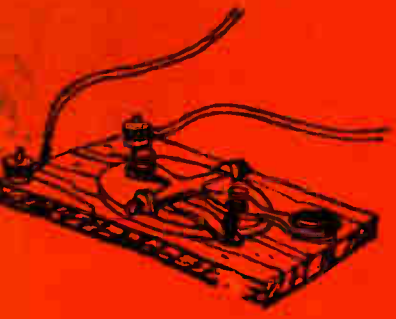
CHILDHOOD OF FAMOUS AMERICANS

David Sarnoff

RADIO AND TV BOY

by Elisabeth P. Myers



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Illustrated by Fred M. Irvin

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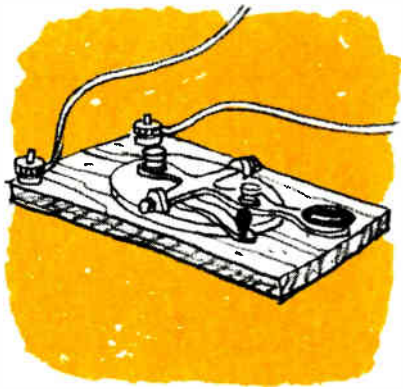
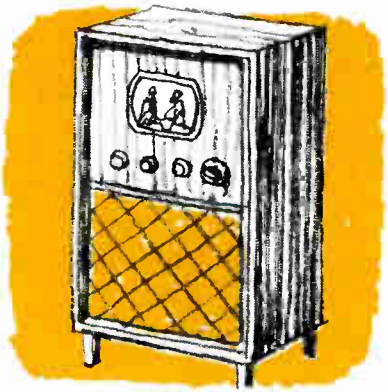


To My Grandnephew, John Potter.



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★ David Sarnoff

Radio and TV Boy

Not a Baby Any Longer

"I KNOW WHAT I'll build with these blocks," said David Sarnoff. He was on his knees beside a pile of blocks on the kitchen floor. He was celebrating his third birthday, February 27, 1894, and had just received the blocks as a gift.

"What will you build?" asked his mother, Leah Sarnoff, giving a last rock to his baby brother Lew, asleep in a cradle. She went over to the fireplace and started to stir something in the iron kettle which hung over the fire.

"A building that scrapes the sky," replied David, beginning to stack up his blocks.

Leah Sarnoff peered over her shoulder.

"Where did you hear of tall buildings that reach the sky?" she asked.

"In Uncle Schlomme's letter from America, which you read aloud to Papa," said David.

"I didn't know you were listening," said Leah. She began to stir so hard that David could hear the spoon beat against the pot. "Uncle Schlomme is likely to write anything," she continued. "You never can tell when he's speaking the truth or when he's dreaming. Why, he even says that over in America Jews have the same rights and privileges as Christians."

David was too young to understand. He realized that he was a Jew, but so was everybody else in the little village of Uzlian where he lived. Why should it matter what Christians, whoever they were, could or couldn't do in America?

Suddenly the conversation was interrupted by the sound of stamping feet and laughter outside the door. Seconds later four boys slightly older

than David bounced into the room. "My house is your house," said David's mother as the boys snatched off their hats and bowed to her.

Neither David nor his mother was surprised by the sudden appearance of the boys. The people in this isolated little west Russian village were well acquainted and friendly. Nearly all were descendants of a handful of Jews who had settled there hundreds of years before.

The boys walked over to David, who was continuing to pile up his blocks. "Stop playing with your blocks and come with us," said Reuben, the biggest of the boys. "We've decided that you're old enough to go along."

David still had two unused blocks. He carefully put them into place and then climbed to his feet. "There," he said. "My building is done, so I guess I might as well go with you."

His mother clucked her tongue. "Watch your manners, David," she said.

"What manners?" asked David, not understanding what he had done wrong.

"Never mind," replied his mother. Then, turning to the visitors, she added, "You boys should have some hot potato broth before you go out into the cold again. Each of you take down a brass mug from the shelf over the fireplace."

The boys got the mugs and she ladled out generous portions of the mixture which she had been stirring in the iron kettle. "Now mind you don't blister your tongues," she cautioned.

While the three boys sipped their broth, she strapped rag-padding over David's boots and legs. "If I'm right about what you're supposed to be old enough to do, you'll need this extra protection," she said in a low voice. "It's bitter cold outside today."

Every winter day was bitter cold in Uzlian, where the temperature was commonly forty degrees below zero, but the cold didn't worry

David. He knew that he would be warm in the coat, mittens, and cap which his Grandma Rivke had made for him out of wolf pelts. One day at market she had traded her entire stock of home-cooked meat patties to get the pelts. His mother Leah had been very upset with Grandma Rivke. "She can't afford such extravagance," Leah had complained. "But you're her first grandchild, and nothing's too good for you."

The unpaved streets of Uzlian, which often were ankle deep with mud in the summer, now were covered with a heavy coating of uneven ice. David had a hard time keeping up with the other boys on the icy streets. His movements were hampered by his bulky leg-wrappings. Every now and then he fell down and had to be yanked to his feet. "You're as helpless as a turtle that lands on its back," said the boys, laughing.

As Leah Sarnoff had guessed, the boys were taking David to an abandoned synagogue. When

the village had been founded the synagogue had been both the place of worship and the center of life in the community. Then, in the mid-thirteenth century, an army of Crusaders for Christ, traveling across Europe to the Holy Land in Western Asia, had happened to come to Uzlian. They had camped in the synagogue and stabled their horses there. From then on the Jews could never use the synagogue again.

For hundreds of years the townspeople had passed along the story about the synagogue from one generation to another. In recent years they had come to let older children pass the story along to younger children, usually when the younger children were about four years old. This was the age when boys were expected to start Hebrew School. David, who was very alert, had been chosen to hear the story a year earlier than most children.

David did not know where the boys were tak-

ing him until they stopped in front of the old synagogue and Reuben said solemnly, "Well, here we are!"

David had seen the old synagogue many times before with his parents. Always, however, his parents, like everybody else, had crossed the street when they had come near. He had wondered why people had avoided going close by. Now today he was surprised. "We aren't going inside, are we?" he asked curiously.

"Yes, in a little while," replied Reuben, "but first I want to tell you a story."

"Good," said David. "I like stories."

"Well, this story isn't a fairy tale," said Reuben, eager to get started. "It's the stark, awful truth."

The other boys crowded close to listen to the story, too. David scarcely breathed, waiting for Reuben to start. Then in colorful words Reuben told the story of how the villainous Crusaders

had ruined the synagogue. He told things so clearly that David felt as if they were happening all over again. He wouldn't have been surprised to hear the clank of armor and the neighing of horses. He even imagined that he could smell the oily smoke of the campfires which the evil Crusaders had built.

At last Reuben finished his story by saying, "Well, now you know, David. Come on, the rest of you. Help me to open the door."

All the boys tugged at the big door and finally managed to open it with a squeal from its rusty hinges. Inside, everything was still and dark. David stood stunned, blinking his eyes. He'd never known a place could be so dark in the daytime. He could hear the other boys nearby but couldn't tell where they were. He felt uneasy even with them there.

After a few scary seconds in total darkness, David began to see things dimly. He could

make out the gray outlines of the window, which provided the only light. Far above he could make out the arched ceiling in the huge room. He could see, too, what appeared to be shreds of gray cloth hanging from the rafters.

"Oo-ee!" called one of the boys, and "Oo-ee!" echoed back through the silent room. Then suddenly David noticed some of the shreds hanging from the rafters beginning to move. They came swooping down toward him, uttering scary noises which made him shiver. They made him think of evil spirits which his Grandma Rivke had told him sometimes inhabited places where bad things had happened. His heart began to pound as he ducked and ducked again. He didn't want to get hit by whatever these frantic squeaking things were.

One of the boys started to chuckle. "I guess I stirred up the bats by calling 'Oo-ee,' " he said as he dodged one of the creatures.

"Don't laugh," said Reuben. "You were stupid. How do you expect David to get a good picture of the place with bats flying about. Now we'll just have to come back some other time."

At once David objected. "You brought me to see something, and I want to stay," he said.

The members of David's family would have expected him to say this. Ever since he was a baby, they had said of him, "He's like a rat terrier. Once he sets his teeth in something, he won't let go until he's ready."

The boys were taken by surprise when David objected to leaving. Reuben tried to lead him outside, but he persisted in staying. The other two boys waited by the door.

Solemnly Reuben led David about the room, and somehow the bats didn't follow them. He pointed out remnants of benches that had been hacked up for firewood and charred places on the floor where benches had been burned. He

pointed out stains on the stone altar which came from the blood of animals. "The Crusaders used the altar for a carving table!" he said indignantly.

David felt that Reuben expected him to do or say something in reply. Quickly he pulled off a mitten, leaned forward, and started to rub the altar with his fingers. Reuben tried to stop him,

but too late. "Oh!" said David, withdrawing his hand quickly from the altar and tucking it back into his mitten.

Reuben stared at him. "I tried to stop you," he said solemnly. "Did you feel a shock or maybe a burning pain?"

"No," replied David, wiggling his fingers inside his mitten. "I just felt something cold. Touch it and see for yourself."

"Oh, no!" said Reuben as he started to lead the way back to the entrance.

"Have I seen everything?" asked David, following him.

"Yes," said Reuben.

When Reuben and David rejoined the other boys, they found them still dodging bats. "Take my word for it," said Reuben, breaking into a smile. "David's not the baby in this crowd. He's braver than a couple of others I know."

When David reached home, he didn't say any-

thing about where he'd been or what he'd done. Mostly he was puzzled by what Reuben had told the other boys. "David's not the baby in this crowd." He wondered what Reuben had meant.

The next morning, when his mother put his porridge in front of him at the breakfast table, he said, "I'm not a baby any longer. It's time for me to start to *kheder*."

David's father, Abraham, laughed. "Just listen," he said. "David's only three years old, and already he wants to go to Hebrew school!"

Leah Sarnoff didn't laugh. Her husband Abraham could scarcely read or write, but she came from a highly educated family. Her father, Shmuel Privin, who lived nearby in the village, was a very scholarly man. "Perhaps David will take to learning like his grandfather," she said. "Perhaps he will be a student and bring yet more honor to the family."

"Honor doesn't fill stomachs," said Abraham,

who worked as a house painter. "Only hard work fills stomachs. Your father is lucky he has a strong wife."

David knew what his father meant. Grandpa Shmuel left the business of making a living to Grandma Rivke. She hired herself out to work in fields on nearby farms. She made home-cooked foods and home-made articles to sell at market. The only way her husband, Grandpa Shmuel, ever attempted to earn anything was occasionally to set up a kheder or Hebrew school for young boys in his home. He never kept the school going for very long, however.

"Maybe Grandpa Shmuel will hold kheder for me," said David.

His father frowned, but his mother's face lit up. "We'll ask him this very day!" she said.

Twenty-Seven Characters

AFTER BREAKFAST, Leah bundled David into his wolfskin outer clothes. She tucked his baby brother, Lew, into a fold of her heavy shawl and slung him over her back. "Now we'll go to see Grandpa Shmuel," she said.

Leah was the eldest of Shmuel and Rivke Privin's nine children. Two younger sisters, Rachel, about ten, and Anna, about six, still lived at home. They greeted their sister and nephews with cries of pleasure. Rachel stretched out her arms to hold little Lew, and Anna helped David take off his coat. Then she invited him to come with her to see a new litter of kittens. Much to

her surprise, he shook his head and said, "I didn't come here this morning to play."

"We came to talk to Papa," explained Leah. "I hope he's still here."

"Yes, he's sitting in the kitchen drinking tea," answered Rachel.

"And where's Mama?" asked Leah.

"She's been gone for hours," replied Rachel. "I don't think she even took time to eat any breakfast this morning."

David tugged at his mother's hand. "Let's go to see Grandpa," he urged.

Leah and David found Grandpa Shmuel still sitting at the kitchen table, but by now he had finished drinking his tea. "I was just ready to go to the new synagogue to discuss some important matters with Rabbi Sholem," he said.

David's heart sank, but his mother squeezed his hand reassuringly. "Please wait, Papa," she said. "We want to talk with you."

Grandpa Shmuel leaned back in his chair to listen, and Leah hurriedly explained why she and David had come. Then for a few moments he sat silently, stroking his long white beard. Finally he drew David close to him and said, "Look at me, my boy."

David stared bravely into his grandfather's face, and his grandfather stared back at him as if inspecting him. Finally, his grandfather dropped his hand and said, "So be it."

David's mother wanted to be sure. "Does that mean you will teach him?" she asked.

"What else?" replied her father. "We'll start tomorrow, and by tomorrow night he'll be able to recite the Aleph Beth Veth for you."

Leah held up both hands in protest. "But that's the whole Hebrew alphabet, Papa!" she exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes," said her father, "but David doesn't seem to be worried about learning it."

"He just doesn't realize how much you're asking of him!" retorted Leah.

"Yes, I do," said David, contradicting his mother.

Evidently his mother had forgotten that Grandma Rivke often had sung him a song based on the Hebrew alphabet. He felt almost certain he could remember the words of this song, if he tried. To make everything clear, he turned to his grandfather and said, "I think I can do it, Grandpa Shmuel."

"Good," said his grandfather. He pushed back his chair and rose to get ready to leave. Then he turned, glanced at David sternly, and added, "Remember, you'll get no special favors just because you're my grandson. We'll keep regular long kheder hours. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand," replied David. "It will be dark, and I'll have to carry a lantern to and from school." He had heard older boys talk

about having to go to and from school in the dark. They had told him that they had to carry lanterns along the way.

Leah frowned at her father. She thought that he was being too rough on David. Her father frowned back. "Either David is old enough to attend kheder or he is not," he said, arising and stalking from the kitchen.

David was ready to leave, too. He wanted to get home to hunt up a lantern and practice walking with it. Tomorrow was going to be a big day in his life.

That night David had a hard time going to sleep, but he finally managed to sleep soundly. The next morning when his mother called him to get ready for school, he felt a big lump in his throat. He swallowed to make sure that he could and jumped out of bed.

"Go out to dress by the fire," said his mother. "Your clothes are out there getting warm."

His father Abraham sat in the kitchen, huddled close to the fire, trying to keep warm. He had delicate lungs but had worked outside the day before, painting a house. Now he was suffering from the exposure. "I don't know how many more winters I can take," he said, coughing.

David had heard his father complain like this many times and didn't even answer him. He went over to pick up his flannel underwear and then stopped. Suddenly he decided that depending on someone else to help him dress was babyish. "I'm a kheder boy now," he said proudly, "old enough to dress myself."

Soon David wished that he hadn't been so hasty. He had one difficulty after another. He thought he would strangle taking off his nightshirt. He kept putting both legs into one leg of his long underwear. He put his blouse on backwards and had to put it on again. His last problem came when he couldn't tie the laces on his

boots He tried and tried but somehow his knots wouldn't hold. Finally he gave up and looked pleadingly at his father.

Abraham Sarnoff patted his son's head. "Put up your feet," he ordered. Then he tied two bows neatly near the top of the boots. "Tying bows takes practice, son," he added in a matter-of-fact tone of voice. "I don't believe anybody can do it the first time he tries."

Now David felt better. Soon his mother called him to the kitchen table for breakfast, but he was too excited to be hungry. He looked glumly at the big bowl of porridge and the two large chunks of dark bread beside the bowl. "Can't I just have some tea?" he asked.

His mother shook her head. "Not if you expect to take a step outside the house this morning," she said. "You need food to keep you warm inside just as much as you need clothing to keep you warm outside." She pushed the bowl of por-

ridge closer to him. "Now eat," she added. "You have no more time to waste."

With his mother watching, David took a bite of porridge. It seemed to go down all right, so he took a larger one. Before long, much to his surprise, he had eaten everything before him.

He was happy when he stepped outside the house to find that it still was dark. He had been a little fearful that it would be too light to carry his lantern. His mother handed it to him, lighted, and he gazed gleefully at the rosy light coming through its greased-paper windows. Then, swinging it happily, he started off for his grandfather's house.

"Don't swing it!" called his mother. "The oil will spill and set the lantern on fire! Wait a moment, while I get my shawl to go with you."

David's heart sank at the idea of his mother going along. Soon he heard his father and mother talking loudly inside the house. Then his

father came to the door and called, "Go on alone, David. Your mother isn't going with you."

David started on, but now he was careful not to swing the lantern. He walked very slowly and carried it as gently as he would have carried a basket of eggs. Minutes later he wished that

daylight would come so that he could blow it out. Then he wondered why he had ever thought that it would be fun to walk in the dark.

When he reached his grandparents' home, Grandma Rivke opened the door for him. "I was waiting for you," she said, taking him into her arms. She started to croon to him as she had done many times before. He hugged her back, realizing as never before how much he loved her. Then, abruptly, she said, "We mustn't waste time. Go on to your grandfather and teacher."

At once David thought of the Hebrew alphabet which he was expected to learn before evening. "Please sing to me one last time, Grandma," he coaxed. "Sing me the song that begins, 'Aleph Beth Veth Gimel.' "

"Oh, you want me to sing you the alphabet song this morning," she said, slyly winking at him. "Maybe you want to surprise your teacher by showing him how much you know."

David nodded and winked back. "Well," she said, "I'll sing the song once through alone, and then you sing it with me. But," she added, glancing at the door to the next room, "sing very softly."

After they finished singing, David felt much more confident. Now he only had to learn to say the letters instead of singing them to satisfy Grandpa Shmuel. Surely he could learn to say them without trouble. Then his grandfather would really think he was clever.

With these thoughts in mind, David opened the door confidently to his grandfather's room. Much to his surprise, his grandfather greeted him crossly and displayed a leather strap which he laid on his desk. "You've been dallying outside while I've been waiting for you," he said. "If you do it again I'll punish you with this strap, and I mean what I say. Many a boy who has attended kheder to me will testify to that."

Following this kind of greeting from his grandfather, David completely lost his confident feeling. Now he felt frightened instead. He wondered whether his grandfather would use the strap if he failed to learn the alphabet.

Grandfather Shmuel put the strap aside and motioned to David to sit on the bench beside him. "I see you understand," he said. "Now let's get to work."

He opened a book and pointed at a printed letter. "This printed letter we pronounce 'Aleph,' " he said. He pointed to the next letter. "We pronounce this letter 'Beth,' " he said.

"Aleph—Beth," repeated David.

"Your lesson for today is to learn to pronounce all the letters of the alphabet and to recognize them in print. I'll say them, one after another. Then you repeat them after me."

They went over the alphabet time and time again. David, sure that he already could say the

letters in order, gave most of his attention to the way they looked in print. At midday Grandpa Shmuel closed the book. "Now say the alphabet to me," he said. "Then we'll have dinner."

David took a deep breath and began. He said the twenty-seven letters one after another all the way through without stopping. When he had finished, Grandpa Shmuel nodded approval. "So far, so good," he said. "After dinner, you can learn to recognize the letters in print."

At dinner, David's young aunts Rachel and Anna were as chatty as usual, but David wasn't in the mood to talk. Instead he was worried about the twenty-seven letters he was supposed to recognize in print before he could go home. He didn't want his grandfather to threaten him with the strap again.

"I won't fail! I won't!" he said to himself. That afternoon he started to work and soon learned to recognize all the letters without trouble. His

grandfather tested him by pointing to different letters out of order in the printed alphabet. Then he tested him by pointing to different letters here and there in the book, but David could recognize every one.

Now his grandfather was proud of him. He bent down and kissed him ceremoniously on the forehead. "You've done well, David," he said. "I think we'll make a scholar out of you. Maybe we'll even make a rabbi out of you!"

A Smart Boy Needs Guidance

DAVID'S ONLY TEXT in Hebrew school was the Old Testament, which actually is a collection of different kinds of books—books of law, books of history, and books of poetry. He studied all his lessons very thoroughly. At first, he studied because he was afraid of his grandfather's strap. Later, he studied because he found the material interesting. Some parts he read so many times that he memorized them.

Often, to show off before his young aunts, he recited proverbs and poetry aloud. Then his aunts would act astonished and tell him how smart he was, and Grandma Rivke agreed.

Once when Grandma Rivke was talking with David's mother Leah, she said, "The Lord in his infinite wisdom has seen fit to add another *landun* (man of learning) to our family. I hope that nobody will say or do anything to discourage him from seeking to learn."

Leah knew that Grandma Rivke was afraid that her husband Abraham might discourage David from learning. Several times in David's presence he had said, "No able-bodied man has the right to do nothing but study." In a way David was inclined to agree, because he remembered a statement in the Bible, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." A man didn't get sweaty just by sitting around studying.

Actually, after David started to school he spent little time with his father. Besides, his father's lung ailment was worse, and talking usually caused him to have a fit of coughing. At last David became worried about him and said

to his mother, "Papa seems to be getting worse, Mama. He's really sick, isn't he?"

"Yes, David, he's sick," answered his mother. "Half the time he can't finish painting a house which he has started. He thinks the climate here is bad for his health, and he is beginning to talk about going someplace else to live."

"Going where?" asked David.

"To America," replied his mother. "You remember how your Uncle Schlomme described it over there. He said that America is a place where food is plentiful, buildings scrape the sky, and jobs are as numerous as plums on a tree."

"I remember about the buildings that scrape the sky," said David. "Do you think all the things he says about America are true?"

Leas shrugged her shoulders. "Who knows, unless a person goes there to find out for himself?" she replied sadly.

One evening in March, 1896, Abraham told

his wife Leah that he had made up his mind to leave for America. "I'll send for you and the boys as soon as I can," he said. "Until then, I think all of you should go to live with your mother and father."

Leah objected to this suggestion. By now she and Abraham had a new baby son named Morris. She hesitated to move into her parents' home with three children. "My mother has enough to feed already," she said.

Abraham continued to argue. "Since David has been going to school, he already has been there much of the time. Besides, your younger sisters Rachel and Anna will enjoy looking after Lew and baby Morris."

After Abraham left for America, Leah and her three sons moved in with her parents. Grandma Rivke gave David a room by himself. "You'll need privacy in order to study," she said.

David liked his new way of life. He didn't

have to get up from a warm bed in the morning and walk along cold streets to school. He had pleasant evenings, with many persons to listen to what he wanted to say. His grandfather always left right after supper and went to his room to read and study.

Unlike her son, Leah Sarnoff was very unhappy living with her parents. She missed her husband Abraham and missed living in her own home. "Our place is with your father," she said to David. "I hope he sends for us soon."

She frequently received letters from her husband, but they seldom contained any money. He was not as successful in finding work as he had hoped to be. Employers hesitated to hire him because of his delicate lungs. "If I were educated, things would be different," he wrote. "There are plenty of plums on the tree for educated persons. Tell David to study hard."

As David became older, he spent less and less

time in school with his grandfather and more and more time outside with boyhood friends. This greatly worried his grandmother Rivke, who felt that he still needed the close guidance of his grandfather.

One evening after David had been out with the boys, he slipped into the parlor and sat down on a wooden seat half hidden by the curtains. His Grandmother Rivke, not realizing he was near, said to his mother Leah, "I'm worried about David. A boy as smart as he is needs constant guidance. I think I'll write my brother Solomon, the rabbi, about him."

When David heard these words, his heart began to pound. Rabbi Solomon, his grandmother's brother and his great-uncle, lived three hundred miles away in Korme. At once his mother Leah came to his rescue. "Surely you aren't thinking of sending David that far away," she said. "Remember that he's just a little boy."

"In years but not in his mind," said her mother in a determined tone of voice.

"But Abraham may send for us to come to America at any time!" pleaded Leah.

"Not according to his letters," replied her mother. "Anyhow, I've made up my mind and will write Solomon at once."

All the while neither David's mother nor grandmother knew that he was hiding behind the curtains. After his grandmother left the room, he crawled out from behind them and called, "Mama, I'm here."

Leah tenderly brushed David's hair back from his brow. Then she said, "So you heard what your grandmother said. Once she writes that letter to Uncle Solomon, you're as good as on your way. She'll find the necessary money somehow to pay for your train ride."

"Train ride!" exclaimed David . He had only seen a train once in his life, and ever since he

had hoped he would get to ride on one sometime. Mostly he had thought about riding to a seaport on a train, when his father would send for the family to come to America.

"That's the only way you can get there," replied his mother. "Certainly you can't walk a distance of three hundred miles."

Just then David's grandmother came back into the room. When she saw him, she too realized that he had overheard her. "Already you know what's in store for you," she said.

David nodded vigorously. "Yes, a train ride," he said.

During the next few days he talked repeatedly about his coming train ride. Once when he mentioned it to his young aunts, Rachel and Anna, Rachel showed that she was greatly displeased. "Boys get to do everything that's fun!" she said. "You are only half as old as I am, but you're going to get to ride on a train."

The day before David was to leave happened to be a half-holiday for all the village boys. Reuben and the other boys who had taken David to the old synagogue came to ask him to play with them. "May I go, Grandma Rivke?" he asked.

"Yes," replied his grandmother. "Even a rabbi has to stop studying now and then."

Summertime in Uzlian was much more pleasant than wintertime. The streets were still muddy from the heavy spring rains. The boys chased one another along the muddy streets to an old cemetery, where they started to play leapfrog over some of the moss-covered tombstones. Before long they became tired and hot from playing and stopped for a while to sprawl out and relax on the green grass.

While they were resting, David suddenly thought of his train ride. He raised himself on one elbow and said, "Tomorrow at this time I'll be on a train. Did you know?"

"Yes, we knew," replied Reuben without showing any particular interest. "You're going to Korme, hundreds of miles away, to live."

"Well, don't you wish you could go with me?" asked David.

"For the long train ride, yes, but not for what you'll face after you get there," replied Reuben bluntly.

This reply made David feel very uneasy. "Just what do you mean?" he asked.

"First I don't think you'll like living in Korme," explained Reuben. "My father says that it's a small town, even smaller than Uzlian. Then you won't enjoy living with a rabbi."

"I won't just be living with any rabbi," explained David. "The rabbi in Korme happens to be my great-uncle."

To his dismay, David felt tears gathering in his eyes. He brushed them away with his arm, hoping the boys would think that he was chas-

ing insects. Moments later Reuben rose to his feet and said, "Let's go on to the swimming hole to cool off!"

David had seen the swimming hole only a few times before. It really was a big muddy pond which the villagers used as a watering place for their horses, cattle, and goats. A few animals were standing in the water when the boys arrived. One of the cows raised her head and looked at them with big wondering eyes. One of the goats bleated. "Stay away from those goats," cautioned one of the boys.

Reuben pulled off his pants and shirt and plunged into the water. All the other boys followed him except David, who couldn't swim. Instead, he waded out to where the horses were standing in the water. Then by looking at them, he could tell how deep the water was and judge how far it was safe for him to go.

The water felt cool on his hot skin. Soon he

sat down and let the water ripple around him. He hoped that taking a bath here would substitute for taking a bath at home. Otherwise his mother would make him take a bath to be clean for the new traveling clothes he'd put on in the morning.

David and his friends ran around for a while to dry off before they put on their clothes. Then, after they were dressed, the other boys suddenly grabbed David as if they were planning to play some kind of prank on him. For a moment he feared that they were going to toss him into the pond with all his clothes on. Instead, they lifted him onto their shoulders and started to carry him back to his home.

As the boys carried him through the streets of Uzlian, many people came out to bid him farewell. They waved to him from the sidewalks and from doorsteps and windows. "Good-by, David Sarnoff!" they cried. "God be with you!"

At first David grinned and waved back, but gradually he began to feel uneasy. He wondered whether the people thought of him as the Old Testament David, the shepherd boy who went forth to battle a giant. No, this couldn't be, because Grandma Rivke was sending him to Korme. He was sure that she would do what was best for him.

Once more he felt better and began to grin and wave. "Good-by! Good-by!" he called as best he could from his shaky perch.

The Train Ride

PLANS WERE MADE for David's Uncle Alter Privin to take him to the railroad station in a horse and buggy. This would be a long ride, for the station was ten miles away.

Before Uncle Alter arrived, all David's relatives gathered at his grandparents' home to bid him good-by. One after another, his seven aunts kissed him, and then turned aside to wipe away tears. His mother cried, grabbed him in her arms, and rocked him back and forth like a baby. His grandmother held him in her arms with tears showing in her eyes.

David wondered about all the tears. "Why is

everybody crying?" he asked. "Especially why are you crying, Grandma, when you are the one who arranged for me to go?"

Grandma Rivke gave David a hug. "Women always cry when they have to part with someone they love," she explained. "Our crying doesn't mean that we are sorry for you."

Grandpa Shmuel now came forward. "Women are hard to understand," he said seriously. "They should be shouting for joy, knowing what a wonderful opportunity you will have."

David frowned. "Wonderful opportunity?" he repeated. "Of course! To ride on a train."

"Uncle Alter is now here with his horse and buggy to take you to the railroad station," said Grandpa Shmuel.

"Are you ready, David?" asked Uncle Alter, coming into the room.

"Yes," said David, feeling cold shivers running up and down his spine.

"You carry the small pack, and I'll carry the big one," said Uncle Alter.

"Let me have one last hug, David!" cried his mother, but David was already on his way.

Uncle Alter drove as fast as he dared to drive along the rutty road. The two packs on the floor bounced up and down and slid here and there under David's feet. Every time he tried to say something, his voice bounced, too. Soon he gave up trying to talk and began to look out into the fields along the way.

The fields at this time of year were beginning to look green and gold, with crops of oats, rye, and potatoes. Women with shawls fastened over their heads worked with hoes in some of the fields, cutting out weeds that threatened to curl around the delicate plants. Occasionally birds from overhead fluttered down to sway on the stalks of oats or rye.

From time to time David glanced up at Uncle

Alter. His uncle was a baker by trade and seldom needed to drive anywhere. He held the lines tensely and had little or nothing to say. Mostly he was worried about arriving at the station in time for the train.

Finally they came to the little weather-beaten station beside the railroad track. A few people with bundles were standing outside waiting, but no train was in sight. "Well, at least you haven't missed it," said Uncle Alter.

The words had scarcely left his mouth before a shrill whistle pierced the air. All the people looked expectantly up the track. David felt his heart thump as he caught his first glimpse of the yellow and blue train. White puffs of steam from the engine almost hid the train as the iron wheels squealed to a stop.

Uncle Alter carried David's packs into an empty second-class compartment on the train. He boosted the big pack up onto a shelf above a

window-seat, and placed the little pack beneath the seat. Then he jumped down to the ground again. "Now climb in, David," he said.

David climbed in and sat down, and Uncle Alter shut the door. Seconds later, the train began to move. David leaned forward and pressed his nose against the window. He tried to look back at his uncle as long as he could. This wasn't very long, however, for the train gathered speed quickly.

The second-class compartment contained two shiny wooden benches facing each other. Each bench was divided into three seats, separated by arm rests. David sat in one of the seats next to the window. A sliding glass door opened onto a narrow windowed corridor along one side of the car.

For miles and miles the train traveled through open country. Finally it came to a town somewhat larger than Uzlian. When it came to a stop

at the station, people jumped out of their compartments and went inside. Soon they came back with bread, fruit, and other things to eat.

Seeing these people carry food inside made David realize that he was hungry, too. He reached under his seat and pulled out his small pack. Grandma Rivke had told him that she had tucked some food in the pack for him to eat.

Just as David had unwrapped a meat cake, the outside door opened. A man looked in at the empty seats in the compartment and called out, "There's room for all of us here."

Two women climbed in, followed by another man. All four of them looked at David and nodded as they sat down. David noticed that they carried no food and wondered whether it would be polite for him to eat his meat cake. He knew that he didn't have enough meat cakes to pass around. Soon one of the women said, "Don't let us interrupt your meal, little boy."

Now that David was on his way to take up rabbinical training, he didn't like being called "little boy." "My name is David Sarnoff," he explained as he started to eat.

Soon David's fingers became greasy from holding the meat cake. He tried to wipe them on some rye bread, but without success. He had a handkerchief in one of his trousers pockets, but his hands were too greasy to get it. As he looked up in embarrassment, the woman who had spoken to him before smiled and tucked a blue handkerchief into his hands. Then he smiled back and said gratefully, "Thank you."

"You are welcome, David," she said.

David felt the need to explain himself to these strangers. "This is my first ride on a train," he said. "On my next trip, I hope to be better prepared."

The strangers exchanged glances and smiled. "How old are you?" they asked.

"I'm five years old," replied David.

Next the strangers asked him where he was going. He told them that he was going to Korme, but that he didn't know how long it would take to get there. "All I know is that my grandmother said I would get there by dusk," he said.

"We'll make sure that you get off at the right place," said the strangers.

They were as good as their word. Before the train reached Korme, they warned him and helped him to get his two packs. Then when the conductor shouted, "All out for Korme!" he was ready to get off. "I'll always remember you," he said gratefully as he waited for the train to stop.

"Will someone meet you here, David?" asked the woman who had given him her handkerchief.

"Yes, my great-uncle," replied David, but suddenly he felt a little scared. He wondered what would happen if his grandmother's letter hadn't arrived in time.

"If your great-uncle isn't here, promise us you'll stay in the station until he comes," said one of the women.

"I promise," said David.

David was the only traveler to step down from the train. He looked back toward the now

brightly-lighted compartment and waved at his friendly companions. Sadly he turned and peered through the gathering darkness for some sign of life. All he could see was the dimly lighted little station beside the tracks. All he could hear was the sound of the disappearing train.

Gloomily he took a deep breath and tried to pick up his packs. The big one was too heavy for him to carry, so he decided to push it along toward the station. He had moved it only a few feet when he heard someone calling to him, "David, I'm your Uncle Solomon."

With a little sob, David ran forward to meet his great-uncle, who grabbed him up in his arms. "I was all alone here and afraid you wouldn't come for me," he said.

Solomon Elkind seemed to understand David's feelings. "Well, here I am," he said. "Now let's go home."

The Rabbi's Boy

BY THE TIME David reached Solomon Elkind's home, he was so tired that he could scarcely keep his eyes open. Solomon's wife, David's Aunt Naomi, and her daughter, Cousin Ruth, welcomed him and kissed him, but he scarcely knew what was going on. "Poor little boy," they said. "Put him to bed, Solomon."

Half asleep, David felt himself being carried to a bed in another room. When he awakened in broad daylight many hours later, he wondered where he was and how he had come there. Soon he heard his great-uncle's voice from the next room and realized he was in Korme.

Before long, as he lay in bed, he heard the clatter of crockery and knew that Aunt Naomi was preparing breakfast. This sound made him hungry because he hadn't had anything to eat since he had eaten in the compartment on the train. "Maybe Aunt Naomi will have something special for breakfast just to make me welcome," he said to himself.

When he left his bedroom, he had a great disappointment. All the members of the household greeted him as if he had been living there all his life. Uncle Solomon looked up briefly from a book propped before him and nodded. Cousin Ruth, who was helping to prepare breakfast, simply said, "Good morning, David." Aunt Naomi asked him to sit down at the table and handed him a plate containing four boiled potatoes. Then she poured a steaming beverage into a tankard for him to drink.

David's hopes rose again. He wondered

whether the hot drink in the tankard was something special to welcome him. He sipped it and found that it was just the hot water in which the potatoes had been boiled.

At once a great feeling of homesickness came over him. He wished that he were back in Uzlian with Grandma Rivke, where he could be eating porridge and beet sugar. Then he wondered why she had sent him away to live with people who really didn't want him.

Within a few weeks David discovered that he was wrong about not being wanted. Uncle Solomon said that he would always be thankful to Grandma Rivke for sending him such a promising young man to train. "It's as if the Lord had blessed me by giving me a son in my old age, as He blessed Abraham by giving him his son Isaac," he explained.

David didn't like this comparison. He was familiar with the Biblical story of how grateful

Abraham had been when he was blessed with the birth of his son Isaac. He was too young to understand, however, why Abraham had been willing to sacrifice Isaac on an altar.

Neither could David understand how Uncle Solomon could show gratitude by keeping him shut up in a room with musty books six days out of a week. Regularly Aunt Naomi brought his meals to him so that he could keep right on studying while he was eating.

Occasionally Aunt Naomi apologized for bringing him a scanty meal of a slice of bread and a bowl of thin soup. "I know that a growing boy needs more nourishment than you are getting," she said, "but we have little money these days. More and more people are leaving Korme, and your uncle has fewer and fewer families to minister to in the village."

Regularly each Sabbath at the synagogue in Korme, David met the few families that lived

in the village. There were five or six children in the group, but they seemed very shy about talking or playing with him. "They act as if they're afraid of me," he said to Cousin Ruth, hoping she could explain the situation.

"They're not afraid but just awed," replied Cousin Ruth. "They feel that way because you're the 'Rabbi's boy.' I know because I was treated the same way when I was a child."

"But that's silly," said David. "I'm no better than they are. Besides, I could show them how to play a new game or two, if they would let me. We could have fun."

"But they won't let you," said Cousin Ruth.

David still couldn't understand why the children felt this way. They didn't seem interested in talking or playing with him or even among themselves. They just stood quietly together or sauntered about listlessly.

After David had been in Korme for a few

weeks, he began to realize that the children were listless because they didn't get enough to eat. He, too, began to feel the same effect. When he moved fast, his head whirled, and often he had to stagger someplace and sit down.

Uncle Solomon, in training David, required him to read a page of text aloud until he could repeat it from memory. He expected him to chant the page in a special singsong manner, just as rabbis regularly chanted in snyagogues. Occasionally, he spent a day or so listening to David and making him correct any pages that he hadn't chanted properly.

During the first year Uncle Solomon assigned David only books written in Hebrew. During the second year, however, he had him begin to learn Aramaic. "Both these languages are very important to us," he said. "Both were spoken long ago in the Holy Land in western Asia. The Hebrew language was spoken in ancient Israel,

and the Aramaic language in Palestine. You have to learn Aramaic, because much of the Talmud was written in Aramaic."

At the mention of the Talmud, David felt a great pang of homesickness pass over him. Often he had heard Grandpa Shmuel speak of the Talmud, so he knew it was important among Jews. "I already know about the Talmud," he said.

"Yes, the Talmud is very special to rabbis and all other persons of the Jewish faith," replied Uncle Solomon. "It was prepared hundreds of years ago by putting together stories, poems, and sayings from the Holy Land. Today we revere it because it tells about the teachings and beliefs in the Jewish religion."

By the time David was seven years old, he could read Aramaic very well. One day he asked Uncle Solomon to let him begin to read and study the Talmud. "You can't possibly understand it yet," Uncle Solomon objected.

"I'd like to try anyhow," said David.

Before long he obtained Uncle Solomon's permission to start reading the Talmud. He greatly enjoyed reading it but couldn't understand its religious meaning. Even so, he was determined to continue and said, "Now that I'm reading the Talmud, I'll have something to discuss when I go back to Uzlian. Like Grandpa Shmuel, I'll study it and talk about it in the synagogue."

David actually expected to stay in Korme until he was fully grown. He remembered vaguely that his father had promised to send money for him to come to America, but he had never thought of it seriously. In fact, after several years, he had almost forgotten about it.

Then suddenly early in the summer of 1900, when he was nine years old, everything changed. He received a surprise letter from his mother, saying that his father had sent money for all the members of the family to come to New York.

He was to return to Uzlian immediately to get ready for the trip to America.

Receiving this news was the most exciting thing that had happened to David in four years. He hurried off to the synagogue to inform Uncle Solomon. When he reached the synagogue, he rushed inside and shouted, "Uncle Solomon, I have to go back to Uzlian."

Uncle Solomon looked up, greatly surprised to be so abruptly disturbed. "What do you mean?" he asked. "You can't leave yet, because you haven't finished your studies."

"My father has sent money for us to come to America," David replied. "I have to go because my father is expecting me."

"Your father is expecting you," repeated Uncle Solomon in a shocked tone of voice.

By now David felt sorry for Uncle Solomon. He put his arms about the old man's frail shoulders and said, "Yes, Uncle Solomon. I didn't

think you would care so much about my leaving. Are you feeling all right?"

With surprising strength, Uncle Solomon quickly pushed David away. "You ask whether I'm feeling all right?" he cried. "How could I feel all right after receiving such a blow? Leave me, son of my old age!"

David turned obediently and walked out of the synagogue. His earlier excitement was gone and he felt guilty about leaving. He knew, though, that he would have to go.

The next day Uncle Solomon took him to the railroad station, but he was still overcome with emotion. In his farewell words, however, Uncle Solomon tried to give David encouragement. "The Lord has plans for you in America, and you will come to no harm, even in a land flowing with milk and honey."

When David stepped off the train at Uzlian, Grandmother Rivke was there to greet him.

"What a grown-up young man you are!" she exclaimed. "And my brother tells me how smart you are. Ah, what a fine rabbi you'll make!"

His mother also was surprised by how much he had changed. "I have dreaded taking a long trip to America burdened with three little boys," she said. "Now I find that you are large enough to serve as a staff for me to lean on!"

These words made nine-year-old David feel very proud. "I'll help you, Mama," he said.

Terry O'Neill's Prophecy

Two days after David returned to Uzlian, he and his mother Leah and his two brothers, Lew and Morris, left for America. Uncle Alter drove them to the city of Minsk in a one-horse wagon. There they were to take a train to Libau, a seaport on the Baltic Sea.

They had little baggage, because Abraham Sarnoff had warned them that they would have little space on board ship. The largest article was a straw hamper filled with dry bread, smoked fish, and cooked meat. "We can't take a chance on eating any unclean foods," explained David's mother as she finished filling the hamper.

"Of course not," replied David, knowing that she referred to foods not prepared according to Jewish customs. For orthodox Jews like themselves, eating such foods would be sinful.

"We should have enough here to last us until we reach America," added David's mother.

"That's good," replied David, fervently hoping that there would be plenty. After years of always being a little hungry, he looked forward to having enough to eat again.

Minsk was the largest city David ever had seen. He stared at the paved streets and the big buildings, some of them three and four stories tall. He noted the beautiful park with grass and flowers and trees, where people could sit and rest. "This is a grand city," he said. "Can New York be grander than this?"

"Yes, it must be," replied his mother, "according to what people tell about it."

"It's mostly what people tell about equality

and freedom over there that interests me," said Alter. "In America, a Jew is just as good as any other man."

At this point he was interrupted by the sound of cries and running feet. A crowd of men, women, and children came bursting out of a side street, like cattle stampeding. "Clear the street!" someone shouted. "The Cossacks are coming."

Instantly Uncle Alter drove his wagon up onto the sidewalk close to a building. "You and David get into the back of the wagon with the little boys," he ordered David's mother. "Then all of you crouch down out of sight."

"What about you?" asked David's mother.

"I have to hold the horse to keep him from bolting," replied Alter. "Now hurry!"

David noticed how pale his mother looked as she crouched down with Lew and Morris close beside her. He, too, was frightened and his heart was pounding hard, but he was determined to

see what the Cossacks were. He would peek over the rim of the wagon as they went by.

All his life he had heard about Cossacks, but he had never seen any before. He knew that they were cruel soldiers who took orders from the Russian rulers. Often they rode horses and went about the country terrorizing people to make them afraid of the rulers. They especially liked to terrorize Jews.

Soon the mounted Cossacks came charging close by the wagon. "Make way for the Czar's men!" they shouted. "Make way!"

Even though the Cossacks shouted, "Make way!" there was no place for the people to go. The soldiers made no effort to avoid injuring them. They just rode on, slashing their whips and causing their horses to trample men, women, and children with their hooves.

After the Cossacks passed, it was some time before the injured people could be helped or

carried off the street. As soon as possible, Uncle Alter drove his horse and wagon back onto the street and started on toward the railroad station. Fortunately the station was located in the opposite direction from which the Cossacks were going.

David climbed back on the seat beside his uncle near the front of the wagon. "Those terrible Cossacks made me sick at my stomach," he said. "After seeing what they did, I'm glad I'm going to America. I don't want to stay in a country where such things can happen. I wish every other Jew could leave, too. Then the Cossacks wouldn't have our people to pick on!"

"Unfortunately that isn't possible," said Uncle Alter, "but someday I plan to leave. Then when I come to America I'll bring all the other members of the Privin family with me."

When Uncle Alter pulled up at the railroad station in Minsk the train was already there.

David and his mother and brothers rushed aboard with little time to say "Good-by."

"Come to America as soon as you can," David called to Uncle Alter, who stood with his hands together in an attitude of prayer.

After David and the others reached Libau, they boarded a ship which would take them to Liverpool, England. There they would change to another ship which would take them to America. After they were settled in their cabin, David took his little brothers on deck to look out over the railing. He kept a firm grip on them to keep them from falling overboard. From here they looked out on the many ships at anchor in the harbor and others coming and going.

During the first part of the voyage, the water was very rough. David didn't seem to mind, but his mother and brothers became seasick and had to stay in their cabin.

David spent most of his time pacing the deck,

watching the rise and fall of the waves, and taking deep breaths of the damp, salty air. He mingled with the sailors and learned how to splice lines and tie knots. From time to time when the

ship came close to shore, he looked out at different countries, including Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France.

He was especially excited when he first glimpsed the shores of England. Fortunately the waters of the English Channel were calm, and his mother and brothers recovered from seasickness. They felt quite well when they reached Liverpool, where they were to transfer to another ship bound for America.

The port at Liverpool was much larger and busier than the port at Libau. The docks were crowded with different-sized freighters which were being unloaded of their cargoes or loaded with new cargoes. David talked with some of the sailors on the freighters.

At last David's mother located the small passenger ship which they were supposed to take to America. This ship would go only as far as Montreal, Canada. There they would get off and

inquire how best to continue their travels to New York. There were two classes of passengers on the ship, first-class and second-class. The first-class passengers had cabins on the upper deck, and the second-class passengers on the bottom deck. David and his mother and brothers traveled second class.

The first-class passengers were treated courteously and given help in boarding the ship. The second-class passengers were herded up the gangplank into the steerage or lower portion of the ship as if they were a flock of sheep. There they waited with their luggage until they could draw lots to find out which quarters they would occupy on the trip.

When David and his mother and brothers first entered the steerage, they found the air almost too stagnant to breathe. David tried to open a porthole to let in some fresh air, but found it was sealed shut. Soon his mother looked down

and discovered that the hamper which contained all their food was missing. "We'll have to find it," she said.

"Don't worry," said David. "I'll go out on the deck to look for it."

David knew that it was necessary to find the hamper. Otherwise, he and the others would have nothing to eat on the journey. Just as he reached the deck, he noticed that some of the sailors were lowering the hamper into the ship's hold, or storage space on the bottom of the ship. "Stop!" he cried. "That hamper is ours."

The startled sailors dropped the hamper and it fell into the hold. When David saw it falling, he rushed forward and jumped after it. Fortunately, even though he fell fifty feet into the hold, he wasn't hurt. "We'll lower a line to you," a sailor called down to him. "Can you tie it about you and the hamper or shall one of us come down to help you?"

"I can manage!" he called back. Now he was thankful for the lessons in knot-tying which he had obtained on the other ship.

He tied the line around both himself and the hamper. Then he called, "Haul away!"

After the sailors hauled him up to the deck again, they looked him over to make sure that he wasn't injured. Later they asked, "What led you to do such a crazy thing?"

"I had to get this hamper," he explained, "because it contains all the food my family and I will have to eat on our way to America."

"Well, the Lord must have been watching over you," said one of the sailors.

"You may be right," replied David, "because I was trying to do a good deed."

"Yes, and I'm sure about something else when you reach America," replied the sailor. "You'll do all right over there, my boy. Just take Terry O'Neill's word for it!"

Sardines in a Can

ALL AROUND the steerage, or part of the ship used by poor passengers, there were tiers of shelves divided into sections. These sections looked somewhat like the sections in a big bookcase. Each section was to be used by a family or other group of persons for sleeping, dressing, and storing belongings.

While David was away looking for the hamper, the families drew lots to find out which sections they would occupy. When he returned, he found his mother and his brothers sitting in a section on the bottom shelf. He congratulated them. "You struck it lucky!" he said. "Now we

can get in and out easily and won't run the risk of someone falling out during the night."

His mother nodded. "Yes," she said softly. "We are lucky, too, that there aren't any more of us. Notice how crowded some sections are."

David looked and saw that some families had six or seven members, often two or three adults among them. He could readily see that they would have to sleep in shifts because all of them couldn't possibly climb in at once. "Papa was right when he said we'd be packed in like sardines in a can!" he said.

"Yes, your father was right," replied his mother. "Where did you find the hamper?"

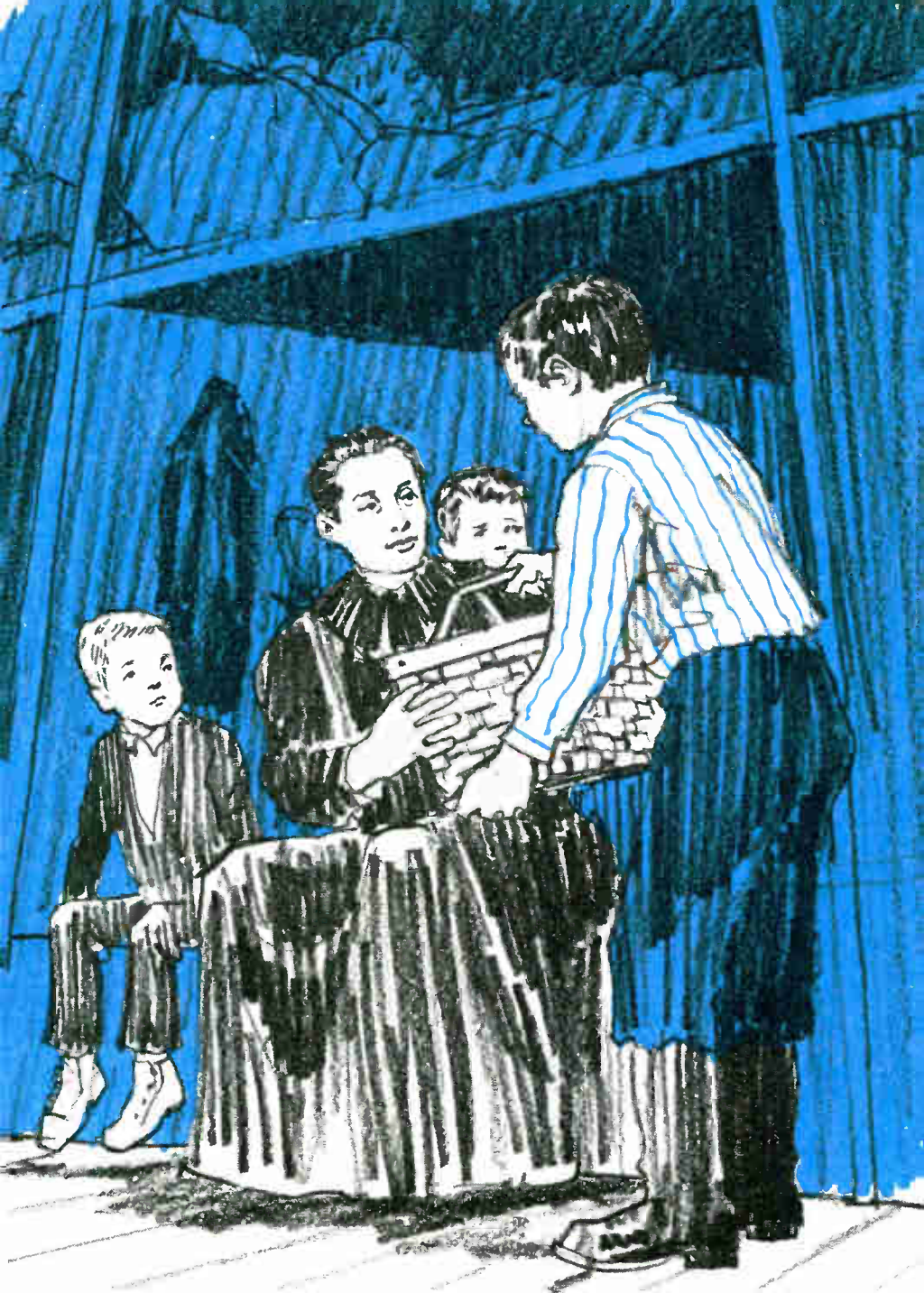
Briefly David told where he had found it, but said nothing about jumping into the hold to recover it. By now he was beginning to realize that he had acted very stupidly. He wondered what would have happened to the family if he had broken a leg or even been killed.

As David talked, he could tell that his mother suspected more than he told. He felt blood rise hotly into his cheeks, and he bent his head to hide his face. Finally he started to open the hamper and asked, "How would you like some bread and meat, Lew and Morris?"

Eating only dry bread and salty meat made David and his mother and brothers to become very thirsty. Fortunately, they could obtain plenty of water from barrels in the steerage to fill drinking cups. This water tasted stale, but it was better than no water at all.

During the first week of the voyage, the weather was clear and the sea was calm. The steerage passengers could get out of their stuffy quarters and move about the deck. Most of them had no place to sit down and rest, but at least they could breathe fresh air.

David quickly found a spot where he and his brothers could be by themselves. From this spot



they were able to see the first-class passengers enjoying themselves on the deck above. David noticed that many of them were sitting in comfortable chairs and there was ample space on the deck to play games. "The next time I take an ocean voyage, I'm going to ride first-class," he said, pointing to the upper deck.

His seven-year-old brother Lew looked at him in surprise. "Why would you want to take another ocean voyage?" he asked. "Aren't you going to America to stay?"

David smiled. "Yes, I'm going to America to stay," he agreed. "America is going to be our home from now on."

"Then why would you ever take another ocean voyage?" Lew persisted in asking.

"Well, maybe sometime on business," replied David, "but if I do, I'll go first-class."

"Oh," said Lew, evidently satisfied.

On the morning of the eighth day the sun

shone brightly, but by noon the sky was covered with dark clouds. At noon David glanced out a porthole and noticed that the sky was almost black. "I think it's going to storm," he said to his mother. "I'm going back out to watch."

Already the wind had begun to blow fiercely, and the ship was starting to pitch. David grabbed the railing and braced his legs in order to stand up. He was the only person on deck, but he was excited to be there. The longer he stood there, the louder the wind blew and the more the ship rolled. He looked out at the waves and saw that they were almost high enough to wash over the deck. Now he felt frightened. Soon a sailor came hurrying up and shouted, "Get inside, you fool!"

The sailor didn't wait for David to obey but pushed him inside the steerage quarters and bolted the door. Now David and all the other steerage passengers were locked in like pris-

oners! He wondered what would happen if the sailor neglected to let them out again. Perhaps they would die like rats in a trap.

After a minute or two of frantic thinking, David calmed down. He began to realize that the sailor had locked the passengers in for their own safety. "He was acting for our good, not to punish us," he said to himself.

The steerage passengers were confined for four days. All the while the ship tossed and creaked as if it were in danger of breaking apart. The steerage became a living nightmare, with people sick and terrified. They moaned and groaned and begged to be released.

David's mother was frightened too. "We'll never live to reach America," she said repeatedly.

David finally decided that he had to do something drastic to soothe her. After four years of watching Uncle Solomon, he knew fairly well what a rabbi would do and say. He would try to

act like a rabbi, so that what he did and said would sound convincing.

Solemnly he knelt on the floor and began to pray, raising and lowering his voice in rabbinical fashion. With his head bowed, he could scarcely see his mother's face, but he noticed that she soon stopped wailing and moaning. Then before long he felt highly exultant, because she placed her hand on his head and said tenderly, "My little rabbi."

Gradually the storm slackened and the sea became quiet. Then the steerage door was unlocked so that the people could wander about again. Hours later David and the others stood on the deck and watched the ship sail into St. Lawrence Bay. At last they were approaching America, and soon would land at Montreal, Canada, still far from New York.

Home in America

MUCH TO THEIR SURPRISE, when David and his mother and brothers walked from the ship in Montreal, a well-dressed man stepped up to greet them in their native Russian language. "I'm Igor Ivanoff, who once lived in Russia," he said. "Often I come to meet passengers getting off ships here, because I remember how lonely I was when I reached here about ten years ago. There wasn't a single person around who could understand me or talk with me."

"Thank you," said David's mother, introducing the other members of the family. "We are very grateful to you for being here."

"Where are you going from here, and may I be of help to you?" asked Mr Ivanoff.

"We are going to New York to meet my husband," explained David's mother. "What is the best way to get there?"

Mr. Ivanoff explained that what they should do was to go by train to Albany, New York, and then take a steamboat down the Hudson River to New York. All the while David was so impressed with this well-dressed stranger that he scarcely listened to what he was saying. He wondered whether his father in New York would look so impressive.

After Mr. Ivanoff finished speaking, David's mother said, "You heard what Mr. Ivanoff just told us. We must take a train to a city called Albany and then take a steamboat down the Hudson River to New York."

"Yes," added Mr. Ivanoff. "I'll take you to the railroad station here, and I'll wire the steamboat

company to have somebody meet you in Albany and take you to the boat. Also, if you wish, I'll wire your husband in New York."

"Wire?" exclaimed David curiously. "What do you mean?" He had never heard this word used in this way before.

"I mean I'll send a telegram," explained Mr. Ivanoff. "The telegram will go by wire."

"I still don't understand," said David.

"Well, sending a telegram is part of telegraphy," explained Mr. Ivanoff. "It involves opening and closing an electric circuit by means of a key or lever. You may not understand it now, but you will when you grow older. Telegraphy is very important in America."

The telegram reached Albany long before David and his mother and brothers arrived. When they climbed off the train, an agent for the steamboat company met them and helped them get to their boat. "Everything has been so

easy!" said David's mother, looking about as if she could not believe her eyes. "How fortunate we were to have Mr. Ivanoff look after us!"

"Yes," replied David. "That wire, whatever it was that he sent, worked like magic."

The steamboat trip down the Hudson River was interesting and peaceful. Almost immediately David started to explore the boat, but his mother and brothers stretched out on benches and went to sleep. David understood, because this was the first time in several weeks when they could completely relax.

While the others were sleeping, David explored every nook and cranny of the steamboat except the captain's bridge and the engine room. He sat on one soft seat after another and watched the other passengers. He stood in the stern of the boat and looked back upstream and in the bow of the boat and looked downstream. He gazed over the side rails at the wooded hills,

green valleys, and little villages along the way. "All this is America," he said to himself, "and oh, how different it is from Russia!"

When David rejoined his mother and brothers, they felt relaxed and happy. Soon they would reach New York and felt confident that Abraham Sarnoff would come to the dock to meet them. He should have received a magic wire, telling him they were coming.

David was quite sure he would recognize his father, even though he hadn't seen him for several years. He peered at the people standing on the dock, but he saw no one that looked familiar. He glanced at his mother and noted that she was gazing earnestly at the crowd, too. "Do you see Papa anywhere?" he asked.

"Not yet," replied his mother, but she didn't seem worried. "He probably is just waiting for some of the crowd to clear away. Let's stay here, so he'll be able to find us."

The afternoon was sweltering hot. All the Sarnoffs wore several layers of heavy Russian clothes. David felt prickly all over, and he was sure that his two brothers felt the same way. Morris whined a few times, but each time his mother silenced him by saying, "Shush!"

Gradually people left the wharf and before long only the Sarnoffs and a few workers were left. "Something is wrong," said David's mother in a trembling voice.

David was more disappointed than worried. When the telegram had caused a man to meet them in Albany and take them to the steamboat, he had felt sure that this strange system was reliable. Now he began to wonder.

For a moment he stood in deep thought. Then he remembered that his father couldn't read very well. Maybe he'd received the telegram but couldn't make out the message. "Mama, do you have Papa's address here?" he asked.

"Yes," replied his mother, "But this is a big city, and we have no idea where it is."

"We can ask people the way," said David. "Someone will help us."

His mother reached into the deep pocket of her skirt and pulled out a piece of paper. "Here it is," she said hopefully.

David took the paper and went over to a man who was leaning against a piling. The man looked at the address, and then from David to the other members of the family. He said something and gestured with his hand, but David couldn't understand him.

Finally after asking several others, David found that the address was less than two miles away. By now the food hamper was nearly empty, so his mother packed as many other bundles into it as possible. "You and I will carry the hamper between us," she said. "Then Lew and Morris can carry the rest of our luggage."

They started off but had trouble following the directions and took a zigzag course. Several times they stopped to ask directions, but people could do little to help them. At last, however, they wound up at the right address, which was the home of a former Uzlianer. He rented rooms to Russian immigrants and had helped Abraham write letters to his family.

The Uzlianer expressed surprise at seeing David and the others. "Abraham was to meet you at the boat and take you to the flat that he has rented for you," he explained.

"We haven't seen him," said David's mother. "He wasn't at the dock when we arrived."

"Did he receive a telegram from Montreal?" asked David.

"Yes," nodded the Uzlianer, "but he may have had trouble reading it."

"That's what I've been afraid may have happened," said David. He felt relieved to know

that the telegram had come even though his father might not have been able to read it.

"What shall we do now?" asked David's mother anxiously.

"My house is your house," replied the Uzlianer in a helpful tone of voice. "Stay here and rest until Abraham gets back."

"Will he come back here?" asked David's mother, nearly ready to burst into tears.

"Of course," said the Uzlianer. "He'll know that you had this address."

Several hours later Abraham arrived. David immediately recognized him, even though his hair and beard were streaked with gray. Lew and Morris, however, couldn't remember anything about him. They hung back and acted afraid when he held out his arms to greet them.

David's mother, who had been sleeping in a nearby room, rushed out to greet her husband. She started to cry but not merely because she

was glad to see him. Rather, she was shocked to see how thin and sickly he looked.

When the first excitement of reunion was over, Abraham explained why he had missed meeting them. As they had guessed, he had had trouble reading the telegram and had gone to the wrong dock. By the time he had discovered his mistake and hurried to the right dock, they had left.

That evening they ate supper in the Uzlianer's house. Then they boarded a horse-car to ride to their new home. David looked out the open windows but already it was too dark to see much along the dimly lighted streets. He could smell, however, and was sickened by a terrible odor coming from garbage, sewage, and rotting rubbish. He wondered whether all sections of New York smelled so unpleasant.

After Abraham and the others left the horse-car, he took them to a nearby shabby tenement house. He led them up to a narrow, three-room

flat on the fourth floor. The rooms were all in a row, and there was no hallway to use in walking from one room to another. "This flat is built like an American railroad car," explained Abraham. "Flats with rooms arranged this way are called railroad flats."

David and the others explored the small flat carefully. The front room was a sitting room and a kitchen combined. "You boys will sleep in the back room," Abraham said. "Then your Mama and I will sleep in the middle room."

"Well, all of us are exhausted from our long trip," said David's mother, eager to get settled. "I think we should go to bed at once and try to catch up on sleep."

David gripped the arms of his two brothers and started to lead them toward the back bedroom. "Come, fellows," he said. "It's time for us to go to bed and get some sleep. We haven't been in a real bed for a long time."

Soon Lew and Morris were fast asleep, but David still was too excited to go to sleep quickly. Besides, even though the window was open, the room was hot and stuffy. Disturbing noises and odors came in from the street below.

From time to time David could hear his mother crying in the next room. He knew that she was worried about his sickly father and their hopeless situation. Probably she was worried because they had come to America. "Don't worry, Mama," he said to himself as if he really were talking to her. "Everything will be all right."

Work and School

AT FIRST in his big-city surroundings David was cautious about mixing with strangers and entering into their activities. Lew and Morris, however, frolicked freely with the neighborhood children. They played in the cool water that escaped from fire hydrants. They played leapfrog and chased one another around piles of garbage. Sometimes their playmates poked fun at them about their clothes or their way of speaking, but they didn't seem to mind.

David felt that it was his duty to keep an eye on his brothers. He had mixed feelings about their mingling freely with the other children.

He noted that they were becoming noisy, ill-mannered, and even rude. Somehow his mother never punished them here as she had back in Russia. New York seemed to have taken something out of her spirit.

David worried about his mother. He wondered whether she was disappointed because America wasn't the land "flowing with milk and honey" which Uncle Solomon had described. Soon he discovered that she was disturbed because his sickly father couldn't support them. "Then why did he send for us?" asked David.

"Because he had promised to," replied his mother sadly. "Now that we are here, though, he's terrified about taking care of us."

"And his being terrified makes you terrified," said David seriously. "Well, Mama, I'll see what I can do to help you."

His mother dabbed at her eyes with her handkerchief. "I had no right to burden you with

trouble," she cried. "Why, you're not even ten years old yet. You ought to be out playing with other boys of your age instead of sitting here worrying with me."

"They aren't doing things that I want to do," said David. He had watched boys hitch rides on horsecars and get chased off by the conductors. He's seen boys dive off the mooring posts into the river when there was danger of breaking their necks. He'd even seen boys throwing stones at other boys and calling them bad names. Some had called him bad names at first, but he had paid no attention.

"I really can't understand you," said his mother. "You used to enjoy going off with Reuben and other boys back in Uzlian."

"That was when I was only five years old," replied David. "Remember that I haven't played with anyone for a long time."

That afternoon David set out to find the office

of the Yiddish newspaper, *Tageblatt*. He had heard boys hawking to sell papers in the neighborhood and believed that he could do the same. When he reached the office, the sales manager hesitated about giving him a chance. "You don't speak good English, and you don't know how to count American money," he said.

"The people who read the *Tageblatt* speak Yiddish, not English," replied David. "And I promise you that I'll learn to count American money right away."

David's quick answer evidently pleased the man, for he grinned and said, "All right. If you can count money by tomorrow afternoon, I'll send you out with a bundle of papers."

Eagerly David rushed home, wondering where he could find any money to practice counting. Luckily his father had a little money which he had been saving to pay the rent. He was able to show David samples of most Ameri-

can coins and a few small paper bills. "Not many people in this neighborhood are likely to have big paper bills," he assured David.

The next afternoon the sales manager hired David and started him out with a bundle of papers. Soon David discovered that there was more to selling papers than just walking about the streets hawking. He found it was necessary to get on the streets early and to locate spots with the most interested buyers. At last he chose a spot in a park right across from the *Tageblatt* office. Job hunters came to the park daily to sit on the benches, eager to get their hands on the want-ad pages as early as possible.

David earned a commission of twenty-five cents on each fifty papers that he sold. Nearly every day through the summer he made at least that much to give his mother. He felt very proud to provide it because he knew that she counted on it as part of the necessary family income.

During the summer David established a record of always being one of the first to reach the newspaper office each afternoon to get his papers. After school started in the fall, he couldn't always be one of the first. Some of the boys attended schools that were closer to the office than his. Besides he often wanted to stay after school to talk with his teacher.

At school David was placed in a special class for immigrants to learn to speak and write English rapidly. He easily learned how to read and write English, but had difficulty learning to speak it fluently. At last he sought special help from his teacher and said, "I don't sound American, but I must."

"Accent and the proper use of idioms make a person sound American," explained the teacher. "Suppose you just talk to me, and let me correct what you say."

These lessons in learning how to sound Ameri-

can were very important to David, but so was the need to help support his family. Now that he couldn't always count on selling all his papers, he had to find other ways of earning money. Soon he picked up several odd jobs working at business places in the neighborhood. Occasionally he even held the reins of horses for people who wanted to spend short periods of time shopping nearby.

In talking with people as he carried on these kinds of work, David learned to improve his accent and use of idioms. Later when he talked with his teacher, she laughed and said, "Now you're talking American."

One day the teacher told the members of her class the story of Abraham Lincoln. David was greatly excited by the story of this American hero. Like himself, Lincoln had been a poor boy with no time to play as a child. Yet he had become great enough to be elected President.

That evening David, still excited, shared the story of Lincoln with his family. "That's why America is a land of promise!" he explained. "Everybody here can become great if he works hard and honestly. That's not so in Russia!"

In the hall at school David often stopped to study a portrait of Lincoln. "Someday I'm going to have a picture of him on my own wall," he confided to his teacher.

That Christmas the teacher gave him a small engraving of Lincoln, which she had purchased at a second-hand store. It was old and stained, but he hugged it to his breast and said, "I don't know how to thank you for getting this, but I'll always keep it."

The teacher choked up a bit and said, "Someday, David, when you're famous, I'll come see whether you still have it."

"Well, you'll find that I will," he said solemnly. Then he took her hand and shook it firmly as if to seal a pledge for the future.

David kept his word and honored Lincoln all the rest of his life. Now he was only a boy, but he was determined to imitate some of Lincoln's admirable qualities.

Son of Duty

AFTER SPENDING one year in a special class, David was put in a regular class in the public school. He found his work especially easy and read many books to keep busy in school. Recently he had discovered a public library, and now he always kept a borrowed book in his desk. Then after he finished studying his lessons, he felt free to read until the bell rang.

Gradually he noticed that a few other boys in his class seemed to be especially interested in reading, too. He spoke to them and found that they, like himself, were eager to improve themselves as much as possible. Before long they in-

vited him to spend his evenings with them at a nearby settlement house called the Educational Alliance. There volunteers helped young people from the neighborhood carry on a variety of activities, including debating. The debaters had a special debating society, which they called the Paul Revere Club.

At first, David was reluctant to participate as an active debater because of his imperfect English. Instead he volunteered to help out as a researcher for persons taking part in the debates. His job was to dig up points which the debaters could use in speaking for or against certain questions of general interest.

One evening when it was nearly time for a scheduled debate to take place, one of the debaters failed to appear. This was a serious matter, because a large audience had assembled to hear the debate. "What are you going to do?" David asked the other participants.

"If he doesn't show up pretty soon, we'll have to announce that we're calling off the debate," said one of them.

"I guess there's nothing else to do," said another, "but that's bad because some people have come long distances to hear us."

David looked thoughtfully at the notes which he had prepared on the question to be debated: "Should the United States grant independence to the Philippines?" Then he inquired which side of the question the missing debater was to support in his speech.

"The affirmative side," said the others.

"All right," said David. "Let's wait five more minutes for him. Then, if he doesn't come, I'll take his place."

"But you're not prepared," cried a teammate of the missing debater.

David smiled at his worried friend. "Not yet, but in five minutes I will be," he said.

He sat down at a table, took out his notes, and hurriedly studied the reasons which he had listed in favor of granting independence to the Philippines. At the end of five minutes, he said, "All right, fellows, let's begin."

"This won't be exactly fair, because we'll have an advantage over you," said one of the boys on the opposing team. This happened to be the same boy who had said it would be bad to call off the debate.

"It will be better than disappointing people who have come long distances to hear a debate," said David, and the other boy had to agree.

The signal was given, the curtains parted, and a few minutes later the debates started. David spoke second on the affirmative side, and his chief job was to support all his partner's arguments for freeing the Philippines. He spoke seriously and earnestly, determined to convince the judges that his arguments were sound.

After the debate ended everybody waited eagerly for the judges' decision. Finally they announced that the affirmative side had won. Afterward many people came to congratulate David on his successful speech. "Thank you," he replied. "I was happy to be able to help."

Now that David could leave school promptly at closing time in the afternoon, he began to compete more strongly with other newsboys in trying to get on the streets early with newspapers. Before long, however, a different sort of competition arose. Four older boys bought a horse and wagon so that they could handle a large number of newspapers at a time. Then the sales manager supplied them first, making the bundle-at-a-time boys wait.

David admired the older boys for their intelligent planning and decided to launch a similar but smaller project. He couldn't afford to buy a horse, but he decided to make a wagon which

he would pull himself. There were plenty of wooden boxes and discarded wheels on junk heaps which he could use for making it.

After he completed his wagon, he rounded up customers with promises to deliver their papers. He started out with one hundred customers a day but soon worked up to three hundred a day.

At about this time, he was offered another means of earning money. This offer came from the rabbi of the synagogue which the Sarnoffs attended. He had noticed that David had a good soprano voice and invited him to sing in the choir. "You'll receive $1.50 a week for singing and extra for singing at weddings or other special ceremonies," the rabbi explained.

David was pleased and wanted to accept, but the choir rehearsed in the late afternoons, just when he had to be selling papers. 'I'll have to see what I can work out," he said.

During the next few days he tried to think of

some way to accept the rabbi's offer and yet keep on selling three hundred papers a day. Finally he thought of a plan. He would find six newsboys who would pay him for the papers plus ten cents a day for the privilege of getting their bundles of papers early. Then he would get rid of his papers at once and make sixty cents profit. In addition, he would be able to attend choir practice.

David had always enjoyed singing, but he never had learned much about music until he joined the synagogue choir. The choir leader, or cantor, was a splendid musician. He took David to the Metropolitan Opera House to hear the opera *La Boheme*. From the top gallery where they sat the figures on the stage looked like tiny dolls, but their powerful voices soared upward to the rafters. David was so enchanted that he sometimes held his breath in wonder.

The spell of seeing and hearing this first opera

led David occasionally to go to see and hear other operas. He only went, however, when he earned extra money for singing at a wedding or other special occasion. He never spent money from his regular income, because by now his mother seemed to need it more and more. Unfortunately his sickly father now was able to earn scarcely any money at all.

On David's thirteenth birthday in February, 1904, he reached the age of responsibility according to the Jewish religion. The rabbi held a special confirmation ceremony, or *bar mitzvah,* for him in the synagogue. Afterwards his mother had a special meal for him with invited guests in the Sarnoff home. For some time she had saved a few precious pennies a week in order to provide this important meal.

During the meal David's mother translated the term *bar mitzvah* for the guests, a few of whom did not know Hebrew. "It means son of duty,"

she explained. "David has been a son of duty for many years without confirmation. He has been both a good son and a good brother."

She kissed David on the forehead and then his father, with tears in his eyes, came forward and kissed him. David sympathized with his father and put his arms around his frail body. "Another spring is almost here, Papa," he said gently, knowing that his father liked to bask in the warmth of the sun. "As you know, spring arrives sooner in America than in Russia!"

Soon after the *bar mitzvah* ceremony took place, David began to think of a better way to sell newspapers than from a makeshift wagon. He dreamed of having a newsstand where every member of the family could take turns selling papers. This kind of work should not sap his father's strength and his mother could help out during school hours. In addition, Lew, now eleven, and Morris, now nine, needed something

to do after school instead of playing on the streets and possibly getting into trouble.

David investigated and found that it would cost him about $200.00 to purchase a newsstand. He knew that he couldn't raise this much money, but he discussed the idea with some of his friends. Then suddenly, one day, a strange woman visited him. "I have heard about you and your desire to purchase a newsstand as a family enterprise," she said. "Well, I have come to make your desire possible."

David stared at her, scarcely believing that he had heard her correctly. "I beg your pardon, Ma'am, but I must have misunderstood you."

The woman didn't repeat her statement. Instead, she handed him $200.00 and said, "Here, take this and buy your newsstand." Then at once she turned and walked quickly away.

For a moment David was stunned and speechless. Soon he recovered enough to call after her,

"Wait! I need to get your name and address, so I can pay you back someday!"

By this time the woman had rounded a corner and was nowhere in sight. "If I didn't already have the money, I'd think I was dreaming," David said to himself.

For several moments he just stood as if in a daze. Then finally he rubbed his eyes just to make sure that he really was awake. "Now the rest is up to me," he said. "That generous woman had faith in me and I must not disappoint her."

David Takes Offense

THE NEWSSTAND which David bought was in a different neighborhood from where the family lived. The distance was too great for his ailing father to walk, so David found another apartment in a more convenient location. Then soon the Sarnoffs moved and all members of the family helped to run the newsstand.

After the family took over the stand, David discovered that the former owner had run a paper delivery service on the side. He had delivered both morning and afternoon newspapers to people who lived nearby. Naturally these people were eager for this delivery to continue.

Though he hadn't made plans for it, David realized that he should keep on providing it. Moreover, he knew that he would have to do the work himself because he would be afraid to allow his younger brothers to walk along the streets alone.

The people in the neighborhood were not Jewish, like those in the neighborhood where the family had lived before. Instead they were Irish, most of whom were opposed to a Jewish family coming to live among them. David already had been obliged to use his fists against a couple of boys who had tormented him. Now he regularly carried a belt with a metal buckle, which he could use as a whip if necessary.

In order to carry on his duties, David had to work many long hours each day. He had to get up at four o'clock in the morning to deliver his papers before going to school. He had to stay at the newsstand until eleven o'clock at night, which was the time for closing.

All the while he kept a variety of books at the newsstand, because he wanted to educate himself in as many ways as possible. He read whenever he could spare a few minutes from work. In the meantime, he continued to do good work at school. He managed to complete assignments during the study hours, even though some of them were supposed to be done at home.

From his baby days in Uzlian, David had been taught to respect his teachers, in spite of their faults. His first teacher after all had been Grandpa Shmuel, whom everybody had respected even though he never supported the family. Everybody had excused him, saying, "Shmuel Privin enriches the family honor with his learning. There is nothing more important."

Through the years, David had come to expect teachers to lose their patience and to speak out angrily just as other people did. Whenever they did, he remembered that Grandpa Shmuel occa-

sionally had lost his temper, too. Now in the last term of his final year in the elementary school, something happened which caused David as a pupil to lose his temper.

Now that the family had moved, he was attending a different school. Most of his schoolmates were Irish, not Jewish like himself. At first they had tried to tease and annoy him, but now they merely left him alone. He realized that they were unfriendly, but he didn't mind so long as they didn't bother him.

David didn't actually blame his schoolmates for their attitude toward him. He understood that they got their feelings from their parents, most of whom had little schooling. "They can't read, so they don't understand that in America everybody is supposed to be free and equal," he explained at home. "They don't understand that a person is not supposed to be scorned because of his race, color, or religion."

In his English class at school, David and his classmates were asked to read and discuss the noted play, *The Merchant of Venice*, by William Shakespeare. As David read this play he was shocked to find that Shylock, one of the leading characters, was pictured as a grasping, selfish Jewish moneylender. He couldn't understand why the author had made such a point of Shylock being Jewish. "Surely he could have portrayed him as a money-lender without having him be Jewish," he said to himself. "Anyhow nothing can be done about it at this late date. There's no use getting mad at someone who's been dead for more than two hundred years!"

One day after all the pupils had finished reading *The Merchant of Venice*, the teacher started to sum up the play for the class. He talked briefly about several characters and finally came to Shylock. "This character Shylock," he said, "is a typical Jew. I saw one on the street

only a few days ago. He was a pushcart peddler, selling old clothes. Some innocent Irish youngsters, just for fun, snatched a cap and a pair of shoes from his cart. He called the cops and said that he had been robbed."

Angrily David jumped to his feet. "You're teaching anti-Semitism!" he shouted. "You have no right to do that here in school."

The teacher stared at him, open-mouthed and speechless. His classmates gasped in surprise, little realizing that he felt such resentment.

This outburst led to a later session in the principal's office, but David was allowed to continue in school. In June, 1905, he finished the eighth grade and was ready to look seriously to the future. He would have liked to attend high school, but knew that this was out of the question. He must settle down to work.

A Day to Remember

BY THE TIME David finished the eighth grade, his father was a complete invalid. During the following summer, he and his brothers took complete charge of the newsstand, so that his mother could stay at home with his father. When fall came, however, and the younger boys had to return to school, she insisted on helping David with his work. "Your father doesn't need me, except to get his meals," she said. "He sleeps most of the time now, and while he sleeps I can get away to help."

David appreciated his mother's interest in the newsstand, because he himself wanted more

challenging work. He wanted to write for newspapers instead of selling them. Someday he might even become an editor of a newspaper or possibly a publisher.

One Saturday morning, shortly after his fifteenth birthday, he decided to visit a newspaper company. He wanted to see how newspapers were edited, put into type, and printed on huge rolling presses. He wanted especially to see what the writers did and find out what he might be able to do himself.

In choosing a company to visit, he selected the *New York Herald,* one of the best-known newspapers in the city. When he reached the *Herald* building, he had definitely decided to ask for a job. Lest he lose his nerve, he approached a man just as he stepped inside. "I want a job working for the *Herald,*" he said. "I'm willing to do anything."

The man grinned. "Well, this isn't the *Herald*

office, sonny, but we might give you a job here. We need another messenger boy and we'll pay you five dollars a week."

David stared blankly at the man. "I don't understand what you mean," he said. "Isn't this the *Herald* Building?"

"Yes, but the newspaper offices are upstairs," replied the man. "This is the Commercial Cable Company on the first floor. You can hear the telegraph keys clicking in the rear."

David nodded. He had heard the clicking sounds but had assumed they were coming from typewriters which newsmen were using. Now he listened more closely.

"What do you say about a job?" asked the man. "Would you like to work for us?"

David stood thinking for a moment. He had been interested in telegraphy ever since the day he had first heard about it from Mr. Ivanoff in Montreal. Besides, this job would be in the

newspaper building. If he didn't like working for the Commercial Cable Company, he could easily go upstairs and try to get a job with the *Herald.* "I accept your offer," he said.

"Good," said the man. "You'll wear a uniform and ride a bicycle to deliver messages. Come prepared to start work next Monday."

David at once became fascinated with telegraphy. The operator of a telegraph key was in communication with the whole world. He instantly could reach distant places, such as London, Cairo, and Manila, with his fingertips.

As soon as David could spare the money, he bought a dummy telegraph key and a copy of the Morse Code, or system of dots and dashes, which operators used in sending messages. Then he stayed up late every night to practice. "I'm studying telegraphy and plan to apply for an operator's job," he told other workers.

The operators at the office were eager to help

him. At slack times they let him practice communicating with other nearby offices in sending and receiving messages. They loaned him books so that he could read to find out how telegraphy really worked.

Even though he stayed up nights to study telegraphy, he still arose at four o'clock in the morning to deliver his papers. He faithfully attended weekly choir practice at the synagogue and regularly sang as a soprano soloist. In addition, he accompanied the choir to sing at weddings and other special events.

When the Jewish High Holidays approached, the choir made special preparation for singing. These holidays would last for three days, and there would be continuous services at the synagogue. Well in advance, David explained to the office manager at the telegraph company that he would have to be off from work. "I have to sing in the choir at the synagogue," he said.

"We can't spare you," said the manager flatly. "Messages have to be delivered during High Holidays at the same as at other times."

"I understand that, sir," replied David, "but you have other messengers who can take my place. On the other hand, I have to sing, because I am the only soprano soloist in the choir."

"Well, you say you must sing and I say you must work," said the office manager. "You can't be two places at the same time."

"I'm sorry, but I have no choice," repeated David. "I must sing."

"Then you're out of a job," said the office manager. "Turn in your bicycle and uniform."

During the Jewish High Holidays, David had an unfortunate experience. Right in the midst of singing a soprano solo, his voice suddenly cracked. This horrified him, even though he had known that his voice was beginning to change. Now his days of singing soprano were over.

"Don't be upset, David," said the cantor. "It's a wonder you've had a boy's voice as long as you have."

At first David was stunned by the loss of two jobs at once, especially from the loss of money to help support the family. He still had the newsstand, but it didn't bring in enough to pay all the expenses. Other stands had sprung up and taken over some of the business.

"I must find work to make up for both the jobs I have lost," David told himself grimly. All of his friends at the Commercial Cable offices were sorry to hear that he had been fired. Several promised to notify him if they heard of a job which they thought he would like. Soon one of them reported to him, "I hear that the American Marconi Company here in New York needs a junior operator."

"The American Marconi Company," repeated David excitedly. "Is that company named after

Guglielmo Marconi, the Italian who invented the wonderful system of wireless telegraphy?"

"Yes," replied David's friend, "but of course Mr. Marconi isn't there. It won't take you long to learn wireless telegraphy."

"I don't think so because I already know regular telegraphy," replied David. "Anyhow, I'll try for the job. Thank you for letting me know about it."

David started at once to walk to the Marconi office, which was a long way from Herald Square. When he reached the correct street address, he paused a moment to get his breath. Also, he checked the name on the door before he walked inside. This time he wanted to make sure he was entering the right office.

At last after he had regained his breath, he opened the door and stepped inside. Across the room he found a man sitting behind a desk heaped with papers. On a plaque above the

desk, he noted the name, George De Sousa, Traffic Manager. Immediately he strode bravely over to the desk and said, "Good afternoon, Mr. De Sousa. My name is David Sarnoff."

"Yes, young man," said Mr. De Sousa. "What can I do for you?"

"I have been told that you need a junior operator, sir," replied David, "and I've come to apply for the job."

"I'm sorry but you have been misinformed," replied Mr. De Sousa. "We don't need a junior operator, but we can use a smart young fellow as an office boy. The pay will be $5.50 a week."

David hesitated. He had hoped to obtain a more exciting job than office boy, but he would earn more than he had earned at the Commercial Cable Company. Besides, if he were to keep his eyes and ears open as office boy, he should be able to learn much about wireless telegraphy. Finally he said, "I'll take the job, Mr. De Sousa,

and I'll work hard for you. You won't be sorry for taking a chance on me."

"I'm sure I won't," replied Mr. De Sousa, coming out from behind his desk and patting David encouragingly on the shoulder. "Who knows?" he exclaimed. "Maybe sometime we'll both look back on this day and say, 'September 30, 1906, was a lucky day for us.' "

David knew that Mr. De Sousa was just being friendly in making this remark, but he happily agreed. "Maybe we will," he said.

As office boy David did many kinds of work at the company. He swept floors, dusted desks, emptied wastebaskets, and cleaned typewriters. He cranked a duplicator, filed correspondence, ran errands, and announced callers. Moreover, he did everything so courteously and thoughtfully that the office people soon began to ask, "How did we ever get along without him?"

David constantly was so busy at the office

that he had little spare time. Occasionally, however, he found a few moments to watch the operators or to read a technical book which he always carried in his pocket. All the operators told him about their work and were pleased to show him what they were doing. Before long, they began to allow him to send and receive simple messages under their direction.

Gradually he became acquainted with several persons, called technicians, who worked in the company experimental laboratory. Also he came to know wireless operators, known as "Coni" men, who worked aboard ships. "Come to see me at any time," said one of the technicians.

"Thank you," said David. "I want to help you with your work so I can learn as much about the equipment as possible."

"I thought you might," said the technician.

At first the technician only let David coil wire and do other simple tasks, but soon he allowed

him to help conduct simple experiments. David appreciated this opportunity and was careful to do only what he was told to do. At first he only asked questions, but later he began to make suggestions and even to provide solutions to some of the puzzling problems.

The Coni men often invited David to visit them when their ships came to port. He ate with them in the officers' mess and listened eagerly as they discussed their work. Now and then they allowed him to examine their wireless equipment and even to help make simple repairs.

In time, David acquired the reputation of being a very efficient and studious office boy. When Guglielmo Marconi came to New York in 1907, he asked to have David assigned to him. "People tell me that I can talk with you, but not to carry on aimless chatter," he said.

David merely smiled. He realized that Marconi didn't expect a reply. In return, Marconi

nodded and said, "Take my dispatch case and let's get started on our way."

During the weeks that Marconi spent in New York, David was his almost constant companion. He went to see many important people in New York and always took David along. Furthermore, he always made sure that they knew who David was. "I predict that someday this young man will make a name for himself," Marconi told everybody they met.

Marconi was greatly impressed with David because of his studious nature and eagerness to learn as much about wireless telegraphy as possible. At first he merely talked with David on various subjects to find out how much he knew. Then soon he began to ask David questions to get his ideas on certain subjects. Finally they began to spend long hours together in serious conversation on all manner of topics.

Of course most of their discussions were on

the subject of wireless telegraphy. One day, while they were in the midst of such a discussion, David looked up and asked somewhat dreamily, "I wonder why electro-magnetic waves really work the way they do?"

David actually hadn't expected Marconi to answer, but Marconi surprised him by saying, "Well, here on earth we know how things work, but we don't know why. Only God knows that."

This remark, coming from a great inventor such as Marconi, greatly impressed David. He remembered it all the rest of his life.

No More Errands

SOON AFTER Marconi returned to Europe, David reached his sixteenth birthday. He went back to the Marconi office expecting to continue as office boy, but Mr. De Sousa waylaid him. "From now on you'll do no more running errands or filing letters," he said.

"What, sir?" asked David, his heart beginning to pound. For a moment he wondered whether he had lost his job.

"These are Mr. Marconi's orders," replied Mr. De Sousa. "He says it's a crime for you to waste your talents as an office boy. So we're promoting you to the rank of junior operator."

"Thank you," said David, "but will I be taking someone else's place?"

"No, you'll be a relief operator," replied Mr. De Sousa. "You'll fill in for other operators whenever they can't work."

About the time David took this new job, he decided to sell the newsstand. He no longer had time to spend there, and his mother could work very little because his father now was completely helpless. Then, as his brothers became older, they found other kinds of work that they preferred to do. Thus there was nobody left in the family to run the business.

While David was trying to sell the newsstand, his father died. All the members of the family mourned his death, but they were thankful he was relieved from suffering. He never had enjoyed a day of good health all the while his family had been in America.

Only a few weeks after David had become a

relief operator, he had an opportunity to substitute for a Coni man aboard a ship. A request came for someone to replace the operator on the steamship *New York*, who had suddenly become ill. "Do you think you can take his place, David?" asked Mr. De Sousa.

"Yes," replied David, thankful that he already knew what his duties probably would be on board the ship.

This voyage lasted only three weeks, but during this short period David tried to learn everything possible. He not only received and sent necessary messages, but he exchanged friendly messages with Coni men on other ships. They were impressed with his ability and predicted that he would become one of the fastest and most dependable operators in the business.

In his position as fill-in operator, David became interested in securing a position at one of the Marconi stations outside New York. There

were seldom any vacancies in these stations, but one day he happened to see a notice of a vacancy posted on the office bulletin board. He noted that an operator was wanted to replace one of four men at an isolated station at Siasconset, on the tip of Nantucket Island along the coast of Massachusetts. "I want to apply for that position," he said to Mr. De Sousa.

"Oh, no," cried Mr De Sousa. "Siasconset is one of the dreariest, lonesomest places in the world. Besides, the other three operators there are old enough to be your father. You wouldn't be happy working with them."

David smiled. "Thank you for your advice, but you haven't changed my mind," he said. "I can keep busy even though Siasconset is a dreary place. Besides, I'll be able to learn many things from the three older operators."

Mr. De Sousa sighed. "Well, if you really want the job, I'm sure you can have it," he said. "There

won't be many other persons wanting to go to that dreary spot to work."

David was selected for the position and left at once for Siasconset. At first the other operators were upset about having a new operator half their ages put down in their midst. David readily understood their feelings, however, and tried not to force himself upon them. He felt that if he did his work well, sooner or later they would accept him.

Fortunately everything turned out well. Soon the older operators began to like David and wanted to help him. They were pleased to find that he was eager to learn.

As Mr. De Sousa had warned David, Siasconset was a bleak, lonely place. The teletype equipment in the station was crude and often out of order. When it broke down, the long-time operators cursed and complained, but David set to work to repair it. Actually he was pleased when

the equipment broke down because it gave him an opportunity to learn more about it.

The Siasconset station had a good technical library, which David used regularly for studying technical books. On his day off, he rode his bicycle to the public library in Nantucket to borrow other kinds of books. He even borrowed algebra and geometry textbooks so he could study mathematics. His months there proved very helpful, because he had a chance to study things that he had never studied before.

After he had been at the Siasconset station for about a year and a half, he heard that a position was open as manager of the Sea Gate station on Coney Island, near New York. This was a very important position, because the Sea Gate station was the busiest in the company.

At once David decided to apply for the position. He realized, however, that there would be many applicants for the position and that they

would be older and more experienced than he. Some of his friends tried to discourage him from applying, but he said, "I figure that I can handle the job as well as anybody else. Besides, I certainly won't get it if I don't apply for it." Then he added to himself, "Many people thought that Abraham Lincoln couldn't be elected President, but he was."

As everybody predicted, there were many applications for the Sea Gate post. The qualifications of all the applicants were very carefully considered by the company officers, both in the United States and Europe. Finally, they selected David for the position, largely because of his steady, serious record.

David was thrilled with his busy life at Sea Gate. This station kept in contact with ships all over the world. Every day it helped to demonstrate how much wireless telegraphy meant to the safety of ships at sea.

As David communicated with operators on ships, he remembered his own short experience as a Coni man. Gradually he developed a desire to become one again, on a ship that would sail to other parts of the world. "I'd like to have a sea job again, while I'm young enough to enjoy it," he said.

One day in February, 1911, he briefly visited headquarters in New York. While there he happened to see a notice on a bulletin board calling for volunteer operators. He read further and discovered that a seal-hunting company wanted to experiment with using Marconi equipment aboard its vessels in the Arctic icefields. "That's the job for me," he cried.

Mr. De Sousa tried to discourage him. "You're foolish to give up your post at Sea Gate!" he said "This is one of the most important posts in the world. Besides, you're close by where you can be selected for advancement."

"Yes, I know," replied David, "but think how important it will be if I can persuade sealing companies to install wireless equipment on their vessels. Surely this kind of thing would interest the people at headquarters."

"Of course," replied Mr. De Sousa. "And I am sure that you have made up your mind, so all I can do is to wish you good luck."

David went to St. John's, Newfoundland, where the ships in the seal-hunting fleet were busy preparing for the long expedition. He was assigned to the *Beothic* and at once set about installing and testing wireless equipment on the ship. The sailors watched him curiously because most of them doubted whether it was possible to send messages without wires.

They still didn't believe in wireless telegraphy after they got out to sea. David told them he was communicating with other ships and with places on shore, but they were skeptical. He

hoped that somehow he would have an opportunity to convince them.

Finally by chance an opportunity came. While he was communicating with a station on shore he picked up the information that one of the crewmen had become a father. His wife had given birth to a son since the ship had left on its journey. At once David relayed the news to the crewman in the presence of several doubters. "Barbour," he said, "I'm happy to inform you that you have a new baby son back home. Both your wife and the baby are doing fine."

The members of the crew started to celebrate the good news. They toasted not only the father but also David for proclaiming the information. Now they were finally convinced that wireless telegraphy actually worked.

Weeks later the seal-hunting fleet reached Arctic regions. Early one morning, one of the ships raised flag signals to inform the *Beothic*

that its wireless equipment had broken down. It further requested that the Coni man aboard the *Beothic* come to repair the equipment.

David always welcomed a chance to tinker with equipment, but this time he hesitated. His only way to reach the other ship was to walk over floating ice, something he had never done before. Then he remembered that he had volunteered for the Arctic expedition to show how helpful wireless telegraphy could be on seal-hunting vessels. "Signal back to the ship that I'll come," he directed the signal man.

"I'll go with you," said the ship's doctor, "if you'd like to have me."

"I certainly would," said David gratefully, even though he knew that the doctor knew as little about walking on floating ice as he did.

Members of the crew brought fur-lined parkas and spike-soled boots for David and the doctor to wear. These heavy clothes reminded David of

the wolfpelt outfit which Grandma Rivke had provided for him back in Uzlian. She had thought he was a smart boy, but he wondered what she would think of him if she knew what he was about to do.

"You'll have to wear goggles to protect your eyes against snow-blindness," said one of the sailors. "Also, you'll have to carry a sharpened pole to help you walk on the ice."

"Thank you," said David, putting on the goggles and accepting the pole. "Are you ready to start, Doctor?"

David and the doctor set out, walking slowly and carefully on the ice toward the other ship. The distance, however, proved to be much greater than they expected. They had failed to take into account the fact that people can see exceptionally long distances in the clear, dry Arctic air. As a result it took them three full hours of walking to reach the ship.

When David examined the broken wireless equipment on the ship, he found the repair work very complicated. He had to work several hours tearing the set down and putting it together again. The day was almost over before he had it in good working order again.

The grateful wireless operator on the ship urged David and the doctor to stay aboard for the night, but David declined. "No," he said firmly, "I have to go back to the *Beothic* yet tonight. I can't leave the ship without wireless communication any longer."

David and the doctor found the return trip frightening and dangerous. A strong icy wind blowing in the opposite direction made it almost impossible for them to push forward. Worse still, they had to jump from one large chunk of floating ice to another, because the large ice mass now had broken up. Several times they failed to jump far enough and fell into the sea. Each

time they managed to climb out again by helping each other, but only after moments of difficult struggling.

Before long, it began to turn dark. This approaching darkness caused David to almost lose hope. "In a very little while, we won't be able to see anything," he said with his teeth chattering. "Then we'll get caught here and probably freeze to death."

"Well, fortunately freezing to death is supposed to be a fairly painless way to die," said the doctor.

They floundered on for a few moments, but finally gave up. Then they sat down close together on a large chunk of ice. "Perhaps the combined heat of our bodies will keep us alive until daylight," said the doctor, but he didn't sound very convincing to David.

Soon David began to feel drowsy, but knew that he must strive to stay awake. He beat his

hands together and raised and lowered his legs. The doctor also kept moving and turning in order to stay awake.

Before long they heard voices shouting and saw lights moving. Then they realized that crewmen from the *Beothic* were out looking for them. Both of them struggled to their feet and shouted, "Here we are! Here we are!"

"Keep shouting so we can find you," called back the crewmen.

Soon the first of the rescuers reached David and the doctor on the chunk of ice. They explained that the captain had sent a dozen experienced ice jumpers to look for them. "He suspected that you would be foolish enough to try to come back," they said.

One of the sailors tossed David over his back and started to carry him back to the *Beothic*. "Yes, we were almost certain that we would find you somewhere," he said. "The captain thinks

you are crazy in many ways, but he greatly admires you for your ability."

Before long the rescuers helped David and the doctor safely aboard the *Beothic*. David was almost numb with cold, but almost immediately he insisted on checking the wireless equipment to see whether it would work. He wanted to be sure that he could communicate with the world before he would go to bed.

As the expedition continued David had several opportunities to use his wireless equipment to help people. One day he picked up the news that a sailor on a far-away ship had been badly injured and that there was no doctor aboard. He asked for full details about the sailor's injuries and consulted the doctor aboard the *Beothic* about them. The doctor dictated instructions for treatment which David then relayed to the ship by wireless. Each day he continued to contact the ship until the sailor had recovered.

The Coni men on other doctorless ships learned about this incident. Soon they began to besiege David with requests to secure medical help for sick and injured members of their crews. David promptly contacted the doctor on the *Beothic* and reported back the needed instructions. In one case, where an operation was needed, he directed every move to the man who volunteered to act as surgeon. The patient lived and without question owed his life to the help which he received by wireless telegraphy.

The Arctic expedition proved to be very successful. David and the other Coni men clearly demonstrated that wireless telegraphy could be very helpful in locating seals. For the first time in history the ships could keep one another informed about the location of seals, and whether or not the herds were large or small. As a result, the combined fleet caught more and better seals than ever before.

The seal hunters on the *Beothic* caught a total of 36,000 seals, setting a record for the ship. They gave David special credit for their good fortune and presented him with a pure white mounted baby seal as a token of their gratitude for his services.

David was touched by the gift. He realized that it was a rare mounting which could readily have been sold to a museum. "Thank you," he said. "I greatly appreciate your kindness. This memento will help me always to remember the enjoyable days I have spent with you."

When the expedition ended, the owners of the seal-hunting fleet informed David that they wished to purchase the Marconi equipment which he had used aboard the *Beothic.* David agreed on a price and happily hastened to present the check to Mr. De Sousa in the company office. "I've had good luck on my expedition to the Arctic," he said to Mr. De Sousa.

Mr. De Sousa fondly and enthusiastically slapped him on the back. "You make your own luck, David," he said. "You and Marconi are cut out of the same piece of cloth."

This compliment pleased David immensely. Since he had become acquainted with Marconi personally, he had come to regard him as one of the greatest men in the world. "Thank you, Mr. De Sousa," he said. "I can't think of anyone I would rather be like than Marconi."

Radio, a Dream Come True

AFTER DAVID returned from the Arctic seal-hunting expedition, he worked briefly as a Coni man aboard the S S. *Harvard.* Then at the age of twenty-one, he was appointed manager and operator of a wireless station which was located in the Wanamaker Department Store in New York. At that time this was the most powerful commercial radio station in the world.

The station was surrounded by glass walls. Each day many curious people stopped to watch David as he sat at a desk wearing earphones and tapping a telegraph key. "I feel like an animal in a cage," he told his mother one day after work,

"but I'm sure the people are more interested in radio than they are in me."

By now wireless telegraphy was being referred to as radio, but David's mother wasn't used to the term. "Radio," she repeated. "I forgot that new name for wireless telegraphy."

"Radio really makes more sense than wireless telegraphy," explained David, "because signals which we send out radiate in all directions. Radio is easier to understand."

Most people still had to be convinced that radio was more than an interesting novelty. Soon David had an opportunity to prove that it was an important modern invention. On April 14, 1912, while he was listening idly to dots and dashes, he suddenly picked up this shocking message: "S. S. *Titanic* ran into an iceberg. Sinking fast." This message had come from the S. S. *Olympic*, which was nearby in the North Atlantic Ocean, 1400 miles away from New York.

The *Titanic* was a brand-new luxury liner making her maiden voyage to the United States with hundreds of prominent Americans aboard. Quickly David signalled the S. S. *Olympic* to provide additional information. "Rush details, including names," he requested.

At once David notified the New York newspapers of the grim tragedy. Soon newspaper reporters and relatives and friends of passengers aboard the *Titanic* crowded around his station for further information. They caused so much confusion that the police had to remove some of them so he could continue his work.

Within hours, the news spread across the country and thousands of people were concerned. President William Howard Taft designated David's station as the official radio station to obtain information. He ordered all other stations to close down to prevent conflicting signals.

For three days and nights David stayed at his

post with very little to eat and entirely without sleep. During this time he obtained the names of all the survivors, or persons who still lived following the shipwreck. Then the nation went into deep mourning for all those who had lost their lives.

The survivors were picked up by the S. S. *Carpathia,* another radio-equipped ship which had heard the distress call. Several other ships had been nearer, but unfortunately they had lacked radio equipment. "Undoubtedly hundreds more people could have been saved if these other ships which were nearer had been radio-equipped," said David soberly.

The entire nation realized that David's words were true. Almost immediately Congress passed a law which made it mandatory for all ships carrying passengers to install radio equipment. Also, it required the ships to employ licensed persons to operate the equipment.

"A tragedy such as happened to the *Titanic* must never happen again," declared Congress.

By now the directors of the Marconi Company fully recognized David's ability. They began to refer to him as Mr. Sarnoff and to give him more important assignments. Even though he became Mr. Sarnoff, he still was much younger than most of his coworkers.

After Congress passed the new radio law, the Marconi Company promoted him to chief inspector of radio equipment on board ships. With this promotion they awarded him the title of Assistant Traffic Manager.

At this time there was a tremendous boom in the radio industry, and many people became interested in learning more about the principles of radio, known as electronics. The Marconi Company established a special training school for operators and technicians. Young Sarnoff became one of the leading instructors in the school,

offering technical courses several evenings a week to carefully selected students.

Sarnoff even organized and taught a special course for Marconi executives who wanted to know more about the principles back of the equipment which the company was making and selling. One of his pupils was Mr. De Sousa, who had originally employed him. Others included persons whom he had met while accompanying Guglielmo Marconi. "Gugielmo predicted that you would make a name for yourself," they said. "Now his prophecy is fast coming true."

Certain older executives in the company hesitated to accept some of young Sarnoff's ideas on the future of radio. They resented the fact that he was younger than they were and that he grasped new ideas more readily. Somehow they respected his knowledge, but they thought he was too young to have sober judgment.

Despite this opposition, Sarnoff frequently

made suggestions to George De Sousa and to Edward J. Nally, Vice-President and General Manager of the American Marconi Company. Also he made occasional suggestions by letter to Guglielmo Marconi in Europe. These suggestions ranged from needed improvements in technical equipment being produced to the importance of gaining access to electronics patents held by other companies. They also included possible new uses for electronic devices.

From time to time young Sarnoff's suggestions were accepted, but he seldom received any credit for them. Other of his suggestions were turned down because they were considered harebrained or impractical. Even so, he failed to become discouraged and kept on making proposals.

One of his most notable proposals came in 1915 when he suggested that the company develop a radio music box. Already he realized

that radio could be used for a variety of entertainment purposes. "I have in mind putting radio in the house along with the piano and phonograph which are already there," he wrote.

Sarnoff explained his proposal in great detail. He went into both the technical and fiscal aspects of manufacturing the new product and even suggested a realistic sales price for marketing it. Unfortunately, the executives listened attentively but dismissed the idea as harebrained. "Your idea is interesting but impractical," they said. "Why, we don't even own some of the patents that we would need to manufacture such a product."

"I fully realize that," replied Sarnoff, "but I'm certain that we could obtain permission to use whatever patented items we would need. If the electronics industry is to grow and prosper, all the electronics companies must share their knowledge and technical developments."

In spite of his frequent unaccepted ideas, Sarnoff continued to move up in the company. In 1917, when he was only twenty-four years old, he was appointed Commercial Manager of the American Marconi Company. This promotion made him second in command to Edward J. Nally in the American organization.

In this new position, Sarnoff had charge of 725 employees and the radio installations on 582 ships at sea. He regulated the flow of the company's radio and telegraph messages, both at home and abroad. He negotiated contracts to provide trained operators when and wherever they were needed. He supervised the sale of electronic products and services to both the government and private companies.

When the United States entered World War I, Sarnoff felt certain that radio communications would be very important. Immediately he went to the Brooklyn Navy Yard to apply for a com-

mission in the communications branch of the service. Much to his surprise, however, he was rejected on the grounds that he already held an essential position. As Commercial Manager of the American Marconi Company he was rated as indispensable to the war effort.

During the same year, Sarnoff married Lizette Hermant, whom he had known for some years. She, too, was interested in electronics and he often consulted her on some of his advanced ideas. Later he said, "She believed in my radio music box, even though her mother thought it was a crazy idea. Anyhow, she believed in me and I couldn't let her get away."

World War I helped to bring about Sarnoff's dream of sharing electronic knowledge and developments. The United States government took control of all radio facilities in the country and all existing radio devices. As Sarnoff had contended, this action showed how much the sepa-

rate companies had been hampered before by not sharing their knowledge. Within weeks, the government, without reference to what each company owned or did, built up the most effective radio system in the world.

Finally, on January 8, 1918, radio helped to announce President Woodrow Wilson's famous speech to Congress in which he proposed fourteen points for ending World War I. Then on November 11, 1918, radio helped to tell the world that an armistice had been signed, which meant that the war was over.

At first, following World War I, the United States government wanted to retain control of the radio industry. The United States Navy especially felt that the government should keep control for national security. Sarnoff was opposed to this control and made many trips to Washington, D. C., to argue against it in Congressional hearings. "Private initiative has pro-

duced radio," he explained to the Congressmen. "If we leave it alone, it will produce other electronic marvels."

Even though Sarnoff was opposed to continued government control of radio, he was fearful America might lose its global control of electronics. To offset this possibility, he listened with interest to a unification plan proposed by top officials of the United States Navy. This plan would involve the creation of a new radio corporation, the Radio Corporation of America, which would be backed unofficially by the United States government. All the existing companies which owned electronics patents would be invited to join this new corporation.

The General Electric Company, which owned most of the vital patents, and the American Marconi Company expressed immediate interest in the proposal. The chief problem for Sarnoff and others in the Marconi Company was to induce

their owners in Europe to sell their American interests. Finally, after about three months of negotiations, they agreed to sell.

In the meantime the American companies proceeded to work out details for forming the new combined electronics corporation. At last all the details were completed, and on December 1, 1919, the Radio Corporation of America was officially launched as a new business operation.

David Sarnoff, Mr. RCA

WHEN THE Radio Corporation of America was founded in 1919, Edward J. Nally, former General Manager of the American Marconi Company, became President of the new organization. George De Sousa became Secretary, and David Sarnoff retained his title of Commercial Manager. Thus these three close friends continued to work together.

"The name Radio Corporation of America is too big a mouthful for people to understand and remember," said young Sarnoff to his fellow officers. "I suggest that we substitute the initials RCA for the name of the corporation."

Nally raised his eyebrows. "What people do you have in mind?" he asked.

"The general public," replied Mr. Sarnoff, "persons who will buy our products."

"Unfortunately we're a new company with limited products to sell to the general public," argued Nally.

"But we'll have more," argued Sarnoff with a tone of determination in his voice. He felt confident that RCA was large enough to accomplish almost anything in the field of radio communications. Besides, he felt that he was well enough established to insist on careful consideration of his proposals.

In 1920, he submitted to the RCA Board of Directors a plan for manufacturing and selling a home radio set. This plan was basically the same as he had presented to the American Marconi Company five years before for building a radio music box. This time, however, he added details

to make his proposal more attractive commercially. Two months later, the board of directors asked him to estimate how long it would take to produce the new radio set and what volume of sales might be expected.

"A radio can be manufactured and placed on the market within a year," he replied, "and we may reasonably expect to sell one million sets within three years. If we establish a selling price of $75 per set, we'll take in 75 million dollars, which will insure us of a good profit on our investment."

Sarnoff's estimate was astonishingly accurate. During the next four years nearly every family that could spare $75 wanted to purchase a radio. The company found that making and selling home radios was a very profitable venture.

In 1921, Sarnoff was promoted to General Manager of RCA. From that time on he became chief spokesman for the company, and most peo-

ple looked upon him as Mr. RCA. He was highly respected not only for his knowledge of electronics but for his exceptional business ability.

After Sarnoff developed the home radio, he arranged broadcasts of special events for people to enjoy. His first broadcast was a blow-by-blow account of the heavyweight championship fight between the American champion, Jack Dempsey, and his French challenger, Georges Carpentier. This was the first time that people ever could enjoy such entertainment at home.

This successful broadcast was followed by others designed to tempt a variety of tastes. These included the Rose Bowl game for sports fans, the New York Philharmonic concerts for music lovers, and special news events for people who wanted to keep up with the times.

The special broadcasts of various kinds which Sarnoff arranged demonstrated the need for a national broadcasting service. In 1926, under

his leadership, RCA bought radio station WEAF in New York City and incorporated it as the National Broadcasting Company.

Some people predicted that the popularity of radio would bring an end to the phonograph. Sarnoff, who had a fine record collection of his own, felt that the phonograph still had a place. "We must put these two home instruments into one cabinet," he said, and at once he began to make plans for RCA to manufacture and sell combined radio and record players.

Sarnoff seemed to possess exceptional ability to foresee future developments in electronics. No longer did anybody accuse him of having harebrained ideas. In 1923, he predicted the development of television or a system of broadcasting pictures for people to see just as radio provided sounds for them to hear.

In 1930, shortly after Sarnoff had been promoted to President of RCA, he faced one of the

greatest problems in his business career. The United States government charged RCA with violating the antitrust law. The government contended that the corporation had come to control so much of the electronic business that there was little opportunity for competition.

In the legal fight that followed, the General Electric Company was forced to drop out of RCA, but the corporation survived the loss. Under Sarnoff's able leadership, it cut down on expenses for a while, but soon retained its business health and became stronger than ever.

In April, 1939, at the New York World's Fair, Sarnoff had the pleasure of announcing the development of television, which he had predicted sixteen years before. "Radio sight now has been added to radio sound," he proclaimed with great satisfaction. "Within a short time the National Broadcasting Company will begin to broadcast television programs to the general public."

Sarnoff never forgot the contributions which he thought radio and television should provide. He felt that these electronic devices should serve not only to entertain people but also to provide them with varied means of securing culture and education. Thus his broadcasts always included these important features.

Back in Uzlian, on his third birthday, David Sarnoff had attempted to erect a building with blocks to reach the sky. Forty years later, he had an office on the top floor of the RCA Building in a real skyscraper in New York City. There, as he sat at his desk, he was surrounded by mementoes of his American experiences. Under a glass bell was the primitive telegraph key which he had used during his *Titanic* vigil. On the wall were portraits of his two favorite heroes, Abraham Lincoln and Guglielmo Marconi.

On Unity Day, 1956, Sarnoff was the featured speaker at a rally in front of the Statue of Liberty

in New York. He ended his spirited address with these words, which expressed his true affection for America:

> "More than any other physical object on earth, this statute is for all mankind a symbol of freedom and promise, justice, and compassion. These are the American ideals, my fellow Americans. Let us never forget them."

Sarnoff never forgot the opportunities he had in America. Throughout his career he always considered it the marvelous country which his Uncle Schlomme had described years before:

> "A land where work and food are plentiful, buildings scrape the sky, and there are no Czars or Cossacks to endure, and all men are considered equal."

David Sarnoff, electronics wizard, still believed these words when he died in December, 1971, at the age of eighty.

More About This Book

WHEN DAVID SARNOFF LIVED

1891 DAVID SARNOFF WAS BORN IN UZLIAN, RUSSIA, FEBRUARY 27.

Benjamin Harrison was President.

There were forty-four states in the Union.

The population of the country was about 77,300,000.

1891–1900 DAVID LIVED AND WENT TO KHEDER IN UZLIAN, LATER STUDIED UNDER A RABBI IN KORME.

Grover Cleveland was President, 1893-1897.

Henry Ford built his first gasoline engine, 1893, and his first automobile, 1896.

Guglielmo Marconi of Italy invented wireless telegraphy, 1895.

Wilhelm Roentgen, a German physicist, discovered X-rays, 1895.

The Spanish-American War was fought, 1898.

Congress first considered a canal between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, 1899.

1900–1906 DAVID LIVED WITH HIS FAMILY, ATTENDED SCHOOL, AND WORKED IN NEW YORK.

President William McKinley was assassinated, 1901.

Wilbur and Orville Wright flew the first heavier-than-air aircraft, 1903.

The first cable across the Pacific Ocean came into use, 1903.

1906–1919 SARNOFF WORKED FOR THE AMERICAN MARCONI COMPANY AND BECAME A WIRELESS EXPERT.

Lee DeForest, an American physicist, invented the vacuum tube, 1907.

The S.S. *Titanic* hit an iceberg and sank in the northern Atlantic Ocean, 1912.

World War I was fought, 1914-1918.

1919–1971 SARNOFF HELPED TO FOUND AND LATER BECAME HEAD OF RCA.

Regular radio broadcasts were started, 1920.

The first full-length talking motion picture was made, 1927.

World War II was fought, 1939-1945.

Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr., became first men to reach the moon, 1969.

1971 DAVID SARNOFF DIED IN NEW YORK, NEW YORK, DECEMBER 12.

Richard M. Nixon was President.

There were fifty states in the Union.

The population of the country was about 205,570,000.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

1. Why did Reuben and two other boys take David to visit the old synagogue in Uzlian?
2. What did Grandpa Shmuel first ask David to learn when he started to *kheder*?
3. Why did David's father finally decide to go to America to live?
4. How did David travel to Korme to study with his great-uncle, Rabbi Solomon Elkind?
5. Why did David at the age of nine suddenly stop studying with his great-uncle?
6. How did David, his mother, and his two brothers travel from Uzlian to Liverpool?
7. Why was the trip across the Atlantic Ocean especially rough and frightening?

8. How did David find out about telegrams on his way from Montreal to New York?
9. How did David obtain his first job of selling newspapers in the neighborhood?
10. How did David manage to purchase a newsstand where members of the family could work?
11. What problems did David have living in a new neighborhood and attending a new school?
12. How did David obtain a job with the American Marconi Company of New York?
13. What interesting experiences did young Sarnoff have while working for this company?
14. How did young Sarnoff achieve distinction when the S.S.*Titanic* suffered disaster?
15. How did Sarnoff through RCA become a renowned leader in radio and television?

IT'S FUN TO LOOK UP THESE THINGS

1. Why did many people from Europe formerly come to America to live?
2. What famous American invented the telegraph as a fast means of communication?

3. What special code did operators regularly use in sending telegrams?
4. How does a phonograph or record player differ from a radio?
5. What are other important uses of radio today besides entertainment?
6. What are some of the leading kinds of television programs which are broadcast today?

INTERESTING THINGS YOU CAN DO

1. Prepare a report on Thomas A. Edison to read to the class.
2. Explain how Alexander Graham Bell helped to bring about great changes in communication.
3. Make a list of the leading television broadcasting companies in our country today.
4. List some of the leading manufactures of radio and television sets today.
5. Name your favorite radio or television programs and tell why you like them.
6. Visit a broadcasting station near your home to see how programs are broadcast.

OTHER BOOKS YOU MAY ENJOY READING

All About Radio and Television, Jack Gould. Random.

Boys' First Book of Radio and Electronics, Alfred P. Morgan. Scribner.

First Book of Television, Edward Stoddard. Watts.

Lee DeForest: Electronics Boy, Lavinia Dobler. Trade and School Editions, Bobbs-Merrill.

Marconi: Pioneer of Radio, Douglas Coe. Messner.

Samuel Morse: Inquisitive Boy, Dorothea Snow. Trade and School Editions, Bobbs-Merrill.

Sound and Its Reproduction, Jerome S. Meyer. World Publishing Co.

INTERESTING WORDS IN THIS BOOK

affirmative (*ă* fûr'mȧ tĭv) : favorable

Aramaic (ăr *ȧ* mā'ĭk) : language of ancient Palestine, spoken by Jesus

awed (ôd) : filled with wonder or fear

bridge (brĭj) : platform above a ship's deck from which the captain directs the ship's operation

comparison (kŏm păr'ĭ sŭn) : pointing out likenesses between things

compartment (kŏm pärt′mĕnt) : separate part of an enclosed space, as a railroad car

conductor (kŏn dŭk′tĕr) : person in charge of passengers on a train or streetcar

confirmation (kŏn′fĕr mā′shŭn) : ceremony of admitting a person to adulthood in church

dally (dăl′ĭ) : linger, play, waste time

duplicator (dū′plĭ kā′tĕr) : copying machine

hamper (hăm′pĕr) : large basket with a cover

hawk (hôk) : sell by calling loudly on the street

idiom (ĭd′ĭ ŭm) : way in which a group of people come to use words, phrases, or expressions

inclined (ĭn klīnd′) : for or against something

mandatory (măn′dȧ tō′rĭ) : required, necessary

musty (mŭs′tĭ) : stale and foul-smelling with age

parka (pär′kȧ) : warm hooded outer garment used in the far north

pelt (pĕlt) : skin of an animal

persist (pĕr sĭst′) : continue with determination or firmness

plaque (plăk) : wooden or metal tablet bearing a name or special inscription

porridge (pŏr'ĭj) : broth made from ground cereal cooked with water or milk

proverb (prŏv'ûrb) : short wise saying handed down from generation to generation

rabbi (răb'ī) : pastor of a Jewish congregation and teacher of Jewish law

sardine (sär dēn') : small food fish preserved in oil

skeptical (skĕp'tĭ kăl) : doubtful, unbelieving

stagnant (stăg'nănt) : foul from being stationary

stampeding (stăm pēd'ĭng) : running away in panic

stark (stärk) : bare, unadorned

steerage (stēr'ĭj) : lower deck of a ship for passengers who pay the lowest fares

substitute (sŭb'stĭ tūt) : person or thing used to replace another

synagogue (sĭn'ȧ gŏg) : building used by Jewish groups for religious worship

tenement (tĕn'ê mĕnt) : building divided into many apartments or living quarters

villainous (vĭl'ĭn ŭs) : evil, bad, wicked

wharf (hwôrf) : structure along the shore of a river or harbor where ships can tie up