small world!

"What are you doing here?" were his first words to Victor. "Don't you know that you are on the list of those for whom we have to keep a look-out?" I shall be eternally thankful to this unnamed and unknown man.

Well, crossing the frontier legally to Switzerland was out, so what next?

We decided that Victor and Louis should spend the next few weeks in a Franciscan convent, whilst we, Ditta, Anthony (14 years old) and myself stayed at a farm near Bregenz, and waited for the end of the war here, without further risks.

It was here that the French troops found us in May 1945 — and a new chapter of our life began, even more tragic than the one before.

Having made friends with the French military authorities, we got the necessary permits and went back to Obersdorf to collect our

trunks. The Salzburg area lay in the American zone; as soon as we arrived, our ex-host, the baker and his wife, rushed out, pale and terrified.

Your belongings are gone, the military cars came and collected everything."

Through the window, a lemon-coloured face watched us intently. I had seen that face before! Where?

Yes, I had seen it several times two months ago here in Oberndorf furtively watching us from street corners and behind windows. When I looked again it had disappeared.

Minutes started to limp; evening shadows deepened. Red hot needles stabbed at my heart — I glanced at Victor and Louis; Ditta had turned her head away; Anthony was very pale. We drove on to find lodgings for the night.

Daylight touched the sky with gentle fingers. We decided to leave and while driving along the village street Victor was arrested. Guards drove him to the American CIC (Secret Intelligence). We followed them in the car and when they disappeared in that house, I got out and went in after him.

We were surrounded and asked many questions in two separate rooms.

"Was your husband a Secretary of State in Hungary in the last four years?"

"No, he was not."

"When was he a minister?"

"Never."

"Was he a member of the Hungarian Nazi Party called Nyilas?"

"No. Never."

This went on endlessly. I was sent away, Victor was taken to prison. Next morning, I went back to the CIC. Hair brilliantined, the plump-faced officer looked over his desk, his thick lips curled into a sneer.

"What do you want?"

"My husband."

He laughed mirthlessly, his eyes darted too and fro like a rat in a cage. I went on:

"There must be a terrible mistake somethere, I —"

He jumped up, his fist came down on the desk with a crash.

"Say! Are you trying to accuse the U.S. Army? Get out of here you —!"

I left but next morning I went back again. He was standing in the courtyard looking like the twin brother of a squat gorilla. Near

him stood a tall, lean-faced Austrian interpreter. The gate was ajar. I rang the bell and walked in. The officer watched me silently, but the interpreter hastily stepped behind him and made frantic signs to me but, at that particular moment, I didn't realise what he was doing. Without warning, a huge wolf-dog jumped forward — silent as a grey ghost — his jaw clamped on my leg but he didn't bite down. Instead, he let go of me and, wagging his tail gently, nuzzled the fingers of my hand which hung limply at my side. The CIC was more civil this time but, I was losing precious seconds. The tall interpreter bowed his head with a kind of furtive homage but the sadistic officer glinted wolf's teeth, leering.

The old Austrian police inspector recognised me — we had spent many years in that area as it was not far from the scene where we hunted chamois many years before.

He got up and his eyes blinked in kindest sympathy; he gave me a pass to the local jail and whispered,

"It was a mistake, the right man has been found," and he added, "As far as I know, his Lordship will be released tomorrow."

Tomorrow came, Victor was not released! He was transferred to an unknown concentration camp. The old police inspector gave me a long look when I went back to him, hands lifted in a gesture of helplessness, he said with a deep sigh —

"The CIC works with the wrong people; they are not after the real devils, what they want is *rich* prisoners in order to confiscate their belongings."

I half stumbled down the wooden stairs and hastened to the recently appointed town prefect — a tall thin black-bearded man: eyes glittering and cold. According to the baker, this had been the official gentleman whose black sedan had halted in front of their house to supervise personally the search for our goods (those farmers had, it seems, hidden everything under straw in cellar and attic and even in the chimney). The town prefect, a CIC officer, and an Austrian Jew in U.S. Army uniform, then proceeded to investigate the 'loot', which comprised not only our possessions but those of Victor's sisters' and brothers' families as well. Contents were then piled back, hurly-burly, into our trunks and locked up in the cellar of the town hall for the time being, but not before an American newspaper man was called in to take pictures of the 'stolen crown jewels' — they were studs and a belt of György's Hungarian traditional gala costume. In regard to these latter events, I must explain that, since we were in Western Austria at the time, I had to depend on hearsay for the above information.

I went from lawyer to lawyer, official to official, looking for some solution, and always alone, for we were afraid to bring Louis into the affair, lest he, too, became involved. I felt three-fold responsibility, particularly since Consuelo and György were far away and could not do anything themselves in regard to their property. Finally, after encountering one hostile official after another, I lost my temper and flared,

"You have no right to hold a man in custody without making known the charges! I hear rumours that you are accusing my husband of having been a minister in Hungary — if you are honest and really want to *know* the truth, you need only pick up the telephone and call Budapest! Besides, you have no right to keep property which is not even his —!"

Checking myself, I rose and said slowly and deliberately,

"I will go right to headquarters to get justice!"

All eyes were focussed on me, and then shifted towards each other; the Austrian in American uniform stood up quickly, a conciliatory expression on his ugly face.

"Madame, we trust you have told us the truth about that confiscated property. I authorise you to take out whatever you may wish in personal clothing and bedding but, of course, you are not to touch anything that is of value." I left.

We couldn't discover where Victor was being held. We rushed to and fro without permits or food ration tickets; in fear of losing our car we walked miles and miles or we hitch-hiked. This meant carrying food, waiting indefinitely at cross-roads, half crushed in wagons, freezing or half apoplectic in the blazing noon sunshine. Queing up once for five hours, in front of the Salzburg jail, behind a tiny barred window, prisoners appeared two by two. They were allowed five minutes conversation with visitors, and I hoped to find Victor at last. Gaunt and the shadow of himself, I found — my brother-in-law Ferenc. He was accused of having deliberately given orders to shoot three war prisoners. It was indeed easy, nay, it was a kind of boasting justice and power in those times to accuse everybody of unimaginable crimes and cruelty. We found Victor in a concentration camp on the outskirts of Salzburg.

Marcus-Orr was the name of that camp, where 8,000 prisoners, men and women, were guarded behind wires, bars, steel doors, from squat towers flood-lighting the areas at night, and manned by American soldiers armed to the teeth.

The prisoners were hungry; once they had no drinking water for two days! Parcels could be sent and, luckily, more often than not

the prisoners would get those parcels. I stayed in Salzburg to be near him, but orders were strict; I had no billeting permit and no food tickets either. People were kind, but frightened and unwilling to give me night shelter for more than a day or two. I lived practically in the streets, painting to pay for food and lodgings. Hungarian money had lost its value. We had bought British pounds on the black market before leaving Hungary; those pounds proved to have been forged by the German army in Belgium and were of no value whatsoever. Our Austrian schillings — recalled to be stamped by the government — were kept in our names and only a ridiculously small pittance was doled out to us monthly. We were actually penniless beggars and the days got shorter and the nights bitterly cold.

For weekends, I went occasionally to Fuschl to see Mother and everyone else, including my own children. Feri and his two boys, in order to be entitled to food tickets, had taken jobs as woodcutters on the steep slopes in the forest, dangerous work for which they were much too weak and poorly dressed. Maria laid the table for a dozen mouths, dividing miniature portions of nondescript food on 12 plates. Often the children asked for more bread, but there was not a crumb left. Mother took charge of baby Mathew. The young girls, including Ditta, helped everywhere, took on temporary jobs, knitted pullovers, painted ceramics for sale in order to get a few schillings. Louis and Anthony roamed the countryside, foraging for food.

On one evening, slightly giddy, I trudged along the slippery road towards the outskirts of Salzburg, where hundreds of little houses nestled among grassy hills and forlorn gardens. Across the road the railway, two gleaming ribbons, joined far away on the misty skyline. From the nearby Negro GI camp, wisps of onion and meat cooking, and the sickening smell of frying doughnuts, came to mingle with the stench of garbage and manure. A train thundered across the bridge, trailing black smoke, dotted with red sparks. Ghostly faces peered out from blurred windows. Two slim GI's, coal black, rolling nostalgic white eyeballs, sprawled in the grass, staring at the beautiful city, towers and castles, glittering in the last sun. I stopped to rest for a minute, taking off a heavy knapsack from bruised shoulders.

"Would you care to have a picture painted of you?" I started the conversation companionably. They understood me at once. They looked at each other, got up and agreed instantly. Asking several intelligent questions, the two boys, who turned out to be college students, came next morning and I sketched them on the

porch of the tiny house where lived a kind, fat widow. She ran a little grocery store. She shared her bed and morning coffee with me for a week. It was a luxury to sleep in the same bed for a week. The first night we talked until dawn and she gave me a dose of strength and vitality which I needed badly. She greeted me with a bright smile on her gleaming face, aglow from the stove.

"You must go to Headquarters tomorrow," she announced briskly.

"My good Mrs. Pfandl, how *can* I hope to get inside those ten-times guarded buildings, when I am literally kicked out from everywhere?"

"Those who behave like that to you are vulgar gangsters, judging everybody by their own mind. You go to some American generals, they are sure to be gentlemen and will listen to you!"

She was right.

Next day I got into that huge building without the slightest difficulty. In front of a desk, piled high with papers, sat an officer, the kindest faced Colonel I have ever met; he waved me into a chair and actually smiled! This made me idiotically near to bursting into tears. I managed a few sentences. He said I should go straight to General Clark's deputy Chief-of-staff, Major General Ladue.

"But where is he?"

"Just across the square," he pointed.

I saw a white-belted, white-legginged sentry standing at attention in front of wide-opening imposing gates.

"How can I get in there?" I asked, bewildered.

He smiled broadly; picking up the telephone, he talked to someone, wrote a few lines on a card — I was dismissed. Hastily I scribbled on a piece of paper 'Colonel Wray — fat angel'.

My memory was completely unreliable by hunger, and so, invariably, I jotted down little reminders of the many official people I spoke to during those months.

Five minutes later I was inside that building, treading upon mellow green carpets and sitting on a gilded brocade padded chair with an Alice-in-Wonderland sort of feeling. A powerfully-built, straight-limbed man was Major General Ladue. His blue eyes were steady, serious, not unkind. In as few words as possible I told him who we were, what had happened and what I came to ask for.

"The authorities could put me in jail any minute because I haven't one of those permits obligatory for a DP and I won't leave this area either as long as I hope to help my husband."

There was a pause. I saw that my wet shoes had made a damp patch on the green carpet. He said,

"And you are painting in the streets to get food? Can you show me some of your paintings?"

I dived into my ample bag and fished out a few reproductions. He studied them, one by one, carefully. He glanced down at Colonel Wray's note in his hand.

"I believe every word you have told me, Madame Károlyi, but I don't *know* you. Please come back this afternoon."

I went away and then went back at 2:30 p.m. I was ushered in at once.

"This is a permit for you to visit your husband in Marcus-Orr. Unfortunately I cannot do anything for him because these cases are dealt with by headquarters in Vienna. I have given orders to our _____ Section to appoint you as portrait painter in a rest sector of the U.S. Army, with complete billeting and food, provided you feel inclined to do it. I would like you to make a water colour sketch of me, if you can. Time is very short — I am leaving Salzburg the day after tomorrow and cannot give you more than 3 hours."

The interview had not lasted more than 7 minutes.

His car took me straight to Marcus-Orr and in another 5 minutes, oblivious of the guards, I rushed into my husband's arms. He was composed, I was not. We were allowed to talk, sitting on a bench in a guard's presence, who never took his eyes off us and listened to every word. We had been warned that we must speak English. Half an hour *can* stretch into an eternity but it seemed like a minute to us. Victor was wonderful and still optimistic about soon being released "because this silly mistake must be cleared up soon." My heart gave a lurch — the time was over! Victor was led away smiling and waving. I stood and stared after him and then was taken into a bare room where maybe a dozen vile, hostile, leering faces surrounded me. They glared. I sat down on a wooden cot. A door was flung open. The tall Austrian Jew in American uniform strode in brandishing Major General Ladue's permit.

"Who in the _____ gave you this permit?" He bellowed with a ridiculously bad accent. I was so scared and nervous that I had completely forgotten Major General Ladue's name. I said, "Read the signature!" He pounced on my handbag and tore our everything including the slip of paper with 'Colonel Wray — fat angel' scribbled on it. He obviously could make nothing of it but he went out with my pad. I waited — everybody scowled. My knees had gone completely cotton-woolly. A big round clock thundered the minutes —

every minute seemed an hour; the long-hand stopped dead so suddenly and then it would go ahead with a jerk. In front of the window, prisoners were led like cattle. A shrill whistle sounded and gave me gooseflesh, and then the Austrian came back with my bag and I was led out and went away. I saw Victor standing behind the heavily barred window — he smiled a strained smile — he was pale. I dragged my legs along the whole length of the camp and back towards the city, where a bus stopped. I climbed in and went 'home'. My hostess was aglow but with curiosity this time. Changing my clothes hastily in the ice-cold room, I collected the necessary paraphenalia to paint, plus a few other things and sat down for a cigarette. At 7 o'clock, Major General Ladue's car picked me up at the Hotel Austria and drove me to his villa. After dinner, I made a hasty sketch while he talked to his other guests but, I had to stop soon. It was no good, I was exhausted and I went up to a comfortable room to sleep, like a log, for 9 hours.

During breakfast, Major General Ladue lifted his head in conversation — I jumped up! I had just caught the right movement and expression and I started getting it on paper at once.

"Do you want me to stop eating too?"

"By no means, please go on and eat and smoke and talk," I said, "but for goodness sake don't be self-conscious. Don't pay any attention to my staring at you!"

"Why? Does that help?"

"Tremendously!"

"But I was prepared to be a statue for 2 hours!"

"Utterly wrong! You couldn't be a statue even if you tried and the picture would be a flop!"

"Would it? Why?"

"Because you are an active man, full of driving personality. Take a look at yourself in that mirror over there and judge whether the word 'statue' could be applied to you!" It was not meant to be funny but he roared and then abruptly changed the subject.

"Have you painted many people lately?"

"Yes — mostly GI's — mess sergeants preferably!"

His blank slightly inquiring look made me smile but apparently he had understood that my sympathy was obviously a culinary one and tactfully refrained from asking. Instead he wanted to know more about the soldiers' behaviour towards me.

"They have an uncanny instinct for proper behaviour in my presence," I said, "even when they are drunk. You see, I simply stop them in the street!! They are usually very keen to be painted but

it's just too cold to sit about. I am forced to go into any mess hall and even into their quarters. I can't finish more than 2 sketches in a day; sometimes I am obliged to go back 2 or 3 times and it happened once that the whole place reeked of alcohol and they were sprawled on their bunks shouting and singing. I took one disgusted look, sat down without a word and started to paint. Gradually there was complete silence — they either walked out or fell asleep. Then the door opened and a young boy lurched in (I had painted him the day before). He stared, his mouth agape; a completely blank look on his face — then he collapsed on the nearby bed.

I painted for an hour then stopped to rest; my model got up and went out — the others had drifted away — and I was all alone. The drunken GI beckoned to me repeatedly. 'What do you want?' I asked him. 'Did the boys pay you all right yesterday?' he stuttered. 'L-l-let them g-g-give you some candy for your kids too,' he trailed off. Well there was something pathetic and touching about that boy and I suddenly thought of his own mother! Tomorrow I have a painting date with 2 coloured students."

Major General Ladue was a bit surprised.

"Do you really? Are they easier to paint than white boys?"

"I thought so at first because I found them so much alike, but I was wrong. There features are very individual and there is a subtle range in their colouring which one has to practice. Little black babies must be adorable to paint!"

Major General Ladue observed, "Well, I suppose all babies look adorable to their mothers. Where are your children?"

"My youngest son is 10 miles from here staying with my brother's family. My grown-up son and daughter are on the Swiss-German border at Lindau, working for a Swiss Welfare Committee in the French Occupation Zone. You see, I was rather anxious for my eldest son, he is 21 years old. We have had too much bad luck lately in the American Zone. The Swiss Director of the Committee knew my brother Charles, who is in the States, and was looking for a Secretary and a Representative. That seemed to temporarily solve our problem but parting was not easy. A mother is always anxious. I went with them as far as Munich."

"Civilians are not encouraged to travel nowadays," he said. "Did you have difficulties?"

"Lots! Crooks get along easily everywhere. It's only the honest people who are treated like criminals," I said bitterly. "I had all the necessary papers but the Army continually issues new regulations.

Maybe 300 people, mostly men, were pulled off the train on the German-Austrian frontier at 8 o'clock at night. So was I."

"What did you do?"

"I walked for about a mile through the woods and knocked at a door. Some of those simple people are incredibly kind and they are good judges of character too. They took one look at me and gave me food and shelter for the night without asking a single question."

"What did you do next morning?"

"We had been told to come to the CIC office for a check-up, so I went and lined up for about an hour but nothing seemed to happen. From the upper floor a rosy-cheeked girl in a nurse's uniform looked out at us from behind iron bars. The men started calling up to her and questioning her. 'Are you locked up?'"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"Since when?"

"For 3 days now."

"Suddenly I was terribly frightened. I turned and went away. It was Sunday, I went to Church, then I took a ticket to another village that I had never visited before but knew to be a fairly good place to cross the border. I got out, walked another couple of miles and realized suddenly that I would collapse from lack of food. At last, a good woman gave me some hot broth and a piece of bread. It was noon. The village seemed to sleep. Several times I felt obliged to knock at doors and inquire my way. I walked on through steep fields sprinkled with buttercups. Under my feet the ground was spongy; I stumbled and slipped from exhaustion. The leather straps on my rucksack cut heavily into my bruised shoulders. Further ahead, tall green elms marked the border. Then I heard the slow gurgle of a brook, under dark trees; I found the narrow shaky footbridge, walked over it and climbed up the bank. I was in Austria again, maybe 40 miles away from Salzburg."

"And ...?" General Ladue wanted to know.

"And then I sat down," I said, trying to smile.

Major General Ladue offered me a cigarette.

"Thank you," I cleared my throat.

"Please go on," he said.

"Well, what can a DP do in such a situation? My legs got walking and presently a dogcart came trotting by with a farmer and his little daughter. They gave me a lift, then I was on the highway and made frantic signs to every car. A huge Red Cross lorry rumbled

past but did not stop. Behind me, a jeep had seen me waving, it stopped and zoomed into reverse. Two GI's, as black as coal, sat in it. I climbed in. They started conversation.

'Where do you want to go?'

'To Fuschl.'

'That is quite a long way.'

'Yes.'

'Would you like us to drive you there?'

'Where are *you* supposed to go?'

'To Salzburg.'

'I will go to Salzburg then — with you.'

'No — come with us to camp, you can wait in our quarters during supper then we will take you to Fuschl.'

'No, thanks, I will just get off in Salzburg. It is kind of you to have given me a lift anyhow.'

But one of the GI's began to glare stubbornly.

'So you don't trust us! We are not white and not good enough for you, is that it?'

"That's not the point!' I said firmly, 'but a GI camp, whether white or Negro is no place for a woman!' That settled it. It was 3:30 when I climbed off the jeep and onto a bus, heading towards Fuschl. Later on I had to walk once more and then I stretched out in the grass and slept.

"But you reached Fuschl at last," Major General Ladue said with a kind smile. "Where there's a will there's a way."

"Oh, God! I wish that this could be applied to everything," I said thinking of Victor in that camp, but I felt that I had talked too much about myself already and so we talked of other things. Presently an ADC came in with some urgent message and my model left. I had painted for exactly two hours and went on working alone. At one o'clock the water-colour portait, neatly mounted, was ready. A delicious lunch was served to me on dainty porcelain. The car took me to headquarters where I delivered the picture and I was asked by Major General Ladue to paint another one from a photograph of his little boy. He then left the next day for Vienna and I saw him but once more in the course of my wanderings trying to help Victor when he invited me to lunch so that I could meet his attractive wife and adorable children in Vienna. He had been unable to help Victor but he had made it possible for Anthony and me to stay in Salzburg, to have lodgings, food and work for two years, and that was really more than I dared to hope in those times.

I left my suburban good friends and got a clean little room in the Hotel Pitter. It was a GI rest centre; Army regulations, restrictions and everyday routine changed incessantly. I had to submit to being glared at, ordered and shouted at by the Captain, the Mess Sergeant, a few other little dictators, the hostesses, the floor maids, the hall porter, the orderlies on duty; it bewildered me considerably. I felt snubbed and pushed about like a naughty teenager in school and I was very lonely. The staff mistrusted me. The officers disliked me because they couldn't classify me, being neither servant nor 'Fraulein'; the mess sergeant, an ex-Prussian Jew, was exceedingly hostile, probably because I was Hungarian and had a title. Though I had dropped the title, feeling it very much in disharmony with my situation, I was asked by Lieutenant _____,

"What shall we call you?"

"Mrs. Károlyi, of course," I said. "Why not?"

"Don't you think it's too conspicuous here in Austria? Besides that, the boys will never remember it."

"All right. Let's find something ... I've got it. Call me Mrs. Ruby. I loved the sound of that word as a child!" So, I had been baptised Mrs. Ruby.

Autumn blizzards were moaning, the threatening heaviness of black clouds swept over bleak countryside. We carried parcels to camp Marcus-Orr, we lingered in vain around the encampment hoping to catch a glimpse of Victor. It was a period when life expectancy was extremely low and the tonic quality of one kind word would have done much to lift the spirits, but no kind word ever came from that place, where I could picture Victor's life — without having the slightest possibility of helping him. I used to go round that place, but there was no hint of Victor. Once I happened to go too near to the wire railings — I was engrossed in my thoughts and hadn't realised it; neither was I aware of those hoarse shouts, 'Get that woman away, hey you damn _____, get away from there!" Then I heard whizzing sounds — I winced instinctively — Good gracious! Are they shooting at me now? — getting away as fast as I could — I gritted my teeth in impotent fury.

Sometime later in October, traffic was opened to civilians to the Russian zone of Austria, including Vienna. With the greatest difficulty, I collected the necessary 21 stamps on my passport and went to Vienna. I was very much frightened. Our train crawled into the huge station between high-piled ruins. I was crushed and carried out by the crowd. It was dark and wet. I clung to my small suitcase. It was hard to distinguish street names; my mood dropped below

zero. Several cars came wallowing through muddy water and splashed my frozen feet. Now I was not only scared, I was wet! Rough crowds hastened and pushed me off the sidewalk and into the street. Russian soldiers passed with rifles and all sorts of vicious weapons on their belts. I had been warned not to stay in the street after dark but to get information at the next police cubicle. There was one just 50 yards away. I entered and tried to contact relatives and friends, by telephone, but everything had come 'undone' in that mighty black city. The numbers were changed, no answer came — I didn't know what to do. For an hour, two kind American policemen drove me round town in a jeep to find lodgings. But they had other duties and finally deposited me in a dark but still crowded main street. It was raining; water poured down in nine rivulets from my battered black umbrella, the wind tore at my macintosh and it flapped like a terrified bird. The suitcase pulled at my arm till it felt as if it had stretched to the length of a fish pole.

"Anything the matter?" a kind voice said. I dropped the suitcase, peering into a human face, a *kind* face.

"Yes!" I said stupidly. "I don't know where to go."

"You can come with me, my dear. My husband is a lawyer and we've got a spare room; tomorrow you can decide what to do."

"God bless you, madam," I replied in a hoarse whisper and somehow we both knew that it was all right. She carried my bag, gave me something hot to drink and put me to bed. I fell asleep instantly — 'God's ways are God's ways'. I will never forget good Mrs. _____ and her husband, so kind, so honest, so human in a world full of shadows. I stayed with them for five days. I went everywhere; I contacted everyone for help for my husband and my brother-in-law. I explained, begged, cried; desperately, I even tried to bribe people in a fit of hysteria. From headquarters to low back streets I went, and hit my head against solid concrete walls or into stifling cotton wool, everywhere — "Speak to X department ..." (this meant going up and down over countless streets). "Come back in the afternoon ..." I went, sat in the public park and went back. "Go to Section X ..." (Where was that d_____ed section!?) "Get in touch with Mr. X ..." (Mr. X was out of town). "Bring me a typed petition ..." (My God! Where would I type it and how could I pay for it?!) "No, I cannot give you an answer ..." (Who can?!) "Come back in two weeks ..." (I can't, I'm working for the U.S. Army; I am a DP and can't get a travelling permit and the Russian zone is dangerous for Hungarian fugitives ...) Came the fifth day, *it was the second of November*, 1945; I was to get a concrete answer at last

at Headquarters. Commander Major C_____ had spoken to me, his face was intelligent, his manners were crisp, his eyes had the penetrating quality of an honest man. I felt confident that here was neither a concrete wall nor cotton wool; here was that, which in general, every Army in the world lacks, a man with a human brain. I stood in line, I got my numbered entry card, passed guards, through dreary passages, elevators, anterooms, waited on a hard brown bench for half an hour staring at nothing and then, instead of the Commander, a middle-aged, kind Major ushered me into his own bare sanctum. His hand drummed a tattoo, with a blue pencil — I dug my nails into my palms.

"The Commander is very sorry he cannot speak to you, Madam. I am to tell you, in his name, that the case of your husband has been investigated. There is no serious charge against him. He will soon be released from our camp in Salzburg. Your brother-in-law's case needs more study."

The interview was over. I sat staring at him. Something was utterly wrong, but what? His eyes seemed honest and kind. I gave a start! No, *not kind!* A FLEETING PITY was in them! Or was it a trick of my imagination?

He stood up. I stood up. He went with me to the door, through the passage and to the elevator. We waited in silence — the elevator arrived — and he took his leave with stiff military courtesy. My legs carried me through endless streets covered with muddy yellow snow. My hands packed my suitcase and I said a farewell to my host and hostess. Towards midnight the Arlberg Express crawled and puffed its way out of the dreary city. I tried to doze off in my berth. The train stopped with brakes squealing and screaming. Muffled sound, shuffling of many feet and hoarse shouts came along the stuffy passage. Russian soldiers crowded in to check our passports.

"Nyet. Nicht gut," he shouted at me. "Get off."

I managed to dress and collect everything and crawled and slithered off the train. Fine biting snow had covered the train and platform completely; white fields stretched into endless blackness; yellow lights streamed from a tiny wooden shed through the open door; Russian guards swarmed in and out, their faces blue and red from liquor and blizzard. Maybe a dozen unhappy travellers stood about, desperately clutching at wallets and heavy suitcases, kicking cold feet against each other, mute question in their pallid faces. I recognised one of them — it was Count Zsiga Berchtold, Victor's cousin. He was, I felt, a Godsend — help in need — but we were all in the same boat! Unaware of a new Russian requirement issued

recently — four stamps on each passport page (I had twenty-one stamps) — three more were missing. These regulations were but one of many attempts to pull in as many victims as possible.

For two hours we stood about aimlessly in that biting cold. White glittering monstrous flakes dropped down in rainbow whirls, burning like red-hot needles on our faces. Russian police, heavily armed, stood ready to jump. Others bargained with the train inspector for liquor and then the Express moved away towards the West and vanished. I had a lost feeling deep in my chest. Black emptiness and white snow were around us. All the guards had crowded into that tiny hut, slammed the door and left us to our fate. Wearily we began to trudge our way in the ankle-deep snow, marching in a file along railings, blinded, stumbling, carrying our luggage mechanically, oblivious of time. At a solitary railway wireless post we came to a halt and went in to rest. My boots had worn through, the snow began to melt into my shoes. Above a desk the black buttons of a signal board danced crazily. Was I going to faint? No! Zsiga B. spoke —

"Three of us have decided to try our luck walking over the other connecting bridge — maybe the guards won't be so good at mathematics there! Will you join us? Do you think you can manage? It means another walk or would you prefer to go back to Vienna for new permits?"

'No — no — NO, I will go with YOU."

We walked and walked and walked. At last the bridge loomed, grey in the grey dawn. There stood another of those little wooden sheds. Inspection of papers. Long palaver. Two of our companions had disappeared in the mist and 'then there were two' — Zsiga and myself. These Russian guards were bad at mathematics, but they found another triviality to quibble over. They didn't like typed signatures (preferred the illegible written ones) — Zsiga's was typed, and so, 'then there was one', it was me, very much alone. Clinging occasionally to the guard rails for support, I walked over to the other side into the American zone. Under helmets, two pairs of sulky eyes scowled at me, then one of the guards bellowed,

"Why the hell can't you d_____ed civilians follow regulations? You have three stamps missing!"

"How can a wretched civilian possibly follow all your regulations? Do you think I would have come if I'd known about it?" I shrieked back in exhausted, desperate fury, and the sound of my own voice did me a lot of good.

They glared, then looked at each other.

"Get off the bridge then and go on," one of them growled.

"No, I won't!"

He wheeled back —

"I mean, *I can't!* I've walked for miles. Please may I sit down and wait for a bus?" He muttered, "Come in."

I went in and slumped down, it was warm there, snow melted off in rivulets all around me. I felt nothing else but gnawing hunger. Crusts of numbness melted off my brain, too. Presently I said,

"You are both very kind. I am an artist. May I make a quick sketch of one of you?" They got interested at once.

"Okay, which one shall it be?"

I shrugged. "Toss a coin." They both grinned.

"Before I start, you must give me some food. I am half-starved."

I never tasted such delicious food in my life! Then my pencil flew over the paper. But that sketch was just good enough to throw into the waste-paper basket. No, it was not thrown in a waste-paper basket; much later, when a bus took me to the next station, I found it lying in the muddy snow.

Anthony was thoroughly alarmed when late that night, he came to see me at the Hotel Pitter and I clung to him for once with uncontrollable sobs of despair and forboding.

Next morning, I hastened to see a doctor friend who used to be called into Marcus-Orr camp for special cases. He was not at home but he had left me a message. His wife made me sit down — there was *pity* in *her* eyes.

"Your husband has been turned over to the Hungarian government. An aeroplane took him and many other prisoners to Hungary *on the second of November.*"

I sat and sat, then I climbed down the rickety steps enclosed in a stupor. The world whirled on but it was the end for me.

Chapter XIV.

Months passed. Christmas had gone and New Year. No news came from Victor. Hungarian newspapers carried his photograph taken at the airport, manacled, lashed together with 19 prisoners. One by one, those prisoners were tried by the Communist People's Court in Budapest, found guilty — of course — and shot or hung. *The Hungarian Prime Minister was at that time a man called Nagy Ferenc.* Stars and Stripes published pictures of the executions with flaming comments, glorifying human justice.

At long last, a letter came from my husband through a friend who had remained behind the Iron Curtain, and from then on, we could write to each other weekly. It was both joy and concentrated anguish. I will refrain from commenting on those letters and Victor's life in the Hungarian jails. It is enough to say that political 'criminals' were treated far worse than murderers.

Victor's trial was on the second of March 1946. The Communist People's Court found him — naturally — guilty and sentenced him to 3½ years imprisonment. His 'guilt' was 'anti-democratic and pro-fascist behaviour', of which he gave proof by advocating uncompromising measures against the Communists and their collaborators. Whatever the sentence was and whatever the men who were in power then (not only in Hungary but in the United States as well) thought, the events of the following years proved beyond any doubt that my husband was right and more far-sighted about the impossibility of co-operating with Communism than many of the 'big' statesmen who courted and befriended a system which was and is based on wholesale murder and robbery.

Then the War Crime trials began in Salzburg with the case of Ferenc Károlyi, my brother-in-law. Newspapers carried his picture — hardly recognisable — *all* evidence spoke in *his* favour.

A lawyer told us (and I quote his words): "No court on earth could find him guilty, he will be released at once." The verdict was 'Guilty' and the death sentence was passed. My brother-in-law's lawyer asked for a new trial — it was granted. His case was once more before an American Court Martial, which, instead of sentencing him to be hanged, found him 'Not Guilty'. This was more than two

years *after* his first trial during which period he was kept in jail without information!!

* * *

The Arlberg Express was due at 2230 hours but all trains coming from the Russian zone were always late. I waited in the station until 4 o'clock in the morning. Sleeping was impossible on a hard bench between hundreds of people, a worrying, coughing, moving, moaning mass of wretchedness. At last the train came; I got a corner seat and stared out at snow-covered Austria — beautiful, remote and unreal as a fairy tale in the silvery moonlight. Morning came, noon and afternoon. In Vorarlberg I changed trains. The German frontier would be reached in half an hour and I had *no* permit to cross the border. But, I *must* go to Lindau, I *must* see Louis and Ditta. We had parted four months before. Yes, I *have* to pass that man-made barrier somehow, but I got more and more nervous as I sat in my corner. Lights were fading rapidly. A tiny weak bulb flared up — faces became yellow patches — the train puffed on shakily. The weather and war-beaten carriages rattled and felt as if they would fall to pieces any minute. The heavy iron train window calmly dropped on my head, its sharp edge hitting it precisely. A rapid growing bump felt as big as a fair-sized orange. I longed for a glass of water or cup of coffee; instead I got the full-measured sympathy of five very kind people in my compartment. I poured my heart out to them. Swathed in a dark rain cape, a horse-faced man sat perfectly still in his corner; he was watching and listening but never said a word. He was the seventh passenger. The train stopped with several unpleasant jerks. I held onto my head in a futile endeavour to keep it steady. An old Austrian border official checked our passports and left. Was it a trick of bad light or had it been a good will gesture or just stupidity — he had stamped my passport! The silent horse-faced passenger began to chuckle —

"Do you *realise* that you are *through* the first check-up? And now, don't do anything, just follow me and — not a word!"

Without a word, I offered him a package of Camels, a rare item in those times; he accepted one cigarette only. Our burning cigarettes were tiny moving stars in the dusky twilight. We rattled out of Bregenz, along the half-moon shaped end of Lake Boden and arrived at last at Lindau on the German border. Like an obedient retriever, I followed the long black cape. Many people scurried toward the exit. Many turned left into the customs area but we bought tickets and went calmly on and out of the station.

"You are in Germany now Madam, and I will take you to your son."

He said this as matter-of-factly as if our entering Germany without permits was the most natural thing in the world!

"You've done plenty already and — I thank you! I am sure I can find my way in this small town. You don't need to trouble anymore on my account!"

"You seem to have forgotten the iron window that fell on your head. Please give me your son's address?"

"Thank you," I said meekly, suddenly being aware of the throbbing orange on my forehead. I never stopped blessing that window!

Those three days with my darlings passed much too rapidly. György and his family were there, Consuelo and her two daughters joined us. We had much, very much to say to each other. Ditta wanted to come back with me. We left; Louis knew everybody and took us safely back to Bregenz. We had no difficulty passing through Customs. Later on, Ditta got a new job; first with the Swiss Red Cross in Klagenfurt and then with the English occupation forces. This beautiful little town was at the Hungarian-Yugoslav-Italian border in the English occupation zone of Austria; I fervently hoped to get a job there myself. Meanwhile, I made plans to go back to Budapest to see for myself what could be done to help and save Victor. But telepathy is a strong current. A letter came, in which he warned me not to do this because first, it would be completely useless and secondly I might be put in jail myself. In fact, my husband strictly forbade it.

Spring passed, early summer came. We could send money home and this enabled Victor to get warm clothes and proper food. This much could be done for him with the help of lawyers. Then news came that Victor had tried to escape; he was caught and had been taken to the hospital. News came from Lindau that György had had an accident. Hastening to his daily work on a bike, he had smashed his skull, broken his neck and was on the verge of death; and Ferenc, the eldest of the three brothers, had just been sentenced to death!

I went to Vienna again, to Lindau, to Innsbruck and Linz, in a futile endeavor to help. I was shaken to the depths of my heart by the tragedy of these three brothers. Summer turned to autumn. Christmas came again, New Year and spring. Two years after the war was over, millions of war prisoners were still missing everywhere and dying in concentration camps, in jails, from hunger and utter despair. Behind the Iron Curtain, hell on earth was governed

by Satan Incarnate with ever-growing power, lust, ruthlessness and demoniac political skill. American and English military powers continued to force fugitives by thousands to return behind that Iron Curtain, sending them either to death or giving the Communist governments the chance to enlist many men into their own military and political organizations. All those who openly contradicted the authorities lost both billeting permits and ration cards and could starve to death. Many preferred to flee towards the West or they committed suicide.

Ditta, Anthony and I were saved from this fate because we were working for the Armed Forces. But, the order of expulsion was in force and had been actually delivered into our hands — it caused us much trouble and many sleepless nights. Mother and all the family in Fuschl had been frightened twice; within twenty-four hours they had to be ready to board the next train for Hungary. Throughout the military zone, frantic crowds stood in line for hours and hours to be sent from office to office between wrangling authorities. There is no doubt about it, the lodging and food shortage was a well nigh insoluble problem and occupation armies and government were, for many years, unable to cope with it. Nevertheless, it was against all standards of humanity to force thousands of civilian fugitives who had saved their own bare lives — back into death, flatly repudiating personal freedom. Hundreds of thousands would have been only too willing to give their experience and strength to fight the ever-growing Bolshevik threat; but they were neither asked nor wanted — or trusted, as a matter of fact. Often, we remembered those crowds of fugitives who had poured into Hungary from Poland and who were treated by both government and by civilians with such kindness and generosity. This seemed a human duty and quite natural, but in certain areas of Austria and Germany, fugitives were looked upon more or less as criminals.

Then, I remember once, on my way cross-country, taking a good parcel into a concentration camp to Victor. I missed my return train and had to wait. Hoping against hope, I knocked at a farmer's door to ask for food. I was refused. I went back to the little station and sat down. From nowhere appeared a blonde-tressed young girl in neat Tyrolean dress. Stepping up with a kind of brisk shyness, she said,

"Did you want some bread?"

"Yes," I said.

Out of her apron she took a big loaf of snow-white bread and gave it to me with a sweet smile. I hadn't seen such a beautiful loaf of bread in years.

"God bless you my child, but, can I accept such a rare gift?"

"Oh yes, you can!" she said with genuine pleasure.

"Where is your home?" I asked.

She waved towards the mountains.

"I live up there in an 'almhütte' with my parents and eight sisters and brothers — it is two hours walk. I come down twice a week to buy provisions."

I decided immediately to go and see those people, but when I had time to do it, my legs had a hard task and twice I nearly lost my way. But it was worthwhile. I found a place kindred to heaven — genuine kindness and simple faith which made me long to stay up there and never come down again. Twelve people sat down to a round table which was presided over by a tall, bony woman, her smallest baby on her lap; we all ate from a great earthenware bowl and drank fresh milk. The little flaxen-tressed girl slept somewhere else to give me the privacy of her own small neat room in the attic; at sun-up everybody started work. I made a water-colour of one of the numerous little boys; his button brown eyes darting to and fro — a striking contrast to the flaming mop of red hair — he was sitting proudly on the rickety chair; all the others plus a Nanny goat, two dogs and several cats watched from a safe distance. Sunset found me again at the little station where Anthony picked me up with a Jeep on his homeward way. He was then a kind of Man Friday. assistant manager at the Stars and Stripes office; he liked his job. Anthony and I had been the closest of friends for years. We were always together and his presence gave me happiness and strength. When his father was arrested and his brother and sister had left, he took matters into his own capable hands and, without saying a word. He went to the nearest Army motor pool and got a job as a truck driver and mechanic. He had actually never driven a car; his only practice in that line consisted of tinkering with every imaginable machine and driving all vehicles in and out of the garage at home. Our chauffeur and coachmen had looked on, smiling their approval at his mechanical-minded skill but taking the precaution of getting out of his way hastily whenever he practiced in the stable courtyard. But to be ordered gruffly to climb onto a huge Army truck and follow the American driver racing ahead through the crowded streets of Salzburg was altogether a different matter; Anthony gritted his teeth and raced after the car, tooting frantically. With the efficient help of his guardian angel combined with his own clear head and instinctive skill he managed to pass that first test and was from then on employed as a mechanic, truck driver and

chauffeur of several officers. His life was so crowded with experiences, droll and ghastly events, that they might easily fill a book. He used to tell me anxiously,

"Mom, this is okay for the present but I don't fancy remaining a DP truck driver all my life. And, what about school? My interrupted studies ... my music ...?"

"All right darling, just take it easy and be a good conscientious driver now ... open your eyes and your mind to everything which might be of value for you to use in the future; shut your eyes and mind to everything else. All your experiences will come in handy to you in the future and maybe they will serve you even more than learning mathematics, geography and history now."

"Mom, do you really think so?"

"Of course I do. And you can trust me to tell you the truth I am convinced of it."

Nevertheless there were times when I sank into complete despondency concerning certain experiences of my young son working for the U.S. Occupation Army. You see, we both missed my husband's help, sound advice and protection. Victor was not the man to put his thoughts easily into words and in the course of years, he had learned to mistrust words even more. He could be gentle and brilliant but, more often than not, he would lapse into silence. In times of trouble and hardship, he was reliable — as reliable as a rock — and he had a hard hitting fist — far more valuable than graceful phrases and ideas. In all those years spent in prison behind the Iron Curtain he never once complained to me but he worried incessantly over our hardships. He had written me a long letter once too often — this was a crime. His punishment was three weeks in a completely dark single cell. His letters had been hard to read in the past; often I managed to understand them more by sense than by sight. But now those letters were little masterpieces and we gradually developed a code of our own. This meant careful writing. I spent hours at night racking my brain as to what to do to get him out of jail before it was too late. To this end, I had engaged the help of a lawyer, Mr. , a man with widespread connections and possibilities who had given us much hope. After nearly two years of planning, working, travelling and paying, one day, stepping out from his car, that gentleman casually informed me,

"I cannot bring your husband out of prison so we had better give up trying altogether."

This happened in Vienna on the exact spot where the dramatic scene of 'The Third Man' was enacted ... and that window, through

which the old janitor witnessed the crime (in the film) was the window behind which I had sat for hours, days and weeks, painting, working, planning and hoping. Something inside me took a plunging drop; on that day I was hanging on the ragged edge of hysteria. I walked the streets of Vienna in a tattered starved state, heart pounding, too weak to realise what I was doing. I passed depressing ruins, gaunt skeletons of formerly prosperous mansions, now abandoned and spiritless. A gloom had settled upon that huge town, once so famous for its merry good humour, boisterous singing, delight in feasts and enjoyment, dancing, drinking and lovemaking. The whole world seemed empty of life and all that was left was a hollow shell on the shores of time. Stalin's mighty heel had come down and was pounding the streets of Vienna to the point where people soon learned to dread the Russian sector and they walked through it hurriedly and furtively. People had been kidnapped in the street in full daylight with baffled, terrified pedestrians looking on. As I walked those streets, I was oblivious of time and danger. My brain was crowded with visions of Victor in that prison, full of inhuman cruelty and terror, tortured by, I knew not what, physical and mental agonies. I kept repeating, "And I cannot save him, I cannot save him! Who can?" Suddenly my eyes saw a tramcar, turned upside down, sprawling, a helpless heap on the empty street. With a start I realised where I was — in the Russian sector. Painfully, orienting myself, I retraced my steps and kept going, going, as though in an endless, terrifying dream.

Late that evening, I left Vienna. I could not sleep; the night was intensely brilliant, not a cloud crossed the star-studded violet dome wherein the full moon soared serenely, bathing all visible things in crystalline purity. Gradually, thoughts of anthroposophy, of HOPE and FAITH lifted the terrible cloud of depression; new possibilities and plans began to take shape in my mind.

* * *

The door was pushed open roughly; a young GI walked in, hands in pockets, a cigarette dangling in pursed lips.

"Are you the painter?"

"Yes, I am. Would you close the door?"

This was a typical beginning to my daily work at the Hotel Pitter. A short conversation would follow —

"I want my picture painted."

"How long are you going to stay here?"

Sometimes the answer would be a week, three or four days and that was all right, but when the response happened to be, "Till this afternoon ..." I tried not to feel a certain resentment towards a man who didn't apparently appreciate the difference between a photographer and a portrait painter. And, if that particular GI happened to have some feature particularly characteristic, such as a big nose, brushy eyebrows, a funny mouth, I could manage to paint him in that short time. After two years of the kind of 'art', I had an album with more than 267 signatures of my subjects, and a top drawer collection of unbelievably good anecdotes. There was the boy for instance, who asked me pointblank how old I was. "Forty-seven," I told him obligingly and matter-of-factedly.

"Forty-seven!?" he exclaimed. "Gee, but you don't look as old as that! Now, I wonder ... would you let me kiss you, a *real* kiss?"

"No thank you!" I replied crisply, bending over my paints to hide an irrepressible smile.

"But please, just to oblige me. I've never kissed a woman *that* old and I would like to have the experience."

I burst out laughing.

"You had better try to collect experiences somewhere else."

Another GI walked in, a cowboy from Texas, polite and serious.

"Mrs. Ruby, they say you have a title, you are some Countess, is that true?"

"Yes."

"Well, I want a picture made and I want you to sign it with your full name, your title and all."

Some of these young men were hardboiled 'gangster' types, many were boyishly genuine, jolly and kind. Some sat down sheepishly but could be drawn out in a couple of minutes and felt genuinely at ease speaking of their homes, families and 'frauleins'; some were interested in serious topics and I learned from their sound, philosophical minds. Very few would be interested in what I might tell them but, if they were, they behaved as real friends and gentlemen. I was always sorry to see them leave the rest-hotel; friends were too rare a gift, especially as time went on and new Captains took command at the hotel. I remember one especially being loathed by everybody; he was squat and alert with stark mistrust in his furtive eyes; sensing dishonesty, lies and crime wherever he went and, he went everywhere, inspections followed each other rapidly. You couldn't meet him without his puffed wet lips being clamped on a huge Havana.

His teeth were yellowed but as he never smiled, they showed

only when he barked. "I'm a swell guy, a perfect example of an officer," was written all over him but, except for himself, nobody knew it. I felt genuinely sorry for the Austrian staff and couldn't blame them for the words of contempt overheard in my own room on the top floor under the roof, between two cooks and two maids. The tiny room was so stuffy and hot that I couldn't paint there. I had to put up with the vile light in the big lobby but, more often than not, I painted on the landing of the second floor. I too, had been ordered to appear at the Captain's office. I went in. He didn't even bother to look up.

His cigar held firmly in its place, he pretended to be busily working. His desk was a litter of books, files and empty coke bottles. Grey ash was sifted over everything. I sat down. Then, he looked up and his eyes narrowed; his tongue began to shift the cigar from one corner to another, in deliberate slow motion. He scowled. I scowled back.

"I understand that you are on our staff list as a portrait painter?"

"I have been asked by Major General Ladue to work as portrait painter in a U.S. rest centre."

"How much do you charge for a picture?"

"It depends which kind."

He scowled again.

"Well — any picture. What are the boys paying you?"

"I was asked by the former Captain not to charge more than 70-100 schillings for a watercolour portrait."

"And you don't?"

"No! I don't! Oil portraits are much more expensive, of course."

"How much?"

"It depends on their size."

The cigar slowly crawled back into the other corner. He said,

"You will understand, that the U.S. Forces in Austria are overrun by all sorts of artists! If you care to stay at the Hotel Pitter, I expect you to work eight hours for the GI's."

"You seem to have made a mistake, Captain. I am not a *wall* painter. I am a *portrait* painter and refuse to be expected to paint eight hours!"

For once, he realised his mistake and his red face suffused with darker colour up to the roots of his hair. The cigar was taken out of its place.

"What I meant to tell you Madam, is that I expect you to work *only* for the Army as long as we give you lodgings."

"Now that, of course, is obvious and does not require stressing. But I may as well tell you that I should have special working conditions in order to produce my best. In a crowded lobby or on a drafty staircase landing, I cannot be expected to do it. I would be obliged to you if you would give me a proper studio. There are several large rooms, unoccupied now, which suffered slight bomb damage. One would be perfectly good enough. In any case, it might have the proper light and space." I got up. "Is there anything else you wish to tell me?"

"No thank you," he said civilly enough.

The next Captain was blonde and polite and rather like a spectacled school-master. His wife came and two alert little boys with the delightful manners of little gentlemen. This Captain gave me, at once, an empty room on the first floor. It was cool and spacious and I was able, at last, to get out some photographs and my beloved Anthroposophy books. But, do what I could, there was not much time to study them. Occasionally I went to see members of the Society in Salzburg and attended weekly lectures. Often, I was too tired to go out in the evening and I just sat in the sun for half an hour — once a day — in the Mirabelle Garden. A fountain played jets of sparkling water; the formal Italian gardens were carefully trimmed; little children with mottled golden eyes and pale curls played on the wide sandy paths. Above an alley of chestnut trees, the old Castle projected its towers and diamond-paned windows, round bays and slanting roofs; doves cooed in the cool foliage. There were no ruins, nothing that would remind me of the war, only a profusion of flowers and budding young life. Sometimes Mrs. M_____ would be there. Sitting on a carved stone bench, a kind witty lady, her heart and brain in perfect balance and harmony. I knew her whole family, having met them at the weekly Anthroposophy lectures. One of her sons was proprietor-director and surgeon of the most up-to-date hospital in town. Since Anthony was no longer entitled to Army billeting, he lived in one of the spare rooms of the hospital nursing home which was under repair. It was a bitterly cold room all through the winter months; temperatures were at freezing point most of the time. But Anthony never complained, in fact, he seemed to thrive on it. From a strong little boy of fourteen, he had shot up into a smiling giant so rapidly that clothing questions meant unsurmountable difficulties. Nothing could be bought without tickets. Ready-made clothes, shirts, even hats were too small for him. A Scottish patterned rug had been converted successfully into a coat and innumerable skilful changes had pro-

vided him with a new fairly decent wardrobe. But Anthony had a bad habit — he still has it — he proceeded to lose things as soon as he got them; a cape, a raincoat, gloves, scarves, socks, a pullover; a brand new hat was left on the top of his jeep and he was mildly shocked not to find it there after a ride of several miles!! Against the Western walls of the peaceful Mirabelle Garden, a big motor pool was built. For nearly two years passing that motor pool, I saw my smiling giant of a boy in oily overalls, demonstrating how to handle 10-ton Army trucks, cars, jeeps, and coax them to life again. He crawled under them, lifted them, lay on his back and came out, hazel eyes shining white in a black-smeared face. He tinkered with tools, knelt on rubber tires, handled enormous barrels of petrol and made friends with practically everyone. He even went so far as to oblige one of his colleagues by smoking a huge cigar, but then he hastily retreated behind the wooden shed and there were indications that his lunch was not going to remain where it was!! In the evening, he would wash, change and shave and go to all sorts of parties; he played the piano for hours. Finally, he quit the Motor Pool with a vast mechanical knowledge and a collection of expressions and words he *never* used in front of his mother!

Sitting near Mrs. M_____, I listlessly played with these thoughts. But she couldn't sit still and started brisk conversation.

"And so I see you've overworked again my dear — your face looks pinched and greenish."

"My face is not pinched by work but by too much worry. I can't sleep; I imagine things; nights are a nightmare."

"Now now my dear, you are being foolish. Where is your Anthroposophical common sense? Don't you know that worry breeds fear and fear breeds weakness ... besides many other destructive forces."

"I know, I know. If you could but see how I try to fight against it you wouldn't scold me. The trouble is now, that I can't even concentrate on the meditations Dr. Steiner gave us as a means to developing those supernatural capacities."

"You mean for instance — to concentrate and visualize a seed growing and developing into a plant — leaves — buds — flowers — with the subtle effect of developing strength and harmony in our own Etheric body?"

"Yes ... and thought concentration at least for five minutes on one single object that has nothing to do with personal questions and everything concerning that particular object; a needle, a pin, a watch — anything."

Mrs. M_____ said, "Oh, I see, but you can surely read Anthroposophical books daily for twenty or thirty minutes?"

"Oh, yes! Of course, I try to do that much at least."

"And you long to do more. Well, that is all you should do now — it's just enough. A morning prayer to God in true and strong faith will link our purely spiritual Ego with the super-spiritual world. An act of charity, patience or forgiveness will lift our Astral body into the Heavenly or Spiritual world, to read and concentrate on thoughts given by Dr. Steiner's books. Cosmology and Karma will strengthen our Etheric body with positive life-giving substances of the Etheric world provided — you do it *consciously.* Yes, it's wonderful if we but know ..." her voice trailed away.

We both watched two little sparrows busily hopping and washing tawny feathered bodies in the sparkling sand dust.

"Have you read Dr. Steiner's book entitled 'Spiritual Background of Humanity's History'?" she asked me presently.

"Yes of course I have."

"Do you remember that part where it says ... thoughts that have real spiritual value do not stay engraved in the *individual* Etheric Body only, they are pressed into that etheric matter, from which flows creative life into the world. Humanity's supreme duty should be therefore to feel responsible for thoughts, as they have *objective* importance and consequence."

Mrs. M_____ said with conviction, "I've seen much progress in this line lately, not in crowds of course, but in the individual. The thirst to learn and to know more about the spiritual world does much to change a man; his habits will be set aglow with a sum of dazzling morality. Truth, beauty and kindness are no abstract ideals, they correspond to spiritual entities, *living* in the spiritual world. Yes, yes, Anthroposophy science is a mighty impulse towards everything that has to be transformed and prepared here on earth, not in an abstract way, but in a decidedly concrete manner and when Dr. Steiner says *concrete,* he means it. He said for instance, that spiritual entities called Angeloi have to realise certain tasks *for* us, but they can do it only *through* us with our *conscious* and intimate cooperation. This again, is a link in the chain: minerals, plants, animals, man, Angeloi, Arch-Angeloi, and so on and on, a living inherent bond built up on each other, through each other, a ladder reaching ever-higher to spiritual zenith. This is not an abstraction, indeed, it is reality through which flow life and strength; this is creative thinking and through it we are connected to those Angels and Arch-Angels and *this* is intimate cooperation."

Putting a warm hand on my arm, giving it a friendly squeeze, the dear lady said, "Angels look at us, wait for us, listen to us, my dear ... don't forget, we are *never alone.*"

I walked home. The hall porter handed me a note. "Colonel Wray rang up. Could you dine with him tonight at 7:30 p.m. at his hotel? He is just back from the States."

My dinners with Colonel Wray were a recreation and a physical and psychic tonic. I needed his jolly, good humour and the rich food.

We had occasional heated arguments about DP questions. He was an Allied Military Government Officer and zone-commandant in the area of Salzburg and as such, one of his responsibilities was to aid the DP's. I am sure that many lives were saved and much help was given through his understanding and personal interest. But being honest and kind, he naturally expected everybody to think and act likewise. Well, many times he was deceived.

On this particular evening, merry chatter filled the red curtained carpeted dining room, many of the officers having brought their families with them.

"Salzburg is *some* place," observed the Colonel, offering me a cigarette to enjoy with my coffee, which tasted delicious. "I wish Mrs. Wray could have come back with me this time, but she is too busy just now. She sends you her kindest regards and wants you to paint me a second time — a larger portrait this time."

"Oh fine! I managed to get some canvas and paints so we can start whenever you like."

"How is your family in Fuschl? Your mother, Feri and Maria and those seven fine children?"

"They are alright now, but they had a scare — the house in which they are living half burned down!"

"Good gracious! That three-story wooden villa must have burned like a box of matches! How did it happen?"

"Some new people came to live on the top floor; they left the bathroom stove burning too long; the splinter-dry slanting wooden roof caught fire from a spark. The whole village helped frantically and almost everything was saved but the fire couldn't be extinguished quickly enough — practically the whole roof and the third floor burned down. I was in Linz to finish a life-size oil of the beautiful Mrs. Kilbride and when I came back rushed out to Fuschl and — but you can't possibly visualize what I found there — soot on everything, clothing like rags, burnt furniture and rain coming in everywhere. Mother actually was sleeping in a big fourposter and was surrounded by pans, cans and every imagineable container to catch

the drips. She made a joke of it but how she could stand that dripping all night, is more than I can understand."

"I am really sorry, I must go and see them. They are grand people and that mother of yours is to me simply one of the greatest and courageous women in the world."

"Thank you Colonel," I said, adding, "What a pity you have never been in Hungary ..."

"Have you been working hard lately?" Colonel Wray wanted to know.

"Yes, many children and women, and some of those young GI's get crazy ideas, for instance, they want me to paint their girlfriends from a photograph but, can you believe it, often they cannot even tell me the colour of the girl's eyes and hair."

"Ha-ha-ha," roared Colonel Wray.

"A young GI made me paint his portrait twice, then I had to paint a tedious very exact painting of the school from which he graduated; two large flower pictures; a bullfight in Madrid and then, at long last, he became morbid (probably because General _____, having seen him walking down the street with his hands in his pockets, had him arrested and in the guard house for two weeks); he requested me to paint a death's head in helmet and a landscape in moonlight with the corpse of a priest sailing across the starry sky."

"Oh, how ghastly!" roared Colonel Wray again. "Tell me, he did at least pay you properly for all your trouble?"

"At the beginning he did; he really seemed like a nice young boy with his large blue-grey dreamy eyes but then — he hastily collected the last pictures and left. I never saw him again. I knew his address and I repeatedly wrote both to him and his mother but I never heard from him anymore."

Colonel Wray said, "Do you know, you ought to send some of those stories to Reader's Digest ..."

"Do you really think that the American public would like that kind of thing?"

"Certainly they would. You see, there *is* zest in the *knowledge of their being true.*"

"Let me tell you just one more and then I must leave. There is adventure and excitement in being a portrait painter. You see, I like people and believe me, there isn't much that might happen to a human being that I couldn't witness in that rest centre hotel. Many problems have been dumped into my lap and I was glad to settle them, if possible. But more than one difficulty arose which I could not settle. For two mornings, I painted a man who had come from

Bavaria. He was in Sergeant's uniform. He had brought films with him and was staying only for three days. He may have been thirty years old; he was very well educated and had an interesting personality. His conversation was far above that of the usual GI mentality. He invited me to dine with him and went through the usual check-up and ticket-paying at the desk in the early afternoon. We walked through the dining room and were going to sit down when the Mess Sergeant came to our table and told him something. Excusing himself curtly, he got up and went out. I waited calmly and he came back; his face was full of controlled fury. He was gloomy all through dinner. After dinner, he immediately disappeared and I went up to my room. Maybe an hour passed, then there was a knock on the door."

"Madam, may I ask you to come to the drawing room please?"

We went down. He said,

"Do you know what happened? That dirty Mess Sergeant tried to tell me that you are one of the staff and not supposed to eat in the GI dining room like anybody else on the staff. This made me mad! You ought to have seen them — the Hostess, the Mess Sergeant — everybody came to explain and calm me down. Fancy those dogs obliging me to make a lady wait by herself among all those men in the dining room; I gave them a piece of my mind! As this rumpus was going on, a friend of mine appeared — I can't tell you his name, only to say that he is one of the most decorated officers in the Air Corps and one of the most feared (his mother was a full-blooded Indian) and as a result he has a terrible temper and is perfectly enormous to boot. We two went down to the GI bar ..."

Colonel Wray interposed, "*That was* against rules!"

"Of course it was — but just listen! My host continued to explain that the Mess Sergeant came up again to mutter apologies about the dinner incident. My friend wanted to know — 'what for?' — and I, of course, told him. His features stiffened and suddenly the giant stood up, banged down his mug of beer, got hold of the Mess Sergeant and shook him like a rabbit and bellowed protest to the crowded room — 'This is exactly why American boys, in the army, will never learn to behave properly when even those who should know better can't distinguish the difference between an artist and a professional scullery maid!' Turning his beaming face toward me, my new found champion said, 'I think you will be treated more civilly here from now on, Mrs. Ruby.' But I was not of his opinion; in fact, for several days, I expected to be fired. But apparently, things had been hushed up, through other channels, and nothing happened, luckily for me!"

"Oh my goodness, the things that happen to you in that job!" commented Colonel Wray amusedly. "Is that slightly lame caricaturist, Countess Széchényi, your cousin, still at the hotel?"

"No, she left, for Innsbruck, to have further treatment. Do you know Colonel, that she was a well-known sportswoman in Hungarian society. A few years ago she caught polio — it was a terrible shock and ordeal for such an active person. To my pleasure and astonishment I met her in Salzburg at the Hotel Pitter; she does those clever caricatures, balancing her paralised arm with her left hand — you ought to see her work; really, it is nothing short of admirable. We had much fun comparing our models and our work. She longed to sketch a negro GI, but they are apt to resent 'funny pictures' as they call caricatures, so ... once, I told her to come and make a sketch of one of the boys I was painting. Apparently he didn't mind being stared at by the two of us and, when we were through, he took a long look at both pictures — he had not uttered one word for two hours, sitting like a statue carved in black marble, but then he stood up, reached into his wallet and spoke his first and last sentence. 'I will take both' and he left, proud and happy. Meanwhile, behind the cupboard, my daughter's little grey puli-dog had been producing a litter of puppies and I was kept busy darting to and fro tending to midwife and artistic duties. To clean up that room was a hard job on that memorable day!"

Colonel Wray was wiping his eyes.

"Oh dear, I hope I won't forget to give an exact account of these stories to Mrs. Wray. She will enjoy them immensely. By the way, are you free to come to Fuschl with me next Sunday and to bring that very handsome boy of yours too?"

"Thank you Colonel, of course we shall both be free and glad to come ... and let me warn you ... if ever I write my memoirs, I will not forget to mention you and every word you said about my family tonight! Now, just before I leave, there is something I must tell you — quite privately. Please keep it a secret; both my son and I will soon disappear from this part of Austria."

"Really, but why?"

"Because, you know, the Occupation Army has to cut down on civilian personnel. It is obvious that artists are less important than bartenders, maids and pretty secretaries, so I am sure to lose my job and billeting. Besides, I feel restless here, I have never ceased to feel that there is a marked animosity toward me from those quarters which were responsible for Victor's arrest and delivery to Hungary on false accusations. My mail is kept back, I am fully aware that my

room has been searched and even ransacked several times; you see, there are quite a few people walking the street who might well sit behind bars with more valid reasons than those they manage to send to jail. I *know* them — *they* know this — and so naturally they try to find a valid reason to arrest me, too. I'm certain that if it hadn't been for your friendship and that of General Ladue, I would have been sent away, certainly from the Hotel and from Salzburg altogether, long ago. I have had enough of that kind of nerve-wracking uncertainty. You see, we were opposed to being dragged into both World Wars but we were forced, between East and West, to give up our freedom; our nation gave her life and bled to death again. In a book by Hermann Kaiserling, 'Spectrum of Europe', he writes on page 237: 'The Magyars are the most aristocratic nation of Europe' — meaning their nobility of heart and spirit."

"My dear, I feel very sorry for you because it is an unpleasant situation — whether true or imagined, the feelings and reactions are the same. Well, at least you will always be capable of earning a living for yourself and — gradually this unhappy world situation will change, too — at least, I hope so. Goodnight, it was a very pleasant evening. I will come to pick you up tomorrow at 9:00 a.m."

"Goodnight, Colonel and — thank you for everything!"

Nine o'clock found Anthony and me waiting for Colonel Wray and presently we sped to Fuschl where he was presented with a little sketch; it portrayed a flock of 10 eager chickens, the family in Fuschl, rushing to meet the first sun rays — the sun being a miniature portrait of Colonel Wray himself. (I might add that he still cherishes it in Charlottesville as a souvenir and likes to show it to his friends.)

The wooden hunting lodge had been partly restored. Anthony and I had spent many a happy weekend there, refilling ourselves with strength and hope. Yes, we hated to say goodbye and when Ditta at last joined us, coming from Klagenfurt, we packed our trunks and secretly left that part of beautiful Austria which will ever remind me of those bitter experiences in my life.

Chapter XV.

Damp fair curls hanging limply in torrid August heat, white shirt sleeves rolled up over her arms, in a little apron, dotted with designs and grease spots, Ditta busily mixed some nondescript food over an electric plate, in three empty tins (for lack of pans). Anthony was tinkering in the adjoining room and I did my best to establish order. In the course of six weeks we had changed sordid rooms on mountain tops, in little huts, maybe six times and landed at last right on the Swiss border in Höchst, to be three minutes walking distance from the land of dreams, where all our hopes were centered. How to get over that border and help Victor from there was my daily worry and prayer. The crops had been fairly good and the Austrian farmers were willing to change a few pounds of potatoes, apples and bread for a portrait of Grandpa or pet grandchild. And now we lived in an inn, in the attic. Just near enough to the back-yard lavatory for the swarms of flies and mosquitoes to drone swiftly in their journeys between full-time parties held alternately in our rooms and those other discreet parts of the inn. They kept our night busy but the innkeeper had a fine head, his picture in sepia, pipe in mouth, was hung up in the dining room now, frequented by many Swiss business men, who drank their ale and came in for a chat. Through this picture, I had already succeeded in getting a standing order for three portraits in our land of dreams. Occasional permits were issued to cross the border within an area of 10 miles during a 24-hour period, and we were to get those permits from the French Occupation Governor, Comte D'Audibert de Lussan, whom we knew already from previous occasions. He was known all over the land as a special friend of the Hungarian fugitives. We went to see him in his office and I was keen to meet his strikingly handsome wife. They were a charming couple, gave us many a sound piece of advice, and the necessary temporary permits. Kindness and friendship are rare gifts when you are a well-nigh penniless DP. I painted Countess D'Audibert a large oil portrait as a token of gratitude from us in the name of all my unknown Hungarian compatriots, whom they had helped to freedom and safety.

"Hurry up mother! Your train to Bregenz leaves in 12 minutes," Ditta said. "Here, drink your tea and you can eat this apple on your way to the station."

"Thank you darling, but I am afraid it is too late already. I have got asthma again and can't walk as quickly as that. I'll just stand by the roadside and ask for a lift."

Anthony grumbled, "What an idea again. Well, in any case, I'll come with you to stop a decent looking car."

We stood at the frontier rail for ten, twenty, thirty minutes — no cars came. I was due at the Governor's Villa at 10 o'clock and it was past 9 o'clock already. I was fidgety and nervous. Then we saw a tiny red dot flying down the road; it stopped in front of the customs. The helmeted and goggled driver, expertly flipped out his wallet as he came over the bridge and stopped in front of the Austrian check-up. The little two-seater was droning and shaking like a nervous race horse.

"Please, could you give me a lift?" I said. The helmeted 'gentleman' gave me a sour look, "I'm in a hurry," he said.

"So am I!"

"Do you mind fast driving?" he inquired.

"Rather ... but ..."

"Get in." There was a hard glint in his eyes. He lifted his voice, "But at your own risk and peril!"

I had wound a bandana tight over my head and I got in fast. It felt like sitting down in an empty bath tub. Anthony's face was dubious and anxious. Poor darling, I was sorry for him and presently, I was sorry for myself too. The engine roared, the tiny car gave a vicious shake, my head snapped back, we were literally flying over those curving narrow roads. Children, dogs and poultry scattered — terrified; right and left, women screamed in the doors and the horn bellowed incessantly. I held on till my knuckles felt cold and numb; I gritted my teeth and shut my eyes. Surely that man was a sadistic fiend!

We risked killing somebody and ourselves, too, but he never got a word out of me; no! I'd not give him *that* satisfaction!

By the Almighty's special kindness we arrived in Bregenz. I got out, said 'thank you' furiously, trying to adjust my limp body on two shaking legs. It was 10 o'clock to the minute but I made a silent vow never to ask for a lift from the owner of a racing car again. And so, next time, when I hunted for a hidden road in the mountains, to find a way to get illegally over the Swiss border (we had been rejected twice already in our attempt to get a legitimate visa), I

stopped good-natured antediluvian cars, a motor bike and a huge lorry; but that last attempt was nearly a failure too, as the driver calmly started up with me hanging in mid-air as I climbed up on top of it from behind.

Day and night we were making plans.

"Oh mother, let's go to England," Ditta insisted.

We had actually applied for those visas and they were eventually granted to Ditta and myself, but not to Anthony, in the Autumn of 1947, on the condition that we accept domestic or factory employment. In those times, there were innumerable restrictions as to male DP's entering England, but I couldn't make up my mind to go there now, having several ideas concerning Victor's liberation through the channels which might be found in Switzerland. So, Ditta went back to her job in Klagenfurt (to wait for the English permit).

She was employed with the British Occupation army where she was treated with true English courtesy; she had plenty to eat and would not have to face crossing a border illegally. In spite of this, I felt it to be one of those relentless fates, making it impossible for a daughter to remain with her mother, where, after all, she belonged. Meanwhile, just across the German border in Lindau, Louis had married a young Hungarian girl, a friend of György's daughters and she was expecting her first baby now. Occasionally I had the great comfort of being able to go and see them.

Day after day we looked at that Swiss border with people walking to and fro over it with careless ease. I had crossed over it myself half a dozen times with occasional twenty-four hour permits and had managed to paint three portraits. This enabled me to get the necessary Swiss Francs for tickets to Zürich and for a pair of new spectacles. We talked of nothing else but our plans to slip across the border. Everything had been arranged — the day was fixed ... and then, an urgent letter arrived from Budapest; Victor's lawyer asked me to send him, at once, documents concerning my husband's length of imprisonment with the American Armed Forces. There might be a chance of crediting this 3½ year sentence. I got onto the next train and went back to Salzburg — night came early in those days. Wearily I walked the dark wet streets to find lodgings. A wheelbarrow stood at the curb — inadvertently it was caught by a carriage, dragged along and pushed rudely, from the rear, against my knees. I didn't expect this blow, lost my balance, of course, and fell sprawling, mud squishing between my fingers. My suitcase slithered across the wet pavement, nearly tripping up several other

pedestrians. I am not a spiteful person as a rule, but just then, I would have preferred to have had company in my grotesque position.

The next hotel porter informed me that he could give me night's lodging if I didn't mind sharing a room with a gentleman.

"Here he comes, you might as well speak with him yourself."

I did speak with that gentleman and it proved to be Count Apponyi, a relative of mine, and we couldn't help laughing at the porter's dumbfounded face when we declined his kind offer. Later, I managed to find a solitary, sordid, cold room in another hotel.

I quickly crawled between the blankets, munching a piece of bread, and fell asleep from sheer exhaustion and hunger. A rude repeated knock woke me; it was an Austrian saying that he was from the American CIC.

"Show me your credentials!" I said trying to sound harsh. He obeyed meekly. "What do you want anyway?"

He actually began to stutter. "I ... I ... Madam, please ... excuse me, but you left Salzburg without giving your new address and my office wishes to know where you are."

"I left Salzburg, yes, because I was fed up with the attitude of your office and I had no proper address to give you anyhow; and you ..." I said ... "should be ashamed of yourself, earning your living in this way — spying on your fellow human beings. Try and get a decent job! Goodbye!"

He went out hastily; my energetic front concealed real fright and, as a rule I don't use bad words but I said a few when that vile little sneak had shut the door. For two days I hunted in vain for the documents requested by the lawyer in Hungary. Those who were directing those proceedings in 1945 in that special area of Salzburg had taken good care to 'lose' all documents and our dear friend Colonel Wray had gone, so there was no help from that quarter. I travelled to Linz and straight to headquarters. A dark handsome captain sat behind a huge yellow desk in a map-hung room. Typewriters clicked busily at two smaller tables.

"With whom do you wish to talk, Madam?" the captain said.

I could not help staring at him, he was so polite.

"I would like to speak with the highest military authority in command here. I don't know any names and please, take a look at my papers."

He took one glance at them, got to his feet and said,

"May I introduce myself. I am Captain _____. I spent many months in Budapest recently and know the L. Károlyis: they are probably your relatives."

"Yes, they are. Oh, please, can you tell me ..."

"Madam," he interrupted me, "I can give you all the details presently but I advise you to speak with either General _____ or Major General _____. They are both in command here. Just now they are alone but later on they ..."

"Very well, could I speak with the General, whose office is here," I pointed to my right. I had seen a tall Major General come out and go back to the office on the left and I didn't like his looks too much. In two minutes, I sat in front of that other 'highest authority' and liked his looks very much.

His kind eyes never left mine and I told him my wishes in as few words as possible.

"Madam, I understand! Alas we know now many things we ought to have known years ago."

He jotted down a few lines and handed them to me.

"My car will take you to Colonel _____ AND YOU CAN TRUST THIS MAN! Please come back afterwards; I want to know what he told you and what we can do for you."

This time I felt I was on the right track; twice the tedious, tiring long journey had to be made between Linz and Vorarlberg, but two weeks later I had the necessary papers, plus a few others which came in very handy much later. Finally the Hungarian lawyer got all the documents but — they proved to be utterly useless. Justice and law were an illusion ignored and abolished in a country where reigned Bolshevism and ruthless terror.

Chapter XVI.

"Where shall we cross to Switzerland," was a question which we had argued about for weeks. It was not easy to find the exact spot and we had to take into consideration a happy blending of all those conflicting ideas. Finally our choice was made and it proved to be as good and new as next year's car. But our feelings were varigated and far from comfortable. The final decision was hard. It is no joke to force an illegal entry into Switzerland.

Anthony and I had left the good innkeeper's family in Höchst, plus the million flies; we spent several days with Mother and the others, the French Governor had driven me to Lindau, to take farewell of Louis, his wife and baby and the hen Motyó. This particular hen was a member of the family, handled with delicate care and much fuss. She had been bought somewhere in the country for a fabulous price, was tucked into the car.

When Louis stopped to refuel, the hen got out, bashfully retreated under the car and promptly laid a shapely fawn-coloured egg. From then on she was considered too precious to be left alone. She lived more or less in the drawing room and when baby was fed by his mother, Louis took Motyó for a walk on a dainty pink ribbon. And that good hen really knew how to prove her gratitude.

On a stormy autumn night, goodbyes were said again ... in the grey dawn Anthony and I left the hotel like silent-footed thieves and had half an hour's train ride before catching our bus. There was *no* bus — these surprises were an everyday happening but on this particular day it was a shock indeed. What could we do? We just started to walk across country, over swampy fields, jumping ditches, endless muddy roads and a village longer than any other village I have traversed, especially since we missed our crossing and had to retrace our steps for two miles. We carried no luggage of course, but three sets of underwear, half a dozen stockings and two coats heavy with rain can make anybody uncomfortable.

Trying to look gay and unconcerned, we crossed an iron bridge at last and our one-day permits were duly inspected and stamped. We were in Switzerland and did not intend to go back to Austria! We hurriedly ate a few sandwiches, drank coffee and climbed on the

first train going west. Peeling off the soaking coats, we looked at each other and grinned. But the last ordeal was still ahead. In Zürich we went straight to the Police; followed two solid hours of cross-questioning, taken down by a stenographer at once, and here, the letters from Linz headquarters proved to be a valuable help. I felt exactly like a deflated punch ball, but found strength in Anthony's placid smile, to go on with the interview. It wasn't the difficulty of the thing itself — for we just told the truth — but two hours can seem very long in a situation like that.

"You can both go now, Madam. You can stay in Zürich, in fact, travel all over Switzerland but wherever you stay longer than three days, please report to the police."

I longed to kiss that police inspector. He was no Adonis, but was far better — to me he seemed like a real fairy from Fairyland.

Consuelo Horthy-Károlyi lived in Geneva and we hastened to the station. What a delight to sit on a clean comfortable seat and rush through beautiful country; what delight not to be hungry and not to see ruins.

The reception we got from my sister-in-law Consuelo and her two daughters is one of those memories which one safely tucks away in a corner of the heart, but cannot clad in appropriate words. Some women grow ever more attractive with age; Consuelo was rich with a personal glamour, warmth and understanding. She would go out of her way and do anything to help those who were sad, sick, lonely and homeless. Though she herself was as penniless and sick at heart as all the other DP's, there were times when she and both her daughters shared their one and only room with five other people. Consuelo was undoubtedly the 'boss' of her surroundings; she would perform the heaviest and filthiest household task grimly but with a sprightly sally, natural 'nonchalance', and a few strong words ... when dusting the dozens of photographs framed and unframed, hanging, standing and pinned on the walls everywhere, smoking countless cigarettes in an amber holder, flipping her Dunhill lighter expertly and then calmly combing her fair waves, making up her face, she changed into a prim-pleated grey suit, her old short black fur coat and walked out to all appearances as smart as a Parisian; but above all she was a mother, a loving, adoring mother, and this had lifted her heart into happiness, or often enough had plunged it into deepest, blackest anxiety and suffering. Looking at her two grown daughters now, grandchildren of Regent Horthy, Sophy and Nicolette, I saw them as they had been — two tiny toddling personalities called Birdy and Pixie, one so fair, the other so dark, swathed

in snow-white woollies, like cuddly bunny-rabbits, smiling up at the motionless guards in the Governor's Palace, trotting on minute shoes over mellow red carpets, down the rich flight of stairs and out into the sunshine of the Palace gardens. Theirs was truly a happy carefree sheltered youth, and whatever Fate would have in store for them, those memories will remain a colourful, beautiful background throughout their lives.

They had been living in Geneva for two years, working hard, and now they shared their two rooms with us, helping us over those first difficult months. Anthony soon got a job at Philips' Radio Department, and I had packed up my troubles in my own kitbag again with a new burst of energy, to paint, and to contact people. At the back of the new activities was, of course, the attempt to find a way to help my husband. But as the weeks and months passed, all attempts proved to be futile. Moreover, at first, it was hard to find people interested in art, and shops were flooded with antiquities and jewels, sold by thousands of fugitives, who were swarming from East to Western Europe, gradually disposing of all of their possessions. I started by walking the streets of Geneva, knocking at doors, it was bewildering and irksome. I had splitting headaches and was very tired. "I am an artist, would you care to have a portrait made of yourself or someone in your family?" proceeding instantly to show some of my work; often enough doors were slammed in my face with a curt 'No'. Sometimes leisurely housemaids would prop the broom against their hip and stare at the pictures with curiosity. Now and again an elderly gentleman came to the door, cocked a head to one side in polite amazement, and retreated hastily. But when a smart high-brow woman would invite me in and offer me a chair, reaching for my collection, delivering comments on each picture, I was sure of the loss of precious time and a thorough practice of that virtue, patience.

Crossing the Mont Blanc bridge on a cold morning, the transparent blue lake glittering in the pale sun, I saw three little girls dressed in smiliar skyblue smocks and jerseys, walking in harmony, little hands locked companionably, followed by a smart nurse. In my turn I followed them; they lived on the second floor of a chic apartment house on the Quais des Bergues. I rang the bell, hoping that I didn't look too shabby. A tall gentleman opened the door, called me into a spacious room, soft green and buff curtains and carpets, a large silver bowl filled with salmon coloured roses ... a cradle in the corner half-hidden from the sun by a pale pink lacquer screen. I felt extremely uncomfortable and shy, explaining and apologizing for my intrusion.

The tall gentleman glanced over my album.

"Madame, I congratulate you ... and yes, indeed, I would be glad to have my three little girls painted, but just now I am rather short of cash. You see, our fourth little daughter has just been born!" and smiling he lifted the frothy pink lace curtains to show the tiny baby in her cradle, playing with rosy fingers. Clinging to that atmosphere of harmony and domestic peace, I climbed on a bus and went out to visit villas. Children played in the garden, a young woman opened the door, apparently the mother, she spoke laughably bad French, and was much relieved when I was able to speak English. Her hazel eyes danced merrily.

"I am *so* sorry but just now I don't need an artist, I need a *maid* very badly; you see I am expecting a baby, and with two children and no help, I just can't manage. My cleaning lady left me suddenly, she might come back next week, I hope."

"Well, Madam, I could come and help you, but ..."

"Will you? Right now! Please come!"

"But Madame, let me give you my name and one or two references. You can't just pick up someone like this!"

"Oh yes, I can see that you are okay. Please come right in."

I hardly realised what the nice little lady was up to, when she whirled away to Lausanne to a party 'where the ex-Queen of Spain would be present' and left me stranded in the absurd position of looking after a three year old boy, a six months old baby, a big villa, the cooking (I couldn't cook), feeding (I hadn't done it for twenty years), bathing babies (no experience at all!) and cleaning the thoroughly unkempt place. It was one of my most comic experiences and when it was over, I looked back upon it with much satisfaction, zest and gratification.

Then, at long last, came the lucky day — a tall, middle-aged woman answered the bell, shaking a titian-red mane, spreading out two incredibly long arms dramatically. "Cara mia," she said continuing in broken French, "No, there is nothing to paint."

She was Italian. She shut the door; when I was half way down the steps, I heard the sound of feet running after me.

"Could you paint my mother-in-law from a photo?"

"It depends on the photograph," I said, and went up and into the untidy apartment. A pair of kind, tired eyes looked at me, magnified through thick gold-rimmed lenses; innumerable fine wrinkles around eyes and mouth made that old face young with humour.

"Could you make a life size head and shoulders from this? She has died and we adored her."

Eight days later I delivered the portrait; the Italian daughter-in-law began to cry.

On that same lucky day, in the afternoon, I went up to the tenth floor of an apartment house and methodically rang at every door. One of the apartments was loud with laughter. Three little boys tumbled through the door. Their slim mother answered the bell — it was Madame Petit-Pierre, sister-in-law of the then president of Switzerland. The three little boys promptly got measles, but gradually I painted them and their mother too, and spent many days with that happy family.

From then on my activities as an artist underwent a lucky increase. Soon I was called to paint a deaf and dumb sister and brother at their lakeside chalet. Those ten days were a somewhat weird experience for we saw hardly a soul. The absolute stillness was broken only by the furious bark of the slobbering huge Boxer, who acted as guardian and porter to his two masters. Both brother and sister were candidly interested and talkative, but their conversation topics were limited and I had some difficulty in understanding them and in making them understand me. I used to watch them when they talked to each other in their own soundless language. Sometimes an age-old crinkled little fisherman would visit them, make errands, telephone and help. The panelled room, so cosy with its thick wooden beams, diamond-paned bow window and large carved oak table, would be filled with merry laughter. I painted; the little gnome sat on the pleasantly warm bench of the green tiled low stove, a knitted hood on his spare grey locks, a briar-pipe in his mouth, and he would watch, merry eyes darting in his rugged face. When both portraits were finished he took a long, last look, spat in the ashtray and turned to me,

"Woman," he said with a hint of suspicion, "You sure prefer men to women!"

"Why?" I asked, trying not to show him my merriment.

"Because you painted the man far better than Miss M_____."

I couldn't argue with him, he wouldn't have understood anyhow. The man's features had been far easier to paint than Miss M___'s, for her face held a pathetic fleeting faraway expression which rapidly changed with every word.

I felt an outsider in that perfect circle of harmony, and presently left for my last, long solitary walk. It was bitterly cold. The huge silver lake looked bare and desolate, dry reeds cracked under their load of needle-sharp icicles. Rooks cawed on leafless naked branches, my steps made hollow sounds on the frozen shore. Wind-swept

clouds crowded hurriedly over the low sky. My thoughts flew back to Hungary, into a desolate damp prison cell ... darkness came suddenly.

Next morning, the innkeeper of Gasthaus Gempenach came in an old car to get me, my easel, my paints and my suitcase. I was to paint this placid stolid Swissman, gruff and jocular, strong-boned, dignified and soft-hearted, and his little efficient quick-tempered wife. This Inn was known for its excellent cuisine and the owners' incredible collection of good pictures. Queen Juliana of the Netherlands had come to this Inn once; she was their gilded memory ever after. For three weeks I was fed noon and evening on the most succulent trout, chicken, and meringues filled with whipped cream, the size of a grapefruit. On Saturdays I would, if I could, go to sleep with a band of musicians playing below in the dining room, and all guests singing, and chorales floating over from the neighbouring house where a choir rehearsed. At dawn there was peace at last, when thousands of melancholy frogs began their mournful concert, stopping in unison, and beginning in unison, with precise harmony and mysterious rhythm.

The two large oils brought me a third portrait order there, from a lawyer of a nearby town; a cannon-ball-headed bachelor with bright round eyes, round cheeks, rounded lips, straight sharp nose and knife sharp wit.

"Do you think you could come this afternoon to meet my three aunts? They would like to know you ...," he smiled, showing a narrow golden band at the base of the left eye tooth. The steeple clock struck four when we climbed the wooden steps. Three silent little old ladies sat in three stuffed red plush chairs; they rose in harmony and offered me soft wrinkled hands. The 'youngest' of the three even curtsied ever so slightly (later on I knew she was 71 years old). Then they began to talk all together; and what those three dear little ladies lacked in youth, they compensated for in dependable kindness and droll wit. They gloated with bashful adoration over their nephew, making him pink and green-striped silk neckties and woolen socks, over-fed him, over-petted him and 'lost' the house door key to keep him from staying out too late.

"You see, Countess Károlyi," the eldest of the three said, (she pronounced my name so correctly that I felt there had been several day's practice behind it). "You see, our nephew is so unsophisticated, we must guard him with our mature love!" And they did take so much care of the 45-year old boy that he finally decided to take separate lodgings. But touchingly enough, he never stopped sur-

rounding those three kind aunts with filial care, devotion and even pride. He was a very kind man. Through his help, Louis and his family, and later on my nephew Ferkó, were able to come to Switzerland.

The Swiss police are a well-informed organization. They knew of my activities; stateless fugitives were strictly forbidden to work; but they never interferred with me and I was never asked one single question about it. Switzerland is far too small a country to be over swarmed by fugitives. This is, from their point of view, both logical and natural. I had a gentleman's agreement with the Federal Foreign Police in Berne asking them to prolong our 'Permit de Sejour' as long as we were waiting for my husband and they had my word of honour that I would leave Switzerland when he could join us. Mr. Bechtold, the Chief Police Inspector, having appraised me as carefully as a man buying a horse, had told me,

"I cannot help your husband now, but I promise to give him the Swiss visa immediately in case he applies for it."

I had a real friend in the Police Department in Geneva, a busy little Inspector who winked an eye at me once, whispering confidentially,

"Let me know all good news from your husband at once!"

I squeezed his hand in a firm handshake, kindness made me cry instantly in those times. Passing him once in the street with a roll of water-colours tucked under my arm, I stopped him. We sat down companionably to drink a midday cup of coffee and just for the fun of studying his expression, I showed him my paintings. He laughed outright, a human twinkle in his little moist eyes, *compassion* written all over his parchmenty face.

"Yes, the Swiss police were ever kind and understanding with me," but I got up and left hurriedly ... I was terrified of compassion and tried to forget the steady pounding in my heart and brain.

One of the kindest Swiss friends we ever had was Mr. Oertli. He had returned at last from a lengthy trip in the United States; I was just painting a funny old couple in Zürich and he had invited me to lunch with him on the top floor large studio in his comfortable new villa. Stone mugs, porcelain plates and droll carved statues stood on dark oak shelves; red copper jugs and jars hung on nails; three succulent beef steaks were simmering over the iron grate in the huge open fireplace. Mr. Oertli put wooden plates under the dripping steaks and carefully turned them over with a two-pronged fork. The comely housekeeper had spread the table with a green and white checkered cloth, green enameled bowls were filled with cress,

carrots and tomato salad, pomme chips, huge rolls of bread and Emmentali cheese, dainty coloured cakes and chocolate pudding with whipped cream. What a Lucullus meal! My thoughts racing to that jail ... visualizing my husband in a line with hundreds of other prisoners, eating nondescript filthy stuff from a tin plate. I shivered.

"What's the matter?" Mr. Oertli inquired.

"I thought of my husband, comparing his meals with this."

"But why are you so anxious about him? He has been sentenced to 3½ years in prison and will be released on the second of May 1949 and he will promptly leave Hungary to join you."

"I wish to God you were right, but, you don't know those usual proceedings in such cases behind the Iron curtain. People are sentenced for a particular time, and they are released all right ... *only to disappear completely.* If I can't save him, somehow, in the next ten months, it might be altogether impossible to save his life."

There was a long pause, and then Mr. Oertli said, measuring his words,

"Try and organize his 'kidnapping' from the jail in Budapest."

There was another long silence. I had jumped up with fingers wrapped tightly around the carved back of the heavy oak chair. I heard the persistent muffled sound of the city below us and listened to the efficient housekeeper rattling her pans in the kitchen to the trailing sounds of the wireless.

"But for God's sake, don't you realise that I forced my way into Switzerland for *this* particular reason only; I've been in Zürich, Berne, Basle, Geneva, Lucerne and Luzanne, in offices and private homes ... without the slightest success. I ended up getting so wrought up over the matter that I nearly lost my good judgement!!" I sat down.

Mr. Oertli shook his wise head.

"You seem to forget that thought and willpower used for the right cause are mighty weapons, and, *you* may not be able to help your husband, but, his good 'genie' or guardian angel, whichever you like to term our spiritual guides, proved the lucky tendency of his life — has brought him back from war, has inspired that People's Court to sentence him to 3½ years, instead of — eventually — life-long imprisonment, He has given him strength, patience, and, as you said — perfect belief and hope in the future."

Mr. Oertli's voice was quite impersonal, but somehow, it gave me courage.

"Thank you," I said. "You have a way of making things sound

real and final! Do you remember your first visit to Salzburg when you intended buying some of our pictures?"

"Oh yes, I remember perfectly, the American Property Control still had in custody all your belongings ... there was nothing doing! I remember the sordid ice-cold hotel room, I remember your studio in that Hotel Pitter, where everything showed signs of bombardment except the dining room and bar, and when I met you and your son and your brother, you all looked so haggard and hungry that my well-fed Swiss placidity got a thorough shock."

"Yes, it was plainly written on your face. You insisted at once that we should leave Austria, you said, 'there is an atmosphere of funeral here'. I trusted you then and there, didn't I?" and we both began to laugh.

"Yes, you were mighty quick to trust me — and — may I advise you to be less impulsive in the future? You might trust the wrong person! But did I ever tell you what happened to your diamond earrings?"

"Of course you did, you took them straight to the largest bank in Zürich, had them put under my name in the Managing Director's safe and promptly sent me the receipt. You see, in this case you were *our* good 'genie', for without that cache I never would have dared to go ahead with our plans for entry into Switzerland."

"That's not what I meant at all, but, do you remember solemnly handing me the jewels in the presence of your brother in Salzburg? I put them in my brief case and left that same night on the Arlberg Express. But the nearer I got to the Swiss border, the more those wretched jewels began to weigh on my conscience. You see, I never had any practice in smuggling! Other travellers were sitting placidly in their corners, but I got nervous as a cat and cautiously tucked the small paper parcel behind the seat. Well, the customs inspectors came and went, the train moved on, I was happy indeed; and when the passengers left the compartment for the dining car, I fished out the parcel, and by golly, one of the earrings was missing. After frantic searching and crawling on all fours under seats and hot pipes, I found it suspended way down under the seat! And I made a silent vow then and there (and will never break it) — no more smuggling!" We both laughed.

Smoking gold-tipped cigarettes, we watched the blue smoke drift toward the open window, the housekeeper brought coffee and left it on the table. Mr. Oertli wanted to know more about our confiscated properties.

"Finally the Property Control released our things, but, you

ought to have seen the mess ... carpets in rags, and some had simply been exchanged for horrible modern inferior articles ... from all that silverware we managed to save from Hungary, I found hardly a proper set of twelve to hand over to the lawyer; the pictures were all there fortunately, and, to my utmost astonishment, also the whole collection of porcelain birds, valuable in as much as they were souvenirs of home life. From the miniatures belonging to Victor's brother, the two most valuable ones framed in diamonds were, alas, missing, and so were many of both his and our carpets. You see, we had to leave all our trunks in that tiny village with the Austrian peasants, and rumour circulated that we would never come back. Then came that pack of new Austrian authorities hand-in-hand with ... others, who collected and ransacked everything; when they had made their own choice, everything that remained was turned over to the American Property Control, who ... again used everything for its own purpose, for adornment of the houses of high-ranking Army officers for a while before final restitution.

"For days I sorted, took stock and made inventories in dusty cold cellars and warehouses, official experts had to be called and paid for to estimate the value of pictures and carpets, in order that we might determine our lawyer's ten per cent. All locks were broken, new boxes had to be made, permits, transportation, storage arranged. Most of the things I did all by myself and it certainly wasn't pleasant, in fact, it was a thankless ordeal! Waving those memories aside, I concluded, 'Instead of carpets and pictures, it would have been far better to have another set of earrings!'"

We laughed.

"How do you manage to send money to provide for your husband? As far as I know it is prohibited by the Hungarian government."

"Yes, but there are always ways and means on one's own risk and peril. Some of the money I sent was delivered, but some was stolen. We were glad to sell carpets and silverware at an auction in Luzerne. By the way, did I tell you what happened to me after that auction? No?"

"My handbag was — for once — filled with a few thousand francs and I was light-hearted enough, making plans how to use them, where to keep them. On the train I met two people, who started talking business; we changed trains and went on talking and then I realised that my handbag was gone; our train was a non-stop Swiss Express. At every large station we thundered past, the porter threw out a piece of paper advising of the lost bag, its contents and

the number of the train, where it had been left. Finally I got out in Luzerne. Two hours later, my small briefcase, neatly packed, plus the inventory of what it contained, was in my possession again. I am sure there are few other countries where that kind of honesty and efficiency is to be found. I love Switzerland and its people."

"I'm glad to hear that!" and changing the subject he said, "You must go to one of our mountain villages sometime, to have a thorough rest and to see some of the beautiful little hidden idyllic spots."

"I have been near Blonay for two weeks through the special kindness of Madame Lombard."

"Lombard? Is she a relative of the owner and president of Banque Lombard in Geneva?"

"Yes, she is his wife, a dear old lady of culture and tradition; I painted her granddaughter and one day she called both Anthony and me to come for lunch. The two of them decided *for* me, that I needed a fortnight's rest and sent me to Blonay. It was a lovely spot, I tried to shut out all thoughts; I watched the while morning mist lift above the amethyst tinted Alps — de Savoie — the majestic snow-capped cliffs of the Dents du Midi, the glowing gold and orange autumn hues on the poplars, the shimmering rippling silver lake and the people coming to Vespers in the gloom of the sunset, across the mountains and valleys, with dancing torches in their hands."

"And so for once you really had to sit still," observed Mr. Oertli, chuckling and coughing from his chain smoking.

"Well, yes ... but when some people found out that I painted the gorgeous view and the old Chateau from a nearby bench, freezing in the cold wind, landscape and portrait orders began to rain down."

"But I hope you didn't accept them?"

"Indeed I did! I made half a dozen water-colours and incidentally, they were a start toward a successful series of portraits in Berne. Madame Lombard's golden heart helped me in every way. From Blonay I was called to paint a little Indian princess, Horsched of Nawanagar, a brilliant child of thirteen. She was a graceful sparkling tropical gem, eyes like dark flashing pools, full of a mysterious wisdom and wistful doubt. Blue waves danced in her glossy jet-black hair, a tiny diamond sparkled in her left nostril; she was covered in flesh-tinted brocade and ivory muslin, dewy with jewels, she sat relaxed and composed, an exquisite little Oriental idol."

"Was it a life size picture?"

"No, and I was quite upset about it, because, truly she would have deserved a large composition, but nowadays in general, people

lack imagination and lofty large rooms in which to hang big pictures. Oh, how fed up I am with those eternal half-length size portraits ...!"

The carved cuckoo clock struck three with fussy haste and I got up.

"No, don't go yet," Mr. Oertli said. "We have talked about your children, but you didn't tell me what they intend doing in the near future. That very efficient daughter of yours ... is she ...?"

"Yes she is!"

"What?"

"I thought you meant, is she going to be married?"

"No. I meant to ask whether she intends staying in Austria?"

"No ... she has gone to England already. She stayed for a while with our good friends the Birch Reynardsons, helping in the household, cooking for 10 to 14 people, now she has a job in London. She is actually engaged to Major Edwards, a nice Welshman, whom she met in Klagenfurt. I hope to fly to England soon as the Birch-Reynardsons kindly invited me."

"I'm glad to hear that. Congratulations. I do hope she will be happy, she deserves it. She is a really brave, smart little girl."

"Thank you."

"Do you mind my asking you a question?" Mr. Oertli said. "Why can't your eldest son remain in Switzerland with you? He would be both a comfort and an efficient help to you; he is clever and a 'debrouillard' in every respect!"

"I wish to goodness he could but you forget — he is not allowed to work here in Switzerland; he has a family to provide for; we are very, very hard up you know! And now they are about to emigrate to Brazil."

"But why to Brazil?"

"Because of all the countries to which he applied, Brazil was the only one to grant a visa."

"I see ... but why these difficulties with your son Louis? When Anthony got one, didn't he?"

"Yes, but that was lucky and exceptional; authorities were lenient with him, maybe because he is not yet twenty. But now, I really must go. I must hurry with those two portraits ... my models are going to cure their rheumatism in Bad Gastein in three days."

"They sound old — your models!"

"They are, physically, but they are as lively and fidgety as a pair of adolescents, and incredibly comic. The 69-year old lady showed me her wardrobe, to choose the dress she ought to wear for her portrait. The wardrobe took up an entire wall; believe it or not, I

have never seen such an array of silk, gassamer, frills, embroidery, lace and muslin underwear in my life, except in a shop — and the poor dear is *so* homely."

Mr. Oertli guffawed, twitching his large placid face in so many jovial lines of mirth, and we hastened downstairs to the car.

Chapter XVII.

Majestic silver wings spread over sapphire blue seas. The aeroplane flew swiftly towards England, her four engines droning steadily in the golden brilliance. Flying for me was a non-stop joy and elevation. A feeling of man's boundless magnitude, strength and might over the physical world. Lungs expanding with intense excitement, I kept peering out through the round window and promptly upset a mug of hot bouillon over my lap. Smiling, the pretty stewardess mopped up the mess and brought me another cup of soup. Over the Swiss Alps we flew, a row of minute, dignified hills from that height; over the French plain, its methodical checkered green fields curiously empty and inert; over the blue Channel (involuntarily my thoughts painted this vast peaceful blueness dotted with burning ships, vicious submarines and floating mangled bodies ...) and then the white cliffs of Dover flew towards us, the big aeroplane began to shake and dance merrily, diving into billowing snow-white clouds, swooping down with a mighty, elegant curve and came to a gentle stop in Northolt.

I hastened down the ladder, squeezed my way through the Customs and flew into Ditta's arms. Bill stood, a sheepish smile on his rugged features, waiting tactfully for the first kiss of the mother-in-law to be. I rather hoped that he would not realise my own shyness; it is a silly uncomfortable feeling to be a mother-in-law! I quickly hugged my daughter again.

"Darling, but you look ever so much better! The English climate seems to agree with you!"

"Naughty Mommy," was all she said just then. But presently her tongue loosened and we talked and talked as we speeded through the beautiful country. I couldn't help admiring Bill. He had lost his right arm in El Alamein years ago, even his left hand was injured, but he drove that car with smooth efficiency; he was, in fact, better with one arm than many men are with two. And both he and Ditta looked so happy!

The fruit trees were in full bloom; bashful dots of pink and white; meadows were thick with buttercups and daisies; along the river banks grew lillies and green rushes; cattle grazed in the emerald

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fields, framed in by silver poplars and scented hedges. The spring sky was blue and transparent. It was pleasant to be alive. Gradually, a happy numbness spread over me ... and it began to seem that all the ghastly events of the past years had not happened recently, but many years ago ... maybe in another life.

"Have you had any news from Father lately?" Ditta asked presently. With a shock I awoke to reality. No, we cannot simplify problems of the heart, the mind and the nerves; we can only forget them for a few minutes, I thought, trying hard to hide my foreboding anxieties concerning my husband.

We passed through Oxford, that beautiful mediaeval town; we drove through Tetsworth and between cherry-brick cottages smothered in sweetbriar and blossoming plum trees. Circled green pastures, placid cows staring at us with mild curiosity and then stopped in front of Adwell House, in rural settings amidst tall trees and flaming flower beds. There, between two small stone columns, arms outstretched, stood Diana Birch Reynardson.

"Darling, at last!" she said, folding me to her motherly heart.

It was somehow like coming home and I swallowed hard a couple of times.

There followed two weeks of air conditioned peace and harmony, a 'turn to the fire, drink a second cup to wet your whistle, and so, sing away all sad thoughts' sort of happy mood, acting like a tonic on bruised soul. In Adwell, everybody seemed to succumb to the mood of the moment enthusiastically. Rooms, galleries, kitchen and scullery radiated love and harmony and there was a constant clamour and hunt for the elusive hostess. I have never seen such a vitally active person in my life; Di would sit very uncomfortably near the fireplace, slightly dishevelled, large grey eyes fondly taking stock of her family, her guests, her animals, counting and recounting stitches dropped from her long knitting needles; talking into the telephone with receiver propped firmly between bent head and lifted right shoulder, stroking the soft bulging tummy of a mother cat, sprawled on her lap, pushing 'Mr. Lu', the old Peke with a gentle foot away from the nose of a crawling baby, and in the next instant she would be gone. You could find her — if you were lucky — behind the garage washing the wound on a spotted calf's hind leg, or maybe in the garden cutting flowers, or in one of the cottages visiting a sick tenant but, often enough, she would take the car and rush out to Oxford to attend to her duties at the Juvenile Court or at the Children's Home she runs. When the gong sounded for meals, Di would call a peremptory command — "Don't wait for me!" — dash

into her room and emerge fastening the last button — probably forgetting a loop — smiling, greeting new guests and waving her adoring son-in-law back to his chair. Di is a splendid grand woman, she saved many lives, probably not only by lending material aid to anyone in need, but because she seems to possess a rare healing gift power in her hands. But she prefers to speak about the first tooth of her latest grandchild or the cat that chose to have a litter of kittens in her hat box, on her smartest wedding hat. That is Diana Birch Reynardson Ponsonby, generally known as Mrs. B.R. of Adwell.

How should I describe Henry, Colonel B.R.? The one and only man fit to be her husband — the true English gentleman, his golden heart, his untiring work, his ever-ready wit, his acid criticism of world politics and exaggerated modern views. Henry B.R. has a great personal charm and he never misses an occasion to use it! His sense of duty and honour is an example worth following ... yes, Henry is the perfect gentleman of the old school and yes, the best friend in the world!

"This is my day!" Mrs. B.R. announced eloquently. She packed Ditta and me into her car, hastened to London, and rushed us in and out of the shops the rest of the day. It was truly Diana's day! That car was filled with parcels, innumerable gifts, apt to make every young bride's heart pound with joy, and her mother's eyes fill with tears. Six fluffy Peke balls rolled over the green lawn, barking at us furiously when we arrived home.

The days passed only too quickly and I flew back to Geneva.

"Partir c'est mourir un peu," says a nostalgic French song, truly indeed. I sat behind the tightly shut window, the aeroplane turned and sped over the country, two tiny dots, Di and Ditta waved and waved and were gone.

That's life; children will marry and go out on their own.

The aeroplane flew over trees and house tops droning monotonously; fiddle-string nerves relaxed. I remembered our last hugs and parting from Louis and his family in the dreary cold dawn of the station in Geneva. I had stepped into a Pullman Car; baby Imre placidly sleeping in a corner, his mother trying to bring some order between rugs and bags, thermos flasks, hats and coats; the porter shouted and banged the doors, Louis stepped up as the train began to move and held out his hand through the window.

"Arrividerci ..." he said, trying to sound cheerful ... I watched the black train with the white waving hand, gliding, curving smoothly

like a lazy snake, two red eyes gleamed ... the train was gone. In Italy they boarded a small IRO steamer, full of emigrating DP's and went to Brazil.

Why are stations so strangely dismal and shabby, almost sad? Why do people look so strained, uncomfortable and haggard? One seems curiously hypnotized with the mood of finality and drama.

Methodically I began to take stock of my nearest and dearest from whom I had to part; my husband in prison in Hungary, my eldest son and grandchild in Brazil, my only daughter in England, presently bound for Uganda, East Africa, where Bill would take up government duties, my brothers and mother in the States, my eldest sister and her family behind the Iron Curtain ... WHY? Gradually, thoughts began to shape into the right answer. The development of future humanity depends on the blending of forces between North, East, South and West — didn't all the inventions facilitating communication and transportation help to bring this about? But, instead of using them for harmonious interchange, chaos and war ensued — and what humanity did not achieve consciously was realised forcefully in spite of it. Hundreds of thousands were pushed from their own countries into new worlds.

In one of Lloyd Douglas' novels, he used the stock phrase for what he calls the 'long parade' of man's participation in contemporary life, forced by circumstances to forget his personal objective in view of the pilgrimage of all humanity, and as these thoughts flashed through my mind, I imagined man as a spark of the creative flame of love, tossed to and fro, onto new soils, to kindle the eternal fire of brother-love, purity and faith. Little sparks burning brightly in man-created darkness that corrodes and kills the divine flame of love and faith; wherever our Fate = Karma elects to send us, *it is our duty to participate in a mutual better future.* There is *no* coincidence, nor chance, nor fortuitous haphazard occurrence, even to the particular direction in which a grain or dust floats through space. We are a handful of corn, grown on the same air and gone with the wind in separate directions to take root, expand and bring fruitage in other soils ... maybe arid, maybe fertile, maybe in darkness, but we shall behold new light, if we use the flame of love in absolute accordance with the *eternal spirit* of love.

I arrived in Geneva and, next day, rushed off to Lausanne to speak to a gentleman who had recently come from Vienna and wanted to speak to me. The meeting took place in the sumptuous apartment of a rich lady. Soft fawn-coloured carpets covered the floor, golden-framed mirrors, old English etchings and a collection of ruby-

studded miniatures adorned the brocade walls, crystal chandeliers flanked the tall Louis XIV bureau, tinkling and sparkling in rainbow hues. The fair lady sat on an ebony tinted satin couch, a perfect centre to the perfect setting of the green and gold screen, shading her in artificial twilight, a deliberately stressed and blended contrast. Amiable platitudes were exchanged! I sat on 'pins and needles'! At last we were left alone!

Tall, slightly bald, in an immaculate creamy shirt and genuine English-cut single breasted brown suit, long fingers playing with gold rimmed monocle, the gentleman from Vienna started his long speech. He chose his words with methodical care; it was a speech full of flourishes meant for a large, well-fed audience — it was completely lost on me! I had smoked two cigarettes and exasperated beyond control, stopped him abruptly.

"Would you mind telling me please, whether it was possible to organize my husband's escape from Hungary — yes or no?"

He looked vaguely hurt and fell out of his self-indulging role.

"I was going to explain that Vienna, now, is full of 'Agents Provocateur' and it might be preferable to have things arranged through other channels."

"What do you mean exactly?"

"Well," he cleared his throat. "It may sound strange, but actually, women could do more about these enterprises nowadays ..."

I waited ... he selected a cork-tipped cigarette from a dainty tortoise snuff box and lit it carefully.

Finally I said, "So ... you contacted and commissioned a *woman* to rescue my husband from prison?"

For once the answer came prompt and clear.

"No, I did not ... the only way to tackle these delicate problems is for *you* to go to Vienna personally!"

At that I lost my temper, tears of rage and desperate helplessness filled my eyes.

"You *know* perfectly well under what conditions I left Austria and to cross the border would be equivalent to walking straight into prison. Moreover, you *know* the visas and travelling permits have to go through a French, English, American and Russian control commission in Vienna and it would take months to get even a negative answer. Finally, as you very well *know*, I simply couldn't afford a trip of that kind!"

He was exceedingly uncomfortable, and after several clearings of the throat, said, in injured protest,

"Your husband is a brave man, he will be able to look after him-

self when he is out of prison; it's almost too much to ask that outsiders run risks above their own safety! Don't forget that I have a wife and children."

At the psychological dead-end, the lady hostess walked in, wearing an impassive smile under elaborate henna-tinted curls, wrapped in a whiff of Chanel No. 5, emerald drops dangling from a delicate platinum chain at her slim wrist. My shabby black tailored suit and age-old white satin blouse was decidedly out of place in those surroundings, and so was my mood ...

Over the Lac Lémant, storm clouds gathered. I had no umbrella and I hastened towards the station.

"Ily, good evening," said a low voice, tearing me out of my gloomy thoughts. It was Baron B_____, the biggest man I have ever seen; he was at least 6'5"; his shoulders were massive and powerful; his face had a puffy flabbiness and greenish tints around the heavy pale lips; a striking contrast to the black beard he seemed to have grown lately. He was a man too appreciative of women to give them all up for one only. He extended two soft, huge hands, his great bulk bent awkwardly; I hadn't seen him for years, and hardly recognized him with all that hair on his face.

"*You* here? I thought you were still in Czechoslovakia?"

"No, luckily not. I've been in Austria for a year now. I had to come to Switzerland on business." He continued, "Have you had news from Victor lately?"

"Yes. He can write one short letter-card weekly."

"He will have served his 3½ years soon, I suppose?"

"Yes, on the second of May."

"Do you know," Baron B_____ said, "that in most cases these prisoners disappear on the day they are out of jail?"

When the nerves are completely inflamed, the dentist's probing needle is not felt. All my nerves seemed to be in that state.

"What exactly is your psychological reason for giving me such news now?" My voice must have been ominously silky.

His beady eyes, glinting yellow in the dusk, searched my face sharply.

"Dear Ily, I felt it my duty, as Victor's *friend*, not to leave you in ignorance of facts that might be of importance to you, in your endeavour to save him, while there is still some time left to do it."

"Goodbye," I said and hastily walked on. I had just missed my train! I waited in the draughty station for the next one. I walked up and down, jostled by hurrying people; I sat on the iron bench; crowds stepped over my legs; yellow electric bulbs glared through

dirt and dust; trains thundered by; they shook the earth. Loneliness felt deeper than any well.

* * *

A small gentle voice said,

"Come in, my dear, how *nice* to see you! Mr. Steffen is still in his study but will be down presently. Sit down, sit *down*, are you comfortable? I will fetch you a good cup of coffee."

Dainty in her black dress, creamy lace collar and cuffs, a soft purple scarf wound about her fragile throat, kind active little Mrs. Steffen hastened out of the room. (Little Mrs. Steffen was very much a flower, a velvet-petalled pansy with golden-heart shaped chalice, soft and efficient, swaying but firm in every storm.)

It was dark and cool in the room; I had waited for my eyes to adjust and sank gradually into a mood of complete impersonality ... there was an echo of pulsating harmony and peace in those surrounding. I hardly dared to draw into the realm of thought, something, SOMEBODY was near me, around me, dwelling on the verge of earthly recognition, but ready to melt away if made tangible. Dr. Rudolph Steiner had lived in that house and in that room ... he had left the physical world long before I had heard of him and the wonderful science he gave to humanity. *There was shadowy action in that room* ... waves of pure love and freedom pressing themselves into me like a seal into wax.

The door opened on silent hinges, steaming coffee and delicious home-made cakes were put on the table and I had a hard time answering questions, drinking and eating, at the same time.

"You were wise to come to Dornach for rest and new strength, my dear, it's just what you need now," Mrs. Steffen said at last, refilling my cup and pushing the plate of cakes nearer to my hand.

And then, Albert Steffen walked in ... the gentlest of gentle men, his eyes too large for that slight face. As President of the Anthroposophical Society* he had to shoulder a responsibility so vast, that it might be compared only with his super-human faith and knowledge. As every great, *new* and good thing in life has its destructive enemy, so must Anthroposophy fight fiendish powers and forces, ever ready to hurt, to distort, to destroy it with calumny and vile accusations. I have seen Mr. Steffen walk up to the Speaker's Plat-

*Until his death, one of the four Board of Directors and editor of the weekly paper called *Goetheanum*.

form in the huge amphitheatre in the Goetheanum, amidst a chorus of shouts and threats from a minority of hecklers, make a slight movement with his hand, and utter a few low-spoken sentences. Maybe a thousand people or more listened to him, then, in utter silence. An audience of all nationalities, creed and culture, come to Dornach to seek knowledge and peace of mind from East, West, South and North; they all strained ears, spellbound by his personality, eloquent sincerity, culture, truth, crystal clear logic, overwhelming simplicity and kindness. He was never carried away by his own emotions nor was he prone to pathos and sentiment, but the words took fresh meaning, pronounced by him, bringing with them new and solemn convictions to all those who had eyes to see and ears to hear. Those, of course, who came with personal aims and hatred — blind bats in the dazzling light — were below the level of his soaring personality.

Mr. Steffen seemed too frail to be addicted to things of this world but nevertheless, he was powerful and as solid as a rock; he stood far above puny personal aims, not caring what sort of comments were passed on himself. He was one of the leaders of that long parade, ever looking ahead for humanity's welfare and guarding Dr. Steiner's heritage with watchful firmness and loyalty, but his nature was of that rare quality which reverberates like a harp to every touch, and the joys and sorrows of human fellowmen with a tender, enfolding kindness towards God's every creature. We talked for an hour and a half and his farewell words were like new life and strength.

"You are weary and worried and troubled in spirit; don't be afraid, fright weakens the mind and weak thoughts provoke the wrong forces. THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR ANXIETY, YOUR HUSBAND IS GOING TO BE ALRIGHT ..."

The dark cypresses swayed in the gentle evening breeze, the sky was a dome of mother-of-pearl, silver and blue, when I left.

* * *

I *hitchhiked* my way back to Geneva and passed the next two weeks in complete solitude and repose, neither quite conscious nor unconscious, just weakly basking in solitude and peace of mind. Being idle had been an impossibility, now nothing was important but to rest and concentrate on faith and courage. Thoughts came and sat there patiently, waiting to be recognized, revolving, fading, whirling, and crystallizing at last into form and shape. A pure cubic crystal stood on my desk, reflecting from its polished prisms a

thousand sparks and miniature rainbows ... symbol of the hidden laws of the world, reaching back through millions of years, determined by waves, temperature, pressure and catalytic processes. This small crystal is the answer to many questions, as organic physical life is but a higher form of inorganic crystallization.

Why are Nature's laws so mathematically perfect and harmonious, for instance, in a flake of snow, or in the space-latticed structure of crystallized salt composed of Natron and Chlorine atoms and why is living Man a crystallized entity of combined substances (all found in the sensory world too), so far from perfection and harmony?

Why don't we try to know more about Nature's vast evolutionary process and development, leading us to a deeper understanding of life and harmony itself?

Why are the merits of civilization measured mainly by its attainments, instead of by its spiritual benefits and the happiness it gives to man?

Why is our thinking apparently not ripe for conceptions of morality and not in accordance with Nature's laws and harmony?

Why can't man use all his faculties in accordance with Nature's cyclic processes of day and night, of winter and summer, of the tide's ebb and full? (We should realise that even an inorganic salt crystallizes in totally different form during nights, day or full moon.)

Why is Man, in spite of this, the crown of Creation? Because he is a four-fold entity. In him, organic crystalline substance is recast into living, organic substance, transformed again into sensorious substance and gradually filled with the eternal, spiritual spark we call 'Ego'. This is, of course, a process of millions of years —

(1) Condensed substance — body
(2) Inorganic substance filled with life — plant
(3) Man was transformed a third time — he developed sensorious capacities, building up a central nervous system, through which originated perceptive faculties, sensations, feelings, passions ... his Astral body, or soul. He is a three-fold entity reflecting three worlds now, mineral, etheric and heavenly.
(4) The fourth stage of Man's transformation is his capacity of consciousness ... the faculty to realise himself as an Ego — I AM the expression of this Ego centres in the blood. Through this Ego, Man is a four-fold entity reaching up and reflecting Super-Spiritual World too.

Why? The crystal is a perfect reflection of the laws of the Physical World; the flowers in their beauty and harmony reflecting

both the laws of the physical world and the life-giving Etheric world; but the animals, who reflect the laws of three worlds, the physical, the etheric and the heavenly worlds — can we call them harmonious? No, we cannot! In their greeds, lusts and passions, they cannot be compared with the subtle beauty of a plant, with the purity of a crystal.

Why? Because in animals the reflections of those other worlds would seem to be distorted. Just as the seven sounds of the scale may produce total disharmony instead of pure divine music and harmony, when combined in the wrong way. The cause of disharmony lies in the wrong application and not in the divine law creating sound ...!

And Man, reflecting the laws of the four worlds, who has in him creative capacities far above those of all other creatures on earth, how does he use them, what are his aims, whither does he go? No one, save Man, can reach up and reflect that highest world ... where dwells eternal peace, eternal love, eternal life.

Man carries within him a soul centre, belonging to the Heavenly world, and when we bury our so-called 'dead', it is the soul-centre — come from the Spiritual World and gone again to that Spiritual World — which we mourn and miss and long for, far more, eventually, than their body. Their love, their kindness, their wit, their co-operation and understanding, mutual memories of the past, their individuality and *this* is the permanent human spirit which passes through repeated earthly lives. This human spirit is trained in one earthly life in normal consciousness, without conscious memory as yet of his former physical and spiritual lives; then he passes once again through human so-called death, into the spiritual world, to gather new impulses for his return to a new earthly life, there to suffer the consequences or gather the rewards of previous lives. This permanent entity acts as the inspirer and shaper of a man's own individual destiny in accordance with the laws and order of the Universe.

In Biblical times we see innumerable cases where the Spiritual World reached down to Man to help him in his childish ignorance, but we have learned much and grown up much since then and the Spiritual World now awaits for *us* to reach up to it of our own volition. Humanity is on its way ... it will develop these capacities ... it will learn to remember angels, tall, white and beautiful, whose towering wings glowed with the radiant light of a thousand mornings, enfolding humanity in love when it was born. It will remember and follow the unseen choir of divine harmony of the spheres, con-

scious above all, of the growing ascendency of spirit over matter, of the greatest truth revealed to Humanity through life itself — 'suffering is crystallized wisdom' — leading to spiritual love and life everlasting. That is the fundamental meaning of evolution — to develop from taking to giving.

There was peace and silence in the little attic room.

Through my imagination, the picture of an ebony crucifix surrounded by seven roses — symbol of faith and pure love — seemed to expand and blossom out, filling the air with fragrance; and the rainbow coloured crystal modified its shape into that of a globe, dense and opaque in its centre, becoming transparent towards its surface and merging into a fluorescent, fluctuating cloud ... this phenomena of solidity and gradual diffusion seemed to be sheathed in a silky blue canopy, glittering with millions of flashing blades, waving into patterns of incomparable luminous beauty and harmony of sound and without space or moment ... all this melted into a vision of shining wings, lustrous watchful eyes, and faces that shone like stars and dazzling suns.

Was it my 'vision'? Was it the reflection of Spirits? It seemed to be a vision of life everlasting ... life clad in picture ... the explanation to man's eternal questions —

From whence do we come?
Whither do we go?

* * *

A friend, S.B., came to visit me. He was the prototype of the man who hides his kind heart very successfully under a cloak of mundane activity.

"Victor will be out of jail in a week now," he observed in a lazy drawl, "and I came to tell you that I have found a way to help him at last. It will mean expenses amounting to 1,000 Swiss Francs. Do you think you can afford it?"

Out of breath with contained emotion, I reached for my bag.

"Here they are. The exact sum ... I have been saving it for this purpose for two years."

"Fine, half of it will be given to somebody who can go to Budapest in a few days, the other half will be saved for when Victor arrives in Vienna in order to be given to his second guide. I am leaving for Vienna myself tonight."

I couldn't answer. He looked round the sordid little attic room, the brown wallpaper decorated with symmetrical pink flowers, the

meagre furnishings ... his expensive taste shrank from it all visibly. Just then the sinewy shape of a black cat appeared on the window sill and two green eyes peered at us, curious, weird and motionless.

"What a place to live in!" he said with frank disgust. We both began to laugh. The cat vanished.

"I have lived in far worse places than this, since we became world wanderers. Anthony has the adjoining room with a piano and our landlords are a pair of really good people. But when we came here, I used to fly into fits, finding that silent-footed black cat sitting on my table, or jumping out from under the bed, streaking across books and photographs."

"Now, my dear, I've got to run. Good luck to you and don't worry. You will hear from me soon."

* * *

Long days and lonely nights piled higher and higher till there was no more space left in that attic room, but, when Anthony came home, his tangible bubbling energy filled everything with placid humour, waves of sound and smoke. He threw off his coat, fell into a chair, reached into his pocket, extracted a crumpled cigarette and lighted it. He grinned, jumped up, dashed to open the lid of the piano and sounds tumbled from under his fingers, gently ... gently ...

Then it was the second of May ... the third ... the fourth ... the fifth ... sixth ... seventh ... eighth ... ninth ... tenth ... of May ... and no news. I sat staring out of the small window at the brown and rusty rooftops, at the far hills, at the setting sun, mirrored in hundreds of windows until my eyes closed from their own weariness. I couldn't work; I couldn't eat; I couldn't think; I couldn't sleep ... sometimes I could pray.

At last, a letter came, a fat letter, bulging with pages and pages. My hands were shaking so that I could hardly open it.

"Thank God, I'm out of prison; I'm *free;* I'm staying with friends; I am well." Victor wrote, giving me details in our usual code.

Our funds had run low, I started my walks again, knocking at any door. Presently there was more painting to be done but time was heavy on my mind.

I knew that Victor would soon organize his escape from Hungary. It must be a dark night, but not quite dark, not one night, but two nights ... to walk for fifty miles through fields and woods,

across country, on scarcely marked paths, where danger would lie behind every bush, to reach the border at last ... to skulk over grassy clearings where the slightest touch on hidden wires would set off mines, to crawl over a double-file of barbed wire fencing, to outwit the sentries patrolling with bloodhounds, to hide in a fraction of a second from blinding searchlights.

Relentless violence, terror and hatred had run amok in our beloved Hungary. My imagination, accustomed to dreaming of pictures of beauty, harmony and light, was driven to seeing hallucinating visions of conflict, death and darkness.

Weeks passed, a whole month went by and some more days.

Heavily laden with a box of paints, brushes and our evening supper, taking the elevator to the eighth floor, I fumbled for the latch key in my bag and prepared to sit down and read a book. The doorbell sounded. The postman handed me a telegram. I could not open it! I sat down, got up again, went towards the window, stopped, tore open the folded paper. Blurred letters danced and took shape — "SAFELY ARRIVED IN VIENNA". I read and fell on my knees.

Then a deep-toned bell rang from a church in the glorious glow of falling sun, the doves, their homes among the pinnacles of the clock tower nearby, rose, floating in circles toward the sky. The bells of Geneva began to chime, and call, one by one, joyously ...

Presently I could think coherently again. I couldn't reach Anthony nor other relatives at that moment but I felt I had to *kiss* somebody, to *tell* somebody or else I would *burst!* I flew to Madame Porchet's kitchen, she was not there but little Monsieur Porchet was there, fat and jovial. Should I kiss *him?* No, I couldn't. Presently both he and his wife walked in solemnly and congratulated me with many words and warm handshakes. On that evening there was crying, laughter and rejoicing in our two little garret rooms. Next day I went to Berne.

"Mr. Bechtold," I said to the Chief Police Inspector, "Can you remember the promise you gave me?"

"What was that?" he said, ever on the alert.

"You promised me an entry visa for my husband as soon as he arrives in Austria. Well! *He is here!* Thank God! Now, can you fulfill your promise?"

His face relaxed ever so slightly and there was a human twinkle in his eyes. He reached for a bulging file under the letter 'K', went through it methodically and, at last, said,

"All right, your husband will get that visa."

"At once?" I asked.

"Yes, at once."

"Can you send it to Bregenz by wire?"

"Yes, if you pay for it."

I paid for it and then I went back to Geneva. I whistled in the streets, like a shoeshine boy, people looked at me, looked around, looked back at me — slightly astonished. *I didn't care!* I whistled! Anthony was slightly shocked. Then we both went to a farewell cocktail party for a young Hungarian friend. Said a kind lady,

"I heard your good news." Pressing my arm warmly, she said,

"May I drink a toast to your husband's arrival, *tonight!*"

He couldn't possibly come tonight, I thought, but obediently, I sipped some horribly strong stuff in compliance.

We left hastily. Anthony had night shift work so he grabbed his coat and departed with a quick kiss. Two minutes later, he walked back. His voice was soft with the promise of restrained joy.

"Mom!" he said. "Guess who is here ...?"

Victor stood in the passage.

Epilogue

Time and again I was urged to continue and finish my autobiography; of course it could easily fill another book, but I decided to add an appendix in abbreviated form for all those who might like to know what happened to us from 1950 to 1978.

I leave you to imagine how we felt, when at last my husband joined us at Geneva, Switzerland.

The next 9 months passed in a kind of hazy, dazed joy, to be free, to be able to voice opinions, to have proper food — it was just unbelievable. Victor's faith, luck and courage in all adversity was one of those experiences one never forgets but hardly ever mentions. He unfortunately suffered a recurrence of infective jaundice, which he had previously contracted in prison. He needed specially prepared food, which, since I was only allowed the use of Mme. Porchet's kitchen till 11 o'clock, was extremely difficult to keep warm. How do you think I did it? By putting the covered dishes under the pillow and quilt of the bed in the other tiny attic room.

Victor's sister, Consuelo Horthy, came to see us, and unsuspectingly sat on the bed; I stifled a scream and gingerly lifted her up. "What's the matter?" she asked. "The soup! You just sat on it."

But we were blissfully happy in those two sordid little attic rooms.

We lived in a whirl of entertainment, work, planning, collecting innumerable data, papers and permits. Police were friendly and allowed us to stay as visitors in Switzerland, which was an exception and compliment in those times, but also we could not live as permanent residents in such an expensive country.

In 1950 we decided to leave Europe and sail to Morocco. But should this prove to be impractical we would join our son Louis and his family in Brazil, where he had lived since 1948.

Sophie-Christine Edwards, our daughter, and her husband were in Africa.

Anthony, who was with us and had been working for NATO in Geneva came with us to Casablanca.

The first three months were a nightmare, but when we went to Rabat, things improved. We had a letter of introduction from the

Governor of French-occupied zone in western Austria — Comte Daudibert de Lussan to his brother-in-law, who held a post at Government house in Rabat.

There followed an invitation to a glittering dinner party; silent footed white-clad Berbers were in attendance.

"Would you like to live here in a comfortable villa?" asked my host. "Wouldn't I! It would be heaven after three months in sordid surroundings in Casa!"

We were invited then and there to live in his comfortable villa while he was on leave in Europe.

We made many friends and I painted 16 portraits besides many flower-pictures, landscapes and illustrations, mostly in oil. Moroccan Government channels contacted me to paint the Sultan of Morocco. I was asked, "Must you see him?" I was not forewarned and said, "Not being keen to paint from photographs, I would prefer to see him!" That clinched it — I was dropped for political reasons.

Six months in Morocco did not bring Victor the hoped for business contract. In November 1950 we sailed from Casablanca on a Swedish freighter to Brazil. Being penniless and jobless we had no time and leisure for sightseeing. Victor and Anthony hunted for jobs.

I was lucky and had portrait orders continually; some large, very interesting group compositions and family portraits of the Monteiro-de-Barros twins, the relatives of Architect Niemaier who designed the plans to the new capital Brasilia and many others.

But we were all alive and reunited, the grandchildren were often with us. I was happy, except for the tropical damp climate, we slowly acquired a foothold in that vast country.

From 1950-1958 I flew back several times for good business reasons and to visit all the relatives. I was in North Carolina when the Hungarian freedom revolution broke out in October 1956 and we listened heartbroken to its tragic end. Instead of DOING SOMETHING, the UNO had closed for a long weekend. Disillusioned and bitter, I hastened back to Brazil. Our only comfort and consolation was the wave of recognition, genuine admiration and help throughout the world towards our poor little brave martyr country struggling for freedom once again.

Having no permanent job, Victor was understandably more homesick and restless. I begged him to stay with us and help me and not accept the position of bailiff on some large remote estate, because in many cases it was dangerous; one of our relatives was nearly clubbed to death, one was shot at and wounded, several people were killed.

When he was offered a job to organise sport expeditions from Buenos Aires into the Andes — he accepted with alacrity and we went to Argentina in 1958.

A new start is never easy, but many friends and relatives had settled there and gave us sound advice.

I was delighted to be offered a perfect large studio and plunged into preparations for an exhibition. But this studio was colder than any I have ever had; I painted in gloves, woolly caps, coats, fur-lined boots and in Victor's long woolly underwear and was really sorry for my models, shivering in spite of three electric fans around them.

One fine day, in marched a tall, tanned, stout man with a petite gentle wife and inquisitive little boy — it was Atahualpa Jupanki, the famous guitarist, quite a national hero. He wished to be painted with his guitar and beautiful hands. I was enthusiastic and after cautiously but firmly settling business matters, started painting at once. Suddenly he began to play and sing nostalgic Hungarian songs in perfect Hungarian. I nearly dropped my brushes and stared. "I visited Gypsy camps," he said, but this could not be the main reason, as absolutely nobody could speak without the slightest accent, who had not acquired it in his childhood.

Well, I restrained from prying into this because he repeatedly spoke of having Indian blood and his grandfather was a Chieftain of Indians in the north.

Many years later in Germany, my grandson aged 13 years, was given a story book, the life of a little Hungarian boy, who due to exceptional circumstances was taken to the western part of America, was adopted by Indians and never returned to live in his mother country. His sole aim in life from then on was to promote the wisdom and greatness of those Indians. Well, what a remarkable coincidence.

The exhibition in August 1957 in the Velasguez galleries with 32 pictures was a formal affair and gave us much publicity.

But in spite of all our efforts Argentina did not bring us luck and the hope for amelioration in our struggle, in fact, it proved a failure in every respect. We bought a round trip ticket — valid for 2 years — and flew to Uganda, Africa to be reunited with our daughter and to join Louis and Anthony again later on.

The flight was long and uneventful, but very exhausting as neither of us can sleep in a plane. We stopped to refuel somewhere in Africa at dawn and I was frankly moved on seeing all the Mohammedans suddenly prostrating themselves wherever they were, bowing their heads to the ground in prayer.

Except baby Richard, all the family was at the airport in Entebbe. After several slightly unexpected and funny arguments with the customs, we all crowded into a car and drove to Kampala. A charming house, clusters of lilac and salmon-coloured bougainvilia, a coloured young Ayah with our fourth grandchild strapped to her back — fair hair bobbing, looking most uncomfortable but loving it. Two dogs and one cat welcomed us.

Bill, our son-in-law, advised his wife, "You should get your parents to see the Nile." But we smiled. "There will be plenty of time later on." He was always breathtakingly active.

He had joined the colonial service and 3 of their 4 children were born in Uganda. Their fourth was nearly born on board ship on their way home on leave.

By the time we visited them, Bill was agricultural advisor to the late Kabaka Frederich Mutesa who was the ruler of the richest province of the country, the kingdom of Buganda.

Bill's office was in the precincts of the Palace and the children were intrigued by the eternal fire which smouldered under a sheet of corrugated iron outside the palace gates and which was only allowed to go out at the death of the king.

With over 25,000 square miles of rich cotton and coffee growing country, Bill's work took him to frequent safaris. We joined him on some of these tours.

And when I say we, I recollect the vast assortment of things to pack and the amazing upheaval of 4 young children setting out on such trips, together with ayah, cook and driver, grandparents, pets and all.

Coffee, cotton and other crops grow in the luxurious climate and there was hope for development and increased prosperity.

The first direct elections were held in some districts of Uganda during 1958 and Buganda Kingdom was in the very centre of advance. Changes affected the lives of the women, too. Not only were the village women asking for agricultural instruction — after all, they were the ones to grow all the food crops — but the girls were leaving home for the towns. Sophie, our daughter, was working as a part-time secretary in the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) and helped to organise courses in agriculture, nutrition and child care.

In answer to an SOS, I agreed to help out in running the hostel until the new warden arrived from England. Little did I know what I was letting myself in for. The sea of faces were as difficult to memorise as the unfamiliar names; rules were made, as usual, to be

broken; problems were totally bewildering from the names to the budgeting.

Sophie helped and advised me as much as she could, of course, but more by luck than expertise, we muddled through and my only period as a "guardian" of 2 dozen or more young women of all races came to an end without anyone coming to major harm. I willingly exchanged this role for that of a full-time granny.

On our next trip to the gamepark, my little grandson Victor-Hugh pointed to a couple of fighting baboons and said, "You see — *they* have no granny to keep them in order."

The profusion of wild life is unbelievable due to the strict application of conservation in the vast national parks. Animals are accustomed to cars. One huge male lion actually smelled the left front wheel of our Fiat on which a small white pekinese had left its trademark. In the Nairobi game park we watched the love life of lions; we even followed the male down to a water hole where it never stopped drinking for 3½ minutes. Baboons jumped up and were carried on the bonnet of the car, staring through the windscreen with unblinking yellow eyes. Those creatures can be very fierce, and looked like it. Hippos do not look fierce, but the locals are frightened of them. To us they look really funny with those tiny shellpink ears and enormous flabby dripping pink jaws, cumbersome on land or in mudpools, but once in, or under water, they float about looking almost weightless. At night they leave the water to graze and walk for miles in single file leaving a narrow trail as hard as concrete. They have special areas between stumps of high shrubs which they use as WCs. They have a habit of swishing their tails furiously, thereby spreading their droppings on those shrubs, marking the territory.

Driving once with the car full of children, we passed a grazing bull elephant. A game warden on his bike peddling toward us recognised that elephant, lost his head, threw his bike down in the middle of the road and jumped into the ditch. It so happened, that that particular bull knew and loathed that man and started to charge us as we blocked its way. My son-in-law, driving with his left arm — having lost his right arm at El Alamein in the war — naturally could not swerve and bumpety-bump went right over the bike. Elephants are unpredictable; having lost its enemy, it turned and trotted away. We reversed and picked up the game warden and his ruined bike. He was grinning happily, "Never mind the bicycle you saved my life!"

But time had passed all too quickly and farewells had to be said

Both Victor and I were privileged to have had the good fortune to spend a year with Sophie and her family in Africa and will ever look back to this gift of Fate with a certain nostalgia. When Ditta emigrated to Great Britain, she decided to use her second name and is called Sophie.

In 1959 we flew to Vienna to spend a few weeks with friends and relatives before returning to Brazil. But then, again, Fate decreed otherwise. My husband gave an interesting lecture on Africa, showing many slides and photographs and soon found a job in an estate agent's office. I received many portrait orders and organised once more a large one-man show which was a success. It was a great joy and comfort to be in Europe, to see fog and snow, to see fair heads and blue eyes. Instead of three weeks we stayed two years in Austria and gave up our plans to go back to Brazil.

Meanwhile our eldest son, Louis, was offered a most interesting job to organise and represent a Brazilian steel company in Europe.

His two children joined him and we settled down with them in Düsseldorf, Germany, in pleasant rural surroundings on the outskirts of the town. It was not an old house, nevertheless Louis and I — being telepathic — soon found out that it was haunted by steps at night, spooky vibrations and heart-rending sobs. It was said that a poor Jewish family had lived there during the Nazi persecution. Later we moved into a more peaceful and comfortable home.

Life began to be slightly easier and when the 2 children went to college, Victor and I visited innumerable relatives and friends in Austria, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium and Holland and I, of course, went often to Dornach, the centre of Anthroposophy.

We spent happy times with Karl Hugo Seilern, his attractive house hugged by rambling red roses. The old mansion "Wasserburg" was very much damaged and under repair, a source of interesting history. Thoroughbred horses walked the paddocks — one of them was the famous Austrian Derby winner "Brabant".

In every guest room hung a framed article of the mutual fates of Lincoln and Kennedy, which I enclose.

Lincoln and Kennedy

Both were concerned with the issue of Civil Rights.
Lincoln was elected in 1860.
Kennedy was elected in 1960.
Their successors, both named Johnson, were Southerners and Democrats and both had previously served in the Senate.

John Wilkes Booth was born in 1839.
Lee Harvey Oswald was born in 1939.
Both of these were slain before trial could be held and were Southerners favouring unpopular ideas.
Both Presidents' wives lost children through death while residing in the White House.
Lincoln's secretary, called Kennedy, advised him not to go to the theatre the night he was killed.
Kennedy's secretary, called Lincoln, advised him not to go to Dallas.
Both Presidents were killed on a Friday and in the presence of their wives.

1973 was the year of our golden wedding anniversary which, being a too emotional event, Victor and I celebrated quietly alone.

It was the same year that the aged primate Cardinal Josef Mindszenty obeyed the Pope's wish, left Budapest and took up residence in Vienna. He was the living symbol of faith and courage in the cold war between East and West.

Cardinal Mindszenty can only be understood by his own deep sense of identification with the spirit and history of Hungary — martyr country and nation.

Time and again, fate had brought us into his life. He was an active young prelate in the country where Victor's brother, George Károlyi, lived. They met frequently.

In 1948, when he was imprisoned and submitted to torture and degradation, Victor was in those same jails. Later the aged and weakened Cardinal was confined for several years in the ex-home of my sister Toinette and family in Nógrád Felsőpetény, guarded by Communist soldiers and police dogs, and when at last in 1973 he came to Austria, he lived in Vienna in a spacious town house, the Pasmaneum, presented by our uncle Bishop Miklós Széchényi to a religious order for young theologists. The large picture in the chapel taking up the whole wall behind the altar, was painted by relatives, sister and brother of the Bishop.

I wrote and spoke of all this to Cardinal Mindszenty and was overwhelmed when I received a personally written long letter from him — he sent his blessing to our families.

When it was announced in the press and on television that Cardinal Mindszenty had been invited by Cardinal Heenan to visit the United Kingdom and to celebrate the millennium of the Birth of St. Stephen, first king of Hungary, in London in July 1973, hundreds of people travelled to London. Victor and I were given invitations

and participated in 2 Solemn Masses in the Westminster Cathedral in Hungarian and the next day in Latin. On both occasions Cardinal Mindszenty delivered long sermons in English and Hungarian. The vast congregation applauded with spontaneous joy, knelt and kissed his hands as he passed by. Five months later, Victor died peacefully in our home on December 16, 1973.

There is so much sorrow in the world but when it comes to certain dramas in my life, I find it impossible to speak of them. To my consolation, all our children and 9 grandchildren from far and near were able to attend the funeral. Sophie felt instinctively that I would be able to cope with loneliness and sorrow, but Louis and Anthony asked anxiously, "Mami, what are you going to do?" "I will answer innumerable letters, paint, give lessons and introductory courses in Anthroposophy and presently I will travel" I said. And that is exactly what I did, visiting USA in 1975 and the 3 graves of my dear Mother and 2 brothers, painting and saying farewell to 31 nearest relatives. I stayed in Rome for a month, several weeks in Switzerland, 3 months with Louis in Düsseldorf, 3 months in Belgium with Anthony and family, and after too much painting, too many goodbyes, too much travelling, I came home to rest. It was a particularly enchanting spring, summer and autumn. To me it seemed a blessed gift of time to practice and to perfect life's tasks in which we had much experience. One of the reasons why age should be respected. But only too often there prevails today a kind of condescending forbearance, if not contempt, towards the old: "poor dear, he or she has aged a lot lately, is getting forgetful, one-track minded, self-centred, etc., etc." This is a normal weakening state with the fading of life's energies. The old should practice even more honest self-perception, patience, unbiased flexibility of judgment towards all in every feeling, thought and action. But the value of experience of age is based on adversity, for in time of trial, men draw near to each other in courage and unselfishness; love is a potent medicine, it triggers unbelievable reactions.

I had ample time and peace to read, to finish my memoirs and to reflect and meditate on the meaning of my life. But there was a note of urgency in my activities: "we have not time to waste, because we can never reclaim the moment".

In January, February and March, 1977 — the year of the wonderful Silver Jubilee — I gave 3 lectures in Anthroposophy, painted many pictures too and 4 portraits in 10 days — all this proved to be just too much. Walking down to my husband's grave on All Souls Day I felt ill and exhausted and called the doctor. My heart

seemed to take up a slow rate of beating, the supply of blood to the brain was inadequate. "This might cause attacks of fainting," he said, "you will have to go to hospital."

On the morning of November 8 I felt myself dying. Nevertheless I had enough energy to ask our kind parish priest to call and prepared everything for the last rites. It was an hour of prayer and peace.

Presently Sophie arrived and my dearest friend Muriel Pickard. Sitting in a deep armchair I dictated farewell letters and the 3 of us chatted comfortably. At 8:30 p.m. the room began to expand and everything became transparent — my heart gave a big beat, fluttered and stood still. I felt completely at ease and in extreme comfort, it was not frightening at all. There was no emotion, only a wonderful feeling of joy — "This is a strange experience, I am actually dead, how wonderful — oh thank God".

I am at a loss to find the adequate words now. Our world is 3 dimensional but the next one is definitely not — I was perfectly conscious. But the most striking point of this whole experience was that I suddenly saw a metallic-blue, turret-shape behind me, seemingly compelling and helping me to rise from that low armchair. Weightlessly, I floated through 2 rooms and a passage and took 2 huge gulps from a flask of cognac — doctor's orders, Muriel's gift — I loathe every sort of alcohol. Instantly a burning spasm contracted my muscles and slowly the heart began to beat. To all intent and purpose just like a clock that had stopped and after being vigorously shaken, starts to tick again.

Obviously, scientific and clinical explanations can be given for almost everything, but I know that my unique experience was not an abstract self-hypnosis, but an out-of-body episode in corroboration with powerful supersensible activities — we could call them spirits and angels — influencing me to "come back"; without them death would have undoubtedly occurred in one minute.

It would have been a rare relief and bliss to pass away prepared, without suffering, in unemotional peace and joy, but I responded obediently to accept new responsibilities and tasks here on earth. Next day we went to the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital and I signed the permit for two operations.

An electrode was introduced into the heart through a vein, to conduct the right impulses again, set up by an apparatus and battery inserted under the skin. It sounded very spooky. During the first operation I watched the reactions of my heart being monitored.

Slowly body and mind adapted themselves to this mechanical stimulus.

I am inclined to think that no man's life and fate here on earth is haphazard, whether he be important or humble, great or small. Rather it is a cosmic pattern, in time, organised by superspiritual powers, influencing history and evolution. Every man therefore should fulfill his particular purpose, whatever he may be.

March was a difficult month, the doctor had to be called twice. Forty mile per hour gales shook trees and the house, it moaned and whistled through the fireplace and closed doors, it smashed heavy rain against the window panes.

From then on my health gradually deteriorated. I had edema of the lungs and a growing tumour of the colon. My doctors advised treatment with the possibility of surgery. But this time I did not give my consent; so I was told that there was little hope of my living longer than a few weeks.

I wrote to the Harry Edwards Healing Sanctuary for prayer, asked a homoepathic practitioner friend for advice and as I was daily getting weaker, my daughter took me to stay with her. She gave me the strength through her own healing power and her natural sunny temperament and faith. Through her advice I changed my whole diet.

On the ninth day, all symptoms vanished spectacularly and two weeks later there was no trace of the tumour.

These last weeks brought a rich variety of events; I am literally living and planning from hour to hour.

The guest rooms are ready to receive friends; pupils come and go twice a week for painting lessons; the coffee breaks are lively and the atmosphere relaxed — a happy kind of mutual therapy exists.

You may wonder what inspired me to write this book; my reasons are many but a fundamental one is to share with you some of the up and down experiences of my life and to prove how where there is a will there is a way.

I count my blessings.

To be in harmony with one's own destiny is in itself a great blessing.

You bought this book.

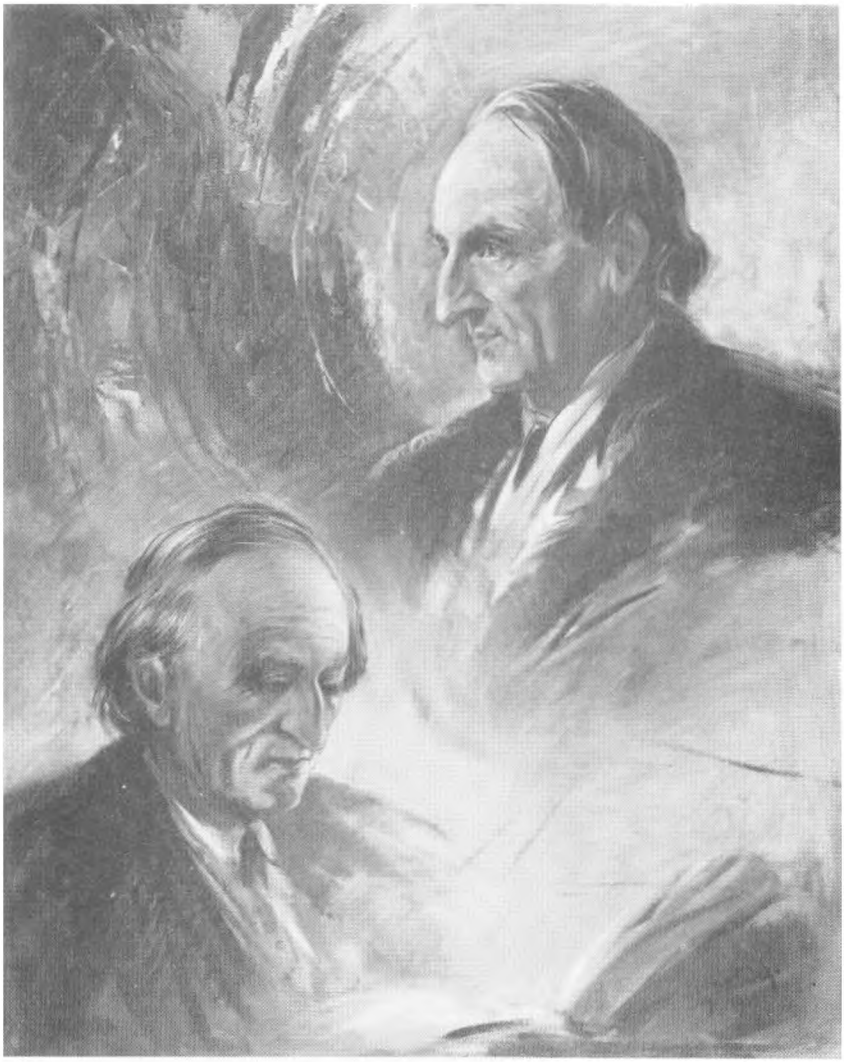
When I have crossed the last bridge into that world of rainbow colours, peace and joy, I will send *you* my prayers and love.

The author: Countess Ilona Károlyi Széchényi

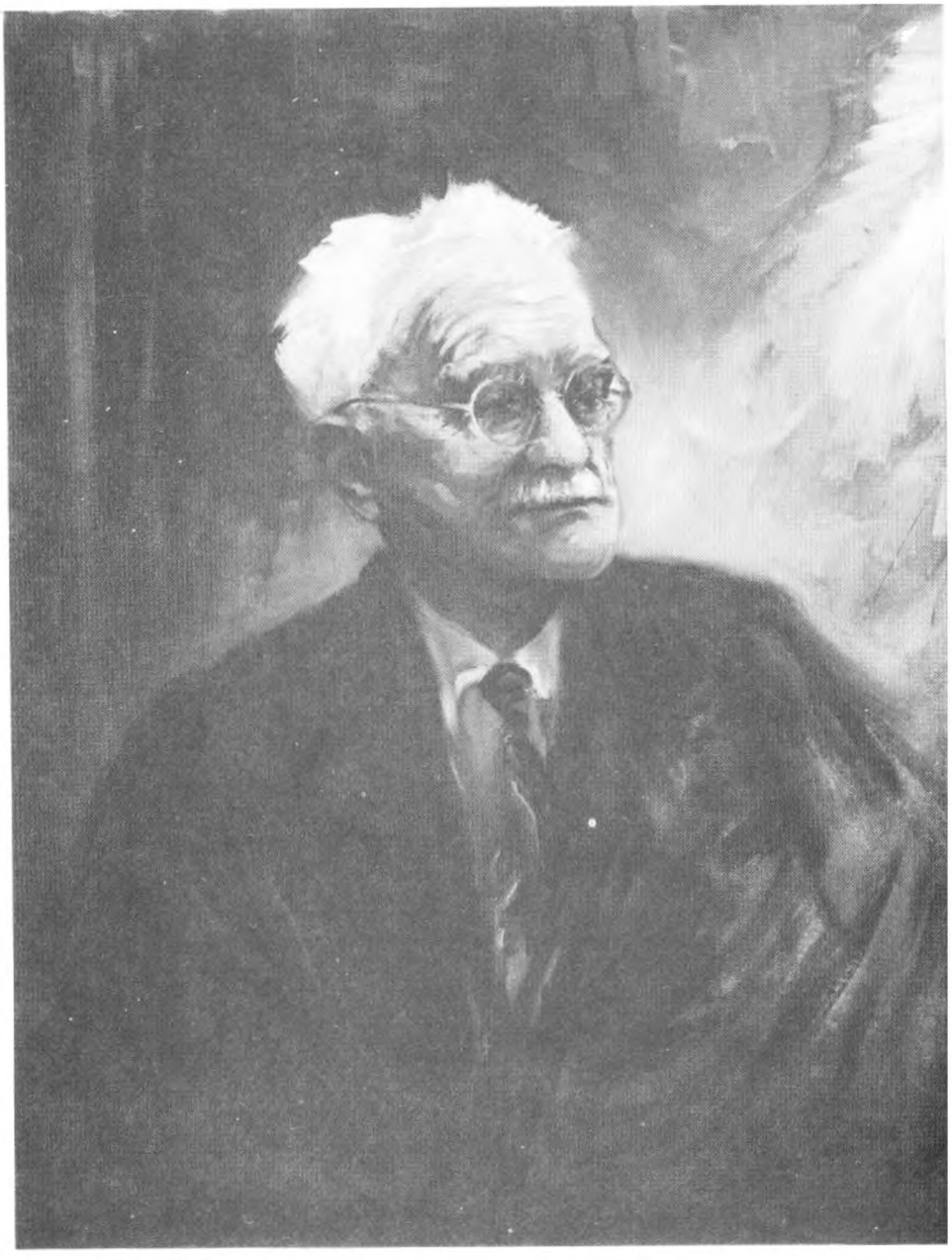
Viktor Károlyi greeting Cardinal Mindszenty in London with his wife, daughter Sophie and grandson Steven.

"Mother With Child" — painted by author

"Count István Széchényi" — painted by author



"Herr Albert Steffen" — painted by author



"Charles A. Fagan, Jr." — painted by author

Countess Claudia Rhédey, grandmother of the late Queen Mary — painted by author

"Count Géza Andrássy" — painted by author

"Fight" — painted by author