WORRYING WON'T WIN

MONTAGUE GLASS

See p. 173

"And the only kick they've got, Mawruss," Abe said, "is that President Wilson won't expose his hand, which, if he did, he might just so well throw the game to Germany and be done with it."

WORRYING WON'T WIN

BY

MONTAGUE GLASS

ILLUSTRATED

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I

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS THE CZAR BUSINESS

Like the human-hair business and the green-goods business it is not what it used to be.

"YES, Abe," Morris Perlmutter said to his partner, Abe Potash, as they sat in their office one morning in September, "the English language is practically a brand-new article since the time when I used to went to night school. In them days when a feller says he is feeling like a king, it meant that he was feeling like a king, *aber* to-day yet, if a feller says he feels like a king it means that he's got stomach and domestic trouble and that he don't know where the money is coming from to pay his next week's laundry bill. Czars is the same way, too. Former times when you called a feller a regular czar you meant he

was a regular czar, *aber* nowadays if you say somebody is a regular czar it means that the poor feller couldn't call his soul his own and that he must got to do what everybody from the shipping-clerk up tells him to do with no back talk."

"Well, it only goes to show, Mawruss," Abe commented. "There was a czar, y'understand, which for years was not only making out pretty good as a czar, y'understand, but had really as you might say been doing something phenomenal yet. In fact, Mawruss, if three years ago R. G. Dun or Bradstreet would give it a rating to czars and people in similar lines, y'understand, compared with the czar already, an old-established house like Hapsburg's in Vienna would be rated N. to Q., Credit Four, see foot-note. And to-day, Mawruss, where *is* he?"

"Say," Morris protested, "any one could have reverses, Abe, because it don't make no difference if it would be a czar *oder* a pants manufacturer, and they both had ratings like John B. Rockafellar even, along comes two or three bad seasons like the czar had it, y'understand, and the most you could hope for would be thirty cents on the dollar—ten cents cash and the balance in notes at three, six, and nine months, indorsed by a grand duke who has got everything he owns in his wife's name and 'ain't spent an evening at home with her since way before the Crimean War already."

"What happened to the Czar, Mawruss," Abe said, "bad seasons didn't done it. Not reckoning quick assets, like crowns actually in stock, fix-

"I bet yer over half a czar's morning mail already is circulars from casket concerns alone, Abe."

tures, etc., the feller must of owned a couple million *versts* high-grade real property, to say nothing of his life insurance, Mawruss."

"Czars and life insurance ain't in the same dictionary at all, Abe," Morris interrupted. "In the insurance business, Abe, czars comes under the same head as aviators with heart trouble, y'understand. I bet yer over half a czar's morning mail already is circulars from casket concerns alone, Abe, so that only goes to show how much you know from czars."

"Well, I know this much, anyhow," Abe continued. "What put the Czar out of business, didn't happen this season or last season neither, Mawruss. It dates back already twenty years ago, which you can take it from me, Mawruss, it don't make no difference what line a feller would be in—czars wholesale, czars retail, or czars' supplies and sundries, including bomb-proof underwear and the Little Wonder Poison Detector, y'understand, the moment such a feller marries into the family of his nearest competitor, Mawruss, he might just as well go down to a lawyer's office and hand him the names he wants inserted in Schedule A Three of his petition in bankruptcy."

"Did the Czar marry into such a family?" Morris asked.

"A question!" Abe exclaimed. "Didn't you know that the Czar's wife is the Kaiser's mother's sister's daughter?"

"Say!" Morris retorted. "I didn't even know

that the Kaiser *had* a mother. From the heart that feller's got it, you might suppose he was raised in an incubator and that the only parents he ever knew was a couple of packages absorbent cotton and an alcohol-lamp."

"Well, that's what I am telling you, Mawruss," Abe said. "With all the millionaires in Russland which would be tickled to pieces to get a czar for a son-in-law, y'understand, the feller goes to work and ties up to a family with somebody like the Kaiser in it, and you know as well as I do, Mawruss, one crook in your wife's family can stick you worser than all your poor relations put together."

"Even when your wife's relations are honest, what *is* it?" Morris asked.

"*Gewiss!*" Abe agreed. "And can you imagine when such a crook *in*-law is also your biggest competitor? I bet yer, Mawruss, the poor *nebich* wasn't home from his honeymoon yet before the Kaiser starts in cutting prices on him."

"Cutting prices was the least," Morris said. "Take Bulgaria, for instance, and up to a few years ago that was one of the Czar's best selling territories. In fact, Abe, whenever the Czar stops off at Sophia, him and the King of Bulgaria takes coffee together, such good friends they was."

"Who is Sophia?" Abe asked. "*Also* a relative of the Kaiser?"

"Sophia is the name of one big town in Bulgaria," Morris replied.

"That's a name for a big town—Sophia," Abe

remarked. "Why don't they call it Lillian Russell and be done with it?"

"They could call it Williamsburg for all the business the Czar done there after the Kaiser got in his fine work," Morris said.

"And after all, what good did it done him?" Abe added. "Because you know as well as I do, Mawruss, the Kaiser ain't two jumps ahead of the sheriff himself. In fact, Mawruss, the king business is to-day like the human-hair business and the green-goods business. It's practically a thing of the past."

"Did I say it wasn't?" Morris asked.

"Being a king ain't a business no more, Mawruss. It's just a job," Abe continued, "and it's a metter of a few months now when the only kings left will be, so to speak, journeymen kings like the King of England and the King of Belgium and not boss kings like the King of Austria and the Kaiser. Why, right now, that Germany is his store, and that the poor Germans *nebich* is just salespeople; and he figures that if he wants to close out his stock and fixtures at a sacrifice and at the same time work his salespeople to death, what is that *their* business, y'understand."

"Well, that's the way the Czar figured," Morris commented. "For, Abe, the Kaiser has got an idee years already he was running Russland on the open-shop principle, and before he woke up to the fact that the people he had been treating right straight along as non-union labor was really

the majority stockholders, y'understand, they had changed the combination of the safe on him and notified the bank that on and after said date all checks would be signed by Jacob M. Kerensky as receiver."

"You would think a feller like the Czar would learn something by what happened to this here Mellen of the New Haven Railroad," Abe said.

"*Yow* learn!" Morris replied. "Is the Kaiser learning something from what they done to the Czar?"

"That's a different matter entirely," Abe retorted. "With a relation by marriage, you naturally figure if he makes a big success that he fell in soft and that a lucky stiff like him if he gets shot with a gun, y'understand, the bullet is from gold and it hits him in the pocket yet; whereas, if he goes broke and 'ain't got a cent left in the world, y'understand, it's a case of what could you expect from a *Schlemiel* like that. So instead of learning anything from what happens to the Czar, I bet yer the Kaiser feels awful sore at him yet. Why, I don't suppose a day passes without the Kaiser's wife comes to him and says, 'Listen, Popper, Esther (or whatever the Czar's wife's name is) called me up again this morning; she says Nicholas 'ain't got no work nor nothing and she was crying something terrible.'

"'Well, if she's going to keep on crying till I find that loafer a job,' the Kaiser says, 'she's got a long wet spell ahead of her.'

"'She don't want you to find him no job,' the

Kaiser's wife tells him. 'All she asks is you should send 'em transportation.'

"'Transportation *nothing!*' the Kaiser says. 'I already sent transportation to the King of Greece, Ambassador Bernstorff, Doctor Dernburg, this here boy Ed *und Gott weisst wer nach.* What am I? The Pennsylvania Railroad or something?'

"'Well, what is he going to do 'way out there in Tobolsk?' she says.

"'If he would only of acted reasonable and killed off a couple million of them suckers, the way any other king would do, he never would of had to go to Tobolsk at all,' the Kaiser says.

"'*Aber* what shall I say to her if she rings up again?' she asks.

"'Say what you please,' the Kaiser answers her, 'but tell Central I wouldn't pay no reverse charges under no circumstances whatsoever from nowheres.'"

"And who told *you* all this, Abe?" Morris asked.

"Nobody," Abe replied. "I figured it out for myself."

"Well, you figured wrong, then," Morris said. "The Kaiser don't act that way. He ain't human enough, and, furthermore, Abe, the Kaiser don't talk over the telephone, neither, because if he did, y'understand, it's a cinch that sooner or later the court physician would be giving out the cause of death as shock from being connected up with the electric-light plant by party or parties unknown and Long Live Kaiser Schmooel the Second—or whatever the Crown Prince's rotten name is."

"Any one who done such a thing in the hopes of making a change for the better, Mawruss," Abe commented, "would certainly be jumping from the frying-pan into the soup, because if the Germans got rid of the Kaiser in favor of the Crown Prince it would be a case of discarding a king and drawing a deuce."

"Sure I know," Morris said, "but what the Germans need is a new deal all around. As the game stands now in Germany, Abe, only a limited few sits in, while the rest of the country hustles the refreshments and pays for the lights and the cigars, and they're such a poor-spirited bunch, y'understand, that they 'ain't got nerve enough to suggest a kitty, even."

"Well, it's too late for them to start a kitty now, Mawruss," Abe said. "Which you could take it from me, Mawruss, the house is going to be pulled 'most any day. Several million husky cops is going up the front stoop right this minute, Mawruss, and while they may have a little trouble with them—now—ice-box style of doors, it's only a question of time when they would back up the patrol-wagon, y'understand, because if the Germans wouldn't close up the game of their own accord, Mawruss, the Allies must got to do it *for* them."

"But the Germans don't want us to help 'em," Morris said. "They're perfectly satisfied as they are."

"I know it," Abe said. "They're a nation of shipping-clerks, Mawruss. They're in a rut,

y'understand. They've all got rotten jobs and they're scared to death that they're going to lose them. Also the boss works them like dawgs and makes their lives miserable, y'understand, and yet they're trembling in their pants for fear he is going to bust up on them."

"Then I guess it's up to us Allies to show them poor *Chamorrim* how they could be bosses for themselves," Morris suggested.

"Sure it is," Abe concluded, "and next year in Tobolsk when the Kaiser joins his relations by marriage, Mawruss, he's going to pick up the *Tobolsker Freie Presse* some morning and see where there has been incorporated at last the *Deutche Allgemeine Wohlfahrtfabrik*, with a capital of a hundred billion marks, to take over the business of the K. K. Manufacturing Company, and he's going to say the same as everybody else: 'Well, what do you know about them Heinies? I never thought they had it in them.'"

II

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON SOAP-BOXERS AND PEACE FELLERS

There is some of them peace fellers which ain't so much scared as they are contrary.

"PEOPLE 'ain't begun to realize yet what this war really and truly means, Mawruss," Abe Potash said as he finished reading an interview with ex-Ambassador Gerard, in which the ex-ambassador said that people had not yet begun to realize what the war really meant.

"Maybe they don't," Morris Perlmutter agreed, "but for every feller which 'ain't begun to realize what this war really and truly means, Abe, there is a hundred other fellers which 'ain't begun to realize what a number of people there is which goes round saying that people 'ain't begun to realize what this war really and truly means, y'understand. Also, Abe, the same people is going round begging people which is just as patriotic as they are that they should brace up and be patriotic, y'understand, and they are pulling pledges to hold up the hands of the President on other people who has got similar pledges in

their breast pockets and pretty near beats 'em to it, understand me, and that's the way it goes."

"Well, if one time out of a hundred they strike somebody who really and truly don't realize what the war means, like you, Mawruss," Abe began, "why, then, their time ain't entirely wasted, neither."

"I realize just so much as you do what this war means, Abe," Morris retorted.

"Maybe you do," Abe admitted, "but you don't talk like you did, Mawruss, otherwise you would know that if out of a hundred Americans only ninety-nine of 'em pledges themselves to hold up the hands of the President, y'understand, and the balance of one claims that we are in this war just to save our investments in Franco-American bonds and that Mr. Wilson is every bit as bad as the Kaiser except that he's clean-shaved, y'understand, then them ninety-nine fellers with the pledges in their breast pockets should ought to convert the balance of one. Because, Mawruss, a nation which is ninety-nine per cent. patriotic is like a fish which is ninety-nine per cent. fresh —all you can notice is the one per cent. which smells bad."

"I am just so much in favor of the country being one hundred per cent. American as you are, Abe," Morris said, "but what I claim is that we should go about it *right.*"

"If you mean we shouldn't argue with them one-per-centers, but send them right back to that part of the old country which they come

from originally, Mawruss," Abe continued, "why, I am agreeable that they should be shipped right away, F. O. B., N. Y., all deliveries subject to delay and liability being limited to fifty dollars personal baggage in case they should, please Gawd, fail to arrive in Europe."

"Sure I know," Morris agreed. "But pretty near all them one-per-centers was born and raised in the United States or in Saint Louis, Wisconsin, and Cincinnati. You take this here *Burgermeister* of Chicago, for instance, and the chances is that all he knows about the old country is what he learned on a couple of visits to Milwaukee, y'understand. So how could you export a feller like that?"

"I don't want to export him, Mawruss. All I would like to see is that they should put an embargo on him," Abe said, "and on his friends, them peace fellers, too."

"Well, I'll tell you," Morris commented, "about them peace fellers, you couldn't blame 'em exactly, because you know how it is with some people: they 'ain't got no control over their feelings, and if they're scared to death, y'understand, they couldn't help showing it, which my poor grandmother, *olav hasholom*, wouldn't allow me to keep so much as a pea-shooter in the house, on account, she says, if the good Lord wills it, even a broomstick could give fire."

"And yet, Mawruss, if burglars would of broke into her home, I bet you she would grabbed the nearest flat-iron and went for 'em with it," Abe

said, "so don't insult your grandmother *selig* by comparing her with them peace fellers which they *oser* care how many burglars is johnnying the front door just so long as they could hide under the bed."

"At the same time, Abe, there is some of them peace fellers which ain't so much scared as they are contrary, y'understand," Morris said. "Take this here LaFollette, Abe, and that feller's motto is, 'My country—I think she's always wrong—but right or wrong—that's my opinion and I stick *to* it.' All a United States Senator has got to do is to look like he is preparing to say something, y'understand, and before he can get out so much as 'Brother President and fellow-members of this organization,' LaFollette jumps up and says, 'I'm sorry, but I disagree with you.'"

"That must make him pretty popular in the Senate," Abe remarked.

"Popular's no name for it," Morris continued. "There ain't a United States Senator which wouldn't stand willing to dig down and pay for a set of engrossed resolutions out of his own pocket, just so long as Senator LaFollette would resign or something."

"But Senator LaFollette ain't one of them peace fellers, Mawruss," Abe said.

"Sure, I know," Morris replied. "All he wants is to run the war according to Cushing's *Manual.* If he had his way we wouldn't be able to give an order for so much as one-twelfth dozen guns, y'understand, without it come up in the

form of a motion that it is regularly moved and seconded that the Secretary of War be and he is hereby authorized to order the same and all those in favor will signify the same by saying aye, y'understand, and even then, Abe, him and Senator Vardaman would call for a show of hands under Section Twelve, Subsection D, of the by-laws."

"Then I suppose if a few thousand American soldiers gets killed on account they 'ain't got the right kind of guns, Mawruss, we could lay it to Section Twelve, Subsection D, of the by-laws," Abe suggested.

"And you could give some of them Senators credit for an assist, Abe, because you take a Senator like that, Abe, and when he holds up the ammunition supply with a two-hour speech, y'understand, he *oser* worries his head how many American soldiers is going to be killed by the Germans in France six months later, just so long as his own name is spelled right by the newspapers in New York City next morning."

"It would help a whole lot, Mawruss," Abe said, "if Senators and Congressmen was numbered the same like automobiles, y'understand, because who is going to waste his breath arguing that the Senate should pass a law which it's a pipe the Senate ain't going to pass, on account that nobody is in favor of it except himself and a couple of other Senators temporarily absent on the road, making Fargo, Minneapolis, Chicago, and points east as traveling peace conventioners, y'un-

derstand, when he knows that next morning the only notice the New York newspapers will take of his *Geschrei* will be, 'Among those who spoke in the Senate yesterday was:

"Well, there's plenty of people which thinks when Governor Lauben wouldn't let them peace fellers run off their convention, y'understand, that it was unconstitutional," Morris said.

"Sure, I know," Abe said. "They're the same people which thinks that anything what helps us and hinders Germany is unconstitutional, including the Constitution. You take them socialist orators, which the only use they've got for soap is the boxes the soap comes in, y'understand, and to hear them talk you would think that the Kaiser sunk the *Lusitania* pursuant to Article Sixty-one, Section Two, of the Constitution of the

United States, Mawruss, whereas when President Wilson sends a message to Congress asking them when they are going to get busy on the war taxes and what do they think this is, anyway—a *Kaffeklatsch*, y'understand—it is all kinds of violations of Articles Sixteen, Thirty-two, O. K. and C. O. D. of the Constitution and that the American people is a lot of weak-livered curs to stand for it, outside of being weak-livered curs, anyway."

"You mean to say we allow these here fellers to get up on soap-boxes and say such things like that?" Morris exclaimed.

"We've *got* to allow them," Abe replied. "The Constitution protects them."

"What do you mean—the Constitution protects them?" Morris said. "Here a couple of weeks ago a judge in North Carolina gives out a decision that the Constitution don't protect little children eleven years old from being made to work in factories, y'understand, and now you are trying to tell me that the same Constitution does protect these here loafers! What kind of a Constitution have we got, anyway?"

"I don't know, Mawruss, but there's this much about it, anyhow—a lawyer could get more money out of just one board of directors which wants to go ahead and put through the deal if under the Constitution of the United States nobody could do 'em nothing, y'understand, than he could out of all the children which gets injured working in all the cotton-mills south of Mason and Hamlin's

line, understand me. So you see, Mawruss, the Constitution not only protects these here soap-box orators, but it also gives 'em something to talk about because when they want to knock the United States and boost Germany, all they need to say is that you've got to hand it to the Germans; if they kill little children, they're, anyhow, foreign children and not German children."

"I suppose a lot of them soap-box orators gets paid by the German government for boosting the Germans the way you just done it, Abe," Morris commented, "which I see that this here Ridder of the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* gives it out that any one what accuses him that he is getting paid by the German government for boosting the Kaiser in his paper would got to stand a suit for liable, because he is too patriotic an American sitson to print articles boosting the Kaiser except as a matter of friendship and free of charge—outside of what he can make by syndicating them to other German newspapers."

"But do them other German newspapers get paid by the German government for reprinting Mr. Ridder's articles?" Abe asked.

"*That* Mr. Ridder don't say," Morris replied.

"Well," Abe continued, "*somebody* should ought to appreciate the way them German newspapers love the Kaiser, even if it's only a United States District Attorney, Mawruss, because you take it if the shoe pinched on the other foot, and a feller by the name Jefferson W. Rider was running an American newspaper in Berlin, Germany, by the

name, we would say, for example, the *Berlin, Germany, Star-Gazette*, which is heart and soul for Germany and at the same time prints articles by American military experts showing how Germany couldn't win the war, not in a million years, and the sooner the German soldiers realize it the quicker they wouldn't get killed for such a hopeless *Geschaft*, y'understand. Also, nobody has a greater admiration for the Kaiser than the *Berlin, Germany, Star-Gazette*, understand me, but that if the Kaiser thinks President Wilson is a tyrant, y'understand, then all the *Star-Gazette* has got to say is, some day when the Kaiser is fixing the ends of his mustache in front of the glass mit candle-grease or whatever such *Chamorrim* uses on their mustaches to make themselves look like kaisers, y'understand, that the Kaiser should take another look in the mirror and he would see there such a cutthroat tyrant which President Wilson never dreamed of being in Princeton University to the shipping-clerk, even. Also this here *Berlin, Germany, Star-Gazette* says that Germany is the land of bluff and that—"

"One moment," Morris Perlmutter interrupted. "What are you trying to tell me—that such a newspaper would be allowed to exist in Berlin, Germany?"

"I am only giving you a hypo-critical case, Mawruss," Abe continued, "where I am trying to explain to you that if this was Germany it wouldn't be necessary for Mr. Ridder to sue anybody for liable. All he would have to do when

they ask him if he's got anything to say why sentence should not be passed, y'understand, is to tell the judge what was his trade before he became an editor, understand me, and they would put him to work at it for the remainder of the war."

"He wouldn't get off so easy as that, even," Morris commented. "Why, what do you suppose they would do to the editor of this here, for example, *Star-Gazette* if he was to just so much as hint that the Crown Prince couldn't be such a terrible good judge of French château furniture, y'understand, on account he had slipped over on the Berlin antique dealers a lot of reproductions which they had every right to believe was genwine old stuff, as it had been rescued from the flames, packed, and shipped under the Crown Prince's personal supervision? I bet you, Abe, if the paper was on the streets at three-thirty and the sun rose at three-thirty-five, y'understand, the authorities wouldn't wait that long. They'd shoot him at three-thirty-two."

"I know it," Abe agreed. "You see, Mawruss, an editor, a soap-boxer, a cotton-mill owner, or a stock-waterer might get away with it in this country under the Constitution, but over on the other side they wouldn't know what he was talking about at all, because in Germany, Mawruss, a constitution means only one thing. It's something that can be ruined by drinking too much beer, and you don't have to hire no lawyer for *that*."

III

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON FINANCING THE WAR

On everything which a feller buys, from pinochle decks to headache medicine, he will have to put a stamp.

"I SEE where this here Chump Clark says that incomes from over ten thousand dollars should ought to be confiscated," Abe Potash observed to his partner, Morris Perlmutter, one morning in September.

"Sure, I know," Morris replied, "and if this here Chump Clark has a good year next year and cleans up for a net profit of ten thousand two hundred and twenty-six dollars and thirty-five cents, then he'll claim that all incomes over ten thousand two hundred and twenty-six dollars and thirty-five cents should ought to be confiscated, Abe, and that's the way it goes. I am the same way, Abe. Any one what makes more money as I do, Abe, I 'ain't got no sympathy for at all."

"I bet yer Vincent Astor thinks that John B. Rockafellar should ought to be satisfied mit the reasonable income which a feller could make it by working hard at the real-estate business the way Vincent Astor does," Abe commented.

"John B. Rockafellar *oser* worries his head over the ravings of a protelariat," Morris said. "But, anyhow, Abe, there's a whole lot to what this here Chump Clark says at that. If we compel men to give up their lives for their country, why shouldn't we compel them fellers which has got incomes of over ten thousand dollars to give up their property for their country also?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Mawruss," Abe replied. "This here Chump Clark is a Congressman, and the way I feel about it is, that when a Congressman wants to say something in Congress, y'understand, he should ought to be compelled to first submit it in writing to a certified public accountant or, anyhow, a bookkeeper, y'understand, because the average Congressman 'ain't got no head for figures. Take Mr. Clark, for example, and when he reckons that everybody which gets drafted is going to give up his life for his country, y'understand, you don't got to be the head actuary of the Equitable exactly in order to figure it out that he's made a tremendous overestimate. So when the same feller talks about confiscating incomes over ten thousand, it ain't necessary to ask how he come to fix on ten thousand instead of five thousand or fifteen thousand, because whether he tossed for it or dealt himself three cold hands, and the hand representing ten thousand dollars won out with treys full of deuces, y'understand, the information ain't going to help us finance the war to any extent."

"Why not?" Morris asked.

"Because you take yourself, for instance, and we would say for the sake of argument that in nineteen seventeen you turned over a new leaf and worked so hard that you made fifteen thousand five hundred dollars."

"Listen, Abe," Morris interrupted, "if there is a new leaf coming to any one around here, Abe, I wouldn't mention no names for the sake of an argument or otherwise."

"All right," Abe said, "then we'll say you didn't work no harder, but just the same, Mawruss, if you was to make fifteen thousand five hundred dollars in nineteen seventeen, and this here Chump Clark gets the government to confiscate fifty-five hundred dollars on you, how much would they confiscate on you in nineteen eighteen?"

Morris shrugged his shoulders. "What is the use of talking pipe dreams?" he said.

"I ain't talking pipe dreams," Abe retorted. "This is something which not only Chump Clark suggested it, but Senator LaFollette also as a good scheme for financing the war."

"Evidently they don't expect the war to last long," Morris commented, "which the most the government could hope to collect is the excess income for nineteen seventeen, because if the government confiscates five thousand five hundred dollars on me in nineteen seventeen, am I going to go around in the summer of nineteen eighteen beefing about business being rotten because here it is the first of July, nineteen eighteen, and so far

all the government could confiscate on me is two thousand two hundred and sixty-seven dollars and thirty-eight cents, whereas on July first, nineteen seventeen, I had already got confiscated on me two thousand four hundred and thirty-one dollars and fifty cents? *Oser a Stück!* If I have made ten thousand dollars as early as April first, nineteen eighteen, and I know that all further profits for nineteen eighteen is going to be confiscated by the government, y'understand, right then and there I am going to shut up shop and paste a notice on the door:

GONE TO LUNCH
WILL RETURN
JANUARY 2, 1919

and anybody else would do the same, Abe, I don't care if he would be as patriotic as Senator La-Follette himself even."

"But that ain't the only idees for financing the war which Congress has got it, Mawruss," Abe said. "On everything which a feller buys, from pinochle decks to headache medicine, he will have to put a stamp. There will be extra stamps on all kinds of checks from bank checks and poker checks to bar checks and hat checks. There will be red stamps, blue stamps, and stamps in all pastel shades, and when they run out of colors they'll print 'em in black and white

and issue them to the public in flavors like wintergreen, peppermint, spearmint, and clove for bar-check stamps and strawberry, vanilla, and chocolate nut sunday for theayter-ticket stamps."

"For my part they could flavor 'em with *gefullte Miltz mit Knockerl*, because I got through buying orchestra seats when they begun to tax you two dollars and fifty cents for them, Abe, which if the government really and truly wants to raise money by taxing the public, why do they fool away their time asking suggestions from such new beginners like LaFollette and Chump Clark, when right here in New York there is fellers in the restaurant business, the theayter business, and running hat-check stands which has made taxing the public a life study already. For instance, if I would be the government and I wanted to tax theayter tickets, instead of monkeying around with stamps for twenty or thirty cents, y'understand, I would put a head waiter by the box-office window, and when the public is through paying for their tickets he gives them one look, y'understand, and they just naturally hand him a dollar."

"What I couldn't understand is why should the government pick on people which goes to theayter for amusement," Abe said. "Ain't it enough that in order to hold my trade I've got to sit for three hours listening to a lot of nonsense when I could hardly keep my eyes open, but I must also get writer's cramp in my tongue from licking stamps

yet just to oblige the United States government and a customer from the Middle West, which it's a gamble whether he wouldn't return the goods on me even if he does give me the order."

"That's what it is to have fellers working as Congressmen which 'ain't had no other business experience," Morris declared. "If LaFollette and this here Clark knew what they was about, Abe, they would make it a law that the *customer* should buy the stamps, and not alone for theayters, but for meals also. You take some of these out-of-town buyers which you've practically got to ruin their digestions before they would so much as look at your line, y'understand, and if they would got to paste a fifty-cent stamp on every broiled lobster they order up on you it would go a long way toward taking care of the uniform bills for the first draft."

"And they should also got to stand for the tax on gasolene also," Abe added. "If you treat one of them grafters to so much as a two-quart automobile ride, you've already sacrificed half your profit on a couple of garments, even if he does pay for the stamps."

"Cigars is another thing the government could of got a lot of money out of," Morris said.

"What do you mean—*could* of got?" Abe exclaimed. "They *do* get a lot of money out of cigars. You take the average cigar to-day which costs sixty dollars a thousand to put on the market, Mawruss, and each cigar stands the manufacturer in as follows:

Advertising	$.01
Printing and lithographing	.0015
Manufacturing and boxing	.01
Swiss chard	.005
War tax	.02
Total	$.06"

"Sure I know," Morris agreed, "but the art about taxing cigars ain't so much to sting the feller that manufactures them and the feller that buys them as the fellers which accepts them free for nothing. There is a whole lot of women's-wear retailers in the Middle West which has got quite a reputation for hospitality, because whenever they have a poker game up to the house they hand out cigars which cost you and me and other garment manufacturers here in New York as much as ninety dollars a thousand wholesale. So what I say is that the government should tax anybody which accepts a cigar to smoke on the spot ten cents, and for every one of them put-it-in-your-pocket-and-smoke-it-after-a-while cigars, such a feller should be taxed ten dollars or ten days."

"Well, they'll get a whole lot of money raising postage from two to three cents," Abe suggested.

"But not so much as they could get if they was to go about it right," Morris said. "For sending letters which says, 'Inclosed please find check in payment of your last month's bill and oblige,' three cents is enough for any business man to pay, Abe, and in fact the feller which received

such a letter shouldn't ought to kick if the Post Office Department makes him pay also three cents postage, but there is some letters which it should ought to be the law that when a merchant received one of them he should right away report the sender to the Post Office Department for a special war-tax stamp of from one to a hundred dollars. For instance, two dollars extra wouldn't be too much postage for a letter where it says, 'Your favor received and contents noted, and in reply would say you should be so kind and wait a couple days and I would see what I could do toward sending you a check for your March bill, as my wife has been sick ever since May fifteenth, and oblige, yours truly, The Reliance Store, M. Doober, proprietor.'"

"If all them overdue retailers which is all the time pulling a sick wife on their creditors was to be taxed two dollars apiece, Mawruss," Abe said, "how much postage do you figure a storekeeper should pay when he writes to claim a shortage in delivery before he starts to unpack the goods, even. Then there is the feller which, when it don't get below zero promptly on the first of November, writes to tell you that he must say he is surprised, as the winter-weight garments which you shipped him ain't nowheres up to sample and is holding same at your disposal and remain, which if the government would come down on him for a hundred dollars, he is practically getting off with a warning. And I could think of a lot of other excess-postage cases, too, but, as I understand it,

we are only trying to raise forty billion dollars, Mawruss."

"Don't let that stop you, Abe," Morris said, "because there's going to be plenty of extras over and above the original estimate, which I see that a lot of South American countries is coming into the war and it's only a question of a month or so when we would have calling on us a commission from Peru, a commission from Chile, a commission from Bolivia, a commission from Paraguay, and all of them with the same hard-luck story, that if they only had a couple of billion dollars they could put an army of five hundred thousand soldiers into the field, if they only had five hundred thousand soldiers."

"Just the same, Mawruss," Abe said, "them countries is going to be a lot of help."

"And when we get through paying the help, y'understand, we've still got to raise money for the family to live on," Morris said, "so go ahead with your suggestion, Abe. Maybe there's some taxes which Congress 'ain't thought of yet."

"Well, there's this here free speech, which, instead of being free, Mawruss, if it was subject to a tax of one dollar per soap-box hour, payable strictly in advance, y'understand, so far as the pacifists is concerned, you would be able to hear a pin drop. Even Congressmen would soon get tired of paying from twenty to twenty-four dollars a day, especially if the government made it a stamp tax."

"LaFollette would be covered mit stamps from head to foot," Morris remarked.

"That would suit me all right," Abe said, "particularly if the collector of internal revenue was to run him with stamps affixed through a cancellation-machine and cancel him good and proper."

IV

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON BERNSTORFF'S EXPENSE ACCOUNT

Here he is coming back from his trip after losing his whole territory to his firm's competitors, and naturally he tries to make a good showing with his expense account.

"I SEE where the government puts a limit on the price which coal-dealers could charge for coal," Abe Potash said to his partner, Morris Perlmutter.

"Sure, I know," Morris said, "but did the coal-dealers see it, because I met Felix Geigermann on the Subway this morning, and from the way he talked about what the coal-dealers was asking for coal up in Sand Plains, where he lives, Abe, I gathered it was somewheres around twenty dollars a caret unset."

"*Gott sei dank* I am living in an apartment mit steam heat and my lease has still got two years to run at the same rent," Abe said.

"Well, I hope it's written on good thick paper, and then it 'll come in handy to wear under your overcoat when you sit home evenings next winter, Abe, because by the first of next February janitors

will be giving coal to the furnace like it would be asperin—from five to ten grains every three hours," Morris predicted, "which I will admit that I ain't a good enough judge of anthracite coal to tell whether it's fireproof, of slow-burning construction, or just the ordinary sprinkled risk, y'understand, but I do know coal-dealers, Abe, and if the government says they must got to sell coal at seven dollars a ton, y'understand, it 'll be like buying one of them high-grade automobiles where the list price includes only the engine and the two front wheels, F. O. B. Detroit. In other words, Abe, if you would buy coal to-day at seven dollars a ton you would get a bill something like this:

To coal	$7.00
To loading coal	1.00
To unloading coal	1.00
To weighing coal	1.00
To delivering coal	1.00
To dusting off coal	1.00

and you would be playing in luck if you didn't get charged a dollar each for tasting coal, smelling coal, feeling coal, and doing anything else to coal that a coal-dealer would have the nerve to charge one dollar for."

"Well, if I would be the United States government," Abe commented, "and had got a practical coal-man like this here Garfield to set a limit of seven dollars I wouldn't let them robbers pull no last rounds of rang-doodles on me, Mawruss. I'd

take away their chips from 'em and put 'em right out of the game."

"Sure I know, Abe," Morris said, "*aber* this here Garfield ain't a practical coal-man, Abe, and maybe that's the trouble. Mr. Garfield is president of Williams College, so you couldn't blame these here coal-dealers, because you know as well as I do, Abe, the garment trade will certainly put up an awful holler if when it comes to appoint a cloak-and-suit administrator Mr. Wilson is going to wish on us some such expert as Nicholas Murray Butler *oder* the president of the Union Theological Cemetery."

"At that," Abe said, "I think they'd know more about the price of garments than Bernstorff did about the price of Congressmen. I always give that feller credit for more sense than that he should try to explain an item in his expense account by claiming that

April 3, 1917, To sundries.....$50,000

was what he paid for bribing the United States Congress."

"Well, say!" Morris exclaimed. "The poor feller had to tell 'em something, didn't he? Here he is coming back from his trip after losing his whole territory to his firm's competitors, and naturally he tries to make a good showing with his expense account, which, believe me, Abe, if I was a rotten salesman like that, before I would face my employer—and *such* an employer, because that *Rosher* 'ain't got them spike-end mustaches for

nothing, Abe—I would first jump in the river, even if my expense account showed that I had been staying in a-dollar-and-a-half-a-day American-plan hotels and had sat up nights in the smoker for big jumps like from Terre Haute to Paducah."

"Can you imagine the way the Kaiser feels?" Abe said. "I suppose at the start he was keeping so calm that he bit the end off his fountain pen and started to light the cap, and probably took one or two puffs before he noticed anything strange about the flavor, because you could easy make a mistake like that with a German cigar.

"'*Nu*, Bernstorff,' he says, at last, as he looks at the expense account, 'before we take up the matter of this here eight-foot shelf of the world's greatest fiction I would like to hear what you got to say for yourself, so go ahead mit your lies and make it short.'

"'I suppose you got my letters,' Bernstorff begins, 'the ones I sent you through the Swede.'

"'What Swede?' the Kaiser says.

"'Yon Yonson, the second assistant ambassador,' Bernstorff answers. 'I told him if he got them letters through for me that you would give him an order on the Chancellor for a first-class red eagle, but I guess he'd be satisfied with one of them old-rose eagles, Class Four B, that we used to have piled up there in the corner of the shipping-room.'

"'I wouldn't even give him an order on Mike, the Popular Berlin Hatter, for a two-dollar derby, even,' the Kaiser says. '*Chutzpah!* Writes me

letter after letter with nothing but weather reports in 'em, and he wants me I should give this here Yonson a red eagle yet which costs me thirty-two fifty a dozen wholesale. Seemingly to you, Bernstorff, money is nothing.'

"Here the old man grabs ahold of the expense account again.

"'Honestly, Bernstorff,' he says, 'I don't see how you had the heart to spend all that money when you know how things are here in Berlin. If me and my Gussie sits down once a week to such a piece of meat as *gedampfte Brustdeckel mit Kartoffelpfannkuchen*, y'understand, that's already a feast for us, and as for chicken, I assure you we 'ain't had so much as a soup fowl in the house since my birthday a year ago, and you got the nerve to send me in an expense account like this. Aint it a shame and a disgrace?

1916, May 1.	Bolo	$4.00
5.	Bolo	6.00
9.	Bolo	3.25

and every other day for week after week you spent on Bolo anywheres from one to fifteen dollars. Tell me, Bernstorff, how could a man make such a god out of his stomach?'

"'Why, what do you think Bolo is?' Bernstorff asks.

"'I don't *think* what Bolo is; I *know* what Bolo is,' the Kaiser tells him, and a dreamy look comes into his eyes. 'Many a time I seen my poor *Grossmutter olav hasholom* make it. She

used to chop up ten onions, five cents' worth parsley, and a big piece *Knoblauch*, add six eggs and a half a pound melted butter, and let simmer slowly. Now take your chicken and—'

"'All right, Boss, I wouldn't argue with you,' Bernstorff says, 'because them amounts represent only the preliminary lunches which I give this here Bolo. Further down you would see where he gets the real big money, and then I'll explain.'

"'Well, explain this,' the old man says. 'Here under date July second, nineteen sixteen, it stand an item:

To blowing up munitions plant.....$10,000

Who did you get to do it? Caruso?'

"'You couldn't blow up a munitions plant and make a first-class job of it under ten thousand dollars, Boss,' Bernstorff says.

"'Is *that* so?' the Kaiser tells him. 'Well, let me tell you something, Bernstorff. I've got a pretty good line on what them munitions explosions ought to cost. My eldest boy has been blowing up buildings in France for over three years now, and for what it costs to blow up a factory he could blow up two cathedrals and a château.'

"'Have it your own way, Boss,' Bernstorff says, 'but them château buildings is so old that they're pretty near falling down, anyway.'

"'Don't give me no arguments,' the Kaiser says. 'I suppose you're going to tell me these here

8 5-12 doz asstd bombs.....$3,200

was some Saturday specials you picked up in a bargain basement. What was they filled with, rubies?'

"'Bombs is awful high, Boss,' Bernstorff says. 'Ask Dernburg what he used to pay for bombs; ask Von Papen; ask this here judge of the New York Supreme Court—I forget his name; ask anybody; they would tell you the same.'

"'Should I also ask 'em if spies gets paid in America the same like stomach specialists in Germany? Look at this:

To one week's salary 12,235 spies. . . . $1,223,500

What have you been doing, Bernstorff? Keeping a steam-yacht on me and charging it up as spies?'

"'Listen, Boss,' Bernstorff says. 'If you would know what an awful strong organization spies has got in the United States, instead you would be talking to me this way you would be thanking your lucky stars that I didn't let 'em run the wage scale up on me no higher than they did. Why, before I left Washington a deputation from Local Number One Amalgamated Spies of North America comes to see me and—'

"'What the devil you are talking nonsense?' the Kaiser shouts. '*Moost* you got to employ union spies? Couldn't you find thousands and thousands of non-union spies to work for you?'

"'That only goes to show what you know about America,' Bernstorff says. 'There's a whole lot of people in America which would stand for blowing up factories, sinking passenger-steamers, shoot-

ing up hospitals, and dropping bombs on kindergartens, y'understand, but when it comes to people employing scab labor, they draw the line. And then again, Boss, spies is very highly thought of in America. Respectable people, like lawyers and doctors, gets arrested every day over there, and even once in a while a minister, y'understand, but a spy—*never!*"

"At this point when it looks like plain sailing for Bernstorff, the Kaiser picks out that fifty-thousand-dollar item, and right there Bernstorff makes his big mistake, for as soon as he starts that Congressmen story the old man begins to figure that if Congressmen are so cheap and spies so dear, y'understand, the only thing to do is to call up the *Polizeiprasidium* and tell 'em to send around a plain-clothes man right away to number Twenty-six A Schloss Platz, ring Hohenzollern's bell."

"Then you really think that Bernstorff and Von Papen and all them crooks didn't spend the money over here that they claimed they spent," Morris said.

"They probably spent it, all right," Abe replied, "but whether or not they spent it for what they claimed they spent it *for*, Mawruss, *that* I don't know, because if them fellers didn't stop at arson, dynamiting, and murder, why should they hesitate at petty larceny?"

"But what them boys did in the way of blowing up munitions plants and sinking passenger-steamers was because they loved the Kaiser so

much, and instead of arresting Bernstorff for the money he spent, Abe, I bet yer the Kaiser made him a thirty-second degree passed assistant *Geheimrat* or something," Morris declared.

"Well, there's no accounting for tastes, Mawruss," Abe said, "and if these here Germans is willing to slaughter, rob, and burn because they are in love with a feller which to me has a personality as attractive as the framed insides of the entrance to a safe deposit vault, y'understand, all I can say is that I don't give them no more credit for it than I would to a bookkeeper who committed forgery because he was in love with the third lady from the end in the second row of the original Bowery Burlesquers."

"The wonder to me is that the Kaiser don't see it that way, too," Morris commented.

"That's because when it comes right down *to* it, Mawruss, the third lady from the end ain't no more stuck on herself than the Kaiser is on *him*self," Abe said. "Them third ladies from the end figure that the poor suckers always *did* like 'em, and that therefore they are always *going* to like 'em, so they go ahead and treat their admirers like dawgs and take everything they give 'em, y'understand, and the end of it is that either a third lady becomes so careless that from a perfect thirty-six she comes to be an imperfect fifty-four and has to work for a living, or else she gets pinched for receiving the property which them poor buffaloed admirers of hers handed over to her, and that 'll be the end of the Kaiser, too."

"And how soon do you think *that* will happen?" Morris asked.

"That depends on how socn the Kaiser's admirers gets through with him," Abe said.

"Maybe the Kaiser will quit first," Morris concluded, "because you take them third ladies from the end, Abe, and sooner or later they grow terrible tired of this here—now—fast life."

V

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS ON THE FRONT PAGE AND OFF

What war done ain't a marker on what peace is going to do to a great many of these here front-page propositions which is nowadays accustomed to being continued on page two, column five, y'understand.

"YES, Mawruss," Abe said, as he thrust aside the sporting section one Sunday in October, "a people at war is like a man with a sick wife. Nothing else interests him, which here it stands an account from how them loafers out in Chicago plays baseball for the world's record yet, and for all the effect it has on me, Mawruss, it might just so well be something which catches my eye for the first time in the old newspaper padding which my wife pulls out from under the carpet when she is house-cleaning in the spring of nineteen twenty."

"Well," Morris said, "I must got to confess that when I seen it yesterday how this here Fleisch shoots a home run there in the fifth innings, I—"

"What are you talking nonsense—a home run in the fifth innings!" Abe exclaimed. "The home run was made in the fourth innings. The White

Sox didn't make no score in the fifth innings. It was the Giants which made their only run in the fifth. McCarty knocked a three-bagger and Sallee singled and brought him home. *You* tell *me* what innings Fleisch shot a home run in!"

"All right, Abe," Morris said, "I wouldn't argue with you, but all I got to say is you're lucky that on account of the war you ain't interested in auction pinochle the way you ain't interested in baseball, otherwise you might get quite a reputation as a gambler."

"I am just so much worried about this war as you are, Mawruss," Abe protested, "but if I couldn't take my mind off of it long enough to find out which ball team is winning the world series I would be a whole lot more worried about myself as I would be about the war, which it don't make no difference how much a man loves his wife, y'understand, if she's only sick on him long enough, Mawruss, he's going to get sufficiently used to it to take in now and then a good show occasionally. In fact, Mawruss, it's a relief to read once in a while in the newspapers something which ain't about the war, like a murder, y'understand, the only drawback being that along about the third day after the discovery of the body, and just when you are getting interested in the thing, General Haig advances another mile on a couple of thousand kilowatt front, y'understand, and for all you can find anything in the newspaper about your murder, y'understand me, the feller needn't have troubled himself to commit it at all."

"Murderers ain't the only people which got swamped by the war," Morris said. "Take William J. Bryan, for example, and up to within a year or so, Abe, the newspaper publicity which William J. Bryan got free, y'understand, William J. Douglas would of paid a quarter of a million dollars for. Take also this here Hobson which sunk the *Merrimac* and Lindsey M. Garrison, who by resigning from the War Department come within an ace and a couple of pinochle decks thrown in of ruining Mr. Wilson's future prospects, Abe, and there was two fellers which used to get into the newspapers as regularly as Harry K. Thaw and Peruna, and yet, Abe, if any time during the past six months William J. Bryan, Lindsey M. Garrison, and this here Hobson would of been out riding together, and the automobile was to run over a cliff a hundred feet high onto a railroad track and be struck by the cannon-ball express, understand me, the most they could expect to see about it in the papers would be:

NEWS IN BRIEF

An automobile rolled over an embankment at Van Benschoten Avenue and 456th Street, the Bronx, landing in a railroad cut. Its four occupants are in Lincoln Hospital. One of them, George K. Smith, a chauffeur, suffered a fracture of the skull.

More than fifty pawn tickets were found on Peter Krasnick, who was caught in Brooklyn after a chase over a rear fire-escape. He is charged with burglary.

And if at the last moment before the reporters goes home for the night word comes that the Germans made another strong attack on Hill Six-sixty-six B, y'understand, they strike out everything except 'World Wants Work Wonders' and let it go at that."

"Referendum and Recall is something else which you used to see a whole lot about in the papers," Abe said, "and while I always ducked 'em myself, at the same time there must be a whole lot of people which is wondering what ever become of 'em since the war started."

"The chances is," Morris declared, "if they was to come across the names Referendum and Recall in the papers to-day, Abe, they would say it's a miracle they escaped as long as they did, because they've got a hazy impression they read it somewheres that the Recollection, the Resurrection, and the Reproduction of the same line was sunk by U-boats about the time they torpedoed the Minnieboska, the Minnietoba, and all them other Minnies."

"Prize-fighting is also got a black eye in the way of newspaper publicity since we went into the war, Mawruss," Abe continued, "and it ain't remarkable, neither, when you look back and think of the pages and pages the newspapers used to print about a couple of loafers trying to hurt each other with gloves on their hands, which, believe me, Mawruss, a green shipping-clerk could give himself worse *Makkas* nailing up one case of goods

than them boys could do to each other in a whole season already."

"I bet yer," Morris said, "and for such a picnic Jeff Willard used to get over a hundred thousand dollars yet."

"Can you imagine how much money one of them aviators over in the old country ought to draw under such a wage scale?" Abe asked. "I read an account of what an aviator has got to do when he goes up in an airyoplane, Mawruss, and at one and the same time while he is balancing himself five thousand feet in the air he takes photographs, shoots off guns, drops bombs, sends wireless telegraphs, and also runs and steers an engine which is so powerful, y'understand, that if you would be running it on dry land, Mawruss, you wouldn't be able to take your mind off of it long enough to think about the high cost of camera supplies, let alone taking pictures yet."

"I wonder if such a young feller has got also a knowledge of bookkeeping and stenography," Morris speculated.

"What difference does that make?" Abe asked.

"Because, Abe, if after the war we could get him to come to work in our place it would pay us to give him a hundred dollars a week even," Morris replied, "on account it would be a cinch, after what he's been used to in his last position, for such a young feller to operate an electric rotary cutting-machine with his left hand and press garments with his right, and he has still got both legs and his head left to keep the books,

answer the telephone, run a typewriter and an adding-machine, and fix up a new card index for our credit system."

"At that he would probably throw up the job on account he didn't have enough to do to keep him busy, Mawruss," Abe commented, "and also it's going to be pretty hard for them fellers to settle down after the war gets through, considering all the excitement they've had with their names in the papers and everything."

"Say!" Morris exclaimed. "The fact that a feller like Hindenberg is now getting his name in the paper the way it used to was a few years ago with Hannah Elias and Cassie Chadwick ain't no criterion to judge by, Abe, because what war done to make the newspapers forget their old friends Bryan and Evelyn Nesbut ain't a marker on what peace is going to do to a great many of these here front-page propositions which is nowadays accustomed to being continued on page two, column five, y'understand. Why, I wouldn't be a bit surprised if in about five or six years from now, Abe, you are going to take up the paper some morning and read an item like this:

OBITUARY NOTES

Max K. Hindenberg, 83 years old, a clothing merchant, member of the firm of Hindenberg & Levy, and recording secretary of Sigmund Meyer Post No. 97 Veterans of the War of 1914–1918, died early yesterday at his home, 2076 East 8th Street, Potsdam, Germany, yesterday. Deceased was a native of East Prussia.

And the chances is that ninety-nine out of a hundred people ain't even going to say to themselves, 'Where did I hear that name before?'"

"That's where you make a big mistake, Mawruss," Abe said. "Hindenberg is a very popular feller in Germany, and I bet yer that on every map filed in the county clerks' offices of Prussian real-estate developments during the past three years there's a Hindenberg Street or a Hindenberg Avenue, to say nothing of the babies which has been born over there and named Max Hindenberg Goldsticker or Max Hindenberg Schwartz."

"Sure I know," Morris said, "and you can take my word for it, Abe, along about nineteen hundred and thirty-five there's going to be a whole lot of lawyers over in Deutschland making from twenty-five to fifty marks a throw for putting through motions in the Court of Common Pleas for the City and County of Berlin that the name of the said applicant, Max H. Goldsticker or Max H. Schwartz, as the case may or may not be, be and the same hereby is changed to Frank Pershing Goldsticker or Woodrow W. Schwartz. Also, Abe, if ever they open up Charlottenberg Heights overlooking beautiful Lake Hundekehlen as per plat filed in the office of the register of Brandenburg County, y'understand, there'll be a Helfferich Place, a Liebknecht Avenue, and even a Bebel Terrace maybe, but in twenty years from now a German real-estater wouldn't be able even to give away lots free for nothing on any Hindenberg Street or Hindenberg Avenue, not if he was

to throw in a two-family house with portable garage complete."

"Well, you could say the same thing about this country, too," Abe declared, "which twenty years from now, people wouldn't know whether the word *viereck* was a fish or a cheese; and as for all them college professors which got fired recently because they made the mistake of thinking that a college professor gets paid to fool away his time making speeches against the government the same like a United States Senator, y'understand, I couldn't even remember their names to-day yet, so you can imagine how they're going to go down in history, Mawruss: compared to them fellers, there are a few thousand notary publics whose names will be household words already."

"Any man who thinks he is going to make a name for himself by talking or writing against his country is due to get badly fooled, I don't care if he would be a college professor, a United States Senator, or an editor, Abe," Morris said, "because the most he could hope for is the thing what usually happens him. He gets fired, Abe, and the only reputation a feller gets by getting fired is the reputation for getting fired, and that ain't much of a recommendation when he comes to look for another job."

"The people I am sorry for is the wives of these here professors," Abe said, "which even when a college professor has got steady work his wife 'ain't got no bed of roses to make both ends meet, neither, and I bet yer more than one of them ladies

will got to do a little plain sewing for a living on account her husband became so hot-headed over this here pacificism."

"That's the trouble with them pacifists," Morris concluded. "If they would only take some of the heat out of their heads and put it into their feet, Abe, they could hold onto their jobs and their wives wouldn't got to go to work at all. Am I right or wrong?"

VI

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON HOOVERIZING THE OVERHEAD

When a feller reckons the overhead on the goods he manufactures he figures in one-twelfth of his telephone number, one-twelfth of the year he was born, and one-twelfth of every other number he can remember from his automobile to his street number.

"OF course, Mawruss, I don't claim that Mr. Hoover don't know his business nor nothing like that," Abe Potash said as he finished reading a circular mailed to him by the Food Conservation Director, "but at the same time if I would be permitted to make a suggestion, Mawruss, I would suggest that in addition to following out all the DON'TS in this here food-conservation circular—and also in the interests of being strictly economical, y'understand—the women of the country should learn it genwine Southern cooking, the kind they've got it in two-dollars-a-day American-plan Southern hotels, Mawruss, and not only would people eat much less than they eat at present, but the chances is it would fix some people so they wouldn't eat at all."

"Why *Southern* cooking?" Morris Perlmutter asked. "For that matter, two-dollar-a-day American-plan Eastern cooking wouldn't make you eat yourself red in the face, neither, which the last time I was in New Bedford they gave me for lunch some fried schrod, and I give you my word, Abe, I'd as lieve eat a pair of feet-proof socks, including the guarantee and the price ticket. But that ain't neither here or there, Abe. Nobody could pin medals on himself for being a small eater in a hotel, Abe, *aber* the test comes when you arrive home from the store at half past seven and your wife sets before you a plate of *gedampfte Kalbfleisch* which if a chef in Delmonico's would cook such a thing like that, Abe, the Ritz-Carlton would pay John G. Stanchfield a retainer of one hundred thousand dollars to advise them how the fellow's contract could be broken with Delmonico's so they could get him to come to work for them. And that's why I am telling you, Abe, when you get such a plate of *gedampfte Kalbfleisch* in front of you, which the steam comes up from it like roses, y'understand, and when you put a piece of it in your mouth it's like—"

"Say, listen," Abe protested, "let me alone, will you? It's only eleven o'clock, and I couldn't go out to lunch for another hour yet."

"That only goes to show what for a stomach patriot you are, Abe," Morris commented. "Even when we are only *talking* about food you couldn't restrain yourself, so what must it be like when you've got the food actually on the table? I bet

"'So,' Mrs. Hoover says, 'you had one of them sixty-cent table-d'hôte lunches to-day again, and now of course you 'ain't got no appetite. How many times did I tell you you shouldn't eat that poison?'"

yer you don't remember that such a feller as Hoover ever existed at all, let alone what he says about eating reasonable."

"That's all right, Mawruss," Abe said. "Mr. Hoover could talk that way, because maybe his wife ain't such a crank about her cooking like my Rosie is, y'understand, *aber* if Mr. Hoover would be me, Mawruss, and there comes on the table some *gestoffte Miltz* which Mrs. Hoover has been breaking her back standing over the stove all the afternoon seeing that it don't stick to the bottom of the kettle, y'understand, and Mr. Hoover takes only a couple slices of it on account of the war, y'understand, what is going to happen then?

"'So,' Mrs. Hoover says, 'you had one of them sixty-cent table-d'hôte lunches to-day again, and now of course you 'ain't got no appetite. How many times did I tell you you shouldn't eat that poison?'

"'So sure as I am sitting here, mommer,' Hoover says, 'all I had for my lunch was a Swiss-cheese rye-bread sandwich and a cup coffee.'

"'Then what's the matter you ain't eating?' Mrs. Hoover says. 'Ain't it cooked right?'

"'Certainly it's cooked right,' Hoover says. 'But two pieces is a plenty on account of the war.'

"'On account of the war! I could work my fingers to the bone fixing good food for that man, and he wouldn't eat it on account of the war, *sagt er*,' says Mrs. Hoover.

"'But, listen, mommer—' Hoover tries to tell her.

"'Never mind, any excuse is better than none,' Mrs. Hoover says. 'Turns up his nose at my cooking yet! *Gestoffte Miltz* ain't good *enough* for him. I suppose you would like me to give you every day roast duck on twenty dollars a week housekeeping money. Did you ever hear the like? Couldn't eat *gestoffte Miltz* no more, so tony he gets all of a sudden!'

"'*Aber* mommer, listen to me for a moment,' Hoover says, but it ain't a bit of use because Mrs. Hoover goes into the bedroom and locks the door on him, and by the time he has got her to be on speaking terms again he has violated the don't-eat-no-sugar DON'T to the extent of four dollars and fifty cents for a five-pound box of mixed chocolates and bum-bums, understand me. Also just to show that she forgives him they take in a show mit afterward a supper in which Mr. Hoover violates not only all the other DON'TS in the food-conservation circulars, but also makes himself liable to go to jail for giving a couple of dollars to a German head waiter under the Trading with the Enemy law."

"At that, the way some of our best hotels conservates food nowadays is setting a good example to the women of the country," Morris declared.

"What do you mean—nowadays?" Abe retorted. "They always conservated food, the only difference being, Mawruss, that in former times, when them crooks used to get ten portions of chicken *à la* King out of a two-pound cold-storage chicken and charged you a dollar and a

quarter a portion for it, y'understand, they was a bunch of crooks—ain't it?—whereas nowadays when them crooks get eleven portions out of the same chicken and charge you a dollar and a half a portion for it, y'understand, they're a bunch of patriots, understand me, which if the coal-dealer and the retail grocer and butcher would short-weight you and overcharge you the way some of them patriotic New York hotel proprietors does, it would be hard to find many patriots in New York City outside of Blackwells Island *oder* the Tombs prison."

"And yet, Abe, if you would go to work and figure out the overhead on a chicken which is used for eleven portions of chicken *à la* King," Morris said, "you would find that the hotel-keeper gets his profit only from the neck which he uses for chicken consommé."

"Well, say!" Abe exclaimed. "A profit of six cups of chicken consommé at forty cents a cup ain't to be sneezed at, neither, and even then you are taking the hotel-keeper's word for the overhead, which I don't care if a feller would be ordinarily a regular George Washington, y'understand, and wouldn't even lie to his wife about how he come out in his weekly Saturday-night pinochle game, understand me, but when such a feller reckons the overhead on the goods he manufactures it don't make no difference if it would be locomotive engines or pants, in addition to the legitimate cost of every one-twelfth dozen articles, he figures in as overhead one-twelfth of his tele-

phone number, one-twelfth of the year he was born, one-twelfth of how old his grandfather *olav hasholom* was when he married for the fourth time, and one-twelfth of every other number he can remember, from his automobile number to his street number, and usually such a crook lives in the last house from the city limits."

"I tell yer, Abe," Morris said, "the feller which invented poison gas was some *Rosher*, and the feller which invented T. M. T. also, but the feller which invented the overhead is in a class by himself just behind the Kaiser. I don't know what his name is, but he is the feller what fixed things so that a ten-cent loaf of bread has not only got into it the air-holes which is caused by the yeast, but also the air-holes which is caused by the lawyer's bill that the baking company paid at the time they issued their five-million-dollar consolidated and refunding four-per-cent. first-mortgage bonds, y'understand, and there's just as much nourishment in that kind of air-hole for a truck-driver's family of growing children as there is in any other kind of air-hole."

"Well, the bakers 'ain't got nothing on the farmers when it comes to cost bookkeeping, Mawruss," Abe said. "I was reading where the milk-raisers' *Verein* claims the price of feed is so high that they've got to sell milk at ten cents a quart wholesale, but for all them farmers figure that the same feed goes to fatten the cow for the market, Mawruss, you might suppose that there was a big institution somewheres up state called

the Ezra B. Cornell Home for Aged and Indignant Cows, y'understand, and that so soon as a cow gets through giving milk, y'understand, instead of slaughtering it the farmer takes it to the home in his automobile and contributes five dollars a week toward its support until it dies of hardening of the arteries at the age of eighty-two."

"Take it from me, Abe," Morris said, "them farmers ain't such farmers as people think they are. It's going to be so, pretty soon, that people will be paying two dollars and a half for an orchestra seat and pretty near break their hearts while the poor old second-mortgage shark is being turned out of his little home by the farmer."

"And on the opening night, Mawruss, the front rows will be filled with milk agents," Abe said, "and after the show you will see them sitting around Rector's and Churchill's and getting terrible noisy over a magnum of Sheffield Farms nineteen sixteen."

"Of course nobody is going to be the worser for making a joke about such things, Abe," Morris interrupted, "but last winter when these fellers which gets off mommerlogs in vaudveille shows was talking about somebody being immensely wealthy on account his breath smelt from onions, y'understand, there wasn't many people raising a family on less than twenty-five dollars a week whose breath smelt from onions at that."

"Did I say they did?" Abe asked.

"And it is the same way with potatoes and fruit, not to say fish and poultry and all the other

foods which Mr. Hoover says we should eat in order to save beef, sugar, and flour for the soldiers," Morris continued. 'When a woman buys nowadays flounder at twenty-five cents a pound, she is paying ten cents for fish and fifteen cents toward the fish-dealer's wife's diamonds or his six-cylinder automobile, so if I would be Mr. Hoover, before I issued bread and meat cards to the consumer I would hand out automobile and diamond cards to the fish-dealer and the vegetable-dealer and maybe it would help to stop them fellers from loading their prices with what it costs 'em to keep up their expensive habits."

"A fish-dealer is entitled to expensive habits the same like anybody else," Abe said, "which if Mr. Hoover stops him from buying his wife once in a while diamonds, sooner or later Mr. Hoover will stop him from buying his wife furs and it will work down right along the line till Mr. Hoover hits the garment business, Mawruss, which, while I ain't got no particular sympathy for a fish-dealer, y'understand, his money is just so good as the next one's, so I ask you, as a garment-manufacturer, what are you going to do about it?"

"Let him buy Liberty Bonds."

"But in that case, how many Liberty Bonds could the diamond merchant, the automobile-manufacturer, or the furrier buy?"

"Say, looky here," Morris said, "let me alone, will you? This is something which is up to Mr. Hoover, not me."

"I know it is," Abe concluded, "and I've got a great deal of sympathy for him, too, because before Mr. Hoover gets through he would not only make a bunch of enemies, Mawruss, but he is going to use up a whole lot of headache medicine, and don't you forget it."

VII

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The hopeless part of it is that there's no way of putting a nation of ninety million people in a lunatic asylum, even if there was an asylum big enough to hold them, which there ain't.

"I SEE where the French President is going to lose his Prime Minister again," Abe Potash said, "which the way that feller is always changing Prime Ministers, Mawruss, he must be a terrible hard man to work for."

"Say," Morris Perlmutter replied, "I've got enough to think about keeping track of what happens here in this country without I should worry my head over political *Meises* in France."

"Well, you are the same like a whole lot of Americans," Abe said, "which for all they read about what is going on over in Europe the Edison Manufacturing Company might just so well never have invented the telegraph at all."

"I don't *got* to read it with such a statesman like you around here," Morris retorted, "so go ahead and tell me: what did the French Prime Minister done *now* that he gets fired for it?"

"That only goes to show what you know from Prime Ministers!" Abe declared. "A Prime Minister never gets fired, Mawruss—he resigns, and while I admit that nine times out of ten when the French President has had a Prime Minister resign on him, it's probably been a case of the stenographer tipping the Prime Minister off that before the boss went to lunch he said, 'If that grafter's still here when I come back there'll be another Prime Minister going around on crutches,' y'understand, yet at the same time this here last Prime Minister has been right on the job, and the French President has been quite worried for fear he's going to quit."

"Well, let him get along *without* a Prime Minister for a while," Morris said. "With the money the French people is spending for war supplies it won't do him no harm to cut down his pay-roll, and, besides, what does he want a Prime Minister for, *anyway?* Has President Wilson got a Prime Minister? Them people come over here a couple of months ago and cashed in a hard-luck story for a matter of a few hundred million dollars, y'understand, and like a lot of come-ons that we are, understand me, it never even occurred to us but what them boys was living right up close to the cushion."

"How much do you think a Prime Minister draws, Mawruss—a million a week?" Abe asked.

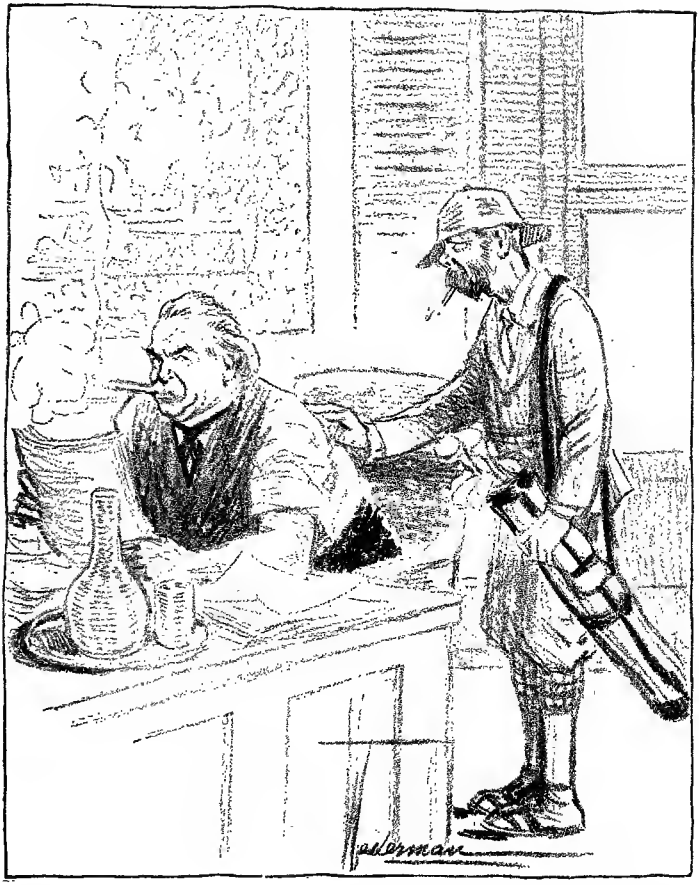
"It ain't how much he draws," Morris said. "It's the idea of the thing which I don't care if he only gets five dollars a day and commissions,

Abe, if President Wilson would got a Prime Minister working for him instead of attending to the business himself, which is what President Wilson gets paid for, y'understand, there's many a time when the President has been out late at the theayter or when he is feeling under the weather, understand me, where he would say: 'Why should I kill myself slaving day in, day out, like a slave, y'understand. What have I got a Prime Minister for, anyway?' And that's how I bet yer the French President has passed over to the Prime Minister a whole lot of important stuff which the poor *nebich* was bound to slip up on, because, after all, a Prime Minister is only a Prime Minister."

"Maybe you're right," Abe admitted, "but at the same time there's some pretty smart Prime Ministers, too, which you take this here Prime-Minister Lord George, over in England, and that feller practically runs the country. In fact, as I understand it, King George leaves the entire management to him, so much confidence he's got in the feller."

"Perhaps it's because this here Lord George and King George is related maybe," Morris suggested.

"I don't think so," Abe replied. "The names is only a quincidence, which even before Lord George was ever heard of at all the Prime Minister always run things in England while the King put in his whole time opening charity bazars and laying corner-stones. First and last I suppose that feller has laid more corner-stones than all



"Perhaps it's because this here Lord George and King George is related maybe," Morris suggested. "I don't think so," Abe replied. "The name is only a quincidence."

the heads of all the fraternal orders in the United States put together, and if there's such a disease as grand master's thumb, like smoker's heart and housemaid's knee, Mawruss, I'll bet that King George has got it."

"Well an English king can afford to spend his time that way," Morris said, "because them English Prime Ministers is really prime, y'understand, whereas you take the Prime Ministers which the Czar *nebich*, the King of Greece, and even the King of Sweden had it, and instead of them Prime Ministers being prime, understand me, they ranged all the way from sirloin to chuck, as they would say in the meat business."

"Some of the English Prime Ministers wasn't so awful prime, neither," Abe said. "Take the feller which was holding down the job of Prime Minister around July fourth, seventeen seventy-six, and the way that boy let half a continent slip through his fingers was enough to make King Schmooel the Second, or whatever the English king's name was in them days, swear off laying corner-stones for the rest of his life. Also the English Prime Minister which engineered the real-estate deal where Germany got ahold of the island of Heligoland wasn't what Mr. P. B. Armour would call first cut exactly, which, if England would now own Heligoland instead of Germany, Mawruss, such a serial number as U Fifty-three for a German submarine would never have been heard of. They would have stopped short at U Two or U Two B."

"Well, anybody's liable to get stuck in a swap with vacant lots, Abe," Morris said, "and the chances is the poor feller figured that with this here Heligoland, the only person who would have the nerve to call such real estate *real estate*, y'understand, would be a real-estater with a first-class imagination when the tide was out."

"That's what Germany figured, too," Abe said, "and the consequence is she went to work and improved them vacant lots with fortifications which lay so low in the water, Mawruss, that from two miles out at sea no one would dream of such things—least of all an admiral."

"So how could you blame a Prime Minister if he didn't suspect what Germany was up to when she bought that sand-bank?" Morris asked.

"Of course that was a long time before the war, Mawruss," Abe said. "Nowadays the dumbest Prime Minister knows enough to know that coming from a German diplomat a simple remark like, 'Good morning, ain't it an elegant weather we are having?' is subject to one of several constructions, none of which is exactly what you could call *kosher*, y'understand."

"And supposing he finds such a remark in a letter from a German diplomat to the Kaiser, Abe?" Morris asked. "What does it mean then?"

"That depends on where it is written from," Abe said, "which if the Minister of Foreign Affairs down in Paraguay or Peru finds out that a German ambassador has written home to the effect that he is feeling quite well again and

hopes this letter finds you the same, y'understand, the Foreign Minister hustles over to the War Department and wants to know if they are going to allow him to be insulted in that way by a dirty crook like that. On the other hand, if the chief of the United States Secret Service gets ahold of a letter from any one of them honorary German diplomats who is practically holding down the job of Imperial German Consul to the Bronx while drawing the salary of—we would say, for example—a New York Supreme Court justice, Mawruss, and if the letter says, 'Accept my best wishes for a prosperous and happy new year in which my wife joins and remain,' y'understand, that means the copper was shipped in pasteboard containers marked:

PRUNES

USE NO HOOKS."

"The German Secret Service certainly fixes up some wonderful cipher codes, Abe," Morris said. "Sometimes as much as two hours and a quarter passes before a United States Secret Service man gets the right dope on one of them code letters."

"Sure, I know," Abe said. "But most times he don't have no more trouble over it than the average business man would with a baseball column, which the way every government secret service knows every other government's secret service's secrets, Mawruss, it's a wonder to me that they don't call the whole thing off by mutual

consent, because the only difference between government secret services is that some secret services is louder than others. Take, for instance, the German Secret Service, and there was months and months when this here Dr. Heinrich Albert, Captain von Papen and his boy Ed got as much newspaper publicity as one of them rotten shows which received such a good notice from the cricket of the *Cloak and Suit Gazette* that the manager thinks it may have a chance, y'understand. Why, there wasn't a district messenger-boy which couldn't direct you to number Eleven Broadway, where that secret service had its head offices, and I would be very much surprised if they didn't ship their bombs from number Eleven Broadway, to the steamboat docks in covered automobile delivery-wagons with signs painted on 'em:

Telephone Battery 2222

GERMAN SECRET SERVICE

'WE LEAD—OTHERS FOLLOW'

11 Broadway

Ask about our Special Service plan
for furnishing explosives by the month

AT LOW RATES."

"At the same time, Abe," Morris remarked, "the Germans make things pretty secret when they want to, otherwise how could the Kaiser have kept

that mutiny under his chest for over a couple of months?"

"And you could take it from me, Mawruss, Abe said, "before Michaelis let it out in the Reichstag, he might just so well have stopped in at the *Lokal Anzeiger* office on his way downtown and inserted a couple of lines or so under the head of 'Situations Wanted Males.'"

"Why, I thought you said a Prime Minister never gets fired," Morris said.

"Prime Ministers is one thing and Chancellors another, Mawruss," Abe told him.

"Then I imagine this here Michaelis must be putting in a lot of time nowadays going over his contract to see if he's got any come-back against the party of the first part in case that crook fires him," Morris said.

"Well, he can keep on looking till he finds another job," Abe replied, "because the Kaiser is like a lot of other highwaymen in the cutting-up trade, Mawruss. To them fellers the first and most important thing about a contract is the loopholes, y'understand, and after that's fixed they don't care what goes into it, which you take that contract of Michaelis's and I bet yer that a police-court lawyer could drive an armored tank through them paragraphs which is supposed to hold the Kaiser, y'understand, whereas if *Michaelis* wanted to get out of it, Mawruss, he could go to work and hire Messrs. Hughes, Brandeis, Stanchfield, Hughes & Stanchfield, supposing there was *Gott soll huten* such a firm of lawyers, and they

wouldn't be able to find so much as a comma out of place for him."

"And as a good German, Abe, Michaelis would be awful disappointed if they did," Morris said, "because that's the way the Germans feel toward the Kaiser. He robs 'em, he murders 'em, and he starves their wives and children to death, just so him and his family could run the country, and them poor Heinies says to one another: 'That's the kind of a kaiser to have! A big strong man which he don't give a nickel for nobody! He's a wonder, all right, and if we didn't have a feller like that at the head of the country I don't know how we would be able to stand all the trouble that cutthroat and his crook family is causing us—Heaven bless them.'"

"The hopeless part of it is," Abe commented, "that there's no way of putting a nation of ninety million people in a lunatic asylum, even if there was an asylum big enough to hold them, which there ain't, Mawruss."

"And as much as you sympathize with a lunatic, you can't have him going around loose, Abe," Morris said, "so what are we going to do about it?"

"Well, we're trying hard to shut 'em up in Germany again," Abe declared, "and after we've got them there, Mawruss, I am willing to stand my share of the expense that the war should go on long enough to give them lunatics a little home treatment, y'understand, and by home treatment, Mawruss, I mean not only treating the lunatics

themselves, but also treating their homes," Abe continued, growing red in the face at the thought of it, "which I only hope that I live long enough to see a moving picture of German homes the same like I seen moving pictures of French homes and Belgian homes, and if that don't sweat the Kaisermania out of their systems they are crazy for keeps."

VIII

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON LORDNORTHCLIFFING VERSUS COLONELHOUSING

While Lord Northcliff is colonelhousing over here, Colonel House is lordnorthcliffing over in England, and the main point about their being where they are is that they ain't where the people are which sent them there.

"WELL, I see where President Wilson says that women should have the right to vote the same like shipping-clerks and bartenders, Mawruss," Abe said, "which it's a funny thing to me the way some people claims they never could see that two and two make four till the war comes along and gives them a brand-new point of view."

"At that, you've got to give President Wilson credit that it only took a war like this here European war to bring him to his senses," Morris Perlmutter said, "whereas with Eli U. Root, Abe, it's got to happen yet another war twice as big as this one, three more revolutions in Russland, and a couple of earthquakes *doch*, before he is even going to say, 'Maybe you're right, but that's my opinion and I stick *to* it.'"

"In a way, Mawruss, Eli U. Root ain't as unreasonable as he looks," Abe said. "He says that if the women gets the vote, y'understand, they would—"

"Listen, Abe," Morris interrupted, "I don't want to hear what this here Root has got to say about *if* women voted in America, y'understand, because over four million women does vote in America, and some of them has been voting for years already, and when it comes to talking about *ifs*, Abe, *if* Eli U. Root 'ain't noticed that four million women vote in this country where Eli U. Root is supposed to understand the language as well as speak it, understand me, what did Mr. Root notice over in Russland, where he neither spoke Russian nor understood it, neither?"

"Don't kid yourself, Mawruss," Abe said. "That feller knows just so good as you do that there's four million women voting in America; also he knows that the women of Colorado, where women vote, don't act no different from the women of Pennsylvania, where women don't vote, but that's an argument in favor of women voting, whereas Root is arguing against it."

"That ain't an argument," Morris protested; "it's a fact."

Abe shrugged his shoulders despairingly.

"What does a first-class A-number-one lawyer like Root care about facts if they ain't in his favor?" he asked. "Also, Mawruss, if Mr. Root now comes out in favor of women voting, y'understand, that would be a case of changing his mind,

and you know as well as I do, Mawruss, the real brainy fellers of the world never changes their mind."

"Not even when the facts is against them?" Morris asked.

"They don't pay no attention to the facts," Abe said. "You take this here Morris Hillkowitz or Hillquit which he is running for mayor of New York on the Socialistic ticket, and for years already that feller went around saying that it was the people which lived in the two-thousand-a-year apartments and owned expensive automobiles which was squashing the protelariat, y'understand, and now when it comes out in the papers that he is living in a thousand-dollar-a-year apartment and running an expensive automobile, Mawruss, does he turn around and say that it's all a mistake and that in reality it's the protelariat which is squashing the feller with the two-thousand-dollar-a-year apartment and expensive automobile? *Oser a Stück!*"

"Well, it only goes to show that a feller can even make money by being a Socialist if he only sticks to it long enough," Morris said.

"At that, he's probably got more sympathy mit the protelariat than he ever did, Mawruss, because before he owned an automobile he only *suspected* what them fellers was missing by being poor. Now he *knows*."

"And I suppose by the time he is running for President on the Socialistic ticket," Morris said, "he'll be owning a steam-yacht and the wrongs of

the working classes will be pretty near breaking his heart."

"Even so, Mawruss, he won't be changing his mind, and I don't know but what he'll be acting wise, too," Abe said, "because when a politician gets a reputation for carrying a certain line of stable opinions his customers naturally expects that he is going to continue to carry 'em, and when he drops that line and lays in a stock of new stuff in the way of political ideas, y'understand, his customers leave him and he's got to build up his trade over again; and that's no way for a feller to get into the steam-yacht class—I don't care if he would be a politician or a garment-manufacturer."

"Well, of course, if a feller's opinions is his living, you couldn't blame him for not changing 'em," Morris said, "*aber* this here Root is already retired from business, and the chances is that, the way he's got his money invested, it wouldn't make no difference *how* liberal-minded he was, the corporations would have to pay the coupons, anyway."

"I know they would," Abe agreed, "but you take some of these Senators and Congressmen which they started out before we was at war with Germany to show an attractive line of pro-German ideas—that is to say, attractive to their regular customers out in Wisconsin and Saint Louis, understand me, and people don't figure that them poor fellers has got mortgages falling due on 'em next year and boys to put through college.

For all people knows, Mawruss, this here McLemon which used to make a speciality of speeches warning Americans off of ocean steamships was supporting half his wife's family and widowed sister that way. The chances is that he sees now what a rotten line of argument that was, and he would like to switch over and display some snappy nineteen-seventeen-model speeches about the freedom of the seas for American sitsons, understand me, but you know yourself how it is when your wife has got a large family, Mawruss: if one of her sisters ain't having an emergency operation on you, it's a case of doing something quick to keep her youngest brother out of jail, and either way you are stuck a couple of hundred dollars, so you couldn't blame a Congressman who refuses to change his mind and risk losing his territory, even if all the rest of the country *is* calling him a regular Benedectine Arnold, y'understand."

"Well, sooner or later some of these big *Machers* has got to change their minds, otherwise the war will never be over," Morris said. "The Kaiser has said over and over again that, once having put on her shiny armor, y'understand, the Fatherland would never let the sword out of its hand till England was finally crushed and *Gott mit uns*, and Lord George and Lord Northcliff has said the same thing about Germany excepting *Gott mit uns*. Also France in this great hour would never lay down the sword, and *we* would never lay down the sword. Furthermore to hear Austria talk, and

Kerensky, Venizelos, and the King of Rumania, there would be such a continuous demand for swords that it would pay Charles N. Schwab and this here Judge Gary to organize the Consolidated Sword Company or the United States Sword Corporation with a plant covering sixteen acres and an issue of one hundred million dollars preferred stock and two hundred and fifty million dollars common stock and let the cannon and torpedo business go."

"Sure, I know," Abe said. "But when the Kaiser says that Germany would never stop fighting till her enemies is in the dust, speaking of Germany as a she-Fatherland, or till its enemies is in the dust, speaking of Germany as an it-Fatherland, Mawruss, if you was a mind-reader, Mawruss, you would see 'way back in the rear of his brain one of them railroad time-table signs: *(GG) Will stop daily after January first, nineteen-nineteen.*"

"I hope you are right, Abe," Morris commented, "but I see where this here Lord Northcliff says that the war is really just beginning, and so far as I can discover that goes without foot-notes or notices that care is taken to have same correct, but the company will not be responsible for delays or for errors in the printing, y'understand."

"Well, I'll tell you," Abe said, "I don't know nothing about this here Lord Northcliff. I admit also that I don't know what his standing as a lord is or when he joined. In fact, I don't even know what a lord has to pay for initiation fees and

annual dues, let alone what sick benefit he draws and what they pay to the widow in case a lord dies, understand me, but I don't care if this here Northcliff, instead of a lord, was an Elk or an Odd Fellow, y'understand, he can't tell when this war is going to end no more than I can."

"But I understand this here Northcliff is an awful smart feller, Abe," Morris said. "He owns already a couple dozen newspapers in the old country, and if he wouldn't have the right dope on this here war, I don't know who would."

"Say!" Abe protested. "Nobody could get the right dope about this war out of any newspaper, even if he owned it, Mawruss, because you know as well as I do, Mawruss, if the City Edition says the Germans is starving, y'understand, and couldn't last through the winter, understand me, that ain't no guarantee that they wouldn't be getting plenty of food in the Home Edition and starving again in the Five-star Final Sporting Extra with Complete Wall Street, Mawruss, so the way I figure it is that this here Northcliff has got the idea that if he tells us the war is only beginning we are going to brace up, and if he says the chances is the war would last twenty years yet and that half the world would be down and out with starvation and sickness before it is finished up, y'understand, we are going to say: 'This is *great.* We must get in on this.'"

"Maybe that's the way they get results in the newspaper business, Abe," Morris remarked, "but in the garment business, if I am trying to turn out

a big order, y'understand, I tell the operators that the quicker they get through the sooner they will be finished, y'understand, and I make a point of saying that they are practically on the home stretcher even if they are just beginning."

"That ain't such a bad plan, neither," Abe admitted, "but there should ought to be some way to strike an average between your ideas for hurrying up and this you-would-be-all-right-if-blood-poisoning-don't-set-in encouragement of Lord Northcliff's, Mawruss, so that we wouldn't think we'd got too easy a job, but at the same time we wouldn't feel like throwing away the sponge, neither."

"I think he means well, *anyhow*," Morris said, "which he is trying to tell us that we shouldn't think we've got such a cinch as all that; because you know it used to was before this war started, Abe. Every once in a while at a lodge meeting some Grand Army man, who was also, we would say, for example, in the pants business, would get up and make a speech that if this great and glorious land of ours was to be threatened with an invasion by any foreign king or potentate, y'understand, an army of a million soldiers would spring up overnight, and all his lodge brothers would say ain't it wonderful how an old man like that stays as bright as a dollar, y'understand. *But*, just let the same feller get up and make a speech that if the pants business was to be threatened with a strike by any foreign or domestic walking-delegate, understand me, an army of a

million pants-operators would spring up overnight, y'understand, and before he had a chance to sit down even them same lodge brothers would have rung for a Bellevue ambulance and passed resolutions of sympathy for his family. And yet, Abe, a learner on pants becomes an expert in six days, whereas it takes six months at the very least to train a soldier."

"That's why Lord Northcliff is making all them discouraging speeches," Abe said. "He's a business man, Mawruss, and he appreciates that we are up against a tough business proposition."

"But what I don't understand is: where does Lord Northcliff come in to be neglecting his newspapers the way he does?" Morris said. "Is he an ambassador or something?"

"Well, for that matter," Abe retorted, "where does Colonel House come in to be neglecting the cloth-sponging business or whatever business the Colonel is in? It's a stand-off, Mawruss. While Lord Northcliff is colonelhousing over here, Colonel House is lordnorthcliffing over in England, and just exactly what that *is*, Mawruss, I don't know, but I got a strong suspicion that the main point about their being where they are is that they ain't where the people are which sent them there, if you understand what I mean."

"And I bet they both feel flattered at that," Morris concluded.

IX

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON NATIONAL MUSIC AND NATIONAL CURRENCY

Some people wouldn't care what they said, just so long as they could give the impression that they was regular sharks when it come to music, but what kind of impression they gave when it come to patriotism and common sense, such people don't give a nickel.

"IT seems that this here Doctor Muck wouldn't play the national anthem, Mawruss, because he found it was inartistic," Abe Potash said as he turned to the editorial page of his daily paper.

"Well, how did he find the national currency, Abe?" Morris Perlmutter inquired. "Also inartistic?"

"He didn't say," Abe replied. "But a statement was given out by Major Higginson that—"

"Who's Major Higginson?" Morris asked.

"He's the feller that owns the Boston Symphony Orchestra which this here Doctor Muck is the conductor of it," Abe replied.

"That must be an elegant orchestra, Abe," Morris commented. "A major is running it and a doctor is conducting it. I suppose they've got

working for them as fiddlers a lot of attorneys and counselors at law, and the chances is that if a feller was to come there looking for a job operating a trombone on account he had had experience as a practical tromboner with the New York Philharmonics, y'understand, they would probably turn him down unless he could show a diploma from a recognized school of pharmacy."

"For all I know, they might insist on having a certified public accountant, Mawruss," Abe said, "but he would have to be a shark on the trombone, anyway, because I understand this here Doctor Muck and Major Higginson run a high-class orchestra."

"Well, it only goes to show that you don't got to got a whole lot of common sense to run a high-grade orchestra, Abe," Morris retorted, "which if I would be a German doctor stranded in Boston, y'understand, and I had to *Gott soll huten* conduct an orchestra for a living, I would consider to myself that there ain't many Americans in or out of the medical profession conducting orchestras over in Germany just now which is refusing to play '*Die Wacht am Rhein*' or '*Heil im der Siegerkranz*' on artistic grounds and getting away with it. Furthermore, Abe, Doctor Muck should ought to figure that no matter if he was running the highest-grade orchestra in existence or anyhow in the state of Massachusetts, y'understand, and if nobody pays for a ticket to hear it, what *is* it? Am I right or wrong?"

"He probably thought there was enough Amer-

icans crazy about music to make his orchestra pay even if he did insult them, Mawruss," Abe said, "because you know as well as I do, Mawruss, there was a lot of sympathy shown by Americans to them German singers which got fired at the Metropolitan Opera House for insulting Americans or being pro-German. It seems that one of them made up a funny song about the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and some of the Americans which heard him sing it said that the tone production was wonderful, and that such a really remarkable breath control, y'understand, they hadn't heard it since Adelina Patti in her palmiest days, and I bet yer if Doctor Muck was to take that song and set it to music so as the Boston Symphony Orchestra could play it them same people and plenty like them would say that the wood wind was this, the strings was that, and something about the coda and the obbligato, y'understand. In fact, Mawruss, they wouldn't care what they said, just so long as they could give the impression that they was regular sharks when it come to music, but what kind of impression they gave when it come to patriotism and common sense, such people seemingly don't give a nickel.

"Why, you take this here lady singer at the Metropolitan Opera House," Abe continued, "which her husband was agent for the Krupp Manufacturing Company, and when she got fired, y'understand, it looked like some of these here breath-control and tone-production experts was going to hold a meeting and regularly move and

second that a copy of the said resolutions suitably engrossed be transmitted to her, care of Krupp Manufacturing Company, Twenty forty-two, four, six, and eight Buelow Boulevard, Essen, on account she had been working for the Metropolitan Opera House for pretty near twenty years, which the way some of them singers goes on singing year after year at the Metropolitan Opera House, Mawruss, sometimes you couldn't tell whether the Metropolitan Opera House was an opera-house or a home, y'understand."

"That's neither here nor there, Abe," Morris said. "There ain't no reason to my mind why the Metropolitan Opera House shouldn't ought to hire ladies whose husbands is working for American concerns or is out of a job, y'understand, and also it wouldn't be a bad idea to see that some of them barytones and bassos which was formerly sending home every week from two to five hundred dollars apiece to the old folks in Charlottenburg and Wilmersdorf, y'understand, give up their places to a few native-born fellers who contributed to the first and second Liberty Loans, understand me, and ain't supporting a relation in the world."

"But the point which them coda and obbligato fans make is that if a feller like this here Captain Kreisler of the Austrian army is the best fiddler in existence, y'understand, it's up to us Americans to pay two dollars and fifty cents a throw, not including war tax, to hear him fiddle, and that we shouldn't ought to got no *Rishus* against him

even if he would be only over here on a leave of absence dating from January first, nineteen fifteen, up to and including seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars," Abe said, "because it is claimed that the best fiddlers in the world and the best conductors in the world don't belong to any country. They are international."

"Maybe they are, Abe," Morris agreed, "but the money which they earn belongs to the country in which they spend it, understand me, which my idea is that these are war-times, and if the ordinary people is willing to take their wheat bread with a little potato flour in it, them big-league music fans should ought to be willing to take their fiddle-playing with a few sour notes in it, so if the best fiddler in the world is an Austrian who spends his money at home, y'understand, they should ought to be contented with the next best one, and if he is also an Austrian or a German let them work on right straight down the line till they find one who ain't, because trading with the enemy is trading with the enemy, whether you are trading with a German fiddler or a German fish-dealer, and if you are going to hand over money to Germany it don't make much difference if you do it in the name of art or in the name of fish."

"Well, you couldn't exactly feel the same way about an artist with his art as you could about a fish-dealer with his fish," Abe protested.

"I didn't say you could," Morris said. "I've got every respect for this here Kreisler as a feller which plays something elegant on the fiddle, but

at the same time he has had himself extensively advertised with pictures the same like King C. Gillette and William L. Douglas, and that's probably what made him, Abe, because it's pretty safe to say that if you could by any possibility induce and persuade them people which is hollering about art being international and Kreisler being the best fiddler in existence, y'understand, to go and hear Kreisler at a concert where under the name of Harris Fine and wearing false whiskers he was playing a program consisting principally of Rabinowitz's Concerto in G, Opus number Two fifty-six B, y'understand, they would come away saying it was awful rotten even for an amateur and that you should ought to hear Kreisler play Rabinowitz's Concerto in G, Opus number Two fifty-six B, and then you would know how that feller Harris Fine murdered it. So that's why I say, Abe, that advertised art comes under the head of merchandise, and I ain't so sure that the artist who advertises ain't just as much of a business man as we would say, for example, a fish-dealer."

"Well, there's one thing about this here trouble with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Mawruss," Abe said: "it has put Boston on the map for a few days, which the way New York people is acting about electing a mayor in New York City, y'understand, you would think that New York, England, France, and Italy was fighting Germany and Austria, and that if the mayor of New York said so, the war would go on or stop, as the case might be, and otherwise not."

"You couldn't blame New York at that," Morris said. "People out in Seattle which has never been no nearer New York as Fall City, Wash., or Snoqualmie, goes round signing 'Take Me Back to New York Town' *oder* 'Give My Regards to Broadway,' and young ladies living in Saint Louis, which is a good-sized city, y'understand, reads in a magazine printed in Chicago—*also* a good-sized city—story after story which has got to do with a wealthy New York clubman, or a poor New York working-girl, or a beautiful New York actress, while the advertising section has got pictures by the hundreds of automobiles, ready-made clothing, vacuum cleaners, beds and bedding, health underwear, and cash-registers, and all of them are fixed up with the Grand Central Depot across the street or the Public Library showing through a window or, anyhow, the Flatiron Building and Madison Square Garden not half a column away, y'understand. Also there is a New York store in every village and a New York letter in every newspaper, and one way or another you would think that the whole United States was trying to prove to New York that it was as important as New York has for a long time already suspected."

"Well, ain't it?" Abe asked.

"It couldn't be," Morris replied. "Take, for instance, this here election for mayor, and the way the New York papers talked about it you would think the Kaiser says to Hindenberg: 'Listen, Max, don't ship no more soldiers no-

wheres till we hear how things are breaking for Hillkowitz in New York,' or maybe he said Mitchel or Hylan—you couldn't tell, and Hindenberg says, 'But I understand Mitchel is pretty strong up in the Twenty-third Assembly District in certain parts of the Bronix, so I think, Chief, it might be a good idea to have a couple of dozen divisions of artillery sent to Dvinsk and Riga.' But the Kaiser says: 'Now do as I tell you, Max. I got a wireless from Mexico that Hillkowitz will carry three hundred and nine out of four hundred and thirteen election districts in the Borough of Richmond alone.' And Hindenberg says: 'Where did they get *that* dope? I tell you they don't know nothing but Hylan down on Staten Island, and if you take *my* advice, Chief, you'll 'phone Ludendorff to hold the Siegfried line, the Lohengrin line, the Trovatore line, the Travvyayter line, the Bohemian Girl line, and all the other lines from Aïda to Zampa, because in my opinion Mitchel has a walk-over.'"

"That's where they both made a mistake," Abe commented, "because it was a landslide for Hylan."

"*Yow* they was mistaken," Morris said. "Do you suppose for one moment that the Kaiser had got so much as an inkling that they were going to elect a mayor in New York? *Oser!* And with this here Hindenberg, you could tell from the feller's face that for all he understands about the English language, Abe, the word *mayor* don't exist at all. As for the way they choose a mayor

in America, that *grobe Kerl* couldn't tell you whether they *elect* a mayor, *appoint* a mayor, or *cut* for a mayor—aces low. And that's the way it goes in New York, Abe. They think that the whole of Europe is watching with palpitations of the heart to see who is going to be elected mayor of New York, and they never stop to figure that there ain't six persons out of the six millions in New York which could tell you the name of the mayor of London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, or, for that matter, Yonkers or Jersey City."

"From the mayor which they finally chose in New York, Mawruss," Abe commented, "a feller needn't got to be so terribly ignorant as all that to suppose that not only did the people of New York, instead of voting for mayor, *cut* for him, aces low, y'understand, but that they also turned up the ace."

"They turned up what they wanted to turn up, Abe," Morris said, "which the way the people of New York City elects Tammany Hall every few years, Abe, it makes you think that everybody should have a vote, except convicts, idiots, minors, Indians not taxed, and people that live in New York City."

X

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON REVOLUTIONIZING THE REVOLUTION BUSINESS

If Kerensky would have had experience as a traveling salesman it wouldn't hurt him to be spending his entire time commuting between Moscow and Petersburg.

"WHAT they want to do in Russland," Abe Potash declared, one morning in November, "is to have one last revolution, and stick *to* it."

"It ain't Russia which is having them revolutions," Morris Perlmutter observed. "It's the Russian revolutionists. Them boys have been standing around doing nothing for years, Abe, in fact ever since nineteen five, and now that they got a job they figure that why should they finish it up, because revolutionists' work is piece-work, and just so soon as a revolution is over, as a general thing, the revolutionists gets laid off—up against a wall at sunrise."

"Well, them boys is certainly nursing their job this time, Mawruss," Abe continued. "The way them fellers is acting up over there it wouldn't surprise me a bit if most of the Russian merchants

would move to Mexico, so as they could carry on their business in peace and quietness, y'understand. What the idea of all these here revolutions is I don't know. They've got the Czar living in a cold-water walk-up, and you could go the length and breadth of Russia with a ballet-dancer as a decoy without running across so much as one grand duke peeking through the window-blinds, y'understand. So what more do them Russians want?"

"For one thing," Morris explained, "the peasants insists that all the land in Russland should be divided up between them."

"What for?" Abe asked.

"They probably see a chance to get a little real estate free of charge," Morris replied.

"*Aber* what good would that do them?" Abe said. "Because in a country where revolutions is liable to happen every day in the week except Saturdays from nine to twelve-thirty, y'understand, there ain't much market for real estate, and, besides, Mawruss, if them poor peasants only knew what a dawg's life it is in the real-estate business, understand me, even when times is good, they would of got such *Rachmonos* for the Czar with his twenty-two million five hundred and forty-three thousand two hundred and twenty-nine versts of unimproved property, that instead of getting up a revolution, they would of got up a meeting and passed resolutions of sympathy."

"The chances is they would of done it, anyway, if it wouldn't been for this here Kerensky," Mor-

ris declared. "What that feller don't know about running a revolution, Abe, if Carranza, Villa, and Huerta would have known it, they would have had two years ago already a chain of five-and-ten-cent revolutions doing a good business all the way from the Rio Grande to Cape Horn. Yes, Abe, compared with a boss revolutionist like Kerensky, y'understand, these here Mexican revolutionists is just, so to speak, *learners* on revolutionists."

"Then if that's the case, Mawruss, how does it come that one after another, Korniloff, Lenine, and Trotzky, practically puts this here Kerensky out of business as a revolutionist?" Abe asked.

"Well, I'll tell you," Morris said. "A feller which is running a revolution in Russland has not only got to got nerve, y'understand, but he's also got to be able to stand very long hours. Also it is necessary for him to do a whole lot of traveling, because no sooner does such a feller set up his government in Petersburg, y'understand, than the Petersburg Local Number One of the Amalgamated Workingmen's and Soldiers' Union is liable to chase him and his government all the way to Moscow, y'understand, and hardly does he get busy in Moscow, understand me, than he gets in bad with the Moscow Local Number One of the same union, and so on vice versa. In fact, in a couple of weeks he's liable to be vice-versad that way a half a dozen times, which if Kerensky would have had experience as a traveling salesman, Abe, it wouldn't hurt him to be practically

spending his entire time commuting between Moscow and Petersburg, but before this here Kerensky became a revolutionist he used to was in the law business, and besides he enjoys very poor health and is liable to die any moment."

"What's the matter with him?" Abe asked.

"I understand he's got kidney trouble," Morris replied.

"Well, if that feller would get an opportunity to die of kidney trouble, Mawruss, he should ought to take advantage of it," Abe commented, "because if you was to look up in the files of the Petersburg Department of Health what is the figures on the cause of death in the case of revolutionists, Mawruss, you would probably find something like this:

Explosions	91.31416%
Gun-shot wounds, including revolvers, air-rifles, machine-guns, cannons, armored tanks, torpedoes, and unclassified	8.99999
Knife wounds, including razors, cold chisels, pickaxes, and cloth and grass cutting apparatus	0.563
Natural causes, including hardening of the arteries	a trace."

"What do you mean—natural causes?" Morris said. "When a revolutionist dies a natural death, it's a pure accident."

"Did I say it wasn't?" Abe said. "But at the same time some Russian revolutionists lives longer than others, because being a Russian revolutionist

is more or less a matter of training. Take this here feller which is now conducting the Russian revolution under the name of Trotzky, and used to was conducting a New York trolley-car under the name of Braunstein, y'understand, and when the time comes—which it *will* come—when his offices will be surrounded by a mob of a hundred thousand Russian working-men and soldiers, understand me, all that this here Trotzky *alias* Braunstein will do is to shout '*Fares, please,*' and he'll go through that crowd of working-men like a—well, like a New York trolley-car conductor going through a crowd of working-men."

"From what is happening in Mexico and Russia," Morris observed, "it seems that when a country gets a revolution on its hands it's like a feller with a boil on his neck. He's going to keep on having them until he gets 'em entirely out of his system."

"Well, Russia has had such an awful siege of them," Abe said, "that you would think she was immune by this time."

"It's the freedom breaking out on her," Morris said.

"It seems, however," said Abe, "that in Russia there are as many kinds of freedom as there are fellers that want a job running a revolution. There was the Kerensky brand of freedom which was quite popular for a while; then Korniloff tried to market another brand of freedom and made a failure of it, and now Trotzky and Lenine are putting out the T. and L. Brand of Self-rising

Freedom in red packages, and seem to be doing quite a good business, too."

"Sure I know," Morris agreed. "But you would think that freedom was freedom and that there could be no arguments about it, so why the devil do them poor Russian working-men go on fighting each other, Abe?"

"They want an immediate peace with Germany," Abe said, "and the way it looks now, they would still be fighting each other for an immediate peace with Germany ten years after the war is over, because if them Russian working-men was to get an immediate peace *immediately*, Mawruss, they would have to go to work again, and you know as well as I do, Mawruss, the very last thing that a Russian working-man thinks of, y'understand, is working."

"Well in a way, you couldn't blame the Russians for what is going on in Russland, Abe," Morris said. "For years already the Socialists has been telling them poor *Nebiches* what a rotten time the working-men had *before* the social revolution, y'understand, and what a good time the working-man is going to have *after* the social revolution, understand me, but what kind of a time the working-man would have *during* the social revolution, THAT the Socialists left for them poor Russians to find out for themselves, and when those working-men who come through it alive begin to figure the profit and loss on the transaction, Abe, the whole past life of one of those Socialist leaders is going to flash before his eyes

just before the drop falls, y'understand, and one of his pleasantest recollections—if you can call recollections pleasant on such an occasion—will be the happy days he spent knocking down fares on the Third and Amsterdam Avenue cars."

"Then I take it you 'ain't got a whole lot of sympathy for the Socialists, Mawruss," Abe said.

"Not since when I was a greenhorn I used to work at buttonhole-making, and I heard a Socialist feller on East Houston Street hollering that under a socialistic system the laborer would get the whole fruits of his labor," Morris said. "Pretty near all that night I lay awake figuring to myself that if I could make twelve buttonholes every ten minutes, which would be seventy-two buttonholes an hour or seven hundred and twenty buttonholes a day, Abe, how many buttonholes would I have in a year under a socialistic system, and after I had them, what would I do with them? The consequence was, I overslept myself and came down late to the shop next morning, and it was more than two days before I found another job."

"Well, that ain't much of an argument against socialism," Abe remarked.

"Not to most people it wouldn't be, but it was an awful good argument to me, and I really think it saved me from becoming a Socialist," Morris said.

"You a Socialist!" Abe exclaimed. "How could a feller like you become a Socialist? I belong to the same lodge with you now for ten years, and in all that time you've never had nerve

enough to get up and say even so much as '*I second the motion.*'"

"But there are two classes of Socialists, Abe—the talkers and the listeners, and while I admit the talkers are in the big majority, the work of the listeners is just so important. They are the fellers which try out the ideas of the talkers, the only difference being that while such talkers as Herr Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg gets a lot of publicity out of going to jail for handing out socialistic ideas, y'understand, the funerals which the listeners get for trying such ideas out are very, very private."

"At that, them talking Socialists which is taking shifts with each other in running the Russian government must be putting in a pretty busy time, Mawruss, because there's a whole lot of detail to such a job, and while past experience as a street-car conductor may give the necessary endurance, it don't help out much when it comes to systematizing the day's work of a Russian dictator. For instance, we would say that he goes into office at nine o'clock with the help of the One Hundred and First Kazan Regiment, six companies of Cossacks, and the Tenth Poltava Separate Company of Machine-Gunners. After making a socialistic address to the survivors he washes off the blood and puts on a clean collar, or, in the case of a Bolsheviki dictator, he only washes off the blood.

"The next thing on the program is to ring up a few flag and bunting concerns and ask for representatives to call about taking an order for a few

national flags. They arrive half an hour later, and after making a socialistic address, y'understand, he picks out a design for immediate delivery, because even a few hours' delay will make a design for a Russian national flag as big a sticker as a nineteen-ten-model runabout.

"When he's got the flag off his mind he next interviews the Russian composers, Glazounow, Borodine, Arensky, and Scriabine, and after making a socialistic address he invites them they should submit a new national anthem, the only requirements being that it should contain a reference to the fact that under the old competitive system the working-man did not receive the whole fruits of his labor, and that delivery should be made not later than twelve-thirty P.M. He then goes over to the mint to decide upon models for a new gold coinage and to confiscate as much of the old one as they have on hand. After making a socialistic address to the director of the mint and his staff, y'understand, he agrees that the old, clean-shaven Kerensky designs shall be altered by adding whiskers, because you know as well as I do, Mawruss, when it comes to the portrait on a gold coin, nobody is going to take it so particular about the likeness not being so good as long as it ain't plugged.

"He then goes back to his office and prepares a socialistic address to be delivered to the duma, a socialistic address to be delivered to the army, and three or four more socialistic addresses with the names in blank for use in case of emergency,"

Abe continued, "and so one way or another he is kept busy right up to the time when word comes that his successor has just left Tsarskoe-Seloe with the Thirty-second Nijni-Novgorod Infantry and a regiment composed of contingents from the Ladies' Aid Society of the First Universalist Church of Minsk, Daughters of the Revolution of Nineteen five, the Y. W. H. A., and the Women's City Club of Odessa. Twenty minutes later he is on board a boat bound for Sweden, and after looking up the *Ganeves* in his state-room he comes up on deck and spends the rest of the trip making socialistic addresses to the crew, the passengers, and the cargo."

"Having to go and live in Sweden ain't such a pleasant fate, neither," Morris observed.

"Say!" Abe exclaimed. "There's only one thing that a Russian revolutionary dictator really and truly worries about."

"What is that?" Morris said.

"Losing his voice," Abe said.

XI

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS THE SUGAR QUESTION

One lump, or two, please?

"AIN'T it terrible the way you couldn't buy no sugar in New York, nowadays, Mawruss?" Abe Potash said, one morning in November.

"Let the people *not* eat sugar," Morris Perlmutter declared. "These are war-times, Abe."

"Suppose they are war-times," Abe retorted, "must everybody act like they had diabetes? Sugar is just so much a food as butter and milk and *gefullte Rinderbrust*."

"I know it is," Morris agreed, "but most people eat it because it's sweet, and they like it."

"Then it's your idea that on account of the war people should eat only them foods which they don't like?" Abe inquired.

"That ain't *my* idea, Abe," Morris protested; "I got it from reading letters to the editors written by Pro Bono Publicos and other fellers which is taking advantage of the only opportunity they will ever have to figure in the newspapers outside of the

births, marriages, and deaths, y'understaud. Them fellers all insist that until the war is over everything in the way of sweetening should be left out of American life, and some of 'em even go so far as to claim that we should ought to swear off pepper and salt also. Their idea is that until we lick the Germans the American people should leave off going to the theayter, riding in automobiles, playing golluf, baseball, and auction pinochle, and reading magazines and story-books, y'understand. In fact, they say that the American people should devote themselves to their business, but what business the fellers which is in the show business, the automobile business, and the magazine-publishing business should devote themselves to don't seem to of occurred to these here Pro Bono Publicos at all."

"I guess them newspaper-letter writers which is trying to beat out their own funeral notices must of got their dope from this here Frank J. Vanderlip," Abe commented, "which I read it somewheres that he comes out with a brogan that a dollar spent for unnecessary things is an unpatriotic dollar."

"Sure, I know," Morris said, "but he left it to the spender's judgment as to what was necessary and what was unnecessary, Abe, which even President Wilson himself finds it necessary once in a while to go to a theayter in order to forget the way them Pro Bono Publicos is nagging at him, morning, noon, and night."

"But the country must got to get very busy if

we expect to win, Mawruss," Abe said, "and them Pro Bonos thinks it's up to them to make the people realize what a serious proposition we've got on our hands."

"That's all right, too," Morris agreed, "but it would be a whole lot more serious if the people become *Meshugga* from melancholia before we got half-way through with the war. Even when times is prosperous only a very few of the *Leute* takes more amusement than is necessary for 'em, Abe, and that's why I say that this here Frank J. Vanderlip knew what he was talking about when he didn't say what things was unnecessary. For instance, Abe, if a Pro Bono Publico, on account of the war, cuts out taking a summer vacation for a couple of hundred dollars, and in consequence gets a break-down from overwork and has to spend five hundred dollars for doctor bills, all you've got to do is to strike a balance and you can see for yourself that he has spent three hundred unnecessary unpatriotic dollars."

"Well, doctors has got to have money to buy Liberty Bonds with the same like anybody else, Mawruss," Abe commented.

"I know they have," Morris agreed, "and that's why I say the great mistake which these here Pro Bonos makes is that the war is going to be fought only with the money which is saved, whereas if them boys had any experience collecting for an orphan asylum or a hospital, Abe, they would know that it ain't the tight-wads which come across. Yes, Abe, you could take it from

me, the very people which is cutting out theayters, automobile rides, and auction pinochle for the duration of the war would think twice before they invest the money they save that way in anything which don't bear interest at the rate of six per cent. per annum."

"You may be right, Mawruss," Abe said, "but arguments about how to finance the war is like double-faced twelve-inch phonograph records. There's a good deal to be said on both sides, which it looks like a dead open-and-shut proposition to me that people couldn't buy no Liberty Bonds with the money they spend for theayter tickets."

"But the feller which runs the theayter could, and he must also got to pay the government a tax on the money which he gets that way," Morris retorted.

"But how about the money which the theayter-owner must got to pay in wages to actors, play-writers, ushers, and the *Rosher* which sells tickets in the box-office?" Abe argued.

"Well, how are all them loafers going to buy Liberty Bonds if they wouldn't get their money that way?" Morris asked. "So you see how it is, Abe: the feller which saves all his money for the duration of the war ain't such a big *Tzaddik* as you would think, because even if he invests the whole thing in Liberty Bonds, which he ain't likely to do, all he gets for his money is Liberty Bonds, and at the same time he is helping to ruin a lot of business men and throw their employees out of their jobs, and incidentally he is also doing

the best he knows how to make the whole country sick and tired of the war. *Aber* you take one of them fellers which goes once in a while to the theayter for the duration of the war, y'understand, and indirectly he is handing the government just so much money as the tight-wad, the only difference being that the government ain't paying him no interest on it, and he is also helping to keep the show business going and to pay the wages of the actors and all them other low-lives which makes a living out of the show business."

"Sure, I know," Abe said. "But how is the government going to get men for the ammunition-factories if they are busy making automobiles for joy-riding *oder* fooling away their time as actors, Mawruss?"

"That is up to the government and not to the Pro Bono Publicos," Morris declared, "which if the theayters has got to be closed, Abe, I would a whole lot sooner have it done by the government as by a bunch of Pro Bono Publicos, which not only never goes to the theayter *anyway*, but also gets more pleasure from seeing their foolishness printed in the newspaper than you or I would from seeing the Follies of nineteen seventeen to nineteen fifty inclusive."

"Well, I'll tell you, Mawruss," Abe said, "admitting that all which you say is true, y'understand, I seen a whole lot of fellers which is working as actors during the past few years, Mawruss, and with the exception of six, may be, it would

oser do the show business any harm *if* them fellers was to become operators on pants, let alone ammunition. It's the same way with the automobile business also. If seventy-five per cent. of the people which runs automobiles was compelled to give them up to-morrow, Mawruss, the thing they would miss most of all would be the bills from the repair-shop robbers. So that's the way it goes, Mawruss. It don't make no difference what a Pro Bono Publico writes to the newspaper, y'understand, he couldn't do a hundredth part as much to make people cut out going to the theayter for the duration of the war as the feller in the show business does when he puts on a rotten show. Also Mr. Vanderlip has got a good line of talk about Americans acting economical, y'understand, but he's practically encouraging the people that they should throw away their money left and right on automobiles, compared to some of them automobile-manufacturers which depends upon their repair departments for their profits."

"I understand that right now, Abe, the automobile business is falling off something terrible," Morris continued, "and the show business also."

"Sure it is," Abe said, "because so soon as the government put taxes on theayter tickets and automobiles, Mawruss, the people was bound to figure it out that it was bad enough they should got to pay taxes on their assets without being soaked ten per cent. on their liabilities also. And if I would be a Pro Bono Publico which, *Gott sei dank*, I couldn't write good enough English to

break into the newspapers, Mawruss, the argument I would make is that people should leave off being suckers for the duration of the war, and the whole matter of spending money foolishly on theayter tickets and automobiles would adjust itself without any assistance from the government, y'understand."

"Well, everything else failing, them automobile-dealers and theayter-owners could get up a war bazaar for themselves," Morris suggested, "which I seen it the other day in the papers where they run off a war bazaar in New York and raised over seventy thousand dollars for some fellers in the advertising business."

"Has the advertising business also been affected by the war?" Abe asked.

"The business of *some* advertising agents has," replied Morris, "which it seems that the standard rates for advertising agents who solicited advertisements for war-bazaar programs was any sum realized by the bazaar over and above one-tenth of one per cent. of the net proceeds, which the advertising men agreed should be devoted to wounded American soldiers or starving Belgiums, according to the name of the bazaar."

"Maybe them advertising agents earned their money at that, Mawruss," Abe said, "which the average advertising solicitor would need to do a whole lot of talking before he could convince me that an advertisement in a war-bazaar program has got any draught to speak about, because you take a feller in the pants business, y'understand,

and if he would get an order for one-twelfth dozen pants out of all the advertisements which he would stick in war-bazaar programs from the beginning of the war up to the time when running a war bazaar first offense is going to be the equivalence of not less than from five to ten years, understand me, it would be big already."

"At the same time," Morris protested, "if people is foolish enough to blow in their money advertising by war-bazaar programs, Abe, it don't seem unreasonable to me that the advertising agents and the starving Belgiums should go fifty-fifty on the proceeds, and the way it looks now, Abe, the New York grand jury is going to agree with me after they get through investigating the bills for advertising in connection with the army and navy bazaars."

"Sure, I know," Abe agreed. "But why should the grand jury investigate only the advertising? Why don't a grand-juryman for once in his life do a little something to earn his salary and investigate what becomes of the articles which young ladies sells chances on at war bazaars? It would also be a slight satisfaction for them easy marks which contributes merchandise to a war bazaar if the grand jury could send out tracers after the goods which remained in stock when the bazaar was officially declared closed by the parties named in the indictment."

"What do you think—a New York grand jury has got nothing else to investigate for the rest of the twentieth century except one war bazaar?"

Morris inquired. "The way you talk you would think that they had nothing better to do with their time than the people which goes to war bazaars, which the reason why them advertising men went wrong was that they were practically encouraged to run crooked war bazaars by the hundreds of thousands of people who wouldn't loosen up for charity unless they could get something for their money besides the good they are doing."

"Well, that only goes to show how one minute you argue one way, and the next you say something entirely different again," Abe said.

"Is that so?" Morris exclaimed. "Well, so far as I could see, Abe, you ain't on a strict diet, neither, when it comes to eating your own words."

"Maybe I ain't," Abe admitted, "but it seems to me that people might just so well pass on their money to the Red Cross through war bazaars as pass it on to the government through buying theayter tickets the way you argued a few minutes since."

"The Red Cross is one thing and the government another," Morris retorted. "If people spend money at a war bazaar maybe one per cent. of it reaches the Red Cross and maybe it don't, whereas if they spend at a theayter, the government gets ten per cent. net, and the transaction 'ain't got to be audited by the grand jury, neither."

"Then you ain't in favor that people should give their money to the Red Cross?" Abe said.

"*Gott soll huten!*" Morris cried. "People should give all they could to the Red Cross and the

government also, but while they are doing it, Abe, it ain't no more necessary that they should encourage a crooked advertising agent as that they should ruin a hard-working feller in the show business. Am I right or wrong?"

XII

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS HOW TO PUT THE SPURT IN THE EXPERT

"WHEN does the Shipping Commission expect to begin shipments on those ships?" Abe Potash asked, as he laid down the morning paper a few days after Thanksgiving.

"I don't know," Morris Perlmutter replied. "The way the newspapers was talking last April, Abe, it looked like by the first of September our production would be so far ahead of our orders for ships that President Wilson would have to organize a special department to handle the cancellations, y'understand, but from what I could see now, Abe, by next spring the nearest them Shipping Commission fellers will have come to deliveries on ships is that this here Hurley will be getting writer's cramp from signing letters to the attorneys for the people which ordered ships that in reply to your favor of the tenth inst. would say that we expect to ship the ships not later than July first at the latest, and oblige."

"But I thought that even before we went to

war with Germany, Mawruss, a couple of inventors made it an invention of a ship which could be built of yellow pine in ninety days net."

"Sure, I know," Morris said. "But the Shipping Commission couldn't make up their minds whether them yellow-pine ships would be any good even after they *were* built, on account some professional experts claimed that yellow pine shrinks in water to the extent of .00031416 milliegrams to the kilowatt-hour, or .000000001 per cent., and other professional experts said, '*Yow* .00031416 milliegrams!' and that .00000031416 would be big already, and that also what them first experts didn't know from the shrinkage of yellow pine, understand me."

"Well, why didn't the Shipping Commission build a sample ship from yellow pine?" Abe suggested. "It's already nine months since the war started, and by this time such a ship could have been in the water long enough for them Shipping Commission fellers to judge which experts was right."

"And suppose she did shrink a little," Morris said, "she could have been anyhow disposed of '*as is*' to somebody who didn't take it so particular to the fraction of an inch how much yellow pine he gets in a yellow-pine ship."

"I give you right, Mawruss," Abe agreed, "but then, you see, an idee like that would never occur to a professional expert, Mawruss, because it has the one big objection that it might prove the other experts was right when they didn't agree with him,

which that is the trouble with professional experts. The important thing to them ain't so much the articles on which they experts, as what big experts they are on such articles.

"Take this here Lewis machine-gun, Mawruss," Abe continued, "and when Colonel Lewis puts it up to the army experts, y'understand, naturally them experts says, 'Well, if we are such big experts on machine-guns, we should ought to know a whole lot more about machine-guns as Colonel Lewis, and what does that *Schlemiel* know about machine-guns, *anyway?*' so they sent Colonel Lewis a notice that they would not be responsible for goods left over thirty days, and the consequence was Colonel Lewis sold his machine-gun to the English army."

"And he didn't have to be such a cracker-jack high-grade A-number-one salesman to do that, neither," Morris commented, "because if his only talking point to the English experts was that the American experts had turned down his gun, y'understand, the English experts would give him a big order without even asking him to unpack his samples."

"Sure, I know," Abe said. "But if Colonel Lewis would of had the interests of America at heart, Mawruss, he should ought to have offered his machine-gun to the English experts first, understand me, and after he had got out of the observation ward, which the English experts would just naturally send him to as a dangerous American crank with a foolish idea for a machine-gun,

"'Well, if we are such big experts on machine-guns, we should ought to know a whole lot more about machine-guns as Colonel Lewis, and what does that *Schlemiel* know about machine-guns, *anyway?*'"

y'understand, the American experts would have taken his entire output at his own terms."

"After all, you can't kick about such mistakes being made, because that's the trouble about being a new beginner in any business," Morris said. "It don't make no difference whether it would be war or pants, Abe, you start out with one big liability, and that is the advice proposition. Twice as many new beginners goes under from accepting what they thought was good advice as from accepting what they thought was good accounts, Abe, and them fellers on the Shipping Commission deserves a great deal of credit that they already made such fine progress. You can just imagine what this here Hurley which he used to was in the railroad business must be up against from his friends which has been in the ship-building business for years already. The chance is that every time Mr. Hurley goes out on the street one of them old ship-building friends comes up to him with that good-advice expression on his face and says: '*Nu*, Hurley. How are they coming?' which it don't make a bit of difference to such a feller whether Mr. Hurley would say, '*So, so*,' '*Pretty good*,' or '*Rotten*,' y'understand, he might just as well save his breath, on account the good-advice feller is going to get it off his chest, anyhow.

"'You're lucky at that,' the good-advice feller says, 'because I just met your assistant designer, Jake Rashkin, and he tells me you are getting out a line of whalebacks in pastel shades.'

"'Well, why not?' Hurley says.

"'Why not!' the friend exclaims. 'You mean to tell me that you don't know even that much about the ship-building business, that you would actually go to work and make up for the fall trade a line of whalebacks in pastel shades? Honestly, Hurley, I must say I am surprised at you.' And for the next twenty minutes he gives Hurley the names and dates of six voluntary bankrupts, all of whom started in the ship-building business by making up a line of whalebacks in pastel shades, together with the details of just what them fellers is doing for a living to-day from selling cigars on commission downwards.

"Naturally, Hurley hustles right back to the shop and tells the foreman that if they 'ain't already started on that last batch of whalebacks in pastel shades, not to mind, and he spends the rest of the afternoon getting his operators busy on a couple of hundred oil-burning boats in solid colors, like reds, greens, and blues. The consequence is that the next day at lunch another old friend comes up to him, which used to was in the ship-building business when the record from New York to Liverpool was nineteen days ten hours and forty-five minutes, y'understand, and says: '*Nu*, Hurley. How is the busy little ship-builder today?'

"'Pretty good,' Hurley says. 'I'm just getting to work on a big line of oil-burners in solid colors, like reds, greens, and blues.'

"'No!' the old ship-builder says.

"'Sure!' Hurley tells him, and after they have said 'No!' and 'Sure!' a couple of dozen times it appears that if a new beginner in the ship-building business lays in a stock of plain-colored oil-burning boats he might just so well kiss himself good-by with his ship-building business and be done with it. Also it seems that the only line of goods for a new beginner in the ship-building business to specialize in is whalebacks in pastel shades, Abe, and that's the way it goes."

"At that we're a whole lot better off as England was when she started in as a new beginner in the war business," Abe commented. "Mr. Hurley was, anyhow, in the railroad business when he took over the ship-building job, and we've got other men which were high-grade dry-goods and hardware men before they threw up their business to help the government branch out into the war business, y'understand, but if we would got to depend on somebody who was trying to run a ship-yard with the experience he had got from being national lawn-tennis champion for the years nineteen hundred to nineteen sixteen inclusive, or if President Wilson had the idee that for a man to be the right man in the right place, y'understand, he should ought to have the gumption and business ability which a feller naturally picks up in the course of being an earl or a duke, understand me, the best we could hope for would be a fleet of six rebuilt tugboats by the fall of nineteen fifty."

"It wasn't England's fault that she made such

a mistake, Abe," Morris said. "Up to the time Germany started this war it used to was considered that if nations did got to go to war, y'understand, the best way to go about it was to put it in charge of a good sport like a tennis champion would naturally have to be, and as for the earls and the dukes, the theory on which them fellers fooled away their time was that they was just resting up between wars, Abe, because they was, anyhow, gentlemen, and it was England's idea that all a soldier had to be was a gentleman. But nowadays that's already a thing of the past. The way Germany fixed things with her long-distance cannons, her liquid fire, gas, and Zeppelins, a soldier don't have to be so much of a gentleman as an inventor, a chemist, an engineer, and a general all-around hustler."

"In fact, Mawruss," Abe said, "a German soldier don't need to be a gentleman at all, because when it comes to stealing château furniture, destroying cathedrals, burning houses, and chopping down fruit-trees, any experience as a gentleman wouldn't be much of a help to a German soldier."

"That's what I am telling you, Abe," Morris declared. "Germany has made war a business, y'understand, and she figures that a gentleman in the war business is like a gentleman in the pants business. He ain't going to make any more or better pants by being a gentleman, y'understand, and if we are going to win this war, Abe, we should ought to stop beefing about German

soldiers not being gentlemen, and take into consideration the fact that while German engineers, chemists, inventors, and submarine-builders may not know whether you play lawn tennis with a cue, mallet, or a full deck of fifty-two cards including the joker, Abe, you can bet your life that they know an awful lot about engineering, chemistry, and building submarines, and they don't need no so-called experts to help them, neither."

"And you can also bet your life, Mawruss, that no German would have turned down Colonel Lewis's machine-guns," Abe said, "the way them experts of ours did."

"Well, what is an expert to do, Abe?" Morris asked. "If he goes to work and recommends the government to give an inventor an order for his invention, he's taking a big chance that the invention wouldn't work, and you know as well as I do, Abe, most American experts play in terrible hard luck. You take these here military experts which gives expert opinions in the newspapers about what is going to happen next on the Balkan front, y'understand, and a feller could make quite a reputation as a military expert by simply coppering their predictions."

"Well, them military experts which writes in the newspapers ain't really experts at all, Mawruss," Abe said. "They're just crickets, like them musical crickets which knows everything there is to know about, we would say, for example, playing on the fiddle excepting how to play on the fiddle."

"*Aber* what is the difference between a profes-

sional expert and a professional cricket, *anyway?*" Morris asked.

"A professional expert is a feller which thinks he knows all about a business because he tried for years and he never could make a success of it," Abe replied, "whereas a professional cricket is a feller which thinks he knows all about a business because he tried for years and he could never even break into it."

"And how could you expect to get from people like that an opinion which ain't on the bias?" Morris concluded.

XIII

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON BEING AN OPTICIAN AND LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

"YES, Mawruss," Abe Potash said as he laid down the morning paper after glancing over the alarming head-lines, "a feller which has got stomach trouble or the toothache nowadays is playing in luck, because when you've got stomach trouble you couldn't think about nothing else, and what is a little thing like stomach trouble to worry over with all the *tzuris* which is happening in the world nowadays?"

"Well, then *have* stomach trouble," Morris Perlmutter advised.

"What do you mean—*have* stomach trouble?" Abe said. "A man couldn't get stomach trouble the same way he could get drunk, Mawruss. It is something which is just so much beyond your control as red hair or a good tenor voice."

"Sure, I know," Morris agreed. "But what is happening in Russia and Italy is also beyond your control, Abe, so if them Bolsheviki is getting on your nerves, and you hate to pick up the paper for fear of finding that the Germans would have

captured Venice, understand me, console yourself with the idee that there's a lot of brainy fellers in this country which is doing all they know how to handle the situation over in the old country, and then if you want something near at home to worry about like stomach trouble, y'understand, there's plenty of misfortunate people in orphan asylums and hospitals right here in New York City which will be very glad to have you worry over them in a practical way out of what you've got left when you're through paying income and excise profit taxes, Abe."

"Maybe there is some people which would get so upset over having to give twenty dollars or so to an orphan asylum or a hospital, Mawruss, that for the time being they could forget how General Crozier 'ain't ordered the machine-guns yet," Abe said, "but me I ain't built that way. When it says in the papers where the Germans is sending all their soldiers away from the Russian front to the Italian front, y'understand, it may be that some people could read it and try not to worry by sending five dollars to them Highwaymen for Improving the Condition of the Poor, Mawruss, but when *I* read it, Mawruss, I think how it's all up to them Bolsheviki in Russia, and I get awful sore at the poor—in especially the Russian poor."

"What are you worrying your head about what they put in the papers?" Morris asked. "Seventy-five per cent. of the bridge-heads which the Germans capture in the New York morning papers might just so well be French villages, except that

the reporters would have to look up the names of the villages on the map, because some editors are very particular that way; they insist that the reporter should use the name of a real village, whereas if he puts down that the Germans has captured a bridge-head on the Piave River he could go right out to lunch, and he never even stops to think that if somebody would check up the number of bridge-heads which the Germans has captured that way in the New York morning papers, Abe, the Piave River would got to be covered solid with bridges from end to end."

"But I am just so bad as a reporter, Mawruss—I never stop to think that, neither," Abe admitted. "It's my nature that I couldn't help believing the foolishness which I read in the papers, and if the Germans capture a bridge-head on me in the Sporting Edition with Final Wall Street Complete they might just so well capture it in Italy and be done with it, because if I play cards afterward I couldn't keep my mind on the game, anyhow. Only last Sunday I had a three-hundred-and-fifty hand in spades, with an extra ace and king, understand me, when I happened to think about reading in the paper where the Germans is going to build for next spring submarines in extra sized six hundred feet long, y'understand, and the consequence was I forget to meld a twenty in clubs and lost the hand by eighteen points. Before I fell asleep that night I thought it over that Germany couldn't build such a big submarine as the papers claimed, but by that time I was out three dollars

on the hand, *anyway*, and that's the way war affects *me*, Mawruss."

"Well, that's where you are making a big mistake, Abe," Morris commented, "because even when the articles which they print in the newspaper is true, y'understand, if you only stop to figure them out right, Abe, you could get a whole lot of encouragement that way. Take, for instance, when you read *via* Amsterdam that General Hindenberg is now commanding the western front, Abe, and with some people that would throw a big scare into 'em, y'understand, but with me not, Abe, because the way I look at it is from experience. I've known lots of fellers from seventy to seventy-five years old, Abe, and in particular my wife's mother's a brother Old Man Baum in the cotton-converting business. There's a feller which he actually went to work and married his stenographer when he was seventy-two, Abe, and, compared to an undertaking like that, running the western front would be child's play, Abe, and yet when all was said and done, if he went to theayter Saturday night and eats afterward a little chicken *à la* King, y'understand, it was a case of ringing up a doctor at three o'clock Sunday morning while his wife's relations sat around his flat figuring the inheritance tax. Now, take Hindenberg which he is six months older as Old Man Baum, Abe, and what that feller has went through in the last three years two lifetimes in the cotton-converting business wouldn't be a marker to it, understand me, and still there are

people which is worried that when he begins to run things on the western front, it is going to be a serious matter for the Allies, instead of the Germans.

"Yes, Abe," Morris continued, "with all the things them Germans has got to attend to on the western front, it's no cinch to have on their hands an old man seventy-two years of age, which, if anything should happen to the old *Rosher*, like acute indigestion from eating too much gruel or lumbago, y'understand, then real generals on the western front would never hear the end of it."

"Ain't Hindenberg also a real general?" Abe asked.

"Not an old man like that, Abe," Morris replied. "He used to was a real general, but now he is just a mascot for the Germans and a bogey man for us, which I bet yer the most that feller does to help along the war is to wear warm woolen underwear, keep out of draughts, and not get his feet wet under any circumstances at his age. Furthermore, Abe, I ain't so sure that the Germans is withdrawing so many soldiers as they claim from the Russian frontier, neither, y'understand, because the way them Bolsheviki has swung around to Germany must sound to the Kaiser almost too good to be true, and I bet yer also he figures that maybe it isn't because nobody knows better as the Kaiser how much reliance you could place on a deal between one country and another, even when it's in writing and signed by the party to be charged, which, for all any one could tell, whether

Russia is now a government, a co-partnership, a corporation, or only so to speak a voluntary association, Abe, the Kaiser might just as well sign his peace treaty with Pavlowa and Nordkin as with Lenine and Trotzky, so far as binding the Russian people is concerned."

"It ain't a peace treaty which them fellers wants to sign, Mawruss," Abe said. "It's a bill of sale, which I see that Lenine and Trotzky agrees Germany should import goods into Russia free of duty and that she should take Russian Poland and Courland and a lot of other territory, and if that's what is called making peace, Mawruss, then you might just as well say that a lawsuit is compromised by allowing the feller which sues to get a judgment and have the sheriff collect on it."

"And at that, Abe," Morris said, "there ain't a German merchant which wouldn't be only too delighted to swap his rights to import goods into Russia free of duty *after the war* for three-quarters of a pound of porterhouse steak and a ten-cent loaf of white bread right now, which the way food is so scarce nowadays in Germany, Abe, when a Berlin business man's family gets through with the Sunday dinner, and the servant-girl clears off the table, there's no use asking should she give the bones to the dog, because the chances is they *are* the dog, understand me. As for sugar, we think we've got a kick coming when we could only get two teaspoonfuls to a cup of coffee for five cents, y'understand, whereas in Germany they would consider themselves lucky if they could get two

teaspoonfuls to a gallon of coffee if they had a gallon of coffee in the entire country, understand me. So that's the way it goes in Germany, Abe; the people ask for bread and they give 'em a report on Norwegian steamers sunk by U-boats during the current week, and if one of the steamers was loaded with sugar, y'understand, that ain't going to be much satisfaction to a German which has got a sweet tooth and has been trying to make out with one two-grain saccharin tablet every forty-eight hours, neither."

"But the Germans seems to be making a lot of progress everywheres," Abe said.

"Except at home," Morris declared. "Maybe the German people still feels encouraged when the German army gets ahold of more territory, Abe, but it's a question of a short time now when the German people is going to realize that they don't need no more room to starve in than they've got at present, and that a nation can go broke just as comfortably in nine hundred thousand square miles as it can in nine million square miles."

"Sure, I know," Abe agreed, "but one thing Germany has fixed already, Mawruss, and that is that she is going to get a whole lot of customers in Russia."

"Well, if she does," Morris commented, "she'll have to provide the capital to set them customers up in business, and after she has done that, Abe, she will have to hustle around to drum up trade for them Russian customers, because when the Bolsheviki get through with their fine work in

Russia, Abe, the Russian people won't have enough purchasing power to make it a fair territory for a salesman with a line of five-and-ten-cent store supplies. So if Germany started this here war to get more trade, she's already licked."

"Then what does she go on fighting for?" Abe asked. "It seems to me that if we saw we couldn't accomplish nothing by going on fighting, Mawruss, we'd stop, ain't it?"

"Sure we would," Morris agreed. "But then, Abe, we 'ain't got nothing to stop us from stopping, because we ain't fighting for the sake of fighting, the way Von Tirpitz, Mackensen, and Ludendorff are doing. Take, for instance, Von Tirpitz, and that *Rosher* insists that the U-boats is going to win the war, so it don't make no difference to him how many German sailors goes down in U-boats, he's going to keep on sending out U-boats right up to the time the German people shoots him, and his last words will be that the reason why the U-boats didn't win the war was because they didn't have a fair trial. Then there's Mackensen and Ludendorff which they've got *their* idees about how the war should be won, and they mean to see that their idees continue to have a fair trial till there ain't enough German soldiers alive to give them idees a fair trial, and that's the way it goes, Abe. All the idees that we want to give a fair trial is that we are going to keep on fighting till we've proved to the German people that it don't pay to back up the Von Tirpitz, Ludendorff, and Mackensen idees."

"And how long is this going to take?" Abe inquired.

"Not so long as you think, Abe," Morris replied, "because Germany may have made peace with Russia, but she has still got fighting against her England, France, Italy, America, Starvation, Bad Business, Conceit, Lies, and Stubbornness."

"And in the mean time, Mawruss," Abe said, "what's going to happen to us?"

"Don't worry about us," Morris said. "All America has got to do is to try to be an optician and look on the bright side of things, and she's bound to win out in the end."

XIV

THE LIQUOR QUESTION—SHALL IT BE DRY OR EXTRA DRY?

Light wines don't harm an awful lot of people, for the same reason that there ain't much pneumonia caused by people getting damp from using finger-bowls.

"YES, Mawruss," Abe Potash said, the day after the prohibition amendment was adopted by the House of Representatives, "there's a lot of people going around taking credit for this here prohibition which in reality is living examples of the terrible effects not drinking schnapps has on the human race—suppose any one wanted to argue that way—whereas if you was to put the people wise which is actually responsible for the country going dry, y'understand, they would be too indignant to call you a liar before they could hit you with anything that lay most handy behind the bar from an ice-pick to an empty bottle, understand me."

"I always had an idea myself that what was responsible for prohibition, Abe, was that the people is sore at booze," Morris Perlmutter retorted.

"Sure, I know," Abe said. "But the people

would be just so sore at candy if the fellers which runs candy-stores acted the way saloon-keepers does, which you take a feller like this here Huyler, or one of the Smiths in the cough-drop business, and we would say his name is Harris Fine, y'understand, and instead of attending to the store and poisining people mit candy, he goes to work to get up the Harris Fine Association and gives all the eighteen-dollar-a-week policemen in the neighborhood to understand that it's equivalent to ten dollars in their pockets if they wouldn't take it so particular when members of the Harris Fine Association commits a little thing like murder or something, *verstehst du mich*, why the people in the same block which wasn't members of the Harris Fine Association would begin to think that candy was getting to have a bad influence on the neighborhood, y'understand. Then if Harris Fine was to run for alderman and all the loafers of the eighth ward or whatever ward he was alderman of was to meet in the back room of his candy-store, Mawruss, the respectable *Leute* which couldn't go past Harris Fine's candy-store without hearing somebody talking rotten language would go home and say that it was a shame and a disgrace that the eighth ward should got to have candy-stores in it. Afterward when he has been an alderman for some time, Mawruss, and Harris Fine begins to make a fortune out of the garbage-removal contracts by not removing garbage, y'understand, and also as a side line to candy and ice-cream soda, does an elegant business in asphalt-paving which

contains one-tenth of one per cent. asphalt, y'understand, the bad reputation which candy has got it in the eighth ward is going to spread throughout the city, Mawruss, and finally, when the candy feller starts in to make contracts for state roads, candy gets a black eye in the state also, and it's only a question of time before the candy-dealer would go to Washington and put over a rotten deal on the national government, understand me, and then people like you and me which never touches so much as a little piece of peanut-brittle, Mawruss, starts right in and hollers for the national prohibition of all kinds of candy from gum-drops to mixed chocolates and bum-bums at a dollar and a half a pound."

"You may be right, Abe," Morris said, "but when it comes right down to Bright's disease and charoses of the liver, y'understand, politics 'ain't got nothing to do with it, because it doesn't make no difference to whisky whether a feller voted for Wilson *oder* Hughes. It would just as lieve ruin the health and prospects of a Republican as a Democrat."

"Whisky might," Abe admitted, "but how about beer and light wines, Mawruss, which you know as well as I do, Mawruss, a loafer must got to drink an awful lot of beer before he gets drunk."

"Well, that's what makes the brewery business good, Abe," Morris said.

"But don't you think in a great number of cases, Mawruss, beer is drunk to squench thirst?" Abe asked.

"That's the way it's drunk in a great number of cases—twenty-four bottles to the case," Morris said; "but if the same people was to drink water the way they drink beer, Abe, instead of thirst you would think it was goldfish that troubled them, which I can get as thirsty as the next one, Abe, but I can usually manage to squench it without making an aquarium out of myself exactly."

"*Aber* what about light wines?" Abe inquired. "They don't harm an awful lot of people, Mawruss."

"They don't harm an awful lot of people for the same reason that there ain't much pneumonia caused by people getting damp from using finger-bowls, Abe," Morris said, "because so far as I could see the American people feels the same way about light wines as they do about finger-bowls. They could use 'em and they could let 'em alone, and they feel a whole lot more comfortable when they're letting 'em alone than when they're using 'em."

"Well, I'll tell you, Mawruss," Abe said, "I think a great many people which is prejudiced against light wines on account of heartburn is laying it to the wine instead of the seventy-five-cent Italian table-d'hôte dinner which goes with it."

"Yes, and it's just as likely to be the cocktail which went before it as the glass of brandy which came after it, and that's the trouble with beer and light wine, Abe," Morris declared. "They usually ain't the only numbers on the program,

and the feller which starts in on beer and light wines, Abe, soon gets such a big repertoire of drinks that he's performing on the bottle day and night, y'understand, which saloon-keepers knows better than anybody else, Abe, because if you would ask a saloon-keeper *oder* a bartender to have something, y'understand, it's a hundred-to-one proposition that he takes a cigar and not a glass beer."

"Sure, I know," Abe agreed. "But once a bartender draws a glass beer, before he could use it again, he's got to mark off so much for deteriorating that it's practically a total loss, whereas he could always put a cigar back in the case and sell it to somebody else for full price in the usual course of business."

"Well, that's what makes the saloon business a swindle and not a business, Abe," Morris said. "Just imagine, Abe, if you and me, as women's outer-garment manufacturers, was to lay in a line of ready-made men's overcoats in the expectation that after a customer has bought from us a big order he is going to blow me to a forty regular and you to a forty-four stout which we would put right back in stock as soon as his back is turned."

"But even if the liquor business would be a dirty business, Mawruss," Abe said, "you've got to consider that there's a whole lot of people which is making a living out of it, like bartenders and fellers working in distilleries, and if they get thrown out of work, y'understand, their wives and children is going to be just as hungry as if

the fellers lost their jobs in a respectable business like pants or plumbers' supplies."

"Say," Morris exclaimed, "if you're going to have sympathy for people which would get thrown out of jobs by prohibition, Abe, don't use it all up on bartenders and fellers working in distilleries, because there's a whole lot of other crooks whose families are going to be short of spending-money when liquor-selling stops. Take them boys which is running poker-rooms, faro-games, and roulette-wheels, and alcohol is just as necessary to their operation as ether is to a stomach specialist's, because the human bank-roll is the same as the human appendix, Abe: the success of removing it entirely depends on the giving of the anesthetic. Then there is the lawyers—criminal, accident, and divorce—and it don't make no difference how their clients fell or what they fell from—positions in banks, moving street-cars, or as nice a little woman as any one could wish for, y'understand—schnapps done it, Abe, and when schnapps goes, Abe, the practice of them lawyers goes with it."

"Well, they still got their diplomas, Mawruss," Abe said. "And even though schnapps is prohibited, Mawruss, there will be enough people left with the real-estate habit to give them shysters a living, anyhow, but you take them fellers which has got millions of dollars invested in machinery for the manufacture of headache medicine, Mawruss, and before they will be able to figure out how they can use their plants for the manufacture of war supplies they're going to be

their own best customers, which little did them fellers think when they put on their bottles,

* * * KEEP IN A DRY PLACE WELL CORKED * * *

that people was going to take them so seriously as to put 'em right out of business, y'understand."

"But there's also a large number of people which is going to lose their jobs on account of this here prohibition, Abe, and if they get the sympathy of these American sitsons which is laying awake nights worrying about how the Czar is getting along, Abe, it would be big already. I am talking about the temperance lecturers," Morris declared, "which if it wouldn't be for them fellers pretty near convincing everybody that no one could be happy and sober at the same time, Abe, it's my idee that we would of had this here prohibition *sohon* long since ago already, because those temperance lecturers got their arguments against drinking schnapps so mixed up with Sunday baseball, playing billiards, and going to theayters, picture-galleries, and libraries on Sunday, Abe, that some people which visits New York from small towns in the Middle West still hesitates about going to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for fear of getting a hobnailed liver or something."

"At that, Mawruss, this here prohibition is going to hurt some businesses like the jewelry business," Abe said, "which not counting the millions of carats that fellers has bought to square themselves for coming home at all hours of the night, y'under-

stand, there's many a bar pin which would still be in stock if the customer hadn't nerved himself to buying it with a couple of cocktails, understand me. Automobiles is the same way, Mawruss, and if the engineering department of the big automobile concerns is now busy on the problem of making alcohol a substitute for gasolene, Mawruss, you can bet your life that the sales department is just as busy trying to find out something which will be a substitute for alcohol, because when a feller has made up his mind to buy a five-passenger touring-car, Mawruss, there ain't many automobile salesmen which could wish a seven-passenger limousine on him by working him with a couple of cups coffee, y'understand."

"Then there is the show business," Morris observed, "and while I don't mean to say that this here prohibition is going to have any effect on them miserable plays where the girl saves the family at eight-forty-five by marrying the millionaire and discovers at ten-forty-five that she loves him just as much as if he hadn't any rating, so that the show can get out at eleven-five, y'understand, but when enough states has adopted the prohibition amendment to pull it into effect, Abe, the Midnight Follies as a business proposition will be in a class with bar fixtures and mass-kerseno cherries."

"Well, so far as I'm concerned, any show that starts in at twelve o'clock would always have to get along without *my* trade, prohibition or no prohibition," Abe commented, "even though I

could enjoy it on nothing stronger than malted milk."

"Which you couldn't," Morris added, "and there's why the Midnight Follies wouldn't last, because not only is this here prohibition going to kill schnapps, Abe, but it is also going to drive off the market for all articles the demand for which contains more than one per cent. alcohol."

"And believe me, Mawruss," Abe concluded, "no decent, respectable man is going to miss such articles, neither."

XV

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON PEACE WITH VICTORY AND WITHOUT BROKERS, EITHER

"AN offer is anyhow an offer, even if it is turned down, Mawruss," Abe Potash said, the day after Germany proposed terms of peace, "which that time I sold Harris Immerglick them lots in Brownsville, Mawruss, the first proposition he made me I pretty near threw him down the freight-elevator shaft, and when we finally closed the deal I couldn't tell exactly how much I made on them lots—figuring what I paid in taxes and assessments while I owned 'em, but it must have been, anyhow, five hundred dollars, Mawruss, from the way Immerglick gives me such a cut-throat looks whenever he sees me nowadays."

"Everybody ain't so easy as Harris Immerglick," Morris Perlmutter commented.

"Maybe not," Abe admitted. "But Harris Immerglick didn't want them lots not nearly as bad as the Kaiser wants peace, Mawruss, so while the parties to the proposed contract seems to be at present too wide apart to make a deal likely, Mawruss, at the same time I look to see the Kaiser offer a few concessions."

"Perhaps you're right, Abe," Morris said, "but while the Kaiser may have control of enough property so as to throw in a little here and a little there, y'understand, in the end it will be the boot money which will count, Abe, and before this deal is closed, Abe, you could bet your life that not only would the parties of the first part got to give up Belgium, Servia, Rumania, Poland, and Alsace-Lorraine, but they would also got to pay billions and billions of dollars in cash or certified check upon the delivery of the deed and passing of title under the said contract, and don't you forget it. So if some of them railroad presidents which is now drawing a hundred thousand a year salary, Abe, has got any hopes that President Wilson would hold up taking over the railroads pending negotiations for peace, y'understand, they must be blessed with sanguinary dispositions, Abe, because it's going to take a long time yet the Kaiser would concede enough to justify the Allies in so much as hesitating on even a single pair of soldiers' pants."

"Say, if anybody thinks the government would let go the railroads when we make peace with Germany, Mawruss, he don't know no more about railroads as he does about governments," Abe declared, "because this war which the government has got with the railroads, meat-packers, oil trusts, and coal-mine owners wouldn't end when we've licked Germany any more than it begun when Von Tirpitz started his submarine campaign. Yes, Mawruss, if we wouldn't leave off

fighting Germany till it's agreed that no fellers like Von Tirpitz, Von Buelow, Von Bethmann-Hollweg, and all them other Vons can use German subjects and German property for their own personal purposes, why it's a hundred-to-one proposition that we ain't going to leave off fighting the railroads till it's agreed that them Von Tirpitzes, Von Buelows, and Von Hindenbergs of the American railroads couldn't use the transportation business of this country for stock-gambling purpose as though the railroads was gold and silver mining prospects somewhere out in Nevada and didn't have a thing to do with the food and coal supply of the nation."

"Wait a moment," Morris said, "and I'll ask Jake, the shipping-clerk, to bring you in a button-box. We 'ain't got no soap-boxes."

"That ain't no soap-box stuff, Mawruss," Abe retorted. "If the government should do the same thing to the meat-packers as they did to the railroads, Mawruss, the arguments of them soap-box orators wouldn't have a soap-box to stand on."

"Well, if the government thinks it is necessary in order to carry on the war, Abe," Morris said, "it will grab the meat business like it has taken over the railroads, but we've got enough to do to supply our soldiers with ammunition without we would spend any time stopping the ammunition of them soap-box fellers."

"Of course I may be wrong, Mawruss," Abe admitted, "but the way I look at it, the war ain't

an excuse for not cleaning up at home. On the contrary, Mawruss, I think it is an opportunity for cleaning up, and when I see in the papers where people writes to the editors that the prohibitionists, the women suffragists, and the union laborers should ought to be ashamed of themselves for putting up arguments when the country is so busy over the war, I couldn't help thinking that there must be people over in Germany which is writing to the *Tageszeitung* and the *Freie Presse* that the German Social Democrats and Liberals should ought to be ashamed of themselves for putting up arguments about the Kaiser giving them popular government when Germany is so busy over the war. In other words, it's a stand-off, Mawruss, with the exception that the Kaiser 'ain't made no speeches so far that Germany would never make peace with America till the millions of American women which 'ain't got the vote has some say as to how the war should be carried on and what the terms of peace should be."

"Do you mean to say that women not having the vote puts our government in the same class with Germany?" Morris demanded.

"I mean to say that the proposition of German men having the vote sounds just so foolish to the Kaiser as the proposition of American women having the vote does to this here Eli U. Root," Abe retorted, "and while there is only one Kaiser in Germany, Mawruss, we've got an awful lot of Roots in America, so until Congress gives women the vote, Mawruss, the Kaiser will continue to

have an elegant come-back at President Wilson for that proclamation of his."

"Well, I'll tell you, Abe," Morris said, "I read this here proclamation of Mr. Wilson's when it was published in the papers, and while I admit that it didn't leave so big an impression on me as if it would of been a murder or a divorce case, y'understand, yet as I recollect it, Abe, there was enough room in it, so that if the German terms of peace was sufficiently liberal, y'understand, the German popular government needn't got to be so awful popular but what it could get by, understand me."

"That's my idee, too," Abe declared, "and while I ain't so keen like this here Lord Handsdown or Landsdown, or whatever the feller's name is, that we should jump right in and ask the Kaiser if that's the best he could do and how long would he give us to think it over, y'understand, yet you've got to remember that we've all had experiences with fellers like Harris Immerglick, Mawruss, and if the Allies would go at this thing in a business-like way, y'understand, it might be a case of going ahead with our business, which is war, and at the same time keeping an eye on the brokers in the transaction."

"I don't want to wake you up when you've got such pleasant dreams, Abe," Morris interrupted, "but the Allies is going to need all the eyes they've got during the next year or so, and a few binoculars and periscopes wouldn't go so bad, neither."

"All right," Abe said, "then don't keep an eye on the brokers, but just the same we could afford

to let the matter rest, because you know what brokers are, Mawruss: when it comes to putting through a swap, the principals could be a couple of hard-boiled eggs that would sooner make a present of their properties to the first-mortgagees than accept the original terms offered, y'understand, but the brokers never give up hope."

"What are you talking about—brokers?" Morris exclaimed. "There ain't no brokers in a peace transaction."

"Ain't there?" Abe retorted. "Well, if this here Czernin ain't the broker representing Austria and Germany, what is he? I can see the feller right now, the way he walks into Trotzky & Lenine's office with one of them real-estater smiles that looks as genwine as a twenty-dollar fur-lined overcoat.

"'*Wie gehts*, Mr. Trotzky!' he says, like it's some one he used to every afternoon drink coffee together ten years ago and has been wondering ever since what's become of him that he 'ain't seen him so long. Only in this case it happens to be Lenine he's talking to.

"'Mr. Trotzky ain't in. This is his partner, Mr. Lenine,' Lenine says.

"'Not Barnett Lenine used to was November & Lenine in the neckwear business?' Czernin says.

"'No,' Lenine says, and although Czernin tries to look like he expected as much, it kind of takes the zip out of him, anyhow.

"'Let's see,' he says, 'this must be Chatskel Lenine, married a daughter of old man Josephthal

and has got a sister living in Toledo, Ohio, by the name Rifkin. The husband runs a clothing-store corner of Tenth and Main, ain't it?'

"This time he's got him cornered, and Lenine has to admit it, so Czernin shakes hands with him and gives him the I. O. M. A. grip, with just a suggestion of the Knights of Phthias and Free Sons of Courland.

"'My name is Czernin—Sig Czernin,' he says. 'I see you don't remember me. I met you at the house of a party by the name Linkheimer or Linkman, I forget which, but the brother, Harris Linkheimer—I remember now, it *was* Linkheimer —went to the Saint Louis Exposition and was never heard of afterward.'

"'My *tzuris!*' Lenine says, but this don't feaze Czernin.

"'You see,' he says, 'I never forget a face.'

"'And you 'ain't got such a bad memory for names, neither,' Lenine tells him.

"'That ain't neither here nor there,' Czernin says, 'because if your name would be O'Brien or something Swedish, even, I got here a proposition, Mr. Lenine, which it's a pleasure to me that I got the opportunity of offering it to you, and even if I do say so myself, y'understand, such a gilt-edged proposition like this here ain't in the market every day.'

"And that's the way Czernin sprung them peace propositions on Lenine & Trotzky, and it don't make no difference that in this particular instance it's practically a case of Lenine & Trotzky accept-

ing whatever proposition the Kaiser wants to put to them, y'understand, when it comes to dickering with the Allies which can afford to act so independent to the Kaiser that if Czernin is lucky he won't get thrown down-stairs more than a couple of times, y'understand. He will come right back with the names and family histories of a few more common acquaintances and a couple of more concessions on the part of Germany, time after time, until it 'll begin to look like peace is in sight."

"I wish you was right, Abe," Morris said, "but I think you will find that this here peace contract will be in charge of the diplomats and not the real-estaters."

"Well, what's the difference?" Abe asked.

"Probably there ain't any," Morris admitted, "because their methods is practically the same, which when countries goes to war on account of treaties they claim the other country broke, y'understand, it's usually just so much the fault of the diplomats which got 'em to sign the treaties originally, as when business men get into a law-suit over a real-estate contract, it is the fault of the real-estate brokers in the transaction. So therefore, Abe, unless we want to make a peace treaty with Germany which would sooner or later end up in another war, y'understand, the best thing for America to do is to depend for peace not on brokers *oder* diplomats, but on airyoplanes and guns with the right kind of soldiers to work 'em. Furthermore, after we've got the Germans back of

the Rhine will be plenty of time to talk about entering into peace contracts with the Kaiser, because then there will be nothing left for the *Rosher* to dicker about, and all we will have to do in the way of diplomacy will be to say, 'Sign here,' and he'll sign there."

XVI

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON KEEPING IT DARK

"I GOT a circular letter from this here Garfield where he says we should keep the temperature of our rooms down to sixty-eight degrees," Abe Potash remarked during the recent below-zero spell in New York.

"What do you mean—down to sixty-eight degrees?" Morris Perlmutter said. "If a feller which lives in a New York City apartment-house nowadays could get the temperature of his rooms as high as down to forty-eight degrees, y'understand, it's only because some of the tenants 'ain't come across with the janitor's present yet and he still has hopes. Yes, Abe, a circular like that might do some good in Pasadena *oder* Pallum Beach, y'understand, but it's wasted here in New York."

"There's bound to be a whole lot of waste in them don't-waste-nothing circulars," Abe commented, "because plenty of people is getting letters from the Food Conservation Commission to go slow on sugar which 'ain't risked taking even a two-grain saccharin tablet in years already, and

the chances is that there has been tons and tons of circulars sent out to other people which on account of their livers *oder* religions wouldn't on any account eat the articles of food which the circulars begs them on no account to eat, y'understand."

"And next year them circulars will be still less necessary because enough people is going to get rheumatism from living in cold rooms to cut down the consumption of red meats over fifty per cent.," Morris observed.

"Well, something has got to be done to make people go slow on using up coal, Mawruss," Abe said, "which the way it is now, Mawruss, twice as much coal is burned in one night to manufacture electricity for a sky sign saying that 'Toasted Sawdust Is the Perfect Breakfast Food' on account it is made only from the best grades of Tennessee yellow pine, y'understand, as would run an airyoplane-factory for a week, understand me, and children is fooling away their time in the streets because if coal is used to heat the school buildings, y'understand, there wouldn't be enough left for the really important things like lighting up the fronts of vaudeville theayters with the names of actors or telling lies about the mileage of automobile tires by means of a couple of million electric lights every night from sunset to sunrise, understand me."

"Still there's a good deal to be said on the other side, Abe," Morris retorted, "which if the new coal regulations is going to make an end of the sky

signs, it will cut off practically all the reading that most New-Yorkers do outside of the newspapers, y'understand. Then again there's a whole lot of people aside from stockholders in electric-lighting companies which used to make a good living out of them sky signs. For instance, what's going to become of the fellers that manufactured them and the firm of certified public accountants *nebich* which lost the job of adding up the figures on the meters, because while any *Schlemiel* with a good imagination would be trusted to read the ordinary meter, Abe, the job of figuring the damages on a sky sign which is eating up a couple of million kilowatt-years every twenty minutes is something else again."

"And yet, Mawruss, while I 'ain't got such a soft heart that I could even have sympathy for an electric-lighting company, understand me, still I am sorry to see them sky signs go," Abe said, "because lots of fellers from the small towns, members of rotary clubs and the like, used to get a great deal of pleasure from seeing a kitten made out of three hundred thousand electric bulbs playing with a spool of silk made out of five hundred and fifty thousand bulbs, and there was something very fascinating about watching that automobile tire which used to light up and go out every once in a while somewheres around the upper end of Times Square."

"Sure, I know," Morris said. "But if you was spending your good money for such an advertised tire, Abe, it wouldn't be very fascinating to watch

it blow out every once in a while on account the manufacturer had to skimp the rubber in order to pay the electric-light bills, Abe, and if any of them members of rotary clubs is in the dry-goods business and has to pay fancy prices for spool silk, Abe, they are *oser* going to thank the salesmen for the good time they put in while in New York rubbering at his firm's sky sign, because you know as well as I do, Abe, when it comes right down to it, nothing costs a customer so much as free entertainment."

"Of course, Mawruss," Abe said, "the idee of them electric sky signs is not to entertain, but to advertise, and as an advertising man told me the other day, Mawruss, the advertised article is just as low in price as the same article would be if unadvertised, the reason being that the advertised article's output is greater and that he wanted me to advertise in the *Daily Cloak and Suit Record.*"

"Well, certainly, if the output is greater the cost of production is or should ought to be less," Morris observed, "so I think the feller was right at that, Abe."

"That's what I told him," Abe continued, "but I also said that if I would put for fifty cents a day an advertisement in the paper, y'understand, my partner would never let me hear the end of it."

"Is *that* so!" Morris exclaimed. "Since when did I kick that we shouldn't do no advertising?"

"Never mind," Abe retorted. "I heard you

speak often about advertising the same like you done just now about sky signs, which it is already a back-number idee that advertising raised the price of goods to the customer and—"

"Listen!" Morris interrupted. "If I would got it such a back-number idees like you, Abe, I would put myself into a home for chronic Freemasons or something, which I always was in favor of advertising, except that I believe there is advertising and *advertising*, Abe, and when an advertisement only makes you think of what it costs, instead of what it advertises, like sky signs, y'understand, to me it ain't an advertisement at all. It's just a warning."

"Did I say it wasn't?" Abe asked. "The way you talk, Mawruss, you would think I was in favor of electric signs, whereas I believe that in times like these a very little publicity goes an awful long ways, Mawruss, which if them Congressmen down in Washington was requested by the Coal Commission to keep it a trifle dark and not use up so much candle-power in advertising the mistakes that has been made by some fellers now working for the government which 'ain't had as much experience in covering up their tracks as, we would say, for example, a Congressman, Mawruss, that wouldn't do no harm, neither."

"It ain't a question of covering tracks, Abe," Morris declared, "because them business men which is now working for the government are perfectly honest, although they do make mistakes in their jobs and get rattled easy on the witness-

stand, which if such fellers *was* dishonest, Abe, even a Congressman would know enough not to advertise it."

"As a matter of fact, Mawruss," Abe declared, "them Congressmen ain't calculating to advertise anybody or anything but themselves. Yes, Mawruss, the way some United States Senators acts you would think they was trying to get a national reputation as first-class, cracker-jack, A-number-one police-court lawyers, and the expert manner in which they can confuse and worry a high-grade Diston who is sacrificing his time and money to help out the government and make him appear a crook, y'understand, must be a source of great satisfaction to the folks back home—in Germany.

"And it certainly ain't helping to win the war any, Mawruss, which most people would get the idee from reading the accounts of it in the newspapers that Mr. Hoover was tried by the United States Senate and found guilty of boosting the price of sugar in the first degree."

"Well, in that case, Abe," Morris suggested, "even if we are a little short of fuel it would of been better for the sugar situation, and maybe also the wool uniforms also, if, instead of getting publicity through investigations, y'understand, the United States Senate would fix up an electric sign for the front of the Capitol at Washington and make Senator Reed the top-liner in big letters like Eva Tanguay or Mr. Louis Mann, because here in America we've got incandescent bulbs to burn,

Abe, but we have only one Hoover, and we should ought to take care of him."

"Understand me, Mawruss," Abe declared, emphatically, "it ain't that I object to a certain amount of light being thrown on the mistakes that is made in running the war, if it wasn't that they keep everything so dark about the progress that is also made—the submarines we are sinking, the number of soldiers we've got it in France, and what them boys is doing over there, and while I know there's good reasons for it, maybe it's like this here Broadway proposition—it pays to keep it dark, but it might pay better to keep it light, which I understand that all the lighting company saves in coal by cutting out the sky signs is less than thirty tons a night."

"Thirty tons a night would warm a whole lot of people, Abe," Morris said.

"Sure, I know," Abe agreed. "But even at ten dollars a ton, Mawruss, it would be only a saving of three hundred dollars, which I bet yer some restaurants on Broadway has lost that much money apiece since the lighting orders went into effect."

"That may be," Morris admitted, "but what the Coal Commission is trying to save ain't money, Abe. It's coal. And that is one of the points about this war that people 'ain't exactly realized yet. Money ain't what it once used to was before this war, Abe. You can still make it, lose it, spend it, and save it, but you couldn't sweeten your coffee with it or heat your house with it till

there's sugar and coal enough to go around. Also it's only a question of time when money won't get you to Pallum Beach in the winter or Maine in the summer unless the government official in charge of the railroads thinks it is necessary, and also if this war only goes on long enough and wool gets any scarcer, Abe, money won't buy you a new pair of pants even until you can put up a good enough argument with it to convince a government pants inspector that it's a case of either buying a new pair of pants or a frock-coat to make the old ones decent, understand me."

"But the papers has said right straight along that money would win this war, Mawruss," Abe said.

"Yes, and it could lose it, too, according to the way it is spent," Morris continued, "and particularly right now when money can still buy things which the government needs for the soldiers, y'understand, money is a dangerous article in the hands of some people who think that the feller which don't feel the high price of sugar is more privileged to eat it than the feller which could barely afford it."

"Even so," Abe remarked, "it seems to me that not spending money must be an easy way to be patriotic."

"And some fellers is just natural-born patriots that way," Morris added, "and if they ain't, y'understand, the war is going to make them. It's going to give the rich man the same chance to be a good sitson as the poor man, and it's made

a fine start by taking the lights off of Broadway so that you couldn't tell it from a respectable street, like Lexington Avenue."

"Couldn't a street be lighted up and still be respectable?" Abe asked.

"Yes, and a rich man could spend his money foolishly and also be respectable," Morris agreed, "but not in war-times."

XVII

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON THE PEACE PROGRAM, INCLUDING THE ADDED EXTRA FEATURE AND THE SUPPER TURN

"IT seems that this here Luxberg, the German representative in Argentine which sent them *spurlos versenkt* letters, has been crazy for years, Mawruss," Abe Potash said, one morning in January.

"Yes?" Morris Perlmutter said. "And when did they find *that* out, Abe?"

"It's an old story, Mawruss," Abe replied. "Everybody knew it in Berlin, only they never happened to think of it until we discovered those letters in the private mail of the Swedish minister."

"And what do they lay the Swedish minister's behavior to, Abe?" Morris inquired. "Stomach trouble?"

"*That* they didn't say," Abe continued. "But I guess they figure that Sweden should think up her own alibis."

"Well, it's a hopeful sign when the Germans realize that them Luxberg letters sound like the idees of a crazy man, Abe," Morris said, "although

compared to Zimmermann's break about handing Mexico a couple of our Southern states if she went to war with us, y'understand, Luxberg's letters ain't so *meshuggah*, neither. So it seems to me, Abe, that Germany would be doing well to say that Luxberg was drunk when he wrote them letters, because later when it comes to explaining the hundreds of rotten acts that Germans has done in this war, Abe, Germany is going to have to think up a lot of excuses, and she may as well keep the insanity defense for somebody who would really need it, like the Kaiser."

"Don't worry about the Kaiser, Mawruss," Abe said. "For years already that feller has been getting up such strong evidence for an insanity defense, in the way of speeches to soldiers, y'understand, that he could feel absolutely safe in not only doing what he *has* been doing, but also what Doctor Waite and Harry Thaw did, too, because all that the counsel for the defense would got to do is to read the Kaiser's remarks at Koenigsburg, for instance, and five minutes after the jury had returned a verdict without leaving their seats, y'understand, the Kaiser would be on his way up to the Matteawan Asylum for the Criminal Insane."

"There ain't much danger of that, anyway," Morris declared, "because I read them fourteen propositions of Mr. Wilson's peace program, and so far as any mention is made of punishing the guilty parties, Abe, you might suppose the *Lusitania* had never been sunk at all, which it may be dumbness on my part, Abe, but the way

"And five minutes after the jury had returned a verdict would be on his way up to the Matteawan Asylum for the Criminal Insane."

it looks to me is that if them fourteen propositions is fourteen net, and not ten, five, and two and one-half off for cash, understand me, we have got to give Germany such a big licking before she accepts them that we might just so well give her a bigger one and add propositions from fifteen to twenty inclusive, of which proposition sixteen would contain the same demands as proposition fifteen, except that the person upon whom the sentence was to be carried out would be the Crown Prince instead of the Kaiser, but no flowers in either case, understand me, and if twenty propositions wasn't enough to take care of all the responsible parties we could add as many more propositions as necessary."

"What you are trying to fix up, Mawruss, ain't a program, but a catalogue, Mawruss," Abe commented, "which if we want to get a performance of Mr. Wilson's program, y'understand, and they're going to have a lot of trouble putting that number over with a satisfactory sea, on account they would either have to paint a sea, dig a sea, or have some sort of a sea effect, because Poland is like Iowa, Mawruss—the only time you could get a glimpse of the sea there is when they run off one of them Annette Kellermann filums in a moving-picture theayter."

"That only goes to show what you know from Poland," Morris retorted, "because in seventeen ninety-three a lot of the sea-front of Prussia belonged to Poland."

"Yes, and in seventeen ninety-three a lot of the

sea-front of Texas belonged to Mexico," Abe continued. "So I guess Mr. Wilson must have some sea in mind which ain't barred by the statue of limitations; but that ain't here nor there, because getting a sea to Poland ain't the biggest difficulty in carrying out the peace program. Take, for instance, number six on the program, which is a proposed turn or act by all the Allies, entitled, 'Welcoming Russia into the Society of Free Nations.' The directions is that the performers should give Russland all sorts of assistance of every kind that she may need, and also to behave kindly to her, y'understand, and no sooner does Mr. Wilson come out with this, so to speak sob scenario, understand me, than Trotzky & Lenine get right back at him with a counter-proposition, so I guess that the present number six will be taken out of the program, and another number substituted for it, like this:

VI

Extra Added Feature, the Popular Russian Dramatic Stars in Rôles that Suit Them to Perfection

LEON TROTZKY & LENINE BARNEY

In 'Nix on the Bonds,' a Playlet with a Punch. Suspense, Surprise, Finish, and All the Fixings that Make a Snappy Dramatic Entertainment in Tabloid Form."

"The mistake that Mr. Wilson made in number six on the program was that he took it for granted when the Allies welcomed Russland into the

Society of Free Nations, Russia would behave like a new member should ought to behave, instead of which Russia started right in by giving a bad check for her initiation fees and first annual dues," Morris said. "She has also got out of the United States railroad supplies, munitions, and food, y'understand, and after giving bonds in payment, Abe, she turns right round and refuses to make good on 'em and at the same time practically says, 'What are you going to do about it?' and all this is right on top of Mr. Wilson saying, 'The treatment accorded to Russia by her sister nations,' y'understand, 'in the months to come,' *verstehst du mich,* 'will be the acid test of their good-will,' understand me, 'and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.'"

"Well, I'll tell you," Abe remarked, "the English which I learned it at night school, Mawruss, was more or less a popular-price line of language, and when Mr. Wilson comes across every once in a while with one of them exclusive models in the way of speeches, using principally high-grade words in imported designs, understand me, I ain't no more equipped to handle his stuff than a manufacturer of fly-papers is to make flying-machines, *but* as an ignorant business man, Mawruss, which you would be the last person to admit that I ain't, Mawruss, it seems to me that the acid test of our good-will is not going to be the way we treat Russland, but the way Russia treats us; and, in fact, Mawruss, Russia already poured a little acid on us long before this. But now when she

renigs on her bonds and practically gives us a whole bathful of acid, Mawruss, for my part the treatment needn't go on for months to come. I am satisfied with the acid test so far as it's gone *this* month, Mawruss, because it don't make no difference what kind of acid you use, Mawruss, a dead beat is a dead beat, understand me, and for a dead beat nobody has got any sympathy—either intelligent or unselfish, or unintelligent and selfish. Am I right or wrong, Mawruss?"

"I wouldn't worry my head over that if I was you, Abe," Morris said, "because, as you said just now, Russland will attend to that number on the program for herself. But what is troubling me is number one, which provides that peace shall be made openly, and at the same time does away with the possibility that some afternoon when you and me gets out of here, after making up our minds that the war would last for ten years yet, we would buy a Sporting Extra with Final Wall Street Complete, and see the whole front page filled up mit the word PEACE in letters a foot high, understand me, which it has always been in the back of my head that the next time Colonel House would slip off to Europe no one would know anything about till the treaty of peace comes back signed 'Woodrow Wilson, per E. M. H.' But if the first number on the program goes through as planned, Abe, and we have open covenants of peace openly arrived at, y'understand, why, then, that will be something else again."

"You bet your life it would be something else again," Abe agreed, fervently, "and what is more, Mawruss, not only would them covenants of peace be open, but they would remain open for a long time, because there's a whole lot of Senators, Congressmen, ex-Senators, ex-Congressmen, and ex-Presidents which is laying for the opportunity when peace is proposed, so that they can discuss the peace terms with one another, openly, frankly, and in the public view, as Mr. Wilson would say. Yes, Mawruss, there's several political orators in and out of Congress which has got the word 'traitor' in their system and has got to get it out again in reference to somebody—preferably a member of the Cabinet—before peace negotiations is closed, and there is also such indigestible words like 'pusillanimous,' which gives certain ex-Presidents a feeling of fullness around the throat, and a couple of Senators will need time to find out just what the other Senators wants to do about them peace terms so that they can differ with them; and looking at it one way and another, Mawruss, if Senator Wadsworth and Senator McKellar thinks it is taking a long time to get ready for war, they should wait till we get ready for peace, Mawruss, and if they don't want to be afterward holding investigations as to why the throat specialists wasn't mobilized on time, Mawruss, they should start right in and mobilize the throat specialists, and also it wouldn't do any harm to find out the available stock of cough-drops is in the hands of the dealers, so that

the lung power of the nation can go forth to holler for peace equipped to the last menthol lozenge."

"In a way, that ain't no joke, neither, Abe," Morris said. "There is people that Mr. Wilson didn't include in his war program which is going to do their utmost to horn in on his peace program at the very best spot in the bill. Take Mr. Roosevelt, and his friends will no doubt insist that Mr. Wilson does a supper turn while Mr. Roosevelt goes on somewheres around nine forty-five, because to-day yet they're talking about making the Presidency of the United States a coalition affair, in which Wilson, Roosevelt, and Taft would be equal partners with the same drawing account and everything."

"And where does Mr. Wilson get off in this coalition business?" Abe inquired. "Ain't two undivided one-thirds of the Presidency of the United States for the unexpired portion of his term worth nothing to Mr. Wilson, even at short rates, Mawruss?"

"Well," Morris replied, "I suppose Roosevelt and Taft would throw in their experience as Presidents."

"Say!" Abe exclaimed. "There ain't a week goes by nowadays but what Mr. Wilson gets more experience as President than Taft and Roosevelt did in both their terms put together, so I don't think you need waste no more breath about it, Mawruss. When the people last time elected a President of the United States they chose Mr.

Wilson as an individual, not as a co-partner, and you could take it from me, Mawruss, it don't make no difference whether it would be a peace program or a war program which Mr. Wilson is fixing up, the name of the chief performer on it was settled by the people a year ago last November!"

XVIII

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON THE NEW NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

"YES, Mawruss," Abe Potash said, after Mr. Garfield had announced the five-day shutdown, "one of the hardest things that a patriotic sitson is called on to do nowadays is to have faith in those fellers which is running the Fuel Commission, the Food Commission, and all the other commissions that they ain't such big fools as you would think for."

"Well, you don't think this here Garfield would close up the country for five days unless it would be necessary, ain't it?" Morris Perlmutter retorted.

"Certainly I don't," Abe agreed. "But what is troubling me is that he ain't said as yet for why it is necessary, Mawruss."

"Maybe he 'ain't figured it out yet," Morris suggested. "And even if he didn't, Abe, it stands to reason that if the country don't burn no coal for five days, at the end of five days they would still got the coal they didn't burn, provided they had got any coal at all to start with."

"But as I understand it, Mawruss," Abe said,

"not burning coal 'ain't got nothing at all to do mit Mr. Garfield's order that we shouldn't burn no coal. It seems from what ex-President Taft says and also from what a professor by the name of Jinks *oder* Jenks says, Mawruss, Mr. Garfield done it because the people 'ain't begun to realize that we are at war, Mawruss."

"You mean to say that *again* the people don't begin to realize we are at war?" Morris exclaimed. "It couldn't be possible, Abe. Here we have had two Liberty Loan campaigns, a military draft which took in every little cross-road village in the country, a war-tax bill that hits everybody and everything, and people like Mr. Taft and Professor Jinks saying day in and day out that the people 'ain't begun to realize we are at war, y'understand, and yet you try to tell me that the people has slipped right back into not beginning to realize we are at war, Abe."

"I don't try to tell you nothing," Abe said. "For my part I think it's time that somebody put them wise, Mawruss."

"What do you mean—put them wise?" Morris demanded. "The people knows that—"

"Who is saying anything about the people?" Abe interrupted. "I am talking about Mr. Taft and this here Professor Jinks, Mawruss. Them fellers has got ideas from spring and summer designs of nineteen seventeen. What we are looking for from the big men of the country is new ideas for the late summer of nineteen eighteen and fall and winter seasons of nineteen eighteen,

nineteen nineteen, and this here people-'ain't-begun-to-realize talk was already a back-number line of conversation in June, nineteen seventeen."

"But what them fellers is driving into, Abe," Morris observed, "is that it's going to help the war along if the people of America should be made to suffer along with the people of France and England. They figure that it ain't going to do us Americans a bit of harm to know how them Frenchers feel, *nebich*, with the Germans holding on to their coal-supply, Abe."

"Well, we could get the same effect by going round in athaletic underwear and no overcoats, Mawruss," Abe retorted, "so if that's what Mr. Taft claims Mr. Garfield shut off the coal for, Mawruss, he is beating around the wrong bushes."

"And he ain't the only one, neither, Abe," Morris said. "From the way other people is talking, Abe, you would think that in order to get into this war *right*, y'understand, we should ought to go to work and blow up a few dozen American cathedrals, send up airyoplanes over New York, and drop a couple gross bombs on the business section of the town, poison the water-supply, cut off the milk for the babies, and do everything else that them miserable Germans did to France and England, not to say also Russia, y'understand. This will cause us to become so sore, understand me, that everybody of fighting age will want to fight, and the rest of us will be willing to work in the munition-factories and spend all our time and money to end a war where American cathedrals

is being blown up, airyoplanes is bombing New York, and babies is suffering for want of milk, Abe."

"You mean that Professor Jinks is willing to have us believe that Mr. Garfield is shutting off the coal, not because it's necessary, but because it's the equivalence of us bombing our own cities and making ourselves feel sore?" Abe asked. "Mr. Garfield?"

"Ordinary people which ain't professors and ex-Presidents might figure that way," Morris continued, "but it seems that the theory is we are going to feel sore at Germany, Abe."

"Well," Abe commented, "I am perfectly willing to feel sore at Germany for the things she has done in this war, Mawruss, and I am so sore at Germany, anyway, that I am also willing to feel sore at her for the things which she 'ain't done also, Mawruss, but so far as Mr. Garfield is concerned, y'understand, I prefer to think that he's a hard-working feller which could once in a while make a mistake, understand me, and that if he cuts off the coal, it's on account he thinks it's necessary to save the coal. Because if I thought the way Professor Jinks thinks, Mawruss, and I should meet Mr. Garfield face to face somewheres, understand me, the least they could send me up for would be using rotten language tending to cause a breach of the peace, y'understand."

"Sure I know, Abe," Morris agreed. "But the chances is that Mr. Taft and Professor Jinks may have a private idee that when Mr. Garfield shut

down on the coal he could of saved coal in some other way, and so in order that he shouldn't get stumped for explanations afterward, y'understand, they are taking this way of giving him what they think is a good pointer in that line, understand me, because if you read the papers this morning, Abe, there must be thousands of prominent sitsons which claims to be patriotic, y'understand, and from what them fellers said about Mr. Garfield, Abe, it was plain to me that the stuff they was holding back from saying about him was pretty near giving them apoplexy, y'understand."

"Well, when it comes to cussing out the Fuel Administrator, Mawruss," Abe said, "them prominent sitsons wouldn't have nothing on the unprominent sitsons which is going to lose five days' pay now and one day's pay a week for ten weeks later. Yes, Mawruss, what them poor people is going to call Mr. Garfield during the five days they will lay off is going to pretty near warm up their cold homes even if it ain't going to provide food for their families, Mawruss. Furthermore, Mawruss, five continuous days is going to give them an opportunity to do a lot more real, hard thinking than they could do if they would have, we would say, for example, only one hour a day lay-off every other day over a period of a hundred days, Mawruss, and if at the end of them five days, Mawruss, they are going to take as much interest in the problems of this war as they are in the problem of how they are going to catch up with what they owe for five days' food and rent,

Mawruss, I miss my guess, because Mr. Taft and Professor Jinks may think that them fellers is going to spend their five days' lockout in looking up war maps and sticking little colored flags in the positions now held by the French and German troops or in reading up the life of General Pershing and *My Three Years in Germany* by Ambassador Gerard, Mawruss, *but I don't.*"

"And yet, Abe, admitting all you say is true, y'understand, what reason do you got for supposing that before Mr. Garfield shut off the coal he didn't also consider all these things, when they even occurred to a feller like you?" Morris asked.

"What do you mean—a feller like me?" Abe demanded. "Thousands of people the country over is saying the selfsame thing."

"I know they are," Morris said. "And why you and they should think that what occurred to thousands of people the country over shouldn't also occur to Mr. Garfield, Abe, is beyond me. Now I don't know no more about this coal proposition than you do, Abe, but I am willing to take a chance that when a big man like Garfield, backed up by President Wilson, does a crazy thing like this, y'understand, he must have had an awful good reason for it, no matter how good the reasons were against it."

"Did I say he didn't?" Abe said.

"Then why knock the feller?" Morris asked.

"Say, looky here, Mawruss," Abe retorted, "are we living in Germany or America? An idee! On twenty-four hours' notice the government

shuts off the coal-supply of the country and you expect that all that the people would say is, '*Omane! Solo!*' ('Amen! Selah!')."

"Well, that's the way a government does business—on short notice, Abe, which if Mr. Garfield would be one of them take-it-on-the-other-hand fellers who considers the matter from every angle before he decides, y'understand, while he would have still got a couple of thousand angles to consider the matter from, Abe, the country would have been tied up into such knots over the coal-and-freight situation that it would have required not five days, but five hundred days, to untangle it, y'understand," Morris said.

"But it seems to me, Mawruss, that Mr. Garfield could have spent, say, twenty-five minutes longer on that order of his, so that a manufacturer could tell from reading it over a few dozen times, with the assistance of a first-class, crackerjack, A-number-one criminal lawyer, just what it was he couldn't do without making himself liable to a fine of five thousand dollars and one year imprisonment, y'understand," Abe said. "In fact, Mawruss, if the average manufacturer is going to try to understand that order before he does anything about it he'll have to shut down for five days while he is working to puzzle it out, and then he will keep his place closed down for five days longer while he is resting up from brain fag, understand me. Take, for instance, a department store which sells liquors and groceries, has a doctor in charge of the rest-room, and runs a public

lunch-room in the basement, y'understand, and if the proprietor decided to make a test case of it by hiring John B. Stanchfield and keeping open on Monday, Mawruss, once Mr. Garfield got on the witness-stand and started to explain just what the exemptions exempted, y'understand, it would be years and years before he ever had a chance to see the old college again."

"But Mr. Garfield wrote that order to save coal, not arguments, Abe," Morris said." He expected that the business men of the country would do the sensible thing next Monday by staying home and playing pinochle or poker, and those fellers which don't know enough about cards to even *kibbitze* the game, y'understand, could go into another room and start in on their income-tax blanks, which, when it comes to figuring out what is capital and what is income in the excess-profits returns, Abe, there is many a business man which would not only put in all his Mondays between now and the first of March trying to straighten it out, y'understand, but would also be asking for further extensions of time to finish it up along about the fifteenth of April."

"And that's the way it goes, Mawruss," Abe commented, with a sigh. "It use to was in the old days that all a feller had to know to go into the clothing business was clothing, y'understand, but nowadays a manufacturer of clothing or any other merchandise must also got to be a certified public accountant, an expert of high-grade words from the English language, a liar, a detective, and

should also be able to take the stand on his own behalf in such a level-head way that the assistant district attorney couldn't get him rattled on cross-examination."

"Well, my advice to these test-case fellers, Abe," Morris concluded, "is this: Be partiotic now. Don't wait till you're indicted."

XIX

MR. WILSON: THAT'S ALL

Potash and Perlmutter discuss the Chamberlain suggestion.

"YOU know how it is yourself, Mawruss," Abe Potash said, one morning in January. "If you would see somebody nailing up something your first idee is to say: 'Here, give me that hammer. Is that a way to nail up a packing-case?' And then, if you went to work and showed him how, the chances is that before you get through the packing-case would look like it had been nailed up with a charge of shrapnel, and for six months people would be asking you what's the matter with your sore thumb. Painting is the same way. There's mighty few people which could see anybody else doing a home job of enameling without they would want to grab ahold of the brush and get themselves covered with enamel from head to foot, y'understand. So can you imagine the way Mr. Roosevelt is feeling about this war, Mawruss?"

"Well, you've got to hand it to Mr. Roosevelt," Morris Perlmutter said. "He has had some small

experience in that line, although, at that, you've got to take his statements of what ain't being done to run the war right with a grain of salt, Abe, whereas with Senator Chamberlain, y'understand, when he says that the President ain't running the war right according to the idees of a man which used to was a practising lawyer and politician out in the state of Oregon, y'understand, and, therefore, Abe, his speeches should ought to be barred by the Food Conservation Commission as being contrary to the Save the Salt movement."

"But even Mr. Roosevelt, which he may or may not know anything about running a modern army, as the case may be and probably ain't, Mawruss, because lots of changes has come about in the running of armies since Mr. Roosevelt went out of the business, Mawruss," Abe said, "but as I was saying, Mawruss, even Mr. Roosevelt, as big a patriot as *he* is, y'understand, ain't above spoiling a perfectly good job half done by Mr. Wilson, because he just couldn't resist saying: 'Here, give me hold of them soldiers. Is that a way to run an army?"

"And besides, Abe," Morris said, "there's a great many people in this country, including Mr. Roosevelt, which believes that the only man which has got any license to say how the army should ought to be run is Mr. Roosevelt, y'understand, and ever since we got into this war, Abe, them fellers has been hanging around looking at Mr. Wilson like a crowd watching a feller gilding the

ball on the top of the Metropolitan Tower, not wishing the feller any harm, y'understand, and hoping that he will either get away with it unhurt or make the drop while they are still standing there."

"They ain't so patient like all that, Mawruss," Abe said. "Them fellers has got so tired waiting for Mr. Wilson to fall down on his job that they now want to drag him down or, anyhow, trip him up."

"Well, I wouldn't go so far as to say that," Morris declared, "but it looks to me that when Mr. Roosevelt read the results of the Senate investigations, y'understand, he wasn't as much shocked and surprised as he would have liked to have been, although to hear Senator Chamberlain talk you might think that what them investigations showed was bad enough to satisfy not only Mr. Roosevelt, but the Kaiser and his friends, also, when, as a matter of fact, the worst that any good American can say about Mr. Wilson as a result of them investigations is that instead of hiring angels who performed miracles, y'understand, he hired human beings who made mistakes."

"Sure, I know," Abe said. "But the worst thing of all that Mr. Wilson did was to say that Senator Chamberlain was talking wild when he made a speech about how every department of the government had practically gone to pieces, which Senator Chamberlain says that no matter how wild he may have talked before, nobody ever

accused him that he talked wild in all the twenty-four years he has held public office."

"Well, that only goes to show how wild some people talk, Abe," Morris said, "because when a man has held office for twenty-four years, talking wild is the very least people accuse him of."

"But as a matter of fact, Mawruss, a feller from Oregon was telling me that Senator Chamberlain has held public office ever since eighteen eighty," Abe said. "He has run for everything from Assemblyman to Governor, and if he ain't able to remember by fourteen years how long he has held public office, Mawruss, how could he blame Mr. Wilson for accusing him that he is talking wild, in especially as he now admits that when he said all the departments of the government had broken down, y'understand, what he really meant was that the War Department had broken down. His word should not be questioned, or, in effect, that when a Senator presents a statement, the terms he is entitled to are seventy-five per cent. discount for facts."

"Some of 'em needs a hundred per cent.," Morris said, "but that ain't here nor there, Abe. This war is bigger than Mr. Chamberlain's reputation, even as big as Mr. Chamberlain thinks it is, and it don't make no difference to us how many speeches Mr. Roosevelt makes or what Senator Stone calls him or he calls Senator Stone. Furthermore, Senator Penrose, Senator McKellar, and this here Hitchcock can also volunteer to police the game, Abe, but when it comes right *to* it,

y'understand, every one of them fellers is just a *Kibbitzer*, the same like these nuisances that sit around a Second Avenue coffee-house and give free advice to the pinochle-players—all they can see is the cards which has been played, and as for the cards which is still remaining in Mr. Wilson's hand, they don't know no more about it than you or I do."

"And the only kick they've got, after all," Abe said, "is that President Wilson won't expose his hand, which if he did, Mawruss, he might just so well throw the game to Germany and be done with it."

"So you see, Abe, them fellers, including Mr. Roosevelt, is willing to let no personal modesty stand in the way of a plain patriotic duty, at least so far as thirty-three and a third per cent. of his answer was concerned. But at that, it wouldn't do him no good, Abe, because, owing to what Mr. Roosevelt maintains is an oversight at the time the Constitution of the United States was fixed up 'way back in the year seventeen seventy-six, y'understand, the President of the United States was appointed the Commander-in-chief to run the United States army and navy, and also the President was otherwise mentioned several other times, but you could read the Constitution backward and forward, from end to end, and the word ex-President ain't so much as hinted at, y'understand."

"Evidencely they thought that an ex-President would be willing to stay ex," Abe suggested.

"But Mr. Roosevelt ain't," Morris said. "All that he wanted from Mr. Wilson was a little encouragement to take some small, insignificant part in this war, Abe, and it would only have been a matter of a short time when it would have required an expert to tell which was the President and which was the ex, y'understand."

"I don't agree with you, Mawruss," Abe said. "Where Mr. Wilson has made his big mistake is that he is conducting this war on the theory of the old whisky brogan, 'Wilson! That's All.' If he would only of understood that you couldn't run a restaurant, a garment business, or even a war without stopping once in a while to jolly the knockers, Mawruss, all this investigation stuff would never of happened. Why, if I would have been Mr. Wilson and had a proposition like Mr. Roosevelt on my hands it wouldn't make no difference how rushed I was, every afternoon him and me would drink coffee together, and after I had made up my mind what I was going to do I would put it up to him in such a way that he would think the suggestion came from him, y'understand. Then I would find out what it was that Senator Chamberlain preferred, *gefüllte Rinderbrust* or *Tzimmas*, and whenever we had it for dinner, y'understand, I would have Senator Chamberlain up to the house and after he had got so full of *Tzimmas* that he couldn't argue no more I would tell him what me and Mr. Roosevelt had agreed upon, and it wouldn't make no difference if I said to him, 'Am I right or wrong?' or 'Ain't

that the sensible view to take of it?' he would say, 'Sure!' in either case."

"You may be right, Abe," Morris agreed, "but if he was to begin that way with Roosevelt and Chamberlain, the first thing you know, William Randolph Hearst would be looking to be invited up for a five-course-luncheon consultation, and the least Senator Wadsworth and Senator McKellar would expect would be an occasional Welsh rabbit up at the White House, which even if Mr. Wilson's conduct of the war didn't suffer by it, his digestion might, and the end would be, Abe, that every Senator who couldn't get the ear of the President with, anyhow, a Dutch lunch, would pull an investigation on him as bad as anything that Chamberlain ever started."

"It's too bad them fellers couldn't act the way Mr. Taft is behaving," Abe said. "There is an ex-President which is really and truly ex, y'understand, and seemingly don't want to be nothing else, neither."

"Well, Mr. Taft has got a whole lot of sympathy for Mr. Wilson, Abe," Morris said. "He knows how it is himself, because when he was President, y'understand, he also had experience with Mr. Roosevelt trying to police his administration."

"There's only one remedy, so far as I could see, Morris," Abe said, "if we're ever going to have Mr. Wilson make any progress with the war."

"You don't mean we should put through that law for the three brightest men in the country to run it?" Morris inquired.

"No, sir," Abe replied. "Put through a law that after anybody has held the office of ex-President for two administrations, Mawruss, he should become a private sitson—and mind his own business."

XX

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS THE GRAND-OPERA BUSINESS

"WHERE grand opera gets its big boost, Mawruss," Abe Potash said, the morning after Madame Galli-Curci made her sensational first appearance in New York, "is that practically everybody with a rating higher than J to L, credit fair, hates to admit that it don't interest them at all."

"And even if it did interest them, Abe," Morris Perlmutter said, "they would got to have at least that rating before they could afford it to buy a decent seat."

"Most of them don't begrudge the money spent this way, Mawruss, because it comes under the head of advertising and not amusement," Abe said. "Next to driving a four-horse coach down Fifth Avenue in the afternoon rush hour with a feller playing a New-Year's-eve horn on the back of the roof, Mawruss, owning a box at the Metropolitan Opera House is the highest-grade form of publicity which exists, and the consequence is that other people which believes in that kind of advertising

medium, but couldn't afford to take so much space per week, sits in the cheaper ten- and six-dollar seats. And that's how the Metropolitan Opera House makes its money, Mawruss. It gets a thousand times better rates as any of the big five-cent weeklies, and it don't have to worry about the second-class-postage zones."

"But you don't mean to tell me that the people which stands up down-stairs and buys seats in the gallery is also looking for publicity?" Morris said.

"Them people is something else, again," Abe replied. "They are as different from the rest of the audience as magazine-readers is from magazine-advertisers. Take the box-holders in the Metropolitan Opera House and they *oser* give a nickel what happens to Caruso. He could get burned in 'Trovatore,' stabbed in 'Pagliacci,' go to the devil in 'Faust,' and have his intended die on him in 'Bohème,' and just so long as their names is spelled right on the programs it don't affect them millionaires no more than if, instead of being the greatest tenor in the world, he would be an Interstate Commerce Commissioner. On the other hand, them top-gallery fellers treats him like a little god, y'understand, which if Caruso hands them opera fans a high C, Mawruss, it's the equivalence of Dun or Bradstreet giving one of them box-holders an A-a."

"Maybe you're right, Abe," Morris said, "but how do you account for people paying forty dollars for an orchestra seat at the Lexington Opera

House just to hear this singer Galli-Curci in one performance only, which I admit I ain't no advertising expert, Abe, but it seems to me that if anybody is going to get benefit from publicity like that he might just so well circulate a picture of himself drinking champanyer wine out of a lady's satin slipper and be done with it, for all the good it is going to do him with the National Association of Credit Men."

"That is another angle of the grand-opera proposition, Mawruss," Abe said. "Paying forty dollars for an orchestra seat to hear this lady with the Lloyd-George name is the same like an operation for appendicitis to some people, Mawruss. It not only makes them feel superior to their friends which 'ain't had the experience, but it gives 'em a tropic of conversation which is never going to be barred by the statue of limitations, and for months to come such a feller is going to go round saying, 'Well, I heard Galli-Curci the other night,' and it won't make no difference if it's a pinochle game, a lodge funeral, or a real-estate transaction, he's going to hold it up for from fifteen minutes to half an hour while he talks about her upper register, her middle register, and her lower register to a bunch of people who don't know whether a coloratura soprano can travel on a sleeper south to Washington, D. C., or has to use the Jim Crow cars."

"All right, if it's such a crime not to know what a coloratura soprano is, Abe," Morris commented, "I'm guilty in the first degree. So go ahead, Abe.

I'm willing to take my punishment. Tell me, what *is* a coloratura sporano?"

"I suppose you think I don't know," Abe said.

"I don't think you don't know," Morris replied, "but I do think that the only reason you *do* know, Abe, is that you 'ain't looked it up long enough since to have forgotten it."

"Is *that* so!" Abe exclaimed. "Well, that's where you make a big mistake. I am already an experienced hand at going on the opera. When I was by Old Man Baum we had a customer by the name Harris Feinsilver, which if you only get him started on how he heard Jenny Lind at what is now the Aquarium in Battery Park somewheres around eighteen hundred and fifty-two, y'understand, you could sell him every sticker in the place, and him and me went often on the opera together. In fact I got so that I didn't mind it at all, and that's how I become acquainted with the different grades of singers which works by grand opera. Take, for instance, sopranos, and they come in two classes. There is the soprano which hollers murder police and they call her a dramatic soprano. And then again there is the soprano which gargles. That is a coloratura soprano."

"And people is paying forty dollars an orchestra seat to hear a woman gargle?" Morris exclaimed.

"Of course I don't say she actually gargles, y'understand," Abe explained, "anyhow not all the time, Mawruss. Once in a while she sings a song which has got quite a tune in it pretty near up to the end, and then she carries on something

"Take, for instance, sopranos, and they come in two classes. There is the soprano which hollers murder police and they call her a dramatic soprano. And then again there is the soprano which gargles. That is a coloratura soprano."

terrible anywheres from two to eight minutes till the feller that runs the orchestra couldn't stand it no longer and he gives them the signal they should drown her out."

"I should think he would get to know when it is coming on her and drown her out before she starts," Morris said.

"What do you mean—drown her out before she starts?" Abe continued. "That's what she gets paid for—carrying on in such a manner, and them people up in the top gallery goes crazy over it."

"Then why don't the feller which runs the orchestra let her keep it up?" Morris asked.

"A question!" Abe said. "There is from forty to fifty men working in the orchestra, and if the feller which runs it let them top-gallery people have their way it would cost him a fortune for overtime for them fellers that plays the fiddles alone."

"He should arrange a wage scale accordingly," Morris said, "because it don't make no difference if it's the garment business or the grand-opera business, Abe, the customer should ought to come first."

"*I* always felt that I got *my* money's worth, Mawruss," Abe said. "In particular when it comes to one of them operas with a coloratura soprano in it, y'understand, it seemed to me they could of cut down on the working time without hurting the quality of the goods in the slightest. There's always a good fifteen minutes wasted in such operas where a feller in the orchestra plays a little something on the flute and the coloratura

soprano sings the same music on the stage, the idee being to show that you couldn't tell the difference between the feller playing the flute and the coloratura soprano except the feller playing the flute has all his clothes on. Then, again, during the death-bed scene in the last act they kill a whole lot of time also."

"Do you mean to say there's a death-bed scene in every one of them operas?" Morris inquired.

"Practically," Abe replied. "There ain't many grand operas where both the tenor and the soprano sticks it out alive till the end of the last act, Mawruss. Tenors, in particular, is awful risks, Mawruss, which I bet yer that eighty per cent. of the times I seen Caruso he either passed away along about quarter past eleven after an awful hard spell of singing, or give you the impression that he wasn't going to survive the soprano more than a couple of days at the outside."

"And yet some people couldn't understand why everybody takes in the Winter Garden or Ziegfeld's Follies," Morris commented.

'Of course I don't say that the audience suffers as much as if it was in the English language, but even when a lady dies in French or Italian I couldn't enjoy it, neither," Abe said.

"It seems to me, Abe, that a feller which goes often on grand opera is lucky if he understands only English," Morris observed.

"That's what you would naturally think, Mawruss," Abe agreed, "and yet there is people which

is so anxious that they shouldn't miss none of the tenor's last words that they actually go to work and buy for twenty-five cents in the lobby a translation of the Italian operas, which I got stung that way only once, because to follow from the English translation what the singers is saying on the stage in Italian, Mawruss, a feller could be a combination of a bloodhound and a mind-reader, y'understand, and even then he would get twisted. For instance, Caruso comes out with a couple hundred assorted tenors and bassos, and so far as any human being could tell which don't understand Italian, Mawruss, he begs them that they shouldn't go out on strike right in the middle of the busy season, in particular when times is so hard and everything, and from the way he puts his hand on his heart it looks like he is also telling them that he is speaking to them as a friend, y'understand, and to consider their wives and children, understand me. All the effect this seems to have on them is that they yell, 'Down with the bosses!' and they insist on a closed shop and that the terms of the protocol should be lived up to. This gets Caruso crazy. He grabs his vest with both hands and makes one last big appeal, y'understand, in which he tells them that the delegates is stalling and that they are being made suckers of, and that if it would be the last word he would ever speak, the sensible thing is for them to go right back to work and leave it to arbitration by a joint board consisting of the president of the Manufacturers' Association, the chairman of the

Garment Workers' Union, and Jacob H. Schiff, y'understand, but do you think they would listen to him? *Oser a Stück!* They laugh in his face, and it don't make no difference that he repeats it an octave higher accompanied by the fiddles, and gives them one last chance, ending on a high C, y'understand, they refuse to reconsider the matter, and when the curtain goes down it looks like the strike was on for fair. However, when the lights are turned on and you look it up in the English translation, what do you find? The entire thing was a false alarm, Mawruss. It seems that for twenty minutes Caruso has been singing over and over again, 'Come, my friends, let us go,' and the whole time them people was acting like they wanted to tear him to pieces, they have been saying, 'Yes, yes, let us go' a thousand times over, and that's all there was *to* it."

"Well, after all, with a grand opera, it ain't so much the words as the music," Morris commented.

"Even the music they don't take it so particular about nowadays," Abe continued. "In fact, the up-to-date thing in grand opera is not to have any music, Mawruss, only samples, which some of them newest grand operas, Mawruss, if it wouldn't be that the people on the stage is making such a racket instead of the people in the audience you would think that the orchestra was continuing to tune up during the entire evening."

"Seemingly you didn't get a whole lot out of your visits to the opera, Abe," Morris said.

"Oh yes, I did," Abe replied. "I got some wonderful idees for dinner-dress designs and evening gowns. I 'ain't got no kick coming against the opera, Mawruss. A garment-manufacturer can put in a very profitable evening there any night if he can only stand the music."

XXI

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS THE MAGAZINE IN WAR-TIMES

"I AM just now reading an article by a feller which his name I couldn't remember, but he used to was a baseball-writer for the New York *Moon*," Abe Potash said, as he laid down one of the several weeklies that have the largest circulation in the United States.

"Is this a time to read about baseball?" Morris Perlmutter asked.

"What do you mean—baseball?" Abe demanded. "I said that the feller *used* to was a baseball-writer, but he is now a dramatic cricket."

"With me and dramatic crickets, Abe," Morris said, "it is always showless Tuesday, which when it comes to knocking plays, Abe, believe me, I don't need no assistance from nobody."

"Who said he is knocking plays, Mawruss?" Abe protested. "This here dramatic cricket has just returned from the western front, and he says that the way it looks now the war would last until—"

"Excuse me for interrupting you, Abe," Morris

said, "but is there an article in that paper by a soldier which used to was a certified public ac countant telling what is going to happen in th show business, because, if so, it might interest me y'understand, but what a dramatic cricket who i also an ex-baseball-writer has got to say about th war, Abe, would only make me mad, Abe, be cause there is people writing about this war whicl really knows something about it, whereas as a general proposition it don't make no differenc who writes about the show business, he usuall don't know no more about it as, for example, a baseball-writer."

"That's where you make a big mistake, Maw russ," Abe said. "I have read articles about th war ever since the war started, and so far as I could see, Mawruss, the fellers which wrote then might just so well of stayed at home and got thei dope from actors and baseball-players, becaus you take, for instance, the fellers which ha written about conditions in Russland, Mawruss and claims to have their information right on th spot from the Russian working-men and soldiers y'understand, and from the way them fellers i all the time springing *Nitchyvo!* and *Da!* in thei articles, Mawruss, it's a hundred-to-one proposi tion that them two words was all the Russian they was equipped with to carry on their con versations with them moujiks."

"For that matter, the fellers which writes th articles about the French end of the war don' seem to have had a nervous breakdown fron

studying French, neither," Morris observed. "All the French which them fellers puts into their writings is *O. U. I., m'sieu,* which don't look to me to be any more efficient as *C. O. D., m'sieu,* when it comes to finding out from a feller which speaks only French what he thinks about the war."

"Sure, I know," Abe agreed. "But a feller which writes such an article ain't aiming to tell what the French people thinks about the war. He is only writing what *he* thinks French people is thinking about the war; in fact, Mawruss, I've yet got to see the war article which contains as much information about the war and the people fighting in the war as about the feller which is writing the article, and the consequence is that after you put in a whole evening reading such an article you find that you've learned a lot of facts which might be of interest to the war correspondent's family provided he has sent them home money regularly every week and otherwise behaved to them in the past in such a manner that they give a nickel whether he comes back dead or alive."

"Of course there is exceptions, Abe," Morris said. "There is them articles which gives an account of the big battle where if the Allies would of only gone on fighting for one hour longer, Abe, they would of busted through the German line and the war would of been, so to speak, over."

"What big battle was that, Mawruss?" Abe asked.

"Practically every big battle which a war

correspondent has written an article about since the war started," Morris replied, "and also while the article don't exactly say so, y'understand, it leads you to believe that if the feller which wrote it would of been running the battle, Abe, things would of been very different. Then again there is them articles which contains an account of just to prove how cool the English soldiers is, Abe, the war correspondent which wrote it heard about a private which had the hiccoughs during the heavy gunfire and asks some one to scare him so that he can cure his hiccoughs, which to me it don't prove so much how cool the English soldiers is as how some editors of magazines seemingly never go to moving-picture vaudeville shows."

"Editors 'ain't got no time for such nonsense, Mawruss," Abe said. "They got *enough* to keep 'em busy busheling the jobs them war correspondents turns in on them. Also, Mawruss, running a magazine in war-times ain't such a cinch, neither. Take in the old times before the war, and if a trunk railroad got wrecked, y'understand, people stayed interested long enough so that even if the article about how the head of the guilty banking concern worked his way up didn't appear till three months afterward, it was still good, but you take it to-day, Mawruss, and the chances is that a dozen articles about how Leon Trotzky used to was a feller by the name Braustein which are now slated to be put into the May edition of the magazine is going to be killed along with Trotzky somewheres about the middle of next

month. In fact, Mawruss, things happen so thick and fast in this war that three months from now the only thing that people is going to remember about Brest-Litovsk and Galli-Curci will be the hyphens, and they won't be able to say offhand whether or not it was Brest-Litovsk that had the soprano voice or the peace conference."

"Well, if a magazine editor gets stumped for something to take the place of an article which went sour on him, Abe," Morris suggested, "he could always print a story about a beautiful lady spy, and usually does, y'understand, which the way them amateur spy-hunters gets their dope from reading magazines nowadays, Abe, if the magazines prints any more of them beautiful lady-spy stories, y'understand, a beautiful face on a lady is soon going to be as suspicious-looking as Heidelberg dueling scars on a man, and it's bound to have quite an adverse effect on the complexion-cream business."

"But you've got to hand it to these magazine editors, Mawruss," Abe said. "They ain't afraid to print articles which coppers the advertisements in the back pages. I am reading only this morning an article which it says on page twenty-eight of the magazine that people in Berlin is getting made *Geheimeraths* and having eagles hung on them by the Kaiser in all shades from red to Copenhagen blue for helping out Germany in this war by doing things that ain't one, two, six compared with what a feller in New York does when

he buys a fifteen-hundred-dollar automobile, y'understand, and yet on pages thirty, thirty-two, thirty-eight, forty, and all the other pages from forty-one to fifty inclusive, the same magazine prints advertisements of automobiles costing from ten thousand dollars downwards, F. O. B. a freight-car in Detroit which should ought to be filled with ship-building material F. O. B. Newark, N. J."

"That ain't the magazine's fault, Abe," Morris said. "If it wasn't kept going by the money the advertisers pays for such advertisements it wouldn't be able to print them articles telling people it is unpatriotic to buy the automobiles which the advertisement says they should ought to buy."

"Maybe you're right," Abe said, "but in that case when a magazine prints an advertisement by the Charoses Motor Car Company that the new Charoses inclosed models in designs and luxury of appointment surpass the finest motor-carriages of this country and Europe, Mawruss, the editor should add in small letters, 'But see page twenty-eight of this magazine,' and then when the reader turns to page twenty-eight and finds out what the article says about pleasure cars in war-times, y'understand, he would think twice, ain't it?"

"Sure, I know," Morris said. "But there's always the danger that the advertiser would also turn to page twenty-eight, so as a business proposition for the magazine, it would be better if the

editors stick to them *nitchyvo* articles, which if the advertisers turn to page twenty-eight and see one of those articles the only thing that would worry them, y'understand, is whether or not the reader is going to get so disgusted that he would throw away the magazine before he reached the advertising section."

"That ain't how *I* look at it, Mawruss," Abe protested. "The way a manufacturer has to figure costs so close nowadays, Mawruss, anything like these here war articles which gives you an example of how to turn out the finished product with the least amount of labor and material in it, Mawruss, should ought to be of great interest to the business man. For instance, you ask one of them live, up-to-date young fellers which is now writing about the war with such a good imitation of being right next to all the big diplomatic secrets that no one would ever suspect how before the war he used to think when he saw the word Gavour in the papers that it wasn't spelled right and cost a dollar fifty a portion with hard-boiled egg and chopped onions on the side, y'understand, and we'll say that such a feller is ordered by the magazine *nebich* which he works for to go and see Mr. Lloyd George and fill up pages twelve, thirteen, and fourteen of the April, nineteen seventeen, edition with what Lloyd George tells him about political conditions in Europe. Well, the first time he goes to Mr. Lloyd George's house we will say he gets kicked down the front stoop, on account when he says he represents the *Inter-*

borough Magazine, the butler thinks he comes from the subscription department instead of the editorial department and didn't pay no attention to the sign 'No Canvassers Allowed on These Premises.' Do you suppose that feazes the young feller? *Oser a Stück!* He goes straight back home, paints the place where he landed with iodine, y'understand, and writes enough to fill up the whole of page twelve about how, unlike President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George believes in surrounding himself with strong men. The next time he calls there he gets into the front parlor while he sends up his card, and before the butler could return with the message that Mr. Lloyd George says he wouldn't be back for some days, y'understand, Mrs. Lloyd George happens in and wants to know who let him in there and he should go and wait outside in the vestibule, which is good for half a page of how Mr. Lloyd George's success in politics is due in great measure to the tact and diplomacy of his charming wife.

"However, he has still got half of page thirteen and all of page fourteen to fill up, and the next day he lays for Mr. Lloyd George at the corner of the street and walks along beside him while he tells him he represents the *Interborough Magazine,* which on account of the young feller's American accent Mr. Lloyd George gets the idee at first that he is being asked for the price of a night's lodging, y'understand. So he tells the young feller that he should ought to be ashamed not to be fighting for his country. This brings them to the front

door, and when Mr. Lloyd George at last finds out what the young feller really wants, understand me, he says, 'I 'ain't got no time to talk to you now,' which is practically everything the young feller needs to finish up his article.

"He sits up all night and writes a full account, as nearly as he could remember it, not having taken no notes at the time, of just what Mr. Lloyd George said about the 'Youth of the country and universal military service,' y'understand, and also how Mr. Lloyd George spoke at some length of the Cabinet Minister's life in war-times and what little opportunity it gave for meeting and conversing with friends, quoting Mr. Lloyd George's very words, which were, as the young feller distinctly recalled, 'Much as I would like to do so, I find myself quite unable to speak even to you at any greater length,' and that's the way them articles is written, Mawruss."

"I wonder how big the article would of been, supposing the young feller had really and truly talked to Mr. Lloyd George for, say, three to five minutes, Abe," Morris said.

"Then the article wouldn't have been an article no more, Mawruss," Abe concluded. "It would of been a book of four hundred pages by the name: *Lloyd George, The Cabinet Minister and the Man.* Price, two dollars net."

XXII

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER ON SAVING DAYLIGHT COAL, AND BREATH

"IT ain't a bad scheme at that, Mawruss," Abe Potash said as he laid down the paper which contained an editorial on daylight-saving. "The idee is to get a law passed by the legislature setting the clock ahead one hour in summer-time and get the advantage of the sun rising earlier and setting later so that you don't have to use so much electric light and gas, y'understand, because it's an old saying and a true one, Mawruss, that the sun shine's free for everybody."

"Except the feller in the raincoat business,' Morris Perlmutter added.

"Also, Mawruss," Abe continued, evading the interruption, "there's a whole lot of people which 'ain't got enough will power to get up until their folks knock at the door and say it is half past seven and are they going to lay in bed all day y'understand, which in reality when the clocks are set ahead, Mawruss, it would be only half past six."

"But don't you suppose that lazy people read the newspapers the same like anybody else, Abe?'

Morris asked. "Them fellers would know just as good as the people which is trying to wake them up that it is only half past six under Section Two A of Chapter Five Fourteen of the Laws of Nineteen Eighteen entitled 'An Act to Save Daylight in the State of New York for Cities of the First, Second, and Third Classes,' y'understand, and they will turn right over and go on sleeping until eight o'clock, old style, which is two hours after the sun is scheduled to rise in the almanacs published by Kidney Remedy companies from information furnished by the United States government in Washington."

"Of course, Mawruss, I ain't such a big philosopher like you, y'understand," Abe said, "but so far as I could see it ain't going to do a bit of harm if you could get down-town one hour earlier in the summer-time, even though it is going to take an act of the legislature to do it."

"And it would also be a good thing if the legislature would pass an act making a half an hour for lunch thirty minutes long instead of ninety minutes, the way some people has got into the habit of figuring it, Abe," Morris retorted, "but, anyhow, that ain't here nor there. This is a republic, Abe, and if the people wants to kid themselves by putting the clock ahead instead of getting up earlier, Mawruss, the government could easy oblige them, y'understand, but not even the Kaiser and all his generals could make a law that would change the sun from being right straight overhead at twelve o'clock noon, Abe."

"Don't worry about the sun, Mawruss," Abe said. "The sun would stay on the job, war-times or no war-times. Nobody is trying to make laws to kid the sun into getting to work any earlier, Mawruss, but even with this war as an argument, there's a whole lot of people which would be foolish enough to claim pay for a time and a half for the first hour they worked if you was to alter your office hours so that they had to come down-town at seven instead of eight, although you did let them go home an hour earlier in the afternoon."

"Maybe they would," Morris said, "but it seems to me, Abe, that a great deal of time and money is wasted by legislatures making laws for unreasonable people. For instance, if you change the clocks to save time where are you going to stop? The next thing you know the legislature would be trying to save coal by changing the thermometer in winter so that the freezing-point from December first to March first would be forty-five degrees Fahrenheit, and then when people living in houses situated in cities of the first, second, and third classes kept their houses up to a sixty-eight-degree new style, which was fifty-five degrees old style, they would be feeling perfectly comfortable under the statue in such case made and provided. Also legislatures would be making laws for the period of the sugar shortage, changing the dials on spring scales by bringing the pounds closer together, so that a pound of sugar would contain sixteen ounces new style, being equivalent to twelve ounces old style."

"It ain't a bad idea at that, Mawruss," Abe said.

"It wouldn't be if the same law provided for changing the size of teaspoons and cups, Abe," Morris said, "and even then there is no way of trusting a bowl of sugar to a sugar hog in the hopes that he wouldn't help himself to four or five spoonfuls, new style, being the equivalent of the three spoonfuls such a *Chozzer* used to be put into his coffee before the passage of the sugar-spoon law, supposing there was such a law."

"Sure, I know," Abe said. "But daylight is different from sugar. The idea is that people should use more of it, Mawruss."

"I am willing," Morris said; "but so far as I could see, there ain't going to be no more daylight after the law goes into effect than there was before, and as for setting the clock one hour ahead, anybody could do that for himself without the legislature passing a law about it."

"Say!" Abe protested. "Legislators don't get paid piece-work. They draw an annual salary, Mawruss; so if they went to pass a law about it, let them do a little something to earn their wages, Mawruss."

"Don't worry about them fellers not earning their wages, Abe," Morris said. "Legislators is like actors, so long as they got their names in the papers they don't care how hard they work, which if you was to allow them fellers to regulate the hours of daylight by legislation, Abe, so as to encourage lazy people to get up earlier, Abe,

the first thing you know, so as to encourage aviators to fly higher, they would be passing an act suspending the laws of gravity for the period of the war."

"Well, I believe in that, too, Mawruss," Abe said. "Time enough we should have laws of gravity when we need them, but what is the use going round with a long face before we actually have something to pull a long face over? Am I right or wrong, Mawruss?"

"Tell me, Abe," Morris asked, "what do you think the laws of gravity is, anyhow? No Sunday baseball or something?"

"Well, ain't it?" Abe demanded.

"So that's your idee of the laws of gravity," Morris exclaimed.

"Say!" Abe retorted. "When I got a partner which is a combination of John G. Stanchfield, Judge Brandeis, and the feller what wrote *Hamafteach*, I should worry if I don't know every law in the law-books; so go ahead, Mawruss, I'm listening. What *is* the laws of gravity?"

"The laws of gravity is this," Morris explained. "If you would throw a ball up in the air, why does it come down?"

"Because I couldn't perform miracles exactly," Abe replied, promptly.

"Neither could the legislature and also President Wilson," Morris said, "because even though you would understand the laws of gravity, which you don't, the baseball comes down according to the laws of gravity, and even though Mr. Wilson

does understand the laws of supply and demand, y'understand, if he gets busy and sets a low price on coal, potatoes, wheat, or anything else that people is working to produce for a living and not for the exercise there is in it, y'understand, such people would leave off producing it and go into some other line where the prices ain't regulated."

"They would be suckers if they didn't," Abe commented.

"And the consequence would be that sooner or later, on account of such low prices, y'understand, everybody would have the price, but nobody would have the coal," Morris said, "and that is what is called the law of supply and demand. It ain't a law which was passed by any legislature, Abe. It's a law which made itself, like the law that if you eat too much you'll get stomach trouble, and if you spend too much you'll go broke, and you couldn't sidestep any of them self-made laws by consulting those high-grade crooks which used to specialize in getting million-dollar fees out of finding loopholes in the Interstate Commerce law and the Anti-trust laws, because there's no loopholes in the law of supply and demand."

"Might there ain't no loopholes in the law of supply and demand, maybe," Abe said; "but when Mr. Wilson gave the order to his Coal Administrator to lower the price of coal it's my idee that he was trying to punch a few loopholes in the law of The Public Be Damned, which

while it was never passed by no legislature, Mawruss, it ain't self-made, neither, y'understand, but was made by the producer to do away with this here law of gravity, because under the law of The Public Be Damned prices goes up and they never come down, but they keep on going up and up according to that other law, the law of the Sky's the Limit, which no doubt a big philosopher like you, Mawruss, has heard about already."

"In the company of igneramuses, Abe," Morris said, "a feller could easy get a reputation for being a big philosopher, and not know such an awful lot at that."

"I give you right, Mawruss," Abe agreed, heartily; "but even admitting that you don't know an awful lot, Mawruss, there's something in what you say about this here law of supply and demand."

"Well, now that you indorse it, Abe, that makes it, anyhow, an argument," Morris commented.

"But it looks to me like one of them arguments that is pulled by the supply end to put something over on the demand end," Abe continued, "because President Wilson knows just so much about the law of supply and demand as the coal operators does, Mawruss, and when he fixed the price of coal you could bet your life, Mawruss, he made it an even break for the supply people as well as for the demand people."

"And what has all this got to do with setting the clock ahead one hour in summer, Abe, which

was what you was talking about in the first place?" Morris demanded.

"Nothing, except that setting the clock ahead so as to save bills for gas and electric light and limiting the price of coal so as the public couldn't be gouged by the coal operators, so far as I could see, is two dead open and shut propositions, Mawruss," Abe said, "which of course I admit that I'm an ignorant man and don't know no more laws than a police-court lawyer, y'understand, but at the same time, Mawruss, I must got to say the way it looks to me it ain't the ignorant men which is blocking the speed of this war. For instance, who is it when Mr. Hoover wants to have millions of bushels wheat by using whole-wheat bread that says whole-wheat bread irritates the lining from the elementry canal? The ignorant man? *Oser!* He don't know the elementry canal from the Panama Canal, and if he did he couldn't tell you whether elementry canals came lined with Skinner's satin or mohair or just plain unlined with the seams felled. Then, again, who is it that when *any* order is made by the government which is meant to help along the war takes it like a personal insult direct from Mr. Wilson? The ignorant man? No, Mawruss, it's the feller which thinks that what's the use of having an education if you couldn't seize every opportunity of putting up an argument and using all the long words you've got in your system."

"All right, Abe," Morris said. "I'm converted. Rather as sit here and waste the whole morning

"For instance, who is it that says whole-wheat bread irritates the lining from the elementry canal? The ignorant man? *Oser!*"

I'm content that you should pass a law saving daylight if you want to."

"Don't do me no favors, Mawruss," Abe commented.

"And while you're about it, Abe," Morris concluded, "if you couldn't save it otherwise, have the legislature pass another law that people should save something else for the duration of the war which they ordinarily couldn't live without."

"What's that?" Abe asked.

"Breath," Morris said.

XXIII

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS WHY IS A PLAYGOER?

"DID you see on the front page of all the newspapers this morning where Klaw & Erlanger has had another split with the Shuberts, Mawruss?" Abe Potash asked, one morning in February.

"Say," Morris Perlmutter replied, "I didn't even know they had ever made up since the time they split before, and, furthermore, Abe, I think that even if the most important news a feller in the newspaper business could get ahold of to print on his front page was an I. O. M. A. convention, instead of the greatest war in history, y'understand, he would be giving his readers a great big jolt compared with the thrill they get when they read about the troubles people has got in the show business."

"Maybe *you* think so, Mawruss," Abe said, "but Klaw & Erlanger and the Shuberts don't think so, and when you consider that them two concerns control all the theayters in the United States and spends millions of dollars for advertising, Mawruss, a feller in the newspaper business

don't show such poor judgment to give them boys a little space on the front page whenever they have their semi-annual split."

"Probably you're right, Abe," Morris said; "but if it was you and me that had a big fight on with our nearest competitors, Abe, advertising it in the newspapers would be the last thing we would be looking for."

"The garment business ain't the theayter business, Mawruss," Abe said. "For instance, being a defendant in a divorce suit don't get any one nowheres in the garment trade, because if a garment-manufacturer would have such a person working for him practically the only effect it would have on his business would be that he would be obliged to neglect it two or three times a day answering telephone inquiries from his wife as to just how he was putting in his time, y'understand, and so far as bringing customers into your place who want to see the lady you got working for you which all the scandal was printed about in the papers, Mawruss, it wouldn't make any difference *what* the evidence was, you couldn't get your trade interested to the extent even of their coming in to snoop with no intentions to buy, y'understand. But you take it in the theayter business and big fortunes has been made out of rotten plays simply because the theayter-going public wanted to see if the leading lady looked like the pictures which was printed of her in the papers at the time the court denied her the custody of the child, understand me."

"Then you think that there's going to be a big rush on the theayters controlled by Klaw & Erlanger and the Shuberts on account people has been reading in the papers about their scrapping again, Abe?" Morris inquired.

Abe shrugged his shoulders. "I don't think nothing of the kind, Mawruss," Abe said; "but there's a whole lot of fellers in the theayter business which have stories printed about themselves in the Sunday papers where it tells how they used to was in business and finally worked their way into the theayter business and what is their favorite luncheon dish, y'understand, till you would think that the reason people went to see plays was because the manager formerly run a clothing-store in Milwaukee, Wis., and is crazy about liver and bacon, Southern style."

"That would be, anyhow, as good a reason as because the leading lady's home life didn't come up to her husband's expectations," Morris commented.

"Well, no matter for what reason people do it, Mawruss," Abe concluded, "buying tickets for a show is as big a gamble as a home-cooked Welsh rabbit, in especially if you try to go by the advertisements. For instance, in to-day's paper there is three shows advertised as the biggest hit in town, four of them says they got more laughs in them than any other show in town, and there are a lot of assorted 'Biggest Hits in Years,' 'Biggest Hits Since the "Music Master,"' and 'Biggest Hits in New York,' so what chance does

an outsider stand of knowing which advertisements is O. K. and which is just pushing the stickers?"

"The plan that I got is never to go on a theayter till the show has been running for at least three months, Abe," Morris advised.

"But if everybody else followed the same plan, Mawruss," Abe commented, "what show is going to run three months?"

"Say!" Morris exclaimed. "There would always be plenty of nosy people in New York City which 'ain't got no more to do with their money than to find out if what the crickets has got to say in the newspapers about the new plays is the truth or just kindness of heart, y'understand."

"From what I know of newspaper crickets, Mawruss," Abe said, "when they praise a show they may be mistaken, but they're never kind-hearted."

"If a play runs three months, Abe, it don't make no difference to me whether the newspaper crickets praised it because they had kind hearts or knocked it because they had stomach trouble," Morris said, "I am willing to risk my two dollars, *anyhow*."

"Maybe it would be better all around, Mawruss, if the newspaper crickets printed what they think about a play the day after it closes instead of the day after it opens," Abe observed, "and then they might have something to go by. As it is, a whole lot of newspaper crickets is like doctors which says there is absolutely nothing the

matter with the patient only ten days before the automobile cortège leaves his late residence."

"But there is more of them like doctors which says that the patient may live two days and he may live two weeks, y'understand, and four weeks later he is put in Class One and leaves for Camp Upton with the next contingent," Morris said. "Take even 'Hamlet,' Abe, which I can remember since 'way before the Spanish war already, and I bet yer when that show was put on there was some crickets which said that John Drew or whoever it was which first took 'Hamlet' did the best he could with a rotten part and headed the article, 'John Drew scores in dull play at Fifty-first Street Theater.'"

"Even so, Mawruss," Abe said, "that wouldn't feaze J. H. Woods or whoever the manager was which first put on 'Hamlet,' because we would say, for example, that the cricket of the New York *Star-Gazette* said, 'Hamlet' would be an A-number-one play if it had been written by a pants-presser in his off moments, but as the serious work of a professional play-designer it ain't worth a moment's consideration; also the cricket of the New York *Record* says, From the liberal applause at the end of the third act 'Hamlet' might have been the most brilliant drama since 'The Easiest Way' instead of a play full of clack-trap scenes and which will positively meet the *capora* it deserves, y'understand. Furthermore, Mawruss, we would say that every other paper says the same thing and also roasts the play,

y'understand, so what does this here Woods do? Does he lay right down and notify the operators that under the by-laws of the Actors' Union they should please consider that they have received the usual two weeks' notice that the show will close the next night? *Oser a Stück!* The next day he puts in every paper for two hundred and twenty-five dollars an advertisement:

FIFTY-FIRST STREET THEATER

J. H. WOODS . . . . . LESSEE

J. H. WOODS

PRESENTS

'HAMLET'

THE SEASON'S SENSATION!

An A-number-one play.—*New York Star-Gazette.*

Most brilliant drama since 'The Easiest Way.'—*New York Record.*

John Drew scores heavily.—*New York Evening Moon.*"

"Well, I'll tell you," Morris said; "while I admit that the theayter crickets is smart fellers and knows all about the rules and regulations for writing plays, y'understand, so that they can tell at a glance during the first performance if the audience is laughing in violation of what is considered good play construction or crying because the show is sad in a spot where a play shouldn't ought to be sad if the man who wrote it had known his business, y'understand, still at the same time theayter crickets is to me in the same

class with these here diet experts. Take a dinner which one of them diet experts approves of, Abe, and the food is O. K., the kitchen is clean, the cooking is just right as to time and temperature of the oven, there's the proper proportions of water and solids, and in fact it's a first-class A-number-one meal from the standpoint of every person which has got anything to do with it, excepting the feller which eats it, and the only objection *he's* got to it is that it tastes rotten."

"And that would be quite enough to put a restaurant out of business if it served only good meals according to the opinion of diet experts, Mawruss, because diet experts don't buy meals, Mawruss, they only inspect them," Abe commented.

"And even if theayter crickets did pay for their tickets, Abe," Morris continued, "there ain't enough of them to support one of these here little theayters which has got such a small seating-capacity that neither the exits nor the kind of plays they put on has to comply with the fire laws, y'understand. But that ain't here or there, Abe. A theayter cricket is a cricket and not an appraiser, y'understand. He goes to a play to judge the play and not the prospective box-office receipts, Abe, and if on account of his knocking a play which would otherwise make money for the manager and do a lot of harm to the people which goes to the theayter, such a show is put out of business, Abe, then the theayter cricket has done a good job."

"Sure, I know, Mawruss," Abe said. "But it's just as likely to be the other way about, which you take these here shows the crickets gets all worked up over because they are written by foreigners from Sweden, Mawruss, where a married woman gets to feeling that her husband, her home, and her children ain't exciting enough, y'understand, so she either elopes or commits suicide, understand me, and many a business man has come to breakfast without shaving himself on the day after taking his wife to see such a show and caught her looking at him in an awful peculiar way, y'understand. Then there is other shows which crickets thinks a whole lot of, where a young feller which couldn't get down to business and earn a decent living puts it all over the man who has been financially successful, y'understand, and plenty of young fellers which gets home all hours of the night and couldn't hold a job long enough to remember the telephone number of the firm they work for, comes away from the show feeling that they ain't getting a square deal from their father who has never done a thing to help them in all this life except to feed, clothe, and educate them for twenty-odd years."

"Well, such plays anyhow make you think, Abe," Morris said. "Whereas, when you come away from one of them musical pieces, what do you have to show for it, Abe?"

"A good night's rest, Mawruss," Abe said, "which no one never laid awake all night wondering if his wife or his son has got peculiar no-

tions about not being appreciated from seeing this here Frank Tinney talking to the feller that runs the orchestra in the Winter Garden, Mawruss."

"Then what is your idee of a good show, anyway?" Morris inquired.

"Well, I'll tell you, Mawruss, a good show is a show which you got to pay so much money to a speculator for a decent seat, y'understand, that you couldn't enjoy it after you get there," Abe concluded. "And that is a good show."

XXIV

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS SOCIETY—NEW YORK, HUMAN, AND AMERICAN

"I SEEN Max Feinrubin in the Subway this morning," Abe Potash said to his partner, Morris Perlmutter. "He broke two fingers on his left hand last week."

"Why don't he let the shipping-clerk do up the packing-cases?" Morris commented.

"He didn't break his hand on no packing-case," Abe said.

"Well, what *did* he break it on, then?" Morris asked.

"The shipping-clerk," Abe replied, "which the feller said that this war is a war over property, and every nation that is in it is just as bad as Germany, so Feinrubin asked him did he claim that the United States was just as bad as Germany and he said 'Yes,' and afterward he said that Feinrubin would hear from him later through a lawyer."

"And that is how Feinrubin broke his two fingers," Morris said.

"Well, as a matter of fact, up to that point

Feinrubin had only broke one finger, Mawruss," Abe said, "but just before the shipping-clerk went out of the door he said that President Wilson was an enemy to Society, so Feinrubin broke the other finger."

"Serves Feinrubin right," Morris said. "There he was in his own shipping-room with hammers and screw-drivers laying around, and he has to break his fingers yet."

"You probably would 've done the same thing," Abe retorted, "if we would got for a shipping-clerk a Socialist who puts up such arguments."

"Well, I don't know," Morris said. "A Socialist would naturally say that this is a war over property because it don't make no difference if it would be a war, an earthquake, a cyclone, or a blizzard, to a Socialist all such troubles is property troubles, just as to a stomach specialist every pain is appendicitis, so if our shipping-clerk would give me a line of argument like that, Abe, instead I would break my fingers on him, y'understand, I would simply dock him fifty cents as an argument that if he wants to talk socialism, he should talk it in his own time and not mine."

"But the feller had no business to tell Feinrubin that President Wilson was an enemy to Society," Abe protested.

"Say!" Morris exclaimed. "For that matter I am an enemy to Society, too."

"Never mind," Abe declared. "Lots of Society fellers which never done a day's work in their lives has gone down to Washington to give

the country the benefit of their experience, Mawruss, and it's surprising how many Society ladies is also turning right in and giving up their time to the Red Cross and so forth."

"Sure, I know," Morris said. "But there is lots of them which don't, Abe, and you take it on a cold Sunday in February when the superintendent of the apartment-house where you live is keeping the temperature of your flat below sixty-eight degrees by not letting it get up to fifty, y'understand, and it would make a Bolshevik out of the president of a first national bank to see Mrs. J. Van Rensselaer-This and Mrs. H. Twombley-The Other on the front page of the illustrated Sunday supplement, photographed at Pallum Beach on Lincoln's Birthday in practically a pair of stockings apiece, y'understand, which if them people want to wear clothes in Florida that if any one wore them around New York if they didn't get arrested they would anyhow get pneumonia, y'understand, that's *their* business, Abe, but what I don't understand is, why should they want to advertise it?"

"Well, what is the use of being in Society if you couldn't rub it in on people who ain't?" Abe asked.

"But this is a democracy, Abe," Morris said, "so who cares if he is in Society or not?"

"Don't fool yourself, Mawruss," Abe said. "There wouldn't be no object for Society ladies to advertise that they are in Society if they didn't know that reading such an advertisement would

make a whole lot of people feel sore which wants to get into Society, but couldn't."

"And such people calls themselves Americans?" Morris said.

"They not only calls themselves Americans, but they *are* Americans," Abe said. "Which the main talking points of any one who advertises that they are in Society, whether they do it through publicity in the newspapers, by marrying or dying, y'understand, is that the bride or the deceased, as the case may be, was a descendant of Txvee van Rensselaer Ten Eyck who came in America in sixteen fifty-three and that another great-great-grandfather opened the first ready-to-wear-clothing factory on the American continent in sixteen sixty-six."

"Of course, Abe, you may be right," Morris said, "but it seems to me I read it somewheres how a whole lot of people which is now in Society qualified by settling in Pittsburg along about the time Judge Gary first met Andrew Carnegie."

"Sure, I know," Abe said. "But millionaires can get into Society on a cash basis, *nunc pro tunc*, as of May first, sixteen twenty, as the lawyers say, Mawruss, which if a lady is trying to butt into Society on the grounds that her great-great-grandfather, Hyman de Peyster van Rensselaer, *olav hasholom*, came over on the *Mayflower* and bought all the land on which the town of Hockbridge, Mass., now stands from the Indians in sixteen sixty-six for two hundred dollars, y'understand, it wouldn't do her chances a bit of harm if

her husband came over on the White Star Line, third class, just so long as he bought U. S. Steel when it was down to thirty and a quarter in nineteen five and held on to it till it touched one hundred and twenty, y'understand."

"Then what used to was the 'four hundred' must have added a whole lot of ciphers to it in the last few years, Abe," Morris commented.

"Ciphers is right," Abe said. "But that four-hundred figure is a thing of the past along with the population of Detroit before the invention of the automobile, Mawruss, and I guess, nowadays, Society must be running the Knights of Pythias and the Royal Arcanum pretty close on the size of its membership, Mawruss."

"For my part, Abe," Morris said, "I would just as lieve join either of them societies in preference to Society. Take, for instance, these here Vanderbilts which they have been in Society for years already, and what benefit do they get from it? It isn't like as if one of them would be in the wholesale clothing business, for instance, and could get a friend to use his influence with a retailer by saying: 'Mr. Goldman, this is my friend, Mr. Vanderbilt. Him and me was in Society for years, already, and anything in his line you could use would be a personal favor to me,' because any connection with the clothing business, wholesale or retail, bars you out of Society unless the Statue of Limitations has run against it for at least four generations."

"Still, it's a big help to be in Society for certain

businesses, Mawruss," Abe said. "Take it in our line, Mawruss, and a feller which was in Society could make a fortune duplicating for the popular-price trade an expensive line of garments such as you would be apt to see at an affair which was run off by somebody 'way up in Society."

"That ain't a bad idee, neither, Abe," Morris said; "and then, Abe, instead of people asking what is the big idee when they see a picture of Mrs. Yosel van Rensselaer Lydig in the illustrated Sunday supplement they could read on it, 'Our Leader—the Mrs. Yosel van Rensselaer Lydig gown; regular sizes, nine fifty; stouts, ten dollars,' which there is no use letting all that good publicity going to waste, Abe, so if a garment-manufacturer couldn't utilize it, a cigar wholesaler could vary his line of cigars called after actresses by naming one of them 'The Mrs. Yosel van Rensselaer Lydig, a mild and aromatic three-for-a-quarter smoke for five cents.'"

"I'm afraid Society people wouldn't be willing to stand for such a thing even in war-times, Mawruss," Abe said.

"Well, I only make the suggestion, Abe, because some states has already passed laws compelling everybody to find a job for the duration of the war, y'understand," Morris said, "and if the courts should hold that sitting on the sand at Pallum Beach and having a photograph taken ain't holding a job within the meaning of the statue in such cases made and provided, Abe, maybe the addition of a little advertising matter to the picture

would be enough to keep some Society lady out of jail on the ground that she is working as a model for advertising pictures, y'understand, although, for my part, Abe, I am willing to see anybody who tries to get publicity as a Society person go to jail whether they work or not."

"Why so?" Abe asked.

"Because such publicity is only the start, Abe," Morris said. "It is the first stages of what is the trouble in Germany to-day yet. For years already the Society fellers of Germany, headed by the chief Society feller of Germany, the Kaiser, has been getting their pictures into the paper dressed in soldiers' uniforms till it got to be firmly fixed in the minds of people which wasn't Society fellers that the latest up-to-the-minute idee was wearing a soldier's uniform. Also, Abe, along with such publicity goes the idee that anything Society fellers does is O. K., and it is this just-watch-our-smoke advice of the German Society fellers to the poor German people, *nebich*, which has changed the motto of Germany from '*Hei-lie! Hei-lio! Hei-lie! Hei-lio! Bei uns, geht's immer so!*' to '*Deutschland, Deutschland ueber Alles*,' and that is what brought on the war, Abe."

"You mean to say that when Mrs. Mosha van Rensselaer has her picture taken at Pallum Beach the intention is the same as when the Kaiser used to got printed a photograph of himself as colonel of the One Hundred and First Pomeranian Regiment."

"Toy Pomeranian or regular size, Abe," Morris

said, "it don't make no difference, the intention in both cases was to get publicity for the fact that the sitter was a leader of Society, Abe, and so far as the Kaiser was concerned, he soon got the idee that just as the Kaiser was the leader of Society of Germans, y'understand, so Germany was the leader of the Society of Nations, and therefore that Germany should have the biggest army, the biggest navy, the biggest colonies, and the biggest territory."

"And she's going to get the biggest licking, Mawruss," Abe interrupted.

"She's got it coming to her," Morris said, "and then when we've showed Germany that she ain't such an international Society leader like she thought she was, y'understand, the Germans which was rank outsiders in Germany Society is going to look up a lot of old illustrated Sunday supplements, and when the trial comes off before the Berlin County Court of General Sessions the district attorney is going to offer in evidence that well-known picture of the Kaiser and his six sons, and, without leaving the box, the jury will find a verdict of guilty of being German Society leaders in the first degree. Also, Abe, pictures will turn up of one of the Kaiser's hunting parties, and only the people which couldn't be identified on account of being at the edge of the photograph will escape."

"But you don't think anything like that would happen to our Society fellers, Mawruss?" Abe said.

"I think they're perfectly safe for the next hundred years or so, Abe," Morris said, "but, just the same, they should take example by the Society leaders over in Russland, and learn to drink coffee from the saucer and eat with the knife while there is still time."

XXV

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER DISCUSS THIS HERE INCOME TAX

"DIDN'T I beg you that you shouldn't give to a lawyer that claim against Immerglick which we had for the money we loaned him five years ago?" Abe Potash said to his partner, Morris Perlmutter, as he pored over form 1040, revised January, 1918, which bore in large black letters the heading, "INDIVIDUAL INCOME-TAX RETURN FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1917."

"Ten hundred and fifty dollars he paid us, and now I don't know should I stick it under A, B, C, D, E, or F."

"I suppose you would rather see Immerglick get away with the whole sum as pay eight per cent. of it to the government," Morris commented.

"I would give the government not only eight per cent., but eighteen per cent., Mawruss, if they would only send round their representative and fill out this here paper themselves, and leave me in peace," Abe said. "I 'ain't done nothing for a month now but write down figures on this rotten

blank and scratch them out again, and what is going to be the end of it I don't know."

"All the government asks of you, Abe, is to be honest," Morris said.

"Sure, I know," Abe replied. "But to be honest about fixing up this here income-tax return, Mawruss, you've got to be a lawyer, a certified public accountant, a mind-reader, and one of these here handwriting experts who knows how to write the whole of the Constitution of the United States on the back of a two-cent stamp, which take, for instance, 'N. CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS, &c. (Enter below name and address of each organization and amount paid to each),' and while I 'ain't given away a million dollars to charity in nineteen seventeen exactly, I can see where next year when somebody comes round to *schnoor* from me five dollars for the Bella Hirshkind Home for Aged and Indignant Females in the Borough of the Bronx, City of New York, y'understand, he's going to get turned down on the grounds that Mr. McAdoo only provided three lines for all charitable contributions and I'm saving them up for the Red Cross, the S. P. C. A., and one orphan asylum with an awful short name."

"Did it occur to you that you could give the Bella Hirshkind Home four dollars and sixty cents and leave it out of your income-tax return altogether?" Morris suggested.

"Listen!" Abe said. "I ain't trying to invent ways of getting around what looks like the only

good feature of this here income-tax return, Mawruss. If Mr. McAdoo or President Wilson or whoever it was that fixed up this here paper thought that the average man didn't need more as three lines to put down his charities in, Mawruss, who am I that I should set my opinion up against theirs? Am I right or wrong?"

"Well, for that matter, Abe," Morris said, "if you are up against it for space to fill in about the Bella Hirshkind Home, how many lines did Mr. McAdoo leave me to write in about you and Feigenbaum?"

"Me and Feigenbaum?" Abe repeated.

"Sure!" Morris said. "The time you and him had the argument should it be pronounced Bol*shev*iki or Bolshe*vee*ki."

"Well, I was right, wasn't I?" Abe demanded.

"Certainly you were right," Morris replied. "But the question is, do I put in the fifteen-hundred-dollar order he canceled on us under 'EXPLANATION OF LOSSES OF BUSINESS PROPERTY' or under 'J. GENERAL DEDUCTIONS NOT REPORTED ON PAGE THREE'?"

"Put it in the same place where I would put the money which I lost from having got it a partner which wastes dollars' and dollars' worth of time on me every day by arguing about things which arguing couldn't help," Abe advised. "Because with this here income-tax proposition, Mawruss, if you are going to waste so much time arguing about what you have lost that you couldn't be able to remember by April first what

you made, y'understand, you would lose in addition a thousand dollars more and fifty per cent. of the amount of the tax due, and you couldn't have the consolation of blaming it on your partner, neither."

"It seems to me, Abe," Morris commented, "that the government makes a big mistake limiting you to April first, because I already figured my income tax out six times and it comes to a hundred dollars more every time, which if they would only give me till, say, the first of August, y'understand, I might be able to figure it out a couple dozen times more and pay the government some real big money."

"With me, Mawruss," Abe said with a sigh, "sometimes it's more and sometimes it's less, but it only goes to show how if a business man is going to have such a big difference of opinion with himself, Mawruss, what kind of a difference of opinion is he going to have with the collector of internal revenue? So I guess the only thing for me to do is to start all over again and this time I'll multiply the result by two, because if I've got to pay anything extra to the government, y'understand, I'd just as lieve do it without getting indicted first."

"Say!" Morris exclaimed. "If they started in to indict everybody which is going to figure up their income tax wrong this year, Abe, the government would got to draft a couple of million grand-jurymen, and then lay off the workers on cantonments and put them to building jails."

"And labor is scarce enough as it is, Mawruss, when you figure the hundreds of thousands of sitsons of this country which has been taken out of active business life during the past sixty days while they were engaged in making up their income-tax returns," Abe said.

"Well, that will simplify things a whole lot next year, Abe," Morris declared, "particularly in the excessive-profits department, because owing to the time they spent in doping out what excessive profits they had last year, the business men of the country won't have any profits this year, excessive or otherwise."

"I should only make enough this year to pay a certified public accountant for fixing up my income-tax return next year, Mawruss, and I shall be satisfied," Abe said, "because who could tell, maybe next year, Mawruss, the government wouldn't stop at wanting to know what your income is and how you made it, but would also insist on knowing how you spent it after it was made, which if business is so bad next year on account of the war, Mawruss, it may be that the government, finding that they couldn't raise enough money with an income tax and an excessive-profits tax, will pass a law calling for a personal-extravagance tax."

"They could get a lot of revenue that way," Morris admitted.

"Yes, and they could get it coming and going," Abe said. "Take, for instance, the hotel and restaurant hat-check business, which I seen it in

the papers that a partnership of hat-checkers got into a dissolution lawsuit the other day, and it come out that they made a quarter of a million dollars profit in less than five years, y'understand. Now in a case like that, Mawruss, the government couldn't tax them robbers an additional eight per cent., because hat-checking ain't a profession under 'A. INCOME FROM PROFESSIONS,' any more than burglary is. Neither could the government soak them highwaymen for an excessive-profits tax, because hat-checking ain't a business with an invested capital, not unless you count as capital, *Chutzpah*, gall and a nerve like a rhinoceros. So the only way the government could collect on tips to hat-checkers would be to tax the tipper fifty per cent. and put it up to the hat-checker to collect it at the source from the feller who is foolish enough to give up his money that way."

"Sure, I know," Morris said. "But that wouldn't be a personal-extravagance tax, Abe. That's what I would call a tax on personal cowardice. It's the kind of a tax the government could soak a feller which 'ain't got enough backbone to say 'No' when a head waiter suggests celery and olives at seventy-five cents a throw."

"Whatever it is, I'm in favor of it, Mawruss," Abe said. "Also it should ought to be collected from the feller who lets the barber get away with ten cents extra for a teaspoonful of hair tonic, and as for face massages, there should be a flat rate of five dollars for each offense."

"*Aber* don't you think that a face massage is its own punishment, Abe?" Morris asked.

"So is attempting suicide," Abe said. "But people go to jail for it, Mawruss."

"Well, anyhow, before the government goes to work and taxes people for that part of their income which they spend foolishly, Abe," Morris said, "they should get busy under the present income-tax law and prevent anybody from getting away with anything under 'J. GENERAL DEDUCTIONS' by claiming a drawback or bad debts arising out of personal loans, which the government is losing thousands and thousands of dollars on many a week-kneed business man who knew when he loaned the money to his wife's relations that he would never even have the nerve enough to ask them to renew their notes even. Then there is other business men which has got a lot of customers on their books who couldn't get credit except by paying such a high price for their goods that if they bust up there would still be a profit, even if they settled for thirty cents on the dollar, and when them business men start to make up their income-tax returns they don't hesitate for a moment to charge off the balance under 'B. BAD DEBTS ARISING FROM SALES (See instructions).'"

"I suppose such business men clears their consciences with the thought that if they had lost the money legitimately playing pinochle, Mawruss, the government wouldn't let them deduct a cent," Abe suggested. "And in a way, Mawruss, they are right, because while you couldn't charge

off pinochle losses, I understand Mr. McAdoo holds that you've got to pay income tax on pinochle profits."

"That only goes to show how much Mr. McAdoo knows about pinochle, Abe," Morris said, "because unless, *Gott soll huten*, a feller should drop dead immediately after he cashes in his chips, y'understand, money which you win at pinochle ain't an asset, Abe, it's a loan, and sooner or later you are going to pay it back with interest."

"*You* argue with Mr. McAdoo!" Abe advised him. "Why, as I understand it, if you are having the game up at your own house, Mawruss, and you happen to draw out ahead you ain't even allowed to deduct nothing for electric light and the delicatessen supper, so strict the government is."

"But do you mean to say that if you have a regular Saturday-night pinochle game and you make a few dollars one Saturday night and drop it the next and so forth, Abe, that the government wouldn't allow you to deduct your losings from your winnings?" Morris asked.

"That's the idee," Abe said. "When you cash in at the end of each game, Mawruss, that constitutes a separate transaction under 'H. OTHER INCOME (including income from partnerships, fiduciaries, except that reported under E, F, and G),' and you don't get no allowances for nothing."

"Well, that settles it," Morris said. "For the fiscal year January first, nineteen eighteen, to December thirty-first, nineteen eighteen, I play

pinochle two-handed with my wife, Abe, and then I've always got the come-back that I answered 'No' to question eight, 'Did your wife (or husband) or dependent children derive income from sources independent of your own?'"

"I don't think that Mr. McAdoo would hold that you've got to report money which you win from your wife," Abe said.

"Why not?" Morris asked.

"Because Mr. McAdoo is a married man himself, Mawruss, and he knows that such moneys ain't income," Abe concluded. "They're paper profits, and you never collect on them."

THE END