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MAN OF THE WORLD

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QUEEN OF THE GOLDEN AGE

THE LIVING PAST OF AMERICA

PERSONAL EUROPEAN TRAVEL DIRECTORY

VAGABONDING THROUGH EUROPE TODAY

CHRISTIANITY OR CHAOS

CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

A WOMAN OF WASHINGTON

FAREWELL TO FIFTH AVENUE

TOO MANY WIVES

PALM BEACH

PARK AVENUE

RENO

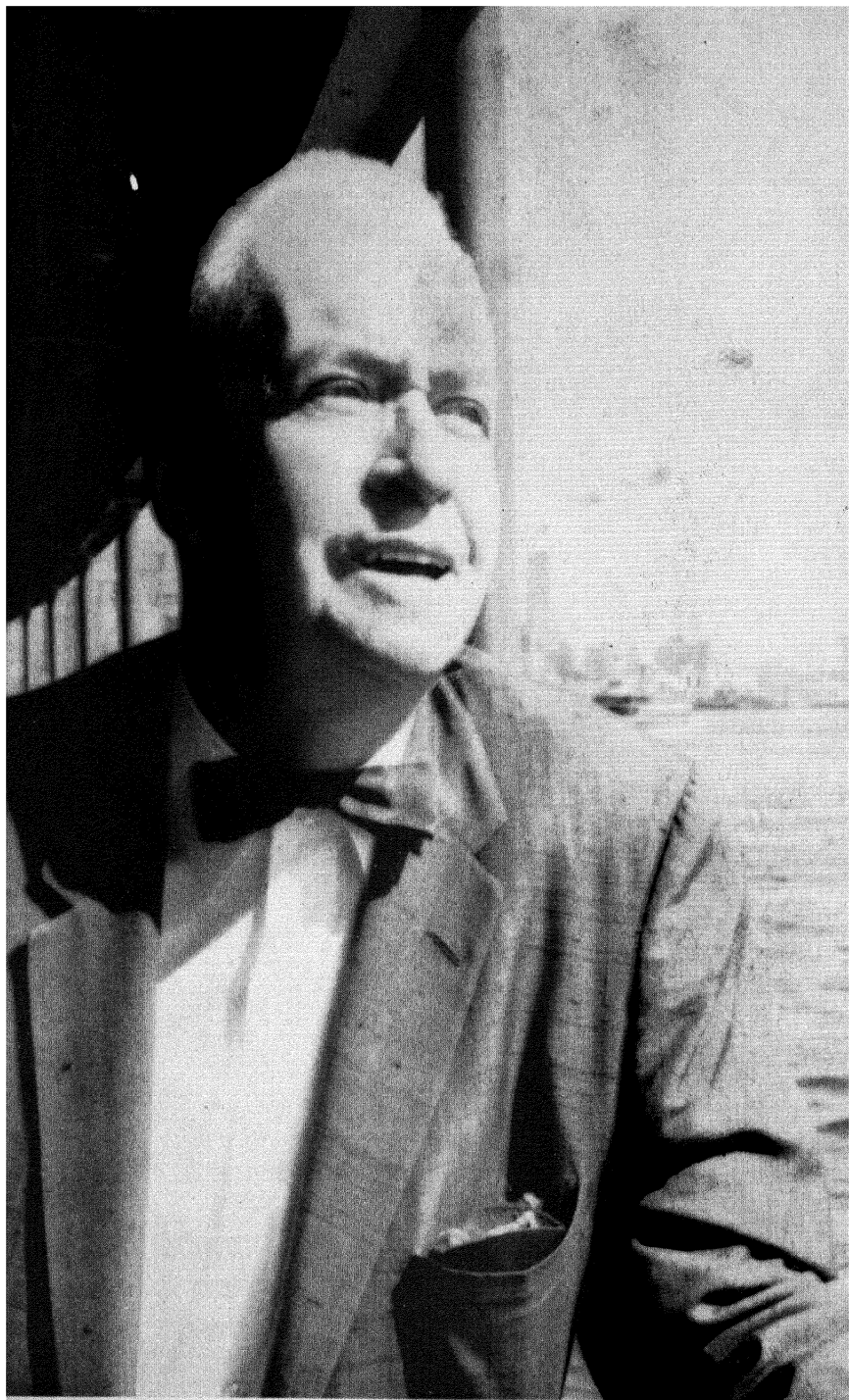
THE FAR WEST

EXPERIENCES OF A WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF A LEGISLATIVE CORRESPONDENT

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF A CUB REPORTER

SYMPOSIUM OF PUBLIC OPINION ON THE JAPANESE-AMERICAN
SITUATION



CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, JR., ON THE STATEN ISLAND FERRY.

Photograph by Lionel Wilson

Man of the World

My Life on Five Continents

CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, JR.

CROWN PUBLISHERS, INC. • NEW YORK, N. Y.

To my devoted wife,
Ann Bernadette Needham Vanderbilt,
without whose understanding and help
these pages could not have been written.

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FOREWORD

First, let me tell you a little secret of the publishing business. The title of this book was selected by my publisher, not by me.

At first I was appalled by it. What is a “man of the world”? To those of a certain generation, the old phrase conjures up a vision of a creature in white tie and tails, something between a magician and a Mississippi gambler, who displays marvelous *savoir-faire* as he leers across the table at a lady while telling the waiter (in French) to bring a bottle and a bird. I am not and never was that man. I am old enough to have heard of him but not old enough to be him.

If, however, you can forget that odious creature and consider me from other angles—first of all, the simple geographical one—I can lay some legitimate claim to the title. When I was six months old, I was taken to Europe in a laundry basket. To date I have made a hundred and fifty-odd crossings of the Atlantic and more than forty of the Pacific, and have been around the world a dozen times, traveling by ship, plane, car, trailer, and train.

More than this, I have been not merely a tourist getting an eyeful of foreign scenery, but a reporter writing about what I saw. After years as a foreign correspondent, I became a sort of private eye, or public ear, for President Roosevelt, who was for most of his three terms, and part of a fourth, his own policy-maker in foreign affairs. As a “leg man for Roosevelt,” I covered more ground than as a foreign correspondent, and observed even more conscientiously, for the man I had to report to was better informed than most editors. He himself was a “man of the world” in the right sense—a citizen of the world, interested in its remotest corners, able to think and speak in global terms.

In all my travels over the world, I was primarily interested in people. As a boy traveling with my parents, I was taught how to behave when royalty came to dinner, or for breakfast aboard my

father's yacht; before I was sixteen I had lunched or dined with all the world's important potentates. Later, as a reporter, I learned to skip the crowned heads, which were falling right and left, and concentrate on Joe Doakes and his friends. In the years I reported to FDR, I told him what the people thought on the highways and in buses and barbershops, in restaurants and trains and on planes, as well as in the chancelleries. For, more than any of our leaders, FDR was concerned with what was in the minds and hearts of the people, whom he addressed in his "fireside chats" and who in their turn said their say at the polls.

So you might call me a man of the world in another sense—the world of people. The people I interviewed, the people who read my newspaper columns, the people who voted for my boss in the White House, the people I photographed and talked to—these people represent our *living* world.

I am fond of this living world of ours; I would like to see it live on in peace and prosperity. That it will do so seems less certain to me now than in the days when, like other Americans, I trusted the man in the White House with our destiny. But I do believe in our survival, in the survival of our democratic system, if only we can make the people who vote in our elections aware of their world, able to think in terms of it, to grasp its problems and look at it with the smiling confidence that wins friends.

"Go world, young man!" said New York's Senator Javits in a baccalaureate speech this year.

I'm still doing that, and glad to see more of our senators and presidential candidates doing it too. Years ago, one of my two favorite senators was Key Pittman of Nevada, who as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was the first senator since the elder Lodge to go abroad. When Senator Pittman's heart was failing, he wanted me to try for his Senate seat but I declined because, among other reasons, I always considered my name a political handicap. Nowadays, with perennial candidates named Harriman and Rockefeller, it might not matter; but at present, with my other favorite senator, Pepper of Florida, I'm busy watching the show.

Some of the observing, globe-trotting, and interviewing I've done has been a political education, and perhaps I can still be of use in that way. Now that my own Passport Number Four is marked good for the Soviet Union but not for China, I wonder whether instead of responsible foreign intelligence we aren't using

the Madison Avenue gag, "An optimist is a guy who thinks the Russians will lick us. A pessimist thinks it'll be the Chinese." I know what ~~my~~ favorite President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, would think of that attitude, or of limiting travel.

I know what FDR's plan for world peace was, because I supplied some of the information on which he based it. I wonder if it is too late to try it? For the alternative, my friends, is world destruction.

Today I can no longer report on the world to the man in a wheel chair whom we all depended on to avert catastrophe. Instead, I report to you.

C. V.

Reno, Nevada, 1959

This Is Where I Came In

CHAPTER I

THE GOLDEN SPOON

ON THE PIAZZA of my Grandfather Wilson's big ugly mustard-yellow house on Narragansett Avenue in Newport, his friend Mr. Clemens used to sit in a rocking chair and tell me stories. Unlike the other grown-ups, Mr. Clemens liked sitting and talking, even to a small boy, better than going off to the Casino or Bailey's Beach. I liked best his stories about cats, for the big Persian in a wicker basket sat beside us.

"Cats are girls, dogs are men," I decided, and Mr. Clemens agreed. I asked him why he didn't write about cats, as he had written about characters named Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer in books my grandfather read aloud to me.

"Boys are more important than cats," he told me.

As my grandfather died when I was ten, I must have been younger than that when Mark Twain talked to me. Later I tried hard to remember the happenings of my early childhood for another writer about boys, Booth Tarkington, who thought that after his great success with *Penrod* he would like to try a series with a background of Newport and Fifth Avenue. But those stories about a little rich boy never came off.

In many ways my early years were what would be expected for the place and time. Like other children of Newport's wealthier families, my sister and I had English nannies. Big, jolly Anna Coxhead, from Hampstead, smacked us, made us wash behind the ears, and took us to church. Later we had French governesses, the stern and obdurate Madame Jumet whose name we thought of as "Jamais," and the sweeter, sympathetic Mademoiselle Netillard, who came from a town in the Vosges Mountains. Ada Netillard

had been jilted in a sad romance, and now her great concern, besides our behavior and accent, was the cause of the French Protestants against the Catholics.

In time we went to schools and I had tutors, but we learned more about the world from our trips abroad. We were always going, usually on one of my father's yachts—for "the season" in London, where we had a house, or for the yacht races at Cowes, or to see Mother's sister Lady Herbert, whose husband was ambassador to Turkey. On my father's side, another aunt had married the Hungarian ambassador to the United States, but at home or abroad, we saw more of my mother's family than of my father's because of "the Vanderbilt feud."

The feud began before my time. My Vanderbilt grandfather never spoke to my father after his marriage to my mother. When I was born, headlines in the New York *World* wondered whether "Baby Vanderbilt" would be able to "reconcile his ancestors," and the story explained: "Society sees him only as a living question mark. Will he heal the breach between the families?" If so, it was estimated, the baby would be worth "many times his weight in gold," perhaps as much as 58½ tons.

Alas, I never achieved this tonnage. My grandfather died without reconciliation with my father, who, although the eldest son, was cut off with a mere million and a half of an estate estimated at seventy millions. Some adjustments were made, under which my father got about seven million more, but the breach continued between him and his brother Alfred, and the argument was kept up with his sister, who became Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney. Consequently I hardly knew my Whitney cousins or their second cousin, John Hay Whitney, the present ambassador to England. I have not seen his other sister, the Countess Széchenyi, or any of her children since my mother's death in 1953.

What was the quarrel between my father and his father? At the time, society gossip columns indicated it sprang from disapproval of my mother on the ground that she was a few years older than Father, had lived abroad while he was still in college, and so was considered "a woman of the world." Actually, I'm pretty sure the feud began with differences between my grandfathers over the control of railroad stocks, but as with most feuds, the origin mattered less than the persistent bitterness. Although the Wilson name was less famous than the Vanderbilt name, the

Wilsons too had millions and lived on Fifth Avenue and in Newport.

As children, my sister and I liked Newport summers best. After a morning swim at the beach and lunch at Beaulieu, we would drive out in late afternoon to a place called Hazard's Point, where the surf broke with majestic grandeur against the rocks. There we could go crabbing. You threw a net into the water with some meat in it, and the crabs would come and crawl in. You carried a burlap bag to put them in. The groom or one of the servants from the house would build a fire among the rocks while you were busy with the net, and you cooked your crabs right there and ate them. Once after I'd eaten crabs and a green salad and then some ice cream, I was very ill and they said it was ptomaine poisoning. Today people don't believe you can get poisoned by mixing these things, but in those days they believed it, and I did.

Sometimes we went riding together. Mother rode beautifully, always sidesaddle. Father had his own pet horse called King, and Mother had a piebald named Molly Darling. Father's was a big brown horse, quite fiery. When I was about fourteen I had a very white horse, which Father named the Great White Hope and I called White Hope. It was a sort of lazy horse but it got you there. My sister had a small, very frisky pony called Mouse, and Father sometimes called Grace Mousie. His nickname for me was Neil.

Often there were elaborate picnics with guests and several rigs, including one for the servants. We had the victoria, and the Irish jaunting car which my father had brought from his visit to the governor general in Ireland. The jaunting car was partly wicker and partly patent leather, and you sat facing the street on each side. We used to drive tandem and even triple, and sometimes on these picnics an express van from the stable would bring chairs for us to sit on. All this may sound a little fancy for a real picnic, but at least we didn't eat from gold spoons, as some Newporters liked to do in those days.

A favorite spot for picnicking was a place called Vacluse, beyond the Vanderbilt farms in Smithtown and perhaps five or six miles up the road from Newport. Vacluse was beautiful but it doesn't seem to exist any more. I've been back there several times to look for it. We used to take country roads and drive up and down hills, and Vacluse itself would be about twelve or fifteen

miles from where we lived. The trees were spindly but very lovely, and someone had built a house that had hardly ever been occupied—quite a large, very lovely-looking French provincial. Then there was a sort of open area where we picnicked. The coachman and the grooms and possibly one or two of the footmen would bring all sorts of food, such as fried chicken and Virginia ham and a gumbo soup, which Mother and I liked. Then there was brown Betty and sometimes an apple strudel. And of course we had hard-boiled eggs and all the other things one has at picnics. A fire was built and we toasted marshmallows and cooked bacon wrapped around sausages, and we ate and ate.

Our young guests were usually the Lippett boys—I think their father was governor of Rhode Island in those days—and the Loew girls whose father was a New York banker and head of the Jockey Club. There were the beautiful Pierson girls whose father had been a general during the Spanish-American War. There was Alice Astor, half sister of Vincent, and Bill Vanderbilt, my cousin, who was my age. All these children would be driven up in their parents' carriages. After eating, we played games like prisoner's base, and had potato races and one-legged races. My father was always the judge; he was in demand for this at children's parties, as he was very stern but very fair.

Always there were birthday parties, and great high jinks then. My sister's, on September 25, came at the end of the summer season and Mother always had a big party for her at Beaulieu. Mine was April 30, when often we were abroad or I was in school. But if we were in New York there was a party at 677 Fifth Avenue, the house just across from St. Thomas's where we lived before World War I. For the young parties, there would be as many of our schoolmates or summer friends as we could get in, and Mother would sometimes get a magician to do tricks. There'd be ice cream and cake and paper caps, and everybody had presents, although of course the celebrant had the most.

These were the times of having fun together, when we all adored our parents and loved one another. There were long periods in our lives when we were not squabbling or having arguments, a great many years when we all got along beautifully. But something happened, I don't know what; the string broke as we grew up. Possibly World War I had something to do with it.

Yet some of the older family differences went back to the Civil War, for while my great-great-grandfather was giving clipper

ships to the North, my Grandfather Wilson was on the opposing side. His slaves had been freed but they stayed with him and some were still in the Newport house, where as children we loved to go. Grandfather Wilson was a huge old man, six feet four, with a ring of white hair around his bald pate, a white mustache, and a stubble of white beard. He had kind blue eyes; indeed, he was one of the kindest-looking men I've ever known.

In contrast my Wilson grandmother was very thin and narrow and angular. She loved us children and she loved her garden, of which she was very proud. One reason we liked going to her house was that they always had delicious food.

The Wilson house was on Narragansett Avenue, which did not parallel Bellevue but ran from the bay over to Forty Steps, down the cliff walk to the Atlantic Ocean on the other side of the promontory on which Newport is situated. We used to take walks with Grandpa and Grandma Wilson from the house down to the Forty Steps, passing Emily Post's house and the house of Senator Green. When we reached the cliff walk, Grandpa would sit down and tell us stories of the sea very different from the stories my father told us. These were tales of piracy in the North Atlantic, or of blockade-running during the War Between the States, and they enthralled us.

So young Grace and I were willing enough to see a great deal of the Wilsons and very little of the Vanderbilt relatives. And when we were grown, one cousin on "the other side" returned a polite note from me with a one-sentence squelch: "I am still my father's son!"

As we boys at Newport grew older, we devised war games on the beach, building sand forts and using wet sand balls for ammunition. We kept the same sides, so that in effect Bailey's Beach had two teen-age gangs, and I was once knocked cold by a sand ball which had, not the usual shell at its center, but a rock.

Because of the family travels, I was always in and out of schools. One school near Miami gave me my early fondness for Florida. At one in New Jersey I edited the school paper and decided to be a journalist. There were others in England, in Germany, even briefly in Spain and in the Russia of the czars.

Often I stayed in a new school just for the disagreeable early period of being a "new boy," a time in which I had to meet the prejudices of my classmates about my family background. Always they had heard about the Vanderbilt millions and about my great-

great-grandfather, the Commodore, whose title, they often suggested, was somehow connected with dealings in watered stock. I knew nothing about the stock market but in time I learned to boast, in reverse, that Commodore Vanderbilt had started life as a vegetable farmer on Staten Island. He owned a rowboat in which he transported his vegetables to Battery Place, at the tip end of New York. He gave his mother, so I was told, about twenty-five per cent of what he made, and with the rest he started a small bank account. One day he borrowed a hundred dollars from his mother and bought a larger boat than the rowboat—a sailboat. Then he sailed across to Manhattan, taking passengers along with the vegetables. He continued to do this, turning in one boat after another until he had a whole string of ferryboats and then of small steamers running up the Hudson River. He still tried, as I heard the story, to put from twenty-five to thirty per cent of all his earnings into his bank account. Shortly before the Civil War started, he had amassed a considerable sum of money and had bought a fleet of clipper ships—three- and four-masters, square-rigged, which he put on the ocean run from New York to England and France. He won the title of commodore because he gave his clipper ships to the United States government during the Civil War. These stories of the old Commodore's character no doubt influenced us all. My father in time would also contribute fast ships to Uncle Sam's wars. Meanwhile his great love was the sea. He was really a sailor, and his wish to make me feel at home in the water accounts, I am sure, for two episodes in my early childhood which at the time I found it hard to understand.

In the early days at Newport, my father would come up for the week end in his yacht, the *North Star*, or in one of his training schooners, the black-painted three-master, *Atlantic*, or his two-master, *Elena*. Then he and my mother would come to the beach for swimming. Bailey's Beach in those days was a little place at the end of Bellevue Avenue, entirely different from all the steel and concrete there today. We had two small wooden bathing cabins, scarcely large enough to turn around in, painted green on the outside and with knotty pine on the inside. My sister and I, with our nurses and governesses, would be driven to the beach by ten in the morning, in our wicker pony carts. The surf was quite rough and cold, with a temperature some twenty degrees below that of the Florida waters I swim in now. But my sister and I would go in and paddle around and shoot the combers on mat-

tresslike floats. After an hour or so Father and Mother would join us, Mother wearing an old-fashioned bathing suit with black stockings and black bathing cap, and Father in a two-piece suit with knickers down to the knees.

Father swam quite well and was upset when I didn't. Once when we were in a rowboat going out to the raft, I somehow fell overboard. Instead of stopping for me, my father continued to row away from me. Of course he thought this would teach me to swim. But I nearly drowned before someone else picked me up and took me ashore, and I was ill afterward. I thought it terribly cruel and I never learned to swim until much later.

When I was fifteen or so a similar thing happened when my father and I went down the gangway to the float of the New York Yacht Club at Newport. The bosun with the megaphone had hailed the *North Star* and they were sending the launch for us. As we waited on the float, I saw a small dinghy alongside and stepped into it, thinking the launch would come up on its other side. But the dinghy turned turtle with me. My father promptly stepped on its upturned bottom, which forced me to go down below and come up beyond it instead of taking advantage of the air under the boat. My father said such things were the way to teach a boy to be a man, and his father had done the same things to him. But they are the things which stick in a child's mind and make him think, foolishly no doubt, that the parent doesn't love him.

To balance these stern experiences there were, of course, many kindnesses and gifts from my father. On my fifteenth birthday he gave me a sailboat, a 29-footer, known as a Conanicut twenty-niner. Conanicut was the name of an island in Narragansett Bay. The 29-footer was stubby but very sturdily built. On it I made cruises all over the eastern coast, up the coast of Maine, around Massachusetts and Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard, then south as far as Chesapeake Bay and Cape Hatteras. Father also provided a Norwegian skipper who had worked for him on one of his cup defenders—he sailed four or five, years before my cousin Harold Vanderbilt began.

The skipper was one of the best, and I think in the beginning he was angry at being relegated to my small boat. But we did a lot of sailing and went through innumerable bad storms in which we always managed to right ourselves, although I often thought we would be drowned in a matter of minutes. And thanks to

things he knew and taught me, we were able to capture many of the racing cups given on Long Island Sound for boats of our size. One year we sailed across the Atlantic from City Island in Long Island Sound to Bergen, Norway; it took us five weeks and was one of the most exciting and interesting trips I ever made.

I also had a land yacht, which I built myself—a four-wheeled craft with a leg-of-mutton sail, the forerunner of my trailers. Land-yacht sailing—the races are very fast and exciting, rather like ice-boat races—is done a lot in Holland, also in Michigan, on Daytona Beach and on some of the beaches in the Far West, and in England and even South Africa. In Newport, one of the pony carts from our stable towed us out to a public beach called Second Beach, fifteen miles from where we lived. There we would put up sails, the leg-of-mutton and later a jib; we could travel at forty miles an hour. Two other people also had land yachts and we raced along Second and Third Beach.

Like the skipper who taught me to sail, my tutors had special skills. John Brodix, who took over from the governess when I was seven, had been recommended to my mother by President Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia. He was a track man with a record for the mile, and stroke of the crew, and a fast swimmer in the Hudson ice floes. His father was a patent attorney in Washington; he knew people there, and was at home abroad. We went for bicycle tours in France and walking tours over the Scottish moors and in the Dolomites—Austrian then, Italian now.

Father didn't care much about walking in the country, but whenever we were on the yacht off one of the Mediterranean countries, we would go for long walks ashore—I just a little shaver, and my father a tall, thin, emaciated man, chain-smoking three or four packs of cigarettes a day. Father was fascinated by the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa, Algiers and Tunis and Casablanca and Alexandria, although he didn't care for Egyptians. So we visited Greece and the Greek islands, Turkey and the Turkish islands, and were several times in Constantinople.

In my teens I had an older tutor, Burton Baldwin, also recommended by Columbia. He could sail but was too old for tennis. As a teen-ager I also saw more of schools. I did not like going to St. Paul's, and in 1914, writing earnest thoughts about the place on my birthday and again at the end of the year, I alternated worry about the First World War with personal pessimism: "My fifteenth year is ended, and yet no rest is at hand. How can a

decent fellow like St. Paul's? I hate it more and more each day." That year, with a classmate named O'Neill, I worked on a model hydroplane, inspired by letters from my father which told of his flights with the Wright brothers. He invested in our enterprise, writing from his Pine Street office and addressing me as vice-president of our company, and in return we elected him treasurer. But even this authorized activity did not reconcile me to St. Paul's.

I still remember that, under the rules in those days, we were permitted to go into Concord, New Hampshire, on our bicycles no more than twice a month, on Saturday afternoons after lunch, and we had to be back on school property between five and five-thirty. We just had time to buy an ice-cream soda and some hard candy at the tuckshop, and send postcards or letters to our families. We were not supposed to go to the movies. But when word circulated that the local theater was playing a picture called *The Perils of Pauline*, four of us—Tony Biddle, Chris Herter, Eddie Dunham, and I—bicycled in, went in the back entrance of the theater, and climbed way up to the gallery, where we watched goggle-eyed. Years later when I sold a novel to the movies, Pearl White played the heroine, but for me her most thrilling performance was the one I saw in Concord.

Suddenly one of us noticed the time was a quarter to five. Not only were we in danger of being late, but the long ride home would be cold. In winter, daytime temperatures ranged well below zero and even in the fall it grew mighty cold after sunset.

But we knew a short cut and we took it, although it was off bounds. The objection to this road was that it led us past a house inhabited by a woman whom the school authorities considered to be a witch. Nevertheless we dared the short cut. We even saw the witch, who looked to us like a very sweet old lady sitting in a rocking chair. But we were late and someone snitched on us, and the four of us were put on demerits, which barred us from Concord for sixty days.

The demerits were for going to the movie but also for taking the road past the witch's house. The witch? She was Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science. In my own lifetime I have seen a considerable advance in this country's religious attitudes.

Though not very religious myself—we sat in the Washington pew in Newport's Trinity Church, but my attention centered on the wasps that buzzed overhead from nests in the ceiling—I was, I now realize, a "good boy." This was partly because my up-

bringing was in some ways remarkably strict. But it was also, I think, because I liked people, including my elders, and tried to please them. This simple effort could cause complications when people differed as much in their tastes as my mother and my father did.

Mother loved the country, or at least country life as we knew it at Newport. Father preferred the city, unless he could be at sea.

They liked different people, and Father had business friends whom Mother did not invite to parties at the house—at least, not until she found they were accepted, as sometimes happened, by people she liked in England. Then there were people who liked Mother but not Father. One of these was J. P. Morgan the elder, who had been a friend of Mother's father and sided with the Wilsons against the Vanderbilts. At St. Thomas's on Sunday, when the Morgan car drove up behind ours—their footmen in dark blue, ours in maroon—Mr. Morgan would call Mother by her first name but hardly speak to Father. There may have been some rivalry in yachting, too; the famous Morgan yacht *Corsair* was about the same size as our *North Star*, but Father's *Atlantic*, later, was a bit bigger.

Mother loved opera and always had a box; Father couldn't stand it and would sneak out to go across the street to the Follies. He used to say his favorite tune was one called "The Girl on the Train."

Mother was late for everything, and this irritated Father. But usually, because of his influence in the railroad and financial worlds, trains and even ships were held for him while he waited for her, sometimes for a full hour.

Mother did not tolerate people who drank. But Father not only smoked too much, he drank too much; as he grew older he never stopped drinking, and this was a reason for my parents' eventual separation. Father tried to limit himself to beer, but then he drank an awful lot of beer. He didn't care at all for wine or candies or any sweet.

Mother had a terrific sweet tooth; she couldn't refrain from sweets. Fruit was no substitute although she sometimes went on a binge and ate two bunches of the immense grapes, black and white, from the greenhouses at Beaulieu, which were famous for their luscious fruit. She also loved French food, with all the sauces and soups which add weight. So she went on periodic

diets, and every fall and spring took a "cure." In this country she always went to Hot Springs, Virginia, where she had gone as a child with her father. In Europe Mother went a good deal to Bad Nauheim, now popular with American troops in the Western Zone of Germany. (In fact, Elvis Presley gave a party at Mother's old hotel.) My father hated the "cures," and one of my early memories is driving away with him in the big old-fashioned Renault car we kept in Europe. It was a town car with a luggage rack on top, and as the chauffeur crept slowly over a country road, my father and I, sitting on top, reached up to pick ripe damson plums. There were times when I liked my father after he had been drinking better than when he had not.

But when people used to say to me, "Your father's such a sweet, quiet man. He never raises his voice, and he's very kind and generous. What a wonderful father he must be—" and so on, I'd think I knew otherwise. Of course I had great respect for Father in his army career and as an engineer, but in other ways there was little love lost between us.

Father had laboratories at sea and ashore, where he worked on his various mechanical inventions, on physics experiments, and at architectural drawing. He loved to draw houses that he planned to build, none of which he actually built, although he did over 640 Fifth Avenue when we inherited it. Some of his mechanical inventions were practical and commercially successful. His experiments were in an important direction because he was trying to smash the atom, using coal as a basis for his attempts. Many times his test explosions shook the Fifth Avenue house, and once in Florida when something blew up, the city of Miami was shaken and the fire and police departments came to the edge of Pier One. But most of the time his tests aboard the *North Star* were made when we were in the Norwegian fjords or off the coast of Greece. He was also a water-colorist and a photographer. When I went through the Corinth Canal on an Italian ship returning from Israel, I remembered the photographs my father had taken there fifty years before, back in 1907 or 1908.

The *North Star* was one of the first private yachts to be equipped with wireless, because Marconi twice made experiments on board. The first time, before World War I, they went up the river to Albany and from there the yacht sent messages by wireless telegraph to Nantucket lightship, and the inventor said soon they would be sent around the world. Back in New York at the old

Forty-seventh Street Ritz, Marconi wanted to go on a guided tour, not of our power stations but of the art galleries. He said he liked to rest by sitting and looking at paintings and sculpture. Edison felt somewhat the same way, except that his relaxation was music. In spite of his deafness he was a good music critic and enjoyed listening to Mother's favorite opera stars. Later on, I realized that from traveling instead of going regularly to school, and from knowing some of the guests that Mother and Father entertained at home and abroad, I got an education that compensated, in a way, for some of the obvious handicaps of my family background.

CHAPTER II

ESCAPE TO WAR

BECAUSE WE were abroad so much, in Germany and in England, World War I hit us hard before Americans in general knew much about it. My Aunt Belle Herbert's two sons were seriously wounded. She and my mother both took their war work hard, and that is how, at the age of sixteen, I came to spend some six weeks with the French Foreign Legion.

One of those energetic, helpful Englishwomen, Miss Mary Bidwell—the tall, tweedy sort with a firm handclasp—had worked for suffrage before the war, and then turned her considerable talents to war work. She was a great friend of Aunt Belle's, and she and my aunt and my mother all worked for the organization first known as Bandages for Britain, bandages being urgently needed in the first terrible days of the war. Later the organization became the famous Bundles for Britain. Besides this, Miss Bidwell organized a group of interpreters for the Foreign Legion. They must have taken over the Sherlock Holmes idea of using teen-age talent, or maybe it was because I was tall for my age that they accepted me when I joined them at Southampton. Thanks to my varied scholastic experience, I did in those days speak fairly fluent—I won't say accurate—French and German, some Spanish and Italian, and even a little Russian. They sent me to Ostend and I interpreted as happily as any teen-ager given a job right out of *Beau Geste*.

But the family, which had got me in, got me out. My sister and I, they said, could roll bandages with the sailors on the *North Star*—a lot less exciting. Then Father gave the ship to the British Navy, the crew lined the decks and hung from the halyards to sing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," and I was out of a war job again.

Back in New York, though the country was still "neutral," Father was very much a military man, first in the New York

National Guard and later in the Regular Army. In those days he often walked all the way downtown to his office at 30 Pine Street from the house at 640 Fifth Avenue. Tall and gangling now, I sometimes walked with him as far as Washington Square. We didn't talk, just walked. Cops at the crossings, who always saluted Mother in the town car, would say to Father, "Hello, Major—" and then Colonel, and finally it was General.

Now it was pretty clear that we would be in World War I. Father's college friend, Frank L. Polk, great-grandson of President Polk, was undersecretary of state. From him and from others, Father was sure we would enter the war on the side of the Allies. The same assurances were given at my mother's dinner table by the financiers, who were already betting their money on England and France. But Mother, though she agreed with them, was not politically minded then and continued to entertain the German ambassador and other Germans, a thing which was a thorn in Father's flesh.

Arguments between my mother and my father had grown louder and more frequent as the years went on, and when I was about seventeen I had a very nasty experience. My father was then drinking heavily, and used a side entrance to the house to escape my mother's parties. One night he said he had to go to a directors' meeting, but Mother didn't believe this, and had him followed by a private detective.

After dinner I went to a meeting at the New York Yacht Club, where I was a junior member. There one of my friends asked me if I was going to the meeting our fathers were having next door; it seemed that my father and some other men were having a sort of peep show featuring girls doing a belly dance, in a building almost adjoining the Yacht Club. The boys all thought it would be fun to have a look-in at this building, which I had always considered an ordinary apartment house. Inside, sure enough, I saw the detective Mother had employed. So I went over and tried to buy him off with the six or seven dollars I had in my pocket. Of course he thought I was crazy.

However, I felt I should tip off my father, so I knocked two or three times on the apartment door. There was considerable noise inside, but after a while a strange man came to the door and I said, "Is Colonel Vanderbilt in there? I'm his son."

The man disappeared and I could hear a lot of muffled conversation; then a lady came to the door and said, "There must be

a mistake. There's nobody by that name here," and she tried to push the door shut.

I had wedged my foot in the door, and I argued desperately, "I just want to tell my father that he's being followed. My mother hired a detective and he's outside the door here." Then I left.

When I got home, I discovered that Mother had called me at the Yacht Club two or three times, and had been told I had left. Strict family regulations made me account for every minute, and I had been gone for an hour. Of course she wanted to know where I had been, so I said I had been strolling around with some of my friends.

The next morning my father sent for me. When I went down to his bedroom, his neck was the color of a turkey gobbler's and he demanded to know what the hell I was doing following him. My father's room and my mother's were separated by their two bathrooms, but I knew that she could be listening, and so I said only that Mother had had him followed and I'd tried to tip him off.

Father said, "Well, for your information, I wasn't in that apartment; I never go to those things. But I want you to know that I'm going to stop your allowance for the next six months because I don't like my son following me whether I'm going out on business or on pleasure."

My loss was small enough, something like two dollars a week, but it meant no pocket money from Father for the next six months.

When the Mexican border troubles came along in 1916, I think my father was very happy to go. He was now a full colonel in the New York National Guard. It was federalized two years before World War I and sent down to the border because the story was that the Germans might try to penetrate the United States through Mexico. There were border raids by the revolutionist Villa, the biggest one in Columbus, New Mexico.

At school in Connecticut I had joined a patrol group; on horseback, we patrolled the reservoirs necessary to the New York water supply. Also, although I was under age, I went to classes in horsemanship, transportation, and so on at the nearest National Guard armory.

So that summer I went down to join my father with the troops on the border. He had just been appointed inspector general of the Twenty-seventh Division of the New York Guard, on the

border some thirty thousand strong. The headquarters staff, Maj. Gen. John F. O’Ryan commanding, gave me permission to drive Father’s car. But when I turned up for the job, he was angry and believed again, I now feel sure, that I was trying to follow him.

Mother had no thought of my really going to war. As soon as war was declared, however, I waged a domestic war of my own, and when I got nowhere with arguments, I enlisted as a private. All over the country other boys were doing the same thing, and I was lucky that, when Mother tried to do battle with the Army, her friend Theodore Roosevelt turned out to be on my side.

My mistake was in innocently choosing a silk-stocking cavalry outfit, but I was not alone in thinking of cavalry as late as World War I. Of course I had been riding from early childhood, when they’d made a ring for our ponies in a big vacant lot across Bellevue Avenue in Newport. I’d ridden in school gymkhanas from the age of nine, I’d ridden cross-country at my grandfather’s in Virginia, and at school in New Jersey each boy had not only to ride but to take care of two horses. We rode at the place at Cedarhurst, Long Island, and even in New York, where the stable was on West Sixty-sixth Street just outside Central Park, and a groom in livery, complete with chamois pants and top hat, would meet us at the gate. There on White Hope, the horse Father had given me, I’d twice won competitions riding around the reservoir—until Father told me sternly, “We don’t compete.”

But after driving mules in Camp Wadsworth, at Spartanburg, South Carolina, I found that war had to be fought without the help of animals.

In those days, the process of turning rookies into soldiers was no more gentle than now; in fact, like all old vets I’m inclined to think these modern wars are duck soup compared to what we endured. We had a real bastard of a lieutenant, just out of West Point. We slept in pup tents, not barracks, until fall, when they moved us into the so-called pyramidal tents which held eight or nine. Toilet facilities at night consisted of a sort of tin garbage can about four feet high in the center of each group of tents. Even in the Carolinas winters can be cold, with occasional near-zero temperatures, but we just didn’t rate plumbing, and even the ten-hole wooden sheds had no heat except from overcrowding. No privacy for privates—that you learned first of all as you joined the line to get into one of these military johns. Latrine sanitation

consisted in ladling lye down a hole; eventually the muck was removed by the LP.

When you were on LP or KP, you made a further horrifying discovery: they used to scour out that nighttime *pissoir*, on occasion, for use as a soup or stew pot. Eating in the long wooden mess shack, screened by mosquito netting, I found it hard to swallow the soup or the stew, but probably most of the three hundred eating with me hadn't had as much LP or KP. A lot of mothers, however, would have objected to army housekeeping had they known.

Out on maneuvers in the Carolina hills, sleeping on the ground at night, we were really next door to freezing. I could always see my breath in the cold gray dawns. But on maneuvers I got a break from the primitive mechanization of that time, for I sometimes rode a motorcycle, sometimes drove a staff officer's car.

They gave me tin medals for rifle and pistol shooting, and with some fellow privates from New York I had a further distinction: we started the first enlisted men's club in World War I. I had acquired a pet raccoon which, with collar and lead, became club mascot. Once he bit me—I still have the scar on my left knee—but I was very sad when we were told to get rid of him because he frightened a visiting British instructor who was sleeping off an officers' party. The 'coon was quite accomplished; he learned to pull the caps off bottles, and the reason he bit me was that I had given him a bottle of Dr. Pepper instead of a Coke.

I owed my success in getting out of Spartanburg and overseas to a successful job of goldbricking. My savior was the general's orderly, a tall Negro sergeant for whom I did various chores. We crossed together and together went through great peril in the submarine zone one night: when the alarm sounded the sergeant was putting on his clothes after a bath in the general's tub, and I, stark naked, was just stepping into it. The alarm was false but the peril was real because of course we weren't supposed to use the tub.

On landing at Brest, the sergeant and I were still helping out the general. There I had a regular job as chauffeur because I had been described in the newspapers as "the millionaire private" and actually was able to manage the English car, a Rolls, assigned to our officers. Also I could speak French, which helped socially; in fact, when I drove the judge advocate of our division over for dinner with the provost marshal, another talent came

handy. Could I, asked the provost marshal, open a bottle of champagne? And when I obliged, I was told, "Vanderbilt, you can have the rest." Alas, I still didn't drink.

We soon got marching orders, officially to be with the Second Army Corps in Sir Douglas Haig's area, but actually with the Anzacs, so General O'Ryan's New York Irish wouldn't start a war with the English. Then the judge advocate, Major Kincaid, took me off one of those forty-men-eight-horses French freight cars, to drive him to Pershing's headquarters at Chaumont. His plans included a night in Paris; could I tango?

I mentioned blisters, because before we entrained our West Point lieutenant had pushed us thirty-five miles a day on foot. But this excuse was brushed aside and I was told to park the car and meet the Major at the Pré Catalan. Once a dairy where we children got milk warm from the cow while Mother had tea and cakes, it was now a gay spot. I walked across to Major Kincaid's table and saluted, but—according to regulations—kept on my big campaign hat.

"Take off that goddam hat and sit down," he told me.

It was an order, so I did. He introduced me to his girl, saying, "Only an American army officer could have a Vanderbilt as chauffeur."

All went well—the girl had to lead me when we tangoed, but she did—until a two-star general came in and headed for us.

"What in hell are you doing here, private?" he asked me.

"I'm here with Major Kincaid, sir," I explained.

"Don't you know Army regulations? What's your name? Any relation to the brigadier? But that doesn't excuse you."

Over at the table, Kincaid stood up. "Hello, general. Won't you sit with us?"

The general asked what the hell Kincaid was doing with a private.

"The governor general's daughter wished to dance the tango. I don't, but my driver does," Major Kincaid said.

The general pointed out that all drivers were sergeants.

"Private Vanderbilt hasn't got his chevrons yet," Kincaid answered. He was a smart egg; he went on to say apologetically that ours was a National Guard outfit, with more liberal views, and then let fall casually that he was at Chaumont to see Pershing. This altered everything. We finished the evening, dropped the girl at the Ritz around three o'clock, and then I took Kincaid

to the Crillon. He arranged for me to park for the night with marines quartered nearby.

I had to report to him at ten. Shaved but without breakfast, I put on my big hat and got to the hotel on time, to find Kincaid in bed, with a headache and an ice bag. Groaning, he had to get up to let me in, but at once he took up the matter of my missing chevrons.

"You rich men's sons don't know your way around. Why haven't you got a commission?" he demanded.

"I didn't want one."

"Going in for politics?" Kincaid had been mayor of Syracuse.

"With my name?" I asked.

He saw that point. "You'll have to report back to headquarters troop. But I'll make you a sergeant."

"The lieutenant won't pass it, sir—"

"Wait and see."

With Kincaid's report that he had detailed and kept me in Paris, I started back to Arras. After driving all night through an army on the move—ammo trucks without lights, men with phosphorus on hats and belts—a British truck landed me at a town called Saint-Riquier, where a sign on a shop window said Twenty-seventh Division casualties should report. I reported, only to find I'd got in ahead of the outfit.

Saint-Riquier was a typical small French town: church, *estaminet*, no plumbing. Only about ten per cent of the houses outside Paris had any. But my billet was clean, and the owner typical, with a son at the Front, one daughter a prostitute, and the other a Red Cross worker.

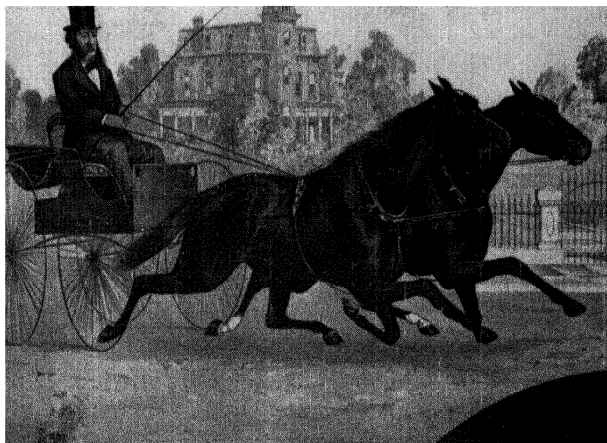
It was a four- or five-day wait for the headquarters troop to show. One morning, I went along to the church with a Catholic who wanted to go to early Mass. The church was filled with nuns saying the rosary. Then long-range shells began breaking the windows, falling in the nearby cemetery. Churches were always getting hit, and it was said that the spires did something to the air currents. Everyone ran for the wine cellar in the *estaminet*, and as I tried to keep from bowling over nuns on the steep stone steps, I noticed one of them was wearing boots. I know it sounds like a classic spy yarn, but the nun *was* a German officer, and they almost killed him on the spot. As a reward for my observation, Kincaid got me put on Intelligence duty. "Keep it up and we'll make you a lieutenant," he said.

But after that one night in Paris I was never really the major's pet; I only did translating and I still drove cars. I got my three chevrons, though, because you had to be a sergeant to drive vehicles. But goggles on our hats were our real mark. The lieutenant was too busy to bother with me after that.

There was some Intelligence work to do because, when our men came in, they didn't behave well and the Belgians, already uncertain on which side their own sympathies lay, were further alienated. Some Belgians flashed signal lights to planes, although they always said they were just lighting cigarettes or going to the john at night. I drove Kincaid and an Intelligence captain on night details to investigate; when we had done this duty we drove on to Arras or Amiens, which meant girls for the officers while I waited hours in the car with nothing to do, and no reading in the blackout. I was still young enough to be shocked by the established houses with separate waiting lines for privates and officers. Of course, girls would meet you in haystacks to drink red ink, but I still didn't drink. And I didn't care for the British custom of giving you a tot of rum before you went over the top; they pushed a sponge in your mouth and, like our commissary arrangements, it seemed to me unsanitary.

At first our men were in tents; then the engineers came in and dug a big underground shelter to match the Hindenburg line right across from us. Everybody took a turn in the line, four hours in a trench and four hours off, sleeping in muddy clothes. At the end of a month you needed a bath. I got a pass to a village, where a huge delousing machine was set up in the square. You undressed in a shed alongside; then, while everything went through the machine, you walked through, wearing a sort of nightgown they gave you, and picked up your stuff at the other end. At least you hoped that what you picked up would be yours.

Except that nobody wanted the wrapped khaki puttees just issued. Every enlisted man hated those spiral puttees. I sighed to see that mine came out looking brand-new. But on my way back to the line I passed a little shop where, to my amazement, they were selling leather puttees, very snappy-looking ones made of pigskin that would take a good shine. The French troops wore them, and some of the French Foreign Legion men. They sold for thirty-five francs, about two dollars and a half in our money, so I bought some and put them on. Then I walked along the road looking for a truck.

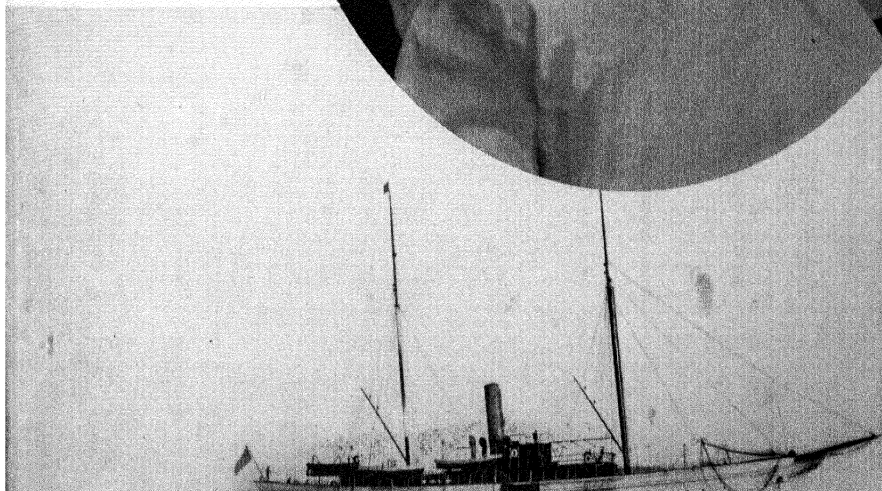


FAMILY ALBUM

Left, great-grandfather William H. Vanderbilt driving his fast team, Small Hopes and Lady Mac. (Currier and Ives print)

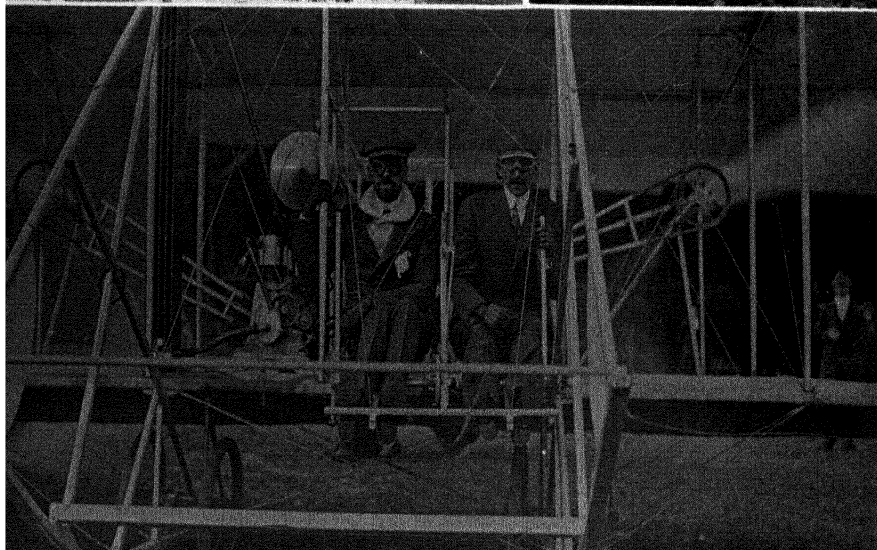
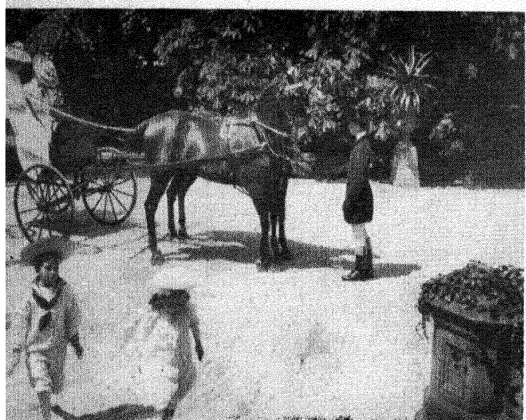
At right, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Junior, aged two—the “billion-dollar baby” beginning life in the shadow of his ancestors.

Below, right, the *North Star*, the famous Vanderbilt yacht.





Young Neil on his first pony, with his grandfather Wilson. Below, the pony cart at Beaulieu, with Mrs. Vanderbilt and Alice Roosevelt and the children. Right, author up a tree.



If anything passed you, you saluted because any car might hold an officer. When a big British car passed me, my hand snapped up. The car went only a little farther. Then it stopped and a young officer hopped out and opened the door. As I came opposite I saluted again.

The young officer ignored me as a tall man with a black mustache stepped out of the car. I recognized General Pershing. Then a third officer got out and said to me, "Soldier, where did you get the puttees?"

I said I had bought them in the village where I was taking a bath.

"What village was that?"

I gave him the name.

"What were you doing there?"

"I was taking a bath, sir. I had permission to take a bath."

"How long have you been in the Army?"

"I've been in about a year and a half."

"Where did you enlist?"

"I enlisted in New York."

"What's your name?"

The aide had taken down all I had said, and when I gave my name the next question, as always then, was: "Are you related to the brigadier?"

I said, "Yes, sir, I'm his son."

"Well, with a general for a father, and in the Army yourself for a year and a half, you certainly should know those puttees aren't regular army issue."

I could only say, "I'm sorry, sir," and salute again.

Then I was asked where I was stationed, and when I had told them I asked one question of my own: "Are you General Pershing, sir?"

But nobody answered; they got back in the car and drove off.

When I got to my station I told my sergeant, Florsheim, who was the son of the shoe people. He said, "The aide made the report. It was Pershing. Want to sell those puttees?"

Now came the last big German offensive and a rollback in our sector, though the Americans didn't retreat. When we were driving to Poperinghe one night, the road was shelled. We parked, and Kincaid and I lay down in a ditch, which unfortunately held water, but we were otherwise unharmed. However, a shell fragment hit the differential and the car couldn't be moved. I had

to stay with it until a British repair truck came; then I had to drive backwards, with a mirror to steer by fastened to the windshield.

That night as I drove I saw my father in the mirror. I took the car to the transport pool, walked back, and found that Father was really there and where he was staying. I walked up to the house and knocked, and he answered the door himself. So I didn't have to say, as I had at the party, "Is General Vanderbilt there? I'm his son." In fact, I had now forgotten both that night in New York, and Father's failure to welcome me in Texas. But Father hadn't. He said only, "Where the hell did you come from? Don't you know you have to see the adjutant before you speak to an officer of my rank?"

Then he slammed the door in my face.

CHAPTER III

HERO'S WELCOME

FATHER COULD shut doors, but the fate that still tied us together sent us home on the same transport. I was not, as reported, his orderly; at the start I didn't even know he was on the ship. And I'm sure he pulled no wires to have me there, although of course army channels tend to try to do what a brigadier general would want. I was shipped home because I'd breathed a whiff of that new gas the Germans were using on the road to Ypres; my father was headed for an assignment on the West Coast.

In Newport I had time only to find I didn't fit into the round of wartime parties. Then they sent me out west to a surgical hospital at Tacoma. After the hospital let me go, I was transferred to the Thirteenth Division, the Black Cat Division, in training at Camp Lewis near Tacoma. I lost my chevrons because my sergeant's rating had been temporary, to let me be a chauffeur. Now I was back where practice war still taught mule-skinning. But I took a course leading to West Point and had just passed all the examinations when I got my discharge, at Yaphank on Long Island. Then they discovered that, by exactly one day, I was too old to enter the Academy.

This ended my army career at the time, though they made me a shavetail—second lieutenant—in the reserve. Between the wars I maintained the reserve commission and in 1927 became a major. But at the moment, like other returned soldiers, I was all dressed up in civvies with no place to go.

Also, like other returning heroes, I wasn't quite the same youngster who had rushed off to save bleeding Belgium and make the world safe for democracy. Though somewhat damaged by the Ypres gas, I had reason to feel more faith in my own stamina. In spite of the early sports training, which under my first tutor had even included boxing and judo, I had been considered a sickly child. Three bouts with pneumonia had climaxed digestive

troubles, which modern psychology would no doubt attribute to nerve reaction over the family tensions and feuds. But I had survived my generation's exposure to a major squabble in the human family.

Also, I had proved to myself that I could go places and do things without family guidance. Of course, in the Army, I had been ordered around by other people. But now perhaps I could find the sort of job I wanted. My own bent was for journalism. I had, remember, edited the paper, the *Acorn*, at the New Jersey school, and had done a sports column for the paper at St. Paul's. I had written youthful poems which only a mother could love, but that phase ended when Charles Hanson Towne told me, "As a poet, you are a go-at." But in those days, as perhaps still, disappointed poets could always learn to type half a stickful about a fire and write "30" with a flourish at the end.

Still unforgiven for going to the war, I found myself even more at odds with the family when I proposed to get a job on a paper. Getting the job was easy; the New York *Herald* put me on at twenty-five a week. But my father was so furious he told me I couldn't stay at the house.

A psychologist might say this was exactly what my subconscious was asking for. I'd rather think that instead of going into the newspaper business as an escape from my family background, I wanted to learn more about a world that had erupted into confusion at home and abroad. Near the war's end, out on the West Coast, a part of my Black Cat Division had been ordered to Vladivostok. Turned around in mid-Pacific at news of the false armistice on November 7, the troops were debarked at Seattle just in time to break a general strike there. There were sandbag barricades as in a real war, with a machine-gun battery in front of the home of Ole Hanson, the Seattle mayor who broke the strike. It was my first look at labor trouble, and for the first time I heard American soldiers ask one another, "Would you shoot down your own people?"

However it happened, I felt I could be a journalist because I was now twenty-one as well as white and, for the first time, free. Or so I thought, and I suppose I was as free as anyone can be in a world of interrelated destinies. I was even free, as so many returning soldiers found themselves, to their surprise, of romantic entanglements. I had thought myself engaged to a pretty girl the family liked as well as I did. Fanny Billings had come to school

house parties, and I'd written to her from the camp in Spartanburg. I'd seen her on leave at Christmas and she'd seemed a little cool then. But, for that matter, down South I'd been going around with a girl from Brooklyn. So I thought Fanny was still my girl, and before I went overseas in the spring she came to Mother's birthday party for me and I drove her to a spot in Central Park where cars running on young love have driven before and since—the place where the bronze panther is poised for a leap over the East Drive. But now that I was a returned hero, that Christmas coolness was back, and it did no good to drive to the Park. Right there by the panther again, Fanny told me she intended to marry another. I'm not going to say she chose the better man, only that he now has a job so important that he should be better known to the American public. His name was Allen Dulles.

So about all I had left of the old life was my name. Looking back, I can see that although I have often failed to appreciate it, the name was an asset in starting a career, even in the democratic newspaper world. No doubt it got me my job on the *Herald* when other ex-warriors were having trouble getting any sort of start. Before the war, I hadn't been trained for any profession. Mother had favored banking, a dignified calling. My father wanted me to be an engineer, either mining or mechanical, after courses at Yale's Sheffield School. But now I found I could work on a paper because, as they had foreseen when they hired me, it was relatively easy for me to interview important people. It helped to say Mr. Vanderbilt was calling, if the person to be approached was a stranger. But as I had gone to school with many of the sons and daughters of the people with whom the American press sought interviews, not all the encounters were with strangers. Thus, although I covered my share of fires, police work, accidents, and so on, I was put on interviewing almost from the start.

In those days it was hard for reporters to get into places where today they would be welcomed and the only complaint would be inadequate coverage. For instance, when the Queen of the Belgians visited this country she was given a Red Cross medal and, in turn, joined the Red Cross in ceremonies at the home of Henry P. Davison, head of the organization, on Long Island's North Shore. Pershing was there, and General O'Ryan, and the Queen drove in with Mrs. August Belmont. But we reporters had to

sneak in. This was a carry-over into our thinking of an English attitude that journalists were not quite respectable.

When my father forbade me the house, I moved across Fifty-first Street into the house of John Ringling, the circus owner, who didn't mind reporters. Mr. Ringling was a kind and generous man and a friend of mine, though not of my family's. He proved his friendship and generosity by renting me a small apartment, comprising bedroom, bath, kitchenette, and a very small living room, on the second floor of his house. I paid him the fine sum of ten dollars a week, and had fifteen left. With this, plus a few hundred dollars I'd saved from my allowance and my army pay, and later of course my bonus, I was able to get along fairly well.

I loved my job. Lord Dunsany, the Irish poet, was in those days a popular idol of the literati and, as an ex-poet, I enjoyed interviewing him. I also enjoyed showing off my French in an interview with the Belgian dramatist Maeterlinck, and I enjoyed even more holding my peace when a Basque painter started talking French to his wife. When my story quoted that conversation, he sent me a note of apology, in French. Newspaper work is the one field in which you find unexpected use for the odd scraps of information you accumulate in an education like mine.

There were times, however, when my background didn't work. The New York *Herald* sent me to Canada to cover an expedition in search of the wood bison. Then, at Calgary, a telegram told me to proceed instead to Banff and interview the Prince of Wales. (These deflections make a reporter's life interesting.)

Edward, Prince of Wales, and I had sailed toy sloops against each other at Cowes when I was young enough to resent the parental warning that royalty must always win. But now when I sent in my card, the secretary replied that I might have an audience if I came as a friend; if as a reporter, I must find other means.

The Prince and his party went on to Lake Louise, and there I discovered in the village nearby a road show traveling in caravans. The attractions included trained fleas and a trapper's act exhibiting marmots, weasels, 'possums, and raccoons. Recalling the pet raccoon at Spartanburg, I talked to the trapper and for about ten dollars he permitted me to join his troupe.

The next day, as I had foreseen, the Prince and his friends stopped in the course of a long horseback ride to see the show. I found myself, costumed in a fur hat, with more of a role than

I had bargained for: I had a muskrat to manage as well as a 'coon, and was expected to help with the trained fleas. While I was searching for powder used in the flea act, one of the raccoons got out of hand and set his teeth in the shoulder of one of the young ladies in Edward's party. He sent his equerry to help. I, rushing about, lost the fur hat and was recognized. The Prince was amused by the episode, which broke up the show, but his guards in the Canadian secret service were less amused and at the hotel that night, with everyone dressed for the evening, they were careful to keep me away from him. It was there I learned of a simpler way to get royal interviews. I asked the name of the young lady with whom the Prince danced most, and learned she was Maureen O'Brien of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She actually was the first reporter to interview the future King of England on the trip.

I had better luck with another interview in Canada. When Lord Northcliffe, the British newspaper publisher, stopped over on his way to Australia, he played golf at the Oak Bay golf links in Victoria, B.C., with a justice of the Canadian supreme court, a former reporter for the Northcliffe papers, and a British artillery major. As Northcliffe's caddy, I went around with the foursome and got a long interview, chiefly concerned with Northcliffe's bugaboo—shared by Hearst—of Japan as a "yellow peril." But when I confessed my great interest in newspapers, he gave me some advice: The most important thing, he said, was to make 'em pay. Hearst had, in the United States. Inouye had, in Japan. Even C. P. Scott had, in England, with the *Manchester Guardian*.

In those days George Bye and George Palmer Putnam were running the literary agency that was later Bye's. George Bye found he could sell stories for me to the March of Events section of Universal Service for as much as \$250 a page—a high price in those days, and I needed the money. But the March of Events articles appeared in the Sunday section of Hearst newspapers, and this brought a complication. The *New York Herald* was of course considered to be a white newspaper, whereas the *New York American* and the *New York Journal* were yellow—that is, they printed scandals and outrages as well as straight news. In fact, my parents had refused to allow the Hearst papers in our house and had threatened to discharge any member of the household staff found reading them. Besides their objection on principle to yellow journalism, they had a personal one. At the time of my

parents' marriage, the Hearst gossip column signed Cholly Knickerbocker had sparked the Vanderbilt feud and cost my father his inheritance.

I had seen William Randolph Hearst at the funeral of Theodore Roosevelt, in Oyster Bay. He came in an open automobile with New York's Irish mayor, John Hylan, known to his friends as Red Mike. Hearst had once been friends with Roosevelt, in fact was credited with having first called him TR, but that was in the days of Hearst's early political reform; later they were bitter enemies. But of course all the big figures in politics had come to pay their last respects to TR.

Hylan I had interviewed and found to be very different from what my parents thought. TR, my idol in those days, had told me he was a kind man but warned me not to trust him and particularly never to tell him anything about my parents that could be used politically, since my father and his friends all opposed Hylan. All I could have told was that my mother worried about my father's drinking, and didn't like some of his New York Yacht Club cronies, who gave wild parties. And as it turned out, it was not I who talked to the Hylan-Hearst alliance, but they who talked to me.

I was in Hylan's office at City Hall, on a follow-up to the articles about him, when in strode a tall man with a long face and very piercing eyes. He was wearing a long black overcoat and a huge black Western hat, almost a ten-gallon hat. He looked something like a misplaced preacher.

The mayor's secretary had come rushing to whisper in his ear, and as this tall, almost Comanche Indian type followed into the office, Red Mike stood up and motioned me to do the same. The visitor was accompanied by a much shorter man, who was bald and fidgety, and behind him came a very fat, semibald character. The first man was of course William Randolph Hearst and the man following him was Arthur Brisbane, the editorial writer, who in later years became my friend. The fat man was Joe Willcomb, Mr. Hearst's private secretary, in later years known as Rasputin.

After the introduction, Mr. Hearst began talking to me; in fact he centered his conversation on me. And although at home I had always heard he was a terrible man, vulgar and crude and rude, with no manners at all, I was amazed to find him most

courteous and I liked him better than I ever had thought I possibly could.

Either he liked me or he wanted something from me, because he asked me to have dinner at his apartment the next evening. I promptly accepted. Years later when I told my father of this meeting, he slammed something down on the dining room table and broke a couple of glasses, and got up and walked out of the room, mumbling something about a son who was a traitor.

At dinner Mr. Hearst spent most of the time telling me that the man my father was backing for mayor was a gentleman crook. And he said that unless my father withdrew his backing, he intended to run in the Hearst papers articles telling about my father's love affairs with various women.

I was appalled because, although my father and I didn't get along, I had never had any idea that he would be untrue to Mother. But according to Mr. Hearst he had a crush on Geraldine Farrar, the opera singer, even though he didn't like opera, and affairs with other women too. Mr. Hearst also mentioned a society woman with a very good figure; I remembered hearing my parents jokingly call her "the jumbo squab." She was tall and buxom and wore low-cut dresses, and talked a lot of baby talk which Mother disliked as much as Father seemed to like it.

Of course I knew that Geraldine Farrar often came to practice singing in our ballroom. But many people in the music world did that because the acoustic layout was said to be perfect. There had been gossip when Caruso came; they said he had a crush on the first wife of my cousin Robert Goelet. But Madame Schumann-Heink used to come to the house to practice too, and nobody said anything about her. Artur Rubinstein came often to use the grand piano. In later years we had Heifetz and Efrem Zimbalist.

I just could not believe Hearst's charges about Father and Miss Farrar, and I remember saying, "No, no, Mr. Hearst, this can't be true."

He said, "If you'd like to see some of the reports from people we've had tailing your dad, I'd be very glad to show them to you."

I said I didn't want to see them. But I was so upset that I told John Ringling what Mr. Hearst had said, and asked him if he thought I should warn my father. He said he thought I should.

I tried to telephone Father at his office, but each time his private secretary told me he was out or busy or something. I

then wrote to say I'd very much like to see him, to tell him something I understood the Hearst newspapers were going to do—something he would not like if he knew about it. Father did not answer my letter. So one morning when I saw him leave the house, I walked across the street and joined him as he started to walk downtown. I said, "I have something to tell you which may change the whole election, and which I think you ought to know." My father stopped abruptly, raised his cane to signal a taxi, and when it came he jumped in and slammed the door. He never said a word to me.

The campaign was growing hotter by the minute, and I knew it was only a question of time until the Hearst papers would begin their blast. So I tried another tack. I wrote a note to Miss Farrar and told her that a group of papers for which I was writing had had her and my father tailed. I said I had done everything within reason to reach my father and tell him before it was too late to stop a nationwide scandal, but that Father had refused to talk to me. I asked Miss Farrar if I could meet her at the stage door of the Metropolitan Opera House, where she was singing on certain evenings.

Miss Farrar never answered. When I went back to Mr. Ringling, he tried to console me: "You know, Vanderbilt, it may turn out that William Randolph Hearst will be the best friend you ever had in your life."

When I couldn't see this, he said, "Frankly, I don't know if what Mr. Hearst said is correct, and I don't want to be the judge. Maybe it's true about Geraldine Farrar and the other ladies, and maybe it's not. But you mustn't look at your father too harshly. Your mother is busy giving parties and being the queen of New York society, and you children have your own lives, so your father probably gets lonely and needs someone to talk to and—well—"

I said, "Please, Mr. Ringling—"

He went on, "I was not going to say what you thought. He needs somebody to flatter him and tell him what a magnificent fellow he is, and build up his ego and make a little feminine fuss over him. You can thank your lucky stars that the women Mr. Hearst wants to link his name with are ladies. Those women think just as much of their reputations as your father does of his, maybe more."

"What would you do, then?" I asked.

"I'd call William Randolph Hearst and ask to see him. And when I saw him I'd start walking around the room, instead of sitting down in one place, because he might have a dictaphone set up near your chair. I'd appear to be very angry, and I'd tell him that even if you and your father didn't get along, he was still your father and you still admired him, and you had served in France and seen him on the battlefield and knew what kind of soldier he was, and what kind of man. And I would say to Mr. Hearst as dramatically as I could, 'If you print a foul lie about my father and any woman, I'll wait downstairs outside the office with a gold-headed cane and give you the thrashing of your life.'"

"But how can I say a thing like that?"

"It's easier than you think," declared Mr. Ringling. "You've just got to get your courage up. Get mad enough and you'll do it. And your father and your mother will thank you for it."

"They won't even know."

"You leave that to me," John Ringling said.

Since I didn't drink, I had no false courage and I remained in a state of indecision until something appeared in the *New York American*, Mr. Hearst's morning paper, that made me think even worse might be coming. I promptly telephoned Mr. Hearst and asked for an appointment. He said to come at ten the next day. That evening I wandered around and looked in pawnshop windows at gold-headed canes.

When John Ringling came in later, I told him what I'd done—that I'd made a start at taking his advice. "But I haven't got a cane."

"Mine isn't gold-headed; it's got a silver head of John Bull. But you can have it," he told me.

"What happens," I asked, "if Mr. Hearst does run the article and I give him a thrashing? Won't I go to jail?"

"No jury in the world would convict you, if you told your story as you told it to me here."

Next morning I went to see Mr. Hearst and did exactly what John Ringling had told me to do. I walked up and down the office as if I were very angry and I said, "Mr. Hearst, I liked you when I met you and I've liked working for your newspapers. You've been kind and generous to me. But the lies you told me about my father I have checked and found to be pure figments of the imagination."

Hearst let out a great big loud guffaw. "Did you ask your father about them?"

"No, I didn't. I told Miss Farrar."

"Good God!" he said. "You mean you talked to her?"

"I wrote her a letter."

"Christ!" he said, getting up from his desk. "Christ, what a sneaky bastard you are. I'm going to kick you out of this office and down the stairs, and I hope I never see you again."

And now I spoke my lines. "It's strange for you to say that, Mr. Hearst, because I was just going to tell you that if you dare to print a word of what you told me in your lousy goddam papers, I'll wait until I catch you and give you the thrashing of your life." And I raised John Ringling's cane over my head.

Hearst looked at me and pressed a button on his desk. He pressed it two or three times, and Joe Willicomb and two girl secretaries came into the office. Hearst's face looked as if he might be on the verge of a heart attack.

"What the hell goes on in here?" Willicomb asked.

"Nothing much," I told him. "Your boss can explain after I go. And some day, Mr. Hearst, I'm going to pay you back for those lousy stories I've been writing for your Universal Service."

Back at Mr. Ringling's, I found a note in my mother's writing, asking me to dinner at the house. When I told my landlord about it, his face lit up and he said with a broad smile, "Vanderbilt, I'm afraid I'm going to lose a roomer, but you can't beat your mother. You know, she's a wonderful woman. You tell her I admire her greatly and if she ever has any trouble with that old man of hers and needs a job, I'll always have one for her."

"In the circus?" I asked.

"She runs a better circus than I ever could," he said, and laughed.

That night, at least temporarily forgiven, I had dinner with the family.

CHAPTER IV

TABLOID TRAGEDY

MY LAST AND most important memory of the New York *Herald* was of its purchase by Frank Munsey, the magazine publisher who began acquiring newspapers and combining them in what he considered business mergers; old newspapermen considered them murders. Mr. Munsey, as the new boss, stood in the door of the city room, where perhaps thirty to sixty shirt-sleeved men were at work, and turning to an assistant stooge, said, "Fire these swine."

He was a tall, lean man with a high, almost bald head. I stood up in the back of the room and he saw me. He was a great friend of my parents', especially of Mother's. Mr. Munsey greatly admired her. So now, to the assistant, he added, "Have that man brought to my office."

It gave me great pleasure to write out my resignation as I rode up in the freight elevator. In the long talk with Mr. Munsey that followed, he told me how foolish I was and said he just didn't understand how, coming from the family I came from, I could side with the other men.

When I went back to the city room, there were questions all around—had I been fired, or what? Some thought I should have stayed on, among them the drama critic, Quinn Martin, who tried all evening to talk me into staying with the paper. Instead, the next day I led a group who went up to Mr. Munsey's office to ask for at least a few days' pay—this was before the days of labor legislation and Newspaper Guild contracts with severance pay provided. Mr. Munsey's response was to ask the New York publishers' association to blacklist me.

The first effect of this was that I got married, my fiancée wisely deciding that the way to do anything with a newspaperman is to move fast, between assignments. Rachel Littleton was a half sister of Martin Littleton, the well-known criminal lawyer, who had

been a congressman from New York and a borough president of Brooklyn. We were married at a high church wedding in St. Thomas's, complete with bridesmaids and flower girls. The various outfits with which I had served overseas—Squadron A, the 102nd Ammunition Train, the Headquarters Troop of the Twenty-seventh Division, and the Second Army dispatch riders—assembled outside on Fifth Avenue, blocking traffic, and we went down the church steps under crossed sabers. The bride was twenty, I one day short of twenty-two, and this was the sort of wedding that the society columnists and the sidewalk watchers dearly love.

My father gave us a check for ten thousand and his wartime Packard car. All things considered (except Father's caution in money matters), we had hoped for a somewhat bigger check. But the good news was that I now had a job. On our honeymoon we drove to the West Coast, where the *New York Times* would pay me thirty-five a week. We took an open Buick, a "touring car," instead of the Packard; but my mother insisted on sending along a footman from the Fifth Avenue house, who treated us like royalty—as Mother indeed thought we were. He obligingly curled up on the back seat of the car when we camped overnight in a tent we carried on the running board, and he was very useful with the farmers in the Dakotas and Canada when we got stuck in the mud of dirt roads.

The West Coast job meant working on something called the *West Coast Analyst*, a business weekly. I found myself writing the life story of Columbia River salmon, and reports on the mining industry in Utah and Washington. But I could free-lance at space rates, and I managed to more than double my salary by writing features, for which United Press gave me fourteen dollars a column and a by-line. When Josephus Daniels landed in Seattle after a survey of Canadian resources, I interviewed him and he offered me a drink of grapejuice. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the expert on Arctic diets, told me the story of one of his men who had starved to death while carrying a supply of sugar, because he did not think of it as a food.

Then the *Times* brought me east again, to work as a legislative correspondent in the Albany bureau for sixty a week. I learned a lot on that job and I kept on with features for the *Sunday Times* at the column rate. I had also begun to sell magazine articles on water power, lumbering, fishing, conservation, and similar subjects.

Albany was a pretty dull place, but once a month we were able to go down to New York by rail and spend from Friday to Sunday night at my parents' house. I remained in Albany through the spring of 1921 and got to know many people who eventually became famous in New York politics, among them Jimmy Walker, later mayor of New York. When I was in Albany, he was the lobbyist for the taxicab interests in New York and also for the cab-drivers and the buses. He was a funny little man, soaked most of the time, but he seemed to know everyone and everyone seemed to know and like him. In fact, many people thought he should run for President. Fortunately he never did.

In January, 1921, Edward L. Bernays, then an editor of *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, asked me if I could obtain material on the Japanese labor problem in the Far West, especially California. (At first I didn't realize that Hearst owned *Cosmopolitan*.) A battle was then raging, with the American labor group running huge billboard and newspaper ads: "Keep California White." The lobbyists who represented the Japanese, in those days excluded from entering the United States, ran a counterslogan: "Keep California Green," because the Japanese did more farming in California than any of the white people or even the Mexican laborers today.

So I wrote a series of letters to educators, editors, politicians, governors, and other important people throughout the United States, asking their opinion. We used several hundred letters, maybe several thousand. I edited the replies, wrote leads and transitions and an introduction, and finally turned out what later was called "A Symposium of Public Opinion on the Japanese-American Question." I got no royalties, though *Cosmopolitan* paid my writing expenses, but the pamphlet sold over a million copies—my first bestseller.

Some of the replies clearly revealed the writers' strong prejudices involving other areas—Hawaii, with its many races, and our Southern states too. From Alabama a judge wrote an almost perfect statement of the states' rights position: "Each state should be permitted to work out these problems in its own way, free from interference from the Federal government, and being protected by the Federal government in such laws as the states may enact."

Only a few replies—one from the writer Achmed Abdullah, and one from Lyman Abbott, editor of the *Outlook*—were as free from race prejudice as the majority of Americans seem to be

today, so we can mark some progress since 1921. But I flatter myself that the introduction to the little pamphlet, stressing our need to know more of international relations and to be wary of pressure groups taking advantage of our ignorance in that field, might have been written today.

That spring the New York *Times* sent me back to the West Coast, to their Seattle bureau. They paid me sixty a week, United Press hired me jointly at the same salary, and I was selling more magazine and newspaper articles. But the Coast assignment lasted only through summer; by fall I was back in Washington covering the White House for the *Times*.

My father was of course a Republican. Mother, born a Southern Democrat, had changed sides and on Wilson's election she wrote to me at St. Paul's, "How strange to have a President we do not know!" I hadn't known what party I was. But now, in Washington, my interest was with the ousted Democrats rather than the Harding administration. Mrs. J. Borden Harriman took me to see Woodrow Wilson, living out his last sad days after the defeat of his League of Nations here had, in his words, come to "break the heart of the world," as it certainly broke his. Nevertheless he still took an interest in what youngsters like me were doing.

Wilson thought I should either get a job on a paper in the Middle West—he suggested the Kansas City *Star*—and work my way up, or go into the stock market and there, by use of my name and connections, make enough money to buy a paper of my own.

I thought I could take his advice in spirit if not in letter. I had worked for various papers and by so doing, and working for syndicates and press services as well, I thought I was learning more than I could have learned by a long stretch on any one paper. As for making money in the market and buying a paper of my own, I hoped I saw a short cut there, because the stock market did not appeal to me.

One of my great faults has always been counting my chickens before they are hatched. But from the time I was a little boy, my mother and my father had promised me that if I didn't drink or smoke or get involved with girls up to a certain age, and did the things they wanted me to do and left undone the things they did not want me to do, I would inherit several million dollars of my ancestors' money. As I grew older the figures crystallized: I would have three million when I was twenty-six. The money was not left "in trust"; it was my share of family funds, which they would

give me, more or less, as a reward for good conduct—a sort of carrot in front of my nose to keep me on the straight and narrow, as other boys were given, with similar conditions, larger allowances of pocket money than I ever had.

This financial expectation of mine was not unreasonable, considering the state of the family finances at the time. We seldom talked about money but I heard, mostly from my father, a lot about financial affairs in general, and certain things about our own I knew in detail. When my Grandfather Wilson died, he had left approximately fifteen million dollars to be divided among his two sons and three daughters. And since various members of my mother's family had died later and she had inherited from them, I would say that by 1920 my mother at a conservative guess had five or six million in her own name.

Through sale of his inventions and through his business directorships, Father had more than doubled his original eight and a half million, and by 1920 he must have had between twenty and twenty-five million. Once financial page headlines credited him with gains of over a million in a week. So you can see why Woodrow Wilson's income tax was unpopular with the family and also why I, though I admired Wilson, felt I might have another way than the one he suggested for getting the money to become a newspaper publisher.

Besides these hopes of family capital, I was now making more money myself. Soon after I went to Washington for the *Times*, Universal Service offered me more money, seventy-five dollars a week and expenses, to be assistant chief of their Washington bureau. I was still selling to magazines—articles to *The American Magazine* and *Review of Reviews* and others of the period—and best of all, financially, I had discovered what could be done with public relations for large corporations. The Barron G. Collier advertising people handled street-railway advertising the world over. For getting them the accounts of the Paris and the Tokyo subways, I made over two hundred thousand in commissions. I worked for another advertising outfit, handling outdoor advertising, and I also handled publicity for a chain of hotels owned and operated by Major—now General—Kincaid, for whom I had driven the car in France.

So making money began to look easy, but of course I wanted to stay in the newspaper world. I had covered the disarmament conference. I also covered the Knickerbocker Theatre fire, a horror

I still remember. But Universal Service refused a raise from seventy-five to ninety a week, and I quit to organize a news service of my own, taking with me nearly all the newspapers for which I had been writing a twice-weekly column syndicated by Universal. My Cee Vee News, with its Washington headquarters in a building looking over a vacant lot where the Mayflower Hotel now stands, started to make money for me too.

The Washington job was all right, and the only thing that would be better would be a paper of my own.

Of course I did not have the money to start a newspaper, but I had a certain amount of justification in the crazy enterprise I now undertook. In four years I had learned something about the newspaper business; I had even talked back to the country's two biggest newspaper publishers. Through the various publicity jobs I had made nearly a quarter of a million dollars of my own in a year. And my share of that family money was about due.

Advising me, at this point, out of what looked like some knowledge of the family arrangements, was a lawyer friend of my father's out on the West Coast. He had known both Father and Mother during the war when Father had been stationed in Washington state. He represented my father's railroad interests in the West. I had carried on the friendship myself when I worked out there, and now he was both sympathetic and plausible—and, I thought, helpful—when he told me of the possibilities of starting a paper on the shoestring I had, plus of course the certainty of the money I expected. We had only to organize a company and sell stock. Perhaps he believed in the enterprise, perhaps he wanted to keep up a close connection with my father—I do not know. But his encouragement influenced me and he seemed to know his way around the financial problems. So, on September 3, 1923—my mother's birthday—I started as publisher of the Los Angeles *Illustrated Daily News*. As the name indicates, the paper was a tabloid—a novelty then—but a “clean” tab, with a pro-labor, progressive editorial policy, rare in those days. The paper caught on at once, helped by a stroke of wonderful journalistic luck which gave us sole coverage of the Tokyo earthquake.

That winter we started the *Illustrated Daily Herald* in San Francisco. The next year Vanderbilt Newspapers, Incorporated, started publishing the *Illustrated Daily Tab* in Miami—the Florida boom was going strong and here we were expanding from coast

to coast. I thought Lord Northcliffe might approve and I even thought the family might be a little proud of me, in time.

Opposition was chiefly from the Hearst papers, all-powerful on the West Coast and well dug in elsewhere. These papers had changed gradually from support of genuinely popular issues—Hearst, like Mussolini, began with “socialistic” appeals to the underdog—to cynical reaction, overlaid with lowbrow sensationalism. It was fun to fight them, on several fronts. We had a syndicated gravure section on Sundays and several “stuffers” for various industrial areas. All this kept me busy. The papers were well staffed, and most of my time was spent in actual news-chasing and writing, rather than being an executive. I wrote features, editorials, daily columns. Also I started writing a weekly page for *Script*, Rob Wagner’s Beverly Hills magazine which was a forerunner of *The New Yorker*. *Script* had my stuff for free (my first piece was an interview with Viscount Kato, the new premier of Japan), but the material was used for syndicated newspaper columns and as a basis for other magazine articles.

As far as distribution went, Cee Vee enterprises, like me, were doing fine. The Los Angeles tabloid had grown to 250,000 circulation; we had 200,000 in San Francisco, and 50,000 in Miami. But as newspaper publishers know, getting circulation is not the chief problem. To get it, you have only to put out a good paper. Heywood Broun spoke truly when he said newspaper publishing was for millionaires—and look what happened to Marshall Field with *PM*.

We’d need more money soon and that three million from the family was overdue. The family was abroad, in Father’s crack three-masted schooner *Atlantic*. I hoped we could hold out until their return, but it wouldn’t be easy. In Los Angeles we had borrowed fifty thousand dollars for new presses, and suddenly the bank called the loan. They had my personal note for the amount. There was no good business reason for their sudden demand for money, but all sorts of pressures were involved—we were fighting Hearst, we were fighting for the labor unions, and so on.

However, thanks to my *Script* stories and to other circumstances, I knew people, and with no time to seek elsewhere I passed around the hat in Hollywood. Overnight the people I knew best there—Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Doug Fairbanks, Will Rogers, Edward G. Robinson—had pledged more than

was needed and several had given me cash. I took the actual bills to the bank in a taxi and dumped them on the desk of the vice-president.

Nevertheless, the harder the three lively papers fought Hearst, the harder we had to fight. Hearst meant to break me as a newspaper publisher, although, as I later learned, one expedient under consideration was the establishment of a new tabloid in New York which I would be invited to edit. But meanwhile a strange weapon was delivered into my hands.

Old-timers on the West Coast and film fans throughout the country may remember the death of the pioneer film producer, Thomas Ince, on board the Hearst yacht, the *Ventura*. Ince died of a gunshot wound under circumstances never made public; in fact, his death is still referred to as a mystery awaiting suitable solution by Alfred Hitchcock or Perry Mason.

Not long after his death, a stranger appeared in my Los Angeles office and insisted on talking to me alone. He offered to sell me a news story he thought my paper should be happy to print. He was a sailor from Hearst's yacht, and his startling story of what happened there, which fixed the responsibility on Hearst, I did indeed buy and file away both in my memory and in the office safe. But I never printed it. Instead, when I was reliably informed that the Hearst papers were planning a series of articles on my financial troubles, I let it be known that the story was in my hands. In fact, I sent a telegram to Mr. Hearst which said in substance, "Have just purchased report of occurrences at sea and at Del Mar on night of [date of Ince's death]. Intend to start printing—" and here came the date of Hearst's scheduled exposé of my financial status. So the exposé never appeared, although the articles had been set in type and it must have cost something to kill them.

More prudently, my linotypes never even set up the true story of Ince's death, but later I came to wish I had printed it. At the time I reasoned that its publication would not revive the dead man nor, in the California of those days, even ensure judicial action. But there are those of us who believe that later the case claimed another victim. Aboard the yacht on that black night was Charlie Chaplin. Other guests were then, and after, good friends of William Randolph Hearst who could be relied upon never to embarrass their host by telling what they knew. Indeed they, like the public on shore, may never have known

what really happened. But Charlie knew. Charlie, said the sailor, had been an eyewitness. And Hearst could never be sure that some day Charlie would not tell. For no man, least of all Hearst, owned Charlie.

As the years passed and their politics and views of life grew farther apart, the aging Hearst may have come to feel that Charlie really was a menace—a Red dangerous to the country, not just to him. So it was that the film capital, which forgave its stars so many things, was in time persuaded to make the beloved Charlie a sacrifice to the Hollywood witch hunt. The biggest little star of all got no mercy when his name was smeared, and Charlie went to live abroad. American theatergoers, now able to see his films only in art-theater revivals, were the real losers.

Soon enough I was to discover that, in the newspaper battle, my real foes were those of my own household. The serious crisis for the papers came in 1926 when the Florida boom burst. Various advertisers in the Miami area—the Roney-Plaza Hotel, the Coral Gables development, the Miami Beach development—owed, all told, in excess of \$600,000. In California a boom had burst also, and we were owed over a million in Los Angeles and around \$300,000 in San Francisco.

With that three million from my family we might have pulled through. They knew what was happening, of course. My lawyer friend—and Father's—was on our board of directors. And his legal advice to me hadn't been so good after all because, as I was told afterward by a really good New York lawyer, we should have had separate companies for the three papers. Then a crisis in Florida wouldn't have affected the California papers, and vice versa, and we might have cushioned the shocks.

But now that we were in real trouble, I found my father was providing, not the money needed and, to my mind, promised, but legal talent to wind up my newspapers. One of his lawyers, Isador Kresel, set up a committee which included another family lawyer and friend, Frank L. Polk, a business associate of Father's from Chicago, and a third lawyer, Martin Littleton, who was my wife's half-brother. They met in the library at 640 Fifth Avenue one evening, and after a lot of discussion they informed me of their decision. It was to put the papers up for sale at once, and if they were not sold quickly, to cease publication.

My father then had me sign a note for \$901,000, a loan to be

taken out of my patrimony when he died. There was no question of giving me the three million dollars I had been brought up to think would be mine.

Of course I was very angry indeed. I was also sorely hurt and upset. I went to my room and remained there until my father asked me to come down because he and Mother wanted to talk to me. Then I went downstairs, to find both of them flushed with anger at what they considered my bad behavior, my disobedient attitude. I made a few foolish threats to the effect that they would live to rue the day and that although I'd made up on other occasions, I would leave the house next morning, never to return.

In spite of these dramatic statements I went over to kiss Mother good night, but she brushed me off. This probably hurt worst of all. I had always felt closer to her than to Father. In her way I suppose she spoiled me; certainly she was more generous with her smaller income than Father with his larger one. It was no surprise to find him arrayed against me, but here Mother was allied with him. That was too much to take, and I said the unforgivable: "I wonder what you did—both of you—with my three million!"

Then I turned and walked to the door, and downstairs and out of the house without hat or coat.

I know that to many people my family's behavior will seem almost incredible, and no doubt in a normal American family, with the customary interest in, sympathy with, and support of an only son's activities, such a thing could never have happened. Indeed, it has taken me years to understand why my case was different, and to arrive at an impersonal explanation which I think may make sense and even have some historic value for students of the American way of life.

All this happened in 1926, before the nationwide depression and the New Deal, which would challenge and change many American views and the whole basis of our economy. At that time it was felt by many people, and certainly by my family themselves, that we were not "ordinary" people. Great wealth in itself was supposed to set one apart and to entail, they felt, certain obligations as well as privileges. Along with the apparent advantages went duties and inhibitions—they were called "standards"—which one was bound to respect. There were things one did not do. Just as an example, my sister was taught to ride sidesaddle, as my mother did and as English queens on parade still do, in a

day when other little girls were cantering around in jodhpurs. As children we were subjected to all sorts of disciplines which, as I learned in school and in the army, others of my generation had escaped. We were taught both "manners" and real obedience to parental wishes. In effect, we were kept underage longer than other children. As long as the family funds guaranteed our livelihood, we were expected to accept family guidance.

Thus, when I was nearly thirty and the head of my own publishing business, my father could feel it his right to destroy the business with one blow. And my mother, far from helping in the crisis, could feel grieved at *my* behavior.

In time I came to understand that though the treatment I received was unjustified on any business or professional grounds, or in equity, my parents were right in one respect: I was still young. I was so young that I had shut my eyes to their prejudice against the profession I had chosen. I did not realize that, for reasons inseparable from their own past experience, no journalistic achievement would ever impress them. A newspaperman was a low creature dedicated to invasion of privacy, digging away at scandals like a dirty dog. I might cover peace conferences and interview kings, I might achieve the most shining success possible with my papers, and my mother would still feel that, laid at her feet, they were as welcome as a terrier's offer of a dead rat. To separate me from this low calling was, therefore, simply and clearly for my good—just as it would have been for my good in 1917 to keep me out of the army, had that been humanly possible. A business failure might be painful for me but I was young enough to outgrow the hurt.

As for my father, I think he doubtless told himself that he too was acting in my best interests, although his objection had more to do with what he considered financial risks. And just as my mother's basic objection to the press stemmed from the gossip columns written about her marriage to my father, his corresponding hostility derived from the financial loss which their marriage—in this blaze of damaging press comment—had cost him. But beyond that, his whole approach to financial affairs was such as to make my newspaper undertaking seem to him foolish and absurd to the point of madness. The greater its magnitude, the greater the error; a serious and painful operation was required to separate me from what I saw as my lifework and he saw as suicidal folly.

My father was an economic royalist of the old school in that, in his day, investments were a matter for private discussion among a group of very wealthy men. I used to see him and his old cronies, many of them men of wealth far surpassing his, sit around discussing the formation of new companies, their launching, the methods of enticing the public to invest, and then the methods by which they would eventually cash in. In those days it was not so much the general public which was doing the investing. Groups of men, or what they called syndicates, got together and decided to back something or not to back it. It was a game they played with each other, rich men against rich men.

Father and his friends would gather in our library in the Fifth Avenue house or on the *North Star*, or later in the beautiful green-brocaded library at Beaulieu in Newport, or perhaps on the *Winchester*, Father's very fast diesel-powered yacht, or in the New York Yacht Club. However, Charles M. Schwab, who was one of the group, couldn't join them in the Yacht Club because he was Jewish. And my father, who could have had something to say about the club rules, was one of those people who didn't care at all for Jews—including the Rothschilds, Otto H. Kahn, and Mortimer Schiff. But in business deals my father and Mr. Schwab got along very well together.

Among Father's closest friends were the Harriman boys. August Belmont was in the group and so was Joseph Widener, high up in Philadelphia finance. So was Richard T. Crane, the head of the plumbing house, from Chicago. Dick Crane was one of Father's closest friends, although Mother never accepted him socially and, for that matter, never accepted Chicago. Other members of the group were William Goadby Loew, whose children were my Newport playmates, and Charlie Mitchell, remembered as chairman of the board of New York's National City Bank, and—younger than the others—William Rhinelanders Stewart, Jr. And there was the father of the late Congressman Joseph Clark Baldwin of New York, and James W. Gerard, ambassador to Germany at the start of the First World War. Mr. Gerard had been one of Mother's beaux; she turned him down in the belief that he never would amount to much. And Father thought his ignorance of protocol funny when, going to represent us in Germany, he asked Mother for an introduction to the Kaiser.

These men sat around over their drinks and discussed plans involving concerns in various parts of the world—the United

States, Europe, South America. It all added up to financial enterprise from the top down, with controls carefully in the right hands. My newspapers had gone over to the enemy, so to speak. In establishing papers with attitudes unpalatable to the privileged investor group, I was dependent on mass support. My penny tabloids were for the people who bought chewing gum, rode on subways and street cars, went to the movies, shopped in basements, perhaps saved money to buy cars and fur coats and trips to Florida or California in those wonderful expanding days of the twenties. They were for people in great numbers, buying mass-produced goods at low cost. Large-circulation papers *are* mass-produced, and nowadays it is a business axiom that selling your product to large numbers of people is the way to get ahead. Soon it would be demonstrated that these large numbers of people could sway the government, too—by voting for Roosevelt.

Such considerations were no part of my father's reasoning; indeed, the fact that the papers supported popular political movements was one more count against them. Father's business deals were successfully managed by consultation with the people at the top, those I have mentioned. And when he sold any of his inventions for profit, here too his associates and customers were the people at the top. In fact, they were royalty.

In those days in Europe the railroads and other transport and all sorts of important practical matters depended on royal recommendations. That's why we visited so many times in Germany and Russia, in England, in Spain, and occasionally up in the Scandinavian countries. We entertained the kings and queens, the princes and princesses, and other important personages, including prime ministers, aboard the *North Star* or one of the later yachts. And after a few trips Father would talk about some of his things or Mother would bring out something about his inventions. Father sold his firebox for locomotives to the German government, and later the British government, and later still the Russian government, many years before Mr. E. H. Harriman adopted it for his Western railroads and before it was purchased by the New York Central, the Chesapeake and Ohio, the Illinois Central, and the rest.

Of course I could be proud of the inventions, and at school I would say that my father was in the railroad business and spent a great deal of his time traveling on inspection trips. But someone would always say something about watered stock, and I grew up

with a keen consciousness that no ordinary person could achieve an income of more than a few thousand dollars a year without doing something considered not quite aboveboard, or at best not quite fair to less fortunate people. Perhaps if I hadn't been sent to American schools and hadn't enlisted as a private, I might not have had the evils of our mode of living so thoroughly rubbed into me.

When I tried to talk to Father about these things he would say, "That's rubbish," or "Nonsense," or "Where did you get such socialistic ideas? Who have you been talking to?" As for Father's financial friends, they always treated me as if I were a child, or didn't have a brain in my head. For my part, I was lacking in respect for the financial jungle in which they made money. And so when I expected some of the money for my own enterprises, I should have known what the answer would be.

But when I went out the front door and down Fifth Avenue that night in 1926, in bitter disillusionment about my parents' unfairness, I had a young man's inability to understand. Why should Mother blame me for what had appeared in "society" columns decades before? Why should my father keep from me money rightfully mine, because I did not want to spend it as he would?

At the time my first concern was what would happen to the three papers, for I had been meeting a payroll. And fantastic things did begin to happen at once. Those who took over for my parents and creditors lost no time in reversing the policy of the papers, which meant nothing to them except as a financial liability or asset. Thus readers in Los Angeles, where the tabloid had supported La Follette, were surprised to find the paper coming out for Coolidge. Their shock naturally hastened the paper's demise.

Well, they weren't my papers any more. But it still never occurred to me to give up the newspaper business. If I couldn't run my own papers I could work on other papers, for although I was no longer a publisher, I was still a reporter.

Such Interesting People

CHAPTER V

FAMOUS AND INFAMOUS

CLARENCE DARROW told me, "Get another newspaper job as quickly as you can and find yourself a good lawyer, preferably Jewish."

I did both. The lawyer, suggested by Arthur Brisbane, was Max D. Steuer. And Brisbane was to give me the job also, though a few other things came first.

Once more, as after the war, I was foot-loose—and fancy-free too. My marriage had busted up during the strenuous days with the Miami paper. Perhaps I should have known that my first wife, like my family, was not geared for the newspaper business. There always has seemed to be some sort of correlation between my marital crises and my business troubles; they come together.

But right then, a natural inclination to get away from it all coincided with a project involving interviews with world celebrities, initiated that year by the newly organized Overseas Press Club. With any luck at all I knew I could sell newspaper and magazine features, and there was a chance I might do better and land an award that would come in handy too.

Luck was with me as I went up the gangplank of the *Leviathan*. There was General Pershing—and I wasn't a private now, or wearing puttees. We could talk like human beings; in fact, he was nice to me as people are nice to newspapermen when they are doing what he was doing at the moment, writing his memoirs. Also, his aide hadn't showed up at the ship. So I took over the job, my chief duty being to look over the memoirs as they were written. Then I was asked to join him in Paris. There, two cars of French security police escorted him to the Crillon and I went there too.

Next I had the unique experience, for a former private, of going on a tour of the battlefields with the General of the Armies. In Pershing's old wartime car, with his same chauffeur, we went to Belleau Wood and Château-Thierry. It was the General's first visit since the war, just as it was mine. We had tea at Caen and spent the night. After all, I was now a lieutenant in the Reserve and could dress the part of aide.

Naturally I had a Pershing interview, and this gave me a head start in the Overseas Press Club's celebrity stakes. Next I went on to Rome to try for an interview with Mussolini. I stayed at the Flora Hotel because I wanted to be close to the American Embassy. An uncle of mine was then ambassador to Italy, and I thought that through him I could secure an interview with Italy's strong man. However, I was told that my uncle would not go to bat for me, and in the end I owed my interview with Mussolini to the Catholic Church.

One evening in the rooftop dining room of the Flora Hotel, at a table not far from mine, I noticed a priest who looked quite familiar. He was young and handsome and full of conversation. At first, we just nodded in passing, but after a while we began to chat and he asked me what brought me to Rome. When I told him, he asked to what denomination I belonged. I said that I was an Episcopalian, though not a very good one, and that I was then separated from my wife, who was a Baptist.

"It seems to me I've seen your face somewhere before," he remarked. It developed that he had known a friend of mine, Jack O'Brien, who had worked for my newspapers. O'Brien had been on the staff of the old New York *Tribune*. He came from a little town outside Boston, and it was evidently in the O'Briens' house that I had met Father Spellman.

Spellman—he's now the cardinal—asked what had happened to my newspapers. I said that they had gone to the wall because my family refused to support them, and he wanted to know why my family should support them. I said it was a long story, but if he'd like to hear it, I'd be very glad to tell it.

"Why do you want to see Mussolini?" he asked, changing the subject.

I told him about the Overseas Press Club prize. He asked what the amount was, and I explained that when I had first entered the race, the prize had been only about \$1,200, but by the time

I left New York, it had risen to over \$5,000. (By the time I won it, the prize turned out to be \$12,500.)

Father Spellman then said, "If I secure you an interview with Mussolini, how much of this prize money would you be willing to give to the Catholic Church?"

I was taken aback. I told him I'd never paid for an interview yet, although I'd talked to many prominent people in various parts of the world during the six years of my newspaper existence—and that was that.

I didn't see him again for some time, and then one day I found a note in my box at the hotel. It said that my interview with Pope Pius had been granted, and that if I would turn up at the Vatican the following morning, I would be able to see the Holy Father. I was surprised because I had not requested an interview with the Pope; but I did have a special reason for wanting to see him if possible, and, if not, the papal secretary of state, and so I jumped at the opportunity.

In an audience with the Holy Father, men must wear evening clothes—not simply dinner jackets, but tails and white tie—and women must wear dark dresses and a little hat or a babushka or something over their heads. There are thirty places in Rome where you can rent the proper clothes, and that is what I did.

The following morning at eleven-thirty I presented myself at the Vatican with all my credentials. I had visited the Vatican many times in my youth, and so knew my way around fairly well, although it's a confusing establishment, covering, I believe, an area larger than Governors Island in New York. The papal secretary of state seemed to expect me to get lost, and he sent me with a messenger up a narrow circular stairway, which went between columns up to the top floor of the Vatican.

There I found myself on a spacious balcony overlooking the so-called seven hills of Rome. I waited for perhaps half to three-quarters of an hour, and wandered about. The messenger had gone back, and there was no one with me. After a while I found myself in front of a very beautiful fountain, on top of which was a large statue of the Virgin. There were several chairs around the fountain and some water lilies growing in it.

Suddenly I heard sounds of walking and talking coming from the halls, and before I had a chance to get back onto the balcony proper, into this large conservatory came the Holy Father, surrounded by a great group of elaborately dressed men. Some were

Palatine guards, others were Swiss guards, and a great many were high dignitaries of the Church. They were wearing scarlet and purple and even golden robes.

The Holy Father was ahead, and he went over to a large chair in front of the fountain and sat down. Two page boys came and took off his sandals. They bathed his feet in water from the fountain, which I understand is holy water. Then they put a sort of carpet down, a small rug or very heavy bath towel. He stood up on this, raised his arms to his neck, unfastened a few hooks, and almost before I knew it, had taken off all his outer garments. He must have been wearing eight or ten state robes, but they all came off together. I was amazed to see him standing there in an undershirt and a pair of old gray pants. He looked very much like our gardener at Newport, and the entire illusion of his great office—the view of him as vicar of Christ on earth—was gone. He just looked like an ordinary mortal.

After a while some of the people around him noticed me, and one of them came over and began talking to me in Italian, or it could have been Latin. Of course I couldn't answer. Then someone spoke in French, asking what I was doing up there.

I said that the papal secretary of state had brought me up to the roof garden outside, saying that my audience with his Holiness would be granted.

At once everything became different. I was led out to the balcony again, and a few moments later the Holy Father appeared, now wearing a cassock. He asked me to return with him into his library, and there we sat down in front of a large fireplace, and he began talking to me about my wife. It was some minutes before I realized that he thought I was my cousin, William K. Vanderbilt, who wanted to divorce his wife, the former Virginia Fair. When at last I explained this misunderstanding I thought the Holy Father seemed somewhat hurt, but he was very polite. After a bit he rose and asked if I would like to have tea or something to drink. I thanked him but said I had not come for that purpose at all. I told him about meeting Father Spellman and about the note I had received at my hotel, and my desire to interview Mussolini.

"Our church today has no connection with Mussolini," he said. "As you probably know, Mussolini is a Bolshevik, a Red; he believes in nothing, no church. But the people are following him, Mr. Vanderbilt, because there is a great upsurge of native national-

ism in Italy, just as there is a great upsurge in Germany under the Austrian house-painter Adolf Hitler."

This was the first time that I heard Hitler's name mentioned outside Germany.

The Holy Father then inquired whether he could do anything else for me while I was in Rome. I said there was something. "My sister is in love with a young European prince. My parents are very much against her marrying him."

"Why?" asked the Holy Father.

"This is difficult for me to explain," I said, "but my father thinks the young prince is not very masculine."

The Holy Father's eyes twinkled. "How should we know about this?"

"Your Holiness, I understand you have a wonderful library here," I said. "I wonder, if you should have a dossier—"

He asked one of the men in waiting to take me down to the main library of the Vatican. This was an immense room; I have been told it is four times as long as the main reading room in the New York Public Library, and twice as high.

I wrote the name of the young prince on a piece of paper and after some time they gave me a dossier. When I read through it I saw that my parents were right. I hated to have to write this to my sister but I believe it was the reason why she did not marry the young man. In those days she believed what I told her, whereas she was afraid of what our parents said because she suspected them of trying to promote a marriage with someone else. Like all American girls, she had a certain amount of spunk and disliked being sold to the highest bidder, which was the custom then in Europe and in some circles still is.

When I was about to leave Rome a couple of days later, I found another note in my box. This one said I should present myself at the Chiggi Palace. I asked the concierge if it meant I would receive an interview with Mussolini, and how I should dress. He said he couldn't tell about the interview but that I should probably wear a business suit because the Chiggi Palace was where Mussolini had his offices.

I arrived fifteen minutes early and was obliged to wait nearly an hour and a quarter. Then the secretary received me and asked whom I represented. Of course I represented no newspaper because I had entered the interview contest in the hope of getting myself back into the newspaper profession. But I said I repre-

sented my own papers, the Vanderbilt Newspapers, Incorporated, in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Miami. He also asked to what religious denomination I belonged, and where I lived. Since I had just transferred my residence from Beverly Hills to Reno, I said Reno. This was the summer of 1926.

Then the secretary inquired what I wanted to talk to Il Duce about, and I told him I would like to find out how Il Duce had achieved his renown in such a short time. I explained also that I had been in Italy for more than a week, hoping to be granted the interview, and the secretary replied that they'd heard about my request only the day before. When he asked me why I hadn't come to him in the beginning, I said that for American correspondents the accepted manner of obtaining an interview was to register at the Embassy and ask the press attaché to secure permission through the foreign office, and that I had attended to this the week before.

After leafing through a mass of papers on his desk, the secretary announced, "Mr. Vanderbilt, I cannot find your request."

I said, "My uncle is the American ambassador to Italy."

"Of course, that makes it entirely different," he said. "You're a diplomat."

I assured him I was only a journalist, and he got up from his desk and disappeared for about fifteen minutes. Then he returned, bowed very low and asked me to follow him. We went down a series of corridors until we reached a huge double door. He knocked discreetly and then opened it, and I found myself in an immense room, far larger than the room in which the President receives reporters at the White House, almost as large as the main library in Buckingham Palace.

On a raised dais, sitting behind a huge desk, was Il Duce himself. He was wearing a sports shirt, open two buttons from the top so you could see his hairy chest beneath his undershirt.

This was in the early days of his assumption of power, when he was not quite so bombastic as he became later on, but certainly bombastic enough. I advanced with the secretary to the end of the table. The secretary made a deep bow, presented me, and retreated backward out of the room. After looking me over, Il Duce signaled me to sit down in a chair at the right of the desk, and immediately began talking at a great rate of speed, mostly in Italian which I couldn't understand. I repeated "Yes, yes," and "No, no," and various meaningless things in English.

Finally, in very poor, broken English he said, "You no speak Italiano."

I told him I understood some but did not speak it, but that I did speak a little French and German. He then spoke in very bad French, but it was much better for me than the Italian. I was afraid to take any notes because one of the things a reporter learns is that sometimes note-taking makes a subject clam up.

My subject began telling me all about the great glories of Italy. This was not, of course, what I had come to hear. I wanted him to say something that would make copy for the American press.

Finally he asked me if I would like to see Rome with him, and of course I jumped at the opportunity. When he got up from the desk I noticed how short and dumpy he was, not much over five feet tall. He opened a French window on a balcony above the street, and took me out to the balcony with him.

"Look, Mr. Vanderbilt," he said, "on the seven hills of Rome."

"I thought you were going to take me out and show them to me," I replied.

He grinned broadly. "Would you like to see my new Italy with me?"

"Sir, I would never miss seeing Italy with you. I would consider it a great privilege and a great honor," I assured him.

He grabbed a jacket and a sort of Sam Browne belt that he wore, and a pistol holster because he carried a pistol under each arm, and we left his office by a side door, went down a staircase to the basement, and got into his Fiat.

Although I've told this story elsewhere, I'd like to tell it in detail here. Il Duce started the motor with a great roar. Then out of nowhere appeared two other cars, enclosed limousines, filled with people. So I thought he was taking me along to some sort of a celebration.

We zoomed along the spiral driveway. At once the sirens started blowing in the streets of Rome, and traffic came to a halt as we went roaring down the Via Veneto, at what I considered much too fast a pace. Almost before I knew what was happening, we were out in the country, and in two hours or less, we reached Naples. I was terrified all the way. I hate fast cars anyway, and I hate people who drive fast in fast cars. We had missed cows and burros and people on bicycles and priests and other pedestrians only by inches. There were times when I was certain we would hit wine carts and gasoline trucks, but we just did miss them. People

seemed to be in the streets wherever we passed, and in some places the towns were decorated.

We spent that first night in a small village below Naples. We stayed in some sort of military headquarters; we ate with the officers and slept in a barracks, though we each had a cubicle. Of course I had no clothes with me, no toothbrush, no razor, nothing.

Next morning we were awakened at five. Since I was not taking wine or liquor in those days, I didn't have a hangover, but I am sure Mussolini and the others did. We were served an immense breakfast in the officers' quarters, something like French toast, eggs, porridge, a tremendous amount of garlic, bread, jam, and milk or yoghurt.

The second day we drove all the way up to the Italian Riviera, through all the little towns, until we reached Rapallo, where Mussolini made a sudden turn to the left to Santa Margherita, and down to the picturesque fishing village of Portofino. Then we returned to Leghorn, near Pisa, where they were building some battleships for the Italian fleet. Here we spent the night with naval officers in their barracks. Next morning our tremendous breakfast consisted of all kinds of fish.

The third day we went up into the hill country and to the great cities of Turin and Milan. In Turin we visited an automobile factory and in Milan another factory. Mussolini asked me if I'd ever been on top of the great Milan cathedral. I told him I'd been there many times. He said it was a great place for romance, and one should see it in the moonlight.

Then we went across northern Italy through Bologna to Venice, and spent that night in Venice in a section of the Doge's palace. We were taken there in a *batori*, what we would call a motorboat, but propelled by steam.

That night a big party was given for us by the mayor of the city of Venice. There were many speeches and the party went on past midnight. I didn't see Mussolini the rest of the night, but of course I had no idea in those days that he had a girl friend. I knew that he was married and had children. It wasn't until many years later that I learned about his lady love, whose body was dragged through the streets of Milan with his just before the end of World War II.

Mussolini didn't turn up next morning until just before we left. He didn't have breakfast with us, but here again we had a very large breakfast, consisting mostly of all sorts of eggs cooked

in half a dozen different ways, and also the inevitable glass of milk. I understand the reason we had so much milk was that Il Duce was trying to make it popular. The Italians prefer wine, but Mussolini wanted to promote cattle raising in northern Italy.

I was in the Fiat by about seven-thirty that morning. One of the aides told me we were going to go back to Rome via the Apennines, the mountain range that runs down to Sicily, and which some people believe is a continuation of the Atlas Mountains in Northern Africa. As usual, Mussolini drove too fast. Late that afternoon, when it was almost dusk, we had left Siena and passed through Perugia and were winding our way down the ladder of the Apennines, negotiating the numerous hairpin curves almost on two wheels. When we reached a level spot, Il Duce gave the car the gun and the Fiat almost leaped out of his hands. A short way down the road we came upon another small village with high walls. In the center of town, where the town hall would be, a number of peasants were sitting around and some were standing beside the road waving flags. A small child standing on the right tried to beat the Fiat across the road. The car shuddered, and I felt the car wheels go up, then come down. I turned quickly to look. I can still see the little crumpled-up body lying in the road.

Then I felt a hand on my right knee and I heard a voice saying, "Never look back, Mr. Vanderbilt, never look back in life."

And we roared on into the mountains.

A couple of hours later we reached Rome and the palace where Il Duce was living. A cold supper was waiting for us—cold chicken in gelatin, cold salmon, and cold mussels, but also a bowl of hot spaghetti. The hot drink was yerba maté, the tea you get in South America, served in a glass with mint. There was nothing alcoholic about it.

After supper, and before I returned to my hotel, Mussolini asked if there was anything he could give me as a remembrance of the trip. "Name it, Mr. Vanderbilt, and you shall have it."

I said I would like an autographed picture of him. He pulled out a desk drawer containing scores of pictures, signed his name in broad, large writing across the lower right corner of one, and gave it to me. I said I would also like to have a pass to take me through the police lines in case I had trouble, for my visa was good for only one week and I had been there nine days. I explained I intended to leave Rome that night for Warsaw, because

I wanted to try to see Mr. Pilsudski, the strong man who had entered Poland through the revolution then taking place.

"Anything else?" Mussolini asked me.

"Yes," I admitted, "I would like to ask where I can have your cuff buttons copied."

He looked at me and then down at his wrists. "Why would you wish that?"

"Well," I answered, "they're interesting. I understand you do not recognize the Catholic Church as the state church of Italy. Yet your cuff buttons bear the heads which appear in the four corners of the courtyard inside the Vatican, the one in which the Holy Father takes his exercise."

Mussolini pulled his cuffs down below his coatsleeves and stared long and hard at the buttons. Then he glanced up and winked, and with a quick motion removed the buttons and handed them to me.

I protested. "I do not want your cuff buttons, sir. I would just like to know where I can have them copied."

"Well, I would like very much for you to have them to remember a pleasant journey we had together," he insisted.

The next day, after breakfast, I got a ticket for Warsaw, where I interviewed Pilsudski, and from Warsaw I went on to Moscow. Stalin had been premier for several weeks, but no American correspondent had yet been admitted to his presence.

There were several British correspondents stationed in Moscow then; I'm not sure whether the New York *Times* had stationed Walter Duranty there at that time. I was staying at the National Hotel next to the American Embassy. We had not recognized Russia for many years, although we did keep some personnel at the Embassy, and I went around a great deal with some of the Embassy people.

After I had been in Moscow about five days and my request for an interview had been neither acknowledged nor turned down, I asked for a permit via the American Embassy to leave Russia and return to Europe. The night before I expected to receive it, I was giving a small dinner party at the National Hotel for several of the correspondents. That afternoon I had come back to my suite earlier than usual and had discovered two members of the Gay-Pay-Oo (GPU), the then secret police, going through my things. They were not being secretive, and they were making a

very thorough job of their search. Of course I couldn't say anything, even though I was angry. They went right ahead with their work. Some of the written things they photographed, including the band off a roll of toilet paper.

At dinner we naturally discussed the ways of the country, and there was some competition in hair-raising tales about what could happen to a correspondent who found himself inside the Kremlin walls. No doubt some of the stories were in the nature of sour grapes. But it was asserted that more than one good man had disappeared in the course of duty, and although I couldn't see how his friends knew what had happened if he hadn't come back to tell, they vied with one another in supplying details. For one thing, it was said, if you actually got inside the place and the escorting soldiers took you up a flight of steps and turned to the left, they were taking you to be tried. But if they turned you to the right, you could make up your mind it was the end. In *that* direction was a bottomless pit, into which the luckless correspondent would be pushed. The press club habitués could swear to this because the body would be found in the sewers on the other side of town a day or so later. These yarns were meant to console me for leaving without my story.

The party broke up fairly early and when I got back to my room just before midnight I took a sleeping pill and went to sleep. I was having some sort of nightmare when I was awakened around two-thirty by very loud pounding at my door. Still rather dopey from the sleeping pill, I padded over to the door in my bare feet and opened it. In burst a whole bunch of rough-looking soldiers, with short army carbines and long bayonets, similar to French bayonets. The leader, probably a sergeant, told me in broken English to get my clothes on in a hurry.

In Russia, one obeys. My first thought was to call the American Embassy, but I knew the soldiers would pretend not to understand me. So I threw on my things, but I had no time to put on shoes or socks because the soldiers kept nudging me out of the room with their bayonets. They nudged me over to the stairs, carpeted as my room was, and quickly down the two flights, some of my escort ahead, but most of them behind me. The clerk in the lobby seemed to pay no attention to what was happening. The street outside was bathed in the perpetual twilight one has in summertime in Moscow. Three cars stood waiting. The first was open, like an open Model T; the last looked more or less

the same and was filled with other soldiers. The one in the middle looked like a Carey limousine. I was nudged into the limousine. I found one man sitting inside and a driver and another man on the box. Before the door was closed, two of the soldiers hopped in with me. The others disappeared. No one maltreated me, but I felt sure that if I tried to run away I'd immediately be killed.

The cars started off at a great speed. The shades of the limousine were all pulled down. We drove in and out of places and twisted and turned, and almost turned over, we were driving so fast. Then suddenly we slowed down and began to bump over something. I guessed we were crossing a wooden bridge. Next the car began to bump a lot, and I knew we were on cobblestones.

All this suggested that perhaps we had crossed the moat and were now on the cobblestones inside the Kremlin. But I wondered why they had driven so far and turned so often, because the National Hotel is only four or five blocks from the entrance to the Kremlin. It occurred to me these people were so simple-minded that they thought such childish tactics would throw me completely off the track, and the fact that I had seen through their wild-goose chase gave me a certain amount of courage.

The car stopped with a bang. The left-hand door was opened and the soldiers jumped out, except for one man. A lot of other soldiers were standing around with the same kind of short, bayoneted guns. In the dim twilight I could see at once that I was inside the inner courtyard of the Kremlin, in front of the building which I understood was the headquarters of the secret police and of the then foreign minister.

Now I was nudged up the outside steps, which I guessed were marble, and through some doors, and then up a very rough flight of stairs. I believe these were wooden, but they were carpeted. Then came a long hall. I remembered the story I had heard, and when we got to the end of the hall and turned to the right, my heart came up in my throat. The soldiers behind me were dog-trotting. All of a sudden a door opened on the right and I was pushed or flung into a room so that I fell down on my hands and knees. But it was no bottomless pit.

The room was almost pitch-dark except for one small light at the far end. When I stood up I felt something very cold under my feet, and realized I was standing on marble. I remember saying to myself, Why would they have marble here unless this is the room of somebody pretty important?

As my eyes adjusted to the darkness, I saw a man sitting behind a table lighted by an oil lamp. He sat with his back half-turned to me, his eyes on a book.

When I got within fifteen or twenty feet I heard a voice say, "Halt." I stopped and stood at attention. I can still feel the cold from that marble floor. The man reading the book slowly wheeled around to look at me. As I was looking into the lamp it was more difficult for me to see than for him.

The voice said, "Why did you come to see us, Mr. Vanderbilt?" He pronounced it Wanderbilt.

I said, "I didn't come, sir. I was brought here."

"Brought? What do you mean—brought?"

"Some of your very efficient soldiers banged on my door and put me into a car and brought me over here," I explained.

I could hear quite a bit of conversation in the background, and I knew there must be more than one person in the end of the room behind the table and the man, whom I now recognized as Joseph Stalin. The book he was reading, I learned later, was the Bible—and I was told that he had read it in four languages: French, German, Russian, and English. After all, he had started to be a priest.

The voice went on, "You say you've been brought here. Did somebody bring you here against your wishes? Did they do any harm to you in bringing you here?"

"No, sir, no one did any harm, but they banged on my door and awakened me. I had taken a sleeping pill."

"Did you not request, Mr. Wanderbilt, to have an interview with the Marshal Stalin?"

"Yes, sir," I replied. "I requested this about a week ago, when I first came to Moscow."

"Do you not know, Mr. Wanderbilt, that your country does not recognize my country?"

"Yes, sir, I know this very well, and I think it's foolish."

"Why do you think it's foolish, Mr. Wanderbilt?"

"Well, sir, I belong to that group of men who believe that the only way the world will ever get together is by what we call in our country the Golden Rule."

"And what, Mr. Wanderbilt, is the Golden Rule?"

"Do unto others as you would wish that they should do unto you."

"A noble ideal, Mr. Wanderbilt, but of course entirely impractical."

These various sentences did not come as fast as I am giving them here. It took considerable time for each one. Mr. Stalin talked very slowly in a very gruff voice, and then the interpreter would translate, speaking faster, and then I would answer, often perhaps too fast.

I was in this room for over three and a half hours. It was one of the most interesting talks I've ever had with any big man anywhere. And either from Stalin's remarks, or from the interpreter's implications, I learned more about the thinking of the masters of Russia at that time than in any other interview I ever had. I've been in Russia many times since, though not since World War II. Perhaps one thing that made this interview with the Russian leader so interesting was that he talked to me more like an American businessman than like the leader of Red Russia. Everything he mentioned he spoke of in huge numbers. He talked of the number of co-operatives, the large number of tractors, the acreage under cultivation. He talked of steel mills, of manufacturing plants, of gasoline refineries, of all things having to do with industry. He did not talk of finance, how much money or how many man-hours things cost, because the Soviet system controls the finances as well as the manpower of the country.

It was seven in the morning when I got back to the National. The exit visa arrived that afternoon and I took the first train out, although I was to return for fourteen other interviews with Stalin, the last just a few weeks before World War II broke out in 1939.

I went through Warsaw and from there to Berlin, on my way to England for an interview I was to have with the Prime Minister.

In Munich the American consul general, a great friend of mine, told me about a small-town crackpot who was going around the countryside making speeches on the return of German nationalism. He suggested that I watch this man because he might make a name for himself later on. He said the man was a house-painter from a small town in Austria, and I recognized his name—the same one the Pope had mentioned.

I happened to be in Munich when this so-called crackpot tried to raise a rumpus. In fact he did more; he started such a riot on the outskirts of the town that villagers joined him and began a march on Munich. Their object was to take the city hall, which

symbolized a great many things to Germans, and to capture the great monument of Germania which I think stands in a large open square on the outskirts of the city. To me, the whole thing sounded like a high-school contest to capture a goal post, or a college prank. But Hitler raised more than the usual amount of trouble, and people began to feel something was really going to happen—something like the rebirth of an aggressive Germany. The Munich police formed a phalanx and kept him from getting into the heart of the city. I'm not sure whether or not he got to the city hall; at any rate he was arrested and jailed.

When the American consul telephoned to tell me about the rumpus, I said I would like to go to the jail to interview the prisoner. My friend said, "Well, there's only one way you can go to jail. We can't get you in. Anywhere else, but not jail. You'll have to find your own way there."

I discussed the problem with some other newspapermen who were there, one of them Floyd Gibbons, the World War I correspondent who wore a patch over his eye. He said, "Well, if I wanted to see this goof in jail, do you know what I'd do? I'd throw a brick through a window."

That's what I did, and I was picked up by a policeman and taken down to the jail. They didn't book me but they put me in. Once in, I bought my way—that is, I paid something like \$1.75 in our money to one of the jailers, who moved me over to the cell next to Hitler's.

In those days Hitler spoke no English. Later on he spoke some French and maybe some English too, but then I had to manage in his language. Fortunately I spoke better German then than I do now. I got to know him, mostly at mealtime, and he was quite a hero in the jail. Everybody thought that the Allies had enough of this world's goods and that Hitler might represent a chance for Germany to get some for itself.

In fact, even today I have a fear that perhaps after the death of Konrad Adenauer, we may have a rebirth of militant German nationalism. Inside the German breast there always seems to burn a fiery resolve to be the top nation of the world. Although Hitler came from Austria, across the border, he had that spirit and was able to rekindle that ambition in the German people.

At the time, of course, there were other names on my list of notables that looked more important. I had cabled my sister from Paris:

WELL EXTREMELY BUSY ALSO MANY PARTIES NAZAIRE WEEKEND
PERSHING THEN DENTISTS GENEVA MUNICH AFTERWARDS IN-
TERVIEWS MUSSOLINI DANNUNZIO GORKI HINDENBURG PILSUDSKI
LUDENDORF KAISER HERE MIDDLE NEXT MONTH

The two that now loom largest, Hitler and Stalin, I did not
even mention.

CHAPTER VI

GO WEST, YOUNG MAN

BACK HOME, it was still the prosperity era. Hoover was not yet President, but I added him and Al Capone to my list of world figures interviewed. The great engineer, concerned with flood relief in his capacity of secretary of commerce, made a personal investigation of the raging Mississippi floods, and I rode the cow-catcher of his train until plucked from it and admitted to the presence. There I noted the official optimism combined with private dismay in the face of rising waters and a broken dam, and it gave me a preview of what to expect in the economic emergency to come.

When Chicago's famous Sicilian granted me an interview, I was in Nevada, but I flew to the appointment and, as in the case of Stalin, was escorted into his office by armed guards and regaled with a businesslike account of enterprises under way. Al Capone of course had no Five-Year Plan—indeed, the authorities were promising to close in on him at any moment—and he would, like any other businessman, have been shocked by the comparison; his sterling Americanism was proved by a replica of the Lincoln log cabin on his desk.

After that interview I flew back to Nevada, where I had decided to become a rancher. Reporting was all very well, and would always be my first love, but I felt I had to make money, for I still owed stockholders in the bankrupt papers. Speculators who had bought stock when the papers were succeeding weren't so much on my mind, although the legal claims were to go on for years. But those who had backed me at the start and the Hollywood friends who had given me cash for the bank loan had to be paid as soon as possible. Douglas Fairbanks had put in \$25,000; Mary Pickford, Marilyn Miller, and Edward G. Robinson, \$10,000 each; Will Rogers, \$50,000. They were the only ones who didn't badger me at the crash, and of course I wanted to pay them first.

Other friends had wanted to help me make money in various ways, and we spent some time planning and investigating. At the time small planes were the thing everyone was talking about—but, as always with a new invention, once it was accepted, progress was not quite as fast as expected. The Ford people planned to make a small all-metal plane which everyone would fly, and with Bill Ford, Henry's brother, I looked over Florida land for possible landing fields. We wanted six- to ten-acre tracts and, starting at Miami Beach—rural then—we looked for possible buys all the way to Boca Raton, where we finally decided to put our airport if we really should have one. Meanwhile, however, the small plane crashed on a test flight, a flight on which I had started to go, but I had shifted to a train. Of course it would have paid us in the end to acquire the land anyhow because, although it seemed high to us then, in view of the Florida boom, it is considerably higher now.

But I went to Nevada instead, where I was a citizen—and not for the sake of that state's divorce laws. I had established Nevada citizenship when I was making money from the papers and wanted to plow it all back into them, not pay it out in state taxes. Nevada tax laws are as hospitable as the divorce laws. And I so enjoyed living there that I went into the ranching business for a time.

When I first went to Reno in 1926, I lived at the Riverside Hotel where, I had been told by Fred Bonfils, owner of the *Denver Post*, that you could fish out the windows of the rooms. This wasn't quite true; although the Truckee River in flood sometimes rushes through the bar and dining room of the hotel, it is ordinarily some fifty feet away. But Reno had charm and I fell in love with the Nevada country. Soon I moved out to the TH ranch near Pyramid Lake, a beautiful lake that looks like the Dead Sea or the Sea of Galilee. Thirty-five miles long and about fourteen miles wide, it is surrounded by high desert mountains, seven to ten thousand feet high. Since the lake is in a Paiute Indian reservation, you can't build private houses on it, but you can fish; Herbert Hoover used to fish there because it contains the largest landlocked trout in the world, many weighing fifty or sixty pounds.

The pelicans of the Gulf States all breed on Pyramid Lake, and the government maintains a pelican census station there which bands the birds for pick-ups in Florida or Louisiana. The lake is

named after the island in it, a large pyramid-shaped rock. Rare rattlesnakes inhabit the island, many of them varieties now extinct elsewhere. The Department of the Interior keeps a station there where they extract serum, and people who go boating on the lake are not supposed to land on the island, though some do. The pyramid rock is higher than the ten-story Riverside Hotel, and a strange light on the lake makes odd shadows, mysterious figures and forms.

I really loved my life in a cabin on the ranch. I used to get up at six to ride horseback, because best of all I liked the early mornings when dawn seeps over the ranges in shades of blue and purple, pink and orange. You hear the song of the meadow larks, the cawing of the crows, sometimes the honking of wild geese going north. I loved even the tumbleweeds and the sudden desert twisters, the coyotes and jack rabbits and occasional sidewinders. No other place on earth seems to have the high, dry, exhilarating air, with a faint scent of pine and sage mingled. You feel you can touch the sky. This sensation of space and distance and freedom is borne out by the complete disinterest of the people of Reno in what one is doing.

Although the road from the lake to Reno was very picturesque, running through the high sage of the desert country (nowadays it's a broad highway built to what was to have been a naval installation on the lake), weeks passed when I didn't go to Reno. I would come back from my early morning rides in time for breakfast and then go out with the ranch dudes, many of whom were interesting people. Some came for the riding, some came for divorces, but many came just because it was so far from everything, and they brought the children and had a good time. Dude ranching was beginning to be a Nevada industry. Most of the mining had gone in towns like Virginia City and the other ancient and well-known places, although there was still mining in other parts of the state, near Winnemucca and Lovelock and down near Tonopah. My family had a mining connection with Nevada; my cousin Willie K., the brother of Consuelo who married the Duke of Marlborough and of Harold who raced the cup defenders, married first into the Fair family, who were one of the four original owners of the Comstock Lode. But Willie K. preferred his motor races on Long Island to riding out west.

There was still some sheep and cattle raising. Cattle raising was Grade A, sheep were Grade B, supposed to be dirty. When I

had a ranch I raised sheep. But I had dudes too; I didn't mind them.

One day at the TH ranch, while most of the other guests were off on a picnic, I was sitting in one of the barns cleaning a bit, when a Cadillac drove in and two men got out. One of them called, "Hey, there, rustle up a couple of cayuses for us."

I looked around, thinking they must be calling one of the cowboys, but I didn't see anybody.

The man shouted, "Didn't you hear me? Rustle up a couple of horses for us."

I got up, bit in hand, and brought two horses out of the barn. Then I said, "Do you want me to go with you, sir?"

"Well, it's customary, isn't it?" the man asked.

So I went along on the horse that I rode all the time. The strangers rode ahead of me and, unlike the usual ranch guests, they seemed to know exactly where they were going. Both carried shotguns, though it was off season.

Finally the two got off their horses at a place they seemed to know, tossed me the reins, and said, "Tether them and build a fire." And while I tethered the horses they went off into the sagebrush, which here was quite deep. One thing I had learned was that where the sage grows deep you find water; that was how the pioneers knew where to look for it. Where the sage grows high enough, you can dig down only a short distance and find an underground stream.

I built the fire—something you were not supposed to do—and waited to see what would happen next. Three hours or so later they returned with bags over their shoulders, from which they pulled out a number of grouse, called mountain quail. These quail are quite large.

"Pick 'em and fix 'em up," they ordered me, but I pointed out that there was no water.

"Get a shovel and dig down," they said.

When I protested that I didn't have a shovel with me, they said, "We'll show you how to do it."

One man whittled on a piece of sagebrush until he got something that could be pushed into the ground; they pushed, and pretty soon some water came up. In those days, you always carried some food on your saddle pack and something to cook it in, so we had a little saucepan in which we dipped the birds and then picked them. We cooked them over the fire on pieces of sage-

brush. I've never in my life had a better meal, perhaps because it was forbidden fruit.

After we had eaten everything, I said quite casually, "I don't know if you guys know it or not, but you're doing something out of season."

Instead of answering this charge, one of them asked, "Where are you from? You sound like a limey."

"I'm not English but I've lived abroad a lot," I answered. "I'm from New York."

"What are you doing out here, taking the cure?"

That meant getting a divorce. I said I was in Nevada on other business, and they wanted to know who my lawyer was. When I mentioned Sam Platt, one of the men whistled and exclaimed, "Sam never takes a case unless the guy is worth a million bucks."

Then it was my turn to ask questions and I began with their names. The lawbreakers were the governor and the attorney general of Nevada.

When the governor died, the lieutenant governor, James M. Scrugham, succeeded him, then went to Congress—Nevada has only one congressman—and later became senator. He owned and edited the morning paper in Reno, the *Nevada State Journal*, and I did a column for him. Scrugham was a good executive, and I liked him because he was such a direct person. I became one of his aides, a member of the state police, which was made up of ranchers who kept the bad men out of Nevada. We had no gang rule in the state while he was in office.

It was Scrugham who got me into ranching. We went into partnership in a ranch near Las Vegas, called the Valley of Fire. There, in old Mormon territory we started what we called the package divorce, an idea I originated that proved highly successful both at this ranch and at one I had later, called the Lazy Me. For a fixed price, \$750, we put a guest up at one of the ranches, providing a room, breakfast and dinner, and a horse. The guest was supposed to take care of the horse—this sounds a little like my New Jersey school—and feed it, although of course the buckaroos would do the real work of cleaning it and keeping it curry-combed.

Then we gave guests one night a week in town. In those days we didn't have open gambling in Nevada; it existed, of course, as speakeasies existed during Prohibition, but it wasn't open.

Also, we got each guest a lawyer, and if the divorce was un-

contested the case was free too. At the end of the cure we gave a party. You can see why overnight we had one of the most popular businesses I was ever in. The idea was copied later in Florida, where they gave you a boat and swimming lessons instead of a horse.

We advertised our package in a terrible magazine called *Town Topics*, and also in *The New Yorker* when it was started. Applications poured in, occasionally as many as a thousand a week, and sometimes as many as fifty people a day would turn up in Reno trying to come to our ranch. We started with one ranch in Reno and one in Las Vegas, but later had two in Reno.

At the start we had to publicize the place, for we were in competition with other dude ranches. One of them had an old-fashioned stage for meeting trains, one a gold truck, and so on. Meeting the trains was very important; of course strangers liked to be met, but the arrival of a train was like a gold rush to the town. In those days there were rickety old-fashioned stations where the Union Pacific trains drew up for a fifteen- or twenty-minute stop. People dashed across the street to the first speakeasy; later, they ran across to the gambling joints. They still do—no time to go to the great gambling houses uptown, but time enough for slot machines in a tacky little joint, with silver dollars jingling in the traveler's pocket. When the streamliners began making only five-minute stops, the people in Reno and Las Vegas said it ruined business. They counted on five hundred to a thousand dollars every time a big Eastern train came through, and there were four a day.

Ranch guests had to be met and escorted safely through this mad rush at the station, and we did it in style. John Brodix and I bought used cars from the White House in Washington. Every year the President was given, free, several new automobiles by the manufacturers, and at the end of the year these were sold at auction. We bought two of these White House cars, one a beautiful Packard town car, and the other a Cole, a make popular in those days. We dressed our chauffeurs as cowboys, with the name of the ranch on their hatbands, and had another cowboy as groom.

We also offered fancy entertainment. In California I had gone riding with Doug Fairbanks, Will Rogers, and Tom Mix over what is now expensive residential property. Now Tom and Will and Hopalong Cassidy came to ride at the Lazy Me Ranch, to encourage the divorcees to get on horseback too. Mix and Rogers

really rode, and after a few beers the guests began daring each other to ride. Then Rogers and Mix came out on the railing of an upstairs porch and Mix, drunk, jumped from the railing onto a horse. Rogers did the same. They started stunting and Mix dared the cowboys to a race up and down hill.

All this was fun, and when I had writing to do I could hide out in my own little cabin, the one in which Mark Twain had written *Roughing It*, or so I was told. But I couldn't stay in one place forever, not even Nevada. I'm still a citizen of that state and go back every year, and keep up with the friends I made then. I used to chauffeur Governor Scrugham all over the state and meet all sorts of people. In those days there were still local gold rushes, or sometimes fake gold rushes, and he'd go at once to the area. Sometimes he'd call me and say, "Come with me, they've just struck gold." More than once we staked claims of our own, and once we fully believed we had something, only the vein ran out.

It was during this period that I first met Scotty the Assayer—nothing to do with Death Valley Scotty. My Scotty lives in Lovelock, Nevada, and is one of my oldest and best friends. He was in the First World War and was the first man to volunteer for a parachute jump from a plane. Some say he landed on his head, but he is one of the most intelligent men I ever met, and he can *smell* gold. Go out on the desert with Scotty the Assayer and he may say, "Right here under my foot I think you'll find it"—and maybe you will.

With the ranches doing a land-office business, coining money, I started moving around and reporting once more. I began writing for a magazine called *Travel*, and later became associate editor of one called *Nomad*, and I ranged over the country. In the West I always tried to stop in one of the great national parks. Once at the Grand Canyon, as I walked at sunset from the El Tovar along the canyon rim to the place where they now sell souvenirs, I fell into conversation with a man sitting on a bench. There, as we watched the changing lights and shadows, he told me that whenever he felt depressed or low and was anywhere near the Canyon, he always came to it. He said he was a great friend of Dan Beard, known as the Boy Scout organizer in this country, but also important as a co-worker with Theodore Roosevelt in the cause of conservation; he had helped TR establish some of the national parks. My informant turned out to be George Horace Lorimer, then editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*.

We talked about all sort of things. Mr. Lorimer seemed to like me and I liked him. He said, "If you ever get to Philadelphia and are in need of a job, or would like to do something, look me up."

When he left that night, he took with him in the express car of the train a crated gazelle, a small deer. Some months later I dropped in to see him in the Curtis Building on Independence Square in Philadelphia, and he took me up to lunch—in those days they had a dining room on the roof—with several of the *Post* editors. After lunch he said, "Would you like to see what happened to our little friend?" And the little gazelle came galloping into the room. Lorimer allowed it to roam free in the offices.

Back in 1924 or '25, the *Ladies' Home Journal* had run an article about me and my newspapers called "Young Vanderbilt's Fight Against Filth," so I wasn't breaking into the Curtis publications as an unknown. Now Mr. Lorimer asked me to do a series of articles on motoring in the United States, which the *Post* published. After that we talked about Reno and I did an article on divorce. At that time the residence requirement was three months; before that it had been six months. It now takes six weeks.

I remember starting off the article with a series of case histories of my friends. I said that among the sixteen or eighteen couples I knew at the time of my own first marriage, only two were still married. All the others had been divorced at least once and some of them two or three times. Then I added figures to show some things about Reno that most people didn't, and perhaps still don't, know—the low rate of divorce among actual residents, and the fact that in other parts of the country, Chicago for example, the actual number of divorces per year or per week is far higher than in Reno.

After I turned in these stories, Mr. Lorimer asked me if I would like to be an associate editor of the *Post*. But I found that I would have to live in Philadelphia; I prefer an outside job. I've always been better at it. I like to be where things are happening, changing, and if possible, to be there first.

Nevada appealed to me as the last frontier state, but you can find new frontiers anywhere. An unlikely place might seem to be an army training school, but I found one—perhaps my most exciting one of the twenties—in the War College at Washington, where I spent a few weeks keeping up my reserve commission and improving it.

My roommate there was unknown to me at the start, and beyond

noting that he was beginning to lose his hair while I was proudly cherishing the first few streaks of gray in mine, I didn't see too much of him. My courses were in what was called the European plan, and his were in communications. We went by numbers, and although some of us knew one another's names, they didn't mean much. The hours were as strenuous as if we had been in basic training; we were up at six, started work at seven-thirty, and got to bed with lights out at ten. This man and I shared the same cubicle for six weeks, but we were working most of the time.

On the last day various experts got up to make speeches. One officer told of the future of communication by air waves, and as I had been with my father on the yacht during the early Marconi tests, this interested me a great deal. In the early days of radio sets I had been a "ham," working with a cat's whisker and a little piece of isinglass.

This speaker—my roommate, in fact—went on to say that some day we would be able to twist a dial and images as well as voices would come out of the air. People sitting in front of me began making a motion round and round, as if to say he was cracked. The officer's name was David Sarnoff, and as you know he's now admitted to know something about TV. His war work on communications made him a brigadier general in World War II.

CHAPTER VII

THE YELLOW EMPEROR

ARTHUR BRISBANE was one of the most intelligent men I ever met and one of the kindest, as well as one of the most forceful and opinionated. In his day, Brisbane's column—the first column on the left, page one, of the Hearst newspapers—was probably the most powerful editorial column in the United States. It was written in such a light and cheerful vein, and in such excellent though unelaborate English, that whatever he had to say influenced millions of people.

We had met at lunch at the Downtown Club. I was still feeling dejected and upset over the loss of my own papers, but I had made a name for myself with the European interviews, and Brisbane had read these stories, some of which the Hearst papers had bought and some of which had been purchased by rival magazines and syndicates.

He asked me if I would like to come to the country with him that afternoon for the week end. I'd need only pajamas and a toothbrush, he said, and so I bought these, and at five that afternoon was with him on the Pullman car of the Central of New Jersey's special Lakewood Express. In this car, which came in on the eight-thirty train every morning, Mr. Brisbane had the only drawing room. He had with him the forerunner of the tape recorder, a hand-operated dictaphone, and on the ride home Mr. Brisbane went into the drawing room by himself, closed the door, and dictated into his cylinder the editorial to appear in the next morning's papers. With him also was a man, whether a private secretary or bodyguard I never knew, who sat outside in the car and, when we got off at Lakewood, took the next train back to New York with the cylinder.

In those days Mr. Brisbane's columns were written from the point of view of the little man, and he damned capital and the rich and did everything he could to show how horrible were such

people as my own family, the Rockefellers, the Morgans, the Harrimans, and the Fords, and others like them. But in Lakewood he was met by a Rolls-Royce, a chauffeur, and a groom.

After a drive of some distance, we arrived at a huge estate on the lake, not far from Laurel-in-the-Pines, where some years before I had covered the very sensational divorce of James Stillman in what was known as the "Indian Guide Story." Stillman's wife was supposed to have fallen in love with a French-Canadian Indian guide, and the trial inspired some of the hectic fiction of that period.

The Brisbane place had been built by George Gould and was as large as my grandmother's place, The Breakers, in Newport. The door was opened by a footman in livery, and to all appearances Mr. Brisbane was living the life of a country gentleman, very much as the members of my own family would live in the country. This rather surprised me, but of course I said nothing about it.

Before dinner, Mr. Brisbane asked if I would like to go for a canter on one of his horses, but I said I hadn't ridden in some time. I watched while his wife, a great beauty, came up riding sidesaddle—she was an excellent horsewoman—and wearing a beautiful gray habit and a very pretty little top hat. My host got on board one of the horses and they set out as if they were riding to hounds in a scene from country life in England.

Dinner was not until eight-thirty, and the guests included some English noblemen and some from Germany and Austria. When we sat down, there must have been twenty-five or thirty people.

After dinner, we sat around and discussed the affairs of the world. Fortunately I had been taught to keep my mouth shut in the presence of my so-called elders. Although I didn't agree with Brisbane's guests, they at least knew their stuff, which is more than I could say for many of my family's friends.

Before dinner Mr. Brisbane had sent the servants up to my room with my few things in a small briefcase, and I found that they had put out a dinner jacket for me which didn't fit. I was a tall, thin, string bean then, weighing about a hundred and fifty pounds; the jacket was for somebody who weighed nearer two hundred. So I wore my blue suit down to dinner, the only person not in dinner clothes, but everybody put me at my ease by not seeming to notice what I wore.

The next day we went for a long drive in the Rolls, with a

chauffeur and also with a groom. This amused me because my family never used the groom except at night. When they went in to a theater or the opera house, he was left there to wait, and when they came out, he went to call the car. But all this was interesting because I was seeing the home life of the great proletarian editorial-writer of the fearless New York *American*, the people's paper.

Brisbane was one of the best-informed men I ever worked for. Yes, I worked for him, and for Hearst again—the Hearst papers were succeeding where mine hadn't. In 1928 I went to work as associate editor of the New York *Mirror*, the paper Brisbane told me had been started to block me from bringing an illustrated paper into New York. The other associate editor was Phil Payne, who died later in an attempt to fly to Rome. He was a good editor who, like me, couldn't resist the fun of running a tabloid, and the Hearst salary of twenty-five thousand a year plus travel expenses. The Hearst papers were the only ones paying newspapermen salaries that enabled them to hold up their heads, financially, in the company of high-priced copy-writers from the advertising agencies.

And I did what all of us do when tied to publishing or advertising jobs—started writing “on the side.” My first novel, called *Reno*, sold well and made a film.

I learned a lot working for Brisbane. When I went into his office to ask a question, I found he always had an answer. If he didn't have it pat, he would swivel his chair around and consult the *Encyclopædia Britannica* or the *Almanach de Gotha* or Burke's *Peerage*, or even the *World Almanac*—they were all in bookshelves right behind his desk. He would say in a deep voice, “Well, Mr. Vanderbilt, such-and-such is printed here and I think it is correct.”

In his way Brisbane also knew as much about the Bible as Stalin. Although when you read his columns you would not think he had faith in anything, he was actually a Bible student of the sort who can name chapter and verse. Someone would say this reminds me of such-and-such, and he would say immediately, “Genesis Fifty-two,” or “Isaiah, Third Chapter.” I understand this habit got on his wife's nerves. She had been brought up in the Catholic faith, and her Bible wasn't quite the same. She would try to correct him, but she didn't know as much about her own Bible.

Brisbane also knew about geographical places. He would ask at dinner, “What's the capital of—” and everybody at the table

would go into a quiz contest. Then he would say in his deep voice, "Well, my dear friends, it's such-and-such."

So I acquired another sort of education by working for him, and, something else which I needed very badly in those days, a certain amount of family life. This I did not have from my own family. Although I could go to the house, and often did, I was never taken into their confidence. They paid as little attention to me as if I were only ten years old. To them I was not a former publisher and editor, a former correspondent who was supposed to know something about world affairs or who knew about Washington; I was still a child. When they were talking about something serious, my father would say, "Your mother and I want to discuss the price of peas in Denmark," or something similar, "so why don't you go out, Neil, and run around the block." This is something you resent no end before you reach maturity, and perhaps resent even more later. But on week ends I was getting from Mr. Brisbane another sort of family life, for I was treated just like a member of his family. He would ask me to do all kinds of things and write all sorts of editorials. Many times I would wait for days to see my editorial, and then find it transferred to his words and appearing in his column.

I learned a lot about editorial writing. One thing I was told was, "No one reads words that have more than seven or eight letters, so if you want to continue journalism, try to learn to say things in words of under eight letters. Certainly no word should have more than ten letters." Brisbane was very strict about that, and if you read his columns, you realize that he kept his own rule.

Brisbane taught me what not to write about, as well as what to write about, and where to put the stress.

He also tried to get me to get rid of agents, but in this respect he was never able to do much for me. He said agents were nothing but bloodsuckers. Why should a man take ten per cent away from you simply because he could go in and talk turkey to the editor of a magazine or newspaper? However, when I handled myself, I never got paid, because newspapers would say, "Well, why would Vanderbilt need the money?" or the magazines would say, "What does that guy need with money with all his millions?" And if I had expected a check for \$1,000 or \$1,500, it never came.

In business Brisbane was a firm believer in the value of real estate. He told me, "If you have the opportunity, grab a piece of real estate for yourself. Even if someone offers to pay you ten

thousand in cash, take land worth five thousand instead, because by the time you want to sell that land, it'll be worth at least twice and maybe five or six times as much." Brisbane had been very clever himself in taking the land instead of the cash.

Brisbane once invited me to go with him to the famous Hearst ranch on the West Coast.

Later I did go, when I had been asked by Marion Davies. I knew her very slightly in those days; her name was mentioned in whispers in the Hearst office, but everybody knew the position she occupied in the life of the boss. My first introduction to her was in Hearst's apartment in New York. I had written an editorial for the *American* and they sent me up to the apartment to show it to Hearst. A few days later I met her at a luncheon Mr. Brisbane took me to in the old Ritz Tower, and then I learned that she had her apartment there. She was surrounded in those days by a group of sycophants, but there were some nice people, too. One very interesting guy I had known before; he had stayed at our place in British Columbia when my first wife and I lived there, and was a friend of her family. He was a Dr. Goodman, but his degree was in agriculture, not medicine. He had inherited a large vineyard in California near Fresno. I visited there once and he showed me around the place. The money was made mainly from raisins. In time Dr. Goodman and I and another friend of his developed selling ideas for his Sunmaid raisins—the chief one being that eating raisins would put iron in your blood and act as a bracer. The ads read: "Have You Had Your Iron Today?" Actually I found that on long motor trips chewing raisins was helpful; if I carried along a little box of raisins and some salami, I had all I needed to keep going. So there was some truth in the ads. Of course, this was before the days of vitamin pills. The raisins were packaged in little red boxes and the girl on the box looked a little like Miss Davies.

Dr. Goodman at that time was with Miss Davies everywhere, as a sort of chaperon, to keep her out of trouble and appear with her at parties. Once he was her escort at a party given by Mrs. Hearst, who I am sure never knew that her husband's friend was among the crowd of guests.

I went up to the Hearst ranch on some editorial matter one night after I had been talking to Mr. Hearst in his Beverly Hills house. At the ranch I was shown to a bedroom in one of the guest cottages, and, as at the Brisbane place, evening clothes were on

the bed. That time I had brought some along, so I put on my own and then found I was the only person so dressed. The ladies were wearing cocktail dresses, but the other men hadn't dressed for dinner; some were in shirts open at the neck, almost sweat-shirts. The conversation was not as brilliant as at Brisbane's, mostly gossip of the type you read in the Winchell or Parsons columns. I sat beside a well-known young movie star, and one of the Hearst sons was there, and perhaps twenty others. The thing which I noticed was the curious mixture of formality and informality; we used no napery—just paper napkins and place mats on a bare table. But there were place cards, with nicknames.

What I had to learn as I grew older, and what I suppose all young people have to learn, is that the clear blacks and whites of one's parents' world tend to become shades of gray. Mr. Hearst's business enterprises and his private life were not admirable, but the same could be said of many people in my parents' approved circle. Some people disapproved of the scandal stories and the editorial policies of the Hearst papers on moral grounds. Others had started disapproving in the early days when Mr. Hearst ran for mayor of New York and later for governor on the Socialist ticket. In time, of course, he was to become a prime mover against both Communists and Socialists, and of anybody the least bit left of center. Today the papers, much less influential than they were, continue that policy.

But in their heyday the Hearst papers were so successful that they had to be recognized as an important part of the American publishing world. All sorts of people admitted Hearst's power. When I was abroad with General Pershing, he started waving enthusiastically at a car and exclaimed, "There's Millicent!" Then he went over to speak to Mrs. Hearst.

When he returned I said, "But you don't like the Hearst papers."

"No, but they're important," said Pershing. "I've learned never to overlook important people."

To recognize a force and deal with it is not necessarily to bow to it. The same principle applies to foreign relations, in which the boycott, or nonrecognition, often fails. The Hearst empire early received recognition abroad; Bernard Shaw, for example, repeatedly gave exclusive interviews to Hearst and Macfadden, or sold material to them, when he must have known that their ideas and aims were very far from his. GBS wanted wide circulation for

what he said. Naturally I wanted the same for my own articles. Also, like most young people, I was forced to learn something of the enemy camp because it was necessary for me to earn a living. To confine your associations to those whom you wholly admire is to limit not only your own circle of friends but your own potential effectiveness. Arthur Brisbane, I'm sure, could have cited chapter and verse for "If you love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?"

In my days of working for the Hearst press, I was well paid and fairly treated, and I covered a number of interesting stories. There were trials ranging from the Elwell murder in New York to the Scopes trial at Dayton, Tennessee, the so-called "monkey trial" which was Bryan's last appearance before the public.

And I also spent some time in the training camp with Jack Dempsey before he fought Gene Tunney. Unlike most of the highbrows, I was for Dempsey. I'd been with Tunney first; when Phil Payne, my associate on the *Mirror*, came into the camp and got into the ring to spar with Tunney, the gentleman champ hit him in the belly for a knockout. I jumped in yelling, "That's not fair!" and took on Tunney myself long enough to make the sports columns.

Dempsey, like me, later moved to Nevada to escape taxes. He taught me a trick: he always carried silver dollars in his pockets and showed me how to grip them between the fingers to use as brass knuckles. In a pinch, fifty-cent pieces will do.

However much we compromise, to earn a living or to learn the opposing point of view, there comes a time when individual views reassert themselves. Many good people worked for Hearst, but when my colleague Phil Payne died in the plane crash I left the *Mirror* and never again worked for a Hearst paper. But I always remembered something Lord Northcliffe told me: "Any man who wants to continue in journalism should work for the Hearst newspapers at least one year in his life, in order to know what not to do the rest of his life in journalism."

Leg Man For FDR

CHAPTER VIII

WE WANT ROOSEVELT

IN THIS COUNTRY, some people still coasted on a wave of prosperity which, we were told by those in power, would never end. I had another idea. I had talked to Professor Irving Fisher up at Yale and he had told me a crash was coming. I tried to convey this information to my father, who said Yale's famous economist was a crazy old coot and he didn't care to hear what he had to say. When the market began its long downward trend, Father got hold of me and had me sit down with his secretary and dictate a report of everything Fisher had said. By that time, of course, the horse was out of the barn and there was nothing to be done. Far from being grateful for my efforts to tip him off in time, Father seemed to blame me for complicity in the crash.

So I was happy to be kept traveling. When I left the *Mirror* I joined the staff of *Liberty* magazine and was sent all over the world doing interviews and travel stories, except for intervals when I did reports from Washington.

Washington loomed larger in the public mind after the Wall Street crash. As always when disaster strikes, there was a feeling that the government should do something. There is the same feeling of alarm today about the international situation that there was then about the national economy. Perhaps it is more complex now, in that more people blame Washington for the international mess, whereas few people found any way to blame the government for the crash of '29. But then as now, the administration in office became unpopular. From '30 on, you began to feel sure that the next administration would be Democratic.

In the Depression many people talked of business cycles who

had never before heard of the cycle theory of history. Nowadays that idea is more familiar and historians compare our era to the end of the Roman empire or to the Renaissance, depending upon whether they are looking at our political disasters or our technical achievements. As I write we seem to be repeating even more decisively that situation of the late twenties and early thirties when it was obvious that a great change was about to occur in Washington administrative circles, and the only question was which Democrat was about to be elected.

This was an interesting time in my own life and I am fascinated by its recurrence. As I covered the country for *Liberty*, it became obvious that the name on a great many people's lips, in different parts of the country, was that of Franklin D. Roosevelt. I have said that I worked for Roosevelt in his first campaign and thereafter, but I have never before told, as I now propose to do, just what I did and why I think the time has now come to tell some of the things I learned from him.

Elsewhere I have described what the country was like in those early days of the thirties, when each region had its own form of Depression misery. There were the Okies in California, there was the dust bowl from which they had fled. There were miles of highways across the country where people were walking, going nowhere, just walking, to get away from what lay behind. Sometimes they had a few possessions on carts, like war refugees, and they called the carts Hoover-wagons. On the edge of every town was the collection of tarpaper and orange-crate shacks called Hooverville. There were tent camps of sharecroppers and migrant farm workers with nothing to do. There were farmers with shotguns resisting foreclosure. In the cities there were people with their belongings on the sidewalks, evicted because they couldn't pay the rent. In state capitals people marched into public buildings and sat down to wait for some action to be taken to relieve their distress. In New York one bread line stretched from Macfadden's free soup kitchen on West Forty-fourth Street down Sixth Avenue for two blocks and then another block around Bryant Park behind the Public Library. Men shuffled along a few inches at a time to get a bowl of gray gruel and a cup of coffee. There are voters now who had not yet been born then, but those of us who saw such things will never forget.

From California to New York people were talking, then as now, of who would be the next President—who could be trusted to get

them out of this—just as they are asking now who will relieve us of the threat of atomic war and the increase of radioactivity in the bread and milk we eat and the air we breathe. There were false assurances about the safety of banks and stock-holdings then, just as there are false assurances now about the safety of strontium. For a while people listened to the conflicting opinions of experts and didn't know what to believe. Then they decided to believe the people out of power, with no interest in maintaining the status quo, rather than people with positions to protect.

People with a large stake in the nation's economy in those days were likely, too, to say one thing in public and another in private. My notebook summarizes certain interviews I had in 1931 with the sentence: "The Depression is going to last a lot longer than most of us think, according to every big man I have talked with, from Myron Taylor, head of the steel trust, to Charlie Hayden of the National City Bank, which bought up nearly half a million of Mellon's recent bonds." The next year I talked to the national president of the Farmers' Union, John Talbot, and noted that "T. has the softest voice I ever heard but the things he said weren't the sort to make Hoover sleep better." The New York financiers and industrialists concealed their anxiety and continued to support the Administration, but the farmers soon began to talk out loud. And up in Dutchess County, New York, a man who loved to call himself a farmer listened to what they said, while his background—for he was considered a rich man—and his experience as governor of New York enabled him to guess how much the assurances from Wall Street were worth. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a good listener, and he was also good at detecting a bluff.

When I first went to work for Roosevelt, in April of 1932, the campaign was following a plan worked out for him by Louis Howe, Jim Farley, and, to some extent, Raymond Moley, also Marguerite LeHand and members of Democratic state committees in various parts of the country, including Mayor Cermak of Chicago, Senator Wagner of New York, and Democratic leaders in the South, including even Senator Huey P. Long of Louisiana.

Under this plan a group of us went into the Northwest and the Midwest to start the ball rolling for Roosevelt's nomination in the national convention. With me was John Brodix, my first tutor, who was later killed in an automobile accident in the mountains of West Virginia, and Craig W. Kershow from New

Port Richey, Florida, who for some years had been running my Nevada ranches, Tumbleweed and the Lazy Me, and who later worked for the government during the Roosevelt administration. We were sent into North Dakota, and in order to travel over the state by car I took with me Edward Durkin, my longtime chauffeur-valet from Philadelphia, who had driven an ambulance overseas in World War I and had political training under Jack Kelly, the Philadelphia boss who is the father of Grace Kelly. We got an early start because North Dakota is the first state in the union to hold a state convention in an election year. The state had been consistently Republican except for a Farmer-Labor trend a year or two before.

I went first to Jamestown, where Theodore Roosevelt, in his early search for health, had spent some time. We stayed in the hotel where young Roosevelt had stayed. Roosevelt memorabilia were all around and the proprietor, a Mr. Patterson, looked remarkably like TR himself. He was able to recall TR's early days on the North Dakota range, his cattle-punching experiences, and his friendship with the Indian tribes. The name Roosevelt was still a household word in North Dakota, not only in Jamestown but in the smaller towns. We went from Jamestown into the western part of the state, down to the south and then back east.

We kept in touch with Jim Farley at the Biltmore in New York twice daily by phone, and sometimes we also talked by phone with FDR, in Albany or in Hyde Park. The method I used for creating Roosevelt sentiment where we wanted it was a simple one based on what I had already discovered in feeling the public pulse for *Liberty*. Plenty of people were for Roosevelt, and you had only to suggest this at the time and the place where popular support could be effective.

We reached Grand Forks, the convention city, at about 2:00 A.M. on the morning the convention was to begin. We had expected to meet with Bill Lemke, North Dakota's only congressman, a member of the Farmer-Labor Party, but we had had motor trouble and been delayed several hours. Lemke had retired, so we did. But after two or three hours' sleep, we were awakened by a very eager reporter who wanted to know what I was doing in North Dakota and what I was writing about. I told him I was writing a history of the Roosevelts, for I actually was working on a story of the Roosevelt family for *Liberty*. I said I had visited Jamestown and would be leaving later that morning for Minne-

apolis and St. Paul, where I had other stories to write. The reporter asked me why I didn't stay over and watch over the state convention, but I denied any interest in politics. He was curious about what I had discovered in my tour of his state and inquired what names I had heard especially mentioned.

"Why," I replied, "there's only one name in the entire state. Everybody thinks of Roosevelt. Whether you're writing about Roosevelt or not, the only name you hear is Roosevelt."

The reporter expressed great surprise but he made a lot of notes.

We went back to sleep. At nine we were awakened by a call from Jim Farley, who suggested that Kershow and Brodix go out into the hall among the delegates and spread the word that it was Roosevelt all over the state, and that I should appear as soon as the afternoon paper was out, and apparently be reading the story I had planted with the reporter. We followed this plan.

The hall was filled with two or three hundred delegates, only a few of whom I had met during my tour of the state. There was one very annoying newspaper editor whose name escapes me. He smelled a mouse in what we were doing, and yet he saw no way to stop the avalanche of votes which might be accumulated by the afternoon, as it was impossible to get a contradictory story into the newspapers before the delegates voted.

Finally Mr. Patterson suggested to the chairman that I should speak from the platform on my findings. Patterson, of course, had no knowledge of our plan.

I had had only a few months of political speaking experience at that time, and mostly I spoke on foreign affairs. But on his insistence, they began clapping and stamping and shouting, "Vanderbilt." So finally I delivered my first and almost my last political speech, in which I said, "Gentlemen, I am a reporter, I am not a politician. I've been making a survey of the state because I am writing some stories on the Roosevelt family from TR to FDR. Upon the insistence of some of the delegates, who have asked me to tell you what I have found out in my survey here, I wish to say that I have found only sentiment in favor of FDR for President. The reason is his liberal policy in the state of New York and his liberal policies in his periods in the legislature of that state. The feeling at the moment is that our country is going to the devil, that no one is backing it up with anything, and that President Hoover is inactive and his cabinet, all being very rich

men, are interested only in helping other rich men to enlarge their fortunes.

"Mr. Roosevelt, who is himself a rich man, seems to be more interested in his fellow men than he is in other rich men, and in New York at the present time there is less trouble and unemployment pro rata than in many other states in the union. I believe, therefore, that when Mr. Roosevelt enters the political arena in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention, he will be nominated for President, certainly on the second, third, or fourth ballot. I can see no name held in greater respect by the man in the street in America, than that of Franklin Delano Roosevelt."

I got quite a round of applause, and by this time the newspaper was out. After my talk, I passed newspapers around, and then went back to the hotel, began packing, and ordered the car. Everything was in the car when we left, including the nomination of Governor Roosevelt in North Dakota on the first ballot!

This was the beginning of the landslide, which spread from state to state, even though the chances of Newton D. Baker, of Governor Lowden of Illinois, of William G. McAdoo of California, and even of Al Smith of New York, and John Raskob, were actually more favored by the starting odds.

We went into state after state following the same program. I recall in Indiana, where Walter Myers was leader of the state senate, there was a great deal of opposition, and some of the newspapers hinted directly that we were working only for FDR and not, as we said, for *Liberty* magazine.

We had prevailed upon the publisher of *Liberty* not only to print both sides of the question in each weekly edition, but also to permit FDR to run in each issue a signed article, in which he set forth some of the policies he intended to put into effect.

In some states we received a cold shoulder, but in most we were received with open arms, for at this time the apple-sellers were on half the corners in the United States, and pencil-sellers were on the other corners. There was vast unemployment ranging from twelve to fourteen million; we had no social security, no unemployment insurance.

We visited South Dakota, Minnesota, Michigan, Indiana, and several of the southern states—Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, the Carolinas, and Virginia. We also visited Maine, and I am certain it was because of the work we did in Maine that that rock-ribbed Republican state went Democratic for the first time

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE
NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING
WASHINGTON

ES A. FARLEY
CHAIRMAN

October 17, 1935.

My dear Mr. President:

I attach a copy of a report sent to me by Neil
Vanderbilt. He advises me that this report was made
ten days ago and that he has traveled 3500 miles
since that time, and the percentage still holds good.
You will recall Neil was able to pick up some good
information for us in '32.

Sincerely yours,

Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

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in more than a century. In Maine a man called Braun—running from, I believe, Lewiston—had the backing of some of the farmers and fisherfolk, certainly not of the cities. We were interviewed in all the cities, sometimes by reporters who came to our hotel and asked us separately what we thought. Of course we always said we found only the name of Roosevelt, who stood for the little man and not for the businessman and the capitalist. When Maine nominated a Democrat for President by a vote greater than the vote accorded to its Republican candidate, the *New York Times* gave it three columns on page one.

In Maine and in North Dakota I am sure that we were responsible for the Roosevelt name's gaining such eminence, and possibly also later on in Colorado. In many other states where Mr. Roosevelt won the nomination, either through state conventions or primaries, I would not be so certain that it was because of our work.

Since I had lived in Nevada for several years (since 1926 and still do), I prevailed on Mr. Farley to send me out to talk to state Democratic leaders there. I felt this was one state that I could swing personally. The first person I went to see was my own attorney, Judge Sam Platt, at one time senator from Nevada, appointed by a Republican governor, Governor Oddie. Mr. Platt, who was Jewish, was then in partnership with Mr. John Sinai, who is my lawyer now.

I went to see Mr. Platt because, first, he was my lawyer and, second, I regarded him as an honest man. I told him I believed that Mr. Roosevelt was going to sweep the other states and would become the next President. Mr. Platt disagreed with me violently; he didn't believe Roosevelt had a ghost of a chance, although he did believe a Democrat would win. He was a liberal enough Republican, and certainly enough of a gentleman, to tell me that he himself would not fight me in the state of Nevada. But he said that the Democratic national committeeman, William Woodburn, would fight me; Mr. Woodburn's interest was tied up in Wall Street and he had no use whatsoever for Roosevelt or any of the people connected with him in New York.

When I went to see Woodburn, I found this was correct. He handled almost all of the business of the wealthy who came to Reno to seek dissolution of their marriages. He was a great power in the state, and he did not intend to see his power usurped by any upstart in any other part of the country. And the fact that I

went to the firm of Platt and Sinai instead of to Woodburn's law firm had displeased him no end. He had no liking for me then or later.

So, with the help of Judge Platt, who was against Hoover even though he was the Republican committeeman, I hit upon the idea of going to see people in the small towns throughout the state. In those days Las Vegas was a small town, perhaps three or four thousand. There and in Elko, in Winnemucca, in Ely, in Wells, and in Carson City, I talked to people and eventually we got men elected to the state legislature, and from there into other positions. Among them was my friend James G. Scrugham, publisher of the Reno morning paper, the *Nevada State Journal*. Scrugham later won as governor in the Roosevelt landslide, leading the national committeeman, Woodburn, in the primaries and badly defeating Sam Platt. And Key Pittman went to the Senate, where he became chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the position held until lately by Senator Green and now held by Senator Fulbright. This is the most important committee in the Senate today.

In the Roosevelt landslide we took over all the state offices except one. Also we defeated the state Democratic committee's choice for the Presidency; Chairman Woodburn had sided with the Newton D. Baker faction. But Woodburn remained chairman, as Judge Platt continued to lead the Republicans.

And I tucked carefully away in my files a letter from FDR congratulating me on my public-opinion polls in various sections of the country, which he said were the most accurate of any he received.

CHAPTER IX

"HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE"

MY WORK IN the first Roosevelt campaign was a series of lessons in practical politics.

I learned that few nominations occur on the first ballot at national conventions, because states must first cast obligatory votes for their favorite sons. Deals made by party chairmen are therefore made with the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, or later ballots in view.

Most election observers now realize the importance of the big states. It is almost taken for granted that no one can be nominated for President unless he can count on carrying a state with a large number of votes—New York or California, with Pennsylvania in third place, followed by Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and so on. Hence the significance of Mr. Rockefeller's election as governor of New York, the Nixon efforts to hold California and the importance of Chief Justice Warren of that state in the jockeying for 1960.

But there are other ways in which small states can carry weight. One way is by coming early in the alphabet. In the convention roll call to nominate President and Vice-President, the names of the states are called in alphabetical order. The chairman of the state delegation then rises and says, for instance, "Mr. Chairman, Alabama casts so many votes for John Smith and so many for Joe Doaks." Our next convention, of course, will see Alabama followed by Alaska, instead of Arizona. A series of votes *for* by the ABC states can build up a favorable impression for a candidate even as the roll is being called.

The timing of a state's choice can be very important, as we saw in the preliminary Roosevelt campaigning. Timing is also important when the vote-switching begins after the preliminary compliments to the favorite sons have been taken care of. This is the real balloting.

FDR learned these elementary election tactics from Louis Howe, recognized as the "king-maker" of the 1932 election. Once when I had called him "the undisputed Talleyrand of the Roosevelt movement," he had cards engraved reading: "Colonel Louis Rasputin Voltaire Talleyrand Simon Legree Howe."

My official job at the Chicago convention, that summer of 1932, was doorkeeper. Men at conventions are like little boys; they have secret passwords. Without the password, I was supposed to admit people to the speakers' platform only on the say-so of the chairman, Jim Farley, or young Jimmy Roosevelt, his father's right-hand man. I knew some but not all the applicants for admission, and took some razzing when I questioned the credentials of New York's Lehman, about to succeed FDR as governor. But I recognized from pictures, and was told to keep out, Governor Ritchie of Maryland. Two nights before the convention opened, there was a scandal about duplicate tickets; some blamed Ritchie's men, others said it was just the Republicans.

Perhaps the most important person I admitted, in terms of the Administration that was to be, was a nervous little man wearing glasses who said his name was Evans. Some hours later I found him still waiting in one of the rooms under the platform, where a Farley assistant had sent him. He had nothing to write with and was afraid to go out and write a note to FDR—he might not get in again!

I took him out to eat at a nearby beanery while he told me his plan. Combining a cure for unemployment with a move against juvenile delinquency, he outlined a proposal to put young men and boys to work on a cleanup job all over the country—helping the rangers stop forest fires by clearing out the underbrush, and doing other useful chores such as forest planting to stop erosion. Housing could be the old wooden army barracks still standing. This in essence was the plan for the establishment of what came to be called the CCC—the Civilian Conservation Corps.

I asked Evans if anyone had listened to him, and he said he'd got as far as the Farley assistant but there had been a quick brush-off. I thought his idea would interest FDR and took him to the Congress Hotel. We got there while Roosevelt was having a late dinner. He was surrounded by secretaries and other people, but I took Evans right up to the table and introduced him, and told FDR a little about the idea. He kept saying, "That's bully.

That's great," and finally asked why we hadn't told Farley about it. I said Evans had.

Then FDR said, "Mr. Evans, what's your first name? . . . Bill? Well, Bill, I'll tell you what you do. Work out this scheme of yours, send it to me at Hyde Park, and send a copy to my friend Neil Vanderbilt here—in Reno, Nevada. Yes, he really lives in Reno and he says it's a nice friendly little place. Haw-haw-haw! And we'll see what we can do with your idea if I get elected in November."

Years later I ran into Bill Evans again—he was then head of a large real estate development in Los Angeles—and he said he liked everything about his CCC plan as it was put into operation, except he wished they'd given him credit for the idea.

During the convention, Jimmy Roosevelt and I attended to packing the stadium with Roosevelt supporters and cuing the band music and staging the marching scenes. Every day I was given about three thousand tickets. I used them to pack the two top floors to the rafters, and had no trouble finding people ready to root for Roosevelt. Those who were most vociferous I placed nearest the huge loud-speakers, and trained to repeat in unison: "We Want Roosevelt! We Want Roosevelt!" Jimmy's job, meanwhile, was to find the various state delegates who were on our side and get them, at the right moments, to start parades around the floor of the big hall, singing campaign songs to the tune of "Happy Days Are Here Again" and "California Here I Come." This was the first big convention to have real radio coverage, and we had a candidate who knew how to use it.

We did our planning in my apartment at 40 East Oak Street, about a block from the Drake Hotel. There, even before the convention started, we'd begun to round up people, serving sandwiches and free liquor to those who turned up.

There Brodix and Kershaw and I first discussed my plan, which we later sold to Howe and Farley, to dramatize the nomination by arranging for Roosevelt to come by air to Chicago. In those days flying was a novelty, and to bring our candidate in by plane would symbolize a mastery of new techniques and willingness to move quickly in a crisis. Sure enough, when Roosevelt flew to Chicago, we had the front page of even the Chicago *Tribune*, which was very much against him.

We thought we'd have the nomination the night of his arrival, but again we voted until two or three o'clock in the morning

without breaking the deadlock formed by opposition candidates, including Governor Ritchie of Maryland and Senator McAdoo of California. Nor were we helped by Al Smith, New York's former governor for whom FDR had once made a famous nominating speech, and his sidekick John Raskob, former executive of General Motors, now both vehemently anti-Roosevelt.

When the voting stopped I was half-dead, partly because of Chicago's summer heat and humidity, and Jim Farley was in the same condition. Farley went back to the Athletic Club, where he was staying, after telling me not to call him except in a case of life or death. I took a sedative and went to sleep. Less than three hours later the phone woke me. A voice said, "My name is Joe Doakes and I run a gas pump out by the airport. I thought you might like to know that Newton D. Baker is here—he just got in and is on his way to the Drake Hotel."

This was news all right, because Baker's opposition worried us and his arrival could start a run to break the deadlock. My informant went on to tell me that he'd called me because he'd read in the papers that I was doorman. When I thanked him he hung up. I phoned the Drake, but got no information there. Craig Kershow at the Congress Hotel didn't think we should wake Farley, but I went over to his room in the Club and banged on the door. He seemed more upset at being waked than at the news about Baker, and said, "Why couldn't it wait? I'd have heard about it later on."

"Yes," I argued, "but by that time they'd have another lineup of votes."

Baker still had strong support from the eastern bloc, and although his arrival in Chicago wouldn't have the drama of Roosevelt's flight in—we'd beaten him there—I was sure it boded no good for us unless prompt measures were taken. My feeling that Baker was a menace went back to World War I, when as secretary of war he had blocked a promotion earned and well deserved by my father. Although Baker was a Democrat, he was the conservative type to oppose all Roosevelt stood for, in the crisis of depression, and he appealed to some powerful interests as a "safe" man.

So, leaving Farley to sleep, I went back to the Congress Hotel and there Roosevelt's Negro valet, Duffie, told me the governor was awake and I could go in. When I began with an apology, FDR said, "I slept beautifully all night—what's up?" As soon as I told him he ordered a check and found it was true that Baker

had arrived. And now, moving rapidly, we did some convention horse-trading. I persuaded FDR to let me call Hearst in California and tell him about this impending switch before it happened, so he could come aboard the band wagon too. When he did, McAdoo also agreed to support Roosevelt. This kept the eastern banking crowd from nominating Baker and kept the western bloc, all for Roosevelt, in the party. Let people who feel sure that black is always black and white is white consider that our greatest reform administration came in with the help of the Hearst papers.

Now the nomination was safe and, in a car furnished by Chicago's ill-fated Mayor Cermak (later shot to death in Miami by a bad marksman who aimed at the President), we drove to the convention hall for the acceptance speech and the cheers. And during the happy delirium Roosevelt found time to tell me that he thought things might have gone differently if I hadn't been on the job that night.

The night of that first nomination, after we returned to the hotel, we sat for a while—FDR in his wheel chair and I in a rocking chair—in the bay window which in those days jutted out over the side street and Michigan Avenue. The governor told me he meant to do two important things as soon as he was elected. One would be to demand, as promised, repeal of Prohibition. The other, which he put first, was to recognize the government of the Soviet Union.

And he asked me whether, when we recognized the USSR, I would like to be the first American ambassador to the new Russia. He thought, he said, that it would be a stroke of genius to appoint a multimillionaire's son to represent us there. And he said he knew of no one else who already knew Mr. Stalin and other people in the Russian government, and he thought I could be of help in keeping the peace of the world.

I told him, as I was to tell him more than once, that I had no political ambition but instead had a passion for anonymity. I said I had joined the campaign because I felt we were on the verge of internal strife in the United States, and if he hadn't been nominated we might have had a revolution right here. I said that aside from their financial mistakes, the Hoover crowd was bound to ruin the country by keeping us isolationist, and I hoped I could help by roaming the world and reporting back to him as well as to papers and magazines.

One of my first assignments after the nomination was to organize a committee of publishers for Roosevelt. Some were Republicans, or had supported Republican candidates and policies. Later, in the New Deal administration, it was recognized that most of the papers were against the President and he had to reach people by other means. But at the time of the nomination this concerted opposition had not developed, and so it did not seem an impossible job for me to seek out publishers in various sections of the country who would support FDR, or, if they would not support him, would anyhow be fair enough to run his messages as they would those of the Republican candidate.

At this point Louis Howe, my friends John Brodix and Craig Kershow, and I evolved a plan. We would prepare sample layouts of editorial material to run in papers whose publishers would agree to give us an even break. One column, set a column and a half wide, would give the Republican story and the other our Democratic story, the columns to be headed either by the party emblems or by the candidates' pictures. What could be fairer? And, of course, it was an anticipation of the arrangement now prevailing in radio and TV under which opposing parties must have equal time.

One of the first publishers I called upon was Judge Bingham, publisher of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*. Mr. Howe felt that it was especially important to line up publishers in the so-called border states, those states lying between the North and the South, or between the East and the West. From the borders, so to speak, we might reach public sentiment in areas still closed to us. It was not necessary for publishers to promise support; we need ask only a hearing for Mr. Roosevelt's views, so that voters could make up their minds.

When we reached Louisville, we checked at the *Courier-Journal* office, then drove out to the beautiful Bingham country estate on the banks of the Ohio River. With their daughter Henrietta, a star in the amateur tennis field and a friend of the champion Helen Jacobs, Judge and Mrs. Bingham were down by the river and the swimming pool. Brodix and I were to stay in the guest house. As formal as my parents were, the Bingham family dressed for dinner. We hadn't brought dinner jackets and I remember that John Brodix taxied back to Louisville to rent them.

During two days with the Bingham family I spent much time on the long-distance phone, talking to FDR. More accurately, I served as

liaison between Judge Bingham and Louis Howe. Bingham wanted to talk to Mr. Roosevelt, but Howe would not permit this. It seemed that there was a deal in mind and the Judge was trying to drive a hard bargain.

In those days, of course, Bingham felt that he was just as important a man as Governor Roosevelt, and as would soon appear, he had political aspirations of his own. Although he said he would be willing to give us space in which to say our piece "two or three times a week," he would not commit himself definitely to back Roosevelt.

While the Judge remained uncommitted to more than a "fair hearing" policy, I rushed to Albany—Governor Roosevelt still lived in the Executive Mansion there—and got past Howe and the secretaries into FDR's bedroom. He was, as I was to see him so often, lying in a huge four-poster double bed and wearing a faded old sweater. The bed was covered with correspondence, newspaper clippings, and articles. The sweater, worn over his pajamas in preference to a dressing gown, was long-sleeved and light blue. I don't know how many of these sweaters he had; after word about them got out they were knitted for him by admirers throughout the country, but each one he wore always looked faded and tattered and as if it had seen better days.

Now he looked up and roared out in his good-natured voice, "Well, well, my boy, what brings you here to see me now?"

It was around nine in the morning and Louis Howe, upset by my sudden interruption, came trotting behind me.

"Now Louie," Roosevelt declared, "you're not on the ground this time and I want to hear what Neil has to say before I commit myself."

I said that I thought if we could get Judge Bingham definitely on our side, not simply to *print* both sides, other papers over the country would follow his lead. I thought Bingham should head the publishers' committee, and in return I thought he wanted to be an ambassador.

The governor said, "Go the limit. Promise him anything he wants."

But Louis Howe jumped up and said, "Certainly not. That guy wants the prize plum, the Court of St. James. We can't give that away without a sizable contribution to the kitty, certainly at least twenty-five grand."

I went out to my car and started driving right back to Louis-

ville. There I saw Bingham immediately and gave him an edited version of my Albany interview. He still wanted to talk to Roosevelt on the phone, so that evening after dinner, when the rest of the family had gone to bed, I called Hyde Park where the Roosevelts had now gone from Albany. Then I turned the phone over to Bingham and went into another room.

Twenty minutes later the judge joined me, all smiles, and his conversation indicated pretty clearly the subject of the phone call. He asked me what I intended to do after Mr. Roosevelt became President. I said it would be months before we could know for sure that he would be. But Bingham kept asking, so I said I intended to go back to newspaper work. He frowned and asked what future there was in that.

Then he asked, "Why don't you try for an ambassadorship?"

Naturally I did not mention Roosevelt's offer of the Moscow post. Instead I said, "No man who has been married three times"—by this time I had been—"could ever be confirmed by the Senate for an embassy appointment."

"You could try," Bingham said. I told him I didn't care enough about that sort of job; I couldn't sit still that long. But he went on to say, "The place for you would be minister to Holland, where your ancestors came from. After you'd been there a few years the President could make you an ambassador somewhere else. He'd certainly have enough votes in his pocket before he'd mention your name."

I just laughed and said I really liked newspaper work better than anything else, and maybe I could be a sort of roving ambassador that way. Since he'd talked so much about my career, I felt I could ask him a lead question: "Did the governor guarantee your deal?"

Bingham was walking up and down the room, in a blue dressing gown, and although he was rubbing his hands with satisfaction he didn't answer directly, but instead explained his insistence on the phone call. "My dear boy, at my age and with my experience, one never makes a deal with a presidential candidate unless one talks to the man personally. Yet none of you would let me get in there." Then he added, very quickly, "I did make an agreement. I am to head the executive committee of American publishers."

"Come, come. I know that," I told him. "But did he promise you St. James?"

The judge stopped walking and turned to look me straight in the face. "Yes, Neil Vanderbilt, he did. He promised me the Court of St. James."

I wanted to ask, "How much?" but I didn't have to. Bingham went over to his large, old-fashioned mahogany desk, pulled out a checkbook, and wrote out a post-dated check. As he handed it to me he said, "Go back and tell that boss of yours that this is to be put in escrow. If he wins, it's his; if he loses, I want it back."

The check was for fifty thousand dollars, but I was struck by the fact that it was made out, not to the Democratic National Committee, but to the candidate. I told the Judge this was wrong, but he told me I was wrong. "If a check is made out to the party, no one except the party treasurer knows where the money is going, and how do I know they won't spend it before the election? But make out the check to the man, and he can't double-cross you—the deal's with him and you've got him over a barrel."

In the years that followed I came to know Judge Bingham very well. Often in London I stopped over long enough to have dinner at the Embassy, and sometimes when he was very tired, we ate on a tray in his bedroom while I told him what I had seen and heard in Europe. I felt his death almost as much as if he had been my father; of all the office-seekers I met in those early days with Roosevelt, I regarded Bingham as the most honorable and true. When he made a deal he saw that he got, and gave, value received.

Back in Hyde Park I found Governor Roosevelt in a very fine mood, but Louis Howe was less friendly. With Brodix and Kershow I resumed the job of lining up publishers.

In Atlanta the publisher of the *Constitution* was "unavailable," but Major Cohen who published the *Journal* said he'd be glad to go on the committee and give us equal space. In Raleigh, North Carolina, Josephus Daniels, publisher of the *Observer*, was the third man to join the committee. In Manchester, New Hampshire, Frank Knox agreed to do what we asked, and in cities across the country—Olathe, Kansas, and Nashville, Tennessee, San José and Santa Barbara, California, and Phoenix, Arizona—our proposal was well received. In Phoenix, Charles Stauffer, publisher of both the papers, became vice-chairman of the publishers' committee. In Fort Worth, Amon G. Carter joined the committee, gave us the space we asked, and presented me with a ten-gallon hat.

In New York, Captain Patterson of the *Daily News* was rough and gruff and hard-boiled, but promised space and eventually did

join us. But Fred Bonfils of the *Denver Post* promised to publish both sides and then went back on the promise. And in Seattle, Colonel Blethen, publishing the *Seattle Times*, asked me to dinner but banged the table and said, "I think you are a traitor to your class to support a man like Roosevelt."

In San Francisco and Los Angeles I had no luck. In San Diego and in Santa Fe and El Paso, they promised space but wouldn't join the committee. In Houston, Jesse Jones and former Governor Hobby, each of whom owned a paper, did all we asked. In Dallas they gave us double space, and in Reno the morning paper agreed to print our side, and James G. Scrugham's articles in support of FDR helped his own political career.

A good many editors were for Roosevelt, but the publishers felt advertising interests were on the other side. As our list lengthened, however, more joined. The Oklahoma papers, the New Orleans *Item*, the Des Moines *Register* came in. By September, 1932, we had the New York *Times*, the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, the Washington *Post*, and the Chicago *Daily News*.

At last I could turn to the comparatively simple job of gathering prominent Americans for FDR. This list ranged from my old friends in Newport, Dudley Pierrepont Gilbert and LeRoy King, to such political allies as Mayor Jim Curley of Boston. We had writers, artists, actors. Hollywood's top names in those days—Chaplin, Bogart, Edward G. Robinson, Melvyn Douglas—glittered on our list. We had Louis B. Mayer's nephew Jack Cummings, and Mervyn Le Roy, then an independent producer. We even had bankers—Herbert Fleishhacker, in San Francisco, was with us, although his brother Mortimer wasn't—and in Oklahoma City I recruited Perle Mesta, a former Republican.

Then it was decided that FDR should tour the country by train. We thought this would be less tiring than air travel, and he could see more people and more people could see him if he took the long distances by rail and then toured the cities in an open car.

As I had already been covering the various states, the governor first thought I should be in charge of the train. But I suggested that instead I go ahead by car as advance publicity man, Brodix with me and Kershow flying ahead of us. As manager of the train I suggested Marvin McIntyre, who got the job and later became presidential secretary.

That it was well for us to run interference for the train was shown in Denver, where Kershow had relatives whom he went to

see. About two o'clock in the morning he burst into my hotel room with the news that one of his relatives who worked for the *Denver Post* had seen an offer on the office bulletin board: "\$50 reward to anyone who can secure a photo of Roosevelt as he is!"—meaning, of course, with the braces. By now the nature of FDR's physical handicap was known to newspapermen but not to the general public; indeed, the Republicans were whispering about venereal disease. As far as that whisper went, the polio facts would help, but we didn't want pictures of the braces because only those of us who knew him, and later of course the public that applauded him as President, could realize how his spirit surmounted the handicap to make him stronger than the rest of us.

We had twelve hours before the campaign train was due. I remembered hearing somewhere that remnants of a "bonus army" were camping under canvas and in wooden shacks along a river bed outside Denver. By dawn, Kershaw and I were having breakfast with their leader, and telling him to tell his men we'd pay a hundred dollars to anyone who smashed a camera raised above the heads of the crowd in order to take a picture damaging to our candidate. Kershaw put notices of our offer on the bulletin boards of both newspaper offices.

Of course we'd also wired McIntyre on the train, and as a result Denver was the first town where a ramp was ready to make it easier for FDR to leave and board the train. When the Roosevelt Special pulled into Denver, the welcoming crowd made it almost impossible for anyone to move; but our bonus marchers were there, and no misleading pictures were taken.

This was the sort of thing we could do for FDR, but in other ways we had much to learn from him. One evening when we stopped at a small place for a bite to eat, a man who been in the afternoon audience came over and said to FDR, "Man, I hate you, I *hate* you!"

And Roosevelt looked him in the eye and began to laugh and said, "Well, you're in good company. Lots of people do."

The man caved in completely, all his spite gone. This way of meeting an enemy required a certain technique which Roosevelt had, and which I do not have, yet am still trying to acquire.

CHAPTER X

THE PEOPLE SAY YES

ONE REASON Roosevelt campaigned so well was that he seemed to meet the people of the United States with the pleasant anticipation my mother felt when she was giving a dinner for distinguished guests. He could, also, face whatever came with an amazing buoyancy. Though he was rightly confident of winning, he reminded us late in the fall of '32 that Blaine had lost just three days before election.

A week before the election, I dined with his family and wrote in my notes that FDR "joked about everything and talked with his mother like a little boy playing grown-up. This while telephones constantly interrupted with calls from the West Coast, or transatlantic." When the phone was plugged into the floor, he'd say, "Let's break the Depression by restoring buying power to sixty million farmers, not by throwing more money to the bankers," and propose reciprocal tariffs to promote exchange of goods, or co-operation with the League of Nations in humane affairs, or handing the liquor problem back to the states.

In Hyde Park, where the family voted, a sign read: "Let's be neighborly—love thy neighbor as thyself. Vote Roosevelt." But when the votes were counted it was found that in Hyde Park 148 more people had voted for Hoover than for FDR.

The evening of election day I was at the Hyde Park house along with a lot of other people—personal friends, political helpers like Ray Moley, and hundreds of newspapermen from all over the country. After dinner FDR planned, gleefully, to listen to Hoover and Ogden Mills on the radio. But first he took me into the study for a long talk about *my* future.

Picking up the embassy idea where we had left it in Chicago four months before, he spoke now, as had Bingham, of the Netherlands. If I didn't want to go to Russia, why not Holland,

where my family came from? He'd change the Dutch job from minister to ambassador.

Again I thanked him and said I'd stick to reporting. I said I hadn't joined his band wagon because I wanted a job, but because I thought what he stood for was what the country needed. Now I'd keep my job with *Liberty*, and be able to come and go and do whatever I could to help, as a newspaper and magazine writer. This reminded him of the newspapermen waiting outside in the rain. So he said, "Let's join the gang!" and we did, motoring down to Poughkeepsie where a huge crowd awaited him. By the time we got back, the weather was even worse and I stayed the night, sleeping in a pair of the President-elect's pajamas.

Happy days were voted in, but the new administration faced the biggest job that any administration had faced since Lincoln took office on the eve of the Civil War. Today we watch the unemployment figures and worry when they go up, but that is partly because some of us still remember what it was like then. Twelve million jobless then amounted to more than the same number would now, because now several million more normally hold jobs. Throughout the campaign and before it, letters had poured in to Roosevelt with pleas and suggestions. Some had even come to me. In my travels I had seen the desperate plight of the whole country, and in my occasional pauses I had local conditions brought home to me.

I still had an apartment in Miami, where the Roney-Plaza, trying to settle an advertising account with my *Daily Tab* newspaper, had built me what we called the Vanderbilt tower. (Afterward Walter Winchell took it over and it became known as the Winchell tower.) And in those Depression days, in Miami alone, between ten and fifteen thousand people were out of work. Others came in on freight trains and dropped off in the freight yards, only to be picked up by the local police, loaded in the patrol wagon—which was called, not the Black Maria, but the Hobo Express—and taken to jail. Late at night they would be driven to the northern edge of Dade County, on what is now the Dixie Highway or U.S. 1, and dropped off with a warning to get going and not return. Chief Scarboro of the local police told me as many as a hundred men a day were thus told to "git." If they drifted into Fort Lauderdale, the same thing happened to them. And from there to the outskirts of Pompano, and then to the edge of Boca Raton, and on to West Palm Beach and Martin

County, until finally they would land back in Jacksonville and be run out of the state. This sort of thing was going on in California, in New Jersey, indeed all over the country. One worker out of four was unemployed. In the general chaos, farmers poured milk into ditches, while a fifth of the children in public schools suffered from malnutrition. As Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., wrote in *The Crisis of the Old Order*, "The fog of despair hung over the land."

Nor did the outgoing administration, now that the election was over, cheerfully admit defeat and offer co-operation in the continuing crisis. With months ahead for the change-over, things could have been made easy, but Hoover wouldn't play. William Allen White, the great Republican editor, was saying that FDR was the noose that would strangle the United States. Bipartisan action was completely lacking between election and inauguration, although the plight of the country called for united effort to pull out of the slump. Banks had failed right and left; in New York my father lost millions when the Harriman bank suspended payment. In Reno the First National Bank literally closed down, not only on savings but on the stuff in my safe-deposit box. All over the country people were in this sort of plight. Yet even with his serious losses, my father and others like him were blaming the Wilson administration of a dozen years back, not their own.

For advice and counsel, when he saw what he was up against, FDR turned to a Wilson adviser, the quiet, gray little Texan, Colonel Edward M. House. I saw a good deal of the colonel during this time; even before the election Governor Roosevelt had begun the consultations with him, and would ask me to run up to Beverly, Massachusetts, and see what House thought of a situation. Later he would ask him to come down to Washington. I found that House was a terrific little man, just the opposite of what Texans are popularly supposed to be in that he didn't blow his own horn and really didn't want anyone else to blow it. He was the sort to enjoy being the power behind the throne, but he never wanted to be on the throne, or even in the Government at all. We could use him today; he used to tell me the only thing that counted in life now was maintaining peace. That had been the purpose of the League of Nations, and although it now seemed too late to rely on the League, House suggested to FDR three men—Cordell Hull, Norman Davis, and Key Pittman—who did what could be done to build foreign policy in the years before World

War II. Roosevelt's aim might have been described as carrying out the best of Wilson's intentions without making Wilson's mistakes, and House was the man to know the pitfalls.

Because there were foreign problems as well as domestic ones, my job as roving correspondent for *Liberty* seemed attractive. Working for its publisher, Bernarr Macfadden, was rather like working for a humanitarian Hearst. Like Hearst, Macfadden had interesting people in his employ—Emile Gauvreau, editor of his New York daily tabloid, the *Graphic*, and Fulton Oursler, editor of *Liberty*.

Like Hearst too, Macfadden was known for his extracurricular activities—in Macfadden's case harmless or helpful ones that ranged from long-distance walking and buttermilk diets to maintaining his penny restaurants in New York, which in the Depression fed thousands each day. Macfadden also was "talked about"—a Russian princess was said to have been his girl friend. But when I went to his lovely country place up the Hudson, I found it very unlike the Hearst ranch—pleasant, although it too had its strange aspects.

The family—Mr. and Mrs. Macfadden and seven or eight daughters—retired early, but I was warned that a bell would ring around 6:30 A.M. for a dip in the swimming pool. It was a cool evening and an especially cool morning after, and when the bell rang I wasn't in the least interested in going for a swim. But, after all, I was a guest, and I was interested in a contract, so it seemed best to appear.

When I looked out my window I was amazed and a little shocked to see Mrs. Macfadden and the children, ranging in age from perhaps five or six up to fifteen or sixteen, and also their French governess, all lined up around the pool in the very scantiest attire. In those days the Bikini bathing suit was unknown, but they were wearing something like it—a sort of jock strap around the middle, and almost nothing above the waist. Then I saw Mr. Macfadden go out, with all his muscles showing; he was a tremendously well-built man. Someone blew a bugle and they all started marching around the pool. Then they began doing somersaults and calisthenics, and next they began diving into the pool, although the temperature couldn't have been much over fifty degrees.

I was frankly terrified that I was going to catch pneumonia, or at best a bad cold. But I put on trunks and dressing gown and



TELEFON: A1 JÄGER 0020
TELEGR. ADP. ADLON BERLIN

Handwritten: Hotel Adlon Berlin
Handwritten: Unter den Linden 1
Handwritten: am Pariser Platz
March 5 '33

My dear Governor:-

Last night we drank your health, at the pre-German-elections ball here! Your toast was suggested by Louis Adlon, president of this hotel, a great admirer of 'Teddy' and a close personal friend of the former Kaiser.

Is'n't history funny!

All afternoon and evening I had tried on numerous radios to pick up your speech but Hitler and other German demagogues drowned it out. Later it came in over the NY Times wire; and I think, like your other speeches it was an exceptionally fine and straightforward and understandable direction.

Germany is a weird, wild, terrifying place these days. Yet I would'n't have missed this week HERE, for anything. More of it later, from a friendly nation. Here they have established mail, phone and telegraph censor-ship:

Suffice it to say though that Hitler is here

2 --

to stay. Make no mistake about that. Only assassination can remove him!

Yesterday Louis Ferdinand, the Kaiser's grandson, who is a great admirer of yours, lunched alone with me here. I am interviewing and chatting with ALL of the other leaders too.

The US seems miles away and I'm getting frightfully lonesome for it; and for whole-gone Americans. This anti-American feeling, particularly in France, grates upon ones nerves.

Again Governor, I know you will understand when I say that I thank God that You were spared to run for us the nation that needs at its helm as able, as constructive, as patriotic a gentleman as you.

My best to Mrs Roosevelt and the children! And of course to Mac and Louis,

Yours always,

Handwritten signature: Keel

Handwritten: P.S. American Express Co.-Paris
will still forward mail -

went out, and by good luck and strategy managed to keep out of the water. They used to tease me about it and call me the man who was afraid to get his feet wet.

Macfadden's health fads were my introduction to celebrities I used to interview for his publications—people like Hitler and Stalin, Mussolini, Chiang Kai-shek, and Hirohito would smile and talk a little when asked what they ate for breakfast and what they did to keep in condition under the great strain of their important work. And this sort of assignment from *Liberty* was now about to send me to places where I could be of use to the new President.

FDR rightly saw Hitler as one of his problems. He wanted to know more about him. And *Liberty* was about to send me around the world on the famous cruise of the liner *Empress of Britain* which brought Shaw to the United States. There were a whole series of stories to do; *Liberty* wanted me to interview Samuel Insull, among other people, and where was Insull? While I was finding him I could check on Der Fuehrer for FDR.

And so, although I had been there when Roosevelt was nominated and when he won the election, I missed the inaugural.

CHAPTER XI

EXITS AND ENTRANCES

AT THE TIME of the election, big-shot bankers and industrialists were still reacting to the Depression in various ways. Some had committed suicide. Some shut down their banks and businesses but weathered the storm. Others were about to go to jail. One industrialist, perhaps not the most guilty, became the most famous because he did none of these things. Owing millions, maybe over a billion dollars, to banks and insurance companies in the Middle West, Samuel Insull simply disappeared.

He had gone abroad, it was understood, and I had a tip-off that said where. I even had an address. Taking the Canadian-Pacific cruise on the *Empress of Britain* was a way to get to Europe without disclosing my exact destination. I left the ship in Greece and took an Athens taxi to the address.

When I got there it looked as if the tip had been wrong; the place was Athens' best-known maternity home. But I went in and asked to speak to Mr. Insull, and the receptionist gave my card to an orderly and asked me to wait.

After some time I went out into the courtyard, and there I saw Insull, sitting in a chair by a table and reading an afternoon edition of an English paper published in Rome. He was a small, wiry man with white hair and a thin white mustache, and he was dressed like a European capitalist in a black cutaway coat.

I sauntered up and said, "Mr. Insull, my name is Cornelius Vanderbilt, Junior. I'm with *Liberty* magazine. I wonder if you would like to tell the American people your story, and what you are doing here in Athens?"

I wasn't sure whether he'd try to hit me or throw a book at me. Instead he slowly put down the paper, took the pince-nez off his nose, and looked up. "Do you people intend to pay me, or am I to give you my story for free?" he asked.

I told him that if he was interested in money, I could find out

about that from my editor. He said he had lost everything in his unfortunate Chicago deals, that they had robbed him blind, and he had left the country broke. He also told me he was British, but I later learned that he was an American citizen although he had come originally from England or Canada.

Insull said that he would be decidedly interested in selling his memoirs to *Liberty*, and when I asked how much he wanted, he said anything he could get would be of great help.

"Do you mean a thousand dollars?"

"Hell, no, I mean a hundred thousand."

I laughed at that and answered, "Well, I know *Liberty* will never pay that much for anybody's memoirs, even those of Mr. Samuel Insull."

My watch reminded me the *Empress* was due to sail in another hour or so, and I told Insull that unless he was interested in a reasonable sum, perhaps fifteen or twenty thousand—

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he interrupted. "I'll think about this thing for a week. Where can I reach you? Can you come back and see me later?"

When I said I would be in Cairo then, he promised to wire me at Shepheard's Hotel there. I asked for his autograph, and he promised me a picture. Then I made a wild dash for a taxi for the long drive to Piraeus.

That was the last I saw of Mr. Insull, for the big news was his whereabouts and I had it. His dickering for more time—in which, of course, to find out whether another publication would pay more—gave me a graceful exit. Now all I wanted was to get to the ship and wire my story.

I found the ship's gangway lined with gentlemen of the press. All the local correspondents from the various American papers wanted to know what I was doing in Athens and why I had left the cruise sight-seers, but I made straight for my cabin. By the time I had finished the story the ship was thirty or forty miles out in the Aegean. To wireless back to *Liberty* cost thirty-five cents a word, including prepositions, and it came to three or four hundred dollars. But *Liberty* sold the story to newspapers all over the United States as well as in Canada, South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

So my earnings in the end approximated the rate per word customarily pocketed by my fellow passenger on the cruise, Mr. Bernard Shaw. Shipboard etiquette left the Shaws to themselves,

and my impression of him, based partly on previous travel encounters, was that he was a very shy man. In Cairo, where I really spoke to him, this impression was strengthened. I had gone ashore there with the tourists, and I emerged one evening from one of the shows put on for their benefit. In front of the place, looking in but not venturing to go in, stood the world's most famous dramatist.

"The belly dancers aren't bad," I told him. "Why don't you go in?"

Shaw looked embarrassed. "Oh, I couldn't," he said. "I couldn't."

Let biographers who study the Shavian inhibitions make the most of that. He didn't seem bored at the thought of watching hootchy-kootchy, but he didn't do it.

Meanwhile, Mr. Insull had chartered a freighter and tried to run the gantlet into the Black Sea, perhaps with a view to landing in the Soviet Union to escape United States control. Their reception of an escaped capitalist might have been worth watching, but he was pursued by a destroyer, plucked off the freighter, and returned to Chicago for trial. There the case went on for several years and he was eventually acquitted.

Now I went on with the *Empress of Britain* to India. My official *Liberty* assignment there was to interview the priest who guarded one of the most sacred of all Buddhist relics, a tooth of Buddha kept at a temple in Ceylon. This sounded simple but turned out to be difficult, and I spent several weeks trying, with no success. I did like Ceylon, and bought some aquamarines there for my mother, which I entrusted to the care of a pretty fellow passenger—a Marilyn Monroe type—who would reach New York before me. Mother never got the aquamarines, but that's another story.

In Ceylon I'd stayed with Sir Thomas Lipton, a pleasant host who told me I was the only Vanderbilt who'd ever acknowledged him socially—in Newport for the cup races, he'd never made "society." Then, in the native state of Jaipur, I was the guest of an Indian prince who took me right back to the snobbery of 3000 B.C., when, I was told, his family had first attained its position. I was also told, in Bombay, that his Highness had an annual income of more than three million dollars—this without touching the gold hoarded in the strong rooms of his Amber Palace, or the

crown jewels. I heard also that his five million subjects would prefer to be flogged by him than led into a happier world by Gandhi, but this I wanted to see.

After a polo match at Jaipur's country club, the prince confirmed this view. The happiness and contentment of his people, he assured me, must be attributed to their being several centuries behind the times. No skyscrapers, no motor cars—we had these in America, but did we have happiness?

I wasn't too sure that the beggars on the streets of Jaipur had happiness either, but of course his indifference to material progress sounded like Gandhi's and I suggested as much. However, his Highness had no intention of discussing Gandhi. Instead he told me about his palaces, both the one he lived in and the ancient Amber Palace that is one of the wonders of the world. The modern palace boasted, like any Hollywood show place, a swimming pool and a jazz orchestra. There was also—a real miracle in India—an ice-skating rink.

I was shown—it was empty at the time—the harem floor, a "hall of delights" with priceless rugs thrown over a floor mirrored in stainless German steel. The absent concubines, I learned, weren't really imprisoned there; at certain hours a girl could sit on the roof of the palace. Of course she and her fellows were known to be protected by the maharajah's eunuchs, and it was hands-off for other admirers. These girls were paid a sort of salary, which would amount in our currency today to about \$150 a week. It was considered a great deal then, and considering all that was done for them besides, they did as well as, say, a quite successful call-girl in New York. Besides his affection, the maharajah lavished jewels on them, and they had cars and furs and their own private servants, and expensive food and perfumes and various other perquisites.

People always ask what happened if they became pregnant. Well, this too was taken care of. All the maharajahs had many children and they were sent to special schools and educated in special ways, and they became almost like princes of the country. But the gulf between these fortunate little bastards and the untouchables coming to life under Gandhi was so great, I found, that it could not even be discussed. Before I left the domain of India's last "pukka" rajah (so considered by his British supporters), I made one more effort to discuss realities with him, this time by way of his European education. How, I inquired delicately, had

that exposure to the modern world left his ancestral outlook unchanged?

The young man with the finely modeled head and deep-olive skin, sitting at the wheel of a fantastically modern car which he tooled around bullock carts on the dusty road, gave me an answer worthy of any Bourbon, any time, any place.

"There is nothing remarkable in it," he assured me. "You can chain a lion and force him to live side by side with rabbits, but you can't make him like cabbage."

The real difference between his Highness' views and those of like-minded die-hards at home was, of course, that when I wrote technicolor descriptions of his palaces and his concubines I could get him into a magazine article. Home-grown anachronisms were less interesting.

My important interview in India was with Gandhi, then doing a stretch in the Poona jail. This was some time before he was recognized by English and Americans as anything more than a fanatic in infant's clothes; in fact the whole British colonial government (abetted by Mr. Churchill and his kind at home) was anti-Gandhi, and he and the other Indian leaders spent much of their time in prison.

At Poona I found Gandhi sitting in a big bear pit spinning cotton. Two goats browsed in the pit beside him, and guards paced a catwalk several feet above his head. I lay on my stomach on the catwalk and shouted down questions. The Mahatma answered each with the same pleasant, benign smile, and at the end of the half hour allotted me, he hadn't said a word of importance. Just as the guards told me I had to go, he broke silence to ask a question of his own: What caste did I belong to in America?

When I told him we had no castes, he insisted, "Of course you have. I have seen your motion pictures. Now tell me, sir, are you a gentleman, a gangster, or a cowboy?"

On my next assignment, my magazine job and my real job for FDR coincided. The President-elect wanted to know more about Hitler, just coming to real power, and *Liberty*, suddenly recalling that I had been in Munich during the beer-hall putsch, wanted me to cover the real victory and wirelessed "PROCEED SOON-EST BERLIN."

Not long after I got there, I was walking in the snow up from the Hotel Adlon under the Brandenburg Gate, when the reddened

sky over my right shoulder told me the Reichstag was on fire. Inside the building I saw that the fire followed distinct lines along the floor, which proved of course that it had been set. I phoned Associated Press, United Press, International News, and finally the New York *Times* before I got anyone to listen to me; one sleepy voice said, "Vanderbilt's in India. You're drunk." Finally I was allowed to dictate what I had seen, and the *Times* carried my by-line on page one.

This, however, did me no good with the Nazis, and only the fact that my interview with Hitler had already been set, plus the fact that the Embassy let it be known I was a close friend of FDR, got me in. As it was, the *Times* story had made me *persona non grata*, and Hitler hastened to tell me that my report about the fire's following definite lines was all bosh and nonsense. He was, however, certain that the fire had been set—by the Communists, of course.

This was naturally the Nazi party line, to be developed later in the trials. I never thought, then or later, that Hitler was a madman. He was sometimes crazy like a fox, and at other times misled by his own wishful thinking, but on the whole he represented his people as well as, say, Fidel Castro today represents Cuba. He simply appeared upon the pages of history at a time when the German people believed they needed him. I do not say this in his defense—I was never, as was Karl von Weigand of the Hearst press, his personal friend. Rather, I think it important to remember that he did represent the German people in order that we may not, in our foreign policy, go all out in alliance with those who, however they may now endorse the freedoms of the western world, were once heart and soul behind the Hitler program.

Before I left home, FDR at Hyde Park had told me that what he wanted me to do in Germany was find out if the German people were really behind Hitler and, if so, why. Facing the reality of Hitler's accession, he also wanted to know whether there was anything within reason we could do to make for a better relationship with Germany.

My talk with Hitler had to do with the latter, and it demonstrated the impossibility of any improved relationship, for he told me that the only thing he wanted from us was to end all trade with the Jews! He said I should be grateful for his anti-Semitic campaign, as the Jews were "selling out the world to the Communists."

640 FIFTH AVENUE

June 11-1933

My dear "Garrison":

Good work! Doodled
could not have been a
better name for the job.

I don't like the way
they are secretly polishing.
up their artillery in recent
weeks and someone who has

the sincere interest of the
nation at heart must
represent us. There is no
hurry in his being dispatched.

The longer you delay the more
respect they will have. Remember
Von Papen has no use for us.

If I can be of service in talking
anything over with Doodled just
say the word. Would like to
see you again too —
Yours always,

Reid

Hitler's henchmen, of course, took the same line. His minister of labor, Franz Seldte, was vague when I asked him if he planned to employ the 400,000 Jewish workers. And when I asked if he meant to classify all Jews as Communists, he said *I* was becoming vague. When I then asked if he classified all Communists as Jews, he said *I* was becoming complex. As for that distinguished Harvard alumnus, "Putzi" Hanfstaengl, *he* told me we'd have to massacre our Jews "before they grasp all business from you." We should start, he told me, simultaneously in Hollywood, New York, Dallas, Chicago, and Miami Beach.

I saw Hitler twice in the same week, and on the second visit he was much more friendly; he had backed down about the Reichstag fire, apparently, and it wasn't mentioned. Instead he wanted me to see if I could persuade FDR to visit the Germany he was "rebuilding." He wanted the President to see for himself how much the Nazi regime was doing for the "new Germany." When at length I did convey this invitation the words used by Roosevelt were of a sort to insure his immediate liquidation had they been uttered in Berlin.

If anyone asks why I was used to talk with Hitler instead of, or in addition to, members of the Embassy staff, I can only say that I think it may have been a policy to impress a dictatorship with the fact that in this country all sorts of Americans are allowed to have their say. Also, in the event of a turndown, I personally and not the State Department would be the victim of affront. Charles Evans Hughes once told me that in politics one must have a rhinoceros hide. I discovered this truth applied also to my new profession of presidential agent. At times it was helpful; I nearly always got in to see the person I was sent to interview, but if the interviewee was displeased with my message the next trip might be difficult.

In Berlin I listened, with Americans everywhere, to the broadcast of Roosevelt's inaugural address. That night at dinner, Lord Beaverbrook had said I was in the wrong place: "The big story is in Washington."

Public Ear

CHAPTER XII

PRESIDENTIAL AGENT

BACK HOME, I thought the President looked tired. He'd been working past midnight, they told me, and his brow was furrowed by the labor troubles which would goad his good nature to the classic quotation, "A plague on both your houses!" But there were other troubles too. The various New Deal emergency measures were under way, and although Congress was still in a co-operative mood, the barrage of ripe tomatoes, rotten eggs, and dead cats which would greet every constructive effort of the new administration was well started. The make-work program was being assailed as "leaf-raking." There were pot shots at the Blue Eagle of NRA. But in spite of it all, the deadly Depression was lifting, and FDR himself, though he might show stress, had recuperative powers as wonderful as those of the country. A day on the Potomac or a drive into Maryland—when, as my notebook says, "Crowds jammed the streets around the car and the cops had to unscramble while FDR waved and smiled that big, broad, gracious smile, lifting his hat to sweet old ladies on second-floor porches"—no more respite than this and he was himself again.

Whatever could be done to help, I was eager to do, but sometimes the duties were a trifle odd. I was between marriages, with a bachelor apartment at the Shoreham in Washington, and I used to be called by the White House when they needed an extra man at a formal dinner.

Once this happened in New York, at the very last time I would have chosen. I had a date with a beautiful young lady whose father was a Newport admiral, and whose mother didn't exactly approve of my two divorces. The daughter, tall and blonde and

very lovely, had other ideas. She let me know when she was coming to New York and we made a date to go dancing, after dinner at a friend's house.

Then came an emergency call from the President's suite at the White House. There was a dinner in New York for a group of visiting foreign churchmen and politicians, and would I please cancel everything and go help with arrangements?

The young lady was by now on her way to New York and I had no way of reaching her. It wouldn't help, of course, to communicate with her family. She was to stay at the St. Regis, so I left a note there saying I couldn't take her out at seven, as planned, but would be there by ten. Something unavoidable had come up.

Then in the main ballroom of the Waldorf I went to work with the White House staff, because I knew the various churchmen, political leaders, and publishers who were coming. This was a very important occasion, and the principal dignitaries, people like Bishop Stires, Cardinal Spellman, and the heads of the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church, and the principal rabbi, were all seated on the stage at the far end of the room. The President sat at the front table. In front of his place was the orchestra, and then there were dozens of tables at which the scores of other leaders were seated. We had Tammany leaders and the big leaders from Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, Atlanta—from all the great cities in the country. I knew all these people because of the private personal missionary work I had been doing for FDR, so I helped with the big seating list.

Then, as people arrived, I would tell the ushers quickly where to put them according to their rank and position in church and in politics. I put myself at the press table, which was between the orchestra pit and the stage. I had cased the orchestra pit in advance, and found that I could at a propitious moment slide into the pit, and then duck underneath the stage and get out of the hall quickly. And I meant to keep my appointment with the young lady, regardless. I wore full evening dress, put my opera hat and dark-blue coat in the back of the orchestra pit, and was all ready to go.

The evening opened, as I recall, with an address by Cardinal Spellman, followed by a speech by Rabbi Wise; then came talks by various churchmen; an address by Mr. Roosevelt was to end the evening.

The speeches droned on and on and I kept looking at my watch. At ten o'clock the President still had not made his address. In fact he was nowhere near it. I started to tip my chair over backward so that I could dive into the orchestra pit without being noticed. I thought I could do this during the applause after a speech.

When I finally started to climb into the pit while the people were applauding, the President saw what I was up to, and in a rather loud whisper said, "Where are you going, Neil?"

And I whispered back, "I'm late for a date with a blonde."

The President's answer, also in a stage whisper and with a wink was, "Good luck, my boy. I wish I had one too."

At another such dinner, this one at the White House, Mrs. Roosevelt provided my release. This time Ike Hoover—no relation to Herbert or J. Edgar, but the chief usher at the White House—told me I was wanted for dinner that evening because, although I believe it was Washington's birthday, many of the guests were English and they would be people whom I knew.

I found that I was seated next to a Dame of the British Empire, a prominent Englishwoman who had received court honors in this particular year. This lady said she was so happy that I had been able to come—she was staying at the White House, a guest of Mrs. Roosevelt's—because she had known my mother in her youth in England. She was a very interesting, pleasant woman, probably in her sixties.

I escorted her in to dinner and sat by her at the table. This was a large round table, and I think there must have been as many as fifty guests. At Mrs. Roosevelt's left, I remember, Nicholas Murray Butler was being funny about Coolidge.

According to custom, after dinner the ladies went into the Blue Room, and the men stayed in the dining room around the table. Since the President was crippled, he couldn't get up and move, but the other men moved in closer to him and began talking.

After a while, maybe a half hour, there was to be a concert in the East Room, and we all filed out and picked up our dinner companions and walked down the long corridor on the first floor of the White House to the East Room. There were a great many people ahead of us when my partner and I came to the entrance of the East Room. The naval and military and Marine Corps aides were all in their full dress evening clothes. They were all bachelors, very snappy-looking men. They were assigned to the White House for a year, a great honor.

The first aide who hopped up to the door beamed at me, and took me straight down, with the lady on my arm, and put me on Mrs. Roosevelt's right. I said to this young man in amazement, "I'm no one."

He said, "Oh, we all know you, sir."

And the English lady said, "Don't move, don't move, Mr. Vanderbilt."

"No, no," I protested. "I can't be put here at Mrs. Roosevelt's right. This place must be for some senator."

However, the English lady insisted that we remain where we were. When Mrs. Roosevelt came in, of course everybody stood up. She looked over at me in surprise and said, "Why, Neil Vanderbilt, what are you doing here?"

I could only explain that the usher had placed me there. "This seat was intended for Senator Russell of Georgia," she said.

I have never considered that I looked like Russell, although oddly enough when I travel in the South, sometimes people have mistaken me for him. The point, however, was that in those days FDR was having some kind of altercation with Russell and they wanted to make friends with him. But as always Mrs. Roosevelt was equal to the occasion. At the end of the first number by a string quartet, she asked me to go and tell them to play another. This of course gave me a good chance to sneak out the back way and out of the White House.

On such apparently minor social engagements did good will depend, and the good will of Southern senators, then as now, was important to the Administration and to the country.

In spite of the election sweep, or because of it, the hate-Roosevelt campaign continued. True, the people I talked to gave different reasons for their hatred. Joe Connolly, head of King Features—the Hearst syndicate—told me FDR was putting us on the road to ruin by taking advice from professors, the so-called brain trust. But at Royal Oak, Father Coughlin told me the President must shake off the yoke of Wall Street. And in Pittsburgh the captains of industry were now one hundred per cent against Roosevelt; even the mayor, a Democrat, couldn't say a good word for him any more. One night I spoke to fifteen hundred ladies of the Allegheny League of Women Voters, and when I mentioned the President's name, they hissed!

If my own early life had not been spent with the class to which FDR himself belonged and which he was now said to have be-

trayed, I would have found this sort of thing as hard to understand as Europeans and other outside observers found it. They asked, "Why do people hate your great President?" For all around now, all over the country, apparent at once to one coming back from abroad, were the signs of salvation. The bums were off the streets, the wild boys off the open roads. Wearing surplus army pants and shirts, trained in the CCC by people who knew the open country—professional woodsmen, desert rats, former miners, and farmers—the boys were giving the country a needed cleanup. At its height I believe between three and four million were in the CCC, almost as many as are unemployed as I write. Whenever I read of unfortunates idle in the migratory work centers, in the farming areas struck by blight or flood or blizzards, and in cities unable to absorb their immigrants, I often think that if we had a CCC today we might not have as much juvenile delinquency.

There were other agencies too, of course, to take men off the street and give them food and shelter and the assurance of a job—a tremendous undertaking when all over the world it was accepted that there must be "the poor," meaning thousands of people who couldn't find a job or a place to live, or a morsel to put in their stomachs. It was a basic premise of the New Deal that people should be given work, not charity. During the campaign, Mayor Rossi of San Francisco had told me: "This feeding business is merely another name for the dole. We must provide jobs. The example must come from Washington. Of course I want to see a cutting down of expense, but not by putting people on the bread line."

Now in Florida I learned that twenty-five per cent of the population was on the rolls of FERA—the predecessor of WPA—and in Key West the figure was eighty per cent. And in spite of the leaf-raking and boondoggling accusations being made, very little futile work was done by CCC, FERA, or WPA. Relief projects started Florida airports, installed sewer and water systems in Key West. The overseas highway was a WPA project. Thousands of miles of road were built, and there was a great variety of other projects—parks, a wing on the mental institution at Chattahoochee, all accomplished by the WPA, by FERA, and by the CCC.

In my own adopted city of Reno, Nevada, small but attractive Virginia Lake was carved out of a city dump, where garbage trucks used to dump all sorts of things. This section is today one of the most sought-after residential areas in the entire city of Reno.

In New York the face of the city was lifted by projects for the unemployed. Many improvements in parks, playgrounds, and beaches, and the great early developments in low-rent housing all owe their existence to WPA and PWA—agencies from the much-criticized “alphabet soup” of those days.

Then there were the larger projects for long-overdue flood control and power provision. As far back as the twenties my newspapers were the only newspapers in the Los Angeles and San Francisco region that had come out whole hog for the building of what was later known as the Boulder Dam across the Colorado River not far from Las Vegas. I remember going to Mr. Coolidge myself about the building of the dam, the money for which was appropriated by the Congress of the United States at that time. President Hoover had in fact, I believe, fought the construction of the dam because his friends in the private utilities thought it should be built by private enterprise. So today when people call Boulder Dam the Hoover Dam it makes me see red.

When I saw Colonel House early in 1934, he told me President Roosevelt would shortly make an important speech at Muscle Shoals, the natural-power site on the Tennessee River which had been a battleground between the government and the private interests back in the Wilson days. House was right. The speech turned out to be the one on TVA—the great flood-control and power project which would rehabilitate a good part of the South and set the pattern for such projects all over the world. Had the pattern been followed in other regions of our own country still subject to floods, we might have been saved vast sums in money and in the very substance of our soil, now lost to us by leaching and erosion. Of course the New Deal power projects unleashed another group of fighters against the Administration, the very vocal private utilities, whose propaganda is actually subsidized by the taxpayers since newspaper and radio advertising costs are deductible from corporation profits.

The President now made another approach to giving me a regular job. He asked if I would be interested in becoming under-secretary of the interior under Harold L. Ickes. Mr. Ickes was quite a close friend of mine. I had known him a great many years and liked him very much, and I used to do some jobs for him when I wasn't working for FDR. But I told the President again that I was not interested in a government post, that I would prefer to remain a friend, and be able to come and go, and see him

whenever I thought I could do some good or whenever he thought that I could help in the big over-all job of liberating the country from the minority group of capitalists and industrialists who still held control.

One of the reasons why I was for Roosevelt was that at the time of the market crash, he told me if he were ever lucky enough to be elected Vice-President, he would suggest to the President that controls be put on Wall Street. I believe this was the inception of the SEC. The safeguards established early in the days of the Roosevelt administration have already proved effective in deterring gambling in stocks and the watered-stock deals which I learned about in childhood. Even weakened by a lack of effective support, the New Deal agencies have served to save us from a recurrence of the serious depression that showed them to be necessary. But the bankers who at the start had done everything to defeat Roosevelt were still disinclined to co-operate with him. The fight now was bitterly waged, but the government was strengthened because Henry Morgenthau, Jr., although opposed by Farley, had now succeeded gentle, violin-playing William Woodin in the treasury job, on which Morgenthau had already served as consultant.

The result of all my talks with the President was that he created for me the post we called PA—presidential agent—and so I became without salary or expense account the first PA in the history of the United States.

CHAPTER XIII

PR AND THE PA

IT WAS MUSSOLINI who told me that you seize power with one group and govern with another. FDR followed this idea implicitly. Although it sounds cynical, it is actually a matter of aptitudes; the man with a talent for getting out the vote may not be the best choice for secretary of state or the treasury.

Outstanding examples, of course, were Jim Farley and "Cactus Jack" Garner, as well as another Texan, Jesse Jones. They helped elect Roosevelt and later were part of the Administration, without ever being New Dealers or even in real sympathy with the New Deal. Indeed, the two Texans made no attempt to align themselves with its objectives, but were election allies only.

Jim Farley's case was a little more complicated. Everyone knew that Farley was a tireless election worker and he received the classic reward, the job of postmaster general. But in time I saw that in contrast with Louis Howe, who wanted only to elect FDR, Farley was a professional politician. It wasn't only such things as signing letters in green ink, an appeal to the Irish. After he was named postmaster general I traveled with him and Mrs. Farley for a time when he was on an inspection tour of Western post offices. We started in a private railroad car and continued by limousine, and in the small places met people from all over seeking post office jobs. Farley, I thought then, was building a national organization—but for Farley, not FDR, if he could swing it. He stopped everywhere, shook hands with the local postmaster, and then promised all sorts of things which I felt he never expected to perform. Later he came into Nevada and there, in a town called Elko, I saw him meet his match. Elko had a postmistress, and when he had promised her life tenure and a new three-million-dollar post office, she said, "Now put all that in writing, Mr. Farley, and sign it right here in front of me!"

Relations between Jim Farley and the President cooled in time,

affected I believe by the Farleys' social aspirations. Mrs. Farley had never liked Mrs. Roosevelt and I think had little use for the President. She was the only cabinet officer's wife who did not reside in Washington with her husband. Farley himself spent most of the time in New York, but I believe he kept a bachelor flat in Washington. Mrs. Farley came down occasionally for cabinet dinners and other functions, balls and embassy receptions and so on, but otherwise she remained in New York.

My mother, who had a great interest in the people in public life, heard me talk about the Farleys and said she'd like to meet them. So once in the early thirties I brought them to the house for dinner. Mother liked Mr. Farley very much. She cared less about Mrs. Farley, but she liked having cabinet people at dinners and continued to invite them. Thereafter Bess Farley could say what was the use of being in Washington society when she could be in Mrs. Vanderbilt's set in New York.

Silly as it seems, this—I believe—had a great deal to do with the break between the President and Farley over the third term. I think Farley's judgment of what the public wanted was influenced by the talk he heard at my mother's dinner table, the talk of people to whom precedents were sacred and to whom even one term was too much for That Man.

My own social relations were strained rather than helped by my political associations. Members of various exclusive clubs of which FDR was a member, such as New York's Union Club—not the Union League—and also the New York Yacht Club, the Metropolitan Club, and various others in New York, criticized Roosevelt, claiming that he was a traitor to his class, that if he thought these things about his old associates he should resign from their clubs. Some of them demanded his resignation. Disgusted, I myself wrote letters of resignation from the clubs and I have never sought re-admission, although in some ways I still miss the New York Yacht Club, which I used so much in my sailing days. But I certainly don't miss the stuffiness of the Union Club, nor the Racquet Club nor the Metropolitan.

My family naturally was as horrified by my enthusiasm for FDR as they had been by my newspaper career. And even the President's mother, Mrs. James Roosevelt, emphatically disagreed with many of his policies. When my *Farewell to Fifth Avenue* started coming out in *Redbook Magazine*, before the book appeared, Mother told me Mrs. James Roosevelt had said at a woman's luncheon

that she thought it was terrible for me to write stories in which I pitted class against class. I told Mother that I couldn't understand Mrs. Roosevelt's viewpoint because this was the very thing that her own son was actually doing, or at least was being accused of doing. I didn't feel that I was pitting class against class any more than he did. I thought that I was writing of iniquities that took place in the social and banking circles of New York.

Somehow or other, my mother set up a tea party for me at Mrs. James Roosevelt's house in the upper Sixties in New York, and there were six or eight people present, some of them important financially and in the social world. I took with me one of the first copies of *Farewell to Fifth Avenue* to give to Mrs. Roosevelt. (I gave the first copy of the book, incidentally, to FDR and I think it's in the Roosevelt Museum at Hyde Park.)

When I gave the book to Mrs. Roosevelt, she thanked me, but said she'd been reading some of the chapters in *Redbook Magazine*, and didn't agree with me at all. She thought it was an awful thing for a man in my position in life, with my social background and my financial background and so on, to take the point of view that I did. In fact she said even harsher things about the book. She said she wished that something could be done to have it banned from sale on public stands throughout the country, because she thought that people soon forgot the things they read in magazines, but they never forgot a book—a book lived forever.

A lot of books were written about the New Deal, partly, perhaps, because there were people in government posts then who were able to write, and partly because, no matter how many times the people of America voted for FDR, as long as big business opposed him, the majority of the papers and magazines opposed him also. Unfavorable newspaper and magazine articles seemed not to affect public trust in the President, though they may have retarded public understanding of his policies, which were often misrepresented.

Besides writing my own book, I was able to furnish some information about European affairs to Upton Sinclair, who was then writing his series about the fabulous Lanny Budd. These were the books of which Bernard Shaw said, "When people ask me about current history, I do not refer them to the newspapers but to the novels of Mr. Upton Sinclair."

I had known the Sinclairs since my newspaper days in Los Angeles; they were friends of Rob Wagner, editor of *Script*, and

of others among the more interesting residents of Hollywood. In the 1936 election, Upton Sinclair ran for governor of California on his "Epic"—End Poverty in California—platform, which was to him simply a local application of the New Deal. I think FDR agreed; Uppie went to see him at Hyde Park and they got on well. "I told your friend he was the second Roosevelt I'd talked to," Uppie told me, bubbling with enthusiasm. "The first of course was TR. I told him they were the two most indiscreet Presidents I'd ever talked to, and he threw back his head and roared."

Harry Hopkins and I were for endorsement of Sinclair; Ray Moley and Jim Farley were against him, and as the Roosevelt train went into California from Nevada the split between the opposing elements was clear. To me it was illogical to oppose "Epic" as a crackpot plan because it was certainly more conservative than the Townsend "Ham and Eggs" plan which was getting the tacit support of Sinclair's opponent.

After an inspection trip to Boulder Dam—with a car accident in which the President fortunately was unhurt—the train stopped all night to prepare for a triumphant entry next day into Los Angeles. We were to have breakfast at Yermo, and I suggested that Sinclair come aboard there for breakfast and we could let him off at Monrovia, where the Sinclairs lived.

FDR said quizzically—he knew better: "Jim Farley says he's a Bolshevik."

"No more than I am," I retorted.

Later the President told me it was all set; "Sinclair's coming for breakfast."

Uppie got to Yermo at 6:30 A.M., as planned. By that time there were lots of people on the platform, and bands playing and general confusion. McIntyre showed up to report to Farley, and I went out on the platform to talk to Sinclair. Suddenly the train started moving! I ran and swung aboard, but the train never slowed or stopped again and Sinclair was left behind. Roosevelt, inside, was surrounded by a crowd and we were miles away before I could have broken through with a public protest. At the time, no doubt, Sinclair thought I was in on the double cross, but Farley did it to me.

This sort of thing went on throughout the various Roosevelt terms in office, with various people bidding for power and briefly exercising it. In time, of course, FDR knew who did and who

didn't agree with him on basic principles, yet he had to go on with many who were there for other reasons.

My only real difference with FDR was on the so-called "packing" of the Supreme Court. I was then lecturing and traveling, and FDR asked me to feel the public pulse about the plan. From what I heard everywhere—from friends as well as enemies—feeling was strongly against it. I knew why FDR wanted to change the court, but I felt it was poor policy to try it. I believe the plan was supported by Harry Hopkins, who had not yet appeared much on the scene but was in the background, in what was called the "baby cabinet."

I was so concerned that I went to Colonel House and asked him what he thought of the plan. He viewed it as the worst possible way to cope with the situation. He said the people on the court who were bucking the Roosevelt policies would eventually wash themselves out of the court and go into private business to keep their self-respect, if they disagreed so volubly with the needed legislation.

Roosevelt often consulted House, particularly about questions having to do with foreign affairs. Colonel House would say, "In our day we did such-and-such, but now I think you should shade your decision by this, or that." Advice of this kind from House sometimes entirely changed the thinking of the President and the people around him. The President never forgot that House had served many years with Woodrow Wilson at a time when affairs were as difficult and as serious as the conditions he himself faced. But in the case of the court fight, Colonel House's advice did not prevail.

Hopkins, Roosevelt thought, might be at times too wishy-washy and idealistic, but he liked him and felt about him much as President Eisenhower felt about Sherman Adams—that he couldn't do without him. As everyone knows, Hopkins was almost a member of the White House family and was of great service.

At various times FDR's worst foes, however unwitting, appeared to be those of his own household. Schoolboy misdemeanors on the part of the younger sons frequently made the front page. Nor were the two older boys without their contributions to the problems of their father as a President under fire. James was of great public assistance, literally lending a strong arm when needed; yet in private talk to me he discounted his mother's contribution, which of course was much greater than his own. Elliott

was unpredictable. Once I hastily filled in for him at a speaking date at Rockford, Illinois, after he had wired that he had a "severe cold." Then he went on his usual radio broadcast from New York. Both James and Elliott, of course, risked alienating voters by their marital changes, but about this I am in no position to comment.

I can, however, say that on one occasion my own marital record was of some service. In the late thirties, Mrs. Roosevelt asked me to recommend the best attorney in Nevada for a divorce case. At this time there were all sorts of rumors about—there is always gossip about a President—but I felt sure that one of the Roosevelt children would be the one to seek a divorce.

I told Mrs. Roosevelt that William Woodburn, the Democratic national committeeman in Nevada, was a divorce lawyer but that he was not my lawyer; mine was the Republican national committeeman, Judge Sam Platt. Actually, when I went to see Woodburn in the first campaign, he turned me down cold—said FDR was a "jellyfish," a maverick, was allied with the Russian bolsheviks, and what we needed was a man like Senator McAdoo or Newton D. Baker. This I never forgot.

Mrs. Roosevelt wanted to know if I thought Platt as powerful as Woodburn, now that the state was controlled by the Democrats. I said this depended on what was wanted, but I pointed out that the very wealthy Republican boss of the state, the Southern Pacific Railroad, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, and others of the state's biggest firms were represented by the firm of Platt and Sinai. I said I liked Mr. Platt very much, that John Sinai was one of the nicest men I'd ever met, and that I enjoyed being with his family. I thought they better represented liberal sentiment in the West than did the other firm.

Some time after this, in Europe, I read that Anna Roosevelt Dall, who had never been a particular friend of mine, was in Reno seeking a divorce. I then received a note from Judge Platt telling me that she had become his client, and thanking me for my recommendation.

Later still, Mrs. Roosevelt herself came to Reno to see a friend who was getting a divorce. I'd had a hand before in the boys' troubles, getting them out of scrapes abroad and even, in two cases, going with them on their honeymoons. And now came a request from the White House that I do everything I could to keep the newspapers off Mrs. Roosevelt's track while she was in Nevada.

I knew the assumption would be that she and the President were being divorced. This was at the time the President was seeing a lot of the crown princess of Norway, and there were many rumors that a love affair was going on, just as there had been rumors that he was having an affair with his secretary, Marguerite Le-Hand. All this gossip was bosh, of course, started by people who wanted to detract from the work he was doing as President.

Mrs. Roosevelt's plane would land in Reno at three, and a car from the Emmy Wood Ranch would meet it. After some thought I hit on an idea I was sure would take the reporters away from the airport: I would say I was about to be married again. This always brought reporters running from all corners—particularly from all parts of the West. So I passed the word out very surreptitiously, as a great secret—to people I knew could never keep a secret. I said I was going to be married at the courthouse the following day at 3:00 P.M. Then I entered the courthouse at about 2:45, and went down to the marriage-license bureau, where I stood in line with hundreds of people. Reno is a Gretna Green for couples seeking to be united. When I heard the plane flying overhead, I stepped out of the office and looked into the hall. I saw a great number of newspapermen and photographers. One dashed up and asked, "Where is she?"

"She?" I said. "What do you mean?"

"The gal," he said.

"Oh, she'll be here in a while," I replied.

About 3:15 I moseyed out onto the front steps and looked up and down the street. Reporters were running all over the place. By 3:30 I decided the coast must be clear, and so I threw my hands up. The reporters came out and took pictures of me, things that looked very silly I must say, and then I drove out to my little town house on Manor Avenue. Some feature writers even came out to the house, and stories appeared in the papers—"Vanderbilt Jr. Left Standing at Church," and things of that sort.

Only two or three days later did it suddenly become known that Mrs. Roosevelt had been in Nevada. Some newspapermen then uncovered the ruse, among them Bill Berry of the *New York Daily News*. To this day he has never forgiven me.

I realize that because I have been very frank about my disagreements with my own family, and have said that FDR was at my christening, someone may consider my allegiance to him a sort of "father fixation." If that was the case, I can say that it was a

fixation I shared with a good many million Americans. Because he came to power in a period of great public distress and discouragement, and acted promptly to relieve the distress, no doubt Roosevelt, like Washington, seemed at the time almost a father to the country. I'm afraid, indeed, that our reliance on Roosevelt set a pattern which other Presidents must find it hard to follow.

But in my own case, although it is true that I enjoyed being made a member of the family, I must point out that it had happened before. The Brisbane family had made me feel at home. And I felt at home with the family of my boss at the United Press, Harold Duane Jacobs, and with the Sinclairs, Uppie and Mary Craig. And, despite the family feuds, I could still go back to 640 Fifth Avenue when I felt like it, and take a bath in my great-grandfather's marble bathtub, which was seven feet long and nearly six feet wide.

CHAPTER XIV

DAWN LIKE THUNDER

IN 1936, *Liberty* wanted me to go out to the far reaches of northern China to write about the dispute over the line that separated Outer Mongolia from Manchuria, the land which the Japanese had taken from China in 1931 and renamed Manchukuo. Since then the Mongolian People's Republic, backed by Russia, and Manchukuo had been quarreling over the boundary.

I sailed on the *President Coolidge* as far as Honolulu, but the West Coast shipping strike hit there about the same time and the ship was held up several days. This suited me fine because the President had asked me, in passing through, to see General Drum. At this time, top army brass was under review for the chief of staff job. Often when I went off on a trip Mr. Roosevelt asked me to report on the background of someone he wanted to know more about.

General Drum was an old friend of my father's, a prominent Army Catholic and a Regular Army officer, rather a bumptious type of person, small and roly-poly, but a very good soldier. In the First World War I think he was on General Pershing's staff, and he was quite a personality then too.

Traveling on board the *President Coolidge* with me was my friend Jack O'Brien, who had the same China assignment for the *Washington Post*. In Honolulu we went up to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, where we had a very fancy suite for the three or four days we were there.

Immediately on arrival I called General Drum. I had written him in advance that I would be passing through on my way to the Orient, and asked for an interview on the pretext that, since he had known my father and so on, I would like to talk with him about the problems of the Pacific. In response to my phone call, he sent his military car in to pick me up, with his military chauffeur and a naval aide.

We had lunch with General Drum in the Schofield Barracks not far from Pearl Harbor, and after lunch he said he'd like to show us some of his own supercritical points on the island. When we had been driving for perhaps an hour, he dropped his chauffeur at one of the sentry posts and took the wheel himself. He and I went on to various parts of the island, and we climbed over the sides of high bluffs along the sea so that he could show me how he had hidden emplacements. At other places he showed me chambers where he could conceal troops.

Then he showed me different landing places for planes and explained how he was working a general liaison with the Navy and the Coast Guard. Mind you, this was in 1936, the year the Japanese invaded China. But the general didn't believe the Japanese would invade China; he was more anti-British than anything else. However, he was evidently a very good soldier and tactician, and a fine man. The enlisted men and the officers, noncoms, everybody out there at Schofield Barracks seemed to be crazy about him, and I had great respect for him. But I did find that he had two or three blind spots.

Of course he didn't know that Mr. Roosevelt had asked me to look him over, but evidently he did know from other sources that I was a friend of Roosevelt's. Apparently he put himself out to do what he did for me because of my association with the President; I think if I had had no such association, he would have sent me around with his aide.

When we returned to his headquarters late that afternoon, he sent me back to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in his car. In a place like Honolulu, where there's a lot of pomp and dignity with the Army and a lot of so-called chi-chi, my being called for by the commanding general's car gave the hotel the notion O'Brien and I were important people. They told us the suite we had been using was taken from the next day on, but they had another for us which was fifty dollars a day. So we both moved back to the ship.

I wrote from Honolulu giving my appraisal of General Drum. My friend Pat Hurley, who was secretary of war under Mr. Hoover, and later on ambassador to China under Mr. Roosevelt, told me once that FDR had sent him out to do the same type of thing with General Eisenhower. He said the information in Washington then was that Eisenhower was too pro-limey. But Hurley spent a week or so with the general wherever he hap-

pened to be at that time, and he liked him very much and thought he had a very fine way with his men; in other words, that he was a good administrator. He thought Eisenhower would have a very fine way with the public too, and so he passed upon him, as I had more or less passed upon General Drum.

I went on from Honolulu to Yokohama, where the feeling toward the United States was not very good just then. Certain passengers had to go into the lounge to be examined before they went ashore. I happened to be in this group, and while I was waiting I walked out on deck. On the dock I saw my friend Joe Grew, then our ambassador to Japan.

I waved and shouted at him, and he looked up and said, "Neil Vanderbilt, what in hell are you doing here?"

"Well, I've come to annoy you," I called.

The last time I had seen Joe Grew he was American minister—in Switzerland, I believe—and I'd seen him at Geneva, though not since.

"Who's going to drive you up to Tokyo?" Grew shouted. And when I said I hadn't made any plans, he said, "Let me do it."

This I thought might prove a little embarrassing, and in fact it was, because my shipboard conduct had shocked the ambassador's daughter. As I was not required to behave like a stuffed-shirt diplomat, I had gone to the ship's fancy-dress party in sailor togs with false whiskers and ENO on my cap-band. Together, Jack O'Brien and I were supposed to represent a couple of old salts, and it might have been funny if Jack hadn't got drunk before the judging and left me to be one old salt by myself. Anyhow, the former Miss Grew was one of the judges and she definitely thought me unfunny, and made it clear that as far as she was concerned I didn't rate a lift in the ambassadorial car.

But now when I returned to the lounge they kept me practically forever. Told that I represented *Liberty* magazine, the immigration officer said only, "Step aside, fresh boy." And when I asked why, he said, "*Liberty* magazine run articles now against Japan."

It was true enough, and he thought, I suppose: How dare they send over a correspondent while they are criticizing my country!

I waited for a while, and then the steward came over and said the American ambassador wanted to leave and when could I go. I said, "Will you tell him, please, that I can't leave—they're holding me here." So Mr. Grew came on board. I suppose he

spoke Japanese; anyhow he went over to the official and was very polite, and after a while I was permitted to go.

I thought it evident that Joe Grew knew I was on a sort of exploration trip for the White House. Fortunately he did not resent this; he admired FDR tremendously and was glad to see me. The Embassy gave a dinner party for Jack O'Brien and me, and Ambassador Grew facilitated various things I wanted to do. He arranged an appointment with Emperor Hirohito, and although the Emperor declined to give a magazine interview, the fact that I had seen and talked with him was used in publicity. Then I met the ruling delegate of the Diet, a baron who gave a supper party for us in the Diet chambers, at which the entertainers were geisha girls whose duty it was to appear at such gatherings. This was supposed to be an unheard-of thing for American newspapermen to attend.

While we were in Tokyo, there occurred a sort of revolt which involved the peace group in Tokyo against the war party. The peace group paraded in front of the palace and also in front of the Diet. One of them was shot, and there was a trial at which the war party appeared with their hara-kiri swords. Then I believe some members of the cabinet were beheaded. This was in the spring of 1936.

I was in Japan two or three weeks, waiting for a ship to take me to Nanking. In those days planes were not flying across the Pacific, and there was no plane connection between Japan and China. Finally one of the smaller President Line ships, a cargo liner, came in, and I was able to secure a cabin.

Five days later we were in Shanghai. We came up the Hwang Pu and landed and went to the Cathay Hotel. I hadn't been to Shanghai in many years, and I found the Bund had been completely revamped, now containing large skyscraper buildings, twenty to thirty stories high. Everything was just as modern as Philadelphia or Montreal. We waited here two or three weeks for our press passes to be okayed by the USSR and also by the government of Manchukuo.

The Japanese were bombarding Shanghai during this period, and one morning I was awakened by the most terrific sound I ever heard. I thought our hotel was being bombed, but it was the department store next door, called Sinceres. It was shelled from down the river by a Japanese gunboat, and I think over a hundred people were killed and hundreds more injured.

Since we were in the very next building, we did a very undignified thing. We left most of our belongings, and dashed down the street, perhaps ten blocks, to the water front where the so-called bumboats were that go out to ships. The American cruiser SS *Augusta* and two American destroyers, and later a number of other units of the American fleet, were in the river. A bumboat took us over to the *Augusta*, where an officer, Leland Lovette, asked us what right we had to board the ship. We said we wanted to do an interview with the captain. He said he didn't know if the captain would be willing to see a reporter during a time like this, but he took us on board and the captain asked us to mess. At lunch, Capt. Gygax and his staff told us a lot of things that were off the record. We realized that Uncle Sam was really backing his interests here, and if the Japanese got too fresh we would probably open up with our big guns and there would be real trouble.

Around us were five or six very black Japanese battleships. (Our ships were gray.) After lunch Capt. Gygax asked Lovette to take us through the ship. Of course no one had any idea that we were running away from the shells; we hadn't said anything about that. So Lovette took us into the forward gun turret, and I distinguished myself by falling down the gun turret. I fell five decks, and landed on my crotch—not a very nice thing to talk about—and I was in terrible agony. They put me in the ship's sick bay, and it was from there—part of the time in intense pain and kept docile by pills and shots—that I covered the attack on Shanghai by the Japanese fleet! Jack O'Brien wrote part of my stuff for me, but neither of us went ashore during the entire period, so you see newspaper stories can be written from a grandstand seat.

I have fond memories of Shanghai, which I've visited several times. It is really what you call a man's town, certainly more of a man's town than a woman's. It's like Paris in many ways, but they don't boast of radical fashion changes. The chic Chinese women were beautifully dressed in a combination East-West style. We met a great many important people—bankers and business people and military people, the mayor, and others.

We motored from Shanghai to Nanking, six or seven hours' drive. At the time there was not too much friendship for the United States, and when we arrived in Nanking, the capital at that time, the anti-American feeling was terrible. We were told

by the clerk at the Bridge House Hotel, and later by the manager and also by the American ambassador, that if we got into any trouble whatsoever, we should say we were British. And the manager of the hotel furnished us with dark blue covers to go over our American passports, so that they would look like British passports. In parts of the world where the British are not in favor, I've been warned never even to speak English, but to use French or some other language, because if your speech sounds like English you may get shot or stabbed. But in Nanking then that situation was reversed.

We were entertained by the American ambassador, Nelson Johnson, and also by Mr. T. V. Soong, the banker brother of Madame Chiang Kai-shek. It was a most interesting dinner party that we attended at Mr. Soong's house. Everything was as modern as in New York or Washington, but during dinner a servant rushed in and crouched beside the host to say a few private words to him. Then Mr. Soong rose very solemnly, hushing the guests, and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have to announce to you that my sacred stork has just laid a pink egg, and this is a sign of great trouble for China." So, you see, in China you have the old and the new side by side. T. V. Soong was the J. P. Morgan of China at the time, also the Rasputin. He evidently thought I was too liberal, for he didn't much care for my beliefs. Doubtless the only reason I was invited to dinner was that the American ambassador had told him I was a friend of President Roosevelt's.

Mr. Soong also asked me to come back to his office in the Treasury Building a few days later. He wanted me to help him buy some American war goods in the United States and get them sent to China on American battleships. He guaranteed to get them ashore. They would be used, he claimed, by his group to repulse the Japanese. Later on I heard that they were to be used to perpetuate his group in power.

I haven't much use for Chiang Kai-shek or Madame Chiang or Dr. Soong or any of that family. I have known about them too well for too many years. I've interviewed Chiang Kai-shek on two or three occasions, and I've known his wife even longer. One time when she was staying at the White House, Mrs. Roosevelt told me that she was the most demanding guest they had ever had. She would slap the White House colored maids in the face, and strike the colored menservants if they didn't bring her breakfast

or tea on time, or if they didn't prepare her bath properly. Apparently in China she could get away with such behavior.

A year or so ago when I was in San Francisco, I saw the flag of Nationalist China flying from the front of the Hotel St. Francis. I asked the desk clerk if some prominent Chinese was staying there, and he said a great many of them were. Then I called the daughter of the manager—I had known her in Reno—and she told me Madame Chiang was at the hotel. I published this in my newsletter, and afterward the State Department press department called my office in Washington and said that my information was not correct. Madame Chiang was still on Formosa. I telephoned Mr. Dan London, the manager of the St. Francis, but he said he was not able to tell me for whom the flag had been mounted. Later on, the State Department made an official denial that Madame Chiang was in this country. Later still, however, I checked with a hospital in California and a hospital in Arizona, and learned that she had been here, and in fact had been at Elizabeth Arden's Maine Chance Farm in Phoenix, Arizona. Why they should deny it I don't know. I understand that at the same time she was in the hotel, Mr. Alfred Kohlberg was there too, so the China lobby was working fast and furiously.

In Nanking I wanted to see the grave of Sun Yat-sen, and I asked the American ambassador if he could send me there. He said he could not; I would have to have permission from somebody in the Government, because it was out of bounds. So I asked Mr. Soong if he could help me. After all, Sun Yat-sen was not only the George Washington of China; he was Mr. Soong's brother-in-law, having married the eldest of the three beautiful Soong sisters. But of course their politics were different, and Mr. Soong said he couldn't give us permission. He was very frank about saying he didn't want anybody to see the grave. So Jack and I just took a taxi and drove there. Nobody stopped us.

Our next assignment would be in Hsinking (Changchun today), the capital city of Manchukuo, where I was to interview the puppet emperor Pu-yi. On our way we stopped at Mukden, in those days a very wide-open town. It had horseracing, for which people came from all over China. The race track was like the race track in Shanghai, right in the center of the city. It was quite a big city, but the houses were low, two or three stories. There were streetcars in the main street, a street nearly as wide as

Market Street in San Francisco, and all the streets were jammed with rickshas running in every direction. From my room on the second floor looking out on the big square, it was a fabulous sight at night. The rickshas carried small lanterns lighted with oil, some red and some yellow, and these were the only lights you saw. You heard nothing because the men ran with bare feet, mostly on cobblestones. As the hour got later there were fewer and fewer lights, but in the early hours of the morning the streets were jammed again.

I was never able to get over the fate of the ricksha boys, whose profession seemed to be as old as prostitution but not as well paid. In the twenties the poor devils received five cents an hour. In 1936 they were getting eight cents. At night, they would run all over the streets with you with one oil-burning lamp. They received double pay then, but I was told that they made scarcely enough to keep oil in the lamps and keep themselves alive.

The only time I had ever seen as many rickshas was on my first visit to Tokyo. Later on, the Japanese having made faster progress, the Japanese cities—Yokohama and Tokyo especially, and Kyoto and Osaka—became more modern and you found some carriages and lots of automobiles. But except for Shanghai, China—at least until the new Communist regime—changed much more slowly.

One day Jack O'Brien and I went to the races. The race track, a rickety place built of wood, reminded us of a county fair in the States. The horses looked like Shetland ponies—small, Manchurian ponies, very fast; I understand faster than many of our purebred horses. They had long manes and very heavy hair, and the jockeys were very tiny, too.

Manchuria, now Manchukuo, had been a part of China until the Japanese came and took it over. It was nonetheless Chinese, and the racing crowd looked Mongolian—very tall, with high cheekbones. The women were extremely good-looking. In general, the people at the track were as chic as the people would be in Paris for the Grand Prix at Auteuil. I think they traveled every two or three years to France, or else they got their clothes in Shanghai, the Paris of the Orient in those days. The men were dressed as for Ascot in England, in pearl-gray clothes and top hats. They wore pink rose boutonnières, gray spats, and almost all wore gray suede shoes and carried canes. Jack and I, in our business suits, didn't fit into the scene at all. It seemed unbelievable, in a corner of Asia ten thousand miles away from New York, in a

town as dusty as Regina or Moose Jaw in central Canada—the dust was actually like a perpetual dust storm—to find people so over-dressed.

The betting wasn't pari-mutuel betting, but was done through a most amazing kind of machine. You put your money into a kind of slot, and then the ticket you wanted came out, a big gong rang, a weight jumped way up high, maybe even a hundred feet, and then came down on something that looked like a drum, which broke with a bang. I think this was to draw public attention to the betting, for there was not nearly so much betting as we have here. The figures were all put up on the wall. Although Jack and I bet something like ten or twenty dollars, we never won anything, but we had a very interesting afternoon.

The rest of the time in Mukden, we went to movies. In those days the Chinese and Japanese both were making movies. We couldn't understand anything, of course, for they didn't have English titles, but it was interesting to see how they worked out their stories. We thought them much more dramatic than we are in everything—both the Chinese and, to a certain extent, the Japanese too. But they reached their conclusions later and in a different fashion.

Hsinking was a new town, built next to the old town by the Japanese, whose puppet Pu-yi was. All my letters to the foreign secretary had been unanswered, and so I telephoned the foreign office, introduced myself, and explained I'd like to have an interview with his Majesty. I was told I would hear in a day or so. After two days I began to be impatient, so I rented a taxicab and drove down to the foreign office, three or four miles from our hotel. The new part of the city was unpaved and very muddy, and the taxi got stuck. I got out.

Just then a sedan chair passed me, carried by four Manchurians. These chair men wore loincloths and a sort of a jacket over their shoulders but not covering their chests. They carried poles on their shoulders and on the poles rested an enclosed, gold-painted chair. From the chair a lady stuck her head out and asked in very good English, "May we be of any assistance?"

I grabbed the opportunity and said, "Perhaps you can be," because I thought those four stalwart gents might help push the taxi out of the mud. They let the sedan chair down, and then I could see a very beautiful woman with very white skin, fingernails three or four inches long and painted purple, and an exquisite

hairdo with all sorts of strange combs in it. She wore a long mandarin coat of brilliant scarlet. Somehow the nails fitted in with the scarlet. Her eyelashes were very long too—I'm sure they were real—and she had jet-black hair, and wore a sort of purple lipstick, but her eyes were not made up at all. They looked perfectly natural. She was a very lovely-looking creature and I thought she was sort of flirting with me.

She gave orders and the men pushed, but nothing happened to my taxi. Then she asked where I was going. I said I was going to the foreign office to try to interview Pu-yi. She wanted to know if I was British. I said I was American, and explained what I was doing in China. Next she asked why I wanted to see Pu-yi. I thought it was strange for a lady I'd met by chance to ask such questions, but I said I wanted to find out if he was fish, flesh, or fowl. At that, she gave a very musical laugh, and said if I'd come with her, she thought she could arrange the interview.

About strange cars and strange places and strange ladies, I was a little apprehensive, but there seemed to be no other way of getting out of the mud. Although a lot of coolies were pushing my taxi now, they were accomplishing nothing. So I climbed into the sedan chair with her. She put her hand on my knee and it made me feel sort of funny. But in next to no time we were at the gates of the palace, and I discovered this charming lady was Pu-yi's mother.

We went into the palace, a sort of run-down, very old house with a wall round it and a moat, and within a half hour I was taken into the dining room where Pu-yi was eating. He was a tiny, thin little guy, with his mother's features but an entirely different disposition—rather surly and autocratic. I didn't like him at all. He gave me a rather bumptious interview and made references to the United States which I thought were unfair; of course he was very pro-Japanese and he had the Japanese viewpoint. He said we interfered too much in other people's business, but in that perhaps he was right.

I went on next day to Harbin, where Jack O'Brien had already gone, on the all-Asian express, which incidentally was the first streamlined train I had ever seen. I understand it was built in the United States for the Japanese government. They had planned to use it on their run throughout China, but it was used then only between Mukden and Harbin.

When I arrived on the station platform that day I noted that

it was jammed with people, as if some important Japanese dignitary were expected. And in the compartment with my name on the window I found five Japanese officers, sitting straight up and holding those large samurai swords. The Japanese in those days wore high buttoned collars, like the ones our officers wore in World War I. These Japanese were very formidable-looking men.

The porter tried to carry my bags into the compartment, and there was a heated exchange between him and the officers, but they showed no intention of moving. I am a pretty husky guy and when I get mad, which fortunately is not often, I get as mad as a hornet. I had a five- or six-hour trip ahead of me, and I was certainly not going to sit out in the corridor. (These trains do not carry observation cars or smoking lounges.) Anyhow, I just went in and pointed to the sign on the window and made myself very objectionable, shouting and waving my arms. They muttered, and one of the officers said something; then they finally got up and stood in the hall so that everybody on the platform could see them. People began yelling and waving to them, but the porter got in with my bags and I stretched myself out on the sofa seat and put one bag behind my head like a pillow, and pulled the door to. Every now and then they would come back and look in, but most of the time they just stood there. Someone told me later on that they were telling their ancestors about what a terrible thing had happened to them—that here they were, military men of the high command, and an American newspaperman, a fresh guy, came in. . . .

I didn't know what would happen to me when I arrived in Harbin and I expected the worst. But Jack O'Brien was at the station and he was waving his arms a lot too. Jack was quite a guy for putting on the dog, and he wore pearl spats in those days and carried a gold-headed cane. When the Japanese officers got off the train and saw him, I guess they decided to leave us two crazy Americans alone.

Eventually we reached Hialar (now Hulun), the place where the Japanese were making the Manchukians build an extension of the Great Wall of China in the hope of keeping the Russians out. I don't know if it did or not; when I was up there, the Soviet troops were quite far in. But the little town of Hialar, which I understand now has close to half a million people, was just a group of large cabins with quite a number of very surly

but, I presume, efficient Japanese infantrymen around it. This was part of the crack Japanese army which, when we defeated Japan in World War II, seemed to disappear; nobody seemed to know much about it any more—just as, in Germany, the Nazis vanished.

Jack O'Brien and I were the only American newsmen covering the Manchukuan boundary dispute, although there were several British, French, German, Chinese, and Japanese newsmen, and others from other parts of the world, including of course Russia. Many months later we both learned that our stories did not appear as fully as we had written them from day to day, or even from week to week; shortly after we left the United States, the Snyder-Judd murder case began to usurp most of the headlines.

On our way up to the disputed area, I bought a four-passenger Chinese car, which in those days very much resembled what the British Ford is today. It was called a Chinese Pussie. The license numbers were painted in red letters on the left rear fender of this tiny touring car, which actually couldn't have been more than about nine feet long. Its top collapsed back of the rear seat into the body, and with the top down, it was a very sporty-looking little job. I think I paid something like six hundred dollars for it, and knowing that I couldn't use it anywhere out in China, Manchuria, or Siberia, I had it sent to London.

In late June we received orders to proceed directly to Great Britain. Now in those days there were no commercial air routes covering that part of the world and the trip would take five weeks by steamer through the China Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean, and so on to Europe. So we decided to chance the Trans-Siberian railroad, on which I had made a few trips before. Ten days later we were in Helsinki, Finland, and after three more days, in London.

One of the first things I did was go to the garage to see about Pussie, the Chinese car. The total cost of shipping all the way from Shanghai to Southampton, as deck cargo, had come to only about eighty-four dollars. In London, I used the car quite a bit, and one evening while it was parked in front of the Dorchester Hotel I noticed a man looking at it and drawing sketches. I asked him if he was working for an automotive magazine, for the automotive section of a newspaper, or perhaps for some automobile concern. When he took off his hat and turned toward me, I was amazed to recognize Mr. Edsel Ford.

CHAPTER XV

THE REIGN IN SPAIN

WHETHER MY job was reporting to newspapers or to the President, I was sometimes embarrassed by knowing too much. In my cub reporter days I had made a mistake when I tried to warn my father about the plans of the Hearst press. Later on I faced a similar decision about my sister's first husband: I learned before she did that she had grounds for divorce. But by that time I had grown so cautious that I hesitated to tell her until she decided the matter for herself. Later still, one of my friends introduced me to a girl for whom he entertained a high regard, and as I had a high regard for him, again I had to decide whether to tell what I knew or keep silent.

My friend of long standing—he had lived in Florida and been one of my partners in Reno, and we had worked together on the Roosevelt campaign—introduced me with every evidence of pride to the girl friend, at an elaborate luncheon at the Colony in New York. The girl was petite, demure, and charming. She was also well dressed and covered with expensive jewelry, and there was something about her that I didn't like. From somewhere out of the dim past I seemed to recall something unpleasant about this woman. Perhaps it was merely a hunch. Certainly I knew that I was often wrong in my opinions of people.

During luncheon I did my best to learn something about her background. She said that her father had been an American, her mother had come from Spain, and they had lived most of their lives down in the Argentine, where she had been the wife of a prominent Argentinian businessman, but her divorce was almost completed. She had entered the United States on a tourist visa, which would expire within the next week or ten days. At this point my friend pleaded with me to go to Washington to see if I could get the immigration people to extend the length of the visa for at least another thirty days. And when we left the luncheon

table, I had practically made up my mind that that was what I would do. Then, as we walked down Madison Avenue together, my memory suddenly clicked. And the recollection was not pleasant.

Back in the early twenties, I had covered a very famous murder case in New York. The victim was a man called Elwell, then our best-known bridge expert. He had an elaborate apartment in upper Manhattan and he had been found murdered there. The crime department of the *New York Times*, as well as of every other newspaper, was called in at about the same time as the New York City Police Department. Carr Van Anda, then managing editor of the *Times*, assigned me to the story as a special writer.

By the time I reached Mr. Elwell's apartment, it had been picked over by innumerable other newspapermen, as well as the police detectives. The bedroom was of course an especially interesting place; the bed was what we call today a Hollywood bed, a tremendous bed, and the rest of the room was almost completely glass. Two walls were covered by glass cabinets, but you didn't know these were separate, individual cabinets unless you knew the combinations and the places in the glass where you would set the palm of your hand a little more firmly than elsewhere. Each place where you pressed your hand opened up into a closet with shelves at the top and the lower part arranged for hanging skirts, dresses, coats, furs, and what not. On the upper shelves there was the most elaborate assortment of feminine lingerie I think I have ever seen outside of some of those places in Paris.

Less than forty-eight hours after I had been assigned to the story, practically every other newspaperman with whom I talked knew who had committed the murder, but no one was able to get her name into the newspapers because her father was the owner of one of Manhattan's most important department stores, and was therefore one of the biggest advertisers in the daily newspapers. The week before the trial she was surreptitiously spirited down to South America, where, I heard later on, she had married a wealthy Argentinian. I also heard sometime afterward that this Argentinian had been found mysteriously dead and that she had married once more. Evidently the man she was about to divorce was her second husband.

This put me in a most peculiar position. Here was my friend of many years' standing, a man who trusted my judgment im-

plicitly, at least where women were concerned (which certainly seems a little bit ridiculous to me as I look back upon things today), asking me to go down to Washington to try to get this young lady's visa extended. But now I knew that this young woman had been responsible for at least one man's death. So what did I do? I went to the immigration people, told them the story, and asked them not to extend the visa under any circumstances—if possible even to shorten her length of stay.

After that, I heard no more of the lady in New York, but the story was not ended. In London, after seeing Edsel Ford making his pencil sketches beside my car, I found a little note fastened to the windshield: "Saw in the newspapers that you and your famous Chinese Pussie were in London, but I don't know where you are staying. Please give me a ring at Claridge's where I have been laid up for some time with a bad chest cold."

It was signed by the young lady with whom I had lunched at the Colony.

Cold chills ran up and down my spine. I had the most guilty feelings. I thought she must of course know what I had done to get her out of the United States. But I also reminded myself that there is no use dodging a clever woman. One never gets anywhere that way.

When I telephoned her at Claridge's, she asked me to come up for tea. I made innumerable excuses but one can't excuse himself all the time, and so I finally set a date for several days later.

Meanwhile I told the story to Jack O'Brien. On the morning of my tea date, Jack wanted to see the ceremony known as the trooping of the colors. I had seen this ceremony on many occasions, and so I agreed to join him at Hyde Park corner shortly before noon. Edward VIII, the present Duke of Windsor, was King of England then, although he had not been crowned. He and his staff had attended the trooping of the colors that morning and were riding slowly down Rotten Row as I walked up to the arch at Hyde Park corner.

It was an especially warm day for London, with the temperature at sixty-seven degrees, and in various places along Rotten Row ambulances were parked. The average temperature in the British Isles seldom goes above sixty, and when it gets higher, believe it or not, quite a few people suffer from heat stroke or sunstroke.

My friend Jack came walking down to the crowd of people following the king and his equerries, who were riding horseback

a short distance away. Jack and I joined forces in the crowd just below Hyde Park arch, and to our left a sizable mob of people surrounded an ambulance. As Edward VIII and his equerries came abreast of the ambulance, I noticed a disturbance in the crowd, and at first I thought someone's camera had fallen out onto the bridle path. Then we saw the bobbies drag a man out of the crowd with his face down on his chest, and I decided he'd fainted and they were taking him for first aid. For a moment the king and his party seemed to tarry; then they resumed their slow pace through the park in the direction of Buckingham Palace. Just as Jack and I were about to turn and walk down Piccadilly, an equerry galloped back and dismounted; then the ambulance started off, sounding its dreary dirge, and that was all.

Jack went back to the Mayfair Hotel and I returned to the Ritz. We met that afternoon at the bar in Claridge's to plan our procedure. Claridge's has a sitting room on every floor where the elevators come up, and Jack was to wait there on the fifth floor while I went to keep my tea date with the young lady in her suite at the end of the hall. If I hadn't returned in fifteen or twenty minutes, he was to knock on the door and ask for me, with some story that I had been assigned somewhere else, and must rush back to read the telegram at my hotel.

We gave ourselves a couple of hookers of Scotch and took the elevator up. When I had left Jack in the sitting room and started down the long hall, whom should I meet but Alfonso, the former King of Spain, an amiable nincompoop whom I had interviewed before his deposition. Later I had interviewed his successor, a Kerenski-type character called Zamora, in the very same room of the palace in Madrid. Now I nodded and Alfonso returned the nod as we passed.

When I knocked at the door, a nurse in a white uniform ushered me through a large and beautifully furnished sitting room into a very large bedroom, where the charming lady was lying in bed, all propped up with pillows and wearing the flimsiest pink nightie I think I have ever seen. But there was no doubt about it—she was really ill with a bad cold.

There was a tea table beside the bed, and as she made tea for me she asked, "How are our friends in America?"

I told her she must know better than I, as I hadn't been in the States since we had first met. And then I asked how, since she'd



PARIS: HOTEL SCIME
HOTEL ASTORIA
HOTEL MODERNE
MARTE-CARLO: HOTEL DE PARIS
HOTEL HERMITAGE
BEACH HOTEL
GENEVE: HOTEL DU MONT D'ARBOIS
BOULLE: HOTEL DES ROCHES NOIRES

24 17

My dear Governor:

I forgot to mention yesterday in my letter from Barcelona, that I noticed the entire north of Spain in a tremendous reforestation project.

Why would it not be possible for you to advocate the planting of hundreds of thousands of trees of all kinds, a certain distance back from all highways all over the United States. The states themselves could give the employment to hundreds of thousands of men; the federal Govt. could furnish the trees and seeds; the states could employ the men under Govt. supervision.

Every year in all of the countries I have motored through over here hundreds of thousands of men are along the roadsides. They prune; chop; rearrange water-sheds; etc, etc. The branches and logs are given by the various nearby villages to the semi-destitute and the very poor.

It would seem to me that some such system would be of tremendous value as a relief for immediate unemployment; besides the plantings on marginal lands which you also advocated.

Motorred in here at dawn in our lizzie; and leave for Rome in the morning and then Vienna.

been laid up with this cold, she had managed to put the note on the windshield of my car.

She smiled and said quite suavely, in a pretty, gracious little voice, "I wrote the note here in bed and gave it to a friend of mine, who told me your car was parked every day in front of the Ritz. You see, we'd read about the car in the papers. When my friend found the car in front of the Dorchester instead, she decided to paste the note on the windshield just the same."

We chatted about a few other unimportant matters, and then, again putting a lead question, I asked jokingly what she was doing entertaining the former King of Spain.

Alfonso, she assured me, was an old friend of the family. "In fact, I've known him since I was a child. He's never been fresh or rude with me, in spite of his reputation."

But she changed the subject quickly, to ask me where my next assignment would take me. I said I had no idea, but had asked for a short holiday, as I'd had none in months.

"Where will you go?" she asked. "Down to the Riviera, to Cannes or Monte? Or to Deauville or over to the Swiss Alps?"

Again I led with my chin. "No, I think I'll go down to Biarritz, or to San Sebastián on the Spanish coast."

"No! Oh no, no, no!" she said hurriedly, sitting up in bed.

"Why not? What's wrong with Spain? I like it—the girls are very attractive. Are you jealous of them?"

"No, no," she said. "But you of all people—you can't go to Spain."

"Why can't I?" I demanded.

"Alfonso just told me," she said, "that Spain is on the verge of civil war." And then she added, "You ought to know about this because the funds for the revolution have been furnished by American citizens."

I leaped to my feet, leaned across the tea table, and kissed her on the forehead. "My dear girl," I declared, "if what you're telling me is true, you have furnished me with one of the most important news beats of my life." And without more ado, I ran out.

In the hall I met Jack O'Brien, bearing down upon the apartment, cane in hand and ready for action.

"We're off to Spain tonight," I announced, grabbing his arm.

He looked at me as if I were crazy. "Maybe you're going to Spain, but I like all this pomp and circumstance here in Britain. I think I'll stay on."

"No, no, no," I argued, "you can't do that. You've got to come with me. We'll get in the car and put it on the boat at Southampton tonight. We'll be in France tomorrow morning, and at the Spanish border tomorrow night."

Jack said, "You must be crazy. What the dickens is going on in Spain that is more interesting than London?"

By now we were outside and in a cab, and I told him what the young lady had told me.

"Well, go ahead if you like," he answered, "but I'm staying right here."

I dropped him off at the Mayfair, and made the arrangements for taking the night boat to France, and taking my car with me. Then I sent a cable to Mr. Oursler at Falmouth, Massachusetts, saying:

NOT HEARING FROM YOU, AM PROCEEDING TO SAN SEBASTIAN,
SPAIN, FOR WEEK OR TWO REST UNTIL I DO HEAR FROM YOU.

Almost as soon as I got off the telephone, it began ringing wildly again. Jack was on the wire. "Have you heard from New York?" he demanded. "I have. The office says, 'Where were you during attempted assassination of Edward Eighth this noon on Rotten Row?' "

Jack said he had phoned the London *Daily Telegraph* to find out what the cable meant by attempted assassination, and he had learned that shortly after the king, his equerries, and staff had passed the Hyde Park corner, a man in the crowd had raised a box camera as if to take pictures of the procession over the heads of the crowd. Another man standing next to him had noticed a trigger-like instrument sticking out from the camera, and just as the first man was about to pull the trigger, the second man knocked the camera to the ground. The crowd jumped on the would-be assassin, and eventually the police arrived and put him inside the ambulance, which we had seen pull away as we were leaving.

Jack had said to me then, as we watched the king's equerry ride back to the ambulance, "This is where the British excel the Americans. You certainly would never see an aide to the President of the United States ride back during a parade in Washington or New York to find out what had happened to some poor bastard who'd fainted from too much excitement." Now I reminded him of this remark.

Jack answered glumly, "I guess the next thing that will happen is that we'll both be fired. It's ridiculous that we were only fifty feet away and yet didn't know what was going on."

I had dinner on the train and went aboard the night boat at Southampton at about ten, only to discover they had sold every cabin except the bridal suite, which cost five pounds. I thought that was too much to pay for an overnight trip across the Channel, so I decided to sit up in the lounge.

It was a very foggy night, and I stood out on the small deck, watching the loading and some of the late arrivals. Just before the gangplank was raised, about a quarter to midnight, a figure I recognized came aboard.

"I thought you didn't care a thing about Spain," I teased.

"I'm certainly not going to let an old bastard like you scoop me if something does happen down there in that filthy country you seem so bent on visiting," Jack replied.

We both sat up in the bar practically all night.

In Paris I went around to visit my friends in the various newspaper offices. Jack called on the *Washington Post*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, and other papers. I casually asked my friends what was doing in various places on that particular day, and since no one seemed to have any special news, I ended my request for information by adding Spain to the list.

We left Paris just after noon, and just before dusk we passed through Biarritz. There were showers all the way down. Our Chinese Pussie could make sixty miles an hour on the open road, but on hills we often wondered if we would ever make the top. We had a bite to eat in a restaurant on the edge of Saint-Jean-de-Luz, which had become quite a famous French watering place, and then dashed on as dusk turned into night.

I had driven, as I recall it, nearly five hundred miles—all the way from Le Havre. After a while, as we were starting up a very long and steep hill, Jack said to me, "There's lightning over there on the horizon to our right. Don't you think you'd better stop so we can put the top up and not be drenched again?"

"Let's wait till we get to the top," said I.

At the top of the hill we pulled over to the side of the road, and there we had an open view of the countryside for miles. We sat there, you might say, transfixed, for as far as we could see across the horizon to the right, shells were bursting at almost regular intervals, and each burst lit up the whole horizon.

Jack grinned at me. "If ever I see that lovely lady, I'm going to give her the biggest box of candy I can find."

We slithered down the hill, and at the first bar at the edge of Hendaye, I let Jack out so that he could get a couple of shots of brandy. I went on down past the railroad station to the old bridge over the Bidassoa River, which separates France from Spain at this particular place. There I parked the car in a field and got out to explore.

It took me only a short time to find the Garde Nationale, which corresponds to our National Guard in this country. They didn't actually know what had happened, except that revolution had broken out again in Spain.

Then I started across the long, dark, wide, old-fashioned bridge, which went up in a mighty arch across the Bidassoa. It was pitch black as I advanced, but I could see a few lights in the town of Irún, on the other side of the bridge, which made it seem to be dancing in the water. And I could hear the shells exploding along the top of the range further away, though I could see their reflection only occasionally. It grew blacker as I continued to walk. And just at the top of the arch, a voice called, "Halt!" At the same time I felt something sharp pressing in the top of my chest, right under my Adam's apple, and you may be perfectly certain I halted instantly.

Then up in the darkness a voice said in perfect Americanese, "No one could be this much of a goddam fool but an American newspaperman."

"Who are you?" I called.

"New York Times, and you don't even need to tell us who you are. You're either Cornelius Vanderbilt, Junior, or that drunken bastard, Jack O'Brien."

The *Times* reporter told me Jack and I had given ourselves away when we visited all the newspaper offices in Paris and asked what was going on in the world, and especially in Spain. And he went on, "Guys like you who are trained seals, instead of regulars like us who have to cover the run-of-the-mill news, never get sent into the far parts of the world unless their editors think something is happening there. A bunch of us chartered a plane and flew down here. We've been writing the first stories—at least this side of the river—on what's happening in Spain tonight."

The *Times* man cleared me with the bayonet-wielding bridge guard, and we walked down the other side of the cobblestone

bridge toward the little village of Irún. Here a sergeant greeted us. The *Times* man spoke Spanish but I didn't. The sergeant wouldn't let us continue any further, however; he said if anything happened to us in Spain, they—and "they" were the republican troops—would have to answer to the great United States of America. Whereas if anything happened to the Spanish people, it was local war among themselves, no concern of foreigners, and they could take care of that.

We noticed several soldiers lying on the ground with machine guns pointed toward the bridge. I remember saying to the sergeant, "Your men are mighty well trained. They haven't made a sound."

The sergeant lit himself a cigarette and as promptly crushed it out in his own fist as he replied, "That's because they are all dead, sir. We have to put them there like that. If reinforcements for the revolutionaries came across the bridge from France, they'd know exactly what their fate would be when they reached Spanish soil."

We turned and went back up and across the bridge. I remember saying to the *Times* man, "Let's walk backward."

"What good will that do?" he asked. "If they're going to shoot you, I'd just as soon be shot in the back so that I didn't know who did it, nor how, nor when. What difference does it make to you if you see the man who kills you?"

When I reached the car on the French side of the river, Jack O'Brien was sprawled in the front seat of the car, fast asleep. We awakened him, and drove down to a hotel at Hendaye beach, where we were able to secure a magnificent suite for practically nothing because the hotel had been almost completely emptied when the shooting began. I believe Jack and I were the only two roving correspondents in Spain when the revolution broke, and we made Hendaye our headquarters for many weeks.

CHAPTER XVI

WAR AT HOME

BACK HOME I found another war. I'd been abroad during the 1936 election, which so triumphantly reaffirmed Roosevelt as the popular choice. The returns were enough to convert even the press and private enterprise, had they been as responsive to what the public wanted as both claimed to be. Instead, the newspapers and magazines and the big business interests of the country chose to disregard the vote and fight the President more bitterly than before.

Attacks were made on all fronts—public opinion, private finance, local to national politics. Households were divided. But the basic cleavage was financial, and the irreconcilables—those who kept crying, “Traitor to his class!”—saw a threat to their own security in the New Deal measures designed to give security to the country. In Newport one young scion, typical of his group, entertained a garden party by a mocking mimicry of FDR's physical handicap. When I told him off on the spot and later in my syndicated newspaper column, I got a reproof from Washington—they even wanted me to apologize, but of course I didn't.

This unpleasant young man, whose father had been ambassador to Spain in an earlier administration, was a close friend of my new brother-in-law. He came from my own so-called class, as of course did Roosevelt. And in the economic war now on, it was clear that just as this class regarded Roosevelt as a traitor, the great majority of people who trusted him continued to distrust his background. Realization of this feeling was the basis of my own “passion for anonymity”; I kept telling FDR that as a Vanderbilt I would be of no public use to him whatever. I also recall giving him my considered opinion that his continued association with Vincent Astor, and frequent trips on the Astor yacht, the *Nourmahal*, were not helpful to his cause when he was attacking the economic royalists.

We often discussed young Nelson Rockefeller as well. In my parents' home there had been uncertainty about the Rockefellers, who had not been recognized by the old "four hundred." In time Mother had the John D., Jr.s., among her dinner guests, but I never knew the Rockefeller children. Now FDR thought it might be a good idea to give young Nelson Rockefeller a job, and he asked me to report on him as I so often did on proposed appointees. I reminded FDR that young Rockefeller had not been for him before the first campaign; could the leopard change its spots? Roosevelt thought that Nelson had. He hoped that recognition would turn him into a real liberal, and as Nelson had the personal fortune to go any place he was sent, he would make a splendid envoy. I agreed that Nelson had excellent training for a public relations man. He told me that in his first year out of college, he was assigned to study the begging letters sent his father. In his second year he graduated into the Rockefeller donations department. His third assignment was to keep the tenants in Rockefeller Center happy and make a success of the night club, the Rainbow Room, at the top of the RCA building. He didn't know too much about politics, but felt that FDR was somehow doing a pretty good job "for a radical."

There of course was the great divide, and New Deal reforms only deepened the cleavage. Although Rockefeller got his job, I didn't think he was a real liberal; I felt he was wishy-washy about people's troubles in the Depression, that he hadn't really noticed what was happening outside his own circle, and didn't actually give a damn about people who had to live in shacks built out of flattened oil cans.

In short, like the voters, I now distrusted those involved with the great financial groups who fought That Man. The publisher of China's most popular magazine had told me FDR was the greatest man in the world. But at home in Newport I could count on the fingers of one hand the people who were really for him.

Among people I knew, private attacks on the President ranged from gossip about the family to the view of a leading banker—his bank handled our family's trust funds—that our Chief Executive, probably the most intelligent since Jefferson, had paresis of the brain. Press attacks ranged from simple distortion and suppression of New Deal and labor news to the fulminations of columnists of the Pegler school. In private most newspapermen were for Roosevelt, but they had to hold their jobs, and estimates of press



Hotel Barclay
New York, N. Y.
September 25, 1936.

Miss Margaret LeHand
Private Secretary to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Missy,

I had lunch with your great Chief the day before yesterday at Hyde Park, and a chat with him in advance concerning many things, chiefly some observations made on my recent globe-encircling trip.

The President asked me to make a list for him of certain persons whom he expects to act upon when he is reelected. He asked me to get these into your hands personally, and not through the mail. I shall work upon the list in the course of the next week or so, and would appreciate knowing whether you are going to be here or in Washington. If here, won't you ring me at my apartment at this hotel. Otherwise, I will come to Washington sometime and give it to you.

Trust this finds you well. With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,

CVJr:hd

. CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, Jr.

opposition ranged as high as ninety per cent of the papers. To professionals, the most dangerous press and periodical attitudes were the invisible ones, failure to print the facts, and sentimental presentation of opposition views under the guise of the good old days, the American way, and so on.

In elections the good old days were resoundingly repudiated, and eventually the opposition settled down to a simple effort to block progress, to hold the line with a "They shall not pass!" appeal. At the same time, new grounds for opposition and for splitting the New Deal front developed of themselves.

The war in Spain furnished one. Because Franco's armies were blessed by the Pope, there was a real danger that the pudgy Caudillo would array all Catholics behind him. This did not actually happen, but certainly the necessity for consideration of Catholic voters at home and our relations with Latin countries south of the border was an embarrassment in dealing with a revolutionary Spain.

For many people the issues were confused. In the first place, as in our own Civil War, the active rebels were the conservatives. In the second place, because of our own neutrality laws dating back to the time of Senator Hiram Johnson of California, and people like Senator Borah who only wanted to keep us out of war, we were prevented from keeping the Spanish Republic supplied with arms to enforce its constitutional authority. To help the legal *status quo*, we had first to repeal our neutrality legislation, not at all easy to do in a period when even the best liberal opinion wanted to keep America out of war.

At the same time it was quite obvious to informed persons that the war in Spain was a rehearsal for a bigger, more deadly European conflict. The Axis powers backed Franco, and their material help strongly reinforced the papal blessing. Help for the other side was much less, in terms of material supplies, although the Russians sent some; young enthusiasts from English and American universities were ready enough to volunteer.

Informed people were also aware that the build-up of Axis strength, aside from the rehearsal on the Spanish front, was becoming a world menace. By now Mussolini was being frank about his designs on Albania and Ethiopia, reviving the old dreams of the old Roman Empire. Hitler's speeches told the world what he could do with Austria, the Sudetenland, and the Ukraine. Americans who couldn't care less about boundary



Hotel Barclay
New York, N. Y.
November 13, 1936.

Miss Margaret LeHand
Private Secretary to the President
The White House, Washington, D.C.

My dear Missy:

I see that John D. Jr. has crawled back again upon the band wagon, which reminds me that Tuesday evening I took Mrs. Winthrop Aldrich in to dinner here at the house, and after dinner Winthrop spent the better part of one-half hour in discussing how men of affairs should teach the President the lesson that the minority of 17 million who voted for Landon was a strenuous minority and would oppose any of his progressive, radical plans. Aldrich went on to say that if the President thought he could renew N.R.A., A.A.A. and so on, and if he was attempting to enter the world Court by the back door, he would find he had a real fight upon his hands. Clarence Dillon (who I believe is on our side of the fence) asked him if he thought the President would balance the budget. He replied he thought that the budget could be balanced, but he doubted if the President would do it. He said that he, himself had played along with the President until he realized the President was a man without an essence of financial principal.

Last night I took Lady Granard in to dinner. She is Ogden Mills' sister, as you probably know, and her husband is Master of the Horse at the British Court. She was very abusive and extremely nasty in all of her many references to the Chief and said that her brother and Mr. Mellon and others were formulating plans to tie his hands financially very, very soon.

I thought these things might be of interest to the President before he went south and am sending them to you in the strictest confidence.

Yours always,

Reil Vandenberg

changes in Europe or Africa had a preview of Nazi world domination in the news leaking out about the concentration camps which were swallowing liberal writers, teachers, and anyone—not Jews alone—who dared oppose the Nazi regime.

To me this seemed and still seems our best reason for defeating the Third Reich. In order to bring the issue home to Americans, I had arranged to make a film, a 35-mm. color movie, which was sold in advance to distributors. In Paris I found two Pathé photographers with an old Oldsmobile. We outfitted the car with special cameras—Zeiss-Ikons in the spotlights on each side of the car. Sound apparatus in the trunk compartment in the rear could be operated from inside the car to catch crowd noises, parade music, and close-up conversation. John Brodix and I accompanied the camera car in an old Ford, which we decorated with silly collegiate signs, to draw attention our way.

By this time I had interviewed Der Fuehrer several times, not always to his satisfaction, and so when we reached the Luxembourg border I was not surprised to see my own name in block letters on the list of those expelled from Germany. But, as I showed my passport, not one of the busy officials looked up at the wall to consult the list, which corresponded in a way to the "Wanted" signs in our post offices. Hundreds of people were coming over the border here, and the chance of recognition was slight. But we knew our time was limited; when reports reached Berlin, some bright lad there would find my name.

Once inside Germany, we decided to keep on driving. We had sandwiches, cokes, and beer, and we slept fitfully in the cars one night, somewhere near Hanover. The next day we reached Berlin, where Brodix and I spent the night with an old friend, Baron Oppenheim, an "Aryan of honor." That evening in a café we were addressed as "foreign swine" by some juvenile delinquents calling themselves Hitler Youth, and the baron's appeal to the police got nowhere. We left at dawn for Frankfurt, and the following afternoon were at the main gate of Dachau.

Brodix and I were ahead in the Ford, and the guards must have been asleep, until a bell rang and a lot of people came running. I got out and walked up to the sentry, my small Zeiss camera in hand. He blew a whistle for the sergeant, who took Brodix and me into their pillbox. We told him we were American newspapermen and had been told it was O.K. to take pictures. When a

lieutenant arrived, he took the film out of the cameras, read us the riot act, and let us go.

Meanwhile, the professional photographers in the other car had photographed us, thus authenticating the whole scene. And as we left, instead of turning around in front of the gate, we drove through the grounds, where we saw prisoners being lashed with whips, blood showing on their backs, while their hands were tied to posts once used to tether cavalry ponies.

We doubled back toward Strasbourg on the Rhine, and near there a man asked us for a ride. He spoke French, and we had an *F* on our license plates, which showed the car had come from France. Once aboard, he told me his story. Four days before, he and his sweetheart had rowed across the river to picnic and fish on the German side of the Rhine. A bunch of young toughs had jumped them and raped his girl, untying his boat before they went back into the woods. He went for help and was put under arrest. They'd beaten him with whips in a camp like Dachau. The night before, he and two other men had escaped, but he knew they'd loosed dogs after them. If we let him ride in the car for a little way, the dogs might lose the scent.

At that very moment we could hear dogs baying. We kept going, and as we neared the International Bridge, slowing for a big line of tanks and cars, our Frenchman jumped and ran for it.

We drove straight for the bridge through a lot of whistling and yelling, and then the sergeant on the French side sent us back. Meanwhile the Germans had stopped the other car and confiscated what film they found in the cameras, but they missed a double-compartment under the crankcase where we hid the films we brought out.

Afterward we went to the small Austrian town where Hitler was born, to photograph what mementos we could find of his early life—his parents' graves in the cemetery, the house where he began his career as a house-painter, and the barmaid who took care of his father in his last years.

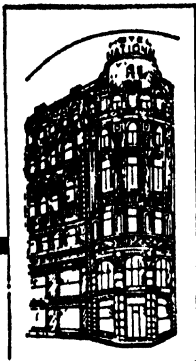
Eventually our film was shown at the Mayfair Theatre in New York. Hundreds of German-Americans came down from Yorkville to protest, and police reserves had to be called out. (These were the years when, during elections, sound trucks drove through Yorkville blaring imprecations against "Rosenfeldt," and swastikas were scrawled on subway walls in the East Eighties.) After two weeks Secretary Hull in the State Department told us to stop

showing the picture, because it bred contempt for "a friendly power." Today it is part of the Pentagon program for reserve training, and is being currently shown in Central and South America.

Though many people were of two minds about Spain, it was difficult to be of two minds about Hitler's Germany. Yet this country was still so far from effective concern that when Roosevelt made his famous "Quarantine aggressor nations" speech in Chicago, he alienated new groups of voters and set up new opposition forces. Besides those with hereditary loyalties to Germany or Italy, there were the anti-English—most vocally the Irish—who had opposed Wilson's League of Nations, and blocked our joining the World Court during FDR's first administration. At that time Father Coughlin spoke on the air, urging his adherents to wire their senators, and apparently enough of them did so to defeat the Court proposal by a close vote in the Senate.

Also opposed to an active foreign policy were a good many peaceable intellectuals, and some die-hards who were willing enough to wave the flag at home, but unable to think in global terms. Criticism of FDR's effort to mobilize public opinion as a weapon against the Axis was as bitter as the criticism of his Supreme Court plan, and like it the idea had to be dropped. Had it succeeded, the course of world history might have changed. For, despite my bad personal relations with the Third Reich due to the Reichstag fire story and now to the film, I was still able to get in and convey to Hitler personal messages from Roosevelt—mostly of the "keep calm, take it easy" variety. Had these private pleas been backed up by a collective public warning, it is conceivable that World War II might have been avoided.

At this time, instead of worsening my own relations inside Germany by making the concentration-camp film, perhaps I should have had one more quasi-friendly meeting with Hitler. A trial balloon I was supposed to launch with him, but didn't, was the thought of what would now be called a "summit conference"—a meeting between Hitler and Mussolini and FDR to be held aboard a yacht in French waters. FDR never shrank from seeing and talking to people, at the summit or anywhere else. Of the Munich disaster, FDR said, "If Chamberlain had only carried a big stick instead of an umbrella!" And Stalin thought the same; he told me, "Little people afraid of the rain do not make good parliamentarians." But consider the difference had the Nazi-Fascist



file

Hotel National



Moscow June 24 1936

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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*PP7.
104*

My dear Mr President:-

Its sunrise in Moscow, in my suite next to the US Embassy overlooking Red Square; and in Philadelphia they are probably just unanimously nominating you! Although I cannot be there in person, I am there nevertheless in spirit. Nothing can prevent your re-election; and try as hard as they will --many of them, you will nevertheless come through with a great, great majority in the fall; because you have proven to our people Mr President that you have done, and continue to do the very best you know how, in their behalf. They will not fail you.

Jack C'Brien and I arrived here a few days ago after 8 1/2 days on the trans-Siberian railroad; and 3 days on the rails in Manchuko. We saw military preparations of such magnitude that I am sending in the Pouch from here a letter concerning them to Mr Dern. If you find time I should be delighted to have you glance through that letter too.

Moscow is in the midst of a gigantic building boom. The whole old city is being rebuilt-it seems. The people one sees upon the streets look less shabby, better clothed, cleaner and in a healthier condition than they did the last time I was here. There is a quantity of cheap food; there are many shops and department stores; and a lot of theaters and local Russian movie-houses. The children look particularly well too. Russia however is getting back to the old system of trusts and fiscal organizations, only instead of their being owned by individuals the state owns them, and they are being operated by individuals. The New Constitution; and the Gorki funeral are on the lips of everyone.

I have found Mr Henderson, our Charge d'Affairs here a particularly able diplomat; and the young men under him seem to know their business equally well. You have many staunch admirers among them; as well as among the newspaper profession here; and

dictators been faced earlier by FDR and Stalin, instead of later by Chamberlain and Daladier! Later, on the verge of war in 1939, Stalin spoke more bitterly: "Mr. Chamberlain was more interested in Mr. Chamberlain than in the people of the nation he represented."

The Munich disaster, during which only Moscow showed any willingness to fight for the beleaguered Czech buffer state, led straight to the Moscow-Berlin accord of '39; for the Russians, seeing the West's capitulation to Hitler, took their own steps to buy time. Had things been different—but it's like speculating on what might have happened had the government of Stanley Baldwin taken Shaw's advice to make Wallis Simpson queen.

At home a "summit conference" might have hurt FDR with the voters, for there was still no wide understanding of his concern over European affairs. Americans didn't like what was going on, but they just bought extras and booed or hissed Hitler, Hirohito, Mussolini, and Franco in the newsreels. In the notebook where I registered the results of the public-opinion poll I took in all my travels, I once put down that I had spent the week defending FDR's policies and the Chicago anti-war speech in particular, and I observed that a great many businessmen were anti-war and anti-Roosevelt in the same breath. Of course they didn't want a war. But FDR's suggested policy of "quarantining" a foreign power would prohibit selling goods to that power. This rather than any serious belief in the Axis threat that "Sanctions mean war!" seems to have governed our financial powers, but the result was to encourage aggression. "Sometimes," I noted bitterly, "I think it would do the business bellyachers of America good to have to live under some of the foreign privations of these times."

A little later the opposition to Roosevelt's foreign policy would be organized and made vocal by the America First group. So far, the various forces involved were still feeling their way.

During the middle thirties, the papal secretary of state, Cardinal Pacelli, came to New York from the Vatican. He stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Myron G. Taylor. Mr. Taylor was then chairman of the board of United States Steel Corporation, and in 1939 FDR appointed him to be his personal representative to the Vatican. Non-Catholic churches here put up a big howl. Mr. Roosevelt told me one evening in the Lincoln Study at the White House why he had done this. He told me, first of all, he had wanted to

make peace with the Catholic Church in the United States as represented in his cabinet by James Farley, the postmaster general, and with various other high Catholic personages, such as Archbishop Stritch of Chicago and Spellman of New York. But in addition, he said, he had appointed Mr. Taylor because the best intelligence system in the entire world, better even than the British, was the intelligence system of the Catholic Church, as received through its priests and high church personnel throughout the world. I remembered my reference to the Vatican dossier back in the twenties, and agreed.

Myron Taylor was a great friend of my parents'. Father had sat on many boards with him, and Mother and Mrs. Taylor were great social and personal friends. Although my parents were not in favor of my newspaper work, they thought it a great honor when the Myron Taylors asked me to dinner with Cardinal Pacelli and many other of his friends in New York, including the John D. Rockefeller, Jr.s., Mr. Henry Frick, Mrs. Carnegie, the widow of Andrew Carnegie, the George F. Baker, Jr.s., the Ogden Millses and others.

After dinner I was singled out by Mrs. Taylor to talk with Cardinal Pacelli. She told him that I was very close to Mr. Roosevelt, and that Mr. Roosevelt probably felt more at home with me than with any other member of the White House staff. This, she said, was because FDR had known me longer than I had known him, because he had been at my christening. She also explained that I was the only member of "the four hundred" who had joined his cause long before he became the presidential candidate, and that I had done this against the wishes of my parents, who were very anti-FDR.

Cardinal Pacelli asked me a great many questions having to do with our political situation. And as I was just in from a combined lecture tour and trip to discover the political sentiment of the country, I pulled no punches in what I told him. Actually I had been sent to follow Lindbergh on platforms and counteract the America First propaganda. I told the cardinal that in many parts of the Midwest, I heard harsh criticism of the King of England and the British Empire. People were saying that the British were doing their best to get us to pull their chestnuts out of the fire. I told him too that in the Far West, as well as in sections near New York and in the "border" states such as Tennessee and Oklahoma

—I mean our interior regional borders—there was some admiration for Hitler's stand against the Jews.

Cardinal Pacelli questioned me about what was then called "Bolshevik" feeling in the country (in those days we spoke of the "Bolshies" as later people spoke of the Communists). I answered that there was some feeling for their point of view but not nearly as much as in the late twenties and early thirties, when we had a depression but no relief measures. When I explained further that the left-wing sentiments were entertained in areas in which the Catholic Church was very strong, as a sort of counterpoint, he seemed upset and wanted to know which areas these were.

I told him about the priest called Father Coughlin, whose Church of the Little Flower at Royal Oak, Michigan, was a shrine, and how this priest had aroused in many people a great antagonism to the White House, apparently with the deliberate intention of defeating the Roosevelt policies in Michigan.

Finally his Eminence asked my own religious denomination, and I said I was an Episcopalian though not a very good one. Then he wanted to know if I was an agnostic, and I admitted that I had sometimes considered myself one. He went on to inquire why I had never joined the Catholic Church, like some other members of my family, but I told him none of my family had, although one of my cousins, Willie K. Vanderbilt, Jr., had married a Catholic and then had had the marriage annulled by the Vatican.

At the end of our talk, Cardinal Pacelli invited me to call on him when I next came to Rome, but by the time I got there he had become Pope. Of course I couldn't just go calling on the Pope, so I asked the American Embassy to make the arrangements for me. I found Pope Pius a charming, intelligent person, and I think the world lost a great man in his death. Of course I didn't agree with him in many of his points of view in world affairs. I believe that if it had not been for the strenuous fight of organized religion against the Communists, there might be more peace in the world.

Of course one cannot generalize about the Catholic Church and politics. Even after the Spanish war began and it was clear that the sympathies of our government, short of course of any effective aid, were with the elected government of Spain, many Catholics remained staunch supporters of Roosevelt. Indeed, the young Communists were much louder in their reproaches when FDR

failed to take positive steps against Franco. And though Smith and Farley, both Catholics, were now cool to the New Deal, their expressed objections were to domestic policies. Frank Murphy, another Irish Catholic but one of a very different temperament, was one of FDR's strongest supporters.

I had known Murphy when he was running for mayor of Detroit. He had been extremely helpful in Michigan, courageous in his stand during the labor troubles and other difficulties in that state. In fact, I had introduced him to FDR and wished I had been able to introduce more like him.

Nevertheless I feel sure that if Roosevelt were alive today he would disagree with Senator Kennedy about the desirability of Catholics in high places. True, FDR nominated Al Smith and made Joseph Kennedy, the young Senator's wealthy dad, our ambassador to England. But Smith eventually took a famous walk, and I'm not sure that the Kennedy appointment was made with any great degree of enthusiasm; it was partly to please Jimmy Roosevelt, a business associate of Joe Kennedy's. Certainly the English raised a terrific hue and cry over the appointment. And in private FDR did not hesitate to mention Catholic connections as a bar to political trust. Among high churchmen, the only one he trusted was Cardinal Stritch.

Still another group alienated by New Deal policies in the second and later terms was a group of Southern politicians committed to the old order. The relief agencies had almost the whole South as chief client; and a government committee, with intensive economic analysis and admirable social consciousness but a certain want of tact, called the region our Number One Problem. This "name calling" of course did not sit well with those Southerners responsible for the situation.

The result was that many Southern politicians opposed New Deal spending in some fields—though they demanded it in matters that touched their own interests. Beginning with the CCC and going through WPA, PWA, and TVA, the alphabetical agencies were accomplishing wonders in the Southern states. Theirs was a real if long-delayed job of reconstruction, and the brighter and more far-seeing Southern industrialists felt no aversion to government contracts even while they deplored the new tendency to coddle labor and rake leaves. Driving through the country from New Mexico to Georgia, one could not fail to see that the smallest communities now had or were acquiring good schools, fine

courthouses, solid-looking jails and efficient hospitals. Larger towns acquired large public buildings, smaller ones got post offices. Everywhere were new concrete highways connecting town and metropolis. Of course this was true over the whole country, but it was especially noticeable in the South, where poverty had been more apparent. The "burden of taxation" some people groaned under was not in vain; we were getting value for our money, and no one else ever deeded to the nation so many improvements as did That Man.

People in the lower financial brackets were unreservedly grateful, and they continued to carry the "solid South" for FDR at every election. Yet many Southerners with political power resisted change. They were used to running the South—and the Democratic Party—their own way and resented intervention from the North. So in Washington the first of the Dixiecrats made their appearance in House and Senate, with their willingness to vote Republican in moments of crisis—or, as one put it, to "put country, suh, ahead of party."

The South, of course, was anti-Catholic, hardly recovered from the Klan craze of the twenties. Yet now, oddly enough, the disaffected Southerners and the unhappy Catholics found a common rallying ground. In Europe the Church had long stood as a bulwark against leftist politics, and this ancient enmity was now exploding in Spain. But here at home, up to now, there had been no left to oppose. Now it was identified. Young radicals of all shades hailed FDR as their champion. And because the New Deal was lifting the face of America, suddenly it was realized that That Man threatened to change our Way of Life. Was not such a thought un-American? A House committee, like the restrictive Rules Committee sponsored and continuously supported by Southerners and Republicans, was appointed to investigate un-American activities. From the start it devoted itself to the investigation of government employees. In time, a corresponding committee of the Senate, under a famous Catholic Republican from Wisconsin, would be set up and both committees would flourish under the free publicity given them by the yellow press.

I had lunch at Hyde Park one autumn day—the dessert was red raspberry ice cream. Mrs. James Roosevelt sat at the head of the table, wearing an old-fashioned print frock of another shade of red, a dark wine color, and outside the windows the trees were

turning. F.D.R., Jr., said now that the maples were going red, they'd blame that on the Democrats, too!

Afterward in the polished-oak library, with his prints of old ships on the walls, photographs of the children and the grandchildren around the room, and the bookcase full of detective stories, I talked to FDR and reported my own news as the news-ticker buzzed in his tiny study. Over the country they were saying so-and-so in the barbershops and the drugstores. Here was a trial balloon I'd run in my *Script* column, with this response from readers. I'd heard this at Newport, that on shipboard. . . .

Before I left he asked me to check an applicant for a foreign service job, and have a talk with a political figure on the other side of the world; and he reminded me that if ever I got into trouble on one of these little assignments, I could not appeal for help to the State Department or any other administrative agency. I was on my own.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LONG, LONG TRAIL

ONE OF THE worst headaches of the second Roosevelt term was the labor situation, in which, some will remember, John L. Lewis became angry enough to come out later in support of Wendell Willkie. When the thunderclouds had begun to gather over the black eyebrows of the mineworkers' leader, I picked up Mr. Lewis one morning at his home in Alexandria, and showed him a trailer I was taking into Washington. He was interested in the trailer, and as I happened to be taking it on to the White House, I thought this might be a golden opportunity to expose the union boss to some of the presidential charm. Often it had worked wonders; it might do so again.

Gently I suggested that Mr. Lewis go in with me to see FDR, but he said no. The after cabin we rode in was connected by phone with the car ahead, and I phoned my secretary-chauffeur, Arthur Thompson, to postpone the White House stop and let Mr. Lewis out elsewhere. At his home in West Virginia, Arthur had been a state senator and I always called him "Senator." As I put down the phone my passenger erupted: "Did I hear you call your driver Senator? Holy smoke! What's the world coming to? Only a Vanderbilt could have a senator for a chauffeur!"

Actually I had the trailer in order to cover the country, and the world, at the grassroots level. Working for Rob Wagner on *Script* and for other good editors, I had learned not to be a name-dropper in print; even when you're sent to interview a big shot, they told me, build up some lesser character too. Joe Doakes likes to read about John D. Rockefeller, but he also likes to read about himself and Mrs. Doakes.

One of the best ways to heed this advice, I discovered, was to travel by trailer. In fact I would say that, unless you like meeting people on the ground and grassroots level, trailer travel is not for you. I've taken trailers across the United States many times, and

all over the continent of Europe, into Asiatic Russia and India and China too. Back in the early twenties, before we recognized the Soviet Union, I spent five weeks crossing Siberia by trailer. And everywhere we stopped on these trips, in the heart of London or Chicago or on the Siberian steppes, people stopped to see and talk to us, and the public generally became part of the picture. It's a lot like traveling by bus, except that you have room to eat and sleep and work. Unless we made camp in a desert, while I pecked on the typewriter inside, there would be a knocking on the sides of the trailer outside; it sounded like woodpeckers, but it would be children, or sometimes grown-ups, knocking on the sides to see what the trailer was made of. You had only to stick your head out to start a conversation. So trailer travel was fine for polling the public.

Fulton Oursler, the editor of *Liberty*, saw another advantage in trailers. "You can't," he pointed out, "put a trailer in a one-column cut." What he meant was that if I traveled in a trailer as a *Liberty* correspondent, the magazine would get a lot of local publicity, or world publicity if I went far enough. Oursler suggested that I take a trailer to London for the coronation of George VI. I could pick any trailer I wanted and *Liberty* would buy it and call it the *Liberty* trailer. I had only to sign a contract to sleep and live in the trailer the whole time. And after the coronation would come the Windsor wedding.

As an old hand at trailer travel, I saw that they made us a good one, built to order in California of aluminum and plywood and Plexiglass. We had a radio-telephone that would reach any part of the world, and also special lights and other equipment. The trailer's name, Stardust, and home port, Hollywood, were lettered on the back. On each side a sign read *Liberty Magazine Trailer En Route to Coronation of George VI, King of England*. We drove from Los Angeles to New York in about two weeks, stopping in every city where *Liberty* circulation was low. Whenever we reached a town with one-way streets we drove in the wrong way; of course we were immediately stopped, and there would be a story in the papers. We accumulated publicity and made national magazines, somewhat in the manner of the pilot "Wrong-way" Corrigan the following year. They did say we were always getting into trouble and managing to squirm out.

There was a lot of publicity about the trailer in New York. That city does not allow trailers within the city limits; at least

you can't live in one. But my job for Mr. Oursler was to get as much publicity as possible. So I was pinched in New York for disorderly conduct because I was sleeping in my trailer on West Street along the Hudson River. The story got in the papers, but I didn't go to jail, nor was I even fined. However, by the time Stardust was swung aboard the SS *Manhattan* for the Atlantic crossing, the trip was quite a thing to the public mind.

We landed in Plymouth, in southwestern England, as far away from London as we could. We landed on a lighter, the trailer was lifted over the side, and we were met by the lord mayor of Plymouth and a famous English automobile racing driver. He came down with his racing car, and there were people from the European division of *Liberty's* circulation department.

We stopped twice on the way up to London and in each of the cities received a vast amount of publicity. In fact, they formed motorcades and cheered us on, and people brought cases of beer, salad, ale and bottles of whisky, and all kinds of things.

The *Liberty* people had secured us a parking space in a sort of areaway outside a large public garage, on a back street about halfway between Buckingham Palace and Westminster Abbey. The English papers did themselves well with our arrival. There were headlines everywhere, one saying, "Journalist Brings His Own Hotel." With hotel space at a premium, this wasn't a bad idea, and we were in a very pleasant, quiet spot, surrounded by gardens filled with spring flowers, and with bright-red geraniums in all the window boxes.

But when we reached the areaway, we were told by the police that we could not sleep in the trailer. I argued that my contract said I had to, but they replied that this was not permitted, and if we insisted they would have to padlock the trailer. So we made arrangements with the people who ran the apartment house above the garage to occupy their apartment. We had two small rooms with a bathroom and a shower in between. And we used to come down and stay in the trailer from 10:00 A.M. to midnight or later. My companion was Arthur Thompson.

We were in London several days before the coronation began, and they had two or three rehearsals. I was one of only five American correspondents inside the Abbey. The AP, UP, and INS each had a man. I sat up in the eaves, two seats away from Lowell Thomas, both of us nearer the stage—I mean the throne—than America's Special Ambassador James W. Gerard.

The ceremonies were unending, and after we had attended one of the rehearsals we didn't return again. Two days before the coronation, it was drizzly and foggy in London, and late in the afternoon I was lying on my bunk in the trailer resting. Arthur was sitting on a stool outside, under a canopy, and I heard him talking to people. After quite a conversation he opened the door and said, "Mr. Vanderbilt, you have some important guests."

I said, "Bring them in," and was just lifting myself off the bed when into the trailer came young King George VI—Bertie, as we had called him in school at Dartmouth Academy, on the south coast just outside the naval school. As children my sister and I had been almost brought up with the British royal family, so actually it was not remarkable for him to come into the trailer.

He said, "I hate to disturb you. I see you are in your usual favorite position."

I jumped up and said, "Hello, there, I want to welcome you to my little rolling home."

Then his wife, whom I never cared for, came into the trailer. She was fat and jolly and had a red face and looked like a young lady who didn't use cosmetics. The two little girls came toddling along behind her; I can hardly believe that one of these little girls is now the Queen of England, and the other Princess Margaret, whose love affairs and doings make so many of the headlines. I haven't seen them since Elizabeth II became queen.

They looked at the pictures—we had autographed pictures of practically all the movie stars in a large book; they had sent us their pictures after attending the christening party we had for the trailer before leaving Hollywood.

Then Bertie asked point-blank, "Are you going to my brother's fu-fu-funeral?" He stuttered quite badly.

I said, "Funeral?"

"Well, you know what I mean—his wedding."

"I've been assigned to cover it."

"You know the young lady?"

"I met her several years ago," I said, "but I don't know her well. I met her when she was around Washington after the First World War."

"Oh, I had no idea she was as old as that," he said.

"She's certainly no spring chicken," I replied, "but she's not very old."

Then he changed the subject. "I understand you're having a party tonight."

"Yes, we've asked a few of our American friends and some newspapermen who are here for the coronation, to come for some liquid refreshments."

"How can you drink in a vehicle in the street?" he asked. "Isn't there a law in London that forbids it?"

I agreed. "But I'm *not* in the street. I'm in a parking lot."

He smiled a bit at that, but the queen didn't seem to think it was funny. She tugged his sleeve, and they left, chuckling a bit.

Two or three hours later we had our party in the street. We had secured fake grass from an undertaking establishment in London and put it all around the trailer, and then we had sprinkled talcum powder on the cement fringe of the garage so we could dance. On our phony lawn we set up some tables, and we'd got bottles and glasses and ice, and Arthur Thompson had bought himself a green jacket (he tried to get a red one but couldn't). He never drank; he belonged to the WCTU or some such thing in West Virginia.

I wasn't doing much drinking in those days and anyway I never drink when I'm on a story, but I can't say as much for my guests. People came, all sorts, and some of the news magazines carried the story. I remember Inez Robb, who writes for one of the syndicates, had so much fun that she did an Irish jig right in the cobblestone street. She was wearing a pair of kilts, and the papers said, "American Newspaperwoman Wears Kilts and Does Irish Reel." Lots of prominent people were there, including the wife of our attorney general then, Homer Cummings. Among the others present was Peaches Browning, without Daddy. Some British and French people also attended our party, and a great number of newspapermen and women. The party started at seven and went on past midnight.

A day and a half later was the coronation, and all I had to do was walk down the street to Westminster Abbey, which we could see from the trailer.

We had to be inside the Abbey at five in the morning, although we rebelled a great deal at this, and we were there until six or seven at night. (Temporary toilets were installed in the Poets' Corner). The press gallery held the only people in ordinary clothes. Below us in the cross-shaped interior, from which fewer than a third of those so honorably seated could see the ceremony,

sat the pageant of Empire. There were two tiers of scarlet-clad lord mayors, and one of white-wigged, black-robed judges. The peers were on one side, their ladies on the other, with hairdos topped by the three feathers of the Prince of Wales—though there was no Prince of Wales at the time. But the Indian princes really dressed up the set, with their long satin coats and turbans ablaze with diamonds.

In the procession of representatives from fifty-five foreign nations who entered as the organ began to peal, the show-stealers were five nearly naked African tribesmen, who first held their weapons high, then prostrated themselves before the high altar. Then came the bald-pated Archbishop of Canterbury in his gold cope, followed by the Roman bishops in green cassocks, all sweeping with apparent indifference past the grave of the Unknown Soldier.

Next the little princesses in white, Queen Mary in purple with an interminable train—then a fanfare and the organ reached new heights and everybody stood, as the principals entered and the real play began. I won't describe that because everybody saw it on TV when Bertie's daughter was crowned as Elizabeth II. The thing is that when "the undoubted King (or Queen)" is proclaimed, and the crowd shouts, "God Save the King (or the Queen)," you do feel a thrill.

For most people the whole long procedure demands attention, but opposite me four workmen sitting inside the organ pipes and munching sandwiches manifested absolutely no interest. And the little princesses, until given a look through Queen Mary's lorgnette, rubbed their heads where their coronets hurt.

We reporters wrote our stories in longhand and then passed them to pages, who took them down to be sent by wire. I was covering for a weekly magazine, which presumably didn't have to have my stories as fast as that, but Fulton Oursler had sold my stuff to one of the newspaper syndicates. So we had a system rigged. In my pocket I carried a battery-telephone set, with a range of five or six blocks, and I could speak to Arthur Thompson in the trailer. He would pick up my words and at once talk on the transatlantic phone in the trailer to the home office in New York. And that was how we were able to scoop the world by two hours.

After the coronation, there was a great hullabaloo in the British press. They said we had no license to have a transatlantic phone in our trailer and no license to have the battery set either. It

looked as if there might be some sort of trial, and so, hearing this, we took off. Whatever hullabaloo there was quieted down.

We'd done our assignment, watched all the fuss in the Abbey and seen them crown Bertie with what they somewhat confusingly called Edward's crown—meaning, of course, the crown of Edward the Confessor. And in my notebook I wrote, "England has done her best with George VI and of course he'll do his best, but he definitely does not have the popular appeal of his brother."

And now we started for a wedding. From Dover we shipped on the night boat to Ostend, went on to Bruges and photographed the lace-makers, and then to Versailles, where we parked in the grounds of the Petit Palais Hotel. Eighteen miles outside Paris, near Versailles, we disconnected the Pontiac and drove in and out of Paris, but spent the nights in the trailer.

Four or five days before the wedding we drove to Tours. The wedding would take place where the Windsors were staying, at the Château Cande, near Monts. When we arrived, there must have been fifty or sixty newspaper people outside the white-trellised gates. Astonished French soldiers with fixed bayonets popped out of sentry boxes at sight of us. A tank!

Beyond the gates the sun, appearing for the first time in weeks, shone on a vista that held a long lazy pool with white swans floating on it. The castle lay like a sleeping giant in gray Caen-stone, overlooking the flooded Loire valley. It was four centuries old, but glassed-in greenhouses, the badminton court at the right, and the golf links and private airport beyond were more recent additions. At the door stood the duke's Ford station wagon—was it unloading Aunt Bessie Merriman from Baltimore?

The various members of the press, outside, sent their names in through a press liaison officer provided by the French government. But they were getting nowhere. We cased the joint and found that nothing happened at the main gate but official visits. The real life of the estate went through the back gate. So we went there. Of course we could not move unobserved, and by the time we got there other reporters in hordes had trailed us. A Hearst reporter was indignant—"It's our job to keep you outta where we can't get in." But the Austrian representing AP and the Russian girl there for UP both stood graciously aside while I told the gatekeeper that the Duke of Windsor had expressed a desire to see the trailer.

Without telephoning the house, he opened the gate and we drove in and around to the front of the château. It was almost lunchtime, and by now there were several cars in front. After three or four minutes a man dressed in a frock coat and tails came over—we thought, to send us away—and said, “The duke would like to know the name of the occupant of the caravan.” So I gave the servant my card and said I would be very happy indeed if the duke and his fiancée would like to visit the trailer at any time.

Word came back almost immediately that they would like me to come in and have lunch with them, and my chauffeur could lunch in the kitchen, if he cared to. I could not very well explain that my chauffeur was not a chauffeur at all, but a former state senator. However, Arthur Thompson hardly ever left the trailer anyhow, preferring to cook himself up something or open a can; and of course he wouldn’t have wanted to eat in the kitchen with the servants.

So I went in, and Fred Bates of NBC got stalled in his efforts to follow me. I was taken up to a large, dark, oak library overlooking the Loire. The room was full of flowers. I had time to notice only that the bookshelves held modern novels, before the Windsors’ good friend, Herman Rogers, came in.

Behind him a small lad in grayish-blue shirt, darker grayish-blue plus fours and stockings, and brown shoes, his head a mop of tousled brownish-gray hair, peered into the room. The duke’s face was reddened by recent sunburn but his eyes were even then crows-footed and tired. Behind him stood a small, wiry-looking woman in a dark reddish sweater and a pleated brown skirt. Mrs. Simpson’s face was lined with worry but her lips were a brave bright red.

Holding hands, they strolled in, and with Mr. and Mrs. Rogers and two other couples we went in to lunch. They told me that they’d like to visit California but did not plan to live either in America or in England.

After lunch they came out to the trailer, and both the duke and the duchess tried my bed. They sat down and bounced up and down on it, commenting, “It’s quite comfortable, isn’t it?”

I said, “How would you like it if I took you off on your honeymoon?”

They confessed they would like nothing better, but were afraid that was already arranged.

"I've got an idea," I suggested. "How would you like to take a drive about the countryside in the trailer?"

They looked at each other, but Mr. Rogers put his foot down. However, they all got in the trailer and we fixed up a tea party. The tea came out of a whisky bottle. The duke drank gin and tonic and the duchess drank straight Scotch.

In those days everybody was good friends and there'd been no long bitterness and trouble inside the royal family. I told the duke about his brother and sister-in-law's coming down to see the trailer and also what they had said.

And he answered, "Well, you know, Brother's a wonderful man, but he just doesn't seem to understand my point of view." But he didn't seem the least bit bitter about it, and Wally wasn't either.

They asked us if we'd like to camp in the grounds and spend the night there, but I was afraid we would offend the newspaper profession too much if we did. They were angry enough already, I guessed, at our getting in. We took a few pictures, and we had an interesting conversation—in fact the duchess told us a lot of stuff we were able to use in our stories. Then we left the grounds and drove away from this little town of Monts to a town on the other side of Tours. I wrote my story there, and then we connected the generator and I telephoned the story to the Paris office of *Liberty*.

Evenings in the château, the couple amused themselves by looking at 16-mm. films they had taken themselves. Later these films, with a musical accompaniment ("Small Hotel"), were duplicated for the Duke and Duchess of Kent and other friends in England; even the new king and queen saw them.

We decided we would not cause them any more inconvenience during the wedding, but we went to the city hall in Monts when they got their license to wed. When the duke came out, he waved to us.

Locally the wedding got shabby treatment; the streets weren't decorated, no crowds stopped to pay homage, there were few telegrams and fewer gifts than were received by a local couple who married about the same time. The legal ceremony took place in the long library, decorated then with pink and white peonies. Next door in the drawing room the religious ceremony followed, performed by the English rector, the Reverend Mr. Jardine, who had volunteered. As at other weddings, an organ wheezed away at

"O Perfect Love," the groom pecked shyly at the bride, and her family—Aunt Bessie Merriman—cried. Both principals looked well and serious throughout, and Wally's blue hat was a becoming halo. There were only thirty-four chairs, occupied by nineteen invited guests and fifteen servants. Five representatives of news agencies stood. There was one gate-crasher, a youngster named Gar Vick; bicycling through Europe, he had got past the gates and in on a Rotary Club pin.

For their honeymoon the Windsors went through Switzerland to a castle in Carinthia. Count Paul Munster's ancient gray castle stood on a rock ledge above the lake, surrounded by a forest of dark evergreens. The roadside village was tiny, and the bleak countryside was the home of deer, chamois, black bear, and bird life. The count had set up a film projector for his guests, providing American films that included *Kid Galahad* and *Captains Courageous*. Later the couple went on to stay in Austria with one of the Rothschilds; the baron was an Aryan of honor, but I believe Hitler later tried to do away with him anyhow.

Now that I had induced a king to be my guest in the trailer, I managed a more difficult guest—my mother. I drove into Newport just before one of the cup races, and took Mother for a drive around the grounds. She liked moving better than standing still; she worried over the vibration when we stopped. At her suggestion, we drove out toward Vacluse, the scene of our picnics in my childhood, and then she wanted to show off to our friends, Admiral and Mrs. Kalbfus, at the Naval War College. There, at first, they refused to admit the trailer, but Mother, nothing daunted, got out, asked for the admiral, and got us admitted. We drove right up to the house (Ned and Syria Kalbfus were among Mother's best friends) and had tea. General Somerville was there too, and I think they all thought I was trying to sell trailers.

My most severe critic in the trailer business was Will Rogers, my old neighbor from the early days in California, and my mother's favorite candidate for President of the United States. She couldn't elect him, but she did what she could—got him started writing daily political pieces in the *New York Times*.

With another friend, Frank Markey (no relation to Gene; Frank handles newspaper columns), I drove up to the Rogers ranch near Santa Monica one warm summer day in the thirties, because Frank had never met Rogers and wanted to. Charles Driscoll, who

was sharing an apartment with me in Hollywood, was along too, and we both assured Frank that Will wouldn't mind our barging in unannounced.

He didn't, of course. His daughter Mary Rogers, a little girl in those days, came out to meet us when we got to the beautiful ranch house on the hilltop, because her father was inside talking to some other old friends. These turned out to be the aviator, Wiley Post, and the sheriff of Los Angeles County, Eugene Biscaluz. They were in the trophy room, a sort of outsize study where Will kept fancy saddles from all over the world, and bridles and spurs and silver stirrups and gear from every state in the union, and from Mexico and Argentina, and even some Cossack specimens from Russia.

We were asked to lunch—or dinner as the Rogers family called it because they liked to keep to Oklahoma ways—and since it was Sunday they had dinner early. Of course they did it so the cook and the other servants could go home early, but Will liked to tease Mary and say he had to watch out or she'd make them go social and eat late at night, now she'd been going to a finishing school in the East.

At dinner Will started telling us his plans to go around the world with Wiley Post. They were going to start in Alaska, and go from there to Siberia and across into Russia, or maybe down over Manchuria into China, and so on around the world. Will thought the *New York Times* would assign him to Ethiopia, where Mussolini was about ready to start shooting.

And then he said to me, "Neil, you know I'll come down through the clouds up over Ethiopia, and I'll look down and see you creeping across the desert in your little caterpillar house"—meaning my beautiful Stardust trailer, which he liked to insult that way. "But you know, something's going to happen to you one of these days, drivin' in those fast cars all over the world, and pullin' a trailer all over the place the way you do."

There was some justification for his scolding. I'd found that if I mentioned in my column making as much as sixty or seventy miles an hour with the trailer, state police were sure to write in and tell me you weren't allowed to pull trailers on the highways at more than fifty or fifty-five. In those days I wasn't afraid of what was considered high speed; I made eighty or eighty-five miles an hour cross-country in Cadillac or Packard cars, and one year I'd won an amateur cup—fastest driver coast-to-coast—put up by

the racing drivers. Some people thought this an achievement; others, like Will, thought I was moving too fast.

"I'll see you down there," he went on with his warning, "and I'll come spiraling down through the clouds. You'll have it on me because you'll have a place to stay and I won't—if by that time there's no American Embassy in Addis Ababa. But Neil, you know, a day will come when I'll turn up some place and they'll say to me, 'There lies Neil Vanderbilt. You know he loved speed, he loved life—hell, he raced through life.' But they'll say, 'There lies Neil Vanderbilt—' "

And I broke in and said I wanted on my tombstone the word *Reporter*; just that and nothing else.

"But you'll have a fancy headstone," Will assured me. "They'll use the driving wheel of your car, or maybe they'll carve a headstone like the steering wheel—"

I broke in again and told him it would be just the other way. "Someday I'll arrive somewhere and find your tombstone, and what'll you have? A broken propeller."

Next morning at four o'clock we went out to see Will Rogers off from a field near where the Lockheed Terminal is today, and then we all went home. I think it was something like twenty-four or thirty-six hours later that I picked up the paper and saw the headlines: "Will Rogers Killed in Airplane Crash in Alaska."

A week or so afterward, Charlie Driscoll and Frank Markey and I were at the Little Chapel of the Heather in Forest Lawn, where Los Angeles buries the actors. We were there with Mrs. Rogers and Mary and the boys, and I was bawling like a child, and so was Charlie and so was Frank. They built a mausoleum for Will and they didn't put a propeller on top, but I've never forgotten what we said.

I'm still driving, but not so fast. I still want *Reporter* for an epitaph, but not right away.

No Quarantine

CHAPTER XVIII

“THE NAZIS ARE COMING”

IN THE YEARS before World War II began, years of tension for those who watched the signs of the times, I made many trips abroad for *Liberty* and for FDR—as many as eight to Europe in one summer. And there was a trip to Australia, which even now I don't feel free to talk about, and other trips south and east. When I talked over those days with Upton Sinclair not long ago, Uppie reminded me of the time I came home from a trip and was off again within twenty-four hours, without even time to go home overnight. This was the sort of thing he liked to use in his novels, and I did furnish information for some of his Lanny Budd books. But right here let me say that although some of the things that happened to the legendary Lanny happened to me, the books were fiction except for the current history they contained, and in real life I wasn't Lanny. In fact, just to put me in the clear, in one of the later books Uppie introduced a minor character called Jim Stoltzman whose history did parallel mine much more accurately.

As the decade of the thirties drew to a close and World War II became inevitable, tensions increased and the information required for Roosevelt's foreign policy became even more essential. There were complaints at the time that he was his own secretary of state, and of course this was true. For one thing, Mr. Hull was often ill. But who, other than Roosevelt, was such a real expert in foreign affairs? Who, before or since, has had his grasp, his fearlessness, his good will, combined with superb common—or uncommon—sense, his *savoir-faire*, or even his linguistic talents? Between them, Secretary Hull and Undersecretary Sumner Welles

BEAULIEU
BELLEVUE AVENUE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 9, 1940

Sept 10

My dear Mr President:-

I neglected the other day to tell you how I felt about our foreign representatives, as I have often done in the past.

First I think Bill Bullitt is doing a great job -- he is by far the most representative diplomat we have in Europe today. Bill Phillips is doing a good job too, though not as good as Bullitt. Tony Biddle is splendid. I wish they were in London - representative name but American enough not to be too pro-British.

I can't say so much for Joe Kennedy. In fact have been very disappointed in him. And his handling of Americans at the time of the crisis was disgraceful.

We have an excellent man in our Consul at Danzig - Kuykendall; and a good man called Perkins in Copenhagen. I thought both the Reids very representative - in Budapest and in Athens.

I do hope if Kennedy resigns you won't send the Myron Taylors. Often in the past I have heard Mr Taylor say as nasty things about you and your government as Jimmy Gerard.

MEMORANDUM FOR

GENERAL WATSON

I shall be glad to see

Neil Vanderbilt when he comes to Washington. When he is here we can send him to the State Department.

F. D. R.

Done

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humored Congress, engineered the Good Neighbor policy and coped with State Department affairs as they were known to be and always had been. The country understood the Good Neighbor policy and was behind it as it had never understood or been behind the Monroe Doctrine, and all this was fine.

But less popular, and not at all understood, were Roosevelt's efforts to see into the future and act on weather warnings, so to speak, in foreign policy. In a way this was a new departure for our diplomacy, which until Wilson's day had ignored the other hemisphere. The defeat of Wilson's efforts to make us admit we were a world power made it necessary to move with caution; Roosevelt's conversations with Colonel House, as I have said, were intended to avoid the errors of technique that wrecked the Wilson policy in the twenties. In any case, temperamental differences between Wilson and Roosevelt would have insured a different approach. Roosevelt might be his own secretary of state, but in foreign policy as in domestic, he believed in teamwork. His were the big decisions; let others work on details. Where Wilson went, Roosevelt sent. Fact-finding corrected theory; in Berlin, Hitler used an astrologer to guide his famous intuition, but Roosevelt used reporters, including me.

My busiest year must have been '39, on the very eve of war. It began tamely enough with the visit of their Britannic majesties, George VI and Elizabeth, to Canada. This, I believe, was the first time that a reigning British monarch visited the North American continent, and it was quite an occasion. Assigned by *Liberty* to cover the royal tour, I found that several hundred American, British, Canadian, and other correspondents had the same assignment.

The Canadian-Pacific liner *Empress of Australia*, with the royal passengers, was delayed by heavy fog in the St. Lawrence River. A group of us chartered a tug for press use and went down the river to where the *Empress* was lying at anchor. We talked through megaphones with her captain, but were not permitted to board the vessel because of the very stringent regulations of the Canadian immigration and customs authorities.

Finally the royal personages arrived, and of course the entire town went mad. Thousands of people lined the banks of the St. Lawrence, the Plains of Abraham, and the walls of the old city. We had all been given particular posts at which to watch the arrival, and my post was inside the Houses of Parliament in

Quebec. *Liberty* had an interest in one of the news-features syndicates, and I was to do a piece of five to six hundred words a day. My job was to write up what is known as a "color picture."

I was immediately struck by the fact that the wife of the British king and the wife of the prime minister of Quebec wore exactly the same hat. As I recall it, it was a little gay-looking number, for the British at least, dark blue or black, with a sprinkling of tiny white flowers up in the front. Just after I had made my notes, I saw that there was another lady in the house wearing the same hat too. She was the wife of some important Canadian and she was sitting up in the open gallery. I reported the trio of hats and the editor of the news syndicate wired congratulations on my eye for millinery.

The tour across Canada got under way a few days later. I shared a bedroom in the pilot train, which ran immediately ahead of the royal train, with Bob Trout of CBS, a mighty fine gentleman and a wonderful correspondent. We called our train the suicide train because if anyone had planned to blow up a bridge or sabotage the line in any way, we would be the first ones to get it.

Pretty soon we discovered that this was one of the most uninteresting jobs any of us had ever had to cover. Armed with maps of the cities on the itinerary, and with the handouts from the press department of the Canadian government, a correspondent could write his stories just as well lying in his bunk aboard the pilot train as he could following the royal visitors in the great parades and at the receptions. After a while, some of the more proficient correspondents, men who had been traveling with royalty and presidents and premiers for many years, got out a mimeographed "trot" (a sort of slang word for a crib). On this prepared form, other correspondents could just fill in the names of streets and a paragraph or two—oftentimes, incidentally, made up completely out of thin air—as to what took place that day in that particular city. For example, "Their Royal Highnesses rose at ——— time, breakfasted in the private car of the royal train at ——— time with ———. Half an hour after breakfast were greeted by the mayor of ———, entered various types of vehicles and when the cavalcade reached the city hall, were greeted by a tiny girl named ——— who handed them a little bouquet of ——— flowers. The keys of the city were given to their Britannic Majesties and (the king) (the queen) answered in a very gracious fashion, saying

——. They later visited such and such factories and stopped at the home of Mrs. —— who (because of her advanced age) (because she was the descendant of an early pioneer family) received special recognition."

Many times we just sat around in the lounge or dining car of the pilot train, drinking whiskey and playing poker or rummy, or a great gambling game of those days that was called Red Dog. Some of the correspondents would engage hotel rooms in advance, and upon the arrival of the pilot train we would proceed on the principle of first-come, first-served. The first arrival was entitled to take the first shower and dry himself off with the first towel. Sometimes I would be the fifteenth or twentieth person, and no clean towels left.

We reached Winnipeg one morning toward the end of May. Bob Trout and I shared a taxi to the hotel. He went to the desk to pick up the mail, and I grabbed a key and was already in the shower when he came into our room and shouted, "There's a telegram here for you, marked extra special."

I told him to open and read it to me. It said, "Proceed at once to Danzig," and it was signed Oursler.

Fulton Oursler was in later years to make the best-seller lists by writing a life of Christ. In the years I'm speaking of, he was known to the members of his magazine staff as God. You did what the man said. But I read the wire for myself, perhaps a dozen times, and I think I uttered some oaths.

The Free City of Danzig was at least halfway around the world from Winnipeg. I had been expelled from Germany two years before this by Adolf Hitler himself, and it would be impossible for me to take one of the fast liners across the Atlantic and go through Germany up to Danzig in the northern part of Poland.

But in less than an hour I was on the first plane for Chicago, and in New York the next morning. Two hours later, with scarcely time to say hello to my parents, I was off to Europe on the *SS Washington*. At Le Havre, six days later, I transferred to the *Batory* of the Polish-American line and in three more days we docked at Gdynia, which was then Poland's only outlet to the sea.

I had cabled ahead for a room and bath, but the hotel when I reached it was one of the filthiest flea-bags I had ever seen. I told the taxi driver to take me to the Danzigerhof Hotel in Danzig, probably the longest taxi ride I ever made. It took five or six hours and it was almost dusk when we reached Danzig. But there,

waving outside the hotel, I saw the huge red Nazi flag, so I told the driver to take me on to the American consul general's house.

The consul, whose name was Kuykendall, didn't seem too surprised to see me. He said they'd been expecting me for several days. He told me also that I should not stay at the Danzigerhof because it was now Nazi party headquarters. He advised me to drive on to Sopot, on the Baltic Sea, and keep in touch by telephone, also if possible coming in to Danzig once or twice each week.

At about nine o'clock that night I got to Sopot and changed \$200 in travelers' checks to pay the \$176 taxi bill. When I gave the rest to the driver for a tip he almost knelt in gratitude, saying it was the biggest tip he'd ever had.

On the way from Gdynia to Danzig I had noticed several places where the highway was torn up and soldiers or policemen were making roadblocks. Our taxi would be stopped and they would have a long confab with the driver. Sometimes they would exchange cigarettes or lights. But nothing happened to me and no one asked where I was bound or what I was doing. From my conversation with the driver I made up my mind that either the Polish Army or the Nazis were laying a series of underground wires, possibly telephone wires, at the various places where we were stopped.

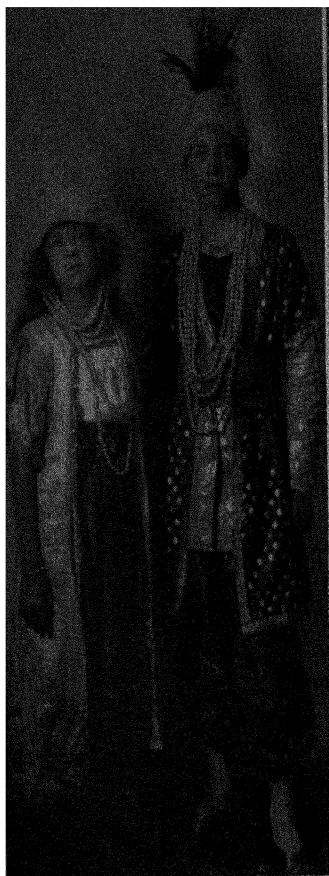
I spent the next several weeks at the Carlton Hotel in Sopot, which was a town of ten or fifteen thousand people. Every day, frequently during the evening, I would phone Mr. Kuykendall, and I went into Danzig at least once or twice a week to see him.

My room at the Carlton faced the Baltic. It was a long, narrow room with two single beds, and I had a large bathroom, and a small veranda or porch facing the sea. My room waiter, like many room waiters in Europe, dressed in tails and wore a stiff shirt. He was a very friendly fellow, and brought me all kinds of reports of the doings of the Nazis in the neighborhood.

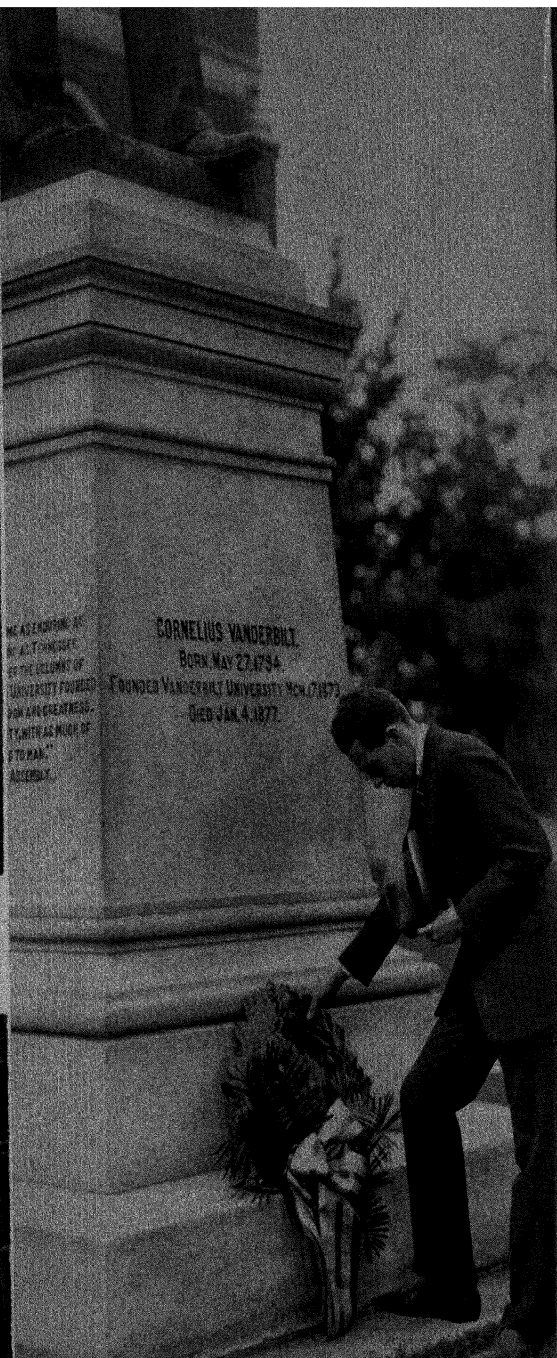
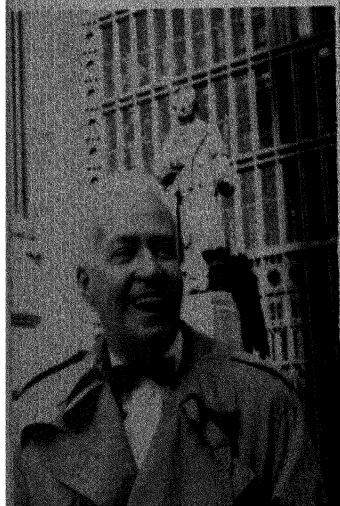
The Carlton was used chiefly by people on honeymoons, real or illicit, who liked to gamble. There were two large casinos in Sopot, one connected with the hotel. Many tourist ships, British particularly and sometimes French, Norwegian, or Swedish, used to come and anchor right across from the hotel and send great boatloads of tourists ashore. They would come into the hotel gambling rooms in the evenings and spend many dreary hours



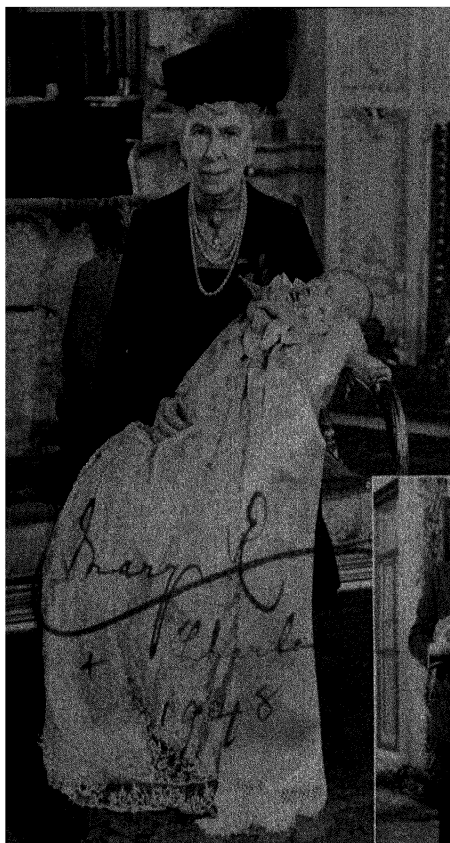
MRS. VANDERBILT WITH AUTHOR, LEFT, AND SMALL SISTER GRACE.



FANCY DRESS: Neil and Grace as unhappy teenage participants in a Persian costume ball at Beaulieu.



ANCESTORS: Young author lays wreath at Commodore's statue, Vanderbilt University, Nashville (photo by Wiles). Left, in front of his great-grandfather's statue, at the New York Central building in New York (photo by Lionel Wilson).

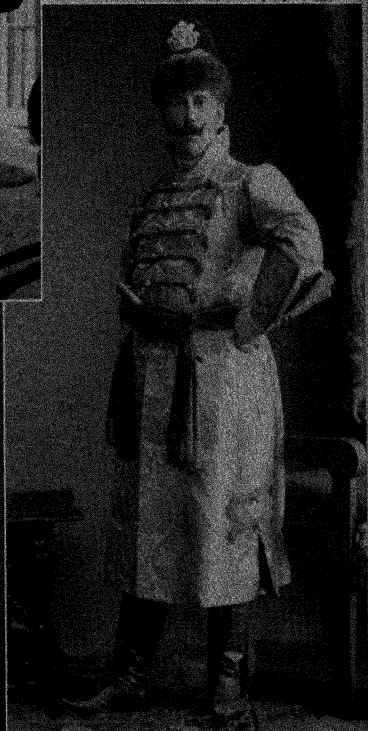


SOUVENIRS from Mrs. Vanderbilt's collection. Above, Queen Mary holding the heir apparent, Prince Charles.

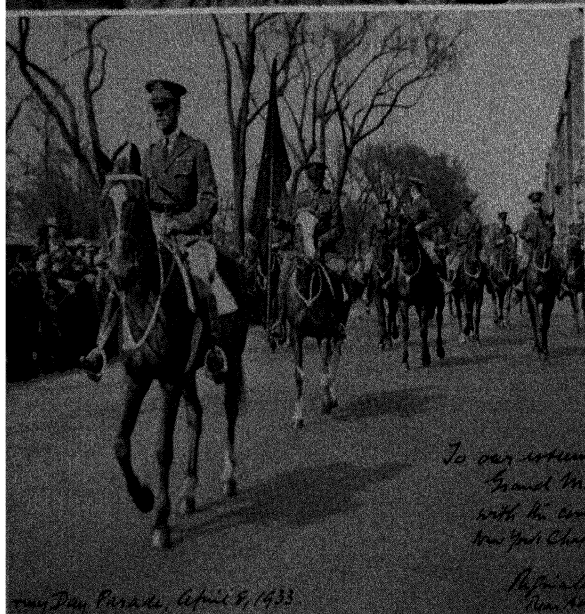
At upper right, the Kaiser. Below, at the right, a grand duke of Russia, Vladimir Orloff.

Adjoining, a king of Siam sent his signed picture to his hostess.

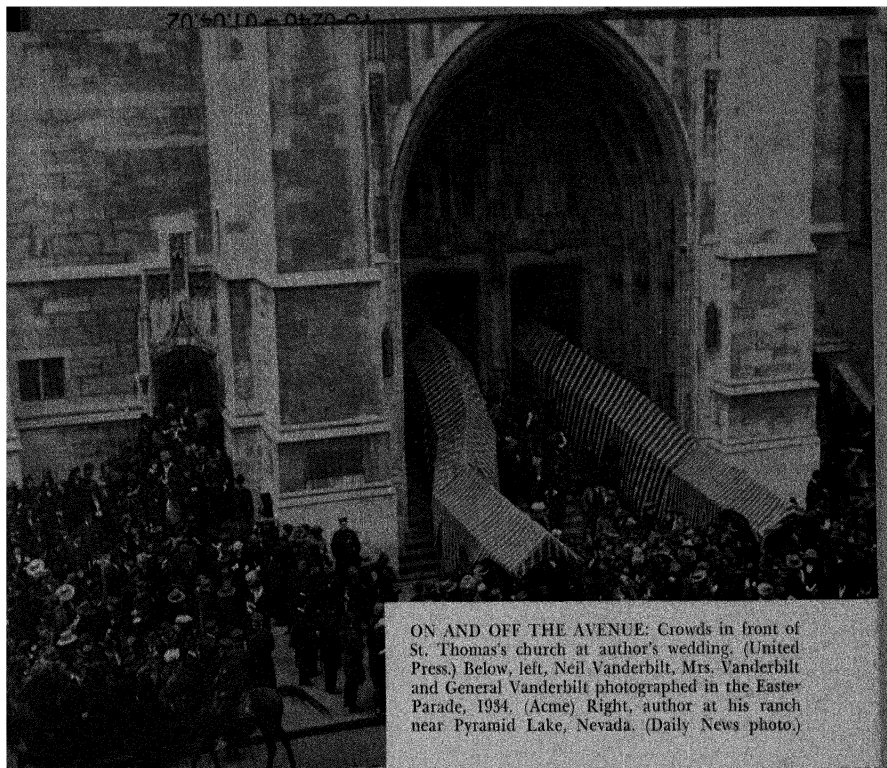
Center, the king of Greece. He is holding Mrs. Vanderbilt's beloved little dog, Dwick.



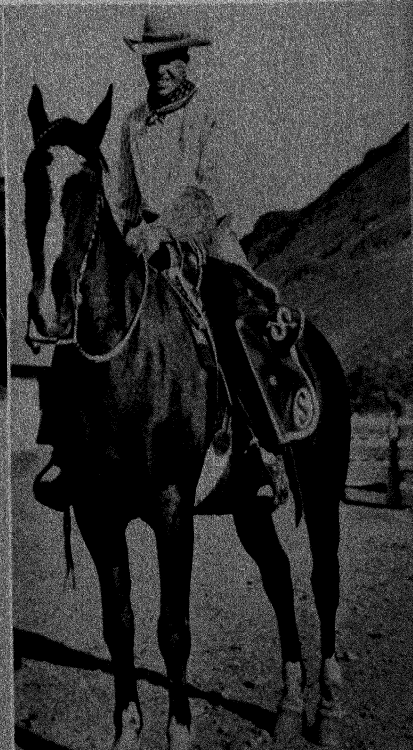
Dr. Vladimir Orloff
S. S. S. S. S.



FROM WAR TO WAR: Author as chauffeur (note goggles on hat) in World War I. (United Press photo). Just above, General Vanderbilt leading a parade down Fifth Avenue (Daily News photo). Right, the author during World War II, leaving his father's funeral (Acme).



ON AND OFF THE AVENUE: Crowds in front of St. Thomas's church at author's wedding. (United Press.) Below, left, Neil Vanderbilt, Mrs. Vanderbilt and General Vanderbilt photographed in the Easter Parade, 1934. (Acme) Right, author at his ranch near Pyramid Lake, Nevada. (Daily News photo.)





THE PLEASURES OF PUBLISHING

Author aboard the *Leviathan* on the trip that won the Overseas Press club prize for interviews. (Photo by New York *Daily News*.)

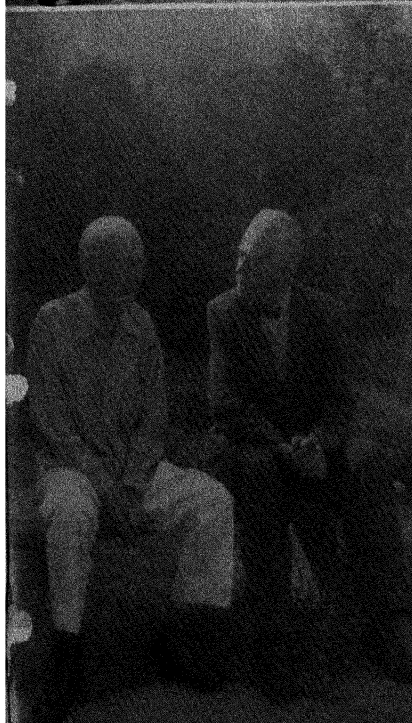
Below, the Cairo stop, complete with camels and pyramid and Arab guide, on a world tour.

At bottom of page, as a judge in a beauty contest, with the novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald. (Photo by International News.)





POLITICS: At left, with Candidate James M. Cox who lost to Harding in 1920. (Wide World.) Above, in a happier year, with National committeewoman Mrs. Anna C. Stubie of South Dakota. (Wide World.) Below, with Count di Zoppola and Mrs. Forbes Morgan, at Democratic National Headquarters in 1936. (Acme photo)



FACT AND FICTION: "No comment" as a P.A. leaves after a White House report (Wide World). At left, Mr. Vanderbilt with his friend Upton Sinclair, who wrote the novel *Presidential Agent*.

At right, the author's FBI medal, seldom awarded and described by FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover as "our distinguished service cross."



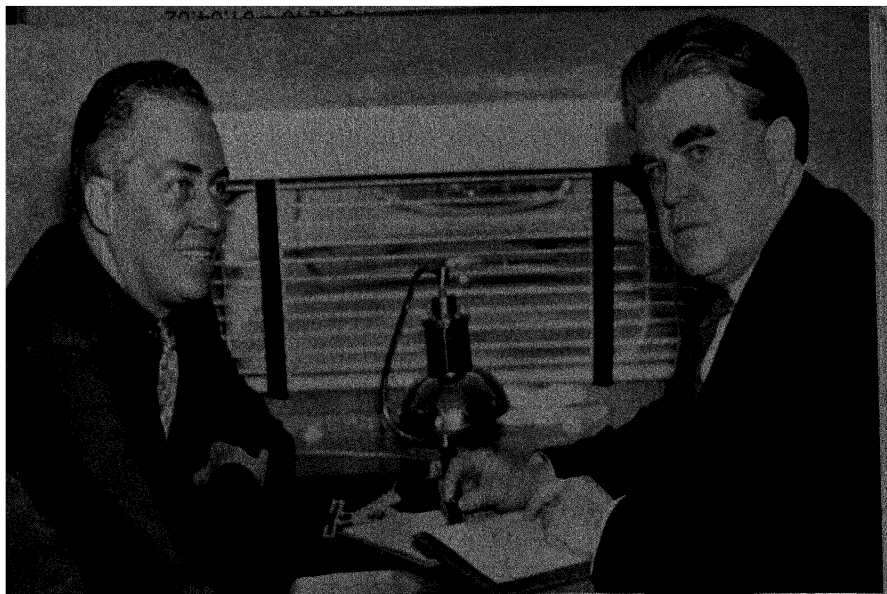
FOREIGN NEWS: Above, the much-traveled "Chinese Pussie" car. (International News photo.)

Below, author with Bernarr Macfadden and Fulton Oursler, *Liberty* editor, at Miami Beach. (Acme.)

At right, with President Avila Camacho of Mexico.

Bottom of page, the trailer *Stardust* in France (note gendarme) for the Windsor wedding. (Wide World)





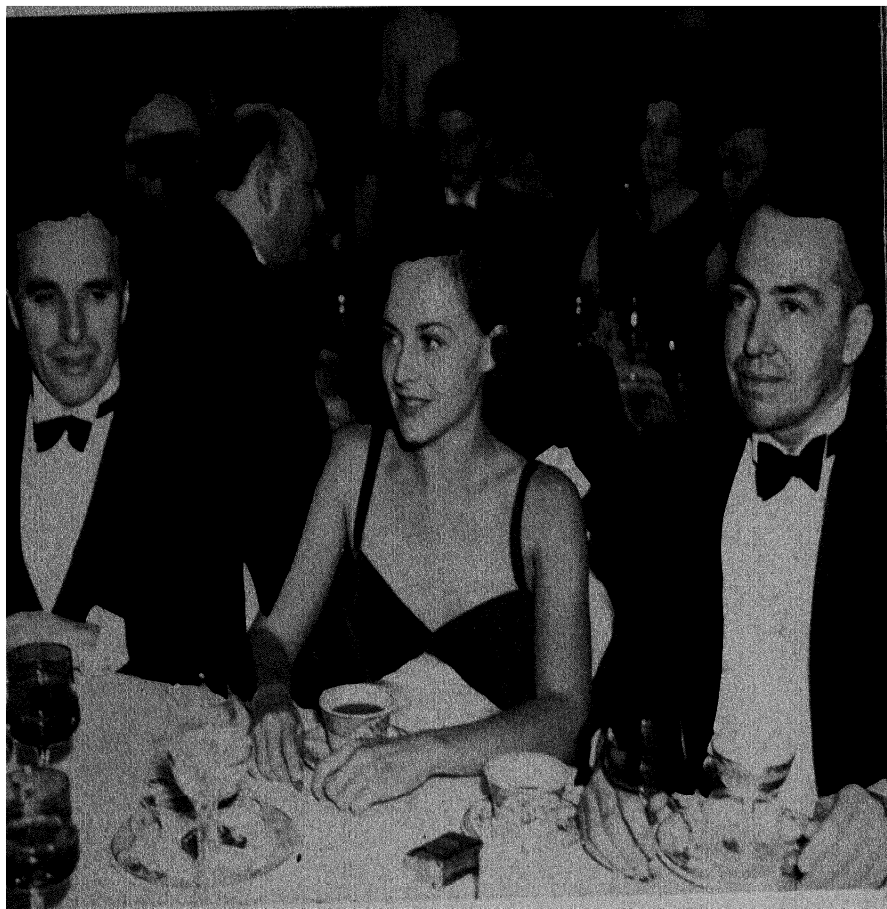
**"YOU DO MEET
SUCH
INTERESTING
PEOPLE"**

Top of page, an interview with John L. Lewis. (United Press)

Above, a ball at 640 Fifth Avenue for the benefit of USO. Mrs. Vanderbilt and Major Vanderbilt are in the receiving line. (Acme)

At left, in state robes, Lord Louis Mountbatten—"Dickie" who had no date in New York.

Right, Mr. Vanderbilt at the Ritz, for the debut of Miss Brenda Frazier. (Acme photo)



CHARLIE CHAPLIN, PAULETTE GODDARD, CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, JR.
United Press International

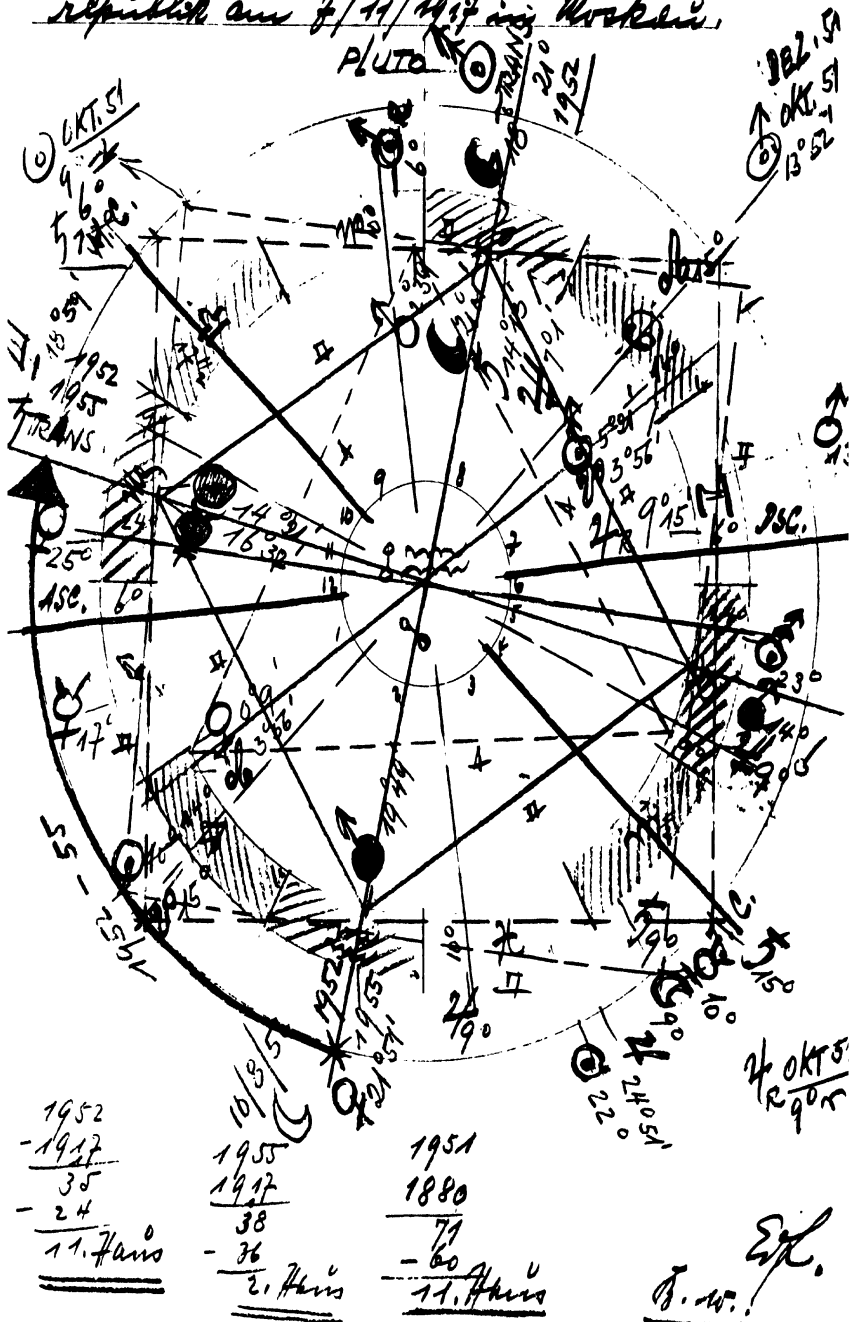
On facing page, Radix Horoscope of the foundation of the Soviet Republic in Moscow, on November 7, 1917—obtained by the author from Hitler's astrologer in Berlin.

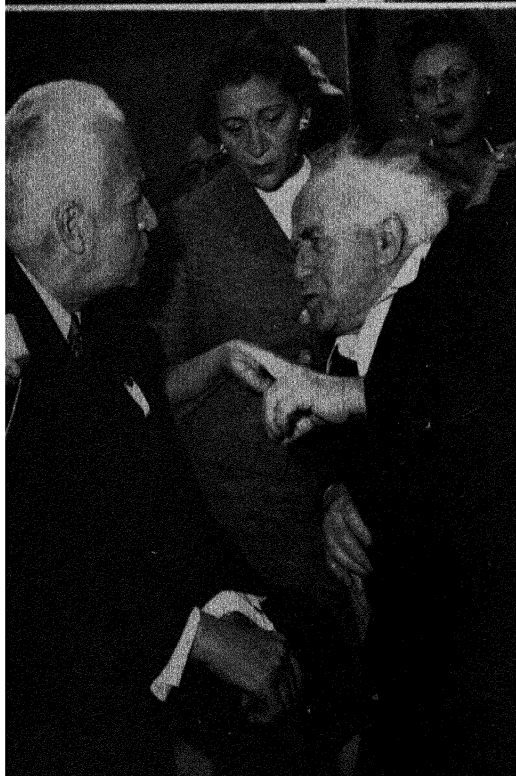
1. Inner Circle—Horoscope of the Soviet Union.
2. Stellar Constellation of Stalin for birth date of January 1, 1880.
3. Margin notes for Stalin's progression transits in his 72nd year.

"If it is impossible to settle political differences on a legal basis, the greatest war of all times will begin. Cities and whole countries will be devastated and erased from the surface of the earth. The earth itself will become a giant graveyard. He who is not killed will starve or perish by epidemics.

"Looking at the Zodiac signs, the radical locations and transitory movements indicate a critical period for 1952-1955. Let us hope that the experienced and responsible will be able to recognize and avoid the danger."

P/UTO





ATOMIC AGE: Laying the cornerstone of the office building now at 640 Fifth Avenue. The author, Jim Farley and Frederic H. Ecker of the Metropolitan Life Insurance company look on as Dr. J. R. Dunning displays tiny nuclear gadget. (United Press)

Just above, author filming Austria for his lecture on "Europe Today."

Left, author's interview with David Ben-Gurion. (Israel government)

*To Cornelius Vanderbilt Jr.
with kind regards
and best wishes
from Jim Farley*

there. I seldom saw any of them come out with anything like the smiles and the cheerful faces they had when they went in.

The Danzig Free State lay between East Prussia and the famous Polish Corridor. There would be, I would say, an average of one Nazi flag to every ten or fifteen houses. Then one day I saw things that made me quite suspicious. All sorts of red and white bunting went on sale in department stores and in stores that correspond to our five-and-ten. And I saw huge Maypoles going up along the streets, and very efficient-looking men with ladders mounting swastikas on the tops of the poles and wrapping red and black bunting around the sides. I always ate my breakfast in my room, and the following morning I asked the room waiter what was going on. He said a visit by some important Nazi official was expected soon.

I didn't like to communicate this news to Mr. Kuykendall by phone, so the next morning I ordered a taxicab and drove the fifteen or twenty miles into town, to the Consulate. Here I found a letter from the White House, enclosed in another letter which looked just as if some friend had written me in longhand. I didn't know if Mr. Kuykendall knew that I was working for the White House, although he certainly did know that I was writing stories for *Liberty*.

As soon as I had read the letter I destroyed it in the nearest toilet. This letter was of supreme importance to me; it advised me in no uncertain terms that trouble was expected with Germany soon. I was told to keep myself in perpetual readiness for orders to move at the slightest notice, and to keep in touch with the American Consulate at least twice or sometimes thrice daily; also that other messages would be sent to me soon that might be of great importance to me.

A few days after this, as I recall, I received another letter, mostly in what we knew then as the "liquor code." In other words, the letter would talk chiefly about liqueurs and liquors which the sender wanted me to bring back to the States.

When I received this letter, I rearranged my clothes in the various drawers in my bedroom, and went down to the village and picked up batteries for my short-wave radio set. I had been given a Zenith by the maker, shortly before the royal visit. (Incidentally, I still have that set, for it is engraved: "Made expressly for and stolen from Neil Vanderbilt." On my way back to the hotel with the batteries, I bought all the latest papers and, as was my custom,

took them to the hotel concierge and asked him to read them to me, at least the headlines.

One of the papers, tabloid in form, had photographs of three naval vessels on the front page. After the concierge had read me the headlines, I asked him what the pictures of the ships meant. He said, "You wouldn't be interested—it's just the movements of ships."

"Yes, I am interested," I argued, "so please tell me what it says."

The first picture, as I remember, showed an armored cruiser. The caption read: "The government of the city of Danzig in the Free State has given the Third Reich permission to bring the training vessel *Schleswig-Holstein* into the port of Danzig on August 24."

The second read: "The government of Norway has given permission to the Third Reich to carry on maneuvers with submarines off the western coast of the fiords of Norway during the last week of August, 1939."

The third read: "The government of Poland has given permission to the Third Reich to allow the pocket battleship *Graf Spee* to enter the port of Gdynia on August 23 in order to refuel."

I said to the concierge, "Please read that over."

He stared up at me. "You must be crazy. There's nothing of any importance here."

I said, "Thank you very much, but it is important to me."

Instead of going up to my bedroom to take an afternoon rest, I went up and left the batteries for my radio, then came downstairs, ordered a taxicab, and drove immediately to see Mr. Kuykendall in Danzig. I showed him the newspaper and asked if he had read it. He told me it had been translated for him earlier in the day, and he had sent a transcript immediately back to the State Department in Washington, via our Embassy in Warsaw.

"Who the dickens is our ambassador in Poland now?" I asked him casually.

"Why," he replied with a laugh, "it's your old friend Tony Biddle."

"I can't believe it! How long has he been there?"

"Well," said Mr. Kuykendall, "I don't know exactly, but he's been there certainly a couple of years, and it looks as though he'll be there forever, because he can certainly charm the birds off the trees."

Back in Sopot next morning, as was my custom at 7:00 A.M., I

went out to my little porch facing the Baltic Sea, with my trusty radio in my hand, lifted the suitcase-like affair up onto the railing, and tuned in on the Eiffel Tower in Paris. I was able to get better news from there than from the BBC in London, which always gave a British coloration to its news anyway. I was wearing pajamas, dressing gown, and slippers, and when I looked up, I saw on the porch adjoining mine a gentleman dressed likewise, listening to my radio. He nodded in friendly fashion, and then asked me in excellent German what the radio was saying. I answered in my very poor German that it would be difficult for me to repeat.

Then he said, "Where are the wires of this attachment?"

I told him it was a battery set.

"Where did you purchase it?" he asked.

When I explained, he said in a sort of a sarcastic manner, "Well, so the Americans are so modern that they have things as good as we have in Germany."

"Yes," I replied, "the Americans are that modern."

"What is it saying?" he asked again. "Do you speak French?"

Finally I repeated some of the broadcast from the Eiffel Tower, and to it I added some of my own interpretation. The broadcast was telling about the movement of ships, similar to the story the concierge had translated for me the night before. I repeated this to him, and then I added, "The government of Poland and the USSR have given permission to the British government to carry on maneuvers with British battleships in the Baltic Sea during the period of the last few weeks in August."

Then the gentleman on the porch next door stamped his right foot several times and said in a rather annoyed fashion, "I do not believe it. I do not believe it."

I picked up my radio, bowed, and returned to my room. I think I mentioned that mine was a long, narrow room. There were two single beds on the left side, several chairs, a sofa, chiffonier, chest of drawers, and other furniture, and in the center of the room was a dining table. I ate in the room frequently because the people who came to the Carlton at night to gamble usually wore evening clothes, and one had to wear at least a black tie and dinner jacket in the elaborate dining room on the first floor.

Now the morning waiter brought in my breakfast and I asked him about the gentleman next door.

"Sir, I don't know what his name is," the waiter answered, "but

he is a high-ranking Nazi officer." He then went on to say that several important Nazis had moved into the hotel the night before, and that he understood they were getting ready for a visit from either Hitler or someone high in the Nazi command. He thought it might even be Goering, because so many young ballerinas were checking into the hotel too. The waiter said he had always heard that Goering had an especial liking for ballerinas, who in a manner corresponded to our movie starlets in Hollywood. The German high command was supposed never to move anywhere without its corps of ballerinas.

Although newspaper writers in the United States and elsewhere were characterizing the German high command as a bunch of queers, their reputation in Germany was just the opposite. In fact, it was said among the more religious people that the high command was made up chiefly of rapists and oversexed maniacs. But these are the kinds of rumors that spread every time some prominent person becomes even more prominent.

After breakfast I got dressed and went back into Danzig. I spent a part of the morning with Mr. Kuykendall, and lunched with him at the Consulate. He invited me to dine the following evening with him and his wife, the British consul general and his wife, and several other people, and I of course accepted. He told me at this time that he thought my own days in Sopot were numbered, that I was now under observation, that they probably read all my mail and perhaps had photographed most of it, and that if I had any private information in my papers, I should have burned them already. And if I hadn't, I should do so when I returned and put the remains in the nearest toilet.

On the way back to Sopot that afternoon, all along the main highway I saw hundreds, possibly thousands, of those huge poles being most efficiently decorated by hook-and-ladder squads, with the same golden eagles on top and the intertwined black and red banners down the side. Even the taxi-driver, who didn't know who I was, began singing to the tune of "The Campbells Are Coming": "The Nazis are coming to town today, the Nazis are coming to town."

When I returned to the Sopot hotel and tried to unlock my room door, the key went round and round. I thought I had the wrong room, so I glanced quickly at the number. The number was right. I turned the key again, and again the key went round

in the lock. I remembered distinctly locking the door when I left in the morning, and the thought went through my mind very fast, "That blankety-blank maid probably forgot to lock the room after she made my bed." Then I turned the handle and entered the room.

As I said before, the Baltic Sea was immediately ahead of me when I went through this door and looked down the long room and out beyond the porch. Now I saw, between myself and the porch, the gentleman from the room next door, sitting at my table and playing my radio. I came in in a hurry, stopped short, and demanded in no uncertain terms: "I beg your pardon, but what the hell are you doing in my bedroom?"

The gentleman looked up and said merely, "Is this your bedroom, Mr. Wanderbilt?"

"Well," I said, "it's as much my bedroom as anybody else's—I've been in it at least a month. Besides, this is a free country, isn't it?"

He turned the dial so that the radio report was not so loud. "Is that vat they teach you in America too?" He called it Ameri-cah. He was sort of peering at me.

I said, "Why, of course. Everyone in the States knows that the Danzig Free State is a free state."

"Ah"—his tone was sneering—"that is wery interesting information, Mr. Wanderbilt."

Angered, I asked again what the hell he was doing in the room, and went up as if to shove him off the chair. He rose and stood very straight. Looking me right between the eyes, he announced, "Zis country is as much my country as it is the country of the people of Danzig."

I said, "I don't want to have an argument here, but what would you do if I were in your bedroom doing the same thing?"

"Zat vould be a different matter," he said flatly. "If you vas in my bedroom, matters would be different." And he turned on his heel and walked toward the door.

"Might I know, please, who you happen to be and why you are trespassing in my room?"

Again he looked straight at me. "Mr. Wanderbilt, my name is Herr Himmler. I am chief of the secret police in the Third Reich. I have a right to be anywhere because I am an official of my government."

I had to bite my tongue to keep from saying that I was an

official of my government too, but I did not trespass on other people's property in places where I was not supposed to be. But this was the chief of the Gestapo, said by many to be the cruelest, most sadistic man in Europe, and I was actually more frightened than I appeared to be. I felt certain now that my phone was tapped. If I called the American Consulate in Danzig this late at night, I would definitely tip my hand. Instead, I undressed as I had done every night, climbed into bed, put my radio beside me on the table by the bed, and drew out my gas gun—a sort of pen-like device in which there was a cylinder of gas. I had a permit to carry this in the States since it might be considered a concealed weapon. I felt that if anybody was going to do anything obstreperous during the night, at least the breaking of the cartridge in the gun and turning the radio up to the high point would help. Then I took the first sleeping pill I had taken since arriving in Europe.

I awakened next morning with the sun streaming into my bedroom. When I went out to my porch as usual with my little radio, I saw that Herr Himmler was outside ahead of me. He nodded and I nodded, and again I tuned in on the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

I wasn't sure if he understood French or not. As before, he asked me to translate, and I did. Again there was information about the movements of battleships, again I said that the radio reported the British fleet was steaming into the Baltic Sea for exercises now, and had received permission to be there the last week in August for exercises then.

Himmler remarked, "This is an incorrect statement. The British do not wish to fight. They are afraid to fight. There will never be war between Germany and England."

When I asked him who said anything about war, he turned on his heel and went back into his room.

I asked the room waiter who were the other important Germans in the hotel. He said, "The German minister of information is expected this afternoon, and he will occupy the suite down at the end of the hall to the right of your bedroom. In the next room to you is Herr Himmler, and I understand"—he put his finger confidentially to his lips—"that the Almighty One himself is coming, but he is coming by steamer and will land at the dock in front of your bedroom window."

"When will this great occurrence take place?" I asked.

"I don't know, sir, but certainly sometime today or tomorrow."

I had long since destroyed or burned all papers of any impor-

tance. Now I decided to try another tack. I put in a long-distance call for the American ambassador in Warsaw. When Tony Biddle came on the line, I told him who I was and where I had been staying, and I said, "Tony, I'm thinking of making a trip to Warsaw in the next day or so. I wonder if you'll be there—I'd like very much to see you."

Fortunately for me, Tony and I had been friends since way back in 1910, when we were together in St. Paul's School. We had both been married several times, and I suppose there is a bond among men of many marriages. But there was an even greater bond between us, because Tony among all my friends, with the exception of two Newporters, Dudley Pierrepont Gilbert and LeRoy King, was the only Democrat I happened to know who came from my same walk of life. Perhaps I should also add to this another Democrat, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Tony was always most effusive in his conversation as well as in his correspondence. So now he answered with many adjectives, and a great deal of excitement and fun in his voice, "I wish you could come over tonight."

"I might," I said. "I don't know yet."

Next I took a cab in to see Kuykendall. When I explained all that had happened since the night before, he told me to go right back to the hotel and make no move until about six that evening. Then I was to phone him, and over the phone he would read an imaginary telegram, supposedly just received from Fulton Oursler in Falmouth. It would say that I was to go on to Warsaw and then to Moscow to interview Mr. Stalin. Mr. Kuykendall also said that as soon as I received this word from him, he wanted me to return to the Consulate with my bags packed.

Without more ado, I went out and grabbed another taxi back to the Carlton. I had my lunch on the terrace instead of in my room, and afterward walked down to the town and stopped at a travel bureau, a local Polish travel bureau. I asked what was sailing for the States during the last ten days in August, and requested them to try to get me a single cabin with shower and toilet aboard the SS *Washington*, sailing from Le Havre. I told them I was a guest at the Carlton Hotel, and if by chance I should go away, they should inform the American consul in Danzig of whatever accommodations they had been able to secure for me.

The travel agent was very courteous. When he asked whether I wanted him to phone Paris or London, because at this season the

boats might be very crowded, I said, "That is unnecessary. I'm in no hurry to return home. I just want to be certain I have some sort of passage on some kind of boat, and if I don't make the boat, I can negotiate another passage for something earlier or later."

I did this for two reasons: first, because of the movement of ships which the concierge had read to me, and second, because I knew that this information would reach the concierge after I had left, and that if there were any need, it would get back immediately to the German high command and they would know where I was going and when. I thought this might put them off my trail.

At about four-thirty, I phoned the consul general in Danzig. Mr. Kuykendall came on the wire and sounded very excited. "Has your boss got in touch with you?" he asked.

"No, Mr. Kuykendall, he hasn't. Who do you mean?"

"Why your boss—Mr. Oursler, isn't it?—who runs *Liberty* magazine."

"No, he hasn't."

"Well, we've received several wires here in the past two or three hours, wanting to know where you are. They want you to go to Moscow right away to do an interview with Mr. Stalin." Then Mr. Kuykendall added, "Something important must be up. Otherwise they would get somebody else to do it—but you know Mr. Stalin so well."

"What do you suggest I do?" I asked.

"Well, Mr. Vanderbilt," he replied, "I'm having a dinner this evening for several of the consuls general from other nations. We'd be most happy if you would join us. I'll have my office arrange to send you up to Warsaw, where you can see your old friend, Mr. Biddle; he's the American ambassador there, you know."

I broke in, "Yes, I know that, Mr. Kuykendall. I talked to him on the telephone this morning. In fact, he wanted me to come to Warsaw as soon as I could. He said the races were on and there would be quite a lot of activity, and I told him I might come any moment."

"How quickly can you pack?"

"I can always pack in an hour. I'll check out of the hotel and be with you as fast as you want me."

"Then I'll expect you here for dinner no later than seven. If you can make it by half-past six, we can have cocktails before dinner."

I called the desk, and explained why I would be obliged to leave immediately. I asked them to make up my bill as quickly as possible, while I was packing. It was about three-quarters of an hour before I called downstairs for the porter to pick my things up and asked them to order a taxi.

So far, so good. I went out to my porch to look a last time at the Baltic. Herr Himmler was sitting on his porch reading a book. I noticed the title was in French, and I remarked, "I see, sir, that you can read French."

"Yes, Mr. Vanderbilt, I can read French, and I can also understand it."

I must have blushed. "Well, Herr Himmler," I said, "I'm sorry to leave you, but I've been ordered to go on to Moscow to try to do an interview with Mr. Stalin."

"Mr. Vanderbilt, if you'll stay over here a day, I think I can arrange for an interview with my chief, Herr Hitler."

"That is very kind of you, Herr Himmler. But the American consul general expects me for dinner, and the American ambassador in Warsaw expects me there for breakfast in the morning, so I shall have to go."

I started to turn, then came back and put my hand out. "I'd like to shake hands with you," I said, "because I'd like to tell my grandchildren that I shook hands with"—I was about to say the butcher of Germany; fortunately I bit my tongue—"with the great Heinrich Himmler."

He just looked at me and glowered.

As I went out my bedroom door, there were four Nazi soldiers. At first I thought they were just chatting, but as I walked to the elevator, dispatch case in hand, I noticed they walked right along beside me. And instead of getting into the elevator, they proceeded down the hall with *me* in between! Then I really was scared.

I had heard so many tales in those days that I didn't know what to think. I was taken down the hall to a sort of sitting room or anteroom. One of the soldiers went to the next door and knocked, and someone answered. In a few moments I was taken into that room, and found myself facing the man who had ex-

pelled me from Germany in '35 or '36, when I made the picture called *Hitler's Reign of Terror*.

The German minister of information, Herr Goebbels, was sitting behind a huge desk. He had a letter opener in his hand and was tapping the side of the desk. I didn't know whether I should stand or sit, but he motioned me to a chair. And then he began a very insulting series of remarks. He said I might think that I was clever in what I was doing, but that the German Gestapo had had my room phone tapped and my mail opened for weeks, and they knew full well that I was a presidential agent and not a newspaperman at all.

I flared up at this. "What do you mean, sir?" I demanded.

"You know perfectly well what I mean. But Mr. Vanderbilt, I'm going to tell you something. If you were not a presidential agent, you would not be alive at this moment. That is all I have to say to you, Mr. Vanderbilt. God speed you on your way, because you will have to have God on your side. You will have no one else until you leave the territory of the Third Reich."

I didn't know if I was going to be shot in the back or stabbed in the chest, but I got up from my chair, walked over to the door and out into the hall, a free man. I took the elevator to the ground floor. People were pouring into the hotel, a great many of them in uniform, the khaki uniform that the Hitler storm troopers used to wear in those days, and some of them in black uniforms with the knee-high black boots, and spurs. There were the Elite Guards and all sorts of other people. There were also many very good-looking younger women, and these I assumed to be the ballerinas my waiter had mentioned.

I paid my bill—in fact, I'd been paying it regularly, and it came to roughly two hundred dollars a week. And I went over to the concierge and paid for stamps and telegrams and various other things, and gave the concierge a liberal tip. I also tipped the bellboys handsomely, and then got into the cab and drove down the avenue which I had traversed so many times the past several weeks.

Every other house was decorated with a Nazi flag, a red flag with the black hooked crosses in a white center. I saw the high poles with the gold eagles on the top, and the crisscross black and red bunting running down the side. I said to the driver in my best German, "It looks as if you people are going to have quite a celebration here."

He shrugged and answered, "Oh, just another one of these blankety-blank Nazi rallies."

He, like many people in the Danzig Free State, and many people in Germany in those days, had very little use for the Nazi party and its members, but were afraid to say so.

CHAPTER XIX

THE LAST TIME I SAW STALIN

AT THE CONSUL'S residence in Danzig, I found the guests already at dinner. The table conversation stopped when I entered, and Mrs. Kuykendall asked, "How did you make it?"

"I made it fine, thank you," I replied, "but now I don't know how I'm going to get out of the country."

After dinner Mr. Kuykendall and the British consul general took me into the library and told me they had decided to make me a special pouch-bearer between the Consulate in Danzig and our Embassy in Warsaw. They had already communicated with Tony Biddle and he knew that I was coming. About eleven o'clock they took me down to the railroad station and put me aboard the train.

Now this was just an ordinary coach train which did not carry sleeping cars. They put me in a compartment with a sign on the window which said "Embassy of USA, Warsaw, Poland." This was written also, I believe, in Polish and German. Then they said good-by and immediately took off. The "diplomatic pouch," I had always thought, was actually a pouch. But there's no such thing. What I carried was several letters in long envelopes with sealing wax on the back.

In those days I used to smoke, so I lit one cigarette after another. I had my radio turned on by the window, and from the Eiffel Tower in Paris I heard that new trouble had broken out in the Danzig Free State—that no trains and automobiles were moving that night, and that there were guards on all the bridges because it was believed the enemy wanted to blow them up to prevent trains from getting out of the country.

Just at that moment the train started crossing a huge river, and my heart was in my mouth until we got off the bridge. But nothing happened that night on the train, though it was rather an eerie ride. Around two or three in the morning I got hungry

and decided to forage around and see if the train carried a food car or possibly a train butcher who might have some sandwiches or chocolate bars. I started up forward and walked through five cars before I came to the baggage car. There was not one single other soul aboard the train. Then I really felt scared; I didn't know what I was up against.

When I got back to my compartment, I walked toward the rear of the train, through four cars. In the very last car one man was sitting in the corner of a compartment, half asleep, and the brakeman was standing there, also half asleep. We were the only people on that train that night.

About four-thirty in the morning, the sole occupant came up to my car, knocked on the door, and asked in German if I had a match. Evidently he hadn't read the sign on my door, for when I handed him a book of matches, he said in surprise, "Oh! America!" He told me he'd once been in the States when he was, I think, a steward on a boat. He didn't say what boat or what year, and I didn't continue the conversation, so he left.

The next morning the train stopped out in the yards of Warsaw and did not enter the great main station. I learned later that day that the station had been damaged by a nitroglycerin bomb set inside, and they were afraid to take the chance of bringing trains into the station. The American Embassy car was waiting for me, and a chauffeur and a footman collected my bags and whisked me off.

In the Embassy I was given a small room on the courtyard with a bathroom. I took a quick shower and then met Tony Biddle for breakfast. After I handed over to him the dispatches or letters that constituted the "pouch," he signed a release which I later put in the mail and sent back to Mr. Kuykendall in Danzig.

Now I was in a rather peculiar position. I don't think Tony Biddle knew that I was working for President Roosevelt. He knew, of course, that I was a newspaperman and was very friendly with Mr. Roosevelt, but not that I was a presidential agent, I'm sure.

He had passage for me in a plane leaving Warsaw around midnight and reaching Moscow at four or five in the morning. Meanwhile he took me to lunch at the Jockey Club, where I met the Polish president and other political and diplomatic figures, the most important being the Polish foreign minister of those days, Colonel Beck. We watched the races for a time and, despite the

danger of an enemy at the gates, the track was thronged with people—among them many Polish generals as well as the beautiful countess who was the wife of Poland's munitions king.

Tony took me to tea—really cocktails—at the home of another high official of the government. After we had tea, his wife and I walked through the grounds of their lovely house and chatted. She tried to find out from me if the United States would come to the aid of Poland in the event of invasion by Germany. When I said I was a newspaperman and didn't know about those things, she laughed a very pretty lilting laugh. "Everyone knows, Mr. Vanderbilt, that every American newspaperman who travels in Europe is a member of your secret service."

I guffawed loudly and answered, "I wish that were true, because it would keep me from getting into so many scrapes."

I had dinner with Tony and his wife and his stepdaughter, and a young Polish prince called, I think, Lubomirski. The stepdaughter and this young man were having quite a romance at the time.

When I reached Moscow the following morning, I went as usual to the National Hotel, which adjoins the American Embassy. The American ambassador was away, but I registered as American newspapermen were supposed to, and asked for an appointment with the Russian chief of state. Then I returned to my hotel to get a little extra sleep.

I had stopped often at the National and had usually been given the same suite. I knew it quite well because it had so many fleas in the red satin furniture. The bathtub was old and rickety, and the hot water evidently didn't work because they brought in hot water for the tub. The huge cans were carried by strange-looking old women who resembled the scrubwomen in the office buildings in New York on a cold winter night.

In those days, when you were received by Stalin or anyone else in the Kremlin, you were obliged to wear tails and white tie and gloves. This I did, but every time I talked to Stalin, I always thought of that first time I had talked to him, when I was barefoot. Of course then I was a reporter for the capitalist press, with a capitalist name, which no doubt had something to do with the informal treatment.

Now, after a light supper at the Embassy, I was driven over to the foreign office at the Kremlin. In the premier's office were an interpreter and two female stenographers, but Mr. Stalin was not

present. I sat down in this long, dark, dank room to wait. There were only a few lights, electric, but the bulbs were evidently of a low wattage. When I'd first been in this room in 1926, I had been dragged in and the light on his desk then was a coal-oil lantern.

This time, when I finally got in to see Uncle Joe, he was in a very elaborate room. An interpreter stood next to him and there was also another man in the room all the time—a secretary who transcribed what we said. When I put my questions through the interpreter I made them strictly journalistic, but they were answered in nonjournalistic style.

Stalin did not rise when I entered; he motioned me to sit down. Then he asked in French, via the interpreter, what I had been doing lately. I told him I had covered some of the royal visit to Canada, and then had been in Danzig, and I remarked that it was generally felt in press circles that Germany was getting ready to go to war again.

He asked when I had last seen Mr. Ruse-felt. I said not since March, though I heard from him quite frequently, and I knew Mr. Roosevelt would like to know whether, if we became involved in war in the Pacific, the USSR would throw its weight in with us to block the Japanese flank. Stalin gave no sign of having heard this question, nor did he say anything in reply.

Next I asked if, in case Hitler tried to grab the Danzig Free State, the Corridor, or Poland, the USSR would remain neutral until we asked them to be otherwise. And what his terms would be for joining us then.

He was very polite, and through the interpreter said it would all depend upon the time and the circumstances. He said he had no argument with Hitler personally, but he did think it a terrible thing for a nation like Germany to be ruled by a little chit of an Austrian corporal; he couldn't understand why the German people followed him. However, he said, the French had done the same thing, in a way, with Napoleon.

Now he asked about FDR's health, and I thought sounded really anxious that the President should keep well. And he asked about the "economic royalists"—were they still causing internal troubles for the Administration? I said they were, but that the masses of people everywhere in the United States were FDR's mainstay and his backbone.

Stalin questioned me in particular about FDR's opinion of a Swedish capitalist, Axel Wenner-gren, but I could only say I had

never heard FDR mention the man. Later, of course, Wenner-gren was in the news when his yacht, the *Southern Cross*, turned up alongside the British liner *Athenia*, the first ship sunk in World War II. At that time Wenner-gren was not permitted to enter the United States, but now he turns up everywhere; in fact, with a group of business friends of the present Administration, he owns one of those islands in the Bahamas near Nassau.

Stalin asked, too, why FDR put such confidence in Loy Henderson and in Robert Murphy, who was just appearing on the international scene. He said neither was interested in FDR's policies but only in their own pocketbooks.

Before leaving, I repeated my question about Soviet neutrality in the event we got into a "squabble" with Hitler. Stalin remained silent for quite a while, picking his teeth with a quill toothpick, but at last in a sort of gruff voice he said, "Mr. Vanderbilt, what do you think that Hitler will do? Will he provoke war now, or wait until he first seizes other parts of the world?"

I said I thought he would keep on seizing territory until someone told him to quit; in other words, that there was no way to prevent a second world war.

By then the interview had lasted probably forty-five minutes, and I felt it was time to go. I thanked him for seeing me again, and so promptly. And I put my hand out across the green baize table top. He shook hands with me, with the flicker of a smile in the corner of his eyes—not a twinkle but an expression very different from the coldness and suspicion I had seen in them at our first meeting. After all, this was our fifteenth.

And he did seem to have a faint smile on his face when he said, "Please tell your chief, Mr. Vanderbilt, how highly I respect him and how much I wish he would trust me." He used the word *trust* as if there should be an underlining.

I thought I would take one last parting shot. "Do you think you and the Germans will ever make up?"

For a moment I thought he was going to fall over backward. Then he seemed to catch himself, and he answered, "I doubt very much if Mr. Hitler has the courage to attack our country. Mr. Hitler, Mr. Vanderbilt, is a bully. He is what you call in slang language a 'fraid cat. He attacks only countries he can lick and demolish. I think Mr. Hitler would prefer making friends with us and keeping friends with us to being engulfed by us." He put

emphasis also on the word *engulfed*. "You see, Mr. Vanderbilt, no country has ever actually won a war with Russia."

"What about Japan?" I said quickly.

Stalin laughed a big guffaw. "Why that was just nothing. Just a sort of a battle in a pepper mill." (I never heard that expression either before or later.)

"Do you mean to tell me," I persisted, "you think that you and Hitler can remain friends if another world war breaks out?"

"Perhaps not friends, but certainly friendly enemies."

And he tried to convince me that we were wrong and England was wrong, in pushing Hitler. This policy, he thought, would only seal the doom of Poland.

Now indeed I wanted to leave and get this news back to FDR. But Stalin asked politely where I was going next.

"Back to Warsaw," I said, "and then down through the Balkans to Greece. After that, I have no idea."

Gruffly he wished me good luck, and I left. That was our last meeting.

When I got back to Warsaw the next morning, in time for breakfast again with my friend Tony, I said to him, "I've got to get something back to Fulton Oursler in a hurry. Is it possible for me to use the diplomatic pouch?"

Tony looked at me benignly, but his answer was, "Neil, you're a swell fellow, but I can't play favorites. If I did, I'd have all the rest of your profession on my back." And he asked why I needed to use the pouch.

I explained I'd like to get word back not only to my editor, but also to the President, that I believed Germany and Russia were about to sign a nonaggression pact.

Tony was thoroughly amused and laughed heartily at me. But thirteen or fourteen years later, while he was showing me through the new NATO headquarters outside Paris, he confessed he had sent a code memo to FDR that night which read: "Vanderbilt just back Moscow interviewed Stalin under impression he and Adolf may make nonaggression pact."

My *Liberty* article, in type before the pact was announced and published shortly after, came close to a forecast of what happened. Upton Sinclair told me that he thought I was the highest-paid correspondent of that era. But in commending me for this article, Mr. Oursler said, "Some people think I pay you entirely too

much, Mr. Vanderbilt, but you're worth every goddam cent of it to me because of your honesty and your sincerity and your interest in your work."

Coming from Fulton Oursler, this meant a great deal.

CHAPTER XX

LE DEUXIÈME BUREAU

FROM WARSAW I hurried down to Budapest, where my aunt, the Countess Széchényi, lived. My mother had told me that if I was ever in Budapest on business or pleasure, I must surely look up my father's younger sister and my five girl cousins. But I suppose that all children, at whatever age, detest following their parents' orders. My aunt, Gladys Vanderbilt Széchényi, spent part of every year in Newport, in my grandmother's house, The Breakers. The rest of the time she was in Budapest at the ancestral home of her husband, Count Laszlo Széchényi, a former Hungarian ambassador to the United States, who lost an eye in a duel before he died.

I reached Budapest by train late one afternoon, and before dinner I walked along the shore of the Danube, past scores of tiny restaurants where little two- and three- and sometimes five-piece orchestras were playing that most delightful, lilty Hungarian-Austrian music. I noted, as so many have, that the blue Danube is not blue but a dirty brown. There were quite a few prostitutes wandering along here, and every time I sat down or went over to listen to an orchestra, a girl would come and link her arm in mine—a girl smelling of cheap perfume and wearing entirely too much rouge. She would lean close and whisper, "Would you like to go with me, dahling?" I didn't see anyone who looked interesting enough to go with at that time of night, even if I had been drinking, which fortunately I had not.

So I returned to the hotel, and because its dining room looked grim and deadly, I said to the concierge, "Isn't there a good restaurant or night club where a man can go by himself and see a show or watch some pretty girls without having them constantly try to join him?"

"Of course, sir," the concierge said. "There's a very good night club called the Arizona."

Imagine—a night club called the Arizona on the edge of the blue-brown Danube.

The concierge also told me I would have to wear evening clothes, preferably white tie and tails. But I just changed into my dinner jacket and hopped into a cab.

The entrance to the Arizona was imposing, and the waiter looked me up and down very critically. Concluding, evidently, that I didn't have enough cash to be worth a ringside table, he put me further back, right behind a pillar. This was annoying; I couldn't see the floor without moving to one side or the other, and such bobbing about disturbed people at other tables.

A number of what we would probably call B-girls kept coming to my table, trying to get me to dance with them or buy them champagne. I have often heard that the stuff the management serves in such cases, if the customer himself does not drink champagne, may be poured out of a champagne bottle but is actually only colored water. One bottle of champagne in a night club in Europe probably costs anywhere from twenty to forty dollars. Yet in the champagne-producing countries like France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and Hungary, you can buy good champagne of the year for not over fifty cents a bottle. So you can see how terrific the mark-up is.

I ordered my dinner, and it was so-so. Then came a pretty good floor show, nothing in comparison to the shows in Reno or Las Vegas or Miami, but nonetheless a passable show. While it was going on, one of these young ladies—I must say she was a very good-looking young lady—asked if I minded if she sat at my table so she could see the show better. I told her to sit down, but refused to buy champagne for her. However, I offered her some wine, or Scotch or gin or vodka. She turned down these drinks, but said she did like a daiquiri. I wondered how she knew about a daiquiri, which is better known on our side of the Atlantic than in Europe, but I ordered the drink for her without comment. After the floor show was over, she asked me if I would like to dance. By now I had had several glasses of my Scotch and water and was beginning to feel no pain. So I got up and danced with her. She was a pretty good dancer.

This restaurant had an amazing floor, with small sections of parquet—three to four feet across—which on signal, as the lights went out, would start turning and rising slowly in the air. Couples standing on the rising islands of parquet would begin to scream

and howl, and while the lights were out the girl would put her arms around her partner and kiss him all over his face and on his white shirt. Then the pirouetting parquets would come back to floor level with a boom, which tumbled their occupants to the floor. The lights would go on and everybody would laugh, and of course you felt like a damn fool.

And when all this happened to me, I found I had fallen at the feet of my aunt Gladys Széchenyi.

She looked me over, rather demurely I must say, and remarked in an amused tone, "Why, Neil Vanderbilt, what are you doing in Budapest? I thought you promised to come and see me when you came here. And where did you get those beautiful bloodstains?"

Fortunately the young lady who had been dancing with me had disappeared, but everybody at my aunt's table began to giggle. With what dignity I could, I explained that I had just arrived and was there to do an interview with the Regent.

"You mean with Admiral Horthy?"

"Yes, Aunt Gladys. I'm going up tomorrow to try to see him."

"Sit right down here beside me, Neil. You don't have to go any further because he's sitting here at my right." And turning, she said, "Admiral, may I present my nephew, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr.?"

And that's how I got my interview with Admiral Horthy. I must say it wasn't much of an interview; although he was a pleasant man, he didn't tell me enough to make more than two sticks of copy.

Afterward I had dinner with Aunt Gladys, and then left by train for Bucharest, where I had a so-so type of interview with King Carol and Madame Lupescu, who was—let's say—his *dame de compagnie*. Some people called her his mistress, and others said he was not capable of any such thing. At any rate, she was quite charming and he was dull and rather silly, and didn't say anything that made copy. Besides, his mustache drooped into his food. Both the king and the lady looked rather worn and old, but she had a disarming manner. The palace was over-done in reddish-brown velvet with thick, dirty-looking Turkish rugs.

The next stop was Greece. In Athens I went to the GB Hotel, the Great Britain, or as they call it now, the "PP"—Petit Palais. The American ambassador was out of town, but the first secretary entertained me at luncheon out at the ambassador's residence in a beautiful section on a hilltop outside of the city.

That afternoon I went in to see the King of Greece at the palace. I had seen him before, and now as then he wasn't worth much copy. I spent the night in Athens, even saw the Acropolis by moonlight. Next morning I found there was an American cargo liner, the *Excalibur*, sailing for Italy.

Of course I had been expelled from Italy by Mussolini about the same time I had been expelled from Germany by Hitler. But, I thought, if I'm on board an American vessel and stay aboard, all will go well. And it did go well. When I reached Marseilles, I telephoned American Express to ask for telegrams and letters, and discovered that my mother was on her way across the Atlantic to England, traveling with Mrs. James Roosevelt, the President's mother. They were on the *Ile de France* and wanted me to meet them in London.

I had been filing dispatches to the White House and to *Liberty*, so now I sent Oursler a message from Marseilles telling him my address would be Claridge's. Mother and Mrs. Roosevelt beat me to London by about six hours.

Mother was in her early seventies and Mrs. Roosevelt, I think, was a little bit older. Mother was pleasantly excited because they were to have tea the following afternoon with her dear friend, Queen Mary. She had carried on a correspondence with Queen Mary for thirty or forty years, perhaps longer. It had even survived Mother's nine-page letter to the Queen telling her that she wasn't fair to the Duke of Windsor! I believe they exchanged recipes too. It seems odd to people when I tell them that Mother could cook; most people think a great social leader would never soil her fingers in the kitchen, but I remember that when we were children she used to make all sorts of goodies for us.

The following afternoon I drove to Buckingham Palace with Mother and Mrs. Roosevelt, in a rented chauffeur-driven limousine, but I didn't go in. Mother used to call Buckingham Palace "Buck House" for short. The gatekeeper seemed to recollect her, and she said to him, and to all the soldiers and guards, "I want to introduce you to the mother of my President." Of course the person she addressed would quickly come to a salute. Then Mother would put her hand out and say, "I'm so glad to see you again, John—or Joe, or Charles, or Dick—" and this made them beam with pleasure.

That night at dinner, Mother and Mrs. Roosevelt regaled me with an account of their afternoon. They were so proud of them-

selves and so very happy and gay; they had a sense of accomplishment that went beyond tea with the queen, and this was why:

Several times while we were in London, Mother had asked me, "Neil, do you think we are close to another world war?"

"Yes, Mother darling," I told her. "We're very close to it. It may break out at any moment. Certainly not later than this fall, but perhaps as soon as next week or next month."

Mother abhorred war. She had known the czar of Russia, the German kaiser, and every king and queen of England from Victoria down. She had known the kings of Italy and of Spain, the khedive of Egypt and the shah of Persia, and even the sultan of Turkey. She used to talk about these people as if they were her close friends. And she used to tell me she would work and pray for peace harder than for anything else in the world. Many of her friends thought she was sort of demented on the subject of peace, but I knew how sincere she was.

So that night at dinner in London she reported to me with great pride, "We went over to talk to Queen Mary and tell her that we three people were not going to permit another world war to come to civilization."

And Mother truly believed that because Mrs. Roosevelt, the mother of the President of the United States, and Queen Mary, the mother of the King of England, and she herself, a powerful person in financial circles in the United States, England, France and some other places—that because these three elderly women had got together and talked about it, they could prevent a second world war. This little story is one of my dearest memories of my mother. Some may think it freakish or unreal, even downright silly, but I am sure that plenty of people will understand what those three lovely old ladies were trying to do around the tea table that afternoon.

For the next two or three days I drove Mother and Mrs. James Roosevelt around London in rented cars. Many of the streets were torn up because they were laying electric wiring for communications, just as I had seen them doing in Danzig several weeks before. They were also working on the sewers and digging dirt trenches and putting up anti-aircraft guns and barrage balloons. To me everything looked as if the country was on the verge of war.

Here I must digress to tell another story about Mother. She never went anywhere without her little Zwerg Reh pinscher,

Dwika. Dwika was a tiny dog looking something like a dwarf deer, which is the meaning of *Zwerg Reh*. Mother had a whole series of these dogs. If you travel you know that you can't take dogs into England; you must leave them for six months in quarantine, for tests and inoculations. But somehow Mother had brought Dwika into London, in her muff.

The day after the tea with Queen Mary, the king came to call on Mother at Claridge's. Mother had known him since he was a baby, and always called him "the Little King." As you may remember, he stuttered quite a lot, and when he came into Mother's sitting room at the hotel, he spoke with characteristic hesitancy. "How is Dwika, Mrs. Vanderbilt? How was she when you left New York?"

Mother kept her baby-blue eyes on his face as she answered innocently, "I hope, your Majesty, that she is well. I miss her so terribly."

Just at that moment a shrill little bark came from the bedroom, and the king shook his finger in Mother's face.

"Now, Mrs. Vanderbilt," he said, "you are a very naughty person. You know, I could have you locked up for the rest of your life."

Mother looked calmly back at the Little King. "Why don't you, your Majesty? I can't think of anything I would rather do than have you have me locked up."

Then they both burst into laughter.

I saw to it that Mother and Mrs. Roosevelt left very soon. They were in London only ten days; then Mother returned to Newport and went on with her usual summer entertaining as if there were no war on the horizon.

I went back to the Continent, first to Liège in Belgium. There I met some officers on the staff of General Gamelin and went with them on a three-day tour of the Maginot Line, which, as you may remember, was the line of huge, supposedly impregnable, underground fortresses which France built at great expense between herself and Germany. When the war started, the Germans broke into Belgium and outflanked the French, and the Maginot Line wasn't worth a tinker's damn. The DEW Line, up in the cold regions, may one day prove as useless to us.

I had been through the Maginot Line with General Maginot himself shortly after its completion, but this trip was more interesting because there were more troops in position. The French

kept the line manned just as we now keep people at the SAC bases and various similar installations in the States and in our bases abroad.

When I came out of the Maginot Line not far from Strasbourg, in Alsace-Lorraine, I was met by officers from the staff of General Von Brauchitsch, who I believe was then commander in chief of the German army. They took me through their Siegfried Line, which faced the French line, so within a week I went through the positions of both friend and enemy. Perhaps I was given these tours because I represented an important magazine and its newspaper affiliates. But I believe the real reason was that they knew I represented the President of the United States. They might not have been sure whether I was then traveling for him or as a newspaperman, but they thought it better to show me around. If they tried to conceal things I might carry back the wrong impression, and certainly they wanted the American people on their side.

Next I went to Cannes on the Riviera for a ten-day leave. As I was cashing traveler's checks there, I noticed ahead of me in line a tall, good-looking man who was changing a huge sum into Polish currency. When I asked about him, the cashier replied, "Prince Lubomirski."

My mind went back to the little stepdaughter of Tony Biddle and to her beau, whose name was Lubomirski too. This man might have been his father or his uncle.

"Isn't he scared to carry so much cash?" I asked the cashier.

"Mr. Vanderbilt, he tells me he's been called to the colors. His country's mobilizing," the cashier explained.

This was a tip of supreme importance. I hurried to my hotel, threw things into my bags, and dashed down to the car, one a friend had loaned me. Downstairs I met a newspaperwoman from the old Chicago *Tribune*, on her way to the station to catch the Paris train. Naturally I invited her to ride with me instead.

Late that night we ran into a storm and had to pull into an inn for shelter. All day we'd had the radio on, and the music programs had frequently given way to dots and dashes. I had asked my companion to take these down, so that when we got to Paris we might get them interpreted by someone who knew Morse code. But I found the night man at the inn knew Morse and he gave me the meaning; the same few words had been repeated over and over: "Anti-aircraft men: Report to the nearest

post as soon as possible, bringing only clothing enough to last you for one month."

In Paris I left my passenger at her hotel and then went to the American Embassy. The ambassador then was William Bullitt. He was out of the office but his secretary, Mr. Offee, said they needed an extra man for dinner the next evening and would I fill in? After accepting, I said, "Why doesn't your boss tell the truth to the President, and why doesn't the President tell the truth to the people? You know as well as I do that we're on the verge of war."

"There's a lot of talk, but I don't think we'll be in a world war for at least a couple of years," Offee answered.

"The world is full of people like you. That's why we're never prepared for a war when it comes along," I said, thinking of the orders in code.

I checked into the Hotel Crillon, immediately opposite the Embassy. In little more than an hour the Quai d'Orsay called to ask why I had not reregistered after visiting Germany.

Later I went back across the street. "Look here," I demanded. "Is France mobilizing?"

Mr. Offee looked straight at me and said firmly, "If France were mobilizing, we'd be the first people in the world to know. And if I knew, I'd be the first person to tell the American press."

In the dining room of the Crillon I saw Whitney Warren, the great architect who built many of our embassies, and I asked him how to find out if France was mobilizing.

"There's only one way," he said. "Go to the railroad stations."

After lunch I hopped in a cab and went to five stations, and in every one I saw hundreds, perhaps thousands, of men without women. The men were carrying little bags or boxes tied with string, but no suitcases.

Again I went back to see Offee and again he assured me France was not mobilizing. But still I didn't believe him. I went to the suburb called Neuilly-sur-Seine, some four or five miles from the hotel, and cabled my secretary in New York, Mrs. Danson. I told her more or less what I expected, and asked her to get word at once to Mr. Oursler and to Mr. Roosevelt. I said I would wait at the hotel for word from them.

Nothing happened that night, but next morning the Quai d'Orsay called. What seemed to be the voice of a secretary wanted to know whether I preferred to come at eleven in the morning

or three in the afternoon. I chose the afternoon in order to have time to get the proper clothes pressed.

When I reached the Quai d'Orsay that afternoon, a number of men were in the secretary's office, dressed as I was in cutaway coats and striped pants. It looked as if I had been called for a press conference.

Two men stood at the desk talking to the secretary, and I moved into position behind them. When they saw me they separated, so I went ahead and said in my best French, "I am Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., representing *Liberty* magazine and a number of American newspapers."

The words were scarcely out of my mouth when handcuffs were clamped on both my wrists. Such a thing had never happened to me before, even though I had been expelled from Germany, Italy, and Japan, and to say that I was amazed and astounded is an understatement.

The secretary said to me very quietly, "Your ill-sent cablegram, Mr. Vanderbilt, caused this." And then he told me that if I would walk in a natural manner with the two gentlemen at the desk, I would be taken for questioning; if I would not go quietly, they would take me forcibly in a police van.

We went down the steps—rather awkwardly, I must admit—with me in the center, and down the Left Bank past the booksellers, sometimes walking out in the street itself. Finally we came to a building just the other side of the Chamber of Deputies. I had seen this building many times and thought it was merely an apartment house.

We entered and went up to the first floor, then down a long hall. One of my guards knocked, the door was immediately opened, and we found ourselves in what is commonly known as a sweat-box. I was in here for more than two hours. It was frightfully hot, and the lights glared in my face. Over and over again they kept asking me how I had known that France was mobilizing.

I did not want to mention the man at the country inn who had read the Morse code, and so I stuck to my story about going to the railroad stations in Paris and noticing that only men seemed to be boarding the trains. I admitted I had asked the American ambassador's secretary if France were mobilizing, and said I had been told definitely that she was not.

There was no actual rough treatment, but I was terribly thirsty, and I was not allowed to telephone the American Embassy, the

Consulate, or anywhere else. I asked my captors why I, of all people, who had served in the American army in France, and as an interpreter with the French Foreign Legion in my early youth, and whose parents were such great friends of France, would want to sell France down the river.

They merely shrugged. After quite a long time, the telephone rang in the adjoining room. Then one of the men who had been questioning me came in and said to the others, "That was he." They all got together for a little conference, after which one of the gentlemen in striped pants—incidentally he had removed his coat and tie—came over and made me a little speech, saying they were very, very sorry, they felt they had taken the wrong man into custody, they would release me right away, and I could go to the American Embassy.

I thought I might be followed, so I went instead to the barber shop at the Hotel George V, where I had a shampoo while I tried to figure out just what had happened. Then I taxied to the Embassy and told Mr. Offee all about it. He shrugged his shoulders too and remarked, "I told you, Vanderbilt, that France was not mobilizing."

He then said the ambassador was expecting me, and offered to have me driven to the residence at Chantilly, but I declined and took my own car. In those days I kept a Ford station wagon in Paris.

By the time I got to Chantilly, all the guests were at dinner. Mrs. James Roosevelt was among them; she had not returned to the United States with my mother. Bill Bullitt was assuring her that the United States under her son was neither a monarchy, a dictatorship, nor a socialist state, but a matriarchy under her!

The young Johnny Roosevelts were there, John and Anne, and Bill Bullitt's daughter, young Anne. Bullitt was called away from the table on several occasions, evidently by long-distance calls. The third time, a servant came and asked me to join the ambassador in the drawing room.

When I went in, Bill said, "This is your friend Tony Biddle calling from Warsaw."

Tony came on the line with, "I guess you know by now about the mobilization." I professed ignorance and he went on, "I've been telling Bill for a long time that this was going to happen, but he wouldn't believe it."

A few moments after we returned to the table I heard a car

rolling into the gravel driveway. Bill was called away again, and remained out quite a while. When he came back he brought with him a medium-sized man whom he introduced to us all as Monsieur Lebrun, the president of the French Republic. Bullitt invited him to join us in a liqueur or some brandy, but he shook his head and said he had to be on his way.

Mrs. James Roosevelt then asked him quietly, "What bad news have you got to tell us now?"

"I have come to tell the United States, and the very charming mother of the President, that the French Republic is mobilizing."

Then as he left he said, "Good night, my friends, and may God bless us all."

It was one of the most dramatic moments of my own life, and I'm sure in the lives of the others.

CHAPTER XXI

HOW THE SHOOTING STARTED

WHEN THE French Deuxième Bureau set me free after the indignities of their sweat-box, they advised me to get out of France as quickly as possible. It would not be amiss, they said, if I left France within twenty-four hours. When I told this to Bill Bullitt later that evening, he wanted me to spend the night at Chantilly instead of going back to town, but I felt that my place was in Paris, for I knew that both my publisher and my friend in the White House might try to get in touch with me there.

After dinner we had liqueurs and brandy in the lovely old library of the château, and then Bill Bullitt loaded us all into two station wagons and took us down to the village of Chantilly. Here a village fair was in progress, and we spent the next two hours walking around among the side shows and carousels. We were all in evening clothes, and so we must have stood out like sore thumbs.

Mrs. James Roosevelt was at that time, I believe, well over seventy, but she was still an excellent shot with a rifle. We stopped in front of one of those wonderful shooting galleries and engaged in a little competitive shooting. Mrs. Roosevelt was on the arm of Bill Bullitt, and young Anne Bullitt, who couldn't have been more than fifteen or sixteen, was on the arm of Johnny Roosevelt; Anne Roosevelt walked with me. We were followed by two or three of the secretaries from the Embassy in Paris. Only a couple of people recognized Mrs. James Roosevelt, however.

In next to no time at all, she shot the bowls off the pipes, hit many of the little ducks and other moving animals, and before we knew what had happened, she won the first prize. Incidentally, Mrs. Roosevelt never used glasses.

The attendant at the shooting gallery was a funny little man dressed in a smock and wearing a blue beret pulled down over the side of his head. He had a very musty-looking mustache, and

a tiny goatee, and out of the right corner of his mouth hung a bit of an old cigarette.

Mrs. Roosevelt's prize was a gingerbread pig. Gingerbread comes from this part of France and is a great delicacy. The little attendant took a small bag which ended in a funnel, to squirt the name of the winner on the cake.

He didn't seem to understand too well, and we spelled the name out to him very slowly—R-O-O-S-E-V-E-L-T.

When he got down to the *-velt*, his eyes suddenly lit up and he exclaimed, "*Oh, comme le Président.*"

We all said, "Yes, like the President."

When we asked Mrs. Roosevelt what she was going to do with the gingerbread pig, she said, "I'm going to give it to Frank when I get back to Hyde Park."

"Do you think he'll understand?" asked Bullitt.

She smiled. "Yes, my son understands everything his mother does, although he often does not agree with her." After some reflection she went on, "You know, when Frank was a little boy he was pretty much of a piggy-wiggy, and sometimes he still is."

Later, before I left for Paris, Bullitt took me into the library to have a brandy with him. While we were sitting on the sofa with our drinks, he invited me to luncheon the following day at the American Embassy residence in Paris, and he also tried again to get me not to take the station wagon back into town that night, but I was insistent on going.

Bill said the French Deuxième Bureau was comparable to our FBI or to the German Gestapo in that, regardless of ambassadors or other officials, they often took the law into their own hands, and he was rather afraid for my safety if I should return alone. In fact, he said, "It has been known to happen that when the Deuxième Bureau wants to get rid of you, all they do is edge you off the road so that your car falls into the ditch. It looks like a road accident in which you just had the bad luck to be killed."

He also said I definitely should leave when they told me to. "But," he added, "this doesn't mean that you have to stay away forever. You can come back next week if you wish, because by then they will have forgotten the incident completely."

I drove back to Paris that night and nothing whatever happened. Next morning I rose fairly late, and pushed everything into my suitcases again. As I was checking out of the Crillon, the young Chicago newspaperwoman whom I had brought up from

Cannes was in the lobby. She asked if I could give her a lift to Le Havre later on that afternoon. I was amazed and perplexed that she even knew I was going to Le Havre, and I asked her how she had found out.

"Everyone at the press club knows about it," she said. "Everyone knows what happened to you yesterday—in fact, it's the talk of the newspapermen all over Paris today. People who are really guilty of doing things to France while they were guests of France are beginning to feel the cold draft on their necks, too."

I asked why she was going to Le Havre and she said she had a story to write at Rouen, which was two-thirds of the way, and that she would like to go on to Le Havre to see that I got safely aboard a boat.

For a moment I thought perhaps she had tipped off the French government about my intercepting the code message calling the anti-aircraft men into action. But of course at that moment I was suspecting everyone. However, I told her to meet me at the Crillon at two-thirty.

When I reached the American Embassy residence on Place D'Iena I saw a tremendous crowd that filled the street from sidewalk to sidewalk, sometimes cheering and sometimes booing people who entered. In the big, brightly lit drawing room were literally scores of prominent Americans and French, and a few prominent British people. The room seethed with excitement. I remember seeing Jim Farley chatting with General Gamelin, who in those days was in command of the French Army. Farley and I, who had been such good friends back in the early thirties, were now scarcely talking to each other, for I had felt for a long time that he had sold Mr. Roosevelt down the river.

I had an interesting place at lunch. On one side of me was the president of the Bank of France and on the other side, Admiral Darlan, later of the Vichy regime. Anne Roosevelt was on the other side of Admiral Darlan, and we talked over him and around him and also to him. She didn't particularly care for him; she said he kept rubbing her knee with his during luncheon, at the same time making remarks in German to another man sitting across the table, unfavorable remarks concerning her father-in-law, President Roosevelt.

I learned very little at the luncheon that I didn't already know, and the moment it was over, scarcely even saying good-by to Bill Bullitt, I rushed outside to my car, drove back to the Crillon,

picked up the young newspaperwoman, and at once started for Le Havre.

Two and a half hours later, as we left Rouen, she was telling me of the story she was going to do there the following day. We started up a long, steep, narrow hill, in the midst of quite a good deal of traffic, with buses and taxis honking their horns. One particular bus behind us seemed to be filled with policemen or soldiers, and it kept sounding its klaxon so persistently and making such a horrible noise that I pulled to the side of the road. The bus crept up alongside me, and when it was almost abreast of my station wagon, it began pulling over much more to the right, forcing me into the ditch.

Bill Bullitt's words of the evening before came quickly into my mind—that if the *Deuxième Bureau* doesn't care for you it will do anything to get rid of you, even to getting you involved in a highway accident and then driving on. That was more or less exactly what the bus did, but instead of driving on, it stopped up the hill a little way from where we were. It was very lucky that my companion was not cut by the shattered glass on her side of the car.

Soldiers jumped out of the bus, came back to us, tipped their hats, were very polite. They hauled us out of the station wagon, opened up the rear end, pulled our bags out, and lined them up beside the highway. While some were doing this, another group put a jack under the front of the car, and as we were looking over our baggage—and before we had time even to think—they jacked the car out of the ditch and hauled it off down the highway with them. I never in my life saw such a perfectly man-aged, diabolical thing.

Several cars passed us, but finally a bus stopped and took on my friend and me and our baggage. When we finally reached Le Havre an hour and a half later, we took a taxicab to the railroad station, where I left my charming companion and her luggage, and then went on down to the United States docks myself. I used to travel so much on the United States Lines in those days that I knew practically everyone from the captains down to the people who worked in the lowest boiler room.

There was a man on the dock who used to run the passenger end of the United States Lines in Paris. His name was Robinson—we all called him Robbie—and he looked up hurriedly and asked, "What are you doing here?"

I said, "I want passage across the Channel on the ship tonight."

"It's so crowded I don't think I can give you a cabin," he apologized, "but if you just want deck space I can oblige you."

I paid him fifty dollars with an American Express check. The porters loaded my luggage and I took it to the purser's office on the SS *Washington*. Then I went out on deck and sat near the gangway to watch the various Americans coming aboard.

World War II was now on everyone's tongue, and a great many very frightened people came aboard the *Washington* that afternoon and evening. When I saw how the land lay, I got myself a table in the smoking saloon in the after part of the ship, and whenever I saw anyone I knew coming up the gangplank, I told them, "Drinks are on Vanderbilt this evening if you come into the smoking room to such and such a table." We had a heterogeneous crowd which included the young John Roosevelts and Mrs. James Roosevelt, and an ex-lawyer of mine who was on his honeymoon.

I wanted to send a press message but had to wait until the *Washington* sailed, and she did not leave port until after midnight. With no cabin, I sat in the smoking room or in one of the other public rooms all night, and finally in the purser's office, where I wrote my story of what I had seen and heard in France. I called it "Half Past the Eleventh Hour."

On deck in the early dawn, I saw the British fleet steam out to sea from Portsmouth, their naval base. Long years before—back in the summer of 1914, as a young teen-ager—from my father's yacht *North Star* I had watched the British fleet of those days go out to sea, a long line of gray that I could never forget.

We docked around six that morning, and I went ashore early to check my bags through to the Hyde Park Hotel in London. I had never stayed there, but I remembered it as the only hotel in London during World War I that was known to have a bomb shelter.

There were no seats left on the London express, but I went into the baggage car—the English say "luggage van"—and sat down. The doors were closed and the train rushed through to Guildford without stopping. Then someone opened the door and I found I was sitting on a coffin. The conductor—they say "train guard"—then put me into a second-class compartment with some other people and charged me the whole fare from Southampton, but I would have paid anything because I was so happy to reach

England, where people understood what you were saying and you didn't have to be afraid of your own shadow.

As I taxied to the hotel, I saw the screaming newspaper headlines about the imminence of war and the threat of bombing. I asked my driver where to get a gas mask, and he said they would be issued in the various parts of London and probably the American Embassy would have them for us. Then he added, "I've got one at 'ome, and if you'd like to 'ave it, guv'nor, I'd be 'appy to let you 'ave it."

When I asked what he and his wife would do, he said, "Well, it belonged to my missus. But she kicked the bucket last night and you can 'ave it for a pound."

This gave me a creepy feeling, but I agreed.

At the hotel I found no reservation and no bomb shelter—filled up years ago, they told me, as nobody thought there'd ever be another war. But they found me a room up under the eaves. Then the taxi-driver returned with the gas mask in a funny little cardboard box, and I shoved it into the pocket of my trench coat and asked him to drive me to the Canadian Pacific office on Haymarket.

The place was jammed with people, all yelling, all trying to get a berth or any place to sleep aboard any ship bound for the States. Immediately ahead of me in line was Mrs. Ogden Mills, whose husband was secretary of the treasury under Hoover. Mrs. Mills was a great friend of my mother's, but had never been a friend of mine because of our political differences. To her, I—with all the New Deal—was not merely liberal but "left."

Now, when she saw me behind her, she said, "Are you trying to get on this boat too?"

"No, Mrs. Mills," I replied. "I'm giving up a cabin."

Then she turned to face me. "Neil Vanderbilt, I never thought much of you before, but right now I think you're the most important man on earth. What do you have? What did you pay for it?"

I told her—a large cabin on the upper deck, with a large double bed and an upper bunk, and my own private bath, all for \$350.

"If you give all that up for what you paid," she declared, "I'll never forgive you as long as I live. I'll give you my check for five thousand if you'll sell it to me right now."

I wanted to say something about wild Republican spending but

I didn't; she stepped aside hopefully to let me talk to the ticket agent.

"How late can I turn this space in before the sailing date?" I asked him. "Mr. Vanderbilt," the agent answered, "I will pay you triple the fare if you'll turn it in right now."

Dorothy Mills interrupted to repeat her bid, but I laughed heartily at both of them.

"I don't want to make any money out of this. I just want to know how late I can hold it and still get a refund."

The agent said as late as half an hour before the boat train left London for Liverpool.

So I hung on to my cabin and Mrs. Mills hung on to me. She took me over to her taxi outside and introduced a rather good-looking young man, to whom she said, "This is the son of one of my best and most loyal and wonderful friends, Grace Vanderbilt," adding hastily, "We mustn't speak of it, but he's a Democrat and a great friend of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's, so be careful what you say in front of him."

Then she turned to me. "Do get in. I'm simply going to shanghai you and keep you tied up until that boat sails!"

Laughing again, I said I had some important people waiting in my cab, and I'd have to go and join them. And I tipped my hat and saw no more of Mrs. Mills for a few days.

At the American Embassy residence, Mr. Kennedy, our ambassador, had several other guests for lunch besides me, among them the publisher of the London *Daily Telegraph*. My twice-weekly column, which *Liberty* was syndicating to daily newspapers, had been running in the *Telegraph* for several weeks. The publisher, Lord Kemsley, and his charming wife asked me to dine with them that evening, and I accepted immediately.

After lunch I went into a huddle with Mr. Kennedy. I told him I had wired Mr. Oursler, asking if I should return or if I could remain in London, and had had no reply.

Mr. Kennedy said he thought I should return because he felt Mr. Roosevelt would like to know from my own lips what I had seen and heard during these last days before World War II broke out.

That night I dined with Lord and Lady Kemsley and four of their six children, along with, I think, two or three sons and daughters-in-law. All during dinner various members of the family got up and left. His eldest daughter was in one of the anti-air-

craft balloon posts which protected London in those days, and she went to her job. Another daughter worked in a hospital. One of his sons, I believe, was in the local militia and another in the Coldstream Guards. Still another was with the Royal Navy. But it was quite easy to see that this British publisher, who was one of the most important men in England in his time, did not believe for one instant that war was just around the corner. In fact, he thought that this was another Munich and that something would stop World War II at the very last moment. He thought our correspondents "badly advised" on the likelihood of war, and he was shocked at our violating our neutrality laws by selling planes to France. When I admitted this was different from our policy in Spain, but said that Franco's victory now seemed to menace France, he said that Franco would be no hazard to the "right kind of Frenchman" but in fact assured a stable government for France. Personally he preferred Fascism to Communism. I said I hated them both and why did we have to have either one?

A member of England's "Cliveden set" which had helped throw out Edward and also helped Hitler's rise to power, Lord Kemsley resembled England's more popular publishers, like Beaverbrook, in that he also thought Hitler would do Germany good. So now, refusing to be alarmed, he wanted me to sell my ticket to Mrs. Mills and join him next day on his yacht to go over to Deauville and Trouville and do a little gambling.

I said, "I hate gambling. I live in the most gambling town of the United States, and I never go near the tables."

"You don't have to gamble," he argued. "You can lie on the sand and flirt with the pretty girls. I'll do the gambling."

"The greatest gamble of your entire life, sir," I replied, "would be to carry out this foolish plan. I know from what Mr. Stalin told me, and from what I heard in the Balkans the last few weeks, that World War II is finally upon us."

But when I left him that night he was still certain that it was not.

I wired Mr. Oursler several times, and tried to phone him, but heard nothing. So two days later I took the boat train to Liverpool. I sailed aboard the *Empress of Australia* on the night on which the SS *Athenia*, the ill-fated Cunard vessel, was torpedoed by a German submarine. You may recall reading that the three-masted schooner-yacht *Southern Cross*, belonging to Mr. Axel Wenner-gren, the Swedish pro-Nazi millionaire, was the

first ship to appear on the scene, and also that the captain of the *Southern Cross* and Mr. Wenner-gren talked via megaphone with the captain of the German submarine.

I was on the upper deck of the *Empress of Australia* and I heard the SOS. I went down with my portable radio, the same radio which had caused me so much trouble at Sopot and explained to the purser what I had heard. The next thing I knew, the captain ordered my radio set impounded for the remainder of the trip.

Mrs. Ogden Mills and the young man to whom she had introduced me in the taxicab a few days before in London were also aboard the same vessel, but they were traveling in tourist class. I think she said he was her French nephew.

I was the only person on the ship who had an entire cabin and bath to himself, and so I had the bathtub made up into a bed at night, and I gave the double bed and the single transom berth to some other people. One of them was Peaches Browning, the young girl who at fifteen or sixteen had married Daddy Browning and had caused quite a scandal in the tabloids a few years before. She was traveling with her mother and a girl friend, and they slept in my bedroom on the *Empress* and I slept in the bathroom in the tub.

Two days out from the States, the captain let me send a radiogram to Mr. Roosevelt, but they later informed me it had not been delivered, and so I sent a radiogram to Attorney General Frank Murphy. All I said was: "REACHING QUEBEC NEXT DAY OR SO. WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO SEE YOU." And of course I signed it "Neil," as I had signed that ill-fated telegram from Neuilly which had got me into so much trouble with the Deuxième Bureau.

When the *Empress of Australia* docked in Quebec, the captain returned my radio, explaining, "Mr. Vanderbilt, my ship is painted white, and if I had gone to the rescue of the poor unfortunate souls on the *Athenia*, we probably would have been torpedoed too. I couldn't take the chance of having panic develop among my passengers if you picked up anything else on your set."

Before I could step ashore in Quebec, an emissary from President Roosevelt arrived to greet me and to tell me that the President's private plane was waiting not far away. I was immediately flown to Poughkeepsie, and then taken in a presidential car out to Hyde Park. When the President saw me he said, "I'm going

to sit you down right here in front of stenographers and I want you to keep talking until you're through. I want you to tell exactly what happened, as well as you can recall it, during the last few weeks while you were in Europe—who you saw and what they said and so on."

It took me thirty-six hours, all told, to do this. And since once more I am telling all, I'll add that FDR told me later, "You're a far better diplomat than our secretary of state. Well done, Neil Vanderbilt, well done."

Then I went by automobile and train over to Falmouth to see Mr. Oursler. Of course I had let him know of my arrival, but it was forty-eight hours before he saw me. While I waited, I put on some trunks and went down to the beach between the guest house and his house. Sitting among the rocks knitting was a very pretty lady who seemed to recognize me immediately.

"Why, hello, Neil Vanderbilt. How are you?" she asked.

I recognized her face but I couldn't place her.

After a while, a little man in an old-fashioned one-piece bathing suit which covered his chest came out of the water. He had dark hair and a tiny waxed mustache. Then I recognized who the couple were—Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dewey. I will never forget his first statement to me. He was dripping wet from the water; in fact, he looked rather pathetic, I thought.

"Hello. Hi there, Neil," he called out. "What are you doing here?" And then, "Oh, I remember. Fulton told me you were coming. He tells me you're very much excited about this little disturbance across the sea."

I've never forgotten those words. When I think that Governor Dewey might have become secretary of state, or even President, I shudder.

The postscript to the story came some twenty years later. In the lounge car of the Sunset Limited I sat between two elderly and distinguished-looking ladies, and I noticed that the one on my right kept looking me over, in a proper, non-flirtatious manner.

Next day in the diner she sat with me, along with a young couple headed for New Orleans and a Caribbean cruise. They were discussing hotels and I couldn't help butting in with advice. Then the elderly lady asked, "Are you on a speaking tour? I noticed you wore a dinner coat when you got on last night."

I admitted it, and she said, "Did you cross the Atlantic on the *Empress of Australia*, years ago?"

"The first week in September, 1939," I remembered.

"And did the captain impound your radio after you picked up the SOS from the *Athenia*?"

"He did," I agreed.

"I thought so—I couldn't forget your voice. You have a very unusual voice, Mr. Vanderbilt."

I was remembering something else. My station wagon, seized by the French, had been found by the United States Lines and placed as deck cargo on the *Athenia*. But now I learned about another cargo.

"You talked to my husband about the radio and he advised you to let sleeping dogs lie," the lady was saying. "You know his advertising firm handled the Canadian Pacific account. What he couldn't tell you was that the *Empress* was carrying thirty-two million dollars in gold bullion to Canada, to save it from the enemy if England were invaded. That's why we couldn't go to help the *Athenia*."

I Spy

CHAPTER XXII

DYNAMITE

BACK AS EARLY as 1939, I had become conscious of the fact that my little adopted city of Reno was being overrun with Germans and other Middle Europeans. I wondered why. Friends of mine who were winter sports enthusiasts were not nearly so apprehensive; they pointed out that in winter Reno is a sportsman's paradise. As a matter of fact, the 1960 Olympics will be held at Squaw Valley in the heart of the High Sierras, only forty miles west of Reno on the California side.

But many of these Teutonic newcomers began spreading the Nazi gospel. And they got around. One of them, a very charming woman in her middle forties, became especially well acquainted with a Reno jurist, who introduced her to a federal judge in California who had been in the Administration.

In 1940 I mentioned our Teutonic influx to the President, and as by that time the lines were clearly drawn for our entry into the war, Mr. Roosevelt suggested that I carry on a one-man investigation, reporting only to the White House, or to J. Edgar Hoover or Edward A. Tamm of the FBI.

I began with Sun Valley, the well-known Union Pacific winter sports resort. I had a Leica camera and an old-fashioned Cine Kodak, and I told the manager of the Sun Valley Inn that I was collecting material for a magazine article. Actually I photographed all the German, Austrian, and other Middle European ski aces and instructors in winter sports.

Idaho was dry then, and the Kungsholm Club in Ketchum hadn't been established. Guests kept bottles of liquor in their lockers and used to drink in the lounge with their ski instructors.

Here I met all the skiing greats, including the famous Hans Schneider. I talked to them about where they came from and what they did before they came to the United States. Practically all of them were very anti-Semitic and admired Hitler. Most of the waiters at the inn and at the lodge were also German. I photographed as many as I could, and made many notes.

Next I went to the Columbia River gorge and beyond, to a place called Tomahawk Inn on the slopes on Mount Hood, in Oregon. Here were more German and Austrian ski instructors. I rented a car and went on to a place called The Dalles, on the upper reaches of the Columbia; then I followed the south bank of the river, checking every inn, lodge, restaurant, winery, and shop as far as Hood River. I did not search the north bank of the Columbia because, although a railroad ran there, it was considered less important than the Union Pacific on the south.

In Portland I filed another report and sent in my films. I didn't have the films processed locally lest someone wonder why I had photographed so many men, showing usually just their faces, heads, and shoulders instead of their ski jumps.

From Portland I headed north to Tacoma, Washington, and then worked my way inland through many towns up to the Snoqualmie Pass, which was covered with snow although this was early in the year. Again I went through the same procedure and found almost exactly the same situation. Germans, Austrians, Czechoslovakians, working in shops, in hotels, in lodges, and in wineries, and quite a few of them working in camps. There was some construction going on along the highway and along the main line of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

I was careful also to try as many logging camps as possible and to check with the forest rangers. If anyone became suspicious, I told him who I was and that I was writing a story for *Click* magazine, and since many of my stories had appeared in *Click*, I don't think anyone doubted it.

From this northwestern point, I drove all the way down into the Siskiyou Mountains on the northern edge of California. Here again I checked all the lodges, hotels, stores, and camps along the highway, and I was very much surprised to find in this area very few people of Teutonic extraction, in comparison with the numbers I had found in the Donner Pass (where I had also checked), along the Columbia River highway, and also in Sun Valley and up along the Snoqualmie Pass. There were some, of course, but

not alarming numbers. To me, this indicated that neither the German high command nor its famed Gestapo service, nor even the German-American Bund, considered the pass through these mountains dividing California from Oregon to be as valuable as the passes connecting the intermountain plateau states with the West Coast.

I checked the area all around Mount Shasta, Shasta Lake, and even up around Crater Lake, Oregon, and what we call the back highway down the eastern slope of the High Sierras to Susanville, California. Then I went through the Feather River Canyon, through which the Western Pacific Railroad runs on its main line from Salt Lake City to Sacramento, and here again I found the same condition as prevailed in the Donner Pass, the Snoqualmie Pass, and along the Columbia River.

I was now filing almost nightly reports back to Washington, and from time to time I was even telephoning.

My friend Paul A. Walters of Reno met me in a car at Alturas, and we drove to Reno. From my own house I telephoned Washington. I was told that the FBI had been piecing my stuff together and they believed I was on the right track. The FBI people suggested I continue to work immediately through the passes in southern California, and gave me permission to take Paul Walters along to do the photographing. Paul was a topnotch photographer, especially with the Leica.

I was working entirely on my own time and money. Uncle Sam did reimburse me for gasoline and such, but Paul and I took photographs at our own expense and paid for hotel reservations.

Seven major railroad passes connect the Far West with the rest of the United States, and a quick look at a map will show you their importance. If all of them were blown up simultaneously, our western coast would be isolated from the East in winter, except by air, for the highways are often blocked by snow.

Of these passes the Donner, on the main line of the Southern Pacific between Reno and San Francisco, is one of the most important. This route serves the big naval arsenal at Hawthorne, Nevada, at the southern end of Walker Lake. If it were closed, it would be necessary to move the large shells for the Pacific fleet by truck trailer down over Deadman's Pass to Cajon Pass which goes through the Sierras just east of Los Angeles, or else by rail up the track to Wadsworth, then east to Salt Lake City or to Ogden; and then north on the Union Pacific track up to Portland, or south

to San Diego, for transshipment to Mare Island, our main naval base in San Francisco Bay at the time of Pearl Harbor. Any of these or other alternative routes would take days longer than the short route through Reno and the Donner Pass. At that time, they could not use the railroad route through the Feather River Canyon because the curves were too short and abrupt for the long freight cars carrying the heavy shells and torpedoes.

Another reason I worried about the Donner Pass was that some hundred and forty or fifty miles south of Reno, on Walker Lake, the Navy was building a huge ordnance depot. Shells to be used by the Pacific fleet in the event of attempted attack upon the North American continent, plus all sorts of secret instruments, were stored there in huge underground vaults. A spur from the Southern Pacific Railroad, unused since the old Gold Rush days, was double-tracked at Hawthorne into the small village of Wadsworth, Nevada, and then connected with the main line of the Southern Pacific through Reno, and eventually over the Donner Pass.

The people of Reno were very apprehensive when it became known to them that vast trainloads of ammunition were passing through the city at night. They sent a protest to Congress, and I believe to the President, in an attempt to have the munitions routed around the city and out through the Feather River Canyon by way of a less populous area. But it took many months to achieve this objective, and for the first year and a half of World War II, ammunition went over the Reno route.

In southern California, we checked the Cajon Pass and the pass further south, and the same situation prevailed—Germans and Austrians well ensconced, selling goods in small shops, teaching people to ski, to snowshoe, to skate, and all the while spreading the doctrine of anti-Semitism.

I was as certain in those days as I am today that the rise of anti-Semitism didn't originate all by itself. It was nurtured and fed by some group along the way. And I think our investigation had at least something to do with the government's order for the removal of some of these people after Pearl Harbor.

It was suggested that I go and see the governor of California, Mr. Culbert Olson, at Sacramento, and tell him—as a newspaperman, that is, not as an agent of the government—what I had found in the passes in his own state. This Paul Walters and I did

together. We explained our findings to the governor, and he asked for a list of the places where these people were working. I remember we sat up all one night to make a copy of the names we had, and where we did not have names we supplied descriptions. I believe the state and county police in California kept these lists, and shortly after Pearl Harbor the California authorities descended on many of these places overnight and picked up the people who seemed dangerous to have around strategic locations. Eventually, I believe, they were moved to spots where they would have less opportunity to blow up tunnels or highways, in case they had any such designs.

After my fourth or fifth check of the Donner Pass I was put on a different kind of work, but after Pearl Harbor I was sent back to that region as the reserve officer I was. The White House had promised me it would place a regiment of infantry in the Donner Pass, as well as in the other passes running from the high plains to the West Coast. This time I was told to take with me anybody I could trust and go through the Donner Pass to see what was happening.

That winter of 1941 was an especially cold and snowy one up in the mountains. By December 10 there were still no troops in the area. I called Washington a dozen times to report this.

Finally I asked for General Watson at the White House, and when I was told he had gone home I asked for the President. I told FDR of my failure to get protection for the pass, and his comment was: "Drat those guys!" Then he asked how many men would be needed.

I told him how many bridges and tunnels and snowsheds there were through the mountains, and how the main transcontinental highway—the Lincoln Highway it was called, Route 40 now—crosses over the Southern Pacific Railroad near the top of the pass at more than seven thousand feet. In other words the highway makes an S turn at the top of the pass, with the double tracks underneath, so that enough dynamite could completely wreck one of our main transcontinental arteries.

Another enemy scheme might have been to use a truck trailer to block the Donner Pass, which is kept open all winter regardless of snow. A time bomb could be placed in a trailer and the trailer detached, and the resulting explosion might make it impossible to repair the pass during the winter months when snows are twenty to forty feet deep.

I had talked to Mr. Roosevelt at seven o'clock in the evening Reno time, ten o'clock Washington time. Afterward Paul Walters and I hopped in the car and went to spend the night in the town of Auburn. Early in the morning we were awakened by a terrific racket, and looking out the hotel window, we saw the railroad track crawling with men in khaki. We sighed with relief.

Then we drove back through the pass. When we reached Truckee, we found the headquarters of our new army guards in the old American Legion building up the hill.

For several nights after that, we drove along the highway and saw men with bonfires at the edges of the various railroad bridges. I didn't think this such a good idea, as the fires silhouetted the guards into excellent targets, but of course they wanted the fires to keep warm. So in a report I recommended shelters for the men, and small houses were built for them which are still used by the Union Pacific track watchers.

Many years later I met the colonel who had commanded the regiment on guard duty. He remarked he would like to punch in the nose the guy responsible for putting his troops on that terrible job in that terrible winter just after Pearl Harbor.

Some time before Pearl Harbor, I had heard stories of the Japanese fishing boats off the Pacific coast, in the area near Vancouver and the Aleutians. In my early newspaper days I had had a vacation lodge on the west coast of Vancouver Island, so I knew the country. My favorite cabinet officer, Secretary Ickes, suggested that I check on the rumors about the fishing boats, and I took the assignment seriously enough to spend some time on it. After being fogged in at Anchorage, Alaska, for days, I persuaded the captain of a little American boat to take me aboard, for a cash consideration. The Japanese all around us took frequent soundings, but they also fished, and what I chiefly learned was that theirs was a hard life.

Just after Pearl Harbor, and while Paul Walters was helping me with photographs, we received word of a portable radio transmitter supposed to be operated by or for the Japanese. This time we went all the way up the west coast to the Olympic Peninsula in the state of Washington, and on two or three different occasions almost nabbed the operator, missing him by a matter of an hour or two on each occasion. At one time, near Astoria, Oregon, we were as close as twenty minutes behind him. By this time we

knew the type of car he was operating, and the FBI knew the type of transmitter he was using. They believed him to be a Japanese, and they said he was sending messages to a Japanese submarine they thought was lurking off our west coast at that time.

By this time we knew of all the railroad bridges which were strategic on the West Coast. Up in northern California, not far from Eureka, there was a very high trestle, and the sheriff of the nearest town said that someone was operating on the bridge with a radio transmitter during that night. A local ham operator had picked up the signals. We were told that a trainload of dynamite was to cross the bridge within the next hour. The sheriff and the local authorities were scared to death and thought that they should take matters in their own hands to prevent the train from crossing the bridge. But since the train was running on army or navy orders to one of the West Coast forts not far from there, no civilian could do anything about it.

I remember rushing into the nearest town, going into a telephone office where people were busy in the booths calling their families and friends, and commandeering a booth in the name of Uncle Sam so that I could phone immediately to Mr. Hoover. In turn, he had to call the army headquarters nearest to our location and then call me back. About twenty minutes after I placed my original call, the commanding officer of the area sent word that the train was to be halted before it crossed the bridge.

However, in order to make doubly sure, the sheriff decided it would be best to put some people on the bridge to prevent the train from even attempting to cross. He asked for volunteers. I remember that a woman with a tiny baby in a baby carriage was the first person to volunteer. Of course Paul and I both volunteered also, and he sent all three of us out onto the bridge—very precarious, it appeared to me, a wooden structure well over a hundred feet high—to stand there while he went back to flag down the train. The engine came right up to the very edge of the bridge before it finally came to a halt. Since then I have often thought about what would have happened if we had remained on the bridge and the train had come on.

We continued to make our way down the coast. We had been advised never to spend a night in any major city, such as Portland, Sacramento, San Francisco, or Seattle, and so at nightfall we would go out into the country and hole up for the night in a motel and then enter the city in the morning. When we reached

the Salinas Valley, which is right back from Monterey and Carmel, we stopped at the tavern in the small town of Gonzales. We had reported that evening from Salinas, and the FBI had told us the newest signals were coming from this area, and ordered us to make a house-to-house search in the valley between Gonzales and Salinas. They had pinned the location down to an area around the Spreckles sugar mill and the small town of Spreckles, but no farther west than the coastal range of mountains and no farther east than U. S. Highway 101.

We started off next morning at five. We always kept a thermos of hot coffee, and an orange and a sweet roll apiece, beside us wherever we put up for the night, and we would eat these before we set out in the morning.

On this particular morning we searched almost all of the houses where Japanese farmers lived. It was a routine search, since we were both in civilian clothes. Of course we carried identification, but we had been told never to show the identification unless it was absolutely imperative to do so, and never to reveal it to anyone except a sheriff or an officer of the Army, Navy, or Marines of a higher rank than our own. I was at that time and had been since 1927 a major in the Military Intelligence Division of the active Reserve. Of course Paul was only a personal friend, but he did have police passes from the city of Reno and he was, like me, a deputy sheriff of Washoe County, Nevada.

A routine search consisted of knocking on a house door and asking to see the naturalization papers or alien-registration cards of the occupants. If people pretended not to understand, we would, you might say, bulldoze our way through and see who was living there and what the place looked like.

At one place the number of cars in the back yard implied that a meeting must be going on inside. We knocked several times but no one answered, so we finally turned the handle and the door opened. We walked into a living room—and found no one—and back into a kitchen, where we found a very old Japanese woman. She pointed down to the cellar. We could see people down there, so we called out, "What's going on down there? Come up—Uncle Sam wants to have a talk with you."

A voice answered in Americanese, "Uncle Sam is already down here. You'd better come down fast yourselves."

We went, and in the cellar were three Japanese men and two large, good-looking Americans. These two turned out to be active

members of the FBI, which at that time had headquarters in Monterey. And since we were what the FBI later called "super-duper snoopers" and these young men had never heard of us, they promptly pulled revolvers and put us both under arrest.

In the subsequent mix-up the three Japanese got away. One of them was the man wanted for operating the radio transmitter. Incidentally, one of the FBI men had smashed the transmitter before he trailed the Japanese into the house.

Now Paul and I were put into his small touring car, Paul on the back seat with one man, I in front with the driver. Naturally they frisked us, and in going through my pockets they found a letter from J. Edgar Hoover and one from FDR, as well as my credentials from *Liberty* magazine. But none of this meant anything to them. They took us to the courthouse at Salinas.

On the way I broke into a fit of giggling. This was, in a way, one of the silliest experiences I've ever had in my life. But our captors were serious. "Look here, buddy, you'll snicker on the other side of your face before we get through with you," one of them told me.

We were not locked in jail but we were "detained" in the courthouse, in a room where they had put hundreds, perhaps thousands, of radio sets—not transmitters, just regular radio sets—picked up in Japanese farmhouses all over the valley so that they could be checked for hidden devices which might make them useful for communicating with enemy submarines. The local sheriff and the local FBI head both talked to us, and finally they let us call FBI headquarters in Washington. Mr. Hoover was out, but Mr. Tamm was there and he told them we were on a special mission for the White House and should be released as soon as possible.

However, the young FBI officer had already called Fort Ord (then called Camp Ord) near Monterey, and a colonel of Military Intelligence, two majors, and three captains soon turned up in Salinas and put me through the third degree for impersonating an officer. They would not permit me to talk to General Watson at the White House, although I offered to call him at my own expense. Instead the colonel, who wanted to show his importance, called his commanding officer at the Presidio in San Francisco, and through the chain of command they called various people back in Washington.

Eventually I was able to get a telegram off to General "Pa" Watson, and while we were still being detained General Watson

sent a telegram to the commanding officer at Fort Ord, and our officious colonel was spoken to in pretty harsh terms. He then advised the sheriff that the army no longer wanted me. And of course they had nothing on Paul Walters because he had not impersonated an officer. So at last we were free.

But we had been kept in the courthouse for six or seven hours, a highly unpleasant experience which helped me to feel I had earned the FBI's distinguished service medal later given me.

A factor in the very real West Coast submarine scare was the width of the Juan de Fuca Strait between Vancouver Island and Washington state. The strait could not be closed, and subs coming in that far could endanger the cities of Seattle and Tacoma, and Vancouver, British Columbia.

There were the usual reports of signal lights on shore. I drove over to the peninsula in an open Cadillac; Paul flew over and joined me at a small town near Lake Crescent. We arranged with Washington where to pick up code messages, and how to call in. And for two weeks we inspected chicken coops. The local industry was raising chickens on wire—they were born and raised without putting foot to the ground. And when you traced a mysterious light to its source, after a hasty drive through the fog, you would usually find it in the brood house of a chicken farm.

However, one farm on a bluff overlooking the strait had a trailer parked outside. We made an excuse to go in, but the two men inside didn't talk much. They said the trailer was the property of Jehovah's Witnesses, to which they belonged; it was used for selling or giving away their magazine, the *Watchtower*.

We said we were in the cattle business and had come there to fish. It wasn't such a good story, we discovered later, for it was the wrong time of year for fishing. But they didn't seem suspicious and we became fairly friendly with them. But we got word that the lights had indeed come from the bluff right near the trailer; our own subs had triangulated.

Then we ourselves saw red lights flash on and off on a tall mast atop the trailer, and so we knocked and asked for a drink. Only then did they light up inside, saying that they'd been asleep. We reported to Washington and next day they were arrested. When they were booked, one turned out to have a name as famous in spy circles (not on the rolls of Jehovah's Witnesses!) as that of Ezra Pound among the converted literati. We were ordered back to the

trailer to go through everything, but we found only files of the *Watchtower*, as innocuous as our fishing gear. It was our belief that the farmer at whose place they had parked had collaborated, and cleaned up after them.

I spent a little time checking on the internment camp at Missoula, Montana. Much of what I did was this sort of routine checking of PW camps for possibilities of communication or escape, or of army camps for morale. At Fort Missoula the Italian internees were making little trouble, I was told; in fact most Missoullans said the Italians were less trouble than our own soldiers who had preceded them at the camp. The internees found it fairly easy to get passes into town, and one of them was making dates with the daughter of the post commandant. I talked to some of the men who had been waiters at the World's Fair in New York, and knew French. The small fry were very polite, the more important specimens very snooty, and all used the Fascist salute in greeting. But the only pro-Axis opinions I heard were held by a German woman who was cook at an adjoining ranch. She was all for Hitler, Wheeler, and Lindbergh.

Next I tackled a Nazi camp at Bismarck, North Dakota. This was in territory friendly to the internees, and I discovered that they were using the children of the neighborhood to send messages. One little girl was wearing a sweater which she said was a present from her friend Hans, "a Dutch boy at the camp," and with a proud toss of her pigtails she went on to mail letters at the airport. I also met what I suppose were "trusties" from the camp, blond lads at liberty, who were sending an uncensored wire from the unguarded Western Union office in the town. I had dinner at a German place—all I could eat for thirty-one cents!—and when I turned on Stimson's speech on the radio, I was asked to turn it off; "Ve ist all friends here; ve don't like to hear about var." The town as a whole was pro-German, anti-FDR.

Later we were on the California coast again, and in accordance with an order not to sleep on the seaboard, we found a little motel in the Napa Valley, some miles out of San Francisco. Under the regulations we were always poised for escape: for instance, we were told to park our cars facing east.

My job was to check safety installations at Fairfield-Suisun, the army take-off field for Honolulu, which was between Sacramento and Sausalito, not far from the Kaiser plant. They were just putting in electrified barbed wire, but I found it easy to get in without a

pass. However, something else in the neighborhood caught my eye. I knew people living in Sausalito; one friend of mine was in shipbuilding, and although he was doing well with contracts for PT boats, and his wife, Peggy, whom I'd known in Spartanburg, South Carolina, was a relative of Secretary Byrnes, she and Bill were both anti-FDR. But I liked taking their children to the zoo, and dropping in when Peggy and Bill had open house on Sundays.

One afternoon, after I'd found I could walk all around the airfield unchallenged, I had dinner at a winery called Stag's Leap. The place, a combination guest house and restaurant, fascinated me. Later I went back for lunch, said I was doing a *Saturday Evening Post* story about the wine industry, and asked to see the cellars. They were a little surprised because, they said, they'd had a *Post* man in only the week before. But they showed me around. The cellars were huge. I learned the pseudo-owner was a German baron—said to be anti-Hitler.

Throughout my stay in the neighborhood, checking chicken roosts and making reports (eight copies!), I continued to ask casually about Stag's Leap. Someone said, "A Nazi hangout? I hadn't heard that, just about the Swiss Inn." This was another spot south of San Francisco. When I was sent to check a plant in that direction, I dined at the Swiss Inn and asked who the owner was. The same baron!

In due time I was again in San Francisco, for the UNO meeting in 1945. Bill and Peggy were still there and so were their prejudices; Herb Caen, the *Chronicle* columnist, said he couldn't go to their house with me because they were anti-Semitic. When I got Peggy a seat at the UNO, she wouldn't take it because it turned out to be next to a Negro. But I felt better when her younger brother, just in from Spartanburg, said, "This is what the world is coming to and you may as well make up your mind to go along!"

From the menace of the Nazis, however, we'd made a cleaner escape. When I asked about Stag's Leap then, people said, "Oh, yes. The owners ran out of money and sold the place." But I was curious enough to check in Washington, and I learned the cellars had been found full of high-powered equipment and it might have been intended for use as a V-bomb base from which to attack San Francisco. Or so our intelligence services thought.

CHAPTER XXIII

MY PERILS WITH PAULINE

PREVIOUS PRESIDENTS had supplied press handouts and been photographed with stage and screen celebrities, but FDR made friends with reporters, really trusted and talked to them, and stars gave him the welcome due another stellar performer. I was not his only admirer from the newspaper and magazine world or from the newer media of communication.

One of the things I found I could do for the New Deal was to line up theater talent for specific projects, not mere personal publicity for the people in the White House. The stage had been in my background since the early days at Newport, when Mother entertained guests with a command performance of a Broadway musical hit transplanted to Beaulieu. Stars of opera and stage were in and out of the Fifth Avenue house and screen stars on the West Coast had long been among my own friends. Knowing them had come in handy when I helped stage the first of the birthday balls for the Warm Springs Foundation, which used famous entertainers as well as other famous names among its sponsors and guests. I well remember who paid the rather large pledges at my "bachelor table" and who didn't—and if anyone feels a twinge of conscience, the March of Dimes, which later took over this fundraising duty, is still receiving contributions.

Everybody was against polio, but it may surprise some to learn today that at one time not everybody in Hollywood was against the Nazis. Or perhaps they just weren't informed. At any rate, one of the early fears of the Roosevelt administration was that the tremendous propaganda power of the movies would be arrayed on the wrong side. Plenty of good people were wrong in those days—at least to the extent of hoping for a compromise with Hitler and the whole Fascist threat. There was bitter struggle at home; in the "Epic" campaign, the seamy side of Hollywood politics was displayed in the fight against Upton Sinclair. The same sort of

propaganda brought to bear nationally against the New Deal and in the field of foreign affairs could make trouble. The extreme sensitivity of foreigners to Hollywood attitudes had been shown me by the last of the Manchu emperors, the Japanese puppet Pu-yi of Manchukuo, who objected to villains as played by Warner Oland. The audience growled and the emperor walked out on one of these pictures, and Pu-yi told me he feared such scenes might provoke an international incident.

In the early New Deal years, American films were achieving a peaceable penetration of the world. The fascination they had for people everywhere was shared by the heads of state. The King of Denmark sat beside me in a Copenhagen theater for *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, and sneaked off to a neighborhood theater during his silver jubilee for a Laurel and Hardy comedy. King Gustaf of Sweden saw an average of four American films a week. At Suez, I watched the King of Transjordan laugh at Chaplin. The story is almost too pat that Chiang Kai-shek went alone to an American film theater to see *Three Smart Girls*, and so is the story that Hitler, joining his censors to see American films, preferred those of the Marx brothers. But one night in August, 1936, I sat in a filthy flea-bitten film house in Burgos, rebel headquarters in Spain, and watched Franco and his General Mola while they watched a blood-curdling American gangster film, complete with gun molls and gunfire louder than the rat-a-tat of machine guns mowing down their prisoners outside. And it was entirely in keeping with FDR's playful spirit that shortly after their countries' default on the debts, he entertained visiting European ambassadors with the comedy *The Gold Diggers*.

Thus, if conversation with royalty lags, you can always talk about films. And if this is true of kings and queens and other heads of state, just consider the effect of films on people in general, all over the world. No wonder FDR felt it would be a disaster if Nazi propaganda should go out from Hollywood.

But the country over, big money was anti-FDR and much of Hollywood was big money. There was a danger, if we got involved in war, that opposition to FDR would carry over to a dangerous sort of disloyalty (in France, remember, there were those who said, "Better Hitler than Blum"). So one of my early assignments for Roosevelt was to go to Hollywood, where I still did a column for *Script*, and make a report. If we had published the names of Hollywood big shots—business people, comedians, and stars—who

were about to bet on the wrong side, the country would, rightly, have been more alarmed than it was later by the trial of the "Hollywood Ten." Instead of that, we did a quiet cleanup, more or less by persuasion. The man most useful in this was Jack Cummings, so-called crown prince of Hollywood—he is Louis B. Mayer's nephew. But like me, he did not follow the family in politics. Mayer, of course, was violently Republican. Cummings was a New Dealer and also alert to affairs abroad. Another helpful topnotch executive was Mervyn Le Roy, then married to a daughter of one of the Warner brothers.

Not only did we head off any attempt to use Hollywood for adverse propaganda, we found enthusiastic support for FDR's policies, and from then on there was never any lack of stars to shine publicly for the New Deal. Some paid for this later when, after FDR's death, there was an effort to "brand" all New Deal supporters as Reds. But on the whole I have always found theater and film folk able to think for themselves and willing to help any cause they know to be worthy.

The very real friendship between Hollywood and the Roosevelts was well exemplified by the younger Roosevelts when James and his wife walked as extras through a Will Rogers film. Then there was a remark once made to me by the President's mother. The elder Mrs. Roosevelt was not blinded by Hollywood glamour, nor was she the informal democrat that her son was. But one day at tea she told me engagingly, "I think people must think me some sort of movie person, because they clap their hands when they recognize me. They never hiss me, or treat me unkindly."

I suppose we're all stagestruck—perhaps even I am. I remember the summer day in Beverly Hills when I took a little girl to buy ice cream, and the window closed just as we got there. Then a man who looked familiar persuaded them to open it, and I recognized Harold Lloyd—without the glasses and eating sherbet instead of mothballs. Better, he remembered who I was—"Oh, you're the man who had the penny papers!"

Right down to now I enjoy knowing stars and having friends like Mary Healy and Peter Lind Hayes; and if you want to know what I've done for theater and country in recent years, it was I who introduced Zsa-Zsa Gabor to Dr. Hermann Baruch when he was in the State Department, and also occupying my Washington apartment, during World War II. Dr. Baruch took one look at

her and arranged to have the rest of the Gabors, then in Portugal, admitted to this country.

My own involvement in relatively exotic adventure came about through something more like the reverse of the Gabor immigration visa—another matter of passports, but these unblessed by the State Department.

In the early war years I went down to interview President Camacho of Mexico, a pro-New Deal liberal who went in with the blessing of his stronger predecessor, Cárdenas, after a thumping defeat of the reactionary Almazán. Once in, Camacho showed signs of moving more to the right in his labor policies, but this was not the only reason for our interest. We also wanted to know how many questionable Europeans were coming into the United States from south of the border, with phony American passports.

Mexico was overrun with refugees of all sorts. The defeated government of Spain had moved there almost intact, and of course Trotsky had lived there until his murder; his widow was still in a Mexico City suburb.

In Mexico the Reds of various shades were far outnumbered by the other side. There were estimated to be some three million Franco sympathizers. There were also around 62,000 Germans, and a large number of Italians. Not all the Germans were Nazis; many of them had been there for years. But their sympathies were with the fatherland, and they zealously helped spread propaganda to the effect that Hitler was winning the war and was bound to lick a rotten British Empire and an Uncle Sam weakened by "labor strife." The existing Mexican government was attacked as having "sold out" to the colossus to the North. Once the Axis powers had won the war and overthrown us, they would give Mexico the "stolen" states of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.

So you could buy swastika buttons—I bought some—in the bigger Mexican towns. In the state of Chiapas there were said to be more than a score of German planes. Germans controlled the coffee and chicle industry in the south and in neighboring Guatemala, and the Condor planes were ostensibly for the use of the planters. But they were there, and the same part of the country was rumored to have training schools for saboteurs. In short, there was the sort of opportunity for collaboration with the enemy that in World War I had produced a state of jitters along the

border and eventually sent our troops into Mexico. This time we kept calm.

President Camacho talked with me pleasantly for half an hour, and I was told afterward that mine was the only private press interview he had given since his inauguration. Next I checked on a few of the known Nazi spy centers, which operated almost openly. Not even to Josephus Daniels, our ambassador, did I mention my curiosity about the passport problem.

I did hear, and report, that many Germans were becoming Mexican citizens and then entering the States on Mexican passports. But this had nothing to do with the passport racket I was investigating. That, it turned out, was flourishing most successfully in Cuba. I left Mexico the last of July, and before the middle of September I had gone from Texas to Florida and from Miami to Havana, where the story was to end.

In Cuba, shiploads of refugees were landing, many of them being people of the sort we wanted to keep out of the United States. At the risk of further confusing people who regard the whole New Deal as dangerously Red, I must admit that our concern was with the Nazis and Falangists, not with the Reds. At this time—remember?—the Russians were fighting Nazi Germany. The Communist Party in America was listed on state ballots, and we weren't worried about them. But we did have good reason to know that the Nazis were stirring themselves to establish beachheads in this hemisphere.

Although a shipload of Jewish refugees might seem an unlikely place to look for Nazis, actually it was a fine place for them to hide. Later we had a comparable situation when fear of Communist infiltration made us cautious about the admission of refugees from Hungary.

Before Paul Walters and I went to Cuba, we were supplied with photographs of persons likely to be involved in the passport racket, and with another bit of equipment. The Nazi Gestapo had ingeniously developed, and we had adopted, a tiny camera hidden in a cigarette lighter. You offered the suspect a light and got a close-up. Besides being easy to operate, the gadget had the advantage of using tiny film which could be hidden anywhere.

I studied the pictures supplied to us, and burned them, after noting particularly the face of a pretty girl whom Washington had mentioned. Her dossier said she was French-Canadian, had once been with the French Embassy in Washington, but was

there no longer, having been pro-Vichy. The pictures showed her as about twenty and not hard to look at; it was really a shame to burn them, especially the one in a bathing suit.

But it was not long before I saw the original. We took the night boat from Miami and she got on it. By eight that same evening I was dancing with her; we spoke French, and we didn't discuss politics. But I was sure it was the same girl, although some fifteen years, I judged, had passed since the pictures I'd burned had been taken.

Pauline—I'll call her this because it was the name she was using, and the last names of girls like her are subject to change—even told me she had been working at the French Embassy and was "on vacation." Just a hard-working girl with two weeks off, although her clothes looked better than that. In Havana, she confided, she'd be staying at the Hotel Nacional, on the Malecón; Paul Walters and I were booked for a noisy hotel in town. I made a date to take her to dinner the next night.

When I checked in at the Embassy I said nothing about my real assignment, only that I was doing a story about the overcrowded refugee camp opposite El Morro Castle. I went to see the camp commandant, and learned that a new ship, larger than usual, with some 1,500 refugees on board, would land the next day. This I mentioned to Pauline as we sat and talked in the moonlight, and she wanted to go with Paul and me to meet the ship. By now I was reasonably certain that she'd meet the ship in any case, and saw no reason why we should cover for her. So I made whatever excuses I could muster, and they seemed to go over, for we parted friends.

The Tiscornia camp, Havana's Ellis Island, covered several acres. Its series of yellowish stucco buildings was surrounded by a high wall and strands of barbed wire. To reach it, you chartered a launch on the Malecón waterfront, then caught a taxi up a hill to the camp.

Sure enough, as Paul and I went up the hill in one taxi, we saw another one with Pauline as passenger. We watched to see if she'd make contact with members of the crew of the *Navemar*, the refugee ship, but that didn't seem to be the game. Instead, she mingled with the pitiable people who were landing, some branded during their stay in concentration camps.

Paul's camera was kept busy while I talked to people I pretended to know, and soon got to know. There were lawyers who

would undertake to "rescue" their clients from camp on payment of a proper fee. There were people seeking such rescue, and others there to bail out friends or relatives. I got into conversation with a Viennese baron, a composer, who spoke excellent English; he and his white-haired mother eventually landed at the Nacional. He told me about a Mr. Goldschmidt on the *Navemar* who had excited his interest, and who later excited mine. The baron was sure there had been Gestapo agents aboard the *Navemar*; he told of a mysterious stop at sea, the night before, for lowering two passengers into a fishing boat headed for the Florida coast.

But Goldschmidt and his wife were still around, and when I saw them I was struck by his resemblance to a gentleman I had met years before in the Adlon in Berlin, in the company of Putzi Hanfstaengl, the piano-playing, Harvard-trained handyman for Hitler. Frau Goldschmidt also had a familiar look, and it turned out she had been on the Berlin stage. In time, and with the help of Paul's camera, we identified her as a friend of Frau Goering's.

The Goldschmidts were not detained at the camp, but within three hours were comfortably established at the Nacional, to which they were taken in a Cuban government car. Pauline's hotel, I then realized, was actually headquarters for the Nazi propagandists. So I continued to date her there, and at the bar Paul Walters picked up a friendly couple to make it a party—it was no part of my duty to date the lady alone.

Estimates of the cost of getting out of the immigration camp ranged from two hundred dollars for a simple "escape," with lodging in a local pension—good German food for fifty a week—to two thousand dollars for a bang-up job with passport. It was the passport angle that concerned us, and this made it important to see more of Pauline, who had circulated in the crowd landing from the *Navemar*.

We heard talk about the passport situation everywhere. At the refugee pension I got a lead that involved the Cuban police, and in the talk of Americans in Havana, mainly newspaper folk, speculations about the racket involved American politicians, including one United States senator. But I found nothing definite until, going to meet Pauline in the bar at the Nacional, I came upon her sitting at a table by the pool with a Cuban officer. He was the police chief, but his identity didn't interest me as much as the papers on the table between them; these appeared to be passports.

Introduced, the officer greeted me with, "Oh, I know—you work for American Military Intelligence!" Although I tried to laugh it off, I could see his words had made an impression on Pauline, who apparently hadn't known much about me until this warning. Of course she couldn't show an immediate reaction, but she did cool off. I, of course, had been warned too; since I was known, I couldn't telephone—I'd been told by our chargé that phones were tapped. Happily, I had a cousin—Cathleen Vanderbilt, who had married a Cuban and lived in a suburb—whose house I could use for making calls. But now we felt we had to move fast. I made a date for a party, which Pauline said would be a farewell because she was leaving for Montreal that night; her mother was ill!

At the night club where we danced, the Cuban police chief cut in. Paul and I had a conference in the men's room, from which we emerged to see Pauline and the officer in the garden—he was giving her something. More passports? Or money?

We had gifts of our own; we'd left some of Paul's tiny films at our Embassy, and hidden others in our shoe heels. At the Embassy a frightened chargé said we'd better get on a ship at once, without booking passage. So we decided to see Pauline off that night. But first I had a heart-to-heart talk with the police officer in a private room back of the bar. He told me that passports—I could, if I liked, have a Cuban diplomatic one, good in any country in the world—could be bought for from six hundred to two thousand dollars. And he told me how to use the phonies—on the airways, not on ships. Immigration officers at our ports of entry could not be "fixed," but sometimes it was easier to get through at the airports. He told me more about the "ring" and the American politicians involved. He named names. And as our object, after all, was to break up the racket, not to arrest Cuban police officers or girl go-betweens, I decided this wrapped up the story.

Meanwhile Paul was dancing with Pauline, and later, he got our bags put aboard the night boat. We went aboard ourselves, ostensibly to tell her good-by. As we approached the crew's gangway, I'd have sworn I saw a gun poked at us over a bale of goods, and Paul swears there was no question the artillery was there. Ungallantly, we kept Pauline in the line of fire and nobody got shot.

But I regret to say that, while they danced, Paul had tipped off Pauline, so that she really did go on to Montreal, perhaps. We traveled together as far as Washington, and she seemed to

bear me no grudge—in fact, she kept saying, “Why don’t you marry me, or keep me, or something?”

The Washington people were pleased with our pictures, and the whole passport situation cleared up, at least temporarily. Among the pictures, I liked a happy group taken of the Falangists who ran a famous rum company. We also had several pictures of Pauline, but none as pretty as the one I had burned. I never heard of her again. She hadn’t wanted to go to Canada. “What can I do,” she kept saying, “in such a dull place?”

CHAPTER XXIV

MAKE MINE MANHATTAN

AFTER CUBA AND the passports, I did a job of checking training camp morale at Bragg and Benning and on down to some of the smaller camps, winding up at the Pensacola naval air station, where I found better morale and worse morals. My reports, I must confess, recommended more field work, because where the boys were kept busy there was less bellyaching.

But soon I was making trouble for the Army, and myself, from inside. After Pearl Harbor, General Donovan's OSS was set up to do the sort of intelligence work I had been doing, and I went into army uniform. I found myself in Washington taking a course in public relations in the Army. What I learned in it I really don't know, but perhaps my mind wasn't on it because at this time my father died, on his yacht down at Miami. I had leave to be with him at the end, and then to go to New York for the funeral. So all I know about the public relations course is that we attended meetings and listened to how one would conduct the passing out of casualty figures to correspondents, and so on. Our instructor was a former cavalry officer.

Afterwards I received orders to report to General Hugh Drum on Governors Island, New York. I had met him in Honolulu in the thirties when, as I have said, he had aspirations to be chief of staff, and I think perhaps he felt the meeting had something to do with his failure to receive the job. He knew I was a friend of FDR's but he didn't care too much for the President, either. In New York, as he had been a friend of my father's, he went quite often to 640 Fifth Avenue and was my mother's guest at tea or on other occasions. I too went to the house on arriving in New York, then reported for duty.

On Governors Island I sat with other waiting officers on a long settee, until General Drum appeared. Then he called out in a loud voice, "Which of you is Major Vanderbilt?"

I rose and started toward him, but he said, "Just a moment, major. I am assigning you to General Irving N. Phillipson."

This was all right with me, both then and afterward. Later I learned that General Phillipson was Jewish, and since some army and navy officers are subject to race prejudice, I think General Drum may have expected me to share this attitude.

He went on, loudly and formally, as if he had never seen me before, "Are you related, major, to the General Vanderbilt who just passed away?"

"Yes, sir," I said. "I am his son."

"He was a great friend of mine and a very fine soldier," General Drum remarked. "I hope you will be as good a military man."

And I think I replied that I hoped so too.

Then an orderly took me to an adjutant, who looked at my papers and told me that orders had not yet arrived from General Drum, and that General Phillipson was out of the city and would be for some days. After the adjutant read through my papers, he went on, "We're building up a new group on Manhattan Island, and I presume that since your father passed away so recently you'd like to be over there for a while to be near your mother."

I quickly explained that my mother had my sister to take care of her and didn't really need me, and that Mother had all the legal advice necessary, and would not need me for that either. I said I thought I was a much better field officer than I would be a staff officer and asked if they had any place outside of New York in which I could fit.

But the adjutant seemed determined to send me to the MMD, the Metropolitan Military District. So off again—cap in hand, you might say—I went to the ferry, and then by taxi up the West Side Highway to the MMD, which at that time was quartered in an armory on, I believe, Sixty-fifth Street just off Central Park West. It was an old-fashioned armory where, as a child, I'd loved to roller-skate. But now there was no skating rink; the floor was filled with small cannon and various anti-aircraft guns, and some small tanks, and a great many of what they called troop carriers, and jeeps, and all sorts of other things. Officers were having it made ready for troops to move in.

The commanding general of MMD at the time was Brigadier General Amos W. W. Woodcock, from Salisbury, Maryland. In World War I he had served with considerable distinction, and was cited for gallantry in action. After that war he had a thankless

job and one that made him a curiosity in the army—he became the director of the U.S. Bureau of Prohibition during the fatal trial run of the Eighteenth Amendment.

I must say General Woodcock was an efficient officer. He was a very pleasant-looking little man with a bald head, smaller than Lowell Thomas or Mike Todd, and he spoke kindly in beautiful English. For a short time he had been president of St. John's College in Maryland. Of course he was death on liquor, but now we no longer had the Eighteenth Amendment, and a great many of the officers and a great, great many of the enlisted men and noncommissioned officers did quite a bit of boozing. It took his staff some time to get used to General Woodcock.

At my own first meeting I looked at him over a desk piled high with papers, and answered his salute and inquiry with, "My name is Vanderbilt, sir. I'm a former major, assigned from the Reserve Corps to the Regular Army. For two years I've been working in various parts of the world on special intelligence assignments, part of the time reporting to G-2 of the general staff."

General Woodcock, as usual, asked about my family and my father's recent death, and then said, "What do you know about military intelligence?"

I quoted Mr. Hoover of the FBI. "Sir, I have been told that in military intelligence hardly any one person finds the little black bag by himself. Mr. Hoover told me that intelligence could be considered a sort of jigsaw puzzle. In military intelligence a lot of noncoms and many enlisted men and a few officers contribute the pieces, then someone sitting in an office puts them together and finds where the little black bag is."

The general seemed to like this answer; like many people he had high respect for J. Edgar Hoover, who had been appointed to head the FBI by a Republican president in 1924, but was kept on by FDR as a responsible administrator.

After two or three weeks with MMD I realized we were doing mostly paper work. As an officer "over age in grade," and a non-professional soldier, I had to endure some polite hazing by my outfit, and this took the form of an invitation to target practice in the basement of the armory. When I broke down and put on glasses I got by; after all I'd done trapshooting and shot turkeys in Georgia, and gone duck-hunting in Nevada, and like the elder Mrs. Roosevelt I always liked the shooting galleries at fairs. But

what did the ability to hit a target with a Garrand rifle have to do with defending the Metropolitan Military District?

Other activities were mainly concerned with human relations among retreats. One day General Woodcock asked me to go along to a dinner at the Metropolitan Club, one of those clubs from which I had resigned. The dinner was a "we boys" affair, given by professional soldiers for professional soldiers, and everybody except the general and me got potted. I was getting hungry, with no sign of dinner, when a telephone message relayed an order for us all to report at once to Pier 86, Hudson River.

There, from General Phillipson, we got our first real briefing. One of the finest officers with whom I ever served, he looked something like Edward G. Robinson and was in earnest about our job. Now he had real news for us: Governors Island had been advised of the impending arrival of some twenty thousand troops, to be embarked from the Manhattan District.

At the pier, a huge map showed the docks from which we were later to ship out the First Division. The *Normandie* fire had just occurred and was believed to have been set when someone threw away a cigarette. Part of our job now was to protect the piers.

So we learned to work with the city fire department and with the police department, then under Arthur Wallender. Detailed to attend meetings with these departments and with those having to do with water supply, sewage, and transportation, I learned more about New York than I had ever known. We were especially concerned for the water supply, but also to prevent disasters of any sort such as the Black Tom explosion of World War I. I think our success in preventing such disasters was due chiefly to the diligence of General Woodcock, who seemed never to sleep. I never worked with a superior officer who worked so hard.

When I suggested at mess that we should look into the opportunities for spies to work in the dock area, and around bridges and tunnels, the general assigned me a detail of men, and later additional officers, and I tried to give them some of the intelligence training I had picked up. In the dock area were warehouses and storehouses of all sorts, some used by the city government; there were also truck garages and small businesses ranging from laundries to hot-dog stands. And we found out one very interesting thing. Along West Street, facing the Hudson River, a large number of small businesses—say, mixing fruit drinks from syrup—

were conducted by Germans or Austrians who hadn't been in business there very long.

In just one place in Jersey—I don't think we were supposed to be in Jersey, but we went there nonetheless because they were loading freight and food and all sorts of things on the Jersey docks—in one place near the Stevens Institute we located a Japanese, the first one located in the area. He was all right—he was attending Columbia University and living with a Japanese girl. But that's how thorough we were.

To find out about these people we went to a building and rang the bell of the shop or store. If they didn't answer, then we knocked on the door with our army clubs, and eventually someone would come. Sometimes, of course, they actually didn't hear us because they had washing machines going, or other machinery in operation. Other times they did hear us but wouldn't answer. I don't think we really had any right to do this, but in wartime one does all sorts of things whether he has a right to or not. We had no search warrants, and I think anyone who objected could have prevented us from coming in. I don't know the legal ground, but the judge advocate on Governors Island told us we had the right to search any place where we believed somebody might be doing something to sabotage the war effort.

When we entered a place, we said, "We're from Army Intelligence, and we're checking to find out if you have any aliens here. If so, will you please show us your alien registration cards?"

As you know, there are a great many people in the United States who are not American citizens, for one reason or another. And we found along the river here, where they were loading troops and where all sorts of other important work went on later, not hundreds but tens of thousands of German aliens who had never become citizens. A little later we found a few Japanese, mostly up on Riverside Drive near Grant's Tomb. Others were in the neighborhood of Sandy Hook, and I think in two or three instances we suspected they might have hidden radios for signaling submarines. However, most of these people had jobs in New York, or had formerly been valets or butlers. In only a few cases were they probably in the employ of the Japanese government.

We never arrested anyone. We had no right to, unless we actually caught them in the act of sabotage. But we made reports. We had to make out eight copies of each one, and since the

ordinary typewriter makes only five copies, each report had to be typed twice.

In a check of the water supply problem, I went up to all the reservoirs, not merely the Croton system but to lakes and dams in Connecticut and upstate. But the two critical spots were right in the city, and I recommended guards there. At first General Woodcock thought this was the job of the police or the fire department. But he went with me in a jeep and after he saw one point where a saboteur could have climbed some two hundred feet underground through an unguarded shaft, he put a guard there. On two different occasions—maybe more, but two that I know of—the men on guard were attacked. At various times our men were shot at from speeding cars, but no one was killed. Some people on our staff thought that stationing the guards made the vulnerable spots more obvious, but the enemy could learn the locations anyhow. Our greatest nightmare was a water shortage, which would require us to evacuate people from Manhattan, while tunnels and bridges were simultaneously blown up.

The bridges had their own critical points. I hadn't known before that they rest on huge ball bearings, to permit movement like the sway of tall buildings. I was told that bridges that do not sway are the ones that collapse.

We lived in fear of two things happening in the tunnels. One was that a truck might, by some prearranged device, detach a trailer filled with dynamite or some other explosive. After the truck sped away, a time device would detonate the explosive and blow up the tunnel. If this happened simultaneously in all the tunnels and also on the bridges, the people in New York would be almost like rats trying to leave a ship.

Our second worry concerned the large buildings housing the machinery which operates the tunnels and controls their air supply. These buildings, windowless and six or eight stories high, are located at the ends of the tunnels. In each one of the buildings there are two places, only two, where—if the enemy knew it—they could cut off the air so that people in the tunnels would suffocate. Here again we stationed guards.

Meanwhile we were still marching troops through the West Street bottleneck. Some time before I had asked at mess, "Why don't we take the men to New Jersey by ferry, and load them across the river?"

There were objections to this; I guess some officers thought I

had my great-great-grandfather's business on my mind, and they informed me there were no more ferry boats left in New York, or very few.

"Well, they could be activated again," I argued. "They must be somewhere. Or we could use some other kind of boats, or bring the troops in by train on the Jersey side."

When General Woodcock didn't want to stick his neck out on this idea I went down to Governors Island to see General Phillipson. He thanked me, but nothing happened. We went by with two or three more troop loadings, and we were also loading live ammo near Coney Island in plain sight of the old Halfmoon Hotel. Both these transport hazards worried me and I kept nagging—I'm afraid that's the word—at any superior officer who would listen.

One who agreed with me, and was my friend in MMD, and later, was a Colonel Cheney E. Lawrence, an ex-teacher who had served on the military staff of Governor Winant in New Hampshire. When Winant became FDR's ambassador to the Court of St. James, he wanted to take Lawrence but Lawrence didn't want to go. He thought the job of military aide to an ambassador was too chi-chi. He was one of the finest men I ever knew, one of the few men I would always trust. Well over six feet tall, thin and angular and straight as a die, gray-haired at fifty, Lawrence kept in trim by walking two or three miles every day. I walked around Central Park with him once and limped for a week.

Colonel Lawrence thought with me that the troops should sail from Jersey and the explosives should be shipped from some other port, perhaps from the Cape. But all proposals for change went through channels as far as General Drum, and nothing happened.

My persistence, I'm sure, was a nuisance to General Woodcock and General Phillipson. However, I wasn't just an anxious amateur; some months before, I'd worked on a similar though smaller problem, to report on the sabotage possibilities at Sault Ste Marie. In terms of the war effort alone, the Great Lakes shipping through the Soo Canals was important, but I reported also on the power plants at Niagara Falls, where the Barge Canal and the river were accessible to any saboteur. So now, in defiance of all army procedures (and even now I wonder if I should admit it!) I told Teacher (FDR) about the problems on Manhattan. I even mentioned a relatively minor worry: I thought we should test

the life preservers on troop-carrying vessels; we always had done this on the family yachts.

Soon we got a directive calling for tightening all controls at the docks. In passing, let me say that we had no troubles with the stevedores' union, though some with the Todd shipyard executives—and no more West Street transfers of troops; the Jersey ferry plan would be followed.

"Did you," General Woodcock asked me, "have anything to do with this?"

Incidentally, the life-preserver check was needed. When the fire department tested them by throwing them overboard, too many sank. And some of the life rafts were discovered to lack important supplies.

Now army shenanigans of some sort changed the MMD command, and General Woodcock, who had got used to me, was replaced. Soon afterward I too moved out.

On my last assignment in the Metropolitan Military District I was OD on the dock one night when we were operating in a big way. The two *Queens* were in port, for degaussing—a process involving the ropes used as shock absorbers, to furnish some protection against harbor mines. So we had the shipyard people, with extra MP's to watch smokers. Also, we had ferries loading twenty thousand men for overseas. My orders were that *nobody* was to leave the dock during loading hours, and the phones were sealed.

But I had no sooner taken over as OD than people began giving me urgent reasons for violating these orders. First, there was the admiral—double jeopardy, because he'd been a general in World War I. Now he was bossing Standard tankers over in New Jersey, and he had nothing to do with troop movements—surely he could go home? But I had my orders, and I could only express deep regret.

Next came a general, a two-star general with General T. R. Roosevelt, Jr.'s, First Division. He was shepherding debarkees fresh from training in El Paso, and he wanted a pass so he could say good-by to his wife. Sorry, general, but the orders are *no one* can leave the dock.

Then there was the lieutenant colonel—says you know him, his father used to be governor of Rhode Island and you played together on Bailey's Beach years ago. He's being shifted over to SHAEF, but right now he's got to get off this dock to meet his

wife; she's waiting for him in the Barberry Room—the last night. Sorry, sir.

Last came the two lieutenants, first and second. I knew them too, or their stepfather—they were the Katz brothers and their stepfather was Harold Jacobs, my old boss at United Press, and one of my best friends in the world. Our last night, sir—but *they* didn't argue.

At this point Colonel Lawrence offered to take over the dock. The admiral only wanted to go home, so we let him. I found the general, an officer popular with his men, playing cards with his sergeants in the grand salon of a *Queen*. With him, the lieutenant colonel, and the two lieutenants, we more than filled an unattached jeep, but we piled in somehow and headed for the Barberry Room. "He's a friend of Roosevelt's," I heard somebody whisper as we pulled out.

I made everyone promise to be back at one o'clock sharp, to rendezvous at the table I told the headwaiter to hold. While the others scattered to their dates, I went to 640 Fifth to soak in my great-grandfather's marble tub. When I returned at 12:45, I found the lieutenant colonel there ahead of time. The two lieutenants arrived at 12:50. But at 1:15, when we had to leave, there was still no general. Regretfully, on our way back to the dock I reported to the MP's that he was missing.

Jammed together in the jeep, the Katz boys and the SHAEF officer-to-be made friends, with the result that Koffy Katz, the elder, was taken into SHAEF and eventually became a chief Eisenhower aide, for which his mother thanked me.

The general also thanked me, when he arrived at the zero hour of 4:00 A.M., but he shouldn't have because he was in no condition to stand up and walk. "I'll make you a general!" he vowed. Alas, he got demoted and sent home, and when last heard of was playing polo, at seventy, in El Paso.

I almost got court-martialed.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PLOT

IN THE YEARS before World War II drew us in, I could not talk to FDR without contrasting him with the other heads of state. My notebook recorded each interview, which meant frequent notes about his appearance—overtired or overworked, yet confident, and so on. In February, 1939, I had written: “Spent forty minutes with FDR. He looked tanned and vigorous but worried, sitting behind the big eighteenth-century mahogany desk in the Oval Room, with the flag behind him. The desk did not seem too crowded and he greeted me with the usual cordiality. Six years of presidential pomp had not changed him; there was the same buoyant friendliness, the same warm handclasp, the same charm, he had as private citizen, state legislator, assistant secretary of the Navy, and governor of New York. His face is more lined and he is a bit quieter. But he spoke with the same direct simplicity, in an off-the-record conversation to be remembered a long time.”

What a difference from Hitler when I had last seen him at the *Sportspalast*, scowling, sweating, surrounded by armed Nazis while he roared for ninety minutes at his animated robots. Or the brow-beetling Mussolini, entrenched in his medieval palace, where to reach him you had to pass rows of sentries, cordons of frock-coated secretaries, and seemingly endless coteries of gentlemen in waiting. And when at last you entered the ballroom-sized office with the high ceilings, which were meant to dwarf you but dwarfed him too, you noticed that the dim lights gleamed equally on his bald head and on the model of the giant Caproni bomber sitting on his desk.

In Franco's cluttered military headquarters at Burgos, the dirty soldiers had harsh voices and fixed bayonets, and their little leader seemed as unimpressive—though pompous—as when I had first

seen him in a barbershop in Madrid. His desk held a metal cross a foot high and a brace of silver-mounted pistols.

Hirohito, on a miniature throne at the end of an endless corridor of gold and mirrors, had his own imperial guards—men in ancient costumes—lining the walls. With one hand holding a scepter, the other a sheaf of papers, the Son of Heaven seemed the central figure in a scene from an ancient painting. You couldn't expect to converse with him.

Stalin, behind the stout walls of the Kremlin, appeared "an ogre to some, to me a schoolmaster, as he sat in his brown blouse behind a plain wooden table and talked in labored French. He seemed willing enough to talk, and if it was summertime the blouse might be casually open at the neck. But the windows were always barred.

The other heads of state were all guarded or barricaded in one way or another, but at the White House the veteran doorman, Pat McKenna, greeted me as he had since I had gone in to meet my first President, Theodore Roosevelt, when I was nine years old. Yet FDR now had bitter enemies and was making more. My notebook recorded that he was "the most hated human being in all Germany today. The Nazis have never forgiven his speech last spring. Such tactics are not Aryan! Therefore he is pictured in their press as leader of a rabble consisting chiefly of Jews, Negroes, Communists, and the unemployed."

At the other end of the Axis, Virginio Gayda, the Fascist mouthpiece, protested for Mussolini our sale of planes to France.

Nor were Roosevelt's enemies all overseas. Our neutrality legislation had kept us from selling to republican Spain the weapons that might have stopped Franco; now we had to modify the legislation in order to help France and England defeat the Axis, but popular opinion was hard to change. Polling the Middle West, I found local shopkeepers five to one against changing the neutrality laws, and in newspaper and other general polls the count was as high as sixteen or nineteen to one against. Any such change was labeled "the back door to war." Al Smith, Carter Glass, and Secretary Stimson had talked over the radio for revision, but made little impression on farmers who felt that "these bozos are hooked up with Wall Street" and housewives who only hoped that "FDR hasn't sold out."

As for Wall Street and the big industrial people, even those with war contracts, they still talked of what could be done "once

we get rid of those idiots in Washington." I was proud of my cousin Willie K. Vanderbilt, head of the New York Central, when, after a Newport dinner accompanied by the usual anti-New Deal chatter, he said, "Gentlemen, you fellows ought to thank God for the President instead of thinking it smart to kick him in the pants. He's saved capitalism a few years longer for all of you. If he wants a third term he can have my vote."

The third-term issue furnished a new basis for attack. When FDR made what would be his last speech to Congress, if he were not elected for the third term, his appearance was greeted by yells of applause from the packed galleries, followed by silence so deep you could slice it, while he spoke. It wasn't his greatest speech but it seemed now that people were beginning to listen as he said, "The future world will be a shabby and dangerous place to live in—even for Americans to live in—if it is ruled by force in the hands of a few. . . ."

On the hottest day of the summer, my notes read: "I was let in to see my favorite American. FDR sat in shirt sleeves before an overcrowded desk. He's aged a bit, looks more serious, more tired, but it could be the heat. He takes cold from air-conditioning, so won't have it."

The next week, after noting that Sumner Welles was coming out as I went in, I wrote that FDR and I talked war dangers, and I found myself wishing that "Senators Vandenberg, Borah, Johnson, La Follette, and Nye might be whole-heartedly disinterested in partisan politics at this grave moment." I even added a naïve wish that "John Hamilton might think of these United States as a unit, instead of worrying over which column each state will go into in the election." Two weeks later I wrote: "The President looked more his usual self, his hearty laugh there again. How this man endures it all, brickbats and praise, is beyond me."

The President was increasingly concerned with newspaper and radio handling of the news, its suppression or distortion, whether planned or unplanned. Regard for public opinion, even when wrong, was at the basis of many of his decisions—necessarily, of course, and the necessity increased as the war became our first problem. I had hoped that the President's running mate in 1940 would be Senator Key Pittman, Attorney General Frank Murphy, or Secretary Ickes. Senator Alben Barkley was a compromise candidate who turned out better than expected.

When war hit us, we had to deal with a new set of political

considerations involving relations with our allies. I made a public opinion check for FDR on the training of our troops—should they be trained here and then sent abroad, or have training in England? By now I was in active service, and I went out to Seattle, via Minneapolis; down the West Coast to Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Then to Denver via Phoenix, Tucson, El Paso, and Santa Fe; and from Denver I cut east to Kansas City and St. Louis, and then down to Dallas and Houston. From Houston I went east again—to New Orleans, Birmingham, Atlanta, Charlotte, Richmond, and Washington, and up to Boston, the other Portland, Providence, Hartford, and New York.

I wore civilian clothes and kept moving all the time, listening and making notes. I had my hair shampooed five or six times a day to get the chatter of the barbershops. I rented cars and listened to the talk at gas stations, at roadside beaneries, outside factory gates, along the wharves of port cities, and in mining and lumber camps. The result of a two months' survey was plain common sense: "Send them overseas when properly trained, and thus save sending food and supplies to them over there."

Undoubtedly this would have been the President's policy had it not been for the pleas of Winston Churchill, who at his next conference with Roosevelt begged that Americans train in England, for the very reason for which common sense opposed it. Besides troops, Churchill knew England would get better food, and arms and ammunition and all sort of supplies. We would pay the British lines for transportation, thus helping out the British Navy and the merchant marine. More American patrol craft would be made available for the English ports, with the oil to refuel them—and so on ad infinitum, with the shipping all insured by Lloyd's. So we sent hundreds of thousands of green troops to England for training in those days.

I've always said that Churchill and Stalin were the great masters of psychology of our times because, besides understanding their own people, they understood the psychology of other nations. I have never shared the general admiration for Churchill; I think David Lloyd George was a fairer prime minister. Nor did FDR trust him completely; but I would exonerate him from the accusation I heard often in the Middle West in the days before Pearl Harbor: "Churchill took Washington without firing a single shot." That was to happen much later, at Fulton, Missouri.

FDR was not easily cozened or bedazzled, and when he yielded,

it was after a balance of the political pros and cons. That he was immune to British ruling-class influence as such was clear when I saw him with Anthony Eden—an amusing meeting because here were two well-dressed charmers who spoke the same language, Eden's Oxonian matched by Harvard-Groton, with a broad *a* and the clipped sentence common to both. My notes say that to see them together was "like watching a game of chess," with Eden the jumpier of the two—"He would walk around tapping his hands together behind his back."

My own dander was up because at his first visit Eden could spare only a week to study the country. "Spending a week around New York, Washington, and Baltimore to learn the story of America," I wrote indignantly, "is much like visiting the main office of United States Steel and week-ending with one of its v.p.'s in order to get the story of the steel industry. Anything approaching a clear picture of the U. S. would take a well-planned tour of at least three months. . . . New York may be the financial, literary, advertising, style, and news center, but it is far from being America and there are vast areas of the U. S. where New York is merely a name." I added, "The indifference of the British upper classes to the United States and to their own colonies borders on presumption. Their manner toward the Dominions is that of a rich uncle toward his upcountry nephews. . . . When a world crisis approaches, it suddenly dawns on them that it might be wise to have us on their side. They then present us with a few carefully measured pats on the head. . . ."

As it happened, the problem of helping the British was solved by the Pearl Harbor attack, and from then on popular opinion was for the war, even though strong minority opposition persisted.

Odd or even funny methods are sometimes used to protect important undertakings. Of all the war secrets, the most important, naturally, was that of the atom bomb. Yet FDR himself told me a highly ridiculous story of how public curiosity was deflected from the Los Alamos site.

When the government became interested in finding a place to erect the first laboratory for experiments with fissionable material and the problems of nuclear science, we were already at war. Therefore, it was feared that if the laboratory were located where the enemy might be able to reach it by plane—from a ship at sea or from Mexico or some place in Central America, or even from

a submarine—the place would be knocked out almost before we got started. There are always spies, in peacetime as well as wartime, and always people out to make a buck, and they would make more than a mere buck if they tipped off the right parties about this project. Many people came to the secretaries of war and of the navy with ideas and suggestions, but Mr. Roosevelt asked the Interior Department to find out which was the highest accessible mountain in the United States at least five hundred miles inland. It turned out to be located something like fifty or sixty miles from Albuquerque or Santa Fe. However, engineers found no area on this mountain where a large space could be blasted out without arousing suspicion. So they decided to give up this particular location and place the lab on a smaller mountain, more like a mesa, a flat face on top of a high promontory. This is where Los Alamos is today.

Back then, however, we faced a tremendous task before the project could get rolling. In addition to the normal construction problems, a spur railroad line had to be built up the steep grade, and every effort had to be made to keep the populace from becoming suspicious. Of course a good many factories and war plants had come into the area, and many people had moved in because of the healthful climate. Still, this further activity might arouse considerable curiosity, and Roosevelt felt something should be done to allay suspicion. He asked for suggestions from various members of his staff, and Marguerite LeHand said, "Why don't you have it leaked to the general public that the government is building a home for pregnant WAAC's, and the secrecy is because they don't want the families or friends of the WAAC's to know they're pregnant?"

This became a standard joke in the army, and people whispered and made all sorts of wisecracks about the home for pregnant WAAC's. And nobody paid any attention to the building of Los Alamos on the high mesa outside Santa Fe.

Now I wish to tell all I can of something that, for many reasons, is difficult to write about. For one thing, some may find it a story hard to believe. For another thing, it involves my family relationships, and also my own judgment and credibility, and so anyone interested in discrediting me will question the story. Nevertheless I intend to tell it.

No small part of my duty as a "public ear" for FDR was to

report to him opinions expressed in Newport and at the Fifth Avenue house by people who were my mother's guests, because these people often represented important forces or areas of influence. Their views in themselves might be far less shrewd than those I heard in hot-dog stands, and as individuals they might be less important than taxi drivers, but what they said carried a certain weight in our economy and I duly reported their opinions even when, as usually happened, they were highly adverse to and critical of the Administration.

One thing I must say for my mother's social circle is that it was completely cosmopolitan. Not long ago, when my *Newsletter* carried a paragraph sympathetic to a Jewish group, I was rebuked by the publisher of a paper of a different sort, a titled Italian, who wrote, "I cannot understand. Your paper carried no advertising and these people were, certainly, not on your late mother's invitation list." To which I hastened to answer: "My mother was a very liberal person. She had no feelings against race, creed, or color. At a dinner once were Ralph Bunche, Bernard Baruch, Senator Taft, and Jimmy Roosevelt."

Socially Mother mixed parties to the extent of having the Farleys to dinner with Harry Fletcher, a former chairman of the Republican National Committee, and she argued pleasantly that we must all work together for a "My Country 'Tis of Thee" party. Actually, she could not give up old friends, and at the same time she had an alert interest in new people, even in new world alignments. For example, she was with me once when I spoke to Andrei Gromyko, and she insisted that I present him. Then she promptly invited him and his wife to dinner, and was disappointed when I said strict Russian protocol would probably forbid their acceptance. It did, but Gromyko himself came to lunch, and Mother talked about his country—her memories, of course, all of royalties deposed and disposed of by the party her guest represented.

Politically Mother had been a loyal Republican for so long that she had forgotten she was born a Southern Democrat. In fact, she might be credited with starting the migration from Dixie into the GOP fold, long before the New Deal. She even opposed sending her granddaughter Cornelia to Vassar because she considered that college too radical.

Now, in the war years, she began to show her age. She aged beautifully, dressing for a family dinner as carefully as for a

formal public appearance, with her Swedish maid Ingrid Nyström spending hours on her coiffure, and her own hand applying the simple make-up Worth sent her from Paris. But as many older people do, she began to feel a sometimes touching gratitude to old friends, or to new ones who knew how to make the proper approach. And she was less critical of the "climbers," a quality spiritually admirable but one which made her more vulnerable to their designs.

Some of the people around her in these days I came to distrust. In themselves, these people were quite unimportant, but they talked and I listened. And from 1940 on, some of the things they said concerned me very much. The 1940 election, breaking the third-term precedent, confirmed FDR as the people's choice to carry on through the war years. His opponent was Mr. Dewey, and the campaign slogan "Don't change horses in the middle of the stream" was twisted, you may remember, to "Don't change to a Shetland pony." The voters didn't, but many people were not pleased, especially those traditionalists who were outraged by the overthrow of the third-term precedent which they had counted on to rid them of "That Man."

The economic royalists were of course frustrated, for now, with a world at war, the chances for financial and industrial gains were immeasurable if only the Administration would go along. Instead, we had this New Dealer—this Socialist—this Red—the epithets piled up, and those who had begun by criticizing FDR's brain trust ended by talking of a madman in the White House, from whom the country must at all costs be saved. Now they were ready to talk revolution—revolution in the Spanish manner, with the rebels on the right. They felt that the third term began a dictatorship, even a dynasty, against which all true patriots should fight.

Certain people all over the country talked like this, in fact, and there were all sorts of stories about the seriousness of Roosevelt's illness—mental, of course!—and the possible succession of the sons, and so on. Such talk could be brushed off as long as it was confined to the cranks who, as they made their wild guesses and dire predictions, shifted their tobacco plugs and spat at the stove, or rattled the car gears in traffic. However, you heard the same things around dinner tables in Newport and New York and Washington, from people who had power and influence. They were just as gullible and excitable, just as willing to believe the

most fantastic rumors against the man they hated—and some of them had power to act. Also, some of them had allies.

And as war loomed closer, army men thought of their careers and not all of them were completely loyal to their Commander in Chief. The Navy remembered him as one of their own, but the Army had no such tie, and men who had been passed over for promotion or who found the New Deal agencies a hindrance in negotiating military contracts had bones to pick. Indeed, the army contracts made natural allies of certain officers and of the hate-Roosevelt group of industrialists.

On the fringes of this group were the anti-New Dealers whose prejudices were already roused, certain wealthy and influential Southerners, certain Catholic admirers of Franco, certain sections of the press, including the still-powerful Hearst papers with their scandal columns. These people were no less intense in their anti-Roosevelt feeling, and they could be depended on to spread or originate rumors and fan the flames of hate, although they lacked the power and unity of the hard core of financial and industrial opposition.

In addition to these fellow travelers in the anti-Roosevelt movement, there were also a few who acted as liaison with the hard core of opposition that really meant business. And some of them, I was sorry to discover, were to be met at my mother's house—wealthy industrialists, internationalists of the royalist persuasion, and a number who had suffered disappointment in their private ambitions. Their talk told me of others who were like-minded.

For years my father had been too ill to see his old friends, and so he never knew that relatives of a wealthy Midwesterner, whom Mother never liked but who was kind to me in my childhood, were involved in what I now had to consider a real conspiracy. Finally, from one of my oldest friends and colleagues in Washington, to whom I was indebted for past favors, I got confirmation of what I had learned in Newport and New York.

I use the word *conspiracy*; I really am talking of a plot—a serious, long-discussed plan to—shall I say—*capture* the President. The idea was not to kill him; none of these people was as crazy as John Wilkes Booth. Nor was it to kidnap him for negotiation, as had happened in the case of Chiang Kai-shek. Rather, proceeding in the pattern of certain South American revolutions engineered by the palace guard, the idea was to impose a firm restraint, for the good of the country; to hold this dictator, this

madman—well cared for, of course; well treated, but well guarded—while sane persons set up emergency controls and saved America.

Given the premises, the idea was logical, and they were premises which many people accepted as truths. Because I had trained myself to listen, and because my name predisposed those who did not know me to assume that I had prejudices akin to theirs, I heard here and there, and bit by bit, pieces that fitted together. I tried not to believe what I had to conclude, and I carried on investigations of my own long before I mentioned the matter to my superiors. But in time I did report because I wanted certain people investigated by the proper federal agencies. In these investigations great care was taken to sort people out and not confuse the innocent with the guilty; there was no "guilt by association," and that is one reason why I am being very careful to offer no clues which might involve the innocent.

As a matter of fact, FBI investigations to protect FDR had been carried on long before this. One such had resulted in changing the plan to hold a conference between Roosevelt and Churchill on the Stettinius estate at Palm Beach, for it was discovered that reports about the conference arrangements were going from Palm Beach to San Francisco, and from there to Germany by way of Mexico and Madrid. The Palm Beach information was supplied by a woman of wealth and social position whom I had first seen in the Hitler circles in Berlin, and the information-gathering involved her small son, who moved freely about the Stettinius estate. As a result of this leak, the conference was eventually held at sea. The people involved were not arrested; they served as links for further investigation.

One of my oldest army friends talked to me freely, when he had a few drinks, of jealousies involving the top brass. As everyone knows, there was a MacArthur party, as opposed to Bradley and Eisenhower; what was not generally known was that the contest for power at lower levels was no less bitter and much more reckless, and as in the Conway Cabal of Washington's day, the threat was against the Commander in Chief.

So what happened? Well, as you know, the President never was captured by the enemy. Neither was any conspiracy exposed, with public scandals and punishments. When the facts were known, I was permitted to call my friend, and another army man I knew well, and offer a tip that all the plans were known. Those involved in the cabal were not disgraced or downgraded, but they weren't



WASHINGTON, D.C.

* Walter Reed Hospital
Jan 7, 1943

Dear Grace Fully -

Your good note came in this morning
So very very many thanks. I had not
expected the President to come to see me

the President ever even suggested. You
may recall I was ranting a year ago
over the fact that unless the President
backed up the local Democrats at
home we might lose the House. We
nearly have. I was suggesting persecution
of Jim Farley — who is now an active
menace — and I have been for the past
two years practically begging the invest-
igation of that little gang inside the
Treasury which seeds the overthrow of

promoted either. Two of them, I think, are dead; at least they have disappeared from the pages of *Who's Who in America*. Of the industrialists and the social leaders who conspired or went along, some have died, some have lost power and influence. Others live in Monaco. We can afford to forget them all.

But at the time the whole affair had a tremendous effect on me; I lived at high tension for months. I remembered once asking Goebbels, "And how would you destroy the United States?" And his reply: "*From within.*"

As I have indicated, some of these conspirators I had known from childhood; they had dined with us, given me toys, been on a first-name basis with my family. And although, a decade before, I had broken politically with my parents and was quite accustomed to our differences and to maintaining my own independence of thought, never before had my devotion to FDR made me—so to speak—a spy among my own friends and in the family household.

One problem was whether to tell FDR. It was no time to add to his worries. At length, torn by this question, I talked to Mrs. Roosevelt about it—this was late in the day, months after the investigations began. She promised to tell FDR at Hyde Park, and she did, only to discover, as she told me later, that he had known all along.

All the tension finally proved a little too much for me. One day, doing a routine inspection on my army job, I felt a pain in my chest and had to sit down. I tried to keep quiet about it, but an army doctor had a look at me, called it a coronary attack, and ordered me into the hospital. At first I was furious, and saw it only as part of the bigger plot—to get me out of the way.

In time, the doctors gave me the welcome news that my heart wasn't permanently affected. But they warned me about worry and excitement, and I think my medical retirement may have saved my life.

Personal Relations

CHAPTER XXVI

END OF AN ERA

IN WALTER REED HOSPITAL—heart trouble put me there twice, actually—an orderly took me to a tiny room and gave me a long hospital nightgown, but no dinner—evidently I was too late for that. I had candy and stuff that I wasn't supposed to eat, but did, and fortunately I had a paper to read, and there was light to read by. Nobody appeared to ask questions; it was a Sunday night.

About seven o'clock the door opened slowly and into the room came a tall, good-looking man in a blue silk dressing gown. He was sparse of hair, and in his right hand he was carrying a large brass spittoon. In his left, he had a pouch of tobacco.

And then, as he turned fully toward me, I recognized General Pershing, and started to hop out of bed.

"No, no, no," he ordered. "At ease. Stay where you are." And he put his spittoon on the floor and got into a large brown leather chair. Rolling up some of his tobacco, he made it into big fat lumps, which he put into his mouth. He began sucking them and then spitting into the spittoon. At length he asked what brought me to the hospital and whether it had happened in the field, and quite a few more questions. Then he said, "Is your lovely mother still alive? I remember her in the days of her youth—and later. She was such a remarkably beautiful woman."

"Yes, sir, she's still alive. She'll probably be down here to see me one of these days."

"Christ, I hope you don't let her see me!" he exclaimed. "I used to be quite a beau in those days—I was a good-looking devil."

I said, "Well, I still think my mother's good-looking, but she's not any younger either."

On one of my trips in army dressing gown and pajamas to

General Pershing's headquarters, I came butting in on General Eisenhower. I have met him on only two occasions. This was the first, and the other was much later when Perle Mesta was giving a party for him in New York. On the second occasion he came over to me and said, "I've seen your face before somewhere. Where was it?"

I reminded him it was in General Pershing's room at Walter Reed Hospital.

"Oh, yes, I remember. You were the fellow who was chewing all that horrible tobacco."

When I was released from Walter Reed, they said I'd be dead in six months if I didn't quit working so hard, and so I went back to my little ranch in Nevada. I found it greatly changed.

On going into the service, I had given the main house as an officers' club for the army and navy, because it was midway between the navy base at Fallon and the army base just north of Reno, where they were using Pyramid Lake, an Indian reservation, for air target practice. The country around the lake is supposed to look like the inland sea of Japan, so the navy built some ships that were supposed to look like carriers, and towed them up and down the lake for dive-bombing targets for the planes from Fallon, about fifty miles east. My place was not far from the lake shore, and they made havoc there. Everything in the house was terribly run-down too, as the officers who used it squashed out cigarettes on the woodwork and put things down the plumbing.

The night I got back, some friends drove me out to the lake, taking the highway the army and navy had built from Reno instead of going out the lovely, picturesque desert road. My friends warned me that I wouldn't be able to stand it at the lake because of the dive-bombing, and after twenty-four hours I realized they were right. The whine of the falling bombs sounded as if the house itself was their target, and many times, in fact, they did hit things on the edge of the lake.

So I moved around, and by winter was settled at a ranch called the Washoe Pines, down the Washoe Valley thirty miles south of Reno, up against the High Sierras, with huge redwoods all around it. It had a number of small log cabins, and a main guest house. The winter weather was quite cold and the snowdrifts reached a depth of several feet. In that area, people have been known to freeze to death in their cars.

One day as I was driving along after a sudden snowstorm, I saw a car in the ditch. A man and a woman were on the front seat.

"Turn off your motor," I called, but they couldn't hear in the gale.

The man got out and said, "Can you help me?"

"Yes, if you'll attach this to the front of your car," I answered. Ever since my days in the state police, I had always carried a winch and some tackle.

Another car came along just then, and between us we managed to get him out of the snow. He wanted to pay me, had a five-dollar bill in his hand, but I said, "Nothing doing. I live out here."

He asked where, and said he was staying "down the road at the Tumbling DW Ranch."

Eventually I met my new friends in town; he had said his name was Thackrey, but I didn't connect it up at the time. Then I ran into them in the bar of the Riverside Hotel, and it turned out he was Ted Thackrey, editor of the *New York Post*, and she was Dolly Schiff, the owner and publisher. She was getting a divorce from George Backer and was evidently going to marry Mr. Thackrey, who had just been divorced too.

It developed that Mr. Thackrey remembered me from the first Roosevelt campaign, and we had a long talk. He wanted to know why I was in Reno and I said, as usual, "I'm one of these people that actually live in Nevada."

He asked if I didn't want to get back into journalism, and I told him what the doctors had said. Then he explained the trouble they'd been having with the Washington office of the *Post*—the younger men had been drafted and now the older ones were going—and reminded me that I'd worked in Washington and knew my way around there. And almost before I knew what was happening, I'd talked myself into a job with the *New York Post*, as head of the Washington bureau.

In a period of about a year, I rebuilt the bureau almost entirely with women, except for some very much older men. Then I was sent out to cover the various conferences, because I knew more people than most reporters know, and had been part of the Roosevelt machine and knew all the politicians. Mrs. Thackrey was a great Democrat and a great liberal, and she was happy to

have me, but I remained an outside man, out of touch with office politics in New York.

There were two Quebec conferences. The first, very hush-hush, was to decide on D day. Quebec was chosen as the meeting place for the Allies because the joint chiefs of staff felt that you could control the countryside around Quebec better than around any city of similar size in the United States. The Château Frontenac Hotel there, a city in itself, is built on the edge of a cliff with several floors running above the cliff and eight or ten floors below it. A company of infantry or marines could control people coming and going, so that there was little chance of successful spying.

The person I knew best in Quebec was Colonel Frank Clarke, whom I had known for years in London, Berlin and Rome, New York and Miami. Probably we met first in a night club, because the colonel liked dancing with pretty girls. But that was only one of his talents. In Canada during the war, the colonel was always at high-level Intelligence meetings in the uniform of the Canadian general staff, with the red band on his cap—as distinctive as Eisenhower's cap would have been at SHAEF. One of Clarke's four sons was a prisoner of the Japanese, and the colonel was chief of the prisoner-of-war section of the joint chiefs.

He'd been to the White House with Bernard Baruch, and in New York I'd taken him to Mother's house and she admired him and often asked his advice. In civilian life the colonel was head of a large paper company which turns Canadian forests into newsprint for papers all over the world. The company ran its own steamship line and the colonel was a prime mover for the St. Lawrence Seaway. Now that that's a reality, he and his eldest son, a survivor of the Bataan death march, are planning an industrial city east of Toronto to take care of the boom expected when the waterway makes the Canadian cities into great ports, and Chicago becomes the second largest port in the United States.

In Quebec I not only wanted to see the colonel, but I thought he might put me up at his club. Instead I found I was expected at his house, Thorn Hill—a huge, old-fashioned English manor hidden behind bronze gates guarded by mounted cavalrymen. There I was provided with the reporter's dream, a battery of telephones—among them a direct connection with the press room at the Château Frontenac, and a direct line to New York. This gave me an advantage of half an hour—once, over two hours—while other reporters were jamming public phones.

Also staying in the house were General Portal and General Alexander and Sir Anthony Eden. Both the Canadian prime minister, Mackenzie King, and his successor, St. Laurent, were friends of Colonel Clarke's, and Thorn Hill was therefore a wonderful spot for news-gathering even though much that I learned there I was honor-bound not to reveal.

One problem to be considered at the conference was what to do about the Pope, for at this time the Germans were in Italy. The decision reached was to bring the Holy Father to Quebec for the duration, if the Germans showed any disposition to kidnap him.

It was expected that Stalin would join Churchill and Roosevelt and the lesser dignitaries at this first conference; also that De Gaulle would come. But neither came. During the second conference it was rumored that De Gaulle came and went, but I was never able to check this. Stalin, however, never came. There were important Russian officers at both meetings, but they were not admitted to the super-duper sessions.

One evening when I returned to Thorn Hill I was given a message: "Please call Mr. Von Buton at the Château Frontenac." I didn't know the name but I tried the call with no result. When I went around to the hotel, I discovered the caller was Admiral Mountbatten, known to me and my family as Dickie. Once he'd been more or less engaged to my sister; on my father's yacht *North Star*, my mother had introduced him to Edwina Ashley, whom he married. He and I had trained together in preparation for the English naval college at Dartmouth, and had met on various occasions in later life. Now, as we had a bite to eat at the coffee shop, he told me that after Quebec he was going to Washington, and then would have a couple of days in New York, and he asked if he could stay at our house there, to avoid reporters.

Naturally I said that he could. When I was a child my mother had first rented for "the season," and later bought, the Mountbattens' Brook House, in London. Throughout the current war, the Mountbatten children had been staying with Mother, first on Fifth Avenue, and at the moment at Beaulieu in Newport. Their governess, a charming countess who was either the sister or the cousin of General De Gaulle, taught them languages and music and took them to see the country—on Greyhound buses because they weren't being brought up to be snobs.

I asked Dickie if he planned to go to Newport to see the chil-

dren, but he said he'd rather they came to New York. So I called my mother and she said she would send them down.

Before Dickie flew to Washington he inquired where he could get certain things—for example, French perfume, because it was then unobtainable in England, and also some nylon stockings for Edwina. And he asked if I knew somebody, preferably a couple and one or two extra girls, so that he could go out dancing in New York. He didn't want to go to El Morocco or the Stork Club, or anywhere where he would be recognized, because he didn't want people to know he was in this country.

I turned one of my address books over to him, and then I wrote to a young New York couple that a friend of mine of some importance was coming to town and would telephone them, and I asked that they keep a particular week free for him. But I mentioned no name because I knew the letter would be opened by the censors.

Dickie arrived in New York one evening, up from Washington on the Congressional Limited, and went immediately to the house. The watchman let him in the side door, and he went up and telephoned the young couple. They were pleased to hear from him, and asked at once if he wanted them to find a dancing partner for him.

"Oh, no," said Dickie. "My friend Neil gave me a few names."

This was at six on a Friday evening. Dickie telephoned twenty-two young ladies in New York. Each time he would begin, "Neil Vanderbilt told me to give you a ring when I was in New York. I wonder if you'd like to go out for dinner or dancing."

And each time the young lady would say, "Well, this is Friday night, you know. I already have an engagement. By the way, what's your name?"

"My name is Dickie Mountbatten," he'd answer.

"What did you say?"

"Well, I'm Lord Louis Mountbatten."

And then they'd say, "Well, I'm the Queen of Sheba"—and hang up.

A few said to him, "Neil Vanderbilt's always playing tricks! You can go jump in the lake."

Although Dickie was in New York for two days, he said he was unable to get one single date. He did go out with the young couple that Friday evening, but on Saturday night even they could not get him a partner; all the soldiers and sailors and

marines in the world seemed to be passing through New York right then, and the girls had dates with them. So Dickie had a very dull time.

Meanwhile, he had telegraphed Mother in Newport, but she was unable to send the children down. The trains and buses were booked full with people going to New York. In fact, Mother would have had difficulty getting them as far as Providence, for she would have had to get a special permit for a car to drive the fifty miles.

So Dickie didn't see his children and he didn't have a date and he didn't have a good time and he didn't have anything pleasant to say about New York.

And that was how I fell down at the job of royal entertainment.

I also covered the UNRRA conference at Atlantic City and the Bretton Woods meeting, the conference attempting to reorganize the world's finances. The UNRRA conference had to do with the displaced persons of the world, and when I was covering it I suddenly found myself in a bee's nest of trouble that almost made me a DP.

In Washington I had run into my friend Russell G. Birdwell, whom I hadn't seen for years. He had become one of the country's biggest public relations people, with tire companies, two aviation companies, the American Plastics Institute, and other important firms on his list. He wanted somebody in Washington and offered me a very good salary plus commissions. I talked the offer over with Mr. Thackrey and told him, "You could save money on me—mark off a hundred a week if you like, because I'll be getting it elsewhere." So from then on, Thackrey and Birdwell each paid me \$150 a week and expenses, and at that time the expenses were considerable. In addition, Birdwell also paid a commission, and suddenly I found myself back in the money again, although I was spending a great deal on entertaining and securing news.

Then came the UNRRA conference. One morning in Atlantic City, when I walked into the newsroom the other men turned their backs.

"What's wrong with me?" I asked. "What have I done? Do I smell or something?"

"Have you seen *PM*?" one man answered.

On the front page of that famous tabloid a headline read: "Young Vanderbilt Registered Agent of Enemy Country." The

*Lib
personal*

Mr. Vanderbilt's national survey in 1936 was 4% off the final election returns. In 1937 he was 2½% low. Mr. Vanderbilt adds that the nation is 80% against war.

Cornelius Vanderbilt Jr. Pre-Election Survey
for Script Magazine

<u>STATE</u>	<u>% for Roosevelt</u>	<u>% for Willkie</u>
Alabama	90	10
Arizona	58	42
Arkansas	75	25
California	55	45
Colorado	51	49
Connecticut	51	49
Delaware	54	46
Florida	80	20
Georgia	80	20
Idaho	51	49 ✓
Illinois	52	48
Indiana	48	52 ✓
Iowa	47	53
Kansas	45	55 ✓
Kentucky	57	43
Louisiana	85	15
Maine	30	70 ✓
Maryland	59	41
Massachussetts	51	49 ✓
Michigan	52	48 ✓
Minnesota	53	47
Mississippi	85	15
Missouri	54	46
Montana	55	45
Nebraska	45	55 ✓
Nevada	51	49 ✓
New Hampshire	40	60 ✓
New Jersey	53	47
New Mexico	55	45
New York	53	47 ✓
North Carolina	75	25 ✓
North Dakota	46	54
Ohio	52	48
Oklahoma	60	40
Oregon	52	48
Pennsylvania	51	49 ✓
Rhode Island	51	49 ✓
South Carolina	85	15
South Dakota	47	53 ✓
Tennessee	70	30

FINAL TOTAL

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT -- 57.09%

WENDELL WILLKIE ----- 42.91%

November 28, 1940.

Dear Neil:-

Your election predictions
were extremely accurate and the
President asks me to tell you that
he has always preferred your prog-
nostications to those of anyone else.

With kindest regards,

Always sincerely,

M. A. Le Hand
PRIVATE SECRETARY

THE BUTTERY



for

WYNAGEN

AMBASSADOR HOTELS

NORTH STATE STREET AT GOETHE
CHICAGO

PP7

104

Dec 10, 1944

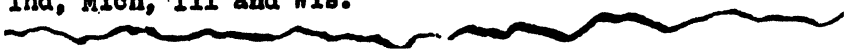
DEAR GRACE,

I THINK THE PRESIDENT SHOULD KNOW THIS, AND QUICKLY:

every time I mention the names of Ed Stettinius,
Will Clayton, Jimmie Dunn or Nelson Rockefeller,

I AM GREETED WITH BOOES, HISSES, CATCALLS.

Have been mentioning them in my lectures through Pennsy,
Ind, Mich, Ill and Wis.



story said that a public relations concern of which I was a member had registered me as an agent for Romania. Puzzled, I rushed to a phone booth and called Russell Birdwell in New York.

"Well," he said, "somebody had to represent the country, and all our other account executives are in different things, so I thought it would be all right to put you down."

"But what have *I* done about Romania?" I demanded.

"Well—you know, you knew King Carol and Madame Lupescu. And when we got the account in Mexico—of course, under Carol Romania belonged in the German bloc. I know Carol's no longer king—but technically it's an enemy country. And when we got the account, we had to put *somebody* down."

Anyone who represented a foreign country, especially an enemy country, was supposed to register with the Department of Justice. Although Ted Thackrey had known of my public relations job, he hadn't known a thing like this would happen—neither had I!—and now I had to choose between my two jobs. I resigned from the Birdwell firm, which, counting commissions, was paying treble what the *Post* paid, and continued to work for the paper, until there were changes in its policy and management.

Although I preferred being with the *Post* and the *Post* syndicate, as any newspaperman would, I had been interested in the Birdwell accounts and was far from snooty about the advertising business. I had worked on accounts before—the Tokyo subways, you may recall, and also, for a New York advertising agency, I had conducted some delicate negotiations involving the first public admission by "socialites" and celebrities that they slept on Simmons beds or used such-and-such a face cream. Though I was out of the army, the public relations job gave me a connection with the government because Birdwell accounts included both the War Production Board, under Donald Nelson, and the War Manpower Commission, under Paul McNutt, former governor of Indiana and high commissioner to the Philippines. Both were interesting characters, fond of what is called "night life" and, I found, easy to get along with. I rather enjoyed the Birdwell "conferences" with these and other politicians and with generals and admirals and all sorts of people. In the army I'd been just a lowly major, and no admiral or general paid the slightest attention to me. But when I was a public relations man, these people asked my advice. Also, I heard all sorts of stuff. I was not in such close

affiliation with the Roosevelt group as I had been before, but I was in with the political people.

At this time Governor Howard McGrath was exerting growing influence in the Democratic Party. I remembered him as a small-time politician in Rhode Island. I knew him, and I didn't see eye to eye with him because he was not really as liberal as Roosevelt, nor even Farley, although he was a great friend of Farley's. But it was because of McGrath that Harry Truman, an old friend of his, was chosen to run with FDR in '44.

McGrath wanted someone from a border state, and Symington—not then a senator, but an assistant secretary in the so-called “baby cabinet”—was considered too young. Roosevelt was not too happy over the Truman choice; he considered Mr. Truman a “phony liberal” and thought the party might have found someone not quite so “uncouth”—his word. Nevertheless FDR and Truman got along for campaign purposes as well, let us say, as FDR got along with Jim Farley in the later years. I think Mr. Truman came really to respect FDR.

When the President asked me to find out how people felt about Mr. Truman, I found that in general the country knew little about him except that, as senator, he had been chairman of a committee investigating big business, which seemed to be in his favor. Some who knew him personally said he was a crude, rude little man who kept picking his nose and telling stories unfit for the drawing room; others enjoyed his boogie-woogie and his stories of piano-playing in a house of ill fame in the days when his friend Boss Prendergast was in power in Kansas City. People liked him better, though, after he became vice-president and, later, President.

In 1944 the choice of a vice-president seemed less important than the same choice did in 1956; few of us considered the possibility of FDR's dying in office. In spite of the stories continually circulated about his unfitness, we were accustomed to his being a hale and hearty invalid whom we knew to be in good general health, aside from the one big handicap. Even at the time of the Yalta conference, later described as a defeat for us because FDR was considered, as so often before, to be “worn out,” those of us who knew him had no notion that the end was near.

The only reason I didn't go to Yalta was, in fact, my own health. In the early part of 1945 I was again flat on my back in Walter Reed Hospital, after a heart attack on a train (on my way to

spend Christmas with my mother) which involved a broken knee and ankle. Then came a long convalescence in Miami, where I was joined by Colonel Clarke, from Quebec.

On the return from Yalta, FDR's ship anchored off Miami and a plane came ashore with the body of "Pa" Watson, his long-time military aide, who had died on the trip. The President suggested that I return with the plane for a talk with him, but I was still shaky and Colonel Clarke told me I'd better wait. So I made an appointment to visit FDR at Warm Springs instead.

I can see him still as he was in that last interview there in the Little White House. The early April sun was setting as the President leaned forward in his wheel chair, as intense and earnest and sincere in what he said as I had ever seen him.

"This war will end soon, and then the letdown will be terrific. Forces will be at work at once to start another. But, Neil, I honestly believe that when this show is over, we can prevent another one—at least in our time—by giving the people of the world something to think about besides war and bloodshed. Of course, in order to do that, the leaders of thought throughout the world must get together with a world program. They must offer the people something to do. They must keep them occupied. And they must make their occupations attractive, interesting, exciting, and filled with the element of romantic adventure. You can't expect the world to revert to peace automatically."

An aide coughed slightly, as if to suggest that my time was drawing to an end.

"I know. I know. I'll be through in just a few moments," the President said—to no one in particular.

Then he smiled at me and went on, "It's different from the old days, isn't it? Sometimes I don't think I run our country any more. Bertie McCormick wouldn't agree; he's still accusing me of trying to run the world. Good old Bertie! He'll never give in—better circulation for the *Trib* to bolster up the German side, with more Germans living out there than there are in Alsace-Lorraine." The old gleeful chuckle marked this mention of the political opposition.

"But while I'm still President, I'll have something to say about the peace. It's time to start thinking now."

Then he went on to tell me that he had arranged with the *New York Post* to send me to the UNO Conference at San Francisco. "That conference will be the beginning of a world body for

the preservation of humanity. There will be doubters galore, but with God's help we'll win. The little people all over the world will see what we're trying to do and support us against the money-changers."

I stood up.

"Give me a ring or drop me a line when you see how things are working out at the Golden Gate. God bless you, my boy, and good luck."

Less than two weeks later, as I raced across Iowa on my way to San Francisco, I turned on my car radio and learned that he was dead.

CHAPTER XXVII

I'VE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO THE PACE

FOR A WHOLE day, in that April of 1945, the radio commercials were silent and they played music, mostly spirituals—"My Lawd, what a mournin', when the stars begin to fall." But that night a party for my niece Cornelia, in my mother's house, had gone right on. Then, in August, came Hiroshima and the new atomic age.

The next few years gave me, and others watching the world situation, occasion for frequent regret that FDR did not live to "have something to say about the peace." When he was gone, the men he called the "money-changers," the 'fraidy cats, all the people whose selfish desires and tricky or timid interpretations of policy could not deflect his purposes while he lived, had their day. In 1950 I wrote to a friend, "The world situation is much blacker than you think. I feel, if only FDR were alive—"

In Washington I saw no solution, but in California I thought I might find one. Young James Roosevelt was running for governor there, and I joined his campaign with the hope that something of FDR's spirit would live on in his sons. Besides my feeling for his father, and my liking for Jimmy himself, I hated to see unfair play; just as they had in his father's case, the big newspapers and the radio, and now the TV networks, were giving Jimmy's campaign the worst of it. He spoke sensibly on world affairs and important state issues, but lacked the funds to pay for the sort of publicity the other side was given for free.

From the first it was clear that we had no better than a fifty-fifty chance to win. One reason Jimmy wanted my help was that he knew my work in polling the country for his father. Four times I had done this and four times had come up with surveys so accurate as to win applause and thanks from FDR and Farley.

In 1932 or 1936, FDR said that my survey of his election was only four-fifths of one per cent off, closer than Gallup Poll or Lubell or any of the others in those days. I also made a number of surveys for different organizations, including one in 1946 or 1948 for the New York *Post* syndicate. At that time I ran a story every other day about what I found in the various towns over the country. Harold Jacobs of UP and the old Scripps-McRae papers, one of my oldest friends, said that survey was as correct as the survey Mr. Roosevelt had praised so highly.

I tried now to help Jimmy as best I could, but although I went with him to all kinds of political places, to Sacramento, San Francisco, and all over the state, I attempted to remain in the background because I knew my name would not help him. If he used my name, I was sure the strictly labor people, who didn't know that I was liberal, would think he had sold out to the railroads. And his best support was coming from the AFL-CIO groups.

I did get a good publicity expert into the campaign—my old friend Russell Birdwell—and we thought of a few inexpensive gimmicks such as the “flying saucers”—light cardboard coasters—that we scattered everywhere. We arranged for Jimmy to stump the state from a trailer, speaking from it as his father used to speak from the end of a train. And he started proposals for civil defense that were later copied and put on a national footing by the Eisenhower administration.

But somehow we never quite got off the ground, and although the professional polls were hopeful, one day after the campaign had been going on for two months I decided that I would make a survey of my own. To me this was one of the most illuminating surveys I ever made. Before the first day in Los Angeles was half over, I knew that Jimmy Roosevelt could not be elected, and at the end of ten days, I was more sure than ever. It was a tragic shock to me, even though I had known he was getting no real support from Washington. Nevertheless I had really believed that he was going to lick Governor Earl Warren. Today I'm very happy that he didn't because I think Earl Warren is terrific—like FDR, a liberal who is also politically savvy.

Mrs. Warren was chairman of a club where I spoke many years ago in Sacramento. She introduced me and I sat at her right at the luncheon table. “I suppose,” I remarked to her, “that it's an unusual experience for you to be sitting next to a liberal Democrat.”

"We are not Republicans," she snapped back quickly. "We're registered Progressives."

Later I ran into the Warrens in Sweden, in 1953, when I was covering the maiden voyage of the new Swedish liner *Kungsholm*. Mrs. Warren, I learned then, had been born in Sweden, on one of the Åland Islands, and at the little hotel they told me that even in her youth she showed a remarkable talent for making friends.

At the end of my ten-day survey for Jimmy Roosevelt, I came back to Beverly Hills and attended one of the meetings of the people who presumably had the campaign in hand. At each such meeting, everybody had a chance to shoot off his or her mouth and tell something. The professional people who were doing a survey said that Jimmy was constantly getting stronger, but from my own survey I knew otherwise. I waited until the end of the meeting, then put my hand up and said, "May I say something?" Jimmy acknowledged me—this meeting was in his house in Beverly Hills—and I told of my findings. The labor people were simply furious at my report. A woman representing the AFL and a man from the CIO were both angry and didn't mince words. They said my report was entirely untrue.

However, later that evening, Jimmy asked, "What would you do if you were in my shoes?"

"Jimmy," I answered, "I'd wait until about a week before the election, and then I'd make a grandstand play. You had a wonderful record in World War II, a better record, I believe, than your brother Elliott. You really had a fine record with the Marines. So here's what I'd do. I'd make an announcement that since the country is now at war in Korea and you place your country above your party, you have now decided to resign as a candidate. And the very next morning I'd ask for active service in the Marine Corps. Of course they'd never send you to Korea because you're over age, but they would put you back into active service; you'd have a desk job, but you'd come out a hero. And the time will come later on where you can run for something else."

"I think you're absolutely crazy," Jimmy said. "In fact, I think you must have seen too much of Governor Warren."

"Actually, I've never met Governor Warren, but I've met Mrs. Warren and I think she's a charming woman and a very clever diplomat. If you want to put on a disguise and come out with me

sometime when I make one of these surveys, Jimmy, I'll be very glad to take you."

He promised that he would but he never did. In the election he was defeated by more than a million votes. Later, more fortunately, he ran for the House seat from an area of Los Angeles which was very pro-labor, pro-CIO, and was overwhelmingly elected.

Before the Democratic and Republican conventions of 1956, I was in Africa and the Near East making a picture. Jack Wheeler, of North American Newspaper Alliance, had said he would assign me to cover the conventions, and Abel Green, editor of *Variety*, had already sent me a press card. But *Variety* didn't rate a press seat in the auditorium, and the NANA deal fell through, so for the first time since 1920 I found myself without credentials. I had been doorman for FDR in 1932, and just twenty years later, at the convention before this one, I had parked my trailer opposite the Ambassador East. Now that parking lot was occupied by a new wing of the Ambassador West, and it seemed all the auditorium seats were occupied too.

But it happened that I knew quite a few people in Chicago, the sheriff among them, and he said he could get me into the hall but it would take three or four days.

Another friend, in a transportation bureau, said, "I've got several ways I can get you in—I've done it already for two or three people—but the seats won't be very good."

"I don't care about the seats," I told him. "In fact, I'd rather not have a seat. Just get me in the hall and get me a ticket that will let me roam."

He instructed me to go down to the corner of Michigan and some other street, a little beyond the bus stop, and stand there with a yellow ribbon on my arm.

"I'll look like a dope," I protested.

"I don't care what you'll look like. If you want to get into the hall, that's what you'll have to do."

So I followed his instructions. It was a terribly windy day, and as I stood there decorated with the requisite yellow ribbon, passers-by stared at me curiously.

Finally a motorcycle policeman drove up and said, "Hop in the sidcar, son."

I looked more like his grandpa, but nonetheless I hopped in, and I had the fastest and probably the most dangerous ride

I ever had out to the auditorium. It usually took me twenty minutes, and it takes the average driver about forty-five. I think we made it in something like twelve or fifteen minutes flat. The policeman stopped at the rear of the building where a door was marked Employees' Entrance. Incidentally, my friend had told me to get a wrench and carry it in with me; I'd be instructed where to leave it when I got inside. The policeman now gave me an employee's pass, and said, "Tell them you're going in to fix the men's john under the speakers' platform."

A sort of ticket collector standing immediately inside the employees' door started to grab my pass, but I resisted. "No, no," I argued. "I need it!"

"Why?"

"I've got to fix the men's john under the platform. Where is it?"

He showed me where to go, but actually I already knew because at all these conventions, everything is more or less the same. When I got there, a much more officious guy barred the entrance, demanding, "What do you want, buddy?"

I explained, but of course I didn't look much like a workman in my city clothes. I did, however, have the yellow thing on my arm, which meant, I believe, that you were connected with the city waterworks or some such department. And I had the pass also.

"Where's your overalls, buddy?" he asked.

"I didn't have time to put them on. They told me to come out here in a hurry."

Though he looked unbelieving, he let me in. I found myself under the scaffolding beneath the speakers' platform. Naturally I couldn't hear much down here because the loudspeakers were in other parts of the hall, but at least I was in. And I was still clutching the big wrench, which I had borrowed from the engineering department of the Drake Hotel.

In the men's toilet were lots of people, including some senators that I knew, and one said, "Neil Vanderbilt, what in hell are you doing here with that big wrench?"

I felt like an absolute idiot as I stammered, "Someone asked me to bring it in here."

"Well, nothing is being worked on here," he answered.

So I went outside, still under the platform where you couldn't see or hear what was going on, and worked my way round to a cubbyhole in the back. There I saw a workman.

"Here's the wrench, buddy," I said to him. "Dave Krupnick told me to give it to you."

The man winked broadly. "Do you know what I'm doing? I've got a small radio and I'm listening to the convention."

I stayed with him in the cubby for a while, and then I went out to look for something that would give me a color story. A likely spot to meet people seemed to be where they came down from the platform to make their way to the ladies' powder room over to the left or the men's room at the right. So, pad in hand, I took up a position there, and as the people passed, some of them recognized me—Jim Farley, for one, though he had not been friendly toward me in recent years; also Mrs. Roosevelt, and a good many senators and congressmen, and some newspaper people.

Among the latter was Serrell Hillman of *Time* who offered me a seat in the magazine gallery. We never had a gallery when I was newspapering, so it was a new experience for me to sit up there in an excellent seat. We were right opposite the press gallery. Each time I would use Hillman's pass to get in, and then I would send it outside to him so that he could get in on it too. Once inside the hall, you were safe. They were very strict at both conventions in 1956, much more so than they had been previously.

At the San Francisco convention where Mr. Eisenhower was to be renominated, I received much better treatment than at my own party's convention at Chicago. When I appeared at the hall in San Francisco without a pass, my friend Herb Caen of the *Chronicle* took me in with him and told me to go and sit in such-and-such a seat in the press box. You were supposed to have a special pass to go walking around in the hall, but I got away with using my *Variety* card.

One of the first people I bumped into in the hall was a man from Carson City, Nevada, the state capital. His name is Ken Johnson and he's a Republican. There's a Democrat of the same name who has a ranch not far from my former ranch, and who used to be a member of the Democratic state committee. But the Republican Ken Johnson has a gas station, and back of it a bar and restaurant, and I used to stop there on my way up to the lake, to pick up liquor or sandwiches and fill my car with gasoline. This Ken was sergeant at arms at the Republican convention of 1956, and when he saw me he said, "Here, I'll make you a deputy."

So I was a deputy sergeant at arms during the Republican

national convention of 1956. When I ran into Republican friends, they'd complain, "How come you get this sort of thing? We can't even get in with our friends."

"It pays to know a lot of people," I'd say smugly, "and in my state I know about everybody."

Pat Hurley laughed about it, but Mrs. Hurley was quite upset. She thought I was a spy in their midst.

Actually she wasn't so far off, because I found that my most popular credential with many people in San Francisco was a souvenir of Chicago, a facsimile of Stevenson's shoe with the hole. "You don't need another thing, brother!" said one city employee, and bus drivers and taximen asked me where they could get that badge. In the Cow Palace lobby, while Hoover was speaking (to the men who hadn't sold apples in '32) Pat Hurley asked me why the working press was so against Nixon. I referred him to the speakers' platform.

After both conventions, a secret ballot among newspapermen showed them five to three for Stevenson. This was their private preference, based somewhat on opposition to Nixon, and not a forecast of election returns. On that score, Bill Donaldson, superintendent of the House press gallery, said truly that the whole concept of politics in the country was changing. "The people are changing and so are the principles. It's no longer the great game of politics; it's a profession staged by the best-heeled ad agency boys. I don't like it any more than you do, but the guy who looks at it all on his TV screen is the guy who'll pick our presidents—as chosen by the ad agencies."

The techniques of managing mass psychology are now familiar, but they still work. The stunt of releasing doves, used at San Francisco, I had seen first in a rally of Hitler Youth that I covered in Munich in 1937. The balloon technique, the fire sirens, reminded me of the *Sportspalast* days. Perhaps the Democrats would have used similar appeals had they been able to afford the high-priced persuaders; instead, in Chicago the show was relatively impromptu and homespun, even dull up to the last exciting moments. Yet throughout there were individual preferences at work, even in such small matters as the fact that Estes Kefauver and I appeared in white dinner jackets at Perle Mesta's party. There was some spontaneity and there were dramatic moments of old-fashioned oratory—if I were a theatrical agent, I thought, I'd pit Frank Clements of

Tennessee against Tom Dewey in the Hollywood Bowl and advertise "The Greatest Debate Since Lincoln-Douglas."

But in the Cow Palace at San Francisco it was different. Everything, including the fifteen-minute demonstrations, had been carefully organized and rehearsed in advance by the agency boys.

Because the power of the agencies extends to newspapers and magazines, I think we may as well admit that in spite of our vaunted press freedom, our American news is slanted, not only by the opinions of the editor or publisher, but even more often by the advertisers. Quite often editors and publishers seem to have no opinions whatsoever; or if they have any, they are afraid to express them for fear of offending the agencies and the advertisers they represent.

I like foreign reporting better than I do American reporting because you're farther away from the home office and you've got a much better chance of having at least some of the things you write appear in print. Whereas, if you're in the home office or not far away, it's easy for the editor or publisher, or some person who thinks he knows more than you do, to call you up and say, "Pipe down on this and build such-and-such up," or "Change your opinion." Thus, it appears that in this country we get as news what those who run things want us to know.

I mentioned earlier that I had expected to cover the Chicago convention for NANA, the great newspaper syndicate. When I was working for NANA, Jack Wheeler, the vice-chairman, formerly president of Bell Syndicate, asked me to do some stuff in Europe. I wrote a couple of articles which I thought would be really worth something to him, and I was disappointed when they weren't used. The fee would not have been very large, but the stories had been very difficult to secure, and so on my return I asked him why the articles had not suited him.

"Well, Neil," he said, "I'm sorry to tell you, but they didn't conform with editorial opinion in the United States. Editors here have an entirely different view."

"What difference does that make?" I protested, for I knew that the people from whom I had secured the information—I believe one was De Gaulle—had given me straight from the horse's mouth what they believed was the truth.

Unfortunately, I have had this kind of thing happen a great many times. Editors have said to me, "You're writing from a

different slant. The editorial slant in this country, which is more or less dictated by big business, is such and such, and you're writing in a different vein." And when I point out that I'm writing what I've seen and heard in a particular country, and ask what use I would be if I didn't tell the truth, they answer, "It doesn't make any difference if you're telling the truth or not. If you don't conform to the editorial viewpoint here, we can't use your stories."

So the man out in the field not only has the trouble of writing the story, but also the trouble of getting it into print, and he is often accused by the public of not reporting the true story. Sometimes, as a matter of fact, editors have chopped progressive ideas out of my stories, or they were chopped out by the copy desk or in the proofreading.

This state of affairs is partially what started me off in the lecture business. And there the same type of thing crops up too. People frequently say to me, "Mr. Vanderbilt, you talk in an entirely different vein from what you write in your column. You were just talking about the Suez situation (or South Africa), but in your column a while ago you expressed the opposite opinion from the one you gave this evening." So you can see that it is indeed difficult to be correctly quoted in the newspapers, and to have all your ideas appear in print just as you wrote them.

Close personal friends, and many of the young ladies to whom I've been married, have often asked, "Why is it that you go off so much on those awful lecture tours? And why do you stop in such terrible tank towns?"

I never think of any town as a tank town. Instead, I think of a place—even a small place—as a part of the world. And I realize how difficult it is, especially in small places, for people to hear about the outside world and get a true appraisal of world events. With so much guff in the newspapers and on radio and TV nowadays, too few people find time to think about the ills and troubles of the world, about how many people are unemployed, how many live in squalor and hunger, or about the very real menace of fall-out. Yet these are things we should be concerned about.

The most difficult feature of lecturing is the distance between lectures; unless you say specifically that you won't go from Boston to Los Angeles in one jump, you will find yourself filling dates all over the hemisphere. Another drawback is that all your dates in

a particular area are not consecutive. For example, one season I was booked for one-night stands as follows: a medical convention in Atlantic City; a bankers' conference in Chicago; a women's club in Detroit; a tobacco men's convention in North Carolina; a high school in Nebraska; the Harvard Club in Boston—then, back to Nebraska for a lumbermen's convention. Lecturers who can fly to their dates find it tough enough. But since my coronary trouble the doctors make me stick to trains, and so my lecture trips involve a much greater expenditure of time.

Some authors can't stand the pace of lecturing. You rarely have a moment to yourself; and if you have some other work such as writing a column or preparing TV or radio material, you are often hard pressed.

During the fifteen years of my close affiliation with FDR, I had better than an inside track to what was going on in the world, and I did my best to make my talks as interesting as I knew they should be because of that association. But I also knew that since I was in the confidence of the President, I was in a more vital position than most people might imagine, and I had to watch my step even closer. I certainly did not want to cause him sorrow through any unfortunate statement of mine. I had a few close calls in that respect. Once in Springfield, Illinois, I was the object of ripe tomatoes and eggs from a public bitterly opposed to our close affiliation with England before World War II, during the destroyer deal. Another time, in Chadron, Nebraska, where I was speaking about the need for the draft, I received a raw onion right in the middle of my chest, and don't think it didn't hurt. The hall there was filled with booing, Bronx-cheering young people who didn't want to put on khaki and go to the defense of the British Isles. From their distant vantage point, they couldn't see that this meant defending the United States.

In Battle Creek in '34 or '35, I went through a real holocaust myself because I had said something about the then impending war which was misconstrued, and the local agents canceled my lecture. This action started a tremendous hullabaloo, and several towns in the neighborhood wanted me to lecture there instead. A town was finally agreed upon for a lecture a couple of nights later, and I was prepared for the worst. By then I had received a lot of threatening mail, as well as telephone messages from local anti-Semites, telling me if I dared talk against Hitler and in favor of

England's part in the war I'd be beaten up on my way out of the hall. Nothing of the kind happened, of course.

I had somewhat the same, though not so vociferous, a demonstration in Altus, Oklahoma, in 1957, when a Syrian in the audience tried to heckle me. After listening to his tirade for a while, I asked merely, "Where were you born, sir?" and when he told me, I said, "Aren't your people and the Israelis constantly at war anyway?" He sat down abruptly. I found out later that his local department store was having tough sledding in competition with a Jewish department store in the same city.

Lecturing is an odd "business," if you can call it a business at all; yet it is the last free platform left in America today. Not that you can say anything you like—but almost anything, so long as you don't start a panic or a fire. And so from October 1 to the end of April, the lecture industry flourishes. It is especially healthy in the Midwest, New England, and the Far West—the Midwest and New England in the fall and winter; the Far West and to some extent the Deep South, from March through April.

Lecturing can take you into unknown or "foreign" parts of your own world. One of the more interesting foreign countries I have visited as a lecturer is the great Lone Star state of Texas. In the past two or three years I seem to have gone there more than at any other time, except possibly right after World War I. I've been to El Paso a great many times, having lectured there practically every year since 1929, and I've also been many times to San Antonio, where I have a lot of friends, and to Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston. I haven't visited the wide-open spaces, the Texas plains, as much as I've been in cities, but lately I've had bookings in such varied towns as Amarillo, Wichita Falls, Abilene, Alpine, Del Rio, Galveston, Beaumont, Orange, and Texarkana. I've also talked at several of the Texas colleges, at the University of Texas in Austin two years ago, and at Texas A & M, and I've been to Waco a dozen times and talked both at Baylor and in the city, and many times at SMU in Dallas.

In Amarillo, I had the loan of a twenty-room penthouse with grass and flowers growing on the terrace and Picassos and Dalis, a Vandyke and a Corot, glowing on the walls. The furniture was teakwood, the rugs were Chinese, the valet was English, the cook Mexican—and the German crown princess had married the local decorator. At Weatherford, Texas, in the midst of his seven-acre

English garden, lives the artist who painted the Big Four of the Yalta conference.

Wichita Falls, a small place before the discovery of oil, is now a good-sized city. Today it's the headquarters for scores of wealthy families, some of which I met a couple of years ago when I lectured there. I spent a few days with my dear and good friends, Dr. and Mrs. J. A. Heymann. He's a well-known brain surgeon; Mrs. Heymann is the sister of the late H. R. Knickerbocker, the war correspondent. The Heymanns had one or two parties to introduce us to people, and later on we were invited to some of the fabulous ranches and town houses. Now of course I've seen a great many large and beautiful homes, but few that could compare to those I saw in Wichita Falls. The houses of the wealthy there are much larger than anything in Hollywood or Palm Beach, or even than some of the ranch houses around Reno, and naturally they have the usual swimming pool and terraces and fountains, and the game room filled with the heads of lions and tigers and elephants, and other fantastic things as well.

There were some good things about these parties. One of the best was the steak. Another was the Texans' habitual kindness to their mothers. Many of our hosts had their mothers and their grandmothers at their parties, and they propped them up on sofas and brought them little toddies to drink—the sort of family scene one doesn't see in Miami Beach or New York or San Francisco or any other American city I've visited of late.

But I've never seen such a vulgar display of wealth. One woman was literally covered with jewels—immense cabochon emeralds and rubies, and the largest sapphires I think I've ever seen. She also wore four or five brooches of different colors on her dress. But, oddly enough, at these big parties the ladies wore cocktail dresses rather than ball gowns, and the men wore white dinner jackets or didn't dress at all.

In Wichita Falls I almost came to grief—in fact I did get seriously snubbed—by indulging in a little impromptu prophecy of a sort locally unacceptable. I was interviewed by a young newspaperman, Glenn Shelton, who writes a column on the front page of the morning paper. It's about both local and world affairs, something like the columns Arthur Brisbane used to write for the Hearst papers in New York. This young man came to see me, with a reporter and photographer from the evening paper, and the society editor of one of the papers. I was very careful to try

to say the things I thought they might like me to say, because I didn't want to offend my hosts. But Mr. Shelton remained after the others and began talking about an earlier experience with me.

He said that in 1941 he and his wife—they were not married then—were attending a school out in the Texas panhandle. I lectured there about European affairs, and said that I believed the United States would shortly be involved in World War II. He told me that at the time everyone thought I was crazy. Afterward, when I sent them some magazine articles and other reading matter, they still thought I was crazy. This was some time after the draft bill had been passed, but it passed by only one vote in the House of Representatives, you may recall. If it hadn't gone through, after Pearl Harbor it would probably have taken at least six months longer to prepare an army for overseas fighting. Glenn Shelton had been greatly impressed by my accurate prophecy then, and he wanted to know what predictions I had to make now.

I told him I thought the Eisenhower administration was through (this was in 1957), and that the good it had done was over; from now on it would have nothing but an uphill fight. At that time the Democrats had forty-nine senators and the Republicans forty-seven, but I said that wherever I went people were talking about their loss of jobs, and bellyaching about various other things. And that hearing this kind of talk in all sections of the country, as I had, I knew that things couldn't be as good as the newspapers and the magazines made them out to be.

I told him I thought we might be involved in World War III before 1960. And that if we ourselves thought of attacking in order to keep our factories working—certainly a possibility, for I believe the war party in the United States could put us into war at any moment if they felt that business was getting too bad here—I believed a military man would be the next President. If we were not involved in a war, or were in a place where we could still avoid one, then I thought a labor man would be President.

Glenn Shelton just couldn't believe me. He said that in Texas they had no sign of any such development. And he tried to draw me out further, asking, "Who do you mean—what labor man? George Meany?"

I said I meant Walter Reuther.

Shelton nearly passed out at that. He wrote an article with quotes startling to Texas, which ran a column and a half, ending

it by saying that I predicted Walter Reuther would be the next President of the United States. And he warned his readers not to sell me short, and told them I had made a prediction about the war in 1941 that had come true, and certain other true predictions as well.

The day after his article appeared, we went to a large reception. A few people came over and shook hands with us, but most of them just gave us a curious stare. Some merely said hello without shaking hands and then walked away. I heard through my host and hostess that I was certainly the world's most unpopular man in Wichita Falls for the next few days.

On the whole, I have found that my own popularity depends on a feeling people have that I am telling them the truth even though it may hurt. I was among the first to talk from a platform about the need for the draft; first to advise a type of Marshall Plan and then to criticize its use as a political football. I was first to tell my audiences of the dangers abroad and of certain dangers at home.

So, from my spotlight soapbox, I tell a civic club in Ohio that the UN should be stronger and more workable, with an international police force, and might have been so, had FDR lived. In Maine I admit mismanagement in our foreign aid, recall seeing grapefruit rotting on Belgian docks and American vegetables shipped to Holland while that country's surplus went to Germany. I tell them in Houston how, on the balcony where once I talked with Mussolini, Count Volpi later told me that administration of the Marshall Plan "had made fifteen hundred more multimillionaires in Italy, and fifteen million more members of the Communist Party." How? "By giving the money to the wealthy, not to the poor whose homes were destroyed by the American planes." In Michigan I translate what Hitler's astrologer once told me about the fate of our world, and in Illinois I remember that out in South Africa the mayor of Johannesburg got beaten up—perhaps by thieves, perhaps because he was the only liberal official, fair to the blacks, in that area.

Why do I do it? My old friend Harold Jacobs of United Press said the best description of my character is the one used by his wife Ethel, who calls me "the naïve sophisticate." But in one of his letters to me about the state of the world, Harold analyzed both himself and me:

"Since civilization began, there have been crusaders against injustice, and I hope there will be until the end of time. But look at the two of us. What quirk in our make-up got *us* into the crusading business? Two supposedly stolid Dutchmen with a high boiling point. We aren't eligible for racial or religious discrimination; we aren't Jews or Negroes or Catholics. Yet we've always fought harder for the rights of minorities than have most of the so-called leaders of those groups. We didn't have to. Life would have been much easier for us if we'd just 'conformed.' Why have we done it?"

We have, I suspect, enjoyed it. So I go on from year to year, and occasionally add improvements. In the fifties it became obvious that even the political conventions must let people see as well as hear, and I followed the trend and began adding color films to my lecture program. The first ones we made in Europe; later, I made longer ones in Israel and in Africa, and discovered in film-making a new field of enterprise. Now I am working on a series of interviews for TV, and I find that getting around Washington's marble halls with a heavy tape recorder is far harder work than I did forty years ago as a young reporter encumbered only with a pad and pencil. But the job is interesting now, as it was then, or I wouldn't do it. And I feel that somewhere, somehow, I am helping the world we live in to keep the peace we all crave most of all. No one can do that by sitting home on the front porch, merely daydreaming about a better world and hoping for it to come.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FAMILY MATTERS

I HAVE ALWAYS said that if I were a woman I'd be pregnant all the time, because I can't say no. At least it's difficult for me to say no. And, like most men, I'm a sucker for a woman with a pretty face, especially if she's wistful or plaintive-looking.

My grandmother Vanderbilt, who was born Alice Gwynne of Cincinnati, Ohio, used to think that every young woman in America was trying to marry her sons—my father, my uncles Alfred and Reginald, and William before his death—and my numerous Vanderbilt cousins. She should have known, having come herself from a Midwestern town where the name of Vanderbilt or Rockefeller, Astor or Van Rensselaer, still implies great wealth, prestige, and social position. And I sometimes think Grandmother was right, because there is always a great change in the attitude of the young women I meet as soon as they hear my name.

The great wealth which the name connotes has never actually belonged to me. I have always been well-to-do but I certainly have never been as wealthy as most of my cousins, my uncles, or my father. I have been through business difficulties galore and have had many financial worries, partly because I have had to provide for six wives and I have spent considerable amounts on other young women whom I have found charming companions for a while. But even though my own personal wealth is nothing like the wealth of many of my cousins or other members of my family, it is impossible for the average person to think of a Vanderbilt as an ordinary human being. A Vanderbilt naturally must be rolling in wealth; if he doesn't want to spend his patrimony—all of it—on the current girl or the pending business deal, it's just because he's a tightwad.

I always feel like Henry the Eighth when I talk about my wives. Or maybe Tommy Manville, whom I have never met though I've seen him around in restaurants and night clubs for years. But Henry the Eighth is a better comparison; like him, I've had only

six wives to date, and I believe Tommy Manville has beaten us both almost two to one.

Now that everything is past and long since forgotten, I find it hard to feel very bitter toward the girls I've loved and lost. Even when it would have been possible to obtain a divorce under the very stringent New York statutes, had I been a resident of that state instead of Nevada, I'd rather use the polite term popular in my state—"incompatibility." In Nevada you are allowed to divorce with decency and privacy, and it's always incompatibility that, it seems to me, leads a pretty girl to start looking around.

And all the girls entitled to call themselves my missus have been pretty. But, present company excepted, they thought they were marrying a playboy and felt cheated when I turned out to be a workboy. Each time I brought a new girl in to see Rob Wagner, my old boss at *Script*, he would say of her, "Face, face, beautiful face, but nothing else to go with it." Events have seemed to prove him right, in the sense that none of my wives has liked my spending so much time on my work, or understood why I want to work. Rob and Florence Wagner said I always married the wrong type of girl, and they didn't blame the girls so much as they blamed me for marrying them. The Wagners understood that my work came first, that I was really married to my typewriter. They thought it unfair of me to marry a girl who couldn't understand this and who therefore believed friends who told her I was only trying to cover up activities other than work when I claimed to be working hard.

My first marriage was a case in point. It got off to a good start—I was home from the war, still young and romantic, and the bride's family was accepted by my family, so that our wedding had showers of good wishes from both sides. Perhaps it was because my wife and I had a similar social background—one from which I was trying to escape—that she failed to see my reason for working twenty-four hours a day to save my newspapers when my family wanted them to fold. Her half-brother, in fact, was on the committee appointed by my father to close them down. Therefore, when I was spending most of my time working on the Miami tabloid, should I have been so surprised to have "incompatibility" develop?

That first marriage lasted eight years, and my wife hadn't been married before. My subsequent marriages have all been of shorter duration and the girls, except my present wife, have been married

before—one or two as often as I. Two had children who were part of their charm; friends say of me, "He's crazy about children, especially if they have pretty mothers." Never having had children myself, perhaps I like them better than do people used to having them around all the time. I really like them a lot, and I tried to adopt two that belonged to two of my wives.

My second wife was herself an adopted child. I met her in Reno in the susceptible period just after my first divorce. I talked to saintly-looking old Judge Bartlett in Reno about adopting her three-year-old, but he told me that to secure the little girl's future I must have the consent of the child's father and of my own sister, who would share whatever was left of our family estate when our parents died. Both put thumbs down, and the same thing happened later when I offered to adopt my fifth wife's child.

Besides beauty and dislike for the sound of my typewriter, my ex-wives have had some traits in common. Perhaps they've differed most widely in looks; although four have been beautiful brunettes, one had red-brown hair and purple eyes, and one was a gorgeous blonde. But more than one of them took dope, or drank, or flirted to excess. And all of them, with me out of the way, lost no time in finding other attachments. One married the trumpet-player in a Reno hotel, one the president of an airline, one a Morgan nephew. Rarely were these gentlemen the men they had been flirting with—but let's not go into that.

No doubt I should say that in each case the parting left me inconsolable, but that would be untrue. Poorer, yes, and sometimes sadder, and I hope wiser. And once I almost became a beachcomber—now I wish I had. That was the time when my wife of those days left California for West Virginia on the somewhat flimsy pretext of seeing the old family dentist. So I took an apartment in Hollywood with two old newspaper cronies, Charlie Driscoll who wrote the pirate story *Doubloons* and many other books, and Frank Markey, both of the McNaught Syndicate.

None of us was an old soak, but just to make sure we avoided the newspaperman's curse, we all decided to go on the wagon completely. Whoever fell off first would pay. One day on my way home from work, as I walked up McCadden Street from Hollywood Boulevard, I heard strange, eerie music coming out of a ramshackle little hotel in McCadden Place. I stood for a moment in the bright afternoon sunlight and listened. A door opened, and at the far end of a long, dark passageway I saw the semi-nude

figure of a Tahitian girl wiggling in an Oriental dance. When the door closed I went over and opened it.

I found myself in a long, narrow, and very dark room, where a man with tousled black hair lounged behind a sort of bar. He wore sloppy white dungarees. I ordered a Coke and sat down to drink whatever it was he gave me. Then it began to rain, or so it sounded. After a while I grew accustomed to the dark and I could tell the dancing figure was a dummy; the rain was phony, too. So I paid for my drinks and went out, sore at myself for being taken in by this very obvious racket. When the full sunlight hit me I could hardly stagger up the hill, and when I reached the apartment, Charlie and Frank wanted to know where I'd got it. The next day we gave three hundred dollars to a local charity for the blind because that night they both returned with me to the long, dark, dank room in the little hotel.

We told our friends about the place and took a lot of them there, and that was the beginning of Don the Beachcomber. Later, when I was offered a third of his business, I declined because I didn't want to own any part of a bar during Prohibition. What a fool I was; you know what the Beachcomber restaurants are worth today.

And I could have used the money because divorces are expensive as well as a nuisance, even when Nevada is your home state. After I had obtained a quiet divorce in Reno, one of my more recent wives tried to sue me for fabulous sums in New York, of which state I have never been a legal resident. She did spectacular things like appealing for relief funds while wearing a mink coat (even the gossip writers found that funny) and, after my mother died, barricading herself and her little girl in the rooms I had occupied when visiting Mother in New York. The caretakers and estate attorneys got her out only by turning off heat and lights; meanwhile she went through my papers, some of which were left there, and made a small bonfire, not in the grate but in the middle of the rug.

These shenanigans may have done some temporary damage to my public reputation, but they were soon forgotten. Earlier, the same lady might have brought on a heart attack (she knew I'd been told to avoid emotional upsets) when she disappeared off a dance floor and then told me she'd had a shipboard romance with a gossip columnist whose feud with me was famous and indeed hereditary, since his *nom de plume* in the Hearst papers was connected with my family's long abhorrence of the press. However,

what hurt most was the fact that process servers kept me out of New York during my mother's last illness, and I was allowed to go back only for her funeral. But I also have a nagging worry that the bonfire on the rug may have consumed some of the notes signed FDR, which I had carefully cherished and haven't seen since.

Are my troubles bad luck or bad judgment, or am I a hard man to live with? If it's the last, why do I always get along with my in-laws? One of my wives, with a fiery Latin temper, threw the breakfast grapefruit at me—yet I got along all right with her brothers, who were tomato farmers trying to make a crop down in Mexico. I'm even good friends with the aunts of the former husband of my fifth wife.

No doubt those who look for Freudian motivations would put at least some of the blame for my marital troubles on my own family background. Specifically, they would say I had a "mother fixation," that I used bad judgment with other women because I could not bear to think of one in competition with my first love, my mother. Perhaps this was what Rob Wagner meant when he advised me to marry only a girl from my own social level, brought up as my sister—or my mother—had been. This of course I never did, after the first, because I had ceased to believe in social levels.

And actually I wonder whether the Freudian theories, valid as they may be in some societies, are as compelling with us as some of the monetary motivations believed in by my grandmother? I have already remarked that my marital troubles seemed to correspond with my financial status. I cannot escape the conclusion that it was not I but the women who married me who were beglamoured by my mother, in that they themselves wanted to become "Mrs. Vee," enthroned in society, living in luxury, entertaining crowned heads, and enjoying the background I had left behind.

If this mention of the profit motive seems cruel, let me add that in my view, also, we much-married people are the idealists, the romantics, the searchers for an ideal of happiness that seems to elude us in this life. We keep on trying, we never give up, and we won't settle for substitutes, or "adjust" to conditions far short of our ideal.

Of course this works both ways, and I admit that some of my much-married wives may have been equally disappointed in me. I haven't taken them to live in a vanished Newport or on a Fifth Avenue where a dress shop stands where our front door used to

be. But recently, when the Internal Revenue people were questioning me, I tried to count up how many mink coats I've bought, how many diamond bracelets, how many expensive cars—these, it may be, in or out of wedlock; but only in marriage have I bought houses and given them away as alimony. Over almost four decades I must have spent millions on the women I've married, and I haven't a bean to show for it today.

When I'm asked about the many marriages, my stock reply is that I guess my wives can't tolerate me, but truly I think it's partly because women change as much as men once the chase is over. I've never tried to conceal from any woman what to expect of me as a husband, but it seems they just don't believe what I say. I've told them all exactly what my income happened to be at the time. I've said how hard I work at writing, never claiming great wealth. Some years I do reasonably well. Others I'm away down at the foot of the heap. Either way, I realize it may disappoint a girl to think she's married a playboy and find out he's a hard worker.

As one who's been around, I'm often asked, especially by the young, to compare women as I compare places. If I must, I'll say that the most beautiful, most understanding women are the Chinese, followed closely by the White Russians. The dumbest are the British; the worst bitches are the Italians and the French. The most demanding are the Americans.

I've always thought it a lot more "decent" to be married often, than to marry only once or twice and keep women on the side. But I must admit that almost my happiest memories are of girls I never married. Memories of *girls*, I mean. If I ask myself when I've been the happiest in my life, it's been those times when I was off on my own at work on a story, in some place where no one knew me or cared what I was doing, and I could wander around unshaven and unloved.

It's fine to go wandering over the world and call it love of country, as men call it when they go off to war. But I'll settle for the vagabond's love of the open road. I love the outdoors more than I have ever loved any woman.

All right, maybe it's tough on the girls when I peck at the typewriter all night, or sit up in bed in the morning writing letters and lecture notes and reading papers, wearing an old sweater as faded as FDR's used to be. Let's be fair. And it's not just my wives and their lawyers with whom I've had troubles. Why, my own family—But that's another story.

Early in life I got tired of hearing about my ancestors and, thanks to the family feuds, I also felt a certain detachment from contemporary Vanderbilts, about many of whom I know only what I read in the papers. And I'm sure a lot of it must be exaggerated.

The old Commodore, my great-great-grandfather, always interested me; some day I may write about him. So far, all I've done for him is to get his title, Commodore, in the American merchant fleet—not the Navy—revived. After World War I, I persuaded President Coolidge to give the title to Captain Hartley, commanding officer of the SS *Leviathan*, in order to put his ship on an equal footing with the British liners commanded by men who would otherwise outrank him and be given first privileges in British ports.

My favorite living relative is my sister's daughter by her first marriage. This preference may be due to the fact that my niece Cornelia, who is now married and the mother of three children of her own, used to flatter me by asking—not taking, of course, but asking—my advice.

Cornelia was always a very headstrong kid, and when she turned out to be quite a beauty, she began coming to me for advice about all her young men, saying, "Uncle Neil, Mother doesn't understand me, and Father doesn't understand me, and my stepfather doesn't understand me. You've been through the mill, Uncle Neil; you know all about women and all about men." She didn't realize how little I really knew.

Then she would go on, "This boy wants this, and this boy . . . and this fellow . . . and which one would you . . . you know."

Then I would give her some advice. When I found she didn't take it, I tried to be more or less noncommittal, but to remain a good father-confessor to her anyhow. So she has always been very close to me.

The only other member of my family still close to me is my cousin Bill (William H.) Vanderbilt, who is about my age. Although we don't think alike politically, we're very good friends in matters having to do with the family and the Vanderbilt estate and various other things. Bill is a conservative Republican, absolutely on the opposite side of the political fence from me. He was governor of Rhode Island for two years, and probably could have gone on being governor for the rest of his life because Rhode Island's a small state and the properties of the Vanderbilts in Rhode

Island are considerable. The Vanderbilt farms outside Newport are two of the largest in that part of the world. Bill's father was Alfred Vanderbilt, the father also of young Alfred, whom you may know best for his racehorses. Young Alfred is Bill's half-brother and so is young George. Their father was married several times—not as many times as I've been, but several times—and had children by all the marriages. Their uncle and mine, Reginald, Uncle Reggie, who was constantly in hot water through his marriages, is the father of the young lady called Gloria whom we hear so much about nowadays. She had a half-sister who was married several times and who died a few years ago in Cuba. There were also other children of both these marriages. In fact, all the Vanderbilts marry early and often. The old Commodore was married twice and, by repute, kept other ladies also. My father was the only Vanderbilt of his generation to have got through life with only one marriage and without divorce, and that no doubt was due to what their friends called Mother's handling of a difficult situation.

Now that I'm back to my own parents, I must say that although I have admitted a preference for my mother, I do wish to be fair to my father. His war record was admirable, not only in conventional ways such as making a fashionable regiment into a fighting one and leading engineers into combat duty, but also because he insisted on absentee ballots for soldiers, and was the first white officer in New York to have a Negro officer on his staff and in the Twenty-second Regiment mess.

Father's working record, when he worked, was admirable too. Not long ago I went over some old family papers, and besides finding some touching letters he wrote to me when I was a boy, in which in his formal way he tried to be friends, I found also a letter which he had written as a boy to his father, begging and pleading to be allowed to go to Yale. He'd passed the examinations, and of course my grandfather had the money, so why did he have to beg? But he did, in a tone of submissiveness that told me why he in turn demanded complete obedience from me. He did get to Yale, and in the course of his engineering training he worked hard as a mechanic in a railroad shop. Although he had no respect for the work I chose to do, I must somehow have acquired from him a willingness to work and a respect for skill as such.

Father was well liked by his own friends and by the enlisted men in the service, as well as by his fellow officers, and yet it may

be that, as John Ringling suggested to me, he sometimes felt alone in our family and perhaps he did not like to be alone. Self-sufficient as he seemed to me, I can remember that he once admitted this. I had asked him the old question, "What would you do if you were cast away on a desert island?"

He said, "Sonny, that's a situation for young people in love to imagine. When you get older, you need your comforts, your friends, and familiar places. If I should find myself in the position you describe, I think I'd start swimming and swim until I drowned."

Later, I made my own friends in my newspaper and magazine work, and they were in favor of what I was doing, and there were quite a few who thought my work was well done. However, the only person in our social group who took me seriously, at least during the middle years of my life, was Roosevelt. He was my hero, the man whose opinion mattered most. But my association with him was like a red flag to my family, who hated and despised him. My father never forgave the President, "That Man" who was his son's boss and hero.

In fact, forgiving comes hard in our family; there sometimes is instead a sort of vindictiveness and suspicion, that explains the continuation of the family feuds. Father never forgave a transgressor, and in his latter years he sometimes imagined further transgressions. For example, after his health failed, my mother installed an elevator in the Newport house, to save strain on his heart in climbing to his room over the garden. One day Father came up from New York on the *Winchester*. This would be his first sight of the elevator and so Mother and I waited in the hall to see how he would like it.

In summer Father almost always wore a dark blue, double-breasted suit and what is now called a "boater," a straw hat with the colors of the New York Yacht Club on the band, and white rubber-soled shoes. He also carried a stick with a rubber tip. As soon as he saw the elevator, he raised this stick and pointed it at Mother. "I suppose," he said, "you put this in the house hoping it would fall and I would be killed in it—you and your son."

Mother burst into tears, and while I moved to comfort her, Father turned around, walked out of the house and down the steps and into his car. He never returned to the Newport house.

With this opinion of Mother and me, he leaned more and more on my sister. She was very much the conservative society type,

with friends at the British court, and both her first and her second husbands inclined toward the Vanderbilt side of the family—that is, toward those who had opposed my parents' marriage. Now my sister and her husband and my two Vanderbilt aunts, Countess Széchényi and Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, with the help of Dr. Sam Brown, the New York Yacht Club surgeon, and Mr. Frank Polk, the attorney, set up a sort of committee to say that Father could no longer see Mother or me because his heart accelerated at the sight of us. So, to see my father I had to get permission, and to do that I first had to get the committee together—six people who traveled a lot in all parts of the world, and had many interests of their own.

Property interests were involved in the family feud, just as in my marital troubles. There were properties which my father and my mother owned individually in various parts of the world: a town house in London; an apartment in Paris; the lot on which the Lever Brothers' building stands in Cincinnati—all sorts of properties scattered around in various parts of the country, some places taken on mortgages. They also owned the house in Newport and property in New York. Lawyers would come to me with various inquiries and problems which they thought that I should know about, as the eldest child and only son. But I found I couldn't see Father to discuss them. And my sister knew nothing of business affairs.

On several occasions I was able to bypass the committee and get out to see my father, now living aboard the *Winchester*. In summertime it cruised on Long Island Sound and up along the coast of New England. Father had on board a young interne, provided for him by Dr. Sam Brown, and also two trained nurses. Besides the heart condition, Father was developing a mental condition too. For the last five years of his life he was an invalid, and in the last year or two he didn't know too much about what was going on around him. But during three of the years he was compos mentis, and I think would have been interested in hearing the things I wanted to tell him.

I remember that one time an old friend of mine located the *Winchester* down off Huntington, Long Island. He had seen the yacht as he motored in to New York the night before, and offered to go with me to try to board it the next morning. There was no way of communicating with the *Winchester*, as they had only

one-way radio service; in other words, they could send messages but not receive them.

So, although it was raining and a rather bad day, we drove to Huntington and finally found someone with a motorboat who was willing to take us out in the bay. The motor soon broke down, however, and we took the dinghy and rowed. By then the drizzle had turned into a downpour. We had noticed several people on the afterdeck looking at us through binoculars as we approached, and when we pulled alongside and asked permission to come aboard, they went into a sort of hurried conference. After a moment or two, they asked who was with me; then finally they told us we could not board the yacht. But we rowed over to the other side and saw a strange, dark-haired lady on board, and so we presumed some friend of Father's was there and that was why he didn't want to see us at that particular time. We rowed all the way back to shore, a good mile and a half, and waited all that day for the lady to leave, but she never came ashore. The following day we took the motorboat and went out to the yacht again, and that time we were allowed to come aboard. However, they claimed my father had gone ashore; he was not on deck or in his cabin, so perhaps he had, or else he may have been in another cabin. I don't know. I had to leave then on another long journalistic tour.

These unpleasant occurrences were frequent in the years preceding Father's death, and it was during this period that he changed his will several times and wrote several codicils, using different lawyers. I learned from the trained nurse who was with him most of the time that in his last two years he was evidently much more concerned about me and more in favor of what I was doing. But the bitterness had gone so deep that it was impossible for him to go back.

My father's final years were spent on his yacht in Miami, at the foot of the street where the old *Daily News* Tower now is and where there was at that time an antiquated aquarium in an old ship. The *Winchester* was tied up at the pier next to the yacht of William B. Leeds, the tin-plate heir, whose last marriage was to a telephone operator. Father and Bill Leeds didn't talk much to each other, but they did meet when Father was taking walks along the pier and down in Bayfront Park.

My father did not die aboard the *Winchester*. He died aboard a houseboat which he had converted into a yacht. He never went out to sea in it; he just lived on board.

Mother and my sister were not with him when he died; I was the only member of the immediate family. I was with him for a few hours before his death, but most of this time he was in an oxygen tent and there was no chance to speak to him.

When Father died, that note for \$901,000 bobbed up again. Had he made a will in my favor, the note would have been charged against the inheritance, although over the years I had managed to pay off part of it. But I knew I could expect little or nothing from him, and so I was prepared for what happened at his death.

It was later, after my mother's death, that I found myself in a new and shocking feud over money, which was to make me cynical over family as well as marital relationships. During Mother's last years I was, as I have said, unable to visit her as often as I wished, both because my work often took me out of the country, and because legal difficulties with my fifth wife sometimes kept me out of New York. In this period my sister persuaded Mother to change lawyers, taking one she recommended, and Mother's will left everything to be divided between us without saying exactly how it was to be done.

Depreciation solved some problems. And fortunately the big house on Fifth Avenue had been sold in Mother's lifetime. But Beaulieu, in Newport, was a white elephant; nobody wanted a place that required forty servants. I promised my half of the Newport place to the Damon Runyon Cancer Fund and am sorry it brought less than the cost of many cottages under the GI Bill.

There were pictures and tapestries, rugs and furniture, to dispose of, and this was a heartbreaking job. Over the jewelry there was considerable bickering, with the final decision to divide the jewels according to the government assessment. I would be allowed to choose one half. An expert, a famous New York diamond merchant, coached me and warned that as most of the diamonds would be reset, it was important to choose pieces that could be broken up easily. My mother's diamond tiara, for example, could be made into cuff buttons or earrings, he said. An emerald necklace worth fifty thousand dollars would be worth twice that as separate stones. On the other hand, there were pieces like Mother's diamond solitaire earrings, shaped like swords, which were still wearable and which would bring much more than the government valuation simply because they came from Mrs. Vanderbilt's collection.

When I turned down the expert's certified check for the heap

of jewels we chose, he said, "Well, hang on to them for a few more years and you'll have a million-dollar nest egg."

My immediate problem was what to do with the stuff; I had to arrange to have myself followed by detectives until I got it safely into bank vaults. A few months later I went to Africa to make a film, and took along most of the jewels because I wanted to photograph them in the Kimberley mines. Some I gave to my wife—my mother's engagement ring, a solitaire diamond with a beautiful rose cut, and an emerald ring, and several other minor pieces. But the main part of the collection I still have, for a rainy day and—I hope—a rich South American buyer. And does anybody want a gold dinner service?

To me, a more interesting inheritance is my mother's letters, not only those she wrote, but those written to her by kings and queens and presidents and princes, and writers and artists and all sorts of people from all walks of life. And the family photographs, and the other pictures, the signed ones—Caruso in the clown suit, Queen Mary with little Prince Charles, albums full of my father's old ship pictures, old diaries . . . Some of these I have, of course, but others I can see only by permission of my sister's lawyers. Vanderbilt feuds die hard.

CHAPTER XXIX

ISRAEL TODAY

OF ALL THE world's trouble spots, the one which has interested me most during recent years is the Near East. Here we have the new state of Israel surrounded by the emerging Arab states, with the whole situation made complex, not merely by obvious national and religious differences but also by considerations of world oil supply and the cold war between the big powers.

My own first experience was with the Arab side. In the middle twenties, the world wanted to know about the so-called King of the Bedouins, who, it was feared, might descend upon Algiers, Tunis, or Bizerte for rapine and pillage. For a magazine story, I chartered a plane in Algiers—a small private plane piloted by a French officer who spoke the dialects of the North African desert. We flew some distance to a spot where dark khaki tents, some huge, dotted the rolling sands of the Sahara. As we spiraled down, fierce-looking tribesmen on camels rushed to where we would land. Armed with long, old-fashioned guns—relics of World War I, I learned later—they looked like extras out of the film *Beau Geste*, and they were yelling at us.

I suggested to the pilot that we needn't descend just there, but he said we didn't have enough fuel to go farther. So we landed, and the tribesmen made a big circle around the plane and raised their rifles. Then the pilot stood up and made a speech, and the tribesmen cheered in response, and began to gallop again until we were wrapped in a cloud of dust. We climbed out of the plane and jumped to the ground.

Friendly now, they offered us camels to ride back to the village where the king was, but the pilot told me camel riding made him seasick. As we walked along, we saw hordes of children and several women with veils over their noses, but contrary to the way they are usually pictured in the movies, few were good-looking and nearly all were filthy. In the village, the head tribesmen were

seated in a canvas enclosure. When we were admitted to their presence, nobody got up to greet us. They were all dressed alike in burnouses, the chief being the fattest in the assemblage. He was jolly and pleasant but answered no questions.

The heat was terrific, over 110 degrees, with humidity above 90, and there were millions of flies. Again I suggested to the pilot that we give up, but again he reminded me of our fuel problem. We just didn't dare make any move that would offend these tribesmen; their loaded guns were too real a threat.

"Do you mean we have to stay here all night?" I asked the pilot desperately.

"Certainly, and they're going to have a banquet for us," he said, and he warned me I'd have to be polite enough to eat, if I expected to get back alive.

In another huge tent we climbed rough ladders to the second story, where the banquet was spread on the floor. The plates were made of coconut shells, there were no knives or forks, and the pilot told me to sit tailor-fashion.

"If that's too uncomfortable, put your legs behind you and sort of half lie down, on your belly," he suggested.

I managed to fold myself up, with the pilot on my right and the king and his tribesmen squatting opposite. We were served by Negroes who must have been brought from the interior of Africa. Their bodies were mostly bare and glistened with oil, but like the tribesmen they wore headcloths.

Other black men chanted as they pulled the long ropes of the Indian-style punkah, which made some air circulate. This device I recognized, but I was at a loss when they brought in something that looked like a large, old-fashioned, brass spittoon, and placed a long feather beside it. The pilot, explaining, made a motion of tickling his throat, and I recognized that, like the Roman conquerors who built *vomitoria* adjoining their banquet halls, the Arabs too made provision for overindulgence at the feast. The meal lasted three hours and a half, and after several courses many of the tribesmen duly tickled their throats with the feather and upchucked.

My own danger of so doing was not because I ate too much but because of what I ate—after the pilot's warning that I *must* eat. The *pièce de résistance* was camel hump from a suckling, but the meat had aged and had a terrible smell. The king, however, helped himself liberally with his fat grubby hands, and I was told

in a whisper that it was a great delicacy of which I must partake. Just then a servant knelt with a huge platter made of woven palm fronds and piled high with curlicues resembling fried onions. The king scattered a handful of these morsels over the camel meat, and when the servant came to me, I practically buried the camel with them. I noted that the king ate them by tossing them into his open mouth from a hand held high above his head, as boys sometimes eat popcorn. Then he would lick his fingers until they were clean, and look over at me and laugh. I was doubtless supposed to do the same thing, I decided, and I picked up one curlicue and tasted it. It was something like a potato chip or one of those crisp corn things served with cocktails. So I kept on, and before long I had eaten all the curlicues and was staring down at the camel again. The king had been watching me, and now he sent a servant over with another heaping platter, and again I buried the camel. Then, in a whisper, I asked the pilot what I was eating. He nudged the man next him, and the word came back. I was eating fried desert worms.

My brief visit with the desert tribesmen is, in itself, hardly adequate grounds for political conclusions, but the still primitive state of Arab society today in contrast with the wonderful new burgeoning of Israel is a basis for conflict. As a result of several visits to the Arab countries, I have come to feel that a part at least of their hostility toward Israel is due to their feeling that if this showcase for Western civilization were not right in their front yard, they might avoid spending a lot of money on education, health, and sanitation to raise the standards of their own people.

My last visit to Israel was in 1958, the year of the tenth anniversary, and my last visit before that had been in 1939. By just about doubling her population in a few years, and building a new nation with broken, exploited, refugee people, Israel has demonstrated what can be done to improve human experience. And Israel's achievements could be duplicated in Arab lands and in other underdeveloped areas in the world, *if there were a will to make the effort.*

In 1958, with my old friend Joe Shane of Beverly Hills, with whom I had worked during Jimmy Roosevelt's campaign, I went to Israel to make a film. The SS *Theodor Herzl*, built in Hamburg under the reparations plan, took us from Naples to Haifa. Owned by Zim Lines, Israel's largest shipping company, the *Herzl* was

manned entirely by Israelis and most of our passengers were immigrants to Israel. I never traveled with a gayer group.

The Haifa dock saw them welcomed by friends and relatives, and steered into new homes and jobs by representatives of the Jewish Agency. Some had to change their occupations; the need was for farmers, fishermen, factory workers, sailors. So we were to find a former judge, escaped from Franco's Spain, happy to do KP in a *kibbutz* kitchen. The big thing was to take care of all those anxious to enter the homeland—survivors of Hitler's terror, refugees from Nasser's threats.

Haifa, when I had seen it in 1939, had been a little town. Now it was a port to be compared with Naples or Port Said or Marseilles. Big Mediterranean cruise ships stopped there, but more important were the freighters that took on export cargoes ranging from citrus fruits to polished commercial diamonds.

From Haifa, transport lines fan out all over Israel. But Joe Shane and I traveled to Jerusalem in a dilapidated 1937 Ford station wagon, the property of our interpreter and assistant cameraman. Jerusalem, or the part of it that is in Israel today, looks like any modern city of Europe. Its Jewish citizens live west of the Old City that was David's capital and Solomon's citadel. You must go to the Old City to see the landmarks, the Jewish cemetery, the Tower of David, the Wailing Wall. But access to their Old City is denied to the Jews, contrary to the arrangement agreed to in the Jordanian-Israeli armistice. In the lost area is Mount Scopus, with its hospitals and the buildings of the Hebrew University, begun in 1924. But new buildings rose in the modern city to house the student body, which increased at least fourfold in the decade. Today the university is training Israel's leaders in medicine and the other sciences, arts and culture, and scholars from over the world flock there to see the Dead Sea scrolls.

The university is the pinnacle of a school system that gives half a million children, including of course the Arab children, a free education. New classrooms are built along with the new factories, the new houses, and they are "integrated"—for Jewish, Arab, and Christian children of all skin shades.

Also, Israel educates the children, as well as the adults, to do useful work. Histadrut, which, because it was an organized group, handled certain governmental functions before Israel became a state, now both provides employment and also serves the workers somewhat after the fashion of our AFL-CIO, and has established a

number of trade schools, one of them near the Tel Aviv airport. Junior Hadassah has a children's village where orphans from all over the world study arts and crafts and practical things like the care of cows and chickens.

Everywhere in Israel you feel, and see, the determined effort to make the desert blossom as the rose—an effort you know can be successful if you have seen similar desert areas in the United States become fruitful farmlands. Israel is fortunate in having phosphate deposits near the Dead Sea, so that it is unnecessary to import fertilizer. But as all the world knows, the country needs water. Many ingenious efforts at irrigation have been successful, but for rapid development of the big Negev area, Israel needs water *power*—that TVA on the Jordan long ago recommended by Walter Lowdermilk, earnestly wished for by Israel, but resisted by Jordan even when Eric Johnston pleaded for it. Numerous small parts of the over-all project have been completed, it is true, but the whole tremendous conception must be brought into being, and in time it surely will be.

Meanwhile, all over Israel they are trying to make two blades of grass grow where one, or none, grew before. So, in Jerusalem, it seemed appropriate to us to find blooming gardens around the still uncompleted residence of the prime minister; the building funds had been temporarily diverted to more urgent use. There at the President's garden party in the birthday year I talked to Madam Golda Meir, who represents Israel in foreign relations. She grew up in Milwaukee and taught school there before serving as secretary general for Histadrut, and then as Israel's first ambassador to Moscow. Then she was minister of labor, and now, as minister of foreign affairs, she has spoken for Israel at the UN and at many international conferences. At the party, we talked *tourisme*—why not Zim Lines passenger ships, Miami to Haifa?

At a garden party given by Israel's prime minister, Mr. Ben-Gurion, I talked with the man who has guided his country's destinies from the first. David Ben-Gurion was one of the organizers of the Jewish Legion, which fought with the Allies in World War I; but he refuses to ask for military aid in return. Under the charter of the United Nations, the member nations are committed to defend the integrity and independence of all members, an obligation confirmed by the resolutions of the UN Assembly on the Middle East, and however we may concern our-

selves with Arabian oil, that obligation exists. The problem of course is that Israel, though only about twice the size of New Jersey, has a long land frontier dividing her from four hostile Arab states. She has as well a long water frontier, from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Aqaba. But everyone I talked to in Israel—government officials, mayors of towns, professors, farmers, truck drivers, shopkeepers, soldiers, Arabs, Bedouins, hotel clerks, restaurateurs—said that Israel would have no trouble holding her own, as long as she had to deal only with the immediate neighbors.

Defense forces in Israel are as hard-working as the rest of the people. The question of what to do with their peacetime army was easily solved: Israeli troops are trained to work on the land. Women as well as men must serve in the army, and their service may be the more willing because the regular army of Israel has the largest number of young high-ranking officers of any army in the world today, with a chief of staff not quite forty.

Israel is a country of great variations and contrasts, a country of magnificent horizons and of sudden climatic changes. These differences are matched by the different backgrounds of the people—believers, unbelievers, Jews, Arabs, Christians, coming from all over and living side by side. And here, too, as nowhere else in all the world, capitalism and collectivism exist side by side, happily leaving to individuals a freedom of choice between them. Arab potato pickers sell their wares through the co-operative market. Jewish farmers buy at consumer stores but stop their burro carts beside the road to sell direct to the customer. The rich mineral deposits of the Negev, including the copper and manganese near the site of King Solomon's mines, are to be developed by individual corporations, but in some cases they will be under government direction. Agricultural reclamation of the Negev, Ben-Gurion's great dream, is like the New Deal dreams for the American deserts, too big a project for private enterprise.

In addition to nearly two million Jews, Israel has about 160,000 Moslems and 100 mosques, and nearly 50,000 Christians and 144 Christian churches. There are also over 20,000 Druses in the Galilee area who are fully autonomous as to religion. Their beliefs combine elements of Hebrew, Christian, and Moslem tradition, but they split away from Islam in the eleventh century.

In Haifa, near Elijah's cave, a famous Bahai temple with its dome all of gold leaf is the world center of the Bahai movement.

Its gardens are renowned. The last leader of Bahai, who passed away a little while ago, predicted that not long after the Jews came back to their homeland, a devastating world war would ensue and Israel would again be overrun by the Arabs. All the Northern Hemisphere would be destroyed, and the Southern Hemisphere would start a new life without racial discrimination. His timetable was set for 1960.

Today people in all parts of the world have a stake in Israel though they themselves cannot be there. I met one Australian Jew who had chartered a freighter and shipped fifteen hundred sheep from Melbourne to Aqaba, so that they might be raised in the Negev. Milk for Israel comes from cows given by Jews in Holland, Denmark, and the United States. And now that the land is producing, the products of Israel go around the world. Spring flowers grown commercially on the reclaimed land around the Huleh swamp are sent by plane as far as Great Britain and the United States and—of all places—to Holland. A very fine dry red wine made in Israel is exported to Italy!

The most famous city of modern Israel is Tel Aviv, the country's largest city, about half the size of Boston and, like Boston, proud to be a center of culture. Here the great Frederick Mann Auditorium houses Israel's symphony orchestra, in which a fourth of the members are Sabras. Also in Tel Aviv is the Weizmann Institute of Science, named for Israel's first president and renowned all over the world. Mr. Abba Eban, former Israeli ambassador to the United States and delegate to the UN, recently accepted the presidency of the Institute. Weizmann specializes in nuclear physics, electronics, X rays, biochemistry, and plant genetics, and owns an atomic reactor. This great seat of learning is financed by contributions from Israel's government, the United States, United Kingdom, France, and South Africa. Over a score of post-graduate students are here today. Yet fifty years ago, where Tel Aviv now stands, all was rock and sand.

Like all Israel, however, the Tel Aviv area has a long history. Its harbor, Jaffa, is mentioned in writings as far back as 1550 B.C. Julius Caesar confirmed its possession by the Jews, one of those little facts to be communicated gently to people who go about saying why not give Israel back to the people who owned it.

I, however, confess a fondness for a very different city, Beer-sheba, "capital" of the Negev and in the heart of that desert

which covers more than half of Israel, and which in the Ben-Gurion plan is to be turned into a huge farming area.

Beersheba was a favorite stopping place of the Hebrew patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—because its abundant water supplied their flocks and brought them prosperity. Beersheba still stands in the heart of the desert and to it Bedouin caravans still come. We took some excellent pictures there. But I also remember Beersheba with pleasure because I spent my birthday there, at the Hias House—not a hotel but a hostel. When I came down for breakfast, I found at my place the chocolate cake that my wife had wired them to have made for me! In the evening, when I returned from photographing in the desert, young people came in from the fields and sang “Happy Birthday” and other songs in various languages, and I was greatly touched.

So far Israel has got along—without benefit of Marshall Plan, SEATO, or SAC bases—and the Lord may still find a way to give His people peace. For it is clear enough that, unless egged on by the big powers in their efforts to win Nasser, the Arabs have no real quarrel with their Jewish neighbors. In the Arab countries round about, most of the land is held by landlords, and the villagers sharecrop. But eighty per cent of the Arabs in Israel till their own soil. Given a chance, the output of Arab agriculture in Israel has increased sixfold. Then there is the matter of those man-made oases in the desert. All over the Negev, the Israelis have piped in water for the free use of travelers. Bedouins with their camels, sheep, goats, and donkeys come from miles around, and the word travels fast by camel train.

No wonder then that many thousands of Arabs who fled Israel some years ago would like to return. Too many people forget that the first Arab refugees left Israel in 1948 under exhortations to open the way for an Arab invasion that never came off. Since 1949, Israel has taken back over fifty thousand of them in what is called the family reunion scheme. Others are kept in refugee camps in the Arab states as part of the great game of political pressure, with UN Secretary Hammarskjöld's two-billion-dollar rehabilitation plan scorned at Beirut.

I shall end my Israel story as I began it, with a famous Bedouin sheik whom I photographed in the Negev. This one is named Suleiman. The first important Arab to throw in his lot with the Israelis, he was born in the Negev and educated in Europe. Suleiman was said to own several thousand acres of land, perhaps

ten thousand camels, and more than a million sheep and black goats. The Israelis, grateful for his friendship, built him a large reservoir and a dam. Seeing the value of allies, he wrote to Ike offering to provide several hundred Arab fighters, with camels, to guard our SAC bases if we should build any in his neighborhood. Also, though a hundred or so wives and several hundred children were in his tents, he wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt proposing marriage. She thanked him graciously but said she was a little too busy.

Suleiman's lead in joining the Israelis was followed by other sheiks, who now find themselves better off than many of their brethren in the Arab world. But you hear less of these friendly Arabs than of those who pin their faith to Nasser's promises, or hope somehow for royalties from oil.

There are, of course, no boundaries for anti-Semitism. Some of Israel's fine modern hotels are owned by people who live in Miami Beach. Yet the Surf Club in Miami Beach, the silk-stockings club started many years ago by the automobile crowd from Detroit and the meat-packing crowd from Chicago, holds to the "Gentiles only" line. Some years ago when someone brought Bernard Baruch, the financier, adviser to several of the Presidents, into the club for dinner, word raced around the club that he was there and before he had finished his dessert he was asked to leave. One club member of many years' honorable standing in the community was voted out when it was learned that his name was in the *American Jewish Year Book*.

Happily, many people are watching Israel with appreciation, and indeed Israel today is serving as a sort of pattern for new governments as they come into being all over the world, for in its short history as a modern nation, it has pioneered through some of the toughest assignments known to man. Not long ago the new republic of Ghana asked the help of representatives from Israel in organizing their nation. Ghana did not ask England or France or Germany or Japan or even Uncle Sam for this advice. It came to little Israel.

CHAPTER XXX

AFRICA TOMORROW

WHEN I WENT to South Africa to make a film for my lectures, I still had many of the popular delusions about that country, and only good fortune saved me from landing in Cape Town wearing a topee. Nobody wears a topee in Africa nowadays, except workers in the diamond mines or the gold fields in the hot desert country. And that tourist delusion about the topee is typical of too many of our mistaken notions about the whole continent.

We had shipped our car by freighter from Savannah to Beira in Mozambique—a port on the Indian Ocean north of Durban. Though its name is unknown to many Americans, Beira has enough docks to remind you of Boston or Seattle, and weekly passenger and cargo service to Europe and the United States. Our hotel, with 1,800 bedrooms and a 600-car garage, boasted a lobby full of pink marble pillars, a Venetian-glass chandelier, and recarpeted stairs copied from Versailles. The place was built for a casino and then they voted against gambling.

The Beira banks like American currency and checks, and the people like American canned goods—S & W and Heinz. Fords and Chevies compete with Austins and Volkswagens on the streets, and they use Singer sewing machines. The population is about one-fifth “European” or white. And the really unique thing about Beira is that, when we were there at least, there was no *segregation*. Everywhere else we went in Africa, there was.

Our Dutch ship, from Rio de Janeiro, had landed us at Cape Town, in a setting more spectacular than that of Rio or Acapulco—the scenery suggests parts of the Italian Riviera and British Columbia. Cape Town itself is a conglomerate of San Francisco, Florida’s St. Petersburg, Havana, and Colombo, Ceylon. The University of Cape Town, located in a suburb, looks a little like the University of Nevada, and was then one of the two colleges in the Union of South Africa that permitted whites and blacks

to live, eat, and study together. But the buses, big double-deckers painted chartreuse, separate the skin colors. In Cape Town, as in all parts of Africa where they have what they call *apartheid*, a black person, an Indian, a Chinese, or a "Cape colored" (local description of mulatto) can't sit, stand, ride, eat, or go to the movies or even to church where a white man can. As we were white, we could stay in a pink luxury hotel at the foot of Table Mountain, where the French chef told me he had been on my father's yacht *North Star* after it became a hospital ship in the First World War.

A "Blue Train"—put on for the royal progress in '47—runs from Cape Town to Johannesburg, at first through rich mountain vineyards like those of California near Napa or Santa Barbara. The train has blue leather seats, even blue sheets and blue blankets, but bad service from sulky *white* Dutch-African waiters. Outside the train window we could see the mountains rise tall, jagged, semi-barren, tilted at odd angles on either side. The vineyards are separated by tall, red-flowering eucalyptus. The small towns have egg-white buildings with grayish tin roofs, and bright, shiny whitewashed houses set in green-hedged gardens full of brilliant red geraniums, purple bougainvillea, and bright blue morning-glories. Station entrances have signs, "For Blacks Only," equivalent to those in Alabama or Mississippi or South Carolina.

Here on the black continent with its *apartheid*, segregation is being fought over even more bitterly than in our South. The native black African who does most of the work of the white man has no vote, no say in the running of his own land. Even the Cape coloreds have recently had the vote taken away from them, as an "Aryan"-type rule is intensified and enforced by native and white police in khaki, commanded by resolute young men in Sam Browne belts. Two-wheeled mule carts carry young colored people, who don't wave or even smile but look stoically ahead, to their dilapidated shacks, as bad as any in our Deep South.

Despite the charms of southern Africa, men go north for jobs. As in our own Southern states, manual jobs are done by Negroes for low wages—here one to three dollars a week. White men make twenty to thirty dollars and say the natives are trying a "slow-down strike" which they attribute to Red propaganda. All this sounds familiar, but a parliamentary committee here went further than Mississippi or Alabama—to recommend complete segregation of natives in certain areas, with emergence only by

work card, and forced return. Some whites opposed the proposal, not because this extreme *apartheid* was unjust to the natives, but because the segregated areas would use their land. Presiding Judge Maritz of the Transvaal Supreme Court told me the only justice the black man in Africa today understands is the whip, and he will continue to use it if the black man errs.

So let us move north with the natives who hope for a chance at a white man's job, or better pay in the copper mines. But remember that here the seasons are reversed, with ice on the rivers, skates in the shops in May.

At Bulawayo, again I almost had hat trouble. Of course I still had the topee, but I also had with me one of those hats draped with mosquito netting, used by soldiers in the South Pacific and suitable for wear when moving a beehive. We were now far enough in the interior that this sort of thing, with one's oldest clothes, seemed indicated. I couldn't find the hat, and that was fortunate because I was wrong. We were met at the station by my friend Larry Hautz, who was driving a big, shiny Cadillac. He took us through wide, modern city streets to a twenty-five story hotel full of British dressed for the evening in white ties and tails.

Back in Milwaukee, Larry Hautz had been head of the Town Hall Club and he knew me as a lecturer. He had worked for the city during a Socialist administration and had been a great admirer of Mrs. Roosevelt. He was also a personal friend of Nehru, whom he had visited in India, and of Chester Bowles, our ambassador there. But during the McCarthy era he grew discouraged about us, and as he had been extremely successful in the insurance business, he could live where he pleased. Larry had joined the Bahai faith, which teaches that all religions and races should get together some day. He grew so worried about the future of our racist world that he sold his house on the lake in Milwaukee, and his motorboats and his cars and his private plane, and moved down to Africa south of the equator, where at least the race issue is right out in the open.

At the big motel Larry was building near Salisbury, the capital of Southern Rhodesia, we lived a very simple, healthy life with the Hautzes. Mrs. Hautz was a specialist in home economics, and she prepared the best meals I've had in many years. She prepared them herself, although the wages of a houseboy were only about five dollars a month and the native cooks made no more than seven or eight dollars, because the natives seldom take baths and

can't be trusted to wash their hands. There were between fifty and a hundred natives living in a small compound or village on Larry's property, where they had showers and toilets, and there was a shower right outside the kitchen, and of course a basin with soap. But still Mrs. Hautz constantly had to make sure that they did wash; to let them handle food or dishes without washing would be to court dysentery. We found that we had to be careful in public restaurants and even in embassies and legations.

In other respects, this part of the world was as modern as our Far West. Farms in the veldt country have had rural electrification since 1910; our own Western and Southern farmlands have had it only since Roosevelt. While we were there the government of Southern Rhodesia was building the Kariba Dam, to be four times the capacity of Boulder Dam.

Everything on this continent is on the grand scale, and when you travel over Africa you realize its size. From Cape Town to Cairo is almost as far as from New York to Moscow. Africa at the bulge, the fat part, is farther across than from Seattle to Tokyo. Even much of the narrow part, which extends more than two thousand miles below the equator, is wider than the United States.

One day Larry Hautz told me he was having a meeting for his Bahai to which he was inviting several Negroes. He knew this was against the *apartheid* laws, but we were ten miles out in the country and he didn't feel they would do anything to an American. Anyhow, it was part of the Bahai religion to bring races and creeds together.

People began driving in at dusk, some in cars, some in trucks. Some came on old motorcycles or bicycles and some came afoot, until I think there were more than forty people. Larry asked me to talk about the fate of the Negro in America, and I tried to make it sound better than the newspapers and the radio were making it sound, because this was the time of the so-called Miss Lucy case at the University of Alabama. I explained that I had known many Negroes in public life and in the army, and their opportunities in the United States were better than they seemed to be in South Africa. My host followed with a speech I thought too optimistic, as he expressed hopes for real integration in the States in a year or so.

Later, when the meeting was breaking up about ten o'clock, I found myself chatting with two editors of local South African

newspapers. So I offered to take them home. One thanked me but said he had a motor bike. The other had come twelve miles on a bicycle, and I suggested we put his bicycle on top of my station wagon, and I'd drive him home.

"We can't do that, sir," he said.

"Of course you can," I insisted. "I'm an American citizen, nothing to do with the government here—I'm just here making a picture."

He still demurred, but I persuaded him. We had a very interesting conversation as we drove back toward town, but when we reached the outskirts he asked me to drive around rather than through.

"Why?" I argued. "Let's go straight through."

At the busiest corner we had to wait for a light, and then we drove across the railroad tracks to the area where the editor lived, with his wife and two children, in something that looked like a packing case for a piano. He was ashamed of it, I thought, and didn't want me to see it.

The next morning I offered to drive to town again, to pick up rations of mealie-meal for my host's employees. Besides his low wages, the native worker gets mealie-meal and a small supply of milk and sometimes a few other things; but mealie-meal—selling for around three dollars for a hundred-pound sack—is the basis of his diet. He uses it, a sort of cracked-up cornmeal, somewhat as the Chinese coolie uses rice—boiled and mixed with vegetables, or sometimes pieces of raw fish or meat or jam, or whatever he can find to give it taste. He also makes his own liquor out of mealie-meal, fermented for several days with bones or other scraps; in the Mau Mau country, it's said that he adds human flesh. When he drinks this on Saturday nights it makes him half-crazy, in the same way liquor affected the American Indians in the early days.

As I started out on my errand, two very snappy-looking non-commissioned officers of the British Southwest African Police came up to the motel on a motorcycle. One of them got off and asked me where to find a man called Vanderbilt.

When I said, "You're talking to him," he asked formally if I was Major Vanderbilt, and then he said, "You're under arrest."

"What for?" I demanded.

The answer was: "Consorting with natives. Last night you were seen driving through the city of Salisbury, with a Negro in the front seat."

When I protested, the officer explained that it wasn't allowed after nine o'clock at night—or maybe seven; it was seven in Johannesburg. Would I come quietly, or must it be with manacles?

I said I'd follow him; I was going into town anyhow. He warned me not to make a break for it, and drove ahead of me into Salisbury, to a building where the customs office was located.

The young men who arrested me, in their topees with chin straps and their khaki Bermuda shorts, were of the sort who used to go out to India from their fathers' estates in England—the flower of British youth, learning how to run the Empire and running true to type. Also typical were the two British army sergeants at the police desk, who belonged in the cartoons drawn by Bruce Bairnsfather during World War I.

I had covered enough police stations as a reporter to know that if I gave them time to put me on the blotter I'd have a police record. So I said, "Just a moment, sergeant—can you tell me where the men's room is?" He sent a man down the hall with me, and that way I got a little time to think. I felt I should ask to see the American consul general, but I wondered also whether these officers had a legal right to arrest me out in the country. I was still undecided when, coming down the hall, I saw my friend Sir Roy Welensky, then deputy prime minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

He waved and said, "What brings you here?"

"I'm under arrest."

The corporal escorting me told him about my offense, and Sir Roy asked if it was true.

"I don't quite know what they mean by consorting with the natives," I said. "In the United States that word would mean something else. But I did take a Negro home in my car last night—a Negro who came out to interview me." I said the last to keep from mentioning the Bahai meeting.

By now we had walked back to the police desk. The sergeant jumped to attention and explained further that I'd had a Negro in the front seat of the car—not the back, but the *front*—sitting there talking to me when we stopped at the signal light.

"Now, Major Vanderbilt," Sir Roy began, turning to me, "you know you are not allowed to do this. It may sound silly to you, coming from a liberal country like America, but in this part of the world, it's not allowed, and you were a very naughty boy."

"Your police are very efficient," I said.

"They are not my police; they are the police of her Majesty, the Queen. We are a federation, but we are a part of the British Empire, and we have to observe some of the rules."

"Are these young men permitted to make arrests out in the country?"

"Yes, they're permitted to arrest you anywhere in the area in which the British rule—the country or the city or wherever you are. They are the law; they represent her Majesty." Then Sir Roy turned to the sergeant. "This man is making a motion picture of our part of the world, and if he receives poor treatment from us, he'll go back to his part of the world and say some very unkind things about us."

"That's not my business, sir," the sergeant replied. "My business is merely to clock him in. We'll see what the judge says."

"Well, I'd be very much obliged if you would release him to me," Sir Roy said. "Will you let him be my prisoner?"

"Why, yes, sir. Yes, I certainly will," agreed the sergeant.

And so I never reached the blotter stage, but was able to go out of the building with Sir Roy, who read me the riot act, more or less, both then and later at his house, where we had a long talk. I learned that he was not in sympathy with local procedures; however, he was bound to enforce the laws of the country.

Africa below the bulge in many ways resembles the Mississippi Delta, in that a few white people, relatively speaking, are nervous over their control because they are a minority group.

An odd thing is that *apartheid* interferes not only with Bahai meetings but with the work of Christian missionaries. People at home who give to foreign missions assume that now, as formerly, the heathen tribesmen are still assembled to hear the Word and sing hymns and learn the elements of Christian civilization. But the general law forbids assembly of the blacks in groups of more than a dozen, forbids their being in buildings with whites, and so on. In effect, *apartheid* has made the missionary job illegal. Aside from the medical missions, the missionaries are left with nothing to do, and the fact that they continue to receive funds from home constitutes what the irreverent term a racket.

Another racket down there is the game racket. There is practically no *wild* game left in Africa south of the equator. The wild game is in the zoos or in the great game reserves. The Kruger Park game reserve is huge, larger than the state of California, I was told. During the summer season everything dries up, and

because of the danger of forest fires, it is closed to the general public then. (The summer season down there comes at the time of the winter season up here.) The safaris into South Africa shoot game escaped from the reserves, and any brave hunter who returns proudly bearing stuffed heads has actually shot animals escaped from captivity. Bears in Yellowstone are wilder.

Actually, unless you drink gin and tonic as colonials are supposed to, there's nothing much to do in this part of the world but go in to the bioscope, as they call the movies. There are radio stations with BBC news, but is there anything duller?

Yet they almost had real news before I left Africa. Just before the Suez Canal excitement in 1956, I sat on the bank of the canal eating sandwiches and counting oil tankers as they passed. I got up to 72—18 Scandinavian, as many English, 6 Italian, 10 each for Liberia and Panama, 2 each for France, Venezuela, and the United States, and 4 from the USSR. Both sides of the canal were patrolled by soldiers with submachine guns, and anti-aircraft guns were in the sand hills beyond, and new, tall steel towers, like forest rangers' towers, for observation. Tanks and gun carriers were on the highway. Yet, as always, there were old women washing clothes on stones, oxen trudging around water wheels, camels carrying alfalfa and burros carrying old men in dirty white nightgowns and turbans. Where breaks in the convoys permitted, dhows with their giant, patched leg-of-mutton sails were pulled along by men, not animals. In some ways, like South Africa, North Africa was Africa still.

Yet Nasser was in Cairo, reminding me of Mussolini in the Italy of the thirties, and Egypt was an armed camp; Suez to Cairo to Port Said was one vast military cantonment, with jet planes, radar, and ammunition dumps, and road blocks every few miles. The old British army barracks housed Nasser's men, but the new equipment was from the Reds. It did them no good in '56, as it happened, against French and British planes and the Israeli army. But suppose the canal had been put out of commission, and the pipelines? The tankers would have had to go around by way of Cape Town.

Right after I got back to the States, I carried on with our parallel problem; I lectured in Montgomery, Alabama, during the bus strike. Then I played the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. In the hall there I saw very few Negroes. When I asked about them the man in charge snickered, but he sobered up when

I said I didn't think I could talk that night unless the hall was opened to them. So a few were admitted to the gallery—in Alabama you couldn't hope for more.

Then I took the bus to Birmingham, and later on I lectured in Austin, Texas, right after a lynch threat. In one of those public interviews for TV, with a mike on the street, I was asked questions nicely calculated to inflame a segregationist audience, but nothing happened then, or later when I talked in the University of Texas auditorium.

But all over the world today, these things are connected. It is easy for a liberal-minded American to see that Africa is England's Siberia, where she can control the labor market and produce commodities cheaply. There, the British and the Dutch can agree on keeping the black man down, unhampered by a meddling Supreme Court—and unhampered too, it seems, by thoughts of a Supreme Being.

Yet in revolt-ridden Cyprus, as I crossed the Mediterranean, I was asked an embarrassing question. When I tried to tell an angry Cypriote shopkeeper that I was American, not English, and Americans were always for democracy and freedom, he said, "Then why don't you treat the Negroes better?"

FDR'S PLAN FOR PEACE

IF ROOSEVELT were here today, what would he do to bring peace to our troubled world? Could he do it, as magically as he restored confidence in the Depression years? Or were his policies, and all they stood for, buried forever in the grave at Hyde Park?

No longer, of course, does the President make his own foreign policy, as FDR did. In the end it was hard to find even a running mate for him, so no wonder we have never found a successor.

With greater responsibility, then, than Hull and Welles had, my old schoolmate Chris Herter is doing his best, I'm sure, but he is handicapped by the immediate past. Our press has made the cold war as real to many Americans as, years ago in that little Concord theater, Chris and I found *The Perils of Pauline*. Our political witch-hunt has been more ridiculous than the tattle of the New England neighbors about that witch Mary Baker Eddy. Failure to reach agreement at Geneva in 1959 coincided with our failure to reverse, in Congress, arrangements made by the Pentagon and the late John Foster Dulles to give nuclear weapons to Germany.

Of course, West Germany today is not the Third Reich. My own belief is that, thanks to us, it is stronger—and despite its applause for Ike, no more friendly to us.

Although I was not barred from Germany for making a post-war film called *Germany Bounces Back*, as Hitler tried to bar me after I photographed his concentration camps, that film was as clear a warning to me as the earlier one had been; for I remember Dachau and I can see no change of heart and mind on the part of the German people. Improved circumstances, yes. The second film showed a wonderful economic and technological comeback, financed by us. But both my observation and that of others has confirmed that the German people as a whole do not feel guilt for making war or attempting genocide, nor do they feel a deep gratitude for what we have done for them—the sort of gratitude likely to make them fight the Russians for us. You cannot buy that sort of friendship. In some parts of Germany I found dislike for us so intense that it was wise to remove U. S. plates

from one's car. Generally speaking, it is understatement to say that the Marshall Plan spending has not brought us allegiance. Too much of the new housing looks like, and is, converted barracks; too many Germans, and other Europeans as well, give credit for all improvements to their own parties in power. That is only human nature, but for us this too has its dangers, for it means that often our taxes are supporting reactionary regimes.

When I tried to follow *Germany Bounces Back* with a Spanish documentary film, Franco's government received me with outward politeness but put so many technical obstacles in my way that it soon appeared I would be given no chance to do in Spain what I had done in Germany. In fact, when I reported to American observers what was happening to me, I was advised to leave quickly while it was possible to go.

Although Germany and Spain are the outstanding examples of our recent "togetherness" with countries traditionally alien in outlook or in regime, there is no lack of other frightening fumbles in foreign relations. What of Latin America? When FDR died, people wept in the streets of Rio de Janeiro. Today, with the Good Neighbor Policy forgotten, we can only be thankful that peace was not seriously endangered by the showers of missiles that greeted Mr. Nixon in South America. Was that affair "Communist-inspired"? Maybe, but as far back as '55 I wrote in my *Newsletter* that Latin American revolts were not necessarily so instigated but were the protests of "little people . . . interested not in political labels as such, but in practical measures. They are sick of eating beans and fish and gray bread. They blame the bankers and the big-shot foreign traders for the lack of electricity, of sufficient water to bathe in and to drink, and for the poor quality of clothes they must wear."

In many parts of the world our policy has had to depend on reactionary local support. When American aid filters through a reactionary regime we are identified with it and vulnerable to attack as friends of reaction. I ceased to feel any confidence in our ability to organize the world for peace during the Truman administration, when six months before the Korean war started I heard that an "incident" would take place. Of course everything would be over in a few weeks. When the "incident" dragged on and swept Ike into office on his promise to stop it, a series of crises—Quemoy, Suez, Lebanon—succeeded the war we lost.

Although "bipartisan" foreign policy has made danger seem

our normal climate, does anyone doubt that people would, if they could, vote overwhelmingly for another Roosevelt era of friendly confidence? I refuse to believe that we enjoy shutting our eyes in order to escape despair.

Would Roosevelt today restore world confidence as he did before, by telling us we have nothing to fear except fear itself? I am not sure, because I have moments of thinking it is too late to right our course. But I *do* know, from many conversations with FDR—as governor, as Mr. President, as Dear Boss—what ~~was~~ his long-cherished plan for world peace. Years ago when he was still governor of New York, and our immediate problem was getting the apple-sellers off the streets, FDR first talked to me of this plan. Even then he saw the danger of approaching war, but he saw beyond the war too, to the problem of employment for the world.

His project then, he told me, would be to link the world in a series of superhighways—not merely the Pan-American which was to come, and the Alcan, but others circling the globe. The need for financing world development he saw answered in terms of loans that would build for peace, rather than United States aid to be channeled into munitions manufacture.

“Think of it, Neil,” he urged me. “Think what it would do to the world. First a highway clear up through northwestern Canada into Alaska. Then ferries across the fifty-odd miles of the Bering Strait, and highways again, down through China and Burma into India and Persia; across Siberia to the Near East and Arabia, to Poland and Scandinavia! Imagine being able to motor all the way to Bangkok or Jerusalem! And the trade—truck lines to deliver American-made goods to all parts of the world.”

He was still spinning it out when Louis Howe, loyal and cantankerous, slipped into the room and stood at the foot of the bed. The governor was winning the nomination, then the election, and I was to convert world leaders to his plan, when Louis coughed and brought us back to Albany. “Chief, there are things to do today. That committee’s waiting, and the report on that bill—” And to me he said reproachfully, without looking at me, “Mr. Vanderbilt, you were promised half an hour, but you’ve been here over an hour—”

I rose, but FDR motioned for me to stay. Turning his laughing charm on Howe, he asked for a match and just ten minutes more, please—and so it was always when he talked of his grand project,

which grew clearer as the war came and transport problems grew more pressing, and the Russians across Bering Strait were our loyal allies whom we had to supply by way of the Persian Gulf or over the perilous Murmansk route. Now the plan had gone beyond Bering Strait ferries; why not a bridge or a tunnel, using the Diomed Islands en route? Meanwhile, of course, the ferries, large ocean-going ones of the type used on the English Channel, the Kattegat, and the Skagerrak. On their side, the Soviet Union would then build superhighways to connect with Manchuria, Mongolia, Korea, and parts of China, linking even Thailand, the East Indies, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan and all the "faraway" places with Pittsburgh and Detroit. Going the other way, the Pan-American highway would be really completed, a land link with Central and South America that would carry our goods and theirs.

When I said the railroads and steamship lines might fight the plan, FDR told me to forget how my ancestors had made their money. "Basically, Neil, we're an automotive country now." But he didn't go on to say that what was good for General Motors would be good for us. Instead, he said, "The automotive workers would be with us, and so would the car-owners who like to see the world. We're a traveling people. Look what our national highways have done for us, not only for prosperity that's based on interstate commerce but for pulling the country together. You know and I know that in parts of the South there are people who haven't changed their thinking since slavery times. But we know, too, that we'll never have another Civil War, not a shooting one. Everybody gets over the country, we see each other, and much as we disagree we're one country. In the same way we've got to get over the world and under the world and see it as one earth."

When I mentioned planes, FDR said they were fine when you were in a hurry, but they didn't help you to know places and people. In time planes would supersede rail passenger traffic, but cars and buses would still be the way to know the country at the grass-roots level. I couldn't argue that point, as I drove a trailer for that very reason.

Over the years I had many other talks with FDR about his plan. He never forgot the idea; during the war years he was as certain as Wilson had been that there must not be another war, and that a way must be found to insure lasting peace. But it must be a practical, down-to-earth peace, not a paper one. He saw opposition ahead, of course, because of the link with the USSR. The Wall

Street die-hards hadn't been for recognition of Russia in the first place and still muttered about it. "The old gang still can't see any good in the Bolshies," FDR would say, "even while they're holding the Germans off for us. They had a revolution, and so did we, but people forget that."

The details of the plan, which he loved to play with, were soundly capitalist. Besides the great international transport corporation, the one-earth plan, as I came to call it, provided for development all along the lines of those globe-circling highway ribbons. "There'll be tourist camps, hotels, restaurants, at every price level. Imagine, Neil, driving from Hyde Park, New York, to Hyde Park in London with only two short ferry crossings en route. Or let's say spending a week end at the races in Santiago de Chile, without even having to put your car on a ferry! And I've another idea—"

Laughing, but serious too, the President said that on retiring to private life, with his great plan under way, he wanted what he called the lunch-basket concession. Restaurants en route were all very well, but why not lunch or dinner baskets like the tea baskets on English trains? "People motoring along our roads could pick up a lunch basket, let's say in Mexico City, and give it up that night in Tehuantepec. Complete, naturally, with cutlery and tea-cups in the wicker basket—"

These little details, of speeding up travel and at the same time making it a perpetual picnic, were important. But he thought also in terms of the larger, solid gains: "Think of carting the rubber from the East Indies, overland through China, Siberia, and Alaska, to Akron! Why, there'd be jobs for millions of people for hundreds of years. Better than treaties to end the unemployment and poverty that the totalitarian schemes exploit. To say nothing of getting people to know each other. See each other face to face—yellow, red, black, and white—and swap ideas and learn to like each other, the way you like the people you meet when you travel."

He had a lot to say on this point, the importance of making it easy for people everywhere to know each other, to rub off the prejudices in that way.

Over the years and through the terms in the White House, we talked of the plan—it became, I think, a sort of dream vacation for a hard-worked man who wanted to take the world along with him wherever he went. And his buoyant spirit always responded to

a light-hearted reminder of how pleasant, how much *fun*, it would be to motor to Rome, say, with only that one water crossing from Alaska. So my recollections about the idea are poignant, but practical too.

It was planning for a positive good that kept FDR young and healthy-minded and able to cope, from his wheel chair, with problems that other Presidents have failed to solve on golf courses. And so I remember his mention of the plan the last time I saw him, that day on the porch of his little wooden cottage at Warm Springs. He'd told me I was to go to the San Francisco conference, but conferences alone wouldn't keep the peace. Organizations wouldn't. We'd have to get going on the One-Earth Plan and I'd have to follow the family bent for planning transport. . . .

"Think it over, Neil. I know you've been having that ticker trouble. You can't keep up the pace forever. You'll want something to occupy your mind when you're old, too."

He looked through me, and I thought, "*He's not old!*" But he wasn't thinking of himself.

"And the world can't live long, either, Neil, as it's going now. It's got to be one world, as even Willkie put it—one earth as God made it—or we'll all blow ourselves up."

He was speaking *before* Hiroshima, of course, but he knew what they were trying to do with nuclear fission and he knew what had been done with Nazi missiles over England. I don't think he needed the charts showing fall-out conditions across the country that I've just got from Washington—black pockets of danger, months after detonation, show on them—to know that there would be a need to hold our world together.

I submit that if you really consider this plan of FDR's and the attitude toward the world implied in it, you have the key to many of our present-day problems. Certainly you have proof, if you need it, that when he went to Yalta the President was not the dupe of the Russians, or of Alger Hiss, or the victim of old age and illness, or any of the horrifying influences since suggested as part of the effort to make our Yalta agreements appear a disaster to be repudiated. It would be quite as fair to suggest that the Dulles policy of rearming Germany was the result of a psychopathic hatred of the Russians induced by Dulles' physical ailment. Instead, and fairly in both cases, it should be admitted that both men behaved with consistency in line with their convictions.

The difference was that FDR looked forward in confidence to

a peaceful world, and would have regarded with abhorrence the thought of an America perpetually armed, living in fear of its life, and resigned to perpetual emergency controls. He did not live to see the possibilities of atomic energy, but does anyone believe that he would have used it as it was used, to terrify a world? The scientists who first worked on nuclear fission under his direction have absolved him of guilt for planning Hiroshima and Nagasaki; that decision came later. As for the cold war and the Korean war and the arms race around the world, it is inconceivable that his leadership would have brought these evils upon us.

Never, of course, did I see any indication that FDR meant to give way to the Russians on any important issue, to imperil American liberties in any way, or to let himself be outmaneuvered by them in the game of international chess which they play so well. But by treating them as human beings he won their regard and respect, and I am firmly convinced that a continuation of his policy, rather than a reversal of it, would have meant a peaceful world today.

Indeed, I myself served as a guinea pig for an early test of his plan. In the late twenties, *before* our recognition of Russia, I drove my trailer across the Soviet Union and through Siberia. Not having the advantage of FDR's proposed highway link, I approached by way of Poland. At the Russian frontier, John Brodix and I didn't know whether we would get in or not. No one said much; the guards examined our various passes and sealed our radio, but they made no effort to keep us out.

We had a phonograph with us and some records, which the frontier guards allowed us to keep. We also had kitchen equipment and butane gas, and we had the back of the trailer and our car filled with cans of gasoline. The butane ran out at the end of the second week, but we had Sterno to make our morning meal. For lunch or dinner we stopped somewhere on the way. Our trip took us about five weeks.

We went up through Moscow and from there to Lake Baikal, through Omsk and Tomsk. En route we passed a place called Ekaterinburg (now Sverdlovsk)—the town in which the czar and the czarina were supposed to have been executed during the Revolution in 1917. From Lake Baikal we cut across the great steppes and the forests of Siberia and came out at a place called Otpur. We went through Manchouli (now Lupin) into Manchukuo and from there to a town called Hailar (Hulun), which I saw again when I was covering the Manchukuo border dispute.

From Hailar we went to Harbin, and then straight down Manchukuo to Mukden, at the far end, and then across to Peking. From there we drove to Nanking and Shanghai. Then we started for home on an American cargo liner, via the Philippines and Japan, and took a Canadian Pacific liner to Vancouver.

In the principal Russian cities such as Moscow we were greeted by armed guards, troops seated in open European cars, with long guns and bayonets, and they would see us through the towns. In some places, evidently newspapers had told of our coming, and identified me as a capitalist. So as I drove through the streets people raised their fists; but this, of course, is the Communist salute.

When we parked in the countryside, we had no trouble at all. We found the Russian people, especially the peasantry, to be as kind as the people in any part of Europe—even in Holland, where I once gave a trailer party for all my distant relatives, the Van der Bilts. We also stopped in communal farms and at tank pools where they kept the tractors. We parked in village squares, or right outside villages, and we would call upon the commissar or the person who ran the village and try to explain ourselves to him, in our best French or whatever language seemed to work. My friend Brodix spoke some Spanish and some Italian, and I spoke some German. But although as a child I'd been to school with the young czarevitch in a suburb of Leningrad, I'd completely forgotten the Russian learned in those few months.

In the small places where we stopped, people would come out and stare at us with amazement. They were mostly peasants, the women wearing shawls and large aprons and the men in heavy work clothes; sometimes they looked us over in a semi-belligerent mood. I believe they thought the trailer might be a tank or some sort of military vehicle. When we would open the door so they could see inside, they were assured by the pictures on the wall and the other ordinary domestic things. Then they were very kind. They would bring us chickens, and milk in oddly-shaped bottles. We boiled the milk and used it and offered them canned goods in return. The cans were all good—they never swelled or exploded—but I remember that in one place a man took an ax and chopped straight through a can. He was astounded when the contents spurted out, and immediately pulled out a revolver and shot the devil in the can.

People have asked me where we were able to get car parts and gasoline on this trip. All over Russia in those days, there were

Ford tractor stations. Ford had some sort of deal with the Russian government long before we recognized the Soviet Union. And every two or three hundred miles we found a yellow Shell Oil sign, on a telegraph pole perhaps, and then when we drove in to a farm or a small village we were able to buy gasoline there. It was not very good gasoline, but it made the car run.

We found, too, mechanics to make the parts work. A thing that has always interested me is the skill of mechanics in far-off places. In South Africa I found mechanics as good as any I have known in the United States. Way off the beaten path in South Africa, they were able to fix my Chrysler hydromatic station wagon in a matter of minutes. They knew at once what was wrong. These mechanics, I learned, had worked in the RAF during the war, and afterward had come to South Africa to get away from possible future wars in Great Britain.

Many of the far-off places are not as far away as one would think. Years after the trailer trip across Russia with John Brodix, I came across on the Trans-Siberian railway. This time Jack O'Brien was with me, doing a job for the *Washington Post*, on the Manchukuo trip. We'd picked up the railway at Otpur and went through forests which go on for miles and miles and look very much like our own forests in Washington and Oregon. Or else we looked out on the great plains which resemble ours in Colorado and Wyoming and Nebraska, and which at the time were crowded with tractors at work. Jack and I were in the same compartment, he in the L-shaped lower berth from which he could look out the window all the time. From my upper I couldn't see so well, but I had crossed Russia so many times it was an old story. In fact, I made the Trans-Siberian trip twenty-one times; I was always in a hurry to get from China to Europe, and the ten-day trip by rail was much faster than the boat trip through the China Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean, and so on.

Now, looking out at the great spaces, Jack asked, "When is it going to look like far away?" I've never forgotten that question; I still can't answer it, because no place that I have ever been looked like far away. Every place you go, you always compare to somewhere else. When I was doing my Israel picture, the man who chauffeured us about couldn't get over the way I was always comparing places there to some part of the United States. Joe Shane, with me on that trip, said, "When you get back home you'll be comparing everything to Israel, and people home won't like it

either." But I've hardly ever found a place that did not look like some other place I've been. Though I've not been to Tibet or very far into the central part of South America, when I go, I suspect that a snow-capped Himalayan peak may remind me of one in the Andes, or vice versa.

In the same way, of course, people the world over resemble each other, remind us of each other—if not in their obvious physical aspects, then in their ways of doing things. In Siberia, we found that if we let down the tail of the trailer and played the phonograph, people smiled, and sometimes they clapped their hands and danced for us. If we had carried a Tommy gun instead and sprayed them with it, their reaction would have been different. And that is why I am still for a world in which we at least try to use FDR's friendly approach.

As an illustration of the Tommy-gun technique which has now become second nature in international relations, let me tell of another travel experience much later than the Siberian one—this one quite recent, well within our atomic age. I had been photographing a Swiss watch factory at the base of the high Alps, a day's work which made me want dinner and a bath, and both were in preparation at my hotel when there was a knock on my door. It was one of those persistent knocks which, if you have dealt with police in foreign countries, you know means you'd better open. Sure enough, when I put on a bath towel and opened the door, here were the soldiers with the guns and bayonets. They were polite, though; the sergeant said I wasn't under arrest, but must go with him, please.

I told the waiter to take away the dinner, and went. In the government building to which I was taken, a very small man with a narrow, intelligent, wily face asked me why I hadn't reported myself as an officer of American Military Intelligence.

I explained that I wasn't an Intelligence officer now. I had been; I still carried my pass with picture and signature, for identification, but it was plainly marked canceled. And how—since his questions showed he had seen it—had he got hold of the pass that I kept with me in my wallet?

That he didn't answer, but he admitted having gone through all my luggage, at Lucerne. He knew all about me, he said—and though I had been a close friend of President Roosevelt's, why was I taking pictures of parts of Switzerland which were considered highly secret?

So I told him I was crazy about Switzerland, always had been; that, in fact, I liked it better than any place except the United States. I started reminiscing about how I'd been in the country with my family way back at the start of World War I, and how my father had helped the Swiss banks out with several millions cash in that war, and gradually the glacier thawed. Instead of arresting me, I found he was talking to me about Swiss preparations for defense in the *next* war—World War III.

The government, he told me, was stock-piling goods, and would advise people to do the same as signs of crisis appeared. Government storehouses were in the mountains, which had been hollowed out for miles, to contain lakes of oil and gas, as well as food supplies and medical supplies, and space for people to live. But not enough space. Just space enough, he told me, for the militia. If trouble came, they planned to take the men of military age (eighteen to sixty) into these mountain caverns and leave everyone else outside.

"Isn't that a terrible thing to do?" I asked.

And he agreed, but said they just didn't have room; they'd do what they could for the sick and the aged, but others would have to take their chance. They could at least meet the enemy with a useful delaying action, because, as even the bus drivers will tell you, all the roads and bridges in Switzerland are mined, waiting for a push button to set them off.

All right, it's crazy, but no crazier than a lot of our own plans for civil defense, and what do you think of it as a way to live? These things cost money, but worse than the bad economy is the idea of this way of life. Little Switzerland, safe in the mountains—and planning to live as they lived in the London subways, except of course that they didn't put the army there.

They are, like us, afraid of the Russians, but for a special reason—they admit successful spying against the Soviet Union. However, the rest of Europe and people the world over are going beyond fear of any one country, or the thought that a single country can offer protection. They are as much afraid of American bases as of Russian missiles, and rightly, if things go up in a general explosion.

With the world as it is today, I have done my share of calling attention to the general danger. With Jimmy Roosevelt in his California campaign, and others who echo him, I have talked of the need for bomb shelters and stockpiles and civil defense—that, I

have thought, might be one way of making people realize what a third world war would be like. Only if they realize, will they start watching our foreign policy and demand world peace.

Will we, instead, look for holes to crawl into? A friend who represents the country's largest farm-selling outfit tells me he has never had so many requests for "hidden farm properties," places safely off the beaten track of bombers and ICBM's. In the West I hear that all sorts of old mining properties are being bought up, because they are underground.

Is this the best we can do? If so, then let's do it as a country, officially, admitting our fears to the world! If we're planning a nuclear war, let's face it. It's not a thing you can fumble with. Take the gold out of Fort Knox and fill it with bouillon cubes; pack the Carlsbad Caverns with powdered eggs and Spam, and don't forget the medical supplies. Otherwise, if and when the thing happens, how will we recover from the consequences of being unprepared? Who will come to our assistance? What sort of Marshall Plan can we expect to help us recover, if we live?

Instead, our plans are small, horse-and-buggy measures, pitifully old-fashioned for an atomic age. Our diplomats try to bolster NATO when even press columnists can see that European defense bases are made obsolete by ICBM's. And the truth is, NATO was obsolete back when a Swiss officer told me of the Russian "staging areas" designed to convert the movement of heavy war equipment from their broad-gauge railways to the standard or narrow-gauge tracks that cover Europe. In our own planning it seems that we have failed to develop such areas for the conversion of old, outmoded mental equipment to a better-gauge thinking capable of taking us where we want to go.

What then happened to FDR's plan—did it die with him?

Once I tried to get a description of it printed in leading American magazines. At least a dozen of them turned it down, although they would take from me thoughts on marriage, fashions, "society," or royalty or Hollywood. Then I saw an issue of one magazine which, though lacking the grand network of roads, at least seriously presented elaborate plans for damming and bridging over Bering Strait. The magazine was *USSR*, the Soviet propaganda monthly modeled on our *Life* and distributed here under the government agreement that allows our similar publication, *America*, to go there.

The Russians agree with me about FDR, too. In San Francisco

during Khrushchev's visit, Deputy Premier Kozlov remarked that, while President Truman was responsible for "spoiling good relations" between our countries, "Roosevelt was a great man and established very good relations. He had the greatest respect in our country."

For agreeing with Premier Kozlov I'll probably be called a Red. I've been called one before—in good company. I've also been called Mr. Astor and Mr. Rockefeller, by people who didn't know me but had a vague sense of family fortunes. And, in company with the majority of Americans who voted in four elections, I've been called a traitor—remember "twenty years of treason"?

Actually, Communism is not and never has been a real threat in this country—it's what Roosevelt saved us from. I should know, not only because my job for FDR was keeping an ear to the ground and nose to the wind for political trends, but because, although I myself failed to share largely in the Vanderbilt estate, I grew up familiar with its extent and aware of the uneasiness about revolutionary confiscation that goes with great wealth. In New York alone, the estate included land from 32nd to 110th streets, and from the western side of Madison to the eastern side of Lexington Avenue. There was other property also in London, Paris, Berlin, and elsewhere. Vanderbilt heirs were in effect nonvoting shareholders in a big corporation, administered by banks and lawyers. When my father died in 1942, the estate was estimated to be worth several billion dollars. There were 184 heirs involved then, which means that under the management of the bankers and the lawyers, most of whom the heirs never saw, no one of us got too much.

On my mother's side, the Wilson money, though only a few millions, was more accessible and actually meant more to us. But on both sides I had cause to know the power of money, the ways in which it still controls the world we live in—sometimes benignly or unconsciously, but so far, in this country, with no real revolutionary challenge since 1932. There are the little ways in which money counts—the scandals that don't make the papers (some among my relatives) and leave the participants still in the Social Register. There are accidental effects, as when my cousin Bill, as Republican governor of Rhode Island, helped elect Truman (Bill cut Catholic Charities out of his budget, and lost to McGrath, who promoted Truman in '44). Here the effect on the world was far out of proportion to the cause, for to me at least it seems that many of our troubles began at Fulton, Missouri.

During and after World War II, some people were fond of saying they would follow FDR as far as he followed Churchill. This was not very far, because it was not FDR who followed Churchill, but Truman. In comparison with Roosevelt, Churchill is a small man because "Mr. England," like Chancellor Adenauer and General de Gaulle, thinks first of his own country instead of thinking in terms of the world. At the beginning of World War II perhaps this was still possible; at the war's end it was not—the atomic age made us one in danger.

My mother agreed with Churchill politically and liked having him as a guest, but she was not, any more than the White House was in those days, an uncritical admirer. The prime minister dined at Mother's table on the night of his taxi accident in New York, and Mother warned him about mixing his drinks. He answered with a toast, "To the most powerful woman in New York. She will remain thus if she does not meddle in the bacchanalian affairs of men." But after the accident Mother had the last word; she sent her disabled guest a Bacchic wreath of grapes.

Roosevelt in his wheel chair, I am sure, got over more of the world in his mind than those who followed him ever did in jet planes, and he grasped the need to develop a sympathy among people the world over, an understanding that would make it unthinkable to promote any large-scale project for mutual killing. His highway plan was not only for geographical unity but for mutual knowledge and respect. He wanted to make us all explorers of each other's territory, capable of grasping opposing viewpoints with that tolerance for opposition that is the basis of democratic government. He said, you remember, that you must never underestimate the people's intelligence, though he had to admit ruefully that with our media of communication what they were, sometimes you *couldn't* underestimate people's information.

But communications can be improved. If we learn in time to let Joe Doakes and Mrs. Doakes and the kiddies drive the family car from Omsk to Tomsk, from Dan to Beersheba, from Bulawayo to Salisbury, I guarantee a return with a better understanding not only of those places but of Little Rock and Levittown, Miami Beach and Reno.

And, as FDR would say with a grin, it would be a fine thing to have the concession for basket lunches.

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