

Boris Schatz
Autobiography.

Introduction.

I HAVE written this book some twenty years ago. A German publisher intended at that time to issue a book of "Schatz and his work". There was correspondence exchanged at that time between me and Mr. R., the well known arts critic, who was entrusted with the writing of the text to the said book. This book has however not been published and the letters, without those lost, have been afterwards, owing to their privacy, printed in 25 manuscripts and distributed amongst my most intimate friends.

I have now decided to publish these letters. At an advanced age we all feel that everything done in our younger years is dear to our memory, even admitted that those things are of little importance. May the serious readers excuse this. I promise instead to write in my next book the continuation of my biography as a Jew whom destiny has transferred to Palestine and Jerusalem, the Holy City.

Jerusalem, 1925.

THE AUTHOR.

My dear E. A. R.

Had you lived in Russia, and had you the opportunity of thus acquainting yourself with the greatest Jewish prison, humanity had ever known, within the bounds of the so-called "Limit of residence"—then to your request of furnishing some material for my biography, I should reply very briefly: "I was born in Russia, of pious parents, in the year so and so". The rest would have been self-evident, just what I was put through in order to become an artist, in order to retain my human likeness at all. But you are Gentile; you live in constitutional Germany, for you the vale of tears in which my brothers live, think, struggle and die, is a region dark and unknown.

I endeavoured to give you a few melancholy pictures out of my reminiscences, I feel that they pale, because the pen—is not my line; but they are true, everyone is deeply stamped by experience, and time has failed until now to erase their trace from my memory. Let these impotent lines serve as a cry for help from *one of the many* tormented souls in Dante's Inferno, where the righteous are tortured body and soul, as well as the sinners. And you, you can use your mighty pen to tell it to the entire civilized world . . . I continue to believe that our sorrows are caused by those who do not know us, by those who do not want to know us. I believe that what is true of one can be true of a whole people and in my own case I enjoy the regard and friendship of persons of various nationalities, faiths and social position. We have been drawn together by our common love of art, through which they have learned to know and to like me. I want to trust, that upon reading your book more than one honest soul will admit: "Yes, we have acted unjustly, but we have done so through ignorance".

Accept my sincerest regard and respect.

Sofia, 1. May, 1905.

B. SCHATZ.

Prof. B. Schatz

By Prof. Dr. JOSEPH KLAUSNER.

A WARMLY appreciated gift, the Monography of Prof. B. Schatz, was donated by the B'nei Bezalel edition. Critics of art will review his work and the art he gave to humanity, and they will pass their judgment from a purely artistic point of view; this, however, is not my task, it is a specialty which is not mine. I shall consider the artist and his art from a different aspect, which, I am quite sure, will not be touched upon by them, because it is not their specialty and therefore it is not within their sphere.

In plastic arts, like in music, poetry and science, there are two kinds of talents; one we call the personal talent, the other, the universal talent. The personal talent is capable of receiving an impression, a desire to gratify his ambition will urge him on to express the impression in artistic form; he will create something exceptionally good; something that has much of the artistic and aesthetic values, but not more; he is not a path finder, he can show no new roads, no new tendencies and no new style to the world of art. It is quite different with the universal talent: he is not only the producer of arts that remain everlasting, he is also the creator of propensities, he is a builder of new roads, a discoverer of new lines of new perspectives, and new vistas of thought. The universal talent digs new canals to bring forth to the surface certain streams, which were heretofore hidden, deep in the people's soul, waiting there to be discovered by a creative & organizing force. It matters little that the canals are narrow, the stream will break through and like a tidal wave it will give life to the spiritual desert.

Professor Boris Schatz belongs to the universal class of artists; he is possessed of creative genius and organizing ability; he is not only the artist of exquisite and beautiful paintings and sculpture; he is also a discoverer of new tendencies, a founder of new highways and by ways in the realm of art. He is a pioneer who invaded new and untrodden territory in Art's domain. His splendid Monograph with forty photographs of his art productions, recently published in Jerusalem, reveals to us his creative spirit as an artist, as well as the new spirit he perpetuated in his works of art. Before us is a long list of the work of his creative spirit; we divide them into four different classes, as follows:

I. The broken soul in the Diaspora. There is no other man who shares as deeply in the individual and national feelings to which the Jew gave expression in the Diaspora, as Professor Schatz. These feelings bear witness that the spirit of God, which revealed itself to us on Mount Sinai and at the Jordan, still illumines the depths of the Jewish soul even in the Diaspora, where it sank low and it became degraded. These feelings he expressed in the following works: The Scribe, the Penitent, Blowing the Shofar, the Marriage Broker, This is my portion of all my labor, the Blessing of the Lulav, the Yemenite Scribe, the Rabbi's Blessing, a Grandmother, the First Mitzwah, the Blessing of the Sabbath Candles, Havdalah, a Jewish Mother and One of the people of the book. If the Jewish soul is not completely manifested through all these works of art, it is because much of its lustre and brilliancy was lost in Goluth, but many fragments remained intact, in spite of the persecution and the darkness of the Ghetto walls. His autobiography, which is probably the only one of its kind, he begins with a deep and tragic sweetness, until the lines grow light and humorous; in this volume we perceive that only one who suffered the Goluth as vehemently as Schatz, can love as strongly as he loves. He is far from those artists who stand aloof, they look upon Judaism from a distance, and they produce Jewish art as if they were strangers, who belong to a different sphere. Schatz dwells among the masses; the things that are sacred to them are also sacred to him, he gathers their sorrows into his soul; therefore his art is so close to us and his language so forcefully appears to our hearts. And yet Schatz does not idolize; his eyes are open to our faults and vices; in his autobiography he enumerates many of them; and his criticism of them are severe and even harsh. He believes that the great Jewish soul, the sufferings and broken soul found a temporary outlet, or shelter, in the religious and national thoughts and meditations; it preserved the last Jewish spark, it was kept from a total extinction until the arrival of the national flame which was to bring light and warmth.

II. The longing for our redemption. The strength to endure and to survive the great sufferings of the Diaspora was acquired by the Jewish people only through their intensive longing and yearning for a deliverance. This thought is expressed by Schatz in his wonderful collection of: Requiem, The Wailing Wall, the Year 1918, the Ninth of Ab, Midnight Prayer, and When Will Come the Miraculous End? In this collection Professor Schatz conveys most emphatically the spirit of an endless longing of a people to be redeemed from slavery. These works of art can be translated in the following words: When will the long night of the Diaspora disappear? When will the sun of redemption shine on us? When will arrive the miraculous end? How long shall we weep for Zion and mourn for Jerusalem? Is it too soon to have compassion for the people and their land? Will God's wrath rest forever on His chosen people and the holy land? ... In many variations, new and old, the artist reveals through his master pieces all these questions which have been on the lips of the Jewish people for a thousand years; and in times of disaster (like in the late world war) these interrogations break out with greater force. This great artist was capable of giving real artistic expression to grave national problems. His relief in bronze, "When Will Come the Miraculous End?" is rightfully considered his most serious production.

III. Historic figures. The hope and expectation to be redeemed was too deep-rooted in our hearts to forget the historic character of our past; Schatz sought in the souls of our great men either their burning desire for our independence, or their heart stirring lamentations for our national misfortune. Schatz won worldwide distinction by creating: Mattathia, Judith, Elija, the prophet, and Jeremiah; they were all prophets, three of them are known as the "Avengers," they killed the enemies to avenge the God of Israel and for the national glory of their people; the fourth was the great lamentor, he wrote the greatest lamentations that were ever produced. However, Jeremiah was not contented with tears and sighs alone, while he mourns and weeps for the terrible misfortune of his people he spurs them on to action and he urges them on to fight for freedom. Schatz conceives Elija, the prophet, not only in the light of one who kills the priests who are servants in the temples of the false deities, but also as one who proclaims the coming of Messiah, he blows on the great horn, "the shofar of the redeemer" to announce the advance of freedom and independence.

IV. Our present great men. Schatz believes that in addition to the great men of the past it is of much importance to have great men at present, who are devoting their genius and ability to the cause of their people, thus he shows us a galaxy of great men of the present era, they are writers, publicists, poets and artists. Twice he modeled Doctor Herzl; he also modeled Wolfsohn, Prof. Warburg, Prof. H. Schapiro. Ben Yehudah, Imber, Schechter, the artists, Hirschenberg and Lilien and Joseph Trumpeldor, the young hero who protected our border with the last drops of his young blood. In the big Jewish heart of Prof. Schatz there is enough room for all our great men, of all times and climes; he revives in all of them the one thought, the thought of redemption: this thought can be read in all their faces, they reflect the spirit of God which shines on a new nation. The creative spirit of Schatz the artist gives him a first place in our national temple of art, but he deserves a place of equal distinction as a co-builder of a new nation.

All the trials and tribulations which Professor Schatz endured in Palestine during the twenty years did not weaken his faith in the Jewish people, nor in the land of the people. To Schatz, like to all creative spirits, the word "failure" is unknown. With a pure fate, a clear vision, and the imagination of a poet and an artist, Schatz goes on dreaming the greatest of all dreams: the sublime dream of the resurrection of a whole nation. In a most confidential form he reveals to us this dream in his Utopia: "The New Jerusalem." His faith is clear, pure and firm, it cannot be conquered, and it will admit no doubt. His is the creative spirit of a real hero artist, of a genius, whose mind is bent to create the great and colossal. That he accomplished this we need only consider the time, place and the meager means which he possessed at his disposal; only then will we realize the real greatness of Schatz.

I.

I WAS born in 1867, on the second day of "Hanukah", in a little town of Vorno, of pious parents.

My grandfather on father's side was a "Hazen", (a cantor of a synagogue), and mother's father—a rabbi, famous for his learning, rhetoric and piousness. Time and again I have heard mother say that there had been "Yichus brief" (ancestral papers) in his possession passed down from generation to generation of learned rabbis and famous scholars, but that these papers had been destroyed during a fire catastrophe. My maternal grandfather has played an important part in the early years of my life.

From dimmest childhood I remember him as an ancient old man, with long, snow-white, "Peyes" and beard, the tip of which had grown yellow, as if about to become young once more; with a beautiful, dry, regular face, high well-rounded brow, and youthful black eyes;—altogether resembling the Maccabee I have modelled later on. He had a host of great-grandsons and great-grand-daughters, out of which he distinguished me for my quick ability, foreseeing in me the continuation of the line of rabbis in his family. Of his own sons not one had chosen the career of a rabbi, although all were brilliant Talmudic scholars. Because of these hopes vested in me by grandfather, I enjoyed particular care at the hands of my mother, and a thoughtful bringing up on the part of my father. Even in my tenderest childhood father constantly impressed upon me the fact that I was already a Jew and must act accordingly, while from my good mother, all I heard was: "Do as grandfather does". The slight difference of some eighty years in our ages seemed to have slipped her mind entirely. Generally speaking, age didn't seem to carry any weight with her. As far back as the second year of my life, when nursing me at her breast, she deemed it proper to make me say a prayer over my food, as befits a pious Jew. My own memory, of course, doesn't reach that far, but many was the time she reminded me of it in later days, declaring, whenever I had neglected to say my prayer, that the older I grew, the worse I became.

The spirit of piety and learning reigned in our house, and I remember, that at the age of six, on entering the "Heder" (the private school of a Jewish community), I could already read quite smoothly, as well as relate with a great deal of animation various stories from the Bible, phantom tales of ghosts, apparitions, miracles and such stuff, which excited and frightened my childish fancy.

Well too do I remember my pre-"Heder" days, and in my memory this time is divided into three periods, according to the style of pantaloons I wore.

The first, when my thoughtful mammy, for the sake of greater safety and comfort would make a slit in the rear of my pants, through which inevitably my shirt would protrude in the shape of a tail. Those were the days when I could only eat and play, and was as yet unspanked. The second period came after I had earned the complete confidence of my

mother, and my pants would button in the back,— "pants with shutters" they were called. It was then, that I felt for the first time the awakening of higher needs, such as joy-rides astride our billy goat, exploration jaunts out in the fields, on French leave, of course,—all of which would not infrequently result in a sound thrashing. And the third period—in real pants, at last, all grown up, with suspenders criss-crossing, and pockets filled with all sorts of junk; and oh, the thrill of pushing one's hands into their depths, and, hat cocked to a desperate angle, and whistling like blazes strutting down the street. I was then the proud bearer of the name "Berka Eli dem Rov's", was highly praised for my "Smart head", and would even be lead to the town baths, so that young Jewish wives coming back from the "Mikveh" would meet me first on their way, and praise such a clever offspring. And notwithstanding all this, I was shunned and frequently thrashed for being a desperate young rascal; a stray stone finding its way into a neighbouring window, a chick with its leg broken, would immediately and unhesitatingly be ascribed to my doing, and mother would inevitably receive a long list of complaints.

Besides my physical preoccupations at this time, there were my mental interests as well. I was a passionate lover of tales, and could listen to them by the hour, fascinated beyond words, with heart failing and mouth open, a finger of questionable cleanliness not infrequently stuck into its depths. But above all else, I was fond of telling stories myself. I remember times, when having gathered an audience of my own imposing size in a cosy dark corner behind our house, I would begin drawing on my enormous repertoire of spookie stories, adding on the spur of the moment details that have just occurred to my fertile imagination. Voices grow hushed and broken, eyes dim and widen, breath comes short. . . . Suddenly we catch sound of a rustle and shrieking wildly, I am the first to fly, the squealing gang hard at my heels. Mother would scold me for having frightened the children and would frequently accuse me of lying. But so vivid was my imagination, and so real everything suggested by it, that I would cry bitterly, insisting that I was telling the truth, that I had seen it with my own eyes. I remember once, while playing hide-and-seek with the children, I hid myself in a dark clothes closet. The feel of my father's fur coat gave me "the creeps"; on the instant everything became bright and I saw before me the Evil One; he was entirely covered with iron scales; the head with its horns was like a chicken's and so were his feet and the horrible curled up tail. Mother rescued me from there more dead than alive, having been attracted by the thump of my falling body; I had fainted. Strange to say, in my student years in Paris, I saw a picture of the identical devil in the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

It was about that time that my little brain began to be puzzled by universal questions: what is

God? man? animals? Where is the sun at night? Where do the moon and stars go? Where does the earth end. To these I would receive vague or unintelligible answers, or else I would be told that it was sinful to be asking about such things. This would not satisfy me at all, and lying on my back, staring at the slowly drifting clouds, I would try to think up my own explanations. The astronomy problem I settled very quickly and easily; the sun climbs up to heaven to sleep at night; and the pretty little stars are the little holes which the light of the sun leaks through. The proof of my hypothesis was served by the fact that rain comes down in drops, leaking through the little holes as if through a sieve. This theory left me most content. But exploring the edge of the earth came more difficult, and I pretty nearly shared the terrible fate of many a courageous explorer. One foggy night I noticed through the window, that the heavens came down to earth in the meadow just beyond the group of trees which I know so well. I made up my mind to set out immediately, I could see very clearly how just a little way off the sky joined the earth, but to my consternation, no matter how quickly I run, I couldn't manage to reach the spot. Finally, tired out with my lengthy walk and seeing that there seemed to be no end to it, I grew frightened. This was surely nothing but the trickery of the "Letz" (a sort of mocking spirit). I knew for certain that he was just the one to be up to such devilry; didn't I hear Zorach, the "baal-agala" (driver) tell, how, on his way from the fair, he wandered and wandered in a circle all night, and only toward morning, at cock's crow, found himself and his waggon standing in the marsh behind his own barn? In alarm I turned right about to go back, and to my horror perceived, instead of the town in the distance,—the same lowering sky. In sheer madness I began running about, now rushing wildly onward, now flinging myself on the earth and filling the air with desperate cries. It was only toward midnight that my folks found me exhausted and prostrate and led me back to the safety of the house.

Shortly after this incident I was sent to "Heder". Of the "Heder" I had often heard before, and thought of it as some thing horrible and greatly to be feared. More than once, after some particularly mischievous prank on my part, mother would threaten: "Now you just wait, you "shegetz" (scape-grace), wait till you are sent to the "Heder" and Osher-Leib gets hold of you". This Osher-Leib and his "nine-and-a-half" fingers served as a veritable "bogey" for all the children of the town, and the mere mention of his name sufficed to send a chill down our spines. We were frightened of his peculiar nickname, of his legendary whip of four "lokshen" (lashes), and of the mysterious "birdie" which spies on everything his pupils do at home and always tattles. And now it came to pass that one day mother gave me a thorough scrubbing, smoothed my hair, dressed me in my Sabbath suit, with my new "tales-kotn" on top, and "tzizis" on the side, kissed me "special strong" and handed me over to father. He wrapped me in his own "tales", lifted me in his arms and carried me to "Heder". All the way down the

street, the shop-keepers, who were pretty near all my aunts or otherwise related, showered me with "candle-sugar" (a kind of sweet) in pretty coloured wrappers, kissed me fussed over me, declared that my face reflected the Holy Spirit, and vowed that I should become a great rabbi like my grandfather. I was greatly flattered with all this attention, but my heart faltered at the thought that I was being carried to "Heder".

Even yet I see before my eyes the long table, at either end of which were seated little boys, an open book before each. At the head of the table sat, as it seemed at the time, a terrifying old man with a long white beard and an enormous shining brow, wearing a sharb-cornered "Yarmolkeh" (scull cap) pushed to one side. Before everything else I caught sight of his "nagaykah" (an instrument of chastising) lying at his right as if in readiness for action. It had a stout well worn handle, around which was wound a twisted leather thong, from which in turn four pliant lashes issued and writhed snake-like on the table.

Father stood me up on the bench right next to this hideous thing. I was all a-tremble, hardly able to stand on my feet. The "Rebe" opened a large "Humesch" (Bible), pointed a thin tapering stick at the letter "alef" and asked: "What's that? My stare met the horribly protruding, mutilated finger with its thick glossy end and I trembled with terror. "What is that?" he repeated in a severer tone, and here I could stand it no longer. Tears choked me, my throat contracted, I rubbed my eyes with my little fists and burst into sobs. When after a great deal of effort my father soothed me, I succeeded in reading quite fluently several lines. Suddenly a "grosh" (a very small coin) fell on the page from above, and the "Rebe" kindly explained it was dropped by an angel who always rewarded diligent children. At this he smiled so wonderfully, and such darling little wrinkles encircled his gentle childish eyes, that suddenly I felt very happy. I understood that it was not the angel that was responsible for the coin, but refrained from voicing my scepticism,—the "nagaykah" with its snake-like lashes was too close for comfort. The ordeal over, I was duly wrapped into the "tales" once more, and carried back home. My first words to mother were: "I have been to the "Heder" and the "Rebe" didn't hit me"!

Contrary to all my misgivings I was quite happy in the "heder". I had a number of school fellows with whom I became intimate in a very short while, and who soon passed on to me the art and science of games, fights and other accomplishments necessary for becoming a full fledged "Heder bocher". Moreover, I actually enjoyed studying the Bible. True at the time of the lessons with the "Rebe", I understood, as a rule, nothing at all, merely repeating parrot like the words and translations and keeping a furtive eye on the ever present stimulus to learning—the whip. But once in the safety of the home, I would delight in repeating the lessons by myself, singing and swaying to the rhythm of the words. Only then I would begin to understand, and

question the various contradictions in the Bible, while father sat there, in rapture, becoming daily more convinced that I was destined to become a great rabbi. And finally, it was while in the "Heder" that I experienced for the first time the joy of artistic creation. I had got into the habit of drawing on the fly leaves of the Bible and the prayer books all sorts of fanciful designs. Another opportunity for decoration was offered by the "asher-yozar" papers distributed to us for hygienic purposes. These became exceedingly popular with my school fellows and even served as exchange coins among the pupils of other "Heders", thus raising my prestige in the eyes of my comrades. The "Heder" also enriched the repertoire of my stories, which thronged my childish fancy with such horrors, that were it not for various ingenious conjurings which I had mastered at the time, I could not have borne a moment's solitude; every dark corner, every nook was peopled for me with ghosts, spectres and such ghastly shapes. I was particularly haunted in the winter time, when I was obliged to return from my "Heder" in the dark. We used to leave school in a crowd, with many a shout, and snow-ball fight, and sliding contest over every frozen puddle. We would attack on our way every unfortunate pig and dog, who personified for us the treacherous Philistines, to be fought with courage and valour. But the farther we went, the smaller the crowd grew, until finally I would be left all alone to plod my way to our house situated on the outskirts of the town. Pigs and dogs held no terrors for me; I had confidence in my strength, and even enjoyed the reputation of the strongest chap in the "Heder". But the trying spot on my way was an old wooden church, black with age, surrounded by tall swaying poplars, sheltering narrow pointed windows, in and out of which continually flitted black and ominous birds. Breathless and faint, tightly clutching the little lantern to my breast, hardly trusting to the magic of my whispered charm, I would slip by this frightful spot and breathe once more only upon reaching the little hall of our house, where I felt completely safe under the protection of the "Mazuza" (a sacred charm, nailed above the entrance) on the door.

This church and the prison, walled in by a tall fence of heavy tapering logs, were the only samples of Christian architecture and institutions in our purely Jewish town, containing besides its Jewish population only the "Shabes goy" (a non-Jew doing the necessary Sabbath chores in the Jewish homes). This latter spoke Jewish fluently, faltering only at the word "Vachlakkus", which, despite all his efforts, in the hope of getting a "Chala" (special Sabbath bread) as a reward, he could not succeed in pronouncing. Christian peasants from the neighbouring villages would come to town only on Friday, the market day. They wore uncouth sheepskin coats, enormous leather caps and ungainly home-made shoes; they would wrangle on top of their voices in a, to me, unintelligible, barbarous tongue over their buying and selling operations; and would invariably get drunk toward evening. In comparison with them I could not but feel proud of my Jewish descent, and looked down upon them as Philistines,

Amalekites and other wild tribes, with whom our ancestors fought, it seemed to me, only a short while ago. For the "stanovoy", the "sotsky" (officials) and the two policemen, the only government officials in the town, I had nought but abomination and contempt. Whenever my kind mother would insist on their partaking of the Sabbath, "gefilte fish" or the holiday "matza", and I heard her add in Jewish, so that they would not understand: "Here you are, eat and burst!" I felt particularly exhilarated. In secret I yearned: Oh, that Messiah would come and we could get rid of all the "Eshevim". And in spite of the fact that our town was purely Jewish, and my own grandfather, the local rabbi, a veritable ruler, I was conscious at all times that we were in "Golus" (exile) and longed with all my soul for the Messiah to come and lead us all into the Promised land of which I constantly heard both at home and in the "Heder".

We felt the weight of the "Golus" not only at the hands of the officials, not only in the derision of the peasant shepherds out in the country, who would spur their hounds at us with the shout: "There goes a sheeny!"; but we were constantly reminded of the fact by the round of our holidays and fast days. Thus, we celebrated the harvest, although we had no bread to glean: during "Sukes", we sat shivering in our chilly "Sukah" (tent), and remembered with pain the palm covered tents under the cedars of Lebanon which once were ours. With wistful pleading the voice of the cantor prayed for "Tal U-motor" (the prayer for rain) at a time when our wretched little town was sinking in mud, its helpless little dwellings soaking with the eternal rain. So keenly did we feel the loss of our fatherland, so conscious were we of the transience of our Golus existence, so ready at a moment's notice to start on the journey to the land of promise waiting only for the sign of Messiah, that we hardly noticed the unbearable conditions of our existence, and far from trying to improve the present, directed all our hopes and dreams towards the future in "Eretz Israel" (The land of Israel). Our parents would give vent to their sorrow in anguish and tears; prayers were their only means for bringing about the desired millenium. But our childish fancy would not be content with that. True, we wept bitter tears on "Tisha B'Ov", (the day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple), and on "Yom Kipur", (a fast day) would put our whole soul into the cry—"L'shana haba BiYerushalaim!" (next year in Jerusalem). Still, it was the *Now* that we could not accept. We dreamed of other times, the time when a Jew could handle a plow as well as a bow and arrow, the Golden Age of the Bible, that lived so richly in our imagination. How glorious on "Log B'omer" (carbour day), to march forth, armed with bow and arrows and wooden swords, to fight the boys of the other camp, or some stray pigs on our way, while we were for the moment the pupils of Rabbi Akivah of the army of Bar Kochba! Fought and died for their native land! Fervent to us the day of "Purim", truly a holiday. With desperate youthful pranks we twirled our ear-splitting racket make

question the various contradictions in the Bible, while father sat there, in rapture, becoming daily more convinced that I was destined to become a great rabbi. And finally, it was while in the "Heder" that I experienced for the first time the joy of artistic creation. I had got into the habit of drawing on the fly leaves of the Bible and the prayer books all sorts of fanciful designs. Another opportunity for decoration was offered by the "asher-yozar" papers distributed to us for hygienic purposes. These became exceedingly popular with my school fellows and even served as exchange coins among the pupils of other "Heders", thus raising my prestige in the eyes of my comrades. The "Heder" also enriched the repertoire of my stories, which thronged my childish fancy with such horrors, that were it not for various ingenious cognates which I had mastered at the time, I could not have borne a moment's solitude; every dark corner, every nook was peopled for me with ghosts, spectres and such ghastly shapes. I was particularly haunted in the winter time, when I was obliged to return from my "Heder" in the dark. We used to leave school in a crowd, with many a shout, and snow-ball fight, and sliding contest over every frozen puddle. We would attack on our way every unfortunate pig and dog, who personified for us the treacherous Philistines, to be fought with courage and valour. But the farther we went, the smaller the crowd grew, until finally I would be left all alone to plod my way to our house situated on the outskirts of the town. Pigs and dogs held no terrors for me; I had confidence in my strength, and even enjoyed the reputation of the strongest chap in the "Heder". But the trying spot on my way was an old wooden church, black with age, surrounded by tall swaying poplars, sheltering narrow pointed windows, in and out of which continually fitted black and ominous birds. Breathless and faint, tightly clutching the little lantern to my breast, hardly trusting to the magic of my whispered charm, I would slip by this frightful spot and breathe once more only upon reaching the little hall of our house, where I felt completely safe under the protection of the "Mazuzah" (a sacred charm, nailed above the entrance) on the door.

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We felt the weight of the "Golus" not only at the hands of the officials, not only in the derision of the peasant shepherds out in the country, who would spur their hounds at us with the shout: "There goes a sheeny!"; but we were constantly reminded of the fact by the round of our holidays and fast days. Thus, we celebrated the harvest, although we had no bread to glean: during "Sukes", we sat shivering in our chilly "Sukah" (tent), and remembered with pain the palm covered tents under the cedars of Lebanon which once were ours. With wistful pleading the voice of the cantor prayed for "Tal U-motor" (the prayer for rain) at a time when our wretched little town was sinking in mud, its helpless little dwellings soaking with the eternal rain. So keenly did we feel the loss of our fatherland, so conscious were we of the transience of our Golus existence, so ready at a moment's notice to start on the journey to the land of promise waiting only for the sign of Messiah, that we hardly noticed the unbearable conditions of our existence, and far from trying to improve the present, directed all our hopes and dreams towards the future in "Britz Israel" (The land of Israel). Our parents would give vent to their sorrow in anguish and tears; prayers were their only means for bringing about the desired millennium. But our childish fancy would not be content with that. True, we wept bitter tears on "Tisha B'Av", (the day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple), and on "Yom Kipur", (a fast day) would put our whole soul into the cry—"T'shana haba BiYerushalaim!" (next year in Jerusalem). Still, it was the *Now* that we could not accept. We dreamed of other times, the time when a Jew could handle a plow as well as a bow and arrow, the Golden Age of the Bible, that lived so richly in our imagination. How glorious on "Log Bomer" (carbour day), to march forth, armed with bow and arrows and wooden swords, to fight the boys of the other camp, or some stray pigs on our way, while we were for the moment the pupils of Rabbi Akivah of the army of Bar Kochbah, who fought and died for their native land! How marvellous to us the day of "Furim", truly a children's holiday. With desperate youthful patriotism we twirled our ear-splitting racket makers, and stamped

the "Mazuzah" (a sacred charm, nailed above the entrance) on the door.

This church and the prison, walled in by a tall fence of heavy tapering logs, were the only samples of Christian architecture and institutions in our purely Jewish town, containing besides its Jewish population only the "Shabes goy" (a non-Jew doing the necessary Sabbath chores in the Jewish homes). This latter spoke Jewish fluently, faltering only at the word "Vachalakakus", which, despite all his efforts, in the hope of getting a "Chala" (special Sabbath bread) as a reward, he could not succeed in pronouncing. Christian peasants from the neighbouring villages would come to town only on Friday, the market day. They wore uncouth sheepskin coats, enormous leather caps and ungainly home-made shoes; they would wrangle on top of their voices in a, to me, unintelligible, barbarous tongue over their buying and selling operations; and would invariably get drunk toward evening. In comparison with them I could not but feel proud of my Jewish descent, and looked down upon them as Philistines, Amalekites and other wild tribes, with whom our ancestors fought, it seemed to me, only a short while ago. For the "stanovoy", the "sotsky" (officials) and the two policemen, the only government officials in the town, I had nought but abomination and contempt. Whenever my kind mother would insist on their partaking of the Sabbath, "gefilte fish" or the holiday "matza", and I heard her add in Jewish, so that they would not understand: "Here you are, eat and burst!" I felt particularly exultant. In secret I yearned: Oh, that Messiah would come and we could get rid of all the "Bshev'im". And in spite of the fact that our town was purely Jewish, and my own grandfather, the local rabbi, a veritable ruler, I was conscious at all times that we were in "Golus" (exile) and longed with all my soul for the Messiah to come and lead us all into the Promised land of which I constantly heard both at home and in the "Heder".

In spite of the fact that the life of my master-piece was brief, — in a fervor of patriotism it was torn to pieces the very same evening, — the fame it brought me as "O man-Yad" (a handy fellow) has been permanently established. Ever since, I was the first to be approached whenever some artistic need arose, and father himself would give me permission to carry out all the orders. All the "miz-rachim" (decorations on the eastern wall), "Vor-Zeit" (death anniversary) needs, and all other necessary decorations at the synagogue were unfailingly prepared by me, and father would point to them with pride. Nor did I consider it beneath me to do designs for the "Paroiches" (curtain for the altar), which the local young ladies embroidered; designs

This good man was in no way different from any other Jewish shoemaker all year round. But on the day of "Simhas Tora" (the receiving of the Tora) it was his customs to get drunk in honor of the day, and aid the cantor in the synagogue by adding "bom" after every word, much to the delight of the assembly. It was this custom that earned him the extra syllable on his surname. Even grandfather with all his severity offered no objection; the fellow's father, it seems, had initiated the practice years back, and the son had, so to say, every legal right to the heritage. And so it was this kind Yisroel-Anzel who sewed my cardboard with his shoemaker's needle, and cut out the silhouette of my Haman with his curved knife. Nor was this all. He actually contrived his back to drag my master work to the place of exhibition; and this involved not a little self-sacrifice, because the entire troop of school children in the town followed him with merry shouts and a shower of snow balls aimed at Haman, but falling mostly to the lot of the carrier when the aim went wrong.

However, after the first shock was over, both machine and I escaped being cast out, and the punishment limited itself to a few occasional slaps at such times as I showed too much ardour. Mother even showed me some signs or approval of my invention, and the Orim Bocher said something about there being learning where there is wit. And as for father, when it reached him, not only did he not punish me, but went as far as to ask me to show the thing to him, examined the workings with some interest and finished by fondly remarking that I was a "shegetz" (a scamp). I was positively drunk with success, and in my overwhelming pride felt equal to any number of heroic deeds. The immediate result was the carrying out of an idea I had nursed in my heart for a long time; to draw Haman himself, carry him to the town square, and exhibit him to public gaze. That very same evening the bold dream became a reality. On several large pieces of cardboard, sewn together, I drew in coloured crayon a large figure in boots, with yellow buttons and a sword, such as I had seen in the possession of the local policeman; with the identical red nose and frightfully bristling whiskers, and a triangular cap resembling a "Haman-tash" (a traditional cake eaten on "Purim"). A sympathetic participant in the affair was our neighbour, Reb Yisroel-Anzel-Bom, the shoemaker.

The following day I was with the dawn. Not for anything would I miss the reading of the "Megillah" (prayer) by the "Orim Bocher" (poor student), read in our house for the benefit of my mother and sister who could not go to the synagogue. With an inventor's pride I took my machine along, to make use of when the proper time arrived. Its success was sudden and complete; mother was startled out of consciousness, my sister rushed at me vowing to fling both machine and me out into the street, while the reader could only cover his ears in despair.

We had an honorary escort composed not only from the children of our "Heder", who were the intimate participants of the deed, but those of other schools, whom the news of our great invention had reached. No lover ever waited so passionately for the first whisper confession of his beloved, no mother ever strained her ear for the first babbling of her child, as did we, with beating heart and failing breath waiting for the beginning of the third chapter, where the name of Haman, our mortal enemy, first occurs. And then, the happy moment at last! The name was called. With all my might I cranked the handle, and the entire "Beth-Hamidrash" (chapel) quaked with the fiendish clatter. Our joy at the success was beyond description. But the "Shamesh" (attendant) seemed to be incapable of appreciating all the glory of our achievement, and promptly expelled us from the room. Nevertheless, true heroes that we were, we remained undaunted, and unflinchingly in the gloom of the icy corridor, we did not allow occasion to slip without clattering our eternal revenge at the mention of the enemy's name. At last, frozen and numb to the bone, I dragged my infernal machine homeward, bitter at this taste of human injustice, yet happy at the thought that I suffered in the name of a common cause.

I remember that my patriotic soul would not be satisfied with the old-fashioned system of punishing Haman; I felt he was not getting nearly as much as he deserved. So I set to work inventing an elaborate machine, a cunning and complicated affair, to make him feel rather sorry for having wanted to exterminate the Jews. My friends of the "Heder" were duly informed of the plan, which met with considerable sympathy. For a whole month we thought of little else. The plan was magnificent in scale. The contraption was to be in shape of a box, of considerable dimensions, with a handle to be cranked, and harboring in its vitals numberless little hammers, wheels, screws etc. It required a great number of parts, and the work of assembling them enlisted the energies of the entire force. I became the hero of the hour, enjoyed universal attention and respect, while my collaborators, far from starting invidious operations with me, would even uncomplainingly suffer me to administer an inadvertent box on the ear for some carelessly executed order. And now the longed for day, at last! "Purim" was here. The instrument was ready and with triumph and pride we carried it into the synagogue.

our feet at the mere mention of Haman's name in the synagogue.

teenth century. Not before the end of my tenth year was I destined to see a picture for the first time, and the impression it left was tremendous. But by that time I had already begun to study Talmud, which deadened in me all aspiration toward art, beauty, nature, love of life itself.

The experience I mentioned happened quite accidentally, and the pictures I have caught glimpse of for a few brief moments have left but a vague memory of a beautiful, hazy dream.

It happened towards the end of the summer, on a beautiful autumn afternoon. Father was going to a neighbouring estate on some business, and knowing my fondness of such excursions, or remembering perhaps the ferocious watch dogs, from whom he knew I would prove a reliable protection, he suggested my coming along. Upon our arrival, both father and the owner of the place went out, leaving me to wait for them in the anteroom. Suddenly, through one of the open doors I beheld such a wonderful sight that it banished all my misgivings at entering a strange room, and stepping across the threshold I came closer. I saw before me a canvas on which was painted a tormented, bleeding Jew, staggering under the weight of a heavy intersecting log, his gaze directed upward in agonizing pain. Around him, half stripped people in shining metal armor and helmets, glowing like our copper kitchen ware, were engaged in howling and lashing the tormented figure in their midst. Next to the picture on a chair, was lying an oval board with little tiles of colour on it, and in the small hole were stuck several brushes smeared with paint.

I had scarcely time to regain my senses, when the owner accompanied by my father entered the room. Noticing my astounded admiration the man explained, in broken Jewish, the contents of the picture, and of the others that hung on the walls, and which in the excitement of the moment I had not noticed before. Of all his talk I understood only, that these were holy pictures, and that he made them himself, not by machine, but with the help of these little brushes. On our way back I was in for a severe scolding from father, for breaking without permission into a stranger's room, and for sinning by looking at Christian holy images. I did not try to defend myself. My thoughts were far away. One question in particular puzzled my brain: "How does he do that?" Also the memory of the tormented Jew gave me no rest. It haunted my thoughts and stirred my curiosity even though I already knew that this was the Christian God.

That very same day, in the dusty corner behind the fateful wardrobe, with the full consciousness of committing an unpardonable sin, I drew to the appalled horror of my followers, the picture I had seen that day.

for "Tfilim" bags, and even blankets. All of this had been used for play. Even at that early period of my life I experienced the fickleness of an artist's fortune. How happy I would be of a Saturday, when all the "Bal-Habatim" (respected members of the community) would gather about my latest picture in the synagogue, admiring the complicated design of fantastic animals and plants, thickly interspersed with Bible quotations and sayings of the wise, at which I was particularly expert. And how miserable, on the other hand, when some blooming ignoramus would indulge in witicism on its account. In a short time I had cultivated quite a following, the members of which were wont to congregate in a cosy nook between the old wardrobe and the wall. Here I loved to draw in their presence on the smoothly polished side of the wardrobe chalk pictures of symbolic contents interwoven with the inevitable moral quotations in Hebrew. Yet, every once in a while I would give free play to my whimsical fancy, and draw such every shapes, such hideous faces, as would frighten even me out of composure, and we would all scamper away as fast as our feet could carry us. Some of my time would also be devoted to sculpture, that is wood carving, and to this day, my old "Rebe" when teaching in the Bible the part about building a "Mishkan", gets out the models of my work for illustration, spreading his own red handkerchief in place of a silken gold-embroidered cloth.

Another of my infatigations at the time was the science of mechanics. The wind mill impressed me to such a degree, that I immediately proceeded to make an exact copy of it including all its inner constructions. I also invented a flying bird, the exact construction of which, to my regret, I cannot recall. All I remember is that it had wings and feathers like a real bird; there was a wooden spike stretching from head to tail, and a string wound about it; when the string was pulled, it flapped its wings and made a semi-circle in the air. I experimented with it for the longest time, exciting comment and admiration even on the part of my elders, until one day it flew across a fence into a neighbouring garden and was torn to pieces by an ignorant dog.

Outside of my own efforts, not a work of art had so far crossed my path. The entire town did not possess a single engraving, nor a lithograph, not even a photograph. Christian pictures of religious contents, which were sold in the market, I considered sinful to examine, and as for sculpture, the single work was so barbarously done, and swathed in the multitude of aprons hung about it by peasant women, out of modesty, cut so preposterous a figure, that it could not conceivably have made any impression on me. And so I can truthfully boast, that in our town, it was I who invented Art, and this, despite the fact that I was born in Europe, and in the nine-

Toward the end of the tenth year of my life I was transferred to another "Heder" for the study of Talmud, in charge of "Reb Leizer the iron head". This name he earned ostensibly for his "strong sense" in the interpretation of Talmud, but it would have been far more appropriate to call him "the iron head"; to this we, who only too often felt the brunt of his bony fist, could bear ample witness. He was a diminutive, skinny sort of man, with a pale, sorrow face, round wrinkled forehead, and alert, suffering eyes; his black hair, sparse and kinky, his thin little goats beard, and finally the restless Adam's apple of his lean taut throat completed the type of the "Golus Jew" (Jew in exile).

For us, his pupils he seemed to have nothing but contempt, sensing in us his mortal enemies, for which in return we repaid him with whole-hearted fear and hatred. His system of teaching was most primitive. He would place us next to himself with a "Gemorah" (a text of the Talmud) and fixing his near-sighted eyes on the book would read the lesson right through, without translating or explanation, forgetting that we understood but little the Chaldean language in which it was written. We would strain our minds to understand, watching the intonations of his voice and the movements of his thumb for a clue to the complicated thought of the words. At such time he would not beat us. Only occasionally seeing that the pupil understood nothing at all he would hiss through his teeth: "Block-head".

The lesson over, we would try by common effort to learn and penetrate the covered subject matter, fully aware of the terrible ordeal ahead of us at the coming review. And terrible indeed it would be. You approach with a failing heart the place where the Rebe is sitting in his favourite half-turn pose, leaning on his bony arm, and you hear his muttered: "Recite". He doesn't seem to see you at all, nor even hear you. But full well we know, that each unsuccessful word will call forth the bony hand and the iron hammer will mercilessly strike your face, so you stand there looking with the corner of one eye at the book, and with the other watching the movement of his arms to be ready to jump back in time. In the interest of safety we would resort to preventative measures before the hour, stuffing under our clothes all sorts of rags to lessen the pain of the blow. Once, having nothing better under hand, I used a tin plate which resounded clearly in response to the Rebe's blow, to the uttermost mirth of the entire class.

The change from the poetical studies of the Bible under the kindly and patriarchal Osher-Leib, to the dry unintelligible Talmud with the inhumanly Jewish Reb Leizer was very abrupt, and at first, having failed to adapt myself quickly, I suffered considerably. In the former of the two schools we had been children still, fond of song and play, of the outdoors, and even our quarrels and fights were of a friendly comradely nature. If they did end occasionally in tears there was no particular disgrace attached. Now, however, things were different. Our

But a fellow learns to get along, and I managed to adapt myself to this particular inferno. I got to the point where I could even take pride in playing my particular impish part honourably, which soon brought me the approval and admiration of my kind. I mastered the secret of bearing the acutest pain without tears: all one has to do is to dig his teeth in to the collar of his coat and laugh. This habit I have carried away with me for life: although a book, a picture, a piece of music affect me sometimes to tears, my own personal grief leaves me calm and even smiling—only there must be some beckoning ideal ahead,—something to dig my teeth into.

In the school howling and sobs held eternal sway. Our Rebe disliked silence in his room: we were required to study out loud, chanting and swaying over the "Gemorah". And so, outwardly obedient to the rule, we managed to play games under cover. In tune with the melody of the "Gemorah" you'd ask "odds or evens"? In the same way your partner would sing his answer. Then you'd open the book at random, and look at the number of the page, and the loser would pay by suffering the number of slaps on his hand to be administered by the winner. This being our only coin in circulation, the hands of the two partners would be duly swollen after games of this nature. Generally speaking, all I have mastered in the years of my study with this learned Reb Leizer is the enduring and inflicting pain. I shudder at the memory of my cruelty with animals and children, of whom I was genuinely fond previous to that. My pleasure in this heartlessness was not limited to my own proceedings, I delighted in watching cruelty in others, and did my best to encourage it. Once the "Rebetzin" (the Rebe's wife) set a plate of cooked fish before him. I knew perfectly well that to my poor starved Rebe the dish was a rare delicacy, and yet could not refrain from taking advantage of his momentary absence for washing his hands, to empty half his snuff box contents into the plate. It happened to be a "Review day"—a day when the Rebe would be in a particularly aggressive mood, and when every trifle was likely to affect his irritated nerves. The risk to be caught red handed on the spot of the crime was enormous, but I braved it in the hope of provoking the most delicious bit of fun—a quarrel between the Rebe and his wife. The plot was a howling success. The Rebe recited the prayer piously and hurriedly tasted several mouthfuls.

attract my attention. But still the test continued, I getting confused, and father ever more irritated. At last the warriors losing patience began yelling: "Long live the King!" This attracted father's attention, and to my horror I saw that he understood all!

"Oh, it is you that are the king, is it? You, a 'Gemorah bochor' aren't you ashamed to play soldiers! Your 'Gemorah' you don't know, but no matter, eh, as long as they made you king? I'll show you!" He was besides himself with wrath, and loosening his wide strap he thrashed the king

The pain didn't matter, and didn't I even cry. But my pride was hurt beyond words. I huddled into a dark corner of the next room and made up my mind never to come out. No, I'd rather die. For a long time I heard my father in the next room shouting excitedly and complaining to mother that "her son" will grow into a good-for-nothing, and that nothing worth while will ever come out of "her son". I heard mother crying and protesting that I was as yet nothing but a child.

At last everything grew still. Father must have fallen asleep. The door opened softly and mother entered looking extremely sad. I closed my eyes, pretending to be asleep. I was afraid of a caress, afraid I'd burst into sobs. Oh! proud and haughty childhood! What would I not give to have my poor mother come to me now, to hold me close, to let cry out my grief on her loving breast. But she is gone long since, and cannot come down to warm the cold loneliness of her, now, bearded, baby.

Toward the end of the second year, things in our "Heder" went from bad to worse. Whether it was the Rebe, who grew more nervous, or it was we who tormented him more, but he flogged us without mercy and life had grown unbearable. Finally, at a meeting which was called to talk the matter over, we unanimously adopted the following resolution: he who is the first to cross the Rebe's path, should do his worst and rudest, so that the Rebe might vent his entire store of wrath on him, at an early hour of the day. We knew from experience, that in such a case we were insured against beating all day. Ever since then, our "Heder" went through a veritable drama of the battlefield every morning. At first, a terrific hush, as before a storm; then a bloody and desperate battle, then moaning and finally a riotous revelry of the victors and the defeated. The cruellest hours were the early ones.

Each head was studiously bent, and every eye furtively watched the Rebe. He-silent and gloomy, was unannually still and cold like a canon before firing. The shot did not keep us waiting long, it was inevitable and unavoidable—the slightest foolish was inevitable and unavoidable, according to the rule, a trifle provoked it. The victim, according to the rule, would answer impudently—and the chastening would begin. Every cruel blow reverberating painfully on our heart strings. Upon me, this ominous morning hush would act so painfully, would stretch my nerves so taut, that I would meet the danger more than half way, would provoke the situation, just to make an end to this horrible suspense. Naturally, I took

It happened in the spring, during "Shvunos". We had arranged an important encounter in connection with the settlement of some territorial questions. Secretly hiding my impatience, I managed to swallow my dinner, ever on the look out for an opportunity to be off, when, as ill luck would have it, all of a sudden, father expressed a desire to test my progress in my studies. He ordered the big "Gemorah" to be brought and the ordeal began. I sat listening to the sounds of the gathering army outside. Small wonder that my recitation proved unsatisfactory, and father was becoming extremely vexed. Outside was heard the sound of a military march, played to

My royal title fell to my lot not too easily. I had a very serious opponent and my party and his had arranged numerous contests between us to decide upon our respective merits. Finally I succeeded in demonstrating my superiority and my opponents gave up their contentions. I was very small in stature, smaller, in fact, than my contestant, but I was nimble and strong, and above all—enduring. The hardest blows in the heat of the battle had no effect on me, and I continued gallantly, puffing and encouraging myself with the words: "It doesn't hurt a bit! Not a bit!" Consequently, having earned my title at considerable cost, I prized it all the more, and was duly swell-headed about it. I cultivated the air of a despot, and the fact brought me besides an amount of pleasure, considerable woe.

"Rivka, it seems to me the fish is rather bitter", he remarked uncertain. But this innocent remark was enough to provoke a torrent of shrill protest from the thin little, blue-lipped "Rebetzin". Poor thing! She could not conceive of the thought that this excellent fish could possibly meet with anyone's disapproval, and accused her husband of an uncultivated taste. "What does a 'melamed', (a teacher used sometimes derisively) know about such royal delicacies anyway?" she shrieked contemptuously at the end of the long tirade.

This was the last straw for the Rebe. He detested to be called a "Melamed" and now a violent quarrel ensued and raged incessantly right through to our leaving time, to our unmitigated mirth and glee.

Even on holidays, out in the country among the beauty and peace of the outdoor, our games were no less savage and cruel, consisting mainly of wrestling and fights, and crude contests of sheer animal strength and endurance of pain. We fought not only the shepherds, our ancient enemies, but would frequently furnish expeditions for a skirmish with the boys of other "Heders". Each group was headed by a "king", and in our "Heder" the honour belonged to me. As such, it was I who most frequently got the worst of the fight, because, after the manner of our Bible heroes, we would pompously declare before the battle: "Why shed unnecessary blood! Let king come out against king, and whoever wins shall be the conqueror of the people!" The agreement, however, was rarely carried out; our ardent host lacked the patience to wait for the outcome of the solitary contest, and would fiercely clash in attack accusing each other of breaking the agreement, and in the end postponing the decisive battle for next Saturday.

The recipe prescribed as far as I remember a forty-two day fast, constant prayer, recitation of psalms in a certain order and above all the total exclusion of thoughts about women and similar sinful subjects. As early as the second day of my fast I realized to my greatest sorrow that I should not be able to endure the test. No matter what I did to banish sinful thoughts, they insisted upon forcing themselves upon my mind. The images of my girl cousins obtruded themselves upon my consciousness, alive in all the details pointed out previously by my companion, and which had seemingly left no impression upon me at the time. There was nothing to do, but to discontinue the experiment, and content myself for the present with the copying of the volume, including the illustrations, representing a sort of cabalistic type of birds and beasts. But these drawings and the frequent visits to grandfather's invalidly brought me back to my long neglected art. I began to draw once more. Grandfather was about a hundred years old at the time, but he still spent all his time in the study of Talmud, over which he would frequently fall asleep. Once on such an occasion observing his face lighted by the flickering flame of a candle, I noticed that one could easily draw it, by reproducing all the dark shadows which were so sharply relieved. I proceeded to do

this nature. The thought of Messiah's coming haunted me persistently, and finally I decided that something must be done. I knew of the existence of the mysterious science of "Kabalah"; of the wizards who by these miraculous means made repeated attempts to call forth the Messiah, and who almost succeeded, but for some untoward circumstance at the very last. And so I decided to try my luck. I knew that grandfather had a vast collection of holy books; it was up to me to master them. The most appealing volume seemed to be that of the "Angel-Raziel". The fly leaf testified that the book was written by the Angel Raziel himself, and was given to Adam for reading in Paradise, and that it was published furthermore by the widow Roma and Sons. The volume did not contain any mysterious discussions of the ten numbers and such like philosophy, but concerned itself mainly with practical clairvoyant and invisible, and gave other useful recipes. One in particular attracted my attention—a sure method of summoning up the departed spirits of our holy forefathers. This I decided to try, being perfectly convinced that I should succeed in persuading the holy spirits of the necessity of Messiah's coming, once I get them into a conversation. The experiment was nearly the death of me, and ended in a complete failure, which led me to the conclusion that I was not free from sin and unfit for work of

they spoke of terrible crusades, of horrible "Alilas-dam" (ritual accusation), of the holy inquisition and other persecutions which the Jews have undergone in exile. These sharpened my love for my kind and woke a feverish longing for the coming of the Messiah. This mood was furthermore strengthened by the old Hebrew folk song sung so wistfully by my friends.

I got to be fond of the lengthy prefaces to mediaeval scholastic works. Up to then, my knowledge of the history of my race carried me as far back as the destruction of the second Temple. The period intervening between that event and my appearance in our little town was perfectly dark to me;

displaying astonishing eloquence, wisdom and wit. I saw them sit in their luxurious lecture halls and conduct endless debates on the most vital subjects, "Tanoim and Gamorim" have become alive shapes. The Talmud lost its dryness; names like intoning the words. Little by little I began to enjoy with a serious mien would study my Talmud loudly watched. I would rest my brow on my head and opinion. Whenever I detected that I was being by now, and I did my best to live up to their

My parents and relatives considered me a man scratched, and bawled, and tell tales into the bargain! Why, one couldn't even fight them decently: they my sister included, were unworthy of the interest. They were interested in. To my own mind, all girls, talk, though I secretly wondered at the silly things do my best to support my part of the "grown up" and the numerous girl cousins I possessed. I would brides, and would question me about my pretty sister gather in his room. They would discuss girls and about of an evening, when the older students would attached to me too, and would allow me to remain completely won over. He seemed to have become plaintive song in the velvet baritone of his, I was studied, and after I had once heard him sing some stories of the life of the large cities where he had I took to him at once. I loved to listen to his

about with him. ed a little round mirror which he always carried. He was at all times careful of his clothes and possessed good-looking, and very particular of his appearance. was one of the oldest students in the school, rather called "Plugiansky the little". My new companion also named after the town he came from, who was giansky the big" as distinguished from his compatriot watchful eye over me. The fellow was called "Plu-my studies, attend to my needs and generally keep a by my father, a young man who was to help me in youngest in the school, a companion was engaged being of quite respectable age. As I was the brilliant youth of the vicinity—many of the "youths" a famous scholar, and the school attracted the most the school). This particular "Rosh-Yeshiva" was and lectures of the "Rosh-Yeshiva" (the head of student works of his own free will, with the guidance study of "Talmud", a sort of a college where the "Bes-Hamedrash". This is a higher school for the to have me transferred to the "Yeshiva" of the During my third year in the Heder father decided

of my face as I ducked in time. would as often as not drive into hard wall instead formed to escape the sledgehammer of a fist, which boys laughing themselves sick, at the antics I performed. Having gained that, I was comparatively safe, and the drama would grow more or less into a farce, the managed to keep close to the corner of the room, which I used as a safety zone during the attack. good care to stuff my clothing full of padding, and

ready to love nature and man, and ready to pray together with its great compatriot, recognized by your people as the Saviour: "Forgive them O Lord, for they know not what they do!"...

Among the worldly books which came within my reach at the time, were several books of science, and these uprooted my guileless Biblical beliefs about Universe and God. Other books were of a frankly revolutionary nature; calling to the people to come out of the dark fanaticism and mediæval gloom into the brightness and culture of the 19th century. The authors, known in modern Jewish history under the name of "Maskilim", wrote a beautiful biblical Hebrew, and were going through a period of martyrdom at the hands of the fanatical persecutors of the environment. To me, they were prophets, surrounded by a halo, teaching truth to the ignorant at the price of their own happiness. I heard their call and responded: following their lead, I began to sing the praises of science, to call the people to light and freedom; I understood but vaguely just what that meant, but I felt beyond doubt that the "Bes-Hamedrish" and the Talmud stifled and curbed us.

When I had become of age, "Bar-Mitzwah" (at the age of 13) father had me transferred to another "Yeshivah" to a strange city, in order to accustom me gradually to a self-dependent life. My fame as a scholar preceded me, but there was also talk of my iconoclasm. The latter led to the immediate grouping around me of the best thinking youth of the place, that is the local "Maskilim". Many were the happy hours I spent in their company in debate, discussion of all kinds important problems, and numerous were the castles we built for the delivery of our people. It is significant that although they were all of them young, they considered themselves beyond salvation, and reserved their plans and dreams of the golden era to come, for the rest of their race, especially for the coming generation. With me, however, whether because of the abundance of my life force, or my more youthful age, things were different. I never failed to include myself into my dreams of my future; I was going to be a great scientist; I was going to be rich; I was going to deliver my people and make them as great and rich as myself. I made up my mind to get myself out of this town, at whatever cost, and go to a large city, where I was quite sure one could easily realize these things. And finally, at the age of fifteen, after tears from mother, I succeeded in getting to Vilna. Neither father nor mother, of course, had the least suspicion of my real purposes. It was fully understood that I was to enter the Vilna "Yeshivah" to complete my Talmudic studies and to follow my rabbinical calling.

III.

Vilna received me without particular hospitality, and lost no time in teaching me how trying and difficult life can be in this Lithuanian Jerusalem, much more so far an inexperienced Jew with empty pockets and head full of ideals and dreams. There I knew not a few hungry days and sleepless nights,

My dear R. I! Would that you could teach your brethren to discern in that comic figure a lofty spirit and a warm heart; a spirit capable of ascending to such heights of beauty and truth as contain no tormentors nor tormented; a heart

I can imagine the figure I cut at the time, — long coat unbuttoned, trousers stuck into boots whitened with dust "Talsesskoti" dangling cap askew, pale faced, uncollared, dishevelled of hair and long of "Peyes" trudging listlessly through richly flowered, triumphant nature, — unseeing, insensible, listening to the call of the beyond. I remember the merriment I provoked in the country gentlemen who drove by on the road, and how the humorously disposed drivers would crack their whips to bring me back to reality.

My daily task in the study of the Gemorah I continued to prepare conscientiously. It used to take very little of my time, since I literally did not know what it was to forget or misunderstand anything. All the rest of my time I devoted to reading of the little books, hidden skillfully among the large folios of the Gemorah, for fear of giving away my sin. I lived then in a fanciful, enchanted world, marvellous as spring, hardly realizing what was going on around me, avoiding people and noises, seeking out solitude to give myself over to reverie and dreams. I developed a fondness for solitary walks in field and wood, where giving free reign to my desire I would be carried away on wings of fancy into the land of my dreams.

About that time I made the acquaintance of modern Jewish literature and poetry. Rummaging through an old book case in the synagogue I came across of Mapy's "Abavas-Zion". Having not the slightest idea of the existence of fiction, and seeing that the book was written in a purely biblical style, I supposed it to be an ancient holy book, and was wholly carried away by the beautiful biblical past pictured in it. Very soon, however, my friend "Plugiansky the big" explained that the book was modern, and that it was written by the famous iconoclast Mapp, and that to read it was temptation and sin. To resist this temptation, however, was not in my power, and I set about seeking the forbidden fruit, which proved to be hidden in the depths of the trunk of nearly every one of my comrades.

are, to me, a most interesting subject for art. drew and studied human faces, which to this day happier than I, at the time. Ever since then, I file of her beloved could hardly have been any legend as to the origin of art, who created the pro-so immediately, and to my utter delight produced a great likeness. The Grecian maid, in the ancient

Once during such a spell of adverse fortune the crowd gathered in my place. Having talked over the latest news in literature and science, and having sung several songs, we began, as usual, to dream out loud of our brilliant futures. I considered myself a candidate for the place of Antokolsky, and had the moral support of the entire group. My colleague in art, Kogan, a good looking chap, was desirous of being a Raphael and a Heine at the same time, because he wrote verse in Yiddish, which another comrade, who dreamt of becoming a Rubinstein, would put to melody, and which we would all together gleefully interpret in song. Some of us, who were less ambitious, would be content with less famous careers, those of doctors of medicine, philosophy, chemistry, etc.

We lived in a hungry commune sharing brother-like the very last coin, as well as clothes, bed and other primary necessities. We all deemed ourselves great, each fully trusting in the bright future of the other. As for the present, we looked upon ourselves as martyrs for the holy cause of truth, in the name of which we suffered at the hands of ignorant contemporaries, who were incapable of appreciating our worth. We were constantly together because none of us was able to enjoy alone the pleasure of wealth when luck sent it his way; at such times we were together for the purpose of sharing the good fortune; and when luck went against us, we would naturally draw together, because misery loves company, and things can be borne more easily in common.

This habit of uncertainty as to tomorrow's bread made us into an irresponsible, carefree lot, caring nothing for what might be in store for us in the future. Suffice it that one of us comes into possession of 20 kopeks, and we all of us joyously buy an enormous loaf of bread, boil a potful of atrocious tea and, hilariously happy, we spend the day together building castles in the air for the brilliant future that awaits us.

None of us had any assured means of existence. How we managed to live was a miracle. One of us would receive, say, five roubles from home; he would rent a room thinking to support himself on the money until he could secure some tutoring. Meanwhile he invites us cordially to tea, and little by little, we settle there for good, spend our days in reading, discussion until we notice that the last cent was gone. Then we go to live with some other fortunate, lucky enough to have come into some money in payment for a lesson or a portrait. And thus we lived our daily hand to mouth existence.

We were many. We were all of us hungry, shabby, without a corner we could call our own. We never knew where we would rest our heads to-morrow,—nor did we care. Each of us dreamed of becoming great in his chosen sphere,—science, music, poetry, literature, art. And in the meantime we lived practically idle, devouring books and indulging in eternal discussions of lofty subjects, and violently attacking pious "Orim-Bochurim" in the hope of leading them on to the road of truth.

The study of Talmud I abandoned completely. It was not only useless, I thought, but decidedly evil in its influence, being directly responsible for all our misfortunes; it stood in the way of our growing to be like our neighbours, the Gentiles. I devoted myself to spreading my ideas among the other "Orim-Bochurim" of various synagogues, and this caused me to be looked upon as an undesirable, who led others into temptation and sin. The continual persecutions increased still more my contempt for Talmud, religion, and fanaticism, and drove me to closed ties with such elements as have shared my fate.

My capital was extremely modest so I set out for one of the numerous synagogues, where one could lodge without pay. Feeding mostly on dry bread, I spent days and nights mastering the Russian language which was my first immediate need. I had no teacher, nor did it seem necessary to have one; I simply bought a Hebrew-Russian dictionary by Shternberg, and began memorizing several hundred words daily, until I finished it to the end. Then I procured a grammar text which I likewise committed to memory in a few days' time, and this I followed up by reading every Russian book I happened to come across. The result was that I read the language fairly well, but could not speak a single phrase, and worse still understood nothing of what I heard. Of the rules for pronunciation I had not the slightest idea, and likewise knew nothing of the difference between such sounds as *s* and *sh*, *ch* and *tz*; I considered them perfectly similar as in Hebrew, in which the Lithuanian Jews pronounce them alike, making distinctions only in writing. This failure, however, did not worry me at all, because I regarded the knowledge of language necessary only for the reading of science.

The very first day of my arrival brought a tragical incident which taught me to become more careful, to discard my provincial innocence and to get into a closer touch with the life of a large city, where one must look at things soberly and keep a level head. I arrived on a beautiful spring day, and having left my bag at an inn, set out for a walk to inspect the city of which I had dreamed so long. The thoughtful landlady made sure to give me the address of the inn, and warned me that I should never find the place if once I lost it. I hid it carefully in the pocket of my coat, and then the day being warm, left the coat at home. I discovered the fact two hours later, after a lengthy walk in the strange city, and look as I might, I could find no trace of the inn. And so I roamed about all night, shivering with cold, and still more with the thought that I may be stopped by a policeman and asked for my passport, which was also left in the wretched coat. With the coming of the morning I was struck by the brilliant idea of asking my way to the station, and thence I was easily able to trace my way to the inn. The lady gave me a second scolding for my carelessness, sparing no adjectives for my provincialism, and expressed her sympathy for the mothers of inexperienced numskulls who had to be sent to a large city.

No sooner said than done. Our kind souled landlady was persuaded to lend her Holiday dress. I, as a sculptor, by means of towels and rags corrected the anatomical form—and the bride was as beautiful as she could be! Not even a wig was required, he had an abundance of long chestnut curls. The tight father swallowed the bait, and forwarded the craved for 100 rubles. But the hopes vested in the fortune were destined to failure. We began to celebrate the successful beginning, and went on celebrating until such time as the last "grosh" was eaten up. We had wasted the several months in perfect idleness, except for a few songs

The idea was accepted as a brilliant one, and particularly one that could easily be put into practice. It was decided that the philosopher was to take the task upon himself, he being the oldest and the most presentable in our midst. The poor fellow did not object; he was so hungry that he was willing to go any lengths, even marriage. And so, by common effort, we began to work out the details of the plan. From the philosopher we learnt that his father was a well-to-do mortgagor of some land in the country, and that the family ties had long since been broken as a result of the son's refusal to continue the study of Talmud and to become a Rabbi. We decided that the first move was to weede out of the parent the sum of one hundred rubles in order to secure some decent clothing, and then to turn a "schadchen" (a match maker) with the request to find him a bride with a large dowry. The father, no doubt, having learned of the son's wealthy match, would also contribute some money, and thus the scheme would work out beautifully. In order to convince the father of his good intentions, it was necessary for the son to have a photograph taken together with the bride, to serve as material evidence. The trouble was to find a girl who would be willing to be photographed with the chap, but after a while we struck upon an excellent idea. We would transform our good-looking Kogan into a young lady!

in my place this time (I hadn't any), but in the place of the good looking painter, Kogan, and the Ph. D. aspirant, who were the lucky possessors of a sort of kennel in a basement. We were all of us beastly hungry, and in mood neither for discussion nor for song; our philosopher gritted his teeth and repeated his ancient regret at the absence of a market for his soul. It was growing dark, oil for the lamp was out of question, and huddled together we were at out favourite occupation of dreaming of our unquestionably great future. Everything ahead was so smooth and bright, everything could be accomplished; only one thing interfered—what was to be done now with the accursed stomach? I don't remember just to whom the credit belongs, but it was proposed that one of us should sacrifice himself for the benefit of the group. . . . By the word sacrifice we did not mean horrible bloodshed, nor even a bargain with the devil, as our philosopher constantly suggested,—we simply meant getting married, and dividing the dowry among the crowd in order to enable each member to reach his goal.

I cannot chose but tell of another incident from the pages of our existence in those days, this of a merrier nature. We were together as usual. Not

If the police had accidentally stumbled upon our track, we would all no doubt have been packed away to Siberia, while the "Novoye Vremia" and the rest of the anti-semitic press would maliciously publish accounts of the discovery of a group of dangerous "Sheeny counterfeiters", and would doubtless reflect upon the fact that "the Jews turn even art into crime. . . ."

Asking no idle questions, hungry as wolves, we forthwith attacked the bread and herring. But gradually, as the first pangs were still, and we learned the details of how he passed the coin on to a half-blind Jewess in the market, we began to doubt the justice of our theory. When we had filled our stomachs completely, we became fully convinced that we had behaved like swine, criminals, even inflicting upon ourselves and the unfortunate woman a terrible danger, and we began to accuse each other of the guilt.

He was the oldest among us, a tall strapping fellow with a ferocious appetite. The poor chap suffered more keenly from hunger than any of the others, gnashing his strong white teeth and reiterating his regret that in our prosaic times there were no devils to buy up human souls; with what pleasure he would have sold his for a single slice of bread! His mission he accomplished brilliantly, having returned with an enormous loaf of bread, dragging a herring, "a cop" we called it, by its tail, and gnawing energetically at a slice of bread unable to control his hunger until he reached home.

We were certain that all of this could easily be achieved; all that was required was the sum of 20 kopeks daily for bread for the crowd. A debate was started on the subject of "does the end justify the means". The candidate for the Ph.D. easily convinced us, that since our aims were noble; since by means of our respective talents we wished to enrich and make happy the entire world,—and only the ignorant and the stupid could not see it,—it was permissible and even necessary that we should resort to every possible means to procure the required 20 kopeks a day. The suggestion that we resort to stealing was rejected; we did not feel that we had sufficient skill to make it a success. And then, I, as a sculptor, had a brilliant idea to make use of my art. I offered to prepare counterfeit coins of 20 kopeks, one daily, so that even the risk of being caught was negligible. The proposition was unanimously adopted and I was instructed to put it into execution immediately. However, there was no coin about to be used as model, and several days passed before we came into possession of one. It was then that I manufactured my first and only counterfeit coin. I cast it in lead, silver plated it with some substance out of the landlady's mirror, and soaked it in some herring water to give it a worn appearance. The future Ph.D. took upon himself the second dangerous task, that of putting it into circulation.

Thus two years rolled by, years which have left a hazy memory in my mind, as if following a long illness, when a man loses his will, the very ground under his feet, and lives in feverish ravings, not noticing his physical and intellectual powers spending themselves to exhaustion . . .

IV.

of my friends, and who would be the last, I thought, to show such an attitude. This was an excellent fellow belonging to the unfortunate type, who forever prepare other people for examinations, and who inevitably fall through themselves. He was the oldest and steadiest of our hungry company; there was rumour that he was of the "red". Unpossessed of any talent himself, he encouraged the beginners in poetry, music or art.

To me, an artist, he had been showing special favour; but quite suddenly during my last visit he poured cold water on our relations; whether because of another failure at examinations, or out of sheer disgust with the cramming of Latin, he suddenly exploded with a torrent of abuse for the whole crowd;—we were, every one of us "Bourgeois" that's what we were! We wanted wealth, fame as poets and artists,—did we? A life of the common people, the fate of a plain honest workman was not good enough for us—was it? Naturally I took the whole business on my score, and refusing the tea and bread offered by the host with his usual hospitality, I left bleakly realizing the truth of his words. I firmly decided never to visit anyone any more, and wondered fruitlessly how I could follow his advice.

My imagination pictured feverishly all kinds of enthralling fancies: now I notice in the distance a lady drop a fat purse chuck-full of bank-notes; I pick it up and run out of breath to catch up with her; she is giddily happy to recover the loss, astounded at my honesty; she notices sympathetically the shabbiness of my suit, my boots; she takes me home with her; I teach her children . . . I become a great painter . . . Her only beautiful daughter falls in love with me . . . We get married . . . And now I hear a cry for help on the river; a rich merchant is drowning . . . no, rather a baron . . . a count; I plunge recklessly after him . . . I save him at the risk of my own life; I am surrounded, praised, discovered as a needy artist, showered with orders . . . Or else, I meet an old acquaintance who, of his own accord offers to lend me three rubles. With the capital I rush to the auction place; a ruble for a marvellous pair of boots, another for the rest of the equipment, the third saved for a rainy day. As for work, no man can fail to find work in a pair of whole boots. Orders, lessons, come of themselves: I finish art school, enter the academy, exhibit my great works of art, achieve world fame for my self and my people . . . Thus I trudged along with my lowered head full of mad fancies, and my shrunken stomach hopelessly empty. I did not feel the hunger particularly keenly, but I got fainter every minute. My throat was dry; I trembled with cold in spite of my winter coat—and the burning rays of the sun. This chilliness tormented me

composed by Kogan, and the tunes for them written by our would-be Rubinstein, which we bawled with full-hearted vim and vigour. The time passed without the slightest purpose; rather, it was directly harmful because with the passing of the fortune-life became more difficult than ever.

It is the second month now that I am without a lodging. I stay over night now with one now with another of my friends, as poor as myself. But most of my nights I spend strolling through the streets or on a bench in the city park until an obliging policeman tells me to "beat it". All my hopes and plans had come to nought. My pictures on which I had worked all winter remained unsold; the tutoring jobs that were promised I failed to secure because my suits had become altogether too unrepresentable, no good mother would compromise her children with my presence; even my last hope—the job of a watchman on a soda water stand, at the royal salary of 2 rubles per month—was irrevocably lost; we all declared a strike against the boss because of something or other, and although our demands were granted, I, as the leader, was the first to be fired. The kindly, poor woman, who was my landlady, did not refuse me shelter, but I left of my own will, realizing that I was depriving her of the best corner in the room—the window corner, and was causing the loss of 80 kopeks a month, which she could earn in rent from others.

Any means of earning a livelihood was out of the question, because my costume, especially my boots had taken on such an appearance as precluded my appearance in public. I starved regularly, selling my last junk, and refreshing myself occasionally with tea and bread in some friend's house. The last few days I had sunk to the lowest degree. Formerly I could at least spend my time in the art school or library, where time managed to pass less painfully, and I would forget my hunger, while now, I was no longer admitted anywhere.

At school I was told that it was discourteous to remain in my coat, but since with all my good will I could not remove it, my coat and vest being sold long ago, I was obliged to refrain from attending. In the library my outfit did not find favour in the eyes of the attendant, especially my boots, which, no matter how I cleaned them at the entrance, had a habit of leaving muddy trails on the polished floor; they were holey and would let out at every pressure the mud absorbed in the street. The chief streets I avoided completely, for it seemed to me that every one was looking at my boots. Once a coachman advised me good-naturedly to blacken my toes, so it wouldn't be noticeable so much.

It was three days since I had had any food. I hadn't the courage to visit any of my friends; it seemed to me that they knew perfectly well that I am hungry, disappointed of my idleness and were hurt at my depriving them of the last morsel of bread. One in particular, it seemed to me, felt that way, a fellow whom I considered among the closest

a basket of warm rolls, singing out: "Rolls for sale, warm rolls". "Two for Three!" What feasted me especially was the odour, it did cost me all my effort to remain in my place; I felt that if I got up, I was going to attack and rob her, choke her perhaps. The woman sensed that I was not a suitable customer and shutting by in her house-slippers disappeared into a gate. . . . I got up. I couldn't sit any more, I was tortured by a most horrible hunger, the hunger of a wild beast, ready to lose his skin for the sake of filling his stomach. Suddenly my mind cleared and a thought, as sharp as a blade, painfully pierced my brain: "What is to be done?" The idea came quite hopelessly that my old theory of "to carry on or to die" has been wrecked to pieces: I felt with all my being that I cannot starve to death, rather would I consent to crime. . . . But prison, the disgrace of being sent home in fetters, the tears of my mother. . . . No, it shall not come to that! It was better to end it all. . . .

It was still early and the morning mist had not quite lifted. The river was clogged with drifting lumber and floats, to which I descended with firm steps. The cold rising from the surface of the water made me shiver. Death did not seem as appalling as the black yawning chasm between the floats, into which I decided to dive so as to cut off every possibility of swimming. "Wonder if I had better wait until the water gets a bit warmer" asked a timid strange voice somewhere within me. But I was firm: "It must be now—this is the end!" Still, it were better to jump down from the bridge, then I would feel nothing at all. The path to the bridge led past a whole row of summer houses picturesquely grouped at the outskirts of the forest. I was unable to think of anything in particular; every sign on the gate, every card drew and held my attention; I read them carefully and attentively as if it were something vastly important and indispensable to me at the moment. One moment I was provoked to laughter by a "to let" sign nailed upside down on a fence; the next, to sadness at the sight of a thin little, starved looking puppy, limping along on three paws, the sick paw pressed awkwardly to its body, who followed me fearfully and pitifully with its gaze. I stopped for a considerable time by a fence to watch a maid in a bright scarlet blouse hang out some clothes on a line, and did not move until the door of the kitchen slammed after her. In front of the gate of one of the houses stood an officer in an unbuttoned army coat, with insignia, his bare feet stuck into house slippers. I said "Good morning" for no reason at all, and felt hurt when he did not respond, but threw a peculiar look in my direction. . . . When I finally reached the bridge it was quite late; I had no desire for food, and no sense of fatigue, only a dull noise persisted in my ears, and my head felt a vacant space through which the wind rushed freely. . . . I was hot in the heavy coat, but was ashamed to unbutton it lest the passers-by notice that I had no coat or vest on. I walked toward the center of the bridge but the policeman glanced at me suspiciously, especially at my boots, and followed me from behind. It annoyed me terribly, and the reminder of my broken boots brought me back to

Thus a sweltering day passed, and after it a chilly night. Towards morning somehow or other I found myself in the woods, in the country, on an old bench. I noticed not far away on the ground some withered skin of a cucumber; quite unconsciously I put one in my mouth, and mechanically without chewing swallowed it. All at once I felt terribly hungry. In a twinkling I swallowed the rest of the skins, and the hunger increased in intensity. As if to spite me, a peasant woman passed me, carrying

my brain clung to the time when I shall be an accomplished sculptor.

do?" because the wild kaleidoscope of images in the life of me concentrate on the thought of "what to lightning rapidly in my sick brain. I could not for bits of pictures which succeeded themselves with and yet I couldn't get rid of some wildly incoherent my head; I was able to think of nothing definite, circles swam before my eyes. There was a mist in bent under me at every step, and peculiar yellow it did not refresh me. I grew heavier, my knees I was horribly thirsty; I kept on drinking water but and there was a constant dull ache in my chest; would pass a convulsive pain through my stomach, I was not hungry somehow, only occasionally there aimless walking, to wherever my feet would take me. I threw the prescription away and resumed my

a pen, and I was outside, once more.

dispatch he wrote a prescription with one stroke of to be included in my diet; after which with equal recting a tiresome task, began enumerating what was irregular living; and mechanically, rapidly, as if of illness, but told me that I am weakened with hospital. On examination, the doctor found no trace I caught on to the thought and set out for the

Why don't I myself go to a hospital while I am don't they take him to a hospital I wondered irritably? I shuddered at the thought. Why on earth realizing fully the horrible disgrace will I pick up bare-footed?

What am I going to do when my boots refuse service altogether? Will I become insane? Or courage enough to show myself in the street

of my own near future as reflected in him. . . .

before, but this time I was struck with the picture attacks of a mania for greatness. I had seen him winter, and in the summer would be subject to the tutor, who would work normally through the recognized him he was known to the whole city as if it were not for his strangely haughty stare. I would have been impossible to refrain from laughter bare-footed, but as if clinking invisible spurs, and it importantly ahead. He stepped as if he were not sively live eyes stared contemptuously and self of a man. His face was deathly pale, and the excess back, feet completely bare, haughtily strode the figure arms folded across his chest, head proudly thrown shook to my weakened system. Along the sidewalk, I had a horrible experience, which caused a terrific Early in the morning, following the third night, broken I was my eyes would not close in sleep.

Luckily this soon came to an end; the door opened with a crash and with an oath a new individual rolled in, exactly in the same manner as I did a while ago. His face was covered with a profuse growth,

"He ate them up! Can't you see his boots keep their mouths open?" said my neighbour, who despite the darkness managed to observe the fact. I sat as on glowing coals. Miserably cold and forlorn I wrapped myself more closely into the worn coat and snuggled under me the feet in their broken boots. Hunger gnawed at my entrails and it seemed revolting that these unfortunate people were still capable of laughing at me and at themselves. . . .

"Oh, but he's a dandy, all right! He doesn't believe in waist coats!"

"That chap is a real 'Maskil' and no doubt" remarked someone in the corner. "He hasn't a 'tales-kohn' on him".

"And so you're one of us, at last! came from another. 'Made up your mind that to get his degree a Jew must pass three stages: 'Melamedism, the gymnasium and the University, eh?'

"Well, old top, another would-be doctor?" merrily asked a fellow with a peculiarly aged face and a puny childish body.

And so it came about that I came or rather fell into the place, because owing to the impenetrable gloom that reigned there, I did not notice the steps that led into the place and rolled in like a ball having missed my balance. I was greeted with a merry ovation and cries of "Baruch-Haba" (welcome). I was terribly embarrassed and escaped into a corner, buttoning my coat which opened at the time of the fall. There were many people present, who owing to the darkness I could not as yet clearly distinguish. They, however, would not let me alone; from every direction came jokes at my expense, and questions in mocking concern.

"Why to be sure!" he exclaimed joyously the next minute, "I had forgotten that you studied Talmud and all the rest of that indispensable Jewish wisdom! Suppose you become a country 'melamed'. I shouldn't wonder if that were the only earthly use you could make out of all your 'science' he added irritably. Obviously the poor fellow could not easily forgive the studies which have robbed him of his youth and have left him now, at a mature age, with the necessity of cramming Latin. . . . He began explaining in detail the necessary steps to be taken in the realization of this new idea. It seemed that in the court yard of the school, below the prayer room of the "Hasidim", in a dark damp hole was located something like an agency for country "melameds", which was aptly nick-named by the plastic biblical name of "Giv'as-Ha-aralos".

I was doing it for sport. Gradually he softened. "You must go away" he said, "the city is no place for you. You need country air, human feed properly, or else you will be going away to see poor Yossif". (He was referring to a member of our hungry crowd, who during the past summer contracted a lung disease and burned up in three months).

While yet on the stairs leading to his room I heard his monotonous voice memorizing some Latin vocabulary,—crazy sounding words which all seemed to be buzzing with "Us". He received me with a strange silence, uttered not a word in reply to my confession of wanting to become a common labourer, and to my enquiry where I could possibly find work; he silently poured me out a cup of tea, and out of his ever warm samovar, and pushed over a slice of black bread my way. All this he performed as if unintentionally continuing to cram his wretched undigestible Latin. Yet somehow I was not hurt by the reception; I swallowed greedily the hot tea, following it up with big bites of coarse bread, which instead of filling me, seemed to make me hungrier than ever. Meanwhile my host strode back and forth across the room paying not the slightest attention to me, keeping up his constant uninterrupted drone. Pretty soon no trace was left of the slice, and I repeated my question. "What are you talking about, what sort of a working man are you going to make?" he muttered avoiding to meet my gaze. "And how can you let yourself sink so low, why, if you starve much longer you are going straight to the dogs" he continued to growl as if he thought

my decision into practice. For my friend's place for advice as to how I could put light of the sun. Without further delay I set out labourers; to strain strong wiry muscles in the bright the desire to live a plain wholesome life, these suffer and die for the sake of art. I was filled with no use looking for anything else, that it was silly to better with his calling. It was clear that there was barefoot, but on the contrary, it seems to harmonise it no disgrace to get about in his shirt sleeves and a working man, a common working man, who thinks simple, splendid way out. I am going to become that everything was lost, when there was such a the words of my friend. It seemed strange to think penetrated my being. Quite suddenly I remembered the brightness of the morning and happy activity; little tune as they worked, I watched them hungrily; tying up some unfasted floats, humming a wistful and thoroughly soaked labourers were happily busy from me, in the shade of the bridge, some bare-footed sparkled in the sunshine like molten silver. Not far trees, seeming to rise directly out of the river, which mountain were outlined the tops of multi-coloured against the clear blue sky. At the foot of the magnificent, with the dark tower sharply relieved beautifully from the spot. The sight was truly the view of the mountain and castle which opened I sat down on a bench alongside the wharf to admire of the river, and here, to get rid of the tiresome cop, down. Thus we crossed the bridge to the other side I hurried ahead, and lagging behind as I slowed followed me like a shadow, quickening his step when rushed to my eyes. Meanwhile the policeman felt so sorry for myself that the tears involuntarily heart contracted with pity for her and I suddenly suicide, the news reaching my poor mother. . . . My boots giving an indication of the motive for the gers, the absence of the coat and vest and the broken clear picture of my corpse being stared at by strangled reality. My decision did not weaken, but I had a

"That one won't do. I'll wager he won't even know how to give a thrashing properly. Give me somebody more solid".

Thereupon the bargaining began. The mistress of the exchange did her best to paint me in the most brilliant colours, related about my great intellect, pointed constantly to my impressive brow, and kept assuring him, that were it not for my being a destitute orphan, I could have become the son-in-law of the richest man in town. The new-comer, on the contrary, kept reiterating that I am a starveling of a 'Rebe', who won't be able even to administer chastisement. At the same time he did not remove his heavy hands from my shoulders, as if fearing that I might give him the slip. I waited for the end of the wrangle impatiently. It hurt to hear my parents relegated to the dead; and I abhorred the thought of mastering the art of beating his children.

The deal was closed at 23 rubles a half-year term. Three rubles went to the agency, five I received as deposit, and as security against my running away I left with him my passport. We agreed that I was to come over that evening to the suburbs, and ask at the first saloon in the horse market for Yankel the Blacksmith.

At the first touch of the rustling note on my palm I rushed into the street. There was so much to be done. I had to get completely fitted out from head to foot: I had to visit the baths; get a haircut, and fill myself to satiety in order to acquire the appearance worthy of my new position. The schedule was carried out brilliantly. The money sufficed to cover all the needs, and I even managed to save some change for an emergency. Naturally all had been bought not in the big shops on Main Street, but from our own "Exploiters"—the Jews....

V.

his feet clothed in enormous dirty boots, and in his hand he carried a whip. On the instant a spritely little old woman piped up out of some mysterious hiding place and began making excuses before the guest, persuading him not to swear because above there was a "Mokem-Kodish" (a holy place).

The new-comer was evidently an unpretentious man, and regaining his balance very quickly he immediately got to business:

"Give me a 'Rebe' for 15 dollars, but a steady one, so he won't give me the slip, like the last years' one".

"Haven't got such cheap goods" replied the old woman. "I haven't any such 'Am-haaratzim' (ignoramuses) as you will find at Yenta Zoruch's; my boys are all learned fellows 'Tora and chochma'; they have all mastered Talmud, Humesh, Rashe, Latin, Russian, Arithmetic and all the rest of the studies. Would to God that my grandson Yosele would grow up like them! She ended her tirade with pious meekness.

"Well, if that's the case, I am willing to throw in another 'red one' (five rubles). But on one condition,—he's to stick it out, and no French leave". "Boys, who is willing to become a 'Rebe' at this good Jew's?" she confronted our crowd.

No one spoke.

I got up and took two steps forward.

"Oh, but with this one I am not going to part so cheaply! I'll take 25 rubles or bust! Why he knows everything; look at his brow, why he is a real 'Tane' (scholar).

The man approached, looked me over from head to foot, laid his heavy hand on my thin sharp shoulder and shook his head disapprovingly:

I had no difficulty in finding the tavern, but no one seemed to know anything about Yankel the smith. Everyone in the place insisted that there isn't anybody by the name in town, and told me not to bother them. Bargaining was going on in the liveliest manner. At last some kindly old soul took pity on me.

"Are you by any chance looking for Yankel the...?" she asked, adding a nickname that made me flush up my ears with embarrassment. "Why don't you say so straight, instead of beating about the bush and bothering people for nothing! There up that way!" She pointed a lean finger to the door of a little room, which evidently served as a reception cabinet for the more exclusive guests.

In the room, filled with acid tobacco smoke and the pungent smell of liquor, I found my Reb Yankel, or Yankel the... face flushed, cap pushed back, holding the hand of some suspicious looking individual in an army cap minus the "Cocarde", repeatedly slapping his palm and calling at each blow: 20 rubles, 10, 20 rubles etc. His partner did the same, hoarsely shouting his own figures. I coughed

discreetly several times but failed to attract attention. It was only when Yankel finished the deal that he designed to notice me. In my new outfit I seemed to impress him more favourably. He set a glass of whisky in front of me and urged me to take a drink with them. I refused, explaining that I never drank. This seemed to irritate them, and they insisted and pressed until, just to get rid of my new friends, I gingerly swallowed a little out of my glass. However, this howling injustice roused the indignation of both my drinking partners. They insisted that I drink to the bottom as they had done already. All my pleading to be let alone were in vain. The individual in the uniform cap, leaped toward me with a nimble, cat-like motion, deftly caught my head under his arm, raised it, and sticking two filthy boney fingers into my mouth poured into it a glassful of the nauseating abomination... My throat contracted and I nearly choked. With great difficulty I managed to cough it down and get back my breath, while Reb Yankel, to correct the slightly discourteous behaviour of his friend, escorted me politely to his wagon outside to enable me to rest while waiting for him to get through.

My occupations as Rebe were negligent. Neither my pupils nor I bore the studies any particular love, so that we managed to devote as little time as possible to intellectual endeavour. All day long I delighted in helping with the work in the fields, in the smithy, in the stable. The latter I enjoyed most, although my initial attempt worked out rather ingloriously. We rode a two miles distance to water the horses. Saddle, rein and such luxuries of civilization were not recognized with us. My mare seemed rather tame, and possessed a spine as sharp as a blade. I mounted it trustfully, grasping the mane for greater safety. All at once she began kicking her hind legs, whirled madly about and to the great delight of the spectators threw me into the mud on the ground. At the moment it seemed to be the soft wing of my guardian angel; but for that mud I would surely have broken my neck. It later appeared

getting to enjoy the constant feel of coolness on skilfully gliding along in the thin mud, and even I became adept in leaping from stone to stone, else in my neighbourhood. After a while, however, puddles, spattering my new trousers and everyone am travelling on my own soles, and kept getting into resorts of Knaipe. At first it was rather difficult to no doubt the latest fashion in the exclusive summer the neighbours willingly sported bare-feet, imitating about, from the master to the beautiful daughters of civilization with any particular chagrin. Everyone to submit. However, I did not miss this product of my duties, to take food etc. I had no way out but an active struggle, including the refusal to carry out shepherd and ending with the master himself. After by all members of the household, beginning with the "Panie Rebe", with which I was invariably addressed bare-footed, notwithstanding the dignified title of the entire six months I was obliged to walk about they put my shoes into some hiding place and during modest wish has not been complied with; moreover the horses harnessed. Needless to say that the master that I am going to leave; and that I want revolved to the soul, and decisively informed my shame, pulled on the not quite dry clothing. . . . I was their infernal laughter until I hastily, burning with merriment of the honourable crowd. They kept up me to jump about on one foot, to the unspeakable childish glee pulled and jerked without mercy, causing foot tied to a string, which my host in innocent laughing crowd of men, women and children, one ing in my underclothes, surrounded by a madly I woke up with a start, and beheld myself stand-

thoroughly spread under me, I was soon sound asleep. I could stretch out, no matter where. . . . I was exceedingly drowsy. . . . If only dimly with a bluish misty light. . . . But nothing of newly baked bread; the two little windows gleamed room was unbearably hot; it was dark, and smelled while I followed my master into the house. The future charge began skilfully unharnessing the horses

"There you are, I brought you your new Rebe" announced the boss triumphantly. "Now, you'll see to it that you say your prayers or else he's going to take the hide off you!"

I could not discern very clearly my future pupil, but judging from his outline, and the gigantic feet lighted by the lantern I had reason to be sceptical of my fitness to execute the entrusted mission. My

Reb Yankel suddenly woke up. With a hoarse cry he urged on the horses, and soon came to a standstill in front of some wretched hovels, from one of which appeared a tall dark figure with a lantern in his hand.

The rain did not cease. . . . Long and monotonous was the journey, but like everything else in this world it finally came to an end. The forest suddenly thinned, it became lighter, the sky appeared with a pale rose, crimsoning horizon in the distance.

There was nothing to do but to resign myself to fate. Once again I buried myself into the hay, but I was given no rest by the lovable escort of horses, who so trustfully pulled chunks of hay from under my head that I was afraid that one of the creatures would take my ear along with the mouthful.

On both sides of the road stood darkly silhouetted trees stretching forth their weird limbs in the shape of clutching monsters. The night was black; in the sky, not a single star, a melancholy drizzle was falling persistent and dreary. I grew frightened of this stillness. . . .

I grew sleepy again. . . . I shut my eyes, and suddenly heard a mysterious whisper right over my ear; at the same time my face was wrapped in a cloud of warm steam. . . . I cried out and jumped up as if stung. I perceived that I was sitting in a slowly lumbering wagon, surrounded by horses, one of which must have whispered into my ear; in front was a formless, swaying shape. I understood at once that it was Reb Yankel taking me home together with his other purchases—the horses.

I wanted to get up. . . . But my head ached fiercely; heavy and leaden, it seemed to be a strange, hindering object; my limbs as well felt listless and numb.

I felt sick. . . . My temples were throbbing painfully and my head ached. Limp as a corpse I sank into the soft hay of the wagon, with a peculiarly pleasant sensation; I sank deeper and deeper, and around me it grew stiller and stiller. . . . Suddenly I felt something wet and refreshing on my face, and a tossing and rolling of my bed. . . . I opened my eyes but couldn't for the world understand where I was and what was going on.

Once at harvest time, we were returning from the fields, and in a fit of playfulness she accidentally cut deeply into my finger with her scythe. I couldn't refrain from crying out. Pale with fright she rushed to my side, bandaging my finger tenderly with a strip of cloth cut from her own shirt. She was

enjoyment would myself slap her tender flexible flesh. touch of her blow on my shoulder, and with keen pent up emotions. I felt indescribable bliss at the innocent pastime. We never kissed. Constant battling and slaps seemed to have served as outlet for our we would engage in wrestling and chasing and such my noble intention of educating her cast to the winds, which would for a moment turn me dumb. Then words more clearly she would pinch my open breast, "You are hardly a man yet", and to demonstrate her have no hair on your chest yet, that's funny!" and places would suddenly interrupt me with, "Say you would listen inattentively, and in the most thrilling of science and art. My pagan companion, however, I was, I would try to initiate her into the mysteries the field, the incorrigible product of civilization that had occasion to work together; coming back from my shyness in wrestling bouts with her. . . . We often bold village stunt, and would frown angrily noticing my shoulder encouragingly when I performed some lad. She liked to see me merry and gay, she would slap strength and acquired the looks of a sun-burnt village to care for me more when I gained in health and broken, half-starved city strapping at first, she got prayer? Whatever it was, that drew her heart to the first and largest tumbler of whiskey at the close of the "Panie Rebe", and would respectfully offer me the at such times put particular feelings into my little attention and respect of the neighbours, who would incomprehensible to her, sacred prayers, drawing the "Tales" like a grown up, singing before the altar, attend her father's house on Saturdays, dressed in a strength of the impression I produced, when I would pure admiration in my widely open eyes? Was it the crude jesting, my only means of expression was the beauty without making use of my hands, without the fact that I was the first to admire her innocent which precluded my uttering a single word. Was it my breath short and casting me into a stoniness glance which would burn into my very core, cutting furtively sending my way an occasional glowing nature, she would maintain a bashful silence with me, us. Ordinarily a care free, happily twittering child of village a peculiar relationship had sprung up between From my early days my taking up life in that have given my life an entirely different course.

To this innocent child, Sara, I owe my love of nature, which I had fully experienced then for the first time. She stirred my guileless soul, she brightened my heart with the rosy rays of a first love and taught me to appreciate and understand the inexhaustible wonders of God's beautiful world. If it were not for a mere accident who knows but that she might have given my life an entirely different course.

I dreamt of the glory of an artist's fame, of life in great cities, of splendour and wealth, of sacred love. . . . My imaginary beloved always took the shape of my comely neighbour Sarah, and would appear before me even in her costume; a crimson bodice

ful world and . . . to dream. I loved in my free time to roam by myself in the loney wood, to breathe in the solace of God's beaut-

herself by sending out peals of laughter. admit it and made believe that she was enjoying dislike it too; that she was most likely ashamed to focularity with her, and imagined that she must of our neighbours—Sara. I resented their rough to see among the merry crowd the pretty daughter necessary courage of action. . . . Moreover, it hurt me would invariably be defeated through lack of the girls, and in my wrestling matches with the latter at the freedom of relationship between the boys and dance only half-heartedly. I felt shy and awkward Saturday and Sunday, I would join the pranks and graciously consented to allow me my boots for would also get dressed for the day, (the master never resting from laughter and song. Although I and playing in our heavy hob-nailed boots, throats into the night we would keep running about, dancing holiday activities. From early morning until late could compare with the utter exhaustion of our No exertion in the exercise of our daily tasks

costumes and ribbons of our ladies. our gathering place, was gaudy with the motley clothes, and the green lawn in the forest, which was getting under the weight of our entire wealth of up for that, we sweated internally on holidays, stag- heads, were also light and bare of foot. But to make peasant women and girls, in short coloured petticoats, flower usually stuck into it. The ladies, that is the brimmed shady straw hat with some bright field a wide open collar; no boots; and finally a broad the inevitable two patches in the back; a shirt, with working trousers shiny and worn at the knees, with would call indecent. We men, sported a pair of walking about in such primitive dress as civilization During the week we spent our time in physical work, lived a quietly unsophisticated primitive existence. nook was situated far from the main road, and we cut through by a broad winding river; the peaceful by a thick forest of ancient picturesque oak; it was the place was truly magnificent; we were surrounded surrounding nature and active youth. The beauty of and warmed and thrilled to the poetry and joy of heart ceased its everlasting meaningless gnawing, mist of wild fancies evaporated from my mind, the bodily health I regained my mental balance. The sports I became an eager participant. Together with the wrestling matches with the village boys, in whose I gained weight and strength and developed a pair simple diet affected me wonderfully well. Very soon horseback riding, swimming, and wholesome, though The fresh country air, hard physical exercise, had all the right to be offended.

that my loving pupils stuck some stinging nettle under its tail and it became clear that the poor mare

I was well aware that all my intellectual development, all my natural gifts for art would not suffice to open to me the doors of higher society. The first requisite was the mastery of conversational Russian, which was the language of the aristocratic circles, even among the Jews. To realize this aim, it was necessary to study with a Gentile teacher. To engage one for remuneration was, in the face of my financial state, out of the question. Thus, after some deliberation, I decided to approach the first high school student crossing my way and ask him to become my teacher. No sooner said than done. I stopped in front of an art shop window, making up my mind to turn with my request to the first fellow that passes me. Pretty soon a round little rosy lad, with flaxen curls, and skyblue eyes and a quaintly lifted little nose, stopped alongside of me. It proved later, that

Among the orders which I received were some portraits of marriageable young ladies of the middle class, and with each of them in turn I would invariably fall in love. In the light of my worldly experience, I perceived the futility of my infatuations, and would adopt a cold severe exterior, calling myself all kinds of uncomplimentary names inside; all of which, however, did not prevent me from suffering at heart. As time passed, this unnatural, double life, began to work on my nerves and I made up my mind to bring about a change in my existence.

VI

This was the end of our idyll. Field work drew to an end, we met but rarely. The season of rains was on, and in the awkward autumn dress and boots she seemed older and stranger. Moreover, the prose of life excluded all other possible thoughts. And the prose was dismal indeed. My kind master was a blacksmith by trade, and the possessor of a pair of enormous hands which he willingly applied to work. He saw, however, that work will not get him very far, and so he tried to apply his brain in the horse dealing business. Horses came of various kinds; some were "orphans" (stolen), and one of such bargains landed him in jail. This happened towards the end of my term, just before my leaving time. Needless to say that my hard earned remuneration was out of question. I was glad to recover my passport intact, and with an empty pocket, but a sound body and mind, I wended my way, on foot, into the city. I made straight for the agency of Yenta Zorich, the competitor of my erstwhile lady-patron, to see what luck would send my way. And lucky indeed I was. I secured a position at the actual salary of 45 rubles, and a private room, in the house of a well-to-do innkeeper, not far from the city. This enabled me to receive books, with which my faithful friend of the unfortunate Latin experience, kept me amply supplied. There was also an opportunity of conversation with a mixed and changing crowd of travellers, stopping at the place, and in the end of the year saw me back in the city, the possessor of heretofore unenjoyed wealth, a store of worldly wisdom and experience, and a clear view of the road ahead. . . .

From experience I knew that the first thing to do was to get some respectable clothes, so that no one would suspect me of need. Then I rented a very cheap lodging, a corner of a room, and limited my diet to tea and bread, to make my money last until such a time as I could earn something by my art. In school, I paid more attention to painting and less to modelling, knowing well that the former is more likely to earn my bread. I intended to devote myself seriously to my beloved sculpture and science, when I would be more or less sure of my living. I concealed the whereabouts of my quarters even from my friends, and no one suspected that this pale-faced, quiet, respectable youth fed on crusts bought from beggars and diluted by bad tea. Gradually I made the acquaintance of a few respectable families, where I came to be considered the essence of accuracy owing to the fact, that afraid of betraying my hunger, I would decline invitations to remain to dinner, explaining that I was expected at home. In spite of my devoting considerable time to exercise, in the effects of which I had great faith at the time, and in spite of regular ascetic life, the insufficiency of diet combined with hard work soon began to tell on me. I grew thinner, lost my natural good humour and joy of living. This was accentuated by the fact that I was a victim to a chronic disease — falling in love. . . . As likely as not I would not even enjoy the acquaintance of the object of my affections.

It was growing dark. The air grew cooler. An intoxicating fragrance peculiar to the harvested fields was wafted towards us. All around us was still. . . . We sat down under a bush, and in childish simplicity she pressed closer to me. I trembled, although I seemed to be on fire with the feel of the pressure on my shoulder, against which she hid her tearful face. I kept silent, kissing, kissing without end, her hands, her hair, whatever of her I could touch, as if burning to satiate myself, to absorb her entire being. . . . She kept sobbing, nestling closer and closer, and hiding her face on my breast. Suddenly a squeaking of ungreased wheels brought us to ourselves. Past us was slowly lumbering a wagon of firewood. Without stopping his horses the peasant greeted us, asked for a match, some cigarette papers and something else or other. Having received a negative reply to everyone of his request (I was unable to emit a single sound except "No") he slowly trudged on. She got up abruptly, and went quickly forward, paying no attention to the fact that I was hardly able to follow. Thus in silence we reached her house; the gate slammed nervously under my very nose, and without saying "Good night" she disappeared into the house.

to my lecture on some lofty subject. lingering longer than usual, and she patiently listened her hair and kissed her. We continued on our way happy. She seemed so little and helpless, that I stroked have I done, oh what have I done!" I felt peculiarly she whispered brokenly, swallowing her tears: "What face pitifully sorry, the lower lip comically puckered sobbed at once, and with guilty looks, her childish

year's board and lodging. To this truly noble Russian I owe the wider horizon that later opened before me. He is no longer, and as he died before I had an opportunity of expressing my gratitude I wish these lines to serve as a tribute of respect to his noble memory.

Before I dwell on my life in the General's house,

however, I must relate how and why I was obliged to leave the house of the lovable Schlegels. The kindly old gentleman, probably out of desire to procure me some earnings, suggested that I should model the bust of his beautiful daughter. My heart leaped to my throat. . . . I knew that there was going to be trouble. Even previous to that. I avoided looking too closely at her finely chiseled profile, and would grow tremulous when catching the gaze of her marvelous eyes on me. And yet, I dared not refuse for among the serious vices of mankind. And so I set to work, and with the first sitting I fell desperately in love. . . . I don't know whether she was aware of it, or whether she just found it funny to watch me "eating her up" with my eyes, but she seemed to enjoy herself immensely. She would jest and flirt with me in an innocent way and the sittings became for me hours of torture and bliss. I suffered because she did not understand me, because she made fun of me, at the same time languishing under the mellow gaze of her brightly mischievous eyes. Every day on my way to her house, I would promise myself that I was going to finish that bust and put an end to my torture. And inevitably on beholding her, I would decide that I was ready to suffer on indefinitely, just that I could hear her silvery laughter, and feel her merry gaze on me, which sent my heart pit-a-patter. . . .

And so far a long time the modelling continued, and she continued to pose, or rather laugh and twitter some innocent nonsense, which was music to my infatuated ears. At last, however, the lovable child was at the end of her patience, and I was obliged to admit that the bust was finished. Everyone was loud in its praise. My beautiful Annie presented me with a dainty box, (I think it was candy) tied with a pink ribbon, and her generous papa — with a sealed envelope. . . . I was on the verge of tears at the thought that our intimate meetings were to be no longer, and that they meant to pay me with gifts and money for the soul which I gave. . . . My sadness seemed inexplicable to these good people in view of my generous reward.

Sensing in my depths that this was different from the habitual infatuation, which periodically seized me for every pretty girl I drew; and realizing the absurdity and hopelessness of the situation, I decided to tear the thing out with the root. . . . I seized the first occasion to thank them for the kindness they have shown me, and declined to continue my lessons, excusing myself with necessity for hard work in connection with the approaching examinations. I used all my will power in avoiding all places where I might possibly meet her. And still both by day and by night her image haunted me, contracting my heart, and filling my whole being with infinite grief. Occasionally her

he was a newly-baked freshman and could almost have passed as my son. However, I stuck to my decision, and lay my plea before him in halting, broken Russian. At first he seemed rather frightened, but finally getting the drift of what I was after, he said shyly that he would ask his mother's permission and took me along to his house. He was the son of well-to-do parents, his father, Mr. Schlegel, holding an important position in the government mail department. Having listened to her boy's story, the mother was moved to tears and rewarded him with a tender kiss, while the father volunteered to assist his son in his new task, a promise he faithfully carried out. The lesson over, the kindly gentleman invited me into his room, and questioned me sympathetically about myself and my family.

Upon learning that I was an art student he expressed great delight, and proved to be an ardent admirer of art. Altogether he possessed the charm of personality one frequently meets with in Russia. He insisted on my staying to supper, and thus I had the opportunity to meet the entire family.

The mother was a fair-skinned, dark-browed, pure-blooded Russian gentlewoman (the father was of German descent); the daughter an ever smiling, sunny little mischief maker, a beauty with large, innocent eyes looking straight into one's soul; the eldest son, in his senior year of high school. For them I was a curiosity, a stranger from another world. They could not cease wondering that a big fellow like me should choose a mere baby for his teacher. Red and flustered, painfully embarrassed with the poorness of my Russian, I managed to explain that I could tell by the boys' looks how kind his folks must be, and that surely his knowledge of Russian made him suitable to be my teacher. They seemed flattered at my opinion and favourably impressed by my modesty, especially since the very same evening they had occasion to convince themselves of the wide scope of my reading.

I used to receive a lesson a day, but there was no definite teacher. I was taught by any member of the family who happened to be free at the time, except the mother, however. The latter considered her own part to consist of the regular feeding me with her excellent chops and truffles, which indeed had a remarkably good effect on me. In a comparatively short time I acquired a working vocabulary in Russian. Their gentleness towards me, encouraged me to speak, and they would persuade me to tell them all sorts of stories to be able to correct my mistakes. Only on rare occasions would they let me go without my dinner. I came to adore this wonderful family, for their kindness to me and their tenderness to each other. I liked the custom of the children's kissing their parents' hands after the meal, their using the polite form of address, and it used to touch me exceedingly when even the smallest member of the family would be asked to "please" do something, and thanked for the slightest service.

In spite of every effort on my part to conceal my poverty, they must have noticed my need and got me a tutoring lesson in drawing with the family of General Dimianowitch, where I later enjoyed a

The fact that this kindly cultured woman could suggest that in return for earthly goods I turn traitor to my parents and race; that she evidently harboured beliefs in the truth of a slanderous ritual calumny which was invented as an excuse for persecution in the barbarous Middle Ages, and could actually bring herself to ask whether I did not know of the exist-

because he would have regarded me as a traitor. I would have been obliged to leave his house, he assured me that had I accepted his wife's suggestion of men, that I forgot his epaulettes. . . . Before I left, spoke so glowingly of freedom and the brotherhood into his study for a smoke, and in a friendly talk That very same night, after dinner, he called me the conversation to her husband.

My words and my tone seemed to make an impression upon my lady and she must have reported the conversation to her husband.

and one God." come brothers, and there shall be but one language in the prophecy of Isaiah: "... and all men shall be as mankind will rise to that level of culture foreseen utmost for the good of his people, until such a time parents and race, and to hesitate to contribute one's of every nation on earth to betray one's loyalty to trusted in their victory; that it was against the ethics waging war against this evil, and that I faithfully different nations; that science poetry and art are tentiously create and fan the hatred among the alike; that only the ignorant, fanatical clergy in the real substance; that the ethics of every creed is more people only, who are incapable of penetrating latter I recognized as being worth while for the common was composed of two parts; ethics and ritual; that the with emotion, I began explaining that every religion understanding of our people. In a voice trembling result of an insufficient acquaintance, an insufficient kind-hearted people. I was certain that it was the tude towards our race, on the part of thoughtful, I was stirred to the soul by this heartless attitude that city).

because as a Jew, I had no right of residence in with honour, but the academy refused to admit me (By that time I had graduated from the art school receive a scholarship and be admitted to the academy. she said, and the governor my godfather, and I would because of my religion. She would be my godmother, did not seem just or logical that I should be suffering I was an unbeliever, anyway, she explained, and it me profoundly by suggesting that I change my faith. And so, once, during our intimate talks, she shocked sacrifice myself for this generous, cultivated woman. I would not have hesitated a moment to ing for me, and my heart was overflowing with gratitude. I would not have hesitated a moment to very closely together; she showed real motherly feeling for me, and my heart was overflowing with gratitude. I would not have hesitated a moment to usually did all the listening. These talks drew us She kept the conversation up I should say, for I occupied, but our mouths were engaged, and so, of her everlasting embroidery. Our hands and eyes were would spend all her free time in my room, busy with out of black wood, and the mistress of the house engaged at the time in carving some little statuette directed towards me his thoughtful attention. I was a human being in me, and this man of rare personality

As already mentioned I spent a whole year with the family of General Dimianowitch, whose children I taught to draw. At first they seemed to take interest in me solely as an artist and their children's art teacher. But as time went on, they began to discern

This incident cured me completely. I saw her several times more after that, admired her greatly, but rather abstractly, as an artist admires a great creative work, and loved her with a pure emotion, like sunshine, like spring. Still, I did not dare to resume my visits.

fraternal feeling. which I returned without a tremor, in sheer successful and she gave me a friendly hand-shake, appeared older, watched me work with earnest, wisdom. She herself seemed to have changed; she this warm little nest, and at her thoughtful help-lighted me with a candle. I felt calmly at peace in my presence, and all through the time of the repairs She led me directly to her cosy little bedroom, stealthily closed the door so no one would know of

spark myself, for my intolerable childishness. . . . almost done, and I had an uncontrollable desire to I was full of horror at the thought of what I had person was doomed to die. . . . I hardly followed her. ing that if the likeness met with an accident the mother had even earlier objected to the bust, insisting that it be no end of tears and hysterics. Her the head broke off. If her mother was to see it, her dress in the stand, and the bust fell down and the maid while cleaning the window pane, caught On the way, taking my arm, she explained that

get my hat and coat, and to accompany her. noticing nothing out of the way, calmly asked me to minute I would have been at her feet. But she, the separation. . . . she came to see me. . . . In another fired my brain. . . . She loves me! She could not stand shape wrapped into a warm shawl. . . . A mad thought stairs, and recognized her at once, her trim girlish Forgetting my hat and coat I leaped down the

they have but one daughter Annie. of my whereabouts except the Schlegel family, and "young lady" struck me like lightning. No one knew waiting for me at the foot of the stairs. The words nounced that a young lady wishes to see me, and was Suddenly my landlady entered the room and announced with the thought of never seeing her again. a distinct image of my beloved Annie, and my heart purposely lighting no lamp. Before my eyes stood One sad winter's evening I sat in my dark corner

resolution. plan and would stick stoically to my previous common sense; I would see the nonsensicality of the morning. But the morning would bring back my narrow bed. I would decide to go to see her in the Time and again tossing restlessly at night on my of woe to my landlady, in a thin plaintive voice. . . . room and behold our neighbour pouring out her tale I could not control myself, would rush into the next ance. I knew perfectly well she was not there, but the next room with a peculiar clearness and resonance. I knew perfectly well she was not there, but tender voice would suddenly be wafted to me from

ence of any such sect of Jews in our own times, — all this served to convince me, that for the common good it suffices not that we Jews learn the language and the ways of living of other nations, but that the rule must work both ways and the understanding must be mutual. . . . If only they could see how much potential wealth is lost through repression, through hindering our free growth and development, through preventing our energy from expressing itself for the benefit and progress of humanity. . . . In spite of our living right in their midst, in spite of their stumbling upon us at every turn, they know less about us, than about some dark African tribe. And worst and saddest of all, they know nothing of their own ignorance, and are guided by an absurd instinct inherited from the Middle Ages. . . .

I began to supply my hosts with books by Bogrov, Levan and etc., and these seemed to affect them deeply. These kindly folk, who used to be loud in their complaints about having to live in a "Sheeny town" replaced all their children's tutors, including the teacher of Russian, — by Jews.

"I want to root out of my children's hearts, this wild hatred of Jews, of which, with all my good will, I find it hard to rid myself," he used to say. And who can tell how many such men there are in the ranks of our oppressors?

He had an extensive library of Russian and foreign editions, which he put at my disposal, lending personal assistance in the choice of books which opened before me a new world and new horizons. It was owing to him, too, that I began for the first time to appreciate the beauty of words, the resonance and plasticity of style.

In childhood, when I studied the Bible, and particularly Talmud, I used to concern myself only with the thoughts. My rebbe would never take the care of pronouncing the words clearly, and never demanded it of me. Why, it was even considered "swank" to use half-words, half-phrases, to penetrate hints. Later on, when I studied independent of help, Hebrew, German, Russian, I never read out loud, never listened to the sound of a word, to the swing of a phrase; I did my best to understand the sense; that was all. And it happened more than once, I would have an excellent recollection of its contents, and no idea of the language in which it was written. I would see when reading, and remember what I have seen, but I would hear nothing at all.

To General Dimianovitch I owe my first experience of hearing proper recitation and reading. When he read to us aloud (to me and the children); "The song of the Merchant Kalashnikov", a famous ballad by Lermantov, I not only saw, but I felt with all my being the power and the music of the words. I was transported to the atmosphere of Old Russia; I breathed its every air; who knows, but that I might have gotten to feel the power of the sound of the Russian language, as keenly as I do, the plasticity of sculpture, if it had not been for my being obliged to leave Russia, through force of circumstances.

My life with the family was a happy one and free from all want. The Summer spent with them in the country had left me perfectly fit, physically. Yet the thought of the hopelessness of my being admitted to the academy, robbed me of joy. Involuntarily I began to think of countries where an art academy requires of its students only ability and not a certificate of descent. . . .

It happened at the time that Antokolsky came from Paris to visit his parents in Vilna. I conceived of the plan of asking him to accept me as his pupil. True the General had expressed more than once his disapproval of artists' studying their calling in other countries than their native land. He would refer to the absurd out-of-placeness of contemporary pictures, with their everlasting nymphs, and bathing beauties, and other subjects, so out of harmony with the spirit of their country, and would argue that it was the result of studying art abroad, far from their native soil. At the same time he seemed to see no other way out for me, and approved my intention of turning to Antokolsky.

It was the accepted thing at the time to approach the favoured of fortune through letter only. Accordingly, in collaboration with my friend Grosovsky, I composed a lengthy missive, where, after describing the ancient sufferings of Jews in Russia, I expressed a desire to leave that country and to become his pupil abroad. This letter together with several of my works in wood and black marble I left at his house, saying that I would come the next day for a reply.

In response to my ring, the door opened at once, and a little fellow in a blue jacket, whom I took to be a servant, allowed me to pass in front of him and pointed to the open door of the study. But a second glance told me immediately that it was Antokolsky himself. I had never seen him before, not even a likeness, but one glance was enough to convince you that you were in the company of an unusual man. . . . He was a slight, small, but proportionately built man, with tiny feminine hands. His features were regular, sharply outlined, and his lips energetic, compressed. Only the eyes, though rather severe, reflected suffering, rather sympathy with suffering, — that universal pain which stamps the true genius. He offered me a chair, himself sat down on the edge of his desk and taking my little carvings began examining them.

"Not so bad, not at all bad!" he mused. "What did you do it with?"

I pulled out from my pocket my nicely sharpened pen knife and showed it to him in silence. My nervousness was so great that I could not utter a word.

"You want to leave Russia and be my pupil?" he asked.

"Yes" I managed to breathe, and with beating heart prepared to hear him say that I was to get ready for the trip. Instead he began talking of the necessity for us Jews remaining in Russia, to get in closer touch with its people, its language, its

At that time I became acquainted with a group of youth, who have given up every personal interest and have devoted themselves to the uplifting and the education of the masses. I joined their ranks... I began regarding art only as a means of existence, and my studies lagged considerably. I still possessed my acquired technique, but the soul, the spirit, was gone. Once a person whose portrait I had done, refused to accept it, declaring that the portrait was whistling, a fact which had escaped my attention entirely. This state of things brought about a change for the worse in my welfare. The monotony of ever filling for those tiresome orders was also telling on my nerves. Sometimes I would fling my theory to the winds, seize a chunk of clay and begin to model feverishly. But my fingers were no more obedient to my will. I had used them for money-making too long for them to give back now the beautiful images that haunted my mind. Finally this struggle between reason and feeling became unbearable, and I decided to desert my art altogether, and look about for another occupation, where I could apply my natural abilities, i.e. rich imagination and skilful hands.

My choice fell upon mechanics. I recalled my youthful inventions and my fancy got busy imagining myself the new Edison, improving the world through my great inventions. I forthwith devoted myself to the study of mathematics and physics, and actually accomplished a good deal. However, the more I progressed the clearer it became that the new plan required many years of study, a university education and other things practically out of my reach. I also saw that most engineers were employed by manufacturing plants, where they were obliged to devote their energies for the purpose of producing third rate goods and the exploitation of the workers; that inventors were few in number, and that even those were obliged to rack their brain for complicated machinery for the making of useless trills and lace, or for destructive war machinery. The result was that I threw over the study of mathematics and with it my dreams... The period that followed was perhaps the most miserable in my life. Something was lacking. I felt an utter emptiness, the absolute purposelessness of my sufferings and my very existence, and even the attempt to reassure myself that my propaganda work was directed for the good of humanity, failed to bring me solace...

Unfortunately, of the life that followed, the 17 best years of my life, during which so much has been thought, experienced, accomplished; of the period which I spent in so many lands, belonged to so many organizations, met so many celebrities, of that I can not write now with any amount of detail... I will have to limit myself to the mention of a few bare facts. All this stretch of time is closely intertwined with one crimson thread, a fact which wove itself into all my affairs to such a degree that I cannot touch upon any without striking the sore spot... A time may come perhaps, when the world will have been healed, and when I may be able to relate it with the necessary degree of calmness. Time they say heals everything. But not yet...

so that we learn to express them in our art and become their real spiritual brothers...

Poor dreamer! He believed that all our misfortunes are temporary, artificially caused by a group "Bashibuzuks" he called them; that the day is not far off when we are going to not only be restored to our rightful place in society, but even be rewarded for the injustice which we have so long suffered...

The same sentiments I heard him express much later, when we were friends, two years previous to his death. Although on the whole he sympathized with Zionism, he trusted in the brotherly feelings of the Russians, who, according to him, were even going to help us realize Zionist goal... And so he passed away without living to see the happy day he dreamt of, and has even missed the pale ray of dawn that appeared for a moment on the black horizon of Russia following the regime of Plevé.

The result of our talk was that he granted me a scholarship and promised to secure for me the privilege of entering the academy. Unfortunately, this did not come about. True, the academy has not refused the request of the country's most celebrated sculptor, but I could not attend it while living somewhere else, and the city governor failed to grant me the right of residence. Some kind-hearted folk offered to register me as their man servant, consoling me with the fact that even our famous poet Frug, resides in the city on similar rights. However, I refused the suggestion flatly, and even threw my scholarship to the winds.

The story had leaked out and had become known in Vilna, and I became rather a celebrity. I began to be invited everywhere, orders and offers of tuition jobs came pouring in on every side. At last I was able to give myself over wholly to art. And now I had another grief: I lost my faith in the usefulness of art, although I continued to love it passionately. It is true, I was far from agreeing with the famous saying of Pissareff, to the effect that a clay pot was more useful than Apollo of Belvedere; against this protested all my artist's nature. Still I could not help but be aware of the deplorable fact that in our age, the so called "high ministers of art" serve but the pleasure of the rich, who value them as much as they do their tailors and barbers.

The son of a poor people, sharing its sorrows and sufferings, I felt that it was hardly in the mood for art, and little solace indeed did it receive at their hands. No wonder the Russians would say "Our Antokolsky", he was hardly able to be called a Jew. On second thought, he could hardly be classed as belonging to any distinctive people; he belonged to the few mighty ones who utilized his genius for their own pleasure...

My newly awakened doubts were buried deeply within me: I hadn't the courage to share them even with my admirers. I continued to work; but the sacredness of the cause had been destroyed.

I waited impatiently for the opening of the exhibition. I was sure I was the first one in. My old rag-man was placed into an obscure corner, which fortunately showed him off to advantage. The natural colour of the clay, with a thin coating of glew lent him in the dim light a peculiar pallor, reminding of the ancient images of the early Christian martyrs. I liked him. He was so forlorn among the luxurious pictures in their gilt frames, but strong and appealing, by contrast, demanding attention, crying out of the thousands like him that dwell in our midst. I sat down on a bench not far away, and waited. In came a group of clergymen, Catholic priests, who without as much as turning toward my old man went straight to a large picture by the name of "Demon". It portrayed an ordinary nude female, (the newspapers made known the fact that it was the painter's wife) standing half wrapped into a fur cloak by the bathtub. The only unusual part of the printing was that in life she would most likely not have appeared before the public in such an identical costume... The group stood in front of the picture a considerable length of time, now approaching, now moving back to attain various points of view, discussing it in half-tones, and looking again through their fists... Then they left taking no notice of my "Handel".

At an exhibit I had the occasion to see some sculpture done by French celebrities and I was profoundly impressed by the gracefulness and ease of their execution. Our own sculpture appeared awkward, lumbering and strained, requiring a painful amount of attention and study to be appreciated. I began to dislike it as the speech of an old man.

The next day a critique appeared in the newspaper, written by a brilliant young writer. He fearlessly attacked the painters for their poverty of contents for their tiresome meaningless "beauty" which bores one to tears; for their blindness to the true beauty of life, great even in its weaknesses. As an illustration, and example to be followed he cited my "Handel"; he admitted that the execution showed the imperfect technique of a young artist, but with a depth and richness of soul that was worthy of being cultivated by the older artists, etc. I was triumphant; I had found my road, at last! My goal was clear, nothing could stand in my way,—on, on, to the desired end. I knew my shortcomings well. I knew my weakness of my technique; I knew that an artist must first of all master his art, like a poet his language. That only then, and not until then, can he express his innermost self, and whatever comes straight of the artist's heart must of necessity enter the hearts of the people. I devoted myself earnestly to the mastery of my art. As an instructor I chose the greatest master that ever was-nature itself. Days at a time I spent in the market place, watching poverty, trade, and wrangle for its daily bread: I watched the human faces freely express laughter and grief, tenderness and greed: I studied their mimicry and made efforts to remember. I made a number of masks expressing various states of emotions, and carefully went through Darwin's work on the subject.

Even on the way out. Several other people came in. Pretty soon there was a crowd around the "Demon", my work remaining as unnoticed as ever. To attract the public, I rose and planted myself in front of my work. I felt suddenly that he was a decided disagreement in this room, and perhaps in all salons dominated by the "Demon". The proper place for such art would be in a temple, where men seeing the suffering of his fellows remembers God, and is wakened to mercy and service. Something I had read came to my mind, something about the end of autocracy and religion bringing with it the end of art, since the latter serves but for the glorification of power and the support of dark fanaticism of faith. I revolted at the thought of serving either one or the other, and my hopes of calling forth human feeling by means of art suddenly appeared childish... I felt so unbearably sick at heart that I could remain not a minute longer. It seemed I just had to run, run as far as my feet would carry away from the place. Just then a group of young people came in. They naturally made for the "Demon" at once, stared a bit, whispered and went on. One of them stopped in front of the "Handel". Sitting on the edge of my bench I could see his face clearly. My heart suddenly stopped when I saw the expression of "Handel" reflected in the face of this self-satisfied citizen... He understood... He felt...

This was my first attempt at propaganda by means of art... I worked with the passion of prophet and artist, creating his first work, which fills his entire soul. I longed to show, to throw open to all the soul of a pauper, a Jew, tormented by hunger and cold, and mortally wounded by human contempt; a Jew whose comical rags hide the soul of a being, a man...

I modelled him.

I was brought back to my art by a very simple occurrence, one of those tricks that life plays us now and then. It happened in Warsaw. During a drawing lesson which I was giving to some rich man's sons, I suddenly caught sound of peculiar singing in the courtyard. The singer uttered in a hoarse, half-smothered voice, that sounded as though coming from the grave, just three words:—"Handel, Handele, Handel". The words were repeated with such desperate steadiness, with such ghastly monotony that they wrung the heart and gave one "the creeps"... In a twinkling my pupils were at the windows imitating and aping the wretch, roaring with uncontrollable glee, utterly forgetful of their art and teacher. I came over to the window, and saw such a terrible sight as only our pitiless life can offer us. In the blackness of the yard, narrow as a well, chilly and damp as the grave, stood the stooping figure of an "Old clo" Jew, with a white patriarchal head. His spare body was wrapped into a variety of rags, his misty gaze directed in prayer towards the garrets inhabited by poverty supplying his goods; he stood under the dazzling rain, alone and forlorn, unnoticed by all, except for the dirty little pup whose barking came from somewhere below, and the clean little pampered children of luxury teasing and mocking him from the "Belle-étage". Their innocent laughter chilled my blood and I hastily left in order to do nothing worse...

heavily and haltingly coughing out cumbersome phrases to express thoughts which were worth enough while in themselves. While French sculpture, made me think of their acting stars, of some light-headed beauty, who scintillates and fascinates with her silvery go to Paris.

VII

Although I got to Paris with very limited means, and weighed with the responsibility my wife and my old father who had no one else to depend upon—I persisted in my original programme and entered the academy of Cormon. I chose the latter because I felt that sculpture alone was not wide enough to express all the themes I intended to do. I was obliged to combine intensive study with working for a living, but things went rather well. I was in good physical shape, my mind saw clearly the road before me, and my heart was at rest. With me was my faithful friend, the source of much needed courage and strength.

The necessity for earning a living took me to various places. A good deal of the time I worked for Antokolsky, and did models for the famous ceramic factory of Dreyfus. The latter caused me to become interested and to study decorative art, which I later got to like very much. In the early years of my stay in Paris I sought in my work the solution of purely technical problems, and had not even the desire to reproduce some conception or thought. I lived under the spell of the great French masters, which robbed me of all individual effort, fascinating me by the beauty, the virtuosity, the genius of their creations. The life and people around me remained strange, I had no time for observation. I knew man from paintings, from statues, or else from the living models in our classrooms, where to me he was no less an appearance, and artistic problem. Neither did I see nature, except for the neatly trimmed, artificially planted and arranged rows of trees, and the smoothly-mown grass of the public parks. I used to pay less to those than to the statues that were placed near by. At the academy I succeeded admirably, and was soon singled out as the only student granted a free tuition. At the end of the first year I received a second standing in drawing. And yet I had no luck with my painting. It was colourful enough, but it was characterized by a certain hardness of outline reminding of sculpture, by a dryness of time which Mr. Cormon used to call "sour". He advised me to go south, where colours were bright, airy and tuneful, where an object would call forth not so much the idea of shape as of a symphony of colours, which combine into something like a perfect chord of music. . . . I accordingly left for the Mediterranean coast. There in the little French town of Banyuls, on the Spanish boundary, I worked for six months. To this trip I owe not alone my understanding of colour but to a great extent my personality as artist and man. . . . If it be true that such of my work as "The Shadchen", "The Rebe's Blessing", "Havdalah", "Saturday Eve", "A Jewish Mother", "Granite and Grandson" etc. are characteristic of my childhood reminiscences, and are in the words of Dr. Brenpreiss "The Poetry of Golus"—then it is equally true, that all the works conceived in Banyuls are no longer the "wistful smiles through tears" but "the mighty song of a brave and liberated Jew, who sings of the glorious past that is gone, and the hopes for the future that is to come". . . . I conceived my pictures, or it would be more accurate to say—actually perceived them while roaming in the lonely grandeur of the Pyrenean Mountains. Stopping in the rocky caverns, listening to the murmur of the sea: I perceived a stately old man, with the youthful heroic heart of a Maccabee, sounding the trumpet call to battle, gathering to his side the last surviving handful of liberty-loving Jews, who would rather meet death as freedom than continue their life as slaves. . . . I saw the martyr prophet Jeremiah, persecuted by his own people, who, incapable of understanding his desire to save them, shut him up in prison. The people who were deaf to his voice, are gone to their doom, and he, alone in the desert bemoans the fate of his people, composes "The song of tears", "Megilas Eichah", the saddest song ever written. . . . I saw the greatest genius the world has ever known, the genius whose light illuminated mankind in its cradle, and is burning brightly to this very day—our great teacher Moses. So imposing was his personality, so super-human his deeds that not only they lose nothing (as do so many other legendary figures) when the misty curtain of myth is lifted, but on the contrary, they gain in greatness under the bright searchlight of science. His wonderful life pressed before me the tiny basket aloft on the Nile, to his lonely old age in the desert mountains. . . . I modelled several sketches for five groups with numerous bas-reliefs, which were to comprise a series under the name of "The life of Moses". I have not quite finished it yet, being still engaged in collecting the material and the necessary data. I intend to devote myself to its completion upon my arrival in Palestine. And then if faith finally relents and grants me the possibility of realizing in peace all I have conceived, I shall be able to say before I die: "I know why I have lived and suffered and died".

The peaceful grandeur of the spot brought me close to nature once more, taught me once again to love and understand her. There, for the first time, I beheld myself and others as small and insignificant as grains of sand, in comparison to the greatness and the divinity of Nature. I understood the ecstasy of being close to it, of embracing, of understanding it. I recollect distinctly the time when the marvelous view of the sea and the sunset in the mountains made me forget my own existence, transformed me into a part of the surrounding beauty. . . . It happened at the close of the day. We, my wife and I, had gone out in a fishing boat far out to sea to cast the net for sardines. We were at a considerable distance from shore; the beach was not in sight; around us

I made their acquaintance at a period, when my attention was no longer concentrated on the

children of our peculiarly luckless race. "will out" may be applied to all except to the and that the generally recognized truth that "talent through in order to develop his God-given gifts, to show that special vicissitudes a Jew must go my own part in it is negligible the story will go three of the number of the pupils I had. Although I want to tell you of the sad lot that befell

VIII

the entire "vale of tears".

Between the time, when arm in arm with my friend I roamed among the wild rocks of the Mediterranean coast, dreaming out loud of the golden age which we, Jews, were going to once more give to mankind,—and the present moment, when flung by the hands of a hostile fate into semi-barbaric Bulgaria, I wretchedly pace my lonely room through long sleepless nights,—twelve whole years have passed. Twelve years of intensive labour, hopes and disappointments... Much has been experienced, much that was sacred has been buried. One being, however remained intact; my deep-rooted faith in man. I still believe: a day will come and suffering mankind will come to its senses, will perceive the reason for its torment in the fact that it tortments its like and itself. There will come an era of love, our reason teaching us how... And if it be true that the time is distant when love will light the entire world,—then each conscious being can and must at once kindle within his soul his own individual flame, no matter how tiny, which will light his immediate circle; as time goes on, these separate lights will become so numerous that joined into one wonderful flame they will have the power to warm and light the entire "vale of tears".

Out of this vague, rosy Utopia evolved later my project of organizing the "Bezalel Society", whose practicability was fully approved by authorities on the subject. It is this plan that is taking me now to Palestine.

nature could man come to feel all the insignificance of luxury and thus set himself free. I dreamed of collecting a group of cultivated people, who conscious of all the evil brought on by our false civilization, would settle in such natural surroundings as those of Palestine, and would create a sort of nucleus for the mankind of the future, in the manner of the early Christians. They, when they have grown mighty would, unlike the Christians, devote themselves to things other than rearing a despotic power and persecuting others not of their faith. If the former were kind out of guilelessness and ignorance, the latter would be so out of consciousness and intelligence. Science would be their sacred hope, art and labour would give them life. Not the labour in shop and factory, where the man-invented machine has made him an abject slave to itself. But the labour of a conscious being, a free man, work which in proportion to the taste and meaning put into its creation will bring joy and happiness to its creator.

Now I tangibly felt that only through closeness to which would develop a wholesome, natural life. throw off the evil habits, the false sheen of civilization; of was a modest mankind, a mankind which would such difficulty—slavery cannot cease. What I dreamed consume so easily, things that are obtained with I knew well, that so long as people continued to devouring, champagne imbibing boulevard-mongers, means of the idle class,—those silk-hatted, oyster brotherhood of men, I did not see them as the special full of rosy dreams of the absolute equality and In the fervent hours of my youth, when my head

kindest people on earth. surroundings would make them the happiest and were to be in their place,—these marvellous natural people of intelligence, of keen taste and sensitiveness were singing then. Yet I was convinced that if ings; they felt it hardly more than the birds who totally unconscious of the beauty of their surround- True enough, my new friends, the fishermen, were pelled by force of circumstances to dwell in cities... city dweller; how unfortunate our people who are com- nature... With all my being I felt how pitiful is the ornamenting their stone boxes; collecting reverently How sorry I felt for these beings, busy building and how pitifully small they suddenly appeared to me... I remembered Paris, its museums, its people;

Parisian street song. came softly waited toward us the air of a little ready to pray... From a distant fishing boat there breath, full of awe, in face of this quiet, grandeur, tightly clutching each others hands, with caught paths splashed with silver and gold... We stood soothing light, and the reflection in the sea formed life. Brilliant like the sun they sent forth an airy moon were such as I had never yet seen in all my infinitely deep, while the scattered stars and the hardly visible golden spots, which made it seem sky took on a pale, pearl-like hue, dotted with red close to the boat. On the opposite side, the swaying surface of the water, which turned purple the entire fairy spectacle blending with the softly rainbow, from yellowish-purple, to bluish violet,—wider in size and changing to all the colours of the It glowed deeper and deeper, became purple, growing like molten iron against the golden yellow background. appeared the crimson outline of a mountain crag, Suddenly, far away, at the very edge of the sky, and beneath us with hardly perceptible motion

wants of my empty stomach exclusively, but included less material interests as well, as good while after my tutoring experience in the village. Our entire group though rather hungry still, was devoted heart and soul to the redemption of the Jewish people. The cause of the "Chovivvei-Zion" (The real Zionists to come later, did not satisfy us. We saw it as a mere philanthropic activity which for our young fancy was inadequate. We dreamed of deeds that were great, of the brotherhood, the

him on the shoulder I said gaily: "Come with me, The whole thing seemed very funny and slapping

in the holy Gemorah" he said. "Such things are a great sin to make, especially

nature.

mine of a rather gay and not wholly respectable erased drawing, and recognized an old picture of my very nose. I saw the remnant of a once carefully a book in an old leather binding shoved it right under the spinner, nevertheless. "Look" he added, and opening S. liked to share his last cent, but he was a great deeds which they sometimes unconsciously do. This sometimes rewarded on this earth for the kind "The 'Roshom' he said instructively; 'are

me he has a much better time of it than you'."

"Why, do you know the fellow?" I laughed. "He isn't nearly as cursed as you think. Believe

so long-lived.

"You speak just like the 'Imach-Shmoim', the cursed 'S'. I had to laugh at the title they awarded me here. I had not hoped that my fame would be

timidly:

All the time I spoke he never took his wide-open fearful eyes off my face. At last he whispered

they are right, those who call us parasites!"

growth on the body of humanity. Why, otherwise some use in this world, and not merely a sickly ductive life, we've got to learn to work, to be of We have got to live, to live a simple, human, pro-pickled "Levison" fish, and the "Shor-Ahor" steak! in heaven foolishness, of getting our portion of the flesh, just bones and skin. Enough of that reward about wicked flesh! Why, we Jews, haven't any stuff!" I flamed up. "What are you blabbering here

"For goodness sake, chuck that infernal cabala

is laid in the earth, and until itself is chastised in hell." and so it is doomed to torment until its sinful body of heaven, but is tempted and tormented by sin; the life of a wicked soul which longs for the purity

"But I showed it so clearly here, my life; interposed:

He listened attentively and then suddenly

to the other nations etc., etc.

on shaking off the dust of the old; on getting closer with my usual like to talk on reform, on civilization; examining your useless 'Talmud'! and so I went on you live and perish here in these gloomy synagogues, all. Why not draw in a human way to show how tried to joke it off. "I can't see any ornaments at

"Where on earth do you see here your life?" I

brink that separated genius from madness...

at me with his wistfully solemn eyes. A sudden

"My life" he answered simply, looking straight

"Why, whatever is that?" I asked in surprise

perhaps animal or else simply infernal...

wild-looking fantastic beings, perhaps human, leaves, while hidden in this ghastly foliage were peculiar growth, a sort of shrunken, sickly Gothic

Byzantine style. All these live ribbons bore some twisting and writhing in every direction in a purely

smoothly upward, some painfully twisted, stumped number of fantastic, snake-like ribbons, some floating

dually lost its natural form, divided itself into a

crooked fingers; towards the top, the trunk gra-

interwoven, clutching at the naked earth with its

every direction numerous gnarled roots weirdly

began with a heavy trunk of a tree projecting in

present day symbolists in modern style. The design

the product of the feverish fancy of one of the

quite Gothic, nor yet Byzantine, rather resembling

form. The drawing was a design of a character not

dealt with an altogether strange world in a strange

surprised to see that the artistic effort of this fellow

bent over his studies or prayers. Therefore, I was

would-be-artists are sketched of some pious Jew

people" and pretty nearly all first efforts of our

to picture them even in its fancy. We are "book-

earthly delights, and our youth is not accustomed

on the school boy's bench... We know of no such

which our tender youth loves to picture while yet

expect a spicy and not altogether innocent scene

sketch in an idle and dreamy hour; nor did I

some pretty girl, which you Europeans, absently

his paper. I was not prepared to see a profile of

on me his peculiar, thoughtful eyes he handed me

and dry as if after a long period of sleep; and fixing

"Nothing" came in reply, in a voice barren

"What are you doing over there?" I asked him.

of some old "Gemorah".

on a piece of yellowish-paper torn most likely out

a pitiful little pencil stump was drawing something

I stumbled over a peculiar sort of chap who with

triumphantly ejected for my "epicurean" propaganda,

shelter from cold, and from where I had been

where I had often gone during the winter to find

Once, in just such an out-of-the-way chapel,

the Talmud.

youths (orem-bootherim) droop and wither over

airless lightless seclusion, and starvation our ablest

religious schools so numerous in Vilna, where in

my work I chose the familiar synagogues and

would spare no effort to rescue it. As the field of

was particularly happy to discover lost talent, and

and to propaganda in our midst. I, as an artist,

stood. We devoted ourselves wholly to self perfection

order to be noticed, to be appreciated and under-

necessary for us only to rise to their height, in

spirit of the people. We believed that it was

and Pobedonoshev, to be representative of the

Dobroludov and Chernishevsky, rather than Suvo-

trusted to the kinship of Russian people, believing

We trusted in the force of civilization, we

They have suffered, they have bled...

Not as slaves, nor guests of fortune,

Joining in the festive toast.

Our poor people ill and weary

Truth has conquered... with the host

We have dreamed: triumphant cheering,

our national poet Frug:

of our people, as was so beautifully expressed by

happiness of entire mankind; of the true delivery

My second pupil was recommended by an old school-fellow from one of the synagogue schools, who continued to rot over his Talmud, though he hated it with all his heart. The pupil was small, nimble, thin as a match; he had black curly hair and equally black shiny eyes. He was forever whistling Jewish semi-comical semi-mournful tunes, pursing prettily his full, well-formed lips. His sad past was the usual story. He was one of a host of children of a poor tailor, and from earliest childhood he was abundantly supplied with the rod by the Rebe, by the father and the mother. Food, of course, was not so abundant. "You know", he used to tell me, "you'd look at the other kids in the Heder munching away their bread and egg, and you'd get sort of jealous, knowing that you have only a piece of dry bread to chew on; so you'd take a potato, bite off little bits and imagine that it's an egg, and believe me, it would taste ever so much better!" Poor kid! Even in his early childhood he had this fervent imagination which in

Everything which impressed him strongly became a sort of god to him, and forced him into an attitude of worship. Late in the honour of incarnating this divinity fell to me and it was this fact that made him follow me. He suffered unspeakable torment being fully aware that I am a wicked sinner, perhaps Satan himself, and that his worship of me was an unpardonable sin. No preachings, not even my divine authority could convince him of the contrary. He considered himself damned, grew more melancholy daily and melted away like a candle. It happened that at that time the famous hypnotizing-man Feldman came to town. The papers reported wonders which he had performed, and though my own faith in him was wanting since I thought him the Jewish "Baal-Hashem" (a wizard of dark Cabala) I decided to take Miller over to him. Perhaps he might succeed in driving the crazy ideas out of his head. I told Miller of my intention and he seemed to have no objections. Yet in the evening when I was ready to go, the wretched fellow was nowhere to be found. To this day I don't know where he disappeared to.

But as time went he seemed to sink in spirits, seemed to have lost his will entirely, and carried out my instructions automatically and indifferently. Seeing no apparent reason for the change, I began to suspect him of perverse practices so frequently met with among the studying youth. I wanted to explain the evil of such a habit, but not being sure of the truth of my supposition, was afraid of taking perhaps a wrong step in acquainting him with the subject at all. It was obviously necessary to wait until he would confess the thing of his own accord, and then steps could be taken for curing him. I decided to turn for help to a friend of mine who possessed an uncanny talent of playing you interminably with his inquisitiveness until you'd tell him anything just to be rid of him. He took my pupil in hand, and after a five hour inquisition he reported that Miller (my pupil's name) suffered from a peculiar case of hero-worship.

We began our common existence in a friendly and peaceable way. He worked industriously all day long, doing his art lessons accurately and conscientiously, and making rapid progress. In my abhorrence of dark mysticism I absolutely forbade his crazy ornamental subjects, and made him work on the bright faces and shapes of Greek gods and goddesses. What made me furious, though, was the fact that he didn't seem to follow my long fiery speeches against religion and fanaticism, although he would listen patiently, looking straight into my mouth all the time that I spoke. Another source of worry was his slavish attachment and obedience to my person. Nothing in the world could induce him to share my bed with me; instead he would settle dog-like on the floor next to my bed. I saw in this attitude the lamentable habits of the Goliath Jew stunted and bent, cramped by suppression, the habits which I so passionately wanted to uproot.

From the fellow I learned that his father was a great "Umaniyad" (skilful hand craftsman) who once devoted himself to the study of Talmud. Then, when several children appeared and the little shop he had, hardly yielded enough to pay the rent, he left his Talmud and sought to apply his skill to earning a living for his family. His specialty was carving decorations for synagogues, and cutting stone monuments for cemeteries. His son he wanted to have a similar upbringing, in other words, he made him sit day and night over his Talmud. For this purpose the later sent him to Vilna. The boy, however, had a powerful leaning toward art, and though he knew that it was his duty to devote himself entirely to religious study, he could not overcome this weakness.

The scolding didn't bother me particularly. I knew her goodness of heart, and I knew, that in the near future she would be giving him the last spoonful of soup, denying herself, as has been the case with many another that "hung on".

Several times on the way he lagged back. Thinking that he was embarrassed at the prospect of having to eat "kolbassa" (sausage symbolizing kosher food), I consoled him, saying that I myself never indulged in such luxuries, tea and bread being the limit I could afford. Thus he saw that it was an injustice to brand me as a "kolbasnik". At that time I was living in a basement, occupying an entire room, the way into which led through the landlady's place. The latter, a dressmaker, and her numerous apprentice girls bored me unspeakably, singing all day long plaintive Jewish songs. At the sight of my guest, the song stopped short, the girls began to giggle and whisper, and the landlady remarked in an audible mutter: "Another one! Nothing to eat himself and yet there is forever some one hanging on! Going to die of starvation one of these days!"

He started, looked at me tremblingly, but followed me obediently nevertheless.

I am going to prove to you that this S. is not so awful as you think. I am he, and I am going to have you live with me and teach you how to draw properly".

He started, looked at me tremblingly, but followed me obediently nevertheless.

later years served him to no better purpose than a temporary escape from the misery of reality.

While yet in the Heder he began to draw scenes from the Russo-Turkish war, and the pictures he would exchange with his fellow for apples, sweets, and buttons; especially buttons, of which he was extremely fond. He gathered a collection of them and would feel enormously thrilled, when, hands stuck into pockets, he could clatter and clink them to his heart's content. Eventually his pictures fell into the hands of more appreciative persons, who advised him to send his works to an art school in Warsaw. The father, however, objected to his son's adopting a profession different from his own. His ambition was for his son to become a fashionable tailor for the respectable provincial ladies. The son, in his turn, proved obstreperous, and having been duly thrashed, he fled to Warsaw on his own risk and responsibility. However, there was no chance of getting into the art school, Jews it is true, were occasionally admitted, but only those coming from Poland, and the fellow was from Lithuania. There was nothing for him to do but to vend his way to Vilna, where another such school was located. The distance from Warsaw to Vilna is not great,—12 hours by train. But that's alright for those who have a ticket, or some spare money with which to bribe the conductor. But in his case, the entire cash capital comprised 20 kopecks, with which he firmly decided not to part. These were to be kept for a rainy day, for the beginning of his artistic career. And so it came about that he made his way into a third class car and dived under a bench. All went well for a distance of several stations, until finally the conductor happened to spy his feet and dragged him into the light. Administering the proper verbal admonition he "showed him where to get off" at the nearest stop. There, quite unabashed, the fellow waited for the next train, and the process repeated itself to detail. Thus, at the end of two weeks he managed to reach Vilna, still the possessor of the original sum, having fed all the while on whatever was contributed by kind-hearted people. After many adventures and much searching he succeeded at last in obtaining a job of a "shamesh" assistant, in one of the prayer chapels. There he had his lodging, that is a bench for the night, his board,—bread which was collected for the poor, and a net salary of 6 kopecks a week. It was at this job that my old school-fellow found him and brought him over to me.

He was a merry chap to live with. He was very quick and clever in picking up the art I taught him, as well as my iconoclast teachings, and used to be thoroughly delighted when we could actually afford sausage for supper, totally unconcerned with the fact that there had been no "Kosher" sign over the shop. There was no need of wasting either much time or eloquence for his enlightenment. He seemed to rebel instinctively against the Lord and his order on earth, but he objected to it without malice, with good natured humour. I remember on one occasion he overheard a poor workman complaining to me of his fate. "Yes", said the younger, "a working Jew has a hard time of it to

He disappeared from view quite unexpectedly. Having gone to stay with his folks during some holidays he heard that I left for Paris. Without much delay he followed. In reality I had left Vilna for the country home of Count Tishkevitch, for whom I had been doing some work, and in whose place I intended to spend the summer to get a much needed rest. In order to get rid of the numerous obligations to my circle, I announced that I was leaving for Paris. When I finally got back to my old lodging, I found a post card from my former pupil asking my bride to inform him of my whereabouts in Paris. He wrote briefly and humorously of his trip in my wake, rather complicated because of the lack of money; of the fact that those stupid Frenchmen have no idea of where his good S. lives, and that though Paris is rather good-looking, the park benches are awfully hard to sleep on at night. He asked me to write to him to Poste Restante. I sent him immediately several rubles, but there was no reply. I was not surprised. Several months had passed since the card had been sent, and the poor fellow had probably got tired of going to the Post Office to ask for mail.

In Paris I had no acquaintances, and so there was no way of tracing him. Two and half a years later I finally got to Paris. All my efforts of locating him remained fruitless and I nearly forgot all about him.

Once, in the third year of my stay in Paris I noticed on the boulevard an odd looking young man coming toward me with a smile and outstretched hands. Before I had a chance to see who on earth this was, I was mightily hugged, and the next minute to my greatest joy I was told that he was my long lost pupil. Myself I should never have recognized him, he was so changed. He seemed to have grown, stretched out, his features sharpened, his face pallid, beard-less, the colour of old parchment,—altogether he resembled a mediaeval sculpture of an excellent monk. He was dressed in a foreign manner, a stiff cap on the back of his head, leaving uncovered his high brow. Only his eyes were the same, shining and alert, except that they had grown in size and depth. Eagerly and with aching heart I listened to the story of his five years' life in Paris. How he lost all trace of me, how he got to this ocean of a city, without knowledge of the language, almost without a penny in his pocket; how he roamed its endless streets showing to the passers by a piece of paper on which, while he was yet at home, somebody had written for him in French: "Where does S. live?" He told me how finally his last coin was eaten up; how he fed on remnants of rotten fruit, lettuce and cabbage leaves picked up in the Parisian "Halles". How he was persecuted by the police for sleeping on boulevard benches, and under the bridges. How desperate he was at not being able to find the Post Office where he was sure there was a letter from me waiting for him. He lost count of days and weeks, when toward the end of the summer the gods sent across his path a Jew, a real one, with "peyes" and beard, with whom he could at

very hard, finding no occupation where he could apply his art. He was forced to take whatever came his way: he swept the streets, stitched underwear on an electric sewing machine in a factory, wheeled push-carts, sold newspapers. The latter he found particularly exhausting; you had to run about and shout all day long, else you ran the risk of remaining hungry. Finally he got into a factory of portraits. This is an institution unknown to Europe, a peculiarly American idea. To become the boss of such an establishment, one need not even be an artist. All that is required in an initial capital to rent a large studio, where hired artists draw and paint portraits from photographs and from the originals. The artists get paid by the hour, and the orders are many and abundant. To this end an enormous amount of cracker-jack advertisements are widely spread, and a number of agents, smoothtongued, and able to talk you deaf, dumb and blind as well as to take photographs, are sent to every state to increase business. Moreover, the Americans like very much portraits, and even a poor workman's room is often decorated with a full-sized portrait of himself. Altogether there is great demand for this commodity.

In this factory he came to the front at once, thanks to his portraits with Indian ink shading. His success he attributes to the quality of the stuff, to which he helped himself freely at the time he worked with me. All through his talk I traced a new streak of fatalism, which surprised me all the more, when I remembered that once, fresh from the synagogue he was nothing loath to eat my un-kosher sausage. The manufacture of portraits did not appeal to him particularly, and just as soon as according to his opinion, he had saved up a sufficient sum of dollars, he came back to Paris. Here he rented a studio and is working at present on a picture which is to show the world the naked truth, about the life of unfortunate Jews. "I live rather modestly," he finished up. "I'd like the money to last until I finish the picture." Live models alone come to about 8 francs a day, but the picture is to be something out of the ordinary; it is to show the "naked truth". The subject of the picture he would not tell me, I was going to see for myself. And then and there he suggested that I come up to his place. He lived very high up, under the very roof, in a so-called artists' studio, which differs from other human habitations by means of a window cut through at the top, which in the summer sends forth merciless heat, in the winter, cold, and in the autumn rains. The studio was very small, littered with all sorts of artist's junk. The only clear spot was the centre of the room right under the window and there, on an easel, stood a large canvas to which I at once directed my steps. My first impression was disagreeably shocking, uncanny. I experienced the same feeling as when I had first looked at the drawing of my old pupil Miller. The canvas was covered with a great number of emaciated naked human figures in every possible and impossible posture. The whole thing was enveloped in a mist, and called to mind medieval pictures of wicked souls in hell...

"It's a Jewish bath," he explained. "I want to show here the naked truth about the Jews. Look

least make himself understood. The latter explained to him that in a city like Paris he will never be able to locate this S. and led him to the Latin Quarter, where he met other Russian students. Then things went much better. The "better" part consisted in the fact that some poor girl student cleared a tiny room for him in her place, and would gather some dry bread for him from her girl friends, as poor as herself. In the evening, she would mend his torn clothes and teach him French. The following summer she even managed somehow that he be admitted free of charge to a private academy of "Coloroc", if I am not mistaken, and with her last few pennies bought him the necessary materials for work. He worked very hard, starved desperately most of the time. His bread was not always dry: the students of the academy use the soft part of the bread for erasing purposes and throw away the crust. The latter he gathered carefully and used for food. At last the girl-student that befriended him left Paris, and he began to lead the life of an independent artist. He drew copies of pictures in museums for which dealers would pay mere pennies, that were just enough to keep him in a state of semi-starvation. He frequently fell sick as a result of physical exhaustion and made the acquaintance of the Parisian hospitals. Usually he would spend in one of these institutions the entire rainy autumn. Finally he was forced to admit to himself that he can bear such a life no longer, and began to think of leaving Paris. To return home was impossible because he had left Russia under a false name, a fact by the way, which was one of the main reasons why I had been unable to trace him. Willy nilly he was forced to direct his gaze toward the land of freedom which lures so powerfully every Jew, — America. He remembered his first voyage from Warsaw to Vilna, and he decided to get in the same way out of "civilized" Europe and into "barbaric" but free America. The liquidation of all his property and works realized just enough to buy a sailors costume and a train ticket to Havre. There he hoped to be able to get work on a ship going to America. He looked for such an opportunity for a long time, until a captain of some semi-freight, semi-passenger boat tempted by the cheapness of such help gave him a place on his ship. But he didn't become a sailor. The very first day, having been told to tie a sail, he pretty nearly fell off the rope ladder, and so he was properly upbraided and sent to the kitchen. In his new duties he succeeded in pleasing the cook, and as for himself he had nothing at all to complain of. All day long he scoured away conscientiously at his pots and pans and worked incessantly with his jaws as well. Food was plentiful. They were on their way a long time, because the boat stopped at every port, loading and unloading various cargo. This suited my hero very well. The present abounded in food, he thought to himself. But what about America? The uncertainty of the unknown future in store frightened him. Once in New York he was thrown into circumstances similar to those in Paris, with the exception that the language was not so indispensable. Jews were to be found everywhere, and Jewish was all but the official tongue. There he did not starve, but he worked

where their home was located. The youth's father was the chief cemetery keeper, and the boy had grown up in the Jewish cemetery.

"Won't you come here, and sit down?" I said to the "black head". The father has already settled comfortably at the foot of my bed. The youth came closer with a decisive step but he neither sat down nor took off his cap. He took a white object out of his pocket and handed it to me. It proved to be a smooth board of ivory on which was carefully cut in relief an ornament in a purely Jewish synagogue style. In the centre were "Luchos" (the tablets on which the commandments were originally written) supported on one side by a lion and on the other side by a stag; there was the traditional inscription: "Be nimble as a deer, strong as a lion in order to serve God"; then there was a "Ceter-Forah" etc. surrounded by complicated designs and otherwise biblical quotations.

I turned and saw near the door a well-made, intelligent looking fellow, staring at me with his bright black eyes, from under a fur cap pushed low over his brow.

"Why do you sleep so late?" he remarked reproachfully, without a previous greeting, "you aren't sick, are you?" I brought you my son, here, "You blockhead" he turned to his son, "why don't you see the master is at home?"

The third of my pupils came to me of his own accord. It happened shortly after my arrival at the country home of Count Tishkevitch. Because of various unprecedented circumstances I had to leave for Warsaw... All night long I would walk about with my sweetheart, taking leave of her before my departure. And the next day I would lounge in bed until noon. Once on such an occasion, while I was still in bed, I heard a sound of heavy boots. The door opened without a knock and a strange man came in.

This was the sad end of an unquestionably talented and noble-hearted being.

On leaving I found out from the doctor that he was being transferred to a country institution for incurable cases.

he knew I was a saint. There was no use discussing things at length. It was clear that he needed treatment, or else he was completely lost. I induced him to come out for a walk, and took him to a hospital of mental disease at "Sainte-Etienne. The first time I came to see him I was refused admittance; the doctor prescribed absolute rest. The sick fellow thought himself a savior, longing to redeem the world with a picture, while wicked people did their best to stand in his way. Not before many months later was I permitted to see him. He had grown yellow and thinner than ever, his eyes acquired a new depth and he was quiet, unusually quiet. He greeted me with a sad smile, brought me the drawings he did for the hospital magazine, but otherwise showed no particular signs of friendliness. It was a painful business and I hastened to leave.

I came to see him often and got to like him even more than before. He was an ardent, impassive youth, pure and guileless as a child, with the courage and fearlessness of a martyr. He lived an ascetic life, forbearing to leave his canvas for a minute from early morning until night, despite his frequent aillings. All my pleadings with him to go to the country, to rest, led to nothing. He refused to part with his workshop, the air of which finally broke his health, which was already sufficiently undermined by past starvation and exhausting labour. At last his material resources came to an end, and the picture, as was to be expected, was as yet unfinished. He began looking for work, and I would rarely find him in the studio. When I finally saw him after a period of time I understood that all was attained... He was in a fit of extreme irritation; persisted in assuring me that wicked people persecuted him on purpose, in order to prevent him from finishing his picture; because they fear to see the truth; that he trusted no one except me because

"Look here, he went on, and pointed to a group sketched in a farther corner of the canvas. "This is the Rebe with the most respectable "Baal-habanim"; they have just come down from the upper hot shelf and are blissfully discussing international politics; while up there, he pointed to a skeleton figure beating with all its might a tiny little body very much like itself, "is the father beating his son on the upper shelf, trying to accustom him to cleanliness and Jewish sufferings..." Thus little by little I began to find myself in this chaos, but in the same proposition grew my fear for the fate of the author. I saw clearly that the picture was going to be his ruin, that he was about to go through the terrific shock which we artists invariably suffer in our youth;—the disaster of an effort to create a picture on a grand scale, while possessing neither sufficient knowledge nor adequate means. A picture of that sort usually robs of an enormous amount of time and energy and means, and inevitably ends in disaster. If the artist happens to be not particularly strong willed, his ardor is killed and despair clutches him for its victim. My pupil was far from being strong. The surroundings showed plainly that he was far from being rich. His premature dryness, moreover, and an exceptional jerkiness of movement, promised neither endurance nor strength of will. I advised him cautiously to leave the picture for a while, and start something less complicated, with a smaller number of figures. He interrupted me impatiently, nervously explaining that a picture of such content could not be postponed. The world must be shown the truth, the sooner the better...

depraved laughing face. audacious posture of his coarse red body, and a out sharply indeed from among the rest with an almost mistaken for the devil. The fellow stood pointing at a fat round belled figure which I had Not at all like the "goy attendant" he continued, modestly hide their nudity with the wisk brooms. bodies; why even in the bath house they shyly and brows and thoughtful wistful eyes sit on those pitiful and bones! Yet what noble heads with splendid how thin and worn and exhausted they are, skin

His first steps in art were the designs he did for the stone cutters who worked close by, imitating the ornamentation of the old monuments which made the old Vilna cemetery famous. His skill in doing lettering made his father send him as an apprentice to a stamp cutter—an art which he was quick in acquiring. When my fame reached his ears he brought his son to me—"to make a man out of him".

I confess that what appealed to me most was his knowledge of stamp cutting which heretofore I was obliged to supply for the needs of my circle. I foresaw that he might be useful in substituting me when I left, and agreed to accept him as my pupil.

He was an independent youth, who had his own ideas. In our discussion he would hold his own, skillfully refuting my arguments against divine and social justice, and would refuse to remove his cap even in the room. One concession he was obliged to make though, not without bitterness: he began to study the Russian language, without which it was impossible to be admitted to an art school. That much his love of art conquered in him his love of God. His fearless spirit astonished me. Never before had I come across such courage in a Jew. Evidently the atmosphere of the old Jewish cemetery, with its ancient tombstones and gigantic trees was less harmful than the influence of the gloomy Jewish streets with the police and watch hounds ever on the scent...

For his language teacher I chose a friend of mine, a radical, and an experienced propagandist, taking care to warn him of the difficulty of his task, and of the hopes I vested in the pupil. Shortly after this I left for Warsaw, where for a space of two years I heard nothing of either teacher or pupil. To correspond with the members of our circle was against the rule...

On my return to Vilna I was told that my protegee had proved to be a wonder boy. He became not only a skilful printer, but a most capable propagandist among Jewish workers. All this however, did not come about so easily. In fact, at one time, his teacher said, he was about to give him up as hopeless. I began to introduce him to the Russian language through "Talks about Nature" said his teacher. "I translated every word from the Russian into Jewish, but my pupil would interrupt me indignantly every minute, quoting abundantly from the Bible and Talmud in proof that it all was a damned lie, I didn't argue. I told him that we had nothing to do with the context, that our business was to study the meaning of the words so as to learn the Russian language. This seemed to console him but little; he continued to protest and for a while even discontinued his lessons. Finally he put in an appearance and without a greeting, gloomy and morose he mumbled disgustedly "You let the devil get hold of a hair and he'll pull your head off. My hair I've given you,—there, pull the rest of my head off!" Well, I pulled! And the head the boy had on him, I tell you, there was nothing like it! Reckless to madness, cunning,—a real Jewish head. He used to spend his time mostly with Jewish workers whom he knew, and who received him as their own. At

Once, on the cemetery grounds, he was engaged in a heated debate with the grave digger in connection with some divine dogma. His father overheard him from a distance and approaching his offspring re-warded him with a ringing slap in the face. The youth related the incident to his teacher, complaining against such unjust methods of debate, and against the barbarous arguments used by his father in defense of his theories. His teacher advised him to give up his everlasting battles and leave God alone, adding: "Why, you don't see me fighting against God?"

"Oh, yes", said the youth. "Nobody loves a swindler, but only the man who had been cheated revenges himself; he has cheated me out of my youth". On the eve of my wedding the good old chap came to see me. He bore signs of a change, and for the better. He had grown taller, stronger and straighter, his eyes looked directly ahead, but seemed colder. I was extremely glad to see him and questioned him of his well being, his art. He gave short answers in reply and then in turn assumed the role of the questioner. He asked things not out of politeness or curiosity, but with a gravity, the impression of a prosecuting attorney:

"You're getting married to-morrow?" he asked.

"Yes".

"Going to Paris to perfect your art?"

"Yes".

"And yet, you consider yourself among the Red?"

he continued scornfully.

"Yes" I laughed in reply.

It struck me as funny, this ascetic severity to my "crimes" on the part of a healthy, good-looking youth of 20. I was so happy then. The woman I loved. I called my darling openly, walking arm in arm with her in the sight of all. I felt that only now, having tasted supreme bliss, loving and being loved, only now I was able to sense the depth of human woe and gladness, and could wish for others the happiness I felt. Was it not the look of my beloved that warmed my soul, caused my heart to pulse with love to my fellow beings, to embrace them, to be ready to die for my brethren? And as for art! Why, that was the only thing I had lacked. Once I have mastered it, I shall speak to human hearts in the universal language, I shall show them the paradise which might be ours and the hell which is. Oh, to become a great artist! And great I shall become. I had no doubt about that whatever. Didn't I have now a guardian angel, a muse, whose single touch, single look lifted up my soul to unspeakable heights, inspired my being, my life. Didn't she vow to accompany me everywhere on my difficult roads. She was an angel; she would not betray; and with her at my side nothing is impossible...

the names of the martyrs was that of my unfortunate pupil...

Thus tragically and vainly perished three of my best gifted pupils. They were killed by the unnatural conditions of Jewish existence.

Where are they now? Did you happen to meet them Regener?

IX.

I tried to explain something of this to my severe pupil.

Not so long ago, on board a steamer, gazing out at the boundless spaces of the water about me, I again became conscious of the puniness and helplessness of man, who has so haughtily assumed the title of "little god"....

All my past lived again in my memory. I saw myself on the billows of life, like to a box hung by Lord knows whom overboard. Now it was raised up high, now lowered, now suddenly twisted and tossed into the depths, only to be lifted up again a moment later. Still, I was sure that somewhere, somehow it was going to be tossed ashore.... My entire life seemed one big mistake, all my sufferings,—just rewards for my great sin. A mistake in as much as I thought myself capable of forming the current, shaping the waves, a sin my overbearing pride. I would not recognize the power of fate, of blind chance.... The current carried me swiftly ahead; the waves tossed me and whirled me in play, now up and now down. My sight caught the limitless heights of the sky, and the glowering depths of the chasm. The cold wind cooled my fevered head, froze my hands which tightly clung to my heart my tiny bundle (my art) — the gift of a wretched mankind....

The waters drenched me through and numbed my weary, aching limbs; I dared not stretch for fear I would let drop my bundle,—the only thing left to warm my aching heart.... Thus wretched and proud I drifted the ocean of life, fancying that I was going forward, recognizing neither ocean current, nor favourable wind. I did not know how, nor did I want to use the chance waves, for fear of straying from the straight path. I was brave,—I feared not the whims of changeable fate.... I was proud—I believed in the breadth of my shoulders, ready to bear and endure.... Nature had given me will, a fervor of soul, a fanciful mind; and then through a whim, a jest she has added a heart, that was tender and soft, a heart of a girl. A heart which at one tender glance, at one soulful sound, at one gentle touch, was ready to leap up and burst; was full of unspeakable bliss. While without it, it withered and drooped, it was frozen and cold, and its chilliness and ache filled my soul....

Oh, I knew well my weakness, but didn't want to give in.... I wanted to be stronger than my nature, and I was cruelly punished. Malicious nature dimmed my eyes and deprived me of its generous gift,—the power of observation. In a mischievous and petty little being, but prosaic and cruel to the core, I perceived the poetic incarnation of my fancy, and gave her my youthful and fiery soul. Like a vampire she tore at my heart, she sucked my blood; she icily chilled my dreams, and like a weight she drew me

No kind of hard work would daunt me, no order was unpleasant enough for me to disdain it; I went as far as deciding to leave my beloved Paris for a semi-barbarous country, all to be able to feel my only one, my dearest one nearer my soul.... But that "dearest one" looked at things in a different way, and had her own interpretation of life.... At times the mists would scatter and truth would appear in all its horror. I would try to deceive myself, however, try to hold on to the one joy of my heart against reason itself. Still life was already poisoned. My idol was desecrated, and if it had not been for two little hands which came to unite us, the breath would have come long ago.... What is there more beautiful, more lofty, more sacred than an image of a young mother with her healthy child in her arms? Before this image I bowed in reverence, I forgot everything that had been. I thought the past a horrible nightmare that would never come back. And indeed, for a short time she grew wonderful once more. She combined the poetry of a young loving mother, with her baby in its arms, and the sacred beauty of a wife and friend. Once more the sun rose gloriously for me, my spirit revived, my heart expanded. Eagerly I drank the warm air around me; eagerly breathed the atmosphere of love; once more I worked, studied, created.... How passionately I loved my darling, mother and daughter our cosy nest,—the whole of God's world. I was ready to embrace and kiss the entire mankind,—I lived in them and for them. Even death held no terror for me: I felt my roots in the beginning of mankind,—my end in its continuation. I fully believed that faith was atoning at last for my long-lived patience.

Winged with the hope and faith for the future I did not notice that my mate was undergoing a new change. The thing began slowly, gradually, almost imperceptibly, but with recurrent steadiness....

again, through her; I lean closer on her young arm; her daddy's hair that has grown white, but his heart is young, and ever will be as is the way of a true artist.

Fate, however, is without mercy.

The fatal catastrophe came, and I lost forever my only and last comfort—my little daughter.

Two years passed.

Two tortuous years. Much was the pain I suffered in that space and many were the things I learned....

I had a horror of my loneliness, and I was terrified of my sleepless nights....

Like a wounded beast I raced back and forth in my studio, ready any minute to dash my feverish head, and put an end to my unbearable torture. Yet I was obliged to live; to live for their sake.... The days were even worse. In vain would I try to forget myself in hard work, exhaust myself by bicycle riding at a killing pace;—my misfortune was ever before my eyes; everywhere and at every time I saw the traces of my child; ever her ringing little voice throbbed painfully in my ears. I knew that my safety lay in my work;—yet I could not concentrate on a single thing. One thought, and one only filled my brain, cut at my throat. "All is lost, forever and ever"....

Those of my works that are related to that period can be defined as bold gymnastics rather than sculpture. The gigantic decorative figure for the Agricultural Bank, and the fountain for the St. Louis exhibition, were the desperate efforts of a man playing with the danger of being crushed to death by his own works.

The above mentioned fountain took me to the exhibition. The ocean trip, a strange and new land, new people and finally the great wonders of the exhibition—great creations of human genius—dispersed the dark mist enveloping my head, refreshed my aching soul. I shook off the egotism so natural in people in times of adversity, and felt suddenly that my grief had seemed so great because I myself had grown so small.... Once more I felt the awakening in me of the artist and man. The great creative activity. Life in free America revived my old dream of working for the freedom of my people, and brought me back to it once more. Old forgotten dreams came to life again; dreams in which I saw myself speaking to mankind in the universal language of art—of the great suffering of my people; saw myself waking the universal conscience gone to sleep; showing off in relief the injustice that has been and is being done to my people.... I didn't turn back to it, as to a convent, where in sheltering security one seeks atonement for sins and peace of soul. No! I came back to work! I wanted to load on my shoulders its ancient burden; I wanted to help it carry its "Golus"; and—if I did not succeed in drying its tears,—at least I could make its grief known to others....

Although in the beginning I fought the horrible truth, it still could not but affect me considerably. My objections to my friend's conduct made things worse than ever. Happy moments grew rare, terribly rare.... My only joy was my darling little daughter, who loved her daddy dearly, and who in turn loved her passionately. She seemed to understand me, rather to feel me with her loving little heart.... There were times when I worked, or fumbled about in the studio; she would notice my being moody, raise her intelligent little loving eyes and say: "Come daddy you're tired. Let's go and rest" With that she would get hold of my hands so protectively that my heart would lighten at once,—I had someone then after all, a protecting consoling friend....

Our favorite resting place was the hammock in a shady nook in the garden.... My little daughter would lie down on my legs to be able always to see her daddy. There I would smoke, while my little companion would swing me and babble of what was going to be "when she would be big"; of how she would help her daddy in his work of how she would read to him lovely stories out of her book "The Little Star"; play and sing to him like auntie Tania. Thus we would chatter until we would unwittingly fall asleep. Sleeping or waking I would continue to dream of the future. I saw myself and my daughter in our studio. We were modelling together the long planned gigantic figure of Moses. My daughter was by now a young lady, and was working skillfully like an old craftsman. Why should n't she? She was not obliged to lose the bloom of her youth in the struggle of existence, and in blind, unsystematic, unfruitful studies. Her teacher had been I; all my experience earned at such cost, I passed on to her, warning and guiding her away from my own pitfalls. We were enjoying ourselves. The work moved swiftly ahead; her youthful fingers express nimbly the ideas conceived by me long ago. I felt myself young, I felt that she was part of my life and I of hers....

And now I would see myself an old man. I, sitting in her cosy little room, and she playing for me the immortal sonatas of Beethoven.... But I am calm at last. The sounds excite no longer my cooling blood; no longer do they wake in my heart unfulfilled dreams and desires. But the music raises me high, high up, to the crest from where no longer can be distinguished a few from a Gentile but from where can be seen the entire suffering human race, hungry for sunshine.

Idea, mature and digested, emotions experienced and suffered clothe themselves into artistic shapes. I see them so clearly; I am certain that I can make others see them. It was for this that fate has sent me a daughter in my old age, a daughter to understand and to comfort me, to support with her young strong arms, mine that are weary and bent....

And then again I see myself a white-haired hoary ancient. I, walking arm in arm with my darling daughter while she whispers to her old daddy the songs of her youthful heart. My heart begins to beat once more; stifled desires, emotions numbed before their time come to life once more; I live over

My unfortunate people! I did not grow weary: I did not come to you seeking for rest. My sufferings have but hardened me, have taught me to feel all the keener the depth of your grief; have shown me the insignificance of an individual when his life centers on himself alone, away from the life of his people...

And now, gazing at the heaving sea I suddenly felt in myself sufficient strength to swim across... Before my eyes stretched the clear horizon,—I knew I could reach it. Only to forget one's pride, to give oneself up to the waves. I saw:—the waves were lifting me higher and higher—just a little effort to turn to the clearly marked goal...

On my return from America everyone found me greatly changed. I had become American, they said. They ascribed it to the American dollars I brought with me. But no one suspected what treasures I brought away in my heart, a wealth before which all gold grows dim: I brought back a meek head...

I surrendered. I made peace with faith. Having seen that one can't go against it I entrusted to it my soul... Life had grown easier to live... Meekly I drifted with the waves... I did not struggle when it lifted up on high, and teasingly allowed the last ray of sunlight to warm for a moment my aching heart. I did not revolt when I lost that ray forever... Tightly clutching my little bundle to my wounded bosom, I found in it my only goal, my safety, my comfort... Shall I carry it safely across? Shall I find strength enough in myself to swim on in cold solitude, with an aching heart? I don't want to guess. One thing I know; when my hands grow weary and my heart stops beating, another will be found, more fortunate than I,—who will carry my work on to its end... The cause is immortal; it is only my heart that is weary of pain. It is bleeding at the memories of the past and is frightened of the coldness of solitude...

O Lord, save me from myself, send forgetfulness and peace to my soul...