

native town of Versec, in the great European kaleidoscope, had become a part of Serbia. They had been well-off and happy in Versec; then the great wars and revolutions had brought famine and high taxes, and had cast such a shadow over the old life, such doubt upon the future, that they had dreamt and talked of the Promised Land, where peace and plenty abounded—

They got their passports, and had them viséd by the American consul. Mother Focht and five children started upon the great adventure, secure in the power of their passports—for what could befall them while those official Papers were correct?

The first thing that befell was a week of detention on Ellis Island. It was somewhat worse than the steerage trip had been—they waited, not knowing for what. Then they heard rumors that another Paper had been signed and sealed with their fate: Mother and the three younger children should enter, but with them the immigration quota was full—Käthe and Anna were to be deported!

"They kept us two more weeks," said Anna with a shudder. "It was awful then, because there was no hope, nothing to make us bear the filthy sickly life in those barracks. There were so many of us that we almost starved. Every day some one died of disease or broken heart, and many of the women went mad. We can never forget it, not if we live a hundred years! It was for that we came across the sea—and now they have signed a Paper, saying we must go back to Versec."

What they should do in Versec, or who should receive and protect them there, the Paper did not say.

"Our home is sold," she continued, "we have sold our house, our furniture, our mattresses and cloaks and all our things. We are told to go home, and there will be no home. We must live upon the kind mercy of neighbors." She glanced at her shabby black skirt and blue jacket. A ragged silk kerchief, originally crimson and gold and deeply fringed, still covered her head, and was the only remnant of some gorgeous Balkan costume, her old mark of rank in Jugoslavia.

"And we have no mother!" she cried suddenly, overcome by this greatest grievance. "We could bear everything, if they only had not taken her away! We shall never see her again. And we have never been away from her before—we are young and helpless and cannot speak to anyone. What will these strange men do to us before we come to Versec? What shall we do among them all without mother? We cannot even write to her, because we will never know where she lives, and she will not write because she does not believe we shall ever see Versec again. O why did

they send just us away, who are so unprotected?"

I tried to explain to her naïve intelligence the necessity of our immigration law, and the impossibility of considering individuals among such a multitude of people. She nodded patiently, convinced of her fate.

Käthe, who had been staring silently out of the window, pushed back her kerchief and turned scornful eyes on me.

"The Law is the Law," she said. "We know it. But this I will ask the American consul in a later life: why did he visé our passports at all, when it was forbidden to enter? Did he not know how many passports he had already seen, and how many could enter every month?"

I could not answer her question. I can only repeat it for myself: why are these people ever allowed to come? Why are passports approved that can be of no use? Why are heads counted in New York instead of abroad at the American consulates? Many a human destiny hangs on this little awkwardness of the immigration system.

America, that is the Promised Land at some time to all the oppressed of the world, stands thus in many memories as the Gate of Sorrows. Poor dreamers, can no one warn them of the fate that may await them? There seems to be absolutely no reason why they should be allowed to sell their all, to go upon the venture perfectly secure in the power of their passports, and return again destitute, penniless, some of them mere children taken from the protection of their parents. They go back to live upon charity, who once have worn kerchiefs of crimson and gold!

What shall the American consuls, or we who stand behind their signatures, answer these plaintiffs in a later life? SUSANNE K. LANGER.

Doppelgänger

I'm waiting for myself, sitting up too late
 Waiting for myself to come back tonight.
 I saw myself go out of a moonlit gate
 And turn to the right . . .
 I saw myself, a midge on the silver face
 Of the moon, trudge up the sky,
 And through the molten silver and fine-spun lace
 Of clouds, go by.
 I saw myself come to that misty house
 On the other side of nowhere, where you are.
 Discreetly hidden under whispering boughs
 It gleams like a star.
 The door glowed open. "Oh, it's you!" you said . . .
 So I sit here waiting—with Fate—
 And I wish Myself would get back
 For I ought to go to bed
 And he stays so late!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT,

The New Peace and Billie Burke

I WENT to a peace meeting one night last week. I went because it was less expensive than the opera, and more promising than calling on my mother.

I rather expected an audience of men with unclipped locks falling back on undusted coat collars, and women with determined-looking clothes. I don't know why I expected this. I see now that an objection to being shot at by a complete stranger, probably at the command of a second lieutenant, can exist side by side with taking thought to one's raiment.

I see my mistake as I enter and glance about. It is the sort of audience one finds at any good theatre, say of a Saturday night. And there is a sprinkling of women whose faces still bear the restraining marks of anxiety, of uncertainty, of the vicarious suffering of women who sit at home and wait for their men to come back. Here and there is a man who looks as though war were not an interesting mental abstraction to him, because he has rotted in the wet fields of Flanders and starved and sweated in the trenches of France. And in the seat next me sits a young man in uniform, with an empty sleeve. It occurs to me that of us all, he has the most right to be here; the most right to an opinion on peace. He has paid for that right with an arm.

Someone is speaking. I have no program and the young man with the empty sleeve whispers the speaker's name to me and adds that he is the head of a workers' college. The speaker is gaunt, patient and awkward. He looks rather like Lincoln when he was young and had not yet been disillusioned by mankind. He is reading figures on the war, from a slip of paper in his hand.

Figures are usually ineffective. They do not bite into the imagination. These are appalling.

He reads that ten million young men, the hope and promise of the world, lie buried on the battlefields of France and Belgium. Ten million women had borne them in travail and agony, had reared them with infinite labor and love, as though for some great purpose . . . to this end. . . .

He tells us that another fifteen million are bitter and awful remnants of men—eyeless, maimed, crippled, with broken bodies.

He reads on, that of every dollar paid in taxes, ninety-seven cents goes to pay for wars—past, present and to come. This in a year when three million men go begging for work as one begs for a great boon, and their children go breadless to school.

A spectacled young rabbi follows him and talks

like a prophet out of the Old Testament, grown ironic. He points out mordantly that the very men who led the armies in war, are now in Washington to talk peace. That war falls most terribly on the common man; and yet that not one representative of labor, from any land, is present. Briand—he goes on—says that Germany is not yet morally disarmed. Does he mention that France is still immorally armed?

Briand is at a discount this evening; the point is tremendously applauded.

He closes on a note of: "This last 'war to end war' has given us an unparalleled and terrible harvest of present and future wars. It is not time now for a 'peace to end war'?"

I sit thinking this over.

A speaker whose name I do not catch, and who must be a chemist or else has an uncanny familiarity with chemical formulae, tells us that the next war will be a "chemical war." Where a company has been wiped out in the last war, newly discovered gasses will wipe out a regiment in the next war—a regiment, a town, an entire countryside—there seems no limit to its deadly potentialities. He reads us formulae to prove it, innocuous, pallid letters and figures. It is terrible to think that these harmless sounds have, translated into reality, implicit in them the power to make mangled masses of swiftly decaying flesh of men who, a minute before, had been instinct with youth, with hope, with pride of the flesh.

A Japanese woman sits on the platform, sober and remote in her kimona of black and silver, her wrists crossed over one another in her lap, her feet parallel and motionless in their white sandals and stockings, divided at the great toe. She looks very tired and sad and a little bored. She belongs to a race so old that it has learned to deal with realities. Our hopes and enthusiasms are immaturities to her. They are the idealisms of little children, for whom every ogre must be killed and every story end happily.

Her cool aloofness angers me. Of course the speakers were right! A peace to end war? Surely we were in sight of it even now! Had not our "war to save democracy" disillusioned us? Surely it isn't possible to lead men to the shambles forever, driven victims of greed or of geographic expediencies? Were we not, even now, a chastened people, wiser, maturer, more thoughtful, clearer-eyed? Yes, we had seen our last war! I was sure of it. The rapt, devoted faces of the speakers assured me of it; the passionate response of the audience; their eager, affirming applause. . . .