
Keep Your Card in This Pocket

Books will be issued only on presentation of proper library cards.

Unless labeled otherwise, books may be retained for two weeks. Borrowers finding books marked, defaced or mutilated are expected to report same at library desk; otherwise the last borrower will be held responsible for all imperfections discovered.

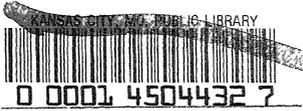
The card holder is responsible for all books drawn on this card.

Penalty for over-due books 2c a day plus cost of notices.

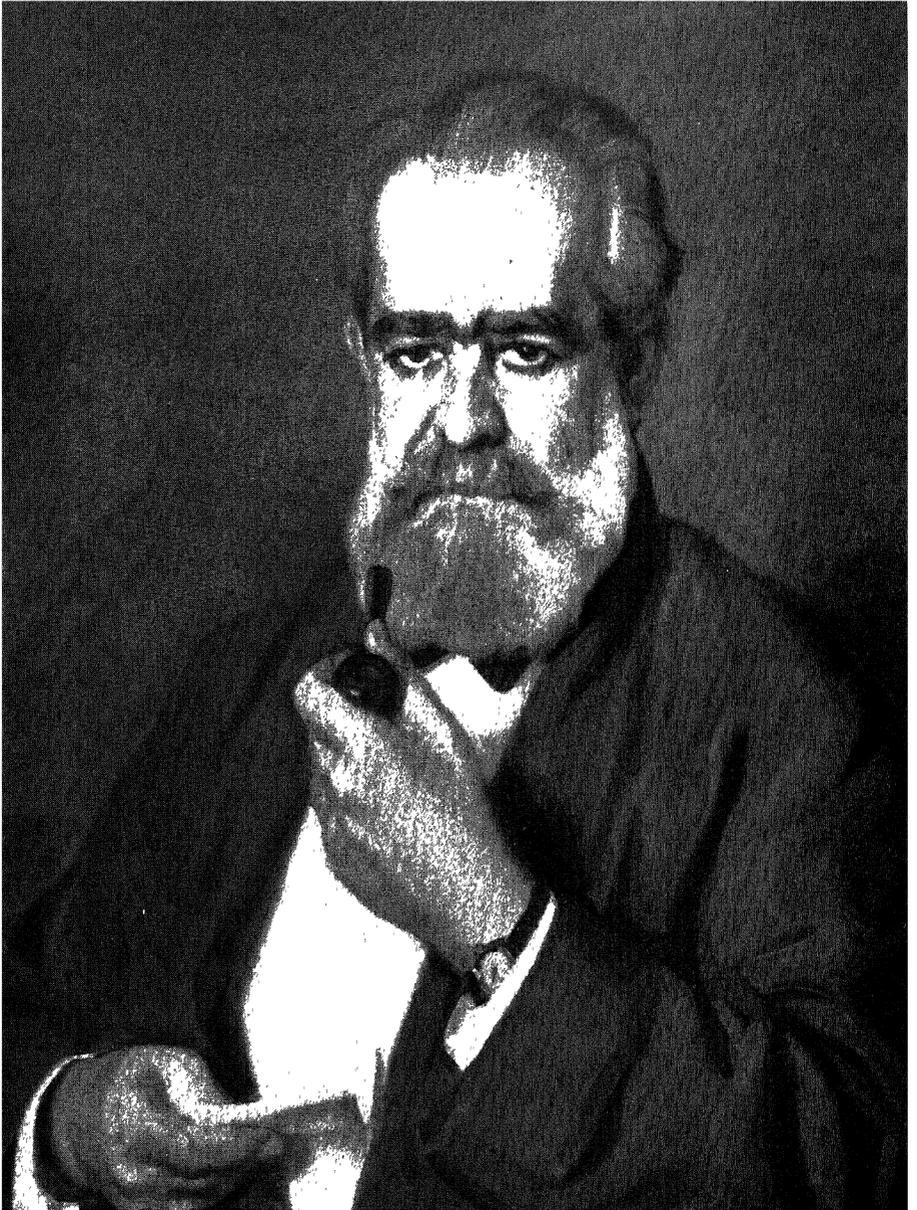
Lost cards and change of residence must be reported promptly.



Public Library
Kansas City, Mo.



BETWEEN SITTINGS



JO DAVIDSON

Photo by Tommy Weber, New York

BETWEEN SITTINGS

an informal autobiography

of

Jo Davidson



The Dial Press : New York : 1951

Copyright 1951 by Jo Davidson

Designed by Bert Clarke

Printed in the United States of America
By The Haddon Craftsmen, Inc., Scranton, Penna.

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	1	"The Million"	3
	2	I Discover Clay	11
	3	A Cossack in St. Louis	17
	4	My First Commission	24
	5	Upton Sinclair's Socialist Colony	28
	6	An East-Sider on the Left Bank	33
	7	The Open Road	40
	8	The Swiss Girl	46
	9	Yvonne	51
	10	I Get Married	60
	11	Adieu to the <i>vie de bohème</i>	67
	12	Washington Square in 1911	73
	13	Chicago	77
	14	In Italy with Mabel Dodge	81
	15	Art Hits New York	84
	16	Picasso and Manolo	88
	17	Frank Harris	92
	18	George Bernard Shaw	96

Contents

<i>Chapter</i> 19	Lord Northcliffe	101
20	A Taste of War	108
21	Joseph Conrad	117
22	Woodrow Wilson	120
23	MacDougal Alley and the Brevoort	124
24	Plastic History	132
25	Marshal Foch	138
26	From Pershing to Clemenceau	144
27	On the Domestic Side	151
28	Anatole France	157
29	The Genoa Conference	161
30	E. W. Scripps	169
31	Gertrude Stein and Dr. Coué	174
32	Russia, 1923	178
33	John D. Rockefeller	185
34	With Otto Kahn in Morocco	193
35	Charlie Chaplin	199
36	Poetry and Politics in Memoriam	202
37	In the Country of Balzac	207
38	I Strike Oil	210
39	Aboard the "Ponca City"	217
40	Egypt	221
41	Il Duce	225
42	Letters from a "Flying Cloud"	231
43	Two Men Named Andrew	236
44	On the Trail of the Literati	241
45	H. G. Wells, Lincoln Steffens, Henry Ford	249
46	The Doran Assignment Completed	259

Contents

<i>Chapter</i> 47	Gandhi	265
48	Experiments in Polychrome	270
49	F. D. R.	275
50	A Mathematician and a Mayor	278
51	Our Last Trip	283
52	Restless Days	287
53	“Camerado, I give you my hand!”	293
54	Will Rogers	298
55	Russia Revisited	301
56	On the Side of Freedom	307
57	An Expatriate Returns	317
58	South American Journey	322
59	Life at Stone Court Farm	331
60	Henry Wallace and Ernie Pyle	336
61	Rooting for Roosevelt	341
62	Atlas Steps Out From Under	345
63	Back to France	348
64	Warsaw Interlude	352
65	Marshal Tito	357
66	A Vice Is a Vice	362
67	Israel	367

BETWEEN SITTINGS

CHAPTER I

“THE MILLION”

A GREAT MANY THINGS were happening in 1883, the year of my birth: the Brooklyn Bridge had just been completed, everybody was singing “A Bicycle Built for Two” and a recently imported piece of sculpture was making news—the Statue of Liberty.

I was born on New York’s lower East Side and the memories of early youth are vague and shadowy. I remember long, dark halls, crowded tenements, strange sour smells, drab unpainted walls and moving—we were always moving. All these recollections are touched with a warm glow which came from my mother and my sisters who surrounded me with love and affection.

My mother was full of an unquenchable fire that brought life to everything around her—everything except my father who lived completely within himself. Father had beautiful eyes, a long white beard, and the face of a prophet. I can still see him moving about the house almost like a spirit. He was always praying and a sign of affection from him was a rarely given luxury.

Mother was tiny, extraordinarily energetic—she was the practical one on whom the family leaned. She enjoyed life to the utmost and when things were bad—we were exceedingly poor and often didn’t have enough to eat—she would tell us wonderful, glowing stories of her past life in Russia to divert us from our hunger. She told us about

Between Sittings

her grandfather, a wealthy businessman who adored her and brought her up; about her first marriage, when she was fifteen or sixteen, how this great love had come to a tragic end when he was drowned in a swimming race; of her second marriage to my father, whose people were scholars and rabbis.

My stepbrother George, who had emigrated to America before us, had written back enthusiastic letters from the New World. Mother loved to tell of landing in New York, her impressions of her first American home, her disillusionment. She never tired of talking about the rise and fall of the family fortunes.

Mother particularly liked to tell us the story about Father who believed in miracles and always hoped to hold the winning ticket in some lottery. While she was carrying me, his friends would tease him, asking, if he had his choice, would he choose to have a son or to win a million in the lottery. That is why when I was born, on March 30, 1883, I was called "The Million."

On Saturdays, I would accompany Father to the synagogue. I respected him but always tried to keep out of his way as much as possible for fear of offending him.

I remember my father trying to teach me to read the Old Testament in Hebrew. I must have been very dense, for every session would end in tears. I recall one time Father explaining to me the story of creation. The Adam and Eve story was all right, but what bothered me was, since there was no one in the world but Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel, where did Cain get his wife? I remember my father smacking me down with a statement that with God everything was possible. You didn't ask questions about God.

One of the incidents of my childhood I remember most clearly happened when I was about five or six. I was given a hobbyhorse. A big one. The horse stood on a board and the board had wheels. I didn't like that. A horse should have its feet on the ground and I was not happy until I had removed the board and the wheels. I could sit on the horse and the horse stood on its own four feet. It was wonderful until one of my sisters—they were all older than I—thought she would try it too.

“The Million”

She did. The horse could not take it. The legs gave way and that was the end of the horse. It was a tragedy.

Nancy was the oldest of my three sisters. She was pretty and spoiled, the apple of my mother's eye. Rachel was my pal—I called her Rachie—a vivacious creature with sparkling, snapping eyes like my mother's. Then, there was beautiful, sensitive Rose, rather like Father, soft-voiced, poetic and musical. My mother was determined that my sisters go through college. She would not have them working in factories. As I was a boy, it did not matter, but the girls, she felt, must be protected.

I remember my mother and Nancy sewing neckties, my sister Ray ironing neckties with a Latin book propped up in front of her. It was my job to deliver neckties.

Our house was always full of people, all kinds: my mother was a great storyteller and the house resounded with laughter. She was a wonderful cook and could stretch a half-pound of meat to feed more mouths than anyone else in the world. She was never still for a moment. She had a special gift with words and could scold and swear and fascinate all at the same time.

One summer we had a wooden shack away out in the country at 109th Street and Riverside Park. I remember going around barefoot picking wild strawberries and raspberries—and what jam my mother could make, such macaroons, such bread! I can still taste them. She was urged to make a business of it, but she stuck to the neckties. My sisters helped and that's the way the family maintained itself while Father grew more and more isolated from us, spending most of his time in the synagogue.

One of the young men who frequented our house was David Bercinsky. He was charming and witty, and had a beautiful singing voice. My mother often scolded him for being a ne'er-do-well but she secretly liked him. One day he dropped out of sight and it wasn't until a few weeks later that a visitor reported that David was working in a drug-store. My mother made a bet—a box of candy against a necktie—that the visitor could not produce him. She lost the necktie but acquired a

Between Sittings

son-in-law, for David Bercinsky eventually married my eldest sister Nancy and became one of the outstanding physicians in New Haven. His house in George Street, with Nancy presiding, was to become a haven for all the Davidsons and their friends.

My mother was a natural snob and did not approve of my associating with the other kids on the street. Just as I would get into a game of cat or baseball, one of my sisters would stick her head out of the window and shout: "Jo-eee! Come upstairs!" It became a slogan with the other kids. It was then that I dropped the "e" from "Joe."

In school I was lazy and very often did not do my homework; I was always drawing pictures. The teachers liked them and frequently had me decorate the blackboard with colored chalks. The stars and stripes and the American eagle were predominant in those blackboard drawings.

It is curious how little I remember of my school days. I was always in a dream, vague and lazy. I understand now—being underfed, I wanted to sleep all the time.

Very early I had to contribute to the support of the household. Gold was not so easily found on the streets of New York and jobs were not so plentiful. If you looked at the newspapers of those days, the want-ad sections read:

"WANTED—Young man as second man in private family, Englishman preferred. Apply 23 Washington Square North."

"BOYS—Four Protestants to pass bills. Meet party on S.E. corner Eighth Street and Third Avenue at 8 o'clock sharp."

"AGENTS AND PHYSICIANS in each city to represent the Morrell Liquor Cure. Address the Morrell Liquor and Morphine Cure, 1 and 3 Ann Street, New York City."

And that is why, like most of the other boys I knew, I took to selling newspapers. My stand at the corner of Duane Street and Broadway was a busy one and there were many others who coveted it. I put up a good fight for that corner, but finally lost it.

“The Million”

That fall, I didn't want to return to school, but my mother and sisters insisted that I should at least graduate from grammar school. They put me in a room, emptied of all distracting materials, and left me, thinking I would do my homework. They had forgotten, however, to remove *David Copperfield*, and I spent the whole day reading it. I got through the exams by the skin of my teeth—just the required 75%.

The family still needed help, so I got a job as an apprentice to a house-painter and paperhanger. His name was Anspacher and his store was on Lexington Avenue, at the corner of Fifty-ninth Street. Work started at seven in the morning, preparing the pots and paints for the painters. I would accompany them on their jobs and on returning, I had to wash all their brushes and clean the pots to be ready for the next day. That would take until seven in the evening. I don't remember how I lost that job, but I did.

Then I got a job with the Western Union Telegraph Company at 16 Broad Street as a messenger boy. They gave me a uniform, of which I was very proud. When I showed myself in uniform to my family, the anticipated approval was not forthcoming but I stuck to that job. It was active. I was running about delivering messages and meeting all kinds of people, and while I sat about waiting for a call I would make sketches of the other messenger boys. They were my first appreciative audience—“Johnny, you are wasting your time, you ought to get a job on a newspaper.”

After Western Union, I got a job as office boy on the *Public Opinion*, a weekly. But that soon came to an end. Then for a time I was office boy in a sausage factory. This is a job I will never forget because it marks my first experience with a telephone—a novel invention at the time. I was alone in the room when it rang and, terribly afraid, I took the receiver off the hook and put it gingerly to my ear. I was so frightened that the noises I heard meant nothing, so I put the receiver back. The phone rang again. I picked it up and made another effort to understand. It was no good. I let it ring. Then the boss ran into the office, and answered it, and when he got through talking I was fired.

Next was a job as an errand boy in the bookstore and publishing house of Truslow, Hanson and Combs. They published a theosophical

Between Sittings

magazine. I remember delivering parcels of books to a Dr. Fullerton and I remember such names as Anna Besant and Madame Blavatsky. I lost that job too.

There were lapses between jobs, and when they came I would hang around the house or go to the afternoon drawing class of the Educational Alliance on East Broadway. Across the way was Rabinowitz' bookstore, which had a magnetic fascination for me. There was always an array of second-hand books on the outside stalls. I could never pass without rummaging among the piles of books. One afternoon I came upon a title that held my attention.

I began leafing through the book and it gripped me. I don't know how long I stood there reading when Mr. Rabinowitz tapped me on the shoulder, saying: "This is not a library reading room." The little I read there that afternoon made such an impression on me that as soon as I was able to raise the necessary dime, I became the proud possessor of *The Age of Reason* by Tom Paine.

I began to attend classes at an evening high school where we made drawings from plaster casts. I made sketches of my friends whenever they would pose for me. I used to go to the Henry Street Settlement. I remember that one afternoon Lillian Wald was proudly showing my sketches to Mr. Jacob Schiff. He admired a drawing I did of my favorite cat, and she gave it to him.

Every Saturday and Sunday, my friend Sam Halpert and I would walk from the East Side to the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Fifth Avenue at Eighty-second Street. There was a veiled lady in marble, which we knew was not good but which always secretly intrigued us. The huge halls and the plaster casts of Greek and Egyptian masterpieces filled us with awe. The Greek sculpture was human but the Egyptians fascinated and frightened me. But it was in the picture galleries that Sam and I spent most of our time.

The idea of becoming an artist appealed to me. I would show my efforts to anyone who would look at them and my sister Ray was my most sympathetic booster. Rachie had graduated from Teachers' College and was teaching in a public school. It was she who had succeeded

“The Million”

in interesting someone to the extent of paying a year's tuition for me at the Art Students League. There I attended the evening classes and worked in the daytime. My first teacher was George de Forrest Brush. I was the youngest member of the life class, where we drew from nude living models. I felt very grown-up in these surroundings.

It was at the Art Students League that I met Waterbury. He had a studio in Union Square and he asked me to visit him. I found him at work, painting an Indian head on a leather skin which he had first burned in with a pyrographic needle. He suggested that I should try my hand at pyrography because the pay was good. Waterbury demonstrated the process and showed me how to use the needle. Wasting no time, I took some of my drawings to the Flemish Art Company and applied for a job.

I was hired. The boss took me into the shop and put me next to a girl who was to show me how to use a new mechanical gadget run by bellows. On the table was an array of leather pocketbooks with designs stamped on them which were to be burned into the leather. While the boss stood behind us, the young lady showed me how to work the bellows. I was so nervous and afraid of burning holes in the leather that I concealed my fear by working fast and furiously. The boss stood by, watched me for a bit and left me, convinced that he had really gotten hold of an expert. I was very happy there. I had a job which paid well and had something to do with art. Eventually I was transferred to the design department.

One day I heard that Langsdorf and Company, a box factory, were looking for a foreman designer in their burnt wood department. I applied for and got the job. The workers there were on a piece work basis and the price they received depended on the time I spent on each piece. My new employers were very pleased with me, but the other employees complained to me that I worked much too fast. I was spoiling it for them and endangering their jobs. So I slowed up and as a result lost my job.

The best part of my life then was the evening drawing classes at

Between Sittings

the Art Students League. In addition to Brush, I had as my teachers George Bridgman and Bryson Burroughs.

On Saturdays and Sundays, I used to go to the Country Sketch Club. We would meet at the Club Saturdays on the top floor of the Folsom Building situated on the corner of Broadway and Thirteenth Street. There we would paint from a nude model. On Sundays, we would go to paint on Richmond Hill, Staten Island. Although I made black-and-white drawings, my paintings were very timid and pale. One day, in a discussion, someone asked me whether, by shutting my eyes, I could mentally see a desired color, red, blue or yellow. I tried and tried but all my concentration produced nothing and it was then that I decided I was not a painter.

CHAPTER 2

I DISCOVER CLAY

MY FAMILY was opposed to the idea of my becoming an artist because that meant a loafer, a perpetual pauper, an absolutely useless person. When my sister Nancy married David Bercinsky, they opened a drugstore in New Haven; by this means he worked his way through Yale Medical School, graduating *cum laude*, and then set himself up as a practicing physician in New Haven. My family felt that I should follow in his footsteps. I was eighteen and not having had a college education, I had to take courses to pass enough exams to get the necessary number of Regents' credits to enter medical school. David offered to help. I went to New Haven, moved into my sister's house, and settled down to work.

In New Haven, David Bercinsky was having a pretty hard time of it. He was just starting to practice medicine and money was scarce. I went to see Randall, the college photographer on Chapel Street and asked him to lend me some photographs of Dr. Arthur Hadley, the newly appointed President of Yale University. Mr. Randall, a charming old fellow, complied with my request. In between cramming for the Regents' exams, I finally completed a burnt wood portrait of President Hadley on a three-ply wood panel. I took it over to show Mr. Randall and was overjoyed when he offered to display it in the window of his store.

Between Sitzings

The next day I went around to the store. There were quite a few people looking in the window. I peered over their shoulders and my heart missed a beat: the portrait was marked "Sold." Mr. Randall had a check for me for twenty-five dollars. There was also a note from the purchaser, a Mr. William S. Pardee, a lawyer who requested that I call on him at his office.

Mr. Pardee asked many questions and when he spotted a sketchbook in my pocket, asked to see it. I gave it to him and he requested one or two drawings, saying that he would like to show them to Professor Neimeyer who was the head of the Yale Art School. Pardee also invited me to join them for lunch at the Quinipiack Club the following day. Later he presented my burnt wood portrait of Hadley to the Quinipiack Club. And that portrait is still hanging there today.

It was during this lunch that Professor Neimeyer invited me to come and work at the Art School. I told him that I lacked the money for tuition and he replied that they were very glad to have young men of talent in the Art School.

The Yale Art School at that time did not have many pupils. The drawing class was composed of Yale students who were obliged to "take" drawing. They drew from a nude male model, always the same one. Day after day I drew that model from every possible angle until I couldn't stand the sight of him. One day, wandering through the building, I found myself in the basement in a room full of plaster casts and modeling stands—and not a soul in it. I found the clay bin, put my hand in it, and I touched the beginning of my life.

The cool wet stuff gave me a thrill that I had never before experienced. I noticed a plaster cast of a mask of Saint Francis, stuck it up on the board and proceeded to copy it. I do not know how long I was at it, but I was so absorbed that I was suddenly startled by a man standing beside me. He was Mr. Boardman, the instructor of the modeling class, and he asked me how long I had been modeling. I said that this was the very first time I had touched clay. He did not seem to believe me, which gave me the feeling I wasn't too bad. We talked

I Discover Clay

for a long time and the result was that I decided to chuck medicine and take up sculpture.

On my first visit to New York, I went to the Art Students League and inquired who taught the sculpture class. I was told it was Herman A. MacNeil. They gave me his address, the Holbein Studios over the stables on West Fifty-fifth Street. I went to call on him to see if I could get a job in his studio. He asked me whether I had ever done any modeling, and, remembering Mr. Boardman's encouragement, I told him I had. MacNeil looked at me quizzically and said, "I have to go out for a bit." He handed me a blueprint, saying, "See what you can do with this," and took me to a stand piled up with plasticine—the beginning of a Corinthian capital. Then MacNeil left.

I had never seen a blueprint before in my life. I tried to figure it out, but it was hopeless. I looked around the studio. There were bronze statuettes of Indians; scale models for monuments; photographs of executed work; and some portrait heads. I was fascinated and impressed. I made up my mind to get a job with that man.

I struggled with my Corinthian capital but got nowhere. In the midst of this, Mr. MacNeil returned. He looked at the sorry mess I had made of his model, shook his head and asked me, "How much do you expect to earn a week?"

I meekly suggested fifteen dollars.

He said, "Young man, you will never make that at sculpture."

I asked him what he would give me, taking for granted that a job was there for me. He was taken unawares and said, "Six dollars a week." I accepted. He looked defeated and said, "All right. Come in Monday morning."

I went home elated and told my people I had found a job in a great sculptor's studio. Though they did not approve, I think they caught my enthusiasm. I could hardly wait for Monday morning. At the appointed time, I rang the studio bell. The door opened and Mr. MacNeil stuck his head out of the door, scowling.

"I've thought it over," he said. "You are not worth it."

I followed him into the studio.

Between Sitzings

"What am I worth?" I asked.

"Four dollars."

"All right, I'll take it."

He gave up. "All right, you go to my studio in College Point, Long Island and see Mr. Gregory. Tell him you are the new studio boy."

The ride was long and expensive, a carfare, a ferry and another carfare. I arrived at MacNeil's house, which was on the Sound, in Long Island, and finally found Mr. Gregory. Mr. Gregory was rather brusque:

"Come on, hang up your things," he said, and he introduced me to Henri Crenier, the master sculptor.

The studio was a huge barn of a place, or so it appeared to me then. It was full of work in progress. There was the "Fountain of Liberty" which Mr. MacNeil was making for the coming World's Fair in St. Louis. It consisted of colossal rampant sea-horses, cavorting over a cascade of waves, sea formations and variegated seashells. At the other end of the studio there was an immense group in clay of two Indians—the older Indian standing on his tiptoes with his arms folded across his chest, looking into the distance, the younger Indian with his left arm on the old man's shoulder and in his right hand waving an olive branch. The title of the group was "The Coming of the White Man." There were plaster models and sketches of details of other projects.

I was bewildered. John Gregory woke me out of my trance and took me down to the cellar where he was working on some plaster moldings. It didn't take him long to discover that I knew nothing but he sensed my eagerness and was quick to give me advice and information. When I got home, I talked everybody's ear off, but my sister Ray was the only one who listened sympathetically. She wanted to know all about it and there was so much to tell.

Every day was an exciting discovery, every day I learned something. There were the problems of building an armature, running moldings and enlarging sketches and many many others.—I was learning fast, but four dollars a week didn't go far. Most of it was eaten up by carfare and all this wasn't making my family very happy; money was needed at home and I was contributing practically nothing.

I Discover Clay

Mr. MacNeil had a gardener, an Indian, who didn't show up one day. I knew that he was getting ten dollars a week and this gave me my opportunity. I approached MacNeil and suggested that I would like to take on the gardener's job.

MacNeil raised his eyebrows and said, "Do you know anything about gardening?"

I said I could do what the Indian did.

"How do you plan to do that?" said he.

I said I could sleep in the balcony of the studio, get up at sunrise, work in the garden until eight, work in the studio from eight till five, and then work in the garden from five till sundown. That seemed reasonable to him and with a smile, he said, "You are on." That night I announced to my family that things were looking up, and the next day I brought my belongings over and installed myself in a corner of the balcony, opposite the corner occupied by Gregory. That week I could not do enough, but when I collected my pay envelope, which I had been looking forward to, I found only ten dollars. I was sore but said nothing.

Besides being a gardener, a sculptor's assistant and an errand boy, I also became a model. Henri Crenier had noticed my legs one day while we were swimming and insisted that they were just right for the young Indian in "The Coming of the White Man." MacNeil thought they could save time by making a plaster cast of my legs.

So Gregory and Crenier volunteered to do the job, claiming to be experts in casting from life. I was innocent and did not realize what I was up against. I was rather hairy, and they haphazardly rubbed the oil over my legs. That done, they covered my legs with plaster, and as the plaster set, the string that was to separate the two halves of the mold broke. Their fun increased as my temper rose, but I was in plaster up to my loins and was helpless. After setting, plaster became very hot and disagreeable. Mr. Gregory and Mr. Crenier chopped gleefully away, separating the two halves. Having completed that part of the job to their satisfaction, they proceeded to take the mold off my legs. The pain was excruciating, for the hair got mixed up with the plaster and

Between Sittings

as they pulled the mold off me my hair went with it. I screamed and swore at them but my anguish only made them laugh louder. They finally got the mold off, leaving my legs like two boiled lobsters. The cast turned out to be a very hairy one. I saw those legs many years later in MacNeil's studio, and I swear they were hairier than ever!

Henri Crenier took a special delight in teasing me. I liked him and took it good-naturedly. But one day I lost my temper and we came to blows. I knocked him down and relieved my feelings by giving him a healthy pummeling. I was so busy that I did not hear MacNeil come into the studio. Suddenly I heard him say: "Jo, when you get through, will you mix me a little plaster."

The summer passed quickly. Those were rich and full days. I was sure of my vocation: I was going to be a sculptor.

CHAPTER 3

A COSSACK IN ST. LOUIS

WHEN THE WORK in MacNeil's studio for the St. Louis World's Fair was finished, John Gregory sailed for France. Gregory and I had become very friendly and when he left, life in the studio was not the same. I needed to make more money than I was making at MacNeil's. There was only one thing to do—go back to New York and pyrography.

But the fashion for pyrography was short-lived and I began looking around for something else. I heard that young sculptors were needed in St. Louis to work on the Fair Grounds. Mr. MacNeil gave me a letter of introduction to Mr. Zolney, the sculptor in charge. But the trouble was the usual one. I had no money to pay my fare to St. Louis.

An introduction to the manager of the Anglo-American Wafer Company, which made wafers for ice-cream sandwiches, got me a job as traveling salesman to sell their wafers to jobbers. My territory was Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati and St. Louis. So I started out and it took me more than two weeks to reach my destination. I had ten dollars when I left New York, and the miracle of it was that, after getting my commission on the sale of the wafers, paying transportation, food and lodging, I landed in St. Louis with exactly ten dollars.

The first thing was to find lodgings—the cheapest. I found a

Between Sitzings

hall bedroom in a rooming house. It was a room with a skylight and no space for anything but the bed. When I opened the door there was not much else to do but to jump into bed. But it was lodgings. It was St. Louis. It was the World's Fair. The landlady insisted on a month's rent in advance. The price—eight dollars.

But I have a pleasant memory of that room. One Sunday I spent the day in bed reading *Huckleberry Finn*. I laughed so loud that the landlady's daughter pushed open the door to see what was wrong—and I made her listen to Jim and Huck on King Solomon.

When I presented MacNeil's letter to Mr. Zolney, it was too late. He had all the young men he needed. There were more applicants than jobs.

Two dollars doesn't go far. I went to the fair grounds to look for a job and paid my admission, fifty cents—a quarter of my fortune. I went early in the morning, spent the day, and soon discovered that "birds of a feather" was a fact. I fell in with a bunch of derelicts like myself. When I told them I had paid to come into the fair grounds, they told me I was a sucker. They showed me what to do, and I never paid again. I did everything at the World's Fair—pushed rolling chairs; told fortunes; acted as a ballyhoo for sideshows on the Pike. But I had an idea. If I could only get a job at pyrography, the one thing I knew all about, I would be all right. Walking along the Pike, I saw a sign: "Booth for Rent, Inquire at the Temple of Palmistry." Armed with a portfolio of my drawings, I called on the lady in charge, a Mrs. McGee.

Mrs. McGee was a tall, stately, white-haired lady. She smilingly informed me that the rent for the booth was two thousand dollars for the season. That did not stump me. I told her I had a great idea. If I could find a manufacturer of leather goods to take the booth, I would make portraits on leather cushions and monograms on the reverse side. I told her about the burnt wood portraits I had made of President Hadley and others, and I showed her my drawings. She was very much interested and very motherly, thought she knew someone who might be interested, and invited me to come to breakfast the following

A Cossack in St. Louis

Sunday about ten o'clock. As I had been living strictly from hand to mouth, the invitation to Sunday breakfast was something to look forward to. The address was somewhere on Grand near Franklin Avenue, about an hour's walk from my lodgings on Fourteenth and Carr. Realizing the distance, I started early, found the house, and there, dusting the furniture on the porch, was a tall, willowy, beautiful girl with a handkerchief on her head. I asked her where Mrs. McGee lived. She said, "Right here. Do come in. Mother is at church. She won't be long."

When Mrs. McGee arrived she greeted me and said, "I see you have met my daughter Gertrude. Mr. Smith will be here shortly. He is your leather goods manufacturer."

We went in to breakfast. Mrs. McGee was dressed in white linen, and with her white hair she looked all starched. As we sat down we were joined by Mr. Smith and Gertrude's brother and sister. Mrs. McGee put me next to her. It was a gay party. They were apparently all in the show business. They got me talking, which was even then an easy thing to do, and in my enthusiasm I inadvertently spilled my cup of black coffee on Mrs. McGee's lap. Her son burst into a raucous laugh. I was so embarrassed I was miserable and I could not get over it. Mrs. McGee scolded her son and reminded him it might have happened to him. This unfortunate incident broke the ice and I spent a happy day with the McGees.

Mr. Smith had a concession, a booth in the Varied Industries Building, where he sold his wares, and he gave me the job I was looking for. I did quite a few profile portraits on leather cushions and designed monograms. It was fun. I met all kinds of people. I did a portrait on leather of Geronimo, the last of the Indian chiefs and a magnificent figure of a man. He would come to the McGees' to pose for me. I was on Easy Street.

One day two Russian Cossacks passed by my booth. They were in full regalia: fur hats, boots and spurs, rows of cartridges on their chests and daggers in their scabbards. I thought they were a couple of showfolks from the Pike. I knew one or two words in Russian and

Between Sitzings

I hailed them. They wheeled around, and practically fell into my arms, jabbering away. I did not understand a word, but I could see that they were in trouble. There was one solution: the Russian Westinghouse exhibit was in the same building. Surely the man in charge could speak Russian. I took them there, and they wept as they told their story.

It appeared that their goods had been confiscated by the government for undervaluation. It was all the fault of the interpreter they had employed, who had also absconded with some of their money. The Westinghouse intervention cleared all that up. Their goods were released and they started fitting up the booth assigned to them.

Their goods consisted of pipes, walking sticks, papercutters, inkstands, all made of wood inlaid with silver. One of these Cossacks would sit cross-legged on the table and actually inlay the silver in a design, while a crowd admired his skill. The Cossacks hung on to me, insisting that I had saved their lives. There was nothing to do but to chuck pyrography and become a Cossack. It was fun, I improved my Russian vocabulary, business boomed and my share was profitable.

Mrs. McGee's Temple of Palmistry became one of my favorite hangouts. The attraction was her daughter Ted. I used to act as a ballyhoo to induce people to come in to have their fortunes told, and occasionally I would help out by telling fortunes. I had met Clivette, the magician who traveled under the name of "The Man in Black." He claimed to have written Chiro's book on palmistry, which I had read.

The Fair was closed on Sunday mornings, but Gertrude McGee and I used to go there very early and wander around amongst the Eskimos, the Igorotes, the Patagonians and the hairy Ainus of Japan. I filled sketchbooks with sketches of everyone I knew and saw. I drew my head off. I was never without a sketchbook, but as everything comes to an end, so did the Fair.

I shall never forget the Fair's closing—the deserted Pike, the various exhibitors packing their goods. I felt as if something had died. There was a sense of tragedy about it. A man in Chicago offered to buy

A Cossack in St. Louis

up a part of the Cossacks' stock, so I accompanied them to Chicago, where we closed the deal.

From there we proceeded to Atlantic City, where they opened a little shop. I got fed up. I was not a shopkeeper but I didn't want to go home. I made a drawing of a girl I met, and she had a friend who had the wheelchair concession on the boardwalk. He gave me space and allowed me to put up a sign: "Your Portrait, Twenty-five Cents for a Profile, Fifty Cents for a Full Face. No Likeness, No Pay."

I did a pretty brisk business—made lots of drawings, mostly profiles. The heads were about two inches high, all duly signed and dated. Just a few years ago I was lunching with some friends in the outskirts of Philadelphia and the hostess, a charming elderly lady, said: "You know I have a portrait you did of me which I treasure very much." I looked at the lady, smiled doubtfully. She said: "You know we were then both very much younger." She took me into her library, and there beautifully framed was a portrait of the lady bearing my signature and dated: Atlantic City, 1905.

On the beach opposite my stand a young man made sculpture in the sand. He was not too good. We got acquainted and I suggested that we go into partnership. I would model the sand sculpture very early in the morning and he could collect the money which we would later divide between us. I showed him what I could do. We tried it out on the public and we made a deal. I modeled figures of dancers and Indian chiefs, all executed in high relief.

It was a curious crowd I met and played with in Atlantic City. They were concessionaires, hotel clerks, lifeguards and show people. At Young's Pier there was a continuous performance, and at the entrance of the pier was the great Pillsbury, the famous chessplayer. He would play simultaneously as many people as would take him on and never lose a game. He and I became very friendly. Another of my passions at that time was bowling. As soon as I made a few bucks with my drawings I would spend them in the bowling alley.

It was while I was making the drawings on the boardwalk that I met Mr. Beamish, a newspaper man from the Philadelphia *North Amer-*

Between Sittings

ican. We got acquainted after I made a drawing of him. I told him that I was a sculptor, or hoped to be one, and I told him it was I who was doing that sand stuff. He was a frequent visitor to Atlantic City, and we would meet occasionally in the bowling alley. One day he had an assignment for me for his paper. I do not remember the reason for it, but he got me to make a drawing from life of some famous dog. The next day there was a two-column spread of my drawing with my signature. Beamish, or "the Bishop," as he was called by his friends, suggested that I could use my talents as a sculptor making quick bas-reliefs of people in the news. He was sure I could get a job on his paper, and invited me to accompany him to Philadelphia. I accepted.

Beamish took me over and introduced me to the Sunday Editor. His name was Smith. The Bishop had him pose for me to demonstrate my skill, and Mr. Smith called in a friend of his and I had a shot at him too. The idea was that I go to the courts, and, instead of pen drawings, make bas-reliefs in plasticine. Mr. Smith had the idea that I make layout and covers for Sunday magazine sections.

That night I had dinner with the Bishop and told him what Mr. Smith had said. Said Beamish:

"Johnny, don't you take that job without a contract. First thing you know they will all be doing it and you will be out of a job."

He didn't know, but I was out of the job quicker than he thought. When I asked for a contract, I was practically booted out of the place.

I looked for the Bishop, but he had left town. Here I was, jobless and penniless, walking the streets of Philadelphia. I was always impecunious, living from day to day, but it did not worry me. I bumped into a couple of fellows, show folks, whom I had known at Young's Pier in Atlantic City, and I told them my story. They wept crocodile tears and said that if I would make a drawing of each of them, they would pay for them. They were joined by some of their friends, whom I also drew, and they invited me into a saloon to have a drink. When I tried to collect my fees, they laughed at me. We got into a fist fight and I came away with a black eye and no money.

My guardian angel must have been hovering around. I didn't walk

A Cossack in St. Louis

three blocks before I ran into Tom Field, a bowling-alley companion from Atlantic City. He looked at me under the lamplight, for it was dusk, and wanted to know what had happened to me. He invited me to come to his hotel for dinner, saying that he had to leave town that night, and that I could use his room at the Garrick Hotel. After dinner he left me and I went to bed.

The next morning my breakfast was brought to me in my room with a note from my friend Tom Field. The note contained a railway ticket to New York, a five-dollar bill and the advice to use it as soon as possible. I followed the advice and arrived home with my black eye. It took a bit of explaining, but I got away with it.

CHAPTER 4

MY FIRST COMMISSION

THE YEAR BEFORE I had won an honorable mention for a sketch of a little figure of David. I wanted a chance to execute it, so I went to New Haven and called on my friend Mr. Pardee, the lawyer. The photograph of my sketch of David appealed to him and he commissioned me to execute it, two feet high, in bronze.

Back in New York, the Art Students League gave me the room which was used by the modeling class at night. In return I agreed to teach the summer class. The "David" was an idea and a challenge but I needed a model and managed to talk Itzel, a young cousin of mine into posing. He had a beautiful figure, about as young as I wanted my David to be.

My figure represented David slinging the stone at an invisible Goliath. I started with enthusiasm and worked every day, but as I worked my enthusiasm lagged. I seemed to be just killing time and getting nowhere. I worked without conviction. It came to a point where I would come in one day, undo what I had done the day before and start all over again. I was getting discouraged. Edward MacCarten would come in occasionally to see how I was getting on. One day he said, "Jo, here's an idea. When you come here tomorrow go to work as if this is your last day on earth and you have to finish your statue before you die."

This struck home. The next day I went to work with new energy. I didn't die that night, nor did I finish the "David" that day. But as I

My First Commission

look back, MacCarten's advice was one of the greatest contributions that I ever received from a fellow artist.

I finally completed the statue of David. Mr. Pardee came to see it and was so pleased with it that he offered to pay for an extra bronze. I was all puffed up.

The Society of American Artists was to hold its annual exhibition. To participate, one's work had to be passed on by a jury. I decided to risk it, and sent in my "David." It was accepted.

An engraved invitation to the private showing arrived. It had my name on it. My sister Ray was so proud of me! The invitation was for two. But I hesitated about attending such a fancy affair; I did not have any proper clothes. However, my uncle, who was staying with us, was a little man just my size and he had a Prince Albert coat and striped trousers. I tried them on and they almost fitted. So I took my sister and we set out together nervous and excited.

The exhibition was held in the Fine Arts Building, which adjoined the League. I knew the building well, but that evening I hardly knew where I was. We walked up the few steps and entered the great gallery all crowded with people. I must have been a very funny sight in that Prince Albert coat, but I was walking on air, completely unconscious of my clothes. We went around looking for my "David." There he was in bronze—on exhibition with the works of real artists, sculptors and painters! I felt timid about looking at it. I pretended to be interested in everybody else's work but my own. We ran into MacNeil.

"How do you like the way we placed your 'David'?"

I would have liked it no matter where they placed it. I do not think I have ever felt that way since.

At the close of the exhibition I delivered the "David" to Mr. Pardee and when the second bronze copy was finished I took it home and placed it on the mantelpiece of our front room. The next day when I came home from the League I found my father looking intently at my "David." He was unconscious of my presence. Then he turned and saw me, and with a disapproving gesture of the hand, said "Bah," turned on his heel and left the room. Father had had other ambitions for me.

Between Sittings

While at home, I modeled a bust of my mother. She was intensely proud of me and was a most willing sitter. When it was completed, I sent it to an exhibition of the National Academy of Design. But it was turned down. This bust of my mother is still a good piece of sculpture, far better than my "David."

Now I was spending entire days at the League and getting acquainted with the other students who worked there in the daytime. There was one girl in that class whom I particularly wanted to meet. She was the monitor of the class, a tall Junoesque girl. Her name was Florence Lucius.

Those were gay days: music, dancing and parties. To those parties at the League I brought my sisters Ray and Rose and it was not long before I brought the League to my house. We were then living on West 111th Street overlooking the Park. It was a top-floor railroad flat, but nobody minded climbing all those flights of stairs. Mother's strawberry jam, Rose's singing and Rachie's warm and vivacious charm pulled people right up to the top floor.

My sister Rose recalls those days with a bit of free verse:

"Like a flock of homing pigeons,
Nostalgic memories flapped their wings,
And roused the slumbering past.
A victrola,
And listening to the Sextet from 'Lucia'—
Zembrich—Scotti—Caruso—
Talking about victrolas—the first phonograph—New York
111th Street top floor—front room—
An olive green velour curtain separating it from the rest of the railroad flat,
And endless tea parties,
Schubert's 'Serenade,'
Sam Halpert, tears running down his cheeks. . . ."

I fell hard for Florence Lucius, or Flossie, as we called her. One night, she took me home to meet her father. He was the engineer who designed and built the Third and Ninth Avenue elevated railroads in New York.

It was a long trek to Flossie's house in Brooklyn, but it did not stop

My First Commission

me from going there often. One night I was there to dinner, with Grace Johnson, another student from the League. Flossie and Grace had planned a walking trip and Flossie's father, who was all for it, had procured the necessary maps. They were excited about their forthcoming adventure. But Flossie's father had misgivings about two girls going alone. I agreed with him, and offered to accompany them. He approved of that most heartily.

A few days later, we took the Hudson River boat to Kingston. We went through the Swangum Mountains in New Jersey, Lake Mohonk and Minnewaska. We walked all day, stopping at some farmhouse at night, where they would feed us and give us lodgings. We, in turn, would entertain our various hosts along the way: Flossie played the organ which we often found in these farmhouses and we would all sing. I would play the mouth-organ and do a little jig. In this way we came into the lives of people who had never gone further than a few miles from their farms and they would see us off in the mornings with regret, making us promise to come back. We vowed we would and sincerely meant it. . . . It was all a wonderful new experience.

After a week, we were sunburnt and healthy but our city feet were sorely blistered and we had to call it quits. We got a lift back to Kingston and the next morning we took the Hudson River boat for home.

CHAPTER 5

UPTON SINCLAIR'S SOCIALIST COLONY

ABOUT THIS TIME, I completed a statue I called "Primitive Music" and I felt it was time that I had a studio of my own. I found one on East Twenty-third Street. It was not too big, but it had a skylight and room for a couch and a couple of modeling stands. The house was an old brownstone, and on the first landing was the studio of Albert Groll, the landscape painter whose pictures of the Arizona Desert were the talk of the day. One or two flights up was Edward Ziegler, a mural painter. Next door to me, on the top floor, was a chap named Henrici. He painted copies of J. G. Brown's shoeshine boys. He was a very successful, busy man and a picture was no sooner finished than it was sold.

During the first part of 1906, life in my Twenty-third Street studio was a series of adventures and discoveries. One day I received a visit from a curious-looking person. He was an art critic and his name was Sadakichi Hartmann.

Sadakichi was tall and gaunt, with a face like a Japanese mask. He later told me about himself. His mother was Japanese; his father had been German Consul at Nagasaki, and while in service had made a temporary marriage which resulted in two sons. The elder brother came to America and I don't think Sadakichi Hartmann ever heard of him again. Sadakichi was brought up in Germany by Paul Haise and then in France under the tutelage of Stéphane Mallarmé, the French poet. He finally landed in Boston where Mrs. Jack Gardner took him up.

Upton Sinclair's Socialist Colony

When I met Sadakichi he had already been in a mess of trouble. He had written a play—in verse—about Jesus Christ, which brought him a jail sentence in Boston. He told me all this while I was doing his bust. When he first came to see me I was working on a little statuette which I called "The Eyelids of the Dawn." Sadakichi was most appreciative of my efforts. I was flattered, for he used to come and see me quite often. I brought him home and he read poetry—Edgar Allan Poe and Walt Whitman. He had a wonderful reading voice. My sisters were fascinated.

One day he came to my studio and asked me if I could lend him a dollar. He needed it very badly, he said. I didn't have it—besides a dollar was a lot of money to me. But there was my friend Henrici next door—he was always good for a loan. I went to see him and he gave me the dollar, which I, in turn, gave to Sadakichi. It was getting on to lunch time. He said: "Where are you going to lunch?"

"At my usual place, the saloon at the corner of Second Avenue. A glass of beer costs five cents and there is plenty of free lunch."

He gave me a lecture on how one cannot produce art on beer and free lunch. Now, he would take me to lunch at the Café Francis, the rendezvous of all the great artists of the day. Jim Moore who owned and ran the place was his friend.

I had never been in such surroundings. Soft leather benches along the walls, waiters in white coats, and sure enough there were Glackens, George Luks and many others. Sadakichi was greeted by some, and ignored by others. We sat at a corner table where we could see everybody. Sadakichi ordered wine with our meal. I tried to stop him but he seemed to know what he was about and would stand no interference. When our lunch was finally finished, Sadakichi called for the bill, and when it arrived, he pulled out such a roll of bills from his pocket that my eyes bulged. I was furious.

"What's the big idea?"

"Oh, that's my rent money," and he grinned his Japanese-mask grin.

"But my dollar you borrowed?"

He laughed his peculiar laugh.

"That was to pay for *your* lunch." This was Sadakichi Hartmann.

Between Sittings

One winter day, Sadakichi came to my studio while I was working on a figure. There was a girl posing for it. Sadakichi began to tell us a wonderful story about Upton Sinclair's recently founded socialist colony in New Jersey called Helicon Hall. I had heard of it because the colony, located at Englewood, had created quite a stir in the press. New York newspapermen insisted that Upton Sinclair had started the colony to have plenty of mistresses handy. To these and other barbs, Sinclair replied that it was with his colony "as with the old-time New England colonies: there were Indians hiding in the bushes, seeking to pierce us with sharp arrows of wit." Sadakichi told us the guests were socialists, anarchists, syndicalists and single-taxers. It sounded like a description from William Morris' *News from Nowhere*.

As Sadakichi pointed out that he had many friends there, my model chimed in to say that she also had friends at Helicon Hall. Sadakichi said: "That settles it." So off we went to Helicon Hall, Sadakichi, the girl and I.

It was mid-winter and it had been snowing. The air was crisp and invigorating. We arrived at about dinner time and the Sinclairs invited us to sit down and share their board.

After dinner we retired to the Big Hall. It had large-sized palm trees in buckets in front of an enormous fireplace. There were many squatting girls with short hair and long cigarette holders, in those days completely revolutionary. Mrs. Sinclair sat down in a wicker rocker, and I proceeded to make a drawing of her. She expressed regret that they could not put us up. I said innocently that I did not mind—I would cheerfully spend the night in the chair I was sitting in.

When I completed my sketch I went in search of my friend Sadakichi. In the conservatory, where there were a lot of singing birds in cages, I found Edwin Björkman berating Sadakichi.

"We told you we had no room. Every available space is occupied. Besides, you are drunk." And so he was.

"Very well," said Sadakichi, "we shall leave. Come on, Jo, we are not wanted here!"

By this time, there was quite a commotion in the peaceful colony, a crowd had gathered in the hall around us while Sinclair kept on explaining

Upton Sinclair's Socialist Colony

that they were full up, but when he said that if Teddy Roosevelt himself appeared there that night, they could not put him up, it was more than I could take. I suggested that if that happened, they would all creep out of their beds and beg him to sleep there. In the midst of all this my model appeared, and Sadakichi, with a Cyrano de Bergerac gesture, said: "We are leaving."

It was late. The streetcars were not running; the last train had left for New York. But again our Sadakichi Hartmann had an inspiration. It was only a two-mile walk to his friend the painter, Van Perrine who had a studio on the Palisades. "That's where we will go." And off we went into the snow which was piling up quite high by this time.

It was a considerable trek. I don't know how long we walked, but it was more than two miles. At last, we came to a beautiful house, bright in the moonlight, on a cliff overlooking the Hudson. It was a welcome sight, but as we approached it we heard the dogs barking. We knocked on the door, but no Perrine, only an intensified barking. Bad luck, I thought, he must have gone to town.

It was cold—it was more than that—it was freezing. Our feet were wet. But Sadakichi was unperturbed. He had a bottle of whiskey and every now and then he would take a swig of it. Whiskey and I were not to become friends until much later. However, I did take a swallow and coughed myself warm again. We found a shed, obviously the oil house—the tank almost filled it—but the girl and I managed to squeeze in for shelter from the wind.

Outside we watched Sadakichi who was dancing in the snow. He emptied the whiskey bottle, threw it over the cliff into the Hudson and then threw his suitcase after it. It was a wonderful performance, but we were still freezing. We attempted to gather some dead wood to build a fire and managed to pick up a few sticks, but we were not smokers, and so there were no matches.

All of a sudden, we heard a call from Sadakichi from the other side of the house. When we joined him, we saw that he was trying to jimmy up the window. At this point, the blind suddenly flew up and there stood Van Deering Perrine in the window.

"Sadakichi, you are drunk."

Between Sittings

With these words, Sadakichi's "friend" shut his window and we went back to our shelter. Fortunately for us, a man went by from whom we borrowed a few matches. We built a fire, thawed ourselves out and started homeward. We caught the first train out, and when we got to New York Sadakichi and the girl went uptown and I got back to my studio, exhausted. I was cold, I was mad, but bed was just heaven.

I don't know how long I had been sleeping when there was a knock on the door. I opened it and there stood a man who asked, "Are you Jo Davidson?"

I grumbled, I was.

"You have just come from Helicon Hall?" He then went on to ask what had happened up there and my reply must have conveyed my intense aggravation with the whole adventure. While I was talking another man appeared who said he was from the *World*. The first man turned out to be from the *Evening Sun*. This was my first encounter with the press. When they left, I locked the door and jumped back into bed. There was more knocking but I was too exhausted to answer.

That afternoon when I was visiting my family, a friend came in with a copy of the *Evening Sun*. On the front page was a big headline:

"POET, SCULPTOR AND LADY OUT IN THE COLD, COLD WORLD"

The next day, I saw Sadakichi Hartmann and finally understood the whole story. He admitted that he had gone directly to a telephone booth, called up several papers, told them the story and for further details, said: "See Jo Davidson."

All sorts of stories, editorials followed. I thought I would never live it down. Shortly afterwards, Upton Sinclair's colony came to an abrupt end through no fault of mine: at three o'clock, one Sunday morning, it was burned to the ground. Circumstances surrounding the accident still remain a mystery.

CHAPTER 6

AN EAST-SIDER ON THE LEFT BANK

I WAS 24 YEARS OLD and had a compulsion to go to Paris. This was due primarily to Gregory, who had just returned, and who had fired my imagination with his descriptions of the center of the world of art. It was my old friend, Mr. Pardee who gave me the hundred and fifty dollars necessary to take me as far as the French capital.

Following the purchase of a second-class ticket on the *Celtic*, I arrived in Paris with only \$40.00 left and a heavy bundle of blankets and linen which my mother had forced upon me before my departure.

Arriving at the Gare St. Lazare at five in the morning, I was met by my friend, Edward MacCarten. I remember that it had been raining that morning and there was a special pungent perfume in the air which I later discovered was caused by the tar cedarwood pavements peculiar to the streets of Paris in those days.

I drank my first *vin-blanc citron* in a sidewalk café and I was firmly installed in heaven. MacCarten had rented a studio for me next to his own at 7 rue Belloni. I got my furniture for 50 francs from Arthur Lee, a sculpture student, my kitchen utensils from Emma Goldman, the famous anarchist. I blessed my mother for the blankets and linen and was ready to get to work.

MacCarten applauded my good fortune, taking it for granted that I

Between Sittings

had at least won a scholarship. I stalled, and asked him how one got into the Beaux Arts.

"You pick the atelier," he said, "and the professor that you want to study under. You appear before him with photos of the work you have done and he will either accept or reject you as his pupil. They are very lenient with Americans. It is much more difficult for Frenchmen, who have to pass all sorts of exams. Of course, if you are admitted, you will have to buy drinks for the 'ancients.' You should try to join my atelier."

I would have done anything to get into the Beaux Arts—that's what I had come to Paris for. MacCarten had been in Paris for over a year, and I looked upon him as a know-all. We had been buddies in New York, and I was now to be his neighbor and classmate in the same atelier. My studio rent was 110 francs for three months. That included the tip to the concierge. Very little was left of my forty dollars. I finally confessed the sad reality to MacCarten.

He turned pale. "How are you going to live?"

"Oh, I'll get a job," I said cheerfully.

"A job in Paris—you're crazy. You don't even speak French. Even if you did, you couldn't get a job in Paris."

At any rate MacCarten introduced me to his bakery and his creamery, and every morning a loaf of bread and a quart of milk were left at my door. It was extraordinary, the trust, the confidence that existed in Paris in pre-World War I days. Broke as I was, I never went without a meal. It may have been meager, but I didn't starve.

I enrolled in the Beaux Arts, got into Engelbert's atelier, and was hailed by the "ancients" as a *nouveaux*, with the usual procedure of razzing and hazing. I was warned that if you were not good-natured, you would have a bad time of it. I jigged for them and sang and played the harmonica, and they decided I was all right.

As a newcomer, I took my place in the back of the class. I put up a figure, and the next morning when I arrived I found that somebody had pulled it down. Apparently, that was the traditional procedure. It took time but I finally managed to keep a figure up. I was terribly in earnest and waited breathlessly for my first criticism from the *maître*. When I

An East-Sider on the Left Bank

received it, I had a feeling it was the same kind of banal instruction I had had in New York. That was not what I had come to Paris for. I wanted to capture life and Paris was pulsating with it. I stuck it out at the Beaux Arts for three weeks and then I left—a decision I have never regretted.

The Beaux Arts experience was not my only disappointment. Upon my arrival in Paris, I had gone to the Louvre to see the Mona Lisa and the Venus de Milo, “the greatest masterpiece of all time.” I had read Walter Pater’s breathless appreciation of Leonardo da Vinci’s masterpiece and I knew the Venus de Milo from plaster casts. I arrived at the Louvre all keyed up to receive the greatest thrill possible. I found my way to the Salle Carré, walked straight to the guard and asked him where the Mona Lisa was. He turned me around and there it was and there was I, waiting for something to happen. It didn’t happen. I left the Salle Carré and found my way to the Venus de Milo. The same negative impression. I felt myself to be insensitive and ignorant and walked home very despondent. I did not dare to confess my reactions to my fellow artists.

At this point, there were two major problems on my horizon: I felt very lonely: I had to talk to someone. I also needed money badly.

Getting a job in a sculptor’s studio was out of the question; I had already tried too many times—unsuccessfully.

I had come loaded with letters of introduction to many people, among them, one to Paul Bartlett from Sadakichi Hartmann. To call on him, I put on my best suit, and with a portfolio containing some drawings and photos of the things I had done, and with the letters of introduction, I appeared at Mr. Bartlett’s studio in the rue Daguerre, where he was then working on his equestrian statue of Lafayette. Incidentally, it was to take him ten years to complete this work.

I knocked and after a minute or two, the door opened just a crack. Mr. Bartlett stuck his head out and said: “What do you want?” I handed him the letter. He stood where he was, blocking the door, read it and said: “Well, what is it?”

Staggered, I replied: “Why nothing, nothing.” And that was the end of the interview.

Between Sitzings

Shortly afterwards, MacCarten took me over to the American Art Association and introduced me to the secretary, Henry Moskowitz, known as Mosky. The A.A.A. was a club for American artists and students and I explained my desperate predicament. I had to get a job and get it quick.

“But what kind of job—what can you do?”

Could I give English lessons? Mosky opened the drawer of his desk, looked through some correspondence and found a letter from a lady who had inquired for someone to give her English lessons. “Here, try that,” he said.

The lady lived on the Avenue d’Alma. She was middle-aged and charming. Her English was very slight and my French was nil, but I got the job; three francs an hour, five hours a week. I don’t recall how much English the lady learned but I do remember that she taught me French and saved me from going hungry.

Before going to Paris, I had heard of the Café du Dome. That was where all the American art students gathered and although MacCarten heartily disliked the place, he took me there. At the Dome, one was certain to meet artists, poets, derelicts and other kindred spirits. It was open till two in the morning and you could go there for girls, chess, poker, billiards or conversation. I soon became a habitué.

Another café I frequented was Lavenue’s. It was an annex to a very chic and expensive restaurant which I did not sample until many years later. In the café section you could sit over an apéritif, beer or *café crème*, and listen to the strains of a string quartet, and their violinist Schumacher would play your favorite piece on request. You could call for “*de quoi écrire*” and the waiter would bring you a folder with paper and a pen and ink to write your letter. You could spend an hour or two over the one drink and the waiter would never come near you unless you called him. You usually got into conversation with the person sitting next to you.

I was barely installed in my studio in the rue Belloni when Samuel Halpert brought over a friend of his, a painter from Chicago, Jerome Blum. I was then working on a little figure which I called “Toil.” It was

An East-Sider on the Left Bank

a nude, a study of a man trying to get a huge rock out of the ground. I was using a packing case for a stand, as I still lacked proper modeling stands. I kept on working as Jerry Blum talked. He was telling about some adventure he had had in Paris, and when he got through he bid me an abrupt good-bye and left. Sammy explained to me that Jerry's people were well-to-do and that he was giving him some pointers on painting.

I didn't see Jerry again till a few weeks later, when one morning, about five A.M., there was a banging at my door. I was asleep on the balcony. I descended quickly to see what the trouble was, and there stood Jerry.

"Have you got a hammer? I've rented a studio upstairs and I want to hang some curtains."

I was startled, being half asleep. I gave him the hammer and went back to bed. It wasn't very long before there was another banging on the door. It was Jerry again.

"Look, have you got a ladder? Can you come up and help me hang some draperies?"

That was how he and I became friends.

The fifteen francs I made giving English lessons was rather meager and I proposed to Jerry that I cook for both of us and that we share the expenses. Jerry agreed with the idea. At about this time, he got the grippe and the doctor suggested that since he needed rest, I should bring him to my studio. The doctor prescribed chicken broth and a little glass of port. I brought back some chicken giblets, gizzards, head and neck, leeks, turnips and soup greens from the market, piled the ensemble into a big earthen pot, stuck it on the stove and we prepared for a feast.

Jerry sat, wrapped up in blankets in front of the stove and as the wonderful aroma of the heavenly chicken broth permeated the studio, his impatience grew in measure with his appetite. When I lifted the lid off, the fragrance was almost irresistible and Jerry began to proclaim his appetite in no uncertain terms. While he irritably yelled for me to hurry, I decided that my concoction was ready at last and told him to hold his horses while I tasted it. The shock I received is indescribable. It was hot, but that was not the reason I spat it out. I had omitted to remove the

Between Sittings

gall from the chicken liver. Everything is relative of course, but this was certainly a tragic moment for us and I could only remain silent under the torrent of abuse that poured from Jerry's lips.

I hastily ran down to the butcher for six sous' worth of beef bouillon and this we hungrily devoured, still smelling the heavenly odors of the inedible chicken broth.

One night, Jerry and I had been playing poker at the Dome and as we walked out, we saw a Great Dane lying on a bench of the terrace of the café. André, the waiter, told us the dog was lost. Jerry attempted to feed him a piece of sugar and just got a snarl in return. It occurred to me that the dog was hungry and I asked André to bring him a bowl of milk and bread. Food is a common language and the dog recognized a kindred spirit. When we started for home, Sultan—for that is what I had immediately named him—came along.

Sultan filled the gap of my loneliness in more ways than one: he was the greatest introducer in the world. It was due to his playfulness that I met Harry McColl who in turn introduced me to Johnny Fergusson, who was to play an important part in my life during this period. Johnny, too, had been a medical student (in Edinburgh) and had chucked it for painting. He was older than I and was *chef d'école* of a group in Paris who called themselves Post-Impressionists.

I worked all day in my studio and would meet Fergusson after dinner. He and I did a lot of walking and talking. We often went to the Closerie des Lilas which was the rendezvous of the literati of the day and in which Jean Moréas, known as the *Prince des poètes*, presided. Sultan was always with us. Often Johnny would take me home and then I would take him home and we would continue to do this until the wee hours of the morning. We usually ended up in his studio for breakfast, tea and bread and butter, all the time talking about the most important subject in the world—ART.

My sister Rachie was always my most enthusiastic supporter. As we kept up a lively correspondence, she knew all about my ups and my downs. Rachie had heard of a scholarship fund which Dr. Felix Adler had set up and she got her friend, Isabelle Eaton, to see if she could do

An East-Sider on the Left Bank

something about getting me a grant. After much palaver, she succeeded in getting the Hallgarten Scholarship Fund to allot me the sum of thirty dollars every month for one year. Overnight I was rich, I could afford models, I could work.

I had finished a figure of a boy and decided to send it to the Salle National des Beaux Arts. I thought the figure, which I called "Youth," pretty good and when it was refused at the Salon, I couldn't understand why. The Salon opened its doors and I went to see for myself. There were some very good pieces of sculpture but the mass of it was no better than my rejected figure. In fact, some of it, I thought, had no right to be there at all. I got to thinking that perhaps this art business was like everything else. At this point I seriously considered chucking everything and going back to continue my medical studies in America.

CHAPTER 7

THE OPEN ROAD

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION was destined to do without me. About this time I met the man who was to be my future brother-in-law, a French painter, Louis de Kerstrat. I told him that I was going to go home and he eloquently deplored that, having come so far, I had not seen Switzerland and Italy. We began to discuss a walking trip and as we talked, a plan took shape.

When we met again, we were armed with maps. The other members of our party were an American journalist named Burlingham, and his girl, Leontine. They wanted to start immediately, but I was slow on the uptake and when I did make up my mind, they had already left.

I knew the route that we had mapped out and one morning, with a knapsack on my back containing a sketchbook and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, I left Paris with my dog Sultan trailing behind me.

The wonderful part of walking by oneself with a dog was the sense of being part of the road, of being alone with one's thoughts and trying to get some order into them. I found I dismissed thoughts that disturbed me. I played a game of pulling my thoughts back and making myself follow them through to the end. It was a mental exercise which I got to enjoy and it was extraordinary how much distance I covered playing that game.

I would stop by the wayside for a bite and keep going until nightfall.

The Open Road

Then I would choose a café that would let me have lodging for the night. Up at dawn the next morning, I was soon on the road for I wanted to catch up with my friends.

One day I was trekking along and it began to drizzle. It was getting on to dusk. A fellow driving a cart offered me a lift. He asked me where I came from and where I was going. I told him from Paris and that I was on my way to Lucerne.

“To a job?”

I said yes, I asked him where I could get cheap lodgings. He looked surprised.

“Don’t you know the law of the land? A traveler on foot looking for work is entitled to one night’s lodging, supper and breakfast. The next village is Chafois. You go and see the mayor. I will show you where he lives. He will assign you to a farmer who will give you lodgings for the night, supper and breakfast.”

I thanked him and found my way to the mayor’s house. The mayor was just coming in from the field and was putting up his horses. He ushered me into his parlor. I explained what I wanted. He took out a book, looked down a list of names, took a piece of paper and wrote out in ink, “*Bon pour une nuit chez Charles Nicolas,*” signed, *le Maire de Chafois*. He stamped it officially and told me where I could find M. Nicolas.

When I found the place, it was deserted. I was tired, so I sat down on the bench by the door and took my knapsack off my back. Sultan flopped down beside me and went to sleep. We had gone fifty kilometers that day. A wizened little old lady came along and asked me what I wanted. I gave her the paper, but she couldn’t read it. I read it to her. She grunted and walked into the house. I followed her. She asked whether I had any bread. I had none. She told me where I could buy some.

When I came back, the table was set for three. She took my bread, cut a couple of slices, put them into a soup plate, put a chunk of lard on top of them, poured hot water over all, added a little pepper and salt, and told me to go ahead. She then went to a cupboard, pulled out a big loaf of bread, and went through the same process for herself and her

Between Sitzings

husband, who had just returned. They got out a bottle of wine, and this was our supper.

We had a silent meal. I was not a welcome guest. It was late. I was tired and could think of nothing but sleep. Madame Nicolas asked me if I had any matches. I turned them over to her, also my knapsack. She motioned me to follow her, opened the door to a barn and told me to climb the ladder into the hayloft. Sultan could not follow, so he slept at the foot of the ladder while I slept in the hay above.

When I woke up, the sun was shining. I went downstairs. Sultan was already outside, and when I went into the living room I found a large bowl of *café au lait* with the rest of my bread on the table, and nobody around, for they had all gone to the field. No breakfast ever tasted better.

I finally caught up with Burlingham, Leontine and Louis at Dôle. They had been dawdling on the road, and all of us proceeded together to Pontarlier. We must have been a curious sight. I had a black beard, Louis a blond Christ-like beard and Burlingham had a long ginger one. We all wore sandals.

We crossed the border into Switzerland. Burlingham and Leontine decided to get some quarters in a *pension*, and Louis and I went on alone to Neuchâtel. We tried to get into a hotel as night was coming on, but we could find no lodgings at our price. There was nothing to do but sleep out-of-doors. Louis, Sultan and I found ourselves a small hollow by the roadside where we intended to spend the night. We had just dozed off when Sultan awakened us with his barking. I tried to quiet him, but found that he was barking at a policeman, who took us into custody. There is a law in Switzerland against sleeping out-of-doors—it goes under the name of *vagabondage*. And so we were taken to the local jail and locked up for the night. Louis, Sultan and I. All our papers and belongings were taken away. We were so tired we did not care and it didn't take long before we were asleep again.

Next morning we were awakened by the jailer, who handed us brooms and told us to sweep out our cell. He watched us do our job, during which I had to keep Sultan from devouring him. Then we were led back to our cell and locked in. We sat on the bedstands, looked at each other,

The Open Road

and decided we could do with a little more sleep. We were awakened again by the jailer as he pushed open the slot in the cell door.

"Here's your breakfast," he said.

Breakfast was three pots of very hot soup—one for Louis, one for Sultan and one for me—and the soup consisted of a piece of lard and a piece of bread floating in hot salted water. We were young and hungry and we not only ate it but almost got to thinking it was good. Then the door opened and our jailer came in and told us to follow him. We were willing, but Sultan wanted to finish his soup. It was too hot for him to gulp down, so the three of us and the jailer and soup which I was carrying carefully paraded into the presence of the uniformed officer in charge.

The officer looked at us sternly but I had a hard time keeping from laughing, for he had a handkerchief tied around his face with a knot on top of the head, the ends of which looked like rabbit's ears. He apparently was suffering from mumps. When the officer cross-examined us, Louis explained that we were artists—he a painter and I a sculptor—and that we were on our way to Italy.

Grimly he said: "You are trying to do a bit of the *vie de bohème*?" Then he warned us: "If we find you in this town again it will not be one night but thirty days of jail."

The question was, what to do next? I had written to my friend Lester Rosenfield, a painter in Paris, asking for a loan and giving my address: General Post Office at Neuchâtel. I knew he would come through. He always did.

After leaving the jail and Neuchâtel, Louis and I walked into a café-restaurant to get ourselves a more substantial meal than we had had at the jail. It was then that Louis decided that he would join up with the Burlinghams and leave me on my own. I had become acquainted with the proprietor. I made a sketch of his little girl, and told him that I must find a job. He not only told me how to go about it, but also offered me a room to sleep in while I was hunting for a job.

My first try was at a stonemason's—a fellow who made gravestones. Business was slow. He did not need any help. The next essay was a

Between Sitzings

photographer, to retouch some photographic plates. Nothing there. My last resort was Suchard's chocolate factory. I saw the manager. He was a nice guy; he tried in every department. No luck.

Twice, every day, I walked to the General Post Office at Neuchâtel to inquire for the letter. It wasn't there. Finally, in despair, I wrote my name on a piece of paper. I had given my name as Davidson but on the paper I instinctively wrote Jo Davidson, and pushed it over to the postal clerk. There was nothing under the "D's." He had seen me so often he had got to know me. He looked under the "J's" and, with a grin, pulled out a letter and handed it to me. I opened the letter, and there, neatly folded, was a brand-new fifty-franc note.

With money in my pocket I was able to leave Neuchâtel. Alone with my dog and my thoughts, I proceeded to Berne and over the Brunig Pass. When I got to Interlaken I saw across Lake Brienz, on a hillside, a sign reading "*Pension de famille—View of the Jungfrau.*" I walked around the lake and got to Goldville and found the *pension*, a typical Swiss chalet. The proprietor, a heavy-set, black-bearded man, showed me around very cordially and suggested a room overlooking Lake Brienz and facing the Jungfrau. The price was five francs a day including meals. I found that most agreeable except for the fact that my money was low. However, I was expecting some money in a week or so.

"Oh," he said, "under the circumstances I don't think you can stay here."

I argued with him, saying, "I did not have to tell you this now."

He conceded there was something in that and asked me what my business was. I told him I was an artist.

"Can you draw?" he said.

"Of course," I replied.

"Well, if you are an artist, you can draw a picture of my *pension* with the Jungfrau in the background. For that, I will give you a week's board and room."

Unfortunately, when you looked at the *pension* from the road at any angle it completely obliterated the Jungfrau. However, in my drawing I pushed the Jungfrau a little to the right and the house slightly to the

The Open Road

left. My host was delighted with the result and used it for picture post-cards to advertise his place.

After a week of loafing, sleeping, eating delicious breakfasts and really seeing the Jungfrau from my balcony, I proceeded on my way. I walked as far as Lucerne and after a day or two there I felt I had had enough. My mind was in order, but I was not too happy about where my thinking took me, for it convinced me that I did not have what it took to be an artist. Again I came to the conclusion that there was only one thing to do—return to Paris and sail for home.

CHAPTER 8

THE SWISS GIRL

BACK IN PARIS AGAIN I went to see Johnny Ferguson and told him of my decision to return home. We argued for and against, and he finally admitted I had valid reasons; but he suggested I do a bust of him before leaving and offered to sit for me in my studio.

Johnny had a head for sculpture, a fine aquiline nose and a tightly-drawn skin. He looked all of the Scottish chieftain. I worked intensely for two hours. Johnny insisted we stop and go to Lavenue's for a drink. Once there he was eloquent on what a swell job I had done.

"You must not touch this," he said, and he argued with me to cast it as it was. I went to bed that night in a happier mood. Perhaps I was an artist after all.

I brought my pals in to see the bust, inducing some of them to sit for me. For the first time I was modeling a head in one sitting. I went on an orgy of bust-making.

One day while playing billiards at the Café du Dome with John Marin, the famous painter, I induced him, after an absinthe or two, to sit for me. On the way to the studio we bought a loaf of bread, some cheese and a bottle of wine. We were both half-seas over when I started to work. I stuck my hands in the clay bin. The clay was soft and gooey but nothing could stop me. I don't know how long we worked or when we left the studio, and I don't remember when I returned, but when I woke

The Swiss Girl

up the next morning there was the bust of John Marin in clay. Curiously enough, the resemblance was still there when I last saw him in 1948.

At that time, all Paris was talking about the exhibition of the *Salon des Artistes Indépendants*, which was being held in tents in the Tuileries gardens. Johnny and I went to have a look at it. What we saw was revolutionary. The exhibitors had overthrown all codes and all canons and no longer had any pope. They painted as they pleased. To say what one liked as one liked was the new trend—whether in harmony, in discord, nobody cared.

The effect on the people who crowded to see that exhibition was extraordinary—crowds of people, some laughing, some jeering, others gaping with blank expressions. As we followed the crowds from gallery to gallery, we spotted an elderly man with white sideburns. He was dressed in a Prince Albert coat and silk hat and carried a gold-topped cane. He was furious. He took the exhibition as a personal insult and kept muttering, "*Les salauds! Les cochons! Il faut les tuer!*" (The dirty dogs! The pigs! They ought to be shot!) I was fascinated. I had never realized that pictures could arouse such passion in a human being.

How different were the crowds at the Louvre or the Luxembourg. There they walked through the galleries silently, respectfully. Here they reacted violently. It was no longer a question of good or bad art—it was art of today. It did not matter whether I liked it or not, but I came away with an exhilarating sense of freedom. I gave up all idea of going home. In the cafés where the artists met there were great arguments. They divided into groups and called themselves *Fauves* and Post-Impressionists. I wandered from café to café where they met. I enjoyed them all. I no longer questioned. I just went on working.

Painters and sculptors worked in the daytime, but Ruffy, my Irish poet friend, had all the time in the world and spent most of it in my studio. His exceptional wit and the way he could turn a phrase were always a delight. One night Ruffy and I were walking along the Boul' Mich'. Sultan, of course, was with us. As we approached the Café d'Harcourt two girls ran out, chased by a couple of Frenchmen. The girls seemed to be in distress, and we two gallants walked off with them,

Between Sittings

much to the consternation of their pursuers. We walked about a block; the girls were effusive in their thanks. We stood under the street lamp and I looked at my girl. She was titian-haired and charming. I told her I was a sculptor and asked her to pose for me. I gave her my card with my address and she promised to be there the next afternoon.

The following day I waited. She never turned up. I was disappointed. Those were gloomy days, for I was broke. Everything I touched seemed to go wrong. Even my work had gone stale. What to do to change my luck? I decided to shave my beard.

Some two weeks later I was sitting in the Café d'Harcourt with my friends, and across the way at the far end of the café I spotted the girl who had never turned up. But I was through. I paid no attention to her. A few moments later I saw her coming towards our table. She looked at me rather doubtfully, recognized Sultan—

“But are you—”

“Yes,” said I.

She gave me a rueful smile and said, “I know you won't believe me. I lost your card and I have been looking for you here.”

“Oh, that's all right. I'll give you another.”

She sat next to me crestfallen. “The trouble is, I've overstayed my leave. My funds have given out and this is my last night at the hotel.”

“That's all right,” said I, “you can stay with me.”

I gave her my address. She left me with a gay, “*À demain,*” but I was a cynic. I did not believe her.

The next day the painter Alfie Maurer was in my studio, and when I told him my story he said, “I know these girls, I have made dates with dozens of them and they never turn up.” Just then there was a knock at my door. I opened it and there she was.

“My trunk is outside,” said she brightly.

At that Alfie bolted. I went to the concierge and told him to pay the cabbie and bring the trunk in. He did and the girl and I sat on the trunk and laughed. I invited her to take off her hat and coat and make herself comfortable. She told me about herself. She was Swiss and was returning from London, where she had been governess to the children of a

The Swiss Girl

well-known English sculptor. She was on her way to visit her mother in Switzerland but had spent all her money in Paris and all she had left was her ticket to Switzerland. That day she posed for me and I made a portrait of her. I confessed that I was stone-broke. She understood, said she had a dinner date that evening and we arranged to meet later that night, at the Café d'Harcourt.

I was intoxicated with the head I had made of her and when she left I went looking for Fergusson to tell him about it. Sultan and I found Fergusson at Lavenue's and he stood me a drink. As we were sitting there celebrating my friend McAdams, the sculptor, came in, accompanied by a tall, handsome lady wearing a large hat and pearls. Both Fergusson and I remarked on her striking appearance. I suddenly missed Sultan. I went out to look for him. He was nowhere to be seen. When I returned I found McAdams feeding Sultan quantities of sugar. That always annoyed me. I called Sultan and was about to pass by McAdams' table when he stopped me.

"Jo, I want you to meet Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney."

Mrs. Whitney seconded him with a cordial, "Oh, do sit down, I have heard so much about you from our mutual friend John Gregory."

Mrs. Whitney told me that she too was a sculptor and asked me what I was working on. I told her I had just completed a wonderful bust of a girl. She said she must see it. She was extraordinary, how she gave one the feeling that what you did was the only thing that mattered. She spoke warmly of John Gregory. I, who shared her enthusiasm, quoted a poem he had written. Mrs. Whitney quoted Alfred de Musset. I quoted Heine. Our party had become gay, but it was getting late and we were about to break up, when someone suggested supper in Montmartre. That sounded good to me, and, leaving my dog at the studio, we proceeded to Monico's, Place Pigalle.

We were no sooner seated when there in the doorway was my girl and her friends. I motioned to her to meet me in the dressing room, where I gave her the keys to my studio and told her I would see her later. I returned to my table and my friends began to tease me, asking who the beautiful girl was. I tried to change the subject, but as the night

Between Sitzings

wore on and the food and drink began to enliven our spirits, they had but one idea. They wanted to go back to my studio to see the bust I had been boasting about. I wouldn't have it. Our party finally broke up and Mrs. Whitney promised to come to my studio the next afternoon.

It was almost daybreak when I got home. The girl was asleep up in the balcony, but I decided to cast the bust right then and there, and when I finished I got the concierge to come in and clean the studio. The floor was still wet after a fresh scrubbing when Mrs. Whitney came in. She saw the bust, recognized the girl, and said, "I must have it." This was good fortune. I had sold my first piece of sculpture in Paris.

When I told the girl about it, we celebrated, and she told everyone she was my mastiff, meaning my mascot. Perhaps shaving my beard had something to do with it, but I soon let it grow again.

CHAPTER 9

YVONNE

THE GIRL wanted to play, I wanted to work, and when she left for Switzerland I was glad to be free again and go back to my usual routine. When I found a note in my studio from a journalist friend, Arthur Bullard, inviting me to join him for lunch to meet two girls, one French, an actress and beautiful, the other American and rich, it did not tempt me at all. I ignored the invitation.

About two months later I ran into Louis de Kerstrat in uniform. He was doing his military service and was on a day's leave. He asked me to join him at Lavenue's for an apéritif to meet his sister Yvonne, who was in Paris on a visit. I had seen a photograph of her in Louis' studio. He had told me a lot about her, and I wanted very much to meet her.

When I got to Lavenue's, I looked around for Louis, but did not see him. However, I spotted a young lady who was sitting by herself, whom I recognized at once as Yvonne. I introduced myself, and she invited me to join her.

"Why didn't you come to the lunch that Arthur Bullard invited you to?"

So she was the actress he referred to!

She knew a lot about me. She had heard about my doing busts in one sitting and did not think much of the idea. I took it all, and would have taken more. I just sat and feasted my eyes upon her. She was beau-

Between Sittings

tiful. Louis came in. I had not noticed how absurd he looked in his hand-me-down uniform. The sleeves of his overcoat were too short, his beard too long, and his peaked red cap just a little too small. As he approached our table, we both burst out laughing. He could not stay long—he had to get back to barracks. I asked Yvonne to dine with me. She couldn't. She was dining with her friend Florence Rauh, whom she wanted me to know, and asked me to join them for coffee after dinner. I did and brought my friend Hal Ruffy. Later other friends joined us.

I was fascinated with Yvonne and thought to myself, why hadn't Arthur Bullard mentioned in his note that the name of the beautiful French girl was Yvonne de Kerstrat? I would have known her two months earlier. I was so anxious to see more of her that I urged her to sit for me, and after much pleading, she agreed. Time was short, for she and Florence were sailing at the end of the week.

The next day I called for her and took her to my studio. This was not to be a quickie. It was an excuse to have her with me as long as possible.

During the sitting I remember she told me the following story. E. S. Willard, the great English actor, was in Chicago on an American tour. She dreamed that she had written to him and that he had answered her, asking her to call on him at his hotel. When she knocked at the door, he opened it himself and invited her to sit down. He then asked her to take off her hat. With that she awoke.

The dream was so real she sat right down and wrote a letter to Willard asking him for an interview. The next day she received a reply, inviting her to call. When she knocked at his door, he himself let her in and asked her to sit down. When he asked her to take off her hat, she almost fainted. He signed her up on the spot for a year. She played with Willard under the stage name of Philippa Wharton.

Yvonne was sailing on Saturday noon. We had to have a party. After dinner I insisted that we go for a drive. We got hold of a taxi—they were rare in those days. We first went to the studio, Yvonne, Florence Rauh, Hal Ruffy and I, to have a last look at the bust. We then started out for Versailles, stopping at places on the way. Ruffy got fairly tight

Yvonne

and insisted on riding on top of the cab. Nothing would do but that we get hold of Louis, and off we went in search of him. Suddenly we were there—the highest walls you can imagine in front of us. We realized how hopeless it was, and started back.

At Ville d'Avray we stopped at a small bistro and woke up the proprietor, who served us an early breakfast. By the time we got back to Paris it was five in the morning. I dropped the girls off at Lavenue's to pack, went back to my studio to wash up, bought some flowers, and went back to Yvonne's hotel for a last try. I had been begging her to stay on, but it was hopeless. She argued that she had a job with the Shuberts to go back to, and that I was an artist. I should stick to my work and she should stick to hers. And so she sailed and I remained behind, in love and unconvinced.

A hectic correspondence followed. I was disconsolate. Work was a solution. I got models and worked in my studio all day. I did a statue of Mephisto. At night I would go from café to café, ending up in Montmartre, where I got to be known as "the man with the dog."

My reputation for doing busts in one sitting grew. Mrs. Whitney was again in Paris and she brought her little daughter Flora to my studio and left her there for me to sculp. She was a very silent little girl and appeared to be frightened of my dog Sultan—he was far too big. I did my best to entertain her as I worked on her bust. Towards the end of the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Whitney came for her. She certainly was glad to see them and they were delighted with the bust, except for one criticism. Mr. Whitney thought her nose was too big, but there was nothing to be done about it. This was a bust done in one sitting, and the sitting was over.

Years later I asked Flora if she remembered sitting for me. She did, and I recalled how frightened she was of my dog.

"Oh no," she said. "It wasn't the dog. It was you and your black beard."

When Louis de Kerstrat finished his military service, we decided to take a studio together with living quarters. We found what we wanted at 39 rue Delambre. This was a large studio on the ground floor with

Between Sittings

stairs leading up to an apartment, and it had a real kitchen. Louis did some painting and all the cooking. I had the studio to myself most of the day.

During this time I had a visit from a strange man, who said he would like to ask me some questions. As he entered the studio he began:

"You used to live in the rue Belloni? You had a long black beard? You were hard up—you went off on a trip—you came back—you shaved your beard—you had money—you moved—you are a habitué of Montmartre—"

I listened no further. I lost my temper and put him out of my studio. I went to the Dome and told my friends what had happened. They wanted to know who he was and why he asked all those questions. I didn't know, but the following day I found out.

The story appeared in the *Matin*, a morning newspaper. Apparently on the night preceding the morning on which I left on my walking trip, there had been a murder in the Impasse Ronsin. A mural painter by the name of Steinheil had been murdered, and Mme. Steinheil said it was done by three curious-looking men. She pointed me out as one of the three, referring to me as "*l'homme aux yeux effrayants*"—the man with the terrible eyes. The newspaper story told how I had shaved my beard, how I had moved, how I was broke and then suddenly I was seen spending money in Montmartre.

I was flabbergasted. I had never heard of M. or Mme. Steinheil. I went to see the American consul, and he recommended me to a lawyer, Donald Harper, who wrote a letter to the *Matin* threatening a libel suit. However, the damage was done and I was pointed out in my quarter as "*l'homme aux yeux effrayants*."

Mme. Steinheil herself was tried for the murder. The case dragged on and on. She kept on accusing people, including her *valet de chambre*. The trial was long and strenuous. Mme. Steinheil was eventually acquitted and went to England, where she married a lord. Shortly after, an article appeared in *La Liberté* entitled "*L'esthète aux pieds nus*" (the barefooted esthete), suggesting that the least Mme. Steinheil could do for the sculptor Davidson, after causing him all that misery, was to get her



Photo Kollar, Paris

JOHN MARIN

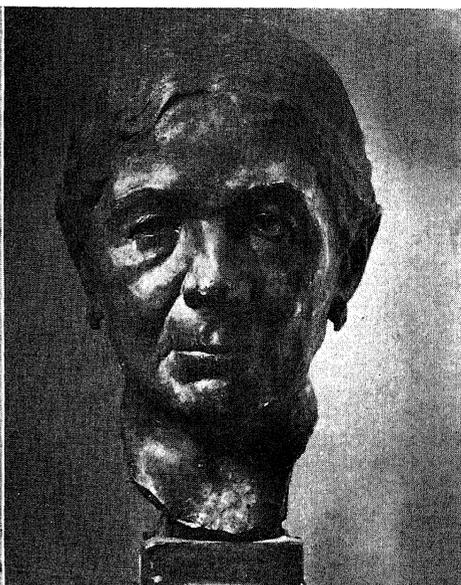


Photo Kollar, Paris

JO DAVIDSON'S MOTHER

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Photo Kollar, Paris

FRANK HARRIS

Photo Kollar, Paris

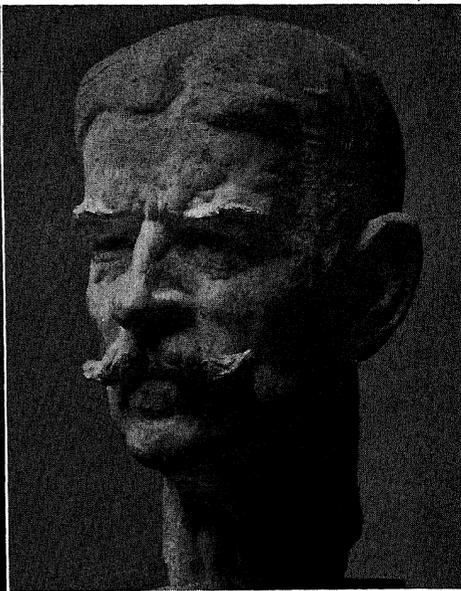
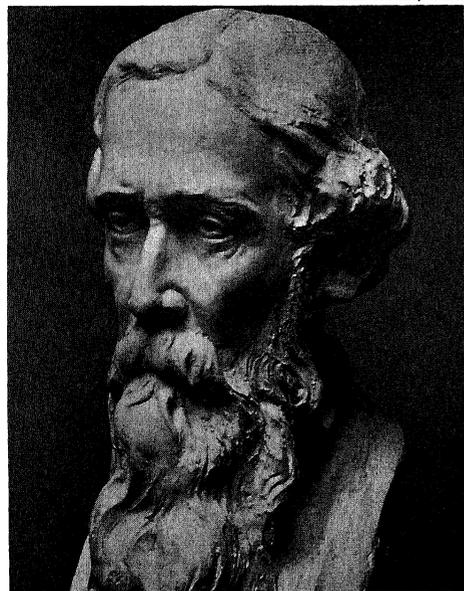




Photo by Alvin Langdon Coburn

LORD NORTHCLIFFE

JOSEPH CONRAD

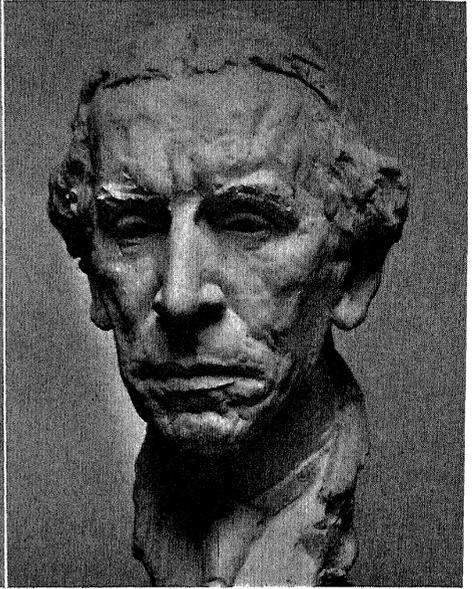


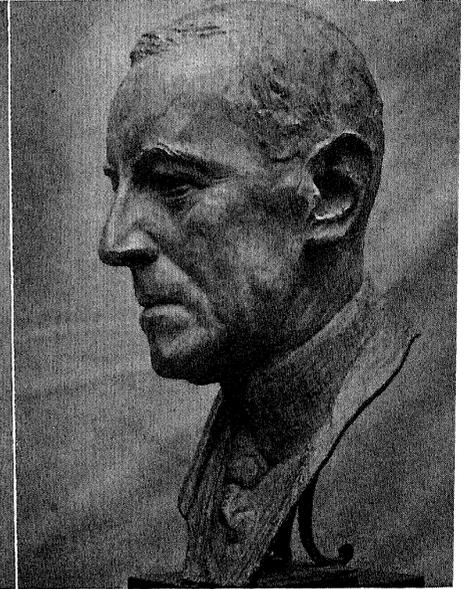
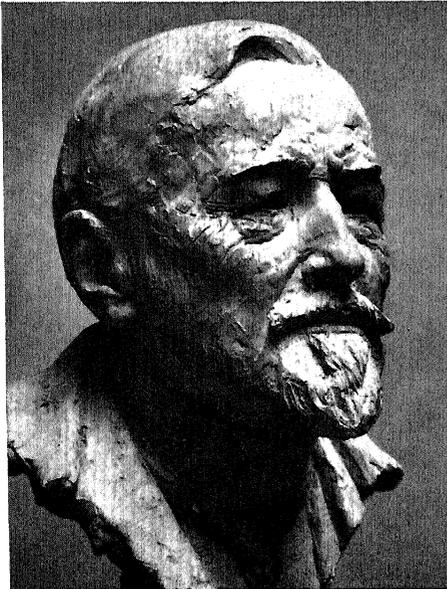
Photo Kollar, Paris

ISRAEL ZANGWILL

WOODROW WILSON

Photo Kollar, Paris

Photo copyright by François Kollar, Paris



Yvonne

friend Leonce Benedite, director of the Luxembourg Museum, to buy one of his works for the Museum. This was a fine idea, but nothing came of it.

One day two girl friends of Yvonne, Blanche and Ida Rauh, arrived in Paris. Yvonne had written Louis and me to look after them. We did, and it was not long before Louis and Blanche fell in love and married. I was left alone in my studio with Sultan. One day I received a letter from Yvonne. She had chucked her job and was sailing for France. My friend Ethel Chase, an etcher whom I had known in New York in my League days, was staying at the Hotel des Écoles, which was on the same street as my studio. I asked her to get rooms for Yvonne and impatiently awaited Yvonne's arrival.

Yvonne's return to Paris called for a celebration. She had heard much of Montmartre but had never been there. I suggested that we both dress up and make a night of it. Not having a dinner jacket of my own, I borrowed one from Jerry Blum. I called for Yvonne at her hotel. When she appeared, I didn't know her. She had brought with her a trunk full of theatrical clothes, and she had put on one of the evening gowns and a huge picture hat; she had made up her face to match.

We went to dinner and theatre and finally landed at Monico's, where I was known as the man with the dog. We were greeted by the headwaiter and were escorted to a ringside table, from which we could watch the performance. When the dancing began, some of the girls hailed me as they passed us. Yvonne suggested that I invite them for a drink. That called for more champagne. They questioned her:

"Where have you been? We have not seen you before?"

"I have just come back from America," said Yvonne.

"How is business over there?" they queried.

"Not so good," said Yvonne.

They had taken her for one of them, and she played up to them. They warned her that I was bluffing—that I was an artist and had no money, but that I was a nice guy and not to be too hard on me. After we left, we both had a good laugh and Yvonne said that that was the best recommendation I could have had.

Between Sitzings

From Montmartre we went to the markets at Les Halles, where the flowers were an unforgettable sight, and then to breakfast at the Pré Catalan in the Bois de Boulogne. We picked up a cabbie who had a very pretty little fox terrier sitting beside him. Yvonne wanted it and I bought it for her from the cabbie. I was afraid that Sultan would eat him up in a jealous rage, but no, he fell for him too and adopted him. In fact, Willie was Sultan's dog in the same way that Sultan was my dog. Sultan, who never had picked a fight in his life before, had a good many, protecting Willie, who would rather fight than eat.

Willie was a nice dog, an adorable dog, but he was a nuisance. One of his passions was eating shoes, and everybody agreed that we could not keep Willie any longer. What were we to do with him? As he was beautifully made, it was suggested that we could get quite a sum of money for him at a dog fancier's, and that it was the best way of finding a good home for him. So, with many caresses and many tears at parting, we sold Willie. With the money we decided to give a dinner, which was to be known as the Willie dinner.

Our friend, Anne Estelle Rice was sailing for America, so the Willie dinner was given in her honor. The guests were Johnny Fergusson, Ethel Chase, Bill MacColl, Yvonne's brother Louis and his wife, Blanche. The dinner was held upstairs in the room above my studio in the rue Delambre. Blanche was late, but we sat down to dinner without her. The dinner, which Yvonne and Louis had cooked, had everything from fish to nuts. It was good.

We were about through with the first course when the studio bell rang. It was Blanche, and I went down to let her in, naturally followed by Louis. As I came downstairs, there was Sultan sitting on the couch with Anne Estelle Rice's hat between his paws, giving himself a royal time separating the bird from the hat—the hat that Anne had just bought that day. It was the hat she was going to wear to sail to America in. It was a joyous affair, a feathered hat, and the multi-colored wings of the bird swept royally around the brim—a Parisian creation which we all had admired when Anne Estelle appeared. Here was Sultan showing his admiration by attempting to devour it.

Yvonne

I gasped and yelled at him to drop it. He did, but what he dropped was a sorry sight. Louis, an ingenious guy, came to my rescue. He would fix it with a little glue and a needle and thread. He managed to bring it back to its original glory. After cleaning up the scattered feathers, he joined us upstairs and our party continued.

Anne left early to pack, without realizing what had occurred. When she left, we told the remaining guests, and they were hilarious. We decided then and there that some of us must go to Le Havre and see her off. They reported seeing Anne come up on deck to wave good-bye, when in a sudden gust of wind the bird and the hat parted company.

Yvonne's brother and his wife had taken a beautiful studio apartment on the Boulevard Berthier, quite a jaunt from Montparnasse. You took a tram to the Étoile and changed to another tram that took you from the Étoile to the Place Pereire, just around the corner from their apartment. Yvonne was staying with them.

One day they invited me to lunch. It was one of those days when I was in my impecunious state—broke to the gills—hadn't a bean. I took the tram that got me to the Étoile and was waiting for the other tram to appear, when a smiling cabbie came along. Instinctively, I hailed him. It was too late. I was in for it and climbed into the cab. There on the floor was a shining twenty-franc gold piece. I relaxed. When I got to my destination, I paid off the cabbie with the two-franc piece, which was all I had had before my windfall. I looked up and there were the three of them hanging over the balcony. When I got upstairs, they were at the door—the three of them starting to give me hell. They all knew the condition of my finances. I said nothing until we got inside. I stood there with the grin of a Cheshire cat on my face and pulled out the gold piece from my pocket and told them, "If I hadn't taken the cab I would have had one franc." I was incorrigible. We had a wonderful lunch and it put us all in a good mood.

One day Henry Moskowitz came to my studio and asked me if I had a bust of Wagner. I said, "Don't be ridiculous. Why should I have a bust of Wagner?"

"Because if you have it, it is sold."

Between Sittings

I said, "What? Say that again."

He told me that David Edstrom, the sculptor, was looking all over Paris for a bust of Wagner which some pupils of an American music teacher wished to present to him on his birthday. He and Edstrom had been scouring the city without success and had thought of me as a last resort.

"Under those circumstances, I have one," said I.

"Show it to me."

"I have not made it yet."

"But he wants it right away."

"He shall have it tomorrow. You go back and tell him that you saw it, and it is wonderful."

He replied, "I can't."

"You must. You don't think for one moment that I'll let you down."

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon. I put him out of the studio and told him to do as I said and it would be all right.

I went upstairs. Yvonne was there with her friend Ida Rauh. I told them what had happened and asked Ida to lend me twenty francs. I went to the Boulevard St. Michel, bought a few photographs of Wagner and rushed back to the studio. I was putting up the clay when Mosky came in all out of breath.

"He is on his way," he said.

I pushed him into a closet, rushed out and told my concierge that I was away and that I would not be back until the next morning. I barely had time to get out of sight when I heard Edstrom asking for me. My concierge very sweetly told him that it was too bad, but I had just left and would not be back until the next day. She was wonderful. She was tiny, but I would have defied anyone to cross the threshold if she did not want him to. Edstrom left. I opened the closet and found a trembling Moskowicz.

"He has gone," I said, "and he isn't coming back until tomorrow."

Mosky left me and I went to work. I worked until very late that night. I was exhausted, so I went to Lavenue's for a night's rest.

I overslept. I was awakened by a message from Ida that Edstrom was

Yvonne

in my studio waiting for me. When I arrived there he was pacing the floor and Ida was standing watch over the bust and would not let him touch it until I got there. He was furious. I calmed him and very quietly unwrapped the bust. There was Wagner.

“It is amazing—amazing! How long have you been working at this?”

“Oh,” I said, “for months.”

“It is extraordinary. I have been looking for a bust of Wagner all over Paris for the last two months, and all the time you were working on it.”

With tears in his eyes, he congratulated me and said a committee of young women would come to see it that afternoon. After he left I went upstairs and broke the glad news to Yvonne and Ida Rauh. All afternoon the girls of the committee kept coming, and they all approved. The fee was a thousand francs (two hundred dollars), and they paid for the bronze casting.

When the bronze was finished there was a ceremony to which I was invited. It was a white-tie affair and Jerry Blum again came to my rescue. He had tails. At the presentation the speakers lauded the bust of Wagner, saying that the sculptor of the bust understood Wagner more profoundly than his critics. There were more speeches. I sneaked out of the party and went back to the Dome, where I had more drinks. The story was too good. I couldn't keep it to myself.

Years later, in London, I was visiting our Ambassador, Walter Hines Page. He asked me what I was doing. I told him I was looking for a studio and that I had heard that Edstrom was in London and perhaps knew of one. Mr. Page replied. “If I were you I would keep away from Mr. Edstrom. He is looking for you with a gun.”

I had completely forgotten the episode!

CHAPTER 10

I GET MARRIED

YVONNE'S RETURN to Paris changed my way of life. I no longer went for long walks with Johnny Fergusson discussing art and life. Instead, Yvonne and I would go to the cafés to meet my friends and she soon became a part of my gang. We would sit talking for hours in the cafés, making drawings and diagrams on the marble-topped tables to emphasize and explain our pet theories.

Most of my friends welcomed Yvonne but there were others who resented her. My friend Johnny Fergusson said, "She has no drawing in her face." He had painted her portrait.

Our favorite restaurant was Boudet's on Boulevard Raspail where we were sure to find Anne Estelle Rice, Johnny Fergusson and Hal Ruffy. Johnny dined there every night, and his menu never changed. It was always "*Chateaubriand garni, à 90 centimes, et gateau de riz*" (steak with vegetables, for 90 centimes, and rice pudding). Yvonne invited him to dinner in my studio and cooked a sumptuous meal. After that dinner he thought she was tops and said to her, "You'd better look after this artist friend of mine."

One night I was sitting at the Closerie des Lilas, with the usual crowd, when someone coming up behind me covered my eyes and said, "Guess who." I couldn't guess who, and the "who" suddenly whirled around and sat in my lap. It was the Swiss girl, announcing that she was going home with me. Both my friends and I had difficulty explaining the situation.

I Get Married

However, I invited her to come to my studio the next day and I gave her my address. This time she didn't lose it. She came the next day and I made a statuette for which she posed, which I called "A Study in Repose."

I had told Yvonne about her, and she asked me to invite the Swiss girl to tea. I did, and when later I had to take Sultan out for a walk, I found on returning that she had gone. She understood.

But girl or no girl, I was an artist, and an artist just didn't stay in his studio and work—he had to talk. Talking was part of it. To prove to myself that I still had my freedom, I would go to the Café du Dome with Sultan and sit there for hours talking with my friends, all the time really wanting to be with Yvonne. But to give in to that impulse would mean that I was licked.

It was a veritable *vie de bohème*. One night, coming home from a late party, I paid the cabbie and gave him a lavish tip—fifty *centimes*. The next morning, when Yvonne asked me for some money to go marketing with, I put my hand in my pocket and handed her what I thought was a ten-franc gold piece. Alas! It was only fifty *centimes*. I had given the gold piece, by mistake, to the cabbie. They were the same size. We were in despair. It was all the money we had, but we laughed. Besides, there was always André, the waiter at the Dome. I went to see him and he lent me five francs.

Yvonne had tremendous spirit. She did not seem to mind my being broke as long as I worked. She tried to help by making scarves and designing knickknacks, but there was never enough money to foot the bills. I was an old hand at borrowing and knew where to make a touch without too much fear of being turned down. I never asked for more than I needed for the time being.

A regular who never failed me was Lester Rosenfield, the painter. He was from Chicago and well-to-do. He never refused me but made me feel rather unhappy about the whole thing—this probably to discourage me, and it often did.

Once I needed a hundred francs very badly and immediately went to call on Rosie. He had a studio apartment on the Boulevard Raspail,

Between Sitzings

one of the first studio apartments with an elevator. His was on the sixth floor. When I got there I found a sign on the elevator: "Out of order." It was bad enough to have to ask for the hundred francs, but to have to climb six flights, and long ones—they were duplex apartments—was really rubbing it in. I was about to give up, but my need was great, and I started the climb.

It was slow work, but lo!—on the third floor landing, staring me square in the face, was a neatly-folded, brand-new hundred-franc note. I picked it up—looked at it—put it in my pocket—and thought to myself, "Well, that takes care of that." And I started to walk down the stairs but changed my mind and decided to go up and thank Rosie anyway.

The maid opened the door, and when Rosie saw me, his face fell. He guessed my mission. He was entertaining some friends. I put up my hand and said, "Has anybody here lost any money?"

Rosie interrupted, "Don't be a damn fool, Jo."

I insisted until each in turn admitted that he had not. Then I turned to Rosenfield and said, "I came here today to borrow a hundred francs. When I got to the elevator I saw a sign "Out of Order" which almost talked me out of it, but I needed it so badly that I walked up. There on the third-floor landing I found this"—and I held up the hundred-franc note. Both Rosenfield and I believed in miracles that day.

Yvonne became ill and the exigencies of living changed our care-free bohemian ways. Occasionally a job to do a portrait bust turned up. Blanche's friend Wilma Stern commissioned me to do a bust of her daughter, and a Dr. John Streeter Sidley of Racine, Wisconsin who was in Paris had me do a bust of his wife. I finally decided to go to New York and arrange for an exhibition. I had had an exhibition in London, at the Bailie Gallery, Johnny Fergusson had arranged it for me, but I had sold only one piece.

My homecoming to New York was a happy one. This was the first time I had been back. But when I tried to find a gallery to give me an exhibition, that was another matter. They were not interested. At that time a one-man exhibition of sculpture was unheard of—of painting

I Get Married

yes, but not sculpture. I remembered George S. Hellman of the New York Cooperative Society. I had sold him a drawing of a rabbi for one dollar—that was before I went to St. Louis. I was afraid he would not remember me, but Ida Rauh was in town and knew him, and she accompanied me to his gallery.

It was located on Thirty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue, in the basement of the Knickerbocker Trust Building. The gallery was going out of business, and when I suggested an exhibition of my sculpture, Mr. Hellman agreed to do this as a parting gesture. This sounded exciting but without any warning I received a letter from Yvonne who wrote that Blanche, Louis' wife, had died suddenly.

Ida, Blanche's sister, brought their brother to my studio. He was going to France, and as he did not know Louis, his brother-in-law, he begged me to go with him. I didn't need much urging, and we sailed on the *Providence*.

Blanche's death had a sobering effect on all of us. Louis was shattered, and Blanche's brother offered to take Louis back with him to America. This somehow brought Yvonne and me closer together and we decided to get married.

Yes, we decided to get married—but there was a slight difficulty. To marry in Paris, Yvonne had to have her mother's consent. It was not forthcoming. Her mother was a descendant of Mirabeau, the brother of the Marquis. She was proud of her ancestry.

So Yvonne and I went to London accompanied by Andrew Dasberg and his wife Grace Johnson. We found accommodations in a boarding house in Russell Square. The proprietor was one of the most amiable johnnies I have ever encountered. When we explained our intention of getting married, he arranged everything for a slight fee. The registrar at Marylebone did the rest. Yvonne and I became man and wife.

Back in Paris, I installed Yvonne in Louis' apartment and returned to New York to attend to the details of my exhibition.

The exhibition turned out to be quite an event. It was the first one-man show of sculpture that was not a post-mortem. I had brought over a number of drawings, some bronzes and terra-cottas. Mrs. Whit-

Between Sittings

ney lent the bust I had done of her daughter Flora. There was also the bust of Mrs. Sidley. Mr. Hellman turned over his whole gallery in the basement to my exhibition. He printed an elaborate catalogue with illustrations and a preface, which contained my credo. Here it is:

"Art begins where Imitation ends."—OSCAR WILDE

A work of art is the expression of an emotion.

Plastic art is a form of expression by which emotions can be made visible.

Emotions being purely personal, the more individual the work of art, the greater it is.

The greater individual the artist, the greater his work of art.

A portrait is nothing but the artist's interpretation of a personality.

Retrospection in Art is folly.

The only use of old Masters is to tell us what to avoid.

It is not what we say but how we say it.

True Art like nature imitates nothing.

My preface was attacked, but the show was not ignored. It was roasted and it was praised. George Hellman sold two or three bronzes, some drawings and I got a commission to do a bust.

One day, Mr. Hellman asked me to lunch at the Holland House to meet Mr. Mitchell Kennerley, the publisher, and Miss Emily Grigsby. Mr. Kennerley had bought one of my bronzes.

At the time, the talk of the town was the first showing of Picasso at "291," as the Stieglitz gallery on Fifth Avenue was known. I had met Alfred Stieglitz in Paris and he had then taken three of my bronzes to show in "291." After our lunch we went to see the Picassos. When we arrived, Mr. Stieglitz took us in tow. When he talked art one could not get a word in edgewise, but his conversation was always illuminating and fascinating.

I Get Married

I had taken a studio in 32 Union Square on the top floor of an office building. Miss Grigsby came to pose for me there. Mr. Kennerley would often attend the sittings, and she brought her friend Edward Wasserman, a Wall Street banker. I did Mr. Wasserman's bust, as well as the head of Morley, Mitchell Kennerley's seven-year-old boy, and one of my impresario, George S. Hellman.

George Hellman also got me my first important commission, to do a bust of Dr. Abraham Jacoby for the Mount Sinai Hospital. Dr. Jacoby was then eighty years old. He had a massive head with flowing white hair and a well-trimmed beard. During the sittings he loved to reminisce about his early days, when he came to America with Carl Schurz. As I tried to organize the flow of his white locks, he said, "The other day I had a visit from a lady, an old friend and an old patient of mine. We were reminiscing and she said, 'Doctor, forty years ago you had such beautiful hair,' and I said to her, 'But my dear, why didn't you tell me that forty years ago?'"

Arthur Dove, who was one of my Paris friends, introduced me to the Carlos Café on West Twenty-fifth Street. It was then frequented by newspaper men, artists and writers. There I met Frederick James Gregg, chief editorial writer on the *Sun*. He became one of my staunchest supporters and stood up for me in print when the critics attacked my exhibition. He had me meet his friends Charles FitzGerald, also an editorial writer on the *Sun*, and the painter George Luks. I made busts of all three.

I became a daily visitor at the Carlos Café. Besides meeting my friends, I could leave my dog Sultan there when I went to dine at Mouquin's, where dogs were not admitted.

Mouquin's was on Sixth Avenue at Twenty-eighth Street, but Mouquin's was France. Downstairs to the right as you came in there were tables with upholstered benches. The waiter and factotum for these tables was named Dubois. Dubois, blond and rosy, was middle-sized but he looked huge. His smile of welcome was given only to those he approved of. The tables were presided over by the sculptor John Flanagan who was there every day for lunch and dinner. You were

Between Sittings

sure to meet Ernest Lawson, Arthur Dove or Dickie Brooks and of course Gregg and FitzGerald. There was always good conversation.

It was Gregg who first took me to Mouquin's. The oldsters did not approve of the impertinence expressed in the catalogue of my show, but Gregg and FitzGerald stood by me. One evening I came into Mouquin's, looking for a friendly soul. There was no one at our table, and Dubois told me that Gregg was entertaining a party of four, paying a bet he had lost to Brooks. As I looked into the mirror, Gregg spotted me and beckoned me to come over. As I approached, I heard my name mentioned in a not too complimentary way. It was Flanagan. He suddenly saw me and said with a wry smile, "You are young, you will get over it." I conceded he was right and retorted: "You are old and you will never get over it." We made it up afterward and had a round of drinks.

My many new friends and my exhibition had made my visit to New York a success and put me on the map as a sculptor. I sold some drawings and bronzes. I did several portraits and I made a little money. But I wanted to get back to Paris and Yvonne.

One night Mitchell Kennerley invited me to join him and Miss Grigsby and another lady at the Opera and afterwards for supper at Delmonico's. After the Opera, Miss Grigsby or her friend was not feeling well and they left us. Kennerley insisted that we go to Delmonico's anyway. During supper he questioned me about my plans. I told him everything and particularly emphasized my need to save enough money to work uninterruptedly on a figure I had wanted to do for a long time. Kennerley offered to help, and then and there proposed to give me a hundred dollars a month for eight months. I was stunned. I couldn't believe my ears.

"But why do you do this?"

Said Kennerley, "I believe in you and I can afford it. You can repay me with a piece of sculpture."

That night I returned to my studio a happy man and the very next day booked my passage to France.

CHAPTER I I

ADIEU TO THE "VIE DE BOHÈME"

YVONNE HAD BEEN LONELY living in Louis' apartment and she was happy to have me back. The separation had been easier for me because I had been busy in New York, with my exhibition and my work and making new friends. Aside from providing us with a happy reunion, the trip, we felt, had been worth while: my exhibition had been well received, I had saved a few hundred dollars and we were enriched by the windfall of Mitchell Kennerley's hundred dollars a month. Not to have to worry and to be able to pay one's debts—what more could one want? Yvonne had found a pretty little flat on the rue Ruhmkorff at the Porte des Ternes near the Bois de Boulogne, and a large studio for me at 22 rue St. Ferdinand.

I was eager to get to work and now that I could afford to hire models, I spent a great deal of time in my studio. One evening something went wrong with the studio electricity. I lit a candle in order to look at a little figure I was modeling. As I held the candle to it, I noticed the huge shadow it threw on the wall. It was fascinating.

"That is the size I am going to model it," I said to myself. The very next day I prepared to go to work on an eight-foot figure which I was to call "*La Terre*."

Yvonne often came to the studio and sat there while I worked. I had endless tales to tell her about New York; although I had written

Between Sitzings

her, there was always more to tell. We were happy to be together again.

Our flat in the rue Ruhmkorff was small, and Sultan was too big for it. He was the only one who did not like our arrangements, for he had to stay behind and sleep in the studio.

Yvonne was pregnant and her pregnancy gave her a peculiar beauty. I planned to do a group depicting maturity, for which Yvonne would pose, but I became so engrossed in the subtle beauty of her face that I did no more than the mask, which I cut in marble many years later.

The first payment from Kennerley was late in coming; the second didn't come at all. My own funds were dwindling, and the peace of mind I had so much hoped for was gone. It was impossible to work on my big figure under these conditions. I was about to abandon it when I heard that Kennerley was in London. I went there, saw Kennerley and got my belated allowance.

I went to work on "*La Terre*" with new enthusiasm and I started another figure, life-size, of a little girl. Months flew by happily.

One day in June the writer Sholem Asch came to my studio. I had met him in New York. He was an enthusiast of the Imperial Russian Ballet, which had just come to Paris. He knew Bakst and Benois, who had designed the sets and the costumes. He had me meet them and some of the dancers and got me tickets for the ballet. I became a balletomane and made drawings galore. I was thrilled by Ida Rubinstein as Cleopatra and made a statuette of her.

One night, with the help of Sholem Asch I got two box seats for "*Scheherazade*" and "*Cleopatra*." Yvonne had made herself a beautiful dress for the occasion.

We arrived early so as to install Yvonne comfortably in her seat. She was radiant. The house was buzzing with expectancy when two American spinster ladies were ushered into our box. Seeing Yvonne they looked flustered and worried. "These terrible French—fancy going out in that condition!" They did not suspect that Yvonne and her black-whiskered escort understood English. They were so concerned with thinking that Yvonne was going to have a baby then and

Adieu to the *vie de bohème*

there, that they saw more of Yvonne than they did of "Scheherazade."

It was a gala night—"Scheherazade" and "Cleopatra," with Ida Rubinstein in the title roles. The unforgettable Lydia Lapokhova was ravishing in the "Bacchanale" by Glazounov. The leaping Nijinsky as the dark slave in "Scheherazade" startled the spellbound audience. He seemed to leap into the air and stay there. There were Pavlova and Karsavina and Fokine—all in one company. Never since has there been such an ensemble.

The theatre was also at its peak with plays and players—Max Dearly, Lavallière, Réjane *et al.* There were the three plays by de Flers and Caillavet—"Le Roi," "Le Bois Sacré," and "L'Habit Vert."

In art, there were the Salons, old and new, *Les Fauves*. As I look back, it seems that everybody lived and talked Art. Then came our own Isadora Duncan. She danced Gluck's "Orpheus" for two weeks and packed the house. All the well-known artists paid her homage and made drawings of Isadora. I too, filled books with sketches made at her performances.

Then on July 1, 1910 Yvonne gave birth to a boy, Yvon Jacques.

I showed Sultan the baby, but he would have none of it. I tried to put his head in the crib, but he got under the couch and sulked. That mood did not last long, because he suddenly decided it was his baby.

We were loving but ignorant parents. We bought books on the care and feeding of babies, read them assiduously, but did just the opposite. This resulted in many sleepless nights. It was hot that summer and we went to Les Andelyes, an hour or so from Paris. Sultan, of course, came along, and when we took the baby for an airing and stopped somewhere, Yvonne to read, I to sketch and the baby to sleep, Sultan was there to devour anyone who approached us.

Feeding the baby became a problem. We experimented with bottle feeding, we read books, we followed instructions, and with the book in front of us we almost succeeded in killing Jacques. At the doctor's insistence, we eventually hired a wet-nurse. The result was Nounou.

To add to all our troubles, Sultan disappeared. I advertised, I searched

Between Sittings

for him in all my old haunts, but never found him. This was a great loss.

Living in the rue Ruhmkorff, with my studio in the rue St. Ferdinand, we begun to feel as if Paris was another city. The cafés where all our friends gathered were in Montparnasse and we missed them. We only saw our friends when they would come occasionally for dinner. They urged us to move back to the "*quartier*." Louis told us he had found a house on Boulevard Victor, whose owner was a contractor and a friend of his, and who was willing to build studios, two on the top floor and one in the garden. Louis and I went to see my old friend Rosenfield and persuaded him to join us in this venture. Louis and Rosenfield were to pay the rent, Yvonne and Nounou would run the house, and I would have the garden studio rent-free.

We gave up our flat in the rue Ruhmkorff and moved into Boulevard Victor, which was then an outside boulevard facing the flying field of Issy-les-Molineaux. We moved in and work on the building of the studios began. My garden studio was the first to be completed. The two studios at the top of the house didn't go up fast enough. The rainy spell set in and we were inundated. Louis, who was the chief cook and bottlwasher of this adventure, threatened his friend the contractor, and that did not help matters. In the meantime Rosenfield had stepped out of the project. Louis consulted a lawyer, who advised us to take a furnished apartment and make the landlord of Boulevard Victor pay for it. We found one in the rue Gavarni, in Passy, and I took a studio at 18 Boulevard Edgar Quinet.

During all this confusion I would go to my studio and work. The figure "*La Terre*" was exhibited in the Salon d'Automne, and it had the place of honor in the rotunda. The critics received it with acclaim. Holbrook Jackson wrote about me in T. P.'s weekly in London and later published the article in a book which he called *All Manner of Folk*.

But we were hard up because the promised allowance from Mitchell Kennerley had again stopped. I wrote to him but got no reply. Yvonne and Nounou were busy with the baby and Louis was busy with

Adieu to the *vie de bohème*

the lawyers, but the lawyers did not succeed in making our landlord pay the rent. The whole thing was a mess.

As to furnished apartments, they were very easy to find, but with unpaid rent, difficult to vacate. That crocodile-skinned warrior, the concierge, whose eyes were everywhere, made it almost impossible. But we had to move. So we invited our friends, the Burlinghams and the Piolancs, Louis and Kiki, my model, to dinner.

After dinner the fun began. It was hilarious. Yvonne, Louis and Piolanc were uncommonly thin. None of us was too fat. Our trunks were put in the middle of the room and each one started to see how much clothes he could put on and not bulge in noticeable places. The transformations were unbelievable. Eight thin people sat down to dinner—eight well-padded humans walked out of the house without a single parcel in their hands!

When we got to the metro we were weeping with laughter. The pockets of my big ulster overcoat were filled with silver—knives, spoons and forks—and just as the train appeared, one of the knives succeeded in working through a hole in my pocket and silver began to fall out, and Piolanc, in a very loud voice, began giving me hell.

“The idea of stealing silver from people who ask you to dinner—shocking!” This caused even more hilarity.

Piolanc, an architect, had a very spacious studio-apartment in the rue du Moulin de Beurre, to which we proceeded. The fun we had in tucking away all those clothes on ourselves was nothing compared to the disrobing act. The Piolancs had invited some of their friends to attend the performance, and we invited Anne Estelle Rice and Johnny Fergusson. As each garment was removed, it was exposed and named and a song composed, to an accordion and guitar accompaniment. This lasted until the small hours of the morning. And it turned out to be a farewell party. It wasn't long after that we decided to go to America to have another exhibition of my sculpture. I produced enough work to hold another exhibition in New York—and this time I was not going alone.

Somehow I got the money and we did sail—Yvonne, Nounou, the

Between Sittings

baby and I. Nounou was a remarkable person. She was petite, she was French, she was as quick in her repartee as she was on her feet, and she was Nounou not only to Jacques, but to Yvonne, to me, and to all our friends. I still do not know who adopted whom—but anyway, we were all one family.

CHAPTER 12

WASHINGTON SQUARE IN 1911

WE ARRIVED in New York in early February of 1911. This time I thought we had come home to stay. After visiting with my family we looked around for a place to live, and naturally gravitated to Washington Square. Yvonne had lived for a time in West Eighth Street and many of my friends resided in that neighborhood. Besides, Washington Square had a feel of Paris, and the Square itself was a suitable place to air the baby.

I found an apartment in 40 Washington Square South, the top floor of a three-story building. It had a spacious L-shaped living room, with a big fireplace, which gave it a very friendly feeling. Yvonne's ingenuity had free play—she could do so much with so little—and in a few weeks' time, she made it look as if we had always lived there and intended to live there forever.

I had brought over some paintings of Jerry Blum's at his request and I hung several of them on the walls of our apartment. I wrote him that everybody admired them and that I thought I had a purchaser for one of them. I did not hear from him. Instead, he suddenly arrived in New York. "Well, what's doing?" he said.

The dining room was furnished with a long wooden table and benches. There was always room for an extra person and our friends soon discovered that Nounou was a wonderful cook. Nounou's cuisine

Between Sittings

was so popular that we found ourselves giving many dinner parties. Our friends formed the habit of dropping in for a drink in the afternoon. In fact, whenever a light was seen on the top floor of 40 Washington Square, people did not hesitate to come up. My exhibition at the New York Cooperative Society the year before had made me new friends—the addition of a wife heightened their interest and we were greeted with open arms.

Emily Grigsby brought Doris Keene, who was then playing in "The Affairs of Anatole," and Doris Keene brought Ned Sheldon, who was at work on "Romance," which he was writing for her. Among the steadies were Hutchins Hapgood, Frederick James Gregg, Ernest Lawson, George Luks and John Gregory, whose charm and wit were always an asset.

Nounou was never alone in the kitchen. Her cheery disposition attracted everyone. One of our guests, Bill MacColl, attempted to embrace Nounou while she was preparing an omelette. The omelette left the frying pan and landed on Bill's cheek—there was no trifling with Nounou.

When my sculpture arrived from Paris I had the smaller bronzes delivered to the apartment and went in search of a gallery which would give me an exhibition.

George Hellman, who had arranged my exhibition the year before, introduced me to Mr. Eugene Glaenger. Mr. Glaenger was the old type of cultivated Frenchman. His gallery, once the old Harriman stables, located on Fifty-fifth Street and Fifth Avenue, was very luxurious, with tapestries, pictures and rare pieces of furniture. The main room had a glass roof, a perfect light for sculpture. Mr. Glaenger came to Washington Square, saw my work and agreed to give me an exhibition.

The exhibition at the New York Cooperative Society had been a little affair. This was my first big exhibition, showing bronzes, terra-cottas and a room full of drawings. The big figure, "*La Terre*," which had been exhibited in Paris at the Autumn Salon, was one of the main attractions. The opening of the show promised well. The press and critics discussed it seriously, and James Gibbons Huneker wrote in the *Sun*, April 13, 1911:

Washington Square in 1911

"This young man, who has studied in Paris, one is tempted to say, at the feet of Rodin, is a sculptor born, one who has not allowed his enormous facility to decline into dilettante methods. His touch is personal, crisply nervous, virile and not too impressionistic; the feeling for line, for structural foundation, never deserts him. That slight perpetual novelty which should season any art production, is seldom absent. There is an imaginative element, too, in his slightest effort. A torso for him is a cosmos, and he shows several that are as beautiful in their way as the Greek; indeed, when they are most beautiful they are Greek. Only this to assure you that Mr. Davidson does not manufacture those writhing, spasmodic dolls which are the fashion of the hour in Paris; nor does he waste his gifts on huge monsters, whose limbs are as bladders full of lard. He models with the plastic, not the literary idea before him; he is more rhythmic than static; yet he can achieve the effect of rigid ponderousness. His figures are evocations of poetic moods translated into legitimate sculptural terms. . . .

"His imposing exhibition definitely ranges Jo Davidson as a strongly individual artist in the field of contemporary sculpture."

Mr. Glaenzer sold several bronzes and drawings, and he got two commissions for me, the daughters of Mrs. Isaac Seligman. He fixed me up a studio in one of his upper galleries and I went to work on the portrait bust of Mrs. Henry Wertheim, one of the daughters of Mrs. Seligman.

I had had two sittings and I thought it was going well. When I came in the following morning I was very upset to find Mrs. Wertheim with her mother standing in front of the bust, which they had uncovered. Mrs. Seligman greeted me with, "The mouth is too big."

"I don't think so," said I, and to prove my point I measured it with my calipers.

Mrs. Seligman insisted, "Make it smaller anyway."

This really annoyed me and I handed her the tool and said, "You do it."

She left in a huff and told Mr. Glaenzer I was a very insolent young man. I didn't get to do the other daughter.

The show at the Glaenzer Galleries attracted a good deal of atten-

Between Sitzings

tion. Walter Hines Page published a long article about me in the August number of *The World's Work* of which he was the editor. There was applause, but no sales, no commissions.

When the show closed, I thought of getting to work on some statuettes I had made in Paris. They were sketches which I hoped some day to execute life-size or bigger. I got models and made drawings and attempted other sketches but I soon abandoned them. During this period, I drank a lot and this was no help. I was not alone in my feeling of discouragement. Most of the artists I met were in the same mood. We felt we were working in a vacuum. The great complaint was the American public's lack of interest in painting and sculpture.

John Sloan, Guy Pène du Bois, Jerome Meyers, Walt Kuhn and I would meet with others and discuss what we could do about it. We seriously discussed the possibilities of holding a big exhibition similar to the French Independent Salon. This was the beginning of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors.

Meanwhile, crisis followed crisis. It was hard going. Yvonne, who had always made her own clothes, which were very much admired, helped by getting an occasional job to make a dress or hat, but the money earned didn't go far enough.

My moodiness and drinking went on. If my friends admired my work, I was contemptuous and made them feel it, telling them my stuff was no good. If they didn't approve, I would get sore. That did not help—things were in a pretty bad way. When the summer drew to a close, the question was—what to do that winter. New York seemed hopeless.

The idea "Go West Young Man" was suggested and repeated so often it seemed a possible solution. Our friend Mary Field, who knew Chicago, predicted a great success for me there and offered to arrange everything for me. She was joined and seconded by our friend Maurice Aisen, a Rumanian who had lived and studied in Paris. He was an industrial chemist and had established himself in Chicago.

So a family council consisting of Yvonne, Nounou and Jacques voted that they would return to Paris while I went to Chicago and attempted to set up an exhibition there.

CHAPTER 13

CHICAGO

EDWARD ZIEGLER, who worked at Glaenger's galleries, gave me a letter of introduction to the Reinhardt Galleries in Chicago. Hutchins Hapgood and Mary Field loaded me with letters. Having seen my family off for France, I went to Chicago, without enthusiasm and feeling very lonely.

When I arrived I telephoned Maurice Aisen. He told me to come right over. As I had no presentable address, he told me to use his, and he suggested that I share his apartment. I jumped at the suggestion. His laboratory was in an office and studio building and that made it all right.

I posted my letters of introduction. The letters from Hutchins Hapgood were to Robert Morss Lovett, Dean of Letters at Chicago University, Ferdinand Schevill, professor of History also at the University, and Tiffany Blake, the editor of the Chicago *Tribune*.

Chicago was a warm, friendly city. Everyone seemed to know everyone else. Michigan Avenue, facing the lake, was alive with artistic activity. The Fine Arts Building, where many of the artists had studios, housed a concert hall, the little theatre and the Little Room Club. Next door was the auditorium used by the Chicago Opera. A block or two away was the Art Institute which was not just a museum, but a living creative center. Across the way from the Art Institute was the Cliff Dwellers' Club.

Between Sitzings

It was not long before I fell into the swing, and became a part of the life of Chicago.

One day, I was in Maurice's laboratory. We were planning my future when there was a knock at the door. It was Professor Lovett, coming to call on Hutchins Hapgood's friend.

Lovett was tall and thin, warm, eager and generous, and took me in hand immediately. To him an artist from Paris was someone he wanted all his friends to meet. Being a friend of Hapgood's was all the introduction necessary. He invited me to lunch for the following day at the University Club, where he promised to produce other friends of Hutchins Hapgood. He brought Tiffany Blake and Ferdinand Schevill and he also brought William Nitze, professor of French at Chicago University.

My next move was to call on the Reinhardt Galleries to look into the possibilities of an exhibition. Armed with an album of photographs and Ziegler's letter, I went to the Congress Hotel where the Reinhardt Galleries were located.

Unfortunately, Mr. Reinhardt was out of town. His partner, Joe Gonzales, received me. He was a huge man, over life-size, and the cigar in his mouth was also over life-size. He was sitting on a couch with his back to the light. I handed him the letter, which he read, and I timidly gave him the album.

"Here are some photographs of my work," I said.

He took the album without a "sit down" or anything, and began leafing through it with obvious indifference and very speedily. This annoyed me. As he turned the pages, chewing the cigar, he said, "What do you charge for a bust?"

I do not know what hit me, but I replied, "Two thousand dollars." I had never received more than a third of that in my life, but I expected nothing from him. I was waiting to collect my album and go, but he stopped, turned the pages back very slowly, looked at a few photographs, gave his cigar an extra chew, and said, "All right, I'll give you a show."

I was suddenly lifted out of my depression. The miracle had happened again.

Chicago

My show opened in the Reinhardt Galleries on November 2, 1911. Henry Reinhardt arrived shortly after it opened, and he was so enthusiastic about it that he planned to give me a show the following year in New York. I had been flirting with the idea that, instead of giving my statuettes titles, I would treat them as musical compositions and number them in the sequence of their production. I tried it out in this exhibit in Chicago. My catalogue read: "Opus 3, New York, 1906; Opus 14, Paris, 1909; Opus 69, New York, 1911," etc. There were twenty compositions and twenty portraits.

Some of the critics, unaccustomed to sculpture without titles, made fun of this idea. To quote one: "All the pieces in it are specified 'Opus 3,' 'Opus 6' and so forth. He is already helping posterity to clear up the sequence of his steps to greatness. Meanwhile, this exhibit yawns with gaps. From 'Opus 22' to 'Opus 40' is quite a long jump, although it represents in point of time only the interval from 1909 to 1910."

However, I had some staunch supporters who had no quarrel with my calling my works "Opus" so-and-so. Harriet Monroe, the poet, editor of *Poetry* magazine and art critic of the *Chicago Tribune*, was one of them. The show was a success. The opening day I met two artists, Walter Goldbeck, a painter, and Mario Korbel, a sculptor, and we became, with Maurice Aisen, a very popular foursome. They had studios in the Fine Arts Building and I took one there too.

One day, I received a note from a Mr. Alfred H. Mulliken, inquiring about a bust—how many sittings were required, how much I charged and what were my terms. I showed the letter to Maurice and we decided to ignore the last query.

After a few days I received another letter asking me to call on Mr. Mulliken at his office, and stating the day and time, if it were agreeable. It most certainly was. When I arrived I was ushered into Mr. Mulliken's office. He greeted me warmly, offered me a cigar, opened a drawer, and pulled out a file. He read me his letter, read my reply, and put it down with, "What are your terms?"

I hemmed and hawed and said, "I'll make the bust and hope to be paid."

Between Sittings

He suggested that that wasn't businesslike, and asked me, "Isn't it customary that an artist gets half before starting and the other half when the job is completed?"

"It's a good idea."

"Now, how many sittings do you want?"

"As many as are necessary," said I.

"You can't do a bust of me until you know me," he said. "You must come to my house; you must come to my factory; you must hear me make a speech. But first come tomorrow and have lunch with me at the Cliff Dwellers' Club. And now to business." He pulled his checkbook out of his pocket and made out a check for a thousand dollars—the first half of my fee. I almost dropped dead.

I remained in Chicago for four months. In that period I made many more friends: it was there that Gertrude Barnum introduced me to Clarence Darrow, the famous criminal lawyer. I asked him to sit for me. He had a wonderful head but he looked worn, tired and cynical. He had just returned from California, from the ordeal of defending the McNamaras in the famous dynamite case—the blowing up of the *Times* building in Los Angeles. When I left Chicago I left the bust behind and it has never been located. I made another bust of him much later.

I remember also being invited to a party in the Little Room Club. I arrived late and the place was jammed. I was handed a cup of tea, and as I was standing there squeezed in a corner, a man next to me stuttered, "B-b-bloody awful." When he left I was told he was Arnold Bennett. Years later, I was introduced to him in Taormina, when he said, "But I know you—and it *was* awful." I was indeed flattered. There was a reason why I should remember him, but I couldn't understand why he should remember me.

I was indeed sorry to leave Chicago. However, I was extremely homesick for Yvonne, the baby and Paris. Yvonne had written me that she had found a beautiful little apartment in the rue de L'Université and a studio for me in the rue de Bagneux, so I left for Paris, promising to return to Chicago the following year with another show.

CHAPTER 14

IN ITALY WITH MABEL DODGE

SHORTLY AFTER my return to Paris, we had a visit from Florence Bradley, an old friend who had been on the stage with Yvonne. She had crossed on the same steamer with Mabel Dodge. She told us with great enthusiasm about the extraordinary Mrs. Dodge. I had already heard a good deal about this aristocratic, wealthy, handsome woman. Lincoln Steffens said she had never set foot on the earth earthy and Hutchins Hapgood called her "a cut flower." With taste and grace, the courage of inexperience and a radiant personality, she had done whatever it had struck her fancy to do and put it and herself over. All sorts of guests came to Mabel Dodge's salon in New York, poor and rich, labor leaders, strikers, scabs, painters, musicians, editors, society swells and unemployed.

One day, Florence Bradley brought Mrs. Dodge to tea at our home. She was indeed an exciting person.

Mabel Dodge blew into our little apartment and talked and talked, then she invited us to visit her in her Villa Curonia in Arcetri near Florence.

It was too tempting to resist, particularly since neither Yvonne or I had ever been to Italy, and when later Mrs. Dodge wrote us, urging us to come, we didn't hesitate. We bought ourselves two second-class tickets, and with joy in our hearts, departed for Italy.

Between Sitzings

We were met in Florence by a long-nosed car with a chauffeur and a footman, and whisked off to our destination.

The Villa Curonia was a Florentine palace, situated among the hills overlooking the city. It had high ceilings and somber interiors, richly furnished with brocades and tapestries and old paintings of ancient gentry whose eyes followed you wherever you went. Mabel, dressed in a Venetian gown, floated through the vast halls looking for all the world as if she had always been a part of the *mise-en-scène*. We loafed and painted in the sunshine, and we spent days in Florence visiting its galleries, its churches, its monuments.

Mabel took special care to inform us of the queer times some of her guests had had at the Villa Curonia. Some couldn't stand it and had left, she said with suspicious glee. The story was that someone had been murdered there in the last century, and "the ghost walked." No matter what we talked about, the conversation always terminated with some reference to spooks. There were all sorts of quasi-supernatural pranks going on, much to Mabel's amusement. She would glide into the room; her eyes were everywhere, like a trainer in a lion's cage—never relaxing, always alert. But she was a patient woman. She knew something would happen—it always did, she saw to that.

One night, about three in the morning, I was awakened by Yvonne. "Did you hear that?"

"No," I replied. "Never mind, I am here."

But she insisted that there was some presence in the room stronger than myself. The next morning, we were not too spry when the butler brought our breakfast. He, too, was a queer duck, and he was suspiciously solicitous as to how we had spent the night.

I did a bust of Mabel Dodge. I would watch for that enigmatic smile of expectancy and wonder, "What is she plotting now?"

Tired of white nights, our nerves on edge because of the lugubrious playfulness of the life in the Villa Curonia, we decided to take a trip to Rome. So Florence Bradley, Yvonne and I boarded a night train. We had a compartment to ourselves, and the girls stretched themselves out on the seats. I sat in one corner and we all fell asleep.

In Italy with Mabel Dodge

The night passed quickly. I woke up early and stood looking out of the window, when suddenly the train stopped and I heard the conductor shout "*Roma.*" Not knowing how long the train would stop at the station, I woke up the girls. They grabbed their shoes and we all piled out of the train onto the station, much to the entertainment of our fellow passengers.

Setting out in search of history and friends, I called on Paul Manship at the American Academy. After showing me the school, he took me to the Foro Romano. We wandered through the ruins and when we were tired, we sat down on a terrace of a café overlooking "the grandeur that was Rome."

As I look back at this, my first vision of Florence and Rome—the austerity of the ruins, the lavish paganism of the Renaissance, St. Peter's with its gilded domes, the overwhelming production of the Renaissance artists—I realized that I was still too steeped in Paris and modernism to get the full impact of what I was seeing. It was some years later, when I came back to it, that I realized what the Renaissance really meant, for Italy is a monument to the Renaissance. It was an era when sculpture was a means of communication, before printing was invented.

The memory of my first sight of the Colosseum by moonlight still lingers, recalling the lines of Byron:

"There the bloody circus stands
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection."

At this point, I rebelled against sightseeing. I wanted to sit in cafés and look at the people.

When I returned to Paris, I was anxious to get to work. In my studio, I happily went on an orgy of modeling nudes and cutting stone.

Rome and Florence were monuments to a tremendous past; Paris was the pulsating present, and my studio on the rue de Bagneux was part of it.

CHAPTER 15

ART HITS NEW YORK

ONE DAY, Walt Kuhn, famous for his paintings of clowns, appeared in Paris. He had come over for the purpose of choosing paintings and selecting sculpture for a forthcoming exhibition of modern art which was to be held in the 69th Regiment Armory under the auspices of the Society of American Painters and Sculptors. While I was still in New York, we had talked of a big show of American artists, inviting some French painters; and now Walt was in Paris at work on an international show of tremendous size, which was to be the first one of its kind to be held in America.

Walt was dynamic and tireless. He loved a show. He had been in circuses and had organized them. He was the main spirit of the Kit-Cat Club, and he went at the job of organizing the Armory show with the same enthusiasm as he did the Kit-Cat Ball. He was a born showman. I did all I could to help him in Paris, while he was waiting for Arthur B. Davies to join him. They went to London, but I was preparing for my forthcoming exhibit at Reinhardt's in New York and could not go along.

I arrived in New York, took an apartment in the Hotel Brevoort, and went to work on arrangements for my exhibition at the Reinhardt Galleries on Fifth Avenue, which was scheduled to open on January 17, 1913.

Art Hits New York

I had brought with me a stone panel of three figures in incised relief which I had started before the trip to Italy. The very tonnage of it was upsetting. It clogged traffic getting into the gallery, much to the distress of "Papa," as everyone called Henry Reinhardt. But once it was in place, it attracted so much attention he was glad I had brought it over. When I was working on it in Paris, Papa Reinhardt came to see what I was doing.

"What do you want me to do with that?" he exclaimed. "I can do nothing with that! Make me some subjects."

Besides my own exhibit, I was very busy with the forthcoming International Exhibition of Modern Art, which was scheduled to open on February 17. Never had there been such an exhibition held in America. Frederick James Gregg was the man we enlisted to promote the show, and he got Mabel Dodge to make a contribution. Guy Pène du Bois, the editor of *Arts and Decoration*, persuaded Mabel Dodge to write a piece for a number devoted to the exhibition.

Mabel Dodge was very much a part of the New York scene. Gertrude Stein had written a small pamphlet entitled "Mabel Dodge in the Villa Curonia." I would take this little pamphlet, bound in old Italian wall-paper, to Mouquin's, and there read it aloud to our table. The reactions were various. Some took it to be well-meaning nonsense. Others read into it esoteric significance. "Blankets are warmer in the summer than they are in the winter" always managed to raise some eyebrows. The name of Mabel Dodge was on everybody's lips.

At the Armory Show there were 300 exhibitors and more than 1000 works. There were French, German, Italian, Spanish, English and American artists represented, showing a kind of art that had never been seen in America before. Before the trumpets of the *avant-garde*, prejudice crumbled like the walls of Jericho. Never had art in America attracted so much attention. People came in droves. The smart set gave dinner parties and brought their guests to the Armory Show; and some who came to scoff remained to praise.

The "Nude Descending a Staircase" was the key to modernism, and the most-talked-about piece in the show. Competing for first place was

Between Sitzings

Brancusi's marble, which he called "Mademoiselle Pogany." The room devoted to Odilon Redon attracted the romantics. The Metropolitan Museum bought its first Cézanne.

All the members of the committee had to give a day to show people around. During my allotted day I was showing Arthur Jerome Eddy through the exhibition, and he bought a painting by Francis Picabia. When I informed Picabia that his picture had been sold, he seemed very crestfallen. I asked him, "Why so sad?" He replied:

"Quand tout va bien, je suis très malheureux. Je sais que cela ne va pas durer. Mais quand tout va mal, je suis très heureux, car je sais que ça ne peut pas durer." (When everything goes well, I am very unhappy. I know it can't last. But when things look bad, I am happy—I know it can't last.)

New York went on its first binge in art. Everybody you met talked art. The small group that frequented Stieglitz' "291" on Fifth Avenue was multiplied by thousands.

I hated to leave New York but my show had closed and was opening in March in the Reinhardt Galleries in Chicago. Returning there was like coming home. Friends received my second show in Chicago as if they had been waiting for it. Harriet Monroe wrote columns in the *Chicago Tribune*. The *Chicago Evening Post* had an editorial on my decorative panel.

The International Exhibition of Modern Art opened in Chicago on March 24. Having been one of the organizers of the Armory show, I was often called upon to do some tall explaining. Frederick James Gregg and Walt Kuhn came to Chicago to handle the publicity. The papers blasted the show, but they succeeded in awakening people's curiosity, and crowds packed the galleries. I myself was dubbed a Post-Impressionist, and it was taken for granted that I was an expert on *Les Fauves* and the Cubist movements. Chicago was aflame with controversy.

Portrait making began to occupy the major part of my time. My approach to my subjects was very simple. I never had them pose but we just talked about everything in the world. Sculpture, I felt, was another language altogether that had nothing to do with words. As

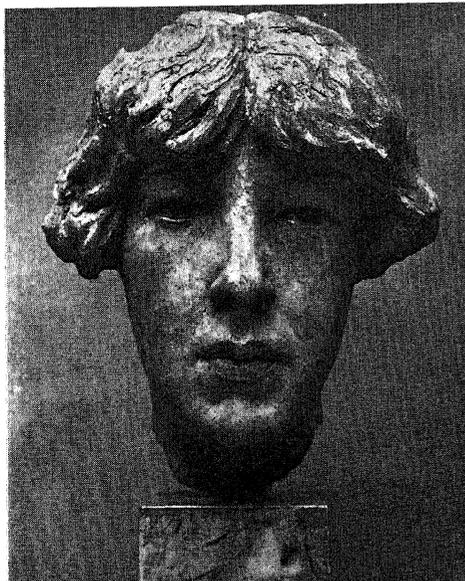


Photo Kollar, Paris

MRS. HARRY PAYNE WHITNEY

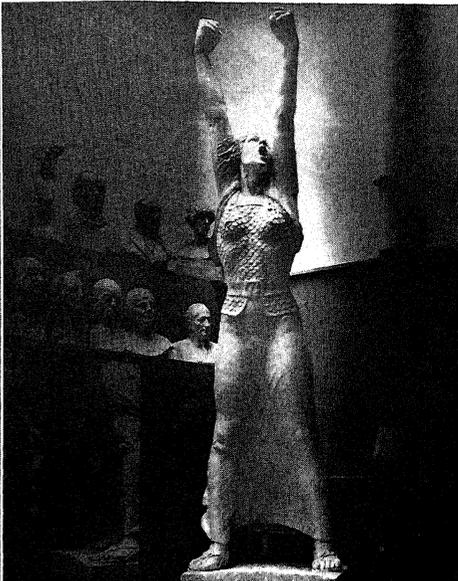
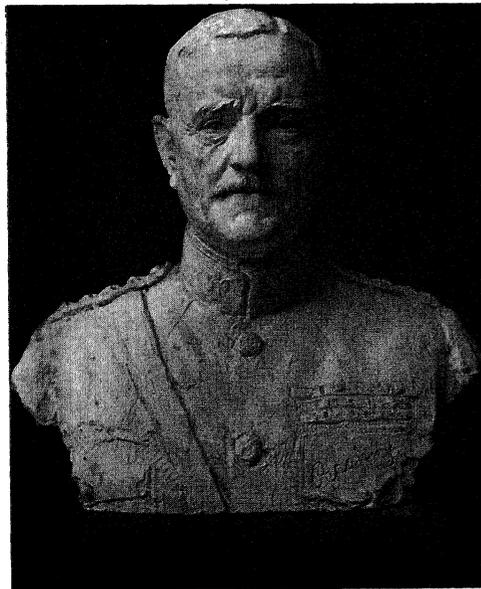


Photo copyright by François Kollar, Paris

FRANCE AROUSED

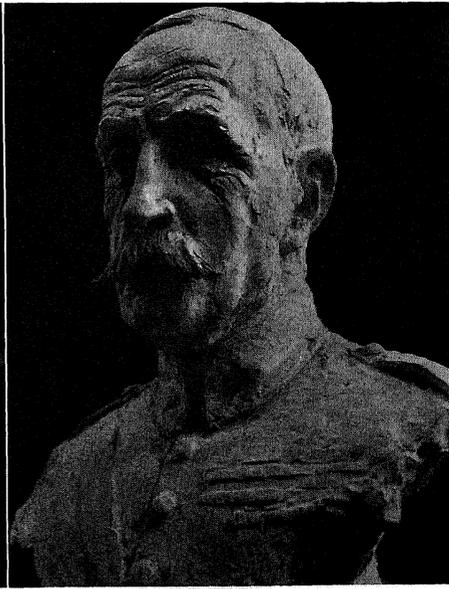
GENERAL J. J. PERSHING

Photo by Bernès, Marouteau & Cie., Paris



MARSHAL FOCH

Photo Kollar, Paris



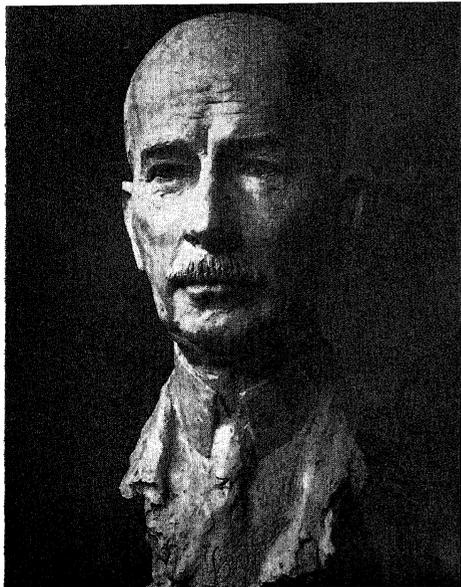


Photo Kollar, Paris

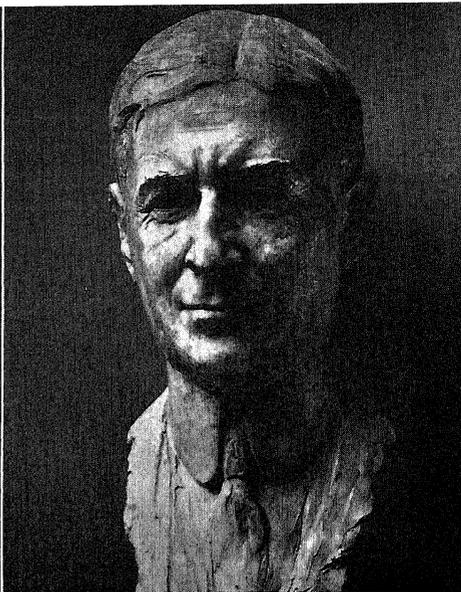


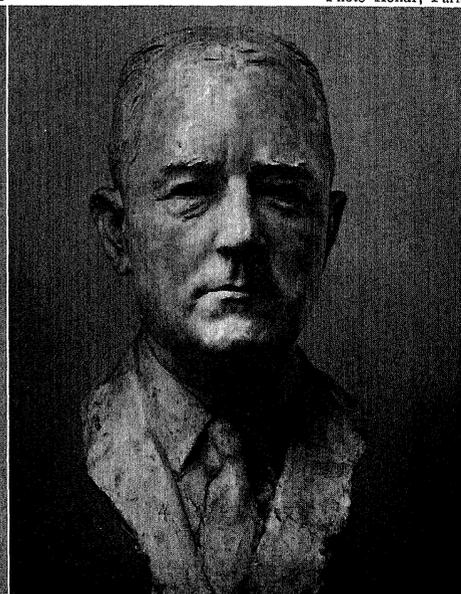
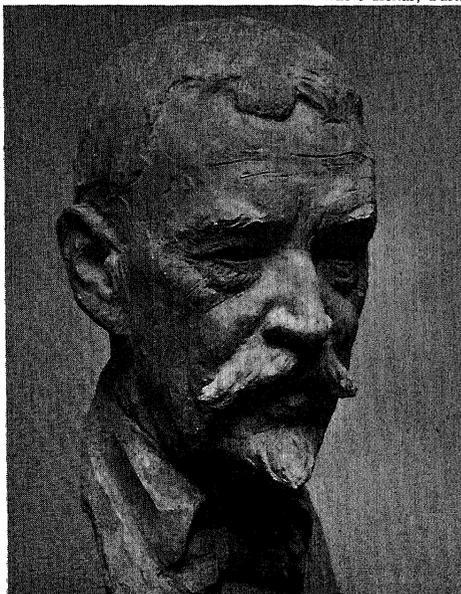
Photo Kollar, Paris

COL. E. M. HOUSE
LINCOLN STEFFENS

BERNARD M. BARUCH
H. P. DAVISON

Photo Kollar, Paris

Photo Kollar, Paris



Art Hits New York

soon as I got to work, I felt this other language growing between myself and the person I was "busting." I felt it in my hands. Sometimes the people talked as if I was their confessor. As they talked, I got an immediate insight into the sitters.

The mother of Julius Rosenwald was a wonderful old lady. Her children wanted her portrait, but they knew how allergic she was to posing. She had posed for a painter and had not enjoyed it. So it was agreed that I was to come to luncheon at the home of Mrs. Eisen-drath, her daughter, with whom the old lady was staying. They had a large conservatory which gave off the dining room. There I had put up my clay and during lunch I would engage Mrs. Rosenwald in conversation and every now and then would leave the table, go back to my clay, and then rejoin the party. The second day the bust was so far along, and the dear old lady and I had become such friends, that it was decided to show her what I was up to.

I think she was on to us all the time, but did not want to spoil our fun. When she saw what I had done, she gave in, and from then on it was smooth sailing. I completed the bust and the children were so pleased with it that they ordered three copies in bronze.

CHAPTER 16

PICASSO AND MANOLO

A FEW MONTHS BACK, my brother-in-law, Louis de Kerstrat, had gone down to Ceret in the Pyrénées-Orientales, the habitat of many famous painters of the time. He had obtained a small house for his mother. Yvonne, Jacques and Nounou had joined them there.

My wife's accounts of the town were so glowing that I decided to join her. I found that Yvonne had not exaggerated.

Ceret was indeed a beautiful spot—a little town bathed in sunlight, high up in the hills, surrounded by white-capped mountains. Our house was a big rambling place, far too big for us so we used only the ground floor, which gave on a large terrace. From the terrace stone steps led down to a lovely garden, or rather park, with enormous plane trees. In the garden was a one-story building which Yvonne had fixed for me as a studio. It had a north skylight, and there I found modeling stands, clay and stone waiting for me to go to work.

For the artists Manolo, Pablo Picasso and Pichot, Ceret was almost home, for in the Pyrénées-Orientales, of which Ceret was a *sous-préfecture*, Catalan was spoken as in Barcelona. Manolo's reputation as a character, raconteur and wit overshadowed his reputation as a sculptor. When the poet Jean Moréas was asked what he thought of Manolo's work, he replied in his stentorian voice, "*Il y a huit ans que je le connais.*"

Picasso and Manolo

J'ignore son oeuvre de sculpteur, mais ce qu'il fait devrait être bien car il est très intelligent." (I have known him for eight years. I know nothing of his work as a sculptor but what he does must be good for he is very intelligent.) Manolo was a noctambule like his friend Moréas and he rarely met the day until the late afternoon.

The Café Justafré, where Manolo presided, was the gathering place of many artists, writers and musicians. Among those who came and went were Picasso, Othon Friesz, Juan Gris, Kisling and Mangin. This group became known as *L'École de Ceret*.

Manolo looked upon Picasso as his special responsibility, and he used to tell endless stories about how he robbed Peter to feed Pablo; how he would stop at a small hotel and clean it out of brass candlesticks, which he would sell. Often he would surreptitiously relieve a friend of some rare book. The curious thing about it was that no one complained. People even vied in telling stories of the complicated ways in which Manolo picked up a living.

Picasso had an arresting personality. He was short, dark and thin, with black piercing eyes which burned like coals of fire. Even at that time he had an ardent following. Juan Gris, who was then making little drawings for *La Vie Parisienne*, became a devoted disciple of Picasso. Manolo used to refer to him as the *valet de chambre de Picasso*.

There was much conversation at the Café Justafré about life, politics and art. Manolo did most of the talking. Picasso never said much but when he did it was to the point. However, it was always Manolo who had the last word and when Picasso insisted, "*Il faut être moderne! Il faut être moderne!*", Manolo's closing thrust was: "*Écoute, Pablo, tu peux être aussi moderne que tu veux, mais tu ne m'empêcherais jamais d'être ton contemporain.*" (You can be as modern as you like, but you can never prevent my being your contemporary.)

There was a balcony in the Café Justafré where we used to gather occasionally for a quiet little game of poker. If luck did not go Manolo's way, he would revert to a little cheating, and when someone objected, he would say:

Between Sitzings

"But you do not understand. I can't lose. I must not lose. I haven't any money."

That would usually break up the game. We would go back to Manolo's house, where he would pick up some little figure he was working on, sit under the electric light, and work and talk about "arrested form" (*la forme bien arrêtée*).

Manolo's only admiration, mitigated by a little envy, was for the sculptor Maillol, whom he considered as his only rival. Maillol was a neighbor living at Banyuls-sur-Mer. Maillol too was a Catalan. Yvonne and I visited him at Banyuls when we lived in Ceret. He was working on a life-sized nude seated figure of a woman, the armature of which was obviously not foolproof. The clay was sagging and he had propped up the figure with broomsticks on one side and a stepladder on the other. This rickety arrangement did not seem to bother Maillol. The sagging clay accentuated the mood of the figure which was ponderous and very moving.

The poet Pierre Camos, and the composer Déodat de Séverac also had their homes in Ceret. We all saw each other constantly, usually finishing up at Manolo's where Totote, his wife, would dispense anchovies, Spanish fried eggs and Roussillon, the incomparable red wine of the region. Totote was a Parisian, a rich personality, and she had a very deep voice. She tolerated all Manolo's vagaries with infinite patience. There was a musical festival at Béziers. Déodat de Séverac and many friends, including Manolo, were booked to attend. When the festival was over, all returned but Manolo. Totote was beside herself; not a word of explanation—not a postcard. She was furious and did not hide her feelings. She swore, she ranted: "*Ah! Le salaud—pas un mot. Il aurait pu écrire. Je m'en fous s'il creve pourvu que je sais qu'il se porte bien.*" (I don't care if he croaks as long as I know that he is all right.)

The last time I saw Manolo was in Spain in 1938, during the Civil War. I heard that Manolo was living at Caldas de Montbuy, a little village outside Barcelona. He was hard up for food, as everyone was, and as I had brought some chocolate and canned goods for distribution, I paid him a visit. One evening, I borrowed a car and went in search of

Picasso and Manolo

him. In Caldas everybody knew Manolo and where he lived, and a little boy offered to show me the way.

I knocked at the door, and after a little while it opened. There standing against a dim light was Totote. She looked at me as if I were a ghost, and in her deep contralto voice said: "*Merde—Manolo—c'est Jo.*" For a moment I thought myself back in Ceret. The room was full of people—a soldier with a baby in his arms, an old woman sewing, and Manolo sitting at his table making a water-color.

Since his death, the road which leads from Barcelona to Caldas bears his name.

CHAPTER 17

FRANK HARRIS

ALTHOUGH they never met, Rabindranath Tagore, the great mystic poet of India was inadvertently responsible for my meeting that very earthy realist, Frank Harris.

I had gone to London at the request of Mrs. William Vaughan Moody who had commissioned me to make Tagore's bust; and London in those days was Harris' stamping ground.

I recall that the sittings with Tagore were not easy. A tall silent man, dressed in a long brown tunic, he wore his hair in long wavy locks, and his beard was long and white. Tagore had a disturbing way of disembodiment his spirit. I would look at him, and suddenly he appeared an empty shell of himself. It was extremely disconcerting and I wondered how I could keep Tagore with me physically and spiritually while I worked. I had an inspiration: May Sinclair, the novelist, who had a studio upstairs, was a friend of Tagore's. I got her to come down and talk to him while I worked. That did it, and I finished the bust.

The contrast between Tagore and my next sitter, Frank Harris, could not have been more violent.

Harris had a lean, broad face with bushy eyebrows, a bulbous nose above a heavy mustache which curled at the ends, a broad gash of a mouth, and a powerful chin held up by a white starched collar. He looked and dressed like a character out of O. Henry, affected a heavy

Frank Harris

gold chain across his waistcoat, and wore patent-leather cloth-topped shoes. When he read or talked he could fascinate you for hours on end.

Frank Harris was an earthy man, who needed no encouragement to talk about himself. He knew everybody and had plenty to say. His memory was astonishing and he could quote yards from the Bible and miles of Shakespeare. He was one of the greatest raconteurs I have ever encountered.

One night at the home of Joe Simpson, the painter, Harris came to dinner. He brought with him the unpublished part of *De Profundis* by Oscar Wilde and boasted it was the first time it had been taken out of the vaults of the British Museum. It could not be published until twenty-five years after the death of everyone mentioned in it. This manuscript he read aloud to us in his rich baritone voice.

It was about this time that Harris had a lawsuit for libel on his hands, brought by Lord Alfred Douglas. This was the background of the suit:

The publication of Frank Harris' *Life and Confessions of Oscar Wilde*, brought out in the United States, was stopped in the British Empire by Lord Alfred Douglas because of slanderous imputations started by his own father that Lord Douglas was not only Wilde's friend but his accomplice in the events that led to Wilde's disgrace and ruin.

In order to get his biography of Wilde published in England, Harris had offered to remove all the libels on Lord Alfred Douglas and to write a new preface explaining how he had been deceived by Robert Ross into making Douglas the villain of the piece. Douglas was quite willing to let the book be issued in England on these terms, and Harris wrote the preface.

Later Harris refused to alter the original text on the grounds that he couldn't afford to set up new plates. Douglas naturally insisted. Harris, in a rage, broke off the negotiations, writing a further preface in which he implied that he had been deceived by Douglas into making Ross the villain of the piece and that the original work was after all "The true truth."

Between Sitzings

(Harris and his wife Nell lived in a beautifully furnished home, at Lexham Gardens. His artistic taste was excellent and revealed a real understanding of paintings and sculpture.

In his palmy days he used to motor from the Riviera to Paris, and while there, would visit various artists' studios. He would always buy something, but boasted that he had never paid more than 150 francs for anything. Then he would celebrate the event by taking the artist to the Café de Paris for a champagne supper.

The night we dined with him in London, he showed me a little bronze—a seated female figure by Rodin which he had bought from Rodin many years before. It was beautiful, and was the only copy in existence. He loved it, but he was hard up.

“Jo,” he said, “you are a sculptor—you know a good bronze foundry. There is a man who wants to buy this bronze but I simply cannot part with it. Take this back to Paris with you and have a couple of bronze copies made from it. I'll give him the copy, you can have the other for your trouble, and I shall still have the original.”

I didn't think much of the idea and refused to go through with it.

Harris was always full of schemes:

For a time he was editor of *Modern Society*, a scandal sheet similar to our own erstwhile *Town Topics*. He had a brilliant idea. He would write a libelous article about me, and when it was published I could sue the paper, on which he held an option. He could then buy it for a song. I never could figure out whether he was in earnest or spoofing, so I laughingly answered: “All right, Frank, write your article, but I won't sue.”

While writing the life of Oscar Wilde, he had decided to have it privately printed by subscription. There was one man who adored Harris—Dan Rider, “The Laughing Bookseller of St. Martin's Court.” He was one of the most lovable characters I have ever known. I remember when I first met him. I was admiring an original Beardsley drawing in the window of his shop.

“Do you like it?”

“It's wonderful,” said I.

Frank Harris

"I'll give it to you," he said. I did not take it, but this was typical of Dan Rider.

It was this lovable man who attended to the business of paper and printing and received the subscriptions for Harris' private printing of Wilde's *De Profundis*, which he turned over to Harris. But Harris suddenly sailed for New York, and Rider was left holding the bag. The printers and the papermakers were after him for some 200 pounds. Rider was in trouble and a number of us decided to have a tombola, each one contributing a drawing, a painting, books or a bronze. He sold tickets for the tombola and the day it was to be drawn, the ticketholders all gathered in my studio, where I acted as auctioneer. The contributors were a noteworthy group: There were Joe Simpson, William Nicholson, Holbrook Jackson, James Pryde and many others. In this way, enough money was raised to pay the bills. However, Dan never had a word of criticism against Harris.

Harris was also quite a gourmet. He loved to give lunches and dinners, and was a connoisseur of rare wines. The Café Royal was one of the spots where we would gather. I once proposed a toast: "Let us be thankful that we do not resemble others." His reply was, "Don't be a damn fool Jo—let us be thankful others do not resemble us, otherwise we should not be able to live."

Besides doing the bust of Harris, I did one of his wife, the beautiful titian-haired Nell. He borrowed the original plasters, and I didn't see them again until more than a quarter of a century later, when I was having an exhibition at the Knoedler Gallery in London of portrait busts of some contemporary men of letters. Feeling such an exhibition would not be complete without Harris' bust, I wrote him and said that if he would send me the plaster of his bust I would have a couple of bronzes made and send him one for his kindness. This request he graciously complied with.

CHAPTER 18

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

WHILE IN LONDON, I had met Mr. Ernest Brown of the Leicester Galleries and he agreed to give me a show the following year. My London headquarters was a studio in Thackeray House, 35 Maple Street, Fitzroy Square, in which Thackeray had written *The Newcomes*. William Orpen had had it for a while, and had painted his famous picture "The Passers-by" there.

As usual, I spent a lot of time at Joe Simpson's where I met James Murray Allison, his wife Elsie and her sister Ruby Baxter, an actress who had the lead in Shaw's "Fanny's First Play." Jim Allison, an Australian, was advertising manager of the *Times*. He also published *Wild Life*, a nature magazine, and *Land and Water*, a sporting journal. The Allison's apartment in 2 Thorney Court, Palace Gate, was the scene of many parties. We would start there and finish up at Joe Simpson's.

I took to London like a duck to water.

(Dan Rider's bookshop was one of my favorite haunts. More than the books, as I have intimated in the previous chapter, Dan himself was the attraction, besides the others that one would meet in the back room of his shop—writers, artists and journalists. Dan was a cockney. His sparse hair was plastered on his head and he waxed

George Bernard Shaw

his mustache to sharp points at each end. He was always puffing energetically at a pipe. His laugh was loud, raucous, disconcerting. If you went to lunch with him at Simpson's or the Royal sooner or later everybody's eyes were fixed on your table. It was Dan's laugh. He was a generous soul and was always looking after some artist, poet or writer who was hard up.

His shop in St. Martin's Court was like the Café de la Paix in Paris. If you hung around long enough, you would meet almost everybody. We all took turns looking after Dan's shop when he went off on an errand. I was doing just that when Alfred Knopf came in one day. I had known him when he worked in Mitchell Kennerley's bookshop in East Twenty-ninth Street in New York. We naturally talked about books. He asked, "What do you know? Have you read anything good?"

Outside Dan's shop, in a threepenny section of remainders, I picked up a book and handed it to Knopf.

"Read that," I said, "it is a masterpiece."

He took it home and the next day bought the American rights. It was published in New York and immediately became a best-seller. It was *Green Mansions*, by W. H. Hudson. It was republished again in England and met with the same success.

There were other reasons for my liking London:

Walter Hines Page had been named the new American Ambassador to the Court of St. James'. I had known Page when he was the editor of *The World's Work*. I wrote a rather timid note to the Ambassador, wondering if he would remember me and received a reply by return mail asking me to call on him at the Embassy some morning, preferably just before lunch. We might lunch and renew our acquaintance. I told him about my coming exhibit and invited him to sit for his bust.

I also modeled the bust of the novelist, Israel Zangwill, who was by then world-famous for his *Children of the Ghetto* and *Dreamers of the Ghetto*. He looked so much like the pictures I had seen of Disraeli that I was fascinated by him.

Portraiture became an obsession. Meeting and knowing people meant becoming acquainted with their thinking. My life became richer by

Between Sittings

association with a great variety of people. I made life-long friends in the British capital and discovered there what friendships really meant.

At that time I was also making a bust of Georg Brandes, the great Danish critic, who had been a friend of Frederick Nietzsche. The sittings were delightful. Brandes had a beautiful head with very marked features. He was an elderly man with white hair and a white mustache and goatee. He was very alert, and his conversation, with a strong Danish accent, was exceedingly witty. Once we were discussing indulgence in such vices as collecting pictures and books. Said Dr. Brandes:

“When a man is fond of art—it’s so expensive. If he likes women, wonderful—but oh! so ruinous. But if he likes himself, he is a happy man, for it costs him nothing.”

We were working away cheerfully when he pulled out his watch, jumped up and said, “I must go. I have letters to write.”

“Surely, you have a secretary,” said I.

“Secretary? I hate the breed. They are the kind of people who, when you die, write one book to show you have stolen all their ideas.”

That night Brandes had to deliver a lecture on his correspondence with Nietzsche, which had just been published. George Bernard Shaw was to preside and introduce Brandes. Alvin Coburn (the photographer and friend of Shaw) and I decided to attend. Van Wyck Brooks, who was teaching in London, also accompanied us.

In introducing Brandes, Shaw told about Brandes’ friendship with Nietzsche and about their correspondence. G. B. S. spoke for three-quarters of an hour, practically making Brandes’ speech. When Brandes stood up, he was greeted with tremendous applause and when the applause died away, he stood there helpless and frustrated, not knowing where to begin. Finally, he thanked Shaw for his “introduction” and said to the audience, much to the delight of all, that he would now tell them the few things that Mr. Shaw had forgotten.

That evening Coburn introduced me to G. B. S. Shaw had a definite aura: sparkling eyes, a ruddy face, and ginger whiskers which gave him an ethereal air. When I asked if he would sit for his bust, he looked at

George Bernard Shaw

me hard, and in his high-pitched voice said, "Why? Because Rodin did it?"

"No, because he didn't do it," I answered.

At that, he turned his back on me with a scornful gesture suggesting that I was an "impertinent puppy," and walked away.

But the matter didn't end there:

Fifteen years later, in the fall of 1929, Frazier Hunt, a newspaperman, took me to tea at Shaw's house. I brought along some photos of my work. Shaw was most complimentary. He particularly liked my busts of Frank Harris and George Brandes. I reminded him of our first meeting, with Coburn, at the Brandes lecture. Shaw denied remembering it then. But when I met him a third time in Lady Astor's house in Cliveden, he acted as if we were old friends and agreed to sit for me.

When he arrived at the Savoy, I had my clay ready for him and we went to work. While I was working, Shaw told me about his sittings with Rodin. He was full of admiration for the thoroughness with which Rodin made him pose. Rodin made him lie down on his back and on his side. He studied all the profiles from various angles, from above and below. Here was the greatest sculptor in the world making a bust of the greatest writer in the world.

I remember Shaw talking about seeing Chartres with Anatole France and how the two of them climbed over difficult scaffoldings of the beautiful ruins. Although they spoke different languages, they derived a great understanding of each other from that excursion.

In talking, Shaw referred to us as "we geniuses." He felt that the trouble with sculpting people you want to listen to is that you can't do both at the same time. I know I missed a great many Shavian gems while I was doing his bust. All I remember is that he sparkled and I emphasized that in my work.

When G.B.S. came to Paris to attend the opening of his "Jeanne d'Arc" which the Pitoeffs were producing, I telephoned and asked him and Mrs. Shaw for a Sunday lunch. Knowing that he was hounded by people, Yvonne and I thought we would give him a rest and decided not to invite any other friends. The luncheon went off admirably except

Between Sittings

for my mother-in-law, Madame de Kerstrat, who had been to the opening of "St. Joan" and raved about the Pitoeff production. Shaw felt it wasn't his play at all and insisted, in no uncertain terms, that it was badly done.

Later, we talked about Frank Harris who, at that time, was writing Shaw's life. Mrs. Shaw hated Harris. But Shaw corresponded with Harris who was in the South of France and supplied him with material to make sure, as he put it, that Harris would not rely too much on his own imagination.

We went down to the studio after lunch. Shaw commented on his own bust, saying that I was the only artist who had caught his humor. He admired my bust of Barrie, which I had recently done, and sat down on the couch. It suddenly occurred to me that Shaw expected a party, and was disappointed that there were no luncheon guests. He thought they would come in after lunch, and when no one appeared, I could see he was furious. Fancy wasting a whole day on a sculptor!

CHAPTER 19

LORD NORTHCLIFFE

IN 1914, my second son, Jean, was born in Ceret. While I was there, I received a note, stating that Lord Northcliffe would be in Paris on such and such a date at the Grosvenor Hotel, and that his Lordship would give me six sittings of an hour each. It had been Jim Allison, I later learned, who induced Lord Northcliffe to sit to me for his bust. He had shown his Lordship a photograph of a head I had done of J. L. Garvin, the editor of the *Observer* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Northcliffe had liked it.

And so I went up to Paris and the next morning arrived at the Grosvenor Hotel with my modeling materials. I was met by Douglas Crawford, his Lordship's secretary.

I had put my clay in the room where I was to work and was in the midst of shaping it when the door opened, and a biggish man in his carpet slippers and undershirt, with his suspenders hanging down, came into the room through another door. Pulling at his jowls, he said, "I am getting fat."

These were the first words I heard him utter. Being polite, I smiled, and, since I was being addressed, said, "I don't think so."

He turned on me, looked at me hard and exploded, "I am."

That was that. I realized then that it was not going to be easy. He wandered in and out of the room, and finally came in completely

Between Sitzings

dressed. He asked me if I minded his looking over the newspapers. I didn't mind.

"You are an American."

I admitted I was.

"Escaped."

"No. Just here."

He looked up at the bust. "Got me looking like William Jennings Bryan."

He went back to his newspapers. He rang the bell and one of his secretaries came in. He pointed out an error. It was extraordinary to see him look over sheet after sheet of newsprint and never miss anything which required correction. His visits to Paris with his whole staff usually took place when there was a forthcoming change in his papers. In this case the *Times* was going to be reduced to a penny paper. He had a chain of them.

I was working when he suddenly looked at the time, said the hour was up and that he had to leave.

"You are comfortable? If you want anything just ring the bell and order it."

I thanked him, and he left me with, "I'll be seeing you tomorrow, the same hour." Apparently, he expected me to stay at his hotel as his guest, but I preferred my own quarters at the Odessa.

The next day the sitting was different. I was at work on the head when he came in, all dressed this time. He greeted me with a hearty "Good morning." Shortly after, someone came in, and he introduced me as the greatest living sculptor. (I had to be that—I was doing his bust.) This sitting was pleasant. It ended abruptly with an apology from him, as he had to go out early.

The next day was terrific. When I arrived at the hotel he was already there.

"You are late," he yelled at me. "You stayed up late. Drink! Women!"

"No, just overslept," said I a bit timidly, and went to work. He was in a bad mood. Shortly afterwards, he rang the bell and, when his secretary came in, he said, "Send 'so-and-so' in."

Lord Northcliffe

“So-and-so” was slight and pale. His Lordship barked at him.

“Sit down at that desk. Write me this apology.”

Northcliffe dictated a cringing apology.

“Now sign it!”

The man did, and left. It seemed that “so-and-so” was one of his editors and that his Lordship had sent for him to come to Paris just to do that. It was awful. I have never witnessed such a scene.

The following day when I arrived, I found a note pinned on the bust. His Lordship had gone back to London, and the note said:

“Dear Mr. Davidson,

“Three friends of mine have seen the bust, and it would not be kind to let you continue it without telling you that they think it extremely unlike me. One of them said it makes me look over sixty years of age, which is five years more than ascribed by my valet, who said fifty-five.

“You must do what you like about it, but I certainly should not purchase the bust if my circle condemned it as vigorously as those here do.

Yours faithfully,
(signed) Northcliffe
Paris
March 10, 1914.”

I was angry and I cast the bust as it was and took it back with me to Ceret. But before leaving I wrote Northcliffe a letter stating that I had been promised six sittings and only given three; the bust was far from finished, and I felt he had no right to show it to anybody. As far as his valet was concerned, I didn't know he was an art critic.

I did not return to London until early spring. As I was anxious to have the bust of Northcliffe ready for the exhibition, I informed his Lordship of my presence and asked for an appointment. He complied, and I brought my bust in clay over to his office, where he received me graciously. He told me he had a most disagreeable task ahead of him that morning, as he had to fire the girl who wrote on fashions in the *Times* (or was it the *Daily Mail*—I forget). Lady Northcliffe said she was no good at all.

Between Sittings

We worked for a bit and the secretary came in to announce the young lady in question. He greeted her, and asked her to come in, but he did not introduce me. She was pretty and blonde. She wore a bright dress and a picture hat full of spring flowers. She smiled coyly as she passed me, and was about to pass the bust, when she suddenly stopped and gasped.

“Isn’t it wonderful! What a marvelous portrait! How like Napoleon!”
She didn’t get fired.

I finished the bust and cast it in bronze, but I was in no hurry to deliver it, as I wanted it for my show, and I was afraid that if it once got out of my hands I would not be able to get it back. When the show was over I still did not deliver the bust. I suppose I was waiting for him to take the first step.

The prospects of making a living in London were promising. So, that spring of 1914 I brought my family—Yvonne, Jacques, Jean and the nurse, installed them in a little house in Gordon Place off Kensington, found myself a beautiful ground floor studio in Camden House Mews off Thornton Street, Kensington, and was all set for my exhibition at the Leicester Galleries to be held the coming June. I sent a lot of my sculpture from Ceret to London to be included in my exhibition. It was to be a new era.

Our house in Gordon Place was typically English. The kitchen was in the basement and on the first floor were the salon and dining room. It was a friendly house, in which Yvonne as hostess reigned supreme. But London is a man’s world, and as we got into that London life of dinner parties and weekends, there was one thing Yvonne could never get used to—as soon as dinner was over, the ladies left the dining room and the men stayed behind for coffee, port, smoke and conversation, and only joined the ladies to take them home.

As for myself, the bars and clubs, where conversation was still an art became part of my routine. The Savoy bar particularly, where I was always sure to find a friend or acquaintance, was an interesting place. Behind the bar were two delightful creatures, Carleen and Katie, who you would never suspect were not on speaking terms. They waited on

Lord Northcliffe

you most pleasantly. In that room the factotum was "Beefy," a stout Austrian, his hair cropped short, almost to baldness, who ran the place like a private club. He decided whether you were eligible or not. If he greeted you, called you by name, and requested your pleasure, you were in. If he didn't, no cajoling or over-tipping would succeed. The bar had its habitués. There was Hugh Spottiswoode, Sir Thomas Dewar, Jim Allison, Mr. Florence O'Driscoll, Fred Grundy of the *New York Sun* and a good many other gentlemen of the press. Everyone knew of my forthcoming exhibition.

The Café Royal was another of my haunts. Its habitués were of another caliber. It was frequented by artists and writers, both men and women. There, the waiters were Italian and French. There, one would meet up with Augustus John, Jacob Epstein, Horace Cole, Lillian Shelley and other artists with their models. It was more like France, and the food was excellent. Those were busy days—bronzes to be made, a catalogue to arrange, wining and dining with old and newly-made friends.

At about this time I did the bust of Tim Healy, the leader of the Irish members of Parliament and later Governor-General of Ireland. He was a great Biblical scholar and read Hebrew. Every time he came to London he would stop with Florence O'Driscoll. I used to join them at dinner there quite often. After dinner, whiskey and soda followed port. Tim Healy's glass, which Mr. O'Driscoll had picked up in some antique shop, was the biggest I had ever seen. It appears that Tim had promised his mother that he would take only one drink before going to bed—the size of the drink was not stipulated. I remember once sitting up with him until four in the morning waiting for Tim to finish his drink.

The Leicester Galleries went to town. My stuff was set up in the big gallery. The big figure of "*La Terre*" and the decorative panel; such portraits as Ambassador Walter Hines Page, Lord Northcliffe, Tagore, Zangwill, Brandes—it was an impressive list. The catalogue was good-looking: the cover had a decorative panel, and the frontispiece a picture of Walter Hines Page.

Between Sitzings

The show was to be a gala affair and Yvonne was having a special dress made for the opening. I remember that dress. It was brown silk taffeta, a sort of *robe de style*. She was beautiful.

When we arrived at the exhibition, the cars were parked thickly around the galleries into Leicester Square. The galleries were jammed. There were more dinners, more parties and more weekends. Those were hectic and joyous weeks, but, alas, short-lived. For one evening, at one of these dinners, the man who did most of the talking was a Mr. Grey. He had just come from Germany, where he had been as a representative of the Marconi Company. The conversation, to me, was like a bombshell. It spelled War. Mr. Grey had been living in Germany for some time and he knew what he was talking about.

The idea of war was quite a jolt. I came home with the news. It was not long before everybody was talking one thing: war—to be or not to be.

We were at a house party when we heard that the Germans had crossed into Luxembourg. Where was Luxembourg? There was a rush for encyclopedias and maps. On the following day, Lord Grey made a speech saying that the British alliance with France was only commercial. That was a shock. At a dinner that evening, Yvonne was the only French person present. Several young lords and guardsmen called for champagne and toasted Yvonne. They swore that if Britain didn't go to war for France, they would cross the Channel and never come back to Britain again. It was dramatic. Everyone was on tenterhooks. The dinner party just melted away.

I'll never forget that night. The streets were jammed with marching humanity, waving both British and French flags. Britain had declared war on Germany. Suddenly, the whole face of the world had changed. War was a fact: Exhibitions, sculpture—all seemed unimportant.

I had to get my family back to Ceret. I finally succeeded in getting them passage on a boat that left Tilbury Docks bound for Bordeaux.

I wanted to get into the war. But how? My friend, Colonel Maude, was at the War Office. I knew they needed interpreters. Besides English, I spoke French and German. I could be useful. Colonel Maude told me to fill out an application and give it to him personally; he would look

Lord Northcliffe

after me. I heard no more from him until I ran into him on the street one day. I was delighted to see him; he wasn't to see me.

"What about my appointment?"

"It's in the wastepaper basket. Too many of our interpreters have been killed—shipped off. You stick to your sculpture."

That was the end of that. Finally, in desperation, I called on Lord Northcliffe. When I arrived, there was a crowd waiting to see him. I gave my card to his Lordship's secretary. He put it on top of the other visiting cards, and took it in to his chief.

It wasn't very long before the door opened and Lord Northcliffe came out, greeted me and took me into his office. Rubbing his hands, he said, "In three months there won't be a German ship on the ocean. What can I do for you?"

I wanted a job as war correspondent. No, he had all the men he wanted, "and they are sending back stuff I can't print."

I explained I didn't want any pay. I'd work on space. I would make drawings. I wanted to go as an artist-war correspondent.

"Oh, that's quite different."

He rang for his secretary and dictated my credentials, appointing me artist-war correspondent for the *Daily Mail* and the *Times* "History of the War." While waiting for my credentials, I asked his Lordship if he had seen my exhibition.

"No," he said. "I am sorry to have missed it. But have you seen the notice we gave you in the *Times*?"

I said I had and was very pleased with it.

"Do you know who wrote it? Clutton Brock—the greatest art critic in the world."

I expressed my appreciation. "How did he like your bust?" I asked.

"Wonderful, wonderful. Where is it? I want it."

"It's in my studio."

"How much do you want for it?"

"Same as agreed. Three hundred pounds."

"I won't do it. I'll give you two hundred and fifty."

I smiled and assented. I was getting the job I was after, and I was being paid for the bust.

CHAPTER 20

A TASTE OF WAR

GEORGE LYNCH, a veteran war correspondent, who had covered the Boer War and had been to China, was going to Belgium and I decided to go with him in order to see the war under proper auspices.

Despite my eagerness to get to the front, I felt somewhat timid about my ability to face the realities of war.

When Lynch and I got to Ostend we found a dead city. The big palace hotels were shut, and we spent the night in the Terminus hotel at the railroad station. The following morning we presented our credentials to the military authorities, who supplied us with the necessary *laissez-passer*, and we went to Ghent, the G.H.Q. of the Belgian Army.

At the Hôtel de la Poste in Ghent we met other war correspondents, British and American. They gave us the lowdown. The Germans were advancing.

I made my first sortie with Lynch. At Waesmunster, the Army's commissariat, we were conducted to a church tower. I remember climbing 194 steps. From there we could look over a panorama of thirty kilometers. Malines was burning. The battle of Grenbergen was on.

When we got back to Ghent we heard that a Zeppelin had dropped a bomb on the railroad station at Ostend, hitting the Terminus hotel, where we had spent the night.

A Taste of War

It took me some time to get my bearings. Sir Alfred Sharpe, of the *Daily Chronicle*, and Hugh Mason, of the *Daily News and Ledger*, had heard that there was a battle in the vicinity of Wettarn. They offered me a seat in their car. The car stopped at No-Man's Land. We got out and walked until we came to a shack near which some cavalry horses were tethered. We were about to take shelter there, but changed our minds—it was too exposed. Bursting shells and puffs of smoke decided us to take shelter in the shadow of another shed down the road. The enemy were evidently trying to locate their target.

One shell burst much too near us, and everybody scattered. I instinctively started running home. Hugh Mason ran after me and grabbed me. "You damned fool, you're running the wrong way!"

This was my first experience. I didn't enjoy it.

Back at the hotel I made some sketches of what I had seen, but not with too much enthusiasm. A good deal of our time was spent at the Café de la Poste. Shortly after we arrived, May Sinclair, the novelist turned up. She had come over with Dr. Monroe's ambulance unit. I had not seen her since the days when I modeled the bust of Rabindranath Tagore in Edwards Square. I met the doctors and nurses of her outfit. They spoke no French and I was called in to translate. I liked that. I was being useful.

One evening Sir Josiah Wedgwood appeared, covered with mud and dirt. He was with Commander Samson's Armored Motor Unit. Wedgwood was a Quaker and a teetotaler, but he came in and ordered a double whiskey and soda and swore like a trooper.

One day I was with Dr. Renton in one of May Sinclair's ambulances. We had been instructed to pick up some wounded. It was a beautiful day, the stillness broken only by the chirping of birds. Not a soul was in sight. We stopped the car by a deserted wayside café. Someone was groaning in the cellar. It was a blind man who, in trying to escape, had fallen down the cellar stairs and broken a leg. We had just got him into the ambulance when sniper bullets began whistling around our heads. We beat it. There were no heroics.

At another sortie I saw officers with their revolvers drawn chasing

Between Sitzings

men back into the trenches. An officer on horseback passed us, saying "No good." We gave a lift to some Belgian soldiers who were hanging onto our car. Cavalry, artillery, infantry, all were retreating. The Germans had got the range and panic spread among the refugees.

I came upon a priest comforting a wounded man whose face was shot away. The effect was shattering. I saw men pouring gasoline on the buildings of a little town that was in the line of fire. I was making a drawing of a sentinel silhouetted against the burning village. A corner house had a niche in one of its façades, and in that niche was a famous bronze, "*Le Débardeur*" (the Longshoreman), by Constantin Monier. I wanted to save that bronze, but could not get anywhere near it.

One morning in Ghent, at three A.M., Douglas Crawford, Lord Northcliffe's former secretary, knocked at my door. He informed me that the General Staff had left. His car was at the door. He was leaving too. Would I accompany him, or did I wish to stay behind and see the Germans come in?

We left Ghent and twenty miles out, at Eckloo, we met what was left of the Belgian Army in its retreat from Antwerp. From Eckloo to Bruges, we passed a stream of battered humanity, dressed in rags and remnants of uniforms. There were horses dying by the wayside. When we arrived at Bruges we saw spick-and-span, fresh British soldiers who had not yet seen action, with their wonderful Percheron horses whose polished harnesses shone in the sun, pouring into the old Flemish square. From the other side the decimated, war-scarred Belgian Army straggled in.

We left Bruges and reached Ostend late that night. On the road we passed refugees loaded with a hodge-podge of belongings, each carrying something he could not part with—a goat, a bird in a cage, a mattress, pots and pans, a chair. We passed carts full of old women and children and babies. There was a stream of them. They didn't know where they were going. They only knew they were running away from hell.

I took the boat for Folkestone on Monday, October 12, 1914. Belgium had fallen. The boat was jammed with refugees and wounded Belgian soldiers. One poor woman gave birth to a baby, but fortunately some

A Taste of War

Red Cross nurses were on board. There were a thousand passengers and no food.

“War” had ceased to be a word in history books. I had seen it with my eyes, heard its nightmarish sounds and smelled the stink of battlefields. I hoped some day to be able to interpret, with my hands, what I was now feeling.

Upon my return to Ceret, I was heartsick. It was obvious that the war was going to last a long time. I felt I wanted to express in clay the intensity of the protest of the people. I went to work on a frieze, a bas-relief, of the escaping refugees I had seen along the roads. I also worked on a figure which I called “*L’Appel Aux Armes*” and which was later to be called “France Aroused.” It was a figure of Bellona, the goddess of War, with her feet squarely planted on the ground, her arms upraised, fists clenched, and head thrown back—a cry of rage and protest.

Ceret was Catalan, and a good many people there did not consider it their war. It might have been in another country. My gardener’s son, Pierre Costal, had married Jacque’s Nounou. His mother, “Memere,” as we all called her, was Spanish Catalan, and although his father was a French Catalan, he considered himself neutral. Pierre was anti-war, and said that they would never get him. He knew every little pass across the Pyrenees into Spain. That’s what he said.

Some three or four months later, when I returned to Ceret after a visit to London, I found Costal in a soldier’s uniform, home for his first leave. It was his war and what he wouldn’t do to the Germans with his bayonet was nobody’s business.

Yvonne had been corresponding with Dorothy Allhusen (Mrs. Henry Allhusen), who was raising funds in England for an auxiliary hospital in France, and Yvonne had offered our house in Ceret. On May 26, 1915, the hospital *Bénévole*, No. 62 bis, was opened officially with forty beds, full equipment, two nurses and Yvonne in charge. The hospital was soon full up. The casualties which crowded the big hospitals near the front were moved as soon as possible to such units as ours.

Yvonne was up at five A.M. every morning, and when everyone else had retired for the night she would pore over her books in the small

Between Sittings

hours. Trying to keep the accounts straight was a difficult job and she could never make the receipts and expenditures balance. We usually had to dig into our pockets to make up the deficit.

The wounded we received were an entertaining lot. They came from all walks of life: a Breton who had never been outside his village, a man from the Haut-Savoie, a traveling salesman from Lyons, an occasional Parisian.

There was one fellow who called himself "*le grand blessé de la Marne*." He had been shot in the temple and by some miracle had survived. He should have been dead—he had a large hole on the side of his head. He was a handy man. One day the bathtub got out of order. I found him under it, tinkering with the plumbing. I asked him what he did as a civilian. He replied, "*Aujourd'hui pour faire de l'argent il ne faut pas avoir de métier.*" (These days, to make money it is better not to have a trade.) We discovered he was an *apache*.

We had another character, a traveling salesman, who was very popular with the soldiers because he could spin endless yarns. But the "*grande blessé de la Marne*" did not care for him. When the traveling salesman was about to leave, everybody was up to see him off except our friend the *apache*. I found him sitting in my studio in front of the stove. I told him that our salesman had returned to the front. His only comment was, "*Comme tout le monde qui cause de trop, il se trompe souvent.*" (Like all those who talk too much, he is often wrong.)

It was sad, when you brought these fellows back to health, they had to go back to the front. They left at ungodly hours—three or four o'clock in the morning. It meant Yvonne had to be up even earlier and of course there had to be packages of food and sweets.

In the discipline of the hospital, drinking was not permitted. There was one chap, Noirots, who, like everybody, adored Yvonne and hated to leave the hospital. He was about to become lachrymose, when he shook himself and said, "Well, anyway, I'll be able to get drunk."

Jacques, who was then five years old, was the mascot of the hospital. We dressed him up in the uniform of a Chasseur Alpin. They took him very seriously and had him preside at meals.

A Taste of War

The war was making it difficult for me to get commissions, and my funds were running low. To replenish them, I went to London. However, when I got there I found my studio plastered with notices of unpaid taxes and water rates. To open the door I would have had to break the seals, so I took one look and went away.

In London, war had become a way of life. Soldiers returning on leave were received as conquering heroes. But—one of the greatest injustices of the war—the families of the boys who were at the front were threatened with expulsion for non-payment of rent and taxes. My friend Dan Rider, the bookseller, took it very much to heart and organized the “War Rents League.” Dan was the moving spirit. In fact, he was the whole thing. He decided that my studio should be a test case. I was taken to court and Dan Rider had the publicity he needed. His mail was colossal. Dan was a busy man. His friends took turns in looking after his shop in St. Martin’s Court while he went to court, fighting the battle of the soldiers’ families. Dan Rider later wrote a book *Landlords and Tenants* about the War Rents League and its accomplishments.

I was obliged to rent a temporary studio in Thackeray House where I could work and live, for I couldn’t get into my own studio in Camden House Mews.

I had paid off the water rates and taxes and consequently could break the seals on my door—which I left hanging out of snobbery—but the rent question was too big a debt for me to handle at that time. Dan Rider had an idea. Since my landlords were the parents of G. K. Chesterton, they might be interested in having me do a bust of G. K. in lieu of the rent. I had met G. K. Chesterton. He was a magnificent figure of a man—huge, fat and rich in temperament—a gift for a sculptor.

I wrote to my landlords, and they invited me to tea. To this charming old couple I explained my unfortunate impecunious state, and said that I would be very happy to do a portrait of their son in lieu of my debt. They were most courteous and pleasant, but they couldn’t see it that way.

Some time later, just as I was about to sail for America, I received

Between Sitzings

a letter from my landlords, the Chestertons. They had talked it over with G. K., and he would be delighted to pose for me. But alas, I was leaving London, and I had to forgo that pleasure. I have regretted it ever since.

I gave up my studio in Thackeray House and moved to the Garrick Hotel in Leicester Square. My work was in my Camden House Mews studio, but it was not equipped for lodgings.

One night, I went to dinner at Lady St. Hillyer's, Mrs. Allhusen's mother. It was a white tie and top hat affair. After dinner, on the way back to my hotel, I stopped at the Café Royal, but it was too late for a drink. I sat there in solitary splendor with a small bottle of Vichy in front of me, when three men came in—P. G. Konody, the art critic, Gaston de Pierre, a paint manufacturer, and a third man whom I didn't know. I welcomed them with, "Will you have some water?"

The man whom I didn't know, a tall blond gentleman with a pince-nez attached to a black ribbon, said, "No, no, but would you come to my club and have a drink?"

I thought it a good idea. The four of us went out, piled into a taxicab and stopped somewhere in Knightsbridge. He said, "Here we are." He took out a latch key, opened the door and ushered us in. We piled into the lift and got out at the top floor. Above the door were three large photographs: Rodin, Kubelik and Mark Twain.

"Three noble prestidigitators," said I.

"Ah, you know them, I see."

"Who doesn't?"

He ushered us into a salon. It was luxuriously furnished, with paintings, photographs, a grand piano. He opened a bar, pulled out a crystal decanter and poured us out a large whiskey and soda each.

I walked around the room and looked at the photographs which were all over the place. I said something about photographs which displeased my host. He went into an unexpected rage, took the drink, which I had hardly touched, out of my hand, and said, "Sir, you will take your hat, you will take your stick, you will leave my house."

I was thunderstruck. I suggested he might call a taxi.

A Taste of War

"No," he said, "you will walk." My friends tried to calm him, but he would have none of it. As I walked out of his house, I looked up and saw a little plaque: Walter J. Barnett, photographer to the King.

I walked home. It was quite a walk from Knightsbridge to Leicester Square. The next night, I was sitting in the Café Royal with some friends, when I happened to look up and saw the gentleman in question coming towards me. I tried to avoid seeing him, but he came over.

"Sir, you must forgive me," he said. "I behaved like a cad last night."

I waved this aside with a gesture. "Why? It is nothing."

He said, "Will you come and have lunch with me tomorrow?"

I thought to myself, "What? Again?"

"So you don't forgive me?" He looked pained. My friends urged me to go. I accepted.

The next day, after a drink at the Savoy Bar, we went into the grill and he repeated his apology. After lunch he asked to come to my studio, insisting again that I had not forgiven him. I gave in. When he saw the door of my studio plastered with bits of notices of water rates and taxes, half torn off, he made no comment. He walked into the studio and stood there, amazed.

"Did you do all this?"

I said yes.

"But this is wonderful, this is great. You are a genius."

"Nobody else seems to think so," I said.

"You mean you can't sell this? Forgive me, but is it possible that you are hard up?"

I admitted that I was.

"Why, this is absurd. I can sell this for you."

I was dubious. He apologized again—he was always apologizing—and said, "Would a hundred pounds do you?" He pulled out his check-book and, leaning on one of the modeling stands, he made out a check for a hundred pounds.

"I'll sell your sculpture," he said, and he took two of my statuettes home with him.

During this time, I had an opportunity to see Havelock Ellis at work.

Between Sitzings

Living next to me at Thackeray House was a young couple that worried me. I had a nodding acquaintance with them. They were young, and the girl was pretty. As I passed their rooms I often heard them quarreling and sometimes heard her sobbing. I told my landlord, Mr. Smythe, about it, and he told me a strange story. The boy made the girl go out and pick up men. If she came home unsuccessful, he beat her up.

I repeated the story to Dan Rider and Robert Steele. This, they said, was a case for Havelock Ellis, and they brought him to the European Café for luncheon.

What a beautiful head he had—a long square white beard, white locks, penetrating and yet shy eyes. He might have posed for Michelangelo's "God the Creator." He asked to meet the boy, and Smythe brought the young man to the café. He was unaware that we knew anything about him. Nothing was said at table to arouse his suspicions. It was interesting to watch Ellis, he was so gentle in drawing out the young husband. I asked Ellis to sit to me for a bust, and he readily accepted, for it gave him an opportunity to see more of the young couple. They moved away and I never knew the end of their story. But because of them I met Havelock Ellis and made his bust.

One night, I was asked by a friend to cover a performance of "Faust" at Covent Garden for his paper the *Weekly Dispatch*. I agreed. In the middle of the second act there was a rumbling noise. The manager stepped out on the stage and said that there was a Zeppelin raid. Those who wanted to leave should please do so as quietly as possible. I had seen "Faust," but I had never seen a Zeppelin raid. I stepped out in time to see a big silver cigar in the sky, and wended my way towards the Strand, where it had dropped its load. The Gaiety Theatre was hit, and some chorus girls were killed. The street was covered with broken glass.

The war was moving back from the front to the cities and in London it was becoming the daily accepted way of life.

CHAPTER 2 I

JOSEPH CONRAD

I OFTEN WONDERED what it was that drove me to make busts of people. It wasn't so much that they had faces that suggested sculpture. Perhaps I wasn't thinking in terms of sculpture as such. What interested me was the people themselves—to be with them, to hear them speak and watch their faces change.

It is true that, in making portraits, some intrigued me more than others. I would get some quickly and others would evade me. Some sitters give themselves with ease—others resist. I once said facetiously that some of my sitters were short stories, and others were novels. It takes two to make a bust. The important thing is the *rapport* between the artist and the sitter.

Looking at a portrait, painting or piece of sculpture, you do not have to know the person represented, but you recognize the truth if the artist has stated it. An outstanding example of this is Houdon's "Voltaire." There have been many Voltaires both in painting and sculpture, but it is Houdon's that has the truth. The same applies to Houdon's head of Franklin. Of the dozens of paintings and sculptures made of Franklin, Houdon's is the only one in which you can recognize the Franklin of the autobiography.

I had been reading Joseph Conrad and had heard much about him. I wanted to meet him. Mrs. Grace Willard, a charming lady who repre-

Between Sittings

sented *Vanity Fair* in London, arranged the meeting. She talked to Conrad about me and he invited us both to lunch at his house in Kent. As I remember, we got off at Ham Street Station, and Conrad met us there with his car.

He was curiously dressed. Under his overcoat you spotted riding breeches, and his legs were clothed in puttees. He wore a bowler hat. He thought he was being very English. His collar was so high, it seemed to throw his head back and at the same time hold it in place upon shoulders very high and square. He was accompanied by a boy dressed in a chauffeur's uniform, but he drove the car himself.

Conrad lived in a charming house with a lovely garden, and served us a very delicious lunch, which he himself did not partake of. He had a cook, but he only ate specially prepared food cooked by his wife Jessie. He was a dyspeptic and a hypochondriac, and loved to talk about his imaginary ills. His friends would recommend medicines, which he always bought. There were shelves in his room lined with bottles of medicines, which, however, he never took.

His wife told us that Conrad used to do his writing in longhand at night. After he had a page or two done, he would wake her and ask her to type it so that he could see what it looked like.

Conrad readily agreed to sit for his bust and came down to my studio in the Mews. I had a wonderful time with him: he spoke a curious English—his accent was entirely his own. As we talked, he would invariably break into French, for he had spoken French before he learned English. He told me about his childhood in Poland. He had always had a yearning for the sea and had run away from home and found employment in the French Merchant Marine.

I asked him, since he spoke French so fluently, why he did not write in French.

“Ah,” he said, “to write French you have to know it. English is so plastic—if you haven't got a word you need you can make it, but to write French you have to be an artist like Anatole France.”

One day he came in chuckling and told me a story about his son John. Coming home from school one day, John said to his mother, “Isn't

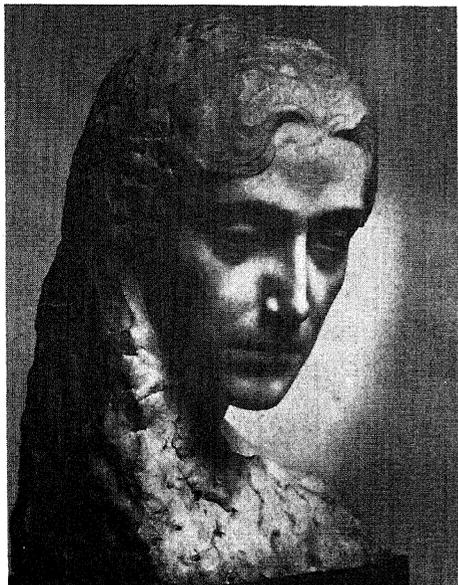


Photo Kollar, Paris

YVONNE

E. W. SCRIPPS

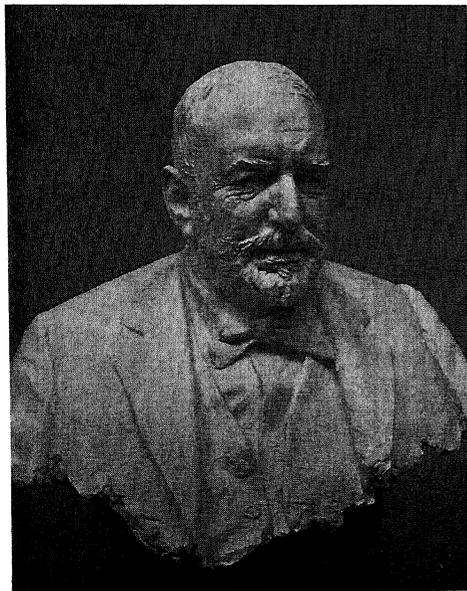


Photo Kollar, Paris

ANATOLE FRANCE

GERTRUDE STEIN

Photo copyright by François Kollar, Paris



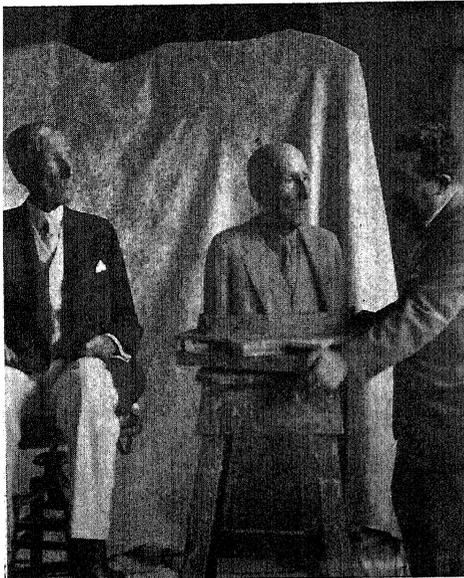


Photo Kollar, Paris

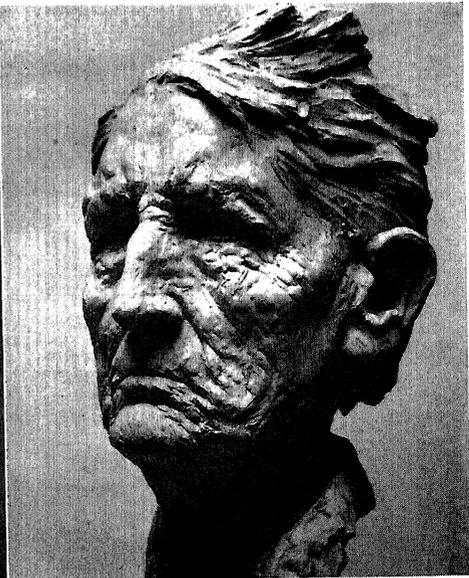
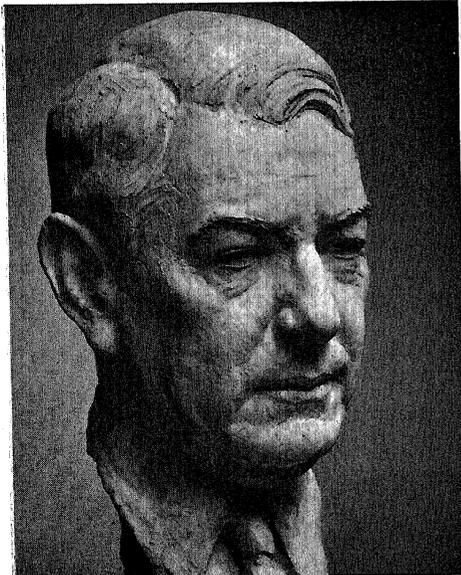
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER AND JO DAVIDSON JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

E. W. MARLAND

ANDREW FURUSETH

Photo Kollar, Paris

Photo Kollar, Paris



Joseph Conrad

it too bad that Father didn't write the Bible?" When asked why, he replied, "Why, look at the editions it would go into—it is in everybody's house." Conrad liked that. He was pleased that his son, at least, had a business sense.

I saw a lot of Conrad. One day I took him to luncheon at the European Café. I had been asking him where he got his characters for *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*—whether he drew them from life or whether they were purely children of his mind. His answer was: neither.

"Look," said he, "see that man over there?"

I looked up and saw an oldish man with a short straggly beard, a big nose and a gaunt face, bending over his plate, concentrating on his food.

Conrad said, "You know, that man—he does so-and-so, and so-and-so," and he began spinning a yarn. Listening, I looked at the man, and was astonished at how true the story rang—I got to believing it.

"I'll go and ask him," said I.

"Don't do that. It probably isn't so, but it might be so."

CHAPTER 22

WOODROW WILSON

MY TASTE OF WAR guided me towards the busy political life of those times. I became interested in “busting” generals, statesmen, financiers, because in this way I could talk to them, listen to them, and so see the war and, I hoped, soon the peace, from the diverse perspectives of army headquarters and the world capitals.

Ambassador Walter Hines Page had liked my war work and thought he could arrange for me to do a portrait bust of President Woodrow Wilson. The Ambassador did not realize my low financial condition. I had read and heard of money-lenders and asked two friends to endorse a note of mine for the money-lenders. With this money, I booked passage for America in April, 1916, armed with a letter from Ambassador Page to Joseph Tumulty, the President's private secretary.

In New York, Mr. Ralph Pulitzer of the *New York World* also gave me a letter to the President of the United States.

In Washington, I waited—only to get word from Tumulty that the President was much too busy to sit for me just then.

I returned to New York, where Pulitzer told me not to be discouraged, and offered to make an appointment for me to see Colonel House. I called on House who promised to see the President in person. A few days later he told me that the President had agreed to sit for me, but not until after the elections.

Woodrow Wilson

One day—this was in June—Herbert Houston (then Vice-President of Doubleday, Page and Company) invited me to lunch with him at the Lotus Club. It was a luncheon of advertising men and, in introducing me, Houston told them all that I was to do a bust of the President. Among those present was Charles Macaulay, one-time cartoonist of the New York *World*, who was very much interested. He asked me if when the bust was finished, I would allow him to use it in a film he was making for the forthcoming Democratic campaign. The film, I believe, was to be entitled "The Hall of Fame." Busts of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln were available; the only one missing was Wilson.

I agreed, but informed Macaulay that unfortunately the President would not be able to sit for me until after the elections.

Macaulay said, "Never mind that, I am going to Washington tomorrow," and asked me if I would go with him, as he was to take pictures of the various members of the Cabinet. I went with him and Macaulay introduced me to all as the man who was going to do the bust of the President.

A few days later, Macaulay took me to the White House where he seemed to be *persona grata*. It wasn't long before we were ushered into the President's office.

The President was sitting at his desk writing, and he rose to meet us most cordially. I had brought with me an album of photographs of people whose busts I had made, including that of his friend Ambassador Page. In my anxiety I assured him that he would not have to sit for me in the ordinary sense, but could go on doing whatever he liked; and we made our arrangements accordingly.

I arrived at the White House the following evening at the appointed hour. Going to the White House for the first time, I had a real case of stage fright.

President Wilson sat in a deep chair and I stood above him. It was all wrong. He would look up occasionally and smile, saying, "You don't mind if I read?" How could I mind? I was nervous and shy, and my uncomfortable dinner jacket didn't help. I would bend down and try to look at him, would walk around the chair trying to see his profile. There

Between Sittings

wasn't much conversation, for he was busily making shorthand notes while he read. He would look up at me encouragingly with an occasional remark.

I do not know how long I worked. All in a sweat, and getting nowhere, I was in agony. I must have groaned, for the President looked up at me as I threw some clay out of my hands in despair and said: "What is the trouble?"

"I can't work like this—I have to have daylight and I must have you. It takes two to make a bust."

Looking quite distressed he said: "Come in tomorrow and see Mr. Hoover, the chief usher of the White House."

The next morning I found Mr. Hoover was expecting me and together we turned the President's study into a working studio. We moved the furniture around a bit, out of the way. The study had a very high ceiling and the windows opened out onto a porch, so that the whole side of the room was exposed to bright daylight.

That afternoon, I was putting up the clay when the door opened and the President entered. When he saw what I had done to his study, he gasped and exclaimed, "And what do you want me to do?"

I pulled up a big leather armchair to the window and asked:

"Would you mind, Mr. President, getting up here and sitting on the back of this chair?"

He looked rather dubious, but he complied with the request. I had to look up at him, but it was better than looking down on him. I did not dare, as yet, to ask him to stand.

We discussed the war very freely. I strongly resented the fact that we were not in the war and Wilson replied by explaining the difficulties which confronted the President of the United States at that time. The population had more than doubled during the forty years before his administration. The foreign-born citizens were of numerous nationalities and traditions, and he, as a servant of the people, had the great problem of finding out and doing what the majority of the people wanted, regardless of his personal sentiments.

Wilson had a wonderful voice and spoke with great clarity and pre-

Woodrow Wilson

cision. When he smiled, his whole face lit up. He had a great fund of humor and was an excellent mimic. His favorite was about an American telling a funny story to an Englishman. The Englishman never cracked a smile. The American slapped the Englishman on the back, saying, "Oh, that's all right, old man—you will laugh at that next summer." The Englishman, fixing his eye-glass, retorted, "Oh no, my dear fellow, I laughed at that *last* summer."

The President's attitude towards art interested me. He seemed to be conscious of a lack in that direction, and never commented on the bust while I was working on it. He simply assumed I knew my job. When I was through for the day, I covered up the bust and upon my return I always found it exactly as I had left it. He seemed to have no curiosity to investigate what I had done.

The three promised sittings turned into seven. In order to give me all the time I wanted, the President gave up golf, his only exercise.

As far as I know, mine was the only bust for which President Wilson sat.

CHAPTER 23

MACDOUGAL ALLEY AND THE BREVOORT

HAVING DONE the bust of President Wilson, I received an invitation to attend the Democratic convention in St. Louis. This was a new experience for me, and I wanted to take a close look at this aspect of American life.

When I arrived in St. Louis, the city was full of the carnival spirit, the convention had taken over the city and the Jefferson Hotel, convention headquarters, where I was supposed to have a room was jammed.

There was a great hubbub in the hotel lobby, people in groups, everybody talking—it was like a swarm of bees. Everywhere I turned, I ran into friends: Lowell Mellett, Art Young, Max Eastman, Jack Reed, Dudley Field Malone, Doris Stevens, Sarah Bard Field, Mary Field—it was all very exciting. I saw enough of the convention to get an indelible impression of this great American tradition.

The last night I was invited to attend a dinner for women's suffrage, which was held at the hotel. Because I was the sculptor who had done President Wilson, I was considered a personality, and was put on the dais with the speakers and other honored guests, while my friends sat at the little tables below. When the waiter passed I asked for red wine. When he placed the bottle on the table I realized I had started something. Many of the women suffragettes were prohibitionists. However, my bottle of wine set off a trend at that dinner—some friends at the table below took it as a signal that drinking was okay and did likewise.

MacDougal Alley and the Brevoort

After the dinner, and following the scheduled speakers, Art Young, who was loved by all and known as an ardent supporter of women's suffrage, was called upon to say a few words. However, instead of making a speech, he entertained his audience by telling stories and giving his famous imitation of a southern Senator.

I sat up all night with Art Young in the diner of the train on the way home, discussing the function of art. We argued back and forth, splitting hairs, but really in agreement—a wonderful way to spend a night. His wit was superb. Talking about a mutual friend, I bewailed the fact that he was not what he used to be. Art replied:

“No, he never was.”

([The time had arrived when I had to find a studio of my own. One day, as I was leaving the Hotel Brevoort, a car passed me on West Eighth Street. Hearing my name called, I turned around and recognized Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney whom I hadn't seen since 1911. She wanted to hear about my sittings with President Wilson, about my family and about my show in London.

Over lunch, Mrs. Whitney said she knew of a studio which was available in 23 MacDougal Alley. It was one flight up—not too good for a sculptor—for the ground floor was occupied by Merly, the stonecutter. But it was a studio with a north skylight. I took it and kept that studio for many years afterward.

Mrs. Whitney's own studio was at the end of the Alley and went through to 8 West Eighth Street. With the able help of Mrs. Juliana Force, she found many imaginative ways of bringing artists together.

I recall one particular affair. Mrs. Whitney and Mrs. Force invited some painters and sculptors to the studio on Eighth Street. Each was to do his bit, a painting or sculpture to be completed that day. I did a bust of Paul Dougherty. We finished up in the evening after the work was done with a party, and a very gay party it was. The following day the works were shown to the public under the title, “The Works of Indigenous Sculptors and Painters.”

Between Sittings

I think that it was shortly after that the Whitney Studio Club in West Fourth Street was organized, where artists met in the evening to play billiards and exchange ideas. There were galleries to exhibit their works. Out of this grew the Whitney Museum, which, under the genius of Juliana Force, has become a landmark in the history of American art.

Mrs. Whitney was truly a friend of the arts. There was hardly a painter or sculptor who did not at one time or another find an understanding friend in her and benefit by her sensitive generosity.

MacDougal Alley was a block away from the Hotel Brevoort. The proprietors, Ely Dautian and Raymond Orteig, were two Frenchmen with a feeling for art and artists, and writers, poets, musicians, painters and sculptors naturally gravitated there. To most of us it was a little corner of France. The leeway I was given there for credit, as were many others, is unbelievable, and many a party I gave there, not knowing where my next penny was coming from.

During this period, I spent many weekends with Ralph and Fredericka Pulitzer at Manhasset, Long Island. Ralph's mother, a wonderful old lady, a southern belle and the daughter of Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, had a home in Bar Harbor and gave an exhibition of my sculpture in her home there. It was a social affair, and I was entertained royally by all the Bar Harborites.

It was here that I later made the portrait of Fritz Kreisler. Kreisler used to bring his violin when he came to pose. He practiced and played for me while I worked, and I feel it was he who made the bust—not I.

Edgar Varese, the French composer, was living at the Brevoort. He had had an accident, and when he came out of the hospital I got him a room next to mine. He was a good-looking young man and had posed for Rodin. There was a large mirror in my room, and whenever he passed it he would stop and say, "*Ah, Bon Dieu, pourquoi m'as-tu fait si beau, si jeune, si plein de talent, si aimé des femmes et si modeste!*" (Oh Bountiful God, why have you made me so handsome, so young, so full of talent, so loved by women, and so modest!)

In the winter of 1916, Varese organized a concert at the Hippodrome. He was to give the "Requiem" of Berlioz, in honor of the war

MacDougal Alley and the Brevoort

dead. It was the first time it was given in New York. It required a male chorus. We were all very keen about it, and, hearing that there was a male chorus of miners in Scranton, a group of us—Varese, Ralph Pulitzer, Paul Dougherty, Walter Goldbeck and I—went to Scranton.

I had never been down a coal mine, and when they offered to show us the works, the others said no, but I could not resist it. It was an experience I wouldn't have missed for anything—to go down into the bowels of the earth and walk through the tunnels, see the miners at work—beautiful people. I asked whom they looked upon as their best miner, and they all pointed at a giant of a man. He was the champion, and they boasted that he could mine more coal than anyone within two hundred miles. He was the artist. He didn't get any more pay than anyone else. This was for art's sake. I wondered why they didn't put up monuments to such men.

Lloyd Warren, the head of the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York, asked me to take a sculpture class during this winter. It was not a paying job so I could not refuse it. I took the night class, and had a wonderful time with those boys expounding some of my theories. My class started with fifteen, and finished up with forty.

At the end of the year there was the usual competition for prizes. I had an idea which appealed to most of my class. Instead of posing the model in a given pose, I suggested that they use the model in a composition of their own choosing. Each student would pose the model as he wished for a few minutes, and the next student would then pose the model for his sketch. The results were interesting.

When the time came for the sculpture to be judged, the jury was upset by what my class had submitted. It was not according to Hoyle. My class's contribution was proclaimed *hors de concours*.

(In August, 1916 I showed “*L'Appel Aux Armes*” at an exhibition which I had at the Reinhardt Galleries. It attracted a great deal of attention, and the general opinion was that I should execute it as a colossal figure commemorating the spirit of France.

Between Sittings

It was felt that this should be a gift from America to France to commemorate the Battle of the Marne.

I did not wait for a committee to raise funds, because to me, this figure was a "must." I had my studio in the Alley and although I was hard up, I got a model and went to work on a nine-foot figure.

I even got an assistant, although I could not afford one. Mrs. Ralph Sanger told me of a Serbian sculptor and asked if I could help find him a job. The next day I arranged to introduce the young sculptor, Dujam Penic, to Paul Bartlett but Bartlett said he had all the help he needed. Poor Penic was so crestfallen that I said: "Well, you can come and work for me." Penic was then working for a tailor, pressing trousers, and could only work on his sculpture at night in the basement. I fixed up a couch in my studio for him and he moved in.

While I was working on "*L'Appel Aux Armes*," my old friend, James Gregg brought me a book of poems by Samuel Coleridge. He read aloud to me a poem which Coleridge had written in 1808, entitled "An Ode to France."

"When France, in wrath,
Her giant limbs upreared,
And with that oath
Which smote air, earth and sea—
Stamped her strong foot
And said she would be free!"

I had never heard the poem before, but when Gregg read those lines I was inspired by the fact that Coleridge had put into words what I was trying to express in clay.

I was working under appalling odds:

The figure was big and my studio too small. The stand I was modeling on was not large enough. In addition I was having a hard time trying to make ends meet.

Mrs. Whitney was a frequent visitor. She commissioned me to make a bust of her, and also a statuette. This was her way of helping me carry

MacDougal Alley and the Brevoort

on. She was very keen on my statue "France Aroused" and her enthusiasm did much to help sustain my courage in this period.

I was convinced that one day my statue of "France Aroused" would be a reality and it meant everything to me. I was thirty-three years old, and this monument was to be my *magnum opus*.

Yvonne and the children arrived in the spring of 1917. Mabel Dodge lent us her flat at 23 Fifth Avenue where I could work and I settled the family in a little house in Port Washington.

The summer came on and it was very hot. On the most stifling August day in history, I was working on my statue. The figure reached from floor to ceiling and was smack up against the skylight. Climbing up and down the ladder, I got into an awful sweat. My hands were full of clay, which got into my beard. I must have been a sight, and my model Jeanette, who was posing as God made her, said temptingly, "Why don't you shave it off?" That sounded like an idea. It was noon—the hottest part of the day—and shaving off the beard became an obsession. Anything to keep cool.

My daily luncheon place was the Brevoort. The barber of the Brevoort was Henri, a Frenchman. Before going to lunch I went to Henri, sat down in his chair—he always looked after me—and said, "Shave it off."

He hesitated, thinking I was joking, but I assured him that I meant it.

"All of it?" he asked.

"All," I said, "mustache, beard, everything!"

He actually wept. "*Une si belle barbe!*"

Well, the deed was done. The air felt wonderful on my face. I left the barbershop and walked into the downstairs restaurant. The waiter brought me a glass of iced water—a thing he never did. Obviously he didn't recognize me, for he handed me a menu, addressing me in English, another thing he never did—we always spoke French. Friends came in, gave me one look and turned away. Other friends who were sitting at nearby tables glanced at me and went on with their meals. I was the invisible man. I saw all and none saw me. I began to enjoy it.

Finishing my lunch I paid the bill and left, and no one stopped me.

Between Sittings

As I walked down Eighth Street, I met an acquaintance who gave me the cold shoulder.

When I got to the studio, Jeannette was there waiting for me. Startled, she said, "I don't believe it—you didn't do it!"

"It was your idea," I said.

That evening when I came home the children were playing on the floor in the hall. When they saw me they dropped their toys and ran upstairs screaming. "Mother, Mother, there is a man downstairs."

Yvonne came to the head of the stairs and looked at me. "You are awful—you are terrible—don't come near me—don't touch me."

This was not the joyous homecoming I had expected.

I continued shaving for the next three weeks. My face and neck were sore. When I went to bed I felt as if I were sleeping on sandpaper. It was simply no go. So I let my beard grow back. For the next couple of weeks I was not too pretty, but my face soon healed. I have never shaved since.

Our house in Port Washington was a pleasant place and I often brought friends to spend the night and weekends. They all enjoyed it. One Saturday I brought Edgar Varese, but the following morning at breakfast he looked haggard and said he was going back to New York: the country was too noisy. The birds, the whippoorwills, and the bullfrogs—nature's orchestration—were too much for him.

Meanwhile, Frank Crowninshield, a frequent visitor to my studio, was much taken with my "France Aroused" and published a full-page photograph of the clay model. Crowninshield enlisted the interest of Mrs. William Astor Chanler and the French Heroes Lafayette Memorial Fund of which she was President. They organized the Spirit of France Committee to raise funds for a twenty-foot figure to be erected on the battlefield of the Marne. Mr. James A. Blair Jr. was treasurer and John Moffat was put in charge of raising the funds.

Mrs. Whitney offered to show my nine-foot model in connection with the annual show of the Newport Art Association. I looked upon the statue as a *fait accompli*. I had it cast in plaster, sent it to Newport,

MacDougal Alley and the Brevoort

and there was a ceremony for the opening of the exhibition. The Governor of Rhode Island was there, and there was a marine band.

But the statue caused quite a controversy. There were two factions, for and against. The letters which came in, many of them harsh, were upsetting. Here are a few extracts:

"It is not art; it is a wild deformity. It is not the 'Spirit of France'; it represents one of the shrieking sisterhood—an awkward, lank-limbed Valkyrie hurling vocal destruction. . . . France in suffering is glorious . . . not insane through torture. . . . France has already suffered too many atrocities from the East. Why must she now endure this barbarity from the West?"

"I cannot understand how anybody can so insult the French people as to offer them, as a representative of their graceful, beautiful, noble, brave, determined, unflinching spirit, the hideous, screeching, straddling maniac whose picture I received."

Fortunately there was also some favorable criticism.

"'The Spirit of France,' by Jo Davidson, has aroused as much controversy both in art circles and among the laity as Barnard's Lincoln. . . . Strength it certainly has, and the idea of revolt and freedom from all bondage is borne forcefully in upon the spectator. . . ."

Well, there was my figure, and there was nothing to be done about it. I did not receive one penny from the funds that had been collected, which were turned over to the French Heroes Lafayette Memorial Fund, and I was more in debt than ever.

CHAPTER 24

PLASTIC HISTORY

WHEN AMERICA entered the war, many people organized in groups to raise funds for various kinds of war work.

I had already been dubbed a "plastic historian" because I had done a number of famous people. I got the idea of making a plastic history of the war—that is, the busts of the Allied chiefs, both military and civil. I talked about it to everyone, and as I talked, the idea grew and took definite shape.

A number of incidents that occurred at this time helped along: one day, I ran into Frank Tuttle at the Coffee House. He was with the Art Section of the Committee of Public Information, a government-sponsored agency. Tuttle not only approved my project, but volunteered to take it up with Ernest Poole, the director of the Committee's Foreign Press Bureau. On September 24, 1918, he wrote me the following letter:

"My dear Mr. Davidson,

Mr. Poole has taken up the matter of your going to France to make portraits of Foch and Pershing etc., with our Washington office.

He received an answer yesterday telling him that they would be able to assist you in the matter of getting passports and the right sort of letters for the people over there, so that there would be no trouble about getting to your subjects.

Plastic History

If there is any further information I can give you, please let me know and I shall be only too delighted to help.

You can always get me here at 1690 Madison Square and I shall probably be at the Coffee House for luncheon every once in a while.

Very faithfully yours,
(signed) Frank Tuttle”

Thus began the most important chapter of my plastic history.

Tuttle also informed me that Masaryk was in town and suggested I do him before I went abroad. I knew only that Masaryk was the Father of a new state, the Republic of Czechoslovakia, but when I met him, I fell for him heart and soul. He was a delightful, civilized human being with a poetic beauty in his face. When I told him of my project, he appreciated its significance.

“But,” he asked, “who is paying for my bust?”

I replied, “No one. I am doing it on my own.”

“But,” he said, “there are expenses connected with sculpture.” I replied that when I went abroad to do these heads, that part would be looked after. He apparently was skeptical, for, a short time later, I received the following note:

“Maestro,

You understand, I can spare the enclosed and I am sorry I cannot send more. Perhaps I can do so later. I thank you for your kindness and generosity.

(signed) T. S. Masaryk”

He enclosed a check for six hundred dollars.

At this time, I also met François Monod, *Chef de Cabinet* of André Tardieu of the French High Commission, and Godfrey Butler of British Information. They both promised to help in their respective areas. I was overjoyed when, on November 2, 1918, I received letters of introduction from André Tardieu to Clemenceau and Marshal Foch, as well as a personal letter to Marshal Foch from Lieutenant-Colonel Réquin.

The same mail brought a letter from the State Department in Wash-

Between Sitzings

ington, saying that my application for a passport had been turned down on the ground that my trip abroad at that time was not essential.

The epidemic of Spanish 'flu was raging, and I had it. I was in bed with a high fever, and when the letter from the State Department arrived, something snapped in me. I jumped out of bed and dressed, much to Yvonne's distress. She pleaded with me that I was ill, that I had a fever, that this was no time to travel, that I should wait. I couldn't wait. I rushed out of the house and took the first train to Washington.

I went straight to the office of the Committee on Public Information to see George Creel, its chairman. He was busy and couldn't see me, and I did not get the letters he had promised me. I saw Carl Byoir, the second in command. He was sympathetic and I asked him who could help me. He mentioned some names, among them Philip Patchin.

"Phil Patchin? Sure I know him. We were at the Belgian front together as war correspondents. Where is he? What is he doing?"

"Why he is in the State Department."

"Get him on the 'phone for me."

When I told Phil who I was, he told me to come right over. When I arrived there, I was taken to Phil Patchin's office. We had a warm reunion. He asked me what I was doing in Washington. I told him about my mission and showed him my letters of introduction. He thought the idea of an American artist doing the busts of the Allied leaders a stroke of genius.

"When do you plan to go?"

"I could sail on Saturday if I got my passport."

I had already made reservations on the *Lorraine* of the French Line. Patchin got busy, telephoned the authorities and explained the situation. When I got to the passport office I was expected. I got my passport and caught the first train back to New York.

I was all set. I had my passport. I had my letters. But I had no money. Only one person could help me—Mrs. Whitney. She knew my story and she readily gave me a loan. I paid my debts, bought my ticket, left some money with Yvonne, and I sailed for France.

However, before sailing, I went to say good-bye to my mother. My

Plastic History

sisters had told her that I was going to California. I was all prepared to repeat what they had said. But when I faced her, something came over me and I told her everything. I told her I was sailing for France. I told her that I had letters to Foch and Clemenceau. My sisters were afraid that Mother, who was almost eighty and ill, would be upset at my sailing for France in wartime. But no—she was elated and proud and kissed me good-bye with a joyous heart.

I arrived at the pier early; the instructions were to be there at seven A.M. One had to go through all sorts of official red tape. Papers were scrutinized, you were scrutinized, and your income tax return was scrutinized. All this took time. There were people ahead of me in line. I suddenly noticed a back I thought I recognized. With joy, I walked over to it and smacked it a hearty "hello." The man whirled around and snarled: "If you do that again, I'll kill you," and walked away. I was bewildered, for it was Lincoln Steffens. I had known Steffens and Hutchins Hapgood at the Brevoort Hotel and had occasionally dined with him there and at the Player's Club.

I went aboard ship feeling terribly lonely. On the upper deck, a French officer in a colonel's uniform was making a water-color of New York harbor. I asked the deck steward who he was and he said he was Lieutenant-Colonel Réquin. That rang a bell, for I was carrying a personal letter from Colonel Réquin to Marshal Foch. When I introduced myself, he dropped his sketchbook, took my hand and called me "*Maitre*."

He expressed his pleasure that I was going to do the bust of Marshal Foch, with whom he had served at the Battle of the Marne. He left his sketching and we went to the bar. I felt better still when Colonel Réquin then introduced me to André Tardieu and Louis Aubert who had arrived on board, and the boat sailed. I had friends on board. To hell with Steffens, I thought.

It occurred to me that I had better go down and look at my cabin. I finally located it. As I opened the door, there was that familiar back hoisting luggage up to the upper berth. It turned around and said, "What? You again? What do you want now? This is my cabin."

Between Sitzings

"This is going to be a fine trip," I said, turning around, I slammed the door and went back on deck and into the bar for another drink. I needed it. I wondered if I could be shifted. I knew it was a full ship, as I had not been able to get a cabin to myself. I had my drink and thought I would get a bit of air. As I started to take a turn on deck I saw Steffens coming towards me.

"Come here," he said, "I want to talk to you."

We walked into the bar, and he shook his finger in my face. "Don't ever do to anybody what you did to me."

We sat down at a table and he explained. He was going abroad on a mission for Colonel House, but was not sure he would be allowed to sail, because his mission was secret and he had no official credentials. He was nervous and tense. He was traveling as a newspaper correspondent. When I hit him on the back, he thought that meant trouble.

I laughed. It wasn't going to be so bad after all. At lunch time, we went down to the dining room, and I told Steffens my story and my plans. I informed him that the whole French High Commission was on board and reported my meeting with Lt.-Col. Réquin and Tardieu. When I asked Steffens to meet them, he demurred, saying, "They are French, you know. They have respect for art and artists. I don't think they will be so glad to meet me."

We soon discovered there were other friends on board: John Erskine in a Y.M.C.A. uniform, who was going over on an educational mission for our armed forces; and Owen Johnson, the novelist.

There was a man Steffens and I watched walking the decks. He was blond and overly tall and wore a little cap. He always carried books or papers under his arm, and walked with a very intent expression. I told Steffens about Conrad, and my experience with him in a restaurant, when he described the possible activities of a little old man who was concentrating on his food. Steff and I played the game of trying to guess the activities of some of our fellow passengers. We decided that this man was in the secret service. I accosted him and invited him to join Steff and myself for a drink. I told him of our game and told him of what we had accused him. He laughed and said we were close. He was

Plastic History

a banker named Hayden B. Harris, and was on business for the Treasury Department.

One afternoon, I walked into the smoking room and I found André Tardieu sitting at a table with my old friend Owen Johnson. As I passed by, I heard the word "Wilson." I stopped and said to Tardieu jokingly, "Don't listen to him, he is a Republican."

Tardieu looked up at me and asked quizzically, "And what are you?" "Oh, me," said I, "I am a sculptor."

They both laughed and asked me to join them for a drink.

This was a memorable trip, for when we were halfway across the ocean, news was flashed that the Armistice had been signed. I had been in New York when the false Armistice was announced, and the mad joy of the people was still fresh in my memory. But this time it was true. The captain ordered all the lights turned on. Strangely enough, it never occurred to anybody that there might be some submarines lurking around that did not know what we knew. The joy and gaiety and tears were unbounded. I remember everybody kissing and hugging each other and swearing eternal friendship.

After the excitement of the Armistice, the journey seemed endless. Everybody was anxious to get to Paris, and was making plans for what they would do when they got there. I was comforted when Col. Réquin said that his first visit would be to Marshal Foch, and that he would take up in person the matter of the Marshal's sitting for me.

Lincoln Steffens shared my compartment in a special train of the French High Commission and we traveled from Bordeaux to Paris together.

We arrived at the Gare d'Orsay about midnight and reached the Chatham Hotel to find that it was packed—not a room to be had.

"There must be some place you can put us up for the night?"

The clerk said, "There is the bridal suite."

We took it. The suite was furnished with brocades, golden Louis XV furniture, golden cupids and garlands all over the place. It was hideous, but we were tired and there were beds and a bath. After a wonderful night's sleep and a marvelous breakfast, we started out to have a look at Paris.

CHAPTER 25

MARSHAL FOCH

IT WAS A Saturday morning, and Steffens and I were in a taxi coming from the American Embassy when I suddenly caught sight of Colonel Réquin. I stopped the cab and when he saw me, he said: "Good God, I spent the whole day with Foch yesterday and I completely forgot about you."

At Pocard's that evening, the colonel brought better news: "I have done the impossible," he said. "A car will come for you at your hotel at 6:30 tomorrow and take you to *Maréchal* Foch's headquarters at Senlis. The *Maréchal* has agreed to give you one sitting from ten to twelve." And Réquin added: "If you don't make a masterpiece, I shall never speak to you again!"

On a cold, drizzly November morning, one week after the Armistice, a military truck drove up to the hotel. The road from Paris to Senlis was war-torn, full of ruts and holes—speed was impossible. It was so cold, we had to stop at a little café on the road for coffee and a cognac. It took us three hours to reach our destination.

I was taken up and presented to General Weygand, who was expecting me, and I proceeded to set my modeling stand in the Marshal's study. It was a high room, very spacious, with yellow tapestried walls covered with maps. There was a large table in the middle of the room, and several comfortable armchairs. I went back to General Weygand's

Marshal Foch

adjoining office to await the Marshal. Soon an orderly came in to announce that the Marshal had just returned from church.

I was terribly nervous when Weygand got up and beckoned me to follow him. The door opened and Marshal Foch put out his hand in greeting. He was short, bow-legged, thick through the chest. His uniform bore no insignia of his rank except the stars on his sleeve.

"Bonjour, vous parlez français?"

I said I did and gave him my hand. He held it firmly, and—intending to lead me into the room—gave it a pull. I, not expecting this, fairly flew in. He stood there laughing.

"Alors, vous allez vous payer ma tête"—which in slang means you are going to make fun of me.

"Well, what do you want me to do?" he asked.

My abrupt entrance into his study had knocked all the nervousness out of me. I answered: "Just stand here next to me," and went straight to work, every minute being precious—only two hours!

We were interrupted several times. A secretary came in to whom he dictated a telegram. His sentences were short and crisp, as was his conversation. Once Foch realized that you had grasped his meaning he did not continue, but went on to the next thought, with staccato gesticulations, frequently interjecting *"patati-patata"* (and so on and so forth).

At 12:30, the Marshal suddenly asked if I liked good food. I did.

"Too bad," he replied, "I was going to ask you to lunch with me. You know," he continued, "there is a very good restaurant here in Senlis—le Grand Cerf—excellent cuisine. However, if you do not mind simple fare, I shall be delighted if you will join me. Come along."

I naturally stepped aside to let him pass. But he took me by the shoulders and pushed me out, saying, *"Je suis chez moi."* (I am host here.)

As we walked through the courtyard, orderlies and sentries stood at attention and saluted. The Marshal waved his hand in a semi-salute, murmuring *"Bonjour, bonjour."* We stepped into his car and drove out to his house where we were joined by his staff. We were seven at lunch.

Between Sitzings

I did not know if this was to be the last I would see of him, so I brought my sketchbook along, hoping to make some notes. He put me on his right, and poured out a glass of wine, after pouring a little in his own glass. He himself did not drink. The wine was slightly corked. I said nothing. I suppose he thought I was not doing the wine justice for he poured a little more into his own glass and tasted it.

"*Mais il est bouchonné*" (it is corked), he exclaimed, and sent for another bottle, "this time a good one for our guest of mark."

When lunch was over, he said, "Now back to work." Another sitting was more than I had dared to expect.

Foch liked the way I went about my job and called out to General Weygand, "*Dis-donc, Weygand, regardes-moi ça, viens voir, ce n'est pas si difficile que ça la sculpture!*" (Come and look, Weygand, sculpture isn't so difficult after all!)

I don't remember having worked so hard in all my life, and yet it was easy. The bust seemed to do itself. The Marshal stood there and watched me very closely, and every once in a while he would laugh. He would throw his head back, close his eyes and chuckle.

"*Le Maréchal*" was very keen on art. He had known Gustave Doré, who had been a great friend of his family. It was in Marshal Foch's house, at his instigation, that Gustave Doré made the illustrations for Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven."

We talked a good deal about the war. He asked me what Paris was like. He had tried to go there once, after the Armistice, but had not gotten very far because the crowds that gathered at the sight of him discouraged him. He never referred to the Germans as "Boches" but always as "the enemy." His only son had been killed in the war.

When I finished the bust I signed it at the back. The Marshal watched me doing it and said: "I'm going to sign it too." This was the first time that any one of my sitters had signed his bust, and it created a precedent. His signing the bust put the stamp of his approval on it, and his entourage reacted accordingly.

The next day Colonel Réquin came to see the bust. We are still speaking.

Marshal Foch

Back in Paris, Lincoln Steffens was waiting to see the bust. Later, when we went into the bar for a drink, we found several newspaper men there.

"What did he say?" asked Steffens.

"I don't know. I am exhausted. I was busy working."

"Here is a man who spent the whole day with the Marshal of France and he doesn't know what he said!"

But several days later I spotted Walter Duranty sitting on the terrace of the Café Napolitain—he was abjectly sipping a *pernod*. When I sat down he inquired mechanically, "Do you know anything?"

"Yes, I know something."

My story of how I made the bust of Marshal Foch brought him to life. Duranty asked some pertinent questions, made copious notes. Then he left me to go to his office to cable the story to his paper, the *New York Times*. It was a scoop, and the wires of congratulation I received from New York were tremendously rewarding.

(¶ After Marshal Foch, the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces, my next sitter was André Tardieu, whose enthusiasm in Washington had contributed so much to the success of my project. I had no studio, but my friend Cecil Howard came to my rescue, offering me the use of his.

The sittings with Tardieu were very gay. He was an unusually vital person and devoted to "wine, women and song." Inclined towards corpulence, this statesman was very much concerned that I should not exaggerate his double chin. He kept throwing his head back as he burst into raucous songs and recited endless verses. Our sittings usually finished up with an invitation to lunch.

One day, while lunching at Lavenue's, we were joined by one of his friends, and Tardieu began teasing him about a certain lady. His friend retorted that the lady was the wife of one of his friends, and that he never made love to the wife of a friend. Tardieu raised his hands in astonishment. "To whom then do you make love?"

Between Sittings

I was leading a busy, hectic life. Through Steffens I met other journalists and frequented their cafés. They got to looking upon me as one of them. These were Armistice days, and everybody was celebrating. It was one party after another. Whenever I met anyone, he fired the question at me, "Who are you doing now?" for they all knew that I had made a bust of Foch.

I ran into my old friend Dana Pond in a captain's uniform of the Red Cross. He was painting a portrait of General Tasker Bliss, a member of the Supreme War Council. He suggested that I do a head of the General. Of course I was delighted, and he arranged a luncheon at the General's headquarters in Versailles, where we were joined by Pierre Bedard, who was on the general staff, and arrangements were made for sittings. General Bliss was generous of body and soul, and had the face of a Chinese mandarin.

As I still had no studio, I modeled the General's bust in Cecil Howard's. One day, Cess had good news for me. The painter who was occupying the studio opposite his own, one flight up on the landing, was going to leave, and his studio would be available. The apartment consisted of two rooms with a large balcony. It had a south light, but it was a studio. I bought some furniture and modeling stands, and other things I needed to work and live with, and moved into 14 Avenue du Maine. Cess and Céline Howard became my daily companions. Having my own studio was a relief. Living in a hotel was costly, and my funds were getting very low.

When I first struck Paris, I went to Morgan's Bank and converted all my dollars into francs. Shortly afterwards the franc was devalued. The cost of living went up. Nothing but a miracle could save me.

Late one afternoon, I called on Steff at the Chatham and asked him to have dinner with me. He looked at me askance. "Sure," he said, "got any money?"

"Enough for dinner," I said.

"Show me."

I pulled out several hundred francs. "Think that's enough?"

"All right," he said. "How about Émile's?"

Marshal Foch

I hesitated. Émile's was a small, chic place, and rather expensive. However, we went to Émile's. We had an excellent dinner—wine, brandy and everything. I called for the bill, and Steff let me pay it. It took practically all I had.

"How are you going to get home?" he asked, knowing how allergic I was to subways.

"Take a taxi," I said.

"You are sure you have enough money?"

"It's all right," I replied, "I'll manage."

It was late, and taxis would take you only if you were going their way. The flags on their taximeters marked their destination. It was easy for Steff—he had only two or three blocks to walk. Just then a taxi drove up with a flag marked "Porte Maillot"—exactly the opposite direction from my studio. The driver asked me, "Where to?"

I said, "Your way," and climbed up on the front seat next to him. As we drove off I waved to Steffens, who stood there scratching his head perplexedly.

The taxi-driver was a good-natured guy, and I talked him into driving me to my studio. When we got there I invited him in to have a drink. His eyes bulged out when he saw my bust of Foch. I explained to him that I was temporarily short of funds but if he would stop by the next day, I would settle with him. He was a nice guy. We understood each other.

The following afternoon, Steffens turned up with our shipmate, Hayden B. Harris. He bought the first bronze replica of my bust of Marshal Foch.

That night I had dinner with Steffens, and he told me how he did it.

"It was easy. I just told Harris that I had wonderful news for him. I told him, 'Jo is broke. This is the time to go to his studio and do him in the eye. You can get that bust of Foch cheap.'"

CHAPTER 26

FROM PERSHING TO CLEMENCEAU

I HAD MADE UP my mind to do General Pershing, the Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces. Whenever I met anybody who might bring me close to him, I would explain the reason for my presence in Paris. And finally, one afternoon, at a cocktail party, I met Colonel Edward Bodwitch, Aide-de-Camp to General Pershing. He promised to do what he could to get me the coveted sittings.

About a month later, I was able to write to Yvonne:

“For the last three days I have been working like hell on the bust of General Pershing, and it promises to be a great success. . . . Last Saturday I received a wire to appear at the General’s house in Paris at 9:30 the following morning (Sunday).

“I found an American artist by the name of Joseph Chase, who was going to make an oil sketch of him, and an English chap named Percy Anderson, who appeared with a pencil drawing practically all done from a photograph, and several others expected. I laughed and put up my clay and we started squabbling for position.

“Finally the General came in and smilingly asked us what we wanted him to do. I spoke up and said that if not for the painters we would get on swimmingly, for I did not want him to pose at all, only to talk. He laughed, saying that he did not realize that sculpture was so easy to pose for.

From Pershing to Clemenceau

“Well, we started to work, and he seemed to be fascinated by the way the bust went on, never having seen sculpture produced before. He asked me how much time I wanted. I told him I did not exactly know, but if I had him to myself I felt I could do much better. He told me he would give me a couple of hours in the afternoon, and if I wanted, he would come down to my studio the next morning and give me a couple of hours more. You can imagine how delighted I was and so it happened. . . .”

There were numerous sittings with General Pershing, for I was doing him in marble. As the stone progressed, and the General saw it grow, he said to me, pointing to his bust, “Some day I am going to write an ode to that man, and tell the truth about him—his strength and his weakness.”

One day, on leaving the Crillon, the headquarters of the American Delegation, I noticed an American soldier unloading a truck in front of the hotel and stopped to talk to him. His height, his weight, his erect stance, his grace and fine features struck me as essentially American—a symbol of the A.E.F. I asked who his chief was, and if I got permission for him, whether he would come to my studio to pose for a sketch.

I went to see his commanding officer, who readily fell in with my request and gave the doughboy the necessary leave to sit for me.

At General Pershing’s next spring, I showed him my sketch of the doughboy. Several days later Mrs. Boardman Harriman telephoned me that the General had told her: “Jo Davidson has made the most wonderful statue of an American soldier as I knew him that I have ever seen.” She asked me if she and Mrs. Willard Straight could come to see it. They too were much impressed with the sketch. Mrs. Straight requested me to make a statue of the doughboy in stone, to be placed in the American cemetery in memory of her late husband, Major Willard Straight.

I worked on that doughboy for over three years but the cemetery was redesigned and there was no place for my statue.

I kept the stone figure of the doughboy some ten years in a studio in the Impasse du Maine. In 1931 the city decided to cut a street through

Between Sitzings

the Impasse, and my studio had to be demolished. After a great deal of correspondence with Mrs. Straight, it was decided that the cost of moving the figure was excessive. My sixteen-foot stone figure of the dough-boy had to be destroyed.

(| When I heard that Colonel House had arrived in Paris, I went to call on him at the Hotel Crillon. He welcomed me very cordially and I told him that I had decided to do a plastic history of the war on my own. That interested him and when I asked him to sit for his bust he replied that he was a busy man but would give me all the time he could. He added that he would get others to sit for me. Through him, Admiral W. S. Benson, Lord Robert Cecil, Bernard Baruch, Lord Arthur James Balfour and others came to sit for me.

Colonel House was fascinated by the way his own bust was progressing and one day, when the bust was almost completed, he told me that his wife was most anxious to see it. I expressed some concern over Mrs. House's impressions of an unfinished piece of work, but he assured me he knew how to handle the situation.

The next afternoon, a bitterly cold winter day, Colonel House appeared with Mrs. House. Colonel House wore a silk topper, a fur-lined coat with a fur collar and Mrs. House, too, was well-wrapped in furs. The Colonel didn't let her take her coat off. I uncovered the bust. Colonel House took Mrs. House over, and stood back of her, holding her arms.

"Have a good look at it! Don't say anything. Now you have seen it."

With a good-bye, he walked her to the door and out of the studio. He came back smiling, said, "You see?" He took off his hat and coat and we went to work.

A few days later, Colonel House called me up to say he had a paying sitter for me—Mr. Bernard M. Baruch.

Mr. Baruch, a tall, handsome man, with a ruddy complexion and white hair, could have been a model for Raeburn. As he walked about my studio, looking at my sculpture, Colonel House took me aside and whispered, "A great man, Baruch—spends money like a poor man."

From Pershing to Clemenceau

While I was doing the head of Bernard Baruch, Steffens returned from Moscow, where he had gone on what was known as the Bullitt Mission. He came straight to my studio to collect his typewriter and other belongings he had left with me. Mr. Baruch said, "Well, what about Russia? What is it all about?"

Steffens was in a hurry to get away and write his piece. All he said was: "I have seen the future, and it works!" and with that he left.

I then reminded Baruch that while I was doing a bust of Frank Polk, of the State Department, he mentioned that he had just had a wire from our Embassy in London stating that Steffens had applied for a visa to go to Copenhagen, and had given Frank Polk as a reference.

"Well," I had asked, "what did you do?"

And Polk had replied seriously: "I wired: 'Listen to him—give him what he wants. I always do. Of course,'" Polk had added: "'Steffens is crazy, we don't agree. But he is the greatest reporter we have ever had. And when he reports a thing, it is so.'"

I started the Baruch bust with enthusiasm and the first sitting went very well. During the next sitting, he seemed to escape me. Why? The recurring question—what is a portrait? All the features may be in place, the structure of the head may be correct, yet the man is not there. Baruch was conscious of my groping. When I confessed my difficulty and sighed, "I thought you were going to be easy," he looked at me with a quizzical smile. "Lots of people thought I was going to be easy." I caught his expression just then as he spoke—I had been watching him like a hawk—and in that instant I got him.

I look back on this period and wonder where I got the energy. I had now done, within the year, Masaryk, Wilson, Foch, Tardieu, General Dawes, Harbord, Pershing, Bliss, Colonel House, Baruch and a statuette of my friend Colonel Réquin.

There was talk of an exhibition in June. In the meantime, Edward A. Filene, the Boston merchant came along and ordered ten bronzes, some of which I had already made and others which were to come. Filene was a big businessman, a great democrat, a thinker, who talked like an intellectual but who acted like a practical businessman.

There was other work too. My old friend George Hellman turned up

Between Sitzings

with a job for me. He wanted me to do a plaque of the late Mayor John Purroy Mitchel of New York City for Columbia University.

As I look back on these years, I realize what a liberal education I was receiving from all these contacts with the men who were making history. The speed with which one sitter replaced another, each being a distinct personality, taught me to simplify more and extract the essentials needed to make a portrait.

In fact, while I was doing each of these heads, I *was* that person. As I look through the list of those who passed through the studio in the Avenue du Maine, I realized that it was there I began to have a sense of international affairs, and my studio seemed at times to be a branch of the Quai d'Orsay and the Crillon. There were Eleutherios Venizelos and Colonel House and André Tardieu, Robert Lansing and Frank Polk, General Diaz and Pershing and Dawes, Harbord and General Payot, to mention only a few.

It is strange how little I remember of some and how much of others.

My next sitter, Lord Robert Cecil, was very tall—six feet three or four, with a large head which seemed heavy to carry. He was stoop-shouldered, I suppose from trying to talk down to people who were merely life-sized. When he came for his first sitting, I was putting up the clay. He sat on the arm of a chair holding his hat and stick. He watched me for a bit as I worked and when I looked at him, he said rather timidly:

“Well, when are you going to begin?”

“I have begun,” I said, amazed. Did he think I was too slow?

He looked relieved: “Oh,” he said; “is that all there is to it? I thought you were going to put plaster on my face.”

I heard later that he had got me mixed up with some chap who was making life masks.

General Diaz, Italian Commander-in-Chief was quite different. After the second or third sitting, he came into the studio, looked hard at the bust I was modeling of him, and, pointing to it imperiously, exclaimed:

“The head is too big. You must make it smaller.”

He was Commander-in-Chief and I was the Army! I took my calipers and measured his head. He was still wrong.

From Pershing to Clemenceau

My contract with Filene required that I make a bust of Clemenceau. I had started the bust from sketches, drawings and some desultory snapshots—most inadequate material. Time was pressing. Since I was seeing a good deal of Tardieu at that time, I asked if there were not some way of getting a sitting. I suggested that I could finish the bust either at Clemenceau's home or at his office. Tardieu said he wouldn't ask him, we would just go there—bust, stand and all.

"When?" I asked.

"Tomorrow morning," he said.

The following morning, I got a car, loaded it with the bust and modeling stand, and called for Tardieu. We drove up to Clemenceau's house at 8 rue Franklin. Fortunately for us, Tardieu was known there. When the doorman saw what we had, he hesitated, but Tardieu reassured him and told him it was all right. We put the bust in the hall, where Clemenceau could not possibly miss seeing it. Then we took a seat in the antechamber and waited to see what would happen.

We did not have long to wait, before we heard the voice of the "Tiger."

"*Nom de Dieu, qu'est-ce que c'est?*" (Who brought this damn thing here?)

That was the signal, and Tardieu stuck his head out.

"Oh, it is you, you 'so-and-so!'"

Tardieu replied: "That isn't all—I have the sculptor here too."

This was my cue. I stepped out into the arena with the growling "Tiger."

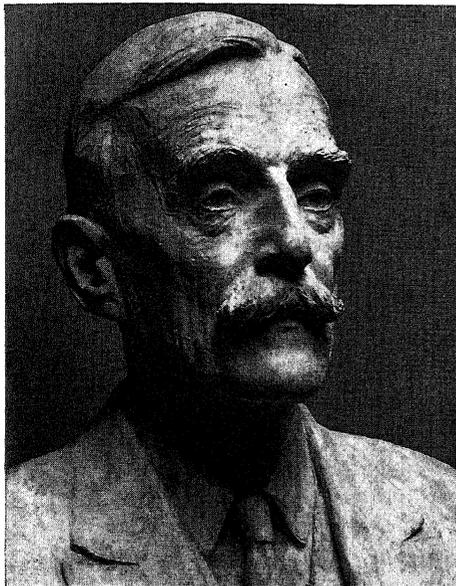
"I have no time," he said, and he started going back into his office with Tardieu, me and the bust following. I rolled my stand into the study. A tremendous bay window gave a wonderful light. I went to work, with Clemenceau gesticulating and shouting, "No! No! No! This is not the way to do sculpture. You wait until I come back from Egypt and I will give you all the sittings you want."

I kept on working, while he upbraided Tardieu for having got him into this. After a little, he came over, looked at the bust, and grumbled, "It is not bad—it's good—but I haven't the time now."

Between Sittings

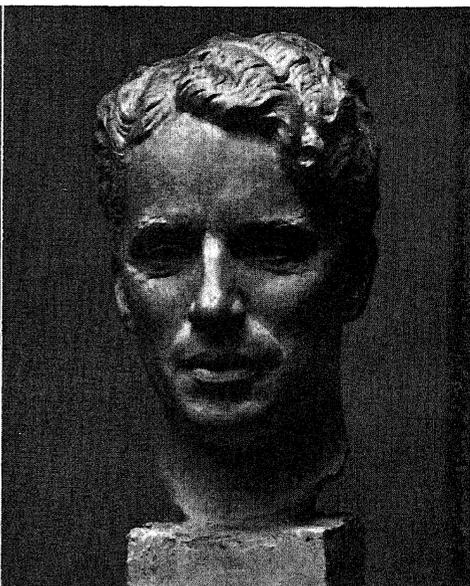
I kept on working, making the corrections I needed. I was not going to take any chances. Filene had stipulated in his order for ten busts that Clemenceau's must be included, and the deadline was the end of July.

Not only was that deadline met but the old "Tiger" even signed his name to the bust.



ANDREW W. MELLON

Photo Kollar, Paris



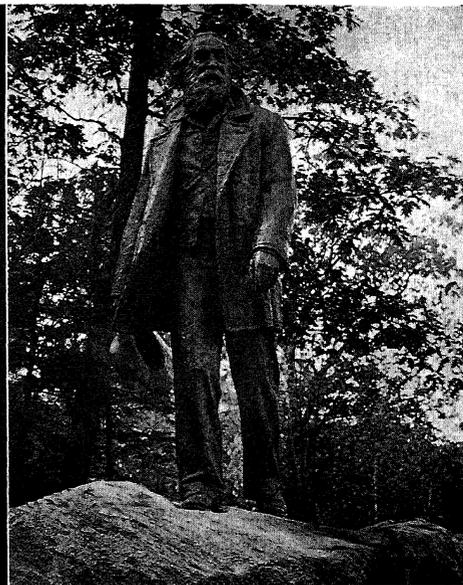
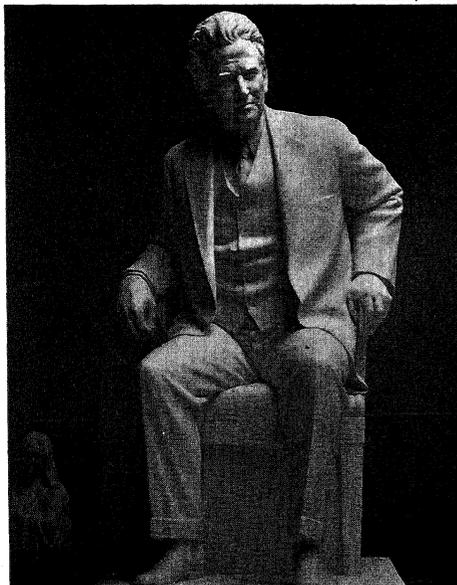
CHARLIE CHAPLIN

Photo by Bernès, Marouteau & Cie., Paris

ROBERT M. LA FOLLETTE

Photo Kollar, Paris

WALT WHITMAN



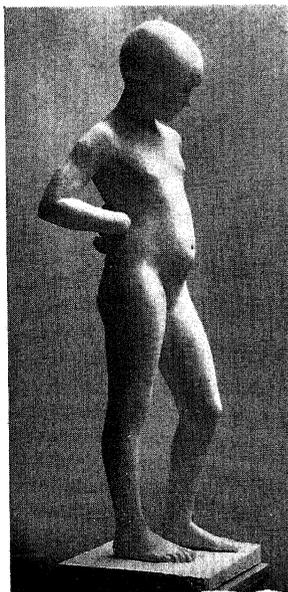


Photo Kollar, Paris

YOUNG NUDE

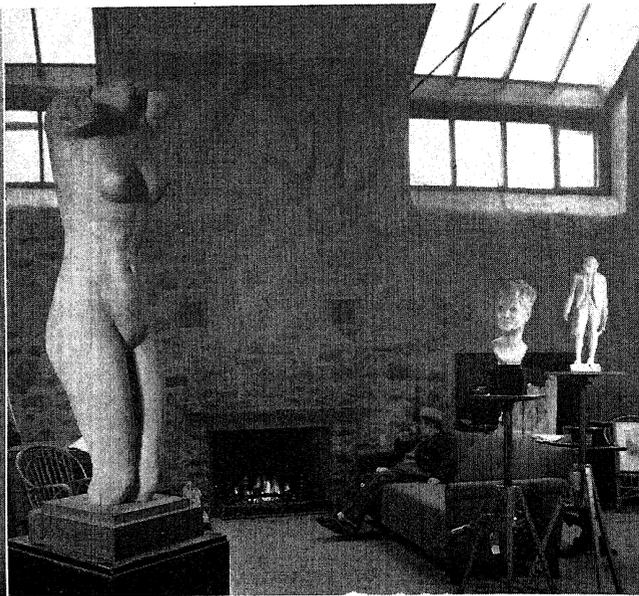


Photo by Andreas Feininger, Black Star

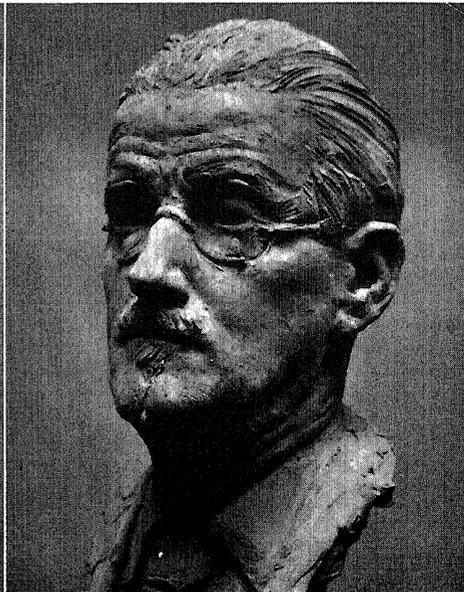
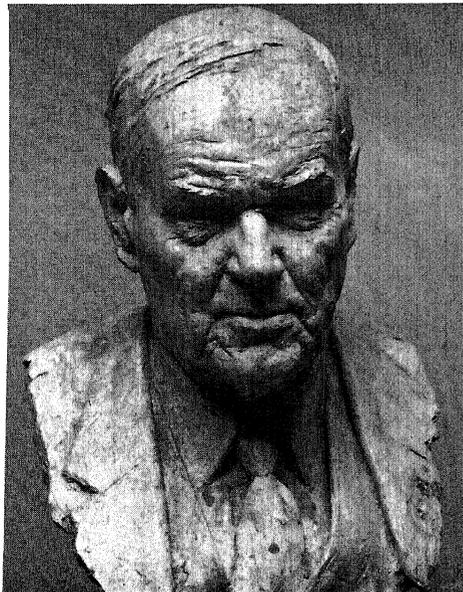
JO DAVIDSON RELAXED

CLARENCE DARROW

JAMES JOYCE

Photo Kollar, Paris

Photo Kollar, Paris



CHAPTER 27

ON THE DOMESTIC SIDE

SCULPTURE HAS a way of occupying space—and so when the studio next to mine became available, I rented it and cut a door through. This meant I had a bedroom which was more convenient than sleeping on the balcony as heretofore. The studio could hardly be called modern but it had atmosphere.

My concierge had become a person of consequence. She loved to report who had visited my studio each day and considered them *her* visitors.

Yvonne was arriving; it was spring and Paris was beautiful. I had told Steffens that Yvonne was coming over to join me. He did not want to meet her, he said. He knew married folks: there was always one who was all right—two was too much to ask. I had written to Yvonne about Steff and of course she was eager to meet him. When I told her what he had said, she was even more determined. We called on him at his hotel immediately upon her arrival and they took to each other at once.

Not having a kitchen of our own, we were taking all our friends out to restaurants and when Yvonne saw the bills, she suggested it would be better to get a furnished apartment and a cook. And so we decided to bring the children back from boarding school in America and settle in Paris.

We found a beautifully furnished apartment at 44 rue du Bac, and

Between Sittings

our bohemian existence came to an end. The artistic discomfort of the Avenue du Maine was replaced by comfortable bourgeois surroundings, and we sank luxuriously into the depths of upholstered armchairs. My studio became a workshop. Dujam Penic, who had been working with me in New York, turned up and I took him on again.

By the time we were settled in our apartment, the children arrived from America to join us. It was a happy reunion. Jacques, who was ten, was delighted to be back. He had not forgotten his French, but my six-year-old Jean, who had refused to learn English when he arrived in New York, now refused to have anything to do with French. He was conservative—no change! Whatever is, must go on!

As the summer days became longer and warmer, we decided to take the children to Dinard, where Margaret Morris and Johnny Fergusson had a school for children. They were taught dancing, drawing and painting. That was a delightful holiday. My son Jean became great friends with Arthur Power, an Irish writer. They were so friendly, in fact, that Jean addressed him as "Power," and he in turn called him "Davidson." Walking along one day, they came across Margaret Morris' pupils painting water-colors, and Power said to Jean, "Davidson, why don't you paint?"

And my son replied, "I hate art, don't you?"

Settling down became a progressive operation: from the rue du Bac, we moved to a small house on the corner of the rue Duroc and the rue Masseran. Our landlord, Count Étienne de Beaumont, offered to rent it to us on a lease for three, six, or nine years, the customary time periods of French leases.

It was a beautiful house. On the ground floor to the left of the entrance was a large salon with three windows giving on a garden and three on the street. To the right was a dining room with frescoes by Le Fauconnier. The floor above had a small library as well as bedrooms and bath and the top floor was for the children and their governess. We took it and furnished it. Some of the furniture came from Ceret and some from New York. When it was ready we moved in. We loved our new home. We found it a wonderful house to entertain in and the children went to the neighborhood *lycée*.

On the Domestic Side

One late afternoon about tea-time, the doorbell rang. As I happened to be in the salon, I opened the door and there stood a charming blonde lady who introduced herself as the mother of Jean's best friend. I asked her in, and Yvonne came down. The lady was most solicitous. She felt she should know the parents of her boy's friend. We agreed.

Tea was served. As the lady was looking around, she spotted the bronze bust that I had made of Jean. "How lovely! Who did that, may I ask?"

I said that I was the culprit. She raised her eyebrows in amazement.

"Why, this is wonderful."

She turned to the bust of Jacques. "And who did that?"

Again I admitted it was I.

"But when do you get time to do all this with all your other activities?"

I didn't follow, and replied facetiously that the days were long.

"But your factories?" she queried.

We were bewildered. Then the truth came out. Jean had been boasting that he was the son of Harley Davidson, the motorcycle manufacturer. Anybody could have an artist for a father, but motorcycles—that was something! While we were laughing, Jean suddenly appeared. When he saw the lady, he turned as red as a beet and ran upstairs.

My studios in the Avenue du Maine were fairly humming with work. The Mitchel panel for Columbia University on which I was at work was progressing. The doughboy was enlarged, and was being carved in the Impasse du Maine studio. There I had as my neighbors the sculptors Antoine Bourdelle and Naoum Aronson. One day Aristide Maillol, whom I had known in Ceret and with whom I had often visited in Marly, came to luncheon. I took him to my studio in the Impasse du Maine to see my doughboy. As we approached the Impasse, there was Bourdelle walking towards us, absorbed in thought, never once looking up, as though he had not seen us. Maillol was quite upset.

"I don't know what ails him. He is furious with me because I do sculpture. He is an old friend. I have always known him. I used to paint, you know. One day, I went to call on him in his studio. He was out. I got tired of waiting, so I found some clay and started modeling my

Between Sitzings

hand to amuse myself. I don't know how long I was at it. Bourdelle came in and saw what I was up to.

"*Il ne faut pas faire de la sculpture!*" he said. (You must not do sculpture!)

"*Il est furieux parce que j'ai fait de la sculpture—qu'est-ce que cela peut lui faire!*" (He is furious because I do sculpture—what difference can it make to him!)

Maillol had been working on a reclining nude which was to be a monument to Cézanne. My stonecutter Tessa was to point it for him in stone. The stone was already in Tessa's studio in the rue de la Glacière. When Maillol completed the plaster model, he sent it down to Tessa's studio, and he and I went there to see both the model and the stone. It was a beautiful figure, but Maillol had never seen it outside his own studio in Marly, and when he saw it there in Tessa's studio in a different light, he was very unhappy. He looked at it from all angles.

"It is a little thin here," he said, pointing to the thigh. "It lacks a little volume. Look, Tessa, when you point it in the stone, if you see anything wrong, you fix it."

Tessa was flabbergasted. "But *maître*," he exclaimed.

"Yes, yes," the great sculptor said to the stonecutter, "you fix it." Maillol's simplicity was touching. I saw a good deal of him in those days. He was working on a seated nude which he was going to send to the Autumn Salon. He was never satisfied with what he did, and when this figure was cast in plaster, he started to recarve it, cutting a piece here, adding a piece there, and patching it with dead plaster. When he got through, the forms were rich, full and solid. I asked him how he was going to get it to the Salon.

"I have a friend here who has a taxicab. He will take it there."

"Oh, I am afraid it will never get there," I said. "It is so fragile it will fall apart." I told him that I had a very good plaster caster and that I would send him down to make a fresh cast.

"No, I know these robbers," he said, "they charge too much."

I assured him that my man was reasonable. The next day I saw my plaster caster and told him what was up. He was thrilled with the idea

On the Domestic Side

of casting a figure for Maillol, and I warned him not to argue about the fee, for I would make up the difference. He agreed, and went to see Maillol the next day.

The following morning he came to my studio almost in tears. I asked him what had happened.

"I assure you I acted exactly as you told me to. When he asked me how much I would charge, I told him I would do it for whatever he was accustomed to pay, for it was an honor to work for him. He mentioned his fee, and I agreed. As I was leaving he stopped me and asked, 'How many sacks of plaster will you use?' I told him what I thought necessary. He flew into a rage and put me out, saying, 'You are all robbers.' "

That was the end of that. When Maillol sent his figure to the Autumn Salon it got there in pieces, and he had a terrible time patching it up.

About this time I did a bust of Harry P. Davison, the banker and head of the Red Cross. During Mr. Davison's first sitting he complained that I had made his nose crooked, but when he came in the next morning, he said cheerfully, "You are right, my nose *is* like that. This morning as I was shaving, I looked in the mirror. I shut one eye, looked down at my nose with the other, and it was not there. Then I shut that eye, opened the other, and there it was." That tickled him.

We had a grand time making the bust. During the last sitting, he told me the story of Michelangelo and Lorenzo de Medici. Michelangelo did a job for Lorenzo, and when it was completed, he delivered it and sent in a bill for his services. Lorenzo was very pleased with the sculpture, but not with the bill, and wrote Michelangelo to that effect, returning the bill for correction. Michelangelo tore up the bill, and sent Lorenzo another doubling it. Lorenzo saw the point, wrote Michelangelo an apology, and sent him back the second bill, saying that he was ready to pay the first bill as it stood. Michelangelo sent him a third bill, tripling the first.

My hands were covered with clay. However, I put out my hand.

"Thank you," I said.

"Now why did I tell you that story?" sighed Mr. Davison.

Between Sittings

When the bust was finished, I sent Mr. Davison a bill doubling the price I had quoted him in Washington. The next day he phoned me to say that he had deposited the amount of the bill to my account at Morgan's that very morning. He was so pleased with the bust that he ordered three copies in bronze.

CHAPTER 28

ANATOLE FRANCE

THE OPPORTUNITY of doing a bust of Anatole France came to me as a result of my wife's decision to go into business.

Yvonne had always designed her own clothes and they were greatly admired by her friends. She was constantly urged to design some for them.

Through Yvonne's cousin, the great French surgeon, Dr. Thierry de Martel, she met the Baroness du Breton who had similar plans, and they decided to set up shop together.

Gardner Hale turned a commonplace apartment in the rue des Acacias into a place of beauty and the two designers prepared their opening "collection." I sailed for New York with the intention of returning in time for the opening. Unfortunately I missed it. But the New York and Paris press reported a grand opening. The papers also made a good deal of the fact that two of France's leading literary lights, Anatole France and Claude Farrère, had attended the ceremonies.

The dressmaking establishment flourished so rapidly that it was not long before it was transferred from the rue des Acacias to the fashionable rue de Marignan, off the Champs Élysées.

The architect Jean-Paul Oury who undertook to remodel my wife's new establishment was also the architect for Anatole France. It was he who urged the great writer to sit for me.

Between Sitzings

When I went with Oury to France's house for the first time, I was quite overwhelmed by the exquisite taste with which this home was arranged. It was full of lovely things, paintings, sculpture and books.

We went upstairs to France's library to look for a place to work in. It was a beautiful room, the walls lined from floor to ceiling with shelves filled with books.

France was in love with the eighteenth century, and you felt that his conversation possessed the perfection of that period. He spoke with extraordinary clarity and beauty. It seemed as if his phrases had been polished and that he was not saying them for the first time. When he talked you didn't want to interrupt him. It was like listening to somebody reading out of a beautiful old manuscript. He loved books, and he loved art. And when lovely ladies were around, he couldn't keep his hands off them.

We made a date to work the following morning. When I rang the bell France opened the door. As I entered the hall, I took off my hat and coat and casually threw them on a table to the right as I came in. This annoyed him.

"This table is a rare *objet d'art* and you put your coat on it."

We went upstairs and I got to work. My friend Oury was with me. My fingers itched to get to work as France sat there wrapped in his dressing gown, with a red velvet skullcap on his head, his eyes watching my every move. When I stopped working for a moment he said, "Why do you look at me so furiously?" I was not conscious of it. Our conversation reverted to art. France said, "I love art. Most people love to love art, I love art."

He was very pleased with what I had accomplished in our first sitting. I also made a good many drawings of him. I felt that he was annoyed that I stopped when I did; but I thought I should not work any more on the bust, for if I had gone on with it, it would have been something else. I remember the terrific excitement the bust caused when I brought it to the foundry.

In the spring of 1922, I sent some of my later works over to New York, where Jerry Kelly of the Wildenstein Gallery organized an

Anatole France

exhibition. When I arrived from Paris, Jerry greeted me with a bunch of messages—telephone calls galore, invitations for lunches, teas, cocktails and dinners.

“Look, Jerry,” I said, “the next time anybody calls tell them that I said this. If you buy a bronze I’ll come to dinner. If you order a bust, I’ll stay all night and be perfectly ridiculous.”

Jerry did not keep that to himself. In fact, he embroidered upon it. His showmanship and my preface to the catalogues created quite a stir. The preface read as follows:

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

It is a fallacy to set out with the assumption that there is a scale of values in Art, “bad” to “good.”

All artists’ work expresses them and those of us who like their art.

My sculpture is neither “good” nor “bad,” it is mine; it may be yours.

It is mine because I did it, I did so because I could not do otherwise, it expressed something in me.

If it expresses something in you, you will like it, and then—in an Art sense—it is yours.

It is yours and mine.

And if it is ours, let us say so.

Don’t call it “good” and don’t let anyone else call it “bad.”

Let us say, “For better or for worse” this Art expresses us.

The critics had a grand time: there was plenty to talk about. I still have a clipping signed G.S.L. from the Christian Science Monitor, April 17, 1922:

“Davidson is so like a big friendly puppy—himself—a black Newfoundland—with his bushy black hair, his bushy black beard, dancing brown

Between Sitzings

eyes, and his sturdy, quick body, so altogether concerned with a rightful joy in life. And in telling you that I come as close as I can to telling you the secret of his genius. For in his sculpture his portraits, his torsos, his little figures are so replete with the quickness of life that you are startled to find that the coolness and immobility of stone and metal can become so highly charged with vividness. It is a vividness that rarely fails, no matter the subject—see the variety: Anatole France (a wonderful head), H. P. Davison, V. K. Wellington Koo, Lincoln Steffens, Mrs. Robert Goelet, a Russian dancer—vivid, vivid, and touched with a beauty of handling almost impalpable yet transforming.”

There were reams of press comment. Reading over some of the laudatory clippings, I realize how little they registered with me at the time. Perhaps it was because I was never quite satisfied with my work.

CHAPTER 29

THE GENOA CONFERENCE

IN 1922, Lincoln Steffens was in New York, on his way to cover the Genoa Conference. He suggested, since I had elected myself a plastic historian, that I come along. The Bolsheviks were going to be there.

One day, when I was lunching with Steffens at the Player's Club, he sold the idea to Glenn Frank, then editor of the *Century Magazine*, that I should write an illustrated article for the *Century* on the Genoa Conference. Frank agreed and advanced some money to make sure I would do it. So, for the second time, Steff and I sailed for Europe together. We stopped over in Paris for a few weeks and then proceeded to Genoa.

In Genoa, we stopped at the Albergo Del Giornalisti. Here there were journalists of all countries, it was a sort of museum in which all types were well represented. There seemed to be more foreign correspondents in Genoa than delegates, with a preponderance of Britishers and Americans.

In my correspondence, I find the following letters which I wrote to Yvonne from Genoa:

"I finished my second bust and have started a third one. The ones finished are Joffe and Krassin. Besides that, I am drawing all the time and have outlined my first story, 'A Day with the Russians at Rapallo.' Am at work

Between Sittings

on my second story, 'Main Street in Genoa'—about the foreign correspondents in a strange land—the things they say, and the things they do.

"We are having wonderful weather. The sun, shining, the Mediterranean, is all that has been written about it, a gradation of deep lustrous blue to bottle-green, beautiful hills dotted with trees and Italian villas, palms that do not look like dirty combs."

A few days later:

"Dearest Yvonne,

"A lull at last. For one day no work—just played around, looking and listening to what they had to say. Rumor has it that Lenin is coming to town. That would be wonderful for I should then try and get him to sit for me.

"The other night I attended a dinner given by the Anglo-American press for Lloyd George. I sat quite close to him and tried to draw him, but somehow or other, it did not pan out as well as I should have liked. . . .

". . . When I contemplate this tremendous struggle for supremacy, nobody is really looking for a solution for the great problems, because if they did, they would realize that they themselves would have to pay the price and, of course, *that* they are not willing to do. So the only thing to do for those who try to understand is not to want, and for those who want, not to understand—for one invariably interferes with the other.

"I am writing this in a room full of people of all nationalities, standing about and talking, a babble of voices in all languages—a veritable *Tour de Babel*. Typewriters going at full speed, others very slow and sharp, a perfect orchestration of a journalist symphony. It is the press club—Germans in one corner, French in another, English and Americans scattered about and talking, each trying to find out what the other knows and giving nothing in return—it is wonderful."

"Sunday, April 29.

"It is indeed a funny world to watch. As I see all these people, it occurs to me how very few people are absorbed in their work. They are looking at themselves to see how they appear to the outside world. And, oh Lord, there are so many 'pseudos.' You know what 'arty' people are like, you

The Genoa Conference

know the type—they wear ‘arty’ clothes, and live ‘arty’ lives. You find their prototypes in all walks of life. Pseudo-etceteras—Genoa is full of them. They are the most important people here, at least they think they are, and somehow convince the unsophisticated majority that they are really honest-to-goodness people, and for a short time manage to do a good deal of harm.

“I wonder how much our whole scheme of existence is to blame for the rarity of the simple man. I don’t care what people are so long as they are what they are, and don’t try to make you believe that they are something else.

“I am now working on a bust of Dr. Beneš, the Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia. He is a young man of great importance here. He is thirty-eight years old. He was in Paris as a student at the same time that I was there. Though we never met, our paths crossed and we found that we had many friends in common. He was a disciple of Masaryk’s and during the war Masaryk did the work in America and Beneš did it in France.

“He is the head of the ‘Little Entente’ here and is listened to by the bigwigs of the ‘Great Entente.’ I have attended some extraordinary sessions that almost every journalist here would give his eyeteeth to have overheard, but I am not telling, for, if I should, I would have all doors closed to me hereafter.”

“May 9, 1922.

“Our main distraction is hunting up little restaurants to try out Italian dishes, terribly materialistic but relaxing after a strenuous day. To get up on a hillside with a wonderful view over the city, to look out over the Mediterranean, so peaceful and quiet—it is difficult to imagine that the face of the world is undergoing a terrific change. It has been a great experience to be as close to it as I have been and, at the same time, to be staying outside of it.

“To have no axe to grind gives one a vision which is impossible for those who are a part of things. For they are so bent on trying to get what they want that they cannot see what is. They think that the other fellow is either mad, or crooked.

“I am afraid I have undertaken too much—sculpting, drawing and writing—time is so short!”

Between Sitzings

To get at the Bolsheviks was not easy. They had their offices in Genoa, but they lived in Santa Margarita in the Imperial Palace Hotel, which they called the "Golden Cage."

George Slocombe, the correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, offered to take me to them. When we arrived at the Imperial Palace Hotel, we were stopped at the door by an athletic person with glasses, the official representative of the *Cheka*, the Russian Secret Service. We nicknamed him the "All-Powerful." When we explained my mission, the "All-Powerful" was emphatic in his refusal. "Impossible," he said.

Slocombe then suggested that I might at least be allowed to make drawings of some of the delegates while they were at lunch. "All-Powerful" agreed, and put us at a table where I could observe the "Big Five"—Tchicherin, Litvinoff, Rakovsky, Krassin and Joffe.

I looked around the dining room. There was no levity there. At the various tables sat individuals of solemn appearance, all talking in dead, low voices, painfully serious people, people with ideas, the kind of ideas that were disturbing.

When lunch was over, we pleaded my cause once more. Finally "All-Powerful" agreed to go and see what he could do for me.

After a few minutes he came back and told me that "Comrade Joffe" would give me a sitting. He was the expert on Far Eastern affairs and former Ambassador to Japan.

As I worked on "Comrade Joffe" I felt that the suspicion which had surrounded me was gradually melting. "All-Powerful" popped in every once in a while to see how I was getting on with my bust—also to make sure that I had not in some mysterious manner done away with my sitter. When it was finished, he pronounced the bust a masterpiece, and the atmosphere cleared still further.

I covered up the bust with wet cloths and requested that no one touch it in my absence. When I arrived the next morning, it was obvious by the way I was greeted that the bust had been seen by many people, just as I expected—and that they had liked it. This meant that I was no longer considered dangerous; I was a harmless artist.

Krassin, my next sitter, was an engineer by profession and the busi-

The Genoa Conference

nessman of the Russian delegation. He looked more like a banker than a Bolshevik.

After Krassin came Litvinoff, rather heavy-set, but active and alert. He spoke English fluently. Before we got to work, he interviewed *me*! He wanted to know about the people I had "busted," and what were the most salient differences in people's faces from a sculptor's point of view. I suggested that the mouth was the most distinctive feature. Language had a good deal to do with it. For instance, one could speak English with one's teeth shut, but it was practically impossible to talk French or Russian that way. Perhaps for that reason Russian and French mouths were more mobile.

Rakovsky, the President of the Ukraine Republic, turned out not to be a Russian at all, but Rumanian. While I worked, several people came in to see him.

"It seems," he told them, "that posing for one's bust is part of the business of the Genoa Conference."

When his callers hesitated to speak in my presence, Rakovsky said: "Go right ahead. It's quite all right." (I was an artist, therefore not dangerous.)

Later, he ordered some beer and filling three glasses he said, "One is for you, one for me, and one for the bust."

Madame Rakovsky came in. It was getting late and he was due to leave for a press conference in about twenty minutes.

"Take this down," he said to his wife, and began dictating. Then he reached out his hand for what his wife had written and upset a glass of beer over the manuscript. Neither he nor his wife paid the slightest attention to it. He went on dictating and she writing.

Rakovsky promised to use all his influence to get Tchicherin to give me a sitting. This meant a great deal to me, because since my first day at the "Golden Cage" I had tried in every way to get to Tchicherin, the head of the Russian delegation. I had offered to do his bust at any time, under any circumstances, anywhere. Rakovsky kept his promise, and I got my appointment. I asked him how he did it. "I told Tchicherin,"

Between Sitzings

he said, "that it shows greater vanity to refuse to pose than to pose when you are asked."

When I arrived for my appointment, Tchicherin, surrounded by detectives, was just entering the hotel. I followed. When I came into the room, Tchicherin hardly looked at me. I began working furiously, not knowing how much time I would have.

Tchicherin kept turning his head nervously in my direction like a timid bird, seemingly terrified at being alone with me and the bust. Suddenly he rushed out on the veranda, came back, picked up a paper, sat down in a dark corner, and began to read. Every once in a while he would look up at me with a frightened look. I asked if he would mind sitting in the light, where I could see him. He did so without saying a word. Suddenly he jumped up again. He could not stand it. He simply could not endure being scrutinized.

The door opened and Krassin came in.

"Where is 'so-and-so'?" asked Tchicherin. "I can't wait for him. I must go."

A detective, whose presence I had not noticed, offered to go and fetch "so-and-so."

"No, no, I can't wait."

Tchicherin grabbed his hat, wound his muffler around his neck—although it was a hot summer day—hesitated a moment, and with that same pleading look, turned to me. "I'll come tomorrow . . . tomorrow." He fairly ran out of the room.

The whole sitting, if you can call it such, had lasted about twenty minutes. Krassin shrugged his shoulders, looked at me sympathetically and smiled.

"What can one do?" he said.

The following day, Sunday, I went to the Excelsior at 11:30. Tchicherin had already arrived. As I came into the room, he looked at me very apologetically, and murmured a "Good morning." I tried repeatedly to get Tchicherin to say something. By way of making conversation, I asked him if he had ever sat for a painting or bust. "No, no—never!" he said; his voice registering horror. In spite of his discomfiture, he showed

The Genoa Conference

me a caricature of himself in an Italian comic paper which he thought was very like him—"very characteristic" he called it.

From time to time he looked wistfully toward the veranda. I think he was rather conscience-stricken about the day before, so he did not run away, but I am sure he thought about it more than once.

The bust was getting on famously. He came over once or twice very timidly to look at it. I was afraid I would not get him to sit for me again, and I asked him to sign it.

"Is it finished?" he asked hopefully.

"No, not quite," I said laughingly, "but you had better sign it anyway. I do hope you will give me another sitting."

"Yes, yes, tomorrow."

For the last sitting, I went over to the hotel to ask what time Tchicherin would be free. The outer office was crowded with people waiting to see him. Tchicherin stuck his head out of his door, evidently looking for someone, but he saw me—and quickly shut the door. That was the last I saw of Tchicherin.

Back in Paris, the press wanted to know what this one had said, and what that one had said. My reply was that I did not talk politics with my sitters. That was not my job. My job was to portray people as objectively and as sympathetically as possible. You have to be in sympathy with your sitter, and anything that tends to create antagonism must be avoided. Therefore, I always avoided politics while I was working.

I came away from Genoa with some seven or eight heads, lots of drawings, and enough material to write a piece for the *Century Magazine*. But writing was hard work, much more difficult than making busts. I wrote and rewrote it until at last I thought it was in shape.

Back in New York, I received a note from the editors, enclosing a biographical sketch of myself which was to be published in a column describing the contributors to the *Century Magazine*. It read: "The Drawings Illustrating Ernestine Evans' Article Are by Jo Davidson." No mention of my article!

When I called on Mr. Frank, he regretted that my story was a bit late and that Ernestine Evans' article was more timely.

Between Sitzings

I then took the piece over to Norman Hapgood, who was editor of *Hearst International*. I was sure the whole world was waiting for this article. A week later it came back, with the editor's regrets.

One day at lunch at the Brevoort with Albert Jay Nock, I told him my sad story. He said, "I would like to see the story." He was then editor of the *Freeman*. And so it was published in the *Freeman* December 6, 1922, under the title of "A Sculptor in Genoa." In payment I received a check for fifty dollars.

CHAPTER 30

E. W. SCRIPPS

IN THE SUMMER OF 1922, Yvonne and I decided to go to Switzerland with the children and their governess. We got a little house in Arzier, and I was just beginning to relax and enjoy my vacation when a cable arrived from New York, signed by Lowell Mellett and Roy Howard, asking me what my fee would be for coming to America and doing the bust of Mr. E. W. Scripps.

They suggested that I come over as soon as possible, as Mr. Scripps, who lived on a yacht, had taken a house in Huntington, Long Island, while his yacht was laid up for repairs.

I hesitated, for I had just been in America, had only just returned from Genoa, and was having a much-needed rest. One trip a year was enough—two were too much. But a letter from Lincoln Steffens made me decide to go ahead with it:

“You must do a great thing with Scripps [he wrote]. He is a great man and an individual. There is no other like him. Energy, vision, courage, wisdom—he thinks his own thought absolutely. He sees straight. He goes crooked.

“He sees the line he is on and his thinking sticks to that. I regard Scripps as one of the two or three great men of my day. He is on to himself and the world, plays the game and despises it. He is sincere and not cynical. Really, he should be done, but as a full-length standing figure, so as to show

Between Sittings

the power of the man—the strength he took care to keep from becoming refined. He avoided other rich men so as to escape from being one. He knew the danger his riches carried for himself and his papers.”

I set sail for a second visit home in the same year. Bob Scripps, the son of E.W., met me at the pier and took me down to Huntington, where I was to do the bust. It was late, between ten and eleven o'clock in the evening, when we got there. Bob boasted that he had some real beer, which was a luxury in those days of prohibition. We were sitting and enjoying the cool beer when we heard the thump-thump of someone coming heavily down the stairs. Bob, who knew that step, got up. I turned around. There in the doorway stood a huge man. I understood then what Steff had meant.

Scripps's first words were, "Where did you get those whiskers?" although he had whiskers too. He had a beautiful head and I was glad I had come. Scripps, however, was not so happy about it. After complaining that he didn't want a bust, he requested that I get it over with as quickly as possible.

"What time do you want to start tomorrow?" he asked.

"As early as you like," I replied.

"I'll be ready to sit for you at seven o'clock," he growled. Then, with a perfunctory good night, he thumped his way haltingly upstairs again. Apparently his legs were not up to the rest of him.

Bob and I finished our beer and went to bed too. It was after seven when I woke up. I dressed hurriedly, and went down to breakfast.

Scripps had finished his breakfast but was still sitting at the table, reading his newspapers. He greeted me with, "You are late." I gulped my coffee.

E.W., as everybody called him, yelled for his valet. "Ernest!" Ernest appeared out of nowhere and helped him get up out of his chair and we went to the room where I was going to work. Then Ernest placed him in a comfortable armchair, put a cigar in his mouth, lit it for him, and left us.

While I worked, Scripps never stopped talking: he objected to the

E. W. Scripps

making of the bust. He objected to me. He wanted to know why I lived in France. Why I did not live in America. Wasn't it good enough for me? He kept on making barbed remarks. My patience wore thin—after all, I hadn't asked to be there.

I interrupted him. "Mr. Scripps, I would like to tell you a story."

"What story?" he growled.

"When I was a kid in New York on the East Side, we had Chinese laundrymen. We kids used to throw stones at them; the grown-ups used to make fun of them with 'no tickee—no washee.' This particular Chinaman had a friend, a white man, a Christian, who said to him, 'Lee, you are a strong fellow. Why don't you get hold of one of those kids and give him a good thrashing? Maybe they would quit.' The Chinaman smiled, shook his head, and said, 'No—white man can't insult Chinaman.'"

From then on, we got on fine. I heard later that whenever he hired anyone for his papers, he would start by abusing him. If the man stood up to him, he was hired. If he didn't, he didn't get the job.

He told me many stories of his life. He came from Scotland. He was the first man to publish a penny newspaper in America. I think it was the *Cleveland Press*.

Every once in a while Scripps would abruptly stop talking, and yell for "Er—nest!" Ernest would appear and take the dead cigar out of his mouth, put in a fresh one, light it, and go away.

Scripps talked about newspapers. He stated flatly that Frank Munsey was not a newspaperman, because he had interests in railroads and other industries. If certain malpractices had to be attacked in his papers, Munsey couldn't do it—because his own interests were at stake.

"I never had a penny in anything but newsprint. It kept me clean," Scripps said.

He talked about money and making money. "John D. Jr. is a greater man than his father. His father made the money but his son knew how to keep it. Making it is nothing—keeping it, that is the thing."

As the sittings went on, there were visits from his editors. Scripps

Between Sittings

asked one of them, Bill Hawkins, how and where his children were. Hawkins replied that they were in school.

“School,” said Scripps. “Education is the most important job a parent has to do, yet he intrusts it to someone who can’t earn more than a hundred dollars a month. Bah! School!”

Had I read *In Days to Come*, by Rathenau? I had not. Scripps yelled for Ernest. Ernest appeared and he sent him for the book. E.W. wrote his name in it, and handed it to me.

I asked him, laughing, if he wrote his name in it so as to make sure I wouldn’t steal it, or whether it was a dedication. He answered, “You go to hell!” I still have the book.

I dragged out the sittings as much as I could. It was fun modeling that powerful head and his conversation fascinated me. But in spite of my attempts to prolong the work, the bust was finished. When I expressed my regret that the sittings were over, the old man reverted to his caustic self with the remark, “As sorry as you are, so glad am I to see you go.”

Bob Scripps was enthusiastic about the bust and wanted several copies in bronze for the offices of their various newspapers.

While the bronzes were in the works, I went to Washington to visit my friend Lowell Mellett, who introduced me to Mother Jones.

Mother Jones was Irish and had elected herself the protector of the coal miners of America. She fought for them, fed them, and shared their hardships. Those who fought her never forgot it. This slight old woman—she was ninety when I met her—wore little curls and an embroidered fichu. She had the most innocent sweet face but when she started on a tirade of abuse, the words that would come out were unprintable. Her sweet little face would suddenly look Neroesque.

But Mother Jones was irresistible and of course I made a bust of her. The press considered it news. Photographers took photographs of the bust, Mother Jones and me, which were plastered all over the newspapers.

A few days later, Bob Scripps had me out to lunch at Huntington and E.W. joined us:

E. W. Scripps

“Say you,” he said to me, “who’s paying for that bust of Mother Jones?”

I grinned. “Why, you are.”

He turned around and hit me a hell of a wallop on the back.

“You are all right.”

CHAPTER 3 I

GERTRUDE STEIN AND DR. COUË

1923 was a very busy year. I did the portrait of Gertrude Stein that year.

To do a head of Gertrude was not enough—there was so much more to her than that. So I did a seated figure of her—a sort of modern Buddha.

I had known her since my first trip to France. She and her brother Leo had two adjoining studios. Doors had been cut through, connecting the two studios; and every Saturday afternoon, the studios were jammed with visitors of various nationalities, either gaping, in earnest discussions, or laughing at the Matisse and the Picassos. Gertrude would stand with her back to the fireplace, her hands clasped behind her back, watching the crowd like a Cambodian caryatid, wearing a smile of patience, looking as if she knew something that nobody else did.

In the other studio, Leo, tall and lean, with a red beard, would talk earnestly about esthetics to anyone who was prepared to listen. In the excitement of his conversation, he generally twisted a button of his listener's waistcoat until it became a straightjacket. One could not get a word in edgewise. All one could do was to wait patiently for him to let go of the button and then make an escape.

Years later I was walking along Fifth Avenue in New York when I ran into Leo Stein. He was no longer bearded, and was wearing a

Gertrude Stein and Dr. Coué

conspicuous hearing-aid. He greeted me effusively: "Remember when I used to talk and talk and never would listen. Now I want to hear and can't."

Yvonne and I became great friends of Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas. Gertrude's was a very rich personality. Her wit and her laughter were contagious. She loved good food and served it. While I was doing her portrait, she would come around to my studio with a manuscript and read it aloud. The extraordinary part of it was that, as she read, I never felt any sense of mystification. "A rose is a rose is a rose," took on a different meaning with each inflection. When she read aloud, I got the humor of it. We both laughed, and her laughter was something to hear. There was an eternal quality about her—she somehow symbolized wisdom.

Gertrude did a portrait of me in prose. When she read it aloud, I thought it was wonderful. It was published in *Vanity Fair* with my portrait of her. But when I tried to read it out loud to some friends, or for that matter to myself, it didn't make very much sense.

That year, I also did the bust of Dr. Coué at Nancy. He was a curious phenomenon, much talked of, particularly in America where he had made quite a stir with his slogan: "Every day in every way I'm getting better and better." But he had his cult in Paris too. And when I was asked to do his head, Steffens volunteered to accompany me.

Dr. Coué's residence in Nancy had a large courtyard. We saw many people sitting on benches, mostly older people, waiting for one of the Doctor's public séances, which were apparently held once a week. His audience was made up of the halt, lame and nerve-shattered people who came from all over, hoping for miracles.

Dr. Coué was a sort of miracle worker, who had come by his philosophy in a curious way. He had been what is known in France as a second-class pharmacist. While filling prescriptions, he found that a good many of them consisted of distilled water with a little coloring matter. But people thought they were taking medicine, and it did them good. Coué came to the conclusion that what you believe is so. Auto-suggestion, or auto-hypnosis, could be a cure.

Between Sitzings

Dr. Coué was a jolly little man with twinkling eyes. After delivering his lecture, he gave a demonstration by calling on one of the people in the audience, a crippled old lady, to walk towards him. She had two sticks upon which she leaned when she walked. He made her repeat after him, "I can walk, I can walk," and she gradually dropped one stick after the other, and did walk.

I was intrigued by Dr. Coué's personality, and the day after the séance I started his bust. Our sittings were very pleasant.

I introduced Steffens to Dr. Coué, and he invited both of us for lunch one day. He sat at the head of the table, with Steff and me on either side, and his wife opposite him. In front of her were pillboxes and bottles of medicine. Steff and I exchanged glances. Mrs. Coué was very thin and did not look very happy. After lunch, as Dr. Coué and I left the dining room to go back to work, I quoted the old adage, "No one is a prophet in his own country." He smiled, and threw his arm around me with the remark: "Not even in the bosom of his own family."

Some months later I had to go to London, and Lincoln Steffens asked me to meet a friend of his, Ella Winter, during my stay. I did, and soon realized that our Steff was in love. He was a secretive guy and none of us had had the slightest inkling of it.

Later Steff confided that he was worried: he thought it unfair—Ella was so young and he so old. I argued that there was nothing to worry about—after all, I said, she was getting the best of it, even if it only lasted five years.

Steff brought Peter, as he called Ella, to Paris, and they were married. Peter was intelligent, a product of the London School of Economics. She had run H. G. Wells's campaign when he stood for Parliament. She had also been secretary to Felix Frankfurter. That is, I believe, how Steffens first met her.

On the day of Peter's arrival in Paris, he took her over to Yvonne's shop.

"I have brought you some raw material," he said. "You are an artist—see what you can do with it."

Yvonne made her some very beautiful clothes. But when Yvonne got

Gertrude Stein and Dr. Coué

her to cut her hair, that was going too far. As far as girls were concerned, Steff was conservative.

When I was doing the bust of Owen D. Young, we got to talking about Lincoln Steffens. Said Young, "Perhaps you know I've acquired Steffens' house in Cos Cob. He's a smart fellow, Steff. I was his tenant for a long time. I rented his house when his wife Josephine died. Well, I got tired of repairing his roofs and plumbing so I said to him, 'Why don't you sell me that house?'"

"'Sure,' he replied, 'I'll sell it.'"

"'How much do you want for it?'"

"'Oh, I don't know,' he said. 'You know more than I do what it's worth. Whatever you say.'"

"'Well, I looked into it and found that it had increased in value and told him so. Said Steffens, 'Whatever you say is all right with me.'"

"'Have you got a lawyer?'" said I.

"'Sure,' said he, 'you're a lawyer, aren't you? You be my lawyer.'"

"'Smart fellow, Steffens. Well, I became his lawyer. You know, a lawyer has got to look after the interests of his clients. So you see, that's the way Steffens did me in the eye.'"

CHAPTER 32

RUSSIA, 1923

IN JULY of 1923, I received a letter from Steffens, who was in Berlin. He was waiting to join Senator Robert La Follette, who was going to Russia, and he suggested that I go along. I needed no urging, for I hoped it would be a chance to do a bust of one of the most talked-of men in the world, Lenin.

The Senator's party consisted of Mrs. La Follette, Robert Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. Basil Manley. We set out from Berlin, took a boat at Stettin, landed in Estonia, and from there went by rail to Petrograd.

When we got on the train at Reval in Estonia, I was not feeling very well. Bobbie Jr. had noticed that the conductor at the end of the car was partaking of vodka and black pumpernickel. He took me back there, and we indicated to the conductor that a drop of that greenish liquid might do me good. As the conductor started filling a water glass, I had to stop him halfway. Grinning, he handed over the glass, and I swallowed the contents. It was fire-water, but it cured me. The conductor was all for the "Americanskis."

In Petrograd our party was quartered on the mezzanine floor of the Hotel Europa, whose gold reception rooms reminded me of the Palais de Versailles.

While the other members of the party attended to their own affairs, I went to visit Petrograd's Hermitage Museum, which was famous for its collection of Rembrandt paintings, drawings and etchings. I was told

Russia, 1923

that Catherine the Great was responsible for the collection. She had commissioned Sir Joshua Reynolds, then President of the Royal Academy in London, to purchase for her all the Rembrandts he could get his hands on. It was indeed a wonderful collection and I spent most of our stay in Petrograd entranced by this great master.

In Moscow, the former palace of the Sugar King of the old régime was put at our disposal. For breakfast they brought us a great cut-glass bowl in which, snugly packed in ice, reposed the biggest can of caviar I had ever seen. At breakfast I had it with coffee, eating it with a tablespoon. At lunch, I had it with vodka and for dinner, we had it with champagne. I had my fill of caviar during this stay.

Our party attended the theatre, operas and concerts. Everybody was talking about the wonderful things Stanislavsky and Meyerhold had done in the new theatre. Little theatres were springing up everywhere. Plays were produced in drawing rooms of former princely residences. In such a little theatre we saw a performance of "Princess Turandot," with exquisite scenery and costumes. The curtain did not come down between the acts, and the stage hands who changed the scenery imitated the actors of the preceding scene, much to the amusement of the audience.

Moscow was crowded with people from all over Russia, wearing their native costumes and speaking many languages. A fair was being held in the city. One of the common sights was a wide street, one side of which, muddy and old-fashioned, was lined with replicas of peasant huts, such as the peasants had lived in for centuries. The other side of the street was paved, and adorned with cottages of tomorrow, furnished with all kinds of new gadgets. It was fascinating to watch the peasants who came from all over the country to see the fair. They looked a little frightened when they saw the new-fangled houses. But when they crossed the street to the old huts, they were happy again.

One of the stories going the rounds at this time was about a peasant who was fishing. Another peasant stopped him. "What are you doing? Are you mad? Don't you know there has been a revolution? Don't you know that fish have a right to live too?"

Between Sitzings

At the former Sugar King's palace, they brought us hot water every morning, but one day Senator La Follette decided he wanted a hot bath. They were anxious to please him but, to get hot water, they had to light up the central heating. It was a scorching August day, and with the furnace going, it was unbearable—like a Turkish bath. That was the last bath anyone had in that house.

There was much to do in Moscow—things to see, people to meet. The Senator decided he was not going to be influenced by Steff. He wanted to find out for himself. We would separate in the morning, and in the evening when we met, Steffens would question the Senator about what he had done and what he had seen. All Senator Bob would do was thumb his nose at him and grin.

One day a luncheon was given in the old Senator's honor by an agricultural group. After many toasts in vodka and a delicious meal, speeches were made. The Senator expressed sympathy for and interest in the Russian experiment; he knew the pitfalls and the difficulties. He described what he had done in Wisconsin when he was Governor, and invited them to come and see for themselves. Perhaps, he suggested, the Russians could profit from that visit.

Steffens looked at Nourteva, who was our interpreter, wondering what she would do with that. I don't know what Nourteva said, but there was tremendous applause.

Although the La Follette party was not scheduled to stay long, the Senator did not want to leave Moscow without seeing Lunacharsky, the Minister of Education and Fine Arts. The date could not be arranged until the afternoon of the La Follettes' departure. It was agreed that I would accompany the Senator to the interview and from there take him to his train.

The interview with Lunacharsky threatened to go on for hours. I was sorely tempted to have the old man miss his train, just for the devil of it, but my conscience got the better of me. I watched the clock and finally tore the Senator away.

When we got to the train, the La Follette party was piling their luggage out of the train on to the platform. They thought the Senator

Russia, 1923

would never make it. There was barely time to pile themselves and their luggage back on before the train pulled out.

After the La Follette party left, Steff and I moved to the Savoy Hotel, where the American newspapermen stayed. One of the guests, Mason Day, a representative of Harry Sinclair's oil company, was in Moscow negotiating for an oil concession. Steff asked him how he was getting on. "Not too well," he said. "These Russkis are tough babies."

"What's the matter?" said Steffens. "Won't they give you a fair contract?"

"Sure," said Day. "But who the hell wants a fair contract? You can't make any money that way."

Since it was August, most of the sitters I had modeled in Genoa the year before were away. However, Tchicherin had just returned, and I put in a bid to see him. I wanted to talk to him about doing a bust of Lenin. He could help me, for he was Foreign Minister.

I requested an interview for Steffens and myself. It was granted, and an appointment was fixed for 1:30 A.M. in the Kremlin, where Tchicherin lived. We had to pass various guards, and, after climbing an ancient stone stairway, were ushered into a small waiting room. We heard strains of Chopin on the piano. As we entered, the music stopped and Tchicherin rose to greet us—it was he who had been playing.

The salon in which Tchicherin received us was beautifully furnished, with Gobelin tapestries, pictures on the walls, and a big Boule table, covered with papers, which served as his desk. On it stood a tall, thin vase containing one rose.

I remembered how frightened Tchicherin had been of me in Genoa. However, he was at home in these surroundings, and he received us warmly. I told him that I wished to do a bust of Lenin. He said I would have to be patient because Lenin was ill, but that he would take it up with him when he could.

Tchicherin then inquired whom I was "busting" and when told that I was doing a head of Karl Radek, he remarked, "What a curious man, Radek. Why does he go on living in such squalor when he doesn't have to. After all, there has been the revolution."

Between Sittings

I laughed, for I knew what he meant. The day before, when I had brought my modeling stand to Radek's apartment, I had had a hard time finding a corner to work in. Radek lived and worked in two rooms. Every inch of space was cluttered with papers. I had lunched with him. He cleared off a corner of the table, spread a newspaper, opened a box of sardines, and that, with black bread and tea, was our feast.

The next day, when I turned up to work, Radek asked me what I had been up to and when I told him of my visit to Tchicherin, he said, "He is a curious man, Tchicherin. Look at the way he lives. You would never know that there had been a revolution."

Karl Radek was a strange character. He had been in the underground and still changed his disguises very often. While I was doing his bust, he wore a beard like Horace Greeley, but when I finished the head and had it cast, some people who knew him didn't remember him like that. He walked around armed with pistols and daggers, a habit of his underground days, when he might have been killed at any moment.

The only available transportation in Moscow at that time, outside of the overcrowded tram, was the "droshky," a sort of horse-driven cab, whose seating capacity was too much for one person but not enough for two. If two got in, they really had to like each other. The few automobiles that one saw in the streets were used only for essential services. When I had to get to my sitter with my materials—clay, modeling stand, and the rest, a car would be put at my disposal. However, I always had to find my way back the best I could.

The heads I modeled in Moscow were all distinctly different types. Kalinin, the President of the Republic, was a bearded peasant. While I worked he received delegations of peasants, listened patiently to their complaints and troubles, and quietly offered them solutions which seemed to be exactly what they wanted.

Rykov, Acting Prime Minister during Lenin's illness, was blond and bearded. Like a Dostoyevskian character, he incessantly smoked long Russian cigarettes and drank countless glasses of tea.

I also did a statuette of Marshal Budenny. A former corporal in the Czar's army, he was a hero of the revolution. I did his statuette in the

Russia, 1923

Moscow Art School, where they put a studio at my disposal. In those days the officers were difficult to distinguish from the ordinary soldier. Budenny wore no epaulettes and no decorations. But his mustaches were tremendous, like handlebars on a bicycle.

Steffens and I ran into Bill Haywood, of IWW fame, and he invited us to dinner in a little restaurant. I had met Bill Haywood at Mabel Dodge's when she had her salon at 23 Fifth Avenue. Then, he had given an impression of terrific power, but in Moscow he looked tired and aged. Shortly after jumping bail in New York and arriving in Russia, he was presented at a big political meeting in Moscow. He was acclaimed and the crowd yelled for a speech. Haywood got up to his full height, towering over everybody, and told of the progress of the labor movement in America. America, he said, was on the threshold of a revolution. Lenin, who was sitting on the platform, nudged his neighbor and whispered, "Another American salesman."

When I saw him last, he was very homesick for America. I asked him if there was anything he needed. He asked me to send him a pair of suspenders.

Our interpreter, Rozinsky had been a coal miner in England. During the Revolution he had enlisted in the Red Army. Rozinsky was very much impressed with Steffens. He had read some of his fables and wanted to translate them into Russian. Through him we met some artists and writers, and went to their homes. The rooms were always packed; they seemed to live in crowds. The air was usually filled with smoke, and everyone drank quantities of tea out of glasses. At about two in the morning or later, if you tried to break away, they would plead with you to stay. "Don't go away. There is plenty of room. Stay here." Privacy was not one of their virtues.

The New Economic Policy was then in full swing and everything was wide open. We went to the Yar race track to see a sulky race. The crowd there was similar to that of any other race meet. In the Casino there was gambling with gold coinage of many lands. The men and women there seemed to have nothing to do with the current historic

Between Sitzings

environment; they were all sorts of left-overs from the old régime. Rozinsky never accompanied us on these excursions.

The New Economic Policy seemed to be based on the idea that if you gave the die-hards enough rope, they would hang themselves. Paper money was issued which had to be spent in a given time; at the new printing, the previous printing became obsolete. While we were there the *chervonetz*, the equivalent of a five-dollar gold piece, was struck off.

My hopes of doing Lenin's bust were dwindling. He was too ill to pose. I was told to wait and I waited and waited. But I couldn't wait any longer. I wanted to get back to Paris.

I turned my finished busts and statuettes over to Rozinsky, who was to attend to the packing and shipping. I asked him to send them directly to America, as I wanted to include them in my next show.

On our return journey, we stopped in Berlin. The mark was falling so fast that, when I walked into an art shop to buy a sketchbook and some water-colors, the old lady in charge wept—she did not know what to charge. She preferred to keep her water-colors rather than sell them.

When the cases arrived in America I found that they had been opened. The plasters were all chipped and broken, but I was able to restore them all except the statuette of Marshal Budenny, which was beyond repair.

CHAPTER 33

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

ONE DAY I received a letter from my old friend Louise Culver, saying that she had been seeing Bill Inglis, a newspaperman I knew, and that he was writing the life of John D. Rockefeller. They had discussed my doing a bust of Mr. Rockefeller. She wrote:

“When I asked Bill why they did not arrange for you to do a portrait of the old man, he was all enthusiasm. . . . Billy has a tremendous admiration for your work. He expresses it from a boxer’s point of view—he has never seen work with such a punch in it.”

She went on to say that Billy suggested I write Mr. Rockefeller that I would like to do a portrait of him.

At first I did not take the idea seriously. I had never approached anybody in that way before. However, I had been wanting to do that portrait for a long time. I thought I would have a try at it, so I wrote a letter to Mr. Rockefeller, enclosing a list of portraits I had modeled.

My letter was written on April 22, 1924. As I had no reply, I was preparing to go back to Paris, but on May 23, I received a letter from John D. Rockefeller Jr. who wrote that it was not quite clear for what purpose I desired to make this bust of his father. Should his father agree to sit, how many sittings would be required? Would he have to come to me, or could I work at his home, and what would be my fee?

The following day Mr. Rockefeller Jr. made an appointment to come

Between Sitzings

to my studio to discuss details. Looking at my work, he queried whether it wasn't better art to have full eyes than eyes with holes in them. He asked how I intended to make the eyes, if and when I did the bust of his father. I said I had no idea, but that I usually did the eyes as the bust itself dictated. All details of the undertaking were discussed. Everything was confirmed by letter. Nothing was left to chance.

Well. I was going to do a bust of John D. Rockefeller. John D. Rockefeller. I was terribly excited. He was a legendary figure, referred to with awe, with hate, with fear. I had never heard him mentioned with love.

A few days later I received a letter from John D. Jr. saying that a truck would come to pick up my materials and that I could take the train to Tarrytown the following morning, work all day and go back at night. When I arrived I was met and taken to my destination.

As I stepped into the doorway I heard the strains of an organ. I was greeted by Mrs. Evans, Mr. Rockefeller's cousin, and taken to an elevator which brought us to the second floor. I was assured that Mr. Rockefeller was not ill, but just resting in his room. Mr. Rockefeller was lying on his bed on his right side with his back to me. He did not look up, or turn his head.

"Give me your hand," he said, thrusting up his right hand. I took it and shook it, but he did not let go.

"Yes," he said slowly, "yes. Da—vis, Da—vi—son, Da—vid—son. Ought— to— be— good." His voice was ancient, not unfriendly. His secretary's name was Davis, his middle name was Davison. He was still holding my hand, and I stood there looking at his profile outlined against the pillow. He reminded me of pictures of the profile of Ramses II.

To say something, I reassured him that he would not have to pose in the ordinary way—that he could go on doing whatever he was doing.

"I am going out to play golf presently. Can you work while I do that?" The profile smiled.

"That would be rather difficult," I replied. "I can hardly carry my clay with me."

"No?" he drawled. "I—have to carry mine with me—all the time."

John D. Rockefeller

While he was playing golf, Mrs. Evans showed me through the house, with a view to finding a suitable room for me to work in. We finally settled on a room adjoining Mr. Rockefeller's own, and I was comfortably installed. About noon Mr. Rockefeller returned from playing golf and came directly to my room.

"Will—five minutes—do you?"

He must have been quite tall at one time, but was bent with age. The most striking feature in his face was his eyes. They were neither gray nor blue, but both, and set wide apart. You felt as if they were looking right into you—friendly but not communicative eyes. His skin was tightly drawn, deeply wrinkled around the mouth, tanned brown as parchment, with a faint flush on the cheeks.

He talked while I worked. His manner was neighborly, and he seemed to be a survival of the era of brownstone fronts, stocks and crinolines. He had a curious way of beginning in the middle of a story—no preamble.

"They said I couldn't do it—but I knew I was right." This, I realized, was in reference to the formation of the Standard Oil Company.

"They had no vision. I knew we all had to get together. They wouldn't believe it. Then I told them I would give them cash—cash, or stock. Those who took stock did well. The others—" he shrugged his shoulders.

Presently he remarked that he would rest a bit before lunch, if that was agreeable to me. Of course, it was.

"A-ll good," he drawled, and left me.

We had worked for forty-five minutes.

He said grace before luncheon—brief, devout and simple. Uniformed servants moved around us silently. When one leaned over me (I thought to ask me what I would have to drink, whiskey or champagne) and whispered, "Will you have your tea with your lunch or after?" I whispered back, "After."

Mr. Rockefeller told a story or two—he was an excellent mimic. He especially enjoyed the confessions of a certain lady: "Golf? Why I would hardly know how to hold a caddie!"

Between Sittings

We worked after lunch and in the afternoon we went for a motor ride. He seemed to like me and, at his invitation, I arrived the next day, prepared to stay at the house as his guest for as long as it took to complete the bust. He was punctuality itself, never in a hurry, patient, most gracious, and a willing sitter.

"I keep busy," he said. "Those who are not busy are apt to become morbid."

People used to come to him, he told me, with all sorts of schemes.

"I always—listened—patiently. If later they insisted, saying, 'But you were so nice and seemed interested,' I would say, 'In serious matters of this kind I always write. Where are the documents? Show me the documents.'"

The days passed quickly. I was fascinated with the old man. I had brought some books with me, but they were soon consumed and I entertained myself evenings by making notes of what the old man, who was then eighty-four, had said during the day.

A friend of mine suggested that I ask him if he remembered a Mr. Morley. I did that. I thought he had not heard me. He looked at me, and I repeated the name. He looked at me again. I realized I was on the wrong track. This was not a name he wanted to hear. I quickly mentioned the first name that came to my mind. It was "Bernie Baruch." His comeback was quick: "A good man—kind man—sweet man—all good."

Every evening we would sit around the table and play a game or two of "Numerica." If we made it work, he would give each of the successful ones a new dime. The failures received only a nickel—and a smile. Then he would read aloud a little—very little—from some book, and a verse out of the New Testament.

During the sittings he remarked, "You know, for years I was crucified. It is better now."

At another time he said, "I had a dream the other night. I dreamed that I was sitting on a lawn and I was told that someone looking rather like a ruffian wanted to see me. They all advised me not to see him, that he meant no good. 'I'll see him,' I said. He appeared. I said to him, quietly, sweetly, 'Sit down' and he sat down next to me. I talked to him

John D. Rockefeller

nicely, quietly, and I said, 'Of course, if it's shooting you want—all these people here are quite ready to shoot.' Well, I talked to him and I won him over, and he departed. A-ll good."

He struck me as being the most patient man I have ever met. I am sure he felt that he had always done the right thing.

"My son is a great man," he said one day. "He sits with the biggest of them and wins them over." Winning people over seemed to be as strong as religion with him.

"What is your pulse?" he asked me. "72? 73? 74? Well, mine has never varied—always 57. I remember when my brother William and I used to go riding. I would invariably come in first. He would be covered with perspiration, as was his horse. My horse would be too. But not I. I would be as cool as I am now. I would always talk to my horse, quietly, steadily, never get excited."

While we worked he would daily ask his attendant to play the organ. "The Last Rose of Summer" was one of his favorites.

As I progressed with the bust, he told the story of a Middle Westerner by the name of Smith, who had made quite a lot of money and started on a trip abroad. On his way he stopped in New York at the Plaza Hotel. He asked the room clerk whether he knew an artist, as he wanted to have his father's portrait painted. Of course the room clerk knew just such a man and gave him his address. Smith went to see the painter and asked him if he would undertake the job. The painter was delighted and asked his prospective customer when his father could come to sit.

"But he can't sit—he is dead."

"Oh, I am sorry," said the artist.

"He has been dead for some time."

"Oh," said the artist, "I understand. You want me to do it from photographs."

"No," said the man, "that is the trouble—there aren't any photographs."

The artist's face fell.

"But," said Mr. Smith, "I can tell you exactly what he looked like,"

Between Sittings

and he proceeded to describe his father. "Do you think you can do the portrait from that?"

The artist, afraid that he would lose the job, said yes, he would try. When Smith came back from Europe about a month later, he asked the room clerk how his artist friend was faring with the portrait of his father.

"Oh, he has finished it," said the room clerk.

"Good," said Mr. Smith, "I must go and see it."

When Mr. Smith arrived, there on the easel was a canvas. He sat down and looked at it intently. (Here Mr. Rockefeller began to mimic Mr. Smith, and gave me a sly look.)

"So, that's you, Father!" said Smith, with tears in his eyes and tears in his voice. "So that's you, Dad! Lord, how you have changed!"

At last the clay bust was completed. Rockefeller invited all the servants to come and see it.

"Come—in," he said. "Take—your—time. Have a good look at it—yes? A-ll good. Thank you."

(It was one of my great experiences to have known for a little while the man who was such a stupendous economic force in America. I would not have missed it for anything.

Maybe you have strolled along the Left Bank of the Seine in Paris, and, rummaging in some old bookstall, picked up an ancient volume bound in dusty leather. You handle it; it has an odor of age; it belongs to another era. You open it. The print is at first difficult to read; the s's look like f's, the spelling seems strange, but you read on and you come to a phrase, familiar, human, appealing, and it acts as an "Open Sesame."

My experience with Rockefeller was like that.

(John D. Rockefeller Jr. not only commissioned me to execute his father's bust in marble but also commissioned a colossal

John D. Rockefeller

head in stone to be put up in the Standard Oil Building at 26 Broadway. Back in Paris, I also had to carve in marble the busts of Mrs. William Randolph Hearst and Mrs. Harry Payne Bingham. Old man Tessa, a master stonecutter, was busy working on the stone of my giant-size doughboy.

My studios in the Avenue du Maine were overcrowded. I had taken a special studio in the Impasse du Maine for the doughboy, but my work was still crying for more space. I started looking for a studio in the neighborhood. It had to be on the ground floor to support the tonnage of stone. I finally heard of a studio house and garden in Auteuil which was to be up for sale. It had to be sold at auction instead of outright, according to the French law, for it had belonged to a young sculptor who died and left a wife and child.

I visited the place and saw its possibilities. However, it was like going to live in the country. I was at home in Montparnasse. Auteuil was only known to me as a watering-place adjoining Passy where Benjamin Franklin had lived. But the house suited my needs and I acquired 6 rue Leconte de Lisle in Auteuil at a bigger price than I had bargained for, owing to the fact that the celebrated novelist, Claude Farrère, unknown to me, was my most persistent competitor. Neither of us knew that the other was after the house.

The remodeling of the house, which had originally been built for three, took about eight or ten months. We added another studio in the garden, and bedrooms and baths. In the meantime we continued to live in the rue Masseran—it was such a beautiful little house, we hated the thought of giving it up.

Yvonne's shop in the Champs-Élysées was going strong. She was dressing all the ladies I had been "busting." Her clothes were noted for their color and line, and the fashion magazines sang her praises.

Ruth de Vallambrosa was a great help to Yvonne. I first met Ruth when my friend Walter Goldbeck the painter, whom I had known in Chicago, brought her to Paris as his bride in 1919 or 1920. Walter had died and Ruth was now remarried to Count Paul de Vallambrosa. She was pretty and vivacious and she wore Yvonne's clothes so well that

Between Sittings

many of her friends subsequently became clients of Yvonne's. Yvonne was busy and happy, but I was worried, for her health was never too good.

¶ The search for stone for the big Rockefeller head took me to Burgundy. Cecil Howard and I were driving along a road just after a rainstorm. The road was covered with bits of stone which gleamed in the sunlight. We stopped the car and examined the stone. I felt we had fallen on something just right. We went on until we came to a little café, where over a drink we discussed the stone with M. Perrin, the proprietor. We were apparently right in the center of the district where the stone was quarried. Mr. Perrin was the owner of one of the quarries, and he offered to let us choose the block of stone we wanted. In color the stone ran from a light buff to a warm flesh tint.

I was so busy at this time that I had to take on more help. Penic did not suffice so I engaged two Italian stonecutters, Mario and Agostino, to help; later Agostino brought his cousin Gino. Gino has remained with me ever since.

I spent almost the whole year of 1924-1925 doing the large Rockefeller head and the other work I had brought back with me. I also worked a good deal from the model, making drawings and sketches and a number of torsos and nudes. That year seemed a very short one because I managed to get so much done.

CHAPTER 34

WITH OTTO KAHN IN MOROCCO

ONE DAY I received a letter from my friend Otto Kahn, inviting me to join him on a trip to Morocco. I had last seen him in Palm Beach where I had been his guest in his beautiful house on the dunes. His other house guests had been Bernard Baruch, Herbert Bayard Swope and Rudolph Kommer, a Viennese playwright who was very good company.

The invitation to visit Morocco was too tempting to resist. Shortly afterwards, I was invited to a luncheon where I met the two other guests who, with Percy Peixotto, the President of the American Club in Paris, were to accompany Otto Kahn and me on our jaunt. They were Count Marc de Beaumont, then President of the Cercle Inter-Allié, and Georges Bénard, a French banker.

It was a curious lunch. The conversation was rather stilted. Bénard said that he had heard that I was a sculptor, and told me that he was a great lover of art and hoped to show me his collection. He also expressed a desire to visit my studio, but didn't sound too enthusiastic.

We arrived at my studio. My big head of John D. Rockefeller was in the center of the room. Bénard exclaimed, "But—this is good."

I laughed and asked, "Why *but*?"

"But it is."

I realized that, to a Frenchman, an American artist was an anomaly.

Between Sitzings

An American banker, an American businessman, an American engineer, that called for respect, but an American artist—hence the “but.”

On the way to Marseilles, we found out that Kahn never did anything by halves. We, his guests, each had a compartment to ourselves. Mine was next to Georges Bénard's. I had a toothache but I soon discovered that Georges had everything for anything in his luggage.

The four of us went in to breakfast. On our return to our compartments, Georges said to me, “Let's get this straight: our host, Otto Kahn, whom we are to meet in Marseilles, is the great Maharajah; the Count de Beaumont is the *Chef de Protocole*; Percy Peixotto is the *courrier extraordinaire*; that leaves you and me, *des valises diplomatiques*, and it is very important to remember that sometimes valises go astray.”

From Marseilles we proceeded to Casablanca with Kahn.

The harbor of Casablanca, alive with activity, was an extraordinary sight. It was the gateway to a great empire, and the name linked with it was that of *Maréchal* Lyautey. Everyone spoke of him as the miracle man. We were going to meet him in Rabat, where the *Maréchal* resided. Lyautey had established a Ministry of Fine Arts that saw to it that the new part of the city did not clash with the old Moorish architecture.

In Rabat we met Lyautey. He was a remarkable man, and looked the part. My fingers itched to make his bust. His residence was an ornate Moorish palace. I remember especially the magnificent stairway and on every landing the gorgeous polychromed statues which turned out to be Arabs in native parade dress. They never winked an eyelash as you passed them.

We made arrangements for the sitting, and it was midnight by the time we got to work. Lyautey never stopped talking. He explained to Kahn and Bénard how he had handled the colonization of Morocco. He spoke in short, crisp sentences, which sounded as if they were shot out of a catapult. He was a dynamo. His white hair, cropped short, gave him the appearance of a cat. He had piercing gray eyes, a powerful nose, and a walrus-like mustache, revealing a mouth that went off to one side as he spoke.

With Otto Kahn in Morocco

I worked at a feverish pace. At one point Lyautey called a young lieutenant, Maurice Durosoy, who was standing by.

"Maurice, in the library, on the third shelf, the fourth book from the left, page 147, bring it down."

The lieutenant took some time, and Lyautey was about to run after him. Patience was not one of his virtues. When Maurice appeared, book in hand, the *Maréchal* turned to page 147, and there was the citation.

We worked until almost three in the morning. It was an unforgettable sitting. I was exhausted, but Lyautey could have carried on all night. I have never seen such energy. He was seventy-one.

Years later, when I was in Brazil, I met Durosoy, then Colonel and Military Attaché to the French Embassy in Rio. He invited us to lunch and pulled out his diary, from which is taken the following account of the sittings in Rabat:

"Saturday, March 7, 1925.

"In the Residence, Davidson sets to work immediately, and powerfully manipulates his clay. When the *Maréchal* and I enter the large study, the clay has hardly taken shape. Then rapidly, with a few strokes, Davidson catches the essential features (perhaps too faithfully, for he reproduces all the irregularities of the *Maréchal's* face). To the protestations of the *Maréchal*, who insists on showing him the photos of himself before his accident, the American artist remarks, 'But no, there are thousands of handsome, well-set-up men in the world—there is only one *gueule* like this one and that's the one I wish to do.'

"The sitting continues late into the night. Irritated by having to pose, the *Maréchal* talks incessantly, with grand gestures, dictates telegrams, reads reports, paces the floor without stopping. . . ."

"Sunday, March 8, 1925.

"At the *Résidence*, Davidson continues to work on the bust. At the insistence of the *Maréchal*, he corrects somewhat the drawing of the face, softening the nostrils, but for all that without weakening the features. Seeing this, the Boss becomes furious, Madame Lyautey insists, and let him beware who doesn't agree with her. 'This bust horrifies me. I don't want to look at

Between Sitzings

it.' One feels the moment has come when the clay will be upset and stepped on. However, the bust has a shrieking resemblance, especially the right profile. It is clearly not a fashion-plate likeness, but indeed the mask of a great man, in a moment of great concentration at a time of crisis and heavy responsibility, the mask that we know well and that we love so much. Prudently, the bust is carried off and locked up in a distant office—mine. Tomorrow, the cast will be made."

Durosoy also read aloud from his diary that the *Maréchal* had said, "Have I a face like that?" and my reply to the effect that "when you have a face like that you don't change it." I recall that when I turned the bust around for the *Maréchal* to have a look at it, he yelled, "*Dis-lui donc, Maurice. Je ne suis pas comme ça.*" (Tell him, Maurice. I am not like that.) He did not like the twist I had given his jaw.

From Rabat we went to Fez, a walled-in city which Lyautey had turned into an open city. It still preserved its traditional character: narrow streets, flanked by shops, covered by a lattice roofing through which the sun broke, spattering the faces of the moving crowd, occasionally hitting a brass pot and reflecting back in your eyes.

In a huge square, near one of the seventeen entrances to the Mosque, was a beautifully carved fountain. The Arabs washed their hands and feet before going into the Mosque. No European was allowed to enter, with the exception of *Maréchal* Lyautey, who had been invited but who had not availed himself of the privilege. From the roof of an adjoining *medersa* (a residential college) we got a peek into the courtyard of the Mosque, where we saw some of the faithful at prayer.

Marrakech, our next stop, situated at the foot of snow-clad mountains, had a distinctive, Thousand-and-One-Nights charm: palm groves, squatting Arab story-tellers, snake-charmers, boys dancing barefoot on broken glass—all this to nostalgic music, with the sun beating down hard and a veil of dust covering the scene and blending the rich palette of many hues together.

Shopping in Marrakech was an adventure. Wandering about the streets, we heard the ironworkers and the coppersmiths singing as they

With Otto Kahn in Morocco

worked. We saw multi-colored fabrics dripping in the sun in the street of the dyers, where they dyed the wools from which they wove their carpets. As we watched them plunge their wools into deep copper pots and cauldrons of rich, ancient shapes, we came upon a cauldron which struck Kahn's fancy. He knew a work of art when he saw one. He had to have it.

The dyers were perplexed. These were their tools, which had been used for generations, and it took a lot of convincing to induce the dyer to part with his copper cauldron. Negotiations dragged on, but after two days of arguing back and forth, Kahn triumphantly acquired the copper cauldron and shipped it direct to his estate at Cold Spring Harbor on Long Island.

My memory of our stay in Morocco is like the echo of an Arabian Nights entertainment. We were invited to a banquet at Marrakech by El Glaoui. From the narrow, crowded street we entered a gateway where beggars squatted and the smells were not pleasant. We then passed through another gateway, and a few hundred yards farther on, another gateway. Here the gates opened into a beautiful garden. From a distance we heard strains of music. We heard the voices of women whom we did not see. We were ushered into a beautiful hall and were greeted by our host, who wore long white robes and a turban. After many salaams we were led into the dining hall.

There were beautiful rugs and cushions, but no chairs. The Arab guests sat on the carpet, but we sat gingerly on the edge of a cushion, or on the edge of a couch. The doors opened and giant, dark-skinned servants brought in brass platters of birds cooked in a most delectable manner. Our host did not join us in the feast, but moved among us, urging us to partake. We watched our Arab friends deftly removing dainty morsels with their fingers. We tried it, but not very successfully. Our maladroitness was tactfully ignored.

Other servants brought in great brass pitchers and bowls of water, which they poured over our fingers. Then they passed us a lovely linen towel to dry our hands, in order to start over again.

The feast was endless, and dish followed dish. Finally, we thought we

Between Sitzings

were through, and as I heaved a sigh of relief, Georges Bénard nudged me with his elbow. I turned to see more giants walking in with more platters and more food. I have never attended such a sumptuous meal anywhere in the world!

(Our trip was drawing to a close. Plans were to return home by way of Spain. I was full of Morocco, and felt Spain to be an anti-climax. Morocco had thrown me back centuries and had given me a vision of life in Biblical days, untouched by European civilization.

Otto Kahn, always the magnificent host, had rented a private car on the train which was to take us through Spain. I tried to beg off, but I could not refuse Otto Kahn. Besides, the Count de Beaumont had left us, and I became a necessary fourth at bridge. Otto Kahn insisted that I was a natural bridge player, and gave me the lesson that I must not forget to lead "from strength into weakness." The game went along fairly well until I got to thinking of something else. Then all hell let loose and Otto threw the cards on the table, annoyed at my stupidity. This entertained me. I could not take bridge seriously, and I said, "Hold it, boss. I'm afraid I will have to do your bust all over again." He wanted to know why. I said, "Here is an expression I have not seen before, and I must put it in."

Ronda, Granada and Seville had their picturesque attractions, but the Mosque at Córdoba got most of my attention. And in Madrid, the Prado Museum made up for everything. It was one of the richest and most beautifully hung museums I had ever visited.

Nevertheless I was anxious to get home to Paris where Yvonne was settling in new quarters on the rue Leconte de Lisle. On my return, I went to work with a vengeance in the immense studio; as usual, there was too much to do.

CHAPTER 35

CHARLIE CHAPLIN

ON MY NEXT TRIP to New York, I brought the marble bust of John D. Rockefeller. My friend Mitchell Kennerley, the president of the Anderson Art Galleries, gave me a room to set it up in. The room had beautiful light and for a background, there was a *mille feuilles* tapestry. Mr. Rockefeller used to come in to see the bust; he was delighted with it. He would sit in front of it and gaze at it while I re-touched it. When I felt I could do no more, Mr. Rockefeller said in his slow drawl: "I like this bust. It is firm, but kindly—not cruel. It is not the face of a tyrant. It is pleasant, strong. That's the way I want to be seen. I am thankful—I am grateful. A-ll good."

John D. Rockefeller Jr. was concerned that it took so much longer than I had expected to produce the marble bust and the big stone head of his father. When I finally got through, he asked me if I was happy with my contract, and of his own accord sent me a check for more than had been agreed upon—the only time, I might add, this has ever happened in my life.

The pedestal for the big stone head was eventually finished. Before the bust was placed in the Standard Oil Building, it was exhibited in the Reinhardt Galleries. The private view was held on November 18, 1925. The bust was shown in a room by itself for two weeks and had a record-breaking attendance. I had a feeling that people were not coming just to

Between Sitzings

see a piece of sculpture. There was intense curiosity on the part of the public about the old John D. Rockefeller. They reacted to the bust as if it were the man himself.

From a diary kept at this time I see that on August 12, soon after I arrived in New York, I went to a dinner for Charlie Chaplin at Condé Nast's. Chaplin and I took to each other and he agreed to sit for his bust.

Making a bust of him was no easy task. He has a very sensitive and mobile face. It was fascinating to watch the rapid play of his many expressions. He would sit there and never move a muscle—and yet his face was constantly changing. He would look gay or sad, wise or silly, at will. It seemed to come from the inside out. He was a wonderfully stimulating companion.

One day Michael Arlen, Walter Wanger, Charlie Chaplin and I dined at the new Russian Inn, which my sister Ray had just opened. It was bigger than an earlier place she had had and the decorations were by Artzybashev. The food was excellent, but it was Rachie herself who was the real attraction.

My sister put us in the balcony, where we could be by ourselves. As soon as we started to talk of someone, Chaplin began to imitate him. When he imitated William Randolph Hearst, this little man seemed to grow in stature, and as he grew bigger his voice became smaller. He actually became Mr. Hearst.

I can remember going to a cocktail party at Bill Hamilton's and as I came in, the maid who opened the door made a motion for me not to make any noise. I stood in the doorway and peeked in. Charlie Chaplin was imitating me imitating Rockefeller. Just then he caught sight of me and stopped, and all the pleading in the world wouldn't make him continue.

During these days I saw a lot of Mitchell Kennerley. He was one of the most complex persons I have ever encountered. The Anderson Galleries were his life. He never went home. He would work in the Galleries and entertain there until the small hours of the morning. The walls of his office were lined with books which he loved, not so much for their content as for the way they looked. He loved a beautiful type and he

Charlie Chaplin

had one which Goudy made for him specially. Today, some of Mitchell's catalogues of the sales at the Anderson Galleries have become collectors' items.

Kennerley was the first to publish Edna St. Vincent Millay, Van Wyck Brooks, D. H. Lawrence and Edward Carpenter. He enjoyed publishing more than paying royalties.

Throughout his varied career, Mitchell Kennerley was always a great friend to me. He was at times a very rich man and at times a very poor one. He played many roles, and he played each one to perfection.

CHAPTER 36

POETRY AND POLITICS IN MEMORIAM

IT WAS in June, 1925, that I received this letter from my old friend George S. Hellman:

“There is a movement on foot to erect a memorial, either full length or bust, to Walt Whitman, to be set up somewhere in New York, very possibly in Battery Park.”

Hellman suggested that I enter the competition for the memorial. The idea was sponsored by the Authors Club. Ten sculptors were invited to make sketches for a proposed statue of Walt Whitman to be placed somewhere in New York City. I was one of the ten.

I have always been allergic to this way of selecting a work of art. Competitions spell tragedy for so many artists. However, this was more than I could resist for I had been a devotee of Walt Whitman all my life. When I got to New York, I went to work as if I had already gotten the job.

Mitchell Kennerley steered me to Goldsmith's, a second-hand book-seller who had a shop at 42 Lexington Avenue. He had a remarkable Walt Whitman collection, and got me some rare photographs of my favorite poet.

In a letter to Yvonne, dated September 19, I wrote:

Poetry and Politics in Memoriam

"I am working on a sketch for the Whitman monument. For the last few weeks I have been simply steeping myself in Whitman, reading various biographies and letters and, of course, his stupendous *Leaves of Grass*. My theme is,

'Afoot and lighthearted I take to the open road . . .
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.
Henceforth I ask not good fortune, I myself am good fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.'

"But not only is this my theme, but the reading of him is so hypnotic—there is something so stupendous, so convincing about him—he sort of grips you and takes you out of morbid lethargy. 'I am larger, better than I thought, I did not know I held so much goodness' and 'Now understand me well—it is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.'

"That is indeed wisdom, and he says 'Wisdom cannot be passed from one having it to another not having it.' So that is that. Anyway, I am working and feeling fine again and hopeful. Wait until you see my sketch. It is really good and those who have seen it are quite enthusiastic."

After my sketch had been submitted, I received a letter from George Hellman dated November 9, 1925:

"Dear Jo,

Congratulations. You received four votes as first choice and three votes as second choice. . . .

"Will you let me know by telegram how we can get the model from your studio to exhibit at the Library where a great Whitman Exhibition has just opened?"

I was happy because at last I was going to be able to do something for New York City; but a disappointment was in store for me.

Originally, the committee had thought of Battery Park as a site. Professor Holloway wrote me in December, 1926:

Between Sitzings

“ . . . we could not budge the Art Commission. When I investigated, I found, however, that their refusal was not based on our selection of a sculptor, nor on the merits of his sketch, nor on the subject of that sketch. They have a settled plan not to place any monuments in the ‘bowling green’ part of the Park to break it up.”

Things rarely happen according to one’s dreams. For four years afterwards many of my friends and the Memorial Committee of the Authors Club, collectively and individually, fought to get a site. I have a correspondence on this Walt Whitman statue which dates from 1925 to 1929.

My friend Bob Davis enlisted the help of Ivy Lee, the public relations counselor, and Lee interceded with Mr. Herrick, the Park Commissioner, for a site. Mr. Lee wrote me:

“Dear Jo:

I have had a letter from Walter Herrick in which he says that there is nothing he can do about the Whitman statue in Central Park, as it has been decided that while your statue is first-class it is not appropriate for the Park. I cannot see the logic of this reasoning but that is the language of the Lord High Executioner.”

From Battery Park to Central Park, from Central Park to Bryant Park, from Bryant Park to Riverside Drive, no site was available. The Women’s League for the Protection of Riverside Drive objected that, because of the narrowness of the park, no more statues should be placed therein.

Sculptors’ studios are full of projects which never come to be. Even if you win a competition, it does not mean your statue will be erected. The Walt Whitman model was destined to remain in my studio for many years.

(Senator La Follette died in June, 1925 and soon afterwards the Wisconsin Legislature voted to have his statue

Poetry and Politics in Memoriam

erected in the Hall of Fame in Washington, D. C. Young Bob La Follette wrote me on August 7, 1925:

“ . . . the legislature has authorized the Governor to provide for the erection of a statue to Dad in the Hall of Fame. . . . Of course, you know that I personally feel that you are the one man to do the job. . . .”

In November, 1925, young Bob was elected to replace his father in the Senate. Bob wrote inviting me to Washington to discuss with him and his mother the proposed monument to his father. The family definitely wanted me to do the statue. We talked the matter over. Bob arranged for me to see moving pictures of the late Senator and after selecting the footage I would need, I went back to Paris to work on my first real assignment for a monument.

I had a vivid memory of the Senator whom I had last seen in Paris after our 1923 trip to Russia. Lincoln Steffens had admired him immensely and often dropped in while I worked on La Follette's bust. One day, when the Senator opined that nobody should have more than two hundred thousand dollars, Steff whispered to me:

“That's what he's got.”

The bust I had done at that time now stood me in good stead. It helped bring back his warm and dynamic personality. He used to tell me about himself, how, when he was young, he had wanted to play Hamlet. He also told about the time he ran for office in the early days and used to ride across the country in a horse and buggy to talk to his constituents.

The Senator had had far-seeing political ideas. It was his belief that public ownership of transportation would solve many of America's problems. Above all, he had a clear practical concept of a better world.

Despite our close association, my first sketch turned out to be not too successful. It had been impressed upon me that when the Senator was in repose, he was completely so. His family thought they wanted him in this mood. I remembered also that La Follette had not particularly liked the bust I did for him and had remarked that it was too belligerent. Accordingly, I held back.

Between Sitzings

Some people liked my first attempt. The family, however, felt differently. Bob wired me from Washington on July 10, 1926:

“Picture disappointing if represent model. Letter follows. Suggest await before proceeding investigating contract delay.”

Several letters followed, in which everyone, particularly Fola La Follette gave me their sincerest criticism.

I was very grateful for these comments and I went to work on another model. The La Follette family supplied me with more moving pictures, more photos, clothes. They even sent me the shoes of the late Senator. It was curious that although La Follette had been short and stocky, he gave me the impression of being a huge man. No wonder they called him “The Little Giant.” I made many studies until I finally completed a model I believed in. I sent photographs of this second model to Senator Bob Jr. On October 27, 1926, Bob wired me:

“Photographs have just come. We are wonderfully happy. We shall ever be grateful for your patient and sympathetic striving which has accomplished what seems to be a masterpiece.”

With the moving pictures going full tilt, I got to work on the full-sized model. Friends came in to see the progress of the work and whenever I found anyone who had any trait that resembled the old Senator, I grabbed him and made him pose—for legs, for arms, for general appearance, for anything. I worked a long time on the full-sized model before I started carving it in stone.

The La Follette statue was an exciting assignment and I did not do it in a hurry. It was four years between the time I started to work on the first model and the completion of the final marble.

CHAPTER 37

IN THE COUNTRY OF BALZAC

DURING THE FOUR YEARS I worked on the La Follette statue, I made several trips to Egypt, to Greece and to America.

In 1927, I came back to Paris from a trip to New York and I brought my nephew Michael, Rachie's son, with me. He was a year older than Jacques, my older boy. Rachie thought it would be an opportunity for Michael to learn French.

With the addition of Mike, our living quarters in the rue Leconte de Lisle were rather cramped. My studio, with three assistants, and plenty of work, was full. Yvonne's dressmaking shop was flourishing, but she was tired and her health was not too good. The winter had been a hard one, and we were all looking forward eagerly to the approaching spring. We began to think of having a place of our own in the country.

One day my architect, Jean-Paul Oury, brought me a photograph of an old manor house near Tours which was for sale. It was a pretty postcard, showing a lovely façade, with an old pigeon tower. Oury advised me to get a look at the manor soon, as it was not yet on the market. The house, which had been built around the time of Louis XII, was well-known to Oury as he came from that part of the country and had an office in Tours.

Accompanied by Mike, I took the train to Tours, hired a car, and drove twenty miles southwest to have a look at the manor. The minute

Between Sitzings

I saw it, I knew that I wanted it. Bécheron had a beautiful gray façade and I was fascinated by its pigeon tower. The house was enclosed by old stone walls, and on the opposite side of the road there was a vegetable and flower garden. From its terrace you looked out over the lovely valley of the gently flowing Indre. The lady who owned it had already started modernizing the interior. I saw its possibilities, for it had a huge barn which was a natural for a studio.

I came home and raved about the manor to Yvonne. She raised objections. After all, I did not know that countryside. It was too far away, four hours from Paris. I urged that she come and have a look. She was under a doctor's care. The doctor, however, said that, if we took the nurse along, it would be all right. We packed our bags and went to Tours and stopped at a hotel.

The following day we hired a car and motored out to Sache, where the manor of Bécheron was located. As we entered the big iron gates, I could tell by Yvonne's face that Bécheron affected her just at it had me. We went into the house, looked at the layout and the inner courtyard and the beautiful barn. Then she said that perhaps it would be a good idea to consider buying it. I told her I was sorry but it was too late. Her face fell. I continued: too late, because I had already bought it. It would have been too late at that point because there were quite a few people after it already. That is how I acquired the Manoir de Bécheron in the valley of the Indre, the country of Balzac, the country of "*Le Lis dans la Vallée.*"

Everyone wanted to help us make the place beautiful—masons, carpenters, ironworkers. We all worked like fury to bring back the old flavor of Bécheron, as it had been abused by many hands.

I became a collector of fireplaces. In the salon there was a little pink marble chimney which did not seem to go with the place at all. On each side were closets. I realized that the original room had been much wider. I got hold of a hatchet, and proceeded to chop down the closets. As we tore the wood away, much to Yvonne's distress, we found the stone base of what had been a monumental fireplace. I made a terrible mess, but it was worth it. I was told of a similar fireplace in the village of

In the Country of Balzac

Sache, in the oldest house there. I called on M. Gentilhomme, the proprietor, and found the duplicate of the fireplace which had formerly stood in Bécheron. I made a deal with M. Gentilhomme to remove his stone fireplace stone by stone. I gave him a brand-new modern fireplace in exchange. We were both very happy about it.

But I had to spend most of my time in Paris where I was carving the large stone bust of Adolph Zukor.

Then Steffens, Peter and their little son Pete turned up in Paris. For relaxation I started modeling a statue of Pete. He was twenty-one months old when I started it, but twenty years old when I finished it. Steff would come around with Pete, who crawled about in the studio on all fours, then stood up on two bandy legs and strutted—a man-cub. Pete wrote to his grandmother through Steffens, “I have been made permanent, you know, by my uncle Jo Davidson, the mud man. He has made a monument in infancy out of me and is going to show it all over, he says. Me and Rockefeller, or maybe it is more polite to say Mr. Rockefeller and Ella Winter’s baby.”

Yvonne spent a good deal of the summer at Bécheron with the children. Her health improved so much she was able to get back to her dressmaking shop by early autumn. It was early autumn, and I had to go to America to deliver the Zukor bust.

At this time Steffens was working on his autobiography. He had visited us in Bécheron and loved it, so we turned the place over to the Steffenses for the winter, with the stipulation that Yvonne was to visit with them while I was in America.

CHAPTER 38

I STRIKE OIL

ONE DAY, at the Colony Restaurant in New York, Paul Reinhardt introduced me to E. W. Marland, the oil man. After a drink or two, Mr. Marland began to berate me and sculptors in general for having omitted one of the greatest subjects in the world—the sunbonnet woman. He talked so rhapsodically about America's pioneer woman that my imagination was fired. I was about to go abroad and gave him my address in Paris, asking him to be sure to look me up if he ever came over.

E. W. Marland was an American phenomenon. He hailed from Pittsburgh and had spent his youth there working as a newspaperman. He also wrote children's stories.

In the early days of oil, he had gone out prospecting with a pick and shovel. He had not met with immediate success. But at the time I met him, he was the biggest independent oil man in America and was reputed to have paid four million dollars in income tax that year.

A few months later in Paris I returned to my studio after a late lunch and found Gino serving drinks to a man he couldn't talk to—Gino couldn't speak English. The man was E. W. Marland.

"I took you at your word," he said, "and I have come here with a great idea."

He described to me the house he was building in Ponca City, Okla-

I Strike Oil

homa, and the gardens he was planning. He had visited Versailles, and I think he got the idea there of laying out his gardens on the same monumental scale. He had another idea, that I, as a plastic historian, should do a plastic history of America—a series of statues: the redskins, the coming of the white man, the frontiersmen, right down to the oil man, which was himself. From a piece of paper, he read off a list of the statues he proposed for me to make. He kept on reading, but when he came to about the thirtieth proposed statue, I stopped him.

“Mr. Marland,” I said, “supposing you went to Fritz Kreisler and asked him to come to Ponca City and fiddle for you the rest of his life. What do you think he would tell you?”

“What?” said he.

“I think,” I said, “he would tell you to go to hell.”

“I can pay for it,” he said.

“I don’t doubt it for a minute,” I said, “but I can’t see myself working for you for the rest of my life.”

Marland had great charm and was very insistent. He had made up his mind he was going to get me to Ponca City. He kept talking about his dream—his house and his garden. He told me that although he had made his money out of oil, he was not like other oil men, who made their money in the Middle West and built their houses in Long Island and Palm Beach. He was going to build his palace in Ponca City where his money had been made, and he wanted to leave a monument to oil.

He stayed in Paris about two weeks and entertained us lavishly. When he was convinced that I meant what I said, he abandoned his first idea and asked: “How many statues would you undertake?”

To humor him, I said I would make one or two.

He rejoined, “What about three?”

I had already sold him the idea that what he wanted was not a one-man job, but a job for a group of sculptors. The three statues which he wanted me to do were of himself—the oil man—and his two adopted children.

I had never been west of the Mississippi in my life, and Ponca City was a funny-sounding name, but Marland made it sound poetic. He

Between Sitzings

told of the Cherokee Strip, the Indians, the mud town that was Ponca City and what he had done and was going to do to it. One afternoon at the Chatham bar he nailed me down. If I agreed to do those statues for him and come to Ponca City, what would be my fee? Hoping to discourage him, I raised my ante. The next morning I got a letter from him enclosing a very substantial check with a note stating that he was sailing for home and that he was looking forward to my visit to Ponca City in two or three months.

Yvonne and I had been amused by his persistence, never thinking that he meant to go through with it. I showed her the letter and the check.

“But I don’t want to go to Ponca City,” I said.

“Well, write and tell him so and send him back the check. But, on the other hand, it might be interesting—after all, you do not know that part of the world.”

We batted the idea around like shuttlecock and battledore. The check was too big to resist and besides, portraiture was my business.

So one bright day I set out for Ponca City, Oklahoma. It was a long journey, but I shortened it by stopovers in New York and Chicago. Finally, one night, I got to Ponca City, deep in the Bible-belt of Oklahoma.

I was met by Mr. Marland. He took me home, explaining to me that this was the old house. After a snack, I went to bed, with instructions to sleep as long as I liked. When I got up the next morning, Marland’s adopted daughter Lyde greeted me, saying that E.W. had gone to his office and that her instructions were to feed me and take me to his office whenever I was ready. At about eleven o’clock Lyde drove me over to the Marland Oil Company.

Ponca City was a little town with a main street full of small shops. On the streets and in the cars passing us were Indians—some in blankets and some in standard Western clothing. We drove up to the office, a great big red building, quite good in design, in the center of a circular lawn with hedges and flower beds. There was a complete circle of cars, two deep, parked around the building. Lyde dropped me there and told me how to get to the big man’s office.

I Strike Oil

I finally located it, knocked and entered. Legs were swiftly taken off the table—apparently I had interrupted a meeting.

Mr. Marland had been telling his associates that he had imported a sculptor from Paris. They had expected an effete-looking artist, but when they saw my ferocious beard, they smiled with relief. Mr. Marland introduced me all around. Then he excused himself, as they were in the midst of a meeting, trying to get a rebate for taxes from the United States Government.

When it was time for lunch, we took the elevator and went down to the cafeteria. I had never been to one before and there I saw democracy at work. There were lots of people ahead of us—secretaries, office girls, stenographers, directors, engineers—each standing in line, waiting his turn to fill his tray, and sitting down to eat his lunch wherever there was a place. Mr. Marland and I did likewise. In France this would have been unthinkable. I thought to myself that I was going to like this city.

Mr. Marland told me that as soon as I had written him that I was coming over, he had had his architect build a studio near the new house. It was ready for me. He drove me over. It had everything in it—modeling stands, clay, etc. He pulled out some keys from his pocket, gave them to me and took me to a locker stocked full of liquor—a luxury in prohibition days.

He had to go back to his office. I stayed in the studio to get acquainted with it. After a short while there was a knock at the door. I opened it and there stood a blond man, in boots, riding breeches and a Stetson hat. He didn't come in, but stood there with his feet planted squarely on the ground and looked at me, hard.

"You are Jo Davidson."

I admitted it.

"So you are Jo Davidson—I used to hate your guts."

"Oh," said I, "but really, we haven't met. Come in."

"I am John Duncan Forsythe. I am the architect."

"Come in," I said.

He stepped in and repeated, "I used to hate your guts. Remember William S. Pardee?"

Between Sitzings

Did I remember! One of my dearest memories.

"I used to work for him," he said, "and every time I would do anything for him, make a drawing or a plan, he would say, 'Jo Davidson would do it this way or that way.' I used to hate your guts."

I went to my locker, got a bottle, and over a few drinks Jack Forsythe and I became great friends.

Forsythe was a Scot who had studied architecture at the Beaux Arts in Paris. He had come to America and one of his first jobs was to remodel a house for William S. Pardee in New Haven. Then he had gone West where Marland had engaged him to design and build his palace in Ponca City.

Marland's house was built of native stone. Inside there were mosaics by artists Marland brought over from Italy. There were beamed ceilings painted with scenes from American history; marble staircases; a tremendous kitchen with all the latest gadgets. In the back of the house was a huge swimming pool. This was the palace that Marland was preparing for himself to live in.

Marland was a liberal. He wanted labor to participate in the profits of the business, and, with that in view, started the Marland Employees Royalty Company. He gave a million dollars' worth of stock to the employees of the company. He built a polo field, and they all had polo ponies. His idea was that sports would keep the workers from gambling and heavy drinking. The Marland Oil Refinery was a model plant. It had an infirmary and rest rooms. A petroleum institute was also being planned.

For Ponca City, Marland built a hospital and gave it to the city as a present. There was a land and housing project, started by him. His architect, Jack Forsythe, was a busy man. He was under contract to Marland and gave him his all.

Marland was very imaginative, and as soon as he had an idea, he put it into practice. He had bought up a tremendous amount of acreage for his grounds. Marland alone was responsible for the land boom in Ponca City. In landscaping his grounds, if he found a lake which would look better in another place, that did not bother him—he would move it to



Photo by Bernès, Marouteau & Cie., Paris

H. G. WELLS

ARNOLD BENNETT



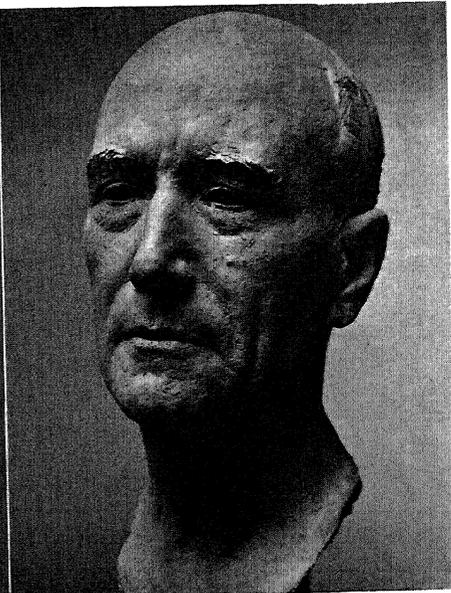
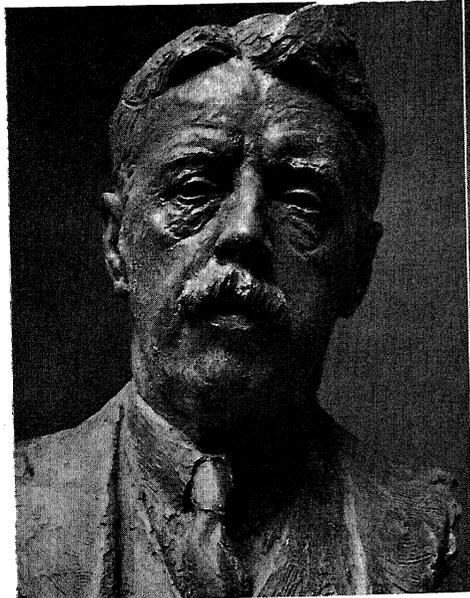
Photo Kollar, Paris

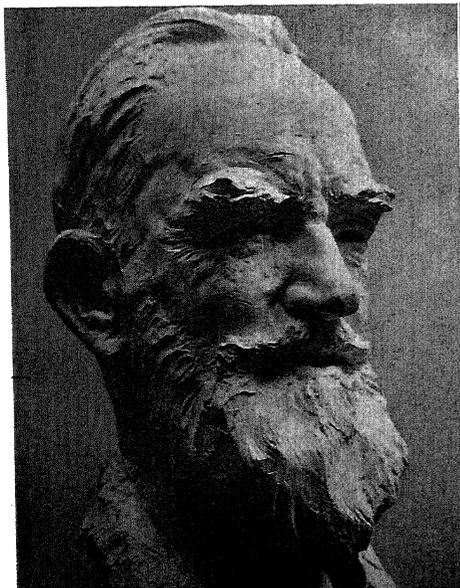
ROBINSON JEFFERS

ANDRÉ GIDE

Photo Kollar, Paris

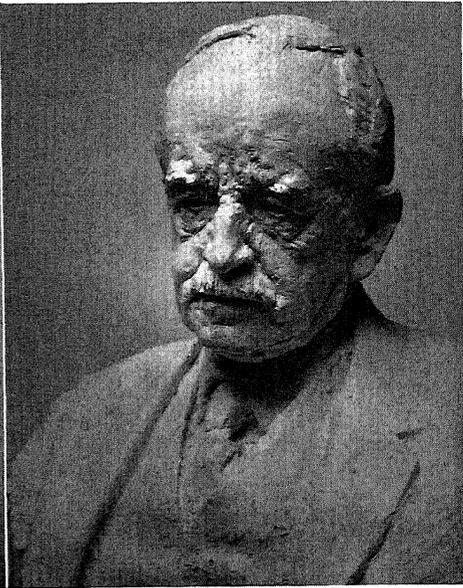
Photo Kollar, Paris





GEORGE BERNARD SHAW
SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

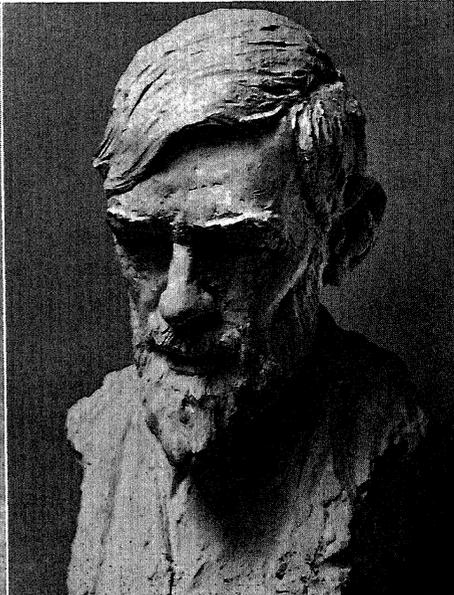
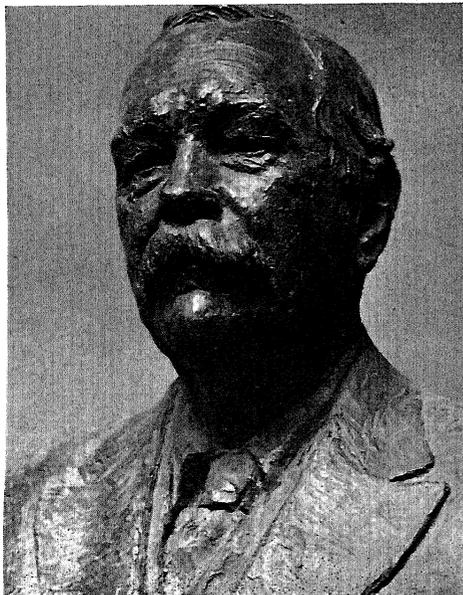
Photo Kollar, Paris



SIR JAMES BARRIE
D. H. LAWRENCE

Photo Kollar, Paris

Photo Kollar, Paris



I Strike Oil

where he thought it ought to be. He had several gardens, and was particularly fond of his Japanese garden, with its little bridges across artificial brooks.

He gave big dinner parties and had me meet all his friends and associates. It was the first time that I met such people. They were different from those I had met in the East. They were not the kind who read book reviews and music and drama and art criticism and discussed these subjects with authority. On the contrary, they readily confessed ignorance of what they did not know. But they were proud of their knowledge of oil, horseflesh and mineralogy, and it was fascinating to hear them on these subjects. They accepted me as one of them, for I confessed my ignorance about the things they were so well-versed in, and in turn talked about my musical, literary and artistic associations. People came from miles around and stayed far too long into the night. Finally, I had to beg E.W. to cut down the number of parties.

I filled the studio which he had built for me with studies for figures and portrait busts of Lyde, E.W., and his stepson George. But besides that, there was my sketch for the "Sunbonnet Woman." This was E.W.'s most cherished dream. It was to be a twenty-five-foot figure, which he planned to put up on a hill where it could be seen for miles. My sketch was conceived with that in view. It represented a pioneer woman in a sunbonnet, peering into the distance. It was to be a monolithic figure silhouetted against the sky.

There was considerable interest in the "Sunbonnet Woman." E.W. brought his friends to see what I was doing. He acted as if he was the sculptor, and in conversation would say that he was doing the figure—that I was his hands. In the midst of this, he was called to New York. On his return, he broke the news to me that he was going to invite some ten sculptors and pay them each a fee for making sketches for the "Sunbonnet Woman." He would show the sketches all over the country and have school children and teachers vote for their preferences. My work progressed. I made small models of the prospective statues—Lyde, a standing figure with a large garden hat in her hand; George, in boots

Between Sitzings

and riding breeches; and E.W., a seated figure, also in boots and riding breeches.

To me, this work in Ponca City was not just another job. Not only did E. W. Marland and I become very close friends but he helped me to know and love my country. For this I shall always be grateful.

CHAPTER 39

ABOARD THE "PONCA CITY"

IT WAS AFTER I had completed my models, statues and busts, that E.W. said one day: "Now that you have shown me and mine to the world, I am going to take you and show you to America." He was going to California to inspect some new oil fields, and offered to take me to California and back to New York in his private car, the "Ponca City." He mapped out a trip too fascinating to refuse.

So it was that one bright winter day in December, 1926, E.W., John Hale, John Alcorn, a vice-president of his company, and I started westward. This trip was the greatest Christmas present I ever received. After a stop in Denver we dropped Alcorn and went on to Los Angeles. I find in my files a letter written to Yvonne from Los Angeles on December 18:

"What a distance I am away from home. And oh, the ground I have covered and the things I have seen. Where to begin I do not know—I have seen and am still seeing and feeling this amazing country of ours. Its immensity appals one. It is midsummer here, flowers and green grass lawns, and there is a general sense of peace.

"Los Angeles is a mushroom town, one that has grown overnight to accommodate a million people or more for their activities, that are moving pictures and oil. Yesterday I saw an oil field in operation. It is certainly a sight, hundreds and hundreds of derricks shooting up into the sky, a forest

Between Sitzings

of them, extracting millions of barrels of oil out of the bowels of the earth. It is strange that the same place should supply the world with both necessity and distraction—oil and movies.

“In contrast I spent a glorious day and two nights at Pebble Beach. Such a spot I have never seen, right on the Pacific Ocean, with an immense lawn, beautiful flowers, and, on either side, snow-peaked mountains. That day our hosts, Colonel Kenney and Sam Blythe, took us for a drive to show us the surrounding country. . . .

“After we left, Sam Blythe explained that Carmel was a colony of artists who painted pictures but never sold them; writers who wrote books that were never published; and playwrights who wrote plays that were never produced; but with all that they were probably the happiest people in the world. They ask for little and are content with the little they get.

“San Francisco I just got a glimpse of, but I did get the impression that there is a city I could love. What a glorious bay miles and miles long. Today E.W. and I are going to take lunch with Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and Jack Barrymore and give the once-over to Hollywood. I don't feel like a tourist, but perhaps I am one for the first time in my life.

“When I arrive in San Francisco I shall try to see the McNamaras so that I can give Steffens a full report when I get home.”

On December 26, I wrote Yvonne another letter on the “Ponca City,” en route to Santa Fe from the Grand Canyon:

“The last I wrote you was from Los Angeles. What a world of things has happened since then. I have been to San Francisco and love it. It has an Old World feeling, and the inhabitants too seem to belong to an older people. However, they give one a sense of youth. . . .

“I wonder if you will be able to read this—the train is moving at the rate of some fifty or sixty miles an hour. We are traveling through a snow-covered desert, with snow-capped mountains on either side. Yesterday we spent at the Grand Canyon. It is by far the most gorgeously stupendous sight I have ever encountered, and sort of hits one in the pit of the stomach. The color of it is like nothing I have ever seen.

“It is all so strange—the sudden changes of scenery and climate. Just the other day we were in a land of heat and sunshine, with the Pacific at our

Aboard the "Ponca City"

feet, with a Spanish architectural background—the Mission of Carmel at Monterey, and Del Monte. After leaving all that, what a contrast to see one of nature's most wonderful feats, the Grand Canyon, looking like a huge stage set for the Twilight of the Gods. I marvel at the immensity of this country, its terrific variety, populated by what are probably the most generous people in the world.

"I did have one disappointment. Fremont Older gave me a letter to the Acting Warden of San Quentin prison, and Dr. Suggert took me over in his car. I wanted to show Schmitt and McNamara what Steff's little boy Pete looks like in the photo. But the powers in charge of the 'Fortress' would have none of it, as we arrived after visiting hours. I shall not forget the experience for a long time. The faces of the guards—the walls of the prison—the ride there and back, four and a half hours—the guilty feeling and the shame of belonging to a civilization that calls this dispensing justice. It makes one shudder.

"We are traveling through a community that can hold twice what it has—but then I suppose it will take time. It is beautiful and tends to take all vestige of conceit out of me."

A third letter from the "Ponca City" en route to New York from Santa Fe:

"My holiday is drawing to a close and it all seems like a dream. Tomorrow I arrive in New York and must get to work once more and get ready for my trip back to Paris.

"Santa Fe—Taos—what a world—something not related to the world we live in and know. I do not wonder that those tired of fighting retire into that extraordinary haven of rest. How to describe it? It's Mexican—it's Indian—it's human. I have attended what the Indians, or rather we, call their 'dances,' but they are more like prayers. It is their religion. I saw two dances by two different tribes—the 'Corn Dance' at San Domingo Pueblo, and the 'Comanche Dance.' They continue for hours. It is a peculiar rhythm, monotonous, which gets hold of you so you can hardly break away—the tam-tam of the drum, the jingle of peas in the gourd as the dancers stamp up and down and shuffle back and forth, the gestures of the chorus as they chant a long and lugubrious prayer.

Between Sittings

"From Santa Fe to Taos the roadpath goes over the mountains, a great divide, a perilous divide, with a drop of a thousand feet. You look over the side of the car and the Rio Grande is churning down below.

"When we arrived at Santa Fe, Ida Rauh and Dasberg met us, also Witter Bynner, the poet, Randall Davey and Billy Henderson, the painter. They gave us a grand reception. Andrew Dasberg and Ida took us about. Mabel Dodge was away. However, they took us to Taos and we lunched at Mabel's house. Mabel certainly has taste. I ran across the oil sketch I made of her son John in the Villa Curonia. Mabel wired Ida to keep me there, give me studios and everything until she came back, which will be the first of the year, but you can guess I was not even tempted.

"E.W. enjoyed meeting all these people and took a great shine to Ida and Dasberg. He invited them to visit Ponca City. He has never met artists before. His associations have always been with industry—oil, lumber, cotton. Artists and all such folk were unknown to him. But, being an artist himself really, he feels for a crew of men and women who live a life so different from his own and ask for little more than the necessities of life. What an extraordinary man he is. What a lonely soul—having all that the world can give, materially, but nothing that can give him spiritual and sentimental peace. He is another 'American Tragedy' that someone ought to write. I wish I could. I want Steffens to know him. He is coming to Paris in June or July to sit for me for the final model, and you will see what a sweet intelligence he has."

The trip, one of the richest experiences of my life, eventually was over, and I set out for Europe where political developments were moving at a rapid pace.

CHAPTER 40

EGYPT

IN JANUARY, 1927, I returned to Paris. My sister Ray accompanied me. On the boat I found my old friend Dikran Kelikian, a collector of, and dealer in Egyptian sculpture. I had been telling him about my trip to Morocco. He expressed amazement that I, a sculptor, had not yet been to Egypt. He said, "Egyptian sculpture is the greatest sculpture in the world. You must see it. I am going there in February. You must come with me as my guest. I will show you something."

Who could withstand such an invitation? When I got to Paris I told Yvonne. She caught my enthusiasm and was tempted to come along. I found a lot of work ready for me in my studio. The clay model for La Follette was enlarged and ready for me to work on, and I went at it tooth and nail. The Marland statues were being enlarged. I told Kelikian that I could not stay away too long, as I had work to do. He said, "Three weeks in Egypt and you will come back a new man and work better."

Yvonne was ill. She had caught a very bad cold. The day before I was to leave, the doctor came to see her and suggested that it was Yvonne who should go to Egypt, not I. The trip would do her good. It was late in the afternoon, but I succeeded in getting to our Embassy in time to have Yvonne's photo transferred to my passport.

Between Sitzings

When we appeared at the train the following evening and Kelikian realized that Yvonne was going too, his face fell. He started to scold me. "A sick woman, in Egypt—you are crazy." However, by the time we arrived in Alexandria he was completely under Yvonne's spell, and when we got to Cairo we were a gay party. Shepheard's Hotel was our headquarters.

Kelikian was not just anybody visiting Egypt. He had a shop in Cairo and he knew everyone—archeologists, art dealers, tomb thieves. He was at home there, and under his expert guidance we visited the Museums, the Pyramids, and the tombs of the kings, Luxor and Karnak.

For the first time I saw Egyptian sculpture not as museum sculpture but as something alive and functional. This sculpture was not executed in one place to be put up in another. It was carved on the spot where it was to stay. I had seen casts of those incised bas-reliefs in museums in Paris, London and New York, but they did not look the same, housed in museum rooms away from the sun. Here they were tremendous symphonies. The sun played its part, and as the sun traveled, it revealed the carvings as they were meant to be seen.

I got drunk on Egyptian sculpture. I bought bronze cats, fragments of bas-reliefs, a small head and a granite torso. I was going to make sculpture like that. That was the way to see things. The sun pointed that out. I thought I understood idolatry. I looked at sculpture as they looked at it centuries back.

All this was in Egypt. But when I got back to Paris, to my studio and my work, I was jolted back to the present, for I am a product of my time, with all its virtues and weaknesses. I still look back to the three weeks we spent in Egypt as a dream.

It was Kelikian who tempted me to buy. One day he discovered a rare piece and wanted us to see it. He was contemplating buying it, and warned us not to be too enthusiastic, as the man who owned it would raise the price. He led us through winding streets and up dark alleys to our destination.

The owner took us into a back room and produced a box which he carefully opened. From this he took out another box, and on opening

Egypt

that, extracted a parcel wrapped in cotton. He slowly opened the parcel and held up before our astonished eyes a most beautiful feline bronze in a walking posture. We were about to shout our admiration, but remembering our promise to Kelikian, checked ourselves and said nothing.

Kelikian had been watching us like a hawk. He could not stand our silence and burst out, "You damned fools, don't you see it is wonderful? Say something—what's the matter with you?"

At that admonition we poured out our admiration. Kelikian bought the bronze, but at the raised price he had anticipated. When we left the place, he suggested that thereafter, when we saw something good, we would say "tic." If it was better than that, we would say "tic-tic." If it was superlative, it would be "tic-tic-tic."

On another visit to a dealer we were shown two cats, and I lost my heart to both of them. Kelikian, seeing my enthusiasm, said, "You are my guests, you buy them. If you do not buy them, I will. If you buy them and want to sell them later, I'll give you the double." I still have those two cats. One is the usual heavy regal sitting cat, the other I have never seen duplicated. The subtle feline movement of the spine, the fine front legs, the fine pointed ears—it is the very essence of cat.

Outside of sculpture, life was fascinating in Egypt. We lunched and dined with Kelikian's friends. We rode camels and covered ourselves with dust, riding in the desert.

Finally we decided to go back on the *Homeric*, which was due to touch at Alexandria on a homeward-bound cruise. Kelikian had acquired a small stone head of an Egyptian princess. It was a rare piece and he was afraid he could not take it out of the country. According to Egyptian law, if you bought a rare piece you had to show it to the authorities. If they had something similar, it was yours. If not, they bought it from you, giving you a ten percent profit. Kelikian did not want to risk that. He asked me if I would take the head out of Egypt for him. He had been so sweet and generous I could not refuse him. I put the head in one of my bags.

Kelikian was nervous, and kept asking me where the head was, and

Between Sitzings

if it was safe. When we got to Alexandria, we went on board and our luggage followed. We were leaning over the rail trying to identify our luggage, when he suddenly saw a bag fall into the water. We were horrified, for we recognized that it was my bag, the one that contained the small stone head of the Egyptian princess. I gasped.

“Is it in there?” asked Kelikian.

I nodded and he went pale.

The bag was saved. It was fished up and I found it on deck, a wet, drenched thing. I took it to my cabin, followed by a jittery Kelikian. I opened the wet bag, took out the little head of the princess, and gave it to him.

CHAPTER 4 I

IL DUCE

THE TRIP to Egypt had been a great success in every way. Yvonne was better than she had been for ages. As for me, my head was whirling with all I had seen. I went to work with new zest.

But there was another trip ahead of me. When in Morocco in 1925 with Otto Kahn, I learned that Otto did not do things spontaneously—he planned. But I did not realize then, when he invited Georges Bénard and myself to accompany him on a trip two years hence to Greece, that he meant it. When I saw him in New York and he repeated the invitation, I thought, “Well, maybe.”

But then Otto Kahn wrote to Bénard on July 12, 1926:

“The time would seem to be approaching for making definite arrangements with respect to our proposed grand journey next spring. . . . The present idea is: 1) to start from Venice or Trieste about April 20; 2) to sail along the Dalmatian Coast, with automobile excursions inland to see points of interest; 3) to visit the Grecian Islands as far, if time allows, as the coast of Asia Minor; 4) to wind up at Athens and take the Orient-Paris from there to Paris.

“The first question is: can I count on the pleasure of the companionship of yourself and Jo Davidson? The second is: if, as I very much hope, the answer to that question is ‘yes’ will you be good enough to take steps to charter the most desirable yacht available (presumably the best place to get

Between Sitzings

it would be through the leading yacht broker in England) and engage the most competent courier obtainable? The third: do you know of any particularly desirable persons (they must be bridgeplayers) to join the party as my honored guests?

“With cordial regards, very faithfully yours,

Otto Kahn.”

I knew the trip was in the cards.

But the trip to Egypt had been so rich, I had seen so much which had to be digested, that another trip seemed an impossible thing to face. However, Kahn was not the kind of person whose invitation I could refuse. Georges Bénard had already dropped out. Besides, it was a chance for me to do a bust of Mussolini, which I very much wanted to do. Lincoln Steffens had been talking to me about Il Duce and his position in history, and Kahn was eager for me to do him. Tom Morgan of the United Press, who was very close to Mussolini at that time, volunteered to arrange for the sittings.

When I arrived in Rome, Tom Morgan met me and said that Il Duce had agreed to sit for me the following day at four o'clock. The next morning at the American Academy where I went to arrange for the clay and materials, I met the young American sculptor, Joseph Kisilevski, a recent American *Prix de Rome*. He accompanied me to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the Palazzo Chigi, where Mussolini had his office, to help me put up the clay.

We were escorted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Morgan. After about ten minutes I was told that I could come up—I was expected. We were taken up a flight of a magnificent marble staircase and ushered into a room which was reserved as a “*Salle d'Attente* for Ministers, Ambassadors and Journalists”—so a sign on the wall informed me. Black-shirted and black-frocked ushers, dark and slick-haired, hovered about. I was informed that His Excellency the Premier had not yet arrived. I was to wait.

At five o'clock one of the black-shirted ushers came in and told me to follow him. He opened a door and pulled back the tapestry curtains.

Il Duce

I walked into a huge, high-ceilinged room, at the other end of which was a table. Seated behind it was Il Duce.

It was the longest room I have ever crossed. As I came in, Il Duce stood up and gave the Fascist salute. With the same hand he turned and beckoned to me, and I started walking towards him, followed by Kisilevski who was carrying my materials.

“You don’t mind if I keep on working?” Il Duce asked.

“Not at all,” I said.

He sat down at his desk and began going through stacks of papers, while I put up the clay. Mussolini was middle-sized, about five feet seven, and slightly bald. He had a very mobile face, and extraordinary eyes—the whites bluish, the irises very deep and very dark.

The first sitting was not too successful. I spent a lot of time moving about trying to get a good view of him. But I managed to get a good start. Mussolini commented that I was doing a bust of “seven in one”; because he, Mussolini, held seven portfolios.

My next appointment was for six o’clock the following day. I was ushered into Mussolini’s presence immediately and he said he would give me an hour.

There was a continuous flow of visitors. First, a gentleman who brought him a book of engravings, with a text which he looked over carefully, praising this and condemning that. Then he autographed a photograph of himself for the visitor. Soon after, a galaxy of Contessas and Marquesas arrived with some younger women. They brought violets and roses for Il Duce and came to discuss the Fascist program for women. During this interview, he gave me an occasional look, with an imperceptible wink, as if to say, “Did you notice that?” Photographs were taken, photographs were autographed—then came more visitors, visitors, visitors.

The next day I appeared at the same hour. Il Duce was already there, working with his secretary. I uncovered my clay and started hopping around, trying to get a good view of my sitter. When his secretary left, Il Duce began looking over some papers. After a moment he said, “Will you be through with this today?”

Between Sitzings

"I am afraid not—not for a long time, unless you will really pose for me."

"Well, I've got fifteen minutes free. What do you want me to do?"

I asked him to come and stand alongside the bust, which he did. But he kept looking away. This bothered me, and without thinking I put my hand on his head to turn it towards me. He was startled and so was I. But it did the trick. It was the first time that I had the situation really in hand. The fifteen minutes became an hour and the bust really began to take shape. He liked what I was doing and we talked.

"For the first time I am being made as I am," he said.

He agreed to give me another hour the following day at the same time. But that turned out to be a fizzle. I no sooner took off my coat and got started when an important visitor was announced and I was asked to leave. I put on my coat and adjourned to the waiting-room. After some twenty minutes, I came back, took off my coat and went to work. But it was not to be—another important personality was announced, and I was again asked to leave. I waited forty-five minutes to come back, only in time to cover up the bust, for Il Duce said he had to leave.

"Tomorrow at five o'clock."

I arrived at five the next day and waited until six to be received. When I came in, Il Duce said, "Now I can pose."

He came out from behind his desk and stood alongside me. We were going along fine when a visitor was announced. Mussolini stood where he was, but turned his back to me as he talked. Again, I was completely forgotten.

When the man left, Mussolini went back to his desk and rang the bell for his secretary. Otto Kahn was announced. "Now," I thought, "I shall get a real pose."

But no. Kahn greeted me and complimented me on what I had done. Mussolini took him to his desk and they sat down facing each other. They talked for what seemed an hour.

When Kahn left, Mussolini turned to me and said, "Now, I'll pose. You will finish?"

Il Duce

"If you would only give me half an hour to myself, I'll promise you'll never see me again."

"But I like to see you, and the bust is very good—the best."

"Would you mind looking at me? I must do the eyes."

"I will give you ten minutes for the eyes."

I worked away like mad. He came around, looked at it.

"This is good. Now you can do the other eye by yourself."

"Oh no, they're not alike, you know."

He took this as a personal insult.

Il Duce agreed, however, to sit for me the next day, and I finally completed the bust. Photographers were called in and pictures were taken of Il Duce, the bust and myself. He signed the bust and dated it "Anno V" (meaning the fifth year of Fascism). That was the last time I saw Mussolini.

While I was doing the bust of Il Duce, I received a visit from my old friend, the Hon. Evan Morgan, a young poet whom I had known in London. He told me he was Chamberlain to the Pope. He knew that I was doing a bust of Mussolini. He came to talk to me about the fact that Mussolini had taken all the beggars off the streets, and how important they were for the practice of Christian charity. He suggested that, in the course of conversation, I might mention that fact to Mussolini, and that His Holiness the Pope would be very grateful.

I understood what he meant and I told him I was sorry but I didn't discuss politics with my sitter. He said this was not politics. However, several weeks later, when in Syracuse with Otto Kahn's party, I learned from the newspapers that the beggars were back again.

Later, I wrote to Steffens:

"There's one particular bust I know you want to hear about, and that's my bust of Mussolini. He *did* pose for me, and when I say 'pose' I mean that he posed to me as he poses to others; he has undoubtedly great histrionic power. I did with him as I did when I did Rockefeller, that is, I made notes of each day's proceedings, but have not yet gotten to putting them together. It's a good story, Steff, and as soon as it is done I will send it to you.

Between Sitzings

“He certainly has guts, that man, and the thing that remains with one is the way he has got them all bluffed. I have seen him with all kinds of people, and they all seem to be scared to death of him. I have seen them tremble in his presence, with beads of perspiration on their foreheads, husky-voiced and almost inarticulate. I can’t help thinking that most of that power comes from having created a myth, and people see, when they come into his presence, what they expect and desire to see, and are therefore not disappointed. The only ones that did not seem to share in that fear were the ushers and myself. . . .”

([A lesser dictator, Spain’s Primo de Rivera, was making news. I traveled to Madrid and met him.

He was a huge man, more than six feet two in height, with immense shoulders. He was suave, polished, cultured, every word was thought out in advance, every syllable measured. In contrast to Mussolini, he was very affable and friendly and we were not interrupted during our sittings. We talked about bullfights and art, particularly Goya, his favorite painter.

CHAPTER 42

LETTERS FROM A "FLYING CLOUD"

SHORTLY AFTER I started work on Il Duce's bust, Otto Kahn and Rudolf Kommer joined me at the Excelsior Hotel in Rome. At the time, I wrote to Yvonne:

Rome.

"This evening, we went to see Pirandello's 'Six Characters in Search of an Author.' It was beautifully done and I hold it is a wonderful play. Otto Kahn agrees with me but Kommer insists it's rubbish and has nothing to do with the theatre. So you can see we had a free-for-all fight. (N.B. No bloodshed.)

"This morning, Kommer and I went to see the Venus Cyrene at the Museo Della Terme. This particular Venus is Greek, not of the best period, but still Greek. As for Roman architecture and sculpture in particular—why, after Egypt, one can't even look at it. It all looks like a lot of well-meaning nonsense, wonderfully executed.

"Rome? Well, you remember Rome. (In spite of making up for long-lost sleep) it really is a beautiful city."

From there, the three of us proceeded to Naples and then to Sicily. Traveling with Kahn was strenuous exercise.

My letters to my wife revive that memorable journey:

"Tonight we are leaving for Sicily: Palermo, Taormina, Syracuse and then the 'Flying Cloud' in Athens. That certainly is worth going for, so I

Between Sittings

will just stick away until then. If you get a wire from me saying 'I am homesick,' wire that my presence in Paris is most urgent.

"The weather here is simply gorgeous, the sun is shining on the bay of Naples, and it is beautiful. My boon companion is Rudolf Kommer. I think perhaps we will have a good time after all. I am mad to see Athens. . . ."

Easter Sunday, Palermo.

"Kommer and I have rebelled, we simply refuse to rush from one place to another sightseeing. So last night I announced to the boss [Kahn] that I was not going to Girgenti—it's four and a half hours by train to see ruins of Greek temples of which there are better examples in Greece itself.

"You see, the trouble with the boss is that he is afraid of missing something and he rushes from one place to another checking things off.

"Otto Kahn is certainly a most extraordinary person. For a man of sixty to be so energetic is almost indecent. He is simply tireless. Never in my life have I seen his equal.

"We leave here tomorrow for Taormina, then Syracuse, and then the yacht. It's only two weeks since I left home, I have made the Il Duce bust, and I have been to so many places—just imagine, Rome, Naples, Amalfi, Ravello, Sorrento, Capri, and Palermo. Is it that I am getting old, that I want to be quiet, or what? For after all I have been rushing around the world myself all my life, and here I am saying this is too much."

Taormina.

"Taormina is a delightful little place in the hills overlooking the Mediterranean. The hotel is an old Dominican monastery, the cells turned into rooms with adjoining baths, looking out on a cloister which in turn overlooks the sea. The only trouble is we do too much too fast. We hardly get settled in one place when we are off again. It is impossible to see so much in so short a time and get something out of it. Perhaps some people's minds are capable of carrying more than mine. So I plead feeble-mindedness and retire."

And a few days later, from aboard the "Flying Cloud," I wrote:

"What a glorious thing it is—this yachting—such a heavenly easygoing, peaceful experience. What a change from rushing about. For here on board there is a sense of quiet which is sheer delight. The Mediterranean is surely all that I ever dreamt it to be. The sun is blazing away—the sea as blue as

Letters from a "Flying Cloud"

blue can be—and the ship—well, no words can describe her. All this gives one a feeling that all is well with the world. It is always thus when one feels the way I do just this minute. The strife, the injustices and all the machinations of humanity to make this life a burden are like some bad dream. I now understand why people like old man Pulitzer and Scripps preferred to live on yachts, for here is space and peace."

May 1, the "Flying Cloud."

"Had my first glimpse of the Acropolis seen from the yacht against a blue, blue sky—a thing of ancient splendor. Mooching in and out among the islands, stopping off here, or docking there, having a look at the glory that was Greece. For today it is not that. I can't believe that the inhabitants of these islands can have anything in common with the people who were the forerunners of our thought and culture. These are a backward peasant race. But what a landscape."

May 2, the "Flying Cloud."

"Our chef on the boat was Scotch, a wonderful pastry cook, but for gourmets such as ourselves he was, alas, wanting in finesse. I complained to the boss and he appointed Kommer and myself to look after the commissary department. The first thing we did, every time the ship touched shore, was to go off marketing with the chief steward. We'd come back with *primeurs*, which were a great relief from cold storage meals. But, of course, the boss being a thorough man, this was merely a makeshift. We wired all over the world for a first-class cook. We finally located one who had been cook to the Russian Embassy in Constantinople. From then on the 'Flying Cloud' has been perfect."

Athens.

"The beauties of the Parthenon and the Acropolis in general are really beyond words. No photos can give you the slightest idea of their grandeur. I have seen Greek sculpture which is superb and it is not Phidias or Praxiteles—it dates back two or three centuries before. There is a group of individual female figures in the Acropolis Museum—they are called Kores. They are magnificent, archaic art of the first order. . . .

"Somehow I look on this trip as rather more educational than amusing, for really it isn't that at all, outside of the yacht. It's all work, hard work,

Between Sitzings

physically and mentally most fatiguing, seeing so much. Sometimes I just collapse."

Constantinople.

"This is indeed the Orient, even though the fez and veiled women are a thing of the past. One still feels the East. Its only weakness is when it apes the West. Unfortunately, this seems to be the wish of the Ghazi (meaning the conqueror) as Mustapha Kemal is called.

"Speaking of the Ghazi, the American Minister said if I could stay over, or come back, it could be arranged for him to sit to me. But I'm not having it. The Ghazi does not live in Constantinople but in Ankara and it takes sixteen hours to get there. And I want to see the Olympia, Delphi and Corfu. And besides, I would have no way of rejoining the 'Flying Cloud.'

"This is a mad way of traveling. The boss suddenly took it into his head to go to Constantinople. It was impossible to go there on the yacht, so we left the yacht in Athens, and took the Lloyd Triestino steamer—twenty-four hours, not bad—but it's not the yacht. I kicked, but was overruled. The gang was all for Constantinople, yacht or no yacht, so here we are, and now that I am here, I am glad we came. Of course Santa Sophia is a marvel of beauty—that alone is worth the trip. Besides, the sight of Constantinople with its mosques and numberless minarets standing up against the blue sky is truly magnificent."

Along the way, the "boss" realized again that I was not the natural-born bridgeplayer he had once thought I was, and did not insist on my taking a hand. Kommer and I would resort to piquet for distraction. During one of our games, Arnold Bennett, who joined us for part of the trip, handed me the following note:

"DIALOGUE ILLUSTRATING LIFE ON THE 'FLYING CLOUD'"

Bennett enters to Davidson and Kommer, who are playing piquet.

BENNETT: We are now going between Cephalonia and Ithaca.

KOMMER: Five cards.

Letters from a "Flying Cloud"

For me, the journey came to an end in Venice where a letter from Yvonne informed me that she was not well, and would be unable to join me. I hastened back to Paris.

CHAPTER 43

TWO MEN NAMED ANDREW

FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, my wife's illness, complicated by a serious operation, threw a depressing atmosphere over the household and studio.

During this period, Mrs. Ailsa Bruce called to ask whether I would undertake to do her father's bust while he was visiting Paris. Her father was Andrew Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury.

The discussion of details, I recall, was conducted in a businesslike manner, befitting a Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Mellon inquired briskly:

"If you do my bust, how many sittings would you want?"

"Three or four, more or less."

"How big would you make the bust—with or without shoulders?"

"I don't know—as much as is necessary for the portrait."

"How much do you charge?"

I told him.

"That's a good deal," he said. "I never paid that sum before."

"Have you had many busts made?" I asked.

"Three."

"Where are they?"

"In the cellar."

Two Men Named Andrew

“Have you got a big cellar?”

He laughed. “Now if you do this bust, what would you do it in?”

His fine face, delicate complexion, white hair and mustache, suggested stone or terra-cotta.

“I prefer bronze,” he said.

“Oh, I’ll try it in bronze too.”

“But,” said Mr. Mellon, “suppose it is not a success.”

“Then we shall call it a day.”

“And who is to be the judge?” he asked.

“You and I,” I said. “You see, Mr. Mellon, in my younger days, any bust I did had to be a success, whether it was or not. Today I charge enough to be able to afford to fail.”

“Now—what about your terms?”

“When the clay is completed and you and I agree that it is a success, you will pay me half of my fee—and the balance when you receive the completed bust.”

“You will do it in bronze, and if I don’t like the bronze, you will do it in terra-cotta or stone?”

I agreed.

“Then I shall have both,” he said.

“No,” I said, “you will send me back the bronze.”

He laughed. “When do we start?”

The sittings were easier than I anticipated, and when the clay was completed, Mr. Mellon expressed his satisfaction. As he left my studio, he slipped an envelope into my hand. I reminded him that he was to write and let me know what he thought of the bronze after he received it. He said he would.

A year later, in New York, I ran into David Bruce and asked him how Mr. Mellon liked his bust. He was shocked that I had had no word from Mr. Mellon.

“Why, I was there when the bust arrived—he was delighted with it, and went to no end of trouble to put it into the proper light.”

Several days later I received a note from Mr. Mellon:

Between Sitzings

“March 26, 1928

Dear Mr. Davidson:

The bust of myself which you made in Paris and delivered at my house some time ago happened only to be brought to my attention today by Ailsa, who arrived here this week on a visit. We are all very pleased with the finished work, and I congratulate you on your successful efforts.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

(signed) A. W. Mellon.”

(¶ While in New York that year, I saw Irene Lewisohn. She and Nikolai Sokoloff, the conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, were working on a program of music combined with a stage presentation, to be produced at the Manhattan Opera House. Mrs. Lewisohn asked me to design the set for Ernest Bloch’s symphony, “Israel.” The setting was to suggest, abstractly, the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.

I attended some of the dance rehearsals at the Neighborhood Playhouse. I had never before designed any stage sets. My problem was to design a set that would look the same no matter where you sat, center, sides, orchestra or balcony. My set was based on a *camera obscura*, a converging bellows and created a false perspective. The floor, which had an eight-foot rise from the footlights to the backdrop, appeared to be smooth, but was actually composed of a series of steps or terraces, invisible from the front, but which gave great apparent depth to the scene.

I attended the first performance and it was thrilling to see the full-scale realization of my “Israel” stage set.

(¶ When the marble statue of Senator La Follette was ready, the Governor of Wisconsin agreed to my showing it in New York prior to setting it up in Statuary Hall in Washington. Mitchell

Two Men Named Andrew

Kennerley offered me the Anderson Galleries for the New York showing.

Getting five tons of marble into the building was an undertaking. It meant shutting off traffic on Park Avenue between Fifty-eighth and Fifty-ninth Streets for the better part of a day. The floor in the hall had to be strengthened to carry the tonnage. . . . After Herculean efforts, the statue was placed on a temporary pedestal just in time to welcome the invited guests for the private view.

My friends turned out in a body. This was my first monument and it was said to be the best thing I had ever done. The statue remained on view in the Anderson Galleries for two months and attracted much attention.

(In February of 1929, Marland was in New York and he urged Yvonne and myself to come and visit him in Ponca City. Since Steffens wanted us to come to California, we wrote him to meet us at Marland's. Steff wrote in reply:

"You-all have a nerve to ask a man of my rank to travel all the way to Ponca City to see you-all, but we'll do it. We have talked and kicked over it till today we decided to wire E.W. that we'd go, and we will, all two and a half of us; Pete too; but I shall have to work mornings on my *Life* and Pete will have to have someone to play with, someone that can keep him out of the lake. But the point is that we are to see you and Yvonne and E.W. and his'n. It's funny how glad I am that this is so. I must have bad taste in people."

E.W. was now living in his new house, or I should say palace, and he gave us a royal welcome. We were his honored guests and he could not do enough for us. We had our three-cornered talk and plenty of it.

Marland had just married Lyde, his adopted daughter. The newly-weds were living in his big palace but nothing seemed to fit. It was more of a stage set than a home—tremendous rooms, paneled walls,

Between Sitzings

mosaic ceilings, play rooms, swimming pools. The kitchen was enormous, complete with the latest in refrigeration. It was a palace for a dynasty. Yvonne was fascinated, and said, "What Marcel Proust could have done with this."

(| Aside from a common first name, there was quite a contrast between the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury and the following sitter. For Andrew Furuseth was a seaman—in fact, he was the president of the International Seamen's Union of America.

I had first met Furuseth during the Peace Conference in Paris. Over a dinner, Furuseth and Steffens had talked about the McNamara case, and Furuseth, recalling Steffens' part in the trial, was ruthless in his criticism of Steff's having butted in.

When I ran into him at the home of Lowell Mellett, I asked him to come to New York and pose for me. It wasn't often that I reacted to a person as I did to Furuseth.

He had the kind of head that told you, the moment you clapped eyes on him, what he was and what he did. Furuseth looked like the figure-head on a Norwegian ship, and he proved to be as fascinating as he looked. His sole interest in life was to improve the conditions of seamen throughout the world. He had been the sponsor of the late La Follette's Seaman Act, which enabled a seaman to quit his job like any other worker instead of being put into irons for desertion. He refused to accept a higher wage than that of an ordinary seaman which was then \$30 a month.

One day, when he was sitting at a bar along the waterfront, someone came in and told him that the dicks were after him, and he had better vamoose. He had been making so-called "seditious" speeches. "No," he said, "they cannot put me in a room any smaller than I have always lived in. They cannot give me food any simpler than I have always had, and they cannot make me any more lonely than I always have been. Let 'em come."

CHAPTER 44

ON THE TRAIL OF THE LITERATI

MY WIFE AND I were preparing for our departure for France when Mitchell Kennerley called one day to say that George H. Doran of Doubleday, Doran and Co., wanted me to make a bust of him.

This turned out to be a very gratifying experience. Doran, a handsome man with white hair and a little pointed beard, was exceedingly charming and he manifested tremendous interest in my work.

Looking over the photographs of various heads I had made, he conceived the idea that I should do the heads of his English and American best-selling authors. He could not do this on his own, he pointed out, and would have to discuss the matter with his associates. He promised to communicate with me if the project went through, and sounded as if he meant business.

Yvonne and I sailed back to France on March 29, 1929, for my work in Paris made it imperative that I return.

The prospect of doing Doran's literary lights was exciting. A good many of them were my personal friends. Having appointed myself a "plastic historian," I had gotten into the expensive habit of asking people to sit for me, and the Doran project would pay for the doing of some who were not on Doran's list.

I had been wanting to do the bust of James Joyce for a long time,

Between Sitzings

but he was always wandering in and out of Paris and I, too, was much on the move. I had met Joyce in 1919 through Sylvia Beach when we were living in the rue du Bac. She was then collecting subscriptions for *Ulysses*, which she was preparing to publish.

While I waited to hear from Doran, I finally persuaded Joyce to sit for me. He was frail, detached and the essence of sensitivity. His mustache was hardly visible; his goatee, which he occasionally shaved off, you would never miss. It was there—it wasn't there. He had a special pallor, and wore eyeglasses with lenses that appeared to be a quarter of an inch thick. They did not seem to help much. When he walked into a room, his head cocked to one side, you were not quite sure that he knew you were there.

In modeling his bust, my great problem was his eyes. Behind those heavy lenses they seemed to be enlarged and to occupy a lot of space, but did not focus. His high bulbous forehead gave him the look of a bird.

In our conversation, Joyce never referred to himself as "modern." In fact, I never heard him use that word in relation to art. He was a very scholarly man with an astonishing memory. If I quoted a line of Whitman he would recite the whole poem. We would sing duets and arias from operas together. He not only knew the music but he knew the lyrics too and would often sit at the piano and play and sing Irish ballads. He could quote the Bible, Shakespeare, Dante or Cervantes in English, Italian or Spanish, to say nothing of Goethe and Nietzsche in German, all without a trace of accent. He had a beautiful voice; when he read, it was like music.

We would often lunch or dine at Fouquet's. His favorite wine was St. Patrice, probably because it was called St. Patrick's. He was a devotee of the tenor Sullivan, who, being Irish, was the greatest tenor in the world. He persuaded me to get Otto Kahn to give Sullivan a hearing. He sent Sullivan's recordings to all his friends; I still have a collection of them.

In London, once, Joyce came to see me at the Savoy Hotel. Just

On the Trail of the Literati

as he came in, there was a thunderclap. Joyce could not stand noise, and hid in a secluded corner away from the sound of the storm.

I made two busts of Joyce, one with a goatee and the other clean-shaven. They are both in terra-cotta; one in polychrome.

(¶ Finally I received the following telegram from New York from Doran:

“Everything all set for Portrait Program as arranged.
Stop. Writing. Stop. Expect arrive London late November.
Regards. Doran.”

Towards the middle of December I proceeded to London to work on the Doran assignment. Doran had written me on December 9:

“Merely as a guide to our processes of thinking, in our judgment there should be included such men as:

Rudyard Kipling	Joseph Conrad
H. G. Wells	Arnold Bennett
John Galsworthy	Christopher Morley
Booth Tarkington	Frank Swinnerton
Hugh Walpole	Sir Philip Gibbs
Edgar Wallace	Aldous Huxley

“In other words, we feel that only the established and permanent figures in the literary world should be contemplated.”

Doran's first attempts to round up the distinguished coterie of authors to be “busted” were disappointing. Despite his best efforts, he could not persuade Rudyard Kipling to sit. H. G. Wells was at Grasse, France, suffering from influenza. Hugh Walpole was sailing for America on December 24 for a three months' trip. Arnold Bennett was completely engrossed in writing a very important novel and declined to be disturbed even for a day; the novel was not due to be finished until April. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was “under the weather” and mo-

Between Sittings

mentarily “inaccessible.” Somerset Maugham was off on a three months’ excursion through the Grecian Isles and into the Near East. The only possibility was Aldous Huxley who was in Paris, and Doran planned to write him at once to ask him to sit for me.

Fortunately when I joined Doran in London at the Savoy, he had been successful in getting several of his authors to sit for me. My first was Hugh Walpole whom I had met in New York with Mitchell Kennerley when we attended a prizefight together at Madison Square Garden.

Hugh Walpole was tall, handsome and well-groomed. He had a square jaw, a protruding chin, and wore glasses. It is a curious thing about glasses: some people can remove their glasses and still look like themselves; there are others whose glasses are an integral part of their face. I tried to model Hugh without his big round horn-rimmed glasses but when he took them off his expression seemed to change—neither he nor his bust was right without them. Modeling glasses, in each case, is a highly special and individual problem.

I enjoyed doing Hugh Walpole’s bust, as we had so much to talk about—particularly art and artists, for he occasionally wrote art criticism. His flat in Piccadilly, where I was working, was charmingly furnished. The walls were covered with contemporary paintings and etchings and on the piano there was a beautiful bronze of Paul Robeson by Jacob Epstein.

We were constantly interrupted, because the moment we got started the telephone began ringing. Walpole would pull out his notebook and start making dates for lunches and dinners—he loved people.

My next sitter was Frank Swinnerton whom I had never met before. He lived in Surrey, and agreed to come up to London for the sittings, to my apartment at the Savoy Hotel. We took to each other immediately. I was captivated by his wit, his natural sweetness and his generosity. However, he was not easy to capture.

Describing our sittings in his autobiography, Swinnerton didn’t spare me:

On the Trail of the Literati

“On the first day, he thought I was a simple fellow with a heart of gold and set about the difficult task of making virtue interesting. On the second day he formed some other impressions. . . . On the third day . . . Spike Hunt, arriving after a festive lunch with Lord Castlerosse and primed therefore with wisdom, whispered into Jo’s ear that he made a cross between Joseph Conrad and Jesus Christ.”

The bond between us was our love for Arnold Bennett. After the first sitting, Swinnerton invited me to lunch with him at the Reform Club. As we walked into the large dining room upstairs, I saw Arnold Bennett at the head of a very long table. As we approached, Arnold rose, then furiously pointed his finger towards Swinnerton and stuttered:

“I say—how—how dare—how dare you—bring my—bring my—my friend—to this—Club. That is my—is my—is my privilege.”

We joined Bennett’s table, where the talk scintillated. It was like a symphony composed of soloists, with Arnold Bennett as the *chef d’orchestre* using his stuttering as his *baton*. When Bennett would lift his hand, and throw back his head to say something, silence fell on the table and everyone waited for the oracle to speak.

That particular day they were discussing Hugh Walpole’s latest book, each of the soloists expressing his opinion. Then they all turned to Arnold because he had raised his hand to speak. He said, “The only—the only—the only trouble with Hughie—is—trouble with Hughie is—is that he can’t write.”

In later years, whenever Frank and I met, we would bring Arnold back to life. It was Samuel Butler, I think, who wrote, “And we shall meet where all dead men meet—on the lips of other men.”

George Doran was very keen on having me do a bust of Rudyard Kipling, but neither he nor Nelson Doubleday had been able to get him to sit. Eventually a luncheon was arranged by Lady Colfax at which the guest of honor was Rudyard Kipling. The hostess deliberately placed me where I could watch Kipling and I surreptitiously made several sketches of him in a tiny vest-pocket notebook.

After dinner Kipling talked with me. For him, the world stopped

Between Sittings

with Teddy Roosevelt and World War I, in which his son had been killed. The conversation got around to France and I told him about my house in Bécheron. He knew the country in Azay-le-Rideau and spoke of his occasional trips to the Loire, the delicious shad and the delicate wines of the countryside. We agreed that Vouvray was the finest. On this note, I invited him to Bécheron and hoped he would come and let me do a bust of him.

Later I extended my invitation to Mrs. Kipling and realized immediately that had been a mistake. She was dead set against it and, I felt, against me too. I went back to my hotel, and with the help of my notes made a clay sketch of Kipling's head.

The next day Lady Colfax came to lunch with Doran. When she saw what I had done, she said, "No, no, you mustn't do it. Kipling will be furious." However, I cast the head in bronze and showed it in my exhibition at Knoedler's in London as a sketch from memory. Doran was delighted with the sketch and still hoped he might get me a sitting.

George Doran continued to give lunches and dinners so I could meet my prospective sitters. There was some doubt as to whom I should model and it came to a choice of whether it was to be P. G. Wodehouse or Edgar Wallace. After I had lunched with both of them, I decided upon Edgar Wallace.

As Wallace and I became better acquainted, I realized what a fabulous fellow he was. His output was prodigious. He wrote in longhand, he used the typewriter, dictaphones and also dictated to various secretaries. He would work on several books, serials, plays and articles at the same time. In addition, he was writing a racing column for, I believe, the *Evening Standard*.

One morning, when Wallace came to sit for me, he brought his secretary along. As I worked, he stood beside me and began to dictate. I listened. It was complete gibberish. He was using words, English words, but they didn't make an iota of sense. I looked over at the secretary who was seriously taking down all this nonsense. Wallace kept on talking and all of a sudden the words began to make sense. The dictation was rapidly completed and the secretary left with his



RESTING GIRL

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

Photo by Samuel H. Gottscho, New York

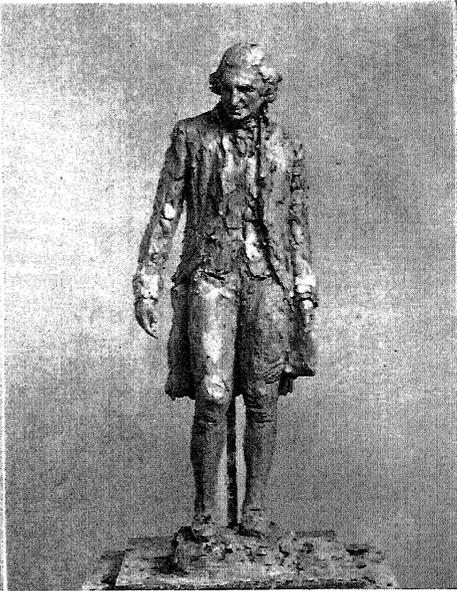
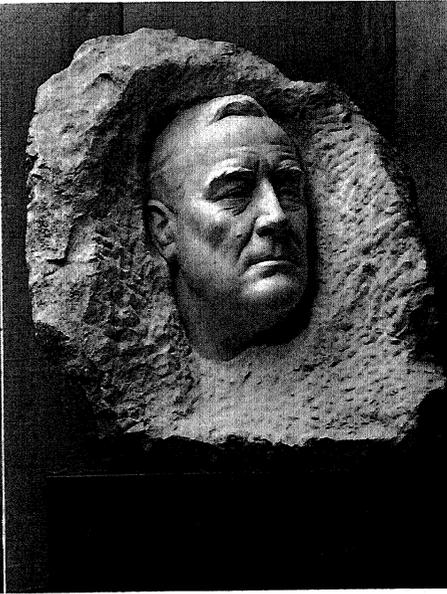
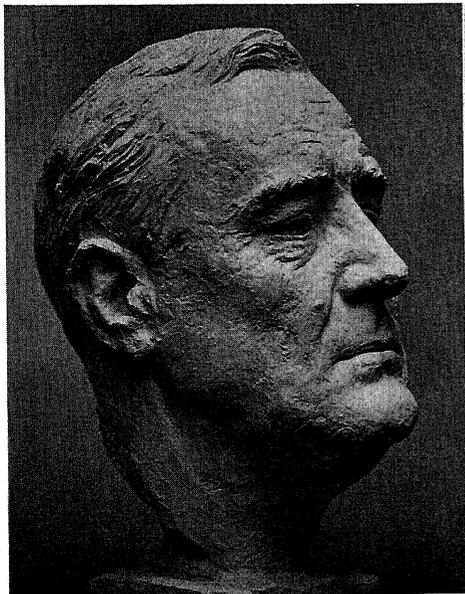


Photo by O'Brien-Pyle, New York

TOM PAINE

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

Photo copyright by François Kollar, Paris



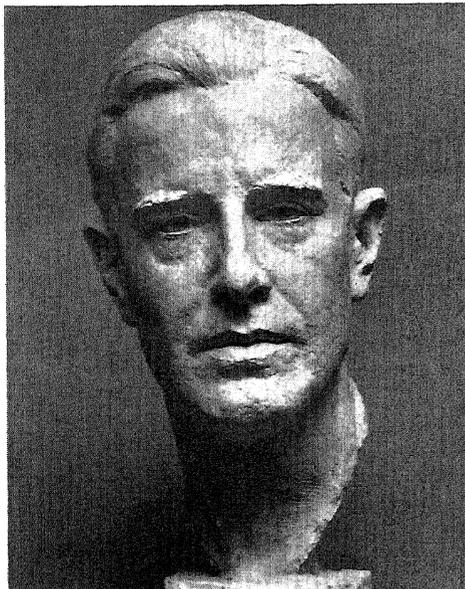


Photo Kollar, Paris

W. AVERELL HARRIMAN
MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK

Photo Kollar, Paris

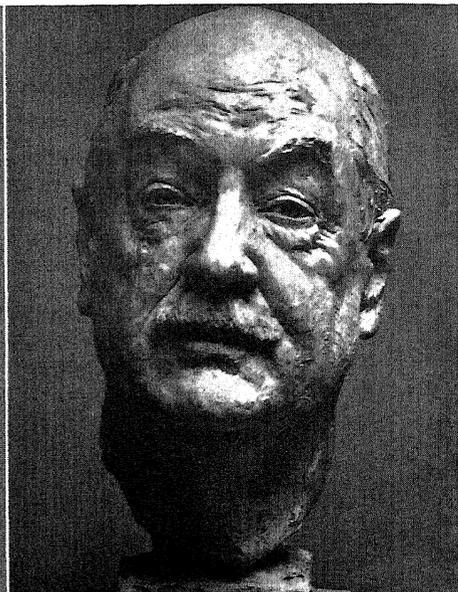
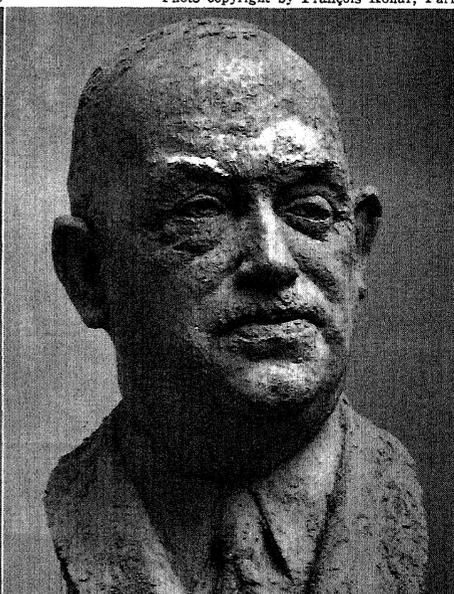


Photo Kollar, Paris

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER
VINCENT AURIOL

Photo copyright by François Kollar, Paris



On the Trail of the Literati

notes. That very afternoon I read his column, that very column, in the *Standard*. Not a single word had been changed—just the nonsensical gibberish had been left out.

Wallace was truly a fascinating man, and I looked forward to our sittings. On one occasion he told me about his youth. He had been a foundling and had been adopted by a fishmonger and his wife.

The bust was almost completed, when his daughter Pat came to see it. When she offered some criticism, Wallace became very annoyed.

“How dare you! Here is a man who knows his job and you dare to offer an opinion!”

Later Wallace invited me to his home. At this time he was working on a murder mystery, in which the criminal escaped from jail. He had made a detailed model of the jail with walls, cells, walks, and he and his son studied the model to be sure that all the details were correct.

I will never forget meeting Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Somehow I had visualized him as tall and thin, Sherlock Holmes with double-peaked cap and a perpetual pipe in his mouth. Instead, there was a big man with a round heavy face and drooping mustaches, looking for all the world like a tired police captain.

Conan Doyle received me in his apartment. It was musty and filled with overstuffed furniture. He was dressed in an old, faded woolen dressing-gown and wore carpet slippers. I had heard that he was a spiritualist and was not surprised when he talked about the hereafter. But when he said that after we die we will all continue doing in the hereafter exactly what we were doing on earth, I asked him if he was describing Heaven or Hell.

All the time I was working on his bust, I kept looking for Sherlock Holmes, but what I found was Dr. Watson. I tried to talk about Holmes and Watson as if they really existed, but Sir Arthur was interested in other things. Pointing to an old armchair by the fireplace, he said, “The other day I was sitting in that very chair and my son, who has been dead for some years, came over and kissed me on the brow, something he never did in his life.”

Between Sittings

(¶ Next, Aldous Huxley came to my studio in Paris to sit for his bust. It did not take me long to realize that what Arnold Bennett had said to me was true: "Aldous knows everything—everything—more—more than anyone else in the world."

His large head over a tall underweight body looked as if it might fall off. His thick glasses did not detract from his beauty and genius was the word that came to your mind the moment you saw him.

There was a story about Huxley. He went on a trip around the world and took with him as part of his luggage a beautiful box containing the Encyclopedia Britannica. When he returned it was no longer in the box, it was in his head.

CHAPTER 45

H. G. WELLS, LINCOLN STEFFENS, HENRY FORD

WITH George Doran paving the way, I continued to trail the literary lights of the day. At the beginning of 1930, I received two letters:

“Villa Mauresque
Cap Ferrat, A.M.

Dear Mr. Davidson,

I hear you are coming down to the Riviera later on. If you would not mind a very dull, quiet house I should be delighted if you would come and spend two or three days here.

Yours sincerely,
(signed) W. S. Maugham.

P.S. I shall be here until the end of March.”

The second letter was from H. G. Wells:

“Will you and, of course, Mrs. Davidson, come to lunch on the 19th. . . . We lunch at 12:45.

“I hate to seem ungracious but all ‘sittings’ bore and irritate me beyond description. I hate to hold out my face. So be swift with your proceedings and don’t have long sessions, I pray you.

Yours,
(signed) H. G. Wells.”

Between Sittings

This sounded like a holiday. Yvonne and I motored down to Cannes. The following day we went to "Lou Pidou," H. G. Wells's villa at Saint Mathieu, Grasse. We were met by H. G. and his friend, Odette Kuen. The luncheon was highly entertaining, for Odette told us in detail how the villa came to be, why it was called "Lou Pidou" and how she had met H.G. "Pidou" was her pet name for H.G., and the "Lou" was "house" or "villa" in Provençal. "Lou Pidou" meant "Pidou's House."

We were shown all through the place. I selected for the sittings a room giving out on the terrace, where I could work, outdoors or in, as I wished. The next morning I went over with my materials. When H.G. discovered that he did not have to "hold out his face" or remain immobile, but could keep on talking and could watch me work, he began to enjoy himself and gave me as many sittings as I wanted.

Fox Movietone wanted to make a film of H.G. talking. He thought it would be fun to have it shot while I was doing his bust. He wrote out a script and we rehearsed it. While I worked, I was to ask him, "*Dites-moi mon cher Wells, what are you thinking about?*" and he would take up from there, with an occasional interruption from me.

The Movietone outfit arrived in two trucks. Everything went off beautifully. When I got back to Paris, I found a letter from the man in charge. Something had gone wrong with the soundtrack, and they wanted Wells to do it over again. They said the film was fine, but I have never seen it.

The sittings did not "bore or irritate him beyond description" nor did he mind the length of the sessions, which invariably finished up with a party.

When the H. G. Wells bust had been completed, Yvonne and I interrupted our stay to keep our appointment with Somerset Maugham at his beautiful house, the Villa Mauresque.

Done in Moorish architectural style, the balconies gave on an inner patio where terrace gardens led down to a beautiful swimming pool. Maugham's study was in a tower, and on the door hung a painting on glass by Gauguin, which Maugham had brought back from Tahiti. The

H. G. Wells, Lincoln Steffens, Henry Ford

house was furnished in perfect taste and Maugham had a fine collection of modern paintings.

Maugham was quiet but certainly not dull: my sitter was a gracious host and he made my task very agreeable.

Some time later, I was lunching with H.G. and he said:

"Jo, you ought to do D. H. Lawrence while you are here." It turned out that Wells had just been to see Lawrence in Venice and had told him what great fun it had been sitting for me and that he should do likewise. Lawrence, very ill at the time, agreed to do it. And Wells told me:

"If I were you I shouldn't go back to Paris without having a shot at it. I am not doing this for you but for him. You will surely do him good. I am sure he is not as ill as they think he is. You can cheer him up."

The following morning, instead of heading for Paris, Yvonne and I went to Venice. We went directly to the Hotel Al Astra, where the Lawrences were staying. Mrs. Lawrence received us as if she were expecting us. I told her of my talk with H.G. She told us that they had been talking about me and she knew her husband would be very happy to see me. I was glad I came.

It was a beautiful sunny day and Lawrence was having his lunch on a terrace. I had brought my clay and paraphernalia along with me, and I had it sent up to Lawrence's room. After lunch I started to work, while we talked of mutual friends. I knew Lawrence had painted, and I asked him if he had ever done any modeling. He had—once, in plasteline. But he hated the material, its feel and odor, and never touched it again. I gave him a piece of my clay. He liked the feel of it—because it was clean and cool. I promised to send him the very clay I was using as soon as the bust was completed. He thought he would like to do some little animals in clay.

After I worked for about an hour or so, Lawrence suggested that I had better go down and have some lunch, while he had a nap.

A little later a servant came down and said that Mr. Lawrence was awake and had asked for me. When I went up, I found him in bed. He asked me if I could work if he sat up in bed. I told him it did not

Between Sitzings

matter. If he would rather, I would come back tomorrow or any other time. He stayed in bed and I worked for another hour.

When I told Lawrence that I had been experimenting in polychrome sculpture, he asked me to do him in color, and not to forget the blue of his dressing gown, of which he was very fond.

The bust was finally completed and we got back to Paris. About a week later, Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney came to lunch. I told her how ill Lawrence was. She was distressed, and said, "Can't you call up Mrs. Lawrence or someone and tell them not to spare any expense?"—she would look after that. When I called H.G. at Grasse, he told me that Lawrence had died that morning.

That summer, H.G. and Odette Kuen were coming to visit us in Bécheron. I wanted to retouch the wax of H.G.'s bust before casting it in bronze. In August, we had a note announcing their arrival.

Odette landed with a trunkful of clothes which she would have no opportunity to wear. Evidently, she hadn't believed us when we told her that we lived very simply in Bécheron.

Steff was with us at the time, working on his autobiography while his wife was traveling in Russia. H.G. and Steff had never met, but H.G. had known Ella Winter because she had run his campaign in London when he stood for Parliament. Odette stayed only a few days and then went off to visit a convent near Tours where she had studied as a young girl.

This gave Steffens and Wells a chance to get acquainted. It was fascinating to see these two great minds working so differently. Wells's thinking was directed towards a conclusion, whereas Steffens was more interested in the direction.

Dorothy Parker's *Laments for the Living* had just been published, and we all pounced on it. We finally had to make a rule that no one was to take the book out of the living room. Later, when I met this sensitive and frail, yet wilful and positive creature, who fought so passionately for the underdog, my admiration for her increased. She was as beautiful as she was gifted. Her work was the subject of much discussion and gave both Steffens and Wells an opportunity to air their

H. G. Wells, Lincoln Steffens, Henry Ford

social and political opinions. They did not agree. Each one thought he understood why the other was wrong.

Whatever game Wells played he did better than anyone else. The children wanted Wells and me to play tennis with them. They were good, but Wells always out-smarted them. He was unbeatable, even in checkers.

I retouched the wax of his bust. Said Wells, "The only thing that will be remembered about me is this bust and that I was a journalist."

Several weeks later Yvonne and I were back in London. I recall one Sunday morning at the Savoy looking forward to a quiet day ahead when the telephone rang. Yvonne answered. She put her hand over the receiver and said, "It's Lady Astor. Do you know her? Will you speak to her?"

I went to the phone. Lady Astor said, "I want you and Mrs. Davidson to come to Cliveden to lunch today. I'll send the car for you and bring you back."

I accepted.

When we arrived at Cliveden, Lady Astor greeted us:

"Ah, there you are. I've gotten all your sitters for you."

She introduced us to everyone. There were some twenty or thirty guests, including Bernard Shaw. Lady Astor seated me next to Shaw, who was at her right. Yvonne was sitting across the table next to James Stephens, the Irish writer.

G.B.S. asked me if I had made a bust of Lady Astor. I hadn't; in fact, this was the first time I had met her. Lady Astor said, "You should do a bust of G.B.S."

"I have always wanted to," I said.

"I'll fix that," said Lady Astor.

"You must do her portrait," said Shaw. "She will pay."

When I was modeling Lady Astor's bust in Paris, we talked about H.G. and his visit with us in Bécheron.

"What sort of woman is Odette?" asked Lady Astor.

"Would you like to meet her?" I said. "Both H.G. and Odette are in Paris. I'll invite them to lunch."

Between Sitzings

She was pleased with the idea. I called Wells and told him that I was doing a bust of Lady Astor; would he and Odette come to lunch to meet her?

He screamed, "What! Do you know what you are doing?"

I thought I did.

"We'll come, but the blood is on your head."

They finally came. There was no blood. In fact, the lunch was a success. Lady Astor asked questions and Odette told all. She told how, where and when she had met "Pidou." She told of his qualifications: he was her twenty-seventh lover, and he was no good anyway. H.G. just sat there and took it. After lunch, Lady Astor turned to him and said, "You are nothing but an old cup of tea." When they parted, her Ladyship and Odette embraced.

While Lady Astor was sitting for me, she asked if I had ever done Henry Ford. I told her I had tried and had corresponded with his son Edsel, but it had never come off. She told me that Ford was in London, and that she would have me meet him and forthwith telephoned her secretary in London to locate the Fords and invite them and their party to dinner on the following Saturday night.

I knew that Lincoln Steffens, who was in London at that time, was anxious to meet Ford and I thought Ford would like to know him. Lady Astor asked me to write and invite Steff too.

I remember that dinner very well. When we sat down Steffens was on Lady Astor's right, Ford on her left, and I was next to Ford. We became an isolated foursome and the rest of the party looked after themselves.

We were drinking wine but Ford and Lady Astor took lemonade. The conversation led off with the 1929 crash and the depression. Ford held forth:

"The trouble with the world is not over-production but under-consumption. What we need is shorter hours and bigger wages. The time is not far off when a man will only work four hours a day and we will still have over-production. Short hours are not sufficient. You

H. G. Wells, Lincoln Steffens, Henry Ford

must give the workers big wages and time to spend. Money is only alive when it is moving. Money saved is dead money."

Apropos of over-production, I told Ford about my gardener in Bécheron, a wonderful gardener whose name was Eugène. One day Yvonne and I were walking through the garden and saw a lot of salad greens that had gone to seed. Yvonne said to Eugène, "Why so many salads? We can't possibly eat them."

Eugène was slow of speech. All he said was: "*Bien, Madame.*"

Then a day came when suddenly we had no salads. Yvonne complained, and Eugène said, "*Vous voyez, Madame; pour avoir assez de salades, il faut avoir trop de salades.*" (You see, Madame, to have enough salads you have got to have too many salads.)

After dinner we went to the drawing room for coffee. We stood around talking. Steffens looked up at Ford and said, "Mr. Ford, did you ever think of any other business outside of cars? Did you ever think of shoes—another form of locomotion?"

"Yes," said Ford. "You know I have a friend in Chicago who makes shoes just as I make cars—men's shoes. He only makes one size, an eight and one-half shoe, but it's the best eight and one-half shoe in the world and the cheapest."

"Mr. Ford," said Steffens, "did it ever occur to you that if there were nothing but eight and one-half shoes in the world, by and by we would all have eight and one-half feet?"

Ford was delighted. "Do you see that too?"

They were looking at the photographs of my busts and we began to discuss art. Ford argued that nothing static was beautiful, only things in movement were beautiful. As he said this, he moved his hand through space. It was a beautiful hand. Lady Astor urged him to sit for his bust. Ford then said to me, "If you can make a bust today of my wife as beautiful as she was—then you are an artist, then you can do me."

When I got to New York, I wrote to Mr. Ford offering to have a try, but I never heard from him.

My trips to London were short but numerous. Before leaving Paris, I would send a few notes to my friends warning them of my forth-

Between Sittings

coming visit. When I arrived at the Savoy, the doorman would hand me a note. It was invariably from Arnold Bennett, dating me up for lunch or dinner or theatre. To accompany him to the theatre was an event. He always dressed up to it—his white lock of hair shining above his forehead, his embroidered evening shirt, his gold-topped stick. When he walked across the lobby, everyone turned to look at him. He liked that.

I modeled Arnold Bennett's bust in London at the Savoy. At that time he was working on his novel *Imperial Palace*. I urged him to come and visit us in Bécheron with Dorothy. He liked the idea and thought he could work there. I explained to him and Dorothy both that we lived very simply, did not dress for dinner and all that. It would be a rest for them.

After making several dates which had to be broken because Dorothy was in a play, Arnold and Dorothy Bennett came to spend Christmas and New Year with us. In spite of what I had told her of our simple life at Bécheron, she arrived, like Odette Kuen, with a trunkful of clothes.

I gave them the two rooms and bath which were on the upper floor and had two entrances—a staircase from the inside and one from the courtyard. It was the apartment where Steffens wrote a good bit of his autobiography. Arnold loved it, but Dorothy objected—she said she did not like living in a garret. We moved them downstairs.

Life was pleasant, except that Dorothy spent most of her time in bed, nursing a mental cold, her revenge. Arnold would come into the studio with his hands in the air, saying "Ah, women!"

Arnold was a pleasant guest. He would sit in the salon and discuss literature very seriously with my son, Jean, who was sixteen. At lunch one day Yvonne was saying how tired she was of big houses. She was looking forward to having a little house containing one large room, a kitchen, living room, dining room all in one—two bedrooms, one bath and that was all.

Arnold Bennett's eyes had a merry twinkle although his expression was serious when he sympathetically replied:

"My dearest Yvonne, I—I know—I know exactly—exactly what you

H. G. Wells, Lincoln Steffens, Henry Ford

vant. A very—a very—very small house—full—full—full of very large rooms.”

I recall that I was responsible for the meeting between James Joyce and Arnold Bennett. Joyce had been eager to meet Bennett because he was the only one in London to praise his *Ulysses*.

They both came to lunch in my Paris studio. It was a successful meeting and each appreciated the other. Of course, we talked about writing. At one point, it was suggested that I should write and Bennett commented: “Jo, Jo—you never—you never—will write—never will write—you—you—you talk too well.”

After holidaying in Bécheron, we returned with the Bennetts to Paris, where I retouched the wax of Arnold’s bust. They returned to London. He was anxious to return to his new flat in Chiltern Court which he loved so much.

On January 26, 1931, I received a letter from Arnold telling me that he had caught the flu the moment he landed in London. Bennett finished his letter, “But let me know beforehand when you are coming to London.”

The last letter I had from Arnold was written on February 2, 1931:

“97 Chiltern Court
Clarence Gate, N.W. 1

My dear Jo,

Ever so many thanks for your letter and the photographs which I think are good. As regards your family, I pray for them. I am much better, but not yet completely recovered. It is a very slow business. Except for one weekly article I do nothing. Nevertheless I hate idleness as violently as I hate being bored. Dorothy is better. Her plans are not yet settled.

Our loves to you all,
Ever yours,
(signed) A.B.”

When I got to London, Arnold was indeed ill. Too ill to see anyone. H. G. Wells had also taken a flat in Chiltern Court, directly beneath

Between Sittings

Bennett's flat. He had me to dinner, and we talked most of the evening about Arnold. Wells was worried about him.

The telephone rang. We both got up. As we did so a glass fell to the floor and broke. Arnold Bennett had just died. We sat and mourned his dear memory.

CHAPTER 46

THE DORAN ASSIGNMENT COMPLETED

THE DORAN ASSIGNMENT was progressing. On April 17, 1930 I sailed for New York to do the busts of Booth Tarkington and Christopher Morley.

I don't remember how I met Kit Morley. It must have been in Mitchell Kennerley's room in the Anderson Galleries. His vitality, his love of words, not only for what they meant but for their sound, enchanted me. He used them with an enjoyment that was almost indecent.

We often foregathered at Mitchell Kennerley's for a drink and *conversazione*. I loved Kit's fantasy. He was an enthusiast about my Walt Whitman statue, and did his darnedest to have it placed in Battery Park.

Kit fathered the Three-Hours-For-Lunch Club, the Rialto and the Lyric Theatre. I still have passport No. 82 issued by the Hoboken Free State and countersigned by Christopher Morley and Cleon Throckmorton. When George Doran designated Kit Morley to be one of his list, it was a luxury for me to have to do his bust.

After I finished his bust I went out West to visit Steffens in Carmel, and planned to stop over in Indianapolis on my way back to do Booth Tarkington.

In Carmel, I received a telegram from George H. Doran on May 14, saying that his associates differed with him on the bust project. Doran

Between Sitzings

was embarrassed and asked me as a favor to him to reduce the number to ten and to omit Booth Tarkington. Of course I agreed. Doran replied:

“Dear Jo: My grateful thanks for your brotherly reception of a necessarily painful proposal. See you in Paris. Loving regards.

George.”

I did not then realize that the making of these busts would be the cause of Doran's withdrawal from Doubleday, Doran and Co. The last time I saw George Doran was when I was in London arranging for my show at Knoedler's. I have been ever grateful to him for the opportunity of “busting” my friends.

In Carmel I modeled the bust of Robinson Jeffers. He was what I always imagined a poet should look like—tall, handsome, shy and silent, moving about under a sort of spell.

Mabel Dodge and her Indian husband, Tony Luhan, were in Carmel and were frequent visitors at the Steffenses'. Tony Luhan had the poise of his race. He looked like some old-time tribal chief. The Steffenses held open house and there was a constant flow of all kinds of people. At one party, Tony stayed on the terrace with his drum, beating away. I asked him why he didn't come in. He said, “White people talk too much. They say the same thing over and over again different ways.”

When I finished the bust of Robinson Jeffers, his admirers got together to present it to him. Steffens wrote me:

“Your bust of Jeffers has come and it has conquered. All the family like it; they are a bit emotional about it; and their visitors are caught by the bust or by the atmosphere of approval. But of course, you and I know that Mabel Dodge is to be credited with some of your success. She is not here now to steer people's judgment with her reason for not liking the bust. You remember her reason? You made the damn thing in our house, not in hers. A better reason than most people's for an attitude on a work of art.”

I was to have an exhibit of my busts in the Knoedler Galleries in Bond Street in June, 1931, to be entitled “Portrait Busts of Some Con-

The Doran Assignment Completed

temporary Men of Letters." In addition to the heads I did for Doran, I modeled, in time for this exhibit, the heads of George Bernard Shaw, James M. Barrie and John Galsworthy.

I met Sir James Barrie through Gabriel Wells, a collector and dealer in rare books and himself a pamphleteer. It was he who arranged for Barrie to sit for me.

I was invited to take tea with Sir James, who lived in Adelphi Terrace, a few doors from the old Savage Club. G.B.S. also lived there at that time. Those beautiful old Adelphi Terrace buildings are now no longer standing.

Barrie received me in the living room. When I saw him sitting at his desk facing the old fireplace, it brought back vividly to me his *Margaret Ogilvy* and *Lady Nicotine*. Everything in the room was old and nostalgic. We had a pleasant visit. Barrie said that both Shaw and Bennett had told him about their sittings with me and he asked when I would like to begin. He had never sat for anyone except Sir John Lavery, who had painted a small figure of him in an armchair, in a rather large canvas. He agreed to come for his sittings to the Savoy, where I worked.

The day before my first sitting, Gabriel Wells came to see me and brought with him several books by Barrie. One was a first edition of *Auld Licht Idylls*, another was a very rare book on cricket. There was also a pamphlet, a reprint of an essay on courage from a speech Barrie had made at St. Andrews. He hoped I would get Barrie to autograph these books for him.

I was rather put out. I did not want to do this, and I put the books out of sight. But as the bust progressed, Wells kept pestering me. "What about those books?"

To satisfy him, I put them out where Barrie could see them, but mixed with other books.

"Ah," said Barrie, "I see you have a first edition of one of my books. That's more than I have."

He took out his fountain pen and inscribed the book to me: "In

Between Sittings

memory of the days when we became friends." He wrote this with his left hand and then signed it "J. M. Barrie," using his right hand.

When I finished the bust, Gabriel Wells came to see it.

"Did you get him to autograph any of my books?"

"Yes," I said, "but it's no longer yours."

"What do you mean?"

I showed him what Barrie had written.

"But that's my book—I paid fifty pounds for it. Do you know what it's worth now with a dedication—it's worth two hundred and fifty pounds!"

Gabriel Wells was dickering to buy my bust of George Bernard Shaw, and the *Auld Licht Idylls*, autographed by Sir James Barrie, went as part payment.

Although I had promised Doran to limit his assignment to ten portraits, I had already announced my intention to do John Galsworthy whom I had met in Morocco when I was there with Otto Kahn. Galsworthy was tall, straight and righteous-looking. His head was beautiful in an austere way—the head of a Puritan, baldish, with a long face, a straight nose, and thin lips.

Galsworthy was a silent man, shy and uncommunicative. I hoped he would unbend during the sittings and tried to make conversation. He just stood there and allowed himself to be modeled. I tried to provoke him with the observation that one should not practice what one preached, as one might finish up by preaching what one practiced. His comment was that that was a dangerous philosophy. When I got through doing the bust, I didn't feel that I knew him any better than when I first met him.

I did not have time to put the Galsworthy bust in bronze for my exhibition at Knoedler's and I had to show it in plaster.

The opening of my show in Knoedler's Galleries was a great event. It was held for the benefit of the Royal Literary Fund. There were posters in the underground announcing my show, with reproductions of the busts of Shaw, Maugham, Lawrence, Wallace, Bennett and H. G. Wells. The afternoon of the opening was a gala affair. Many of my

The Doran Assignment Completed

sitters and their friends were there. Luigi Pirandello, whose bust I had modeled in 1926, came to the show.

The "free" day brought people who came to see their favorite authors whose pictures they had seen in the posters in the tube stations. The show was acclaimed by the critics and pictures were published in all the illustrated papers. Even the London *Times* carried an editorial about it.

In her column "I Said to Me," Rebecca West commented (July 28, 1931):

"A New Yorker, George Doran, did one of the things best worth doing that have been done during the last few years in the way of artistic enterprise when he got Jo Davidson to make bronze busts of a dozen or so of the great. Now Jo Davidson has put them in a room in Bond Street, with another dozen or so of his own picking, and going there is a great experience. There they all are. The men who make one think as they do, who think as one makes them because one is part of the present, which even the greatest cannot get away from—the embodiments of that queer thing, the mind of the age, which is both inside and outside each of us. . . .

"Jo Davidson knows who is no good. All the people whose work has no stuffing, who get in here because of some accident of fashion, look as if they were made of butter. . . .

"I have never read a book of criticism that so subtly and completely inventoried the mind of the age as this room of Jo Davidson's. It is a superb exercise of lively, sensitive, well-informed intelligence."

When the show was over, I made my first trip by air, back to Paris. As I wrote to Steffens:

"I was forced to it, Steff. Yvonne was the first one to attempt it (she would). Without saying a word to me, she arrived at the Savoy a couple of hours before I was expecting her, all smiles. 'I did it,' she said. Then Jean came over, by the same route. So, when Jacques arrived, there was nothing else for me to do but to fly back with the gang. And now I'm sold—sold completely, and wonder why I never did it before; it's comfortable, speedy

Between Sitzings

and not a bit boring. Quite the contrary—the sheer beauty of it is too marvelous for words. It helps you understand Cubism.”

In 1919 a friend of mine, Joe Ely, was about to fly to London with his daughter. I had to go to London to do the bust of Marshal Haig. There was one place free in the plane, a four-seater. Ely invited me to fly with them to London. I had never flown, but I could not refuse. I must say I was rather timorous about the idea, and to keep up my courage, I went about announcing that I was going to fly to London—which in those days was considered quite a feat.

When the day came I took my bag to the studio where Mr. Ely was to pick me up. The telephone rang. Mr. Ely's car had broken down and he could not make the plane. Our flight was off.

I took the train for London. When I arrived at the hotel, I went to the bar to have a drink. A man was standing there with a newspaper, the headline of which read: **PLANE WITH LONE PASSENGER AND PILOT CRASHES IN THE CHANNEL.**

I shook myself, and had another drink.

CHAPTER 47

GANDHI

MAHATMA GANDHI was coming to London for the Round Table Conference. My friend Jim Mills of the Associated Press told me that Gandhi had promised him that if the opportunity ever presented itself, he would sit for me. It was decided that I should come over to London and meet Gandhi there.

On their arrival in London, Gandhi and his party were given a house in Knightsbridge, which they used also as offices. Mills took me there.

As we entered, we saw Gandhi, squatting on the floor, wrapped in a blanket, with his back to the wall and a spinning-wheel in front of him. My first impression was: "What an ugly man this is." His ears stuck out and a front tooth was missing, showing a black space when he grinned. This impression only lasted a split second. Suddenly Gandhi appeared beautiful to me.

I had brought some photos of my sculpture. Gandhi looked at them intently and said:

"I see you make heroes out of mud."

And I retorted: "And sometimes vice-versa."

Gandhi laughed and agreed to sit for me the following morning.

I had originally intended to make just a head of him. But when I saw him in his white robe, squatting before his spinning-wheel, it occurred to me that a life-size figure was a better idea. He looked eternal—a holy man.

Between Sittings

In my hotel that evening, I proceeded to build an armature which would hold a life-size figure.

I came back the next morning and went to work. At first, the Mahatma seemed rather upset by my presence. In fact, whenever I caught his eye, he looked pained. However, having promised that he would sit for me, he said nothing. Why he had consented, I do not know but apparently his philosophy was never to refuse anything that was asked of him.

I worked as people came and went, and Gandhi acted as if I were not in the room, as if in fact, I did not exist. He simply continued to ignore me. It generally takes two to make a portrait—the sitter and the artist. In this particular case, however, I had to do it all myself, as I received absolutely no help from my sitter. In addition, I had all the physical difficulty of crawling around on the floor, squatting beside him, trying to glance up into the face that was constantly avoiding me, and bending forward. This made the task practically impossible.

By the end of the day, however, I had succeeded in putting up the figure. It was fairly well along before he left me. I pushed my figure into a corner of the room. It was very fragile. The clay was too wet and the armature was not strong. I had built it too hurriedly and feverishly. However, I covered it lightly so the air could get at it and dry it, hoping it would be in better condition the next day. I put a sign on it, "Please do not touch or move," and begged the Indians not to touch it.

It was eight o'clock in the evening when I left, and I went back to my hotel exhausted. The next morning when I arrived I was met at the door by Gandhi's son, Davidas.

"I have some bad news for you," he said.

My heart missed a beat. I thought he would tell me that his father had changed his mind about posing. I followed him upstairs. My figure had been moved into the middle of the room, and the head had fallen off and was on the floor. I stood there distressed. Gandhi came in.

As Gandhi stood there I realized for the first time how small and thin he was.

Gandhi

"You see," he said, "you should not do it."

I replied, "You are quite right, sir. I'll just do a bust."

I set to work to pull down the figure and put up the bust. Gandhi squatted in his habitual corner of the room. I can never forget the aura around him—his skin actually seemed to glow.

I was constantly aware of Gandhi's disapproval, and felt very badly about it, but giving it up was out of the question. I tried to make it as easy as possible for him by keeping away from him and working at rather a long distance. However, it was impossible to work under such trying conditions and I pleaded with him to allow me to work closer so that I could observe him better.

He said, "You occupy so much room. I am only a pigmy and you will crush me. However, do with me as you like."

Gandhi's face was very mobile; every feature quivered and a constant change played over his face when he talked. He practiced his passive resistance on me all the time while I worked; he submitted to my modeling him, but never willingly lent himself to it. Never once did he look at the clay I was working on. But when I stopped for a breather and just sat with him, he was extremely amiable.

There was a constant flow of visitors, or rather pilgrims to seek light who came to worship at his shrine. Some of the visitors asked him rather rude questions. One asked what "Mahatma" meant. He replied, "An insignificant man."

His conversation was not conversation in our sense of the word. He would listen very carefully to the questions they put to him, repeat them to be sure that he knew what was asked, and then reply. His language was very simple, almost Biblical. He was very patient. Nothing and nobody seemed to irritate him. He liked to play with words, and was brilliant in his repartee.

Someone asked him about Russia. He said he would be more sympathetic toward Soviet Russia if they had not used force. He was against all violence.

He was anti-Ford. Ford was to him a symbol of a mechanized world.

Between Sitzings

He was against machinery (yet he used the Rolls-Royce that was put at his disposal).

In talking about education, he said that a child should be taught restraint from the moment of his birth. "You don't allow children to do anything they like when they are babies, because they will develop habits of self-indulgence which, later on, are very difficult to overcome."

He did not believe in art for art's sake. He had a great respect for art, but thought it led to nothing unless it had as its motive a religious impulse. Only then did it rise to its highest level.

I wrote to Steffens:

"I'm back here once more after my tussle with Gandhi. It was some job. I have met and 'busted' all kinds of people in my life, but this is the first time that I have ever met such a one as this. He merely allowed himself to be 'done.' And in the end it is I who was 'done.' . . . While I was in his presence there was a constant flow of visitors, worshipers, pilgrims, interviewers, cranks and just folks, and they were all received with the same respect and understanding. Yes, he's a politician all right, and he's wise, and courageous. It's rather a childlike courage; perhaps I should not call it courage at all—I think it's merely a total absence of fear which permits him to say anything that enters his mind."

The Associated Press, who were after all responsible for my making this bust of Gandhi, were very anxious to get pictures. They knew that Gandhi would not stand for flashlights and cameramen. One day when I was working, I happened to look towards the window. There I saw a chap with a camera whose lens looked bigger than the camera itself. He did not make a sound. He took the cap off the lens and put it back again. I am sure that Gandhi was not even conscious of the photographer's presence.

I did not dare to ask Gandhi for his signature. I gave a bit of wax to Jim Mills and asked him to get Gandhi to sign his name. Mills returned the wax to me, signed "Mohandas K. Gandhi."

Gandhi

I spent four or five days with Gandhi and then took the bust back with me to Bécheron, where I completed it. For all the heartaches that I had with the Mahatma, I look back at these sittings with the realization that I had the privilege of recording in clay one of the greatest figures of our time.

CHAPTER 48

EXPERIMENTS IN POLYCHROME

THE MAKING of the ten busts for George Doran, the exhibition in London, and the bust of Gandhi left me exhausted. We shut the house in Paris and moved down to Bécheron.

I had been working on an over-life-size nude in Paris and I had it sent to Bécheron in order to complete it. The studio in Bécheron was so constructed that I could open the big doors and roll my work out on to a terrace and work in full light under the sky. Working under these conditions was soothing and restful.

After two years at the University of Wisconsin, Jacques decided that he was getting nowhere and gave up his studies. He was considering the stage as a career, and went to London, where he attended classes at Margaret Morris' school. Jean was preparing for his baccalaureate. He had been in a school at Tours, but disliked it and so we got him a tutor and he buckled down to work. These were beautiful and peaceful days.

We were a big household at Bécheron that winter of 1931-1932. Jacques came down to spend Christmas and New Year's, and we had a joyous holiday celebration. The house was full to overflowing. Our nieces Anne-Marie and Marie-Louise were with us, and also Madame de Kerstrat, Yvonne's mother. I wrote about our holidaying to Steffens:

"Oh, how we wished for you Christmas Eve. We got hold of a suckling pig and roasted it in the fireplace in the big studio. It was some party.

Experiments in Polychrome

Youngsters ranging from 13 to 83. And if you and Pete and Peter had been here, it would have reduced the average. Everyone stayed up till four in the morning—nobody got indigestion or a headache. We were 17 in all and they're all still talking about it. Jacques arrived from London on his motorcycle—arriving at Bécheron at 15 minutes to midnight, looking the part of a modern crusader."

Shortly after the holidays, Yvonne fell ill again and had to have her tonsils removed. We return to Paris. Yvonne's operation almost proved fatal and the rue Leconte de Lisle was again turned into a hospital. Our devoted nurse, Madame Nopert, looked after Yvonne.

I had been working on a posthumous portrait of Harry Payne Whitney in Paris. Mrs. Whitney had often talked about my doing a bust of her husband. When he died she had a death mask taken, and her daughter and son-in-law, Flora and Cully Miller brought it to me when they came to Paris, together with some photographs. I modeled a head, but I felt it was wanting. In posthumous portraits, those who knew and loved the person you are trying to portray can be of great help. They often call attention to some detail in a photograph which to anyone else would pass unnoticed.

After the holiday, I decided to go back to New York and finish it there.

On the boat was Mayor Jimmy Walker, whose bust I had made while he was in Paris. He was returning to face the Seabury Inquiry. The Maharajah of Mysore was also on the boat with a Dr. Herzog who was showing moving pictures of his trip in India. I was sitting next to Jimmy Walker while the lecturer commented on the pictures. He said that there were five or six million inhabitants in Mysore. Said Jimmy to me under his breath, "That's nothing—there are seven million in *my-sore*."

Mrs. Whitney had gathered more photographs and with her invaluable cooperation I finished the bust. She wrote to Yvonne:

"Jo is in splendid working form. I have never seen him so on the crest from the artistic standpoint. Everything he touches is like magic. Harry's bust is amazing. I had about fifteen of Harry's friends to see it and they were

Between Sittings

much moved. Dev Milburn just stood and looked at it without saying a word, for a long time, a very sad and affectionate expression on his face. Then he turned to me with a smile. 'It is just the way I have seen him look so many times when he was just going to tease someone.'

At this time I frequently joined my friend Rudolf Kommer for lunch at the Colony Restaurant, where he had a table and lunched daily in the company of some of our prettiest ladies. Kommer was always surrounded by beautiful women and, with his European wisdom, served as a kind of father confessor and adviser to them all. They doted on him and called him "Kaetchen."

One day at lunch Kommer persuaded Mrs. Harrison Williams to have me do a bust of her husband. As I had no studio, Mrs. Whitney again offered me the use of one of her studios in MacDougal Alley. Harrison Williams was North American Power and Light. He was not a talkative person. He said he was often taken for Rockefeller. It was rumored that during the crash he had lost over a hundred million dollars and when questioned about it his reply was, "It is not the first hundred million that counts, it's the last." He had a mysterious smile, as if he knew something that no one else did. He was so pleased with his bust he brought Clarence Dillon to the studio and tried to induce him to sit for his head; he offered to pay for it. But Dillon refused to pose. He said nobody could possibly do him. When Charles Payson saw the busts of Harry Payne Whitney and Harrison Williams, he was won over and asked me to do a bust of him.

About this time I took a furnished studio in the Hotel des Artistes, on Sixty-seventh Street just off Central Park. I was anxious to do a bust of Mrs. Williams for she had a face that suggested a modern Nefertiti. She shied away from the idea of posing for me, declaring she was unsculptural. I wanted to do her in polychrome terra-cotta, and I assured her that if she did not approve of the bust when completed it would be quite all right. I still have the bust.

I was excited about doing polychrome terra-cottas, but I received little encouragement from my sitters. Throughout the ages we find ex-

Experiments in Polychrome

amples of sculpture in polychrome—Egyptian, Greek and Renaissance. I had installed a kiln in my studio in Paris, so that I could fire my own terra-cottas. I finally found an amalgam (a mixture of clays) which, when fired, produced the basic color I was after, a warm vibrant flesh tint.

Ceramic colors had to be covered with a glaze. The problem was to have the colors stick to the clay without a glaze. I consulted chemists and ceramists, but they were either not interested or could not help me. I tried all sort of things and failed, but I kept at it.

One day I got hold of an ordinary water-color box that was put out for children. The colors looked gay, so for the fun of it I took a piece of clay, divided it into as many squares as there were colors in the box, numbered them, and painted the squares with the colors in the same sequence as they were in the water-color box. I fired the piece of clay in the kiln. When the kiln cooled, I found that very few of the colors had taken. However, there were some interesting results.

I was not trying to reproduce the exact coloring of the person whose bust I was doing. What interested me was to accentuate the life quality of the portrait bust. I soon developed a palette of reds, blues and browns of different shades.

My experiments were most unscientific. Some of the heads would come out of the kiln not at all as I expected, and I would have to retouch spots that did not take for some reason or other. It was often heart-breaking, as some of the heads would crack or blow up in the kiln.

My kiln was big enough to fire a life-sized torso. When I took the life-sized torso out of the kiln, after it had cooled long enough to be removed, it was still warm—an almost human warmth, with a glow and texture like that of a ripe peach in the sunshine. Right then I understood Pygmalion and Galatea.

I made a quick trip to Paris early in spring. During that sojourn, I made a polychrome of Mrs. William S. Paley and a bronze of her husband, Bill.

Yvonne was ailing and was confined to her bed a great deal of the

Between Sitzings

time. We decided to come to New York to see if her physicians in America could be of help.

It seems as if, at this time, we were caught up in a cycle of misfortunes.

Steffens was in New York when we arrived but shortly afterwards left for a lecture tour. He collapsed in Chicago with a severe heart attack and was taken to Carmel.

A few days after we arrived, we received a cable from our friend Rod Tower saying, "Have Seen Jean—American Hospital—He Is All Right."

I remember receiving that telegram as I sat by my desk near the window. Yvonne read it over my shoulder and collapsed. When we left Paris Jean had been all right. I called my friend Dr. Hartwell and he telephoned the American Hospital in Paris.

We soon found out what had happened. Jean had passed his baccalaureate with honors. We had promised him a present if he passed his examinations. He wrote to Jacques, who was working on Bob Scripps's ranch in San Diego, to ship him an American motorcycle. The motorcycle arrived just after we left for New York. Jean had been on his way to have it insured, when a truck had run into him and thrown him some fifty yards. He had been badly mangled, but fortunately did not lose consciousness and had asked to be taken to the American Hospital where his cousin Dr. Thierry de Martel luckily took care of him. This news reassured us a little but it had been a great shock and my wife never fully recovered from it.

CHAPTER 49

F. D. R.

1933: FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT was beginning his term of office. At the suggestion of Sara Delano Roosevelt, I went to Washington to meet the new President of the United States.

This White House was a friendly place, alive, gay and human: on entering the main hall, I heard barking dogs and voices of children in the distance.

My feeling that I was in the home of a friend was even further strengthened when the President appeared. He was rolled in, seated in a wheel chair and he greeted us with a broad, cheerful smile. Shaking my hand, he said:

"I've just had a meeting with a delegation of plasterers who want to have the plasterers and their assistants share in the profits. That will fix your business!"

"I am not a plasterer," I said, "I am a chiseler!"

Thus cementing our friendship, we made arrangements to get to work.

At dinner in the White House that evening, there were fourteen guests. When the cheese course came around, the President looked across to me and said:

"Do you know that cheese shop in Paris on the rue d'Amsterdam—the most wonderful cheese shop in the world? When I get through with this job of being President of the United States, I am going to open a

Between Sittings

cheese shop like that—not only that, I will carry in addition to the various cheeses, two other specialties—caviar and *pâté de foie gras*.”

“Mr. President,” I pointed out, “you would have to carry all the wines that go with these cheeses and specialties.”

“What’s wrong with that? I think it would be just perfect.”

After dinner, Mrs. Roosevelt and the guests left and the President and I remained alone. I had brought an album of photos of my busts and the President asked me innumerable questions about my sitters. He was alive and quick with his accurate remarks about so many of them and time flew by.

It was after midnight when Mrs. Roosevelt returned and said:

“Franklin, do you know what time it is? You have to go to bed—you have a big day tomorrow.”

“Why should I?” the President argued, “I’m having a wonderful time.”

The next day I worked in the President’s office. The President sat at his desk and visitors came and went. I rolled my stand around to observe him from all angles. When the first visitor of the day entered, he stopped short when he saw me but F.D.R. laughed and said:

“It’s quite all right. You can say anything you like in front of Jo—he just don’t know nothing.”

We worked again that evening after dinner and the next morning, I worked in his room while he sat up in bed looking over some papers.

President Roosevelt won me completely with his charm, his beautiful voice and his freedom from constraint. He had unshakeable faith in man. All those projects—NRA, CWA, PWA—stemmed from his belief that if you give man a chance, he will not let you down.

Nobody before had worried about the artist, but in Roosevelt’s tremendous relief program, the artist too was included, and the influence of the WPA projects was tremendous. It had always been my feeling that art degenerated into a luxury when printing was invented. Printing had replaced art. Roosevelt’s WPA program had not created a demand for art but merely had helped to make art a functional thing.

President Roosevelt’s lively imagination was an inspiration. There

F. D. R.

were many times later when I would come to see him feeling despondent about one thing or another. And just spending some ten or fifteen minutes in his presence, I would invariably leave him with the feeling that nothing was impossible.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt made me realize that direction was all-important—the thing was to know where you are going. Being a sailor, he knew that one could not always go from one place to another in a straight line. You have to tack, and sometimes in doing so, you may seem to be going off your course. But if you have an objective, you will get to it.

CHAPTER 50

A MATHEMATICIAN AND A MAYOR

WHEN THE BUST of the President was finished, I returned to New York. Some fifteen pieces of sculpture I had sent from France had arrived. I went to the Knoedler Galleries to see if they would arrange for an exhibit. Why hadn't I let them know earlier? They could not possibly do so now. However, when I informed them I had just finished a bust of President Roosevelt and would like to include it in the show, a date was arranged at once.

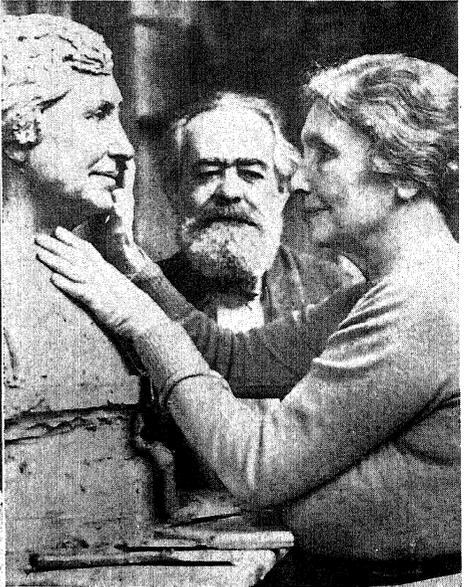
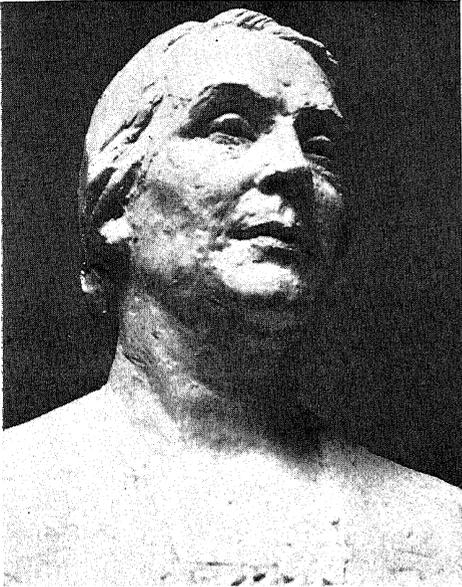
The exhibition opened a few days before Christmas, 1933, and created quite a sensation.

The New York *Sun's* Henry McBride wrote on December 23, 1933:

"The Jo Davidson Exhibition of sculpture in the Knoedler Galleries seems to be having a special success with the public. In advance of any newspaper reclamation, and as though the tip had gone about by word of mouth, many eager visitors arrived to study the portraits with the hushed attention that is the ultimate flattery. Of course, Jo Davidson is not a stranger to success, but the general opinion agreed that he had excelled himself.

"He has also excelled himself in his choice of sitters. . . .

". . . It is an impressive list. It summarizes much of the exalted aspiration of the day and garners it from widely separated fields. It gives you journalism, satire, high spirituality; literary genius, diplomacy, military and social prowess, astute knowledge of the world, art, sportsmanship and, possibly



LA PASIONARIA

HELEN KELLER AND JO DAVIDSON

GANDHI AND JO DAVIDSON

Photo copyright by The Associated Press of
Great Britain, Ltd., London

WILL ROGERS

Photo copyright by
François Kollar, Paris





Photo by Andreas Feininger

JO AND FLORENCE DAVIDSON

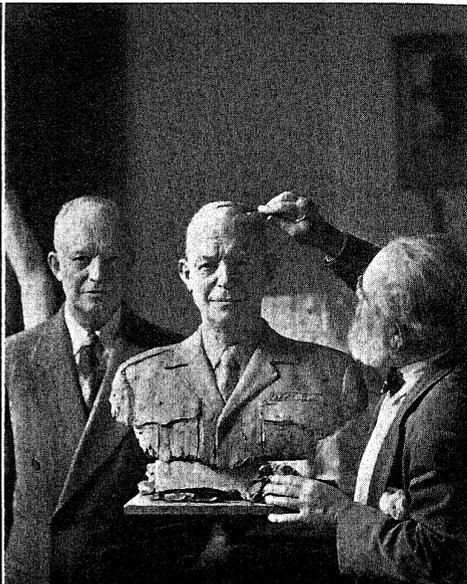


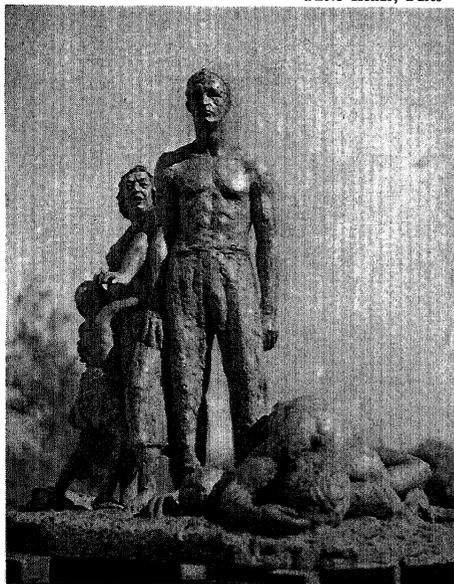
Photo by Webb Studios, New York

GENERAL DWIGHT W. EISENHOWER
AND JO DAVIDSON

LIDICE

IDA RUBINSTEIN

Photo Kollar, Paris



A Mathematician and a Mayor

here and there some hint of the lost art of banking. All these manifestations of realized ideals are met by the sculptor with complete understanding and sympathy. It is no wonder that the people are awed to silence by what a sculptor can do and the heights to which the ambitious climb. . . .

"I used to accuse him of being only able to do celebrities, people who presented him with obvious qualities that only needed to be surfacely stylized for posterity, but I was either unjust or Jo has vastly improved, for now it is quite certain that he could do the forgotten man himself, and with credit to all concerned.

"In any case he has done very well by the inventor (or perhaps 'discoverer' is the word) of that strange personage. His 'President Roosevelt' looks the character that the whole world has readily acknowledged. The face shows courage and a nice balance of many kinds of knowledge. It has kindness, force, and complete lack of affectation. Last, and by no means least there are good looks. In fact, our President seems to be, as they say, 'a natural.'"

The New York *Herald Tribune's* Royal Cortissoz wrote, December 24:

"The most interesting thing about the collection of busts in bronze and polychromed terra-cotta which Jo Davidson is showing at the Knoedler is the step in progress which it marks. I remember some war busts of his which seemed like so many postage stamps, struck off in a hurry. In these latest works he seems to have worked with more deliberation, to have been not so much impressionistic as reflective. . . . Mr. Davidson has been interested by these various sitters and has set forth their traits, not only with the cleverness by which he has always been distinguished, but with real feeling. He is twice the sculptor that he was before, full of life, as he always was, but now richer in the qualities of an artist."

The exhibition was directly responsible for Knoedler's getting me a commission to do the bust of Edward Harkness. He was a very timid man, with the kind of timidity that sometimes goes with excessive wealth. I sometimes think that the possessors thereof are themselves

Between Sitzings

amazed that so much should be theirs, and are afraid that others share their amazement.

As the sittings progressed and Mr. Harkness realized that I wanted nothing from him, we became very friendly. Mr. Harkness owned a great collection of paintings, tapestries and sculpture, all masterpieces. One evening, as he was showing me his collection, I noticed a little white head in his study. I was curious, and went over to look at it. I picked it up and took it towards the light. It was Houdon's head of his little daughter.

"What a lovely thing," I exclaimed. "You should put it in a case under a light where it could really be seen."

"You know this head?" asked Harkness.

"Yes, from photographs," I replied. I also knew that it had been sold at auction and that Mr. Harkness had paid three hundred thousand dollars for it. I urged him to light it properly. He agreed, and took the little head out of my hands and set it back on the desk. The last time I saw it, it was still on his desk.

John Erskine persuaded Nicholas Murray Butler to pose for me. Mr. Butler was a very pompous man, every inch the President of Columbia University. But as we worked he unbent. I told him that I had never been to college but that most of my friends had. When they invited me to their various university clubs I would inquire what most of their fellow members did for a living. They would say brokerage, real estate, insurance, this or that business. Very far from scholastic, I suggested. Of what use to them was higher education? We exchanged pleasantries about the idea of compulsory illiteracy.

Fiorello La Guardia was the new Mayor of the City of New York. I had met him while he was running for Congress. He had a free and easy quality about him. I wanted to make his bust. He agreed to pose for me in his office in City Hall. The day I appeared with my modeling paraphernalia, his office was full of workmen tearing out the telephone booths which his predecessor, Jimmy Walker, had installed. Said La Guardia, "Whatever I have to say, anybody can hear."

There were four telephones on his desk. While I worked, there was

A Mathematician and a Mayor

a constant flow of visitors and he spoke to them in their native tongues—Italian, Yiddish, Hungarian and more. They could not doubt that they had a friend in City Hall.

La Guardia was too preoccupied with his job to be interested in his bust. His office was no place for a sculptor to work in. However, he came to my studio when I returned from California and I retouched the plaster. I really did not get to know him well until many years later, when we became close friends.

(I had always wanted to do a head of Dr. Albert Einstein. At this time, Percy Chapman, who was professor of French at Princeton University, induced Dr. Einstein to sit for me and it was arranged that I work in Dr. Einstein's study in Fine Hall.

I explained to Dr. Einstein that he could go on with his work while I modeled, because I felt it put my sitter at ease. Einstein sat in an armchair facing me. He was working on a problem with his assistant Dr. Meyer, who was writing figures on a blackboard behind him.

As Einstein talked, the word "*Wahrscheinlichkeit*" (probability or likelihood) would come up constantly. Einstein, sitting there with a faraway look, would occasionally twist a lock of his iron-gray hair. He never turned to look at what Dr. Meyer was writing on the blackboard, but after a heated discussion he said to Dr. Meyer suddenly, "If you look back at the fifth figure on the third line, I think that is where you committed the error."

The blackboard was covered with figures from top to bottom. Dr. Meyer erased the figures up to the one indicated by Dr. Einstein, and they made a fresh start. It was an extraordinary performance. Einstein had evidently carried all those figures in his head.

As the bust progressed, he looked at what I was doing.

"Tell me," he said, "do you understand people as well as you see them?"

I replied that I was rather like a dog—I sensed them.

"Oh, I am like that," he said, and smiled, "only I am so often wrong."

Between Sittings

I asked him if he had ever sat for his portrait before.

“Yes,” the great scientist replied, “when I was a student in Munich. I was really an artist’s model and, between sittings, I was a physicist.”

It was lunch time and I was going to eat at the University Club with Percy Chapman—who had sent his car for me. I offered to give Einstein a lift to his home. It was cold, the snow was thick on the ground and I had noticed that Dr. Einstein had no socks on. But he refused the offer of the ride, saying that he would rather walk. He was wearing a light sweater. He put on an overcoat and his hat and walked out in the snow. I was afraid he would catch cold.

Dr. Einstein’s face was red and nipped with cold when he came in that afternoon. When he sat down and crossed his legs, I saw that he had still not put on socks.

CHAPTER 5 I

OUR LAST TRIP

ONE DAY, after lunching at the Coffee House, Ricardo Bertilli, my bronze founder, and I were walking up Sixth Avenue. We passed a paint shop. There in the window was the tiniest water-color box I had ever seen. It measured two inches by one and a half and inside it were eight of the brightest colors in the world. It was irresistible and I had to buy it.

My studio on Fortieth Street had a huge window facing Bryant Park. Whenever I looked out at this view, I was always a little sad because I would start thinking how beautiful my Walt Whitman would have looked against the rear wall of the Library, striding away from it with these lines carved in the pedestal:

“Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.”

They were re-landscaping and Bryant Park was full of derricks and steam shovels. I made a water-color of that scene, and also made one looking out of the bedroom window of my studio, looking uptown towards the Sixth Avenue Elevated which was later demolished. That little water-color box was compact and complete and it never left me. When Yvonne and I took the train to go West, the first thing I did

Between Sitzings

was a water-color of Yvonne sitting in our compartment, looking out of the window. I was off on a binge and I water-colored my way to the West Coast and back to New York again. From train windows, hotel windows, from automobiles, any place I saw anything which struck me, out came the little water-color box.

Yvonne was not too well, but she had extraordinary resilience and was anxious to revisit California. We were looking forward to seeing Lincoln Steffens for the first time since his heart attack. I also had a commission from Mr. Harkness, who wanted me to do a bust of his wife in Santa Barbara.

On our way, we stopped in Washington to visit Marland who had quit the oil business and had been elected to Congress.

In San Francisco, we were besieged by the press: I was the sculptor of the President of the United States, and Yvonne was a great dress-maker from Paris. We visited my sister Rose in Berkeley, and then we went over to Carmel. Yvonne was going over ground she knew well. In her youth she had been with a theatrical group and had played one-night stands in many little American towns. She met old friends and talked of former days.

In Carmel, where we stayed with the Steffenses, Yvonne again had a setback. The Steffenses' doctor advised her to go to his sanatorium which was nearby. He was sure he could help her. Leaving Yvonne in his care, I went on to Santa Barbara.

Henry Eichheim, the violinist and composer lived in Santa Barbara. He had a beautiful house and garden and a music room with a large studio window. It was there that I did the bust of Mrs. Harkness. The Harknesses were great friends of Eichheim. We had a delightful time together, for between the sittings Eichheim gave musical recitals in his studio. He had a famous collection of records which he had made of Javanese music and he had written a symphony based on this music.

After finishing Mrs. Harkness' portrait bust, I modeled Eichheim's head. When the busts were completed, I went back to join Yvonne who had left the sanatorium and was back with the Steffenses, feeling much better. After a few days, we went to Los Angeles. We took the Daylight

Our Last Trip

Train, a lovely scenic ride, and I painted one sketch after another from the window of the train. My little water-color box was working overtime.

At the Town House in Los Angeles, where we stayed, we ran into Sam and Bella Spewack who were now budding playwrights, also writing scripts for the movies. They were on vacation and had been planning to visit the Steffenses but changed their minds and stayed on to look after us.

From Los Angeles, we went to visit the Bob Scripps at their ranch Miramar, in San Diego.

Bob was built on the same scale as his father, but he was a gentle soul, really a poet. And his wife Peggy was a charming woman.

Most of the time, we would sit around the patio or in the beautiful gardens and talk our heads off. It was *dolce far niente*. But Yvonne was obviously still not well. We found a fine doctor in La Jolla and she went to his sanatorium for a thorough rest.

While Yvonne was resting in the sanatorium I was lonesome and Bob Scripps offered to show me Boulder Dam and the Painted Desert. It was arranged that Bob was to take me by car while Peggy would take Yvonne by train to Albuquerque where I would join her on our way back to New York.

My trip with Bob Scripps was fascinating and I was painting most of the time. We stopped in Las Vegas. The town was so full of cowboys that I wouldn't have been surprised if anyone had pulled a gun. It seemed the normal thing to do in those surroundings.

Boulder Dam was not yet completed. We visited the petrified forests there and the Painted Desert and I made water-colors everywhere.

We finally got to Albuquerque and waited for Yvonne's train. I was happy to see that she looked so much better. So we said our good-byes to Bob and Peggy Scripps and proceeded on to New York.

In New York we were met by my son Jacques and began making preparations to sail for France. It had been a wonderful trip but almost too long, and visions of Paris and Bécheron looked peaceful and good. Yvonne was worried about Jean and we called him up in Paris. It was

Between Sitzings

reassuring to hear his voice across the Atlantic. He was recuperating from his accident. We rejoiced about our approaching reunion.

Our stay in New York was another series of dinner parties, farewell parties.

H. G. Wells arrived from London. He was on his way to see the President. He came to call on us at our hotel. He asked me, "What sort of man is Roosevelt, and what does he know?"

"Is it necessary for a man of action to know?"

"Say no more," Wells replied.

We had been away from France five months, and we were anxious to get back to Bécheron. I engaged passage. We were all packed and were due to sail next morning, when Yvonne complained of a splitting headache. I called in the doctors.

The next morning Yvonne was in a coma. Two days later she died.

Suddenly everything was changed. I couldn't believe it. The next few years were to be pretty terrible.

Everyone wanted me to stay with them. I couldn't accept and Jacques and I decided to return to France, where we would feel closer to her memory. H. G. Wells had returned from Washington and also was returning to Europe. The three of us sailed together.

CHAPTER 52

RESTLESS DAYS

BACK IN FRANCE, I wandered aimlessly between my studios in Paris and Bécheron, but I could not get back to work. Without Yvonne, everything was cold and empty.

My younger son Jean, now fully recovered from his motorcycle accident, wanted to marry. They say marriages are made in Heaven but I say they are sometimes made on tennis courts. Because that is how Jean met his girl Janine.

Janine was French and had lots of relatives. To avoid all the things that go with a wedding in France, which none of us felt in a mood for at that time, Jacques, Jean, Janine and I went to London, and Jean and Janine were married in the same registry where Yvonne and I had been married in 1909. My old friend Webb Miller of the United Press acted as best man. H. G. Wells gave us a dinner party afterwards and took us to the open-air theatre to see Shaw's "Androcles and the Lion."

Jacques and I returned to Bécheron. But my heart was not in my work.

My old friend Jimmy Rosenberg, a well-known lawyer in New York and also an amateur poet and painter, was in Paris. He was on his way to Corsica with his daughter and he invited me to accompany them. Jacques urged me to go. Jimmy was going to paint water-colors and I still had my little water-color box. I didn't need much persuading. We started off for Nice, where we took a steamer to Corsica.

• Between Sittings

But I soon returned to Paris, I tried once more to settle down to work. I had hoped that having Jacques, Jean and Janine in the house would give the place the feel of home but it did not work out that way. I soon realized that the children were young and I was old, and they had a life of their own in which I did not fit: Jacques was working with the photographer Francis Kollar. Jean wanted to go to school to study aviation, so I sent him and Janine to New York where he entered the Columbia University School of Aeronautics.

I spent most of my time in the studio, working with models, and making drawings. I began two life-sized nudes, one of which was to be a memorial to Yvonne.

Years before in Chicago, while I was working on the bust of Mrs. Chatfield Taylor, I had met Mrs. Albert Simms. She was now in Paris, and I did a portrait bust of her in bronze and one in terra-cotta. Mrs. Simms understood my mood and her wit and liveliness were a tonic for me. She asked me to visit her in Albuquerque on my next trip to America because she wanted me to do a bust of her daughter Triny.

Triny's bust was made very shortly thereafter, because I went back to America that same winter.

I took a small studio in the Hotel des Artistes on West Sixty-seventh Street. Although I had always insisted on large spaces to work and live in, I now craved smaller quarters. New York without Yvonne was just as lonely as Paris and Bécheron and I was still deeply affected by my loss.

(I was not very sociable and resisted all sympathy. At night I would go to the bar of the Hotel des Artistes. After many drinks, I would get into conversation with anyone and pour out my bile, arguing with strangers I was sure I would never see again. I shunned old friends, who brought back memories, and was constantly looking for new faces. All this time I was reaching for something that would absorb me, something that would take me out of myself.

The visit to Boulder Dam with Bob Scripps the year before had left a deep impression on my mind. Here was an extraordinary construction,

Restless Days

something very powerful. The concave wall of Boulder Dam begged for a figure to express what it did. The idea of creating a figure which would express that power took hold of me. I talked and dreamed about it.

While in Washington, Averell Harriman, who was then working with the NRA, invited me to come and stay with him in his apartment. Averell was charming and very earnest and when he returned after working all day we would sit and talk over a drink. He would talk about his activities and what the President was trying to do. Harry Hopkins would often drop in as well as many of that great group of men who were so devoted to the President.

I was full of my dam project and talked about it to anyone who would listen. Dining one night with Harriman and Lowell Mellett, I made a drawing of my idea on the tablecloth. As I drew my idea, it took on definite shape. Harriman was fired with my enthusiasm and the drawing and bought the tablecloth.

The next day I called on the President and told him about my idea. He also was very keen about it. I made a small plaster sketch of a figure representing a colossus, itself a part of the dam wall, whose powerful arms gripped the sides of the ravine. I called it "The Stemming of the Tides."

After seeing my plaster sketch, the President suggested that perhaps I could put the figure on Norris Dam, in the Tennessee Valley Authority. He was eloquent about the TVA project and told me that I must see it. He telephoned David Lilienthal and asked him to take me down to Knoxville.

Norris Dam was a magnificent sight, but, so far as my project was concerned, it was discouraging. Instead of a ravine, it was a long barrage, a spillway. However, it was a dam. My problem was to fit my figure to the geography, because the President wanted it there. I enlisted the help of my friend Burrall Hoffman and he made drawings adapting my figure to the Norris Dam.

In Washington, Mr. Minnegerode, the director of the Corcoran Art

Between Sitzings

Gallery, lent me a studio and I worked on the new variations of my original sketch. But all the time I felt it wasn't right. However, when the sketch was completed I took it to the White House and set it up in the garden for the President to see. It was no go. I needed a ravine.

"Never mind, Jo," said the President, "we will find a dam that fits. I see what you mean. It has to be a ravine. But we'll find one."

But a ravine was never found and my dam project is still a dream.

In those days, Washington was a stimulating place. The great relief program, which was headed by Harry Hopkins, was being organized. I wanted to help, especially on the art and theatre projects. Artists, usually forgotten members of our society, had at last found a government which felt that they should have the opportunity to work and live also. The CWA, then the PWA were set up. Work for artists was sought, projects were set up in which 70 percent of the money would go to labor and 30 percent to materials. My dam project was among those considered. Finding jobs for painters was comparatively easy but for sculptors, more difficult. At any rate, the artist was being given his place in society. He was becoming a functioning member of the social organism.

All this was exciting, but I was still restless and started wandering again. I needed to talk to friends again. I went to see Steffens in Carmel. He was in poor health, and his spirits were low. But when I left him, he was more cheerful and so was I.

That summer I went back to Bécheron. On the boat were Sammy and Bella Spewack, who had been so nice to Yvonne and me in Los Angeles the preceding year. I invited them to come and stay with me in Bécheron. Triny McCormack, whose portrait I had made that winter, had just married Cortland Barnes Jr. They were on a honeymoon and they too came down to Bécheron. Both Sammy and Corty were musicians. I rented a piano and a fiddle in Tours and they played duets together. Sammy and Bella were then working on their "Boy Meets Girl," which was to have such a phenomenal success. When it was published, the dedication read:

Restless Days
To
JO DAVIDSON
Whose Hospitality and Encouragement
Delayed the Completion of this Play Three Months

During this restless period I went on a painting spree. One day I was lunching with our Ambassador, Jesse Straus. The Ambassador told me he had to have his portrait painted and asked me if I knew of a portrait painter. I said that I did.

“Who?” he asked.

“Me,” said I.

“But you are a sculptor, not a painter.”

“I also paint,” said I. “Let’s try it. It may not turn out, but we will have a good time anyway.”

The Ambassador agreed. I prepared what I thought was a big canvas and Mr. Straus came to the studio to pose. And we did have a good time. While I painted, he would read me rhymes and verses he had written.

Mrs. Straus did not like the painting, saying it looked too much like an El Greco and so it still hangs on my walls as do many other canvases I painted.

During this period, I also painted a head of the poet Percy MacKaye and he brought his friend Gordon Craig.

I thought back on the comment of the late sculptor Janet Scudder who said that she liked painting because she could do it sitting down. That could not be the reason for which I was attracted to painting because I have to stand up to do it.

([On my way to visit Steff in California in the fall of 1936, I stopped off to visit Mr. and Mrs. Albert Simms in Albuquerque. It was my usual stopover whenever I visited Marland in Oklahoma, or Steffens in Carmel.

While I was there, a letter arrived which had been forwarded from Paris. It was from a Joseph Lewis and asked if I would consider doing

Between Sittings

a statue of Tom Paine, to be placed in Paris. I did not know Mr. Lewis nor where he lived, but Mrs. Simms, an efficient person, suggested we call him up in New York. After a few inquiries, we located him and got him on the telephone.

My hopes were high. This job was just up my alley. Tom Paine was one of my heroes, as was Walt Whitman, and here I would place him in Paris, my second home.

In Carmel, Steffens, told of my conversation with Lewis, was also elated. "It is a job meant for you," he said. I hastened back to New York.

As soon as I got to my studio I called Mr. Lewis, who came over immediately. But he brought bad news: "We had a meeting of the committee last week," he said, "and they decided to give the job to Gutzum Borglum."

For a moment I could not speak. When I caught my breath, I said, "You can't do that, you can't take a man to Heaven and then throw him out. That is what you have done to me."

Mr. Lewis was genuinely upset. I began talking about Tom Paine and as I talked, he realized that a mistake had been made.

It was too late, since the job had been awarded to Borglum; but when he left, Mr. Lewis swore that there would be a statue of Tom Paine one day in the United States, and that I would do it. What I felt at the time was best expressed by Lincoln Steffens, who wrote me:

"Dear Jo:

The decision in the matter of the Tom Paine statue hit me so hard. I felt that you quailed under it; you broke. Your letter to me faltered, and I laid it down where you interrupted it. I certainly suffered the full impact of your disappointment along with you, and not only because I knew how you had set your heart on the job. I felt that it was peculiarly your job. I do yet, and I think you will still find some way to do it. . . ."

But my sketch for Tom Paine is still a sketch in my studio today.

During these years my life was without an anchor. I kept on traveling—London, New York, Washington, Paris, California, but I was too restless to stay anywhere for very long. I was still looking for some project in which I could completely forget myself.

CHAPTER 53

“CAMERADO, I GIVE YOU MY HAND!”

STILL SUFFERING from the impact of my disappointment over the Tom Paine statue, I sailed for France where I was to receive another blow. In August, I received the tragic news that my beloved friend Lincoln Steffens had died.

Ours had been a friendship of eighteen years' standing. And you only begin to realize what a friendship means after you have lost it. Steff was a friend I could tell anything to. He had that rare faculty for listening—listening and understanding. It was a great loss and it took me a long time to realize that he was gone.

Steffens truly loved humanity with understanding. I remember that when he testified for Clarence Darrow in the McNamara case, the prosecuting attorney asked him if he was not a self-avowed anarchist. Steffens replied, “No, Mr. Attorney, I am worse than that, much worse. I believe in love. I believe in Christianity. That means that you and I have got to love each other, and that's going some.”

I was working on a statue for Yvonne's garden at Bécheron. I had completed the clay and had worked intermittently on the stone which Gino had pointed up. In the lower garden where Yvonne had used to sit and read, a pool had been constructed. My statue represented a reclining girl looking into the pool. It was in a protected corner where the winds never blew. I finished the figure and put it up that summer.

Friends were beginning to come and visit me again in Bécheron. I was developing a new rhythm and groping towards a new way of life.

Between Sitzings

One day, Averell Harriman, visiting my Paris studio, was admiring my sketch for a Walt Whitman statue. When he asked me how it was faring, I told him of my experiences with the New York Park Commission: how they refused to have it in Central Park, Battery Park or Bryant Park, and how I suspected that they did not like Whitman or me either.

Said Averell, "How would you like to have it in Bear Mountain Park?"

I did not know where Bear Mountain Park was and suspected that Walt Whitman had not known it either. Harriman said, "Don't answer me now, but when you come home I will take you over and show it to you." I had had so many disappointments that I never believed this prospect would materialize.

I returned to New York that autumn and the Harrimans invited me to spend Thanksgiving with them in their home in Arden, New York. Averell took me to Bear Mountain Park, which adjoined their property at Arden. His mother had given ten thousand acres adjoining Bear Mountain for a public park and Averell wanted to contribute a statue of Walt Whitman to commemorate that gift. In the meantime, I had been reading Whitman's prose and was happy to discover that he had wandered about in that neck of the woods. In fact, he had written about it.

As Harriman and I were tramping through the Park, we came upon a rock along the Appalachian Trail which seemed to be there for only one purpose—to support a statue of Walt Whitman. I took photographs of my Walt Whitman sketch and had enlarged photostats made: 8 feet 6, 9 feet, 9 feet 6. We carted these enlarged photostats down to Bear Mountain Park and tried them out on the rock. After many consultations, we finally decided on the 8 feet 6 size. I took a mold of the top of the rock and shipped it to my studio in Paris. Averell gave me all the time I wanted to do the statue in. At last my statue of Walt Whitman was to become a reality.

Now I sailed for France with a purpose: to bring Walt back to life. Friends helped me collect books and papers about Walt Whitman. His

“Camerado, I give you my hand!”

Leaves of Grass was my constant companion. I carried it in my pocket wherever I went.

I wanted Walt afoot and lighthearted. I modeled a life-sized nude first, and had an articulated life-sized armature made especially for it. The armature was so constructed that I could move the arms and legs, the hands, the feet, the head, in fact any part of the clay figure.

Nothing in my statue of Walt Whitman could be static and finally, I got the rhythm I was after. I had to make a sure Whitman, a singing Whitman—a Whitman who said to you: “Camerado, I give you my hand! . . . will you come travel with me?”

There is no greater happiness than working on something one wants very much to do. As Whitman said, “Henceforth I ask not good fortune—I myself am good fortune.”

My studio at Bécheron, an old barn 60 by 40 feet and some 20 feet high, was an ideal place to work in. I had installed both a skylight and sidelights. And, as I have mentioned, I had constructed a terrace where I could wheel out my clay statue and work on it out of doors.

Friends who came to visit had to pose for Whitman’s arms, legs and his clothes. My neighbor, the architect, William P. Dudley was one of my models for my nude study of Walt Whitman. Dudley really put his heart in the work: he was “afoot and lighthearted.”

Then there was “*le Père Petit*,” a bearded, walking vagabond. He had been in World War I and had been gassed. He had started out as a medical student but never finished his studies. He was allergic to work, but walked from village to village doing odd jobs, repairing watches, giving illicit medical advice and philosophizing about life. Nobody knew where he lived. During the day he covered fifty or sixty kilometers, from Tours through Azay to Artannes. When he posed for me I was tempted to do a study of him as himself, but there was no room in my studio for anything else but Walt Whitman.

Besides William Dudley and *le Père Petit* I had other models. Cecil Howard, the sculptor, had a beautiful pair of trousers that fell rhythmically around his shoes. He and his wife Céline would come over for a weekend and Cecil would lend a foot.

Between Sittings

The artist André Dignimont had a sailor jacket very similar to the ones worn in 1860. He too volunteered to pose. All these friends not only posed for the statue of Walt Whitman but talked about and read Walt Whitman with me.

Aside from these visits, I was alone in Bécheron—alone for the most part. Jacques was in Paris studying with Kollar, the photographer. Jean and Janine were in Rockford, Illinois where Jean, who had given up the aeronautics idea, was working on the Rockford *Morning Star*.

Outside of the gardener Eugène and Julia the cook, both of whom had been with me for many years, Gino, my assistant, was my only companion. Gino had stayed on with me after I finished the La Follette and Marland commissions. Now he appointed himself my caretaker and I began to depend on him more and more. Gino seldom talked, but what he said was always comforting.

After a long day of work on Walt Whitman, Gino would come into the studio and find me on the top of the ladder, still at it. After watching me for a bit, he would say, "*Assez! Assez!*" There was no contradicting him. He would cover up the statue and we would go to the billiard room and play a game of billiards.

Gino went with me wherever I went. He drove me back and forth from Paris to Bécheron. He would drive me around Paris and wait for me outside my haunts until all hours of the morning.

Eating my meals alone was a bore. I heard the laughter in the kitchen and I thought how pleasant it would be to join them in there for my meals. I suggested it. They were surprised, but acquiesced.

That night, when I went into the kitchen, I found my place set differently from the rest. I tried to talk and joke, but everyone was too self-conscious. It did not work. They did not feel at ease. That made me feel still lonelier, and the wanderlust would overtake me again. I would go off to Paris, London or New York.

During those three years that I was working on the various models for Walt Whitman, I occasionally had to leave Walt to go to London and New York, but it was always Walt who called me back. I think I rather hated to finish him. When it went to Valsuani's bronze foundry

“Camerado, I give you my hand!”

to be cast, I was there too right beside him and dragged all my friends to watch the exciting performance of the casting.

Before going to its final abode, my Walt Whitman was set up in the New York World’s Fair of 1939. It was placed on a small pedestal. He seemed to like it there, striding joyously along among the moving throngs.

After the World’s Fair shut down, my statue of Walt was set up at its destined site in Bear Mountain Park. At the unveiling ceremonies, Robert Moses, Park Commisioner of New York, told how the statue had escaped him. He was not quite sure whether this was a statue of Walt Whitman by Jo Davidson or a statue of Jo Davidson by Walt Whitman. It was a memorable occasion for me. Among those who spoke were Lieutenant-Governor Charles Poletti, Robert Sherwood, and Averell Harriman.

On the rock opposite my statue, I had carved the first and last lines of the “Song of the Open Road.” The last time I saw the statue, I realized that the passers-by took Walt’s words, “Camerado, I give you my hand!” literally. His left hand was all worn and shiny.

CHAPTER 54

WILL ROGERS

IN AUGUST of 1935, the news of Will Rogers' death shocked the world. He and Wiley Post, on a round-the-globe flight, had crashed in Alaska.

Will, who would say anything that came into his head and was not afraid to say it, was a symbol of a free America. His political jibes and homey truths are part of American folklore that will never be forgotten. Everyone loved Will and he, in turn, "had never met a man he didn't like."

I regretted that I had never got around to doing Will's bust; Will himself had toyed with the idea. His wife Betty urged him to sit but when I suggested that he pose, he would say: "You lay off of me, you old head-hunter."

That month, I was lunching in New York with Sidney Kent of Fox Films and we talked about our beloved Will Rogers. I told Sidney how much I wanted to do something to keep his memory alive. Kent thought it a fine idea and offered to lend me some of Will's movies to work from.

When I returned to Paris, I contacted the Fox Film people and they sent a couple of cameramen who installed a big projector in my back studio in the rue Leconte de Lisle with a movie screen in the front studio. While I worked in the back studio, my friends were in the front studio watching the Will Rogers movies. These screenings continued for about a week and I worked, talked and lived nothing but Will Rogers. The films brought back so many memories.

Will Rogers

I recall once in London, when I ran into Will Rogers at the Savoy Hotel, while I was working on the busts for George Doran. I said, "Hello, what brings you here?" It was the time of the naval conference.

"Oh, I have just come over as social adviser to Senator Joe Robinson," said Will.

He was writing "boxes" for the *New York Times*. He had pockets full of them and would read them to me and chuckle. He enjoyed his own wit.

Will's ship was sailing that night and he went down to the dispatch office.

"The clerk behind the desk gave me a paper to fill out," said Will. "Where it said 'Name' I wrote 'Will Rogers.' 'Born' I wrote 'Yes.'"

"The clerk said, 'Mr. Rogers, *where* were you born?'"

"'Young fellow,' says I, 'where I was born they don't ask you where you was born. They don't even ask you what your name was before you got there. My people didn't come over on the *Mayflower*, but they were there when the *Mayflower* arrived.'"

I remember another time in London, I was passing through the Savoy Grill when I heard a greeting, "Hello, you old head-hunter." Will Rogers was lunching with a friend, and the friend said, "Oh, Mr. Davidson is like Peggy Hopkins Joyce." Will retorted "Don't be a fool, you've got the wrong end." I made some small models of Will, casually standing there and giving the world his drawled nuggets of wisdom and his precious humor.

Shortly afterwards the State Legislature of Oklahoma passed a bill to put up a statue of Will Rogers in Statuary Hall in Washington. His wife, Betty, recommended me for the job. I was in New York when my friend Governor Marland wrote me that I had been chosen to do the Will Rogers statue. I went to Oklahoma City to visit the Governor to discuss the details. As soon as the contract was signed, I returned to Paris.

Mrs. Rogers sent me Will's clothes, his shirt and tie, and his shoes. I got a model—a type suggesting Will—and put up a nude. Then I had the model put on Will's clothes. They still contained his personality. Clothes have a way of being impersonal until they are worn; then they

Between Sitzings

become a part of the person who wore them—like a glove before and after wearing.

While I was at work on this life-sized statue of Will, young Will Rogers Jr. came to my studio. It was extraordinary how many characteristics of the father were in the son. I modeled the life-size figure of Will Rogers, working completely absorbed in it day and night.

When it was finished, I dragged all my friends over to the studio to see it. I always did this when I felt that I had put all I had into a figure. I needed the enthusiasm of my friends, and I got it when they saw my Will Rogers.

The life-size model of Will Rogers was then enlarged in clay. It was to be an eight-foot figure. I now saw it with a fresh eye and went to work on it with renewed enthusiasm. I still remember the joy of going at it with trowel and scraper. "To splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comet's hair. . . ." Every time I touched the clay I sensed the grace and the ease with which Will Rogers wore his clothes. They expressed the careless freedom of his personality.

I sent the plaster statue of Will Rogers to my bronze founder Valsuani to be cast. There were to be two copies in bronze, one for Statuary Hall in Washington and one for Claremore, Oklahoma, Will's birthplace.

John Duncan Forsythe had designed and built a very handsome museum atop a hill near Claremore, Oklahoma. My statue was placed inside the rotunda.

A tremendous gathering came from all over for the unveiling, some 20,000 strong. There were Indians, cowboys and other friends of Will's. There was a radio program from coast to coast and President Roosevelt spoke from Hyde Park. He said about Will:

"There was something infectious about his humor. His appeal went straight to the heart of the nation. Above all things, in a time grown too solemn and sober, he brought his countrymen back to a sense of proportion."

When Will's daughter Mary pulled the string which unveiled the statue, there was a moment of hushed awe. The light fell on the statue just right. Mrs. Rogers, overcome, broke down and wept.

CHAPTER 55

RUSSIA REVISITED

WHILE THE FIGURE of Will Rogers was being enlarged to its final size, I took a furnished studio in the Beaux Arts Apartments in East Forty-fourth Street. My hangout in those days was Chris Cella's Restaurant on East Forty-fifth Street. Mitchell Kennerley had taken me there in the early days, when the only place to get some red wine was in a speakeasy. The recommendation for Chris Cella's wine was that he drank it himself. We gathered there for dinner—Mitchell Kennerley, Christopher Morley and other friends. After dinner, Chris would get out his accordion and we would sit and talk until the small hours of the morning. Chris, mellowed with wine, would recite Dante's *Inferno* in Italian and translate it *ad lib* into English.

I often went to Chris Cella's with Charles W. Ervin. Charlie Ervin, now eighty-four, is the editor of the *Advance*, the paper of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. An old-time Socialist, he has spent his entire life working for the amelioration of labor conditions. Ervin often traveled thousands of miles to address meetings. I had heard about him for a long time. He had been editor of the *New York Call*, and a lot of my friends—Max Eastman, Art Young, Boardman Robinson—wrote or drew for his paper.

Charlie Ervin has blue eyes, unruly straight white hair, and a white mustache and pointed beard. His laugh has the reverberations of a

Between Sittings

thousand bells. He is a huge man, six feet two or three, with a voice whose timbre can pierce walls. One day in Washington, he invited me to join him for lunch at a press club. I took a taxi, arrived at the address indicated, but could find no sign of a club. I was about to give up and walk away when I heard a powerful voice. I half closed my eyes and walked towards it. I found the club and Charlie Ervin!

One day early in 1937 Charlie came to lunch at my studio in the Beaux Arts. As he talked I got the itch to do a bust of that booming voice. The bust seemed to do itself. I think that André Gide's definition of a work of art applied in this case: "A collaboration between the subconscious, which is God's part, and the artist; and the less the artist interferes, the greater the work of art." This has happened to me several times in my life as a sculptor. I have often said that when I complete a portrait bust, if I can hear the sitter's voice, I know that the bust is good. The bust of Charlie has his voice.

My studio apartment at the Beaux Arts was very spacious. I worked better when I had space. Besides needing people around me, I was happy there in the Beaux Arts where people could and did drop in at all hours of the day.

It was a busy studio, and no sooner did I finish one bust than I would start another. Among others I made a bust of David Sarnoff, President of the National Broadcasting Company. While he posed for his bust, he was negotiating for Toscanini, who was then in Palestine. Sarnoff telephoned to him from my studio and succeeded in signing up Toscanini for the National Broadcasting Company.

I did my friend Edward MacCarten, the sculptor, my old friend from my student days at the Art Students League. Irene Lewisohn posed for me. She was a beautiful, sensitive soul, and a very dear friend. She gave her whole life up to the Neighborhood Playhouse, which she founded with her sister Alice. She also founded the Costume Museum in New York. I did her in terra-cotta.

Another head I did at that time was that of Sinclair Lewis. I had been wanting to do him for a long time. But old friends shy away with, "What do you want to do me for?" As usual they end up by posing.

Russia Revisited

When I finished Lewis' bust, Florence Lucius was in my studio and we were talking about portraiture. She reminded me of John Sargent's definition of a portrait, "a picture of somebody with something the matter with the mouth." Some ten minutes later Dorothy Thompson came in to look at her husband's bust. She gave it one glance, turned to me and said, "It's very good but there is something the matter with the mouth."

I saw a lot of Lowell Mellett in those days. Lowell was slight of build, with a fine, sensitive face. He was neat and orderly, which is always miraculous to a disorderly fellow like myself. There was no pretense about Lowell. He always said what he meant. He had extraordinary integrity. Whenever I went to Washington I used to visit the Mellett home. I have nostalgic memories of the evenings I spent with them in Georgetown. There were always interesting people and intelligent conversation, and we finished up around Bertha Mellett at the piano, singing old songs until the small hours of the morning.

Lowell was editor of the *Washington News*, a Scripps-Howard paper. It was his baby. I had been playing with the idea of taking a trip around the world, and when Lowell's wife died, I urged him to go with me. He finally agreed to come along.

After a big farewell party in my studio, a very hectic and late night, we sailed for France on the *Normandie*. When we arrived, we went straight down to Bécheron to relax and plan our trip. We planned to go across the Trans-Siberian Railway to China. With that in view, we applied for visas to Russia at the Intourist Bureau in Paris.

Lowell wanted to go to Germany, and that was one place I did not want to see. So, he went and I waited for him at Bécheron. Upon his return, we started our trek.

Lowell Mellett and I turned out to be a pair of "associate hermits." Each kept his innermost thoughts to himself. I drank heavily. We were both far too introspective.

In Rome, some journalist friends gave us a picture of Fascist Italy, but they did it behind closed doors. It was ten years since I had been there. The gaiety of the Italy I knew in the old days had disappeared. The

Between Sitzings

Italians whom I knew would not talk. We went on to Florence and Venice.

From Venice we traveled to Budapest. There we were like any other tourist—we were at the mercy of the hotel porter, who supplied us with addresses of restaurants and night spots. We visited museums and historical monuments.

In Vienna, the conversation was depressing and the night life had a feeling of doom about it. "Make the most of what ye yet may spend before ye too unto the dust descend."

Then we went on to Prague. That was different. It seemed much more alive. Almost every Czech we met spoke English. Many of them came from Chicago. This was a new and young country and full of ideas about what they were going to do. Woodrow Wilson was their god.

From Prague we flew to Kiev in the U.S.S.R. We were the only passengers in a thirty-six-seater Douglas plane. Over the Carpathians we flew so high we almost froze to death. Coming out of the sky and landing in Kiev, we felt we had landed on another planet.

Before leaving Paris, we had bought our tickets at the Intourist Bureau. Upon our arrival in Kiev we were assigned an interpreter, a young girl, who was also to be our guide. She asked us what we were interested in. I was an artist—that was easy. Lowell Mellett was a newspaperman, an editor. She asked, "Of a government paper?"

"No," said Lowell Mellett, "we have no government papers. We criticize our government."

"Oh," she replied, "so do we."

"Do you criticize Stalin?" asked Lowell.

"But," she quickly replied, "there is nothing to criticize."

As we toured Russia we joined some of the excursions that were organized for tourists. These tourists came from many countries. They were not gay, frivolous people doing the usual sightseeing. They were little groups of "serious thinkers," earnestly looking for information. You didn't go to Russia to enjoy yourself. Everybody was looking for

Russia Revisited

something, and they found what they were looking for. It was different from being a tourist anywhere else in the world.

The Russians were like children boastfully showing you what they had accomplished and always telling you "*Budet Lutche*" (it will be better). They showed us collective farms equipped with American farm machinery, schools, kindergartens, hospitals, "Parks of Culture and Rest," and heavy industry factories. Lowell and I didn't miss anything.

We visited Odessa, Kharkov, the Dneprostroi, the dam they were so proud of, which Cooper, the American engineer, had helped to build. Then we went on to visit the Crimea, Yalta and Sebastopol. In the cities, the streets were filled with poorly-dressed people.

Apparently the Russians had just discovered tomatoes. You had them with every meal: vitamins! But fortunately, visiting firemen like ourselves had caviar and vodka.

In comparing this trip with my first visit to Russia, I found that people didn't give themselves as freely as they had before. It was after the purges and fear was in the air. We were instructed not to call on any Russians we knew, as it would not go well with them if we did. If you wanted to see anyone, he would come to see you in the hotel.

In Moscow I wanted to do a bust of Stalin. Joseph S. Barnes, of the New York *Herald Tribune*, who spoke Russian, volunteered to take me to see the Minister of Education, Mr. Kirzencheff. Getting into the building to see Mr. Kirzencheff was no easy feat. I had to borrow my passport from the hotel clerk in order to get a pass to get inside the office building. Joe Barnes acted as guide, interpreter and guardian angel. After being stopped several times for examination of our passes we were finally admitted into the presence of Mr. Kirzencheff.

I had brought some photographs of my work. The Minister seemed dubious, and said that I must realize what a busy man Stalin was. I said that I would only want an hour.

"What could you do in an hour, or even two?"

I showed him photos of some of my portraits and told him the time I had spent on each bust. I knew that if I got one sitting, I could get another. Mr. Kirzencheff was impressed with the photos. He asked me to

Between Sitzings

leave them with him. He would take the matter up and let me know. I never heard from him.

Someone suggested that I write Stalin directly. On the outside gate of the Kremlin was a box into which one could post a letter to Stalin. I did this but received no answer and I gave up.

On our arrival in Moscow we had called on our Ambassador Mr. Joseph E. Davis, but he was away. One day, while walking in Leningrad, we were hailed by a passing car. It was our Ambassador. He invited us to dine that night with him on his yacht. There was such luxury aboard that yacht that for a few hours, we forgot we were in Russia.

In Moscow and Leningrad we visited many artists. The sculptors were working on huge monuments. The subjects? Lenin and Stalin. They all had sculptor assistants and were supplied with all the materials and help they needed. The painters were working on huge canvases depicting scenes of the Revolution. The central figures? Lenin and Stalin.

China was at war, and we therefore abandoned our plan to go to China across the Trans-Siberian Railway. Our grandiose project of circling the globe dwindled. We changed our itinerary and cut our trip short. In Helsinki, we ran into John Duncan Forsythe, Marland's architect who used to "hate my guts." He was gay and expansive and we joined forces. We became ordinary sightseers again, not the guided and serious tourists of the U.S.S.R. We had a series of drinking bouts and we celebrated as if we had escaped.

Our route then led us through Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland and back to Paris. After our wanderings, we needed a rest. We went down to Bécherson to recuperate.

CHAPTER 56

ON THE SIDE OF FREEDOM

IT WAS in the home of Irene Lewisohn that I met Don Fernando de los Ríos, the Spanish Ambassador in Washington, and many other Spaniards and Spanish sympathizers. Irene had been in Madrid when the Franco revolt began. I had been in Spain several times, loved the Spanish people and the idea came to me of going to Spain and recording in clay some of the Spanish leaders.

On the boat, returning to France, I ran into Don Fernando de los Ríos, Bill Bullitt, our Ambassador in Paris, René Pleven and others I knew. I mentioned to Don Fernando my idea of doing some Spanish busts. He approved and gave me several letters of introduction.

In Paris, a group of young journalists came to my little studio in the rue de Cels. Among them were John Whitaker, of the Chicago *Daily News*, Louis Fischer and Vincent Sheean.

The newspapermen were indignant at the unfairness of the Spanish situation. The people of Spain were not fighting Franco alone; Mussolini and Hitler were using Spain as a testing-ground for their new-built strength. The Spanish people were fighting against terrific odds in defense of their legally-elected government.

Sheean was the center of a lively group. He and his wife Diana Forbes-Robertson were a double attraction; Diana was a charming, beautiful, generous soul. Sheean strongly espoused the cause of Republican Spain,

Between Sitzings

and at his home I met many Republican enthusiasts, most of whom had been to Spain: writers, ambulance drivers, members of the International Brigade.

By this time, I was well infected with the Spanish fever, and decided to go to Spain forthwith and make the busts of some of their outstanding personalities.

But my passport read, "Not good for Spain." I went to see our Ambassador, Bill Bullitt. What could he do for me, he asked.

"A lot," I said. I yanked my passport out of my pocket and pointed to the phrase that kept me from my prospective sitters.

"That is the one thing I can't do. If you were a journalist, it would be simple."

I went to see my friend John Whitaker of the *Chicago Daily News*.

"When are you going?" he asked.

"As soon as you give me an assignment as correspondent to your paper."

Without a word he turned to his typewriter and typed out the necessary papers that made me an accredited correspondent in Spain for the *Chicago Daily News*. With that document in my pocket I went back to the American Embassy where my visa was granted.

I left Le Bourget one Sunday morning in June 1938, with the letters of introduction that Don Fernando de los Ríos had given me. Besides, I carried with me a large case of canned food, chocolate and thousands of cigarettes.

At the Barcelona airport I was met by Leigh White, a young American journalist, who remained my guide and mentor during my stay. He spoke Spanish and also had the use of a car, a great luxury in Barcelona in those days.

I presented my credentials to Constanca de la Mora, who looked after foreign correspondents, and explained that, although I was a newspaperman, I was incidentally a sculptor and was especially anxious to make busts of some of the leading personalities. She promised to help.

I tried to find a studio, but could only get an extra room in my hotel. I had the furniture removed, borrowed a modeling stand from a young

On the Side of Freedom

sculptor, had the hotel carpenter make me a couple of armatures and got some clay at a pottery. I was all set to work.

Barcelona was overcrowded and the populace was walking or hanging on to jammed streetcars. On the scarred walls of bombed buildings one could see the sad tracings where the fireplaces and staircases had been. Very few restaurants were open, and food was scarce. The city was full of refugees. But the morale and spirit of the people were magnificent. Castilians, Asturians, Basques and Catalans were united in one cause: "*No pasarán.*"

Eager to get to work, I persuaded Constanca de la Mora to be my first victim.

"But I have a terrific amount of work to do and cannot leave my office until nine o'clock at night."

"That will suit me perfectly," I said.

Constancia de la Mora came from an old Madrid family. Her grandfather had been a Conservative Prime Minister of Spain in 1910. She was tall, dark and heavily built, with a small head on a powerful neck. She had black hair, tightly combed back, and large, dark expressive eyes. Ingres would have loved to draw her.

I worked on the bust until about eleven o'clock that night. We were both tired and she left me with a promise to come back next day to lunch and sit once more. I went to bed and to sleep, forgetting that there was a war on. At about three in the morning I was awakened by a succession of screeching bombs, accompanied by the *crack, crack* of the anti-aircraft guns. My heart stopped, waiting for what was to follow, but all was silence. I tried to turn on the light, but the electricity was cut off. I decided to go to sleep again.

At about 5:30 I was awakened again by sirens, quickly followed by more explosions and, in spite of all my philosophy, more apprehension on my part. I looked out of my window. All was quiet once more. On a balcony of the house opposite, a cock crowed at the top of his voice. After bathing and dressing, I went down into the streets and found people going to work as usual.

That morning I delivered my letters of introduction to Álvarez del

Between Sittings

Vayo, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He received me with great courtesy. I told him that he was on my list, as one of my prospective victims. He said that I would have to do him that week, as he was leaving town. I also told him that I was hoping to do the President, Manuel Azaña, and *La Pasionaria*, and he promised to try to get them to pose for me.

I returned to my hotel to wait for Constancia de la Mora. She was on time, and I worked fast and furiously. She promised to arrange for me to get to the front to do some heads of the military leaders. At three she left, and I set up my clay and waited for Álvarez del Vayo, who was due at five.

I was rather tired, and was glad when del Vayo turned up a bit late. He was tall, heavily built and determined-looking, with graying hair and blue eyes peering through very thick glasses. He spoke excellent English in a thick, husky voice. He was very precise and there never was any doubt as to what he meant.

I got a good start that afternoon. Watching me work, del Vayo exclaimed, "*Estupendo! Formidable!* I must bring my wife tomorrow. She must see this."

When I showed him photographs of the various people I had done, he borrowed them to have them reproduced in the *Vanguardia*. Del Vayo told me that he, too, had been a journalist and had represented *La Nación* of Buenos Aires and the Manchester *Guardian*.

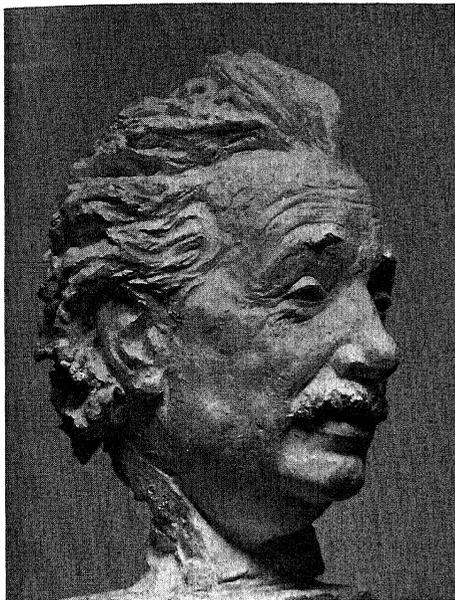
I told him that I wanted to do *La Pasionaria*.

"She will sit. I will see her myself. She must sit. It is important!"

When he left I was fairly dead with fatigue—no sleep and two sitters in one day. After an early dinner I went to bed, but that night there were more bombardments. I was told one got used to it, but I couldn't really understand how.

Del Vayo came at about ten-thirty the next morning and brought his wife. While I worked, some of his friends came to watch and admire.

Two sleepless nights were rather wearing, and I took advantage of the invitation from our *chargé d'affaires*, Mr. Thurston, to come to dinner and spend the night at Caldetos, some forty-five kilometers from



ALBERT EINSTEIN
MARSHAL TITO

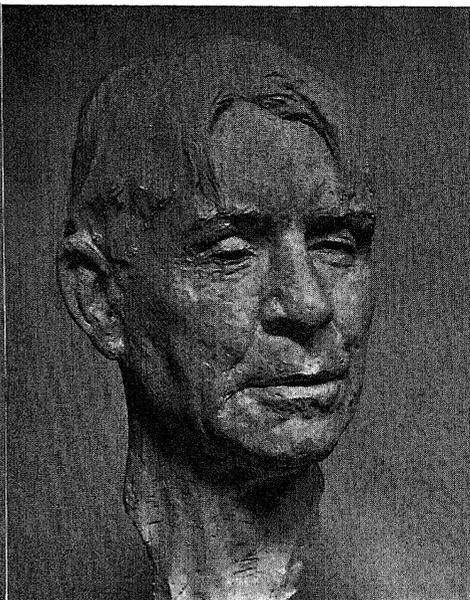


Photo by Alexander Alland, New York
CARL SANDBURG
ERNIE PYLE

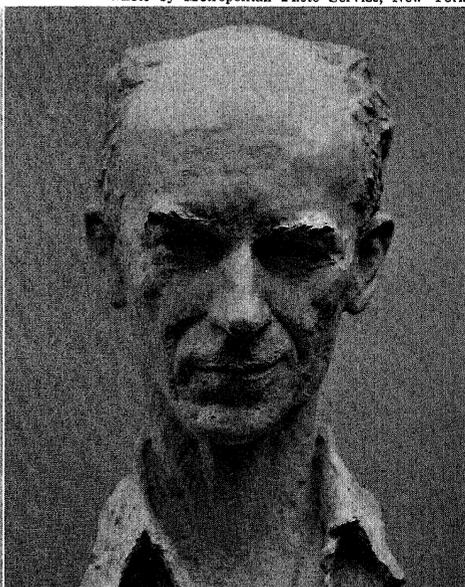
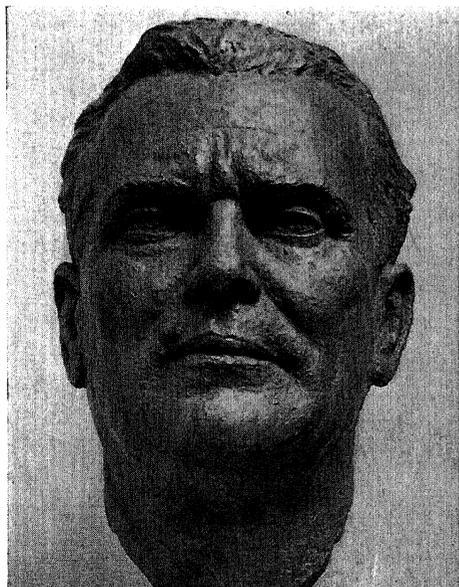
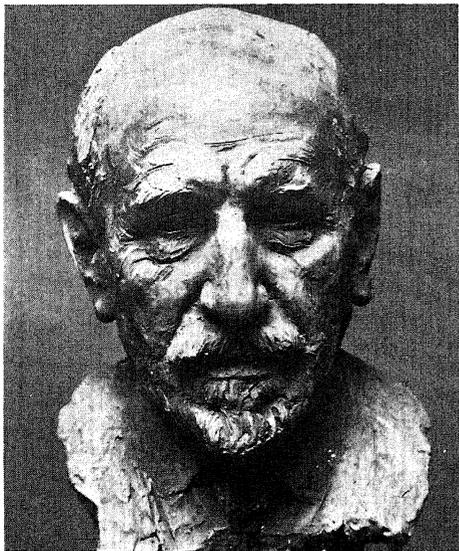
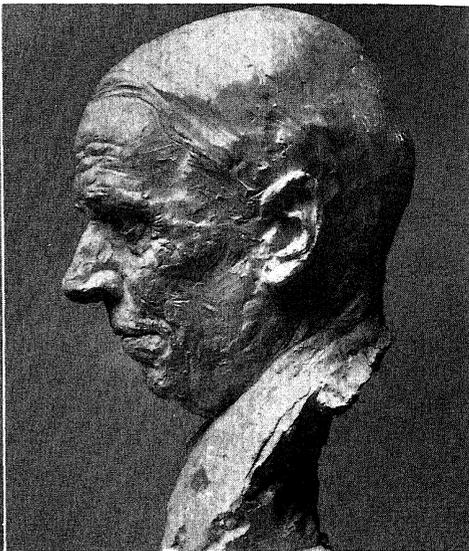


Photo by Metropolitan Photo Service, New York



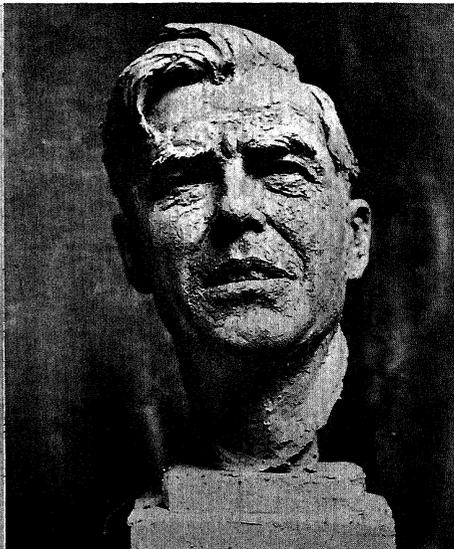
LUIGI PIRANDELLO
DAVID BEN-GURION

Photo House and Studio REFLEX, Israel



SINCLAIR LEWIS
HENRY A. WALLACE

Photo copyright by François Kollar, Paris
Photo by Hayes Photo Service, New Hone. Pa.



On the Side of Freedom

Barcelona, where the American Embassy staff was in residence. We had a good dinner and retired early. But I did not get the full night's sleep I had looked forward to, as I was awakened three times during the night by the noise of distant bombing.

The next day del Vayo told me that *La Pasionaria* would sit for me. I was to see her secretary and make arrangements. *La Pasionaria's* secretary was a black-haired, snappy-eyed young lady of diminutive size.

"When would you like Dolores to sit for you? Tomorrow?"

"Yes, wonderful."

"Could you work right here in her office?"

It was a tiny cubby-hole. I looked around and thought, "Not so good, but better than nothing." I did not dare suggest that she come to me.

"Send up your materials and telephone me tomorrow morning about ten-thirty. I will tell you what time *La Pasionaria* can receive you."

The next morning, instead of telephoning, we piled my stand, clay and armature into the car. When we arrived, lo and behold, there was *La Pasionaria* herself, in the flesh. Her real name was Dolores Ibarruri, but because of her passionate devotion to the Spanish workers, she was called "the passion flower."

Dolores Ibarruri was a tall, robust, motherly woman in her early forties, very shy, with beautiful eyes and a most winning smile.

I deplored the fact that her office was so small.

"But I can come to you, if you like."

I told her that I had a big room at the hotel that I used as a studio.

"Oh, that is fine. Would you like me to come this afternoon? I could be there at five."

This was the woman who everyone said was so austere and so difficult to get at.

At the appointed hour she appeared with her secretary. Several friends of mine were there, and I kept them there on purpose to talk with her while I worked. They spoke in Spanish, and there was a constant flow of conversation.

I worked at fever heat, trying to accomplish as much as I could in one sitting, for I was not convinced that she could come back for another.

Between Sitzings

Her face, when in repose, had a serene beauty, but when she talked about the war, the aerial bombing of the helpless civilian population, the destruction of defenseless villages, the effect on the children, her whole being seemed to change and her face took on a look of appalling tragedy. There was in her that flame which inspired everybody with a desire to help her people who were fighting so desperately for life and liberty.

After I worked for two solid hours, I was exhausted. She noticed that, and asked when I wanted her to come again.

She came the next morning. As I was finishing the bust, she remarked that there was a slight hump on the back of the neck. Pointing it out to me, she said, "You know that is not normal. It's my dress that is badly made." She smiled. "You see, I am a revolutionary, but I am also a woman."

Alvarez del Vayo kept his word and arranged for me to do the bust of Manuel Azana, the President of the Spanish Republic. He was a heavy-set, charming and cultivated gentleman who spoke French. When I told him I was going to show the busts in America, he was delighted with the idea. He mentioned that Don Fernando had written him about me. He kept me for lunch and I finished the bust that day and took it back with me to Barcelona.

I returned to Paris with the molds of the busts of Azana, Alvarez del Vayo, *La Pasionaria* and Constana de la Mora. I sent them to be cast and put into bronze, and then went back to Becheron. It was a busy summer. Every conversation in France was about Spain, Hitler and Mussolini.

Bennett Cerf was in town and was going to visit my old friend Gertrude Stein. He asked me to accompany him. She was living at Bilignin, near the Swiss border. We flew to Geneva, where she was to pick us up in her old Ford.

Gertrude Stein, with Alice Toklas and Basket, the white poodle, met us. We all piled into her Ford and she started driving home. The conversation was rich and furious. We crossed the border. After driving for a while, we passed a village where we remarked some smiling faces. The conversation never stopped. Suddenly we noticed a village that

On the Side of Freedom

looked familiar. When we passed it a third time and everybody cheered, we realized that it was the third time that we had gone through that village.

In Paris, I saw Fred Thompson and Louis Bromfield, who were working on the question of supplying food for Republican Spain. The food shortage in Spain was appalling. When Fred Thompson and Bennett Cerf went to Spain, I accompanied them. This time I did not go as a journalist; I was with the International Red Cross. My purpose was to do more busts with the idea of raising funds for Spain through an exhibition.

My previous trip to Spain had been by airplane, but this time we were given a car at Perpignan which took us to Barcelona. When we reached Figueras we saw the effects of a bombing which had occurred that morning. It was a tragic sight. The smoke was still rising out of the ruins, and the inhabitants were aroused and furious.

We went on to Barcelona. I stayed at the Majestic Hotel, which had been assigned to journalists. There I ran into André Malraux, who was doing a movie on the heroic resistance of the Spanish people.

The three military figures that everyone talked about were Juan Modesto, Enrique Lister and *El Campesino*. They were the heroes of the Ebro front; although they only held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, they were in command of the army corps. Modesto was their chief, and they were quartered within motoring distance of one another.

One bright sunny morning, Bob Allen, a young American who drove an automobile in the American Brigade, and I loaded our car with my modeling materials and we went to the Ebro front.

Our destination was Modesto's headquarters, but when we arrived there he was away and was not expected back until late that night.

Not liking to waste a day, I persuaded the officer in charge to telephone Lister, whose headquarters was some sixty kilometers away. I was told that if I could come over immediately, he would sit for me. When I arrived, there was Modesto in Lister's office. They both greeted me warmly. It was about six o'clock, but I wanted to start work at once.

Lister was quartered in a little stone house, with a terrace facing the

Between Sitzings

Mediterranean, which was about two hundred yards away. The terrace was covered with a trellis of bamboo, and old blankets. This was to keep the sun out, but, more important, it was also a camouflage against air attacks by the enemy. I set up my clay on this terrace and went to work on the bust of Modesto. He was due back that night at his headquarters, but promised to return the next afternoon.

Modesto was an Andalusian, an athletic young man just turned thirty. He had a Greco-Roman profile. He sat on the balustrade and posed for me there. I worked for an hour and hoped to rest a bit, when Lister announced to me that he would have to leave the next day at about ten-thirty in the morning.

I stopped working on Modesto and started the bust of Lister. I worked until dinner time, which in Spain was ten P.M. At the front the food was good and plentiful. I went to bed and slept like a baby. It was at the front that I enjoyed the first peaceful night I had had since arriving in Spain.

The following morning I was up at seven and at work by eight. Suddenly I was conscious of excitement. I looked over the balustrade and saw soldiers pointing to the sky and running for shelter. I looked up. There, flying very high, I saw an airplane. Lister called for his binoculars. It was an Italian plane, followed by two others. Gradually the first plane descended so that you could see its silver wings. Lister and I had the terrace to ourselves. Everybody had beat it. "They are photographing," said Lister. We went on working.

When Modesto returned I tried to work on the terrace, but the noon sun was so bright and hot that I could not see what I was doing. To work inside the house was impossible, so I worked in front of the house, while grown-ups and children stood around and watched.

Lister had telephoned to Lt.-Colonel Valentin González, *El Campesino* (the farmer). *El Campesino* appeared at about eleven o'clock the following morning. He was a swaggering guy, and I did him with his cap cocked jauntily on the side of his head.

I made the molds right there at the front and brought them back to the Majestic in Barcelona. General José Miaja, Commander of the

On the Side of Freedom

Armies of the Center, was in town and he agreed to pose for me the following day. But the peace and quiet under which I had worked on the Ebro front were gone; I worked on General Miaja's bust to the accompaniment of bombs and anti-aircraft fire.

Barcelona was full of refugees who had come from all over Spain. They were underfed and in rags, but their spirit was not broken. Although the odds were against them, they were sure that they could not lose.

I will never forget one 70-year-old Castilian from Palencia. He was furious because they would not let him go to the front. He swore that he could outshoot any of the younger fellows. I took him back with me to the Majestic and did a bust of him. There too I did a bust of Major Milton Wolff, a young American who was commander of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. He was tall and shy and reminded one of a young Lincoln.

I was tired, but the spirit of "*No pasarán*" was catching. It was a hope, almost a religion.

When the bronzes were completed, I took them to New York where an exhibition of my busts and drawings was organized. It was held at the Arden Galleries, for the benefit of the Spanish Children's Milk Fund. Dorothy Parker was chairman.

A catalogue was printed, to which Ernest Hemingway, Vincent Sheean, Lawrence Fernsworth, Herbert L. Matthews, Edgar Ansel Mowrer, John Gunther, Leland Stowe, Elliot Paul, Waldo Frank and Jay Allen contributed pieces telling about the personalities whose busts were on exhibition. Dorothy Parker wrote a preface, which read in part:

"Many things happen in a few years. There was Spain about which no one thought much until the Spanish people had to fight, not in a civil war but against an invasion, not for lands and revenues and power, not to abolish anybody's God, but for their lives—and more than their lives—for the right to live those lives in decency.

"Jo Davidson, ever the plastic historian, saw these things. He had his com-

Between Sittings

fortable, safe, honored life. He threw aside the whole business and, in Spain, out of the nobility and greatness of his art, he modeled these heads of great and noble people.

“Always the *great* artist has been on the side of freedom.”

The printing of the catalogue was contributed by Bennett Cerf. Contributions poured in. Catalogues sold for five dollars, the entrance fee was five dollars. I autographed catalogues for five dollars, and my friends made generous contributions. All the monies raised went for food for the gallant Spanish Republic, whose struggles were soon destined to come to a tragic end.

CHAPTER 57

AN EXPATRIATE RETURNS

THERE WERE rumblings of war. My Walt Whitman statue was at the World's Fair in New York. My Will Rogers statue had been unveiled both in Claremore and in Washington. In Washington, I visited with my son Jacques and his wife Toni and I got acquainted with my beautiful granddaughter Yvonne Marie.

Back again in France, I did a bust of Charles Lindbergh. Bécheron was full of visitors. Everybody talked war. I argued that there could be no war, as if war was a matter of logic.

General Edouard Réquin, commander of the Army of the East, and his wife were staying with me in Bécheron. The General and I were both amateur painters and amateur fishermen. One morning we went to paint the bridge in Azay-le-Rideau, about five kilometers from Bécheron. I had often looked at that corner with a painter's eye. We were both painting happily away, when Gino appeared, to tell the General that he was wanted urgently on the telephone. The call was from General Gamelin. That was the end of General Réquin's holiday. It was ominous. We all returned to Paris.

In Paris I stayed close to my journalist friends. The conversation was war, but nobody believed it was inevitable.

My boy Jean had strained his heart while swimming at Hyères in the south of France, and was in the hospital. I went down to see him. The doctors assured me that he was all right, and I returned to Paris.

Between Sitzings

Rumors were flying, and when I got to my studio, I called up my friend Maynard Barnes, the press attaché at our Embassy. He informed me that the war had begun. The first gun had been fired that morning, September 1, 1939, at five o'clock. He advised me not to tell anyone until the papers carried the news.

My heart was heavy, but I couldn't say anything. The *Paris-Midi* was the first to carry the news. My Swiss butler excused himself. He had to return to Switzerland at once. There was panic in Paris. No taxis. War again!

The World War I peace conference had been merely a temporary armistice. The face of the world changed. It was incredible, but it was so. I talked to my newspaper friends in the cafés. They knew that the war in Spain had been only a prologue for World War II. They felt and I felt that Hitler and Mussolini might have been stopped in Spain.

I offered Bécheron as a hospital, but in the meantime I received a requisition order from the Prefecture of Tours. The house was to be occupied by three families from the Ministry of Beaux Arts. I took it for granted that they would be artists or literati, but their department in the Beaux Arts was athletics. I tried to lodge them comfortably, but it did not work out too well, and when Ambassador Bullitt moved down to the Chateau Condé, a few kilometers from Bécheron, the Commercial Attaché, Mr. Daniel Regan, and his family, took over Bécheron.

One day Ambassador Bullitt said to me, "Jo, what are you going to do about your sculpture?"

"I don't know," I said. "My business is to produce it. It seems to me your business is to preserve it."

One day, when lunching with Dan Regan, I met George Huysmans, the Directeur-Général des Beaux Arts. He arranged to have my sculpture in the rue Leconte de Lisle packed and shipped down to Bécheron after I left for America. I heard later from Gino that the packers had spent three weeks in my studio, packing seventy cases, and had transported them in two vans and a trailer to Bécheron.

In the meantime, I was hanging around the American Embassy and the Hotel Continental, where the French Ministry of Information was

An Expatriate Returns

lodged. I wanted to do something. I wanted to help. I saw my friend, the poet, Pierre de Lanux. I saw André Maurois. I saw Jean Giraudoux, Minister of Information. They all had one opinion: there was not much I could do in Paris—I could do more for them at home. I could go back and tell what the situation was. I could tell of the need for ambulances.

The only way to go home was to fly. That meant going to Lisbon, and that meant going through Spain. My passport was stamped with the visas of Loyalist Spain, and the Franco regime might not let me through. I got a brand-new passport.

In New York I went about my business of speaking about the need for ambulances. I also worked on an exhibition of French art to be held at the Wildenstein Galleries.

As a whole, I met with a great deal of indifference, primarily due, I felt, to the fact that people did not realize what was happening. And I would tell them the old story about two men on a boat which had been torpedoed. One of them was in a corner crying. The other went to him and said: "What are you crying about?"

"Why—the boat is sinking," said the other.

"So what? It isn't your boat, is it?"

(I was still at loose ends, restless and haunted by a vague sense of dissatisfaction. There was no real reason for this complicated business of living.

Then one day, I found my old love of the Art Students League days, Florence Lucius. I hadn't seen her for several years.

With Flossie around, life began to take on a new meaning and the studio began bubbling with life and buzzing with people.

One day, Charlie Ervin brought Sidney Hillman to my studio and I did Hillman's bust. There was much talk about labor. I argued that the main problem was not the employed but the unemployed. I said that, instead of dividing the day by three, it was time to divide it by four, so as to have a six-hour day in industries of continuous effort.

Between Sittings

That is, there would be four shifts instead of three. That would create civilized leisure for the employed and do away with unemployment. The new efficiency would be two men doing one man's work, instead of one man doing two men's work.

I remember when talking about his education, Sidney said, "I got my elementary education in the sweatshops of New York and my post-graduate course in Sears, Roebuck in Chicago."

Sam and Bella Spewack who were living on their farm in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, invited me for a weekend visit. While we were out driving in the afternoon, I noticed a farm for sale. There was something about it that reminded me of Bécheron. It had three small stone houses, huge maple trees on the lawn and rolling country all around it. I wanted very much to buy it and asked my friend Burrall Hoffman the architect to look it over.

Shortly afterwards, I was eating in a Chinese restaurant with my friends, the Lin Yutangs, the Harlan Millers and Florence Lucius one night when I felt an excruciating pain in my left arm, and the next day, I was in the hospital with a heart attack. I spent six weeks in the hospital.

While I was there, Burrall Hoffman came to see me. He was enthusiastic about the Bucks County farm and brought with him some sketches showing how he would remodel the barn into a wonderful studio. The upshot of this was that I bought my American Bécheron.

When I emerged from the hospital, the doctor ordered a complete rest and *no worries*, so I went to the Virgin Islands, where I stayed for two blissful months, until one night, as I was listening to my radio, I heard the voice of Jimmy Sheean reporting the bombing of a Red Cross train in France by the Germans. Other voices told of bombings, of roads filled with refugees. In the peace and quiet of this beautiful night in St. Thomas the news was appalling. I packed my bags and returned to New York.

I was able to move right into Stone Court Farm. No longer was I an expatriate but the owner of a lovely house and farm in Bucks County, U.S.A.

My first job in Stone Court Farm came as a result of a phone call

from Joseph E. Davies in Washington who asked whether I would do the third inaugural medal of President Roosevelt. It was a rush job. He would send a photograph of the painting of the President by Salisbury. It was the President's favorite painting of himself.

When the photograph arrived, I set to work but the President did not look like that to me. Besides, it was ridiculous to do a bas-relief from a photograph when you could do it from life. It was the 30th of December and the mint had to have the medal on January 1st.

Precious time was wasting and I was getting nowhere. In despair I telephoned Washington to ask for one sitting. The President agreed to sit for me. I flew to Washington and the President posed for me the same afternoon. He was most sympathetic with my plight and offered to give me another sitting the following afternoon.

While I was working, trying desperately to make up for lost time, Steve Early came in with a tray, a bottle of brandy and three little glasses. He offered one to the President, handed me mine and proposed a toast. I raised my glass, gulped it down and went on working. Steve Early was horrified and said to the President, "Look at that Frenchman." I was too busy to sip the brandy in the traditional French manner.

CHAPTER 58

SOUTH AMERICAN JOURNEY

HENRY AND PAULA CHAPIN were my friends and neighbors in Lahaska. At their house one night, I met John Abbott and his wife Iris Barry. Abbott was working with Nelson Rockefeller's Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. That night at the Chapins' home, the idea was first conceived of my going to South America as a "good-will ambassador" to make busts of the Presidents of the South American Republics.

In a short time the idea became a reality. There were to be ten portrait busts, of the ten Presidents of the South American Republics. Dudley Easby of the State Department was appointed to arrange the details of my journey and my itinerary.

This was going to be a job that needed an assistant, and I suggested Florence Lucius. I thought Flossie, a sculptor herself, would be the ideal person to accompany me. This suggestion was approved.

We sailed for Venezuela on April 25, 1941, on a Dutch freighter, which left from a dock under the Brooklyn Bridge. Florence and I were the only passengers on board. For company, we had the captain, the first mate and chief engineer. The *Flora* was like a yacht. It had a low waterline. Our cabins which were on either side of the lounge dining room were tiny and the promenade deck was the smallest ever.

When I asked to have Florence accompany me as my assistant, I had

South American Journey

another idea—I wanted to marry her. I had known her since my art student days before I went to Paris. I had been in love with her then. It was puppy love, but real nevertheless and now this old feeling and need for each other came right back. Anyhow I thought that it would be a wonderful idea to get married at sea. I was very happy when she agreed.

Neither one of us relished the kind of publicity we would have gotten if we had been married in New York. But it did not work out the way I had planned. Captain J. D. Maarleveld of the *Flora*, a charming, cultured Dutchman, showed me the by-laws. Marriage at sea was not permitted in his books.

At LaGuaira, Venezuela, we were met by the American Consul, Carl Brewer who came up the gangplank on one of the hottest early mornings conceivable, to make us welcome in the name of the Ambassador of the United States. He stood at attention to the booming of cannons. The cannons, however, were not for us—they were for the newly-elected President of Venezuela, Isaias Medina.

In Caracas, Ambassador Frank Corrigan and his charming wife Ethel took us in charge. The Ambassador was a surgeon and, in addition to his ambassadorial duties, he often operated and lectured on surgery. I confided to him my disappointment over the Captain's failure to perform the wedding ceremony and asked whether he had authority to perform it.

"I can lodge you and feed you, but I can't marry you," he replied.

But ambassadors have ways of arranging things: Florence and I were duly married at Chacao, a suburb of Caracas, on May 15, 1941. We spent our honeymoon in the palace of the late dictator Gómez, which was the American Ambassador's residence in Caracas.

Ambassador Corrigan was very much interested in my good-will mission. He had lived in South America for many years and he appreciated the good-neighbor advantages of my tour. He thought that it would be politic to do both the outgoing President General López Contreras and the incoming President General Isaias Medina.

The Ambassador took me to the Art School in Caracas and we picked

Between Sitzings

out a studio for me to work in. The director and the students were extremely pleased that I was to model the bust of the General in their school. López Contreras took great pride in this Art School, and it flourished under his regime. It was only three years old but already showed some amazing results. I saw tapestries, pottery, paintings, sculpture and a whole revival of Venezuelan folk art, which had been completely submerged under the dictatorship of Gómez.

My first sitter, General López Contreras, had a beautiful head, made for a sculptor: a finely-drawn nose, a sensitive mouth and beautifully modeled ears. He looked as if he might have posed for one of the faces in an El Greco.

At the second sitting, I asked the General if he would take off his coat and undo his collar, for I wanted to model his long, thin neck. When he took off his coat, we saw that he carried a revolver and a cartridge belt, which he removed and put on the table. I assumed it was a left-over from the violent days of revolution.

After I completed the bust of Contreras, Frank Corrigan had me meet the new President, General Medina, who readily agreed to sit for his bust. General López Contreras had been Gómez' Minister of War; and later General Medina had been López Contreras' Minister of War. Whereas López Contreras was ascetic-looking, with a skin tightly drawn over his features, Medina was round-faced, short-necked, heavy-set and overweight. But he too was most interesting from a sculptor's viewpoint.

According to my original itinerary, I was now to continue along the West Coast of South America. This meant we had to fly. Before I undertook the assignment, I had gone to consult Dr. Dana Atchley, who had looked after me when I was in the Harkness Pavilion with a heart attack. After giving me a thorough examination, his verdict was: I had to take it easy in general but flying was definitely forbidden. So, we decided to sail for Rio instead. It would take about ten or twelve days and the rest on board ship would put me in condition to continue with my strenuous job. But I was impatient and being impatient was as taxing as flying—so I disobeyed the doctor's order and went by

South American Journey

plane. As a matter of fact, I have disobeyed doctors' orders many times since.

On the plane, we met Alzeria Vargas, Senhora Peixotto, the daughter of President Vargas of Brazil. She was returning from a trip to the United States. When I told her I was going to do a bust of her father, she said, "Oh, no, he won't sit. He has always refused." I told her this would be different, but she was not so sure.

When our plane landed, it was greeted with brass bands and cannon in honor of the President's daughter. No one paid any attention to us. We struggled our way to a taxi and went to the Copacabana Hotel, where rooms had been reserved.

Meeting the President of Brazil turned out to be extremely difficult and I began to think his daughter had been right. Ambassador Jefferson Caffery was not encouraging. He maintained that the President was too busy. I hung around for two weeks doing nothing, but we enjoyed it, and got acquainted with Rio and its people.

Theodore Xanthaky, an attaché of our Embassy, was most helpful and introduced us to the social and artistic life of Rio. In every sense, Rio de Janeiro lived up to its reputation—its superb setting, its beautiful old churches dating back to the sixteenth century, its luxurious villas, contrasting with its appalling slums. On its beaches people of all tints mingled in extreme friendliness. There seemed to be no color line.

Eventually arrangements were made for President Vargas to pose for me. He was a little man with titanic energy. I started my first sitting after lunch and did not leave until seven in the evening. One day he told me that I was a *porte-bonheur*; he had just gotten some news from the U.S.A. which seemed to please him.

Vargas enjoyed looking through the photographs of my sculpture, and showed particular interest in Mussolini and G. B. Shaw. He told me a story of a man who asked Shaw if it was true that his father had been a tanner. Shaw answered, "Is it true that your father was a gentleman?"

Vargas appeared one morning in his red dressing-gown, looking for

Between Sittings

all the world like Nero of ancient Rome. I told him that the bust was nearly finished. Photographers were called in to photograph the bust, the sitter and me. Vargas asked, "Would you like a sitting tomorrow?" His daughter, who was present, was amazed. She had never seen her father so cordial.

The bust of Vargas was then taken to the American Embassy, where the Ambassador and Mrs. Caffery were having a *thé dansant*. Eddie Duchin and his orchestra were the attraction. Paul Draper, who was having a phenomenal success at the Copacabana, did an impromptu dance.

We left Rio on June 26 at six o'clock in the morning and arrived at Asunción about noon. What a contrast! Rio was a monument to an old Latin civilization; Paraguay was primitive and Indian.

Our Minister Mr. Frost had arranged for the sittings with President Higino Morinigo, and I got to work the day after I arrived.

The President told me that his ancestors had come over from Italy in the sixteenth century and had intermarried with the Guarani Indians. He was very proud of his Guarani blood, as the Guaranis were fighters. In Rio, President Vargas had mentioned to me that the Paraguayans had lost two-thirds of their men in the Chaco wars. Vargas thought that the remaining men should adopt the Mormon idea of polygamy. "But," he added, "that is not an idea for you to entertain—you are just newly married."

Asunción was a city of unrest. All the time I was doing Morinigo's bust, well-informed people suggested that I had better hurry it up because he might not be President next week. But all remained calm during the period I was working on Morinigo.

It was a hectic week of work and parties in Asunción and we were glad to get on a boat for Buenos Aires. That four-day trip on the Paraná River from Asunción to Buenos Aires reminded me very much of Mark Twain's description of the Mississippi. Every time we stopped at a little port or landing we would see cowboys on horseback, riding hell for leather. There were army officers on board, apparently on an official

South American Journey

mission, and we were invariably greeted by brass bands, but they were never for us.

Buenos Aires had a little of New York, a little of London and a little of Paris. There I met a good many people whom I had known either in Paris or London. I felt at home with our Embassy there. Both Norman Armour and Kippy Tuck, the Counselor, were old friends of mine.

President Roberto Ortíz, whose bust I was going to make, was ill. He suffered from diabetes, was almost blind and was not on active duty; the Vice-President, Ramon S. Castillo, was in the saddle. Ortíz was a big man, heavy-set with a sensitive face. He was a great liberal and rather reminded me of our own President Roosevelt. He sat for me in the Presidential Palace, surrounded by his family. Ortíz spoke of the mysticism of the English. He believed them to have the most democratic government but he refused to talk about the influence of the German on the sons of the rich conservatives in Buenos Aires.

Ortíz was a great admirer of President Roosevelt. During the last sitting, he called for champagne and drank a toast to the President of the United States:

“A President may send his signed photograph with cordial greetings of friendship. That is but a formal and unsatisfactory method of expressing friendship. *Viva voce* I send greetings of affection, respect and admiration to President Roosevelt, and I charge you, Mr. Davidson, by means of the bust into which you have breathed life, with bringing my message to your President, face to face.”

The next President to be “busted” was Alfredo Baldomir of Uruguay. On our first day in Montevideo, Florence and I were having a cocktail in the bar of our hotel. The barman nudged us and said, “That gentleman sitting in the corner with the officers is President Baldomir.” I was pleased to be able to get an impression of him before starting his bust.

In the hotel dining room, later, I had a full view of my prospective sitter and made several sketches. I felt that the President noticed me. When I met him the next day, he said, “I told my friend that you were either a spy, or the sculptor.”

Between Sitzings

Uruguay was a sympathetic and civilized country. Poverty was not too apparent and I felt the Uruguayans to be a very happy people, proud of their advanced legislation and general culture.

I had met their great sculptor Zorilla de San Martín during his stay in New York, when the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs had asked me to look after him and show him the sights. He thought that the greatest metropolis in the world was poverty-stricken only in one respect—sculpture. That was his opinion. After showing him the General Sherman statue, the Admiral Farragut, George Washington, Nathan Hale and the Radio City sculptures, I understood now why Zorilla had felt that way about the lack of New York sculpture. Montevideo was like a little Paris, with sculpture, fountains and gardens everywhere. I came to agree that you just can't have great sculpture. You have to have lots of sculpture and only then will you have great sculpture.

We spent a good deal of our time with Zorilla de San Martín, visiting his studios, and driving about town to see his fine monuments. He had a beautiful wife and five lovely daughters. When Señora de San Martín sang "Madelon," we all felt as nostalgic as any Parisian.

The flight over the Andes, which came next, was a thrilling experience. We flew through a pass eighteen thousand feet above sea level. After an hour of dazzling white mountain peaks and dizzy crevasses, the fertile valley in which Santiago, Chile lay looked as green as an emerald.

Our Ambassador Claude Bowers was at the airport in person to greet us. I had my first sitting in the Presidential Palace with Chilean President Pedro Aguirre Cerda, or "Don Tinto," as they affectionately called him, for he was a wine grower. As he was going to his summer residence in Viña del Mar for the weekend, he suggested that I bring the bust in clay down there, where he could give me all the time I needed. Cecil Lyons, one of the Secretaries at our Embassy, and his wife motored us down. We escaped an earthquake in Santiago, but we got the full force of the storm as we crossed the three mountain chains to the sea. As in

South American Journey

most wine-growing countries, the food was good and the Chileans were a warm, easygoing people.

President "Don Tinto" was a very friendly democratic person. His country house in Viña del Mar was exceedingly simple—like that of a country squire. "Don Tinto" jokingly told his entourage that I was a conservative and offered as evidence the fact that I was conserving him for posterity.

In Peru we were taken in charge by Dr. Alberto Giesecke, who took me to the Foreign Office and arranged for my sittings with President Manuel Prado Ugarteche. President Prado had an aristocratic head which reminded me somewhat of the old Inca heads. He had lived in Paris as a young man and spoke beautiful French.

Peru was a strange and beautiful country, with its deserts and barren mountains. The old Inca civilization still permeated the atmosphere of modern Lima. Peru was an archaeologist's paradise. Almost each day one heard about some new staircase or Inca dwelling that had been unearthed in Cuzco, or of some pre-Inca cemetery where they had discovered some ancient carvings. Even the children amused themselves by digging for Inca treasures. We got the fever ourselves and dug up some skulls.

The subject of archaeology arose again in Ecuador. While working on the bust of President Carlos Arroyo del Río, I said something about the extensive archaeological excavations in Peru and Ecuador, and he remarked that archaeology was a sport of the rich, like polo.

The good-will mission was drawing to a close. I had to give Bolivia the slip. It was too high for my ticker—eighteen thousand feet. "Too close to God," I said. In view of my inability to travel to La Paz, moving pictures and photographs of Bolivia's President, General Enrique Peñaranda, were especially taken and I made his bust from these pictures. Some time later, I met President Peñaranda at a private luncheon in New York. When he walked into the room, I said to myself, "Here comes my bust." People commented that the resemblance was startling.

In Bogotá, Colombia, Ambassador Spruille Braden and his beautiful Chilean wife took us in hand. They had waited for us after our visit

Between Sitzings

in Venezuela at the beginning of our mission. Now this was to be our last stop.

Ambassador Braden accompanied me personally to meet the President, Dr. Eduardo Santos. When Dr. Santos discovered that I spoke French, he asked the Ambassador if he might steal me for luncheon.

It turned out that Dr. Santos, a cultured French scholar, had spent his youth in Paris at about the same time that I did. He recited Baudelaire and Verlaine, and we agreed that it was not necessary to be a Frenchman to be a Parisian. I asked him where he went for his holidays. Of course, it was Paris. That seemed to be the Mecca of most Colombians.

When the bust of Dr. Santos was completed, Ambassador Braden gave a party at his residence to exhibit my bust. We were tempted to stay and visit the Colombian countryside, which they said was the most beautiful in the world, but my conscience interfered. I had a great deal of work ahead of me.

The continent of South America is truly beautiful. Prior to the age of aviation, communication between the republics was long and difficult. It took weeks and weeks from Santiago, Chile to Buenos Aires. To have covered the whole continent in a little over six months, making the busts of nine Presidents and one retiring President, was indeed a feat possible only in our age of aviation. I will always be grateful to Nelson Rockefeller for having chosen me for an assignment which from many reports did much to strengthen the "good neighbor" relations.

When the bronzes were completed they were exhibited in the National Gallery in Washington. Later, they were presented to the various South American republics as a token of friendship from the United States.

CHAPTER 59

LIFE AT STONE COURT FARM

WHEN FLORENCE AND I returned from our travels in South America and settled down in Stone Court Farm, memories of Paris and Bécheron became dimmer. Being married again stabilized my existence and confirmed my belief that I was not meant to be a bachelor.

The farm was beautiful: Burrall Hoffman had added a red stone terrace to the house which looked out over the valley—for all the world a Poussin landscape.

I had always had a passion for organizing and laying out gardens. I now engaged an Italian gardener, Luigi, and together we set out a vegetable garden similar in design to the one in Bécheron. Each vegetable patch was framed in a border of flowers. There just wasn't anything Luigi felt he couldn't do. After the gardens had been planned, he referred to himself no longer as a gardener but as a "landscape architect."

The huge barn which had become my studio was equipped with top and side lights. I took some fifty busts in bronze out of storage and placed them in rows on the shelves I had put up on the side walls. We were barely installed when Charlie Ervin telephoned us. He was in Philadelphia and we invited him to spend the weekend with us. Florence and I dashed up to Doylestown and bought a daybed, which we placed in the studio for Charlie.

Between Sittings

The next morning, Charlie reported that he had spent a sleepless night. All night long he had been witness to a battle of the busts—Mussolini, Clemenceau, Wilson, Rockefeller, Gandhi, Pershing, Foch. It had been a veritable free-for-all. He was eloquent on the subject.

Stone Court Farm was situated in the heart of Bucks County. We were surrounded by the intelligentsia: playwrights Moss Hart and George Kaufman, poet Henry Chapin, sculptor Harry Rosin, painter John Folinsbee, architect Antonin Raymond and of course the Spewacks, who were the cause of my being a Bucks Countyite.

That summer I did a portrait of Senator George W. Norris of Nebraska, who was eighty-one years old. It was just after he had been defeated for the Senate, after almost forty years of service. But while he was posing for me he did not talk about his defeat. He talked about the TVA, the wonder of it and its possibilities. I told him about my visit to Norris Dam and my attempt to adapt my figure, "The Stemming of the Tides," to the dam that bore his name.

There was a dignity and beauty about this old man. Friends came in to see him while I worked and questioned him about what he was going to do next. He said he was going back to Nebraska, but what he was going to do there he didn't know.

Thomas L. Stokes, who attended one of the sittings, wrote in the *World-Telegram*:

"The clay came to life . . . there was revealed the simple man without pretense, the beloved elder statesman, with the eyes that can be so compassionate for the people and so hot with rage for those who would exploit them."

This was the year Hitler destroyed the town of Lidice in Czechoslovakia. Clifton Fadiman, of the Writers' War Board, asked me to do a group depicting the tragedy. The Writers' War Board had organized the "Lidice Lives" Committee to keep alive the memory of the village which Hitler had boasted would soon be forgotten. Clifton Fadiman's request was indeed a challenge. I did a group portraying a man of the

Life at Stone Court Farm

village facing his Nazi executioners; a woman and child are by his side, and those already shot are on the ground. I tried to express in the group the defiant resignation of the victims of that atrocious massacre.

For models, I used my gardener's son Vincent for the boy, my Florence for the woman, and Angelo my assistant for the living and the dead men. I had only three weeks to do the group in, but it was completed and cast in plaster in time for the scheduled showing at the Associated American Artists Galleries.

(In the spring of 1942 I had the good fortune to meet Helen Keller. While an art student, I had learned the deaf-mute alphabet from a deaf-mute sculptor named Hanson, and had never completely forgotten it. I found I could spell into Helen Keller's hand. A spontaneous sympathy sprang up between us. I wanted to know her better, and asked her to sit for me.

I invited Helen and Polly Thompson to come and stay with us at the farm. As soon as they stepped across our threshold, the house was flooded with sunshine. Dinner, that evening, was a joyous occasion. Helen's appreciation of food and wine, her laughter at a joke were infectious. She never fumbled for her fork or her glass. She was so at ease. It was difficult to believe she could not see or hear.

The next morning I took Helen and Polly to the studio. As Helen's fingers wandered over the bronze portrait busts, recognizing and questioning, I sensed that she was seeing these portraits profoundly. When she came to Einstein, she said, "He is like a sunflower." As her fingers passed over the head of Franklin D. Roosevelt, she recognized him and expressed her devotion to the President.

Exploring Helen's mind was a rich adventure. Thoughts and words were miraculously superimposed on each other with astonishing precision. I realized the profound honesty of her thinking.

We had much to talk about during those sittings. Helen shared my love for Walt Whitman and Tom Paine.

Between Sittings

When they left us to return to Westport, Helen wrote me the following letter:

“April 6, 1942

Dear Jo Davidson,

“Life is certainly full of glorious imponderables, and one of them is the week I spent at Stone Court Farm. It was a Wonder Week that brought me content. . . .

“As I tried to tell you in the course of conversation, your work is an Art of Release—a beneficent acid which dissolves the jarring, separative peculiarities of any handicap and reveals a Personality wrought out of eternal, complete values. Until I came to your studio, I had often seemed to move in a deaf-blind show, but you multiplied my powers of feeling, reflecting and observing as you worked, and now there will be a new significance in whatever there is left for me to accomplish. . . .

“You confirm the truth which has always burned into me—spiritual exaltation is not enough. We must also lift our earth-horizon as we climb Godward, or we shall always profane our high thinking by mean living.”

This was the beginning of a rare friendship.

I shall never forget accompanying Helen and Polly to the Naval Hospital in Philadelphia. Florence and I followed them from ward to ward while they visited the blind and the deaf of the war. Here were depressed and sullen young men, feeling the injustice of it all. Helen's presence in their midst was something very moving to see. She spoke to them of overcoming their handicaps as if it were almost a privilege. One of the boys was learning to use a typewriter. Helen typed out a message on it and read it to the boys in the ward. Their faces lit up. One felt that Helen had left behind her that priceless thing—hope.

I was to do another bust of Helen, for as I got to know her, I realized that a satisfactory portrait of Helen would have to include her hands. Helen Keller's extraordinary gestures were a part of her unique personality. Whenever I introduced Helen to someone who interested her, she would pass her fingers ever so lightly over his head and face and would comment on the beauty or the strength of that person. You knew

Life at Stone Court Farm

that she had seen him and would recognize him when she met him again.

When touching flowers, which she loved, Helen would occasionally startle you with a comment like, "What lovely white lilacs." How did she know they were white? Helen explained that the texture of white lilacs was different from purple lilacs, and the perfume was not quite the same.

Her wisdom, her sense of humor and her knowledgeable enjoyment of all of life endeared Helen Keller to us forever.

CHAPTER 60

HENRY WALLACE AND ERNIE PYLE

I HAD FIRST MET Henry Wallace at one of the White House receptions while he was Secretary of Agriculture. It was rare that his name did not come up in the course of conversation when I was with friends who so often referred to him as "The Man of Tomorrow."

Lowell Mellett arranged for him to sit for me and in the summer of 1942, I rode down to Washington for this purpose. Mr. Minnegerode, the director of the Corcoran Art Galleries, put a studio at my disposal.

When Vice-President Wallace arrived, he brought his Spanish teacher along. He explained that he was going to Mexico and he felt it important to talk to people in their own language.

Wallace was shy, almost gauche. At first, he did not give of himself easily. But he looked up at me from time to time. He gave you the feeling of wide open spaces, a clean beauty, and of strong healthy optimism. He didn't seem to waste his energies in useless words or gestures. As I worked, we got closer and more friendly. The clay seemed to model itself, and I completed the bust in two sittings.

I was to do another portrait bust of Henry Wallace three years later. The American tradition is that Presidents of the United States are painted and Vice-Presidents are "busted." The Vice-President's bust should be a head and shoulders, executed in marble.

Henry Wallace and Ernie Pyle

Wallace came down to Lahaska to pose and spend a weekend with us. I went to Trenton to meet him. I looked for him in the Pullman cars, but he was not there. Then I spotted him with bag in hand, walking rapidly from one of the coaches. As he walked down the platform, nobody seemed to recognize him. He had the faculty of not being seen.

Henry Wallace was rather like Wilson. He had a love for humanity, but was not a sociable person. He never indulged in small talk but what he knew, he knew thoroughly. He seemed to be most at home with farmers and scientists.

After a long day of posing in the studio, we went to the house to have tea. We were talking about a method for growing mushrooms out-of-doors. Wallace suddenly excused himself, went up to his room and came down in his shirt sleeves. "I am going out to find Sam," he said. Sam had replaced Luigi as our gardener.

We had no idea what he was up to. He often stepped out for a bit of fresh air. It began to get dark and we went out too look for him. There, behind the studio, I saw Sam shyly holding a lantern while the Vice-President of the United States was digging a trench for my mushroom pit.

([Stone Court Farm was a way of life which I loved but I was essentially a city feller and would go to New York at the slightest provocation.

I found a studio apartment again in the Beaux Arts Studios, where I had modeled the busts of Nicholas Murray Butler and Edward Harkness. This new studio, which had formerly been occupied by William Randolph Hearst, on the third floor, overlooked Bryant Park and had a beautiful light. There were still traces of his stay there—ornate ceilings, archways, fancy fireplaces. The Beaux Arts Studios building held wonderful memories of New York.

One day I had a visit from Colonel Edward Hope Coffee, who had been told by Clifton Fadiman about my Lidice group. He asked me if I would undertake to produce a piece of sculpture expressing the

Between Sitzings

important contribution of the Infantry in World War II. I was very happy to undertake that assignment. He arranged for me to go to Astoria to see motion pictures of the infantry in actual combat. I saw these movies several times, and was extremely moved by them. I began working on a group which I called, "The Infantry is the People."

I needed some G.I.'s to pose for me. Colonel Coffee took me to an armory, and I selected several boys who came to pose for me in full equipment. I worked fast, since each G.I. was allowed to pose for one morning only.

The final group consisted of three figures, arranged in a typical infantry rhythm, two and one. Churchill's words, "blood, sweat and tears," were ever present in my mind. I saw the G.I.'s trudging through the mud, tired, weak in the knees, but still alert. Ernie Pyle's vivid front-line reports had made a deep impression on me. When you looked at the group, you saw not just three separate figures—it was the infantry: two and one, two and one, two and one.

About this time I went to see "Desert Victory," an English war film, and was struck by the face of a soldier in the battle of El Alamein, who was counting the seconds on his wrist watch for zero hour, when all hell would break loose. The expression on that face haunted me. I wanted to do a bust of that boy, and talked about it to everyone. One day, when I was lunching at the Coffee House with my friend Bob Flaherty, famous for his magnificent documentary films, he said, "The man you are looking for is right here—Tom Baird, of British Information." Mr. Baird supplied me with a 16-millimeter film of the boy with the wrist watch, and I did a bust from it. I called it "Desert Victory," and it was shown all over the country, wherever the film was shown.

It was during that period that Lee Miller of the Scripps-Howard organization told me that Ernie Pyle was in town. We went to see Ernie at the Algonquin Hotel. We were not the only ones: there was a crowd there—Ernie's friends and the friends of these friends. I joined the crowd of worshipers of that frail little man with the sensitive face and the soft-spoken voice. I begged Ernie to sit for me, and after much pleading on my part, he finally agreed to do so. It meant moving his

Henry Wallace and Ernie Pyle

day-headquarters from the Algonquin to my studio. There, amid bourbon, tobacco fumes and a steady throng of visitors, I worked for three days in a regular hullabaloo. Never have I witnessed so much love and affection as surrounded Ernie Pyle.

There were photographers, of course. The Scripps-Howard people sent their man and a *Life* photographer appeared. Helen Keller and Polly Thompson also wanted to meet Ernie and they came to the studio.

Ernie Pyle talked about going back to the front, to the Eastern theatre of the war. I don't think he wanted to go back—he had already been through too much—but he had a compulsion to go. Ernie had a premonition; the law of averages, he said, was against him.

When I heard the tragic news of his death, it seemed almost as if he had really known.

(The war brought sitters from all over the world into my studio. Madame Chiang Kai-shek was in New York and my friend Lin Yutang, whose portrait I had made a short time before, volunteered to get her to pose for me.

Madame Chiang had a suite, or rather a whole floor, at the Waldorf-Astoria. As you got out of the elevator there were secret-service men in front of her private apartment, and more secret-service men inside. I was admitted.

I had a problem in modeling Madame Chiang. In an oriental face, the depths and depressions are so slight that you do not see the profile until the head is completely turned. Western eyes, compared to oriental eyes, appear to be deep in their sockets—the nose is more prominent. Madame Chiang's oriental features were drawn exquisitely and tenderly on a rich, full surface. Most people think that oriental faces are impassive and mask-like, but how Madame Chiang's expression could change! I would come in one day and she was radiant. The next day, she was haggard and did not look like herself.

Madame Chiang was very friendly. Over a fragrant cup of tea she told me about the *faux pas* she had made while visiting President Roose-

Between Sittings

velt. After a long conversation with the President, she got up to leave. As she did so, she said unthinkingly, "Please don't get up." He looked at her and smiled. "But, I can't."

I spent seven days working on that bust. It was not an easy task. I took the bust back to my studio in Lahaska and worked on it, for it was the kind of head that called for stylization. I did it in polychrome terra-cotta.

Some weeks afterwards, Florence and I went to Westport to visit an old friend, Mrs. Oscar Howard. Lila had a lovely old house in Westport. Van Wyck Brooks was a near neighbor. I had not seen him since our London days. We called on him unannounced and he answered the bell himself. Van Wyck had not changed. His hair, although a little whiter, was still standing up straight, and he still blushed as he had twenty-eight years before.

It was a happy reunion. Van Wyck went through his files and brought out some letters I had written so long ago I did not remember them. They bore my face as a signature, with the jet-black hair and black whiskers I had then.

He came to visit us in Lahaska and I did his bust. Sometimes knowing and loving a person makes it more difficult to do him. But I had a wonderful time working on Van Wyck's head, trying to put into his bust the sensitive beauty of his spirit.

While he was posing we got to talking about the curious fact that America did not celebrate its great poets and philosophers. We talked about Thoreau and Van Wyck remarked how few documents and portraits there were of this great rebel. I had often thought of making a statue of Thoreau. Van Wyck volunteered to go to the public library and send me whatever material he found there if I would make a sketch. He did this, and I made a sketch of which Van Wyck said, "It's the best biography of Thoreau ever written."

We tried to organize a committee to put up the statue, full-size, in Walden, but Concord was allergic to statuary and the project is still only a sketch in my studio.

CHAPTER 6 I

ROOTING FOR ROOSEVELT

I HAD NEVER BELONGED to any political party. I offered my views freely at the slightest provocation, it is true, but they were just my views.

When President Roosevelt was running for a third term, Mrs. Charles Poletti, the wife of New York's Lieutenant-Governor, asked me if I would go on the air for the President. I demurred, saying I was doing the job my way: wining and dining and weekending with conservative friends, I would always bring the conversation around to Roosevelt, explaining why I was for him and reminding them of his achievements. I may not have convinced them, but I certainly succeeded in spoiling many a dinner party.

All this, however, was happening in 1940, a period after which the fear of President Roosevelt's defeat for a fourth term changed my view. Many of my friends got together and discussed at length how to get artists, writers and scientists out of their ivory towers. We sent out about five hundred questionnaires to artistic, literary, scientific and stage folk asking if they would join in forming a committee to help reelect President Roosevelt. Among the signatories were: Ethel Barrymore, Helen Keller, Van Wyck Brooks, Tom Benton, Bob Flaherty, Norman Corwin and Tallulah Bankhead.

The replies that came in were so encouraging that we decided to hold

Between Sittings

a meeting in my studio. Having offered the studio, I was elected chairman. Not being a parliamentarian, I agreed to accept the chair, provided that somebody else did the presiding.

We sent out more invitations, and acceptances poured in. The intellectual *confrérie* was organized and became the "Independent Voters Committee of the Arts and Sciences for Roosevelt."

The formation of our Committee was almost a spontaneous combustion, which answered a need of liberal-minded artists, scientists, writers and actors. We felt it imperative, even though a fourth term was not in the American tradition, to do all we could to assure Roosevelt's reelection.

Wallace had just been defeated in the convention for a second term as Vice-President. It was suggested that I telephone Wallace to ask him to speak at our Madison Square Garden meeting for Roosevelt. I doubted that he would accept. It was a good deal to ask from a man who had just been dropped from second place on the Democratic ticket. However, I telephoned him. He was taken unawares, and after a moment's silence, he said he would. I felt that was greatness. When he appeared on the platform, the audience too felt the magnanimity of his gesture and shouted, "Wallace for '48."

That meeting at Madison Square Garden was an extraordinary event in American political history, for those who spoke, besides Henry Wallace, were Helen Keller, Dr. Harlow Shapley, Serge Koussevitzky, Fredric March, Sinclair Lewis, Dr. Channing Tobias, Bette Davis, Orson Welles, Quentin Reynolds and others.

When I called on the President after that meeting, he told me that Bob Hannegan had said to him, "That artist friend of yours is crazy, selling tickets for a political meeting in Madison Square Garden." Hannegan had offered to fill the house, but our committee turned him down. We were novices, but we sold our tickets. Madison Square Garden overflowed its capacity.

Our headquarters were at the Astor Hotel. We issued pamphlets and posters. Meeting followed meeting. Our theatre section did a great job, ringing doorbells and making speeches at street corners and from sound

Rooting for Roosevelt

trucks. I threw myself completely into the Committee's work, for I felt I was doing something truly constructive.

The most active person on our committee was the tireless and amazing Hannah Dorner, our Executive Secretary. She had been a newspaper woman and had been in publicity. If it had not been for her extraordinary sense of organization, we would not have gone very far.

Before the election I went with a group of our members to call on President Roosevelt. He laughingly said to me, "Jo, have they called you a Communist yet?" They had not at the time but I did not have long to wait.

It was Franklin Delano Roosevelt who said, "When the ballots are cast, your responsibilities do not cease."

On that memorable Tuesday night in November 1944, we gathered in the ballroom of the Astor Roof to hear the election returns. After the triumphant results came in, a general cry went up that the Committee should be continued. We reorganized, and became the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions.

The Committee grew by leaps and bounds. It participated not only in political action but in educational and scientific discussions, it conducted meetings and forums, produced radio programs and participated in political campaigns. I gave all my time and enthusiasm to the Committee, attending board meetings and many money-raising functions, since that seems to be one of the chief preoccupations of the chairman of a committee.

During this time I was called to Washington to design the Fourth Inaugural Medal. The President had agreed to give me the necessary sittings, although those were busy days for him, and I had to wait around until he found a few precious minutes for me.

While I was working on his profile, he suggested that the reverse of the medal should carry the U.S.S. *Constitution* in full sail, with the inscription, "Thou too sail on, O Ship of State, Sail on O Union strong and great." The President had a painting of the *Constitution*, which he had brought down and sent to the Willard Hotel, where I sat up all night working on it.

Between Sitzings

While I was working on the portrait for the medal in the White House office, the President picked up a beautifully bound Christmas book and inscribed it "To Jo Davidson in search of light." This was in reference to my shifting from place to place in order to see him better. But it carried a deeper meaning for me.

Florence and I, accompanied by Helen Keller and Polly Thompson, attended the inaugural festivities. After being greeted by Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. Truman, we were approached by Mrs. Boettiger, the President's daughter, who took us in to see the President. I was deeply moved when I saw Roosevelt shaking hands with Helen Keller. Here were two phenomenal human beings, both of whom had surmounted tremendous handicaps.

What with the Committee's activities and my sculpture, I spent my time between Lahaska and the studio in New York. In Lahaska I was working on a memorial, and in town I was working on my infantry group.

In the late afternoon of April 12, 1945, Frances and Bob Flaherty were having tea with us when the telephone rang. It was one of the big Fifth Avenue shops, asking me if I would allow them to exhibit my large plaster head of Franklin D. Roosevelt in their window. I asked why, and I was told that the President had just died.

When I rejoined my friends, they asked "What's the trouble?" I told them the terrible news. We sat there in silence, each one of us struck with this shocking universal tragedy yet each one shaken by a feeling of great personal loss.

CHAPTER 62

ATLAS STEPS OUT FROM UNDER

AS CHAIRMAN of the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, I went to San Francisco to attend the United Nations Conference. I took all my sculpturing paraphernalia with me, as I also wanted to do the busts of the chief delegates to the first United Nations assembly.

Florence and I boarded our plane at 5:30 A.M. Our journey lasted until four in the morning, and we arrived in Los Angeles exhausted.

That night we attended a dinner given by the moving picture colony, at which Arthur Hornblow presided. Assistant Secretary of State Archibald MacLeish was the principal speaker. The death of Roosevelt had been a great shock to me, and when a few weeks later, Ernie Pyle was killed in action, I felt I could not take much more. I was dosing myself with the nitroglycerin tablets I always carried in my pocket. When I reached San Francisco two days later, I had a heart attack and found myself in St. Mary's Hospital under an oxygen tent on the very eve of the opening of the United Nations conference. All my plans were shattered.

I could not have chosen a more hospitable city to be sick in. I remember the kindness of Attorney General Bob Kenny, his assistant Dick Ellsworth Wiley, Dr. Yoel and Dr. McGinnis, and the sisters who took care of me. My friend Averell Harriman had impressed upon the hospital staff that I was a person to be spoiled, and they did so.

Between Sitzings

After the sign "Do not disturb" was taken away from my door, I had a steady flow of visitors from the United Nations conference. At times our conversation became so animated that Sister Serena or my nurse Julie Wilson would rush into the room with worried looks and shoo my distinguished visitors away. They were solemnly warned that I was just recovering from a heart attack.

As my allotted time for staying flat on my back drew to an end, my nurse would take me for little walks in the park near the hospital. One day we sat down to rest on a bench and in a little while the birds discovered us. They sat on my lap and on my shoulders and a squirrel decided to sit on the bench beside me. My nurse was impressed, and remarked there were other people sitting on benches in the park and the birds did not make any such fuss over them.

While I was in the hospital, the news of V-J Day came over the radio. Florence was anxious to listen to the excitement of the broadcast, and the nurse escorted her to a radio in another room. In a few minutes Florence came back half crying, half laughing. The nurse had taken her to a radio in a padded room for the mentally deranged!

I remained two months in the hospital and another month passed while I recuperated at Ralph Staggpole's ranch in Cloverdale, about forty miles north of San Francisco. Ralph was an old friend from my early Paris days. He was a sculptor, a painter and a poet. He and his wife took in Florence, my nurse and myself and helped me to get back my strength. Then we returned to our farm in Lahaska.

The Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions eventually combined with another body, the National Citizens' Political Action Committee, a labor group which had supported Roosevelt. I had liked the independence of our organization. Some others felt like me, but we were a minority. The two groups combined, and became the Progressive Citizens of America, with Dr. Frank Kingdon and myself as co-chairmen. Dr. Kingdon, the columnist and radio commentator, knew the language of the chair, but I felt like a fish out of water. My original enthusiasm began to wane. This new organization was too professional and required what I did not have. Being a die-hard,

Atlas Steps Out From Under

I still attended meetings and contributed in time and energy to help make a success of things, but I regretted the good old days when we were only amateurs.

At a convention in Chicago, the Progressive Citizens of America became the Progressive Party, with Henry A. Wallace as its candidate for President. At that convention, our original Committee was revived as the National Council of Arts, Sciences and Professions, with Dr. Harlow Shapley as chairman and myself as honorary chairman.

I attended the Philadelphia convention, at which Wallace was officially nominated as candidate for President, and I gave him my full support. I thought his candidacy showed courage and selflessness.

Committee meetings had been taking too much of my time. I wanted to spend more time in my studio.

There was a story Steffens used to tell about his early days as a reformer. He thought he was Atlas carrying the world. "One day," Steff said, "I got tired of carrying the world on my back. In fact, I was fed up with it and I said, 'To hell with it.' I quickly bent down, stepped out from under, stood well off and watched. And—nothing happened. The world stayed where it was."

So I followed in the footsteps of Atlas and Lincoln Steffens.

CHAPTER 63

BACK TO FRANCE

MY STUDIOS AND HOUSES in Paris and Bécheron still housed a good part of my forty years' production of sculpture. I had not been back there for six years, but Gino and his wife had managed to keep Bécheron intact through the war years.

We were seen off on our first trip to France since the war by Frank Sinatra, whose bust I had just completed. Sinatra is a phenomenon, a crooner with a social conscience. I was fascinated by him. We arrived in Orly on June 29, 1946 at three o'clock in the morning. We went to the Hotel Crillon in Paris and after a night's sleep, woke up too late for breakfast. We dressed and went to a little café on the rue Royale, where, sitting on the terrace, we tried to drink the substitute for black coffee and eat the black bread which were all they had. The streets were empty, with only an occasional car. We watched the people as they passed by, still *chic* in spite of it all, but wearing wooden shoes or sneakers.

Gino drove up on the following day in my old Renault to take us to Bécheron. My heart sank when he entered the room. He was a little gray old man, a skeleton of his former self, but it was good to see him.

On the way to Bécheron, Florence and I stopped off for lunch at the Providence restaurant in Jouy. The proprietors M. and Mme. Delaunay and all the personnel were outside waiting for us, for by some mysterious

Back to France

grapevine they had known we were coming. They received us with tears and embraces. To them we were a symbol that the war was really over.

Soon after buying Bécheron, Yvonne and I had discovered La Providence, a little restaurant in Jouy just some ten kilometers outside Chartres. It became one of our stopovers at lunch time on our way to Bécheron from Paris. The proprietors were charming people and the food was excellent. One cold winter day I stopped there for lunch. I went into the kitchen and began slapping my arms. "Brrr, it's cold," I said. I heard a voice: "What about a glass of good old sherry?" It was M. Coudray, the then proprietor, a venerable gentleman with gouty hands, like old olive trees. I was startled.

"I did not know you spoke English."

"I should, you know," he said. "I was chief pastry cook at Sandringham for Edward VII when he was Prince of Wales."

Gino told us the story of Bécheron during the war. Bécheron had been in the occupied zone. One day it was visited by a German general who was looking for quarters. Guided by Gino, the general gave the place a thorough inspection and was impressed. Gino had previously placed the busts of Pershing, Mussolini and Rockefeller where they would not be missed.

"I see this house belongs to someone of note," the general had said. "I will take it. No one else must live here."

Thinking that a general who appreciated art might be preferable to anyone else, Gino suggested that it would be easier for him if the general would write a letter to the effect that this was his domicile. The general wrote the letter, which Gino then had certified by the prefecture. Later, when other Germans appeared who wanted to take the house over, Gino showed them this letter. The general never returned, and no Germans ever occupied Bécheron.

However, during the German retreat, about three hundred of the Free Fighting French, the FFI's, occupied Bécheron. They were a tough bunch and they were not too welcome in the countryside, but

Between Sitzings

Gino was an experienced watchdog and relatively slight damage was done.

As we entered the gate, I was struck anew by the beauty of Bécheron, overlooking the valley of the river Indre. In a few days, I felt as if I had never left the place, there was really little change, only that the studio had become a storehouse. Seventy huge cases were stacked high in it. We spent the summer unpacking them, and also bringing things out that had been stored away in closets and bureau drawers. I was appalled at the amount of my sculpture, drawings and paintings that I found. I was still the biggest collector of Jo Davidson in the world.

To Bécheron we invited all the friends we hadn't seen for so long. Most of them were fellow artists. Among them were Léon Sola, the Spanish painter, and his wife Germaine. A good many of his pictures adorn our walls at Bécheron. Of course my old friend, the sculptor, Cecil Howard, his wife Céline and his sister Majolie came down. There was Uslek, the Yugoslav painter, whose pictures also hang on the walls at Bécheron, and my old friend Hutch Hapgood came with his daughter. I did his bust in Bécheron.

One of our great pleasures was to go fishing off the island in the Indre. We had elaborate lunch baskets, and the children with their tutor Bergeau as watchdog would go to the river for fishing, swimming and picnic lunches.

The billiard room, with its open fireplace, played an important part in our celebrations. There we roasted suckling pigs to welcome the New Year in.

Bécheron became part of the life of all our friends, for whenever they came to Paris, Bécheron was a part of their itinerary. There was a moment when it appeared to be a burden too heavy to carry, and we talked, not too seriously, about selling it. Everyone raised his hands in horror. "But you can't sell Bécheron!" I knew what they meant. I couldn't do that to them. They talked about organizing a society, the Friends of Bécheron. Each would contribute a membership fee for the privilege of coming to visit in Bécheron. The only condition was that we must be there.

Back to France

My Paris house in the rue Leconte de Lisle was a wreck. It had been patched up and made habitable by one of the attachés of our Embassy, who moved in after the Armistice. As he was not using the studio part of my house, Florence and I moved in and made ourselves comfortable in the studios and on the mezzanine floor, using it as a *pied-à-terre*.

I began looking up my old friends. One of the first was General Réquin. He had been through hell. I was shocked when I saw him, gaunt and half his former size. He told me in detail the story of the retreat and the occupation.

I looked up my old friend André Dignimont, the painter. Everyone I met had another story to tell. Dig's wife Lucette had had one of her fingers shot off as she tried to warn some young boys, from her window on the Ile St. Louis, that the Germans were about to fire on them. Another artist, Jean Oberlé, had been in London during the war with my son Jean. Both of them had broadcast to France. The two Jeans were famous in France, for theirs were the voices that informed the occupied zone of what was going on in the outside world. We had many reunions in Bécheron and the idea of giving up Bécheron just did not seem possible.

I conceived the project of adding a chapter to my "Plastic History": the story of the French Resistance. I wanted to make the busts of the men and women who played an active part in it—Royalists and Communists, radicals and conservatives, clericals and atheists, intellectuals and peasants. But it did not pan out. I soon discovered that each was rooting for his own gang. If I made a bust of someone in one group, the others would not play. I did make one bust of Colonel Rol Tanguy who played an active part in liberating Paris.

After three months, we returned to New York. We left Gino looking less gray and younger. A little food and less responsibility had done wonders.

CHAPTER 64

WARSAW INTERLUDE

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE for any human to express the full grief of war, but following my trip to France, I had been thinking constantly of giving some expression to that sorrow. It was in this frame of mind that, in the spring of 1947, I welcomed the visit of two Polish Jewish gentlemen who, at the suggestion of my friend, Arthur Szyk, came to interest me in a memorial to commemorate the tragic disaster of the Warsaw Ghetto and the six million Jews who were slaughtered by the Nazis.

They outlined the preliminary obstacles. They had been told they would have to obtain the services of a reputable sculptor or architect before the Park Commission would consider a possible site for their project. I was keenly interested and agreed that it was more constructive for a sculptor to make his sketch for a given site than to look for a site after the sketch was made.

They asked me to help them find a site. I contacted the Park Commission and was referred to Mr. Stuart Constable at the Arsenal. Together, we looked over various sites on Riverside Drive. As we were passing Eighty-fourth Street I noticed a bearded rabbi leaning over the wall feeding pigeons. We stopped the car. The rabbi's presence seemed to point prophetically to the spot for the memorial to the six million slaughtered Jews. Mr. Constable shared my opinion, and we decided on this site.

Warsaw Interlude

I came home very excited and reported this story, rabbi and all, to my two clients, who started to plan a sponsoring committee. They wanted some names and I gave them a list of my friends. We exchanged letters. They signed me up as the sculptor for the monument, and I promised to make preliminary sketches. A few days later, Florence and I sailed for France on a slow freighter for the second time since the end of the war.

That summer I worked feverishly on several sketches for the Warsaw Ghetto memorial. My idea was to convey the dramatic, poignant spirit of the fight and the desperate heroism of the fighters. I felt the Warsaw Ghetto story as a personal tragedy, not only because those involved were Jews, but because they were human beings, and people had always been my concern.

At this point, a letter from my friend Van Wyck Brooks informed me that the American Academy of Arts and Letters had offered to hold a retrospective exhibition of my sculpture. I was flattered, set about selecting pieces of sculpture to send over, and shipped the major part of my work to New York. So, we returned to New York sooner than we had planned.

The show at the Academy and National Institute of Arts and Letters drew a record attendance, and as people complained that it was too far uptown, I offered to show it downtown for the benefit of some charity. The Museum of Science and Industry in Rockefeller Center offered exhibition space gratis. Thus some two hundred pieces of sculpture were transferred from the Academy to the Museum. My exhibit was held for the benefit of the United Nations Children's Appeal.

(| Throughout the war I wanted to do General Dwight D. Eisenhower for my "Plastic History." Everything I heard about General "Ike" was so appealing. Photographs of his captivating, genial smile were everywhere.

I never did think of the simple way of going about things, as for instance, writing to ask him to sit for me. I always looked around for someone who would put my request personally. When I met General

Between Sitzings

Edwin Clarke at Helen Keller's and was told he was a friend of General Eisenhower's, I asked if he would request the General to sit for his bust.

General Clarke arranged for the sittings, which were to be the last duty General "Ike" performed as Chief of Staff. When I got through with the bust, General Eisenhower, the bust and I left the Pentagon together. I was present during the moving of his personal belongings, and saw the sign "General Dwight D. Eisenhower" being replaced by a sign reading "General Omar N. Bradley."

When I got back to New York, I had a telephone call from Leonard Lyons at the New York *Post* asking me "Is it true that Jim Forrestal said to General Ike, 'What do you mean by sitting for your bust for Jo Davidson? Don't you know he is a Red?' and that Ike replied, 'Oh, is he? I don't know about that, but everything he said I agreed with.'" My reply to Lyons was, "You shouldn't call me. Call the General. I wasn't present at that meeting."

Meanwhile I kept working on the Warsaw Ghetto memorial plans. The site required study, for that part of Riverside Drive was over the railroad tracks. I solicited the help of Ely Jacques Kahn, the architect, to work with me on the architectural part of the monument.

We had scale models made of the site. The model and sketches occupied most of my studio in West Fortieth Street. To do that monument I needed more space, and that spring I began looking around for another studio.

A house was found on East Fifty-eighth Street which had a large garage in the rear of the house, 40 by 30 feet, suitable for use as a studio, and a cellar 100 feet long, in which I could store my sculpture. I got Ely Kahn to see what could be done with it. I regretfully sold my farm in Lahaska and bought the house in East Fifty-eighth Street.

I had been invited to attend the Cultural Congress for Peace in Wroclaw, but had turned down the invitation on the plea that I had too much work to do. However, I hoped to go to Warsaw later, as I wanted to visit the Warsaw Ghetto.

Dr. and Mrs. Julian Huxley came to visit us that year in Bécheron, where we had gone to spend the summer. Julian roamed all over the

Warsaw Interlude

countryside, bringing back strange plants and bugs and showing us all kinds of interesting things that grew or crawled right in our garden. It was a gay, charming visit. He sat for his bust, which was later presented to UNESCO by a group of his colleagues to commemorate his two years of devoted leadership as Director-General of that organization.

When the Huxleys urged us to go with them to the Wroclaw "Cultural Congress for Peace," I saw a chance to go on afterwards to Warsaw and see for myself what remained of the Warsaw Ghetto. I was an old hand at peace conferences but this was to be a cultural conference, and I had never been to one. Florence and I decided to go to Wroclaw with the Huxleys.

We thought this conference was going to discuss how to achieve peace through cultural exchange. It started off with a blast of accusations and counter-accusations—a hell of a way to open a peace conference.

However, I still believed that these writers, poets, artists, and scientists, a notable group, had gathered there to find ways and means for a free exchange of knowledge and that it would be a step toward understanding and peace. I left the conference feeling very hopeful, but I soon found out that, like all conferees they were more interested in conferences than they were in peace. That was the last peace conference I attended.

After the Wroclaw Conference, we drove to Warsaw and traveled along the road which the Germans had taken on their retreat from Stalingrad. They had left scorched earth behind them. On either side of the road were burnt-out farmhouses and ruins of walls and chimneys.

In Warsaw, we saw the same marks of total destruction—an entire city in ruins. The day following our arrival, we went to visit the Ghetto. It was a mass of rubble, with weeds and blades of grass shooting up amid the debris. We visited the museum on the edge of this mass of rubble and saw there the horror photographs which the Germans themselves had taken. It was heartbreaking and more than ever, I wanted to do something to commemorate the heroic resistance and martyrdom of the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto.

Between Sittings

When we returned to New York that autumn, we moved furniture, sculpture and ourselves into our new East Fifty-eighth Street house. Ely Kahn had done a beautiful job. It was a perfect house for a sculptor. More studio than house, it was equipped with modern lighting so that I could get the same kind of light at night as I had in the daytime. I could floodlight and dramatize my figures, a very important thing for sculpture. Generally, the correct lighting of sculpture is sadly neglected.

It was in the new studio that I hoped to execute my dream of the Warsaw Ghetto memorial. However, the Committee which sponsored the project acted up at the last moment and refused my sketch. They tried to buy me off on conditions which I could not possibly accept. My disappointment and indignation brought on my third heart attack.

I bruise easily but heal quickly. I recovered after a few weeks at Sea Island with my friends, the Harold Strongs.

It was good to get back to New York because I was to meet a newly-arrived member of my family. My son Jacques had married the granddaughter of my old friend Leonce Benedite. They presented me with a grandson, Laurent Thierry. This was my second grandchild. I modeled his portrait when he was four weeks old. Shortly afterward, we returned to France.

CHAPTER 65

MARSHAL TITO

ONE DAY I received a telephone call from the Ambassador of Yugoslavia in Paris saying he wanted to see me. I invited him to drive down to Bécheron for lunch.

Before we flew to Paris in June, 1949 I had had a visit from the cultural attaché of the Yugoslav Embassy in Washington. There had been some talk about my doing the bust of Marshal Tito, and he had asked me whether I would consider such an assignment. I thought no more of it until this telephone call from the Yugoslav Ambassador in Paris. I simply remembered having visited the Dalmatian coast while I was Otto Kahn's guest on the "Flying Cloud," and having always liked all the Yugoslavs I met.

On a beautiful August day Ambassador Maro Ristic and his wife came to Bécheron, accompanied by Louis Adamic. As they drove through the gates, I went down to meet them. The Ambassador, a poet, was as well-known among the literati in Paris as he was in his own country.

Ambassador Ristic brought me an invitation from the Federation of Yugoslav Artists to visit Yugoslavia and, while there, do a bust of Marshal Tito. I liked the easy informality of this invitation to do a portrait of the Yugoslav Chief of State.

On the way over I met Mr. Marco Celebonivic, the Yugoslav *chargé d'affaires* in Paris. He was also an artist—a painter of note. I knew I was

Between Sitzings

going to like this assignment, for Marshal Tito apparently was one of those rare people who thought artists were useful as well as ornamental.

Going to Yugoslavia on the Orient Express was in itself an adventure. For fear that you might have a comfortable night in the *wagon-lit* the customs officials made their appearance at ungodly hours to remind you that this was a vale of tears.

We arrived in Belgrade about 10 P.M., and were met by the Artists' Federation Committee. They took us to the Majestic Hotel and set us down to a late supper of caviar and slivovitz *et al*—in short, the works!

The Committee were most anxious for us to see everything. The next day they took us for a walk to a park where we saw Mestrovic's monument to France. From there we drove eighteen miles through lovely rolling country to Avala to see the monument to the Unknown Soldier, also by Mestrovic. Carved in black polished granite, the monument was very impressive and was situated on top of a mountain, overlooking a magnificent view.

That evening we were exhausted and ready to retire when, at about 11, the telephone rang. It was the New York *Post*, calling from New York. The voice at the other end introduced itself and asked, "What is the political significance of your doing the bust of Tito?"

I was staggered and lost my temper.

"Didn't you ever hear that I was a sculptor? Sure, I'm going to do Tito. That's what I came here for. So what?"

The next morning Marshal Tito sent a car for us. We were accompanied by our interpreter. As we entered his villa, the Marshal himself walked towards us with a welcoming smile. Dressed in a uniform of light gray-blue without any medals or decorations, he had a strong face—the face of a man who knew what he wanted. His hair was wavy, with a touch of gray, and his clear eyes changed in color from gray-blue to green. His face was Slavic, with high cheekbones, strongly modeled forms, a high forehead, a strong jaw and a sensitive mouth. His head was well set on his shoulders. He was a handsome man.

Marshal Tito asked us what we had been doing since our arrival, and we gave an account of ourselves. He asked us how we liked our hotel,

Marshal Tito

and suggested we would be more comfortable in a villa. When we mentioned seeing the sculpture by Mestrovic, he said, "I have various pieces of sculpture in my garden. Would you like to see them?"

We started on a tour of the garden and noticed that there were soldiers all about. Wherever I looked, I saw them. Marshal Tito was well guarded. The garden was filled with statuary, and you felt that Tito really liked sculpture.

The Marshal himself offered to show us about to find a room with suitable light where I might work. It was like a procession: a car filled with soldiers preceded us, and others followed in the rear. We visited both the former King Alexander's palace and that of Prince Paul. I chose the library of King Alexander's palace as the light there seemed better. Then we parted, having agreed to meet the next morning at 8:30 for the first sitting. I was looking forward to my job.

We returned to our hotel. Our friends, the Committee, were there to help us move into our new quarters, a villa that had belonged to Stoyadinovic, the ex-Prime Minister. The villa had a lovely garden, a car was put at our disposal, and we were made very comfortable.

I arrived at my studio early the next morning and very shortly afterwards Marshal Tito came in. He shut the door behind him and we were alone. He asked me where I wanted him to sit. I said I did not want him to sit, but would prefer it if he would stand alongside me, as I worked at close range. We could talk and he could watch me work. This entertained him, as he could see the clay taking shape.

He told me that there were so many of their painters who wanted to paint his portrait that he had agreed to sit for eight of them all at once. I asked him how the portraits came out. He did not seem to think they were very good. I suggested it was not surprising, for after all, it takes two to make a portrait and portraiture is a very intimate business. Tito laughed and agreed with what I said.

I happened to glance out of the window and I saw soldiers with their guns. I thought to myself, "They are not quite convinced that I am here just to make the Marshal's bust."

The next sitting was fixed for the same hour the next day. When I

Between Sitzings

arrived, the Marshal was there. There were no more soldiers. The Marshal was very easy to talk to, and we touched on all sorts of topics. He talked about the Yugoslav partisans, about the progress that had been made in Yugoslavia, and about his army; he explained that more than sixty percent of his officers were peasants and workers who had come up the hard way. He himself had spent twelve years of his life in various prisons. In World War I he had been in the Austro-Hungarian Army, was captured by the Russians and thrown into prison. In Yugoslavia he had been in prison for distributing the writings of Lenin, Marx and Engels. I remarked that I thought twelve years a long time.

"Oh that is nothing," he said. "My friend Moshe Pijade spent fifteen years in prison." Moshe Pijade was the first Vice-President of the Praesidium. He was also a painter. Decidedly Tito liked and surrounded himself with artists.

The Marshal told me of the wealth of Yugoslavia in raw materials, and of the necessity of industrializing the country.

He expressed his fondness for the late Fiorello La Guardia, and said that they had often played chess together.

He was pleased that I was getting the human side of him into his bust. One day he came in rather pensive, a very earnest expression on his face. I remarked about it. He said, "I can't ever hide my feelings. My face always gives me away." He did not go on to say what troubled him.

The following day he was accompanied by Moshe Pijade, a little man with marked features. What a bust he would make, I thought to myself. As one artist to another, I asked his opinion of my portrait of the Marshal. He thought I had not made Marshal Tito stern enough. "It is better to overstate than to understate," he said. The Marshal brushed him aside, saying, "Don't listen to him. I like the bust as it is."

I should have liked another sitting, but Tito was leaving the next morning.

When I finished Marshal Tito's bust, our hosts arranged for a small tour of the country. We flew to Zagreb. From Zagreb we went to Ljubljana, stopping en route at Postoina to visit the famous grottos which recalled Dante's *Inferno*.

Marshal Tito

Returning to Belgrade, we had dinner with Marshal Tito the night before we left for Paris. The Marshal told us that that day he had stood for six hours reviewing his troops, thirty kilometers of them. I suggested that the two hours he had stood for me each morning while I made his bust had been good practice for him.

We left the next morning with a warm glow in our hearts for Tito and his people. Our artist friends saw us off. With a promise to come back, we boarded our plane for Paris.

CHAPTER 66

A VICE IS A VICE

I HAD A JOB ahead of me, a book to write: to tell about myself and the people whose busts I had made. False starts were unavoidable. I had theories about writing but I soon discovered I was not up to my theories. There was no choice, I had to do it chronologically.

A vice is a vice, and mine is sculpture. I would indulge in it whenever the opportunity opened itself. When I came to Paris in 1948, I enlarged my bust of Roosevelt to twice life-size with the idea of carving it in a piece of Burgundy stone I had in my studio. The stone was an odd shape and obviously would not contain the full head. Gino pointed the head without cutting away the stone around it. It had been a long time since Gino had carved stone. He had spent the war years in Bécheron keeping the wolf as well as the Germans from the door. He also pointed in sienna marble the head I had modeled of Florence at Lahaska in 1940. He was delighted to have something to do and have ready for me on my return.

I loved working on the big stone head of Roosevelt. It was a composite of all the portraits I had made of him. It is a portrait of Roosevelt the seer.

The opportunity to do another president turned up in Paris when I met Rolf Andvord, the Norwegian Ambassador whom Florence and I

A Vice Is a Vice

had known in South America when I was doing the busts of the South American Presidents.

"How is it," he asked, in looking around my studio, "that you have never done President Édouard Herriot?"

"I have tried," I replied—"but without success."

"I'll fix it," said the Ambassador. Not long after, he brought President Herriot to lunch.

Herriot was reputed to be a gourmet and my cook Julia went out of her way to prepare a delectable meal.

"Alas!" said the President of the National Assembly as he sat down to the table, "I should not eat or drink." But he did.

I had had my clay set up before Herriot arrived. He was a tremendous hulk of a man and even more magnificent in his old age than when I had met him some twenty-five years before. It was a great effort for him to walk up to the dining room so we had lunch in the studio. As our lunch progressed, my fingers itched to get to work; I was afraid he would escape me. I would leave the table from time to time to shape my clay. He was amused by the way I went about it and I think he was skeptical of the outcome.

After coffee we helped him up into the high revolving chair and I went to work in earnest. Ambassador Andvord and Florence stood by to keep him busy talking. I had to put up an awful lot of clay. He liked what I had done, for he agreed to pose again the next day.

Our conversation had no logical sequence. We jumped from one thing to another as if we wanted to cover a lifetime in two hours. In recalling some incident he would begin:

"When I was minister," and with a chuckle, "as everyone was in France, I went to Stockholm to give some lectures and before I left I brushed up on my Ibsen. One night I was taken to the theatre. After the first act a lady asked me how I liked the play. I answered politely but hadn't been able to make it out and at the first intermission I dashed out to look at the billboard. To my amazement it was *Fédora* by Victorien Sardou."

The President recalled his life as a prisoner of the Germans. He was

Between Sittings

held somewhere near Berlin. "I had a front seat at the debacle of the Boches," he said. "If I had had a bottle of cognac, I could have escaped, for they lost their heads when they drank. Hitler sent his car for me but my doctor said I was too ill. I don't think Hitler was inviting me to lunch."

Herriot came again the next afternoon accompanied by his secretary but he could not stay long as he had to get back to the Chamber of Deputies. Parliament was in full session. I worked like all fury for I sensed that he would never come again. He didn't. The bust I did of Édouard Herriot is a quickie but a good one.

My friend Guérin de Beaumont, whom I had known in New York during the war when he was consul-general, saw the bust I had made of Herriot; he said: "You should do the bust of President Auriol."

"You are right," I said, "you fix it"—and he made the arrangements.

The bust of President Vincent Auriol was started in the Élysée Palace. But a golden room with silken curtains and an Aubusson carpet is not the ideal place to model even the President of France.

I started his bust from scratch. When President Auriol saw the iron armature with nothing on it, he looked worried and bored and sat there in complete silence while I worked. However, when Madame Auriol came in, the president suddenly came to life and began speaking volubly to her.

"Twenty minutes ago there was nothing but a piece of iron and now look at it. It's marvelous!"

I complained about the light and the carpet and said, "If you would come to my studio, I would do so much better."

"But I thought you lived in the country."

"Yes, but I also have a studio in Paris," I said.

"Then why don't we work there?" said the President.

Arrangements were made for a sitting a few days later and that was a wonderful session. I was charmed by his friendly, simple manner. I soon discovered that he had many friends among artists and writers and that he was an avid collector of books and pictures. He was also an ardent fisherman and I invited my friend Dignimont, a friend of the President,

A Vice Is a Vice

to one of the sittings. Dig is also a devotee of Izaak Walton and we went on an orgy of fishing tales. The President recounted how one day he was fishing in a little stream when suddenly a guard appeared and asked him for his permit. He didn't have one and got a summons. When the guard discovered he was the President of France, he was all apologies. However, the President insisted on being treated like any other citizen.

I knew President Auriol had played an important part in the Resistance. He told me that he had grown a beard during that time which put mine to shame. He gave me four sittings in all, and they were most delightful.

(Helen Keller and Polly Thompson had promised to visit us the following spring. We looked forward to this visit for we were to celebrate Helen's seventieth birthday at Bécheron.

They were planning to spend the early part of May with a newly discovered cousin of Helen's in Portofino, Italy, and some weeks later we were to pick them up there and motor them down to Florence. Gaetano Salvemini had arranged with the Beaux Arts authorities for Helen to visit the Borgello and the Medici tombs. A movable scaffold was set up so that Helen could pass her hand over the sculpture of Donatello and Michelangelo. I have seen these sculptures before but never so intimately as when I watched her hands wandering over the forms, peering into the slightest crevices, into the most subtle undulations. She exclaimed with delight as she divined the slightly opened mouth of the singing young "St. John the Baptist."

We who watched from below were transfixed as Helen contemplated Michelangelo's "Night" and "Dawn." And when she came upon the "Madonna and Child" and discovered the "Suckling Babe," she threw her arms around the group and murmured: "Innocent greed."

I was not satisfied with the first portrait bust I had made of Helen. I had to do another which would include her wonderful hands. And now I wanted to include Polly in my story of Helen. The only way to do it was to paint a large canvas of Polly communicating with Helen. Back

Between Sittings

in Bécheron, I made many sketches of Helen sitting on the floor while Polly read into her hand or as they sat side by side on a couch while Polly repeated into Helen's hand our conversation. How willingly they posed for me! It was a rare treat to watch the eagerness of Helen and the joyous selflessness of Polly. When I finally decided on my composition, I started on my canvas and every morning after breakfast Helen would exclaim: "Now to work!" And what glorious sittings they were. I felt as if I were painting a religious picture.

CHAPTER 67

ISRAEL

ONE DAY I received a letter from a Mr. Elkin, a bookseller in New York City, enclosing a postcard written by myself in Hebrew. The postcard was addressed to Mr. Elkin's father who, it appears, had been my Hebrew teacher when I was a boy. It was dated January 26, 1896. I may have been a Hebrew scholar then, but alas, I could not read it nor even decipher it now.

Then a week later, my friend Bartley Crum turned up in Paris and came to my studio. As I greeted him he said, "Jo—I am going to Israel tomorrow night. You and Florence must come with me!" It took me a few minutes to realize that I had been waiting for just such an invitation and I replied, "Why not?"

We left the following night and arrived Monday morning in Lydda, the airport of the new nation, Israel.

I wanted to know the people who were the leaders of this new state of Israel. I had met the President, Dr. Chaim Weizmann in New York in 1941. So Bart Crum took me to see him.

Recalling Dr. Weizmann's contribution in 1917 and the Balfour Declaration on November 4 of that year, I offered to President Weizmann the bronze bust of Lord Balfour which I had modeled during the Peace Conference in Paris. Dr. Weizmann was touched by my gesture and said, "Balfour was always a welcome guest in my house and now will live here permanently."

I could only stay a week in Israel. I wanted to do a bust of Dr. Weiz-

Between Sitzings

mann then and there but he had other duties ahead of him, so I promised to come back in September. I recalled how the French sculptor, Houdon, crossed the Atlantic to model the portraits of George Washington, John Paul Jones, Franklin and Lafayette. My fingers ached to model some of the extraordinary faces I saw in Israel, particularly the head of the Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, who had just returned from a trip to my country. He was not to be in Tel Aviv until Saturday night and we were leaving early Monday morning.

Said Bart Crum: "What about doing a head of the Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett?" So that Saturday morning, with the help of Mr. Ziffer, a young sculptor who supplied me with a stand and clay, we went to Mr. Sharett's residence to model my first bust in Israel. Mr. Sharett had been in the United States as the first delegate of Israel to the United Nations.

Moshe Sharett was alert and lively, with a pair of dark, burning eyes, and while I worked he stood beside me, dictating to his secretary in Hebrew, occasionally speaking in English to me, and Russian to his wife. It appeared he spoke eight languages.

I worked in the morning and afternoon and when I got through, Ziffer took the bust to be cast in plaster in his studio. I returned to the hotel exhausted. Bart Crum was there waiting for me, telling me we were invited to the Prime Minister's house that evening. My fatigue left me immediately. The Prime Minister received us most affably and jokingly said that he had read in the papers that I had come in without a visa; that he had a notion to keep me there. The walls of his room were covered with books from ceiling to floor. On a shelf in an alcove were busts of Plato and Homer: Greek is his passion and relaxation. His warm, vibrant personality permeated the house.

His is a beautiful head with an aureole of white hair, with blue eyes set deep under bushy eyebrows and a powerful jaw.

"I have to leave here tomorrow morning at nine," he said, "but I could sit for you before that." "Good," I replied, "I'll be here at seven."

Said he, "But why not start tonight?"

With that, Bart and Florence went off to Ziffer's studio for clay, stand, and my armature. They returned in a half-hour and there, sur-

Israel

rounded by his friends, I worked till midnight, to return the following morning at seven-thirty.

Everyone gets up early in Tel Aviv no matter what time they retire; the climate is so bracing. After four or five hours' sleep I was up full of pep and rearing to go to work. When we arrived at the Prime Minister's house he was waiting for me. I felt this was the last gasp. I recalled the words of MacCarten, "I've got to finish this bust before I die."

Ben-Gurion was interested in what I had done and said, "I'll give you another sitting this afternoon at six-thirty." I was relieved. At six, I again found the Prime Minister waiting for me. He, too, was anxious for me to finish it. All my friends and his turned up. At nine o'clock the bust was finished and the next morning we flew to Paris. It had been a wonderful experience.

Israel is a land of history, the birthplace of our civilization, the names of the cities—Jerusalem, Haifa, Nazareth, Gaza and Jaffa—date back some three thousand years. Into this land came men and women from the East and the West, Russians, Germans, French, Italians, Spaniards, Rumanians, Hungarians, Yugoslavs, Iraqis and Yemenites (dark-skinned with fine features)—some fifty races and nationalities, all Jews brought together with one idea: to rebuild their ancient land, the land of promise.

After having seen what had been the Warsaw Ghetto, to see Israel confirmed my belief that life is eternal. It was like a phoenix rising out of the ashes after it had been consumed—an ancient people, the youngest in spirit, no longer fearing persecution or discrimination, breathing the air of freedom, working, as Walt Whitman says:

"To exalt the present and the real,
To teach the average man the glory of his daily walk and trade . . .
To manual work for each and all, to plough, hoe, dig,
To plant and tend the tree, the berry, vegetables, flowers . . .
To use the hammer and the saw, (rip, or cross-cut,
To cultivate a turn for carpentering, plastering, painting,
To work as tailor, tailoress, nurse, hostler, porter . . .
And hold it no disgrace to take a hand at them themselves."

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



110 001

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY