"MY TIME HAS COME!" I HEARD HIM MUTTER. "MY TIME HAS COME!"
REBELS

INTO ANARCHY—
AND OUT AGAIN

BY

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IN COLLABORATION WITH

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Guiding us through strange, noisy streets  
"It is the end!"  
All day long his sharp little eyes were upon us  
The little group of mourners were left hopelessly behind  
"The time has come for action"  
My studies with the pal broadened my mental horizon rapidly  
In the coffee house, posing as poets and idealists  

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REBELS
REBELS

CHAPTER I

THE TENEMENTS

IT was a home of two tiny rooms. The room in the rear was not much larger than a good-sized clothes closet, and not the stuffiest of closets could be more lacking in sunlight and air. The walls were as blank as an underground dungeon's. There was neither window nor ventilating shaft. The room in front, almost twice as large, though half a dozen steps would have brought anybody with full-grown legs across its entire length, was a kitchen and living-room by day, a bedroom by night. Its two little windows gave a view of a narrow, stone-paved court and, not ten feet away, the rear wall of another tenement. The sunlight never found its way into that little court. By day it was dim and damp, by night a fearsome place, black and sepulchral.

In this little bit of a home lived five persons, my father and mother, myself, my baby brother, and Schmeel, our boarder. What squalid home in New York's crowded ghetto is without its boarder? How can that ever-present bogy, the rent, be met without
him? He must be wedged in somehow, no matter how little space there may be.

My father had established this home, our first in the New World, through God knows how much toil and worry and self-sacrifice. It took him two years to do it, and he must have haggled with all the bartering instinct of his race over the price of many a banana in the stock on his pushcart in Hester Street before his little hoard of savings had grown large enough to hire and furnish those two miserable rooms and to send tickets to his family in Galicia.

I was only five years old when in the summer of 1896 we joined him in America, but I remember well the day when he met us at Ellis Island. He was like a stranger to me, for I had been not much more than a baby when he left us on our Galician farm, but no child could be on distant terms with him long. Children took to him at once. He understood them, and was never so happy as when joining in their play. A quiet, unobtrusive man was my father, tall and slender, with a short yellow beard and mild blue eyes, and I have not forgotten the childlike glow of happiness that was in his face as he welcomed us.

I suppose it is the experience of most people that among the little scraps of our past lives that we carry with us the most insignificant things are apt to stand out more clearly than others of greater moment. I have found it so. I like to go groping into the past now and then, stirred by curiosity as to how far memory will carry me. It is a fascinat-
ing game, this of peering into the dim vistas of the long ago, where the mists of time are shifting as if blown by the wind. Now against the far horizon one scene stands out clearly, then another, as the mists fall apart and close again. Now the perfume of flowers comes to me, and I see our garden in front of the old Galician home—the bright little spot which is all I remember of the Old World. Now a breath of salt air is in my face, and I see a rolling sea and a distant, low-lying shore—my one memory of our journey to America.

But however disconnected and far apart the few scenes that still come back to me from the first years of my life, I have glimpses of our arrival in New York that are as vivid as if it had been only yesterday. In a quiet hour alone I wave the years away, and I am a child again, trudging along beside my father, who, weighted down with the great rolls of bedding we had brought with us from the old home, is guiding us through strange, noisy streets. I am staring in wonder at the great buildings and the never-ending crowds of people. I am frightened, bewildered, ready to cry. I keep a tiny hand twisted in the tail of my father's coat, fearing to lose him.

At last we turn into a dark, dirty alley, which runs like a tunnel under a tenement house and leads us to our future home in the building in the rear.

Oh, how hot and stuffy were those two little rooms that we entered! The city was scorching
under one of the hot waves that bring such untold misery to the tenements. Not a breath of air stirred. The place was an oven. But, flushed with heat and perspiring though he was, my father ushered us in with a great show of joy and enthusiasm. Suddenly his smile gave way to an expression that reflected bitter disappointment and injured pride as he became aware of the disgust which my mother could not conceal.

"So we have crossed half the world for this!" she cried, thinking bitterly of the comfortable farmhouse we had left behind us. I can see her now as she stood that moment facing my father, her eyes full of reproach—a pretty, slender woman with thick, black hair and a face as fresh and smooth as a girl's.

I am sure it had never occurred to poor, dreamy, impractical Lazarus Ganz that his wife might be disappointed with the new home he had provided for her, or that he had ever fully realized how squalid it was. He was one of the most sensitive of men, and the look of pain in his face as he saw the impression the place made on her filled me with pity for him, young as I was. A five-year-old child is not apt to carry many distinct memories from that age through life, but that scene I have never forgotten.

When at last it grows dark we creep up flight after flight of narrow stairs, lighted by only a tiny gas flame at each landing, to the roof. Long rows of
men, women and children are lying there under the stars. We look off over miles and miles of house-tops to where they disappear in a blue haze. We spread the bedding we have carried from below, and we lie down to sleep. All the stars of heaven are winking roguishly down at me as I slip away into dreamland.

Beginning with that first night our housetop had a wonderful fascination for me—the cool breezes, the far vistas over the city's roofs, the mysteries of the night sky, the magic moonlight—a fairyland, a place of romance after the dreary day in the stuffy little rooms below or in the crowded, noisy streets.

Early every summer evening the roof served as a playground for all the children in the house. My father would come home, tired out after the long day at his pushcart, and as soon as the evening meal was over would climb the stairs to take part in the children's games. Promptly at sundown, when the roof was cool enough for the barefooted youngsters to tread upon, a strange ceremony would begin. Surrounded by a semicircle of children, my father would take from a little bag in which he kept his savings a penny, which he would implant firmly on his forehead. Then, stooping slightly, he would call a name.

"Sadie Peshkoff!"

A little girl would run from the group and jump for the tempting penny. She might miss; then another little girl would be called on to try. So the
game would go on until every one of us had had a chance.

"Ketchin's is keepin's, Sadie. You missed, so here's a caramel."

Always there was consolation of some sort for the losers.

The wolf was always at our door, but during our first year or two in New York I was too young to know the full meaning of poverty, to share in the worries of my parents over making both ends meet, or to realize how squalid our home was. I was as well off as any of the children, I knew, for there was not a family in the block, or in many blocks, that was not desperately poor. But what did it matter at my age? I had a rag doll to fondle, there were the streets to play in, and any number of children to play with. The block swarmed with children.

But little by little I grew acquainted with the dreadful side of want and with its terrors. I soon came to realize that as the first of each month drew near there was much counting of the money in my father's pouch and much figuring and discussion, while the faces of father and mother and even of the boarder grew gloomier with every hour. A knock on the door at such times would be followed by a dreadful silence. Father and mother would exchange furtive, anxious glances, and would remain glued to their chairs as if paralysed with fear. What messenger of evil tidings might be standing
behind that closed door? It might be a collector with a long-outstanding bill, or, most dreadful of all, the landlord. The rent was due, and we never did manage to have it ready on time.

Another knock. Father pulls himself together, moves stealthily to the door, opens it slowly and cautiously, and peers out. If he then throws the door open wide, and stands bowing and smiling and wringing his hands, we know at once, even though the hallway is too dark to disclose the caller, that it is the landlord, Mr. Zalkin.

A bull-necked, scowling, overbearing person is Mr. Zalkin. He is a man of few words, in fact of only two words, "De rent." Father and mother are profuse with explanations and apologies, but Mr. Zalkin pays no attention to what they are saying. He stands in the doorway, stolid, immovable, giving only one answer to the torrent of words that are bestowed upon him—"De rent."

At last he goes away with a disgusted grunt; but we know he will return the next day, and the next, and the next, uttering those two awful words, "De rent," until the money is produced.

Mr. Lipsky, on the next floor above us, is the only person in the house who is not afraid of Mr. Zalkin, not because he is more likely to have his rent ready than any of the other tenants, but because he is a man of courage, resource and independence. I know this because I was visiting Mr. Lipsky at the moment when Mr. Zalkin made one of his calls on
him. The rent must have been long overdue, for before the usual "Come in" could be spoken in response to the knock at the door, Mr. Zalkin rushed in breathless, crying, "De rent!"

Slowly Mr. Lipsky rose from his chair, dignified and imperturbable. He fixed a cold, unwavering eye on Mr. Zalkin.

"Like this you come into a house?" he inquired softly. "Like this a gentleman, a landlord, should behave?"

Mr. Zalkin, who had picked out the one chair having a back and had seated himself on it, looked bewildered.

"De rent," he repeated, but in a much milder tone.

"Never mind de rent," retorted Mr. Lipsky. "What right you got to come in without being told 'come in'? What right you got to grab a seat without being invited to sit down? Maybe when you pushed the door open before I said 'come in' my wife was around the house half dressed. Besides, in America a gentleman, a landlord, takes off his hat when he comes in a house. Take off your hat and go outside, knock in the door, and when I say 'come in,' come in, and not before. And wait until I ask you before you sit down."

This was a brand-new experience for Mr. Zalkin, who had almost always found his tenants cringing before him. He was too slow-witted to adjust himself to such an unusual situation without loss of dig-
nity, and Mr. Lipsky’s stronger personality seemed to have hypnotized him. Mechanically he proceeded to obey instructions. He stepped out into the hallway, closing the door softly behind him. Again there came a knock, this time far less insistent.

Mr. Lipsky waited a full half-minute before giving utterance to a deliberate “Come in.”

Mr. Zalkin pushed open the door and entered meekly, but in his bewilderment he had forgotten to remove his hat.

“De hittel! De hittel! [The hat, the hat],” Mr. Lipsky reminded him.

Off came the hat.

“Good morning, Mr. Zalkin,” said Mr. Lipsky.

“Good morning, Mr. Lipsky,” returned the landlord, fidgeting uneasily with his hat.

“Sit down, Mr. Zalkin.”

Mr. Zalkin sat down.

“What can we do for you to-day, Mr. Zalkin?”

“De rent!” gasped the caller.

Mr. Lipsky looked vague.

“Oh, de rent,” he echoed. “I’ll tell da truth, Mr. Zalkin; I ain’t got it.”

Another regular caller was added to our list when my father made a memorable investment in a sewing machine. This machine he presented to mother in the hope of making her more contented, for she had never been able to reconcile herself to the American tenement, and had spent much time
lamenting the more cheerful and comfortable home she had left behind forever in Galicia. Father did not reveal immediately the financial basis on which he had purchased the machine, and mother asked no questions, though it must have puzzled her how he ever raised the money. It was a marvellous machine, and its arrival produced a sensation. It could sew stitches so fine that they could scarcely be seen. I had never seen mother so happy or so enthusiastic, and I myself was so excited that I ran out to spread the news through the neighbourhood.

A week later the secret of the financial transactions that had enabled father to get the machine was revealed. Mr. Lefkowitz, who was destined to be a regular caller at our home for many years to come, presented himself at the door. He asked for twenty-five cents, the first instalment on the sewing machine.

Every week thereafter Mr. Lefkowitz called for the twenty-five-cent instalment. Sometimes he got it; more often he didn’t. The average of his collections must have been about twenty-five cents a month instead of twenty-five cents a week. But he was a polite and agreeable man. He never protested, never argued. He was always willing to wait another week for payment. He had the patience of Job. Years passed; he was still coming for his instalments, and had become an old friend. Indeed, it was only two years ago that he stopped coming; he had collected every penny at last, though it had taken him eighteen years to do it. There were tears
in his eyes when he received his last twenty-five cents and as he realized that after so long an intimacy his weekly calls had come to an end.

A well-known character for many blocks around was Mr. Lefkowitz. He spread all the news and gossip of the neighbourhood from home to home. Good news he brought with a smiling face, and he was as funereal as an undertaker when he told of family troubles. There was not an owner of a sewing machine within a wide radius whose joys and griefs he did not share. If somebody had managed to exert enough political influence to get a job as a street cleaner, Mr. Lefkowitz would report the matter without fail and would be likely to suggest the job-getter as a likely match for the daughter of one of the families on his list. He would advertise the virtues of a girl who had saved a hundred dollars from her earnings, and would try to find a desirable husband for her. He not only sold sewing machines; he supplied wine and whisky by the gallon for family celebrations; he brought black cloth for those who must go into mourning; he sold lottery tickets; and yet with all these irons in the fire he was almost as poor as any of us.

Father told us that he had hesitated a long time between buying the sewing machine or a clock. Many of our neighbours had bought on the twenty-five-cent-a-week plan a marble clock surmounted by a bronze horseman carrying a spear, and father had a great longing for such a useful decoration. It took
many a family fifteen or twenty years to pay the instalments, but such a magnificent treasure was worth all the worry and all the scraping together of pennies. Most of the families that were not buying a clock by instalments had no timepiece of any kind. In our home there was neither clock nor watch. Father, while away with his pushcart, could inquire the time or look at the clock in a store window. Our time-teller at home was the shadow in the courtyard, and, figuring by it, we were never more than half an hour wrong. The shadow would creep along the stone flagging, and then up the wall of the opposite tenement, and from study of it we could approximate the time at a glance. Dark days, when the shadow failed to appear, caused us some trouble, and I would have to run out now and then to look at the clock in a drugstore window a block away. Clocks and watches are not absolute necessities; they are luxuries; and the purchase of luxuries in our neighbourhood meant trouble sooner or later.

By way of illustration, there was the case of Ichael Schwartz, one of three Schwartz brothers who all lived together in a small room on the top floor. In a rash moment Ichael bought a watch for seventy-five dollars. The intricacies of the financial transactions that ensued would have been beyond the comprehension of a child, but years later Ichael explained them to me in full detail. He paid fifteen dollars down for the watch, which completely wiped out his assets, and signed an agreement to pay one
dollar a week for sixty weeks. The watch kept getting out of order, and before long repairs had cost twenty dollars. That put Ichael in debt, so he borrowed twelve dollars from a money lender, and, as was the custom, signed a receipt for fifteen dollars. He was to pay this fifteen dollars at the rate of one dollar a week. That meant two dollars a week out of Ichael's slender income besides some more money for repairs, for that watch had a passion for getting out of order. The strain on his income put Ichael on financial shoals again before long, so he pawned the watch for ten dollars. The schedule of his business affairs then stood as follows:

Liabilities: Owing to money lender, seven dollars, plus interest on the original loan; owing to pawnbroker, ten dollars, plus interest on the original loan; owing to watch dealer, forty-nine dollars.

Assets: One pawn ticket.

It took Ichael more than a year to straighten out his finances sufficiently to end his worries, and he was still without his watch.

"I should be glad de tam thing is in hock," he declared, "so no more I hear its tick-tocking, reminding me of my troubles. It is crazy I should be if ever again I should buy me a watch."

Father took a warning from Ichael's experience, and I never saw him angrier than when a man once tried to sell us a marble clock.

"A clock!" he cried, his voice rising shrilly. "For why should I get a clock and bring ruin upon
mineself and upon mine wife and upon mine children? A clock! Go! Never show me your face again!"

So we continued to watch the shadow in the courtyard.

Yet other families had clocks, and even watches, without being completely ruined by them. Surely they must be very clever to steer their way without meeting disaster through all the difficulties that such an investment brought. What made them clever? School. And, most of all, the American school. It was plain that any graduate of an American school knew enough of the ways of the world to find the problems following the investment in a timepiece as simple as adding two and two. I was seven years old, and I knew it was high time I was going to school myself, especially if I should ever want to possess a watch or a clock without meeting with such a catastrophe as overtook Ichael Schwartz.

But my mother had a poor opinion of most of the other children of the district, and she hoped to be able to teach me herself so that I should not have to mingle with them in a school. With this aim in view, she was learning the English language with the help of an English-German dictionary. This plan was not to my liking. Other children of my age went to school. I wanted to do as they did.

One day while I was relieving father at the pushcart that he might go home to get his midday meal
and a nap, a group of children of my own age passed. I asked them where they were going.

"To school," they replied.

"Can I come along?" I asked hopefully.

"Sure, Greeny."

I left the cart to its fate.

Soon I was at Public School No. 92, at Pitt and Rivington streets. What I know now as a summer vacation class was in session. I singled out the teacher, and walked up to her, saying: "If you let me come to your school I'll bring it you bananas. My fader has a full cellar from dem."

The teacher laughed. It was a sweet and kindly laugh, and I was sure it was not given because I was a greenhorn, so I didn't care. She told me she was sure I was a good little girl, and admitted me to the class. That day I learned to sing my first song in English, "Soldier Boy, Where Are You Going?"

Of course, I was not enrolled that day, but very soon mother overcame her prejudice against the other children, and the only thing I needed to become a regular school pupil was a vaccination certificate. I heard that at a dispensary in Essex Street I could get such a slip. Barefoot I ran to the place, and arrived breathless. An officious man at the door refused to let me in.

"Give me the ticket!" I panted. "For why shouldn't you give me the ticket?"

A crowd of waiting mothers, who were there on the same errand as I, jeered.
At that moment there came upon the scene an important-looking man in a blue uniform, with shining brass buttons. I recognized him as a horse-car driver with whom I had once scraped an acquaintance. He must be a man of authority, I was sure, and I turned to him appealingly. He exchanged a few words with the door attendant, with the result that I was admitted. Without further trouble I got my ticket—the magic blue ticket that was to admit me to an American education.

I ran home to my mother, who was sick in bed, and displayed the ticket proudly, explaining to her how I had got it all by myself. My story filled her with pride, and she began to get better at once. Surely, she thought, she must have a wonderful daughter—a child of only seven who had succeeded alone in passing all the mysterious barriers of officialdom. She lost no time in spreading the news among the neighbours, and they marvelled greatly.

The following day, which I had expected to be the beginning of my schooling, brought disappointment. I must have a grown person to take me to the school on the first day, and it turned out that mother was too sick to go. Father could not leave his stand, for some competing peddler might usurp his place in the street. I was in tears. Mother tried to comfort me.

"Chiala, cry not, my child," she pleaded. Chiala is my middle name. "Chiala, cry not. I will better get, and then I will to school take you."
But I was hopeless. I sat on an old box, which served as a kitchen chair, close to the open doorway leading to the hall, and from the floors above came laughing children, their faces shining from soap, their clothes clean, their shoes mended and newly blackened with stove polish, their books under their arms. In that disconsolate moment Abie Schwartz, one of Ichael's two brothers, came through the hall.

The Schwartz boys were regarded as rather low in the social scale. They were eight-dollar-a-month tenants in their bachelor quarters on the top floor, while we on the first floor paid twelve. In the ghetto social position is often fixed by the floor one lives on. But whatever Abie Schwartz's social position might be, he was an Amerikaner. He had been in the land of freedom not less than three years, and was known to have spoken in English over the telephone. This I knew to be a fact. A neighbour's child while visiting the corner drugstore had actually seen and heard him doing so. Also he had been known to buy beer by the bottle instead of in the customary tin pail. Furthermore, he and his brothers possessed a sateen quilt, which almost balanced the fact that they lived under the roof. Mrs. Gritzenstein, the janitress, had once thumbed the quilt, and it was a sure sateen, almost like silk, and once it had been hung on the line for all to see. Surely Abie Schwartz was an important enough person to introduce me to an education.
"Mr. Abie, please take me to school," I called, as he passed the door.

"Sure," he answered. "Put on your shoes."

My heart sank. It had been months since I had had shoes on my feet, and I was not sure that the precious pair that had been laid away so long would fit. Here was a difficulty I had not counted on and that needed time for consideration.

"Wait until to-morrow," I said. "I'll go then."

I knew that Abie Schwartz was on strike—a condition not unusual in those days—and that, having no job to go to, he would not fail me. He called promptly the following morning, and I set off with him, proud and happy, though my shoes, shrunk from disuse, pinched terribly. Without further difficulty I was admitted to the school, where I made rapid progress in my studies. Before long I was made a monitor and had also achieved an ambition to write words in chalk on the sidewalk.

One day as I came running in from school singing gaily I was met at the door by a very old woman, our neighbour, Mrs. Becker. Generous, self-sacrificing old soul, she was an ever-present help in time of trouble.

"Be quiet, you young brat," she croaked. "Der good Above One has a new little brother given you."

I was led into the darkened little apology for a bedroom, where lay my mother. The old woman turned back the coverlet, and I got my first glimpse
of a tiny, wizened object that represented my new brother Sammy.

Another mouth to feed! And six human beings now in those two crowded little rooms! It was no wonder father looked anxious as he came in from his cart. His face was drawn and white, and I noticed for the first time that his hair was beginning to turn grey. He had always been a slender, delicate man, but now his shoulders stooped more than ever and he looked pitifully frail.

"He is getting old," I thought.

What devils of despair must have been clutching at his heart I was too young to realize, but his depression was contagious, and I had a vague sense that black shadows were beginning to fall over our home.
CHAPTER II

THE WOLF

"Chiala," said my father gently, "there are too many here. You are in the way. Run out and play."

Some invisible fairy must have been waiting outside for me waving her magic wand, for the remainder of that day was to be gilded with the romance of a great adventure. As I reached the street a big man wearing a cap and a long coat was standing on the curb beside an empty carriage and pair of horses. I stopped to stare at him, for he did not look as if he belonged to our neighbourhood; there was too prosperous and important an air about him. He exchanged a few words with a young fellow who came out from a store with some message; then got into his carriage and took the reins. At that moment he caught sight of me, and I seemed to arouse his interest. I was a pretty child, so I have been told, and I had two thick, yellow braids, which fell below my waist and which often attracted attention from passers-by. He pulled in his horses as they were starting off, and stared at me, his good-natured face spreading into a grin.

"Hello, Goldielocks," he called. "How'd you like a ride?"
"You mean it?" I returned, almost sure he must be joking. Never had I even dreamed that I should ever ride in a carriage behind two horses.

"Sure," he answered, and held out his hand to help me up.

I stepped in and sat down beside him, my heart beating fast. He drew the reins tight and flicked his whip. Away we went, rattling over the stone pavement at a terrific pace. In almost no time we were flying along what had been the western edge of the world for me, the Bowery, the jumping-off place into the unknown. Then on and on into streets that were strange and wonderful, where there were no bearded men, where every woman wore a hat instead of going bareheaded or with a shawl over her hair, where there were no pushcarts, where there was no bargaining at the curbs, no gesturing with hands and arms or shrugging of shoulders, where even the faces were different—Gentile faces. No tenements now, with fire-escapes hung with bedding and where groups of women and children huddled at the doorways, but stately buildings that almost reached the sky and that bore no sign of family life.

Of a sudden I felt lonely and afraid. I was a stranger in a strange land. I clutched the big man's arm. "Take me home," I gasped.

"Don't get scared," he answered. "You'll be safe enough. I got to go uptown; then I got to see
a man in your street again. I'll get you home all right."

He flicked his whip. We went on faster than ever. Stranger and stranger grew the streets. Gorgeous carriages passed by with men in gaily coloured uniforms and tall, stiff hats on the boxes, and inside surely princes and princesses, such men and women and children, too, as I had never seen, all dressed most wonderfully, even the children decked with furs. Far behind now were the cloud-piercing buildings. On one side were beautiful trees, a forest of trees decked in autumn colours; on the other palaces of brownstone and of marble, solemn, mysterious, forbidding.

Suddenly from among the carriages comes a great, black shining thing. It flashes by with a chugging sound—a thing of magic.

"A carriage without horses!" I cry.

"Automobile," says the big man. "First you've seen? They're getting pretty common. The streets will be full of 'em in a year or two."

We stop in front of a building. The big man gets out, leaving me holding the reins, and disappears in the doorway. In a few moments he is back, and we are off again. It is growing dark. Great white lights are throwing a magic glare over streets and buildings. All the windows of the palaces and of the great buildings glow with light. Mysterious shadows come and go. Nothing seems real. Am I awake or dreaming? Even the crowds of peo-
ple are shadows, not living beings of flesh and blood.

It is too weird and fantastic to last long. The world begins to grow prosy again. We are leaving the magician's paradise behind. Familiar sights appear. Again we are in the streets I know, the streets of the tenements, and the walks are thronged with people of my own kind. Pushcart torches flare along the curbs; oil, gas and candle lights gleam feebly in dingy tenement windows; mothers crouch gossiping together on tenement steps; to hurdy-gurdy music little girls are dancing on the walks. I have come back to my own world. Oh, day of wonders, never to be forgotten! It is over—gone like a dream. And here I am again, running through the dark tunnel that leads to the door of home, while from behind me comes the clatter of horses' hoofs as the big man drives away. If I had heard that a fairy godmother had created his carriage from a pumpkin and that his horses were enchanted mice I should not have doubted it, for Cinderella's adventure had been scarcely more marvellous than mine.

I was sure, too, as I stole into our crowded home, of how Cinderella felt when she found herself in her rags again crouching before the cinders after her return from the palace ball. But I could not console myself with the hope that a prince was searching for me with a glass slipper in his hand. For the first time in my life there came the realiza-
tion, after all the splendours I had seen, of how miserable our home was. I was beginning to know the meaning of poverty.

Twelve-year-old Jimmie Casey, the firelighter, came on his weekly rounds the following evening, for it was Friday, and I told him all about my great adventure, adding many fantastic details from my imagination. Jimmie didn't seem to be so much impressed as I had expected.

"I've been in all them places," he said. "There ain't no place in this city I ain't been to. I ain't afraid to go nowhere. You kids down here never see nothing."

"You seen all them palaces, and them trees, and a carriage that goes without horses?"

"Sure. It's only the poor folks down here that never sees any of them things."

So it was that Jimmie Casey introduced the fiend Discontent into my life. I had not the least doubt of what he said. I knew he was a very wise boy; that he knew far more about the world in general than the other children of the neighbourhood. Though he was a Christian, who fearlessly and shamelessly lighted fires and lamps on the Sabbath, he knew more than the grown-ups among us about many things. And what a money-maker he was for a boy of his age! Besides the money he earned in various ways throughout the week, he received from each of thirty, perhaps forty, families two cents for lighting their fires on the Sabbath, for from Fri-
day's sunset to Saturday's no orthodox Jews may make or extinguish a light. Also he received money for putting out the lamps in tenement hallways at ten o'clock on Friday night. In our home it was only the fire in the stove that he attended to, for a candle was lit on Friday just before sundown and was left burning all night, until by morning it had melted away completely into a shapeless heap.

Jimmie was around early that evening trying to collect money owing to him from previous Sabbaths. He earned his two cents easily enough, merely by striking a match and touching it to the paper in the grate; it was the collecting of this stipend that was the hardest part of his job.

"Them Schwartzes up under the roof are the poorest pay of all," said Jimmie. "It's always some excuse they got. I been tryin' to squeeze some coin outer them for a month, and now they got a new hard-luck story. Their bedspring's busted, and they got to go broke getting it fixed."

"And why shouldn't it be busted?" said I, "with the three of 'em, all great big, heavy fellers, sleepin' on it? A mother and a kid like me and a baby ain't too much for a bed. That's the way it is in our home. A mother and a kid and two babies ain't too much," as I recalled the arrival of Sammie. "But three fellers like them Schwartzes is differ-

ent."

"It might have stood the three of 'em," returned the firelighter, "but they was four of 'em last night,
and the fourth was the biggest of the lot, their cousin Yusel. Yusel never slept under a real quilt like what they got, so last night, when Rudolph said he was going to be away, the other two invited Yusel to take his place in the bed so he could know what sleepin' under a sateen quilt was like. They got along all right till along about midnight in comes Rudolph, who'd changed his mind about stayin' away. There ain't no pleasure with four full-grown fellers in a bed. They was wedged in so tight they couldn't sleep. So Ichael gets up, and says: 'This may be all right for you two guys in the middle, but me and Yusel on the two edges is clingin' on wid our fingers and toes tryin' to keep from slippin' out onto the floor. Now I got a scheme.'"

"Sure, I know," I interjected. "They was going to sleep 'popareek.' That means sleepin' crossways of the bed, so your feet's on one side of it and your head's on the other."

"Well, that's what they was goin' to do, whatever you call it," continued Jimmie. "So they all get up, and twist the bedclothes around, and lie down again to sleep crossways. That gave 'em plenty of room sideways, but the bed wasn't wide enough, and their feet was stickin' out over the edge and gettin' cold. All of 'em did so much squirmin' about tryin' to pull their feet in that the bedspring couldn't stand it and busted. Then Yusel pulls hisself out o' the heap, and says, that's enough of sleepin' under a sateen quilt for him, and he beats it for his own
home. But where do I get off? Since they got a new bedspring to buy I got a swell chance of gettin' the eight cents that's ownin' to me."

I did not need enlightenment from Jimmie Casey to know that the collecting of money earned was often the hardest part of making one's living in our neighbourhood. How fortunate that my father was in a strictly cash business. Surely we should have starved if it had been necessary to extend credit for part of the ten or twelve dollars a week that he earned. That might be some small consolation for his poorly paid twelve-hour workday, though the clock and sewing-machine agents, who sometimes had to spend fifteen years to collect an account, made better incomes than the pushcart peddlers. Often I thought: "It is glad we should be that boarders must pay cash down every week." Our own boarder never failed us. He was scrupulous in money matters and was never an hour late with his weekly payment. I say he never failed us; I am overlooking the crisis that came in his affairs, and which brought a crisis into our own. It was Schmeel's ambition that was to blame. For years he had aspired to the presidency of his synagogue.

One day when the time for choosing a successor to the incumbent of that office was drawing near he announced himself a candidate. In this ambition he was encouraged not only by my father and mother but by all of peddlerdom, for Schmeel was a peddler
himself. Just before the election he took all his savings, about eighty dollars, and conducted a party of friends to the synagogue. There, through the influence of juicy herring, wine, Carmel schnapps and sponge cake, and partly because he was a bit of a Talmudic scholar, he made such a favourable impression that later he received the unanimous vote of the congregation.

His triumph was short-lived. During the festivities preceding his election he had contracted a cold, which developed into something worse. He took to his bed, and our combination kitchen, bedroom and living-room became a sick-room also. He lay there for weeks, and, as he had spent most of his savings on his campaign for the presidency, the little that was left soon disappeared. But father and mother agreed that if our boarder must die he should die in our home; they would not listen to suggestions of sending him to a hospital. There was not a dollar to spare to tide us over such a calamity. We ran into debt, and the problem of meeting the doctor's and druggist's bills grew graver and graver; but through all the fast-growing difficulties my parents clung to their determination to keep Schmeel with us.

The sick boarder became my personal charge, for mother was busy with the baby and the household affairs and father with his pushcart. Between the care of the patient and the household duties that fell to my lot, there was no time for play. Indeed, as
the future proved, there was never again going to be time for play.

With all her worries it was wonderful how my mother kept her youth. Her complexion remained as fresh as a girl's. There was not a wrinkle in her face, not a grey hair in her head. Yet, though she faced her troubles bravely, she could not conceal her despair over present problems nor her dread of the future. Every evening when father came home from his cart her eyes were full of anxiety as she studied his face. No one could fail to notice that there was something very wrong with him. His face had lost its colour, his shoulders were more bent than ever, and he had an almost continuous cough, which seemed to shake his whole body. He could no longer bear the strain of such long hours at his cart, and often he would have to leave me there in charge. Sometimes, when he had sold a whole bunch of bananas to some grocer he would find himself too weak to carry it to the place of delivery, and it fell to me to trudge with it across my sturdy young shoulders for several blocks.

Schmeel's condition grew better fortunately, in time to save us from absolute ruin; otherwise we should have found ourselves and all our household possessions on the street; but, although the boarder managed to get back to his work before long, father seemed to grow worse with every day. In July, 1899, a crisis came in his condition. One Friday at dusk, just after the three candles had been lit,
that were to burn through the Sabbath night, he came home white and trembling, and sank exhausted into a chair.

"It is the end," he said hoarsely. "My strength is gone. No more shall I be able to go to my cart."

Mother sat silent for a few moments as if stunned by the realization that her premonitions of disaster were coming true. After a time I heard her crying softly. Never shall I forget the dreadful gloom that settled over our home that evening. Silently we sat down to supper. Schmeel's long, gloomy face, in which never in all my life had I seen a smile, looked as if the crack of doom had sounded for us all, and he gave a little shrug and shivered whenever father coughed. The flickering candles cast a ruddy glow over the bare little room, stirring up ghostly shadows and sending them flitting after one another along the walls and ceiling. The big brass candlesticks from Galicia, which were almost our only relics of former prosperity and which mother, who took great pride in them, polished every day, shone brightly. In a trembling voice father began the chanting of the Kiddush, and, through force of habit, Schmeel took up the words.

"Blessed be the name of our Lord, who glorified the Day of the Sabbath," he concluded earnestly, and again a heavy silence fell as we broke bread.

The following day father remained in bed, and Monday morning found a competing peddler at his stand. Our crowded home was no place for so sick
"IT IS THE END!"
a patient, and we had to send him to the hospital. He was, of course, a free patient in a public ward. We could do no more for him. For weeks life for us had been a hand-to-mouth existence, and now indeed the wolf was at our door.

I was sent to take charge of the pushcart, and I succeeded in selling the few remaining bunches of bananas to another peddler. Fourteen dollars of the money he paid me was turned over to the wholesaler to settle father's account with him, and only twenty-eight cents remained. It was all we had between ourselves and starvation. Schmeel, who took almost all his meals in restaurants, paid us eight dollars a month; but how far would that go, with rent day coming and four mouths to feed!

That evening I crept up to the head of the staircase, and sat there on the top step alone in the dark brooding over our troubles. It was a spooky, dismal spot. The tiny flame of the stair-lamp was sputtering inside its grimy chimney and throwing just enough light to mark a wavering, ghostly yellow spot upon the wall. There was scarcely a sound. It was so still that I could hear a mouse scurrying across the dusty floor.

Suddenly it seemed that I heard my father's voice calling to me.

"Chiala! Chiala!"

Yes, it was his voice; there was no doubt of it. Yet I knew he was many blocks away. It was a miracle—either that or I had fallen asleep and had
dreamed I heard his call. But perhaps it had not been a dream. Perhaps he really was calling to me. I fancied I could still hear the echoes of his voice, very faint and far off. Of a sudden came the conviction that he wanted me, and I hurried down the stairs and into the street. I knew where the big hospital was, half a dozen or more long blocks away. Father might be very sick and in need of me at once, and I set off at full speed.

Breathless and almost exhausted, I came at last into the shadow of the high, bleak hospital wall. I rushed up to the door, where I found my way blocked by a man in a spotless white uniform.

"Mine fader!" I cried. "Lazarus Ganz, he is mine fader. I must see him."

"You must come to-morrow, little girl," said the man. "To-morrow is visiting day, not today."

"No, no! Now it must be!" I cried. "Mine fader, he wants me!"

"To-morrow," repeated the man.

Stubbornly I stood there pleading, but he was as unyielding as if he had been a figure of stone.

"To-morrow." It was all I could get from him. "To-morrow, to-morrow;" and, as I turned away in despair, with the tears starting to my eyes, the word kept ringing in my ears. To-morrow! A dreadful premonition took hold of me. To-morrow might be too late.

Very early the following morning I was awakened
by the wailing of my mother. I did not need to be
told what it meant. I knew then that while I had
been sitting in the dark stairs I had heard my
father's voice for the last time. Already neigh-
bours were crowding in upon us. There was no
need of my asking questions; I had only to listen to
learn all of the dreadful news. Father had died a
little before dawn. Evil tidings travel quickly in
the ghetto, and already the entire block—a block
in which at least four thousand persons lived—had
heard of our bereavement.

All through that long, dreary day our neighbours,
many of whom had never come to see us before,
crowded our little home, some prompted by kind-
ness and sympathy, some merely by curiosity. The
cries of many mourners mingled with mother's hys-
terical wailing and with the screams of Moishe and
the baby. Even the sewing-machine collector called
to condole with us, and said not a word of instal-
ments long overdue.

That evening my father's body was brought home.
The coffin was placed in the centre of the outer room,
where all through the night Schmeel and another
man sat beside it. Huddled together in the bed in
the tiny inside room were mother, Moishe, the baby
and myself. Neither door nor curtain separated the
two rooms, and again and again I awoke from
troubled sleep and saw the dim outlines of the coffin,
beside which burned a solitary candle, and the dark
figures of the two mourners. I heard them chanting
in low voices the prayer for the dead taken from the Psalms.

"Yonuf basayser eliom bitzail shadai yisloion." *

At last the grey light of morning came creeping into the room, and the chanting of the prayer came to an end. That day we followed father's body to the cemetery. There was only one coach, for our friends were too poor to afford the expense of accompanying us to the grave. Mother and I and Aunt Rosie, whom I had never seen before, were the only mourners on the long, solemn ride or at the grave.

The ghetto lights were glowing through the dusk of early evening when we returned. Candles were burning in our home, the mirrors were covered as is the custom in time of mourning, and a neighbour was preparing a supper for us. But mother would not touch the food. It was not only her sorrow but the problem of how we were going to save ourselves from eviction and starvation that affected her. I, too, knew how desperate was our situation. I knew the day was very near when Mr. Zalkin would present himself at our door with his scowling face and his gruff demand for "de rent." The thought of him frightened me. The rent! The rent! The dreadful words ran through my mind all the evening. I knew the meaning of eviction.

*"May he be in the care of God and rest in the shadow of the Almighty."
What ghetto child does not? Indeed, I knew now all the hideous meaning of poverty. I knew now why ghetto men and women talked so incessantly of money, and fingered it so greedily, with such a glitter in their eyes. I knew now why so often I had seen stark fear in the eyes of men who had financial losses. Many a street orator I had heard denouncing the rich, and winning applause from his hearers. I knew now what had put the bitterness into their hearts.
CHAPTER III

THE SWEATSHOP

THROUGH the seven days of shiva my mother sat in mourning on a low, wooden box, her feet clad only in stockings. Such is the custom of the ghetto. Many neighbours came to offer sympathy and help. Sometimes a woman would bring a cup of warm milk, another a few cookies, made, like as not, from the last scrap of flour in her home. The merest hint would have brought offers of money, too, from persons almost as poor as ourselves, but mother was firmly determined not to accept such assistance from them. The funeral expenses, which otherwise would have overwhelmed us, had been borne by the synagogue, but there was food to be bought, and the day when Mr. Zalkin would call for the rent was drawing fearfully near. Obviously our twenty-eight cents would not stretch very far.

Aunt Rosie tided us over a few critical days by lending a few dollars from her small savings—enough to buy a little food, but far from enough with which to face the terrible Mr. Zalkin. The rent! The rent! Oh, that word, rent! What a fearful sound it has in thousands of ghetto homes! The debt to the landlord must be paid in dollars,
not in pennies as our other expenditures, and how could we, living from hand to mouth, accumulate dollars?

I suggested to mother that I might give up my schooling and continue father's business, but she would not listen.

"Your father had a right to support his children by whatever work he thought he could the best do," she declared. "He was a sick man, and peddling was for him easy. But no more the peddling for my family. A young woman I am, only twenty-eight; your father—shall he live in God!—was only thirty-two when he died. You will go back to school. I will find the wherewithal."

One day came Ichael Schwartz to our flat—the one who always slept in the middle of the bed. He said to mother: "Marie, if you want, can stay by us. She is a big girl already, strong, eight years old and looks twelve, and if she will of the home take care we will look after her."

"Just so long as I have two hands, and a head on my shoulders," mother replied, "I will take care of my children."

Ichael reflected a moment, and a happy thought came to him.

"I will tell you what," he said eagerly. "In the building from where I work in the shop, upstairs there is a place where they make skirts. If you will go up there they will give you work to take out."
Before he or mother could say another word I was outside the door, running full tilt on the way to the skirtmaker's. I found the building, a five-story brick structure, which was reached by way of a narrow alley. Evidently the inside stairway of the building had been condemned by the authorities as unsafe, for the only way of getting in was by way of a steep flight of rusty iron stairs jutting from the outer wall. The rust of the latticed steps cut into my bare feet, but I made the dizzy climb until I came to the skirtmaker's door. I entered, and found a sweatshop in full operation.

Forty or fifty men and women sat hunched up, their heads bent low over as many foot-power sewing machines. Pale, heavy-eyed folk they were, some of whom I had often seen in the streets, where their bent backs and rounded shoulders proclaimed their means of livelihood. As I recall it, the shop was about sixty feet long, twenty-five feet wide and perhaps eight feet from floor to ceiling. Besides the machine hands there were ten or twelve pressers, some women sewing by hand, three or four small boys and girls who were carrying piles of work from one part of the shop to the other, and, over all, in the centre of the room stood a man who, I immediately realized, was the boss. He did not look approachable. There was a surly expression in his eyes, and his face was cold and hard. I stood staring at him, and at last he noticed me.
"What you want?" he snarled.
It was too late to retreat. I spoke up bravely and to the point.
"Work. Work for mine mader."
"Tell her to come to-morrow."
"She won't come. She told me to get work I should take along home."
"Did your mother when work by skirts?"
"Yes." It was not true, but the man frightened me.

We struck a bargain after I had explained to him the circumstances at home. He told me that my mother could get one and a half cents per skirt for sewing up the bottoms by hand. I was to take a batch of the skirts, and I should have to return them with the bottoms sewed before I could get more.

Forty skirts he gave me, a huge bundle, so heavy and cumbersome that I staggered under it, and it was a nerve-shaking experience carrying it down the steep stairs that hung dizzily from the outer wall. But, though my body ached under the burden, my spirits were high—higher than those heaven-aspiring steps—for an income was in sight. No longer would the fear of being put into the street keep us awake through the night. No longer should we tremble when there came a knocking at the door. Straight into even Mr. Zalkin's eyes we could look, and it would be, "Is it like this you come into a house, Mr. Zalkin; like this a landlord should
behave? De hittel! De hittel! And here is your money, Mr. Zalkin, every cent.”

Oh, how hard mother worked at the skirts. Very late into the night she continued her sewing, and when I awoke at six in the morning every one of them was ready for me to take back to the shop before going to school. The boss was satisfied, and I carried another bundle of them home. The bundle was always twice as big as I was. Just the bundle and a pair of legs were all the neighbours could see as I passed their windows. “The bundle with legs” was the way they described it, for the legs seemed to belong to the pack rather than to a human being. Twice every day I went to the shop to return completed skirts and to get more, and after school hours I helped mother with the sewing. Often when the sewing of the day before had been left unfinished I would get up at four o’clock in the morning, and together we would sit by candlelight hemming the wide edges of the broad skirts then in fashion.

Early as I came to the shop in the morning I always found the hands there hunched over their machines working by weak gas-light, and likewise when I sometimes came there late at night they would still be there, as machine-like as the whirring wheels before them. So it was with them, day after day, year after year.

We managed to keep the home together, mother and I, though at no time did our combined earnings amount to more than ninety cents a day. Though
we worked from early morning until late at night we could earn no more. Our weekly income was about five dollars besides the four dollars a month the boarder paid. The money from the boarder was set aside to make up the rent, besides about two dollars a week from our earnings. The remaining three dollars a week had to meet all our other expenses. As a matter of fact it was only enough to pay for our food. I know just how it went, because I did the buying, and the figures were fixed firmly in my memory. For a week when we really had enough to eat our account stood as follows:

Four rolls a day (two for a penny) $ .14
Butter (one and a half pounds) .................... 48
Meat (half a pound a day for soup) ................ 49
Vegetables ........................................... 35
Milk (a quart a day) ................................ 49
Bread (an eight-cent loaf a day) .................... 56
Coffee and tea ...................................... 18
Sugar ................................................. 30

Total .................................................. $2.99

How were the other expenses met? I hardly know myself. As a problem in arithmetic it was impossible to solve. According to what I had been taught at Public School No. 92, two dollars and ninety-nine cents from three dollars left one cent, no matter how often it might be figured or worried over. But I learned through hard experience that there were ways other than by arithmetic of solving
that problem—ways that teacher knew nothing about. Two minus two didn't always equal nothing in the tenements. How an apparent deficit was often changed into enough of a surplus to cover vitally important necessities that had not been taken into the account was known to only the poorest of ghetto families and they didn't really know. They knew that it was done, but the method was always so intricate that only a professional expert accountant would have been able to check it up.

Besides food, shoes were the principal expense item. We simply had to buy a two-dollar pair sometimes, though other clothes were hardly ever bought. There was also the weekly instalment of twenty-five cents to the sewing-machine man. He didn't get it every week; he thought himself lucky when he got twenty-five cents a month. Sometimes we made drastic reductions in our food purchases, sometimes—alas! I should say very often—we borrowed a dollar from a relative, sometimes we managed to hold Mr. Zalkin off for two or three days. We paid back the money we borrowed, but usually we borrowed a dollar somewhere else to do it. I was old enough to discover that the more intricate one's finances became the easier it was, by tangling them up a little more, to squeeze something out of nothing.

So it was that we kept our souls and bodies together.

Yet, with all our hard work and our worries, our
lot was no worse than that of many families around us. Indeed, there were some that faced much harder problems. We even felt that we were in comparative prosperity when we discovered that Mrs. Zulinsky, on the floor above us, whom we had regarded as a woman of wealth, had been selling one piece of furniture after another to make both ends meet. But the Zulinsky family had a genius to support, and such a luxury, though it adds to social prestige, is almost always ruinous.

Mrs. Zulinsky, who had been a widow for six months, had inherited a small grocery store from her husband. As she knew nothing about the grocery business, she sold the store for six hundred dollars. Six hundred dollars. A fortune in our block! Everybody envied her. No longer did she need to worry over money matters. She kept the six hundred dollars in a stocking under her mattress, for her distrust of banks was great and was not without reason considering the frequency with which such institutions went to smash in the ghetto.

One day the stocking disappeared. Too many persons had shared the secret of its hiding place. That was why Mrs. Zulinsky had become a furniture dealer. Business was brisk for a time, as it had to be, for there were three children to support —two little girls, and Julius, the genius. Julius was sixteen years old, but earned nothing because all his time was occupied in playing the piano.

So long as any furniture remained to be sold Mrs.
Zulinsky managed to get along without much privation or worry, for her soul was above the sordid details of money matters. She was content to sit and listen to Julius's music instead of brooding over what the future might have in store. But when she had disposed of all the chairs, the two beds and the table, and nothing remained but the cookstove, the kitchen utensils and the bedclothes she found herself wondering where the money was coming from to keep the larder filled. Even the marble clock surmounted by a bronze horseman armed with a spear had been pawned. She did not breathe a word of the situation to Julius.

"Such troubles a piano player should not think about," she said.

So, while the family was reduced to sitting on boxes and sleeping on the floor, he played on and on hour after hour without noticing their reduced circumstances. His piano was very small, or it never could have been carried up the narrow stairs, and it was also very old and battered, but it might have been sold for a tidy sum could Mrs. Zulinsky ever have brought herself to do such a thing. Instead she appealed to the Bureau of Charities, though not until after a hard struggle with her pride, a struggle in which her ambition for Julius decided the issue. The bureau sent an agent to look the situation over and report. The agent—a woman—was inclined to think the piano should go the way of the rest of the furniture, but the ensuing
argument resulted at length in a compromise. The bureau would give Mrs. Zulinsky a little money to help her over the crisis, and Julius would look for a job, confining his piano playing to the evenings.

Mrs. Zulinsky met me in the dark hall and told me all about it. She was jubilant. They had almost starved, their home was stripped bare and the future was uncertain, but she had saved the piano. Indeed, Julius began to play on it at that very moment. Mrs. Zulinsky raised a warning finger.

"Hear! My Julius he is playing. Mine kind! What music! Already my heart it is light again."

I wished mother had the carefree disposition of Mrs. Zulinsky. Why should we worry so much? It never helped us. But mother was the worrying kind. If there was no food in the house and no money mother's anxieties would begin at once, even though we had just eaten, while Mrs. Zulinsky could pass such a situation over with an untroubled mind until she or the children began to feel hungry.

It was not only ourselves that mother worried about; she was more and more disturbed by the condition of poor Schmeel. His improvement had continued for only a few days, and now he was worse than ever. No longer was he able to go to his cart. Sometimes, on a mild, clear day, he would go out for a little stroll, but he always returned tired out, and most of the time he spent in our crowded home, coughing and counting his money. Little
enough money he had, but his little hoard looked like riches to me.

"He cannot live very long," mother whispered to me one morning. "He can hardly walk he is so weak. His cough is shaking him to pieces."

It was on the same day, when I returned from the shop with my pack of skirts, that I was startled by the frightened expression in her eyes as she met me at the door. The place was strangely quiet. Schmeel was no longer coughing. Then, as I dropped my pack to the floor, I saw him sitting in his chair, his bearded face bent low over his chest.

"Go quick for Mrs. Becker," cried mother under her breath; and I ran out to spread the news of another death.

Mrs. Becker, helpful and self-sacrificing as ever, came with her husband. He took charge of affairs. Again our home was crowded to suffocation with curious and sympathetic neighbours. Again came a weird, ghostly night when a coffin stood in the centre of the outer room and in the dim glow of the candles two bearded mourners chanted in low tones through all the black hours the prayer for the dead. Their chant mingled with the screeching of a clarionet from the floor above and the thump, thump of dancing feet. In the home of our upstairs neighbour, Mrs. Eckstoff, the betrothal of her son, Morris, was being celebrated. Down the airshaft came the cry "Mazel tov! Mazel tov!" Lucky day! Lucky day! Through all the sounds of merri-
ment the solemn chant for the dead went on in dreary monotony.

For two days we did no work, and immediately after the funeral we began puzzling over a more serious money shortage than ever. The week's income would be reduced one-third, we had spent at least a dollar on incidentals resulting from Schmeel's death, and we no longer had a boarder on whom we could rely for the payment of one-third of the rent.

Our luck turned just in time to save us from the certainty of eviction. Hersch Ditchik, a banana-peddling friend of Schmeel, called on us one evening when our fortunes were at their very lowest ebb and at a moment when mother was in tears over our desperate situation, and inquired whether we wanted a boarder to take Schmeel's place. Did we want a boarder! Mother fairly rushed at him. With both hands she clutched him as if to make sure he was real and not a vision that might fade away into nothing.

"Sure we want a boarder!" she cried. "You can come to-day—this very hour. And just look what you get for four dollars a month! All the comforts of a home you shall have. A real folding bed, with blankets and sheets on, and a pillow—oh, such a pillow! Look! Here is it. Feel for yourself; so soft with feathers inside. Never a bad dream you would have with such a pillow."

Hersch Ditchik seemed to be impressed. There
was a pleased expression on his broad face as he stroked his beard and surveyed his surroundings.

"I will come," he said. "I will come this minute. My baggage, it is here under my arm."

He tapped a very small bundle. Surely his worldly possessions were not bulky, and I was glad it was so, for it would have been awkward to find room for a trunk or box of any size. I was glad, too, to observe that he was not so emaciated as Schmeel had been and that the prospect of another funeral in our home seemed small.

It did not take us long to discover that our new boarder, in spite of the fact that everything he owned could be carried lightly under one arm, was a man of some means. He had a bank-book, and he always carried in a trousers pocket a good-sized bag of money. Indeed, his opulence was proclaimed by the fact that during the first week he was with us he burned up at least five cents' worth of candle grease while counting this money at night. Often I was awakened by a jingling sound in the still, late hours to discover him in the adjoining room with all his money spread before him on the table. Assisted by a pencil and a sheet of paper, he would go over it again and again to make sure there was not a penny more or less than he had figured. At last, and always with a long sigh of satisfaction, he would sweep it all into the bag, which he would bind tightly with a leather string and stow away in his trousers.
I knew that no banana peddler could possibly make so much money in a day. Surely it would not take him whole hours of the night to count the earnings of even a week. Most of the money in the bag he must have been saving for a long time, and it was plain that a good part of the counting must be due to the fact that this was his way of amusing himself, his sole diversion, for he never went anywhere, never read, never played games, seldom even talked, never, so far as we could discover, had any pleasure in life except this solemn poring over his coins.

Sometimes the bag would be full to bursting; sometimes, which meant that he had made a deposit at the nearest Kobre bank, it would be half empty; but he always kept a goodly number of coins in it to count and fondle in the evening.

At last we learned why his only pleasure seemed to be the handling of his money. For two years he had been saving in the hope of having enough some day to be able to send for his wife and children, whom he had left in Galicia. Poor, lonely Hersch Ditchik! He was not the sordid, selfish miser he had seemed. Every coin he dropped into the bag brought the time a little nearer when he would see his family again.

One day on entering the shop with a bundle of skirts, which I had by this time learned to balance on my head, I became conscious that something had gone wrong. The hands were not at the machines;
they stood about in groups, silent and sullen. As I walked in the boss snatched the skirts and threw them into a pile on the floor. I was accustomed to having the skirts counted, but this time he let them lie where he had tossed them and turned his back on me. Yes, surely something was wrong; perhaps the boss was not going to pay us. I was frightened. What could we do if we failed to get what he owed us? There was not a penny in the house, and we owed the corner grocer for rolls and milk. Our pay was not due until the next day, but I made up my mind to ask for it at once.

"Pay me!" I cried, confronting the boss. "Pay me!"

"I will pay you to-morrow."

"No; pay me now. Mine mader needs money."

"Go home! What wants that fresh child from me? I will pay you to-morrow."

The glint of rising anger was in his eyes, and I knew he would not pay me, no matter how persistent I might be—not that day, at least.

I went home, but I did not tell mother of what had happened at the shop or of my fear that we should not get our money. Worries enough she had already; why should I add to them? Early the next morning, before school, found me banging at the door of the shop. It was locked. Only a dismal silence answered my knocks and kicks. The boss had gone—gone and taken with him the four
dollars and sixty-nine cents we had earned, the only money we could look forward to.

"What'll we do! What'll we do!" I cried, my eyes full of tears.

I stared down at the stone pavement of the alley far below me, and felt for a moment like throwing myself over the railing. It would be quick and certain death, and the four dollars and sixty-nine cents would worry me no more. But I was sensible enough to realize that without me mother's troubles would be greater than ever, and I drew back against the wall away from temptation.

Some one had crept up the stairs and was standing beside me. It was a girl, one of the hands in the shop, whom I knew by only her first name, Anna. She was more than twice as old as I, but no taller, and very thin and frail. At that moment there was a wild look in her eyes and her face was white and haggard.

"Is the door still locked?" she asked.

"It is locked yet," I answered. "And the boss is gone—gone with our money."

"Yes, he is gone—gone with my seven dollars, the seven dollars I earned in six fourteen-hour shifts, the money I worked like a slave for."

She sat down on the top step and buried her face in her hands. I noticed how white and frail those hands were, how worn and misshapen with hard work.

"I was saving up to go to Denver," she said list-
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I have something the matter with my lungs, and they told me I could get well only by going there."

I remember that as I stood with my back flattened against the door her hands caught my attention again and I stared at them fascinated, they were so different from the broad, stubby, practical hands I was accustomed to. They would have been beautiful if they had not been so emaciated, so calloused with work—the hands of an artist, long, slender fingers—wonderfully expressive. Perhaps some aristocrat of generations ago whom she had never even heard of had bequeathed those hands to her, for surely they did not belong to the ghetto.

I wonder why I can still recall those hands. Children seldom notice such details, certainly do not remember them for long. Strangely eloquent hands they must have been to have impressed me so; pathetic, appealing hands they must have been, telling vividly of toil and suffering, for to this day I can scarcely keep back the tears when I think of them.

What happened afterward that morning I have entirely forgotten. Perhaps I left her sitting there with her face buried in her wonderful hands. Perhaps we came away together to take up the dreary search for work. I do not know. But oh, how clearly I still see her before me up under the dome of the sky at the top of those long stairs on the outer wall of the building—her tattered grey dress,
her broken shoes, her white, tired face—as she asked, with just a glint of hope in her eyes, "Is the door still locked?"

Yet I scarcely think I could have felt much pity for her then. I was too young to be touched very deeply by the pathos of such an incident; and, besides, I was altogether too busy with my own worries to give much thought to those of others. That locked door meant misery to me, too, though I was well and strong and with all life before me; not hopeless and disillusioned as was that pitiful wreck of girlhood, broken on the rack of the sweatshop.

I reasoned that what mother and I needed in such an emergency as confronted us was the help of a man with a "pull," and I thought of Mandel Katzenstein, the street cleaner. Surely if Katzenstein could be induced to exert his influence in our behalf our troubles would be over. For was he not the politician of the block? Did he not hold a political job? Did he not call the policeman by his first name, "Hey—Jim?" (The policeman's name was like a Turk's as the street-cleaner and all the rest of us understood it, for we believed the "hey" was its first syllable.)

Out in the middle of the street I found him, where, very slowly and with the dignity of a man of his importance, he was sweeping the pavement with his wide, long-handled brush. I was certain he must know who I was, for did he not know all about everybody in the block? Politicians always knew
everybody. Also, owing to his position as street-cleaner, he was able to make a close study of every family’s financial condition from the character of the refuse they threw out. He knew that only those who were comparatively affluent threw away bed-springs that were not broken beyond the possibility of repair. If he found shoes with only the soles worn out, or a chair with four good legs, though it had lost its back, he knew such reckless waste denoted enough prosperity to render the usual economies unnecessary. All this knowledge was of value to him in his rôle of politician. I am sure no political boss ever had a more intimate knowledge of his constituents than Mandel Katzenstein had of his.

So I was not surprised when I found that he knew already of the hard struggle we were having to get along. He had not heard, however, of the closing of the skirtmaker’s shop.

“So-o!” he exclaimed when I told him of what had happened. “Anoder one! Dis is not de first time a boss has run away mit de wages. And more than once will it again happen. So now what will you do—look for anoder job?”

“Yes, a job for mine mader, Mr. Katzenstein, or all our t’ings will on the sidewalk be soon. Maybe you’ll find us a job, Mr. Katzenstein?”

Katzenstein leaned on his brush and looked as if he were thinking hard.

“I’ll come soon and see your mader,” he said at last, and resumed his sweeping. There was some-
thing about his manner and the tone of his voice that discouraged me. Intuition told me that either I had asked more than even he with all his political influence could give or he did not care to be troubled by us. So it proved, for, though he did come to see mother that very evening, he explained that many persons were asking him to find work for them—more than he could provide for—and he did not hold out much hope for us.

"Maybe I find somet'ing and let you know," he said. "I got a pull from some shops. Dose bosses I go see, and maybe in day, maybe a week, I hear somet'ing."

Maybe a week! A week without work and we should be out in the street starving. From that day have I had no faith in politicians.

"Mineself I'll find a job," I resolved, and early the following morning I was out hunting for one. Many long blocks I walked watching the windows for the sign that is displayed when employees are needed. Yet it seemed on that morning as if in all the teeming ghetto there was not one chance for us. Hour after hour I trudged along through the crowds, looking the buildings up and down, missing not one window in my search for the elusive sign. And then at last, when more than half the day was gone and my tired feet were aching, I saw it! "Hand Wanted On Blouses."

It was at No. 24 Pitt Street, four stories up. Just inside the door of the shop I was confronted by a
plump, elderly little man, who smiled down at me benignly.

"How old are you, little girl?" he inquired.

"Nine years, mister."

"I'll give you work for your mader. A bundle you take home with you this very day, and your mader makes maybe five dollars a week if she's a good sewer."

I felt my heart give a jump. Our crisis was over. We should be able to look Mr. Zalkin in the face.
CHAPTER IV

ZALMON ECKSTOFF GETS MARRIED

POVERTY! Oh, I know what it is!

Don’t talk to me of its blessings. It hasn’t any. Only old men with huge fortunes talk of its brighter side—old men who, if they ever knew poverty at all, knew it so long ago that they have forgotten its miseries. How I hate to hear them try to cheer the unfortunate by prating of the burdens of wealth and of their envy of the simple life of the poor. Go down into the ghetto, rich old man, and learn there what poverty means.

All through my childhood I never had a toy except an old rag doll; I never knew the joy of having a pretty new dress; I never saw the fields and woods or the seashore in summer; I never even went to a show. From the day my father died when I was seven years old, I never had time to play; I forgot how to play. The hours when I was not in school meant work, work, work, from early morning to late at night. Oh, yes, I know what poverty is.

For three years there was no break in that grinding routine of struggling to keep the home together, until, when I was getting to be quite a big girl, Zalmon Eckstoff got married. A great event in our block was Zalmon’s wedding and a still greater
event in my life, for it was the first big social affair I had ever attended. No matter how many hours of work we might lose mother and I simply couldn't stay away from the long anticipated celebration. Even Moishe and Sammy were taken along. Everybody in our house went—everybody but Hersch Ditchik, who couldn't be dragged away from his pushcart until his stock was sold out. Who but he could miss the wedding of such a near neighbour?

The bride was not the girl Zalmon had been engaged to at the time of Schmeel's death, for he was not a steady enough young man to continue a courtship through all the time that had passed since then. That first engagement had been broken long ago. The bride was Sadie Burick—a lucky match for Zalmon, for she could earn eight dollars a week in a skirt factory as she had done for years, and he had been out of a job for three months.

The scene of the wedding festival was set in the home of Mrs. Zulinsky, not because she was related either to the bride or groom, but because her home was the only one in the block that had a piano. Through all her troubles she had managed to keep her son's piano, though the clock and chairs were still missing and there were only boxes to sit on. It was easy to borrow chairs from neighbours for the wedding. But the piano was the most important consideration, for there must be music for the dancing that would follow the return from the synagogue. To earn a mitzvah (the pleasure of the
Above One) Mrs. Zulinsky had been glad indeed to offer to Mrs. Eckstoff the use of her home, piano and all.

Things began to go wrong at Zalmon's wedding from the very beginning. At the synagogue, around the corner in Pitt Street, where the ceremony was to be performed, hard feeling was created when the insistent demands of the bride's family compelled a delay of the solemnizing of the nuptials because Mrs. Burick's prosperous son-in-law, Moe Fishbein, who owned a hand laundry in Brooklyn, had not arrived. To hold the ceremony in his absence would mean the possibility of losing his wedding present, which had been announced in advance as ten dollars.

"Ten dollars for a pair of beggars whose husband ain't even got a job is a whole lot of money," declared one of Sadie's relations. "We can wait a few minutes with the ceremony. Nothing is on fire here that we should hurry."

"What kind of a yachtsin (important personage) is that Chinaman that we should all wait for him?" some impatient friend of the Eckstoffs demanded. "Those Buricks they got nothing to worry, for herring is herring and will be just as good if eaten later, but by us the supper will get cold. Why should it be we have a cold supper because we wait for a man washwoman?"

Mrs. Burick flared up at once.
"In their family," she cried, "they should have
such a man in the mispoocha (kindred)—a man what has five working people and a horse and wagon!"

This speech affected every one of the Eckstoffs, their relations and friends like the sting of a hornet. It fairly made them jump. They all began to talk at once, their voices pitched high, their hands waving wildly. Above the din could be heard one of Zalmon’s cousins crying shrilly:

“What is a laundryman? By us we got a writer in the family, or nearly in the family. It’s epes (somewhat) nicer than a laundryman. It’s epes more ungenumen (genteel) than a man what washes soiled clothes.”

The writer he referred to was Ben Rubin, who picked up bits of gossip for a Yiddish newspaper. On hearing himself compared to Moe Fishbein in such flattering terms he rose to the occasion.

“Who is he with his ten dollars, anyhow?” he demanded. “A whole sport he is by you on the East Side. By us in Brooklyn he had to beg me I should wash by him my things, what he tears to pieces, so rotten he is. Start the ceremony right away and I’ll give ten dollars for a present as good as his ten dollars. I ain’t got it all with me, Zalmon, not carrying my bank account in my pocket, but you get five down and five next week.”

So Rabbi Drucker was instructed to begin operations. As the rabbi took his place before the couple under the spreading canopy Fishbein arrived, his
wife on his arm, and the Buricks breathed easier. The laundryman wore a hired full-dress suit—in deed, at a ghetto wedding there is rarely a full-dress suit that belongs to the man who wears it—a high hat and low, tan shoes. His wife was attired in a hired silk gown, cut very low. She was a tall, stout woman, in striking contrast to her husband, who was short and thin. There was much craning of necks on their arrival because Fishbein had been heralded as a man of wealth, but his appearance was against him. Ben Rubin was a much more impressive figure, for not only did he wear a hired dress suit but he had patent-leather shoes to complete the conventional attire, and his serious expression and horn-rimmed spectacles gave him a distinguished appearance—distinguished at least as compared with Fishbein. The animosity of the bride's family and their relations was increased if anything by the obvious inferiority of the laundryman they had boasted about. In fact, Fishbein seemed to shrink under Rubin's glance.

"I t'ink this Fishbein is wearing one of Rubin's shirts," piped-up sharp-eyed little Moishe, who had heard rumours that the laundryman had been accused of wearing on formal occasions his customers' linen. I am sure Ben Rubin must have been seized by the same suspicion, for several times he made a close and questioning scrutiny of Fishbein's shirt-front.

At every wedding in our neighbourhood there
was a good deal of wrangling and disputing, but feeling ran higher at Zalmon's than was usual at such affairs. As soon as the ceremony in the synagogue was over the fact that the scene of the ensuing festivities had been set at Mrs. Zulinsky's home under the auspices of the Eckstoffs instead of at Mrs. Burick's almost precipitated a panic.

According to custom the wedding festival should have been held at the home of the bride. The unwritten law of orthodox Jewish society gives to the bride's parents that honour. But in the ghetto an honour involving the expenditure of money is sometimes regarded somewhat dubiously. Of course Mrs. Burick had an explanation ready:

"A flame carried away mine daughter. I didn't want the skidach in the first place. A fine ornament, such a son-in-law, that I should yet make a wedding party for him. If his mother wants a wedding party let her make it."

"Mit my mine son no one has to throw themself around," Mrs. Eckstoff retorted. "It's true that he ain't got a job, but who didn't begin life poor? It's all right; we won't send our son away with empty hands. The Almighty will look after him and Mrs. Burick's daughter. I'll make a supper even a king should be able to eat, and let her make a supper for her own relations in her own house. It's all right; the Above One will pay us in accordance with our due. Anyhow, mine relations won't have to eat on a party herring."
"Kid, you go with your gang and I'll go with mine," suggested Zalmon to his wife. "I'll meet you after the show."


She had no doubt that Zalmon would live up to the agreement because if he didn't the couple would get none of the presents that awaited them at the Burick home. And those presents could not be ignored, for the future of the still unfurnished home in Avenue B where they were to begin housekeeping depended entirely on wedding gifts.

So we hurried off to Mrs. Zulinsky's home, and there what a feast was spread! I am sure that on the improvised table, made of boards laid on wooden horses, more food was displayed than the Zulinsky family had eaten in a year. The table was covered with long, white cloths, the edges of which hung down on either side close to the floor. On these cloths were laid dishes containing more kinds of food than I had ever seen together. Conspicuous among the dishes were great piles of apples, oranges and bananas which had been bought wholesale from
Hersch Ditchik, and of sponge cake and little cakes of a dozen varieties home made by Mrs. Eckstoff.

Sam Silverman had come to the feast with his little boy, who in spite of his size—he couldn't have been more than eight years old—had the appetite of a very hungry full-grown person. My attention was first attracted to Mr. Silverman, who sat opposite me, when I noticed him reaching out for four bottles of seltzer, which he stowed away at his feet under the table to fortify himself against thirst in the hot, crowded room. As soon as he had made sure of the seltzer he began to grab food from all directions, piling it up before himself and his son, Yankel. When the roast chicken was brought on in huge platters—one platter for every ten persons—he became even more active. It seemed as if he couldn't get enough of that roast chicken. The contents of fully half of one of the platters he deposited before himself and Yankel at once, and I discovered that he was providing for the future as well as for the present, for I saw him wrap a wing and a leg in paper napkins and stuff them into his son's pockets.

All this seemed to me no more than wise foresight on the part of Mr. Silverman and unusual ability in providing for himself and his offspring, for I was not accustomed to elegant table manners in those days. But Ben Rubin, who had seen something of more refined social circles, was offended.
“What you grabbing about?” he asked sharply, scowling from behind his horn-rimmed spectacles.

“What you mean grabbing?” returned Mr. Silverman, who looked very much surprised and whose voice was rising to a shrill tremolo. “Ain’t me and the child got a right to eat? Mine child all day has had nothing in his mouth, and you talk about grabbing!”

Ignoring further remarks from Rubin, he resumed his attentions to his son’s appetite, at the same time keeping his own mouth well stuffed with chicken. I think I must have been almost as greedy myself, for never before in all my life had such a meal been spread before me, but even the food did not interest me more than did the grasping guest across the table.

Mrs. Becker, good old soul, ever helpful at weddings as well as at funerals, was taking a share in the work of waiting on the table, and she paused to speak to Mr. Silverman, who with his wife had been a neighbour years before of both herself and Mrs. Eckstoff.

“How is your wife?” she inquired. “Why didn’t she come?”

“Oh! Mine wife!” cried Mr. Silverman proudly in a voice that everybody could hear. “Mine wife is a semple.”

(Sample was what he meant.)

“A semple? What is that, a semple?”

“Mine wife is in the hospital.”
"She's sick?" All the women looked amazed that he should be enjoying a wedding while his wife was ill.

"No; she ain't sick any more. She's a sempel."

"What kind of a sempel? What can be a sempel in a hospital?"

"She was sick," Mr. Silverman explained, "but, thank the Above One! she is no more sick. You see, she was so sick she got such operations that nobody, not even the doctor, thought she should live. Nu, she got well. They are now keeping her in the hospital to show what good doctors they are. She's a sempel."

Mr. Silverman reached under the table for one of his bottles of seltzer, and the next moment was raiding the fruit plates and stuffing bananas and oranges into Yankel's pockets. He was certainly an expensive guest to have at a feast, but nobody except Ben Rubin seemed to pay any attention to his hoarding propensities or to his appetite. Most of the guests were too busy looking after their own appetites to worry about his, for not in many moons did such an opportunity come.

Everybody was provided for lavishly, and nobody wondered where the money had come from for such a bountiful meal. They all knew that Mrs. Eckstoff was poor and that of course she had had to strip her home almost bare and pawn most of her possessions to see that her son's wedding was celebrated properly. There was nothing unusual
about that. Any poor ghetto mother would have done the same under the circumstances.

Dancing was going on between the courses of the supper, but the bridal couple had only begun to take part in this feature of the celebration when their hour at Mrs. Zulinsky's home came to an end. Old Mrs. Becker, who had known the groom from the day of his birth and who had looked after him while his widowed mother was out working, bestowed a five-dollar bill and a tearful kiss upon the pair, who, having collected one hundred and ten dollars in presents, left promptly for Mrs. Burick's.

At the Burick door the bride's sister Stella confronted them.

"How much did you make?" she asked very candidly.

Zalmon told her.

"Pikers!" cried Stella. "By us you'll get more."

Zalmon and his bride, Moishe, myself and two or three other children to whom the squabbling between the rival families had meant nothing hurried in to be present at the cold repast Mrs. Burick had provided. Very soon everybody there knew the extent of the couple's sudden wealth. There were mutterings that the Burick family should not be put to shame, and Mrs. Burick said, though with a shade of doubt in her voice, "Any time will mine relatives acquit themselves as well as Mrs. Eckstoff's."

With the hope of getting from Fishbein a larger
gift than had been announced from him it was decided to accord him the high privilege of making a speech, but Fishbein demurred.

"I'm not a speechmaker," he said. "I'm a laundryman. My business is starching and ironing shirts and collars and things. Try me and you'll be glad. But speaking I leave to my lawyer, Sidney Kohan. Him I pay for it."

Sidney Kohan, however, was not present, and Mrs. Fishbein cried out sharply to her husband: "Would you put us all to shame? Make a speech!"

He glanced at her, seemed to make note of the determined look in her eyes, and decided to comply. There was nothing particularly timid about Fishbein, and his voice rang through the room. The speech he made ran about as follows:

"Zalmon! You are marrying a poor orphan that has only a mother. Treat her like your own child. She is only a child."

(Mrs. Burick and all the bride's sisters burst into tears.)

"You are a man. You were a bum. You know it, and we are all intimates; let's not fool ourseftes. What later will be depends on you. It is one way to carry on with a horse and another way to go on with a wife. A horse you can beat with a whip. That you should know. You're a good driver when you want to work. A wife is another thing. If she will be happy you will be happy; we will all be happy. If you are to live with your wife like you live with a
horse when you work, then will you all rot in the
ground. Here is ten dollars."

Fishbein's words seemed to me very impressive
and eloquent, for I had never heard a formal ad-
dress to a bridegroom before and had not learned
that almost all such speeches at ghetto weddings are
of much the same pattern and that there was noth-
ing particularly original about his.

No speech in reply from the bridegroom was ex-
pected, nor was it made. In fact Zalmon was too
busy figuring up the presents to think about making
a speech. The visit to the Burick home had brought
him eighty dollars—not so much as had been re-
ceived at Mrs. Eckstoff's, and the hope of inducing
Fishbein to increase the amount of his present had
not been realized; but the couple seemed satisfied;
indeed they had reason to be, for the total of one
hundred and ninety dollars was more money than
either of them had ever possessed.

They hurried back with their wealth to Mrs.
Zulinsky's home, where a goodly number of people
were waiting for a ceremony that always takes place
after a wedding though nobody pays any attention
to it after it is begun. This ceremony consisted of
the reading of telegrams from absent friends and
also of imaginary telegrams from celebrities. The
reading of the messages is an honour accorded to the
most learned person present, and of course Ben
Rubin was chosen. One of the genuine telegrams
was as follows:
"Charges prepaid Mr. and Mrs. Eckstoff we wish you luck and we wish you joy and a little baby boy.  
"(Signed) Mr. and Mrs. Slonim dealers in shoes."

In quite a number of them it was announced that the charges had been prepaid. It might add something to the cost of the messages, but it helped to emphasize the fact that the sender was not a piker and had spent money on his congratulations.

And of course there was the inevitable imaginary telegram from the White House:

"Mr. and Mrs. Eckstoff may you be the father and mother of a future president.  
"(Signed) Theodore Roosevelt."

Zalmon's wedding lingered in my thoughts for a long time, for it was the most festive affair I had ever seen. The steady grind of work was more irksome than ever after such an orgy of gaiety, and our poverty seemed more miserable after all the display of wealth I had seen—the dress suits, the tall hats, the patent-leather shoes, the silk dresses, all of which must have cost a lot of money to hire for an evening, and Moe Fishbein handing out ten dollars without even changing expression or giving it a good-bye look. Ten dollars! Mother and I were lucky when he earned as much as that in ten days. And Fishbein had given it away without a groan or a sigh! What would Hersch Ditchik have thought if he had seen the calm way in which the
laundryman parted with that bill—Ditchik whose horny fingers clutched and fondled even pennies as if nothing else in the world mattered.

Now the wedding had become only a memory; but it was to have a sequel. The show was over, but the two principal figures in it were not to drop out of my life like the actors in a play. It must have been poor Ditchik who was at the bottom of the turn of affairs that led me to the discovery of what lay at the end of Zalmon Eckstoff’s romance.

This is the way it happened: Things had been going badly with Hersch Ditchik of late. The profits from his pushcart had been growing smaller and smaller, and he was becoming discouraged. More and more often he spoke of giving up the struggle to earn enough money to bring his family to America. He would go back to Galicia and stay there. He was getting old, the fires of ambition were burning low, he was homesick, he longed to see his wife and children, and it might be years before he would be able to send for them.

"Who knows?" he would say. "Maybe I'll never live so long to save enough money to bring here mine wife and children. In your Amerika a man hardly can make a living for himself. To what will I bring mine family? To live somewhere in a cellar. Or maybe I should have to make mine wife for a janitor. Nu, I had to put a healthy head into a sick bed by coming here."

"What will we do if Ditchik will go?" mother
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would ask. "It's a long time since we had to worry about being put out on the street."

Then there would be silence. But I knew the answer to her question. There was only one thing to be done. I should have to leave school and get an all-day job. I was thirteen years old, and I felt that I had learned a great deal in school—enough to get through life with. I knew now how to use much better English than most of the people of our neighbourhood, and I knew many other things that most of the grown-ups had never learned. Our expenses were growing; we were in debt; the sewing-machine man hadn't been paid for two months; even Mr. Zalkin might be kept waiting when the next rent day came; and, oh, how ragged our clothes were and how many holes there were in our shoes! Oh, yes; even without the danger of losing our boarder the time had surely come for me to get an all-day job.

So at last it was decided, after mother had shed many tears and had used many arguments against it. I was large for my age and found no trouble in getting my working papers. The day after I left school I found work in a button factory in Centre Street. Though I did not know it, my path and that of Zalmon Eckstott's wife were drawing very close together.

It was a hard-driven lot of girls in that button factory. We had to begin work at seven o'clock in the morning, and we kept at it until seven in the
ALL DAY LONG HIS SHARP LITTLE EYES WERE UPON US
evening, except for an hour off for lunch in the middle of the day. A uniform wage scale prevailed among the younger girls of two dollars and fifty cents a week. If a girl came even a few minutes late the lost time was charged against her pay. Our work consisted of counting and assorting buttons and putting small pearl buttons on cards. We were not permitted to talk to each other. Sometimes some girl, unable to endure the silence any longer, would begin humming a tune, which would be taken up by others near her. Marks, the foreman, would question us until he had learned who began the singing. Then he would deduct three hours from her pay. If any girl objected to this treatment she was told to look for work elsewhere. It was my first real job and I was afraid of losing it, so I tried hard to keep silent. But for a lively young girl to be forced to keep her mouth shut for eleven hours is torture; it almost drove me wild. It seemed to me that Marks had no other object in life than to make us girls forget how to talk, forget how to smile or laugh. Surely if ever a man were born to stamp all joy out of young lives his name was Marks and he was foreman in that button factory. All day long his sharp little eyes were upon us, watching, watching, seeming to glitter with the hope of catching us in the act of breaking some rule and of pouncing upon us. There was never any sympathy in his face. The fact that we were only children—forlorn, overworked, brow-
beaten little girls to whom were denied all the pleasures of life—never softened him.

There were older girls and women in the factory, too, but even they earned no more than five dollars a week, and they were driven as hard as we were and crushed by the same maddening rules.

One day a young woman came into the factory looking for work. She must be hard up, I thought—she, a full-grown woman, coming to such a slave shop for a job. I did not see her face at first, but there was something familiar about her figure. And then she turned, and I recognized her—the heroine of that wonderful wedding that had lived in my memory through all the dreary months that had passed, Zalmon Eckstoff’s bride!

So this was what the bride of even such a wedding could come to! How could it have happened that even she had been driven to look for work in such a place, she who had been such a clever shirtmaker that she could make eight dollars a week in any factory she chose? The sight of her gave me a shock. It made me feel that even the most prosperous could never be safe from disaster. If fortune could take such a turn with Sadie Eckstoff what might happen to me?

She got the job. There was always room for one more in that factory because it had a bad name and no grown woman came there looking for work who did not need it badly.

When we filed out for the lunch hour I met her
ZALMON GETS MARRIED

on the stairs. She had changed a good deal since the day of the wedding. The fresh colour had gone from her face and there was a worried look in her eyes which had been so bright and twinkling at the supper at Mrs. Zulinsky's. I learned from her that all the skirt factories were closed by a strike and that there was no chance of work in her trade. She knew she could get a job at small wages in some place like that button factory, where she would be turned into a slave like the rest of us, but her pride caused her to hold out until all her money was gone and there was not a scrap of food left in the home.

"But your husband?" I asked. "Isn't he working?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Eckstoff bitterly. "He's been busy ever since our wedding."

"What's he been working at?"

"Finding jobs for me," she answered sharply.

Weeks went by, and Mrs. Eckstoff and I still clung to the grind of the button factory. I am sure that all the spirit of childhood that was left in me was driven out in that place and that Zalmon Eckstoff's wife, who had made such a merry, attractive bride, lost her youth and grew suddenly old in those weeks. But the strike was still on in the skirt factories, and there was no escape for her. Neither was there any escape for me, for mother was not getting so much work as formerly and every penny I made was needed at home.
One day on my way home from work I came face to face with Zalmon Eckstoff himself. He recognized me at once and stopped to talk. However forlorn his wife might be looking, there was no sign of poverty about his appearance; in fact he had grown a good deal stouter since his marriage.

"You got a job yet?" I asked.

"Sure I got a job."

"Oh, you got a job at last. What kind of job? A good-paying job?"

"It ain't a pay job," replied Zalmon. "I got a job being an anarchist."

An anarchist! A murderer! A man that kills presidents! I turned away from him with a shudder.

But I did not know then how soon Zalmon Eckstoff's path and mine were to meet.
CHAPTER V

EMPTY CUPBOARDS

In front of the door of a tenement that stood at the corner of the covered alley leading to our courtyard a pile of chairs, tables, boxes and rolls of bedding blocked the sidewalk. It was late afternoon, and gas jets and pushcart torches were beginning to spread pale aureoles in the dusk. A ragged woman with a baby in her arms stole out from the hallway, and stood staring with round, child-like, frightened eyes at the disorderly array of household goods. They were hers—the wreck of her home.

Passers-by took but scant notice of either the forlorn young mother or the pitiful display of her treasures. It was too old a story in the ghetto. To her the thing had happened the fear of which hung always over thousands of homes in those streets. Sometimes a man or a woman paused for a moment, moved by pity or just a touch of curiosity, then passed on with a little shrug of the shoulders. It was only another eviction, and there were hundreds of tragedies just like this one all over the lower East Side that summer.

A little shiver ran through me as I saw this woman standing there so helpless and miserable,
clutching her baby to her breast. I knew that the dreadful thing that had overtaken her was what we ourselves had barely escaped many times, and that sooner or later luck might turn against us in our struggle to meet Mr. Zalkin's demands and we should see our own things strewn just as these were helter-skelter on the walk. While the grown-ups passed on, most of them indifferent, too busy with their own affairs to give much attention to the troubles of others, an eager curiosity born of dread of just such a disaster to our own home held me to the spot. I am sure she must have been too anxious and bewildered and heartbroken to take notice of me, for she kept staring at the litter of cheap things, which were surely all her possessions, things in which she must have taken no end of pleasure and pride while she had been gathering them one by one in the making of her home.

Suddenly, with a little gasp as if she had resolved on something that cost her an effort, she brought out a china plate from the folds of her dress and placed it on one of the chairs. Then she turned away with a sob, wiping her eyes with her sleeve, and moved slowly off down the street with her baby. She had made the last sacrifice—her pride. People would drop pennies, perhaps even nickels and dimes, into that plate—enough to save her from being wholly destitute.

As I went through the street I saw other piles of furniture—indeed I could have found fifty of them
in the course of an hour's stroll—and on a few—only a few, for to ask alms was the last resource of desperation—plates had been placed, some of them already covered with coins. Never had I heard of so many families dispossessed. In every block at least one home had been destroyed through a landlord's appeal to the law. The streets were full of men, women and young girls looking desperately for work. Theirs was almost a hopeless search, for the strikes in the needle trades which at the very beginning had driven Zalmon Eckstoff's wife to the button factory had spread and spread until now there were hundreds of closed shops.

The closed shops meant no work for mother, and for more than a week our only income had been my earnings and what Hersch Ditchik paid us for board. Eight dollars a month from him and two dollars and fifty cents a week from me would not keep the home going very long; that was certain. The appetites of Moishe and Sammy seemed to grow keener with every day and never had the supplying of our larder been such a problem. Another crisis in our affairs was drawing near. That was plain enough.

Such a crisis had already come in the home of Zalmon Eckstoff with the result that he and his wife had come to live with his mother on the floor above us. He was penniless, for the money received at the wedding had been spent long ago on furnishing the home in Avenue B, and his wife's reduced
earnings were no longer sufficient to support both herself and her husband.

Most of their furniture had been bought on the instalment plan and had been "pulled" by the dealer because payments had lapsed for many months. Remaining to them were a brass bed, which had been presented to them at the time of their wedding by the bride's mother and sisters, who had bought it out of their savings, an icebox which the young couple had bought for cash second-hand, several kitchen chairs, a kitchen table, some curtains and a set of four framed pictures printed in colour and entitled "Love," "The Elopement," "Marriage" and "Forgiven." The pictures were a wedding present from the employees of the shop where the bride was employed at the time of the marriage. All these things saved from the wreck were a welcome addition to the elder Mrs. Eckstoff's household goods because she had not been prospering of late and had been obliged to part with a good deal of her own furniture.

Zalmon and his wife had been living in his mother's home for only a few days when Mr. Zalkin appeared in the door demanding "de rent." He knew the Eckstoffs were in hard circumstances, hated them accordingly and put more emphasis into his words than usual. His call was a calamity to Zalmon's mother, who, seeing that her son was eager to face the landlord, retired to a corner, where she sat weeping. She had managed to keep
a roof over her head and over her son's head through many weary hours of toil, but now she had no money with which to meet Mr. Zalkin's demand. Her nerves were shaken also by a fear that Zalmon would burst into a tirade, which would surely make the hard heart of Mr. Zalkin even harder. Zalmon, who had not had his hair cut for at least a year, long hair being suited to his character as a radical, was already facing Mr. Zalkin with blazing eyes. The landlord belonged to the class he hated. Was he not a man of property, a capitalist, an exploiter of the poor?

"Beat it!" Zalmon cried. "You get no rent to-day."

Mr. Zalkin drew back a step, looking very much puzzled. He surely had not met with such a rebuff since Mr. Lipsky had taught him to take off his hat in his presence. Probably he had expected to find poor old Mrs. Eckstoff alone. She would have cringed before him, he knew.

"Vass is it, 'beat it'?" he demanded. "You don't own me de rent?"

"When we have the money we will pay you," returned Zalmon.

"Vat you mean, 'ven you have de money'? It's already two weeks more than de month. I had already a tenement what owned me for a month and moved out."

The recollection of that loss stirred him to fury, and he shouted in a voice that could be heard
throughout the building: "De rent! What kind of business is this? Lieber Gott! For money what people own me I gotta beg. Mine enemies should be landlords with such a tenements like you."

This had an irritating effect on Zalmon, who had been pacing back and forth silenced by his mother's pleading.

"Get out, you schleper (pauper)!" he roared. "You yard-singer that got rich picking up pennies that people throwed you!" (That was in truth the way Mr. Zalkin had got his start in life.)

The landlord noted the danger signal in Zalmon's eyes and retreated hurriedly down the stairs. From the floor below, where he felt fairly safe, he called back: "Wait! To-morrow will be by you de city marshal in de house, and de next minute your t'ings will be on de street."

Three days later Zalmon, who had been away visiting some radical friends ever since the day of Mr. Zalkin's call, returned to find that his mother had been to court, where she had been told to move the following morning unless she paid her rent; otherwise all her possessions would be put into the street.

"On the street he'll put us out!" Zalmon cried. "A million dollars expenses I'll make him first! Wait. You'll see."

He hurried out, and in the course of half an hour returned with some huge strips of wood. They
had already been used for some purpose and were full of nails, but he pulled these out. For the remainder of the day the Eckstoff home resounded to the din of sawing and hammering. By evening he had built an enormous crate almost as large as the room in which it stood. It was so large in fact that it needed only a glance to prove that all the engineering science in the world could never suggest a way of getting it through the narrow door, much less through a window.

Zalmon proudly called the neighbours in to show them what he had done, and he seized the opportunity to make a speech.

"Let them put us out now, those cheap marshals, those murderers from the law who will put a poor man out on the street for so much a day!" he cried. "Here is your example of the law. Law! Down with the law! If there would be no laws there would be no judges to give out dispossesses to the rich landlords to put out the poor tenants. If there had been no law there would be no city marshals. If there was no law there would be nothing to keep me from squeezing out the life of this bedbug that calls himself a landlord. Damn the law! Let them put us out now! Let them touch one nail from that case and I will show them what their own law will do for them. I'll go to the same judge and sue them for ten thousand dollars! They ain't allowed to break my property. Let them move the case, but without breaking it or opening it. And if they really
want it out so badly let them tear the doors, the stairs, the house apart."

I stared at Zalmon in silent awe. To me he had suddenly become an intellectual giant, a genius who had performed a miracle. Who but he could have braved the wrath of Mr. Zalkin and then have cheated him of his revenge?

Before long came the marshal with his movers. One look at the crate convinced him that he had a knotty problem on his hands. Having some knowledge of the law he was far from certain that he had a right even to loosen a single nail in an effort to get the bulky thing out. As he stood there scratching his head and looking very much perplexed Mr. Zalkin hurried in breathless.

"Murderer!" he cried, confronting Zalmon. "What do you want from my life? Why don't you move—move like a gentleman?"

"A fit you will take a thousand times before we will move, schnorrer!" Zalmon returned.

Being called a schnorrer (a beggar) was too much for Mr. Zalkin to stand, for he was sensitive to references to the days when he had scraped together enough money to buy an equity in that very house by going from yard to yard singing Yiddish melodies in a quavering voice and picking up the pennies that were thrown to him. His voice rose to a scream.

"I'll bring you in de court! I'll bring you in de court if mine house I have to foremortgage! You tell de judge vat you called me."
"Bah! Maybe next week I'll pay you. To-day we have no money."
"When next week? When, murderer?"
"Friday; a week from to-day."
"You make it Sunday. Make it Monday. By Friday you will have 'lived in' a whole month already."
"I'll make it Thursday and no sooner."
"All right; let it be Wednesday."

Zalmon dropped off another day, and it was settled for Wednesday. But not until that day came would Zalmon permit the unpacking of the household goods. Not until somehow or other his mother had succeeded in scraping together the amount of the rent and he held a receipt for it signed by the landlord's mark—for Mr. Zalkin couldn't write even his name—would he take a chance of having the marshal dash in and carry off the family's possessions.

Zalmon's strategy made him a hero in the neighbourhood, for never had a landlord been outwitted so cleverly. Indeed his fame spread far and wide, for Ben Rubin wrote up the incident for his Yiddish paper, in which he proclaimed Zalmon Eckstoff as the inspired champion of the poor.

Our own rent day was drawing terribly near and there was no telling where the money was to come from. We certainly couldn't save it out of my earnings. Ditchik's last payment had already been spent and it would be almost a month before he
would pay again. This time it was not only the rent that worried us but the problem of how we were going to buy enough food to keep from starving. Ditchik brought in his own food—bread and herring mostly—so we didn’t have to bother about his appetite, but with four in the family and three of us fast-growing children it cost us for food alone seven or eight times as much as our boarder spent for his frugal meals. The butcher and the grocer were no longer giving credit to anybody—not even for a day—and never had it been so hard to borrow a dollar. We might have toured the whole neighbourhood in that closed-shop period without raising twenty-five cents. Already many families in our block were going hungry.

I came home from work one evening and found mother counting a few pennies—all the money we had. The evening meal was laid out on the table already, and my heart sank when I saw how meagre it was. At my place were only two thin slices of bread and some coffee.

"It is the best I can provide," mother said with a sob in her voice. "Scarcely any food is there in the house, it is yet four days before you are paid and we have just twelve cents. We must eat less or the time will come when there will be not even a mouthful."

I jumped up and ran to our tin box. Inside were two loaves of bread, a little tea, small packages of sugar and salt and a handful of coffee. I went to
the window where on a wooden shelf fastened to the outer wall of the building we kept our perishable foods. The shelf held six potatoes; nothing else. How were four persons going to live through four days with nothing to eat but two loaves of bread and six potatoes? I think my face must have gone white as I turned to mother. Poor mother! She was trying hard to keep back her tears. I realized then why she had not let me know before how close we were to starvation. I was working twelve hours a day, and she had tried to save me from worry.

That evening after Moishe and Sammy had been put to bed we sat up late talking over what could be done. We might borrow a dollar, mother suggested. I couldn't help but laugh. Who could borrow a dollar at such a time? Our neighbours were hoarding their coins like misers fearing that they, too, might soon be forced to join the ever-growing number of homeless and destitute.

“We might borrow a dollar from Hersch Ditchik,” mother persisted.

“We owe him a dollar already,” I objected. “And he hasn't been acting like himself lately. He is growing dissatisfied.”

“Yes, we cannot borrow from him again,” mother admitted. “It is better that we should go hungry until you are paid. But what then? Your two dollars and a half will not last until another pay-day.”

“I'm going to look for another job,” I said.
"We can't live on what the button factory pays me."

We began figuring how much we could eat a day. It was a simple problem. It was plain that we had a daily supply of half a loaf of bread and a potato and a half. That much a day for four persons. How was I to keep working twelve hours a day in that slave shop on my share of those scant rations?

"But we have the twelve pennies," said mother. True; I had forgotten them. And much could be made of those twelve pennies. At the Christian bakery, which offered an opportunity that was not to be found at the Jewish bakers', who made all their stale bread into pumpernickel, we could buy stale loaves for four cents each, one cent less than the prices of the fresh bread. Three loaves we bought there with our twelve cents. We could soak them in water and put them in the oven, which would make them almost as good as if they were fresh.

Somehow we got through those four dreadful days, and, weak and faint though I was from hunger, I managed to stick to my grinding job. But those days of suffering put a bitterness into my heart that never left it. The spirit of rebellion broke loose in me then—rebellion against the conditions that had left us and so many others in such fearful poverty and misery while others lived in comfort. The fires of hatred flamed in me then—hatred of the bosses that tyrannized over us, mere children that we were, and kept us toiling through those long
hours for a pittance, hatred of the landlords who would turn families into the street because of a few paltry dollars, hatred of the rich who seemed to live their luxurious lives without a thought of the miseries of such as we, hatred of the whole world, a world so black and hopeless. And I know that those days of starvation left me with my youth gone forever, though I was only fourteen years old.

Fear took hold of me, a fear such as I had never known before; for now I knew what starvation meant. I knew the agonies of it, the sickness, the blinding headaches that came in the work-hours, the sleepless nights, the dreadful dreams that hunger and exhaustion bring, dreams of horror such as only children have. From that time I had a dread of being penniless again that I could never shake off.

More than once after that crisis had been passed and we were just managing to keep our home together I lay awake half the night thinking of the evicted woman I had seen with her baby. I wondered what had become of her. I wondered whether we, too, might not soon be turned out into the street, as she had been. I wondered whether we could ever bring ourselves to place a plate for the pennies of passers-by with our evicted things, as she had done. Yes, perhaps we should even come to that. Rather than starve I knew I should put out the plate.

At a time when our fortunes seemed to be at their lowest ebb Mr. Katzenstein, the street cleaner, called
to announce that he had found work for mother as a cleaner in an office building. The job might not last very long, he told her, but it would help. Mother held it for two weeks and earned enough to solve the problem of how our immediate needs were going to be met. Then came another catastrophe. As we were about to prepare breakfast one morning we found on a table a crumpled piece of paper in which was wrapped a dollar and ninety-two cents. On the paper was written:

"Mrs. Ganz—Wherever my eyes will lead me there am I going. Zeit gesund [Be you healthy]!"

There was no signature; it needed none. We knew Hersch Ditchik had left it there. The money was the amount he owed us, which he had figured to the very penny. There was no need of further explanation. We knew that for weeks our boarder had been moody and discouraged. The bitterness of his separation from his wife and children, who were so far away and whom he might not be able to see for years, had driven him desperate. He had gone God knew where—to wander like a tramp perhaps. Very likely he would return after weeks or months with less money in his bag and with even less hope of sending for his family.

This loss of our boarder was a serious matter. If we could not find another boarder eight dollars a month would have to be added to our earnings somehow, or the wolf would be at the door again.
The strikes were still going on, and as long as so many shops were closed there was little chance that mother would be able to find any sewing work. But for several days I had had an eye on the possibility of a job in a dress and kimono shop that had not been affected by the labour disturbances. Rosie Schecter, a girl I had met in the button factory, had just succeeded in finding work in this shop and she was watching for an opening for me. Rosie was earning five dollars a week and was sure I could get just as much. It was just the same kind of a slave-driving place as the button factory, she told me, but after working under the terrible Marks for twelve hours a day she felt that she could stand anything.

One evening as I was on my way to talk with Rosie about this job Jimmie Casey, the firelighter, came tumbling down the stairs of an old tenement and brought up face to face with me on the sidewalk.

"The old man's dead," he announced breathlessly.

"What old man?" I asked.

"Why, the old feller with the fiddle that played the songs."

"Herman?"

"That's him. Come along. You want to see him?"

Together we crept up the stairs—very dark and dirty stairs they were—and at the very top we came
to an open door. There wasn’t a sound, and the darkness frightened me. Jimmie caught my hand to give me courage, and we passed through the door into a very small garret room. A little light was glimmering in through the dirty window-panes, and there, sitting almost upright in a chair, was old Herman clutching his violin, his “baby” as he had often called it. On his dead face was a smile such as I had often seen when I was a small child and he had come to play to the little girls who were dancing on the sidewalk.

The next moment we were stealing cautiously down the rickety stairs, and I gave a gasp of relief when I saw the street lights again.

A widely-known character in the ghetto Herman the fiddler had been. More than one celebrated vaudeville star had when a child danced on the ghetto streets to his music. To many a family he had served as a clock, so methodical he had been in his comings and goings. If Bennie Kessler, who was noted for his love of a warm bed, happened to waken a few minutes earlier than was his custom to rise he would remark, half asleep: “Herman is yet by Schindler’s yard. I still have fifteen minutes to sleep.” And he would pull up the quilt again. I felt as if another link with my childhood had been broken by the old fiddler’s death.

I left the firelighter to spread the news of his discovery, and hurried on to find Rosie. She had got the job for me at last and I was to get five
dollars a week, which was just twice as much as the button factory paid me. Five dollars! Almost enough to save us from worry, and after the strikes, when mother went to work on skirts again, we should be rich. The news went to my head. I felt like jumping about and shouting. But I reflected that I should have to behave like a grown woman now that I had such a job. They wouldn't take me if they knew I was only fourteen. Fortunately I was big enough to pass as two or three years older.

My enthusiasm didn't last long. Rosie had been right in saying it was the same kind of a slave-driving place as the one in Centre Street; in fact it was worse if any place could be worse. Levinson, our foreman, was another Marks but with far more opportunity for making his girls miserable. The abusive words he used in dealing with us some of the girls could not stand, and they gave up their jobs, preferring to risk the danger of starving.

It was in this dress and kimono shop that I learned the meaning of the speed-up system. It was a means of getting larger quantities of work out of the already hard-driven girls. Sitting in long rows, our bodies bent over the machines, the work we turned out fell into wooden bins attached to the part of the machine facing us. No one girl made an entire garment. Each was a specialist, making either a sleeve, a collar or some other portion. As she completed her part the garment was passed on to the next girl by
Levinson, who was always walking back and forth urging us on. Should a girl lag behind he would prod her, sometimes pulling on the garment to hurry it on to another worker.

"Hurry! Don't you see that the sleevemaker soon will have no work?" he would shout.

This sort of thing created a spirit of competition for self-preservation which ended only when the worker, too weak to compete longer with a stronger sister, broke down.

One day I was half a sleeve behind my "follow-up," and Levinson, to hurry me, pulled on the waist. In doing so he pulled my finger under the needle, which plunged into the finger a dozen times and broke off, leaving a piece of steel in the flesh. I almost fainted with the pain, but Levinson was unconcerned.

"Wait a minute," he cried, "and I'll get another needle."

"I'm hurt," I said. "I can't go back to work."

"You can go back to work or you can lose your job," answered the foreman, and he slipped a new needle into the machine.

Five dollars a week! I couldn't give it up. I gritted my teeth and sat down to my work; and I stuck to it for the rest of the day.

Before many days I discovered another phase of the speed-up system. At the end of each week the girl who had turned in the least work was dropped from the pay-roll. Knowledge of this fact had the
effect of keeping the girls working like mad. Every week we knew that one of us was doomed to go—the weakest one of course, who could not keep up with the terrific pace. And before long came a week when that weakest one was myself.
ICHAEL SCHWARTZ poked his head in at our door to say "Good morning." The only answer he got was a stifled sob from me, and he stepped in to investigate.

"So-o!" he exclaimed, looking into my face, which was red and swollen from crying. "You got no job again."

Gifted with quick perceptive faculties was Ichael. He had read the situation at a glance.

"Find me a job, Ichael; find me a job," I pleaded. "We got no money. We'll be out in the street if we don't get a job."

"A job!" he cried. "A job! Why you don't better ask me I should get by the landlord a hundred-dollar Christmas present? A lot easier than a job getting would be that. For the three from us, Abie, Rudolph and me, we ain't one job got, and yesterday only we hocked it our sateen quilt. And now I'm thinking of being a missis."

"A missis!"

"Sure; a missis. Already Abie and Rudolph has went to Rochester, where they think they can jobs find, and now the whole rent I got to pay from mine own pocket. I'm going to be a missis."
"But how can a man be a missis?"

"Why not?" Ichael humped his narrow shoulders and turned out the palms of his hands to give emphasis to his words. "I'll put on an apron, take in boarders, and I'll be a missis."

"But me and mother is each a missis, and we got no boarder at all," I argued. "How could a man missis get boarders if we can't?"

"You'll see," Ichael said. "But listen. I seen an ad in a paper from a dressmaker what wants a girl for a job."

He pulled a crumpled newspaper from his coat and began running a finger along the classified advertising columns. At last he found what he was after. An errand girl was wanted by a modiste in Fifth Avenue. A job on Fifth Avenue, the street of the rich! My imagination began to stir. What tales I had heard of that street—of its splendid homes, its great hotels, its stores where one could spend a fortune on a bit of jewelry, on a tiny vase that the squeeze of a rough hand might shatter into dust, on a dress that might be spoiled in a night; what tales of its endless procession of carriages and automobiles, its myriads of sparkling electric lights that turned the darkness into day! Of course I had never been there, unless possibly I had caught a glimpse of it on that wonderful ride I had taken with the stranger when I was a small child. We children of the ghetto's poor never, unless through some miracle, strayed so far from our own neigh-
bourhood as that. Indeed very few of the grown folks among us ever went beyond the bounds of the lower East Side. Riding in street cars was expensive, and nickels were too scarce to be squandered on such extravagance as sight-seeing. So it was little we really knew of the strange world that lay just beyond our own domain—of the region that lay before us dim and mysterious in the distance on summer nights as we stood on the house-tops.

"You think I could find Fifth Avenue, Ichael?" I asked doubtfully.

"Sure," he answered. "You keep walking up the Bowery and asking the policemens. It ain't hard finding the way anywheres if you keep asking the policemens."

"Give me the piece out of the paper," I said. "I'm going."

And so it was that I went out that morning into the undiscovered country. A thrilling journey it was through all those unknown streets, and when I came to the great avenue that was my goal I was dazed with its wonders. Crowds I was accustomed to, for the ghetto's streets were always swarming with people, but not with such people as I saw now. How tall the men and women were! How strange their faces! What wonderful clothes they wore! How motionless they held themselves as they talked—no gesturing of hands, no shrugging of shoulders. Truly I had discovered a new race of human beings.

I came at last, as if walking in a dream, to the
shop whose advertisement I carried in my hand. It was a very fine shop with great silken curtains in the windows and trees growing in pots at the doorway. But inside it was even more impressive, not only because of its rich furnishings but because of the glory that seemed to be reflected all over it from the magnificence of the woman who was its boss. Many a dressmaker I had seen, but never one that bore the faintest resemblance to the woman who ran that shop. Here was a dressmaker who wore the clothes of a queen, or at any rate such clothes as I imagined queens must wear, and who carried herself with truly royal dignity; a dressmaker whose clean, polished, carefully-trimmed fingernails bore no traces of the toil of her trade, whose hands were white and soft, even to the tips of the fingers, with not one callous spot, not one sign of a needle prick. She was tall and stout and had a mass of vivid red hair. Her eyes were as grey, cold and unwavering as an eagle's. Never before had I met a woman of such majestic appearance. Indeed she was the first woman I had ever spoken with in my life who was not of the ghetto.

"You will receive four dollars a week," she said, giving me a sharp look and then turning her back on me. "Be here to-morrow morning at eight."

A good hour's walk it was between home and the modiste's (I soon learned that she was never referred to as a dressmaker), but all the time I held that job I never thought of taking a car. Five cents
for carfare! What would become of me if I acquired such luxurious ways? Neither was the spending of money for lunch to be considered for a moment. I could carry a cream-cheese sandwich from home to serve as my mid-day meal.

My work for the modiste brought me into contact with such life as I had never dreamed of—the life of the very rich. The wealth of the East Side shop bosses and landlords, men to whom the ghetto looked in awe, was as nothing to that of many of the women whose gowns I lugged through the streets. The homes to which I was sent and the liveried servants to whom I delivered my parcels filled me with wonder. The first time I ever met a butler I thought he must be some high official far more powerful than even a policeman, and I fairly grovelled before him.

A few days of such experiences and I began to realize more clearly than ever before all the squalor and miserable poverty in which we and our neighbours lived. What a contrast! At last I had solved the fascinating mystery of that hazy region that, as we spread our beds on the house-top on summer nights, lay under the low northern stars. No wonder it had seemed like some enchanted kingdom against the dim horizon, for I had found it to be in reality almost that, with its palaces, its wealth that seemed limitless, its strange, luxurious inhabitants, whose customs, environment and ideas bore scarcely any resemblance to ours.
I began to ask myself why all the comforts and joys of life which those people had should be denied to us. Why was fortune so parsimonious to us, so prodigal to them? Who among us had fine clothes, unless they hired them for an evening? Was there one of us who could spare even a single day to pleasure? If we slaved from early morning until dark we thought ourselves fortunate, for we were making a living—the hard, bare living that was all we could ever hope for; if we were idle we starved. Luxuries were beyond our wildest hopes. Luxuries! Who ever spoke of them? We had a neighbour once who set his ambition on some day possessing a bathtub, and his friends doubted his sanity. Of course he never got it. Who ever heard of a bathtub in those tenements, where there was not even a gaspipe and where running water was to be found only at the sinks in the halls?

Until now I had taken the conditions in which we lived as a matter of course. I had thought almost everybody lived in that way. The discovery of how wretched we were as compared with the people in other districts roused the spirit of discontent and a hatred of my lot. I was sorry I had ever gone outside our ghetto. Never did life seem so bitter and hopeless as now.

I knew from the beginning that Fifth Avenue didn't agree with me. I was a stranger in a strange land. I could never be contented there. The ghetto called to me. I wanted to be back among my own
kind. The Fifth Avenue job did mean freedom from the tyranny of such men as Marks and Levinson, but I had found that there was nothing easy about the lot of a modiste's errand girl. I was kept going all day long. Sometimes, when I had to wait late for the completion of a gown for a customer who was in a hurry for it and I had to carry it a long distance after the closing of the shop, I would not get home until eight or nine o'clock in the evening. By that time, of course, I would be half starved and dead tired.

These women who were kept waiting for their gowns were almost always irritable and bad tempered, and they usually laid the blame for the delay entirely upon me. One of these vixens, who was perhaps an actress or a singer, for she certainly had the artistic temperament, pounced upon me as I arrived with her gown long after shop-closing time, and gave me such a hard slap in the face that I was almost knocked off my feet.

"You young devil!" she cried. "What do you mean by taking so long in getting here? Don't you know I ought to have had that dress two hours ago and have been kept waiting?"

I swung the heavy pasteboard box over my shoulder, and brought it down with a thud on her head.

"There's your dress," I said, and darted for the door.

How she did scream and curse. I didn't stop run-
ning until I was safely around the corner of the block.

The next day I gave up my job and got what money was owing me. It was an early hour, and evidently the modiste had not heard of what I had done.

On my way home I discovered that the soles of my shoes were worn through, and I called on Berel Ginsberg, the shoemaker, partly to find out what would be the very least he would charge for new soles, and partly because, as he was a wise old man, I wanted to talk over my troubles with him and ask his advice.

His shop was in a basement, a few steps below the street level, and through his mud-bespattered window he could see only the lower half of each passer-by. Sitting in his backless chair, whose legs had been cut short to bring his knees on a level with his last, he could identify by a glance at the feet any passer-by whom he knew.

"There goes Fineman, the grocer," he would say. "A gozlin (robber)! The whole block he is making poor while he is getting red in the face with health and money. I can tell him from his turned-out shoes on the inside by the toes. Like a thief he walks on his toes. By him always the sole is worn out; the heel never. Everything what you buy by him and he puts on the book grows. A pound sugar take by him is eight cents. Next day he will sneak in before the eight a one, and it
is eighteen. A wonder that people wear diamonds and we wear rags.

"Lechinsky, the butcher. Here he goes. I can tell him from his heels. He wears them out even in the back. Such a man what stands on his own feet takes from nobody. That is why he is a poor man.

"There goes Mrs. Levine. A lovely woman. Three times I already her shoes fixed. Poor woman, she is sick, and she must work for such a bummer. Hardly can she her feet drag. I cry nearly when I fix her shoes. Always one toe and one heels on the inside must be fixed. God should give me such a wife when I marry again."

Thus he was rambling on as he worked at his last, pausing now and then to look up at me when something I said chanced to arouse his interest.

"I want to get ahead, Mr. Ginsberg," I said. "I don't want to stay so very poor and miserable all my life, with never a job that lasts. Sometimes we go hungry; always we worry; never can we put a dollar by for a time of trouble. What can I do?"

The old man raised his head from his work and studied my face. For some time he remained silent.

"Don't take from me an example," he said at last. "Mine whole years I been sitting here in the cellar and looking at people's feet. People's troubles I know enough from their feet. I can't help
their troubles, so I help their shoes. I fix them. They get a job with the fixed shoes. Sometimes they walk off the new soles and come back with the shoes again to be fixed, and yet a job they ain’t got. If I was a young person all over again, if to me it now should be coming to live instead of coming to die, I would better work by fixing people’s heads.”

“How do you mean fixing people’s heads? You’d be a doctor?”

He looked up at me sadly from under his bushy eyebrows. “What shoemaker wouldn’t be a doctor?” he asked, with a sigh. “Some even become doctors, and better shoemakers they could be, on my honest word. No; I mean I would make people think. I would fix their heads so they should know not to do again what I have done with my life. They should then know enough to fight for a place out of the darkness. Some one must make the people in this foreblackened world think, that they should able be to help themselves.”

For a few moments he sat staring into my face. “Ah!” he exclaimed at last. “You understand! You have on your shoulders a head. Yes, you will teach yourself to think.”

Long I talked there with the old man, and I came away from his cellar thrilled by a new resolution. Yes, I would teach myself to think. I would read. I would study. I would go to the libraries. I would go to the night school. I would talk with people
who knew how to think. I would raise myself out of the rut.

But first of all I must get a job. Through the remainder of that day I went from shop to shop, spurred on by the realization that every hour I was out of work brought starvation so much nearer to our door. Toward the end of the day I called at the sample-card place of a man named Lewis, in Grand Street. This man told me I could go to work, but that instead of naming my salary in advance he would pay me at the end of the week what he thought I was worth. I was not sure I could trust him to be fair with me in this proposition, but I took the job.

In a small, dingy room I found eight girls working by gaslight. One or two of them glanced at me indifferently, but the rest did not even look up from their cards as I took my place with them. They were all working with feverish energy at top speed, as if they were mere bundles of nerves keyed up to the breaking point.

Before the week was out I had succeeded in keeping up with the hard pace set by the others. Except for the mid-day lunch we seldom paused for even a moment in the counting and sorting of the cards, and our workday was from seven o'clock in the morning until eight at night. When my first pay-day came I received an envelope containing four dollars and a half, which was a decided disappointment, for I was sure I deserved more after
working at such a pace through thirteen-hour days.

I had soon learned why the girls put such feverish energy into their work. The shop had what was known as the slip system, which was designed to keep a check on the workers every hour of the day. On arriving in the morning each girl received a long, white slip of paper ruled into spaces in which the foreman marked the precise time at which a bundle of work was passed to any of us and the time of its return to him. At the end of the day these cards were collected and turned into the office. If the record showed that a girl had fallen off in speed during any hour of the day she was informed that a deduction would be made from her pay to make up for her failure to keep the pace. If Sarah Cohen's salary was five dollars and Minnie Sidman's was six a check-up of the slips would have to show that Minnie had done enough more work than Sarah during the week to make up for the difference in wages. This scheme had the same effect as the speed-up system I had experienced in the dress factory under the watchful eyes of Levinson. It acted as a relentless driving force which gave a girl no rest and which took all the nervous energy she had. We were like runners in a long-distance race, not daring to pause for an instant, straining to keep abreast of one another or to catch up with some girl who was outdoing us.

Night school was out of the question until I could
manage to find a job that would not keep me so late, for it was nine o'clock before my evening meal was over. But I could carry out a part of my resolution, and almost every evening I went to the East Broadway Library, across the street from the Educational Alliance.

There I met the Russian set. All Russians seemed to be revolutionists. Girls as well as men told me of dangerous plots in which they had taken part against the Czar's government. Many of them were students in the preparatory schools of the neighbourhood. All seemed to be hungry for knowledge. They wanted to enter the professions; they scorned trade. Many of the girls as well as of the young men were determined to study medicine. That seemed to be the most popular profession of all among them.

In the evening I would go to Jackson Park, where groups of them were always to be found. They discussed their favourite authors, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Ibsen, Tolstoy, none of whom I had ever heard but with all of whom I soon became acquainted in the library. When they were not carrying on animated discussions they sang their folksongs or danced. There was nothing apathetic about them. Their minds and emotions were always wide awake. They were the only intellectual people I had ever known, and association with them widened my mental horizon rapidly. They read everything they could lay their hands on. They
introduced me not only to books but to newspapers. They took a lively interest in the Yiddish paper Ben Rubin worked for, and whenever they disagreed with its editorial policy they raised loud protests and either wrote to the editor or sent delegations to him.

A novel written by Rubin himself was running in this paper serially at the time, and it met with their violent disapproval. They sent a committee to the editor, Rubin’s boss, to tell him so.

“What kind of a story is this, about dukes and earls and counts and things like that?” demanded their spokesman. “What do we care about such people. There’s nothing in it but high society life. Anybody’d think you were running a paper for aristocrats.”

“I’ll see about it at once,” the editor assured them, getting very nervous and excited, and he called Rubin in.

“Ben,” he said, “I’m told that story of yours is no good. Our readers don’t like it. You got to end it right away.”

“Right away!” cried Rubin, his eyes growing very big behind his horn-rimmed spectacles.

“Yes; in the very next chapter.”

“But how can I end it in the next chapter when it isn’t half told yet?” Rubin protested. “Can a novel be ended all of a sudden before it’s begun?”

“You got to do it,” his boss insisted. “A bum novelist it would be that couldn’t invent a quick ending to a story that’s no good.”
The committee filed out, and waited for the next number. When it came out they found that Ben Rubin had obeyed his orders. He had put all his characters into a barn, set fire to the hay and burned them up.

I had not held the job in the sample-card shop very long when mother got some sewing work again just in time to lay by some money for rent day. Then another bit of good fortune came, for one evening Hersch Ditchik walked in and announced that he had come to stay—the same old Ditchik, silent, taciturn, with not a word of where he had been. Late that evening I discovered him again counting his money, and I wondered whether he had more or less than when he went away, whether the day was nearer or more distant when he could send for the wife and children whom he so longed to see.

Fortune had also done Ichael Schwartz a good turn.

"Nu, at last I am a missis," he announced. "Two boarders I got what pay me good rent—nine dollars a month for the both—and it's nearly better than working in the shop. Anyhow, I don't have to hide any more when I hear' that blood sucker, Zalkin, creeping' up the stairs to holler, 'de rent'!"

Most of my Russian friends were Socialists, but a few of them had dropped Socialism and were now anarchists through and through, holding the laws in
contempt and speaking bitterly of all government. I think the first of these anarchists I met—with the exception of Zalmon Eckstoff, who really didn't count as he was a weak character wholly under the influence of whomever he chanced to be associating with—was Dave Lerner. Dave was a consumptive, but he was studying in one of the preparatory schools and was about to get his last few counts that would entitle him to enter a medical college. He knew that he had not long to live, but he persisted in his studies in the night classes in spite of the fact that his work as a salesman in the daytime told heavily on his strength. He supported his mother and consumptive sister, Rebecca, a girl a little older than myself with whom I became very friendly. They had quite a library at home, and I often visited there and read their books. Dave and I had long talks together. He was twenty and I barely fifteen, but he did not treat me as if I were a child. Indeed I was a child no longer, in spite of my age, and he seemed to realize that fact. He knew that childhood passed away quickly in the hard routine of the sweatshops.

"The world hasn't been very kind to you and me," he would say bitterly, his eyes growing very bright and a feverish flush creeping into his hollow cheeks. "Look at me. I worked in a shop, trying to earn enough money for an education. The place had no ventilation. The long hours, the hard, steady grind and the stifling air were enough to
wreck the strongest of us. See what it did to me. I can never get well. None of us were full grown; some of the girls were little children. The law ought to have protected us if it can do what some people think it can. But did it? Has the law ever done anything for us—for you, for me, for tens of thousands all around us? The law! Bah! It is all on the side of the bosses, of the rich. Better for us if there was no law, no government. Then the poor would have some chance against the rich, who would be without its protection and help in grinding us down to the condition of slavery."

I wonder if any girl of my age who was working in a sweatshop for thirteen hours a day under a speed-up system would not have been influenced by Dave Lerner's harangues. Is it any wonder that I began to echo his words, to share his bitterness? Is it any wonder that I began to look upon the law as a hateful contrivance for the protection of the bosses and for the enslaving of the poor who worked for them? What other teacher had I had, except experience? And what had experience taught me?

I soon began to look upon Lewis, our shop boss, as a tyrant, a soulless, cruel slave-driver. The influence of my new-found radical friends stirred me to rebellion. I was sure there was no law to which we could appeal with any hope of justice. We must take the situation into our own hands. And one evening when the day's work had been even harder than usual and I had come home exhausted,
I resolved that the time had come to strike for our rights.

I called on Nathan Postach, who had been regarded as a hero by the girls in the shop since the day he had refused to lift a heavy bundle, which the boss had told him to put on a shelf. He had given the excuse that he was afraid he would strain his voice, for during each New Year he sang in one of the big synagogues, which paid him fifty dollars.

I proposed a strike to Nathan, and he agreed to talk to the girls downstairs during the lunch hour if I would in the meantime talk to the boss. This I did. I asked Lewis to abolish the slip system at once.

"If you don't," I said, looking him squarely in the face with the courage of desperation, "we will all strike. If you force us to strike we will picket your shop and won't let any other workers take our jobs."

"You can strike all you want to," he shouted. "I'll introduce any system I please."

I ran down to the waiting girls, who had already been convinced by Nathan's arguments, and told them of what the boss had said.

"Then we'll strike!" they cried, and we began to picket the place. We were on picket duty all the rest of the day, and returned for the same purpose early the following morning.

Lewis had in the meantime advertised for girls,
but not one of those who came in answer to his offer was willing to pass our lines when we announced that a strike was going on. In fact some of the newcomers undertook to help us with the picketing.

By noon the boss had surrendered. He agreed to take us back to work and to give up the hated slip system.

We all came back to the shop at one o’clock. I had been at my table about an hour when I was called to the office. Nathan was there with his pay envelope in his hand. I was given my pay, too, and was told that the new arrangement was for the others but not for Nathan and me.

So I followed Nathan to the street, and we walked away together. We had lost our jobs, but we had won our fight, we had bettered conditions for the workers that we left behind, and we were happy.
I

HEARD the wind howling in the courtyard as I crept out of bed. Though the windows had been tightly closed all night, as was the rule in winter, it was bitter cold. Snow was swishing against the frost-coated panes.

Hersch Ditchik was stepping softly about on the rough, uncarpeted floor, shivering and blowing on his numbed hands. He had rolled up his bedding, which he had stowed under the table, and was waiting for a cup of coffee and a roll before going after his pushcart. In front of the cook-stove my brother Sammy was poking the dead ashes.

"We got to get another pail of coal," he said gloomily. "There's only two shovelfuls in the box."

"And how are we to get a pail of coal when we have less than a dollar in the house and must buy food to last us through the day?" mother demanded with a despairing ring in her voice. "All of us are out of work. Where is the money to come from to keep us warm and save us from starving?"

Sammy looked guilty. He had reached the age when he could have his working papers, but had been unable to find a job.
“Haven’t I been trying hard enough to get work?” he asked reproachfully. “Who finds a job now? I been hunting till there’s no soles left on my shoes. If there’s a job there’s twenty men after it, and what chance have I got? The streets are full of people out of work—two hundred thousand of them looking for jobs.”

It was true. Never had the ghetto known such misery. Hundreds of the shop bosses were being forced into bankruptcy, which meant destitution for many thousands of workers. It was the latter part of January, 1914, the beginning of a year that will never be forgotten by the tenements. My childhood was long past, but we were still living in Mr. Zalkin’s squalid building, and the years had not been kind to us. Hersch, too, had shared in the general misfortune. Once he had saved almost enough money to send for his family. The hope of long years of toil and scrimping was about to be realized, when a chain of those uncertain institutions, the private banks of the East Side, closed their doors, and Hersch’s savings were gone. He has become an old man now. His hair and beard are almost white. He has scarcely a word for anybody, but his thin, worn fingers clutch the coins in his bag more greedily than ever. Moishe is the only one who has managed to climb out of the rut and is sure of enough food and clothing, for he has enlisted as a soldier and is away at an army post.

Our last lump of coal went to the making of the
fire, and almost the last bit of food was laid out on the table. I breakfasted on a cup of coffee and a piece of bread, slipped on a ragged coat, which mother and I had for months taken turns in wearing, and, still hungry, stepped out into the storm to join the ever-growing hordes of unemployed who all day long day after day had been passing drearily through the ghetto streets looking for work. For more than a week I had been job hunting, but in my own trade there seemed to be no chance for me. Small chance indeed was there for any of us as we went almost hopelessly from door to door, but I was a marked girl in those forlorn crowds and wherever I went I was turned away with a sullen frown or an angry word. The bosses knew me as a radical, as a trouble-maker, as a leader of strikes. They knew that ever since I was scarcely more than a child I had been fighting for better conditions in their shops. Now, when there were not half enough jobs to go round, their chance had come to even the score with me. Time and time again I was told, "We want no anarchists." Many a mile I walked, and many a long stairway I climbed in my search, but it was the same story everywhere.

"It's no use," I told myself at last. "There's no place for me. What can I do? What is to become of us?"

A dreadful fear took hold of me and shook my nerves. I could see nothing but starvation ahead, and I knew what it meant to starve. Stepping into
a doorway which offered a shelter from the wind I stood staring into the street, half-dazed, numb with cold, faint with hunger. My clothes were too thin for such weather, and my shoes were full of holes. The snow was whirling up in great spirals and now and then beating against my face, half blinding me. The wind, whistling around the corners, cut like a knife.

Little piles of household goods were beginning to make their appearance on the sidewalks, and I knew that for days the municipal courts had been full of landlords who had come to have tenants evicted. Standing homeless beside their poor possessions were mothers and little children. The fathers and the children who were old enough to have their working papers were away going the rounds with so many others hunting for employment. The little boys and girls and the babies were wrapped up in bags or in old quilts. Many of the mothers were without coats or wraps of any kind, and they shivered with cold. I was glad there were no babies in our family, and no longer any little children to suffer from want.

Only a few steps from where I stood the furniture of some miserable home had been thrown onto the walk. There was not much of it—two or three chairs, a table, a clock and some bedding—but it meant a great deal to the poor woman who stood beside it wiping the tears from her eyes. Clinging to her dress were three frightened little children,
the largest surely not more than six years old. I scarcely noticed them, for I was accustomed to such sights and my mind was intent on my own thoughts. I was bitter, desperate, full of hatred for the shop bosses, for the landlords, for every human being who had riches while so many poor folk were being driven from their homes.

Aimlessly, and not caring which direction I took, I stepped out from the sheltering doorway, and, bending my head against the wind, hurried on through the snow. A hand reached out and clasped at my arm, and I saw the evicted woman beside me, the three little girls clinging desperately to her skirt with bare, frost-bitten hands.

"What can I do?" she cried. "We are homeless. We are penniless. We have no place to go."

I stood staring at her helplessly. There was a look in her eyes that would have melted a heart of stone. What could she do? What could I say to her? Who could have been so merciless as to drive her and those little children from their home into the storm?

All the fierce passions, the bitterness and hatred that years of suffering had bred, broke loose in me, and of a sudden I "saw red." Wild impulses surged in me bidding me to revolt, to stir others to revolt, to destroy and kill if necessary, to defy all the cruel laws that had crushed us, the laws that had never helped us, never protected us, the laws that had been always on the side of our oppressors.
There was no longer hope for us. The world was growing harder and harder. We were being destroyed. The time had come to fight—to fight or die.

In the shabby hallway of the building from which the woman had been driven the janitor was trying vainly to patch a water pipe which had frozen and burst.

"Who is the landlord that put this family out?"
I cried to him.

"I don't know the owner," he answered. "He lives in Europe. I work for an agent?"

"Who is the agent?"

He gave me the address, and I hurried off to find the man who was responsible for the eviction.

The agent's office was in a big building in lower Broadway, where at last, covered with snow and breathless from the long, fast walk, I burst in upon him. He was a plump, elderly man with a round, good-natured face, and he looked as if he was at peace with all the world.

"Do you know that a woman and her three little children have been dispossessed from one of your houses," I shouted at him, "and that they are freezing in the street?"

For a few seconds he sat staring into my face without saying a word. Apparently he was trying to determine what sort of a pest he had to deal with.

"Such things do happen," he said at last.

"Yes; and they are happening now in hundreds
of tenements such as yours. Look out of your window and see what a day it is. You are warm and comfortable here; perhaps you don't realize what it means to those evicted families to be homeless in such a storm."

"Oh, yes; I realize it," he said with a gesture of annoyance. "But I am sorry to say I can do nothing. I represent an estate that owns a great many buildings in which there are thousands of tenants. If I should allow families to remain in their homes when they are unable to pay their rent the estate would soon be bankrupt. This woman who interests you is of course a very pitiful case, and I am sorry for her, but business is business."

The old cry of the shop bosses and the landlords—"business is business." How often I had heard it, this guiding dictum of the rich, this unfailing excuse for heartless deeds. Business was business, though the streets were filled with women and children hungry and homeless. And law was law, though it might protect the rich man in his greed and be the terror of the poor man in his misery.

What was the use of talking to such a man? Back to my ghetto I went, and as I turned into East Broadway I met a group of my radical friends. I call them radicals; most of the world would have called them anarchists, as indeed they were. Most of them were homeless, all of them out of work, discouraged, desperate. What I told them of my experience with the evicted woman and the agent had
the effect of oil poured on fire. It stirred them to frenzy. Suggestions were made of going to the agent's office and attacking him.

"Such talk is foolish," I told them. "There is nothing we can do except to keep ourselves from freezing. I passed the open door of an empty church a moment ago. Why don't you go there and get warm? What else are the churches good for?"

"A church!" they cried. They hated churches. What had the churches ever done for them? They declared they would rather freeze than have anything to do with such a place.

So I left them to solve their problems for themselves. As I turned into Rivington Street the way was blocked by a long line of men standing outside a tall old shop building waiting for a chance to earn fifty cents a day from the Mayor's Committee for the Unemployed by rolling bandages and sorting cast-off clothing, which had been sent for the relief of the destitute. Many of these men had already come into possession of some of the cast-off clothes, and there were all sorts of fantastic costumes in the line. Here was a man wearing a high silk hat, striped evening trousers and a sweater. Another was in rags except for an immaculate pair of white kid gloves.

So the rich people were trying to help at last. Surely it was time. But what a farce it was. Here was a problem involving two hundred thousand unemployed people, and these wealthy philanthropists
were trying to solve it through a system that could reach out to only a few hundred persons a day at most. And among those few hundred were many who deserved help the least. What of all the homeless women and children I had seen? Where were they? Most of them too proud to beg, too ignorant or bewildered to know which way to turn, where was there a helping hand reached out to save them from despair?

"The rich!" I sneered, as I stood watching the shivering line. "The rich! Why don't they come themselves to our streets and see what is going on? What do they know of all the misery among us? They send a few dollars and their cast-off clothes, and their consciences are satisfied."

I recalled having read in my favourite newspaper of great fortunes that had been made of late by some of the men who were backing this committee for the unemployed. The committee's chairman had recently added fresh millions to his hoard. And he and his friends were sending us their cast-off clothes!

With a shrug of disgust I turned away from this exhibition of charity, and wandered off aimlessly through the driving snow. At the Williamsburg Bridge entrance a hearse passed by. Close behind in the middle of the street a man, a woman and several children were hurrying along on foot trying to keep up with it. They were all wringing their hands, and tears were streaming down their faces.
As the hearse reached the bridge driveway its speed suddenly quickened, and the little group of mourners were left hopelessly behind.

"Mein kind! Mein kind!" the woman cried, and the children joined her in loud wails of overwhelming grief. She had followed her dead child as far as she could, and beyond their means were the few nickels that would have paid the carfare of the family to the cemetery.

Everywhere wretchedness and suffering. How long, I asked myself, would the ghetto bear its burden of woe so meekly. Surely such unendurable conditions could not last much longer with the sufferers so harmless and uncomplaining, awed by the shadow of the law. I knew that all around me were tens of thousands who, if they had but a leader, would assert with all the might of their numbers their right, the right of every human being rich or poor, strong or weak, to the necessities of life.

"The time has come!" I cried to myself. "The time has come!" And I took my stand on the curb and began to speak aloud, raising my voice high. I spoke of the wrongs I had seen committed and of the cruelty of the laws. I called on all victims of oppression to ignore the rich man's law and to assert their rights.

A little group of people gathered round me, and quickly from streets and alleyways and tenements streams of eager men and women poured in to join them. Soon there were thousands of them, stand-
THE LITTLE GROUP OF MOURNERS WERE LEFT HOPELESSLY BEHIND
ing in silence, blocking the whole street. The great mass of human beings hanging so intently on my words inspired me. The hour had come to wake these sullen, brooding crowds, to stir them from their apathy. The thrill of a sudden sense of power ran through me. Here were my own people. Scores of them I had known from childhood. I knew what they had suffered, for I had suffered with them. I knew their needs; I knew their thoughts. I knew I could speak the words that would rouse them from their sluggishness and open their eyes.

"How many of you don't know what hunger means?" I shouted at them. "What have you got to show for all the hard work you have done since you were children? You have been slaves, toiling for just enough to keep you alive, always at the mercy of your taskmasters. When you fall sick or old age comes they turn you adrift. What do they care if you starve or if your children starve? What do they care if our streets are full of dispossessed families, driven from their homes by the law? Do you know that in this city there are thousands and thousands of people who have more money than they know what to do with and who have never had to work a day to get it? You are the producers, and they are the people who live by your toil. A mile or two to the north of where we stand you would find comforts and luxuries such as you never dreamed of. You would see squandered for an evening's pleasure money enough to keep you
alive for a year. I have worked among the rich. I know how they live. There is enough food in this city for us all, and why should you stay here slowly starving without raising a hand to assert yourselves? If you can't get a job and haven't enough money to buy food go up to those lobster palaces you hear so much about, walk in, order a meal and tell them to send the bill to the mayor."

"You're right, Marie," came many voices. "We'd rather do that than starve."

"Show them we no longer care for their rich men's laws," I cried. "If they arrest you what of it? You'd be no worse off in jail than here."

Suddenly there came a stirring in the tightly massed crowd. Men were pushing their way to the outer edges. In a few seconds fully two hundred of them had worked their way free of the rest, and, forming in a body, were marching away for uptown.

"We're going to get a square meal, Marie," they called back.

As I watched them just a fleeting shadow of doubt crossed my mind. They might be clubbed by the police. Some one might be killed. They were going to start disturbances that would be likely to spread, and there was no telling what the outcome might be.

"Let the trouble begin," I told myself, "no matter what happens. It is better so. We've got to force an issue with this thing."
Right or wrong, I had spoken my convictions, the inevitable convictions of environment and circumstance. I had been taught to read and write in the schools. I had been taught to think by the followers of the red flag of anarchy. My emotions had been stimulated and directed by the sufferings of sweatshop slavery.

The crowd was waiting to hear more. I recalled the line of men I had seen in Rivington Street.

"Don't think the rich people have forgotten you," I cried. "They are showing this very moment how charitable they can be. They have not come here themselves, but they are sending us their cast-off clothes. If any of you need a pair of shoes, or a coat or a pair of gloves follow me."

Followed by several hundred men and women, I led the way to Rivington Street. Most of my followers were men, fortunately, for no provision for women had been made by the committee. How little that organization understood the situation. Surely the needs of the women were as great as those of the men, but they had not been taken into the reckoning. For all the thousands of unemployed girls from the sweatshops—girls like myself—absolutely nothing was being done. No wonder many of them were drifting up to Fourteenth Street, lured by the wages of shame, the wages that would save them from hunger and cold.

The line of men in Rivington Street had grown longer when we arrived there, and my reinforce-
ments fairly blocked the street. At almost the same moment a young man who had recently become a firm friend of mine, a settlement worker whom I called "my pal," appeared from a side street at the head of two or three hundred vagrants, whom he had picked up in the Bowery and City Hall Park. I thought it foolish to be wasting time on people of that sort when there were so many more deserving people in need, and I ran over to him and told him so.

"But, Marie," he protested, "if these people need help why not let them have it? It's a time to help everybody who's down and out, isn't it?"

"No," I said. "It isn't. It's a time to help those that deserve it most and to let the rest go until the last."

"That's right," spoke up a bright-eyed, slender young fellow who had been helping to gather the vagrants together. "Show me where they are, and I'll help you get them."

"This is Arthur Caron," said my pal by way of introduction. "Take him along if you want to."

I had heard that name before. Indeed, a good many had heard it in the ghetto during the past few months. He was a pronounced anarchist who preached the most extreme views. He believed in violence and assassination. He and two other "reds" were killed by a bomb of their own making not long afterward—but I am getting ahead of my story.
"Come on," I said to Caron. "I'll show you thousands of people we can bring here and who are not of the kind you've been bothering with."

He and I walked away together, and he began to tell me about himself. He was a Canadian Irishman, who had been in New York less than a year. He had expected to find employment here as a civil engineer, for that was his profession, but had not been successful, and had had to turn to any job he could find to keep himself alive. He was out of work now and penniless, he said, but he didn't care much about his own troubles; he wanted to help the thousands who were in an even worse plight if he could. I took a liking to him at once, and found it hard to believe he could hold the bloodthirsty ideas that were beginning to make him notorious. I told him of how I had sent a crowd of men to the uptown restaurants to order food and charge it to the mayor, and he became enthusiastic.

"Oh, fine!" he cried. "That's the stuff. I hope there's a riot. And there will be. There will be. I can't stay here any longer. I've got to jump uptown and join them. Good-bye."

He hurried off, and I went on to Rutgers Square, that great rallying point of the lower East Side. The little park was full of idle people, as it always is in times of widespread unemployment.

"Come with me," I cried as I joined them. "Come with me if you want to get free clothes or if you want to earn fifty cents a day."
Many of them knew me and came to me at once. Almost all the rest of the crowd followed. I led them down to Rivington Street, but I was not prepared for the tremendous mass of people that awaited us there. One person would have found it hard to wedge a way through it, and my followers numbered five hundred at least. But into this mass the Rutgers Square folk piled, pushing and struggling.

Women, caught in the crush, began to scream for help. Men swore and fought. The snow was churned into slush. The huge crowd swayed to and fro in great waves. The police stood by helpless, sympathizing with the wretched throng and unwilling to resort to vigorous methods to clear the street.

The situation was hopeless. The well-meaning social service workers who were helping the committee held up their hands helplessly. At last they realized how tremendous was the problem they faced, how futile the means through which they had expected to solve it. They locked the doors against the crowd, and abandoned the work. It would have been impossible to help one-tenth of all the people who were pouring in upon them.

For the remainder of the afternoon crowds hung about the doors, held there by the hope that they would be thrown open again. When darkness fell they began to scatter, trailing off in long, uneven lines through the biting night wind that swept the
ghetto streets. Great throngs drifted to Rutgers Square. When I saw them gathering in that spot in the driving snow because they had no place to go for shelter, I gave up my idea of going home. I had offered to help these people, and I had not made good. I had given them nothing but words, and I knew that if I should leave them there in the storm without another effort my conscience would give me no rest and I should get no sleep myself that night.

Again I rallied them. I had disappointed them once, but they were ready to follow me again blindly.

"Come on!" I cried. "I'll find you a place to spend the night. We'll break our way in somewhere if we have to."

A feeble cheer rose into the wind, and the crowd, in rags and tatters, surged round me in the dark.

I thought of the big, empty rooms in the University Settlement House. There was room there for hundreds if the superintendent would only open the doors to us. To that place we marched, and on the way recruits joined us at every block. The night had settled down, black as pitch, but as we came back to Rivington Street, which now lay empty and silent, a great, yawning, shadowy chasm, the lights of the settlement house sent a cheerful, ruddy glow into the storm and spoke to us of warmth and comfort.

We banged on the door of the big building, and
after a moment it was opened by the superintendent, who greeted us with a bewildered, anxious stare.

"These people have no place to go," I told him. "Can’t you give them shelter for the night?"

He knew me well and would have been glad to do anything within his power for me, but he shook his head sadly.

"I am very sorry," he said, "but I don't see how I can let them in. I would get into trouble. I have no authority to turn this place into a lodging house for everybody who comes."

But already the crowd at my back was beginning to surge forward. Suddenly a great mass of people swept into the doorway, pushing us both aside, and swarmed through the warm rooms. The superintendent was helpless. They were in complete possession of the place. Every room was packed tight with them, and still more were struggling to get in from the street. After a time we managed to get the door shut, and, as there was not sleeping space for all those who were huddled together inside, some were persuaded to leave. Old newspapers were spread on the hard, bare floors, where at least five hundred persons, lying down close together as tightly as they could be packed in, found warmth and shelter for the night.

That part of the problem had now been solved for these five hundred; but they needed more than shelter. Most of them had had nothing to eat all day. Many were suffering cruelly from starvation.
I thought of a Socialist newspaper, which had been making propaganda for its party out of the unemployment situation, and I called on its manager.

"Give me some money for coffee and rolls for the men I have taken to the Settlement House," I demanded.

"I can't," he answered.

"But you are filling your paper with news of our troubles," I said. "You are trying to show that you are supporting this work of helping the unemployed. I'll make it known in my speeches that you have refused to give a cent to help them."

"Well, I'll give you five dollars."

"I'll accept your five dollars, and will tell my audiences that you, the head of a Socialist organ that has just put up a building worth many thousands of dollars, have given me five dollars to feed five hundred starving men. Make it ten dollars."

He gave me the ten.

Then to storekeepers and other East Side business men I went, bulldozing and threatening, and before long had raised enough money to buy rolls and coffee for all my hungry five hundred.

On my way home that night I met Arthur Caron. His clothes were torn, his face cut and bleeding.

"Look at what you have done," he said with a laugh. "The police almost killed me. We've had an awful time uptown in those restaurants. I joined those men you sent, and we went in and charged our
meals to the mayor. The police came and used their clubs on us, and they've made a dozen arrests. I'm lucky I'm not behind the bars."

"Oh, well; I don't care," I said with a yawn, for I was dead tired. "I've done more than that. I may have got some people into jail, but I've found supper and a night's shelter for five hundred others, and I guess that more than evens the score."
CHAPTER VIII

RIOTS

THE effort to check the ever-spreading destitution and suffering among the tenements in that dreadful year 1914 was much like trying to sweep back the waves of the sea. The mayor's committee and the rich philanthropists uptown meant well, but they did not accomplish much more than making life a little easier for the chronic breadliners. Not one in one hundred of the deserving unemployed—the people who were willing to work and who always had worked to the limit of their strength when they had the opportunity—received any help.

I was sure, however, that the University Settlement House was sheltering the right kind. I kept the Bowery loafers out, and sent there only men who, I knew, were workers when they could be. Until the mild spring weather came five hundred homeless wanderers of the streets slept on the Settlement House floors every night and had a free supper of coffee and rolls. The supper money was often raised by myself and my radical friends. People sneered at us and called us dangerous anarchists—probably some classes of people regarded us as dangerous with good reason—but we did have
the feeding of those Settlement House crowds to our credit, and, God knows, we were often hungry ourselves while collecting the money. Young Arthur Caron, homeless and penniless himself, spent the greater part of his time helping other unfortunates, though he was full of blood-curdling threats against the rich. His views were far more extreme than mine, and he would not have hesitated at murder in carrying them out, but I liked him. Whatever his faults may have been, he was absolutely sincere and as generous and unselfish as anybody I ever knew. I was glad to be able to give him a ticket to the Settlement House every night; otherwise he would have walked the streets or slept on some park bench.

Every evening I continued my curbstone speechmaking. I was trying to stir the unemployed to the point where they would force the public to provide them with free meals and free sleeping quarters until they could get work. I believed that their present plight and the lack of any remedy for their condition were due to the fact that they had not learned to do their own thinking; that if only they could be taught to think and to think clearly they could solve their problems themselves and would make the power of their huge numbers felt to such an extent that they would enforce a decided improvement of the conditions under which so many of them were starving.

One night the glow of a street lamp disclosed to me in my audience the eager, shrewd, old bearded
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face of Mr. Ginsberg, the shoemaker. In a flash my thoughts went back to my childhood and to the day in his cellar shop when I told him of my problems and asked him to advise me.

"There's an old shoemaker," I called out, pointing at him, "who told me when I wasn't more than half grown that it was you ghetto folks' heads that needed mending more than your shoes. 'If I had my life to live again I would teach them to think.' Those were his very words; and they've been running through my mind ever since. That's what I'm trying to do now, to teach you to think."

People began to crane their necks, trying to get a look at the old man. Then came cries of "Hurrah for the shoemaker! His head don't need mending. Give us a speech, shoemaker."

He was pushed up to where I stood. Very old and feeble he had grown, but the eyes beneath the shaggy brows were as bright and clear as ever. Indeed, they seemed to be burning at that moment with intense emotion, as if he were realizing at last the dreams of a lifetime. For he heard the crowd break into a roar of greeting and of demands that he be heard. He, Berel Ginsberg, who had always bemoaned his humble sphere and the hopelessness of ever being recognized in his community as a thinker, as an intelligent man, poor old Ginsberg who had never done anything more in all his long years than sit at his last in a cellar, was being called upon for a speech.
He held his head high; he threw out his chest; he was trembling with excitement. Never before had a crowd so much as noticed him. He had lived in obscurity, an ignored idealist, dreaming of what he might have been. I am sure that as he took his place on the box from which I had been speaking he must have felt he had been called as if by a miracle to be a leader among his people. For Rutgers Square was black with people that night, and a thousand voices were calling him.

"My time has come!" I heard him mutter to himself. "My time has come!"

He looked bewildered, as if not quite sure whether he was awake or dreaming; but after a moment his face cleared, and the glow of inspiration came into his eyes. He began to speak. His voice, low and indistinct at first, rose until it rang out over the square. The crowd fell silent. There was the thrill of real eloquence in his words. All the thoughts he had brooded over alone in his cellar for so many years seemed to be crowding one another for expression. He spoke and looked like a prophet of old. I doubt if Rutgers Square, for many a long year the forum of the East Side, had ever heard a speech so full of sober thought and wisdom.

The occasion proved to be a turning point in the shoemaker's life. So great was the impression he made that night that afterward no large public meeting in the ghetto was considered complete without him. He was invited to speak at all sorts of
affairs, even at weddings, and he went to them all. He became a public character; and he gloried in his reputation.

It was all very well for me to be doing my best to help the unemployed, but I could not forget that I, too, was out of work and that I must give time to my own needs if I was to keep a roof over myself and my mother. During the daytime I continued to make the rounds of the shops, though I had almost given up hope of finding anything.

While going about among these places I was greeted one morning by Zalmon Eckstoff's wife.

"I'm a lucky woman," she said. "I'm working. What do you think of that when most girls are wearing their shoes off chasing jobs?"

"Look at mine," I exclaimed, showing her the holes in my soles. "You can't land a job for me, can you, Sadie?"

"That's what I was going to tell you about," she answered. "There's a good chance of your catching on where I am over in Sol Borkin's dress factory in Grand Street. But don't let old Borkin know you're Marie Ganz or he'll blow right up in the air. Give him another name."

That was how I came to go to work for Sol Borkin under the name of Rosa Stein. What a piece of good fortune! A job when more than half the shops on the East Side were closed! An eight-dollar-a-week job, too, and in a shop that wasn't half bad as such places went. The conditions were better
than I had found in many other dress factories, and Borkin was amiable and on good terms with his employees when he was sure there were no anarchists or strike leaders among them. But even the mention of a radical or a labour leader would stir him to fury. It was well that I had adopted Sadie's suggestion and given an assumed name, for surely he would not have hired me otherwise.

"Never dermind me of such murderers again!" he would shout. "Ain't it that one of them throat-cutters made a strike here by me in the shop and closed kept it a whole week? If again one should here come I'd his life take, even if he was a woman and I should to jail have to go."

Borkin had a partner named Schindler, whom he dominated completely. Schindler was slow-witted and uneducated. He could neither read nor write.

"You can't even your name sign," his partner would sneer at him, for Borkin was proud of the fact that he himself could sign his name even in English and could read a Yiddish newspaper. Whenever they got into an argument over any matter that was outside of their private affairs Borkin, when hard pressed, would grab up the Yiddish paper and say, "Here; look. It's in the paper." Schindler, unable to discover whether the paper even mentioned the subject, would be reduced to helplessness by this bit of strategy.

"What is printed is right," Borkin would declare, as if anybody could ever question the truth of such
an assertion, and Schindler would have to admit that he had been mistaken.

One day Borkin was summoned to serve on a jury. I am sure it was the proudest moment of his life. Impressively he showed the notice to Schindler, and then to everybody in the shop, and it caused something of a sensation. After giving most minute instructions to his partner, whom never before had he entrusted with full charge of the place, he threw all business aside and left for the court.

We didn't see him again for a week. In his absence Schindler bustled about the shop with an air of great importance. He seemed to believe that much distinction was reflected to him from the honour that had come to his partner. To any one who called and asked for the missing head of the firm he would say loftily, "Oh, Borkin? You know how it is with an Amerikaner business man; he is on a jury."

After his return to us nobody ever referred to Borkin except as "the juryman," and he was proud of the title. It had been only a two-hundred-dollar case in a municipal court he had helped to decide, or rather had decided entirely himself, for he had caused a disagreement by holding out against his eleven associates, but the experience had made a changed man of him. He was much more dignified, and showed far more eagerness to adopt American ways. He gave up speaking Yiddish. To all of us he spoke only in English, even to his partner except when he had to make him understand what he was
saying, for English was almost as foreign to Schindler as Chinese. No one in the shop or out of it said “Mr. Borkin” now; they said “the jurymen,” and often in an awed undertone. People now asked his advice on matters of law, and he was always ready to give it.

“We jury people what sit on the same side with the judge know what law is,” he would say.

From this time on any controversy between the partners, no matter how heated, would be settled promptly when the jurymen threatened to invoke the “pull” of his friend, the judge, before whom the two-hundred-dollar case had been tried. So proud was he of being associated with the distinguished Borkin that Schindler did not seem to mind his oppression, which he took as a matter of course.

“If eleven men were wrong and I was right—jurymen, not grubba yungen” (stupid persons), “mind you,” Borkin would remind his humble partner in the course of an argument, “how come you to hold debate with me?”

Neither the jurymen nor any of his friends ever considered for a moment the possibility that he might have been wrong and the other eleven jurors right in the matter of the lawsuit.

It was while I was working for Borkin that I began to realize that, while the radical movement was doing the best it could for the unemployed men, it was almost ignoring the unemployed girls and women. So I organized a committee, which ar-
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ranged to meet in Beethoven Hall, in Fifth Street, where they were to meet and advise any girls or women out of work who might choose to take advantage of the opportunity. It happened that very few did choose to take advantage of it, and the plan proved to be a flat failure. Yet it was not because there were not many girls in destitute circumstances. Surely there were as many girls as men out of work at that time. No, it was because the girls preferred to have nothing to do with any organized movement to help them. They were suspicious of philanthropists and of social service workers of any kind. Many of them would rather sink down to ruin than accept a helping hand. Fourteenth Street was never so full of women of the underworld, and a great number of them were former shopgirls who had come there from ghetto tenements.

As spring came on the great hordes of unemployed grew even greater. Some of the large Sixth Avenue department stores closed and threw thousands of East Side men and girls out of work. Then, at about the time his store went out of business, Henry Siegel's bank failed, and all the savings of his employees were swept away. Scarcely was there a week when some private bank in the tenement districts did not close its doors. So, day by day, the ghetto's burden of woe grew and grew.

All the lower East Side, the home of a million people, began to seethe with the spirit of unrest. In the faces of the crowds I saw only the sullen dis-
content that sooner or later breaks out into open rebellion. It seemed to me sometimes that a revolution was on its way, such a rising of huge masses of people as the country had never known. I became more certain of this when here and there small riots broke out from time to time. Often there were fights between idle street crowds and the police. It was a simple matter during those nerve-wracking weeks to stir a crowd to violence.

The first serious disturbance came on the evening of March 18th, when the Socialists held a meeting in Cooper Union. The anarchists and the Industrial Workers of the World believed the Socialist leaders were trying to make political capital from the general misery, and hated them accordingly.

Not long before the time for the meeting to begin I went to Rutgers Square, and met there Joe O'Carroll, who was known by the police as "Wild Joe." He was certainly wild in appearance, and I doubt if any one would have questioned the wildness of his disposition. His hair was as long as Buffalo Bill's, his clothes were in tatters and his eyes glared fiercely. He was getting a crowd of his followers together, most of them I. W. W. men. As he caught sight of me he called out, "Come on, Marie. You're one of us. Come and help us show those damned Socialists what we think of them."

I didn't care particularly about making trouble
for the Socialists just then, but Joe's crowd was made up largely of my friends, and I joined them. I suppose most people would have called them a bad lot. Perhaps they were. I don't know. They were certainly a ragged lot and a violent lot. But I have never judged a man's character by his pocketbook or his position in the world, and I never believed a man to be bad because he believed in violence to get justice for himself or for others.

O'Carroll's following numbered three hundred when we marched away for Cooper Union. The police had got wind of his coming, and, though we did not know it at the time, had stationed forty detectives throughout the audience in readiness for trouble. We filed down into the old gloomy basement auditorium and took up all the space that was left. There was scarcely standing room.

One of Joe's friends, a man named Wissolsky, was in jail for creating a disturbance in a church, and his followers recalled this fact bitterly when they took notice of the uniformed policemen at the doors. The meeting had scarcely begun when they set up cries of "We want Wissolsky." The detectives and the uniformed men took no notice of the disturbance. They were waiting for something worse.

What they expected soon happened. Suddenly O'Carroll, who had been standing beside me, shouldered his way down the aisle, leaped to the center of the stage, threw off his coat and began to
make a speech. Julius Gerber, one of the Socialist leaders, laid hold of him and tried to drag him away. Joe swung his fist, and it landed heavily on the Socialist's jaw. Immediately all the men on the platform rushed at the intruder.

Instantly Joe's three hundred bodyguards sprang into action. They formed a flying wedge, forced their way to the platform, clambered up to it and attacked their leader's assailants. Then the uniformed policemen and the detectives took a part. The whole hall was in an uproar. The noise was terrific. Everywhere the tightly packed mass of people was surging to and fro. The police were using their clubs, striking in all directions. Fists were flying. Wild oaths were shouted. Men were knocked down and trampled. The few women who were present, crushed and buffeted about, were screaming at the tops of their voices. I could have taken no part in the disturbance if I had chosen to, for I was wedged in so tightly that I couldn't move. I contented myself with crying out encouragement to Joe and his followers, who, I could see, were being badly beaten.

When things were at their worst the lights went out. We were in total darkness. The women became hysterical. The place was so black that I could see absolutely nothing, but I heard the shouts and the screams and the noise of the fighting, and sometimes Joe's voice raised in fury against the police. I expected at any moment to be struck by a club or a
fist, for no one could tell whom he was hitting and blows were being dealt recklessly.

There came a brilliant flash and an explosion. For a bare instant the place was as bright as day, and I caught a glimpse of a cloud of smoke. I thought some one had exploded a bomb. A few seconds later the lights blazed again, and it was discovered that a newspaper photographer had taken a flash-light picture. Then again the lights went out, but only for a moment this time. The janitor of the building was flashing them on and off with the idea of emptying the hall.

Before long the police succeeded in driving us all out, except Joe, whom they had placed under arrest. In the street I saw him as they were leading him away. His face was covered with blood, and half of one of his ears had been torn off.

That experience had no effect in keeping me away from places where there were likely to be disturbances. I believed it was a time for violence. "Let it come," I said, for my fighting blood was up.

Once a prosperous woman from uptown said to me in the Settlement House, "My dear girl, why do you, an intelligent, decent young woman, associate with such a dangerous lot? Why don't you choose a better sort for your companions?"

"Why shouldn't I associate with them?" I answered hotly. "They are my own people. Haven't I suffered just as they have? Haven't I known what poverty and starvation mean? I am
no traitor. Their cause is mine. I'm the girl that circumstances have made me. How do you suppose I could be anything else?"

And it was the same with those poor, wretched friends of mine, who were risking broken heads and prison terms to fight for their principles. They were what circumstances had made them. How could they have been anything else?

During all this time Emma Goldman, the anarchist leader, was away on a lecture tour and out of harm's way. She paid no attention to appeals to come back and to take part in the meetings. She was making money and was living comfortably at first-class hotels, and I became convinced that she had always been actuated by sordid motives. Her place as a leader was taken by Alexander Berkman, who had served fourteen years in prison for trying to assassinate Henry C. Frick, the steel manufacturer.

A few days after the Cooper Union riot, Berkman, Caron and others determined to take part in a meeting that had been called by the Central Federated Labour Union, which was to protest in Union Square against the treatment of the Michigan copper mine strikers. Berkman and Caron asked me to come there and speak, and I accepted. Joe O'Carroll was preparing his I. W. W. men for the occasion and advising them to seize the opportunity to protest against the imprisonment of Frank Tannenbaum, who had been arrested for inciting a riot in
the Roman Catholic Church of St. Alphonsus in West Broadway.

When we arrived at the square, early in the afternoon, we found four hundred policemen, many of them mounted men, on guard. Soon at least seven thousand persons were massed in the northern end of the park. Joe's men, several hundred strong, wore in their hatbands red cards on which were printed the words, "Tannenbaum MUST Be Free!" They began to scatter circulars announcing that the unemployed were about to hold a mass meeting. Each circular bore a big black flag, under which was the plea, "Come and protest against the class verdict that railroaded Tannenbaum and others of our brothers to prison."

On my way to the speakers' stand I met my pal, the settlement worker. He held my hand for a moment as he wished me luck.

"I think there's trouble coming, Marie," he said. "Remember, I want to help you whenever I can."

"I know it," I answered. "Whenever I'm in need of help you're the one I'll come to."

Then I left him, and joined Berkman, Lincoln Steffens, Caron and O'Carroll. After a few moments Berkman raised his arms for silence. The crowd let him speak. At the conclusion of his remarks two of our men held aloft two great black flags. On one were the words, "Tannenbaum Shall Be Free!" On the other, in huge white letters, was the single word, "HUNGER."
As the banners tossed in the wind the immense crowd broke into a wild demonstration; then slowly began to surge westward in the direction of Fifth Avenue, evidently intent on trouble. Joe had left us, and was pushing forward at the head of his men. A police inspector raised his hand as a signal. The crowd noticed his movement, and jeered and yelled at him. For a moment the flags continued to wave above the moving throng; then they were suddenly jerked from the hands of the colour bearers, whom the police placed under arrest.

I realized that there could be no more speech-making that day, and I left the stand. Immediately I was caught in the rush of fully a thousand frantic people, who were following the two prisoners, who were being led away to the station house. We followed these men and their captors as far as the intersection of Seventeenth Street and Fourth Avenue, where the mounted policemen formed a line and ordered us back.

"Get back!" I cried. "Get back! You can't fight the police. They're too strong for you to-day."

The crowd obeyed, and trouble was averted for the time. Almost at the same moment Joe O'Carroll appeared, shoulder to shoulder with Adolph Wolff, who called himself the "poet of the East Side" and who had written a book of verses entitled "Songs, Sighs and Curses."

"Come on, men!" Joe cried. "We'll move to
Rutgers Square and hold a meeting that won't be interfered with. Marie Ganz will speak to you there. Come on, Marie!"

We made a detour of the lines of the police, who were intent for the moment only on preventing a rescue of the prisoners. Close beside me was my pal, determined to protect me in case of trouble. It was only for my sake that he was there, he told me, for he could not see how anything worth while was to be gained by creating a riot. I laughed at him, but at the same time a suspicion crossed my mind that he was right. However, he did not fit in with my mood just then. I felt myself swept on by uncontrollable impulses; no cool appeals to reason would have swerved me or any of us from our purpose in that wild orgy of stormy passions.

As we were soon to discover, there were scattered among us as we surged onward at least a score of policemen disguised as workmen. When we came swarming into Fourth Avenue, some distance below the square, these men tried to disorganize our mob by separating it into groups. The object of their manœuvre was so apparent that we realized at once their true character, and some of our men immediately attacked them. In the course of the fight Joe and Caron were arrested. Joe fought desperately to free himself, and was clubbed unmercifully. I saw him fall heavily to the pavement, where he lay so still that I thought he had been killed. The sight maddened me.
"Kill the cops!" I cried. "Down with the tools of the capitalists!"

All around me my cries were taken up. In a great, furious wave we swept forward, determined on rescuing our leaders. With their clubs the police struck against the foremost of us, knocking some of them down, but, a thousand strong as we were, they could not keep us back. For a moment it looked as if victory were ours.

Three shrieking blasts of a police whistle rose above the uproar. A moment later a squad of mounted men with drawn batons came riding toward us at a gallop from Fourteenth Street. Not far behind them a line of uniformed men on foot were coming on a run.

Realizing that their comrades were in danger, the mounted policemen rode their prancing horses right over our front ranks. Threats and shrieks of defiance changed to cries of alarm and terror as the horses came crowding in upon us, the flying hoofs a fearful menace. Beside me Becky Edelson, one of our leaders and one of the few women in our ranks, was crying out at the top of her voice in an effort to rally our forces. Nearby I saw Wolff, the poet, fighting desperately. A policeman struck him and he fell.

Frightened though I was, I stood my ground, until a hand reached out and clutched my wrist with an iron grip. It was my pal, trying to drag me away. The horses were almost upon us.
"It's all over, Marie!" he shouted. "We're beaten. Come on."

In the very nick of time he dragged me out of danger. I looked around me. Our men were scattering, panic-stricken by the plunging horses and swinging clubs.

"For God's sake, come away!" cried my pal. The police were close behind us. It was hopeless to continue the struggle. We moved on with the fugitives.

At last we were driven in widely scattered groups into the side streets, and the police gave up the pursue, going off to the station house with their prisoners. Exhausted, our clothes torn, some of us cut and bleeding, we made our way back to the ghetto, and to our homes—those of us who were fortunate enough to have homes.

But the bitter memories of that day were to remain with us. Never before had seemed so hateful that mysterious, heartless thing, the law, the classes that it served and protected and the police who enforced it so mercilessly.

Yet some time, I was sure, our chance would come—the hour of which we dreamed.
CHAPTER IX
THE FIRES OF HATE

THOUGH we had been defeated ignominiously in our battle with the police, the spirit of revolt was stronger than ever. Reports of the brutal treatment our leaders had been subjected to fanned the fires of hate. Police batons might drive and scatter us, but could not bring peace for long when two hundred thousand people, unable to get work, were being stirred out of their sullen apathy by scores of our speakers every night in every open square.

At the close of each day's work I set out to harangue the street crowds. And what crowds they were! How fast they grew! At Rutgers Square, at Tompkins Square Park, in Mulberry Bend, almost anywhere in the tenement districts, a few minutes of speech-making would draw a thousand people together. How they howled in furious approbation as I spoke of the brutality of the police. How they groaned and jeered as I described the greed and selfishness of the rich. How the poor men and women who had been dispossessed cried out for justice as I reviled the laws and the landlords that had driven them from their homes. Everywhere that a curbstone speaker raised his voice it was the
same. The tenements were aroused at last. Their bitter cry for a chance to live was being heard, and the whole city was being compelled to listen. The effectiveness of the police might hold disturbances in check, but the property holders whom these agents of the law protected could no longer keep their consciences free from the knowledge of the misery of the poor.

There was never a doubt in my mind that I was right in everything I said and did as an agitator against the social system that permitted such conditions. I saw no room for argument of my conviction that we were entitled to free speech, that the police were wrong in attacking us, that the laws protected only the property owners and had been made with inhuman neglect of the interests of those who lived always in the shadow of poverty. Some of the violent speeches I made I might retract in part to-day, for I have learned a good deal since that time, but, no matter how conservative I may possibly become under broadening influences, I know I shall never be able to recall without bitterness and without a stirring of the old hatreds the hardships and cruelties that darkened our lives.

Let me make it plain that I was preaching in those days precisely what I had been taught. My attitude toward the capitalistic class and toward the law was the natural result of a childhood spent in destitution, of bitter experiences in the sweatshops, and of a mental development fostered by men and women
driven desperate by the sufferings of the same sort of environment and who, with quick, eager minds hungry for knowledge which was so hard to get, had picked up most of their education, as I had done, in the night schools and the libraries.

I might ask the persons who wrote letters to the newspapers that spring demanding the suppression of Marie Ganz, and who were encouraged by editorial writers who echoed the same appeal for the protection of society against my disturbing harangues, I might suggest to all who denounced me as a dangerous agitator, that they exert their imagination enough to see themselves as tenement-bred children of poverty, working ten and twelve hours a day in the sweatshops, and never free from the fear of hunger and eviction. I wonder if any of them, if they had lived under such circumstances, would have held more conservative opinions than were mine. Radicalism is just as certain to be bred by poverty as conservatism is by wealth. The rich man's ideas and the poor man's are never going to agree. All of which reminds me that Ichael Schwartz once won a bet on a one-hundred-to-one chance in the Honduras Lottery, and, immediately undergoing a complete change in his political opinions, became an eloquent defender of the rights of capital against the foes of law and order. He lost his winnings in another gamble a few days later, and was metamorphosed into a noisy agitator against prevailing social conditions.
My pal had worked his way through college, and his learning filled me with awe and envy. I had always felt keenly my lack of educational opportunities. Once I had set my ambition on a college course, but it had not taken long to realize the impossibility of achieving it. It was better than nothing, however, to be able to absorb a little of the knowledge my pal had acquired. He would look over my little row of books—Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and other German philosophers, some of the Russian novelists, and a collection of anarchists' speeches, all of which had been recommended to me by my radical friends—and would enter into an animated discussion of them, occasionally suggesting to me other lines of reading. He was the most helpful adviser I had ever had, and under his influence and direction my mental horizon began to widen. But before long a campaign conducted by Sophie Irene Loeb for penny lunches in the public schools called him away and absorbed all his attention, so that for a time he dropped out of my life.

It was during his absence that Mrs. Garshofsky, a neighbour, came to mother with sensational information.

"Mazel tov, Mrs. Ganz!" Mrs. Garshofsky exclaimed. "The Above One has had pity on you. At last it has come that you should joy get out of your Marie. Pincus Goldberg, what the fine saloon has on the corner, wants to marry her, your daughter. Such a luck! He will deck her out in silks and dia-
monds from head to foot. By the whole world you should be envied. Every day he has your daughter seen passing his door, and already he is in love with her. Such a luck a girl should have!"

She did not mention, however, what we learned later, that she had been offered ten dollars by Goldberg if she succeeded in bringing about the shidach.

Here at last the way out of poverty and all its hardships had opened. Mother looked as if a miracle had happened. But her expression of delighted astonishment changed swiftly to one of doubt as her eyes met mine.

"Don't say you will not take him," she pleaded. "You will soon be an old maid. Another year and another year, and you will no longer be so pretty, so strong. The time has come. You should get married. I am getting on myself, and I don't want to worry about you in my old age. Besides, a mother is entitled to a little pleasure from her own daughter when she has one your age."

But I didn't want to get married, at any rate not then. And, anyway, I didn't like saloonkeepers. How could I go back to my street crowds as the wife of the prosperous owner of a saloon in which husbands spent from their small earnings money that should have gone toward the support of their families? I felt that if I were to marry Pincus Goldberg I should be betraying the cause of my people, that I should be worse than the landlords or the
shop bosses, that I should no longer be able to face my friends without shame. Surely the homeless hordes who had listened to my appeals, who had followed me against the swinging clubs of the police, would curse my name if I should take this way out of the shadows of privation.

"I won't marry him," I said.

Mother burst into tears. I could never bear to see her cry, and my resolution began to waver. She begged and argued. She reviewed all the wretchedness of our life. She spoke of how little we could hope for and of how the future would very likely prove even harder than the past. She cried out her dread of spending her old age in penury.

"Rent day only a week off, and nothing to meet it with!" she exclaimed. "To-morrow the sewing-machine man comes for his twenty-five cents, which he will not get. And you refuse a man who would give you diamonds!"

I relented. I wouldn't say I would marry Pincus Goldberg, but I would meet him the next evening.

When the time came Hersch Ditchik, who considered that a great stroke of fortune was about to befall me, was on hand to help entertain the guest who was to do our home honour, and added a handful of bananas from his pushcart to the tea and biscuits that had been prepared. For this occasion I had only the dress I wore at all times. A neighbour
offered to lend me a silk gown she had worn at her wedding, but I declined it. I had no desire to dress in borrowed finery for the sake of impressing a wooer whom I didn’t want to marry.

Pincus Goldberg was a short, stout man with very small, round eyes, a large, thick-lipped mouth, and very black, wire-like hair, which was cut close to his scalp except on top of his head, where it stood straight up like the bristles of a brush. He wore a brand-new suit, and there was a white flower in his button-hole. He was a man of few words but of large appetite, and he ate all of Hersch’s bananas and most of the biscuits in a surprisingly short time.

When he had apparently satisfied himself with the food, he turned to me and said, “Two seats I got for the People’s Theatre. Dollar seats in the orchestra.”

I remained silent, trying to decide what to say. The more I looked at him the less I liked him.

“Some people like theatres,” he persisted, “especial such a show as Mrs. Zipkin will play, ‘The Wasted Tears.’ Maybe you’d like to come. It’s orchestra front seats.”

Well, at last I decided to go with him, and we walked away to the theatre. On the way he pulled from his pocket a bag of candy.

“For you,” he said, “and the candy ain’t sweeter than your eyes.”

I wondered how long it had taken him to compose that speech. It didn’t sound like him at all, for he
was a man of few, in fact of only absolutely necessary words, and was not given to sentiment as a rule. At the theatre door he bought a bag of peanuts. "For you," he said again, but this time without a compliment, though he seemed to be groping in his mind for one. Evidently he could find no inspiration from peanuts.

As soon as we were in our seats he began to tell me about his affairs.

"I ain't such a schnorrer as some one—maybe you—would think," he said. "A man what thinks of another day should always save something. If so much they didn't charge me for a license—twice as much as last year—I would have six hundred dollars more than I got; but any time I can cash a good check for two thousand dollars."

Goldberg ate most of the peanuts, spewing the shells from his mouth to the floor and to the empty seats in front of us with a loud, hissing noise. I might have overlooked this exhibition of bad manners, for we of the ghetto could not afford to be fastidious, but before long one of his friends caught sight of us from across the entire width of the house, and sung out, "Who's de goil?"

"Mine!" my escort shouted back in a voice that nobody in the place could fail to hear.

That was too much to be borne. I sprang up flushed with anger, left him, hurried home, and broke the news to mother that the courtship was over and that the way that had opened to us to a
life of comfort was closed. She took the blow more calmly than I had feared.

"Nu, my child," she said, "if you really don't want the man don't marry him. I want you to do as you please."

And that was the last time she ever referred to the affair, though she must have been cruelly disappointed.

So the golden opportunity passed, leaving me to the toil of the shop and to the old problem of stretching our income far enough to stave off hunger and to keep a roof over our heads. The next evening found me again with the crowds in Rutgers Square, and glad I was to be with them as one of their own kind instead of having accepted the saloonkeeper's offer. There I found Joe O'Carroll, his head swathed in bandages, and Arthur Caron, who were being welcomed as heroes. In court they had triumphed over their accusers, for the magistrate had not only discharged them on the ground that they had been arrested without justification, but had criticized the police severely for their interference with the right of free speech and for their brutal attacks upon us.

O'Carroll, however, looked like a wreck of his former self. His face had lost its healthy colour, and he seemed very feeble. He walked with the shaking steps of a very old man. Not many days later he collapsed and was taken to a hospital. He never recovered from the effects of the policemen's
clubbing, and, though he came back to us after a few weeks, he was never again able to lead his riotous crowds.

The sight of Joe’s bandaged head and white face made me furious. I stood up on a bench in front of the old, disused fountain, and began to speak.

"See what the police did to Joe O’Carroll," I cried, pointing to him. "A little more of such brutality and a revolution will be stirred up, a revolution that will be a reign of terror for the classes under whom we work for a beggarly pittance. Let it come. We are ready for it. It will right our wrongs, it will sweep away oppression and injustice and misery. What have we done to deserve such treatment as we have received from the police? Is it a crime to be penniless?"

Angry mutterings came from the crowd, and I could see that the policemen who were standing on the fringes of it were getting a firmer hold on their clubs. I heard jeers and threats from both men and women as they began to take notice of how closely the officers of the law were watching us. I realized that a riot would soon break out if I could not change the temper of my audience, and, to prevent a repetition of what had occurred a few days before at Union Square, I changed the trend of my speech and made an appeal for a collection to buy food and clothing for the two heroes of the hour, O’Carroll and Caron, who were both out of work.
This bit of diplomacy averted the threatened trouble, and the police had no cause to interfere. The crowd was unusually liberal that evening, for the feeling that had been created by the Union Square riots was intense. Eighteen dollars was contributed, which was a very large amount to come from a ghetto street crowd composed wholly of poor people, many of them without employment.

At a second meeting at Union Square, which was held a few days later, the same feeling was apparent. It was a Saturday afternoon affair, and there were no Saturday half-holidays in my trade. But I left the shop without giving the boss any excuse. I had just bought a new pair of shoes, and felt independent enough to risk my job rather than miss such an important demonstration of our cause.

It was a huge crowd that gathered in the square, and was made up of all kinds of turbulent elements. From seven platforms they were addressed by Socialist, anarchist and I. W. W. orators. I was on the same stand with Caron, Lincoln Steffens, Hutchins Hapgood and Leonard D. Abbott, President of the Free Speech League, and I made one of the speeches. The crowd greeted me with a roar of cheers, and the cry went up, "Sweet Marie!" It was the first time I had ever heard this nickname, but it stuck from that day on. Whenever I appeared in public afterward it was sure to be heard shouted at me sooner or later. I, as well as the other speakers, referred to the imprisonment of
Frank Tannenbaum, and a collection was taken to help in meeting the expenses of appealing his case.

"Fellow workmen," said Abbott, "I want to tell you that the fire Frank Tannenbaum lighted when he called the bluff of the churches by invading them with his followers for shelter will not die out. I want to tell you that the blows of the police clubs that fell upon the heads of Joe O'Carroll and Arthur Caron a week ago have already been heard around the world."

When during some of the harangues I heard the words "Russian Cossacks" and "capitalist police" applied to the officers who were watching us I was afraid another fight was about to be precipitated which would result in more police brutality. The situation looked even more serious when a huge mass of men who wore in their hats placards on which were printed the words, "Bread or Revolution," began to move toward Fifth Avenue, some of them crying out their intention of invading the homes of the rich. They soon found themselves confronted by a solid, impenetrable wall of policemen. They then began to surge eastward with the intention of marching up Fourth Avenue, but in that direction, too, a strong police line barred their progress, and they came swarming back into the square.

Fortunately the excitement soon died out, and, the speech-making being over, the throngs melted away peaceably.

However, this demonstration resulted disas-
trously for me, for the next day my picture was in a newspaper that chanced to fall into the hands of no less a person than Sol Borkin, my employer.

"So-o!" he cried, glaring fiercely at me as I came into the shop. "I have by me one of them anarchists, them cut-throaters, what dares here come with murder in her hands. Get out! Get out!"

I didn't budge, and he ran into the adjoining room crying for his partner, Schindler. They came rushing back together, Borkin shouting, "Look, Schindler, what I, a juryman, have got working by me; a murderer, a anarchist. I want you should fire her, Schindler—fire her quick. Throw her out!"

"You'd better pay me the money that's coming to me before you try throwing me out," I reminded them. "When I get it I'll go."

"Pay the anarchist the money, Schindler," yelled Borkin. "Pay her the money quick, so that never again should I her face see."

Schindler complied, and I went away without any hard feeling on my part, for they had treated me better than had most of the shop bosses I had worked for and I realized that I could not have expected Borkin to be so untrue to his kind as to employ me after he had discovered my career as an agitator.

They had done me a good turn in one respect, for the loss of my job brought the opportunity to attend the meetings in Franklin Square, which had become the greatest noonday forum in the city. The speakers who delivered their harangues from the
base of the Franklin statue were beginning to dwell upon the disturbances in the West, for reports of the strikes in the Colorado coal mines were filling columns in the newspapers, and the celebrated "Mother" Jones had just been arrested while leading a riot. Already some of the East Side I. W. W. leaders were travelling westward to take part in the trouble, and Arthur Caron would have gone, too, if he had felt strong enough to endure the hardships of the journey, for it was not in comfortable passenger coaches that our comrades of the I. W. W. travelled, but in box cars, where there were no fares to pay.

"It's the beginning of the revolution," he declared to me in a ringing voice. "There are going to be some great battles out there, and much blood is going to be shed. And when that happens you will see such an uprising from one end of this country to the other as you never dreamed of."

He was wildly excited, his head was held high, his chest thrown out, and his whole body was quivering with emotion like a nervous, mettlesome horse. It was said that his grandfather on his mother's side had been an Indian chief, and for the first time I noticed what a strong resemblance he bore to that race, with his strongly marked features, his high cheek bones and his erect, dignified bearing.

I got hold of the newspapers, and read of what was going on in the coal fields. Thereafter I followed closely the march of events in that district,
but there was another subject then under wide discussion which occupied fully as much of my attention. This was the prospect of a war with Mexico. My convictions in regard to this matter were those of the ghetto. I reflected the sentiment I heard all around me. We did not want war. The reports in the newspapers that citizens of our country were being killed across the border, that armed bands were invading Texas, that the rights of our nation were being disregarded and held in contempt failed to appeal to me. It was not with such facts in mind that the ghetto considered the subject, but with the conviction, in which I shared, that the trouble was being fomented by American capitalists with the hope of plunging their country into war to adjust their business difficulties and to reap huge profits.

While hunting for work one morning I heard that Becky Edelson and Samuel Hartman, both of whom had been telling the crowds in Franklin Square what a crime it would be to declare war on Mexico, had been arrested there for making seditious speeches. I called up the office of Mother Earth, the anarchist newspaper, for further information. Berkman was on the wire. He told me that Becky and Hartman had been mobbed for what they had said, had then been arrested, and were out on bail. He said also that a special meeting to defend the right of free speech was to be held at the Ferrer School. I told him that I meant to go to Franklin Square myself and speak my mind, no matter what
the police might do, and he suggested that I should have circulars printed announcing my intention.

Some of us formed a committee, and we got the circulars printed at once announcing in big type that I was to speak from the Franklin statue the following day and that we, the workers, were warring on war.

With a big bundle of the circulars under my arm, I walked downtown in the noon hour the next day to the statue, where I expected to find our committee waiting for me. Not one of them was there, but the square was packed with people, who were listening to a man whom I knew, a man who had been born a Jew, had become an atheist to sell atheist pamphlets, had become an anarchist with the object of advancing himself as a public speaker, had joined a Bible society to sell its tracts, and who was now talking patriotism under a huge American flag.

I began to distribute my circulars. The speaker, on discovering what I was up to, began to direct his remarks at me. The words "War on War" at the head of my circular had an immediate effect upon his audience. The crowd turned upon me as if to tear me to pieces. The speaker was quick to take advantage of the turn affairs had taken. With one hand pointing at me and the other at the flag, he shouted:

"Here is one of them now, one of those anarchists. She has come to break up our meeting, a meeting held under the very flag itself."
"I respect that flag as much as you do, and more," I shouted at him. "And I know more than you do what it stands for. It stands for freedom, for freedom of speech, for freedom of thought."

My words were lost in the roar of hundreds of voices.

I climbed to the ledge of the statue and began to speak, but it was impossible to make myself heard above the shouts and jeers. The crowd surged toward me furiously. The newspaper reporters who were there taking notes surrounded me in the first rush, and the police, more to save the reporters than me, got between them and the mob. Missiles began to fly, traffic stopped, heads popped out of office windows, and there was a perfect bedlam of noise. All the way from the bridge to the post-office Park Row was black with a howling, pushing mass of people.

With the help of the reporters, I forced my way through the throng. A stinging blow fell on my head, and I staggered under it. Men were clutching at my dress, tearing it to shreds. I gasped for breath. I was being smothered and crushed. I thought all chance was lost of getting away alive. But the reporters were doing their best to keep the frantic pack away from me, and at last I found myself, almost exhausted, with bleeding face, dishevelled hair and torn clothes, staggering against the door of the Nassau Building. A man caught me in his arms. I shut my eyes for a moment, believing
the mob was surely bent on killing me. I was swept off my feet in a grip of iron.

Suddenly the roar of the crowd became indistinct, and, opening my eyes, I found myself in the corridor of the building. Beside me stood Stillson, a detective who had been trailing me for days with the hope of getting enough evidence to place me under arrest.

"You're safe enough here," he said kindly. "But, believe me, young lady, if I hadn't pulled you in here just when I did there's no telling what might have happened to you. Take my advice and keep away from Franklin Square."

The crowd was clamouring for me at the doors, and Stillson, taking me to an elevator man, asked him to take me to a rest room on an upper floor. Then the detective turned to the doors and threatened the leaders of the mob with arrest unless they dispersed.

A number of stenographers gathered around me in the rest room, and helped me to wash my bleeding face and to adjust my clothing. I remained there a good half-hour, and, after being told that the crowd was scattering, I took the elevator to the ground floor and left by a door on the other side from the one I had entered. The square was still fairly well crowded, but I walked quickly up Park Row to the bridge without being recognized. There I got into the subway, and came out at the Worth Street station. As I reached the top of the stairs I met Lincoln Steffens, Leonard Abbott and Saul
Fieldman, who had been searching for me all over the lower part of the city. They had been at the trial of Becky Edelson and Hartman, and the news that I had been mobbed had reached the court-room. Steffens and the two others had immediately started for the scene, but arrived too late.

I told them that the police had failed to protect me, and they determined to go to Mayor Mitchel and make a protest. While they set out for the City Hall, I made my way to the Tombs Court, where I arrived just in time to hear the magistrate sentence Becky to serve ninety days in prison.
CHAPTER X

A STORM BREAKS

RUUMOURS were flying out of Rutgers Square that I was to be arrested. It was true that the police were watching me closely, just as they were watching Berkman, Caron, O'Carroll and all our other leaders; and there was good reason for their vigilance. The red flag of anarchy was waving in the breezes of that spring, appealing as never before to the hungry and the homeless, and desperate men were roaming the streets, ready for an opportunity to spread a reign of terror.

The news from the strike in the Colorado coal mines came to our hordes like a call to arms. The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, controlled by the Rockefellers, had employed armed guards to shoot down the strikers. In a battle with the State troops forty-five persons had been killed and many wounded, and women and children had been burned to death in pits as fire destroyed the tent colony at Ludlow. The whole country was ringing with these reports. The Colorado Federation of Labour was calling on the unions to arm and to aid the strikers. The Anti-militarist League was making plans to recruit fighters to wage war against the soldiers. At 173
the White House and in Congress labour was appealing for justice against the tyranny of capital.

One could have heard many a sinister threat in the East Side gathering places. The opinion was growing among us that days of violence were at hand, that a revolution was coming, and the prospect stirred and thrilled us. If all the dark plots that were planned at that time had been in charge of an efficient organization of our anarchists the city would surely have been made the scene of bloodshed and widespread destruction, but when it came to plotting violence there was no central directing agency. In this respect men worked independently of one another. It was an unwritten rule that the somewhat loose organization that controlled them should not be involved in any deeds of individual members through which they ran danger of imprisonment or the death penalty. This is now, and, I think, always has been, the understanding in anarchist circles; certainly in those with which I have been associated.

In a dark side street a man came out of the black shadows and stopped me. The glow of a sputtering street lamp fell across his face, and I saw that he was Arthur Caron. I had not seen him for several days, and there was a marked change in him. He looked half-starved, his cheeks sunken, his eyes glittering feverishly. When he spoke his voice was hoarse and rasping.
"What's the matter with you, comrade?" I asked. "You look as if you hadn't eaten for a week."

"Well, what of it?" he snarled. "I'm not thinking about food or about myself. There are other things to think of now. They are shooting men and women down like dogs in Colorado, and it's time we did something more than talk."

"What do you want us to do?"

"To rid the world of a few capitalists. And we're going to do it. Now is your chance if you want to help. You're one of us."

"Have you got a plan?"

"Yes, I've got a plan—dynamite. Before many days we're going to tear things wide open."

As we talked we had been walking toward our nightly meeting place, Rutgers Square, where we found many of our friends standing about in little groups. Caron gathered a few of his comrades around him and told them what he thought should be done.

"We ought to wreck the offices of every capitalistic concern in this city," he said, and there was a murmur of assent.

"Kill a few millionaires," I cried, "and put the fear of God into those that are left. Let the workers who are being attacked in Colorado know that we, their brethren in the East, are with them in action as well as in spirit. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., is a Sunday School teacher and preaches kindness and
humility, yet he is the instigator of these murders of men who have created wealth for him.

"Such a man should not be allowed to live," said Caron, dropping his voice almost to a whisper. "Who is ready to risk his own life to see that justice is done?"

Silence fell. The lights in the tall buildings in Canal Street glared down at us, the pushcart torches in Hester Street flared red; the night shadows in the little square seemed to whisper of bloody deeds. For a full minute not a word was spoken. Words were no longer necessary. Each knew what was in the minds of all, and I am sure that every one of us was ready at that moment to go out and kill.

I considered Caron's plan to blow up offices, and decided against it.

"If you use dynamite," I told him, "you will kill many men and women workers who are innocent."

"A few innocent ones may have to die with the guilty," he answered.

He turned away and left us, without divulging more of what he meant to do. But it was plain that he had some very definite plan in mind and that he needed recruits. He had made his appeal, and it was not necessary for him to say more. He knew that whoever among us might decide to join him would talk the matter over with him privately at some other time.

A feeling of dread came over me as I watched
him walk away into the dark. I was certain that he would carry out his plan, whatever it might be, and just as certain that lives would be destroyed. He himself would very likely be among the dead. And even if he should escape with his life he would have only a slim chance of escaping the clutches of the law. He was going out to kill, and perhaps to be killed—this homeless, penniless, hungry young man. Oh! I can see now the folly of it. I can look back upon that moment now calmly and clearly and can apply cold reason to the problems that faced us. But our minds were inflamed then by the passions arising from all that we had endured. And one does not think clearly when half-starved. Perhaps a square meal would have driven the spirit of murder out of poor Arthur Caron, and out of us all for that matter.

"Good-bye," I called after him, thinking I might never see him again. But he neither turned nor answered.

Rumour flies swiftly on the East Side, where there are so many tongues to spread it, and when I arrived home that night I found Mrs. Katzenstein there telling mother that she had heard I was to be arrested.

"The men were talking about Marie in the union where my man belongs," said Mrs. Katzenstein, "and they all agree that for Marie will be only one end. She will go to jail."

"But why should she be sent to jail?" cried
mother. "Because she has made collections to help the poor? Because she has starved herself and run around with no soles on her shoes to help others?"

"Because of the law," returned Mrs. Katzenstein.

"The law!" echoed mother with a shudder. That incomprehensible, inhuman thing, the law, was enough to stir fear in any ghetto home. What was the law to the poor but a constant menace and burden—the mysterious force that such men as Zalkin used to evict tenants who could not pay the rent.

"I think they will send me to jail," I said, "but I don't care. I can't get work. Nobody will give me a chance to earn a living. I'm tired and discouraged. Let the city pay for my board in prison. I'll at least be sure of not going hungry there, and I'll get the rest that I need. If they arrest me send me my books. I'll have the chance I've always longed for to do a lot of reading."

It was at about that time that we received notice that the building in which we lived had been condemned by the authorities and that we should have to move out. Here was a new worry. We might not be able to find a home at such low rent, and it was always possible that certain expenses might be connected with moving—fifty cents or a dollar for one thing or another. One could never tell. However, luck proved to be with us. In Delancey Street, in the shadow of the Williamsburg Bridge, we found a place at the same rent. It was no larger, and no
better in any respect than the room and a half we had rented from Zalkin, but there was some consolation in the fact that it couldn’t be worse than what we had been accustomed to. All Zalkin’s tenants helped one another in the general exodus, and we managed to get our things transferred without the expenditure of a nickel. Fortunately there was very little that mother and I couldn’t carry between us, and Ditchik, who had nothing of his own to move that couldn’t have been wrapped in a pocket handkerchief, helped us with the heavier things. Our new home was as sunless as the one we had left, for the windows looked out upon the great wall of the bridge; but there was one marked difference, for our view, instead of being confined to a little courtyard, took in the crowded, noisy street below. Poor Ditchik mourned for the old place; he was homesick for it. The noise of the trolley-car gongs and automobile horns on the bridge and of the crowds that all through the night moved to and fro beneath the windows worried him. He wanted quiet in which to count his money in the evening and to think of his wife and children.

But I gave scant attention to home affairs during those exciting days. By the time we were face to face with starvation I succeeded in getting work under an assumed name in a millinery store, and between the job and my meetings I was at home only to sleep.

A meeting was arranged to be held at Union
Square to protest against the failure of the police to interfere when I and other of our speakers were mobbed. When the day came there was a heavy downpour of rain, and Berkman, O'Carroll and I decided to call the meeting off. Two or three days later, however, we held a meeting at the Franklin statue, and I and Becky Edelson, who was out on bail, made speeches, as did also Leonard Abbott and Berkman. The crowd was an unfriendly one, and seemed to have caught the spirit of the newspapers, which had been attacking us for our attitude toward the prospect of a war with Mexico. They listened sulkily to Berkman, Abbott and Beck, but when I climbed to the ledge of the statue it became apparent that most of their vindictiveness had been reserved for me. As soon as I began to speak the crowd surged forward. No attempt was made to attack me, but there came derisive yells and hoots. This disturbance was followed by scuffles with the police, who were carrying out Mayor Mitchell's order that our meeting should not be interfered with. Occasionally there was an outbreak at some point in the square, but the police were quick in suppressing it and I succeeded in concluding what I had to say.

The following day we held another meeting at the same place. This time it was not the subject of war but the news from the western mining fields that received most of our attention. The crowd was no longer unfriendly but applauded us. The same sort of a mob that had risen in fury when it
suspected me of sedition grew demonstrative in its appreciation when I said:

"Men like the Rockefellers, who have the power of arbitrating, but who, instead, hire thugs to kill those who differ with them, ought to be killed themselves."

No news from Caron since the night he left us in Rutgers Square, though almost a week had passed. Every time I picked up a newspaper my heart sank with foreboding, for I was sure that before long I should learn of some frightful tragedy that he had caused. I don't think I should have worried in the least if I had been sure he was going to kill only the men who, we were agreed, were our enemies, and equally sure that he himself would escape, but I was convinced that innocent persons were going to suffer, too, and that there would be no chance of his getting away from the police. Naturally I had no sympathy for the men whom he sought to destroy, but I was very fond of him, and the thought of what he had planned to do kept me awake of nights.

While I was scanning the newspapers from hour to hour for his name, I read of constantly recurring outrages by the armed guards and the troops at the Colorado mines. What good was all my speech-making doing for the poor men and women who were being shot down because they had dared to strike for living wages and decent treatment? I might rail until I was hoarse against the Rocke-
fellers, and the crowds might cheer me on, but was one life being saved by it all or was it bringing justice one step nearer to the strikers? Was not poor, starving Arthur Caron about to do more at the risk of his life for the cause—more with a stick or two of dynamite—than a thousand speeches could ever accomplish?

"The time has gone by for words," I told myself. "The time has come for action. If this killing of men and women at the coal mines is meant as a warning to other workers who might dare to look for their rights, then the killing of one capitalist will serve as a lesson for other capitalists. And the time has come for it! The time has come!"

The call had come to me, and I thrilled to it. How could I ignore it? The pleading voices of millions of my fellow-workers, the voices of the homeless, the voices of the women I had seen evicted, the voices of hungry children and the ghostly voices of the dead miners seemed to be ringing in my ears urging me on. All my past life rose before me urging me on, all the bitter recollections of poverty and suffering. How could I face my people, how could I exhort them to rebel against injustice, if I myself should shirk this supreme duty to strike a blow for the cause of the oppressed?

All through one night I lay awake brooding over the thought that had come to me. What was my life worth, I thought. What right had I to consider it when the lives of so many others were at
‘THE TIME HAS COME FOR ACTION’
All that I might do for the cause throughout all my life in lawful ways would be as nothing to what an assassin's hand could accomplish in the passing of a second of time. The killing of one capitalist responsible for the killing of the western miners would so stir the country that there would be no peace until wrong was righted. So it was that I argued as I lay there in the dark, while the clinking of Hersch Ditchik's money broke the silence.

But I am not arguing the matter here. Some of my readers may be roused to protest, not only denouncing such a crime as assassination, but pointing out that the miners had attacked property and that the troops had been called out merely to protect it and to protect the lives of those who were in charge of it. I am not discussing the rights and wrongs of the question now. I am merely telling the story of my life, the life of a ghetto girl and its development under certain circumstances.

When morning came mother could not fail to notice how haggard I looked, but I told her I had a headache and said not a word of the wild thoughts that had been running through my mind. I hurried into my clothes, gulped down a little coffee, and went out into the street. I did not mean to go to work. The great call had come to me. What did work matter now? What did anything matter except the one supreme thing that I had determined to do?

I made my way through the streets as if I were
in a dream. I saw nothing, heard nothing. I walked as if on air.

"A gun; a gun," I muttered. "Where can I get a gun?" I had never had one in my hands in my life, and did not even know where they were sold. And certainly I had no money to buy one, no matter how cheap they might be.

I have no idea of how long I walked about through the tenement streets, but it must have been hours. My mind was in a whirl. I could not come to a decision of where to go or what to do. Never had I been so dazed and bewildered. Perhaps need of proper food and rest had had something to do with it, as I think it did with Caron.

I remember that at last I stepped into a telephone booth, and with my last nickel called up Mother Earth, though I have no idea of what I meant to say. Berkman answered, and I told him of the last reports I had seen of attacks on the miners. He, too, had seen them and was furious. He said that whoever was responsible for the outrages ought to be killed. I feared to tell him of my resolve, for I thought he would try to dissuade me.

The noon-day crowds were filling the streets as I drifted into Franklin Square. It must have been force of habit that brought me there, for I had surely had no intention of visiting the spot or of making a speech. Again and again I had told myself that morning that the time had passed for words and that it was a time for action.
But as I found myself in front of the statue some impulse sent me to the old ledge, and I climbed to it. I was alone. No meeting had been arranged for that day. A crowd began to gather round me. I tried to collect my thoughts, but there was only one word that I could find in them—the one word "kill!"

In my hand was a crumpled newspaper. My eyes fell on the headlines over the latest report of killings in the mines, and I began to read it aloud to the crowd. It was easy to see that they were interested, and, encouraged by their close attention, I began a speech. I said a good deal more than I had intended to. At last I shouted out:

"One man in this city is guiltier than all others for what has been done out there in the west, and he must no longer live."

The crowd broke into cheers, and swept toward me in wild excitement. So close did they press that I was almost swept from the ledge. At that moment a hand reached out to me. It held a pistol. Not a word was spoken, and who it was that offered it, whether man or woman, I could not know, for the crowd surged round me, and the hand disappeared as quickly as it had come, leaving the weapon in my grasp. At last the hour had come. And I was ready for it.

"I am going down to 26 Broadway to kill the guilty man," I shouted, "and his name is John D. Rockefeller, Jr."
Jumping down from the ledge, I ran down Park Row, and the crowd came roaring after me. The pistol was hidden under my dress, but even with that precaution I have never been able to understand why the police did not stop me at once, though I gave them not a thought at the time.

Into Broadway and down through the great canon of office-buildings I ran, and the crowd behind me grew with every step. Once or twice I turned, and I saw the street behind me blocked with a dense mass of people as far as I could see.

It seemed to me in my frenzied state of mind that it took only a moment to pass those long blocks that lie between the post-office and the Standard Oil Building. When I arrived there Upton Sinclair and his group of mourners were marching back and forth. I paid no attention to them, for I had never been particularly friendly with any of them and at that moment had less patience with their methods than ever.

As I ran into the corridor of the building the special policemen stationed outside brought to a halt those that had been following me, and I found myself almost alone. A waiting elevator stood near, and I stepped in and called out "Fourteenth floor." The negro elevator man refused to start the car, and I jumped for the control lever, threatening to tear it from his grasp.

"You start this car, or I'll know the reason why," I shouted at him, and perhaps he saw the pistol
peeping from my dress, for he slammed the door and we shot upward.

I walked very coolly to a door on which I saw the words “Standard Oil Company,” and opened it. A man stepped toward me, and I asked for Mr. Rockefeller. A card was handed to me, and I wrote my name on it, but as the man walked into the inner office with it I followed him. I entered the inner room just in time to see a man who looked very much like the pictures I have seen of the younger Mr. Rockefeller dive through a door in the rear and hastily slam it behind him. At the same moment my guide turned upon me.

“Mr. Rockefeller isn’t in town,” he said. “Can his secretary do anything for you?”

“I’ll see the secretary,” I answered.

A tall, slender young man came out to me.

“What can I do for you?” he asked.

“If you’re Mr. Rockefeller’s secretary,” I replied, “I want you to tell him that if he doesn’t stop the killing of the workers in Colorado I’ll shoot him down like a dog.”

“I will deliver your message,” returned the young man suavely, and bowed me out.

Out in the street, in spite of a drizzling rain which had begun to fall, several thousand persons were waiting for me, and up in front, close to the door of the building, I recognized Berkman, Becky and others of my ghetto comrades. The news had travelled to them like magic, and they had rallied
swiftly to my support. The police were around in great numbers, but none of them tried to interfere with me, and with my friends and followed by the crowd I walked down to Bowling Green to get into the subway.

All around me people were clamouring for me to tell them of what had happened. I climbed on a box, and in the course of a little speech gave them the information they wanted. Some laughed when they learned to a certainty that the affair had ended in a fiasco, but there were many sullen and angry faces, too, and I felt that most of them sympathized with me.

I left my friends at Worth Street, and trudged homeward through the ghetto alone. Now that the excitement had passed away and I had only failure to show for all my furious enterprise, all my strength left me. I was so exhausted that I could scarcely walk, and I felt sick and utterly discouraged. I had been the heroine of a moment and had accomplished nothing. Already the newsboys were yelling extras that Marie Ganz had tried to shoot Rockefeller. Had tried! Bah! So this was the result of my dream of striking a blow for the cause that would startle the world!

Mother met me at the door as I staggered into our home. She gave a little scream as she saw me, for I must have shown how sick and exhausted I was. She had heard nothing of what had happened, but I told her the whole story.
"You were right," she said when I had finished. "But now you will surely go to jail."

A few minutes later I was called to the corner drugstore to answer a telephone call. A woman who explained that she was speaking from the office of Mother Earth informed me that the police were looking for me and that it would be wise to come to the Mother Earth office at once and arrange for what should be done in case of my arrest.

"I don't care what is done," I answered wearily. "They can arrest me if they want to. I won't try to get away."

I returned home, flung myself on the bed and fell asleep.
I AWOKE with a splitting headache. Grey dawn was glimmering through the windows, and the street was beginning to roar with the work of the day. From outside the curtain that screened our bed came a sound of scuffling steps, and I knew that Hersch Ditchik was up and getting ready to go to his pushcart. He must have heard me move, for he spoke my name.

"Chiala?"
"Yes, Hersch."
"You are sleeping?"
"No."

"Chiala, a check I got from Judge Jacob Strahl. He is the man what for the depositors took over the business from the bank. He some of our money saved. From him I got a check for ninety dollars. If you think it will from jail save you take it."

It was a supreme sacrifice he was offering, for I realized that he knew I never could repay him. It would take him a year at least to save up so much money, a whole year of hard work and self-denial, a whole year added to the time that he must wait before realizing his hope of seeing his family—and Hersch was growing old and feeble.
“It’s very kind of you, Hersch,” I said, “but I couldn’t take your money. It wouldn’t save me, anyway, and what’s more, I’m not afraid of going to prison; I want to go. I’ll get a good rest there, which is more than I could ever get here, and I’ll have a chance to do some reading. Look at me, trying to help solve big social problems and with so little education to do it with. I’m like a carpenter who hasn’t any tools. I’ve got to read a lot to make up for all the schooling I’ve missed.”

Our voices awoke mother.

“Don’t go back to your crowds to-day,” she pleaded, looking at me with frightened eyes. “You will surely fall into the clutches of the police if you do.”

“Yes, I’m going back to my crowds,” I answered. “I’m half blind with a headache, but there are two big meetings to-day, and I’m going to speak at each of them.”

Mother raised her hands in a gesture of helplessness. She knew it was no use to argue the matter with me.

The first meeting was at Mulberry Bend, in the Italian district, where several hundred unemployed men and women welcomed me enthusiastically. I told them of my experiences of the day before and declared that, though I had failed to carry out my purpose then, the time would come when I should not fail.

At the second meeting, which was held in Union
Square, the crowd was much larger, and the police, who had not been in evidence at Mulberry Bend, were everywhere.

"If they really mean to arrest me, now is their opportunity," I thought; but they made no attempt to interfere with me, though I spoke my opinion of them very freely during the course of my speech. Police stenographers were present, however, and took notes of everything I said, which led me to think that they were preparing a case against me and that my arrest would come later. It was a sympathetic audience of men and women, all of whom bore the marks of poverty and suffering, and they listened intently to every word. The only interference came from outsiders. Motormen banged their gongs and chauffeurs tooted their horns derisively, while from the edges of the crowd came scornful hoots and yells and cries of "Sweet Marie!" These disturbers, men and boys of the labouring class, seemed unable to understand that I was trying to help the cause of the thousands of miserable unemployed, among whom they themselves might be at any moment through some turn of chance.

Yes, I was trying to help the cause, but what was I doing? What was I accomplishing? What was any of us accomplishing? Words, words, words! But of what use were all our harangues? They had done nothing toward bringing justice to the western miners. From Colorado the tales of brutality came over the wires just as steadily as if we had never
raised our voices, and all our meetings had not caused the smallest perceptible decrease in the number of unemployed among us or the smallest improvement in their condition. Was not Arthur Caron about to accomplish more for the cause with his dynamite than all the rest of us could ever do through mere words?

That night at home Caron came into my thoughts again and again. I wondered where he could be and why I had not heard from him. Surely I should have been the first to be taken into his confidence, for he had been my right-hand man, following me from meeting to meeting and echoing my words as if he found in them his inspiration. But then I realized that he was out on a desperate mission, and that it was only natural that he should not want to have me or any of his friends connected with it in the slightest way. He alone must face whatever punishment the law might bring.

The fact that so many days had elapsed without his putting his plan into execution did not cause me to doubt for a moment that his resolution was unwavering. I knew him too well; he would never abandon his purpose; fear of consequences would never enter into his calculations. And perhaps he had succeeded already for all I knew, for there had been mysterious and disastrous explosions in several places in the country since his disappearance. Yet I doubted that he was responsible for any of these, for I had understood quite clearly that he
meant to carry out his deadly work in New York City.

It made me feel guilty toward the cause and cowardly when I thought of him bent on risking his life while I was giving nothing but futile words. I, too, had set out to give everything, to give my life if necessary; and I had failed. But that failure did not excuse me from abandoning my sworn purpose. The call had come to me to give more than words, and I could not waver.

Grimly determined, I left home the following morning, and made my way toward the Standard Oil Building. I met many of my friends as I passed through the ghetto, but I had scarcely a word for them. I might be arrested for murder that morning, and I meant to keep them out of danger of being involved. As I had only five cents, I intended to walk the whole way, so I trudged down the Bowery, where I was greeted with friendly cries from groups of loiterers, and down Park Row toward the Broadway canyon, the great, frowning stronghold of the hated capitalists. As I was passing the Franklin statue two detectives appeared suddenly beside me.

"We want you, Marie," one of them said quietly. "You're under arrest."

Instantly a crowd gathered and followed us as the detectives led me through the street. The news spread swiftly over the lower East Side, and at the Oak Street Police Station I had scarcely had my
pedigree taken by the man at the desk, when a clerk for Harold Spielberger, an East Side lawyer, came in offering to deposit money for my bail. It was plain that my friends in the office of *Mother Earth* were already at work in my behalf. The clerk, on learning the amount of money demanded, promptly deposited five hundred dollars at the desk, and I was released.

On the station house steps newspaper reporters were waiting for me, and, as they noticed that I was fumbling in my dress, they offered to lend me a little money for carfare if I needed it. But I no longer had any friendly feeling for the newspaper men, for they had ascribed words to me that I had never spoken and had distorted many of the things that I had said. I told them curtly that I should rather walk than be helped by them, and I suppose they at once put their heads together to determine how they could misrepresent and malign me again in their papers. Accompanied by the clerk, I went to the lawyer's home, for it was a Saturday and he had closed his office early. When I met Mr. Spielberger I told him that I did not want to enter any defence.

"I knew what I was about," I said, "and if it was against the law then let them send me to prison. I don't want my case won on technicalities, and I won't go back on my principles."

"Very well," he said. "I'll try the case in accordance with your wishes—and probably lose it."

Then I hurried home, for I knew there was noth-
ing left for me to do but to prepare for prison. I certainly couldn’t go to the Rockefeller offices, for I had learned that the police had set Canal Street as a "dead line" for me, and that if I should be found south of it I should be locked up, having become a menace to that well-protected hive of wealth that lay on the other side.

When I arrived home mother had already heard of my arrest, but she was not in the least excited, for she had been steeling herself for such a crisis.

"What are you going to do now?" she inquired.

"Go to jail, I suppose," I replied.

"Is it true, as the papers say, that you may be sent away for a long time?" she asked with a little tremor in her voice.

"No," I said. "The most that I can get is six months."

"Six months!" She burst into tears. "Six months in prison!" So this was what all our dreary life was to come to!

"You have steady work now," I said, "and with what Hersch pays you for board you will manage to get along. Don’t worry about me. I am ready to go. I am not going to fight the case. I am not sorry for what I did. I regret only that conditions are such as to compel me to do this sort of thing."

While we were speaking the door was thrown open, and my pal rushed in breathless.

"What can I do?" he demanded. "You know you can count on me for anything I can give."
“You can’t do anything,” I answered. “Unless you want to send me some of your books to read in prison.”

“Yes, I can do that,” he said dejectedly. “But I can’t think of your going to prison. There must be some way to save you. Prison for you! The thought of it drives me mad. Why, it’s hell over there on Blackwell’s Island. Why did you get into this trouble? Violence will never do any good. Haven’t I tried to reason you out of it? I’m as much of a friend of the cause as you are, but we ought to keep within the law.”

“The law!” I jeered at him. “Don’t talk of the law to me!”

He sat down and covered his face with his hands, overwhelmed by what had happened. As I have said, my pal had been through college. Prison seemed more dreadful, more calamitous to him than it would have seemed to others of my radical friends, to such a man as Joe O’Carroll, for example.

When I went to the Bleecker Street court on the following Wednesday to face the magistrate I knew I should be found guilty. The newspapers had been denouncing me and clamouring for justice. They always appealed frantically to the law whenever the rich and mighty had been offended, though it was little they had had to say when the ghetto streets were full of evicted families, and it was little clamouring for justice they ever did in behalf of children who worked twelve hours a day in sweat-
shops under brutal taskmasters. I had been one of those children, and I knew. The law! Justice! What cloaks for hypocrisy and cruelty and greed!

In the court-room were many of my friends, among them Berkman the always helpful, Becky Edelson, who was still out on bail pending an appeal of her case, Joe O'Carroll, who brought me a solitary carnation, which was surely all that he could afford to buy, and Louise Berger and her half-brother, Carl Hanson. Louise Berger and her half-brother had been little known outside of our own little group of anarchists, but they were destined to become notorious in connection with a frightfully disastrous explosion of dynamite in their flat in Lexington Avenue. While all these friends were greeting me who should come into the room, to my great surprise, but Arthur Caron, wild-eyed, haggard, ragged, looking as if he had neither slept nor eaten for days. His emaciated hand felt like a claw as it grasped mine.

"I couldn't keep away," he said hoarsely. "This is a time when you need all your friends beside you to show their sympathy, a time when every one of us should be here. I want to say good-bye. I've had bad dreams, premonitions. There's some disaster ahead of me. I can feel it. I don't think I have long to live. But I'm going to strike a blow for the cause before I go out of this life—a blow that will ring around the world."

I heard the gavel fall on the magistrate's desk,
and I pressed his poor, thin hand and turned away, realizing that my case was about to be called.

After the formal preliminaries, I was asked if I wanted to take the stand. I rose from my seat, and said: "I have committed no crime. I have nothing to defend myself for. I have done what I thought and still think was right, and I do not know that I can say anything more."

The representative of the District Attorney's office, who had tried to persuade me to sign a peace bond to the effect that I would make no public speeches for six months, which I had refused to do, demanded that I be given the full penalty of the law on the charge of disorderly conduct. A number of policemen were called as witnesses, and they testified to what I had said and done.

Magistrate Murphy then spoke as follows:

"The evidence of these police officers and the refusal of this defendant to put in a defence tend to show that this young woman is guilty of the charge of disorderly conduct. There is a terrible situation in this city which needs most serious attention immediately. It has gone to such an extent that lawlessness and disorder are daily occurrences. I do not believe this young woman is as guilty as the ring-leaders. She, in my opinion, is a tool of older heads and vicious minds. They have urged her to challenge the law, and she has done so. This poor, misguided individual has put the challenge directly up to the law, and in administering the law I must do
my duty. I shall impose a penalty of sixty days at hard labour in the workhouse."

He had truly said that lawlessness and disorder were daily occurrences. The city was in a turmoil. Since my arrest there had been demonstrations in many places. In the Brownsville section of Brooklyn five thousand Socialists had marched through the streets behind a hearse upon which were signs in Yiddish and English denouncing John D. Rockefeller, Jr. I was afraid that my imprisonment would act as an incentive to my friends to carry these demonstrations to dangerous extremes, and that they would soon all be in difficulties with the police, but as for myself I didn't care, and the sentence certainly was no shock to me, for I had come to court thoroughly convinced that I was going to be punished. My poor pal, however, was much affected, and almost lost control of himself. It was quite the contrary with Berkman, who had spent so many years in prison himself, and with O'Carroll and Caron. The faces of these three seemed to be illumined by the spirit of our cause, and they listened to the judge pronounce the sentence as if his words were conferring an honour upon me, were raising me to the heights of martyrdom.

And indeed it was in the spirit of martyrdom that I walked away from that crowded court-room. It was a beautiful spring day; the streets were bathed in brilliant sunshine; little girls were dancing on the sidewalks to the music of hand organs; and in that
moment prison seemed more hideous and fearsome than I had ever before imagined it. Yet I thrilled to the opportunity of suffering that the cause I served might be advanced, no matter how little, through the sacrifice of my freedom.

Before long the grey, gloomy walls of The Tombs loomed before us. The barred gate swung open, and my guards led me inside. I was to be kept there over night, and in the morning would be transferred to the penitentiary on Blackwell’s Island. Almost immediately my finger prints were taken, and I was then led to the head matron. She took away my pocketbook, in which, by the way, there was not so much as a penny, searched me, and locked me up in a cell.

My fellow prisoners, it seemed, had heard all about my case. Through the mysterious “underground” channels of information which exist in every prison they learned promptly of my arrival, and greeted me with cries of “Hello, Marie!” “We’re with you, Marie!” A high, clear tenor voice started the singing of the Marseillaise, and soon the corridors were ringing with the world’s great song of freedom. Some of the singers banged a harsh accompaniment on the iron piping that ran around the walls of the cells, and the din became terrific.

After a time the singing died away, and some of the girls in nearby cells seized the opportunity offered by the comparative quiet to shout out mes-
sages to me. They told me that on the following day, when we should all be taken to the island, they would make friends with me and advise me how to conduct myself there, for prison life seemed to be new to none of them. Some of them asked me if I meant to start a hunger strike. I answered that I should accept the food that was given me if it was fit to eat, and that if it was not I should certainly let the public know about it after my release.

I was tired out by all the excitement of the day, and tried to rest. My cot was hard as nails, and smelled strongly of disinfectants. The pillow was full of hard lumps and black with dirt, and I threw it on the floor. Without removing my clothes, I lay down, and, despite the discomfort and the jarring voices of the other prisoners, soon fell sound asleep.

The heavy rapping of a key on my cell bars awakened me. A matron was standing at the door. She summoned me out, and led me to the lower floor, where I was given a large cube of bread and a cup of black coffee without milk or sugar. One bite into the bread made me change my mind about eating it, for it was stale and sour.

"You better get used to this," one of the girl prisoners advised me. "That's all you're going to get." But I contented myself with the coffee, and let the bread remain uneaten.

With several girls and women I was put into a big, black van, and soon we had crossed the ferry and were on the island. Inside the great prison
building some of my companions from The Tombs were having a reunion with friends who had arrived there before them. Girls were throwing their arms about one another's necks. The old-timers began giving the new arrivals advice as to how to get the kind of work they preferred. If a girl wanted to work in the kitchens or to sew or to scrub, she was advised to pretend that she was ignorant of everything else. Such advice was not needed by most of them, for there were very few who had not been in prison before. One girl stood aside from the rest, and mumbled curses at a tall woman who was walking down the aisle with a mop and pail in her hands. The two had once been cell mates, and had become enemies.

We were taken into a long, bare room, where a woman in nurse's garb appeared. She took our pedigrees, and we were then led into the examination room. There we were examined by a physician and two matrons. We did not have to undress, but they gave us a rather thorough examination. A blood test was taken and recorded in each case. When my turn came the doctor, who evidently had read about me, called me by name, and passed me on without an examination. We were then moved on into the big bathroom, which was filled with numerous showers. While the women were taking off their clothes I told one of the matrons that I had taken a bath just before going to The Tombs, and that I didn't want to undress among all those women,
most of whom were far from clean. She said she was willing to make an exception of me, and I escaped the ordeal.

A trusty brought to me my prison garb, a one-piece dress of white and black perpendicular stripes. We were not allowed to wear corsets, but it was not a place where a woman cared to indulge her vanity.

By this time the mid-day meal was ready. It was laid out on long tables in a huge place that bore some slight resemblance to the nave of a church. Cells rose on all sides, tier after tier, to the high roof. I was told curtly to sit down and begin my meal, but, having no appetite, I hesitated.

"Hey, you, Ganz!" came the voice of a matron.

"Get to your meal."

I sat down with the others, but it was little that I could eat. Pea soup was served in a bowl. I took one mouthful of it, and stopped, for it was like dishwater. I tried the meat, but it was rotting. Even the bread was bad.

"Why, this is the best meal we've had in some time, girlie," said a woman who sat beside me and who seemed to be surprised by my disgust. "You better eat this, for you won't get any better, and not even so good."

Again I tried; but it was no use. The food smelled foul and nauseated me. I couldn't understand how the others could get so much apparent enjoyment out of it. There was no doubt that they
were enjoying themselves; indeed, there was every appearance of a huge festive board, as if it were a banquet at a celebration.

After that gruesome meal I made the acquaintance of my cell. It was on the ground floor, and inside were three cots, which hung on chains from the walls, though I had the place to myself. It was a large cell—plenty large enough for the three girls it was intended to hold when the prison was full—and was even larger than our bedroom at home. Through a solitary, narrow window came a glimmer of light, and by standing on tiptoe I could look out through the bars and get a glimpse of the river.

As I lay down on my cot a terrible nausea came over me. I knocked on the cell door, and a matron came.

"I'm feeling very sick," I told her, "and I want something to drink—a cup of tea. I can't eat your food."

"Others are eating it," she replied sharply. "There's no reason why you can't."

"The fact that others are eating it—eating it because they have to—is no reason why it is fit for human beings," I said.

"Oh! Is that the way you feel about it?" she cried. "Well, you'll eat it soon enough."

It was useless to argue with her, and I asked her either to give me some decent food or to call the doctor. She gave me a hard, searching look, and I think she must have realized how sick I was, for
she went away without another word, and returned a few moments later with the physician.

"Well, what's the matter with you?" the doctor demanded.

"I'm weak and faint," I replied. "I want some tea and some decent bread. I haven't eaten since yesterday."

He felt my pulse; then turned to the matron, saying, "She's all right. Don't worry about her."

"She acts as if the place wasn't good enough for her," the matron put in sourly. The doctor's eyes fell on the book I had brought with me from home. It was a volume of Dostoyefsky, which I had brought with me from home.

"You quit reading those horrible Russian books," he advised, and walked out, followed by the matron.

The place was as silent as a tomb. On the edge of my cot I sat, staring dizzily at the bare black walls. Gradually exhaustion began to overcome me, and now and then I dozed. My thoughts went wandering back over all my past life. I was a child again, playing with my father on the house-top under the evening sky. Years went by in a flash, and I was slaving for a living in the sweatshop under the ever-watchful, cold, hard eyes of Marks, the foreman. Again the scene changed, and I was with my crowds; they were cheering me—then sounds of a struggle—the ringing clubs of policemen—cries and curses—"Kill them! Kill the cops!"—the rumble of
horses' hoofs—the mounted men are coming—they are riding us down!

A blur comes before my eyes; the cell goes swinging round me. I fall back upon the cot, and cover my face with my hands. There is nothing in my heart but bitterness and hatred.
CHAPTER XII

THE WOMEN OF THE ABYSS

WOMEN of the depths of poverty I had lived with always, but now I was among the women of the black abyss of crime, and I made my first acquaintance with the ways of that mysterious underworld that had lain so close to our tenement doors.

The hard, degraded faces of these women had been with me in my sleep, appearing in horrible dreams, and their harsh voices I heard now echoing through the corridors as I awoke and saw the grey light of early morning glimmering through the barred windows. All the voices seemed to ring with hatred and bitterness and despair. They seemed like echoes of old crimes and tragedies. I thought of how many tales of broken lives and of infamy they could tell. They filled me with shrinking dread, and I put my hands to my ears to shut them out.

My head ached, and I felt feverish. I got up and cooled my face and hands with a little water which was contained in a small pitcher. There were no water pipes in the cell, nor in any of the others for that matter, and the pitcher held scarcely enough for washing purposes, but this was as nothing to other shortcomings. For sanitary needs there was
a large agate-ware bucket, with a cover. Before long the door of my cell was unlocked, and I was told to take this bucket and to join a long line of prisoners which was forming. Each woman was required to empty and rinse her pail, and it was a sickening experience. When it was over I staggered into my cell, threw the bucket on the floor and sank onto my cot. I was too sick and nauseated to be able to think of breakfast. An old matron whose face looked sympathetic came to my door, and, after watching me for a moment, inquired in a kind tone:

“What is troubling you, Marie?”

I told her of my aversion to the food and of the sickening effect of the buckets.

“It is all too true,” she said. “Things should be different. But wait a minute, and I’ll see if I can’t get you some food from our mess.”

Soon she returned with a cup of fairly good tea, milk and sugar, and a slice of eatable buttered bread. The sight of it brought back my appetite, and I took the first meal I had had for twenty-four hours.

As I had not yet been assigned to work, I was permitted the freedom of the large room that served as the mess hall. While I was there a tall man in uniform, who, as I learned later, was Warden Fox, came in. He had a newspaper in his hand, and, hungry for news of what my friends were doing, I asked him if I could look at it.

“Sure,” he replied. “Are you Marie Ganz?”
I told him I was.

"How do you like the prison?"

"I think this place is terrible."

"Well, you may not have to stay here long. I hear they are appealing your case."

He continued on his rounds, leaving me in possession of the paper. I was walking toward my cell to read it when a matron came running after me.

"Why did you talk to that man?" she demanded.

"I wanted the newspaper."

"Well, you mustn't speak to any man in prison. He is the warden, and must be spoken to only when he speaks to you first."

I promised that I would observe the rule in the future, and tried to get away from her, for I was in a hurry to read the news. I had scarcely reached my cell when she came running after me again.

"Hurry!" she cried. "Get your clothes and get out of here."

I didn't need to be told this twice, though I could scarcely believe my ears. It was too good to be true. I got into the clothes in which I had been brought to the prison, and hurried out. A man and the old matron who had befriended me took me in charge, and a few moments later we were out of the gloomy old pile and were walking down the path to the little ferry. Oh, how good it felt to be out in the fresh air again, with the sun shining down on me and the river breezes fanning my face!

At the end of our journey I was led before Jus-
tice Lehman in the Supreme Court, where my case was to be argued on habeas corpus proceedings. Some of my friends were there to greet me, among them Becky Edelson, but I looked in vain for my mother, though I realized the chances were very slim that she had been able to get away from her employment. There is always an end, even to Supreme Court proceedings, and, the long dreary arguments being over, the judge promptly decided against me, and, keenly disappointed, I was taken back to prison.

Not long after my arrival there I was in my cell reading Dostoyefsky, when there again came a call for me to dress. I was told that I was going away. I had no idea of where I was going to be taken, and I didn’t much care, for I had given up hope of being freed, but it was a relief to have another break come in the deadly monotony. The same matron and keeper came as my escort.

"Where are you taking me?" I asked.

"We can give no information," the old matron replied. "It’s against the rules."

But I was soon to find out for myself. After a journey by ferry and trolley cars, we came to the Queens County Penitentiary. Here I was received by the warden, who spoke to me kindly.

"I hope we shall be able to make things as comfortable as possible for you," he said. "Of course, you must remember that this is a prison, but we believe in treating our prisoners in a humane manner."

The appearance of the place bore out his remark.
It was airy, spotlessly clean, and looked more like a convent than a penitentiary. A motherly matron—Mrs. Kotch was her name—came over to me, and, by direction of the warden, led me to the top tier.

"There's lots of air up there," the warden said. "She'll like it better there. Give her everything she wants."

As I was led through the corridors, past the long rows of cells, I was impressed by the fact that each cell had a complete sanitary equipment, and at the end of each row was a bathroom with a tub and two faucets, denoting the fact that there were both hot and cold water available. In such healthy, cleanly surroundings a wrongdoer might have a chance to recover from the poisons of evil and to prepare for a new start in life, which was surely not the case in the hard, brutalizing environment on Blackwell's Island.

The door of my cell was allowed to remain open, but the solid corridor doors were locked. The cells were all on one side of the corridor, and on the other side, facing each cell door, was a tiny barred window high in the wall. In all that long row I was the only prisoner, and I had the whole corridor to myself. My cot was clean, everything was sanitary, and I found the place a heaven as compared to the island prison.

My first meal consisted of a piece of good white bread, a cup of hot, appetizing black coffee, without
sugar or milk, and four stewed prunes. What a surprise it was after the awful meals in the other place! And this was not the end of my good fortune, for in the evening Mrs. Kotch brought me two clean, sterilized bed-sheets, and an equally clean blanket. I made my own bed, and fell asleep with a luxurious feeling.

Of course I felt that such a fortunate state of affairs could not last very long, but when the next day brought no unpleasant experiences I began to think that perhaps my prison life was to be more agreeable than I had ever dared hope. For breakfast a coloured trusty brought me corned beef hash, potatoes, coffee and bread. The noon meal consisted of a large bowl of good soup with meat chopped into it, potatoes, bread, and tea with milk in it. I still had the entire corridor to myself, and I began to wonder why no other prisoners were with me. This mystery was solved before long, when a matron told me in confidence that Katherine B. Davis, the Commissioner of Corrections, had decreed that I should be kept for a few days in solitary confinement because she thought I was a trouble-maker and, if put among the other prisoners, might start strikes.

"It is well she thinks so," I told myself, for I was glad to be alone. I had the opportunity now of reading all I wanted to—at any rate so long as my reading matter held out—and I could rest and think. I could write letters, too. I wrote to
mother, to my pal, to O'Carroll, and I sent requests to my friends in the office of Mother Earth to send me books, for the charm of Dostoyefsky could not last forever. Books came to me, and so did letters. Berkman wrote often, signing himself "Bella," for if he had used his own notorious name his letters surely would not have been delivered. Of course I had to read not only what he wrote, but between the lines, for much that he tried to convey might not have been to the liking of the prison authorities. His letters breathed encouragement to me. He had been in prison fourteen years himself, and knew what loss of freedom meant.

After I had been in solitary confinement for several days seven women who had just been transferred from another prison were locked up in the corridor. At about the same time the meals took a decided change for the worse. Commissioner Davis must have judged me correctly, for I told my fellow-prisoners that we should complain to the warden that the food was not fit to eat. They agreed with me, and I did the complaining myself as their spokesman. The warden listened patiently, admitted that the cook was inefficient, and that he would have him discharged. But, whatever he may have done, the meals showed no improvement.

With the arrival of the women in my corridor prison life became very different for me. I could
no longer read, for there was a constant noise of bickerings and arguments. It was a typical prison crowd, unruly, restless and quarrelsome. But now my prison acquaintance was not confined to them by any means, for I was at last permitted to go into the yard for exercise, and there met a wild horde of prisoners—women of all ages but almost without exception long hardened to the life of the underworld.

One of them seemed to me to be very different from the rest. She was a French-speaking Canadian, a pleasant-faced, intelligent, well-educated little woman, whose cell was in the same corridor with mine. She told me a story that aroused my interest at once. She declared that one day she had happened to be in a large department store, where a woman accosted her and asked her to hold a waist. Suddenly a store detective had arrested her for stealing this waist, and the woman who had left it with her disappeared. I was inclined to believe her story true, for she did not seem like a woman who would steal. At any rate, whether innocent or not, she suffered terribly, and her hair turned from grey to snow white during the few weeks that I was with her.

However, many of the most hardened of the lot were always protesting their innocence. Nellie Ross, for example, who told me that she was a lion tamer by profession, declared she had been arrested because a gun had been found on her, though her
intentions had been perfectly innocent. But it developed that she had been carrying the weapon for a notorious gun fighter.

Many of the women were known by the names of celebrities. A little coloured girl was "Ethel Barrymore"; a certain stout woman was "Tetrazzini," and the noisiest girl in the place was "Emma Goldman."

Our nights were hideous. None of us had been assigned to work, and women were driven frantic by the terrible monotony of doing nothing. Once I was awakened by blood-curdling screams, which were suddenly shut off. My cell neighbours informed me that a strait-jacket must have been fastened upon some unruly prisoner. Through the dark hours after we had been locked in our cells for the night one woman after another would tell her tale of misfortune. Soon one would break into tears and loud screams over what she believed was the injustice she had suffered from prosecutor and judge. Her outbreak would rasp the nerves of others, who would join her in wailing. Soon bedlam would break loose, with scores of hysterical women screaming at the tops of their voices.

Sometimes, after the lights were out and the guards were prowling and sleep had come at last to the poor, nerve-wracked women, there would be a soft ticking on the bar of a cell. This was the means of opening communication, usually a request for a cigarette. Prisoners sleep very lightly, and they do
not mind being awakened by such a request. The message is passed from cell to cell until it reaches some woman who can provide what is required. Then the cigarette travels back along the line, passed on by hands that reach in spectral fashion through the bars.

The women were not permitted to smoke, but they managed to evade the rule quite easily. The matrons preferred to turn their backs on what was going on rather than to incur the dislike of the prisoners, who could have made things very unpleasant for them. But it was always a serious problem how to get the cigarettes, and also how to get them lighted, for matches were not allowed. Often through the night came a curious scratching on the stone floors of cells. The prisoners were not allowed to wear corsets, but a woman experienced in prison ways would always manage to extract one corset steel on her arrival and to secrete it in her prison clothes. With this steel a fire could be produced. One match—but seldom more than one—could be stolen from the kitchen, and with this a bit of cloth, preferably an old stocking, would be set afire. The flame would be put out, leaving the edge of the cloth a charcoal. When the steel was rubbed against the stone floor it would strike enough of a spark to set the charcoal to smouldering sufficiently to provide a light for a cigarette.

One afternoon all the women in our corridor—eight of us—got together in one cell, where we sat
on a blanket spread on the floor. None of us had any tobacco, and a frantic hunt began for cigarette ends. A handful of these being found, they were torn apart, and the tobacco was gathered into one pile. Some—they were not fastidious, those women of the underworld—had brought in masticated chewing tobacco which they had picked up in the yard, where the inmates of the men’s prison, who had their own hours for exercising in the yard, had left it. All this mess of tobacco was being skillfully made into cigarettes, wrapped in scraps of newspaper or in anything that would possibly serve as a wrapper, when there came the crash of glass. At almost the same moment our corridor door was banged shut and locked.

Instantly all the women jumped to their feet, screaming hysterically. Their nerves always at high tension, the shock had driven them frantic. They rushed down the corridor, and began pounding on the solid door.

"What’s up?" we cried to the matron. "What has happened?"

"It’s nothing; nothing at all," she assured us. "Don’t get excited."

Gradually we were quieted, and returned to the cigarette making. Two hours later, at supper, we learned that a little Jewish girl, a drug addict, whose cell was on a lower tier, had gone mad, had smashed a window with her fists and had been taken to a hospital.
"Ethel Barrymore," who prided herself on a fancied resemblance to the actress of that name, had been put into a strait-jacket because she had abused the warden, and, after her ordeal, sought the sympathy of the rest of us when we were all turned out into the yard by showing the cuts and bruises that had been caused by the attempt to subdue her. The marks on her frail little body made us angry. I had always thought the strait-jacket method was brutal, and I now said so to the others. We decided that the next time a prisoner was put to this sort of torture we should call a strike.

We did not have long to wait before being called upon to carry out our plan. One evening we heard screams from the direction of "Ethel Barrymore's" cell, and we recognized her voice. Her screams became more and more frantic.

"They are putting me in a strait-jacket!" she cried.

This was our signal. "Let up on the little girl!" "Don't put a strait-jacket on her!" and other cries many of them profane and obscene, came from all over the prison. Then there came into noisy evidence all the implements that prisoners, no matter how watchful the matrons and keepers may be, manage to conceal in their cells. Spoons, pot-covers and various other sound-producing things stolen from the mess or the kitchen were swung lustily against the cell bars with terrific clamour. From
the time the girl was put into the strait-jacket until four o'clock in the morning—fully five hours—this ear-splitting din continued, and surely no matron or keeper, or anybody else, got a wink of sleep during that maddening time.

Keepers from the men's prison came to our side of the building to threaten us into quiet, but all their efforts were fruitless.

"Take her out of the strait-jacket!" came the cry. "Murderers!" "Cowards!" But there was far worse abuse than this heaped upon those helpless keepers—language so foul and revolting that it could have been conceived by only such women as were those around me.

When at last the sun began to shimmer weakly into our cells some of the girls were still yelling. One by one they were overcome by sheer exhaustion, and fell onto their cots, dropping almost instantly into heavy sleep.

Strange to say, the only penalty inflicted for our outbreak was a denial of the privilege of receiving our mail for one day. Yet this was no light punishment, for we always looked forward eagerly to the arrival of the mail, which brought the only pleasure of the day to many of us. I think that that day when there were no letters was the most dreadful of all. Never had the prisoners been so irritable, so quarrelsome, so easily moved to tears. Unusual excitement prevailed the following morning, when our letters were delivered to us, and many of the
women were crying; indeed they almost always cried when letters came to them. After supper that evening they were all eager to be locked up in their cells for the night that they might write their answers. One girl runs to another. One who has a surplus of stamps helps out one who has none. Pencils and stationery are borrowed. Then, after the cells are locked, an unusual stillness falls, broken sometimes by sobs, for every one is writing to a friend or a relation, and bitter memories are aroused.

Before long voices are heard again. Girls discuss with one another what they have written, and tell stories of their experiences which their correspondence has recalled. Some of those who have received no letters and who are in bitter mood break in with sharp criticisms, and noisy quarrels ensue. Threats and curses fill the air, and the corridor rings with the uproar. The lights are out; nothing can be seen; the shrieking voices are like the wails of lost souls in the black depths of hell.

Then, as the night grows late and weariness comes, softer emotions assert themselves. The turmoil dies away. Nerve-shaken bodies are exhausted and ready for sleep. Quiet brings sobs of repentance and sad memories of years long gone. Out of the heavy, oppressive silence, that favourite hymn of the prisons rises sweet and clear, "Nearer, My God, To Thee." The solitary voice that has begun it is joined by others, and soon all the
women in the corridor are singing the familiar words.

Every Sunday morning a woman social service worker came to our corridor to pray with the Catholic girls. She would kneel on a cushion, the girls would gather round her, and together they would pray. Being a Jewess, I would stand apart, but I would listen respectfully. Fortunate, I thought, were those who had not lost their faith in prayer, as had I, who long ago had forgotten how to pray.

Rising from her prayers one day, this woman visitor was accosted by a girl who told her that the prison food was very bad.

"I didn't think so," she replied. "I tasted it myself."

"Whose food did you taste?" I put in. "The food that the officials eat?"

"No, I ate the prison fare, and I think it is excellent."

"Having just concluded your prayer to God," I persisted, "would you swear before this God that the food is good enough to eat?"

"You are a firebrand!" she shouted. "I'll never come here to pray again."

She swept out angrily, followed by the jeers of prisoners.

Prison life fretted me less as the days wore on, for I was growing accustomed to the dreary routine, and the horrors appalled me less after many repeti-
tions of them. I began to be almost fond of my little, bare-walled cell, and the hideous noises of the night no longer wracked my nerves. My friends had sent me many books, and now, grown indifferent to the disturbances, there were many hours in which I could read. The thoughts aroused by Nietzsche and Schopenhauer I pondered over for many an evening, and I wept over the sorrows of the heroes and heroines of my Russian novels. I almost dreaded the time when I should return to freedom, for what was there for me to look forward to? Nothing but the old life of poverty and persecution. I should have no job, and it would be harder than ever to find one now that I had been in prison. To the employing class I should be an outcast. And I had debts, too—and how should I ever be able to pay them? At the time Joe O’Carroll and Arthur Caron were in jail I had borrowed desperately, everywhere that I could, that I might help them. They had both been sick at the time, and in need of better fare than their jail afforded. I am sure my comrades in the cause would have helped me in the same way if it had not been for the fact that I was not permitted to have visitors. My debts amounted to seventy-five dollars, and I felt that it would take me years to save such a huge sum.

So it was not with any great eagerness that I looked forward to the day when I should be released. Indeed, I think my fellow-prisoners took
more interest in its approach than I did, for I am sure they had grown fond of me. The day before I was to leave they gathered round me outside my cell door, and, degraded as most of them were, they tried their best to let me know how much they would miss me and yet how glad they were that I was so soon to get my freedom. I distributed among them such things as I could give away. To some I gave my pencils, to others pamphlets, and to others books and stationery. It was while going through my things that I came upon a volume of Oscar Wilde’s works, and, opening it, my eyes fell on “The Ballad of Reading Gaol.”

“Here’s something I’ll read to you, girls,” I said; and they gave a shout of approval. In silence they stood about me, listening intently to every word, until they burst into tears as I came to the lines:

“I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky.”

Never had I seen hardened women so shaken by honest emotions.

That night the voices died away earlier than usual, but I lay until very late brooding over my future. There was not the slightest pleasure for me in the prospect that I should be set free in the
morning. My mind was tormented with anxiety. When at last sleep came to me it brought a frightful dream. There was the sound of wild disturbance. Horses were running away through crowded streets. I could hear distinctly the clatter of their hoofs on the ringing pavements, and the screams of people they were trampling down. The frantic horses came rushing on. Always came more to take their places as they swept away. Hundreds of men, women and children were falling before their charge. The gutters were streaming with blood. Great throngs of people were streaming in from the side streets and were gathering in a wide public square. Suddenly came a roar that shook the earth, and a great building came tottering down upon the crowds, burying them under its débris.

I awoke with a scream, and an answering cry came from some startled woman down the corridor. For the remainder of the night I could not sleep, for I could not shake off the horror of the dream. When day came it still obsessed me, and all the noisy voices of the prisoners could not drive it away. My dejected appearance attracted the attention of Nellie, the lion tamer, and she inquired kindly what troubled me.

“You're going to be free to-day,” she reminded me. “You ought to be happy.”

I told her of my dream, and she listened with frightened eyes.

“Something terrible is going to happen to you,”
she said, for, like all prisoners, she was extremely superstitious.

"I think so, too," I agreed, for I had taken the dream as a premonition of disaster.

But the farewell entertainment my fellow-prisoners gave for that morning helped to drive away my gloom. Every one in the corridor took part in it, and the din became terrific. Some sang, others danced, a few particularly agile ones turned hand-springs. "Ethel Barrymore" put two fingers between her teeth and whistled a piercing solo. Nellie, the lion tamer, was walking on her hands as adroitly as an acrobat in a circus. Then, in her bare feet with a towel over her face like a harem veil, she began to do a spring-maid dance, while she hummed Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" in accompaniment.

The noise brought the matrons, who came rushing in and warned us that unless the disturbance stopped our privileges would be curtailed; but we all ignored them. The next moment the matrons fastened their astonished gaze on Nellie, and burst out laughing.

So ended my imprisonment. As I walked out into the welcome sunshine, with the loud farewells of my poor companions of my prison life ringing in my ears, the breezes from the river swept my face, and it seemed as if I were coming out of a nightmare.

Outside the grey prison walls were waiting Joe
O'Carroll, whose long hair was blowing in the wind, and my ever-faithful pal. They put me into a taxi-cab, and took me back to Delancey Street, where, standing in the door of our tenement, my mother and a little group of neighbours were waiting for me.
CHAPTER XIII

THE DEATH OF THE DYNAMITERS

My heart warmed to these faithful neighbours who had come to try to cheer my homecoming. Their faces were full of kindness and of eagerness to show their sympathy and affection. Poor folk they were, every one of them, and their lives had been constant struggles with misfortune; but in my own hours of trouble their hearts had been tested and proved. They were friends who would never fail me. No matter what the world might think of me, they would remain always staunch and true.

But where were my comrades for whose cause I had been imprisoned? Where was Berkman? Where was Caron? Where were all the men and women of Mother Earth, and the leaders of Rutgers Square? Joe O'Carroll was the only one of them all who had come to welcome me, and I resented their neglect. As soon as I could get away from mother and the neighbours, I went to the drugstore at the corner, and called up Mother Earth. Berkman himself answered the telephone.

"What kind of friends are you?" I demanded angrily. "I have just come home from prison, and
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you haven't even taken the trouble to come to welcome me."

"I'm sorry, Marie," Berkman replied, "but something very serious has happened. I and a number of others were about to start for the prison to greet you this morning, when we received the news that a bomb, which I believe was planted through some trickery of the police, had exploded in Louise Berger's flat in Lexington Avenue with frightful results. Caron, Charles Berg, a woman named Mrs. Marie Chavez, who was at some of our meetings, and Louise's half-brother, Carl Hanson, were killed, and a lot of people were hurt. You will understand what this means for us. It means that the police will try to connect you and me and every one of us with it."

The receiver dropped from my hand. Faint and dizzy I staggered out of the booth. Arthur Caron killed? So the fearful dream I had had in prison had come true. My fears and premonitions were realized. My eyes filled with tears. Of all my comrades in the cause he had stood first in my affections.

Frantic eagerness to learn more of what had happened sent me rushing to the Mother Earth office. It was the Fourth of July, and firecrackers were popping in the streets. The anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. A day that spoke clamorously of our freedom. Freedom! Where was freedom among the poor? Were we not still feebly fighting invincible powers to obtain
it, and that very morning had not some of my comrades been killed in the struggle? From a tenement window the stars and stripes fluttered vividly in the hot, brilliant sunshine, and inside the voices of children were singing the national anthem. As I hurried on I found myself wondering for a moment whether those singing children who were now celebrating their country's liberty were doomed to follow the footsteps of so many others along the rough paths that led through the drudgery of the sweatshops.

When I arrived in the office of Mother Earth I found Berkman and his secretary, Elinore Fitzgerald, who were working as calmly and deliberately as if nothing unusual had happened. They told me more about the explosion, the news of which was being cried already by newsboys in the street. The roof of the building and the two highest stories, on one of which was Louise Berger's flat, had been blown away completely, and the débris had fallen upon the holiday crowd passing by in the street, injuring many.

"It was the work of the police," Berkman insisted. "They've been framing us up. Caron and those other boys weren't responsible for this thing. They've been murdered."

But I knew better, and I believed Berkman himself knew better. For a moment I stood staring in perplexity into the shrewd face of the arch anarchist, wondering why he was unwilling to admit the
truth. In his eyes was a queer expression that stirred distrust in me. I thought of my dead comrade, Caron, who, half-mad from starvation, had given his life for the cause, and I contrasted him with this man who stood before me, who had urged others on to desperate deeds but had taken no part in them himself. True, he had once served a long term in prison for an attempted assassination, but many years had passed since then, during which he had lived in comfort and security, making an easy living from the propaganda he spread so disastrously.

"Why don't you tell the truth?" I cried at him. "Arthur Caron and those others were killed by their own bomb, and you know it. If you believe in violence why should you crawl and talk of a police frame-up when a thing like this happens?"

Just the trace of a smile flickered across Berkman's face. The red leader never lost his temper except on the speakers' platform, and there very rarely and only for the purpose of producing a desired effect. The country's foremost anarchist had learned the value of suavity and imperturbability.

"Don't get excited, Marie," he said softly. "I'm not going to quarrel with you."

While he was speaking the telephone bell rang, and I turned away to answer it.

"Is Miss Emma Goldman there?" came a man's voice on the wire.
"She is somewhere out west, and has been for some time, so far as I know," I replied. I glanced at Berkman and Miss Fitzgerald, and they nodded their heads in approval.

"Who are you?" I asked.
"An officer of the law."
"What do you want Miss Goldman for?"
"We want some one to identify the men who were killed in the Lexington Avenue explosion. Who is talking?"
"Marie Ganz."
"Well, you're the very party we want. Come down and identify the dead men."
"I came out of prison only two hours ago, and know nothing of this affair."
"Wait for us," and there came a click as he cut off.

The speaker must have been only a few doors away, for not more than two or three minutes had passed when he and another officer walked into the office of Mother Earth.

"We want Miss Marie Ganz," said one of them.
"That's my name," I replied.
"Will you come and identify those dead men for us if you can?"

I couldn't understand why they wanted me to do that, for the names of all the dead were in the newspaper which a comrade had just brought in to us, but I went with them without a protest. They led me to a police station and into a rear room,
where, on the floor, three figures were lying entirely covered by white sheets.

"Did you know Charles Berg or Carl Hanson?"

I was asked.

"I don't think I did," I replied, for I didn't want to be compelled to look at all three of them. As a matter of fact, I had known them only slightly, and I doubted if I could recognize their dead faces. But I told them that I knew Arthur Caron very well. They led me to one of the figures, and drew away the sheet. For an instant I stared into the ghastly, mutilated face of Arthur. I staggered back. The room whirled round me. Then everything grew dark. When I came to myself some one was pressing a glass of water to my lips.

"I want to get out of here," I moaned.

"She's all right; lift her up," came a voice.

I was making my way uncertainly to the door, when a detective tapped me on the shoulder.

"Deputy Police Commissioner Rubin wants to see you upstairs," he said.

In the commissioner's office I was questioned closely, but I am sure I convinced him that I was innocent of any connection with the explosion. A detective tried to make me say that while I was in prison I had sent instructions to Arthur, who was known as one of my most devoted followers, but I was too miserable to pay any attention to his insinuations.
"What do you intend to do now?" the commissioner asked. "Do you mean to keep up your campaign?"

"No," I told him. "I don't feel strong enough. I'm going to take a vacation so far as the cause is concerned."

But I knew there could be no vacation from work. My purse was empty, and my debts must be paid. Mother, too, had been obliged to borrow in the struggle to save herself from eviction during my imprisonment. No, there could be no vacation, no matter how much I felt that I needed one. There must be years of hard work ahead of me, with never a chance to rest. Somehow I must find a job, though I knew that wherever I was known I should be turned away.

From the police station I went home, where I told mother that she must be prepared to hear of my arrest again.

"But how can they say you had anything to do with that explosion when you were in prison?" she asked, for of course she had heard of what had happened long before my return. The news had been the talk of the tenements for hours.

"They can't say it truthfully," I assured her. "I think I've just convinced the commissioner that I had nothing to do with it, but those detectives will try their hardest to connect me with it. Very likely I won't be arrested, but I want to prepare you in case I should be. You know what the police
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are. They'll never get over suspecting me whenever anything like this happens."

I had not been home very long when an invitation came to me from Berkman to join a march on Tarrytown, where John D. Rockefeller lived. The march was to be a protest against the killing of the miners in Colorado. But I could not see how anything could be gained by such a demonstration, in which some of the usual crowd that followed the leaders would probably be arrested and perhaps beaten by the police, and I declined to take part. My refusal must have angered Berkman, and it may have been that it was by way of the Mother Earth office that a report reached one of the newspapers that I had deserted the anarchists and was not going with them to Tarrytown.

Whether Berkman was angry or not, I certainly was. He knew I had just lost my dearest comrade, and that I had just returned from seeing his body, and yet already he was trying to get me to help further his propaganda by making capital of Arthur Caron's death. Why couldn't he let me alone for a time? I thought. He knew that I was penniless and in debt, and he should have realized that I must now devote all my time to looking for work.

What I had feared is exactly what did happen at Tarrytown the following day. Some of my friends were arrested, some were beaten, and all of them were driven from the town. But Berkman was not one of the sufferers. While this was going
on I was going from shop to shop on the familiar search for work. But wherever I went the mere mention of my name brought a sneer, and I was turned away. Usually I gave an assumed name, but even then I was often recognized, as my picture had appeared in the newspapers many times. At the same time the police were keeping a close watch on me. Indeed, they were watching all who had been known as leaders in the cause. Louise Berger was questioned by them again and again, and came near being arrested, but, though she admitted that she had been with Caron, Berg and Hanson only half an hour before the explosion, she succeeded in convincing the police that she had known nothing of the large quantity of dynamite that had been taken into her flat.

The bodies of Arthur and the two other men were cremated, and she and Berkman took possession of their ashes. They announced that the ashes would be deposited in a fitting receptacle in the yard in the rear of the Mother Earth office, and that all friends of the cause would be invited there. It was there that I went to pay my last tribute to my comrade.

In the centre of the yard was a pyramid of cement, the apex representing a clenched fist, which symbolized the enmity of anarchy to government. Inside the pyramid were the ashes of Arthur, Berg and Hanson. Underneath was a sort of an altar, covered with red cloth, and all around it were piled
red flowers, some of them worked into elaborate designs. The walls of the yard were covered with placards, which in huge letters demanded vengeance and proclaimed that the three dead men were victims of murder. These were the work of Berkman, of course. He still persisted in declaring that the police had placed the dynamite in the Berger flat.

The yard was crowded with comrades, but they were far from being the only spectators. The rear windows of all the buildings in the block swarmed with people. People lined the edges of the roofs, and packed the fire escapes. There must have been thousands gazing down in silence upon that tragic scene.

I stared at Berkman's inflammatory placards, and wondered what could have been in his mind as he devised them. I knew that he knew as well as I how false they were. Yet he seemed to glory in them, and many times I caught him gazing at them in admiration and studying their effect upon the crowd. He showed no grief for the poor boys who had died for his cause. It was a great occasion for him, and I had never seen him so full of enthusiasm.

My thoughts went back to the days when Arthur Caron walked the streets penniless and hungry, and my eyes filled with tears. I knew now that he had been wrong, but I could not forget that there had been a night in Rutgers Square when he and I, both of us half starved and half mad, had talked together of just such a desperate thing as this that
had brought his death. I thought of how generous he had been, how warm-hearted, how ready to help the homeless even when he himself was as homeless as they. But even though I might still believe that violence was justifiable and that a well-placed bomb might help the cause of the oppressed, I could not overlook the fact that he had jeopardized the lives of innocent people by bringing dynamite into a tenement flat, and that innocent people had been seriously hurt in the explosion. There could be no justification for that.

Berkman came toward me, smiling complacently.

"We are going to hold a meeting——" he began.

"I am through with your meetings," I said. A sudden hatred of him came over me, and I turned away and left him with his mouth gaping open in astonishment. I wanted to forget him and all his works. Even the cause had for the time lost its hold on me, and the lurid red pile of flowers, the pyramid with its challenging hand and the great placards clamouring for vengeance filled me with loathing.

Yet I did go to one more of Berkman's meetings, for I felt that I could not ignore the great memorial demonstration in Union Square, where all the radicals of the city were invited to honour their dead comrades. An immense crowd had squeezed into the square when I got there, and the police were evidently worried, for the lines of both men on foot and the mounted force were being reinforced con-
stantly. I am sure that never before in New York had a meeting brought forth so many of those guardians of the law to watch over it. So great was their force—it was announced later that there were eight hundred of them—that a disturbance would have been suppressed almost as soon as it began. I had been there only a few minutes before I realized that the police had good reason for their precautions. I knew well the danger signs in such a crowd. All around me were angry, menacing faces, and I heard many a muttered threat. Any of the speakers, if he had so chosen, could with a few reckless words have sent a frenzied mob storming against the police lines. I was afraid that this might happen at any moment, and I knew how worse than futile it would be, for such an outbreak would surely be put down very quickly and very brutally.

When Berkman began to speak I felt that the moment I had been dreading had arrived, for immediately he threw all caution aside.

"We will get our rights through bloodshed if need be," he shouted, and there came wild howls of approval, while the crowd began to surge to and fro. I think he must have realized in the nick of time the danger, for suddenly he changed the inflammatory trend of his speech, and the tumult subsided.

Berkman was capable of stirring radical crowds to fury whenever he chose, and often I had found
myself completely under the spell of his domineering personality. But now his words no longer made the slightest impression on me. That very day I had been reading his statements to the police inquisitors, to whom he had admitted that late on the night before the explosion he and Caron had been alone together in a saloon near the rooms of the Ferrer Association, and I was convinced that Arthur had told him about the dynamite stored in Louise Berger's flat. My faith in Berkman was gone forever, and I told myself that this would be the last time I should ever listen to one of his speeches.

My red comrades held their meetings without me after that memorial demonstration. I might work with them again some time; I wasn't sure; indeed I did not know my own mind. I was bewildered. I wanted time to think. But I knew that a change was going on in me, and I knew that it would not be quite the same Marie Ganz who would return to them—if ever I should return.

Troubles at home became more pressing than ever. We were in dire straits for money, and I resolved to part with my beloved books. I could get three or four dollars for them, perhaps, which would be enough to buy food for a few days. I took them to Maisel, Grand Street's great bookseller, knowing that he often befriended students, buying their books and later selling them back to them at no profit to himself. He paid me a good price for my
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books, and assured me that he would hold them until I could buy them back.

My search for work was at last rewarded, for I found a job in a wrapper shop, which was owned by an old fellow who seldom read the newspapers and who had no idea of who I was. This man had come thirty years before from Russia, "with only a herring in his pocket," as he often boasted. The herring had served for his first meal in America, and he had set to work with such vim that he had never gone hungry from that time to this. With the exception of myself, his employees were all "landslite," that is, people who had lived together in the old country. The news of his prosperity had reached his native town, and year after year his former neighbours had followed him across the seas, until the entire population had colonized in New York's ghetto. His employees, many of them his relations and all of them from the colony that had followed him from Russia, made scarcely any outside acquaintances, knew nothing of the wages that were paid elsewhere, worked fourteen hours a day for little money, and were adding rapidly to their boss's riches.

One day I told one of my fellow-workers that we were earning far less than was being paid by the bosses of other wrapper shops.

"Then why do you work so cheap?" she asked.

"I haven't any choice," I told her. "Because of things I have said and done no one would employ
me. That is why I have to work for such a miserly boss. You are getting ten dollars a week when you should be getting eighteen. There is a man here who is getting six dollars when he should be getting fourteen. Go to any other shop, and you will find out that this landsman of yours, who is the president of your synagogue and whom you think so benevolent, is a knave and that he will work you to your grave before you will save a penny."

My words impressed her, and she began to do some hard thinking. Before long she was spreading the news throughout the shop that the boss was underpaying all of us, with the result that we all went on strike.

It was one day while I and the others were picketing the shop that my pal came on the scene in company with a tall, very beautiful young woman.

"Marie, I want you to meet a friend of mine," he said, and he introduced me to Mrs. Boissevain, the former Inez Milholland.

"I have come to help you in this thing," she said, and she went to work at once. She talked with some of the pickets, and then went in to speak with the boss. In her masterful way, she soon brought him to a settlement by which we gained better wages and shorter hours, and she was a heroine among us from that day.

I knew that the boss would surely discharge me as soon as he discovered that I had started the strike, and I told Mrs. Boissevain so.
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"Never mind," she said. "I'll see that you get along. Your pal has been talking with me about you, and I want to help you to get ahead."

The boss did discharge me very promptly after he had convinced himself who had started the trouble, but Mrs. Boissevain helped me to get enough work to enable me to take up a course of studies, dealing largely with sociology, which she had mapped out for me. These studies broadened my mental horizon rapidly. Opportunities came of meeting educated and intellectual men and women who were of very different types than my comrades among the Reds, and whose views of social problems were entirely new to me.

It was while I was still pursuing these studies that a terrible scourge swept over the tenements. It was the infantile paralysis epidemic, in which thousands of children died in the ghetto and thousands of others were crippled for life. My pal was one of the foremost in the work of bringing relief to the afflicted. He did not spare himself. He forgot sometimes even his meals, and there were nights when he worked until dawn without a wink of sleep.

"Here is the greatest opportunity you have ever had," he told me, "to do something that is really worth while. You can do more now for your fellow-beings than you and your comrades ever did with your speeches and your riots. Come and help me. I need all the volunteers I can get."
So we worked together, he and I, through those tragic days and nights when the roll of the dead was growing faster and faster with every hour; and it was then that I learned what self-sacrifice really meant. Both of us were running risks, for we were in our early twenties, an age at which one is not immune from such a disease; but again and again he exposed himself so recklessly that I was filled with fear for him. Once I found him carrying a dying baby to a hospital, and I was sure he would not escape the contagion.

Yet it was not the plague that at last overcame him; it was exhaustion. His nerves gave way under the strain, and he took to his bed, completely broken. And it was to his bedside that I felt my duty calling me. For many days I nursed him, and at last his strength began slowly to return.

It was during the long days of his convalescence that I came to know him best. It was then that I began to realize how much he meant to me, and how empty the world would have seemed if I had lost him.

"We've done something worth while at last, Marie," he said. "We've managed to save a good many children's lives, you and I. Isn't that better than to go out and destroy lives, as you would once have done? What will such men as Berkman ever gain for humanity through all their preaching of violence. I've come to learn that it is constructive work that the world needs, not destructive. What
would be gained by killing one capitalist who does not agree with us? There will always be rapacious rich men, and there will always be poor ones. We face economic conditions that have always existed and that cannot be upset by violence. Nations go to war with one another because they cannot agree, but that doesn't change the condition of the world. Anarchists are killed by men who represent the law, but that doesn't end anarchy; it only spreads it. And the anarchists gain no more when they, too, go out and kill. You've been on the wrong track, Marie."

"Perhaps I have," I said, and I reached out for his emaciated hand and held it. "I feel as if I were coming out of the dark, with a new life opening before me. But the light isn't very clear yet."
CHAPTER XIV

HUNGER

HUNGER! That dreadful word, emblazoned in great white letters upon the black flag of the radicals, might have waved over our tenements in February of 1917 as truthfully as it had proclaimed the plight of our starving crowds three years before in Union Square. For the day of the food profiteer had come. Prices had risen rapidly to such figures that many of our ghetto folk were living on only bread and tea, and there were very few among us who really had enough to eat. In the streets thousands of white, pinched faces told of the spectre of want that was hovering over us, and never had I seen mothers brooding over their wan babies with such anxious eyes.

My ten dollars a week, earned in a garment factory, added to Hersch Ditchik's payments and mother's scanty earnings, were not enough to keep our table supplied, and many a sharp winter morning I set out for the factory with a wracking headache from lack of nourishing food. It was the same with my fellow-workers; they were always hungry. And yet wages had risen everywhere. Even the sweatshop bosses were paying more; paying more grudgingly and because they had to, for our strikes
had had a good effect upon them. But food prices had advanced more than wages, and all of us were far worse off than when we were earning less. A pound of potatoes, which a few months earlier had cost two cents, now cost seven; onions had risen from three cents a pound to twenty; the price of meat had gone up fifty per cent; a cabbage, which had cost two cents, now sold for ten times as much, and the price of bread had more than tripled. In our home there had not been an egg for weeks, and potatoes were a luxury. When we and our neighbours had tried to economize by living mostly on cabbage, which seemed to have been forgotten by the profiteers, the price of that vegetable promptly went soaring with the rest, until it was beyond our means.

It was the war in Europe that was the cause of these conditions, so we were told; but we didn’t believe it. If it was the war, then why was one dealer charging far more than another for the same thing? Oh, no; it wasn’t the war; it was the profiteers. What had the war in Europe to do with us poor ghetto folk, that vague, far-away war to which we had scarcely given a thought? The only persons among us who had been following that conflict very closely were the “Coffee House Von Hindenburgs,” as my pal called them, who would sit in the cafés dipping their fingers into their coffee cups and tracing battle lines on the marble tops of the tables. It was there that many a fierce discus-
sion would ensue between Hungarian and Slovak, German and expatriated Englishman. With the exception of such strategists as these it was little that the ghetto knew of Europe's war, of where the right lay or where the wrong, and it was little that it cared. The ghetto was opposed to militarism, and its sympathies were not with the Kaiser. At the same time we could scarcely have been expected to show much enthusiasm for the cause of the Allies so long as imperial Russia was one of them. How could we be on the same side with the Czar, under whose tyrannous government we or our fathers had suffered? But now this war in which we had taken such sluggish interest was being brought close to our own doors, for every store and peddler was using it as an excuse to send up prices. More and more every day it was becoming a topic of conversation, and soon came rumours that this nation, too, might be drawn into the struggle, though we paid little attention to such a possibility.

It was not the war but the prices that were attributed to it that were arousing our passions. All our lives we of the tenements had suffered privation, and that our burden should now be made even heavier seemed beyond human endurance. It seemed to me that the rapid fluctuation of prices and the fact that there was such a variety of them for the same things among the dealers was proof that the war was by no means wholly to blame. Indeed, I was convinced that profiteers had made up
their minds to squeeze us to our last penny, and I resolved to strike a blow at them.

One morning as I left home—it was the twentieth of February—the street had an unusual aspect. Women were standing about in groups talking and gesticulating excitedly. In the old days of hardship it had been the men who filled the streets, but now most of them were away working, for, though there was more suffering than ever, this was not a time of unemployment, and whatever the momentous question was that had arisen it was the women who were settling it. A few children were playing on the walks, and from an upper window Mrs. Seligman was calling to her Ben, who was known as "Chinky" because he ran errands for the Chinaman around the corner.

"Chinky," she cried, hanging dangerously over the ledge of the window four stories up, "upstairs come, and watch the phonograph. I got to go in the street to buy in things."

"Chinky" scurried into the dark hallway, and I thought of the days when such an extravagance as a phonograph was unknown to the ghetto. Now one of these things, bought on the instalment plan before prices began to shoot upward; could be found in many a tenement home. Mrs. Seligman, with such a precious possession, didn't intend to take any chances with thieves during her absence.

In Orchard Street I stopped to listen to a woman haggling with a peddler.
"How can you ask me nineteen cents a pound a onion? How can you be such a thief?" she asked ingratiatingly, as if seeking his sympathy.

"A thief I am?" cried the peddler. "My enemies should have such customers. Go away before I'll make from you nothing."

"Say! Say!" the woman exclaimed. "What are you exciting yourself? No wonder you peddlers have become such gentlemen that no one can talk to you. With the way you are robbing the public no wonder you are becoming so high-tone."

At this the peddler lost his temper completely. If it had not been for the fact that striking a woman or a man with eyeglasses are the two most das tardly crimes known to the East Side and are certain to bring heavy punishment he might have laid violent hands upon her. But he had another recourse for getting even. Turning his face to an upper floor of the tenement before which stood his cart, he yelled at the top of his voice, "Sadie, where are you, you good-for-nothing!"

Immediately a woman stuck her head out of a window.

"Schicker meiner (drunkard mine), what do you want?" she inquired.

"Want! May a plague take you! Come down. I got a lady here what must be beaten up."

Slam went the window; but before the peddler's wife could reach the street his cart had been over turned by a crowd of frantic women, who proceeded
to scatter his stock of vegetables into the gutters. This was a signal for an attack upon all the peddlers in the street. It seemed only a moment before a mob of hundreds of women had gathered. Cart after cart was overturned, and the pavements were covered with trampled goods. The women used their black shopping bags as clubs, striking savagely at the men whom they regarded as their sworn enemies and oppressors. Onions, potatoes, cabbages flew through the air, and in each instance the target was a ducking, wailing peddler, whose stock had been ruined beyond hope of recovery. Police-men came rushing upon the scene, and they, too, were pelted with whatever was at hand. Surely a thousand women—perhaps twice as many—were in that mad struggle, long-enduring wives and mothers who had resolved to bear the oppression of the profiteer no longer.

At the height of the conflict Mrs. Teibel Shimberg, while beating a peddler's head with her shopping bag, caught sight of me.

"Look, women," she cried. "Here is Marie Ganz. She will show you how to fix them blood-suckers."

The women gathered around me with cries of "Tell us what to do!"

"All right," I answered. "Come with me to Rutgers Square, and I'll talk to you."

With hundreds of them trooping along behind me, I led the way to the old meeting-place of the
radicals. In the meantime the riot had spread into Rivington Street, where long rows of carts had been overturned and the peddlers were being attacked with as much fury as before. The crowd behind me grew and grew. All the women of the ghetto seemed to be swarming to us. They came from every cross street and every tenement—thousands and thousands of frantic, surging, shrieking women.

Arriving at the square, I stepped up to the stone seat encircling the fountain, the seat from which I had spoken so often to my comrades, the radicals and the reds, and the women suddenly became silent to listen.

"No one is taking any interest in you," I told them. "It is time that we took some action. We should go down to the City Hall to tell there our troubles and demand that the city do something to bring us relief and to make possible the purchase of food at prices within our means. Let us appoint a committee from you mothers and wives, who will address the Mayor and other members of the Board of Estimate. If our voices cannot reach Washington, perhaps the voice of the Mayor will, after he has heard from your own lips how you are being overcharged and cheated."

"You lead us, Marie!" they cried. "And choose your own committee."

At that moment there came rushing out of the Forward Building some of the members of the Socialist organization. It was an opportunity for them
that was too good to miss. They began to circulate among the women, inviting them to stay to listen to "speeches of enlightenment," as they called them, by trained Socialist orators. But the women waived them aside, and soon were following me in the direction of City Hall.

Our numbers grew rapidly as we went along, for women swarmed out of every tenement that we passed to join us. Many in the throng carried market baskets, and many had babies in their arms. Some had their children running at their heels. Policemen came running from every quarter, intent on driving us back, and they did succeed in hemming in huge masses of women and preventing them from following, though I think fully a thousand must have still remained behind me when I arrived at Brooklyn Bridge.

As I was about to cross Park Row to City Hall Park a policeman came up to me.

"Where are you bound for?" he demanded.

"We want to talk over a matter of business with the Mayor," I answered.

Before he could say another word the horde of women came surging behind us, and swept us both across the street. On the City Hall steps I turned to the crowd, and called on them to stop.

"We are not here to make a riot," I said. "We are here to get a respectful hearing from the Mayor, and the only way we can it is by proceeding in orderly fashion. If you want me to speak to the
Mayor for you you must stay right here. I want no one to follow me. I shall tell you the result of my interview."

So they waited quietly while I went up the steps. At the top I found that the big iron gates had been closed and locked. Inside in the corridor policemen were standing about, but they paid no attention to me when I demanded admittance. I turned back to the women.

"They have shut the gates," I cried out to them. "They will not even give us a hearing."

Instantly there was a mad rush for the gates, and the women battered against them furiously.

"Give us bread!" they cried, and their cry was taken up in English and in Yiddish by the crowd below. "Give us bread! We are starving! Feed our children! Our husbands are working day and night, yet we have nothing to eat."

The pressure on the gates became so great that they threatened to break. Mounted policemen were riding their horses back and forth across the plaza and the walks trying to scatter the crowd, but the maddened women refused to be driven back.

"Give us bread!" rose the cry again. "We are starving! Our children are starving!"

Many of the women were in tears; many were hysterical and were shrieking wildly. Above the din rose now and then the loud wails of frightened, ill-nourished, white-faced babies as the police horses
jostled against their mothers. I doubt if there had ever been such an uproar in City Hall Park, accustomed as it is to demonstrative crowds. At any rate, it was the first time in the city’s history that it had been the scene of such a demonstration by women.

When it became evident that the mob was not to be turned away, the big gates were opened just enough to allow one person to squeeze through, and Police Lieutenant Kennel, the Mayor’s bodyguard, came out to the top of the steps.

“What do you want?” he called to us.

“We want to see the Mayor,” I answered. “We want to ask him to find a means of reducing the cost of food.”

“The Mayor isn’t here,” he said. “He is at the Hotel Astor. But come in, and I’ll see what we can do for you.”

Mrs. Ida Harris, President of the Mothers’ Vigilance Committee, two other women and myself passed through the gates, and in the corridor the lieutenant began to take our names. He took the names of Mrs. Harris and the two other women first, and when he came to mine he turned to a policeman who stood beside him with the remark, “That’s Marie Ganz, the agitator.”

“The Mayor will see you to-morrow,” the lieutenant assured us. “I think I can promise that. And now, Miss Ganz, will you please go out and quiet those women?”
"If you will let me talk to them in their language," I replied, "I will tell them to be quiet and that the Mayor will see them to-morrow."

So he opened the gate to let us out, and from the steps I addressed the crowd in Yiddish, telling them to return to their homes and be patient for a day longer. But they grew more and more excited as I spoke, and the officers must have thought I was trying to incite a riot, for a policemen stepped up to me, laid hold of my arm, and said quietly, "Miss Ganz, Captain Dwyer has ordered me to arrest you."

He led me into the City Hall Police Station, and a few minutes later I was brought out to be put into a patrol wagon. As we came out of the door a terrific uproar greeted us. Hundreds of women, many of them with their hair dishevelled and their clothes awry, were shrieking at the tops of their voices, and now and then one would swing her shopping bag at the head of a policeman.

"Give us back our Marie!" they cried. "Why do you take from us our Marie!"

It was only a glimpse I had of what was going on, for I was hurried into the waiting wagon and the door was slammed behind me, but I saw enough to prepare me for the scene that was to follow at Police Headquarters in Mulberry Street. Only a few minutes after I arrived there a hundred or more women, who had followed the wagon as fast as their legs could carry them from City Hall, ap-
peared in front of the building, crying loudly, "Marie! We want Marie!"

A deputy police commissioner went out to speak to them, and again they set up a demand for my release. The official explained to them good-naturedly that it was not in his power to release me and that they would have to wait until my case came before a judge. His words had a quieting effect upon them for a time, but a little later, when I was brought to the Tombs Court, they all came trooping in before the magistrate, evidently prepared to make another loud demonstration. I asked them to take seats and to be quiet, for I realized that at the least outcry they would be put out of the room none too gently and that perhaps some of them would be hurt, and that nothing could be gained by creating a disturbance.

Some police witnesses testified that I had tried to incite a riot. The magistrate then called upon me to give my version of what had occurred, and I explained to him that I had been trying to quell a riot and not to create one. My defence didn't seem to impress him a great deal, for he said sharply:

"In the future if you want to see the Mayor, which is your right, you should do so in an orderly manner. You say you have not caused a riot, but if that is not what has been going on at the City Hall I don't know what a riot is, and you were the leader of those women. You are found
guilty of disorderly conduct, but I will suspend sentence."

The women—bless them!—faithful creatures that they were, welcomed me with cries of joy as I joined them outside the court-room, and we formed what was very like a triumphant procession back to Rutgers Square, where we intended to hold another meeting to make our plans for the following day.

But we had no sooner reached the square than we were informed that the Socialists had hurriedly organized a "Housewives Association," and delegates from them came hurrying to us to invite us to attend a meeting to be held that night in Forward Hall. I refused to accept the invitation. I didn't care to make votes for any political party that was trying to advance its interests through the suffering in the tenements, and I told them so. This made them angry, and they denounced me loudly as an anarchist. Much to their disgust, the women declined to listen to them, and they went away in a very bad temper.

However, that was not the last of their interference, for the next day when we presented ourselves at City Hall we found that a large number of the Socialist propagandists, with automobiles at their service, had already arrived there. They had introduced themselves as representatives of the women who had come to present their grievances on the preceding day, and had been received as such. When the women heard of what had been done they
swarmed about the steps of the Hall, shouting, "Why don't you hear our representatives? Why don't you hear Marie Ganz?"

The Mayor must have heard their cries, for he sent Lieutenant Kennel out with word that he wanted to talk to me. So I went in, and explained to the Mayor, who received me kindly, that we represented no political party or faction, that we were not connected with the Socialists, that we represented only ourselves and our families. I told him that, though most of the men of the tenements were getting good wages, the prices had become so great that they were unable to buy enough food to keep their families from going hungry.

He showed a great deal of interest in all that I had to say, and seemed to be making mental notes of many points that I brought out. At the conclusion of the interview he assured me that he realized something should be done without delay to relieve conditions, and that we could depend upon him to take some steps in that direction. I went out and repeated his words to the women, and we marched away feeling that our visits to City Hall had been far from futile. Indeed, many of the women were roused to such enthusiasm by the Mayor's assurances that I think they expected to find prices dropping that very day.

A good many days passed, however, without bringing relief. The Mayor talked over the situation with other city officials. The Board of Esti-
mate discussed it at long sessions. All sorts of suggestions came pouring in from the public. The newspapers carried long editorials on what ought to be done and what couldn't be done. Indeed, the whole city had waked up at last to the absolute necessity of doing something, though nobody seemed to know just what.

In the meantime desperate women in several sections of the city followed the example set by their heroic sisters of Orchard Street, and proceeded to upset pushcarts and to attack the peddlers. There were riotous scenes in Williamsburg, in Brownsville and in the Bronx. In the chicken market at Stanton Street and the East River women seized a crate of chickens, broke it to pieces, dismembered the chickens and marched triumphantly off waving legs and wings of the fowls and crying out what they had done.

A boycott was declared. We allowed people to buy only certain foods on which there seemed to be the least profiteering. They could buy bread, butter, milk and cereals—though surely all these were far more expensive than they should have been—and any person who was caught buying anything else was mobbed. This course I told the women to follow until the profiteers should find their goods rotting in their stores. It was evident that the plan worked, for after a few days of wild disturbances throughout the poor quarters prices began to go down.
Sometimes during those dark days when the pangs of hunger were growing keener and keener, my ever-faithful pal, knowing how little we had to eat at home, would invite me to one of the Second Avenue cafés, but even in those places there were signs of what the East Side was suffering. Many of the diners looked as if it was rarely the opportunity came to have a good meal, and most of them contented themselves with only coffee.

One day in one of these cafés a tall, broad-shouldered, gaunt, hungry-looking man in shabby clothes walked up to the table where we were sitting. He was plainly as poor as any of us, and looked as if he had been through much suffering, but he carried himself with great dignity, and in spite of his shabby clothes and general air of poverty, he was of distinguished appearance. His face was drawn and wrinkled, but his dark eyes were very clear and sparkling. He had a short black moustache and a great mass of black, rumpled hair. At once my pal rose and greeted him.

"Marie," he said, "I want to introduce Mr. Leon Trotsky."

The big man held out his hand, and said he had heard of me because of my connection with the food riots. But I had surely never heard of him. I had never before heard that name which a few months later was to be known the world over.

"Sit down, Mr. Trotsky," said my pal, drawing up a chair for him. He sat down heavily and
wearily, as if he had had a hard day, and rested his elbows on the table. Soon he was telling us about Russia. He did not seem to be interested in American politics at all, but was absorbed with the idea that a Russian revolution was on the way.

"Russia," he said, "will soon awaken the world?"

"How?" I asked.

"A revolution is coming. It has got to come. Germany, too, will have this war long to remember. The Kaiser doesn't realize yet what he has done, but, like Samson in the Bible, he has brought down the temple upon his own head."

He seemed to feel that this nation would soon be taking a part in the conflict, and remarked that President Wilson was justified in waiting for the psychological moment to enter it.

"For Russia this war is a godsend," he declared. "It means the end of the present government, the end of the Czar and all that he stands for. America will soon be in this war, and will help Russia work out her salvation. The German ruler and the entire House of Hohenzollern are doomed. I am not against war. I am for all wars that make for the ultimate freedom of the mass. Only through intense suffering will the proletariat awaken to what is its due. Despotic rulers and capitalists may start wars for their own benefit, but the mass of people, when it has done its share, will look for its reward. History will repeat itself; after war, revolution."
Each country will revolt in proportion to what it hasn’t got to-day. In Russia and Germany, where there is political tyranny, the masses will look for political freedom. In England, France and America, where the political yoke is less irksome, the economic question will have to be solved. In these countries, and here more than elsewhere, the masses are smarting under rank economic injustice. But many generations will pass before the people of the United States will revolt against their present political system. Yet here, as elsewhere, there will come a demand after this war that the worker be given a place in the sun, a chance to earn enough to live in comfort. He will demand that he be given his just pay for what he produces.”

When Trotzky had left us I asked my pal about him, for he had impressed me deeply.

“He’s one of your radicals,” the pal informed me, “who has been driven out of Europe because his ideas didn’t suit the governments. He earns a little money by writing for our ghetto newspapers, but he has a wife and two children with him, and they are all having a hard time to keep from starving.”

It was easy to believe, for indeed it was like a famished man that the future war lord of Russia gulped down the coffee the pal had bought for him.
CHAPTER XV

MY COUNTRY

"WAR is coming," the pal said, "and you had better make up your mind to it. America can't keep out any longer."

"War!" I echoed. "Impossible! This country will never go into this war. To fight on the side of the Czar? Oh, never!"

"Just wait and see," he persisted. "It's coming, and it isn't far off. Another week may see us in it; a month at most."

I had great respect for the pal's opinions as a rule, but I couldn't bring myself to realize that we were really going to join our arms with the Allies' and with those of the Russian tyrant whose name could never arouse anything but hatred in any ghetto home.

We were sitting on the old stone seat in Rutgers Square. It was growing dark, and the groups of debaters which evening always finds there were beginning to gather.

"Listen, Marie," the pal said solemnly; "you've got to make up your mind where you're going to stand. Your comrades, the radicals, aren't going to be for war. You know that. A good many of them are going to make all the trouble they can
when the call to arms comes. Are you going to stand with them, or with your country?"

"And with the Czar? Remember what our race has suffered from him."

"Remember the Lusitania."

"I do; I am as much opposed to the Kaiser as anybody is. Yet how can you expect me to sympathize with the Allies so long as the Czar is one of them? The sinking of the Lusitania was a terrible crime, which ought to be punished, but I'm not ready to join the side of the Czar. How can any Jew be? How can you be? Isn't the Czar worse than the Kaiser? Haven't there been far worse things done under his name in Russia than the sinking of the Lusitania?"

War! I hated the word. What had the ghetto to do with war? Was not war made by capitalists, who could keep us out of it or send us into it at will? And why should we go to war at the bidding of capitalists, the oppressors of the poor, who took all the good things of life and left us nothing? No; I was against war, against this war and all wars, and appeals to patriotism would never change me. I was a child of the ghetto, and the ghetto was against war. The spirit from which could spring the words, "My country, right or wrong," was unknown in the environment from which I had drawn my guiding principles of life. There, where the word "humanitarian" was on every one's lips, the word "patriot" was rarely heard and naturally would
have conveyed little meaning to people who had come from a country where government meant tyranny and who had acquired only vague ideas of the sentiment and the national principles of their adopted land.

Yet now even the ghetto was talking war, talking bitterly, and with fierce resentment of the idea that America should be called to arms. The groups of young men who stood around us in the square absorbed as usual in animated discussions were now talking of the reports from Washington, and nothing else. All the old topics were forgotten. There was only one subject in the minds of all.

Over on East Broadway the lights of the tall Forward Building were shining down on us, and Abraham Cahan and his fellow editors were probably at that very moment writing denunciations of the men who would bring this country into Europe's conflict. And well I knew what must be going on in the office of Mother Earth, where Berkman and Emma Goldman were working day and night to stir the opponents of war to violence.

It was all very well, I thought, for the rich folk uptown to talk glibly of national pride and to declare that the time had come for the nation to save its honour, but they were not struggling in the depths of poverty as we were, and their women would not be facing starvation, as ours would be, if the men should go away to war.

So it was that matters stood that March evening
in the tenements' forum. A few days later came the startling news that ended an epoch of the old square's history, the news that the Czar had been dethroned. At last the people ruled in the land that had known only brutal despotism. And it was free Russia now that was on the side of the Allies.

What a change that stirring news brought to the ghetto! The soap-box orators who were still holding forth for American neutrality found that their audiences were no longer wholly with them. In Rutgers Square there were now two sides in the discussions, and the side that believed this country should join the Allies was growing in numbers every night. The Socialists and the Reds no longer found themselves unopposed in spreading their anti-war propaganda through the tenements. They found a martial spirit rising against them.

"Now, don't you think that, even if nothing else is gained," the pal inquired of me, "that the winning of Russia's freedom has made Europe's war worth while?"

It was so, I agreed. How else could the Russians have thrown off the yoke of the despot? My opinion of war was beginning to waver. This time, at least, the pal was right, and Trotzky's prophecy had come true.

Close on the news from Petrograd came the Kaiser's ultimatum. Germany was going to permit no American ships to cross the Atlantic except under
the most humiliating conditions. It was certainly going to be war; even I had to admit that at last.

My pal was all enthusiasm. Young and athletic, he yearned to get into the army. From morning to night he talked nothing but war.

"Yes," he would say, "I'm a humanitarian, and I don't believe in war; but this is going to be war on war. Get that into your head, Marie; it's going to be war on war. The Kaiser has always been the greatest militarist of the world, and now he and all his kind are going to be overthrown. We're going to do away with war and war-makers forever."

The nation was preparing to arm. The pal, a newspaper man now, was going to Washington to report the declaration by Congress of war on the Hun.

"And you're going, too, Marie," he said. "You're going as my secretary. Forget your Reds, forget your Radicals, your I. W. W.'s, your soap-box orators. This is no time for them. Come with me to Washington, and find out what it means to have a country."

And to Washington we went. What a sight the crowded capital was to me, who had never been away from my ghetto! I felt that I was on the threshold of a new life. I thrilled to the martial spirit around me.

And of a sudden the spirit of national pride awoke in me. The flag bore a new meaning. Oh,
America, mighty and just, rallying to save the world! I was proud that I, I too, was an American. It was my flag, my cause. And I cried out to myself:

"Good-bye, past! Good-bye, old hates! Good-bye, old doubts! Good-bye, old comrades of a cause that is dead! My country is calling, and I know the road that is right!"

We were in the gallery of Congress together, the pal and I, when the President made his stirring call to arms. We both joined in the cheering, and the pal, his eyes ablaze with enthusiasm, gripped my arm and cried into my ear:

"I knew it! I knew it! You've found yourself. You're going to do your bit with the rest of us, whatever the ghetto thinks or does."

"Whatever the ghetto thinks!" I wasn't worrying about the ghetto. I knew what it was going to do; it was going to be loyal and do its bit. And so it soon proved.

And yet, among some people, the ghetto had a bad name for a time. Perhaps it has yet with people swayed by prejudice and ignorant of the facts. It was supposed to be a hotbed of sedition; but I, who have seen thousands of its sons going away to enlist—sons who were breadwinners for hungry women and children—I, who could realize how great were their sacrifices, knew better. I am sure there were very few disloyal men and women in our tenements as compared with the population,
though they made noise enough to damn the whole quarter.

When I came home from Washington I soon found that the tenements were being stirred from their apathy by the cry of "War on war!" From every block young men were hurrying away to join the army, and their women folk were bravely facing the consequences of bearing the burden of poverty unaided. If there were slackers most of them were men who had lived under Russian tyranny and who had come to this country with the belief that they were to be free forever from military oppression. They knew nothing of the causes that had brought America into the struggle. To them government had never meant anything more than a mysterious power that subjected the masses to the will of autocrats. When the call to arms came they were frightened and bewildered. In their ignorance they were scarcely to be blamed when their first impulse was to avoid military service, the hated thing that had driven them from their native land.

It was a bitter moment for the pal when he was rejected by the military authorities because of his failing eyesight. He and his chum, Dr. A. A. Greenberg, "the doctor of the tenements," had been preparing together for going into the army, and one was as eager as the other. But "Dr. A. A.,” as we called him, was luckier than the poor pal, for he was accepted.

A tall, gaunt, broad-shouldered, strong-featured
man was the doctor. "Honest Abe" he was sometimes called, partly because of his sterling worth and partly because of his striking resemblance to Abraham Lincoln—the same sad, shrewd face, the same great, ungainly frame. He was the idol of the poor folk among whom he worked. In the streets children would run after him and tag onto his coat-tails. Though he was going to war now with as much fervour as anybody, he had always been opposed to militarism. He had believed that mankind had reached a stage of civilization where international disputes could be settled through arbitration, and that war was a crime. He had been a soap-box orator for the Socialists, but he hadn't agreed with the leaders of that party at all times, and, because of the frankness and persistency with which he voiced beliefs for which they had no liking, they had expelled him. After that experience he kept away from organized radical movements, but he bore no bitterness toward his former comrades, nor indeed toward anybody. He was without prejudices or animosities. Even the Reds he regarded in the spirit of friendliness, though he did not share their beliefs and abhorred their methods. He listened patiently to everybody who seemed sincere in his opinions, whether he could agree with him or not, and seldom entered into arguments. He was searching for the truth, and he believed that the truth was as likely to be found in the tenements as anywhere else.
No wonder the tenement folk loved him. He was their friend, their champion, sympathetic and self-sacrificing, always to be depended upon in times of trouble. He sent no bills to patients who could not afford to pay, and he gave freely from his earnings to the needy.

"Look at all these poor people around us," the doctor said to me one day, as he and the pal and I were walking together through one of our crowded streets. "Here lies your work, Marie. Help these unfortunate mothers and children by doing something constructive. You know what they need, for you have been one of them, and you could work among them far more effectively than an outsider could. Join with your pal, with Josh Kohan, with the Wolf girls and Al Schanzer, the Tainsky girls and all the young people of the Social Guild who are giving so much of their time to relieve distress through quiet methods and without arousing bitterness and strife. You will find far more satisfaction in such work than in stirring up your radicals."

It was my last talk with "Honest Abe." A few days later he became infected while attending a patient who was suffering from a contagious disease. Very often in poor homes the good doctor had not only worked as a physician without charge, but had given his services as a nurse as well, and this was such a case. It cost him his life. He died on the very day that orders came for him to report for duty at Fort Benjamin Harrison, in Indiana; and
our ghetto, and, across the river, Williamsburg and Brownsville mourned him not only as a beloved friend but as a hero and a martyr.

The pal and I soon found that the country had plenty for the stay-at-homes to do as well as for those that were going away. He became chairman of several war work committees with which I was connected, and, like everybody else except the slackers, all the time we could spare from earning a living we devoted to doing our "bit." At that time, however, when there was so much talk of sedition and of conspiracies to interfere with the war preparations, I found that the shadow of my past was still with me. I was under suspicion. As a former comrade of such active anti-war propagandists as Berkman and Emma Goldman, the detectives who were on the trail of conspirators considered me as well worth watching, and there were always some of them following me wherever I went. They set a watch on our home, and often as I looked out of the window I would catch a glimpse of some of them pacing to and fro on the bridge, from which they were trying to peer into our two little rooms to see what might be going on there. They must have been disappointed when they found that my trail usually led them to my work for the war committees.

They followed me one night to the Academy of Music, in Brooklyn, where a big rally was going to be held for the war service organizations. The pal,
as a member of the publicity committee, had two stage seats, which I shared with him. Sitting not ten feet away from me was John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who was to be the orator of the evening. Perhaps by that time he had forgotten all about the girl from the tenements who had come to his office with a gun in her hand determined on killing him. At any rate, I am sure he was not aware that the same girl was sitting so close to him that night.

I no longer bore any ill will toward him. I had learned much and changed much since that day when I led the mob into the capitalist stronghold, and the old rancours were gone forever. I believed he, too, had changed. He had come to realize, and had frankly said so on more than one occasion, that industry is a form of social service from the fruits of which labour must be remunerated adequately, and that welfare of employees is as important as profits.

I wish I could say that my former comrades among the radicals had all seen the new light that was breaking. But, though I believe many of them did and became loyal supporters of this nation's cause, no love of country awoke in the hearts of some of those agitators who had so often in the old days rallied around Joe O'Carroll, Arthur Caron and myself under the lights of Rutgers Square. Berkman, Emma Goldman and their assistants in the office of Mother Earth were never so active. Through others, being careful not to expose them-
IN THE COFFEE HOUSE, POSING AS POETS AND IDEALISTS
selves, they called meetings to protest against America's part in the war, and, as proof of the fact that they still regarded me as a friend, they invited me to speak at their rallies. I ignored these invitations, and they abandoned me as a hopeless renegade.

The persons whom these two leaders found most susceptible to their propaganda at this time were young men who hung about the coffee houses, where they posed as poets and idealists. They were pitiable creatures, sick mentally and starved physically. They were ready to accept with enthusiasm any new creed or "ism" that might be preached to them, and had taken part in all sorts of radical campaigns. When the draft came most of them became tools of such men as Berkman, who were constantly looking for recruits wherever they might be found.

These weak, pliable coffee-house characters were soon at work distributing handbills which urged young men to resist conscription. Many of the bill distributors were arrested, of course, and sent to prison; and the police soon found out where the seditious matter had come from—the office of Mother Earth.

"Just see what that pair are doing," the pal exclaimed hotly. "Those poor boys they have been influencing are going to prison one after another, while Berkman and Goldman sit in Mother Earth office pulling the strings and trying to play safe. But
they can't keep it up. They'll be caught sooner or later."

His prediction came true, for not many days afterward the two leaders of the Reds were arrested for conspiring to interfere with the draft. I suppose most people remember what became of them, for the papers gave much space to the news of their trial and conviction. They were sentenced to serve long terms in prison, at the expiration of which they were to be deported. So this country is rid of them forever.

For Emma Goldman I felt not the slightest sympathy, for I had never had faith in her. I believed she was selfish and insincere. She had lived in comfort from the profits of her Red propaganda and gloried in her notoriety. But I pitied Berkman in his downfall. His followers were scattered. He was friendless, with the whole world against him. The Red hosts would never again rally at his call. Another leader might take his place, but he himself, if he should outlive his imprisonment, would be an exile, forgotten and penniless.

I could not forget that he had once been my friend and leader; that I, like so many hundreds of others, had once been under the spell of his powerful personality and his convincing eloquence. Mistaken he was, I know; self-centred and heartless toward his followers whenever he thought his cause could be furthered by steering them into danger; yet I had been able to admire many good qualities in
him, and absolute sincerity in his beliefs was one of them. What a pity that his great abilities had not been guided by clearer reasoning! Oh, why had destiny chosen him for such a rôle? As he stood ruined, with all his hopes gone forever, I could have taken his hand as in the old, wild days, and wept for the man that he might have been.

War! That was the cry in the ghetto now. The Reds and all the other agitators who had so often aroused the street crowds were forgotten. The sons of the tenements were going away to fight, and thousands of homes in which there had been only apathy were full of martial spirit. I was at Brother Moishe's side when he presented himself before the exemption board. As he had already served in the army, he felt that he was needed with the colours more than most, and he was the first man called in our district. He was also one of the first to waive exemption. The day when the first men were called out to go to camp, he, by virtue of his previous service, was put in charge of the first squad.

The East Side streets were crowded that day as never before. Tears streamed down the faces of the fathers and mothers, to whom war was so terrible a thing, but they were tears of pride rather than of sorrow. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and sweethearts marched proudly beside their young men as they set out for the busses that were to take them to the railroad station.

Among the first to go were the three Schwartz
REBELS

boys, who, on leaving, bestowed their most cherished possession, the sateen quilt, upon Mrs. Gritzenstein, their janitress, who was to care for it until their return—if they ever should return. Mintz, of the delicatessen shop, made up for his lack of relatives by giving each of the three a strip of bologna a foot and a half long, and the brothers had a firm grip on their big sausages as they marched off. Mrs. Gritzenstein took the place of a mother, and, though they had often been far behind with the rent and had had many bitter words with her in consequence, she shed tears as she hurried along the sidewalk in an effort to keep pace with them.

Katzenstein, the street cleaner—he who wielded so much political power on our block—is one of the most important persons in the crowd. He struts proudly about, his broom over his shoulder military fashion, and gives orders to every one; but no one listens. Katzenstein and his political influence are forgotten.

Here comes Jimmie Casey, the firelighter, grown to strapping manhood now, with his feeble old Irish mother hobbling along behind him. Neither father nor brother nor sister has Jimmie; she alone is there to bid him good-bye. Like the Spartan mothers of old she is, with never a tear nor a sigh, and her jaw is set in grim determination to hide the feeling that I know must be choking her. I give a cheer for Jimmie, for there is no one else but his brave old mother to do it.
"Good-bye, Jimmie! Good luck!"

He waves his hand to me, and his mother turns a look of gratitude, her eyes aglow with pride.

And here comes Zalmon Eckstoff, marching away to the first job he has had in years. His poor, worn, white-faced wife is beside him, true to him to the last, though he doesn’t deserve such loyalty. He had tried to wriggle out of service on the ground that he was a married man, but his patriotic better-half, believing it to be her duty to send him out to serve his country, had truthfully told the exemption board that he didn’t support her.

Mother and Hersch Ditchik are beside me, and our boarder is grasping a huge bunch of bananas from his cart. He is going to give them to Moishe when the time comes for the final parting. Hersch is getting pretty old, and it is doubtful if he will ever see his family again, but he has become an enthusiastic patriot. He has never been able to save enough money to send for his wife and children and has almost lost hope of ever being able to, so he is talking of putting what he has into Liberty Bonds.

A bearded little man, bent and old, appears beside me in the crowd. It is Berel Ginsberg, the shoemaker, he who had once been such an eloquent orator before the crowds in Rutgers Square. He steps to the curb, and cheers at the top of his voice, waving his arms frantically.

Everybody is there somewhere in that vast throng, which fills the long street as far as one’s
eyes can reach. I catch a glimpse of Ben Rubin, the fiction writer, very serious and pompous and with a badge on his coat, for he has become an interpreter in the intelligence service, and no longer has to beat his brains in the Yiddish newspaper office thinking out plots for novels.

And, at last, here is Mr. Lefkowitz, the sewing-machine man, as genial and smiling as ever, full of all the gossip of the neighbourhood and telling of the terrible language Zalmon Eckstoff had used to his wife after she had betrayed him to the exemption board.

So it was that the boys of our tenements marched away to war. After the last good-byes were said and after the crowds had melted away I saw service flags appear in window after window. Mrs. Gritzenstein proudly hung one out with three stars on it for the Schwartz brothers. Pincus Goldberg, the saloonkeeper who had wanted to marry me, having no relatives of his own in the service, displayed one with a star for every one of his customers who had gone away. Pathetic indeed was the home that could show not a star for any one.

From that time on the East Side tenement district centred its interests in the success of its faraway sons. In the synagogues prayers were offered for the quick success of their arms, that their victory might end war for all time. And when before long news of battles won spread like wildfire from home to home what wild rejoicing followed, and how
the fathers and mothers swelled with pride. We learned then what it meant to have a country to be proud of.

How long ago those stirring days now seem. Peace has come. The victorious armies are coming home, and the shadow of dread has lifted from our ghetto homes.

And my story has come to an end, too. I look back over the long years, and see myself, a child again, running beside my father as he leads us to our home in the New World. I see the evenings on the housetop, where we played together under the stars. All the chapters of my life pass before me, and many a scene and many a familiar face comes out of the dim past. I see the sweatshops where I and so many other little daughters of the tenements slaved through the long hours under brutal taskmasters. Again I see the lights in Rutgers Square and the mobs of despairing men and women. I see the black banner with the flaming word "Hunger" waving over our tattered followers, and I hear the wild cries as the police charge our lines and their horses ride us down. I see black prison cells, full of hopeless women, poor pawns of destiny; and I see all the homeless, starving thousands who were victims of an economic system that is still with us. My work is not over; I realize that. But, in the effort to help the poor and downtrodden, it is to run in other lines hereafter.
My pal is beside me. Around us the evening shadows are falling over the old square where the mobs once gathered. We have been talking of the days that are gone—the dreary days when life seemed so terrible and hopeless.

"The past is dead, Marie," says my pal, as he reaches for my hand. "Forget it. Think of the future—the shining future of our dreams. It is calling to us. There is work to be done. We are going back into the old fight to better the lives of our people, but there is to be no more violence, no more bitterness or hate."

I bow my head as my hand is gripped in his.
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