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[33] Computed from the Thirteenth United States Census, New York State Population, 1910, Table 13.

[34] The United States Immigration Commission's study of the immigrant and crime found that in most cases the criminality of the second generation differed from that of its parents insofar as "the movement of second generation crime is away from the crimes peculiar to immigrants and toward those of the American of native parentage." "Immigrants and Crime," p. 14.

Jews, however, were an exception to this rule. ". . . the percentage of the Hebrew second generation differs from that of the first generation," wrote the Commission, "away from the percentage of the native white of native father instead of towards it.", "Immigrants and Crime," p. 69.

My data support this finding. Instead of decreasing his percentage of property crimes, as one might expect, the native born Jewish felon had a higher incidence of property crimes than the foreign born Jewish convict.

A Comparison of the Criminal Profiles of the Native Born Jewish Convict, the Foreign Born Jewish Convict and the Native American Convict (In Percent)

	Property	Person	Both	Other
American	78.8	15.4	1.5	4.8
Native Jew	96.4	3.6	-	-
Foreign Jew	73.2	21.4	1.8	3.6

[35] "Immigrants and Crime," p. 1.

[36] "Because You Are A Jew," *The Independent,* 65 (November 26, 1908), 1214–5.

[37] For biographical information on Bingham, see *New York Times,* December 30, 1905; July 2, 1909; September 7, 1934; *New York Herald,* December 30, 1905, George B. McClellan, *The Gentleman and the Tiger,* ed., Harold Syrett (New York, 1956), p. 295.

[38] *New York Times,* September 17, 1908.

Bingham's claim was not without merit. In April 1908 the commissioner wrote a lengthy memorandum to Mayor McClellan in which he contended that since the city held great "attraction" for criminals of all sorts, an increase in the number of police officers was imperative. See Theodore Bingham, "Notes on the Necessity for an Increase in the Police Force," April 30, 1908, Police-McClellan files, McClellan papers, Location 25, New York City Department of Records and Information Services.

[39] *AH,* September 18; *YT,* September 8; *AH,* September 25.

[50] *YT,* September 1.

[51] Louis Marshall is quoted in the *AH,* September 25.

The Diary of Anne Kahan

Siedlce, Poland, 1914–1916

TRANSLATED FROM THE YIDDISH BY THE AUTHOR

Thursday, December 31, 1914

It's been five months since the outbreak of the war. Today an article in the *Moment* calling on everyone to mark down facts or events for history, awakened in me a desire to record all my past and present experiences since mobilization. Not because I expect my writing to serve history, but should we survive this terrible time, I'd like to have a record of all we went through.

A week before mobilization I took my vacation from work and went with my father to the village Hopolie where my mother and the rest of the children had been staying for the summer. On that Friday we learned that Austria had issued an ultimatum to Serbia. There was talk about war and the possibility of an all-out European war, but it seemed remote. There could still be peace. After all, people always talk about war, yet, thank God, we haven't had one for a long time.

The weather was bad: wind and rain, but when we arrived in Hopolie, Mameshe gave us a warm welcome, the bungalow was neat and cozy, and I could smell the odor of gefilte fish all over the place.

That Sunday I did not go back home with my father, but remained in Hopolie for my vacation. Day by day the rumors about war grew stronger. Austria declared war against Serbia and we expected news any minute. The possibility of a European war sud-

denly became very real. We stood anxiously on the road, watching for anyone with news or newspapers from town.

Thursday morning, two men arrived. They told us that many officers and soldiers had arrived in Siedlce (Yid. Shedlets). All the banks had closed and there was panic in town.

We became restless. At the railroad tracks we watched trains with soldiers and ammunition roar by. The soldiers waved at us and we waved back. It made me very sad.

Toward evening our landlady, Rokhl Lea, approached us. "You know, children, they took away the guard from the railroad booth, they must have made peace."

We wanted to believe her.

It was a lovely night, cool and clear. I could smell the freshly cut grass and the scent of the nearby forest. We sat on a bench in front of our bungalow, chatting with neighbors. Then, about 9:30, a man came shouting: "Mobilization has been declared!"

It struck us like a thunderbolt. I was dazed, I wasn't capable of thinking or saying anything. I heard everyone asking questions and the man explaining that someone had just arrived from Siedlce who'd read the newly posted signs calling all men in reserve to report for duty. They also called a mobilization of horses.

We had three reservists in our family: Yosl and Yitskhok, my father's brothers, and Yankl, my aunt Rukhtshe's son. I imagined the world was coming to an end. What can be done? Where can one escape?

"Perhaps it isn't true," said Rokhl Lea, "let's wait for Yoske. He'll know for sure."

Yoske made his living by going back and forth with his horse and wagon from Hopolie to Siedlce, moving the summer residents and taking their orders for food and other purchases in town.

As if for spite, Yoske arrived late that night. He confirmed our neighbor's report—it was all true.

"Tomorrow morning I'm going to town," Mameshe declared. "I must find out what's going on."

We argued against it: "What will you go for? It's no pleasure bouncing on that wagon. Besides, tomorrow is Friday, Tateshe is coming anyway, so we'll find out everything."

But Mameshe insisted. Finally, it was decided that I go instead of her.

Next morning I was up at 5:30. Outside, I saw several men reading notices that must have just been posted. *Nebekh!* They're probably reservists.

After a while I climbed on top of the wagon, settling between two men and all kinds of bundles and boxes. "Come back with good news," everyone called after me.

It was a lovely morning. I gazed at the passing fields and forests and I thought: all this will be devastated. Here comes a cottage with a garden. How much labor went into building this house, planting these flowers, and all at once they might be destroyed!

I saw a dark mass from afar. It turned out to be the horses and wagons that the peasants were bringing in for the army.

As we entered Siedlce, I was struck by the animation and noise in the streets. People were standing around in circles, talking excitedly. The place was full of soldiers.

I met my father in front of our butcher shop. Oh, how he had changed! His face an ashen grey, his cheeks sunken. He said: "Tell Mameshe to come home immediately. At least, I'll have someone to consult. Do you know what's going on? I'm supposed to collect all my bills on Friday, but today no one is paying. Everything I own is tied up in these collections. Besides, I can't bear all the weeping that's going on. I can't enter our house. On one side Rukhtshe cries, on the other, Yitskhok."

I went to our house and my aunt met me, crying. "My Yankl has to report for service. I shouldn't even utter it with my lips, God forbid, he can get killed in the war. What am I going to do? Please, tell Mameshe to come home today. Your father is sick with worry."

But how can we move today? Yoske won't be going back to Hopolie before one in the afternoon. How can we pack and return to Siedlce before sundown? Should we travel on the Sabbath?

I left with the determination to return before nightfall. On my way I stepped into the millinery store where I'd been working. Serke, my employer's daughter, said that my father was right to insist that we move back today. "If you wait till Sunday, the roads will be jammed and you won't be able to pass at all."

I went to where the wagon stood, but Yoske wasn't there. As I waited, a man passed, waving a newspaper on which I could read: GERMANY DECLARES WAR AGAINST RUSSIA! Many people surrounded him and I could not read any more. Suddenly, the

storekeepers began shutting their stores and people started running. A wagon full of soldiers, their guns pointed at us, appeared. I was frightened, but they rolled by without an incident. Later, someone told me this was the government treasure they were transporting out of town.

At last, Yoske arrived and we were on our way. Mameshe was waiting for me outside. She was not surprised at my father's request. "I expected it," she said.

The neighbors tried to dissuade us from moving in such a hurry, but our minds were made up. Mameshe served a hot lunch, but neither my sister Brokhe nor I could eat. My two brothers and baby sister did eat something, the rest of the food we gave to Yoske's wife.

In one half hour we had everything packed. I still don't understand how we could have done it so fast. As Yoske began to carry out our things, a woman came in begging us to let her come along on the wagon as she had to be in town tonight. She'd only take her bedding, nothing else. Then Esther and Lea Podolsky decided to go too, and being our friends, we could not refuse them. Our cousin Matl's little girl, Rivtshe, had been visiting her aunt and now we had to take her back home, for her mother would be worried. Then Lutzky's son approached us—he too must reach town tonight. How could so many people get into that one wagon?

Yoske loaded our things up high and we sat on top of them, holding on to something in order not to fall off. Our friends piled up on top, too.

On the way we were blocked by the many carts with mobilized horses, moving in an incessant stream toward town. It would have taken too long to wait for them to pass, and so, Yoske managed to squeeze our wagon in and we moved along with them.

When we finally arrived and I walked into our apartment, I felt as though a load were lifted off my chest. Thank God we were back home, together with my father. Whatever might come, we'd face it together.

We came just in time for Mameshe to light the Sabbath candles. My aunt had cooked a meal for us and when my father came from the synagogue we sat down at the table and ate. It was as if nothing had changed, were it not for my aunt's weeping and the sounds of song and marching feet drifting in from outside, as students

and soldiers passed our street in noisy, patriotic demonstrations.

I was exhausted and fell asleep as soon as my head touched the pillow.

Screams and laments woke me up early in the morning. Yankl and his wife came to say goodby. Yitskhok was also getting ready to leave. A woman's shrill voice kept repeating: "I won't let you go! I won't let you go!"

There were many reservists on our street. Some were pretty old, about 45 or 50. They had big families who'd followed them all the way to the recruiting station. Every time one of these reservists would pass, his family would raise a cry, and Brokhe and I would dash to the window and weep for them. Mameshe shouted: "Stop it! You cannot help them with your crying! When you hear a commotion, don't go to the window!"

After a while we got used to the wailing and did not pay attention to it any more.

Thank God, Yitskhok and Yosl were deferred, but Yankl was sent away. His wife, Fradl, was pregnant and she came often to my aunt Rukhtshe and the two women would sit and weep.

People began hoarding food and prices went up. My parents could not afford to store much food, besides, we still hoped for peace. We now accepted the situation, but we feared the future.

I did not think of going back to work—there was no work, anyway. In my free time I studied German from an old textbook.

One day we sat around the table talking about the war. My uncle Avrum said it couldn't last very long, too many nations were involved. Suddenly, we heard someone yelling: "The war is over! Peace! It's peace!"

We ran outside, we couldn't believe it. "It's true! It's true!" they shouted, "Mazl tov!"

Passing soldiers were stopped and they smilingly confirmed that the war was, indeed, over. "Go home!" we yelled at them, "you're not needed anymore." An old woman, whose son was in the army, seized a bearded soldier and kissed him. Moyshe Dovid the *klezmer* ('musician') took out his fiddle and played in the middle of the street. Motke the *meshugener* ('madman') appeared from nowhere and started dancing in front of the musician. It was very funny. We felt such great relief. Several women fainted from joy.

I grabbed my hat and ran to Warsaw street. It was packed full

of people. Many rode in *droshkes* ('horse-drawn cabs') in their haste to get home with the good news. Reservists, already in uniform, threw off their caps and jackets and rode home. I met all the girls I had worked with, promenading. "What will Beyle do with all that hoarded flour?" Esther Galantz asked with a twinkle in her eye. Then she turned to me, saying: "Look at all these faces, Khantshe. Save this moment in your heart."

Suddenly, there was a commotion: an army colonel rushed over to the crowd, shouting, "For Christ's sake, disperse! Who ever let out this rumor that the war is over? I haven't received any such communication! Now go home or I'll order to fire!"

I felt as though I were falling out of the sky. Gendarmes appeared and a panic ensued. Someone shouted, "They're shooting!" and the people ran. The storekeepers bolted the stores. Esther and I ran through Gursky's backyard to Długa street. We did not know why we were running. It was enough to hear: "They're shooting," and our feet took off by themselves.

Later we learned that the false rumor was spread by the Germans. A Russian military commander had received a telegram that a peace agreement had been signed by Russia and Germany, and this was how it had started. Now soldiers were patrolling the streets, and military police had been sent to all roads to turn back the reservists who went home.

After that, the days passed long and sad. The wives of the reservists spent their days at the cemetery, crying at the graves of their relatives as though the dead could help them.

Several thousand Jews arrived from Lodz to report for duty in Siedlce. Most of them had no money for food or a place to sleep. The Jews of the town immediately opened free kitchens where several hundred men were fed at a time. Many families took in men to sleep. I was sorry that we could not accommodate anyone in our place. We were so crowded, we had to open folding beds every night for our own boys. I went to help in one of the kitchens on Piękna Street. I peeled potatoes and washed dishes about five hours a day.

Then, a few days before Rosh Hashanah, I was called back to work. I was very glad—at least I'd forget the war for a while. But there was no forgetting.

The Germans were advancing. Tales of atrocities in occupied towns reached us. In the evenings, when I came home, we studied maps, figuring out where battles were taking place.

On Simhath Torah many government employees arrived from Warsaw. The enemy was very close. Again panic. But, thank God, the Germans were repulsed.

Meanwhile, our designer, Merada, gave up the job. Only Itke, Mindl and I remained working. Then they hired a new girl, Estusha. Itke and Estusha are both older than me, while Mindl, who is only a learner, is about 12, almost two years younger than me.

I think this is about all that transpired since the outbreak of war until today. From now on I shall go on relating things day by day, like in a diary.

When I came to work this morning, I learned that the Czar was stopping in Siedlce, on his way to the front. It was announced in all the synagogues that everyone may go to see him today.

"We'll all go," said Itke, "an opportunity like this comes only once in a lifetime."

I don't care much for the Czar, still there is some excitement in watching a parade, or seeing the mighty ruler of an empire.

It was decided that first Itke and Estusha would go, Mindl and I would follow after they came back. I waited impatiently for their return. It took hours. By the time they did, the Czar was gone and I had to remain at work.

By the time I left the store, it was too late to go visiting. It was very windy outside. I went into the other store, asked my employer for six rubles out of my salary and walked home.

I was very tired and upset. After drinking some tea, I calmed down enough to read the newspaper and discuss the things I read with Mameshe. Then I washed my hair and sat down to write these lines. From now on I'll try to write daily, or as often as I can.

It is 1:30 in the morning. I can hardly keep my eyes open.

Friday, January 1, 1915

Every Friday morning it is my job to buy *khales* ('Sabbath breads') at the bakery, but today I slept late and couldn't do it. I swallowed a piece of bread, gulped down my tea and rushed out to work.

"Good afternoon!" Serke greeted me ironically.

I did not reply. Silently, I picked up a roll of wire and started on a hat frame.

I sit quietly and my thoughts fly. How good it would be if I

could sit now in a warm, comfortable place with pleasant people around me! But then I think of the men on the battlefields and I feel ashamed.

A committee has been formed in town to collect old clothing for refugees. The Eisenbergs offered the room in the back of our store for a depot. Now people keep bringing things. The back room is nearly filled to the top. Some girl-volunteers sit there now, sorting, mending, darning. Whatever is badly torn, is put aside for rags.

The winter day is short. When I come back from lunch, it's almost time to close the store for the Sabbath.

By the time I get home, Tateshe is back from *shul*. I wash, change my dress in a hurry and go to the table, where everyone is already waiting for me.

After dinner, my mother's cousin Freyde pays us a visit. While she sits, talking to Mameshe, I settle down to read Mordovtsev's works* which I borrowed from Itke. Pretty soon, Shayele, called the Englishman, because he's lived in London a few years, and Morris, the *Amerikaner*, who'd been in America, come in. They are followed by my cousin, Tovye. Morris and Tovye like my sister Brokhe, who is two years older than me, but Shayele is forever staring at me and trying to be friends. He must think me older than I am. I always talk and act as though I were fifteen or sixteen, but I'm not even fourteen. I do feel older than my age, but I don't care much to be friends with Shayele. I'd much rather read. Even now, I am so engrossed in my reading that I don't know what they are talking about.

Saturday, January 2, 1915

I was up at seven, took my book and went back to bed. What a pleasure! When do I have a chance to read? I come home from work late, by the time I read the newspaper and exchange a few words with Mameshe, it's time to go to sleep. Lunchtime, I sit and eat with the book in front of my eyes. Mameshe scolds me for eating and reading at the same time: "You don't know what you're eating! It's bad for your stomach and bad for your eyes!"

But what am I to do? If I wouldn't snatch a little reading here

*D.L. Mordovtsev (1830–1905), Russian novelist.

and there, I'd never get the chance! I've always had a great desire for learning and reading, and now more than ever. At times I feel as though I could drown in a sea of words. I want so much to penetrate life, to see the good and the bad, to find an answer to many questions. Every time I open a book, I think maybe here I'll find the answer.

Tuesday, January 5, 1915

Another frosty day. Snow keeps falling. There are rumors that the Germans are not far from Warsaw. God knows what will happen to us! We may have to flee in this bitter frost!

I've had a busy day. Not only do I sit and work, I also wait on customers in the front part of the store. It's before the Russian Christmas and suddenly they all want new hats. Tomorrow I must come very early.

I have a splitting headache. As soon as I finish reading the newspaper, I'll go to bed.

Thursday, January 7, 1915

It's Christmas, all the stores are closed, but our little shop is open. However, we were told to come in later in the morning and we'll leave earlier, too.

Mameshe wakes me: "I want you to bring some water. The water carrier won't be here till the late afternoon and there isn't a drop of water in the barrel."

I grumble as I get up and dress. I run across the street for fresh rolls and give the children their breakfast before I pick up the pail for water. But everywhere I go, the pumps are out of order, frozen. At the pump on Długa, the water trickles down drop by drop. I wait in line and by the time I fill my pail and carry it home, it's time for me to go to work.

The streets look festive with the flags waving from windows and gates, the closed stores and the promenading people. Many sleighs are gliding over the snow and the bells make a tingling, musical sound.

However, no holiday inside the store. We sit and sew. I cover a frame with black velvet. I pull it very tight over the buckram and

slip-stitch it so that the thread doesn't show. It's an expensive hat, it'll be trimmed with ostrich feathers. They now give me expensive hats to work on. I must be good.

Serke reads us a story about a Jewish soldier at the front who writes a letter to his wife and children, asking them not to worry about him—he is having it very good! The same day he is killed. He dies with "Shma Yisroel" ('Hear oh Israel') on his lips. The letter is later found in his pocket.

Tears fill my eyes. How horrible war is! How cruel!

Friday, January 8, 1915

They're playing a nice picture at the "Modern": *The White Slave.* The girls ask me to go to see it with them. I haven't seen a picture for such a long time! I promise to meet them after supper.

The place is packed. Music is playing. I see many familiar faces. The picture is interesting. After it's over a woman appears on stage, singing vulgar couplets. She spoils the show for me.

Saturday, January 9, 1915

Brokhe and Shaye are going to sell little flags tomorrow. The money goes for wounded soldiers.

Mameshe comes in with a story about a young man who came asking my aunt Rukhtshe all the details of her little boy's, Shmulik's, death. A few years ago Shmulik, aged four, disappeared after watching a military parade and was found dead several days later in a ditch a few versts from town. Foul play was suspected, but the police did not bother investigating.

"Why this sudden interest?" I ask

"The young man explained it this way: it is expected that at the opening of the Gosudarstvenaya Duma ('parliament') the Poles will submit a bill requesting autonomy for Poland. Should the bill pass, the Jewish problem would be left to the Poles, for them to solve according to their precepts of justice and fair play. But the Jews know they cannot depend on the justice of the Poles. No, not the ones who'd rule the country. It is, therefore, important to gather all facts about antisemitic acts in Poland, in order to show that the Jewish problem cannot be left to the Poles, but must be taken up and discussed by the Duma itself."

Sunday, January 10, 1915

Shayele calls for Brokhe at 8:30. She looks very pretty, dressed in a navy suit, the white satin ribbon across her chest. They are to cover Ogrodova and Florianska, both nice, wide streets, where many Gentiles reside. Mameshe and I buy two little flags from them for a "beginning".

I leave the house together with them. A light snow is falling. Our store is not open yet, so I walk with them for a while. The Russian soldiers and officers we meet, give generously, the Poles—not so. Brokhe is a good saleslady; she sells all her little flags in no time and is now going to pick up more.

I leave them as I have to go to work. The snow is getting heavier. The volunteers who are appointed for the afternoon shift will sell very little, I'm afraid.

When I come home for lunch, Brokhe is back already. She tells me a few episodes. She pinned a little flag on the lapel of one man's coat and he pulled it off angrily and threw it on the ground. Another was quite drunk. A soldier tried to make a date with her. But on the whole she did very well, selling the second bunch of flags as well as the first.

After work I take a walk with Estusha. Estusha is about sixteen, tall and pretty with her dark shiny hair and fair skin. Her father is in America and she hopes to go there some day. "I wish I could go, too," I say to her, "but it's impossible. We could never get together enough money for the tickets. Besides, I don't think my father would like to leave Siedlce."

Monday, January 11, 1915

As we sit and sew, Itke, Estusha and I talk about love. How odd! I cannot make out this feeling. Sometimes I think it is the most sacred thing in the world, but people with their coarse hands have besmirched it, under the name of love they meant something else. Perhaps it's very hard to find true love and so a passing fancy is called by that name.

Itke doubts whether there is such a thing as pure love. "Of course, there is," I reply with deep conviction. "It is rarely found, yet people are always searching for it, people who long for the pure and beautiful. Once they find their true love, they never change."

"But how can you tell whether it's love or an infatuation?" says Estusha.

"You have to show character," I say. "Don't fall in love in a hurry. I think, if the feeling for this one person lasts a long time, it must be love."

The fact is, I see girls meeting boys—after a few words, they're sighing already. A week passes and they're head over heels in love. They don't eat, they don't sleep, they suffer. A few months later they cool off and become infatuated with someone else. How stupid! Thank God, so far I haven't contracted this disease. I hope to continue so. Of course, one can never tell, but a strong will power can overcome everything.

Serke says that I talk big, but I'm really a child. Leave it to Serke always to say something nasty.

Just as we are ready to leave, a customer comes in. By the time she is served, it's 9 o'clock. I buy writing paper, then run into Morris and Shayele who take me home.

My mother, father and uncles Yitskhok and Avrum are discussing the recent draft laws. Many of our friends will be called. It's a pity. So many young lives broken! My aunt Rukhtshe tells us that Motl Eta-Sime's was wounded and they'll have to amputate his leg. How horrible! A cripple. It's worse than death.

Mameshe reads aloud from the newspaper. The English have celebrated Christmas in the trenches and so have the Germans. On that night they forgot their enmity, climbed out, shook hands and exchanged gifts. Isn't that something? I suppose, the plain soldier doesn't want this war. He fights because he is forced to fight.

Tuesday, January 12, 1915

Rivke Goldstein was in our shop today. I used to go to school with her. Our town school consisted of three grades, all taught in one large room. Being older than me, Rivke attended a higher grade, but we got to know each other, anyway.

Rivke is a rich man's daughter and doesn't have to worry about learning a trade. She goes around enjoying herself, although in a fine way, not like other girls. Last summer she went to Warsaw, where she saw many good plays. Imagine: she traveled with a crowd to Falenice just for one evening's performance!

After hearing her talk, I realize how little I have seen, or gone anywhere for fun. I haven't been out of this town at all! I haven't lived at all! Buried in here! Will I go on living this way the rest of my life? I have such a longing to know and see everything. Even if I were disillusioned or disappointed, it would still be worth trying.

I think I'll go to America after the war is over. I have such a desire to get away! I'd like to meet people of a higher intelligence, interesting people. So many things plague me, for once I'd like to speak to someone who'd understand. I feel so many strivings inside of me—I don't even know what most of them are. That's why everything around me appears drab and boring. I want to live—in the full sense of the word.

Wednesday, January 13, 1915

We received a card from my cousin Gitl in New York. She wants to know how things are with us. Over there they think we are all dead. From a distance things appear even worse than what they are. Here we got used to our *tsores,* we're only worried it shouldn't get worse. Yes, my dear Gitl, our situation is pretty bad, but we manage to endure it. As for me, I'm even concerned about the lack of entertainment. That's what habit does for us.

Morris met me on my way home from work. He complained about being too busy. He's a metal worker and very much in demand. "I have no time to breathe," he says to me. "I'll be glad when it slows down and I can take a rest."

I think of Shaye who is idle and complaining, too. How differently people are situated! One hopes for work, the other prays the work should stop. Perhaps it's well that man is never content. The dissatisfaction makes him search for something bigger and better, thereby developing his faculties and making his spirit grow.

Thursday, January 14, 1915

Stepping out of the store tonight, I ran into Mameshe and Khayim Leyb who were coming from the glaziers. One of our window panes is broken and needs replacing. We take a walk and later Shayele joins us. He tells us about his life in London and the Social-

ist movement over there. He has attended many lectures and heard famous speakers. For the first time, I'm interested in his talk.

Friday, January 15, 1915

The Eisenbergs have a big library with books, some of them very old. The old man must have brought them with him from Russia where he was born. The three older daughters, all educated and married, must have added some later works to the collection. Once, when I was up in their apartment, and Mrs. Eisenberg noticed me looking avidly at the backs of these books, she said that I may borrow any one of them to read. From then on, Serke or Beyle bring down books for me, whenever I ask them.

Today Serke forgot the book and I won't have anything to read tomorrow.

Saturday, January 16, 1915

I slept late and had to rush with the house cleaning. It's raining and we're staying indoors. After dinner my cousin Hershl comes in. Brokhe and I read Avrom Reisen's poems, two of them we learn by heart. Then we sing some of his poems that are set to music.

Tovye joins us later. He tells us about the movie he saw last night at the "Modern," *Rome at the time of Nero.* He is not as enthusiastic about the picture as about the music. Tovye loves music. He plays the violin very well. His oldest brother is a cantor, the whole family is musical.

After they leave I sit down to write. Brokhe wants me to play cards with her. "Another day gone with nothing," I say. "What do you want?" says Mameshe. "You used to be such a good child. You never complained. Now nothing satisfies you."

"Perhaps I'm growing wiser," I say with a smile. "Or is it the *Weltschmertz*?"

Sunday, January 17, 1915

As I enter the store, Serke shouts angrily: "So late! It's twenty after nine! You leave at half past eight, you ought to be here before nine!"

Of course, it isn't true—we never leave at eight thirty—but, as usual, I don't reply, but sit down silently to work.

After a while Rivke comes in and we talk. She has ideas. "Life is a paradise," she says, "you only have to know how to make use of it."

I tell her that at times I feel very old.

"Whoever is capable of love is not old," she says. "Are you aspiring to something high? Good. Keep it up. This will be your interest in life."

"But what happens after you achieve your goal and the ideal is no more an ideal? What then?"

"Then you'll strive for something else. You'll always have something to strive for."

"What about now? Everything is so drab, the people—petty. Sometimes they disgust me, but then I feel such a great pity for them."

She says every human being is interesting, no matter what he is or how he acts. She has an interest in him as a type, a character.

"You'd lose your interest very soon, if you'd come close to them," I say. "They are so colorless. They have so little inside of them that when you see them twice, you know all about them. You know exactly what they'll say or do. So far I haven't met anyone who'd really interest me. Perhaps it is because the people who would have something in them do not remain in Siedlce. Only those who have not enough energy to get away, or those who are satisfied with the dregs of life remain here. As for me, I hope to get away from here before it's too late."

"Good," she says, "I like your spirit. You go. There are many good people in this world, they'll help you. Those people understand life. Living well, they don't forget the suffering of others, and when they themselves go through hardships, they know what they are suffering for."

She really can talk big, but she makes me feel good. Tonight, after work, strolling with Itke and Estusha on Warsaw street, I laugh and joke. I'm young, I want to live, laugh, forget my troubles.

I'm at home, absorbed in the newspaper, as Tateshe comes in. In the now quiet night, he has heard distinctly the boom of cannons. The enemy may be pretty close. Again I'm assailed by anxiety.

Monday, January 18, 1915

Estusha brought in a card that tells your fortune and we had fun with it. But most of the time I talk to Itke. I've grown very fond of her. Although she is about three years older than me, she consults me about everything. Today we swore friendship to each other, it made me very happy.

Itke tells me all about herself. Her father had been married once before. His three sons by the first marriage live in the United States. Her mother was single when she married her father, she is much younger than him.

Itke is tall and graceful. She has a small round face with large brown eyes. Even her hairlip, that was caused by an accident, adds to her attractiveness. It makes her look different.

Itke likes to talk about romance. I think that Esther's brother, Pinkhes, is in love with her, but that fellow is so full of irony and bitterness that he'd never say anything about it. He's got plenty of competition, too.

Brokhe shows me a book of Yiddish poems which she borrowed from Suchorzebsky. I love poetry. These are selections by many poets, fit for recitation. Most of them I know by heart.

Friday, January 22, 1915

Beyle always lends me Russian books to read. Tonight she gives me an important historical work: *The Year of Struggle.*

After dinner, Brokhe and I take a walk. We meet Zelde and Anna Lubelsky. Anna is my mother's cousin, nearly thirty and not married. I haven't seen her for a few years for she was away in Warsaw. Since she has returned a few months ago she has called on us several times. She still has that haughty, aristocratic look, although the Lubelskys have come down in the world. She tells me that she is pleased with the chaos of war in which everything personal is forgotten. All one thinks of is the general disaster. We live in a time of perpetual excitement, of expectation. We never know what the next moment may bring.

"Perhaps it's a little selfish of me," she adds with a smile, "after all there are thousands of victims daily. Still, I'm not the one who made this war and so I'm not at all dissatisfied."

She asks me to visit her sometime, but I don't know whether I will. I don't care much for her ideas.

Saturday, January 23, 1915

I went to Itke's this afternoon. Her mother served us tea and cookies and we sat reading Ansky's works. Dina and her cousin came over later. We had an interesting conversation about the war, Polish-Jewish relations and literature. They asked me to recite Bialik's "The Last Word", which I did and then I had to recite other poems.

Night falls by the time we leave Itke's house.

At home, I find Shaye, Morris and Brokhe playing cards. As I sit down to eat and read, Hershl comes in and sits down beside me. He ignores the two men and they seem to be angry with him. What's going on?

After a while Brokhe gets up, excuses herself, she is going out with Hershl to see a picture at the "Modern."

I am appalled at her rudeness. To leave guests and go away? It positively disgusts me. Hershl asks me to come, too, but I refuse.

Mameshe senses the tension and she starts talking about America. What if we ever get there? After Brokhe and Hershl leave, Tateshe joins the conversation, too. Morris and Shaye say that there are many opportunities for people willing to work hard, America is especially good for children, for they could get an education and make something of themselves.

It is nearly ten o'clock when they leave. After the children go to sleep, we talk again about emigration. Mameshe says it will be impossible for us to go to America. The fare is very expensive and we'd need some capital to carry us over until the time when Tateshe learns a trade and gets a job. "I think we'd better contemplate moving to Warsaw," she says. "It's a big city where the children could have more of a chance for education and growth. In Warsaw we could open a butcher store and make a living."

But father is against moving to Warsaw. Food and rent are high in Warsaw. At least here, we don't have to pay rent. "Before I do anything, my few hundred rubles will be gone. Is there a guarantee that I'll do better there than here? There are plenty of butcher stores in Warsaw without me."

He recalls how his mother, may she rest in peace, began worry-

ing about her children when they reached their teens. At that time they lived in a village and her fervent wish was to move to Siedlce, where there'd be more opportunities for them to achieve something.

"What about grandfather?" I ask.

"He was so absorbed in the study of Talmud that earthly matters did not concern him much. But my mother—yes. She was the breadwinner, she carried the burden."

How little things have changed, I reflect. My grandmother would probably be satisfied with what we have now. We only went up one rung on the ladder. She lived in a village, so she dreamed of moving to a town like Siedlce. We live in Siedlce, so we want to go to Warsaw or America. The discontent is still the same. We may not be happy even after we reach our goal. What is this force that drives us on?

Sunday, January 24, 1915

Today is a Polish flower-day. I'm afraid they won't make much money—they do it phlegmatically. The Jewish volunteers brought in 861 rubles for the wounded soldiers. I wonder how much the Poles will collect.

It's a frosty day. Toward night snow begins falling. Shaye and Morris must have made up with Brokhe, for I find them playing cards at our home. They are friends again. What a fool I was to take it to heart!

Monday, January 25, 1915

There is no work today. No customers, no orders. We busy ourselves examining our stock of trimmings: the ribbons, feathers, artificial flowers. We take the boxes down from the shelves, dust them off and put them back. After lunch, I look for something to do. I make a wire frame, cover it with buckram. I don't like to make a show of working, when I'm not. At the end of the day I'm more tired than when I really do work.

On the way home, I meet Morris. He gives me the Yiddish-English textbook I've asked him for. He tells me about rumors that they'll soon draft 17 year-olds.

I don't want to ask him why he is not in the army. Maybe there is something wrong with him. I know that Shaye came back from London to the *priziv* ('draft board') and was exempted from service because he is an only son.

Brokhe has a cold. Morris doesn't stay long. I write two cards to America: one to aunt Rivke, the other to Gitl. Then I write these lines. Am I tired!

Tuesday, January 26, 1915

In the morning we sort out all the straw braid, putting it away in boxes for next summer's use. Luckily, I take an order for two hats and Itke and I have something to work on.

Brokhe is still in bed. Lunchtime, I run over to Zelig the barber and borrow a thermometer. Thank God, her temperature is normal.

Itke received a letter from her cousin in Warsaw. He had visited them last year and Itke enjoyed his company. They've been corresponding ever since. I think she is interested in him.

Shaye meets me on my way home. I ask him the correct pronunciation of some English words that I learned from the book. Again we talk about America. He says: "Don't think you can pick up gold in the streets. You have to work very hard over there. I'll let you read Edelshtat's* works and you'll judge for yourself."

"I don't mind working hard," I say, "as long as I get a chance to study at night."

Wednesday, January 27, 1915

Lunchtime, Tateshe tells me that a crowd has gathered in front of the Magistrat ('city hall') to read newly-posted notices. He could not get through to read them himself, but was told, it was an order drafting men with blue tickets up to the age of fifty-five.

A new calamity! They might take my father, too!

I feel as though the world were coming to an end. We're getting all this gradually, little by little, so that we don't die at once, but daily, hourly. Oh, God!

*Dovid Edelshtat (1866–1892), American Yiddish labor poet.

The girls in the store have also heard about this new order and are very depressed. Then Lea Gutnik, Eisenberg's cousin, comes in. She is amazed at our despair. "Fools!" she cries. "Why do you believe everything you hear? Why don't you read for yourself? I read the notice. It calls for volunteers, for drivers with their horses —no other men! The drivers will get paid for their work. They need drivers with their wagons and horses for transportation."

What a relief!

We have nothing to do, so we go into the back room, light a small lamp and stretch out on the benches. Beyle doesn't like it. She turns off the light and makes us get up. She finds old hats for us to rip and do over on new frames. Now that we are working, she is happy.

Later, some customers come in and order hats. And here I thought the world was coming to an end!

Thursday, January 28, 1915

We are looking over last summer's hats. Some of them have to be done over for next season. How many memories! Here is Zina's work, there—Merada's. Zina is now residing in another town, and Merada is married.

I recall the time when we made these hats: the lovely spring, the warm, bright summer that ended so badly. Every morning, an hour or two before work, we used to go to the park for *majówka.* ('picnics'). How sweet the lilac and the acacia smelled! Will we ever have spring again?

Everything that becomes a memory becomes dear to you. When we packed these hats into boxes, I wondered whether we'll ever unpack them again. And now we're doing just that. So there is hope. We will live in spite of everything. I *will* see spring again!

Friday, January 29, 1915

My cousin Khayim borrowed Knut Hamsun's *Victoria* from someone. I've read it twice already, but I don't mind reading it again.

Morris calls to inquire about Brokhe's health. He seems to be very interested in her. I don't know whether she likes him, too. He

is older than the rest of the boys, sort of settled. A fine, handsome young man, but very plain.

Reyzl and Esther call in the afternoon. Later, Tovye and Shayele join us and we all play "Post Office". Then we look at photographs in our album. Brokhe starts singing and we all join in. We sing *Hulyet, hulyet beyze vintn* ('Blow, Angry Winds') by Reisen, *Yontevdike teg* ('Festival Days') by Warshawsky and Russian songs like *Unesij moju dushu* ('Carry My Soul Away') by Frug, and Tchaikowsky's "Night" which is not easy to sing.

After the girls leave, Shaye tells me that at the theater in the park they are playing a fine drama. Would I like to go with him? I refuse politely: "I cannot leave Brokhe." However, the truth is that I don't like to have anyone pay for my ticket, especially Shaye who I know depends on his father for pocket money. The worst of it is that Shaye does not get along with his father who is a pious Jew, and he dislikes his stepmother. What a situation.

I've made Shaye unhappy with my refusal, but what else could I do?

Sunday, January 31, 1915

It is very cold in our shop. We haven't had a fire for days. The Eisenbergs have plenty of wood stored in their apartment which they keep nice and warm, but for us they have none. The excuse is they have no one to carry it down to the store.

Itke had a headache and remained home after lunch. I take a walk with Estusha after work. When Rikhter approaches us, I excuse myself and leave them. I know very well that Estusha likes to be alone with him.

From nowhere Shayele appears. When I complain about the cold, he says the cold makes me look pretty. I don't believe these compliments, I know they're not true. Everyone in my family is better looking than I. The younger children are beautiful. Brokhe has big blue eyes, dark hair and a pale face. My hair is neither black, nor blond, and my eyes are all colors—green and grey with brown specks. Because of my high cheekbones, they look smaller than what they are. Besides, my face is entirely too full. Those red cheeks make me look like a peasant. I don't know why I look so healthy, I certainly don't feel so healthy. But even in my family they consider me as the

strong one, and Brokhe, the delicate one. Brokhe is always complaining about her health.

Tuesday, February 2, 1915

I simply couldn't get out of bed this morning, my whole body ached. Later in the day I feel better. I do some washing, then I sit down to study English in that self-teaching book. After a while I put it down. I have no more patience to learn all these strange words by heart!

Wednesday, February 3, 1915

Toward evening Khaye Bursztein comes in with a strange request to me. Today she is on duty at the *Ezres hayesoymim.* Her job is to cover all the weddings or other affairs in town where a collection can be made for the benefit of the orphanage. She's found out that a wedding would take place tonight in my neighborhood. Wouldn't I, please, cover this wedding together with Estusha?

I decline because I've never done such a thing—it's distasteful to me. But she keeps appealing to me in the name of the poor orphans, until I consent. "I don't care if you don't make much," she says, "I just want to be sure that our institution is represented."

Estusha agrees to go with me. We leave at 8:30. On our block I inquire at the candy store about the address of the wedding. The woman describes to me a small house adjoining the bakery on Brovarna. It is so dark on that street that Estusha and I hold on to each other in order not to fall. When we arrive there, we are told this is the bride's residence, but the wedding is taking place in a neighbor's house.

Finally, we enter a low, rickety door. Can it really be here? In my mind a wedding is associated with brilliant lights, a polished floor and music. How can you have a wedding without *klezmer* ('musicians')?

The entrance is dismally dark. In the kitchen a small kerosene lamp is burning; something is cooking on top of the stove. On the left, we see a small room with benches around two small tables which are covered with a white cloth. But there is nothing on the tables. This room must be reserved for men.

No one is stopping us or asking any questions, so we walk into the next room which is larger and brighter and has a long table standing in the center with cakes and cookies and a bottle of wine. There is no other furniture in the room except for some chairs around the walls.

Several guests sit on these chairs, talking to the bride, who is a plump girl with red-rimmed eyes. I can tell that she is the bride because she is wearing a white dress and veil and keeps dabbing her eyes with a handkerchief.

We decide to go back to the kitchen and wait till more guests arrive. A few girls come in, wearing old-fashioned gowns. The *mekhuteneste* ('bride's mother'), a stout woman in a blond *sheytl* ('wig'), keeps going back and forth from one room to the other, without knowing what to do, or how to receive guests. The guests keep arriving. They walk in, kiss the bride and look for a place to sit down.

Gradually, the place is filling. Children are crying, their mothers hushing them up. I notice dark Malke among the guests. She's powdered her face a chalk white, put two red spots of rouge on her cheeks and is wearing a shiny green satin blouse with a black skirt. V-very fancy! She looks like a big stuffed up clown. It makes me laugh.

It's time to start. We pick up a plate and approach the bride. She puts in a big copper *zekser* ('three kopeck coin'). Some women refuse to give anything, others put in a kopeck. The *mekhuteneste* says: "The bride has contributed." "This is for orphans", I say, "The bride gave only a *zekser.*" "I have no money!" she snaps at me.

I feel offended. "Let's go home," I say to Estusha.

On the way out we glance at the plate that a woman from the *Gmiles khasodim* ('Free Loan Association') is passing around. There are only a few groshn on it.

I breathe more freely after I am out on the street. We count the coins—altogether, 19 kopecks. I feel ashamed. I add a kopeck to make a round sum and ask Estusha to take it to the *Ezres hayesoymim.* "Give it in your own name. Don't say we attended the wedding. It's a disgrace!" I say to her as we part.

Friday, February 5, 1915

Again a hard day. Itke came in late. I thought she wasn't coming at all. She complains about her health. "These walls will make all of us sick," she says. "Were a doctor to come in here, he'd say we'll all end up with tuberculosis."

It is true. The room we work in has no air or sun. The iron bars on the windows, the dank walls, the musty odor, remind me of a prison. Oh, how I'd love to get away from here!

We sit and sew and weave golden fantasies about our future in America. From where else could come our salvation? There is no other place, no other solution.

What if we were wrong? I recall Shayele's words about the lot of a worker, even in America. He has since given me to read Rosenfeld's and Edelshtat's poems about the sweatshops. They are really horrible. Still, I think, there is hope there. There is no hope here. Here, everything is stagnant, decayed. I want to be anywhere but here. At least, it'll be a change. Even if it turns out badly, at least, I will have tried.

"I will not stay in Siedlce," I say to Itke. "I will not bury my best years here. I must go to the big wide world where I can learn and experience life. Is it too much for me to dream that some day I might even be of use to humanity? Why not? Energy and courage can accomplish wonders. Right now I ask myself over and over again: Do you possess enough energy and courage to fight your way through life? Are you not too soft? Will you not fall in the struggle? And I answer myself: no matter what, I still have to try."

As I talk, I become inflamed with hope. My mind is racing. I see myself in the United States, dressed neatly, walking to school with books in my hands. It's beautiful all around—many trees and flowers. I'm going to high school, maybe to the University. Many boys and girls are strolling alongside of me. They smile at me, they love me. We exchange greetings and I hear them say: "This girl is the best student in class. Mind you, she is not long in this country . . ."

I go on dreaming like this for a while, but then the sense of reality returns. Serke says there is bad news from the front. She tells me to deliver an order.

A freezing rain is falling. I have to struggle not to slip on the ice. I say to myself: "Away you thoughts! Stop fooling me! Stop your dreaming! We are not masters of our fate! Who knows what will happen tomorrow? The Germans may overtake us, for all I know!"

Tuesday, February 9, 1915

It is dreadfully cold in the store today. The most beautiful crystal trees are drawn on the window panes. It is four days now since the place had been heated.

We talk over the situation and decide that we cannot go on working with frozen fingers. We have to hire a man to bring down a load of wood from the Eisenbergs. If they refuse to pay the man, we'll all chip in and pay him.

Estusha finds a man who asks 30 kopecks for the job. We send her next door to tell Mrs. Eisenberg about it. But Mrs. Eisenberg says not to get the man because the frosts won't last much longer. This gets me really angry. "*Nu, nu!* We have to freeze and pray to God to stop the frosts! Do you think, we can depend on that?"

"Hire the man," Itke says to Estusha. "He'll probably take 25 kopecks. We'll pay him ourselves."

It only takes about ten minutes for the man to bring down a big load of wood from the Eisenbergs. Mindl went up with him and the maid let him take it. As the man is untying the rope with which he has strapped the wood to his back, Beyle walks in. She takes one glance at the scene, and dashes out to the other store.

"We've certainly progressed," I say, "to go against the wishes of our employer."

Itke gets busy with a customer, as Mrs. Eisenberg rushes in. "Who had the nerve to give orders about my property?" she shouts at me.

"We are cold," I say quietly, "we cannot sew with frozen fingers. If it's the few kopecks you mind, you needn't pay them. We've paid the man ourselves."

"I could have sent down Rokhl with a few logs," she says angrily, "don't worry, I wouldn't have sent *You!*"

Meanwhile, Itke takes an order for a hat and muff. This softens the old lady. "How much did you pay him?" she asks Itke. "What's the difference?" Itke shrugs. "We all chipped in and paid it."

"Here are 20 kopecks." She throws a coin on the table and

walks out, muttering that 5 kopecks would have been enough.

"Let's not touch the money, let's leave it on the table as a reminder of human pettiness," I say.

We certainly accomplished something. Mindl has put some logs in the stove and now a bright fire is crackling. We sit around the fire with a feeling of triumph. Mindl leaps and dances. What a gay creature she is!

In the evening Itke and I step into the adjoining store where I pick out a nice blue knitted jacket. They do me a favor and charge me 5.75 for it. Nearly a month and a half of my salary!

Mameshe likes the jacket. I hear that Mendzyrzewsky has been exempted from service and Rosenbaum sent away. My cousin Yankl's wife Freyde gave birth to a boy. *Mazl tov!*

Wednesday, February 10, 1915

I read in the newspaper about new refugees pouring in to Warsaw. What destitution! The cold, frosty weather is the worst part of it.

We've received a letter from my uncle Yidl in New York. What joy! We haven't heard from him since the outbreak of war. They're concerned about us. Thank God, they're all well, but there is great unemployment. Both my uncles are out of jobs.

In the evening I write a reply to my uncle. Mameshe tells me what to write. I hope the letter gets there.

My cousin Hershl tells me that in May they will be drafting the 19 year-olds. That means him. The new recruits, those that have passed the physical examination yesterday, have been sent away already.

Saturday, February 13, 1915

Shaye and Morris call in the evening. Shaye draws me into a discussion about religion. He says that religions cause division, bigotry, hatred; the freethinker is a finer, more honest and decent person than the religious man. I, on the contrary, point out that every religion contains moral laws for men to follow; without religion the ignorant man would be a beast.

"They are hypocrites," says Shaye. "There is no crook like a pious crook."

"Certainly there are some hypocrites," I say, "about scoundrels like these, there is nothing to argue. They would have been just as depraved without religion. But isn't it true that many of the so-called freethinkers when threatened by danger or death call to God for help? Doesn't that prove that religion is something basic in the human heart? At least, it gives hope and consolation. To be a free-thinker one must be a person with a higher intellect and education. He must come to his convictions by deep and independent thinking, only then, can he stick to his ideas."

Shaye says that religion dupes people, divides them, makes them hate each other. There were plenty of times in Jewish history when mobs had been incited to violence against us in the name of God. "In the name of Jesus Christ who was supposed to have died for love of man, they've been killing and killing. But I'm not talking just about Christianity. To me all religions are a fake."

I have too much of a headache to keep arguing. I'm glad when they leave and I can go to bed.

Sunday, February 21, 1915

Serke returned from Warsaw late this afternoon. She brought many sample hats for us to copy. Some of them are very pretty, others look crazy, but I like them because they are original.

It's rainy and windy when I go home at night. Shaye appears from nowhere with a big umbrella. He tells me he is lonely, he is like a stranger in his family. "They are all so full of superstitions. They persecute me for my ideas. I regret coming back from London. I wanted to save my father the 300 rubles fine. In London I worked in my uncle's store, here I can't find anything to do. The idleness kills me. If not for the war, I'd leave immediately."

I feel sorry for him, but I think he exaggerates his troubles. "At least, you are not at the front," I say, "what are you complaining about?"

"You don't understand," he says. "You are lucky. In your home people are always welcome. They come and go. They can say anything they please, they can argue and discuss. But not in my home."

Monday, February 22, 1915

Serke comes down early in the morning and starts unpacking the merchandise she has brought from Warsaw.

"This is for you!" She throws two small packages to Itke and me. We unwrap them—two penknives.

"A gift for ten kopecks," I whisper to Itke.

It's really funny. But Serke feels magnanimous. She keeps showing off her knowledge and her good taste, expecting us to praise everything she bought. Then she begins instructing us how to make the new frames as though we wouldn't know it ourselves, without her advice. Her voice becomes hard, she orders everyone around—the big boss!

"You did very little work today," she says when we're about to leave at night.

It makes me furious. Itke and I are eager to exchange our impressions of the day. She feels exactly the same as I do. That Serke putting on airs, lording over us, making our lives miserable!

The night is lovely. We haven't had such good weather for a long time. Pinkhes Galantz joins us and both he and Itke take me home. We stop for a few minutes on the little square near our house, in front of the water pump. It's a dead pump, for the well underneath has dried up years ago. Yet the pump is a landmark in this neighborhood. Children love to play games, running around it. Right now there is an enormous moon on this little square and millions of stars in the sky. I think you cannot see anywhere in Siedlce a moon like this!

Pinkhes tells us he used to attend heder in this neighborhood. Whenever he had a kopeck, he used to buy hot *bobelekh* ('beans') from an old woman across the street. This is his best memory from that heder.

Itke tells me to calm down about Serke. "Don't worry," I say, "this is not the first time I feel so indignant. I'm already used to the days when I feel like tearing everything to pieces. Eventually, I get over it."

Tuesday, February, 23, 1915

I must have caught a cold in my legs. They hurt me badly, when I take a walk at night. I meet Brokhe, Tovye, Morris and Shaye. We all go to our house.

Morris tells me of a man whose face was shot away. Oy, how horrible! Yes, the twentieth century has invented new, scientific methods to kill and cripple people.

Wednesday, February 24, 1915

"This is no way of acting," Serke confronts me as soon as I cross the threshold of the store. "When there is no work, you girls come in at 9:30, sometimes, even after 10 o'clock, and I don't say anything; but when there is work, you should come in earlier."

"When did I ever come in after ten?" I ask.

"Itke came in many times after ten. If you want to know, you are supposed to work here from nine to nine."

"What about the times we work till ten?"

She has no answer for this. When Itke comes, she gives her an angry glance, but does not repeat the argument. She talks against Itke behind her back and pretends to be chummy, because she saw Itke's cousin in Warsaw, went out with him and brought back regards.

Whenever a customer comes in, Serke shows her the new hats which we copied from the samples. "I made this one, myself," she points to a hat which I just finished.

Saturday, February 27, 1915

Esther comes over after dinner and we both go to Itke's house. We sit there a while reading Eisenman's works, then we all go to Dina's where we find two more girls. It's too nice to stay indoors, so we all go to the park. We walk in pairs. I walk with Itke. We have a most interesting conversation.

She is reading now *The Kreutzer Sonata* by Tolstoy—I have read it some time ago. I remark that judging from the way Tolstoy brings out the relationship between man and woman, one could never believe a man's word. He professes love, but it's only passion.

Itke says that I'm still a child, I don't know a thing about sex.

"You're wrong," I say. "I've read Dr. Farrel's book. It was shocking."

"You read everything in books. In life it's different."

"What do you mean?"

"A woman has just as much desire as a man. Of course, we are still young. We need awakening. That's what Yulek told me."

I think of her unattractive cousin and say somewhat in jest: "I'm sure he tried his best to awaken you. Did you like it?"

But Itke is serious. "He put his arms around me and kissed me many times. I thought I was in love with him."

"Don't you think so now?"

"I don't know, I'm not sure. There was another boy, Yulek's friend whom I liked very much, but after Yulek kissed me, I thought I was in love with him."

"Now you're not sure. That means you loved his kisses, not him."

"You talk as if you can separate one from the other."

It is all so confusing. I suppose Itke is right—I am still a child. Serke said so, too. I've had no experience, I know things only from reading. Perhaps I am a little harsh in my judgment about bodily cravings; perhaps I dwell too much on the spiritual side of life. Will I change as I grow older?

Itke thinks I will. "You'll have desires and feelings you never dreamed of. One cannot separate body from soul."

I think she is repeating her cousin's words. "One doesn't have to become an animal," I say.

Zuckerman passes by, greeting us with a deep bow and tipping his hat.

"There is an example of the types Tolstoy depicts," says Itke.

According to her, he is a flirt and very passionate. Whenever he is near her, he tries to touch her with his hands. I hate these characters.

The stores are being opened by now. How quick the Sabbath passes! I suggest to Itke we turn off Warsaw street as one of the Eisenbergs might see us and call us into the store.

Meanwhile, Zuckerman comes over. I stroll along silently as he talks to Itke. He's surprised that we are working tomorrow. "Whoever is working on Purim?" he says. "If I see Mr. Eisenberg, I'll tell him something."

Then he starts telling Itke how beautiful she is. "Why do you have curtains over the store windows? I'd like to see what's doing inside. Every time I pass, I'd see you, lovely girls."

I hate this stupid talk. When I see Brokhe walking with Morris and Shaye, I have a good excuse to say goodby.

At home a neighbor asks me to write a letter to her husband in America. Her circumstances are sad. She hasn't received any money from him since the outbreak of war. She and her seven children are starving. I write the letter and she leaves, blessing me over and over again.

"You'll have a holiday tomorrow," says Shaye.

"No holiday for me. We work on Purim."

"That's an outrage! Why are you such slaves? Why don't you strike?"

"Who shall I strike with? There are only the two of us—Itke and I. Estusha doesn't care one way or another, and Mindl is only a learner. Anyway, I feel that I'm here only temporarily. One day I'll get away from the Eisenberg store."

"You stopped working on Saturday nights and they can't do anything about it. The same would happen, if you'd stay home tomorrow."

That's Shaye, never giving up an argument.

Sunday, February 28, 1915

My mother puts a white cloth on the table and the apartment takes on a festive look. Purim! A gay holiday. But I must run to work.

Serke treats us with *homentashn* and we cannot refuse.

"How early do we leave?" I ask Itke.

"Let's leave around five."

But it doesn't work out that way. Serke finds all kinds of work to keep us in longer. Around seven our patience is at an end. We seize our hats and coats and walk out defiantly.

A festive crowd, dressed in their best, is strolling on Warsaw Street. It seems to me that we look drab and grey among these people.

"You know," I say to Itke, "It seems to me that we are like poor relatives coming late to a wedding. Everyone looks at them crossly, wondering why they dropped in so late. They, in their turn, still catch a dance, like us, promenading now."

We part, wishing each other happier holidays.

In our apartment all the lights are burning. My father is sitting in his place at the head of the table, Brokhe on his right, I take my place on his left. Aaron sits next to me and Khayim Leyb next to Brokhe.

Our conversation at the table is not at all *purimdik.* Things are going from bad to worse. No *purim-shpilers* ('Purim players') coming tonight.

A man and woman come in to collect for the refugees. Then a man comes from the *Biker khoylim* ('clinic for the poor'). My father keeps coins stacked up on the table ready for these charities. But there are not many committees collecting tonight.

Shaye and Morris come in while we're still at the table. We invite them to join us for tea and cake.

After supper we go for a walk. The crowds are gone, the streets are empty and windy. Shaye tells me that his father addressed him this morning in a friendly manner and that made him very happy. "I don't want much, all I ask for is a friendly word."

We walk much faster than Brokhe and Morris. Shaye talks and I listen. Now he is feeling sorry for his father. "So young and turning grey. It's all my stepmother's fault."

Monday, March 1, 1915

It's one of those days when you feel like crying and cannot cry. It started with Esther's coming to the store. Esther had worked here two years for nothing and when the war broke out, they told her nicely to stay home. I'm sure, she'd have been glad to continue working for a very small salary.

The thing would not have been as terrible, had not the Eisenbergs known Esther's circumstances, the poverty in her home. Serke knew very well how anxiously this girl was waiting for the two years to be up, for the day when she'd start earning something, not for luxury, but for the most elemental needs. Mindl, who is now taking lessons in Polish from her, tells me that Esther is walking around

in torn shoes. She is waiting for Mindl's payment to have her shoes fixed.

Oh, God! Why is the world so cruel? Why has one person got everything, the other nothing?

Today it seems to me that I'll forever sit on the same stool, in the same place, look at the same people, and never, never will I find contentment. I'll keep searching for something higher, better, but I won't find it. In the end—no striving, no hope, no youth.

I say to myself: either you have to fight for improvement, or be satisfied with whatever life throws you from time to time. But I cannot be satisfied with a bone like a dog! That means struggle. Am I strong enough to fight a world in which falseness, pettiness and selfishness prevail?

Sunday, March 21, 1915

I haven't written for nearly three weeks. It's before the holidays, I have to work late in the store and at home I also have work to do. I have to make new spring hats for all of us. I come home after ten o'clock and am very tired.

Itke's mother came last night to ask Mrs. Eisenberg to give Itke a raise for the new season.

"I may quit working," Itke said to me. But I knew that they'd come to some kind of an agreement. It's too busy now for them to let her go.

I waited with Itke outside, till her mother came out of the big store. Itke will be getting a raise of 4 rubles, all together 12 rubles a month, which is not bad. "And I told them about the wood, the freezing in winter and many other things," Itke's mother said.

Coming home tonight, I find two soldiers sitting in our dining room, one of whom I recognize as my cousin Avrum Iser from Warsaw. They are on leave. My cousin's friend limps as a result of a leg injury. He has volunteered for service and is a real hero. He's been decorated with three St. George medals.

Saturday, April 10, 1915

I haven't written for nearly three weeks. Last time I fell asleep in the middle of a sentence. I was that tired.

I don't think it's necessary for me to go over everything that occurred during those three weeks. Most of the time life is monotonous and repetitious. Still, some changes did take place. The Russians captured Przemyśl and there was great joy and noisy demonstrations. This week a decree was signed whereby Poland will perform her own self-administration, beginning with New Year, 1916.

It is now after Passover, the holiday we always look forward to with much eagerness. This year it was not a gay holiday and it ended with sad news: the great Yiddish writer, I. L. Peretz, died. It just broke me up.

I worked hard before the holiday. I asked for and received a raise of 4 rubles a month. I now get 8 rubles a month, which isn't much, considering the high prices. Yet it was progress, for never before have the Eisenbergs doubled anyone's salary.

Thursday, April 15, 1915

I don't feel well today, I'm depressed. I'm in one of those moods, when I'd like to get away from everything. There is no special reason for it. I suppose, it's the strain. I lose my patience. After days of trying to be jolly, to forget things, comes the rude awakening.

I sit sewing, and Serke's voice, overflowing with enthusiasm over the wonderful time she had in Warsaw, irritates me. Oh, what flowers she had received! And she begins describing each flower separately. I do love flowers, but today I see everything in dark colors. It's strange. I do want to live. I haven't used any of my *Lebenslust* as yet. I understand her elation about the way her friends had seen her off with flowers and candy. I would probably be just as happy. Yet, it's so banal. Is this living it up? Is that how one finds happiness and contentment? To create an effect, to show off? But inside of you? Is there anything inside of you?

For heaven's sake, what is it that I desire? I can't go on living the way I do now, but to live by today's standards of excitement and tumult wouldn't please me either. Then, what is it?

I have no answer. All I can say, is: something bigger, higher, deeper—the soul as well as the body should receive nourishment.

I'm afraid I'll always be dissatisfied. Today, everything I see

hurts me. I walk on the street and see a suffering face. I'd like so much to read this face. If I could only alleviate its pain! So many faces are now filled with sorrow. Fear overwhelms me. What if I am one of the weak ones that cannot help anyone, not even themselves? All these people had been young once, full of ambitions and strivings, yet life had broken them, given them nothing.

I cannot understand how one can be an optimist after seeing so much poverty and injustice. Yet many of these people have preserved hope. They keep deceiving themselves: tomorrow, tomorrow things will be better.

My father is a religious man. He is so sure that God will help. I am not so sure now.

Take Shaye, for instance. He is only 22, but he is so broken up, so pessimistic. He feels isolated in his home. Loneliness must be an awful thing. Not to feel that someone thinks of you, cares for you; always alone with your thoughts—that must really be terrible. I feel a great compassion for him, but I cannot help him. It hurts me to see him so bitter, but the minute I smile at him, he thinks I'm in love with him. I don't want to arouse false hopes.

At our home things are not going well, either. Business is bad. My parents are worried. My aunt Leyele and her little girl are living now with us in our crowded apartment. Her husband has been thrown into jail on a trumped-up charge and poor Leyele is running around to see lawyers, but they all want money and she has used up her last kopeck. Leyele was such a beautiful woman. These last two months she has changed beyond recognition. All we can do for her is to let her stay with us. It's hard on her and it's hard on us. And there is nothing, nothing I can do to help.

My heart is breaking in me today—there is just too much suffering around me. When will mankind be redeemed?

I feel so weary tonight, exhausted physically and mentally. No one knows about it. Tomorrow I'll probably put on an act, laugh and sing. There will be moments when I'll even feel like laughing. Youth! Youth! You demand yours!

Saturday, April 17, 1915

I made up to meet Itke in the park this morning. We find a bench under a tree that is covered with new bright green leaves,

where we sit and read some pages from *Niebezpieczny wiek* ('The Dangerous Age'). Then Itke reads me a letter from her cousin about the beauty of spring.

"I fear the coming of spring," Itke says, "it makes me sentimental and romantic. There are so many dangers for a young girl at this time of the year. I fear it."

We talk for a while about nature, love, life. "I love spring," I say. "The new green foliage, the flower-buds, the birds—it gives me a feeling of such sweet longing. I could embrace the whole world. Everything is so beautiful, even your fear. There is expectation in the air. I can sense it, smell it. Something is being born. Aren't you glad you are young? When you're old, you won't be afraid of spring."

Itke gives me one of her books to take home. I'm now reading three books in three different languages: Yiddish, Russian, Polish. The language doesn't make any difference to me as long as the book is good. I read them all. Some books you forget the next day, others leave a deep impression.

In the afternoon I go again to the park with Esther. Esther is reading now *Nokh alemen* ('When All Is Said and Done') by Bergelson.* We talk about the characters in the book, all such sad creatures. Bergelson is a master at depicting these forlorn types, but mainly he brings out the decay, the hopelessness of small town life.

Suddenly, it starts raining. What a scene! From all directions people are running for shelter under the roof of the summer theater. The rain is increasing, the tree branches are bending and swaying under the attack. It suddenly turns pitch dark. All is dismal and deserted except for this veranda full of laughing, shouting people. It seems to me that we are afloat on a ship in the middle of a dark ocean.

Gradually the rain and wind diminish. Someone puts out a hand like Noah with the dove. It gets lighter. The bold ones leave, others wait for the rain to cease entirely.

By the time Esther and I leave the park, the stores are opened. I have to go in to work. Another week ahead!

I get home from work about 10 o'clock. Mameshe asks me to write two cards to America. Tateshe says that many new soldiers

*Dovid Bergelson (1884–1952), Russian-Yiddish novelist.

arrived in Siedlce. Meat is very high and hard to get, but the military come into a store, take all of it and pay half of what it costs. If you hide the meat, or refuse to sell it, they take it without pay and put you in prison, too. New trouble!

Wednesday, April 21, 1915

I got up this morning with a stiff neck and it got worse in the afternoon. I could hardly wait for the night to go home and to bed. Brokhe applied some camphor oil on my neck.

Thursday, April 22, 1915

I'm still full of pain and Mameshe wouldn't let me go to work this morning. I lie in bed and read *War and Peace* by Tolstoy. I've read it once before, but I enjoy reading it again. A book like this you can read many times and always find something new. It is especially interesting now because of the war.

My father brings a newspaper with a big headline: GERMAN PLANES DROP A HUNDRED BOMBS ON BIAŁYSTOK. MANY KILLED AND WOUNDED.

The war! The war! So many lives lost! So many innocent victims! The scientist that dedicated his life to conquer the air, never knew what man's lofty desire to fly like a bird would be used for. The more technology is developed, the more it serves to kill people and destroy everything that was created with so much time and labor.

Wednesday, April 28, 1915

How exhausted, how weary I am! For the last four days I had no chance to write and now it's midnight. I've suffered so much this week, mainly because Itke is ill. Monday night she had an attack right in the store and Serke had to take her home in a *droshke*. I went to see her last night, but couldn't stay long, for by the time I got there, it was 11 o'clock. She was very nervous, weeping all the time I was there. The *feldsher* ('old-time barber surgeon') said she was suffering from gallstones. I tried to cheer her up, telling her that the pain would pass and she'd be feeling better soon, but she kept saying she was going to die and she wanted so much to live.

half of the day and I—the second. The first half is really harder because you have to make the beds, serve breakfast, straighten the house, get the dinner ready and set the table. But I agreed, because I wanted to go to Itke in the afternoon. And so Brokhe went to the park early in the morning and I remained home.

Mameshe is very weak and pretty capricious, like most sick people. She keeps me running back and forth to the bedroom. By the time I've straightened out the house and put the dinner on the *mashinke,* I'm all out of breath and have no desire for food.

I've dropped a heavy pot on my toe, but that won't stop me from going to Itke. I find Dina there. She's brought a book of Polish poems which we read. One, called "Revolt," is very good, it's about the English suffragettes. After Dina leaves, Itke's mother insists I have a bite with them. She serves cold *shtshav* ('sorrel soup') with pumpernickel and butter. It's delicious. She is a very hospitable woman. I feel good in Itke's home.

Later we go to the park where we meet Shaye, all excited. He tried to break up a gang of hoodlums attacking an old Jew and a *sheygets* ('gentile boy') hit him on the head with a rock. Then they fled. Nothing new in this story. Shaye was lucky. He only received a bump on his head.

Itke is leaving this Tuesday for Drazhneve. She has trouble getting a pass as her passport has been issued at her birthplace, Morde, and was not registered in Siedlce. Now one must have a pass, traveling even a short distance.

Shaye promises to find out from his uncle who, is a *dozor* ('elder') in the *gmine* ('Jewish community'), what can be done about it.

Itke must go to work now. I have this one free evening. Tomorrow I start working again.

I ought to enjoy this evening, but my toe hurts and I'm concerned about Mameshe. I go home and find her in pain again.

Sunday, June 13, 1915

I rose early, prepared breakfast for everyone and went to work. Passing Długa Street I saw a crowd of people waiting in front of the bureau where they issue passes. Many people are leaving Siedlce now. Most of them were ordered to leave, for they came here temporarily and have no occupation. Others are leaving for fear of the war.

"Business will suffer," says Leytshe. "Many people made a living from these newcomers."

She only thinks of business. What about the tragedy of these people who are driven from one place to another?

Estusha heard that a curfew will soon be imposed on us. I can imagine the gloom with no one out on the street after sundown!

Beyle reads in the *Russkoje Slovo* that riots broke out in Moscow. The Gradonačalnik ('Mayor') appealed for calm and order as the enemy takes pleasure when there is unrest in the country.

I feel both fear and exhilaration upon hearing this report. What are we to expect in the near future? An uprising? A revolution?

It rained today and suddenly turned cold. I was chilled as I ran home at night. Shaye and Greenbaum intercepted me. Shaye found out that Itke could travel on her father's passport. I'll tell her about it in the morning.

Monday, June 14, 1915

After all this trouble about a pass, Itke was told she can take a train to Drazhneve without a pass. We say goodby to each other at night out on the street. A whole crowd is here to wish her farewell.

Tenenbaum came at 11 tonight to change the dressing for Mameshe. Thank God, it's healing nicely.

Tuesday, June 15, 1915

A cloudy, chilly day. Not much work, the way it is after the season. Sheyntshe talks. She's forever talking. Where does she get the strength to talk so much?

I miss Itke. I'm sad and bored. I go home by myself, feeling an emptiness inside of me. Shaye is there talking to my father about his parents. I hear my father saying: "Your mother was right. You shouldn't be cross with her." But Shaye says, "No, she is a selfish woman."

I don't like to talk about anyone's private affairs. I never ask questions and even when they themselves volunteer information, I

don't pursue it. I feel sort of embarrassed now and am glad when Shaye leaves.

Tateshe is depressed—we have no *parnose* at all. He's given up the store and now we're eating ready money. It came about this way: after dissolving the partnership, our former partner, Yosl, opened a butcher store right across the street from our shop. He took in cheap, uninspected meat and sold it at low prices. He took chances because he knew my father was not the man to inform on him. We not only paid more for the meat in our store, we also paid a high tax on it, which he did not. Our store was empty and his was full of customers. My father kept losing money until he decided to close the store for good.

Mameshe says that no matter how bad business was, it's worse now. "How long will our capital last? In a few months we'll be through. I'm sick with worry. I got this infection because my blood is poisoned with anxiety."

It's true. Her sickness drags on because of her anxiety. Tateshe looks bad, too. But our competitor, our enemy, is doing fine. Nothing wrong with him. The more he swindles, the more he hurts us, the stronger and richer he gets. Where is justice? Where is God?

Thursday, June 17, 1915

A minor triumph for me at work today. Sheyntshe does not know how to make a wire frame. I have to make all the frames for her and even show her how to cover them. After I make the frame and she sews on the braid, she takes the credit for making the hat. I wouldn't mind that at all. But she is a person who does not deserve kindness. She's forever finding fault with the girls, and trying to ingratiate herself by a show of loyalty and devotion to the business.

Today I had my little victory. She made a hat—a straw crown with a silk brim for which I had made the frame. It was done so badly that Leytshe told her to rip it and give it to me to do over. For one full minute her mouth shut. It was a pleasure.

Friday, June 18, 1915

Late in the afternoon I got a rush job. Estusha did not come in today as she had to go to the bureau for a permit to remain in

Siedlce. They're very strict about it now. People who were not born here must leave town. Since Estusha has a job, she may be permitted to remain here.

Saturday, June 19, 1915

Brokhe went to the park and left all the work to me. In the afternoon I meet Reyzl, her uncle and Shaye. I can hardly recognize Podolsky [who returned from Warsaw] so thin and pale. He says one gets used to everything, even to suffering. He is full of praise for the nurses who sometimes work for eighteen hours at a stretch. There are so many patients to attend! They are self-sacrificing souls. He is amazed at the way they assist at the most serious operations. They certainly must be hardened to do that.

He saw many wounded and crippled soldiers in that hospital. The victims of poison gas are all black and cannot breathe. Every few minutes air is pumped into their lungs.

We meet some more friends in the park and I walk off with Reyzl. This is the first time we talk so intimately. She is concerned about her uncle's growing affection for her. He is no longer an uncle. He is a man in love.

"What's wrong with that?" I ask. "He's a fine young man and not much older than you."

But Reyzl says she cannot accept him as a suitor. She is very much disturbed.

Sunday, June 20, 1915

Mameshe is in pain again. The bandage loosened and rubs against the wound. Tenenbaum changes it daily, last night he did a bad job.

At night, after work, we go to the park. It's a lovely night. Strains of music and singing from the summer theater fill the air. There is life and joy all around me, but I am so sad.

I rush home and there is no joy in my house. The *feldsher* hasn't come and Mameshe is irritable. Tateshe has an infected finger. Brokhe and the children are asleep in their clothes. I undress the children and put them to bed. Then I wake Brokhe.

I cannot fall asleep. My father isn't doing anything and the fear

and anxiety grow. How long will it keep up? What's in store for us?

I cannot fool myself with silly hopes. Things look pretty dark to me.

Monday, June 21, 1915

Great excitement was created by the sudden decree of a curfew. No one is permitted to be outside after 10 o'clock at night.

We leave the store at nine, go to the park for a half hour and then—home. What a weird picture! The stores are closed, lights are out and the streets are empty.

Tuesday, June 22, 1915

Again work became unbearable. We are rushed like in season. I have an especially difficult day. Leytshe takes an order for a hat which I am to copy, making it a size larger. I copy it perfectly and have it ready before I go for lunch. When I come back, I'm called into the next store and given an argument. The customer refused to take the hat, claiming it was not the model she has ordered. "How do you come to make the wrong hat?" Leytshe storms at me.

"I made the hat you told me to make," I reply.

But this is no excuse. I ought to be a mind reader, I suppose. Anyway, she now shows me the model the woman really ordered and I go back to our shop to make it.

I work in silence while the girls are cleaning the place. Mindl is pretty sturdy, but our new apprentice, Sortshe, is small and thin. I feel so sorry for her. I can see she's falling off her feet.

It is now 1 o'clock. I wonder what Itke is doing. Most likely she's fast asleep. I miss her so much. Our conversations partly gratified my restless soul. Now there is nothing. Since my mother is ill, I have no time even to read. I must help Brokhe with the housework in my spare time. Mameshe is still mostly in bed, which gives her enough time to worry and fret. We're all sick with worry about *parnose.*

Wednesday, June 23, 1915

After today's rush, I was too tired to go for a stroll with Estusha. I'm glad I can walk home alone, without anyone disturbing my thoughts. Will they always be gloomy? Is there no joy for me?

I'm pleasantly surprised to find Mameshe sitting outside on the stoop. This will do her a great deal of good. I sit down beside her, telling her about the gas masks we are now making for the Red Cross. The civilians ought to make these masks for themselves, too.

Mameshe tells me that my father submitted a bid for the *podryad* ('contract for delivery of meat or other products') in the Army that he had held last year. I hope he gets it. He gave a very low price, but one can never tell.

Saturday, June 26, 1915

I have a bad cold and headache. Brokhe went to the park just the same and left me all the work.

I lie down in the afternoon, but I can't sleep. I read two little books published by the "House-Library" on the subject of self-education. I'm pleased with the contents of these little books. They teach you how to strengthen your character by improving your good qualities and uprooting the bad. Work is the most important thing in life. Not only does it provide you with a livelihood and give expression to your creativity and ability, but it is also the best means of fighting despondency. The author calls for optimism, energy, strong will-power. If you don't possess these qualities, you can develop them by long and patient self-education. He teaches you how to read: you must analyze the work, find out what the writer intended to express, whether he succeeded—all this develops one's mental capacity. But reading life is more important than reading books. One must learn to observe and evaluate life.

I am fascinated by these thoughts. My reading is interrupted by Morris. We haven't seen him for a long time. He's been staying with his mother and younger brothers in a village, operating a dairy farm. Like a real farmer, he speaks of the heat and lack of rain. My own experience of the country is limited to one summer, about five years ago, when we had rented an orchard near Miłosna, in partnership with my uncle Mendl. My mother recalls now that summer's drought, causing a great loss of fruit. But for me it was a wonderful experience, living in a shack right in the midst of scented fruit trees, picking cool, dew-covered mushrooms in the woods at dawn, and red, juicy berries at our orchard in the hot afternoons.

The subject of drought reminds Morris of the year he had spent in Palestine, prior to his visit in America. He had tried to get used

to the climate, but was forced to leave after an attack of malaria. In Palestine, he tells us, it rains only in the spring and fall. They dig ditches around every tree and pour water into them. Water is very scarce. They keep digging the ground in search for wells. Fruits grow big and sweet in Palestine, but life is hard.

"What about the Arabs?" I ask. "What sort of people are they?"

He has a low opinion of them. "They work one day and go idle several weeks. When their money is gone, they hire themselves out for another day's work. Those who save some money, buy themselves a wife. The richer the man, the more wives he buys."

It sounds bad. I can't believe that all Arabs live that way. Perhaps just the ones that Morris met. On the other hand, living close to nature, without education, or modern tools . . .

"Do you think that our life is better than theirs?" I ask. "Here we kill ourselves working. We make wars on each other, killing people. Is this civilization?"

We come back to our own situation. The Russian Army keeps retreating, the Germans—advancing. The Governor of Lublin issued a decree that the Army take along the male population as it retreats. What about the women and children? There is great consternation about this. No, the women will not stay behind, they'll flee with their men!

Morris leaves. I keep sneezing and my head is splitting. When Shaye comes over, he insists I go with him to the park. The fresh air might do me good.

We meet Reyzl with her uncle and Esrog. Podolsky looks even thinner and paler than when he came back from Warsaw. Tomorrow he has to appear before the draft board. I don't think they'll take him.

We separate, Podolsky strolling with me. He tells me that the Lublin Governor's decree has been revoked and the Governor has resigned. There is great anxiety; no one knows what's coming next. "How are things with you?" he asks.

"Nothing new," I shrug. "Conditions at work are pretty bad, but mostly, I miss Itke. She hasn't even written to me."

He tells me a long story about a childhood friend who left for America, wrote one letter and then no more. "This is how they are," he concludes. "When they need you, they're friendly. As soon as their need is over, they forget you."

"Not Itke," I say. "Besides, she is not in America. She'll be coming back soon."

I ask him how he felt before and right after the operation. "One has such a desire to live," he replies. "You long for simple everyday life, for a loved one beside you. You first appreciate living."

He was in a room across a ward with wounded soldiers. Those that could walk, would come to sit on his bed and talk. They liked him. They liked talking to him. They were of many nationalities and there was no distinction made between Jew and non-Jew. But one single Pole in that ward kept yelling: "Jew! Jew!" He was just sick with hatred.

Podolsky is full of admiration for the nurses. They're true angels of mercy. Without them, the patients would never recover.

Sunday, June 27, 1915

All day long I've been thinking about America. That's where I'll be able to study. It seems to me I could endure most anything as long as I'd have an opportunity to study. If the war would only end! It drags and drags and the bitterness and anxiety are unbearable.

My fantasy paints such beautiful pictures for me in America. I really don't believe they could come true, but I recall what I read about optimism and I go on dreaming.

At night, I hear a muffled weeping from the hall of our house. It's my cousin, Nekhe. Brokhe and I take her into our apartment, trying to calm her down. But this is not a case of nerves. It's a *tsore* that we can't do much about. Her oldest sister, Esther Malke, has tuberculosis, is running a temperature. It may be typhus. Esther Malke's husband is in America and she has four children, two of them are crippled by polio. The husband sends a few dollars once in a while, but how could she feed and clothe her children on so little? No wonder she got ill. Nekhe is frightened because Esther Malke is talking crazily now. She must be out of her mind.

"It's the fever," I say to her. "As soon as the fever goes down, she'll be perfectly normal."

But Nekhe is inconsolable. "I have no strength left," she says between sobs. "Taking care of these children will kill me, too."

Nekhe is about sixteen. She can hardly read or write, but she has a big heart. She does most of the housework because her mother

and her older sisters work in that shack of a store in our back yard, selling entrails of cows to peasant-women. I hate to pass my aunt's place because of the stench and the disgusting fat blue flies that swarm over the "merchandise." Whenever I meet my aunt, I shrink from her touch because of the stinking odor that permeates her clothing, her very skin. She really is a good soul and very affectionate. Whenever she runs into me, she hugs and kisses me. But I dread it. I try to avoid her as much as possible. I feel sorry for Nekhe who is a plump, goodnatured girl, and who has to live with her mother, three brothers, three sisters and father in one room, full of beds, the parents' two beds seperated from the rest by a small partition. Their windows open into the yard right across the privy, but I suppose their sense of smell is not as keen as mine.

This aunt of mine is tall and thin, her face is wrinkled and weatherbeaten, yet, she could not be so old. Her youngest boy is thirteen. What surprises me is her boundless energy. Once in a while she steps into our house and standing in front of my mother, she pours out her troubles in a sing-song voice. It runs something like this: "My dear sister-in-law. Your face shines like the sun and your wisdom is known all over town. Whom shall I talk to, for whom shall I open my bitter heart? My *tsores* are bigger and deeper than the ocean, my grief has no end. I'm out in that stinking hole day and night, winter and summer, in heat and in cold, and no one helps me. No one takes pity on me. The girls will remain old maids because I have no dowry for them; the boys have no jobs. *Okh un vey* ('woe unto') to my life! Esther Malke is spitting blood. The two crippled children will drive me to my grave. I have to provide for all of them. My *shlimazl* ('good for nothing') of a husband abuses me. I cry out to God, but I'm only an ignorant woman. I have only you and my dear brother who should live and be well. My dear brother who is the crown of my head, the light of my eyes . . ."

She'd go on in that vein for a long time, Mameshe sitting quietly, nodding from time to time to indicate her sympathy, until a shrill cry: "Mame!" would be heard. Then she'd snap out of her tearful monologue, kiss my shrinking mother and depart.

The next minute I'd hear her yell and swear at her husband, or call vigorously to passing customers.

I am kind of ashamed of this aunt and don't like my friends to

run into her. At the same time, I can't help liking her. I'm fascinated by her colorful speech, by her vigor and courage.

She had a lot of trouble lately with the Sanitary Commission. They made her clean up the place, scrub it and spray it with carbolic acid. Now the odor of carbolic acid mingles with the foul odor, giving me even a bigger headache.

Almost daily, inspectors come around now to enforce the sanitary laws. Many people have been fined; but, at least, our street looks cleaner than before. However, I think that the order not to pour slops into the gutter during the day is no good. In this heat to keep them in a bucket in the house all day can really cause an epidemic. It's about time we had sewers like in Warsaw.

Meanwhile, there is a lot of excitement about this sanitation business. Wherever you go, tenants and landlords are quarreling.

Wednesday, June 30, 1915

Some things have happened during the three days that I haven't written. My father received notice that his was the lowest bid for the *podryad* and that he should start delivery of meat on the first of the month. We were overjoyed, but then the question of financing this enterprise arose. The Army pays at the end of the month, sometimes later than that. Meanwhile, you have to buy cattle with cash and pay your help. My father doesn't like to borrow money: There is no one to borrow from, anyway, except the usurers, who'd take more than our profit in interest. And so my father has no choice but again to take in Yosl as a partner. He's the only one willing and able to invest money in this enterprise. May it be with *mazl* this time!

My parents are plagued by the uncertainty of the war situation. One never knows what tomorrow may bring. Many people are leaving town, many are sending their daughters away, further east. Tateshe wants to send Brokhe and me to Brest Litovsk. I refuse to go without the rest of the family. "What good will it do me?" I say. "All I'll do over there is worry about you."

After work, tonight, I meet Shaye, Dina and Tovye out on the street. Shaye tells me that Podolsky has been exempted from service. I'm glad to hear that. Dina wonders why Itke hasn't written to her. I suppose she is too busy having a good time.

Tovye brought me *The Deluge* by Sienkiewicz.* I'm anxious to get home and start reading it.

Sunday, July 4, 1915

On my way home tonight, I saw many refugees from Radom Province. The alley leading to the synagogue is crowded with wagons on which I see women, children and old men. The *shul* inside is overflowing with people. There is a crowd around a man who is weeping. His wife died on the way, leaving him with nine children.

Already women are collecting tea and sugar. They'll need many more products to feed this crowd. From all sides people are hurrying toward the *shul.* On every face I see pity and fear. Only at a time of disaster one realizes how close these people are to you. A misfortune unites us all. Everyone thinks of the morrow that might come when he, too, might have to depend on human charity and compassion. What a dreadful thing to anticipate!

Tuesday, July 6, 1915

There are rumors that the enemy is near Lublin. At night I go with Mameshe to our partner's house on the Prospektova, where my father is waiting for us. Yosl and he have decided to send the families away as soon as possible. The men will follow later. The baggage would have to be sent separately with a wagon driver as the trains wouldn't take it.

Hinde, Yosl's wife, is afraid to go with her baby, without her husband. Mameshe is braver. Tomorrow we're going for passes.

On the way back we meet David Yablon who has just come from Biała. "The trains are impossible," he says. "It's so crowded, you cannot find standing room. Besides, they stop for hours between stations. You'd better hire a driver with a horse and wagon, if you want to get anywhere."

Tateshe tells me to stay home tomorrow as we have to go for passes and prepare for the trip.

*Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916), Polish novelist.

I cannot sleep from agitation. I am both glad and sad. It's not easy to leave everything behind. Yet, I feel we have to go. I'm sure my father will catch up with us quickly. I mustn't worry about that.

We don't even know how far we'd travel. Our first stop would be Zhabinke. What would be waiting for us there?

I must sleep. I must keep up my strength. I'll need it now.

Wednesday, July 7, 1915

We spent a half day in line at the magistrate's before we obtained our passes. The gloom in town has been lessened by rumors that the enemy had been repulsed at Lublin. Besides, people get used to trouble: they're not as shocked at the thought of fleeing as they were a day ago.

Meanwhile, we are getting ready: laundry to be washed, things to be packed. We haven't set a definite date. We'll leave when everyone else is ready to go.

Leytshe is going to Warsaw. Itke is back from Drazhneve and coming in to work tomorrow.

Thursday, July 8, 1915

Itke and I are so happy to see each other again. She's gained weight and looks very well. We have little chance to talk as the store is full of customers. Even at night, at the park, we're surrounded by friends and cannot talk intimately.

Shaye takes me home. We discuss the Warsaw Governor's call for men to dig trenches around the city. Shaye is depressed. I ask him since when has he begun to love life?

"You don't understand me," he says. "You're trying hard not to understand me."

Friday, July 9, 1915

Itke tells me about the wonderful time she had in Drazhneve. Her aunt and cousins catered to her as though she were a princess. They made excursions into nearby towns like Semyatitsh [Siemiatycze], Drohitshin [Drohiczyn]. She met many boys and girls. The

girls seemed jealous of her because the boys followed her around. In general, the girls there were not as modest as the girls in Siedlce, they were bold and aggressive.

The day before she left, a young man proposed to her. She liked him very much, but could not say yes or no. She is very confused and agitated now. The man is pressing for an answer. Her mother, too, is pressing for a decision. But she is still thinking of her cousin, Yulek. She hasn't heard from him for a long time now. "What am I to do?" she asks me excitedly.

I have a feeling that this trip to Drazhneve had been arranged by Itke's relatives for the specific purpose of her meeting this young man. I wonder whether Itke realizes that. To me the idea is repugnant. Of course, I don't mention it. I don't want to hurt Itke's feelings. She needs advice. But what advice can I give her?

"Don't let anyone rush you into making a decision," I say, "not even your mother. This is too serious. Besides, it's wartime. We don't know what the next day may bring. You have a good excuse. Just tell them you'll wait till things settle. This will give you time to search your heart."

Itke embraces and kisses me. "You have a way of putting me at ease. That's just what I'm going to tell them."

Saturday, July 10, 1915

It seems we are not leaving town after all. Things have eased somewhat at the front and we're certainly not eager to join the army of refugees.

I've enjoyed reading *The Deluge*. Just finished it. The story takes place during the war between Poland and Sweden. Sienkiewicz brings out a whole gallery of characters, people in high places who, because of their own selfish interests, betray their king and bring disaster upon the country. At first, the people succumb to Swedish rule, but when the enemy begins to encroach on their religion, the people arise and drive the Swedes out of the country.

Throughout the book I find the author underscoring the struggle between good and evil, virtue winning in the end. He shows, through his main character that it's never too late to mend one's ways. Noble actions redeem former sins.

Still under the impression of the book, I go to Itke's house.

Dina didn't come because there's some trouble at their inn. Her father had been called to the Chief of Police. We wonder what's wrong and hope for the best.

In the park we meet most of our friends. We discuss Polish-Jewish relations which are not good. Yet Poland had given refuge to Jews when they were expelled from other countries and Jews had been mighty patriots of Poland, defending her with their blood and possessions. Now things have changed. I don't know who started this bigotry and hatred among peoples, but the Poles certainly swallowed a big dose of it.

When I come home, I find Tovye whispering to Brokhe. After he leaves, she tells me that a Zionist group is being organized in our town. I think Zionism is a great ideal—Theodor Herzl's dream of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Now that life is insecure and Jewish youth is searching for an ideal, this idea may inspire them to action.

I think of the obstacles in the way of achieving the goal of a Jewish homeland. Of course, if there is enough dedication, one can overcome all obstacles. But how many would go on after the first setback? How many would, in spite of adversity, continue to sacrifice for the happiness of their people?

Sunday, July 11, 1915

At night Itke and I went over to see Dina. Their license had been revoked because of a scandal involving a drunken officer. Instead of blaming the drunk, they punished the innkeeper. The Friedmans are now trying to get back their license. It will take plenty of money and heartache.

Going back home, we meet Markusfeld and Greenbaum. We separate and I walk with Greenbaum. I'm surprised at the change in him. He is animated and gay, speaking enthusiastically about Zionism. When I express doubts, he replies heatedly, "We have to believe in our own strength. Once we do that, half of our task is accomplished."

"An idea must have a practical foundation," I retort.

"We're working on that," he replies.

Thursday, July 15, 1915

I haven't written for several days. I was simply too tired coming home late at night. I had no desire to read or write. I'll try to catch up on what has transpired. Not much, anyway.

At the beginning of the week a new spirit seemed to have arisen among our friends. Greenbaum, Markusfeld, Tovye and others were out on the street talking, arguing, agitating. Some people laughed at these enthusiasts who had become inflamed about Zionism without knowing much about it. They talked so much, repeating exaggerated, empty phrases that I became fed up. The fact is, I did thirst after a weighty word, a word that would lead to action, but it wasn't there. At least, *I* hadn't heard it.

I am still amazed at the change in Greenbaum. Not so long ago, he had tried to convince me that the Jewish people would either assimilate or perish. He saw no inner or outer forces that would rise to their defence. There is no sense in suffering meaninglessly, he said. The Jewish people ought to stop reproducing themselves.

Of course, I had protested against this pessimism. I told him our nation is alive and doesn't want to die. You give the people a ray of hope, give them an ideal worth fighting for and they'll accomplish wonders. At that time, Greenbaum laughed at my naive faith. And now? A different person! "Believe in your strength!" he keeps saying. Does he believe in it himself? Convictions that are changed overnight are not to be trusted. Yet, I see in this change the deep roots of life. Even those who claim to be hard and cynical, are looking for something to hold on to. This hope, this faith in the future is elemental. It's our mainstay; we could not live without it.

It seems to me that someone in leadership has told these boys to hush up, because they suddenly became subdued. Is it fear of the police? I don't know. You don't ask questions like that.

Tovye tells me that they won't seek to enroll women before they have more literature on the subject. He gives me the Ussishkin Program—that's the program they're following—to read, and also something on the Biluim.

Friday, July 16, 1915

I've been thinking the whole day about the contents of the two brochures that Tovye gave me to read. It seems to me that we have an opportunity to take part in shaping great historical events. All we need is patience, perseverance and labor to realize our great dream. Oh, not so fast! It'll take a long, long time. First of all we have to educate the people, awaken in them the desire to return to the land of their forefathers. Then comes the task of obtaining land, piece by piece, which is a hard, dangerous and costly affair. Then, work the land, truly "by the sweat of your brow," with innumerable hazards and hardships to endure and overcome through the force of spirit and dedication to an ideal. Unity! This is what we need most and this is what the Jewish people lack, alas!

I tell Itke the story of the Biluim, the group of students in Russia who went to settle in Palestine. These pioneers suffered unspeakable hardships, were plagued by hunger and disease and mortal danger, but they did not leave. They stayed on to become a symbol and an inspiration to those who followed and will follow in the future.

Saturday, July 17, 1915

I found Rivke at Itke's house this afternoon. She is a bright and interesting girl, but she loves to make fun of people, which I don't like. Esrog and Greenbaum came over later.

Esrog happens to know some girls from Semyatitsh whom Itke has met on her trip. He recounts such silly trifles that Rivke has a fertile field for her irony and derision. I don't like it. I cannot talk with hints and pins.

Itke reads an article to us that her cousin wrote about education. Then Greenbaum reads a composition of his own. It's a story about an eagle who's given shelter to a dove. The dove is overjoyed, but finds later that the eagle deems it his right to peck at her whenever he so desires and eat her children.

I think the story is an allegory about the Jewish people and the Russian government. I don't say anything because he doesn't ask my opinion. He seems to fear criticism, and while reading, he keeps asking Rivke whether the tale is boring. "No, no," she says grandly,

"go on." I suppose he does not consider Itke and me capable of understanding it as well as Rivke. After he is through reading, he looks expectantly at Rivke, but she hasn't caught the meaning of the story. I can see he is vexed, but too proud to show it. "It's a very simple story, isn't it?" he says.

I keep quiet. I don't know why I just sit there without saying anything. I'm glad when Esrog proposes a walk.

It's a lovely night, full of stars and mild breezes. We walk on the road leading out of town. Rivke takes us to a tree where the initials G and F are carved. I understand: Goldstein and Froman. I wonder what did become of their romance?

But Rivke doesn't seem heartbroken. She is not even secretive about her love affair. On the contrary, she's proud of it.

Itke asks me to recite a poem and I recite "Der nes fun khanike" ("The Miracle of Hanukkah"). Then Rivke starts talking, reciting, quoting. She overwhelms you with a flood of clever phrases, quotations. I have heard her go off that way several times before and I find nothing new in her talk now. It's as if someone had put on a record, playing it over and over again. But to Greenbaum it is new and I can see he is listening with great interest.

Itke and I say goodby to them and go to the park. It is dark and quiet. We sit in silence, each absorbed in her own thoughts.

Monday, July 19, 1915

Mameshe insisted I go to see Tenenbaum. I've been suffering pains in my stomach for a long time and have never consulted a doctor. Mameshe believes that Tenenbaum knows more than a doctor because he cured her of her infection. This *feldsher* does not believe much in medicine. He says sickness comes from worry. "Nerves, everyone suffers from nerves."

He prescribes powders for me and a special diet. "A young girl like you," he says, "should be cheerful. Your stomach gets upset when you worry too much."

Try and be cheerful at a time like this! Panic is again gripping our town. There are rumors that all Yiddish newspapers in Warsaw have been stopped. Why have they picked on the Jewish newspapers? All other language papers are still being published. What will the people who can read only Yiddish do?

Rumors also have it that the Germans are coming closer to Warsaw. Again my parents talk about leaving town. Oh, God! What will happen to us?

Tuesday, July 20, 1915

We received a letter from my aunt Rebecca from New York together with a photograph of her little boy. What a pretty child! Things are not going too well with them either, but, mainly, they are worried about us. We keep writing, but it appears that they do not receive our letters. She also sent 15 rubles for Grandpa. We'll have to mail it to him. I'm sure it'll come in very handy.

Today is Tisha b'Av. It is truly a day of mourning, but not because of ancient troubles. According to the Jewish calendar, today is the anniversary of the outbreak of war. I never thought I could live through so much in one year. And yet one gets used to everything. How many rivers of blood have been shed during this year! And no end in view. I read yesterday in the *Russkoje Slovo* that the coming year will far surpass the preceding one with its severe battles. Something to look forward to, no doubt.

At night Itke and I go to the park. I feel very restless tonight. After Shaye and Podolsky come over, I excuse myself and rush home. Shaye catches up with me.

"Why are you running away?" he asks.

"I'm fed up with it," I reply.

Thursday, July 22, 1915

We live in a tense atmosphere. News is expected any minute. We see many loaded wagons passing from Warsaw. The families of all the officials and policemen have already received orders to leave town. People are bewildered, they keep asking each other what to do. Many have their trunks and bundles packed, but are still waiting. It's hard to leave your home, your business, and go into the unknown. Besides, it requires money. The very poor have no choice. They must remain. The rich have plenty of money and most of them have already sent their families deeper into Russia. But for people like us who have a few hundred rubles, the question arises: How long can a sum like this last? What then?

Girls are most frightened. We hear stories about rape wherever the Army has passed. I'd rather die than submit to such fate.

Rivke gave me two works by Verbytskaya: *The First Swallows of Spring* and *She Became Free.* Both deal with the subject of "women's rights." I'm glad to read up on it. Except for my convictions, I don't know anything about the struggle for women's rights.

Leaving the store at night, we meet many friends strolling on Warsaw Street. Oh, how strong is the desire to live! In this dangerous time it is stronger than ever.

Saturday, July 24, 1915

I went early to the park so that I could read my book, *Jealousy* by Artsybashev.* I sit on my favorite bench, which stands between two old trees whose branches overhang this spot, forming a sort of retreat. A few minutes later Shaye finds me. He saw me entering the park and followed me up here. No more reading now.

He tells me that Feigenbaum, the big manufacturer, received an order to either evacuate, or destroy his machines. Five hundred men will be out of work. Lerner, too, received a similar order. The enemy must be very close. The Cossacks who have been stationed in Siedlce rode off yesterday.

I don't want to sit in this secluded spot any more and so we go strolling. Shaye tells me how he had admired the family life of his uncle in London. They've been married 15 years and are still in love with each other. His second uncle who lives in Siedlce is also happy with his wife, but his own father's life is broken and he feels very sorry for him.

Podolsky, his cousin Khayim, Tovye and Greenbaum join us. They are discussing the question of loyal citizenship. Khayim argues for blind loyalty, without any modifications. His cousin opposes him. Khayim bases his argument on sayings of famous people, on patriotic utterances, but I think it's all in theory. Does it work when applied in life? Life has a way of upsetting many high sounding theories.

I go home for dinner and no sooner do I settle down to read,

*M.P. Artsybashev (1878–1927), Russian novelist.

than Shaye and Tovye come in. They are still pursuing the discussion about loyalty. "Please," I say, "have you nothing else to talk about?"

Shaye shows me a Russian newspaper, *The Warsaw Thought.* A big headline gives me a shock: "ELEVEN BOMBS DROPPED BY GERMAN AIRPLANES. 27 VICTIMS."

How barbaric! Bombing peaceful civilians?! What is this world coming to?!

Brokhe wants to go to the park and so I put away my book. I couldn't concentrate on reading now, anyway. On the way we meet Itke, Reyzl, Podolsky and Khayim. Again those two! Arguing, arguing! I grab Reyzl by the arm and go off with her.

I suddenly feel good, like one escaping a nightmare. I laugh and joke. Reyzl is easy-going, one feels relaxed in her company.

Shaye catches up with us. "You're forever running away," he says to me.

"I can't stand this talk, talk, talk. It gives me a headache."

"Don't you want to discuss things?"

"This is not discussing; this is fighting."

"When you feel strongly about something . . ."

"You don't have to shout about it," I break in impatiently. "Besides, I have a feeling that at a time like this words are meaningless. It's just a way of showing off, or deafening your fears, or justifying one's empty existence."

"You are harsh. I didn't know you could be so . . ."

"The truth is not sweet."

My good humor is gone. Reyzl looks at me in a perplexed way. Perhaps I am too severe. Why do I always unload on Shaye?

At home, Mameshe tells me that my father and his partner, Yosl, have definitely decided to send us out of Siedlce. Yosl's wife, Hinde is now the one who is anxious to get away. Some Army units have already pulled out and all Government bureaus are packing. There are rumors that Lublin was taken.

"Where are we going to?" I ask.

"Your father thinks we should go to Wołkowysk. It's not as crowded as Minsk or Yekaterinoslav. Tomorrow we start packing. I wanted to buy a straw valise, but they're hard to get—the price went up to 15 rubles."

It's hard to believe that the time for leaving has arrived.

Sunday, July 25, 1915

I couldn't sleep last night. Is it possible that the dark clouds hanging over our heads for more than a year are now about to break? Where are we going? What is in store for us? What will become of everyone and everything we leave behind? Will we ever see our relatives or friends again?

Tateshe is supposed to catch up with us later. What if he cannot reach us? What if we become separated, lost?

Oh, why do I always anticipate disaster! Maybe it's lucky for us to get out of Siedlce. Siedlce! How I suddenly love this name! Every street, every stone is full of memories for me. Everywhere I look, I see familiar faces. Is it possible that Siedlce, my beautiful town, will be destroyed?

I am the first one to arrive at work this morning. I obtain the key from the next store, unlock the door, open the shutters and let light and air come through the dusty windows. How many times have I prayed for deliverance from this place! And now . . .

At last, Itke appears. With tears in her eyes, she tells me that they received an order to destroy or evacuate the motors of the mill. They'll have to close the mill and get out.

"And what will Galantz do?" I ask. "He has a houseful of children! Without work in the mill, they'll all starve!"

We talk quietly all morning. "Itke, is it possible that we'll never see each other again? Remember the May mornings in the park? Will they ever return? Wherever I'll be, the memory of those early, fragrant hours will shine for me like a star in a dark night."

Now everything past appears so sweet to me: The strolling after work on Warsaw Street or in the park, surrounded by friends; our conversations, discussions, arguments. Oh, except for some small faults, they're all such good, simple people! How I will miss them!

Itke will give me the address of her relatives to whom she and her family may go. Perhaps we'll be able to get in touch with each other.

At night, it starts raining, as if my mood were affecting the weather. On my way home, I renew the prescriptions at the drugstore. This excitement does not help my digestion. I certainly cannot afford to get sick now. I better take those powders and watch my diet.

At home, I find everyone sitting gloomily around the table. "What's the matter?" I ask. "Are you all packed?"

"So quick?" says Mameshe. "This is a problem of life and death!"

I don't know why I flare up: "I knew it! I knew you'd never make up your mind! You change it a hundred times!"

"Don't be so impetuous!" Mameshe scolds me. "I made some inquiries today. Wołkowysk has been declared a war zone, so we can't stop there; and to go further is impossible. The trains are so crowded, you cannot find standing room. It took Lutzky eight days to come back from Wołkowysk and all the time he had to carry his children on his shoulders. And once you get there, wherever that is, you cannot find a roof over your head. Food is sky-high. How long do you think our capital will last? I see bigger capitalists tarrying. Let's wait and see how things turn out. We'll pack and wait. Let someone else make the first start."

I'm sort of disappointed, yet deep in my heart I'm glad we postponed our trip.

Monday, July 26, 1915

No one is surprised that we've changed our minds. It appears that the same vacillation goes on in every home. Itke's mother was all set on going and now they, too, have decided to wait. It's a waiting full of uneasiness and trepidation. Some people go to Warsaw because they think it's safer in a big city, especially for girls.

At night we meet Esther, Dina and Lea Shapiro. Lea is definitely going to Warsaw; Dina would like to go to Russia, but Esther is remaining here. She has no other choice.

Shaye comes over. He just heard that we intend to leave town.

"It's foolish to go," he says. "There is nothing to fear. As soon as the police withdraw, we'll form a militia and keep order."

It makes me angry. Of course, the men have nothing to fear, but what about the girls? Will a militia protect us?

Still his confident tone gives us some reassurance. Itke begs us to speak to her mother who is frantic with fear. We go into Itke's house, and stay for about half an hour, talking about the situation. The general opinion is to stay on until the storm is over.

I would not mind it at all. In fact, I hate to miss the exciting

moment when one power pulls out and the other takes over. I don't think the Jews have more to fear from the Germans than from the Russians. But war is horrible, turning men into beasts, and the thought of how girls are abused haunts us all. Itke and I have already searched for hiding places; but there is no safety anywhere.

Shaye takes me home. "I won't let you go," he says. "I'll board up the doors and windows and you won't be able to get out."

I laugh it off. As we shake hands, saying good night in front of my house, he says gravely, "If you do go, I'll come along, too."

"Why not?" I shrug. "I have no monopoly on the train. Anyone can go on it," and I run swiftly into the house.

Everyone is asleep. I think if we don't go, I'll buy a bottle of carbolic acid to have handy in case of an emergency. . . .

Wednesday, July 28, 1915

All day long troops are passing through Warsaw Street in trucks and in all kinds of horse-drawn vehicles. We stand in front of the store and watch. Policemen are riding by in wooden wagons. Then come sappers, marching with their shovels and axes. They're dirty and unshaven. One, who stops for a drink of water, tells us that this is the eleventh day they're marching. The order is to stop 23 *verst* beyond Siedlce and dig trenches. That's where the Army will make a stand. Trucks with ammunition will follow tomorrow. Isn't this encouraging news?

Droshkes filled with officers, make their way through a throng of Red Cross vehicles. Now trucks with food products and field kitchens appear. The street is black with smoke, the din is deafening.

I cannot understand why people want to go to Warsaw. All these troops are coming from that direction. Will Warsaw be surrendered without a fight? Does anyone know what's going on?

Many girls I know consider going to Warsaw. How can they do it? If it is safer there, how can they go and leave their parents here?

It was nice of Mrs. Eisenberg, who is an old friend of Itke's mother, to propose that they move into her apartment for the time being, as it's most dangerous living on the outskirts of the town. Serke and Beyle are away, so there is a vacant room, and in case the Eisenbergs decide to leave Siedlce, Itke and her family would have the whole apartment to themselves.

I feel much calmer now. I stopped worrying. Whatever is to come to pass, will. I am ready for it.

Thursday, July 29, 1915

The troop movement kept up for two days and two nights. Lea, Dina and Itke are going for passes today. The families who remain here are anxious to send their daughters to Warsaw, where they think the retreating troops will behave better than in a small town.

As for us, we are still contemplating leaving town. Tateshe says we must go because all our money is tied up in the *podryad.* We have to follow the *punkt* ('army unit') that we provide with meat. The trouble is that this regiment will be the last to leave Siedlce and by then the trains will have stopped running. That's why Tateshe wants us to go now and Yosl and he will catch up with us later. The commanding officer promised to take them along whenever the *punkt* pulls out. Their destination is Pinsk and this is where we ought to go.

But Mameshe is not eager to leave without my father. "It may take weeks till the Germans reach Siedlce," she says, "are we to stay in Pinsk and you—here? Besides, I've made inquiries. Pinsk is overrun with refugees. It's impossible to get an apartment. Prices for food are exorbitant. The money you can give me won't last three weeks. No, we'll stay here until the enemy is very close."

The military doctor Vasiliev came back to Siedlce to recuperate from an injury at the front. Mrs. Eisenberg, who had been his patient, went to see him, asking for advice. He said that it will take at least four weeks until the front draws close to Siedlce. The Army will pass through the town, but will not fight inside. If there will be a battle, it will take place at least 10 *verst* out of town. "The devil is not as frightful as we picture him," he said. "The stores may be plundered and girls violated. Otherwise the town will remain intact."

What a cheerful picture!