CLARA KLINGHOFFER
The life and career of a traditional artist

by

Joseph W.F. Stoppelman

Volume I

Agent :

Clarke Conway-Gordon
213 Westbourne Grove
London W11 2SE

01-229 4451

J.W.F. Stoppelman
2 Gloucester Gardens
Golders Green London, NW11

ORIGINAL Ms.

of Clara Klinghoffer's Biography

VOLUME I

C L A R A K L I N G H O F F E R

The Life and Career

of a traditional artist

t o l d b y h e r h u s b a n d

Joseph W. F. Stoppelman

Volume I

Volume 1

"Art is the translation of aesthetic associations of ideas. The more complexly and intensely the conscious and unconscious concepts and ideas of the artist communicate themselves to us through his art work, the deeper is the impression. It is then that he succeeds in stimulating others to that vivacity of imaginative feeling which we call art, in contradiction to what we hear and see and experience in our ordinary moments.'

Albert Schweitzer,
in his analysis of the
music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

'The greatest influence on my work came from Greek sculpture. That was when in my early teens I worked day after day in the British Museum , London. I believe that this influence grew in strength with the years. It is from the Greeks that I learned to understand form.'

Clara Klinghoffer

INTRODUCTION

It is a generally accepted norm that the story of an outstanding artist's background, his growing pains, the triumphs and disappointments of his career, his innermost convictions and his reactions to whatever shaped his destiny, remains untold till some time in the far future , long after his death. Thus his image as 'an ordinary human being' is apt to get lost in the nebulous past, until finally some enquiring art historian courageously starts out upon the arduous journey of thorough research.

Gradually, like a restorer of precious antiques, he will then piece together the multifarious fragments of the artist's existence: his joys, yearnings and pains, and in doing so always run the great risk of misjudgment, of ascribing to his 'subject' degrees of wisdom and prejudice, the possession of sentiments and set opinions which, actually, existed to a limited extent only--or not at all. Or he may hold forth weightily on a mass of social and moral motivations that placed the artist 'here or there' in the framework of his time, while in reality the only place he could have occupied was the niche based upon his natural talent and his subconscious drive.

Of course: there always was, and is, the remedy of the auto-biography. But how few draughtmen, painters and sculptors of note have been eager or capable to express in

writing their recollections of their early days, the ups and downs of their maturity, their feelings and reactions past the apex of their achievment and the coming of old age ? And how much rarer still is the artist who acquired his very own Boswell: a devotee following doggedly in his footsteps and chronicling fanatically every utterance of 'the Master', no matter its genuine significance?

Clara Klinghoffer knew no compulsion to record steadily and punctiliously the events of her life, important or of little meaning. Yet, she wrote with ease and was a good stylist, as the abundance of her letters amply proves. Also , she possessed a splendid memory. None the less, she never felt the urgent need of putting her remembrances on paper. When she wrote so extensively to me about her painter's activities, the contact with fellow-artists and collectors on two Continents, she did so principally to soften the distress of our long and too frequent separations. She very rarely made for herself a hurried note, on any scrap of paper that came to hand, about something she suddenly recalled, or jot down a thought that was important to her in connection with her understanding of form in draughtsmanship and painting.

In the course of many years I persuaded her on maybe half a dozen occasions to talk to me at length of the early days, or of the way her career developped; and as she spoke I made copious notes. Once or twice, with intervals of several years, she talked of the same incidents, such as her unforgettable 'outing to the pantomimes' with a young teacher. It never failed to strike me how such recollections never deviated, even in the smallest detail. She did not magnify, glorify or belittle. Only one thing was of paramount interest to her: the truth as she saw it, the event remembered faithfully, and unalterably.

These scarce occasions of returning to the past, and the contents of hundreds of letters she wrote to me between 1923 and 1970 form the solid basis on which this book is built. Much of the time, therefore, it is Clara Klinghof-

fer herself who speaks to the reader: also in the radio interviews, the two short lectures she gave in New York, and her informative, at times amusing 'report' on painting the portraits of five greatly divergent personalities. I have also included a statement on the art of portrait painting, which she dictated to me shortly before her fatal illness.

I have made no attempt to evaluate Clara Klinghoffer's art. The opinions expressed by leading art critics in hundreds of reviews published on two Continents throughout the fifty years of her active career speak for themselves. For that reason only I have included a fair number of those criticisms.

As to the 'picture' of Szerzezec, the little Austrian town of the artist's birth, I wish to express my thanks to Mrs. Clara Golka, a relative of the Klinghoffers who, when she left Szerzezec, was old enough to remember its structure and general colouring with great exactitude, and who told me about it with gratifying clarity. I also recognize my indebtedness to Rachel Freeman, a younger sister of the artist who, being a favourite model, was very close to Clara Klinghoffer in the early years, and told me many an amusing anecdote of 'the young children and the old men of the East End' who functioned as willing, infinitely patient models.

London, 1974 Joseph W. F. Stoppelman

List of Illustrations in Volume 1 :

The very beginning

In the early months of 1898 everything was reasonably well with Szerzezec, a little town of some four thousand souls, important railway junction between Strij and Lemberg, the one-time capital of the province of Galicia. Since Galicia had been separated from Poland and placed under Austrian control, there had no longer been fear in Szerzezec of an anti-semitic outburst that so easily might take on the terrifying character of a pogrom. The Jews, forming the majority of the town's population, were both socially and economically on friendly terms with their Christian fellow citizens. The Magistrate had only moderate opportunity to use the town's prison, and the relationships of many Jewish traders with the Austrian government were good and often lucrative.

True: the central square of Szerzezec was dominated by the most important of the town's several churches, but in the side streets were no less than three synagogues, each with its own 'Beth Hamidrash'(school of learning). On market days droves of people from neighbouring villages filled the streets, selling and buying, while young Jewish boys, in constant swaying movement, sing-songed through some holy text, or tried valiantly to understand a learned rabbi's commentary on passages of the Bible.

It could without exaggeration be said that Szerzezec was a progressive little place, surprisingly tolerant, with both Jews and non-Jews well aware of needing one another. It was a community open to new ideas, such as lengthy discussions on the merits of a book written by a certain Theodore Herzl who warmly defended the possibility of a return--some time in the vague future--of all the world's Jewry to Palestine, the land of their fathers. Lawyer Schmorak, young and articulate, could for example often be found in the prospering drapery store of his parents, discussing heatedly with a crowd of less enthusiastic co-religionists the--obviously illusory--chances of founding a Jewish state where Jews would forever be safe, no longer within reach of anti-semitic cruelties, their own masters, independent from

the whims and political scheming of Christian officialdom.

A lively little town was Szerzezec with, in the background of all Jewish activity, the strong, indispensable links with Lemberg,only forty minutes or so away by train. Lemberg: centre of teeming masses, a city holding opportunities for ambitious youngsters that Szerzezec could not possibly offer. Posts, for instance, in commercial enterprises with oftimes valuable international connections. Study in high schools and , in spite of restricting rules, at Universities that might lead to degrees in law and medicine. Bright streets and many attractive krasnas and cafés. But above all a vast Jewish community of close on ninety thousand people, a firmly united group that always welcomed visitors from the many shtädtl all around.

But in these early months of 1898 Abel Stark and his wife Witie were more than anything concerned with events in their own comfortable home. Great preparations were underway; and even though Abel, tall, bearded and handsome in his kaftan and shtreimel, did not for a moment neglect his prosperous grain business including a profitable trade with the Austrian army, he found all the same time to discuss with his wife and their marriage broker the coming wedding of his eldest daughter Chana Riza. Rather short, but well-proportioned, with good features, more Polish than semitic, the girl had so far been a little difficult to please whenever the active shadchen had introduced eligible candidates for marriage. She was now in her twentyfourth year, and the possibility of her remaining 'on the shelf' could no longer be looked at as a matter for mere ridicule. Besides, there were two younger sisters, Sarah and Leah, to be thought of, and as--according to ancient custom--the eldest daughter must marry first, it was high time to exclude all further hesitation. Fortunately, the latest applicant, an exceptionally good-looking man from Drohobycz, centre of the naphta-mining region, had found favour in the eyes of the parents as well as in those of Chana Riza. He was well built, with fine features clearly influenced by a modicum of Russian blood. His eyes were blue, his hair bluish-black with, in strange contrast, dark-red whiskers. He was soft-spoken and attentive;

it seemed to Abel Starkthat in this young man he might well find a good worker in his commercial enterprises. And thus Salman Klinghoffer, son of David and Sary, was accepted, and the marriage ceremonies set for the first of March, 1898.

Vast preparations had to be made, both for the ceremony in the synagogue of which Abel was a parnes (warden), and for the elaborate celebrations to follow. Large numbers of guests were invited to the nuptial formalities, and arrangements were made with seven relatives or friends for the traditional 'services of blessing' that must take place, each day in a different house, during the first week after the wedding.

Abel Stark, influential in the orthodox community, was looked up to as a rich, successful man of business but also--even though he was not a rabbi--as a person well versed in religious and secular lore, a learned leader to whom many people came for advice; and thus there was no difficulty whatever finding willing hosts for the blessing services. As to the marriage ceremony itself, with rabbi Wolf Schonblum officiating, it turned out to be as impressive and solemn an event as could possibly have been wished for. The festivities that followed were filled with praying and music making, eating, drinking and dancing: activities in which the young couple played an important part.(*) During that week many hundreds walked in and out of the large hall in which the celebrations took place. In truth: everyone was welcome. The whole of Szerzezec became involved in Chana Riza and Salman Klinghoffer's wedding, while Sarah and Leah, Chana's sisters, rejoiced in the knowledge that from now on nothing could prevent them from also becoming the very focus of so much joy, such emotion and gaiety!

*

The young couple moved in with the bride's parents. There Chana soon became pregnant and prepared herself for motherhood, while Salman tried to adapt himself to the trade in which his father-in-law had achieved such outstanding success. But as the months went by, things did not work out too satisfactorily.

(*) Frank Sobel,now an octogenarian, then an eight year-old little fellow, remembers the wedding feast well. "A whole ox was slaughtered for the occasion. There were crowds of people,all day and all night: singing,eating,dancing. Sometimes they slept on chairs,on couches,even on the floor. I sat in a window niche --and hardly got a thing to eat. The women were all so busy entertaining the guests! I was frustrated alright...!"

Abel Stark was not happy about the way his new son 'cooperated'. Almost from the start it became evident that the two men were of greatly differing natures: the older one a shrewd merchant, since his early years engaged in the sometimes difficult relationship with basically anti-Jewish circles, a dynamic, domineering force, a swift thinker, a man of rapid decisions. The son-in-law a strikingly quiet, contemplative creature, a bit of a dreamer. Not the kind of person to enjoy heated arguments, or to carry out urgent orders with the expected speed. And although no doubt a measure of forebearance was shown by either side, it cannot have been long after the birth of Chana's first child--a girl--that both men must have fully realized the degree of their incompatability. Abel saw his hopes shattered of having found the ideal man to run his business, when the time came for it, in partnership with his son Ephraim. Salman, true man of peace, suffered under the constant pressure placed upon him by so dynamic a force. He felt himself treated like a clerk, having little liking for the work he was to do, being harassed by a demanding employer who would in all probability have dismissed him peremptorily were he not the husband of his daughter. Clearly: there was no future for him in Abel Stark's well-conducted grain business.

But there were wife and baby to be thought of , and when in August of 1899 Chana was once more pregnant, Salman appeared to settle down, resigning himself to the inevitable. Yet, he could hardly ignore the excited talk among men of all ages of the 'golden chances' America and England were offering to young Jews from eastern Europe. Many among these people already had relatives in those far-away countries; others discussed with enthusiasm what they could--and would--do once they had left the narrow confines of Szerzezec and led an existence unhampered by racial prejudice, or lack of opportunity. And so, when on the eighteenth of May, 1900 a second child was born, Salman was silently fighting against the tempting idea to try his luck across the ocean.

The new baby, a girl, was given the names of Abel's deceased mother: Chaje Esther. She had hazel eyes and an astonishing wealth of silky auburn hair."A pretty child--a leb'n oif ihr kopf"(may she live long) said Hinde Schreiber,the midwife.

But despite the joy of now being grandparemts twice over, Abel and Witie Stark did not hide their disappointment. Two girls--good! But what is a family without at least one boy? They themselves had their Ephraim, and among their grandchildren there must be many boys! And so while the eldest girl, Fegele, was pampered and Chaje Esther adored, there followed impatient waiting for the next child. In July 1901 Chana became pregnant once more, and on the fourth of April 1902 her third child was born...: another girl, light eyed with hair of a pure Titian red. She was given the name of Reisel.

By now Salman had made up his mind: he would in the near future leave Szerzezec, travel to that unknown golden land across the sea, make good and have his wife and children come over to him as soon as he earned enough to keep them. Others had done this in the past, and were doing it now; then why should not he ? True, he was not sure of the kind of work he would do once he had reached America, but the others had faced similar problems and solved them successfully.

It is not known how he broached the ticklish subject of leaving wife and children behind, but perhaps the opposition of Abel and Witie was not too great. Abel, well aware that Szerzezec held no further promise for his son-in-law, must have felt relieved to see him leave and Witie must have shared that sentiment. As for Chana, now in her late twenties, she surely realized that staying in Szerzezec would rob her husband of whatever ambition and enterprise he might possess but had not so far been able to display.

Thus Salman Klinghoffer set out for the Great Adventure. But for reasons only he can have known he decided to start his hunt for Good Fortune in England, rather than in the United States. Why he travelled to Manchester rather than to London is another unsolved riddle. Perhaps some friend had given him an introduction to an earlier immigrant living in that city. Be this as it may, Salman settled down among fellow countrymen in Manchester, took a job as presser in a tailor's shop and wrote his wife fairly regularly, telling her one thing and another about the strange city, and the many people he had met. But not a word about her coming to him, with their three little daughters--not a single word. And as the months flew past, the let-

ters from Manchester reaching no. 62 in the little Austrian town of Szerzezec became ever fewer, and then stopped altogether.

What had happened ? Chana, her brother and sisters, her parents and many of their friends were growing exceedingly worried. Surely, Salman was not capable of perpetrating the sin that many other emigrants had committed in the past: settle down in a far-off country and simply forget all about their wives and children in the homeland... But when messages sent to Salman's last known address in Manchester remained unanswered, there were some that said :'who knows? He may already have married another woman! On the other hand--he might be ill, alone and unable to write. Or maybe he had left Manchester and was now working elsewhere. Or he might actually be on his way to America: for weeks upon the high seas without the possibility to contact them.

The final conclusion to which this uncertainty led was that Chana must go to Manchester and for herself find out what had happened. It would be a hazardous undertaking, travelling with three small children to a country of which she had not the slightest notion, a land where a language was spoken that she could neither speak, read or understand. She was almost thirty years old and had never travelled much further than Lemberg. None the less, Chana decided to go; she was not afraid. She packed whatever was indispensable for herself and her children and then, at the last moment, she agreed to leave Reisel, the baby, with her parents until things were straightened out and she could return, to fetch her. So she set out to find her husband: across land and sea, watching over her two tiny girls, a featherbed and her many packages and parcels. Many years later Chana would sometimes, reluctantly, speak of her trip on a third class boat: the many hardships, the misery of seasickness. But she <u>did</u> reach England and in some mysterious way , without knowing a single word of English, manage to travel to Manchester and to find her delinquent husband.

Salman was completely taken by surprise and not too effusive in his welcome. There was nothing to hide, to be ashamed of: he was in his presser's job making a bare living. There had

been no money to send to Szerzezec. To his thinking his wife and children were better off in Abel Stark's comfortable home than living with him in abject poverty. What , then, had there been to write letters about ?In fact: would it not be better if Chana and her little girlswent back at once to where they had come from ? And in the background of this embittered thinking were the wry memories of living under Abel's roof, and acting as his obedient clerk.

But Chana could not be put off so easily. She had come to claim her legal husband, the father of her three children; there would be no sending them home again. If he was poor, she would share his poverty. They would work together and build up a good existence for themselves and their babies.

And so the Klinghoffer family settled down in Manchester where Fegele became Fanny, and Chaje Esther was henceforth known as Clara.

*

Of this infantile period of her life Clara remembered no more than little flashes, bright but very short. Of Szerzezec she retained a vivid picture of sitting in a buggy 'next to an old man', her grandfatherwho in reality was very probably no more than middle aged. They were driving along a sunny road... The next flash of memory placed her in a vast room with big fires, where it was very hot. It was a bakery where matzohs, the unleavened cakes replacing bread during the Passover week, were being baked... A third glimpse into her very first years of life called up the picture of a woman with a white babushka, pouring out some milk for her into a mug.

The long, fearsome voyage across the ocean left no impression upon her, nor could she recall the train journey to Manchester, or meeting her father again. But there was a moment during the early Manchester years in which she all at once awakened to her surroundings. "It must have been in a park," she told me once, "or in some other open space. I was standing by myself, away from other small children. And suddenly I became aware of a sensation that I could not understand; something strange seemed to be happening inside me. Maybe it had to do with the atmosphere, the 'feeling' of that wide open space, the landscape. Nearby was a huge tree, perhaps a chestnut. I felt very moved, close to crying,

conscious of what I saw, but also of myself as a part of it. It was as if I was watching it all outside my body. Actually I saw myself standing there motionlessly, awed into immobility by feelings I could not fathom. How old was I ? I don't know exactly. Perhaps just about four."

The next event she remembered with great certainty was standing in a huge station, waiting for a train that was to bring the family to another town. "There was a lot of clanging and much shrieking of whistles; and suddenly I wanted urgently to do a pee-pee. My father took me to a place with a very large white bowl, too big for me to sit on so that my father held me out over it. It was like rocking to and fro upon his hands..." During the train journey she stood at a window and wondered why the hills went round and round, interminably. She thought the train rushed ahead in huge circles--and in the end she became trainsick.

In Manchester things had not worked out well. Salman could not earn enough to keep the household running beyond the very edge of poverty. So to Hanley the Klinghoffers moved. What her father's work was like in Hanley, Clara never knew, but she loved the quiet of the town. It was so peaceful, after the bewildering rowdiness of the Manchester street in which they had lived.

But if materially things were getting somewhat better in Hanley, the inner structure of the little family was far from improving. There were frequent squabbles between the parents, rows in which the name was often mentioned of a woman Salman had become acquainted with in their neighbourhood. It was more than Chana could endure. Once again she was pregnant; above all she wanted to save her marriage and protect her children. And so, quite suddenly, she was once more packing their scanty belongings--and back they went, to Manchester's Cheetham Hill and Strangeways. Here, at 18 Irwell Street, a child was born in late June--another girl. She was named Rachel: a very blond child, as little semitic-looking as were her mother and sisters.

At the foot of their road ran the Irwell river; and one day there was a great outcry near a thickly populated house on the opposite bank. Fanny and Clara ran to the riverside and heard people say that police were dragging for the body of a boy who had lived in the house. The search went on all day and night but the child's

corpse was never found. It made the little girls very sad, and they cried and cried about the death of an unknown boy.

About this time Clara started going to school. "How excited and frightened I was! The teachers looked to me like giants, and the 'school' was not even a real one. It was only a kindergarten. We looked at picture books and drank tea out of a dolls' set. At some time during the day we had to put our heads on our desks and have a little nap. On the very first day I upset my miniature teacup. I was terribly unhappy about it, but the teacher was kind. She stroked my head, and told me not to worry... One other memory of that school always persists: seeing the dolls' clothes that older girls had knitted. I thought those tiny things very beautiful, so small but so perfect! But there also was such a thing as 'handers' in this kindergarten. I remember that more than once I was sent out into the hall to get a few blows on my outstretched hands. It hurt--but I liked the school all the same: I can recall the day on which I first learned to write the letters of the alphabet. The teacher said I had done them so nicely that she made me go around to other classes, to show my handiwork to the teachers..."

Living in Manchester was hard at times, but it also had its moments of intense pleasure. As, for instance , when Frank Sobel, a young cousin who not long before had arrived from Szerzezec and joined the Klinghoffer family. took Clara to a fair on the outskirts of their district. She was thrilled by the vast field of brilliant colours and the medley of musical sounds, by people laughing, by huge wheels turning high up in the air, by the sight of such masses of delectable sweets. She was a little put out, too, by the general confusion, by tall boys dancing and singing. Cousin Frank, very young himself, enjoyed the hubbub as much as his tiny companion. But then, all at once, he remembered that he had to meet someone for a job--and that he was late. No time was left to take the child home; but he gave her detailed instructions and repeated them so often that Clara tired of it all, and did not listen anymore. Then he left her.

"It was a lovely summer day--blue and gold and green," she recalled years later. "I felt completely at ease, identified with the surroundings. It was as if I could see myself, a little girl, walking down that country lane with a myriad little

yellow flowers by the wayside. When I think of it , even now, my heart gives a great bounce. I can almost experience it again: feel the warm breeze and hear the twittering of the birds. I was not at all afraid, and I found my way home without once hesitating--as if it was the most natural thing in the world."

But this self-confidence was badly shattered soon afterwards one Saturday morning, when Chana and Salman had gone out for a walk and left their two eldest girls playing in the street. Suddenly Clara hopped across the busy road towards the entrance of their home when she slipped on the trolley rails. In the next moment she was pushed along by a front bar of the tram, and heard people scream and yell : "stop! Stop'A child!" A front wheel caught her clothing and began to drag her under the vehicle. With a loud shriek the trolley stopped; a man held Clara in his arms while she howled at the top of her voice. Immediately a crowd gathered; and just beyond that mass of people were Clara's parents, strolling along leisurely and wondering what could have happened...

The man who held her brought Clara home, and all at once the flat was filled with men and women."My mother, crying, held me pressed against her breast, and my father gave me a powder and some water 'against the fright'. He also brought a bag of sweets, and in a short while I was allowed to go and sit on the outside stoop to enjoy my unusual treat. A lot of people stayed inside the house talking about the incident--and nobody took any further notice of me."

Some years went by. Then, one day Chana travelled all the way to London to see a cousin of hers who had been living there for quite some time. When she came home, she had great news: the family was to move again, this time to...London! No longer would Salman have to do the heavy labour of a tailor's presser, work he thoroughly disliked and that made him ill. From now on he would be manager in a drapery shop somewhere in the East End, one of the two stores belonging to the cousin whose name was Maurice Rutter.

It was an overwhelming prospect: living in London, that

huge, glittering city of which Chana spoke as if it were Paradise itself. Yet, there was one reason for Clara's fervent wish to see the removal put off for just a little while. The school year in Manchester was just about running toward its close, and prize-giving was in the offing. Clara knew that she was to get two prizes because she had been allowed to make her own choice of books. But alas--the great day of prize-giving had not yet come around when the Klinghoffers left Manchester--and the poor child never got her rewards. It was a great sorrow... For many years she could not forget that disappointment.

There were other things she would miss for a long time to come. The blind man, for instance, who , when she came hopping along Crossways on her way to school, would invariably sit against a wall holding out a penny and saying over and over again in a plaintive voice: "pl..ease buy me a penny bun! pl-ease buy me a penny bun!" She would grab the penny that was strangely warm, rush across the road that seemed to be enormously wide and buy the blind man's bun. She would have loved to eat it herself; the icing on it made her mouth water. But she brought it back faithfully to the man who had a stubbly beard, wore green glasses and had a square of greyish-dirty cardboard hanging on his chest, with the word BLIND on it, in large letters.

There also was the memory of some people, parents of a class mate who had been kind to Clara whenever she came to their home. She liked them very much. It gave her pain akin to anguish to think that they were now far away; she would never see them anymore. She had no idea where exactly in the world they were but she felt that it would be impossible to reach them ever again. Of coursse, she could have asked her parents who they were and what had become of them; but she did not. She could not speak to others of her feelings; she had no need to share them. Such experiences, strange and mystifying, were very precious to her.

Still another incident of the Manchester days used to come back to her mind long after the family was settled in London. There was a girl, a school- and play-mate, to whom Clara was very much attached. She was the daughter of a publican, the 'apple of her parents' eyes', and very well protected. Her fa-

ther or her mother would come to the door of the pub ever so often to see that everything was well with her. They never yelled at her, even though both of them had very loud voices and were, as Clara's mother called it, 'rough people'. Then, all at once, the child fell ill and in a few days' time she died. Large crowds came from all over the neighbourhood with flowers, to be at the girl's funeral; the hearse was literally covered with wreaths. The whole of Irwell Street was mourning for the child; and for weeks afterwards people spoke with pity of the girl and her poor parents. But soon the pub opened again, and business was resumed as usual.

This tragic happening left a deep impression on Clara. She pondered much of what had become of her playmate. She would have liked to go to the publican and his wife--try to tell them how sad she felt. But they were the type of gentiles that, Clara knew well, did not like the handful of Jews living in their midst. It was impossible to approach them.

Around this period Clara loved walking alone, especially after dark. To see stars winking and glittering in the evening sky filled her with feelings that had nothing in common with everyday's life. To look up towards them was to her like drifting away to somewhere far beyond the common world. She began to try to write poetry: dreamy, often incoherent thoughts on angels, on the beauty of flight, of soaring birds.

This exaltation, this unformed longing for a nobility of 'being' she could not fathom, might well have turned into unhealthy introspection in so young a child. But despite her dreaminess, the sudden spells of her awareness of things quite different from her material surroundings, she loved laughing with her friends, playing at hop-scotch, high jumping and skipping, or practising diavolo--all of it in the only available playground: the public street. And although little thought was given to protecting the children, there never happened anything untoward. In this rough-and-ready neighbourhood they were as safe as if a permanent guard stood watch over them.

2

The early years

The train trip from Manchester to London seemed interminable to Chana and her three small children. Salman had gone to London before them to find some sort of living quarters, and now they were following, dragging boxes and parcels along with them. For a long time the children stood at a window, looking at the revolving landscape and Clara began to feel very sick. She could not understand that the train, with shrieking whistle, stopped at a great many places with incomprehensible names, but never appeared to reach London. When the train stopped again for quite a while Chana gave her girls something to eat, and they chewed obediently, without appetite. People left their compartment, and others came in. Finally Clara put her head in her mother's lap and fell asleep.

What she remembered next was holding on to her mother's skirt, walking along a very busy street, full of people and horse-drawn carriages. At one point a bus stopped, and they climbed into it. A big brown horse began to pull the tram --and almost immediately Clara was violently sick. She vomitted all over the floor and the conductor, furious to see his vehicle soiled, unceremoniously ousted the whole family. How after this Chana contrived to steer her little family to the very place where Salman was awaiting them, Clara could not recall. But she did remember that her father said he had seen a magnificent procession that morning: it was the ninth of November, Lord Mayor's Day.

Despite the inglorious beginning of their London life, the day had a somewhat festive end. Late in the afternoon they all went to a big house where moving pictures were being shown. But years afterwards Clara remembered vividly how very little pleasure she derived from this celebration. Salman,

in the mistaken belief that one must sit close to the screen to see the moving pictures well, chose the front row in the dingy cinema for the great welcome treat. Craning their necks, the big and small Klinghoffers looked up at elongated, wildly rushing figures that seemed ready to jump right out of the screen and land atop of them. Distorted men in strange clothes and with swinging capes fought with each other, hacking about them with immense swords and shedding a lot of blood. While all this was going on, a woman tinkled on a piano that stood below the screen, just a few feet away from the frightened children. The baby began to howl and had to be pacified in Chana's lap. At last the film came to an end and the family trotted back to their new abode. It was a small East End flat in a dark, somber tenement house, known by the grandiose name of Puma Court.

The 'Court' was in an alley and the alley was close to Spitalfields which, in the mornings, made the whole neighbourhood smell of fruit and vegetables; but at night, more often than not, the odor was of rotting greens and other offal. The Klinghoffers lived on the third floor; the stairwell was invariably filled with a damp, mildewy smell. The stairs were made of stone and never lit by day. At night a feeble gasflame barely illuminated the landings.

On the floor below theirs was the one and only communal lavatory--a terrifying place. Black beetles were crawling in and around it, and generally the lavatory seat was smeared with urine and excrements. The three little girls were afraid to go there; and generally they tried to hold up as long as possible what they should not have postponed doing at once. There was, besides, another reason why the lavatory became a spot to be avoided: on the top floor of the tenement lived a seaman , a very kind person of whom the children were not afraid. He often went to sea and stayed away for weeks, but on his return he would bring them a present: some oranges or even a coconut. Unfortunately he left at home a nasty boy, a cross-eyed, horrible looking little fellow. He would hide in a dark corner of the stairs and then, when the children came down to use the lavatory, he would jump at them, yelling with all his might.

Puma Court, a typical beginning of the century 'palace

of the poor' was filled with people of all kinds: decent workmen and their large families; doubtful characters galore, and even a number of half-wits. Two of these, sisters and both moronic, used to act like babies. Their strange behaviour fascinated the Klinghoffer children who, at times, acted as the girls' messengers, running for them to a nearby little shop and buy a pennyworth of sweets. The sisters always quarrelled about the sweets, and finished up by crying and pulling each other's hair.

There was another tenant in Puma Court Clara remembered throughout her life. He was a true bum--filthy and lousy, about fifty years old, and owner of a bulbous nose. He picked up rotting bits of fruit and vegetables in Spitalfield market. Wherever he went in the neighbourhood boys threw stones at him, shouting 'rah-so! Rah-so!..., whatever that meant. One day a boy pinned a newspaper to the back of rah-so's coat, and set it alight. The unsuspecting man walked on till he suddenly realized that he was afire. He turned around with clenched fists, growling threateningly at his tormentors. Clara watched the scene tremblingly, her hands clasped tightly across her chest. It was terrible to see the poor man's face, distorted with impotent hatred.

No--Puma Court was not a nice place to live in , although the Klinghoffer's flat--a single room--was larger than most others. It had a rough wooden floor that mother scrubbed on her knees, once a week. There was little furniture in the room: the beds in which the family slept, some chairs and a table. At night an oil lamp burned on the table; outside the flat door was a water tap. There the children brushed their teeth with Sunlight soap and washed themselves. All water needed for the household had to come from that tap.

It was all very primitive. Yet, the neighbourhood was not without touches of earthy wisdom. For instance: in the little grocery shop where Chana sometimes went with her daughters hung a large placard:"Early To Bed And Early To Rise,Makes Man Healthy And Wealthy And Wise." Clara often pondered on its meaning. 'Healthy'--yes, that was clear enough. And 'wealthy'--you could save more if you worked longer hours. But 'wise'...; how could one get 'wise' that way ? And <u>what</u> was this really,

being 'wise'?...

Almost immediately after coming to live at Puma Court, Clara was sent to a school not far away. She was frightened by rows of figures that stood chalked on the blackboard; never before had she seen such difficult sums. She also felt afraid of the teachers; they were unkind, and once one of them beat her hands mercilessly when out of five sums only two were right. Her palms were full of blisters so that, when she came home crying, her mother was very upset, and furious. She would come to the school next morning she cried, and have it out with that inhuman teacher. But next morning came, and Chana did not go. In those days the poor did not have much courage when it came to facing authority...

To make things at home worse, a dreadful accident happened. Chana fell down the stone steps outside her flat, and broke a leg. The fracture was a complicated one so that the leg was in a cast for many months. Most of that time the poor woman had to stay in bed, leaving her children to be looked after as well as possible by relatives, and neighbours.

It was a terrible time for the girls. How and what they ate, were kept tolerably clean and sufficiently dressed, Clara recalled only vaguely in later years. It was a period of great unhappiness--that was clear. After school hours there was only the street to play in; or the girls stayed in the room upstairs where their mother lay in bed and told her children to do this or that, so as to keep the household more or less going. Once a relative from Austria arrived, and stayed with the family for a while. She was the second wife of Salman's brother. Clara well remembered her, because of the straw hat with green streamers she used to wear. Also: she had a very tight waist. When she left, she went to America.

Then, at long last. the 'bad time' came to an end: Chana's leg got healed and she was once more about, busy from early morning till late at night.

Despite the unhappiness at home and in school, Clara retained one beautiful memory of this difficult time. On a public holiday--maybe it was a religious festival--hundreds of children stood neatly in rows on the steps of Spitalfields Church. The bells rang out, the organ played and all the child-

ren sang: maybe hymns, or patriotic songs, solemn and deep. It was a gorgeous experience, her first encounter, perhaps, with the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Gone was the squalor of Puma Court, the stench of rotting vegetables in Spitalfield Market. Forgotten were mean teachers, and the pain of the birch on small, tender hands. Like the angels in a hymn she was transported into a realm far above and beyond the world of illness and decent poverty in which she lived. She never forgot that moment; long, long afterwards it would suddenly come back to her mind: as when, twelve or thirteen years old, she saw in a library book a black-and-white reproduction of Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne".

Towards the end of Chana's illness things became a little better. Lying helpless for so long, , Chana had often begged her husband to give up working for the cousin as the manager of a haberdashery shop in Poplar. What sense was there in handling someone's goods, making money for Maurice Rutter, working himself into a sweat and knowing all along that he would never in this way have 'a business of his own'? For this was the fixed idea that left Chana no rest: Salman 'must be his own boss.'

She must have thought of all sorts of enterprises and talked of her great ambition to whoever came and wanted to listen to her. In the end a way was actually found! Salman Klinghoffer gave up his little manager's job, went on a trip to Manchester and came back home a trader in mill ends, better known in the trade as 'shmatters'.

Soon afterwards there was great excitement in Puma Court. Men carried up jute sacks filled with thousands of remnants of all kinds of materials. They spread a penetrating odor of 'filler' and accumulated dust; and all day long Salman and Chana, for once working in perfect harmony, sorted the bits into dozens of bundles, tieing them up with heavy string. Every bundle had its own use: some were for lining, others would be applied to reconditioning sleeves, old trousers and jackets, secondhand clothes which, at that time,were readily sold to India, China and Africa. Many East End tailors made a living out of repairing these old clothes, and one reliable source of their 'raw material' became Salman Klinghoffer.

Every few weeks now Salman travelled to Manchester

to buy fresh bales of mill ends. While away from home he would often send Chana a postcard written in Yiddish, and invariably signed 'S.Klinghoffer'. A few days after his return to London the wonderful bales would arrive and fill the one room flat with the penetrating smell of dressing. As unpacking began, Clara would stand close to her father, to see the marvellous colours of the rags, to feel the texture of the materials. She knew that her father would give her 'samples': little bits of printed patterns, all sorts of things. Throughout life she recalled the odor of the dressing on those mill ends; and whenever she handled new materials she would be reminded of the years in which her father became 'an independent business man'.

Around this time Abel Stark made the cumbersome journey from Szerzezec to London, to see how his Chana and her family were faring. Clara remembered him as an important looking man with a silk waistcoat, an alpacca jacket and a yarmeke on the back of his head. He had a reddish beard; his features were very much like Chana's, and he gave his grandchildren pennies and half pennies, especially if they brought home from school a ticket testifying to their regular attendance and good conduct.

How long her grandfather stayed, she did not recall. Nor did she ever have the faintest notion of what he thought of the slum in which they lived, or whether he did anything at all to improve their condition.

But Salman did, in fact, not need Abel Stark's help. He was now doing quite well: so well that one day, after still another buying trip to Manchester, mother and he went to look around for 'a real shop', in quite a different neighbourhood. They found what they wanted in Grove Street, a narrow lane off the Mile End Road in London's East End. The children were very excited and eager to see the place. And so, one Saturday morning, their parents took them down to the new home.

True--it was not very large, but it was a complete house, not just a tenement room. The front room was destined to be 'the shop'; the smaller room behind it would be a living and part bedroom. A narrow, winding staircase led to another bedroom: for the parents and one of the baby sisters. But the most glorious part was at the back of the living room! In a miniature yard

stood a neat, clean lavatory that would be all their own! How delighted was the whole family to have a whole house, a lavatory not shared with anyone, no more threats and pestering by a frightening creature shooting out of dark corners. Why--there even was a garden behind and around the lavatory with grass and some mustard cress that would grow if you wrapped it in a piece of flanel and put it in a bowl of water.

Soon the little shop, that had a large figure 12 over its entrance door, was filled with bales of materials, and day by day more people came to buy the mill ends. Better times were on the way. Salman Klinghoffer, thanks to the ambition and driving power of his wife, had developped into a merchant, a profit-making businessman.

Now a school had to be found for the two eldest children. There was a large, modern school in Fairclough Street, but fresh applicants had to await their turn. When Clara's turn came at last there was no more place. Mother Klinghoffer had to look elsewhere; and with her usual perseverance she soon discovered a small school not far from the Tower of London: St.Mark's School in Cable Street. Clara was far from happy with her mother's find; after the experiences in her first London school she was afraid of what St. Mark's would be like.

Perhaps because of those tense expectations the first day at St. Mark's stood out clearly in her memory--especially what happened during playtime. When talking of this period of her youth, she would say that she could <u>see</u> herself standing in a corner of the playground , looking at the other children romping about and enjoying themselves, but feeling too shy to join them. Then a tall, thin woman came up to her, lifted her high up in the air and cried:"oh, what a little darling you are!" She was Miss Holly, one of the teachers, and from that moment on she and the child were great friends.

Miss Holly wore a high, stiff collar with whalebones. Her hands were always so very clean and her nails so beautifully shaped that Clara wondered how it was possible to have such perfect hands. Her own hands were generally grubby and sometimes her nails had black rims; but in spite of this Miss Holly had obviously fallen in love with her. She was

a motherly person, and had so recently become engaged to be married that the other little girls knew of it. Of course, those others were jealous of Miss Holly's preference for the tiny redhead, and they showed it. They gave her nicknames: Miss Holly's grasshopper, sugar baby, goody-goody, and many other, uglier ones. But all this did not disturb Clara; to her Miss Holly was the embodiment of something altogether angelic, sweet and beautiful.

It obviously pleased the teacher that her favourite was not only pretty but also a very bright child. One day when the final examinations were in the offing, she came into Clara's classroom and announced that she would take out to the Pantomimes the girl who was to get the highest marks. Immediately a murmur went through the room: ' 'fcourse..., you'll see..., the grasshopper!'

The days that followed were tense. Clara felt that she simply must get the highest marks. The thought of being taken out by a teacher, and that Miss Holly, conjured up the very summit of bliss. All her being was focussed upon this and the examination days were filled with excitement: the nice, foolscap sheets of paper to work on, the absolute silence in the warm class room, the children concentrating so hard.

Clara's examination papers looked good. The writing was clear and her sentences ran well. Every few days results were announced and the total points mentioned each pupil had so far been given. There was a fierce competitor: a girl just as small as Clara. Her name was Blake and at one point the girls ran 'head to head'. But there was still one subject left and there, Clara felt, there was still a chance to beat Blake. That subject was drawing.

Finally the struggle was over. The announcement of the winner's name was made: it was...Clara Klinghoffer!
But when Miss Holly said nothing about the promised outing, the child felt keenly disappointed. Perhaps, she thought, the teacher had forgotten her promise; or maybe there never had been a promise and Clara had only imagined it.

Several weeks went by; then one morning close to the

Christmas holidays Miss Holly came up to Clara in the play-yard, took her by a hand and bending down to her said smilingly "will next Saturday be alright to come out with me, toddlepuss ?" Of course, the child must have whispered yes, but she trembled with excitement and could hardly wait to get home, and tell everybody about it.

The next few days were a round of preparations. What was she to wear ? It was not a great problem really, as she did not have many clothes. A blue pleated skirt was chosen, and a blouse.On the eve of the great event Chana bathed her daughter in front of the open fire. Although Clara had naturally wavy hair, it was washed and rolled into many little braids. Next morning, when these were combed out, Clara looked like a golliwog. As a surprise Chana had washed and heavily starched two petticoats, well be-frilled and as white as snow. Dressing took quite some time , but she was to meet Miss Holly only at ten, or ten-thirty, somewhere close to the school. However--on no account must she be late; and so at eight o'clock Clara was already at her post, gazing with wildly beating heart in all directions for Miss Holly. Her elder sister Fanny had come along, to deliver her into the hands of her teacher; but after a long, long while she got tired of waiting and went home.

Throughout the years Clara retained a vague recollect-ion of having stood there all alone, near a railway viaduct, in a grim, forbidding-looking neighbourhood. She held her hands in her coat pockets, clutching a penny which Chana had given her to spend as she liked. It was a great treasure, equal to four weeks' 'normal' pocket money!

Finally Miss Holly actually arrived, and when she was told how long the child had been waiting, she appeared to be quite upset. She took the child's hand and they walked to a dirty-look-ing station. Next they were on a train: Clara's first train trip since the family's arrival from Manchester They travelled to a place called Kennington. It was a chilly day with much wind, though at times the sun came through and then everything looked very gay. There was a long wait at the theatre--it was still much too early. But in the end the doors were opened, they shuffl-ed to their seats and the play began. It was called 'Aladdin and

the Wonderful Lamp." Miss Holly had brought along two bars of chocolate and Clara had, besides, spent a half penny. They ate the sweets as they looked at the pantomime which was one great marvel--from beginning to end. But more wonderful still was that during the performance Miss Holly put her arm around the child's waist. Fancy a teacher doing that! And above all this wonderful, unearthly lady actually showing that she was fond of Clara.

When the play was over they walked to a Lyons' Tea-shop and there Clara was treated to tea and a chocolate éclair. It was hsr very first experience of being in a restaurant. They sat at a table covered with a brilliantly-white festive cloth; it was something she would never forget. This was a <u>real</u> party! More than ever before she realized how poor they were at home; and she loved every fleeting moment of being with Miss Holly. How different were things here from the tiny kitchen in Grove Street, with the smells of washday, and all the other odors of pauperism.

But unavoidably there was an end to the party--bearable only because Miss Holly saw Clara home, right to the very corner of Grove Street. Darkness had fallen, and Clara was filled with the immensity of her adventure. Alas--little attention was shown at home for her awesome experience. It was Saturday night--the shop was crowded with buyers. It was the best selling night of the week.

*

There were other teachers at St. Mark's whom Clara liked. Miss Thomson for instance. She had the poetry class and although Clara was not her favourite and the child did not love her like she loved Miss Holly, she was most certainly one of her best pupils. Often Miss Thomson would say : 'Come on, Klinghoffer, get up and show them how to recite.' Clara loved reciting. Once she recited Cowper's 'On the receipt of my mother's picture', and afterwards the other girls were angry because they said she had made them cry.... On another occasion she stood in front of the class declaiming Longfellow's 'The day is done'. But the history class was, perhaps, the one

Clara liked most of all. Especially in wintertime, when the gas light sizzled soothingly, and everything around the room turned into something wonderfully intimate and beautiful. The head mistress, Miss Sinock, a rotund little lady, generally taught the history lesson. She was a kind woman with a good understanding of the East End children in her school, and a great sense of honour.

Clara's closest friend in these early school years was Phoebe Isaacs, a very pretty child with lovely dimples. The two girls always walked home together, arm in arm, their hands in one another's pockets. Phoebe lived closer to the school, and so Clara made it a habit to see her home first because she liked her so much and anyhow--it was on her way. The children had much in common: they were great competitors in composition and history, and both were sensitive creatures who sobbed in unison at the death of Little Nell in Dickens's 'Old Curiosity Shop.'. Reading 'The Rose of Alhambra' by the Spanish writer Ruiz d'Alarcon, they blushed when they came to the part of the story where the lovers embraced. But it was the loveliest tale in the world --and very romantic. To Clara it was like a picture: she saw everything clearly before her.

Friday was map drawing day. Actually Mrs. Sinock did administrative work on that day and left her girls more or less to themselves. These were lovely afternoons. The room was very quiet with just the sound of pencils on paper. Though there was no supervision, the girls were attentive, and at work. The setting sun flooded the sky with a crimson glow that penetrated and mingled with the yellow gaslight in the room. Then the dark of night settled upon the windows, filling the children with peace. From elsewhere in the school the clear high voices of singing boys came drifting over. Then, at half past four, Mrs. Sinock would come in smiling, waddle up to her desk to ring her table bell. It was time for the children to stop, and go home.

The memory of the glow and warmth of St. Mark's school never left Clara. Several decades later her nostalgia for this early haven of love and serenity was so strong that she went on a veritable pilgrimage to Cable Street to see it all once more. But

alas--kind teachers and well-behaved pupils had long since disappeared.

All she found left was a neglected hull,used as a warehouse, with only a sadly-worn wall stone witnessing to the fact that once this modest building with its large windows was , indeed, St. Mark's School for Boys and Girls.

3

Dawn of a career

Long before she was fourteen and left her beloved school of Saint Mark, Clara had unwittingly started out upon her career as an artist. When the cramped Grove Street house was left for a much bigger one in Cannon Street Road, off Commercial Street, she was almost nine years old, and immediately discovered in the new home undreamt of opportunities to give full fling to her drawing urge. Behind the downstairs shop was a fairly large living room, the walls of which were covered with leafed and flowered paper But between these decorations there was plenty of space to draw all kinds of things: faces, figures, groups--even caricatures of people who visited her parents' shop. Sometimes she sat in a corner with paper and pencil, watching the people; but generally her after school hours were spent in the huge attic that ran across the width of the house and had a skylight almost as large. Bales of her father's stock of cloth were stored in the attic; but somehow a table had found its way there as well. Here Clara drew on large sheets of thin, poor quality coated paper which one of her father's clients had given her. She particularly liked drawing women dressed in 'fashionable' clothes: huge drawings presenting the fantastically got-up ladies of her fertile imagination. She never tired of drawing them, and her handiwork was greatly admired by Rachel, the blond seven year old sister. But once her drawings were done, Clara had no further interest in them. There would always be more to do, new 'fashions' to create... Unfortunately every one of these drawings got mixed up among the mill ends

and the sweepings of the attic. Not a single one survives.

In the summer, when the attic became stifling, Clara got busy on a lower floor. It was known as 'the parlour' and had, next to a medley of papers, invoices and bales of material, also some nice furniture plus, of all things, a piano. Here Clara could draw in greater comfort. The parents took scant notice of their young daughter's favourite pastime. She was a quiet,sweet-natured girl, getting on with her sisters and doing her share of baby-sitting when, in 1910 and 1911, two more girls came to enrich the family. She was, besides, an independent girl who knew how to take care of herself. Many a Saturday morning she would walk towards the Thames, watching the boats thst slid in stately fashion through the gigantic maws of the open Tower bridge. There were numerous tall-masted ships and large barges..; and then, all at once, the upright halves of the bridge would slowly descend and fall back into place. The scene was constantly changing; it was like turning the pages of a fascinating picture book.

One day, as Clara was in the corner of the shop, doing a composition in crayon, a young man came in to buy something. He stepped over to the child, to look at what she was doing and then, turning to her mother, said gravely: "Do you know that you have a very talented daughter? You should do something about it--and at once. She is a very talented little girl!"

This spontaneous opinion fired Chana's imagination. A talented child--a very talented daughter! A girl that could draw marvelously without having had a single lesson. A born artist! Indeed, something must be done about it--but <u>what</u> ?

Clara was fourteen and just about to leave St.Mark's school. Maybe it was Mrs. Sinock, the school head, who suggested sending her to St John Cass Institute, in Aldgate. Anyway--there she went, seeing for the first time that long, long ago there had been people who drew, as it were, in stone. Shs was told to make drawings after casts of the eyes, nose, ear and mouth of Michel Angelo's 'David'. Immediately she set to work , drawing well and without much effort. Her natural talent as a draftsman showed itself undeniably and aston-

ished the teachers. But one day, when one of them showed his enthusiasm by standing behind the drawing girl, leaning over to her and fondling her young breasts, she became terrified. All the pleasure of drawing in school was gone, and soon afterwards she left the Institute, without telling anyone of the reason for her sudden dislike.

Around that time the Central School of Arts and Crafts was being advertized on the trolley-trams. Clara's father saw the advertisement and suggested she should come with him, to be enrolled as a student. It was a great and perilous adventure going all the way to the West End, but Salman seemed to have little trouble finding the school. Clara had brought a few of her drawings, and after one look at them the principal, clearly surprised, enrolled her. She was to start on the following Monday.

The Monday morning came, and with wildly beating heart , a little sick with fear, Clara set out by herself, It was the very first time she travelled alone from the East End to the centre of London. She was carrying a large portfolio, newly acquired and filled with paper and other drawing materials.

Southampton Row was safely reached but once there she could not remember where exactly the school was. Walking around and around, carrying her load that was getting heavier by the minute, she did not dare approach the smartly-dressed people who hurried past. Everything was so different here; not a soul seemed interested in the little girl with her red-brown hair. Then, by great good fortune, a workman came along. She asked him in a small voice if he knew where the school was, and to her great surprise he did. Walking up with her a part of the way, he made it very clear where she must go.

But the worst was to come. She would have to enter the drawing class all alone, face a teacher and tell him who she was, and what she was coming for. Slowly she climbed the stairs; her left hand that had supported the portfolio, felt stiff; it was red and sweaty. She cautiously opened the door of the drawing class-room, and saw two men standing near a desk. One of them turned, looked at her, put a hand to his mouth and let out a loud guffaw. He evidently enjoyed

the sight of so tiny a girl holding so big a portfolio. The other man also laughed; and Clara felt deeply hurt. What was there to laugh about so ?

The man who had turned to her first was Bernard Meninsky; the other was Duncan Grant. When they stopped laughing and she had given them her name, Meninsky made her sit down, placed a cast before her and told her to make a drawing of it. It was the heavily-veined, gnarled hand of a very old man. Silently, with tightly closed lips, Clara opened her cumbrous portfolio, took out a pencil and a sheet of paper and began to draw. The two teachers stood aside, looking critically at what she was doing.

How swiftly their attitude changed! 'Good heavens', cried Meninsky, "that child draws like Da Vinci!" And as Clara went on working, the astonishment of both men increased. Never before had they seen genuine talent so convincingly demonstrated by so young a student.

*

Soon Clara's drawings were hung on the walls of her class. She loved drawing after Donatello casts, or the heads of Verrochio, the Venus, the Discus Thrower and other beautiful bodies long ago created by the Greek. But in a while boredom set in; she wanted more than drawing from casts, no matter how great the artists who had made the originals. There hung a colour reproduction of Botticelli's Primavera in the room; she could hardly take her eyes off it. She loved that painting beyond everything else; she was eager to strike out into the larger field of using oils. In those days the memory often came back to her of being in the Cable Street public library a year or two ago, and seeing there a black-and-white reproduction of Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne'. How it had electrified her! She never knew what exactly had made her feel so strongly about that picture. It was a sudden, irresistible influence, a terrific response to qualities that only the art of the Italians could have. From that moment the art of Italy had had an immense influence on her. Instinctively she loved it, and understood its form. Yet, when seeing Titian's painting, she had no idea who he could have been. Though she had read that the original was in the National Gallery, it could not be seen : it had been 'put away somewhere' safely, because of the

war. She well realized that what Titian's painting showed was not something that had happened in her own day.Rather, it was a fantasy which people called mythology. The nature of it was dreamlike, something belonging to a totally different sphere, nothing like the world she lived in. Perhaps more than everything else it was the soaring pose of Bacchus who, leaving his carriage, almost 'flies' to Ariadne whose back is turned to him. It gave Clara an impression of wings, of angels flying, of things close to godliness. That evening, when she came home from the library, and her mother shared out a bunch of grapes, it seemed to her that the strange aroma of the fruit melted together with her memory of Titian's painting. The one belonged to the other; they were noble, exalting her in a way that did not bear speaking about.

Despite Meninsky's frank admiration for his young pupil's talent, things did not always run smoothly between them. Perhaps she was a rather rebellious girl who, when feeling that her work was undeservedly criticized, used to answer back. Many years later Meninsky yold a mutual friend that as his young pupil Clara 'had been arrogant'. He had mistaken her independence, her desire to say in an argument exactly what she thought, for arrogance , when in reality it was an utternace of her basic wish to be truthful and outspoken.

Much as Clara liked drawing at the school, she was happier still when the summer holidays began and she could start to paint in oils on her own. Concentrating on portrait, she produced three paintings; of these the finest and most astoundingly 'pure' is undoubtedly the picture of a young girl closely pressing a book against her chest (*). In September when she went back to school and told Meninsky of the three paintings she had produced, he scowled at her. "I think you're running much too fast", he said. "But anyway, bring the pictures . I want to see them."

(*)see reproduction

She did so; and when Meninsky saw the pictures, he raved. He took one of the canvases, a figure study, and made the round with it of the entire school, showing it to teachers and students. "Klinghoffer," he said to Clara, "one day you will be recognized as being as great as Rembrandt. You draw like him. It's a miracle..!"

That day the place rang with Clara Klinghoffer's name

Meninsky wanted to buy the painting he liked best, but Clara would not hear of taking money. If he liked the picture so much he had better have it. She was, in truth, delighted that so fine an artist as Meninsky should want to own a work of hers.

Soon after this promising beginning of the new semester Meninsky began to introuce his youthful 'discovery' to some of his many artist friends. 'You're going to meet a very marvellous, famous man," he told her, and in his studio Clara, that day, shook the hand of Wyndham Lewis. She realized that she was expected to look impressed but actually there was very little contact with the great man in his splendid officer's uniform. Later, when she became acquainted with his work, Clara's desire to know him better did not increase. She did not care very much for his paintings. To her taste they were 'too wooden'.

Another introduction that left a lasting impression on her was meeting with Therese Lissore, a member of the Bloomsbury group eho, just then, was being divorced by her first husband. Clara's family background having endowed her with a deep-seated distrust of people who broke up their marriage, she tried to tell Meninsky on their way to Lissore's studio how she felt about divorce. He looked at her in wonder, then shrugged and said :'Oh well, you're only sixteen. You're too young to understand why divorce can be a good thing, sometimes." And he proceeded to make it clear to her that 'some women were very frigid', and that perhaps their husbands could not take that sort of thing, and had to get a divorce. It was quite a revelation to Clara, even though she did not quite grasp what exactly 'being frigid' meant. Sex and all that belonged to it was not a subject of much discussion in her home, or in the circle of her friends.

A short time later there followed another, much more worthwhile, introduction: Menisnky took Clara to the home of Jacob Epstein at 28, Guildford Street. He had impressed upon her how great an honour it would be to meet the famous sculptor, and as a natural result Clara felt extremely shy on meeting the tall, broad-shouldered man, his redhead wife and their little daughter Peggy-Jean. But very quickly she began to feel at ease. Epstein had seen examples of her drawings and paintings and praised her 'to

the skies.'. It changed her mood entirely; she took to the Epsteins without reserve. The room in which, that afternoon, they had the traditional 'tea' was brightly lit and seemed very festive to her; and for the first time in her life she saw both an Epstein model and the bust he had done of her. It was the head and shoulders of Mrs. Epstein wearing a lace veil over her hair--a very beautiful portrait study, Clara thought.

She became very friendly with the Epsteins and often called on them, even when Jacob was absent, or working in his studio. That was how Mrs. Epstein began to tell her of the complicated relationships between her husband and some of his handsome models, Indian and English alike. She was very jealous of him and hated from the bottom of her heart some of the models that did more than pose for him.

Clara would quietly listen to Mrs. Epstein's complaints, a little pained and not knowing what to say. She felt sorry for the woman, even though her admiration for Jacob as a modern sculptor remained unimpaired. There was much talk of Epstein starting a head of Clara, but nothing came of it. Perhaps also because the young girl, forewarned by Mrs. Epstein's laments, was afraid of a possible amorous approach...

Meantime she had become aware that in Meninsky's private life difficulties had arisen. One afternoon, coming home unexpectedly, he had found his dark-haired wife Peggy with another man. This discovery stunned him; it not only led to a speedy divorce, leaving his two boys with their mother, but it also influenced his personality. He became very irritable, hard to please, hyper-critical of Clara's work, at times even displaying unmistakable jealousy, although he himself was a superb draftsman. He one day called on Clara at the studio she had in her parents' home at 50, King Edward Road, Hackney, and put himself out to say unpleasant things about her work. <u>This</u> should have been different, and <u>that</u> was really no good at all! It was utterly destructive criticism which unavoidably widened the gap between him and Clara.

For a long time after the divorce Meninsky remained an embittered man, whose health deteriorated greatly. He suffered from chronic ear trouble and one day, in his loneliness, while Clara sat for him in a little cloche hat ("it must have looked very pretty on me; I was so young", she told me) he hinted at

his desire to remarry...with her. In a round-about way he tried to find out what she thought of the idea. He even went so far as to tell her how much he earned as an art teacher, and by the sale of his work. But the young girl was not in the least interested in his financial status or in him as her husband.

After Clara left the Central School to have the advantage of studying at the Slade, her contact with Meninsky weakened, and gradually it ceased. Some years went by before, accidentally, they met again in Tottenham Court Road. Meninsky was very pleased to talk to her: "I'm so happy to see you--I could kiss you!" he said. They talked of the 'old days': how he had advised her to buy books on art: monographs on various German and Italian painters, a detailed work on Rembrandt's drawings and etchings. He clearly wanted to re-establish their former relationship. But their careers ran in different directions so that after this chance meeting they saw each other only once more.

There was an exhibition of work by the London Group in the gallery of the New English Art Club. For the first time Clara had been invited to take part; and walking towards the gallery on pre-view night, Clara all at once felt a hand on her shoulder. It was Meninsky's. He looked better: less disturbed, more composed. Almost immediately he told her he had made up his mind to marry again. "She is very fair," he said. "You will meet her at the gallery". That was how Clara met tall, blond Norah who became Meninsky's second wife.

In later years they had mutual friends: the gifted sculptor Eric Schilsky and his Guatemalan-born wife Bettina. Despite the existence of this possible meeting-point, fate kept them separated and when, in 1950, Clara heard that Meninsky had committed suicide, it came to her as a great shock. Often, when talking about her life among London artists, she expressed her regret that she got never again together with Meninsky. "He certainly was a very fine artist, an outstanding draftsman. It would have been so good talking with him, exchanging ideas. We might have become such good friends..."

*

Sometime before she left the Central School of Arts and Crafts, after almost two years of study, Clara somehow 'discovered' the Victoria and Albert Museum and, more especially, the British Museum. At the Victoria and Albert she drew from the casts of Michael Angelo's 'Slaves'; unfortunately, not a single sketch she made there, survives today. But the British Museum proved to be a much richer territory for her: here she drew from the vast collection of Greek sculpture. Soon the guards knew the young girl with her long auburn hair who with such astounding facility drew whatever inspired her to work. They helped her to get an easel and a folding chair from the stock room downstairs --where these days the over-crowded tea-room is--and they watched over her like a group of superannuated Guardian Angels. She was barely sixteen: the youngest artist who so persistently found her 'models' inside the Museum, and worked there for long hours with such obvious devotion.

But not the guards and the museum policemen alone kept an eye on this gentle, sweet-faced young girl. There also were a few 'regulars', aged, retired men who came to the museum to do a little drawing or sketching. Most sympathetic among them was old Harry Walden who made water colours of museum interiors, or created views of ancient streets and Tudor houses, the products of his fantasy. He was a true Dickensian character in a bowler hat and a strange assortment of trousers, jackets and ties.He was tall, had gay blue eyes and a big nose , and he generally smelled of stale beer and tobacco, odors that did not offend Clara in the least. He loved to watch the girl as she worked, and would talk to her about himself : how he lived with a sister and how much he enjoyed his bread 'n butter and kippers in the morning, not to forget the early cup o'tea.

If he himself was at work, generally in the Egyptian room, Clara would visit with him for a while, and look at what he was doing. One morning he brought her a framed and glazed water colour of a castle gate, a gift so deeply appreciated that Clara kept it throughout her life. On another occasion he suddenly turned to her as she was talking and laughing with him, and

said: 'dear child, you have such pretty ways.' In the end he consented to sit for his portrait, and Clara created a marvellous character study of him.(*)

(*)see reproduction

Another voluntary protector was a Mr. Mills who solemnly warned the child -artist against 'bad men who lurk in museums, on the look-out for young girls!' And indeed: such unsavoury characters were by no means mere figments of Mr. Mills' imagination.

There was, for example, a burly old man with a thick grey beard and curly moustaches. He used to come and stand at a little distance from Clara as she was working. From time to time he would make dubious remarks: about the broken penis of a Greek athlete, for instance. "Lookit 'im there', he would say, 'e's also got a piece chipped orf 'is thing..."

Or there was Mr. Campbell who had a club foot and walked with a heavy stick. He suggested repeatedly to take Clara to an opium den in Poplar where 'she would see things'; and in a short while his visits began to terrify the girl. Fortunately, the tapping of his stick upon the marble floorslabs announced his coming, so that she could hurriedly leave her easel and, tiny as she was, hide behind a group of statues till the old man had passed by mumbling, and looking around for the little red-head.

Of course, there were among the vistors to the museum many who would stop a minute to look at the girl and her magic fingers. Clara never forgot the remarks of a woman who, coming back to have a second look at a drawing of a Greek nude, had nothing to say about the beauty of that sketch but instead remarked to her companion: "Ach--seh mal what pretty fingernails she has got..."

One day a tall, healthy looking woman in her late twenties came past, halted and remained a long time looking at Clara's drawing. She had, Clara noticed, almost the same colour hair as she: a rich chestnut. The woman began to talk and introduced herself as Ethel Sinclair, working in the India Office but using much of her free time as a water colourist. They became good friends, and in a while Miss Sinclair asked Clara to have tea with her in her home in Ealing, where she lived

with her mother. Clara accepted gladly--but it seemed to her that Ealing was very far away. So as not to be late, she started out from Hackney early in the morning, and arrived at Miss Sinclair's home shortly after one o'clock.

Her hostess was very surprised. "But my dear," she said, "I asked you for tea. I am not ready yet!" Undaunted, Clara walked around this strange neighbourhood for hours. She enjoyed her stroll; it was a fine summer day and the long walk turned into an extra, unexpected treat. At last tea time came around, and she returned to the Sinclair home.

Despite this somewhat frustrating beginning ("I always used to come too early in those days," Clara said in later years) the friendship between the two women never slackened Throughout her life Clara remained in contact. There still exist many of Ethel Sinclair's letters written in the clear and certain, perfect hand of a precise and careful, generous and likeable person.

4

First reactions

The fame of Clara Klinghoffer's work as a student, first at the School of Arts and Crafts, then at the Slade spread with surprising speed. Bernard Meninsky continued praising her everywhere,and soon she was invited to take part in exhibitions. Among them were the shows of the London Group; and artists like Sickert,Robert Fry and Jacob Epstein expressed their admiration for her uncanny draughtsmanship.

One of her fellow-students at the School of Arts and Crafts was a red-headed, bristly-faced young man called Seidenfeld who startingly resembled Schubert. There was at that time little contact between him and Clara; but later, when her work became known, they met again, and Seidenfeld fell in love with her. He sent her flowers,telegrams, bottles of perfume--without response. Yet, their renewed friendship had far-reaching results. He spoke enthusiastically with others about her work. One of these people drew the attention of the journalist Joseph Leftwich to 'the phenomenon'. He, in turn, was duly impressed and approached Alfred A.Wolmark, an artist of name who painted,among many others,the portraits of Thomas Hardy, G.K.Chesterton, Sir Oliver Lodge and Aldous Huxley.

Wolmark visited Clara's home, saw her work and immediately recommended her to a comparatively new gallery where work of his was on permanent exhibition. It was the Hampstead Art Gallery, at 345,Finchley Road and belonged to the firm of Langfier,framemakers and photographers. Soon a one-man show was arranged for May, 1920, a year or so ahead; and now began a period in Clara's life that would offer little scope for anything but work.

Some years previously the Klinghoffer family had made another, this time very significant, move. On the strength of the success in their mill ends trade, they had taken a large

Victorian house in KingEdward Road, Hackney, a place with a huge basement kitchen, big first floor rooms and several bedrooms on the upper floors, all of them of comfortable sizes. Good furniture, including a couple of pianos began to appear, and as time went by and the family was enriched with three more children--all of them girls!--the hardships of Puma Court and the fierce struggle to make a living in Grove Street were relegated to a past best not now remembered. In fact; Chana's ambition knew no boundaries: she foresaw a splendid future for all her seven daughters, culminating in perfect marriages. At the same time she became ever more involved in her husband's business as a dealer in mill ends and clothing materials. As for Clara's art, she and Salman supported its development as well as they could, even at times when spending money on canvases, paints and frames was by no means an easy matter. There was never the slightest doubt in their minds that Clara would be a famous painter: artists of fame had come to their home and assured them the girl was very talented. How, then, could there be any doubt of her early and complete success?

*

Though a wall had been broken out in the King Edward Road house to create a roomy studio for Clara, she continued to do much work in the ample space over the Cannon Street Road shop. There was no lack of models: the neighbourhood children were eager to sit for her, and thus, in quick tempo she painted the 'Girl with a jug', 'the Russian girl', 'Child with a flower', 'Boy holding a cup', and many others (*), exquisite drawings-in-paint. As a rule they were small canvases, concise studies of types. But she wanted her exhibition to have more than this: a choice of larger scale portraits and groups--and here she began to work in her home-studio, using the six sisters for her models.

(*) see reproductions

What better subjects could she find than these girls ranging in age between four and twenty-one? Where was she to discover a better choice of fine yet greatly varying features? Among them was a bright blond with blue eyes, a light brunette with eyes of an extraordinary lilac blue, a black-haired girl with the face and eyes of a classical Italien, a white-skinned freckled sister with hair of a gorgeous Titian red. To be sure: her parents could not have gifted her with a more satisfactorily-

divergent arrayof models, practically always available and, as a rule, only too willing to pose, in whatever attitude she liked:reclining, relaxed and beautiful to look at in their virginal nudity, seated at a table, four of them, their attention focussed on one in their centre who is writing a letter. Or the eldest, Fanny,holding the nude body of her youngest sister Hilda. Or red-haired Rosie watching placidly while Hilda is being fed from a cup by a smiling maid-servant.

Thus she moved around the family circle, discovering fresh compositions, catching glimpses into their daily life. The size of her canvaxses was large, from 44 x 34" to 36 x 24", with added to them only a few smaller studies of fantasies, half-realized biblicalscenes, such as queen Esther on her knees for a bearded, stern Ahashverus; or a dreamy landscape dark and mysterious. A woman in red, her white-frocked child standing close to her. She painted a splendid backview of a blond girl, serene and innocent, and followed it up with the study of a woman, profile to the right, with a harrowing expression, filled with anguish. Perhaps this, too, was meant to become a biblical scene for Clara was much moved by the human tragedy of the Old Testament and felt close to the vicissitudes of its protagonists.

Now and then Clara went back to the East End, to re-discover the fascination of its lively scenes, the attractiveness of its people. She painted a Jewish child in a fancy-dress, and a fine portrait of a curly-headed young Jewess.

Returning to Hackney she interrupted work on the studies of her sisters to paint Protima, daughter-in-law of the world-famous Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. This done, she sketched Rosie, monochrome study in light green, and Rosie in a peculiar, high black fur cap, hands placidly folded in her lap. Then followed Fanny in a large straw hat , and --recalling her happy times in the British Museum under the protection of Harry Walden,-she painted him,complete with bowlerhat and shiny jacket, his long nose up in the wind like that of an eager hunting dog.

But most interesting of all: she sat before a large mirror and created a looking glass picture of herself at work, the palette in the crook of her arm, an uplifted brush in the fingers of the other hand. The eyes, looking searchingly towards

the left are sternly observing. The entire attitude expresses concentration. The portrait conceived on a slightly larger than life scale. Though in reality Clara was not quite five feet, she makes on this self-portrait the impression of a somewhat heftily-built young woman: tall, strong and older than nineteen or twenty. Perhaps unwittingly she appears to have expressed in this self study all the creative urgency that possessed her, all the power that, gathered within her, drove her to work with such compulsion and made her, once confronted with her canvas, so utterly unapproachable to anything outside her art.

During this strenuous period her colours were generally brilliant, but basic and direct. The marvel of her impeccable draftsmanship is unmistakably observable, even in the few canvases that from the standpoint of attractive composition or clearly-seen purpose, do not distinguish themselves.

In addition to all this work Clara drew indefatigably: she made washed in black and sepia, tender line sketches of sleeping babies, the sisters sewing, relaxing, chatting, busy at the kitchen sink, her father in a characteristic attitude: legs crossed, felt hat at the back of his head, a cigarette held loosely between the fingers of his right hand, his eyes dreamily focussed upon his talented daughter.

In good time the Langfier's men came to collect the components of the exhibition: no less than twenty-one paintings and thirty-two framed and glazed drawings. And on the third of May , 1920 the first one-man show in Clara Klinghoffer's career opened without as much as a private view. The young artist was not even present at that solemn moment. Yet, it is evident that Langfier's, or those who advised them, had been able to interest the London press in a phenomenon: a girl of not quite twenty who was exhibiting a choice of over fifty remarkable works, and this only a part of her total output to date!

Next day the first jubilant reviews appeared, and in the course of the week the voices of praise swelled to a veritable chorus. Hurriedly Clara was summoned to the gallery, to be subjected to the usual interviews, the questioning--sometimes inane-- on her background, the story of her artistic urge. Short but well proportioned, very young and handsome, modest but self-confident, she made a good impression on those who came to

write about her : 'Discovery Of A Talented Polish-born East End Girl.' As to her work, the critics predicted without exception 'a splendid career for this gifted young woman'. The London 'Evening Standard' stressed 'the brilliant future "this 19 year old painter is destined to have". And it continued: "One of the most encouraging things about her work "is that it gives frank and full expression to what may be "supposed to be her racial instincts and interests. She likes "exuberant forms and bright colours, and says so when painting with commendable frankness. Her strongest point at present is the ease with which she can fill her canvas. Evidently she has studied the Old Masters, particularly Leonardo "da Vinci, to good purpose...Her grouping in such pictures "as 'The Meal' and 'After the Bath' (*), both with a child "for the centre of interest, is large and free, and she "seems to have no difficulty at all in foreshortening a "head or a limb. Her drawing is both firm and sweeping, "with a distinctly 'calligraphic' character to recall her "origin...Portraits like 'Russian Girl' and 'Little Annie' "and that of a white-bearded man with a cigarette (*) "can be praised without qualification; and some of the "drawings of babies are excellent". The 'Sunday Times': "Clara Klinghoffer's 'Mother and Child' will appeal to "many as having more sheer beauty than any work in the "exhibition. While exceedingly able in point of drawing, "this moving painting of a mother just lifting her child "out of the bath delights one by the piquancy of its "colour, the shimmer of light on the bare flesh being "rendered with the tenderness of a Renoir and the dexterity of a Besnard. In its dazzling radiance it is a "joy of pure colour..." The 'Daily News' critic wrote: "She undoubtedly has a fine instinct for brilliant colour, "inspired by the best Italien models. This is particularly "shown in a group of a mother and child which is early "Italien--also in general conception, and in a self-portrait (*), showing her in the act of painting. A "large study of a semi-nude woman is excellent in pose "and colour, and here we see the effect of modern influences in the projection of the background colour onto

(*) see reproduction

(*) see reproduction

(*) see reproduction

"the face and figure. Some of her portraits display "a keen instinct for character which is especially shown "in the figure of Reb Hirsch (*). The face and head "are firmly painted, and the expression and attitude are "extremely characteristic. There is great skill in the "painting of the shabby coat... Miss Klinghoffer certain-"ly has a future".

(*) see reproduction

The more popular dailies, both in London (Daily Graphic) and in Scotland (Glasgow Bulletin, Glasgow Daily Record) were equally generous with their praise, some of them adding a rather clumsily drawn pencil sketch 'by our own artist', and signed by Clara, while various papers printed a large photograph of the young artist at work on a composition of two female figures. As to the London 'Daily Mail', its eulogy surpassed all others because, so it said, the artist was 'only ten years old'....

The 'Bristol Times' and several other provincial dailies saw in Clara 'a new star, not yet of the first magnitude but too brilliant to be passed over. Life-size figure subjects, with the whole interest concentrated on the humanly in the picture, are Miss Klinghoffer's favourite studies, and everything about them is strong.' The 'Jewish Chronicle' said: "Clara Klinghoffer, "in her exhibition at the Hampstead Art Gallery, has "clearly proved to be a truly great artist. Her drawings "are very beautiful and quite remarkable for an artist "scarcely out of her teens. One feels how very much she "has been influenced by the Great Masters--by Raphael and "by Leonardo for example. And yet, her outlook is entirely "modern; she has absorbed the past and expresses herself "freely, inspired but never enslaved thereby. Her pain-"tings are always well composed and this is so whether "a single portrait or a group is considered. She has a "peculiar sense of colour and makes no attempt to get the "correct tone, which fact accounts for the unreal appear-"ance of all save one or two portraits. She apparently

"paints without much effort, and the spontaneity of her "work is charming...There is nothing shallow in Miss Kling- "hoffer's genius. She is perfectly sincere and employs her "extraordinary gifts for a definite artistic purpose, simply "and beautifully, without the slightest trace of affectat- "ion." 'The Outlook' had this to say : "Clara Klinghoffer "was a Slade student, but fortunately as I think the disci- "pline of that admirable institution did not destroy her na- "tive style in drawing. Its presence in an art obviously "based on the Old Masters, notably Leonardo da Vinci, is encourag- "ing evidence of the compatability of personality with tradition. "It gives a flavour of race to such astonishingly capable works "as 'After the Bath' and 'Mother and Child'." The 'Jewish Guard- ian' agreed with other critics that Clara's drawings were largely inspired by Leonardo: "in many cases they are exceed- "ingly fine... She shows powers of characterization in her types "of Polish Jews...It is evident in the sensitive painting of "most of the faces that she has the makings of a really good "painter...One feels that here is by nature a real and distin- "guished artist." 'Colour', a leading art monthly, declared that "in addition to remarkable technical ability, there is a very "full expression of Jewish characteristics which are becoming "so increasingly a factor in any consideration of modern art."

This flood of eulogies, those glowing articles and prophecies filled Clara with stunning amazement. It was the last thing she had expected, and she laughed heartily about her 'having the spirit of Raphael', as one critic wrote. What she had done and would want to continue doing was to express herself 'the way she felt', subconsciously inspired,maybe, by the work of those Masters whose paintings and drawings she had seen, and best understood. But there was no escaping the festive atmosphere of her parents' home; and even the shop in Cannon Street Road overflowed for days on end with wellwishers who had read 'all about her', and came to congratulate the Kling- hoffers.

Meantime the exhibition attracted art-lovers and -collectors from all over London; and the very first person to buy four fine wash drawingsfor a total investment of less than forty pounds was Baron Profumo of Princes Gate... Letters of

congratulation from persons of note poured in, among these a card from Bronislav Hubermann, the famous violinist who had taken time off to see for himself whether so much praise in the media was justified. He found that it was, and he told her so. Clara would have liked to thank him for his kind words of encouragement, but she was much too shy to go to him, and writing was out of the question. What could one say ?

On the twenty-ninth of May the exhibition closed, with results that promised much for the near future. Already various artists' groups had asked her to participate in forthcoming shows; and some London galleries showed a vivid interest in talking with her about possible one-man exhibitions.

Meantime lionizing members of London's society hurried to invite the unassuming girl to teas and dinners. Suddenly she found herself in a strange world of real and would-be aristocracy, in the centre of a way of living that made butlers and flunkeys as indispensable as tables and chairs. It amused rather than impressed her; the truth was that her sudden popularity left her rather indifferent. In her Slade years she had known many society girls; most of them had been very pleasant, no snobs at all. So the curious glances of beautifully decked-out ladies and very correct gentlemen failed to intimidate or disturb her. Actually, she begrudged them the time she sacrificed to them; but she realized that both in her interest and in that of the gallery that sponsored her, she must meet these people and move freely among them. Indeed: a few commissions for portrait-drawings materialized, one of these a portrait of Daphne Baring, member of a famous banker's family.

"I would like you to do a drawing of my daughter", said Lady Revelstoke after a luncheon with various young people, among them a granddaughter of the painter Millais, then known all over England as the creator of the poster 'Bubbles', an advertisement for Pears' soap. "It does not matter whether it is going to be an exact likeness," Lady Revelstoke went on. "It's your way of drawing I love, and likeness is of secondary importance."

"It was a wonderful thing to hear", said Clara to me many years afterwards. "It made me feel very free, untrammeled. And the result was a very fine likeness of Daphne, a drawing I would have liked to keep for myself. So--everyone was delighted--but now came the most difficult part of the commission: how much did she owe me? Lady Revelstoke asked. I hesitated and then said, a little falteringly 'would ten guineas be alright?' 'Oh no!' she said, and I felt quite embarrassed. No doubt I had asked too much. Then I saw that Daphne's mother was smiling. "Not ten guineas," she said, "but fifteen!" I felt like protesting, but I dared not. So I kept silent , watching Lady Revelstoke as she wrote out my cheque for fifteen guineas...

"I left that lovely house as if in a trance. It was a beautiful day, and as I walked along I held the folded piece of paper tightly in my hand, but I dared not look at it before I was well away from the Baring home. Then I stood still and unfolded the cheque: yes, it actually was for fifteen guineas!"

Of course, Clara's parents and sisters were much impressed by this 'royal fee'; all at once she had entered a different world, with completely different ideas on the value of money.

To amuse her family Clara sometimes acted out what happened in 'those rich houses' on certain occasions."The differences were so strident: we lived so simply. All we could afford was a very young maid of all work. Butlers and footmen...? We laughed and laughed when my father hung a dishcloth over his left arm and stood behind my chair: very erect, a somewhat vacant, neutral expression in his eyes..."

In the summer of 1920 the 'Mother and Child' that had attracted so much attention in the Hampstead Art Gallery, went to the yearly exhibition of the New English Art Club. And once more the critics vied with each other in praising this work of 'this latest girl genius from the Slade', 'The Connoisseur: "...Its drawing is of striking interest, specially "in regard to the nude figure of the baby, sprawling in the "abandoned grace of sleep." 'The Architect':"Clara Kling-"hoffer's 'Mother and Child' is a brilliant, cleverly lighted

study." 'The Nottingham Guardian': "...The nude child is re-
"markably modelled and the masses are treated with tender,
"perhaps too tender feeling." 'The Westminster Gazette':
"Her 'Mother and Child' is another triumph of luminosity..."
'The Jewish Guardian': "The figures and their arrangement is
"absolutely reminiscent of Procaccinni's Madonna and Child in
the Pinakothek of Munich." 'The Daily Telegraph': "Her Mother
"and Child, very nearly a Madonna and Child, is a skilfully
"composed composition, strongly recalling in style the later
"works of Lorenzo di Credi."

But Clara had never heard of Lorenzo di Credi, nor did it matter much to her what her style of painting was reminiscent of. All she wished was to go on working. The Leicester Galleries had approached her with a view to giving her a show, exclusively of drawings, some time in the not too far off future. The Goupil Gallery asked for her contribution to their by then famous yearly Salon. Portrait commissions came in; others were in the offing... Indeed: her career as an artist had been launched in a most convincing if somewhat overwhelming manner.

*

Clara now was at her easel as much as the light of day and the availability of her models allowed. A bursary at the Slade, offering three days' tuition per week for a year and worth about twenty pounds, was given a try and then, after a few weeks, given up. She felt that attending the sessions of professors Tonks and Brown did not give her what she had expected; she preferred to work alone. She now filled small notebooks with exquisite black and sepia ink washes (*) and in an experimental way, approached the problems of etching.

(*) see reproductions

Then, suddenly, the skies came down on her, leaving her uncertain, confused, fighting a solitary battle against an overwrought nervous system.

It all happened one evening when, coming home from seeing a film of Dr.Jeckel and Mr. Hyde, she stood before her mirror. All at once she began to tremble fiercely, all blood drained from her face. She imagined that her reflection showed

a person quite different from what she thought to be: someone who had no grip on ordinary life but drifted between unformed longings and terrifying fears. It was as if, with a horrible jolt, she was losing all awareness of her true personality. She sat down at the edge of the bed, telling herself that, of course, it was that frightening story of Jekyll and Hyde that had made too deep an impression on her tense mind. She must not think of it anymore and reject with all the strength of her will every attempt of her brain to lure her back into such ludicrous obscurities as doubting her own personality. In a panic, she wiped the cold sweat from her hands and forehead and tried to sleep.

Next day she continued to paint, as usual, but the great, irresistible urge to work had vanished. She was constantly fighting, re-assuring herself : 'I am sane, I am not going mad. I am sane...'

It was the beginning of a terror-filled period that throughout the greater part of a year, tore incessantly at her mind and body. Had there in those days been some understanding psychologist he might well have made it possible for her to recognize that she was paying heavily for the super-sensitive experiences and exaltations of her early formative years, the compulsion of her puberty to understand, and express in line and colour, her longing for aesthetic perfection and a superhuman nobility of soul. But there was no one to talk to. She lost weight, slept badly and gradually worked less and less. The parents , even though they saw the change in her person and behaviour,had not the faintest idea of what could be the matter. They asked her: was she feeling ill? Why did not she work more ? She hardly ever was in her studio now; instead, she would sit somewhere and appear to read, or walk in their garden, seemingly in deep thought. People wanted her drawings and paintings...; then why...? But all she could answer was that she felt very tired and did not feel like working.

Now and again she would force herself to keep up at least some of her new relations. One day she even went back to Langfier's in their nice Hampstead gallery, but Mrs.

Langfier did not, at first, recognize her: she had gone so thin and was so wan-looking. She began to smoke cigarettes all day long; it gave her a strange--though passing--feeling of reassurance, made it possible for her to face people. Did they see that there was something 'wrong' about her ? Did she act differently, or say things that sounded crazy ? She watched herself with harrowing closeness, and then, adopting a slogan that had attained international popularity as a means of 'building up self-assurance', she repeated innumerable times to herself , throughout day and night, Dr. Coué's maxim :'Every day in every way I am getting better and better.'

Then something happened that, at first, seemed of little import to her state of mind , but turned out to be the most effective road towards her recovery. At the back of the large Klinghoffer garden ran a low wall; on the other side of it a set of tennis courts had recently been constructed and were now ready for use. It soon became a habit of the Klinghoffer girls to lean over the wall and watch the players. The owner of the courts, a tall, dark-haired, handsome young man in his late twenties, Julius Abrahams, saw them there, talked with them, and soon they belonged to the regular players. The necessity to focus upon the ball, excluding all other thoughts, the protracted physical exertion, the companionship of Julius who very soon had begun to display his preference for Clara as his playing partner--it all helped to give back to her after so many long and utterly somber months, a feeling of elation, of being fully alive, and 'no different from the others.' She now began to look forward to being on the courts and, especially, to play one game after another with Julius. His earthy soundness of body and mind, his obvious pleasure in her company became means of rescue to which Clara clung with desperate tenacity. She wanted to be with Julius as much as possible: he gave her courage and self-confidence. She asked him to sit for her, and he agreed eagerly. There, in her large studio, she painted him on a huge canvas, only a little below life size. Dressed in white tennis flanels, his shirt with open neck, his right arm resting on the back of a chair, his fingers tightly clasped together, he is looking sideways at the painter with a calm, contemplative expression.

~~tive impression.~~

It was early summer of 1922. And now very slowly the nightmare that had blackened her life: of 'being a double personality', began to dissolve. In an unspoken way she felt immensely grateful to Julius; she even imagined herself in love with him. She was well aware that, had she given the slightest hint that she wanted it, he would have broken off his engagement to a neighbourhood girl, and come to her.

But as her capacity for sound judgment grew strong again, and the horrifying doubts and self-torture receded ever more into the background, Clara saw the pain and suffering which such a predicament was certain to cause. And although her friendship with Julius endured, their meetings in her Studio ceased and their partnership on the tennis court gradually petered out.

But the huge painting of Julius Abrahams remained, and for many , many months it 'took the stage', somewhere in the centre of Clara's vast Studio.

5

A time of changes

In spite of the long, exhausting inner struggle for her identity and the hidden suffering that constantly threatened to play havoc with her creative impulse, Clara had during that most harassing year of her young life done a number of drawings, mainly pencil sketches and washes in ink and sepia. She also had painted a few pictures that turned out well--they were in no respect inferior to those that had brought her so much praise. Using the always cooperative sisters for her models, she had made large scale studies of some of them, dressed as well as nude. She had produced, for example, an outstandingly charming portrait of her twelve year old sister Bertha. It shows the dark-haired pretty child, dressed in an ample white frock, sitting completely at ease, legs spread a little, hands folded, listening attentively to something her 'big' sister, half-hidden behind a large canvas, is telling her.(*)

(*) see reproduction

There also is a nude, beautiful in texture, that went up to the summer exhibition in the Grosvenor Galleries, and was particularly commented on in 'Drawing and Design': "It shows "an astonishing development in the talent of this young ar-"tist", exclaimed the critic enthusiastically, and then, putting on the brakes in gentle fashion, he continued : "but as "yet one hesitates to acclaim her unequivocally as a genius. For "great talent is sometimes inimical to genius and facility of "technique, degenerating into what the French call 'la chose "volue' may kill vision. Her drawings of babies have more of the

"attributes of genius. They are less stylized, more spon-
"taneous, a direct and inevitable rendering of an impression. There are many gems among these drawings."

In the course of that year she had met with, and been generously praised by, a variety of artists, many of them members of the London and Bloomsbury groups. For example: there was Nina Hamnett who visited Clara in her Hackney studio and then asked her to come to a party. "It was a small place, and there were quite a few people there, among them a soldier to whom Nina gave much of her attention. She played for us on her guitar, and later Edith Sitwell came in. I had never heard of her, and wondered at her bizarre get-up. She wore a long, colourful evening cloak , though it was in the middle of the afternoon. What my contribution was to the general conversation, I cannot recall. But I'm sure it must have been very unsophisticated, because I was exactly that!"

David Bomberg was another group member who had seen her work, and praised it. One day she met him in Oxford Street, and he told her that she could use part of his large West End studio for thirty shillings per week. She accepted the offer, and for some time the two artists worked in absolute harmony. But Bomberg's wife gave unmistakable signs that she did not particularly like so young and handsome a fellow artist in her husband's studio. Feeling the strain between the couple, and having been witness to some acrimonious discussions, Clara gave up her part of the studio, and went back to work in the parental Hackney home.

At exhibitions and receptions she met several members of the Groups, painters as well as sculptors. But she never felt an ambition to belong to their circles. Her all-absorbing interest lay in working on her own; and although she was conversant with the art of many colleagues, she had no desire to be present at their gatherings, take part in their discussions, their wrangles on painting styles, and 'new directions', or spend her time trying to solve intricate problems of aesthetics and art history. Yet, to this rule there were two exceptions: Peggy and Jacob Epstein, and Esther

and Lucien Pissarro.

After her first shy visit to the Epsteins, a close friendship ensued. Clara greatly admired Epstein's sculpture; his studies of Indian women and children, of his little daughter Peggy-Jean, or of his wife, her face covered with a genuine lace veil had deeply impressed her. As the months went by she would walk into the Guildford Street studio when she happened to be in the neighbourhood, and gradually Margaret Epstein began to look upon this young woman as a sort of confidante. She would try to convey to her her anxieties about Jacob who was apt to show too great an interest in some of his good-looking models. It was, she confessed, not an easy matter to hide her feelings of distrust and jealousy.

It created an embarrassing situation for Clara, the more so since she saw that often Peggy herself was instrumental in bringing new, attractive young models into her husband's workshop. There was, for example, the young music student whom Epstein had once met in Clara's company. Soon afterwards Peggy wrote Clara a long letter from their summer home in Epping Forest:"...Do you think that you could trace her through some "fellow studentat the Royal College of Music ? Would you ask "her if she would be willing to pose for Mr. Epstein ? It "would be so nice of you. He was so enthusiastic about doing "something from her... If she is willing, bring her out some Sunday morning. We could spend the day in the best part of "Epping Forest where our cottage is and Mr. Epstein would per-"haps make drawings and could fix up with her posing in London "or do her here. Before he has done something of her, don't "introduce her to any other artist. He likes to work from models whom no one else works from, I've noticed. Not only "because they are sometimes diverted and perverted. I suppose "sometimes it is because others exhibit what they do at once, "and he does not for years."

But Clara was not to be drawn into these affairs; she took up the attitude of listening sympathetically to Peggy's plaints while expressing no opinion. She wished her friendship with both Epsteins to remain unimpaired.

As to the Pissarro's, she got acquainted with them through their daughter Orovida, herself a painter and silk

screen printer; and immediately both Esther and Lucien took to her with great warmth. She went to see them often in their Hammersmith studio, The Brook, and there, for the first time in her life, she saw ~~she saw~~ beautiful little books planned, set up in type, illuminated , printed and bound with such artistry that each copy of the restricted editions became a precious jewel. The Vale and Eragny presses, using specially designed and cut type, set up by hand and illustrated with delicately coloured woodcuts created by Esther Pissarro Ben Susan--a fine artist in her own right--were an enterprise of love, not directed at making profit. Of necessity the range of books produced was limited, but certain is that to possess the full series in these days would represent a valuable collection.

At the Pissarro's Clara met Adolphe Armand Braun, founder and editor of 'Drawing and Design'. Already this paper had published very favourable criticism on Clara's exhibition in the Hampstead Art Gallery. Now Mr. Braun decided to reproduce one of Clara's sensitive baby drawings in the second edition of his book on 'The Child in Art and Nature'; the volume, a charming and thorough study on children of all ages, and a valuable guide to the child's anatomy,was published by B. T. Batsford Ltd., London, in 1922; and thus the work of Clara Klinghoffer, done at the very start of her career,(the drawing is dated 1919) was reproduced between the same covers as that of a long list of Italian, French, Dutch and English master draftsmen--with Da Vinci, Raphael, Rubens, Titian, Rembrandt, Boucher and Sir Joshua Reynolds among them.

By now she had resumed submitting work to various ranking exhibitions, such as a show organized by Colour Magazine and held in P. and D. Colnaghi's Grosvenor Galleries in New Bond Street. The '<u>Sunday Times</u>', in its review of the exhibition, singled out Clara's two contributions: "Her work takes a "foremost place; her two portraits are strongly modelled and "brightly illuminous in colour." However, the '<u>Morning Post</u>' was not so delighted with Clara's 'Woman':"...In the corner "gallery there is nothing more striking than Clara Klinghof-"fer's study of the over-developped and ugly carcase of a "woman"--a wryly amusing, left-handed compliment to the sense of realism of the artist.

But most of her working hours were how dedicated to

preparations for her exhibition of drawings to be held in June, 1923 at the Leicester Galleries. There were to be some forty choice drawings ; all of them must, of course, come up to her highest standard. Once more she concentrated for long hours each day on her work, and several of her models were, again, the ever-willing pretty sisters: Rosie, the red-head, Rachel, the petite blonde with her piquant features, dark-haired Bertha, as Italian as any Da Vinci model...

In the beginning of the new year Clara's portfolio was steadily swelling with fresh drawings: pen or pencil sketches, large washes in blue or sepia ink, and compositions for oils. Then, in the afternoon of Sunday the tenth of January, she set out, carrying her large portfolio for the home of Mr. Smith who lived in Gordon Square. This gentleman had come across her work somewhere and was duly impressed. Subsequently he had contacted her and asked , could he see more of her drawings? At his home ?... If anything, Clara disliked trudging her work around to the homes of possible patrons. But the cost of artist's materials was high, and sales were very welcome events, What happened in the sumptuous Smith residence was, however, very different from what she could possibly have expected when setting out through mist and rain to Gordon Square.

*

These Sunday afternoons in Mr. Smith's 'cercle artistique" I had heard quite a bit about from the young Italian journalist with whom I shared a flat in Hampstead. Those tales were generally followed by the advice 'not to be a fool', and come along. "You will like it," he would insist."There might even be good copy in it for an article..." But so far I had withstood the temptation. For five days each week I worked in an office and only during the week-ends I found a chance to write the articles on London life which were to convince various chief editors of Netherlands newspapers that --quite obviously--I was the man to act as their London correspondent. But on that particular Sunday afternoon my well of London lore had most dishearteningly dried up. Be-

sides: it was a grey,dreary winter day, the sort of weather that makes one melancholy and turns being alone into misery. "Alright then--I'll come," I sighed. And off we went to Mr. Smith's abode.

It was a grand-looking house indeed, both out- and inside. The huge front door was opened by a buxom woman in her thirties, a handsome creature with lively, deepbrown eyes. "Long live Italy", she said and gave my room-mate a broad smile. Then, turning to me; "Where are you from ?" "Holland." "Welcome--you're the first from that country. " She pointed to the wide marble stairs. "It's in the Study today. There are a lot--I'm baking an extra cake!" She walked away through a long corridor, lined with books. My roommate whispered, respectfully : "She's his housekeeper. We call her Mrs. Appletart--becauss she bakes the best appletart in all London."

As we climbed the stairs, the hubbub of many voices became audible; there was no doubt where the Study was. When we opened the high, panelled door we stood, all at once, in the midst of pandemonium. Everyone of the forty or so young men and women seemed to be talking simultaneously, in loud voices and with considerable heat. But above their combined brouhaha was heard the deep powerful bass of their host. Mr. Smith, in his early fifties, was quite tall and broad-shouldered, he wore grey trousers, a pinkish shirt open at the neck, a fawn sport jacket and a half-undone lavallière type of red tie that , hanging loose, blew back and forth upon the brusquely displaced air like a sail in a storm. Mr. Smith ran tirelessly from one group to the next, gesticulating and shouting things that not a soul appeared to listen to. Then, abruptly, he made his way to an upright piano, banged hard upon the defenseless keys--and all at once the huge room grew strangely quiet. The host was about to deliver his weekly harangue.

He talked excitedly about the need of coordination and cooperation of all young people. There must be understanding between all young people, and more especially among all creative youngsters, of all nations. Men and women who,

like ourselves, served every form of art or, through our writings helped to mould public opinion. A world organisation of artists was needed to take the place of misguided politicians!..His eyes bulged, his face became ever redder as he elaborated noisily upon those principles, exhorting us with frantic gestures to follow his advice. His greying Henry IV beard moved up and down with uncanny speed, till his voice became a deep groan and the words were unintelligible. He threw out his right arm in a kind of Roman salute, sat down heavily on the creaking pianostool and, accompanying himself, burst into song. First came the British national anthem, joined in by everybody, then the Marseillaise, shouted by Mr. Smith in horrible French , and finally, to my astonishment, there followed the Wacht am Rhein. The room shook with the roar of so many voices, though the participation of the guests diminished notably when Mr. Smith began the militant German song.

Now our host rose and led us in three deafening cheers. Then--dramatically--the sliding doors to an adjoining room were opened, and there stood our 'high tea', exhibited on a long, damask-covered table. Large dishes with all sorts of sandwiches, biscuits and a variety of pastries took up much space amidst the splendour of fine porcelaine, the glitter of cutlery and the awesome brilliance of a gorgeously wrought silver tea service. My roommate had not exaggerated. Mr. Smith's tea party was in fact a substantial meal, a treat not easily forgotten. And the appletart--ah! that was no cake but a delicacy melting on your tongue!

Gradually the satiated guests trickled back to the Study. There would be, warned my roommate, 'a final word' by our host, a passionate admonition to 'walk the paths of brotherhood'... Mr. Smith was clearing his throat as we grouped around him when the Study door was opened and a small girl with beautiful auburn hair, entered, carrying a portfolio much too large for her to hold with any comfort.

"Ah ha!" yelled Mr. Smith, and he broke through the ring, freed the girl of her burden and, holding the portfolio high, shouted hoarsely: "Now my young friends you will

Now you will have the privilege to see art that's on a par with the work of the great Masters. And who has created it? This little girl--Clara Klinghoffer. Mark that name well, for one day it will be famous!"

The young woman smiled and shook her head. "Oh Mr. Smith..., there you go again! Please, don't!" She opened the portfolio that Mr. Smith had very carefully placed on a centre table, and all of us crowded around as she lifted out drawing after drawing: incredibly sensitive studies of men and women, young nudes, babies asleep, suckling, smiling, cradled in their mothers' arms. As she showed us her work Clara remained silent; her face was serene with an expression of great affection.

It was very quiet in the room. Even Mr. Smith managed to limit himself to an occasional groan of admiration. The 'final exhortation' was totally forgotten.

As the gathering broke up I watched Clara carefully re-arranging the precious contents of her portfolio. When she had fastened the strings I found the courage to suggest that maybe she would allow me to carry it for her to whatever transportation she meant to use. She agreed laughingly : 'that's very kind. Yes--it <u>is</u> rather large...'

We were among the last group to leave the house and, although we walked slowly, chatting about Mr. Smith's good heart and strange enthusiasms, the distance between Gordon Square and the number 55 trolley to the East End seemed annoyingly short to me. She did not ask me whether I had liked her work, nor did I mention it. I could not possibly have offered an opinion, anyway. I was too stunned by the fact that this young girl had the gift to create so much beauty. But when we stood waiting for a tram she looked up at me and said, very serious-faced: "Would you like to see more of what I've done ?" I would--of course I would. And so, hurriedly , we exchanged addresses and she gave me her phone number. As the trolley clanged into sight , she took the heavy portfolio, and said :"You must phone me some time very soon. Will you?"

*

Having lived 'on my own', outside a family circle

for more than three years, my entry into the Klinghoffer circle was filled with surprises. I did not meet Clara's parents on my first few visits; they were at work in their East End shop. But I did make the acquaintance of all the models whose faces I had seen in many of the drawings Clara had shown at Mr. Smith's. There was something uncanny in discovering how extraordinarily like the drawings these girls were, not only in regard to their facial features but also in their natural attitudes. From the moment I had rather solemnly shaken hands with each of the five--Fanny, the eldest, was married and lived elsewhere in London--I sat on a Gothic type bench aside of the fireplace in their huge basement, to watch them. Talking little myself, I enjoyed listening to their chatter, not following some of the allusions they made, and sometimes puzzled by their sudden outbursts of laughter. But the general atmosphere was so lively and warm that I felt very close to all of them, never bothering about what they might think of me, the thin, bespectacled Dutchman who so suddenly had appeared among them as their artist sister's friend. Fanny had married a Yiddish writing journalist, and thus the idea that a young man might like most of all to spend his time writing 'things', was by no means novel to them. Rosie, alabaster-skinned, freckled and with hair of a golden red, obviously liked me--and I her--from the moment we met. The next sister, petite Rachel with her thick, very long honey-blond hair, had the gift to see the humour of almost anything. Her hearty laughter was infectuous. "She ought to go on the stage, " Clara said, "she'd be a first class entertainer. " Bertha and Leah, thirteen and twelve were still at school: a sort of Institute for Young Ladies, carefully chosen by their ambitious mother. Both girls were pretty: Bertha Italian dark, with classical features and a lively, easily explosive nature; Leah, a brunette, more placid, with a delicately shaped face, a charming, dimpled smile and eyes that had irises of a beautiful soft-purple blue. But the youngest, nine year old Hilda, amused me most. Her bright eyes observed keenly and critically; she possessed a sound sense of the ridiculous and poked good fun at the general uproar and confusion into which this ''Sanger's Circus' so readily lapsed.

Most hilarious was the perfection with which she imitated certain singers of popular songs ; and her rendering of Bing Crosby's 'My baby is a crooner...' could only be called magnificent.

From the very start I was at home in that old Victorian house in Hackney's King Edward Road. They were good company, these five girls, and obviously fond of each other, in spite of occasional squabbles. But it struck me with surprise and a powerless sort of irritation that Rosie, twenty-one years old, gentle and helpful to the extreme, shouldered the bulk of the inevitable household duties. With the help of a young, little experienced maid she did all she could to replace the much too often absent mother.

Somewhat less encouraging than with her daughters was my first encounter with Mrs. Klinghoffer. She was then in her late forties, a well-dressed, small, still good-looking woman with narrow features and sharply evaluating eyes behind the glasses of her stylish pince-nez. She shook hands with me in a rather perfunctory way, at the same time giving me a thorough all-over look. Next, with a faint smile around her puckered mouth,she offered me a drink. I accepted , wondering whether I was to be the only one to imbibe. But the drink turned out to be a generously-large glass of Eno's Fruit Salt. It hissed and bubbled ferociously. Good heavens, I thought, did I really look such a fright ? Did my very face cry out 'indigestion! Indigestion!' and nothing else ? But I had no choice ; I swallowed the fizzy stuff, hoping frantically that it would not have the promised result of insuppressable burping. Fortunately Clara came to the rescue, insisting that I come with her to the garden, to watch an exciting match on the tennis courts just beyond the wall.

As for Salman Klinghoffer, he returned home in a while, and came into the garden to meet me. I took to him right there and then. Of medium height, broad-shouldered, he had gentle features with sharply marked cheek bones, a straight nose, high forehead and blue eyes that had a somewhat unsure, guarded expression. Later, when we were at tea, he did not take much of a part in whatever we talked about. He sat quietly back in his chair

with crossed knees, his well-worn felt hat rather jauntily at the back of his balding head. He fascinated me; I could not help noticing the persistent, soft drumming of his fingers on the armrests, or the enigmatic little smile with which he watched his 'seven women', and me.

"Dad likes you," Clara said later, when we ~~watched~~ walked along the rowdy Whitechapel High Road. I was genuinely pleased, but wisely did not ask what her mother had thought of me. There was, in fact, little doubt in my mind that she did not wholeheartedly approve of me: a young foreigner with nothing more promising to his name than a small city job, and the burning desire to see his scribblings in print. Already, she had seen her family increased with a son-in-law who wrote but who, in order to make a living, had virtually abandoned journalism and started a newspaper cutting agency. Who, then, could blame her for not welcoming with more warmth a similarly 'possessed' young fellow, even as a mere friend of her gifted second daughter ?

To some extent her anxiety should have been allayed by the circumstance that during the week Clara and I seldom found an opportunity to meet. She was taken up by the preparations for the coming Leicester Galleries show and besides, was often asked to the homes of art loverswho, as she expressed it, 'wished to touch the phenomenon..!' But on week ends I began to spend the Friday nights at 'number 50', in the basement kitchen. Soon after dinner the parents would go to bed, leaving us talking and laughing, after repeated admonitions to watch the candles ,burning rosily in the silver candelabras: one candle for each member of the family.

On those evenings all the girls stayed home, and somehow, since I had no 'real' home of my own, they became accustomed to my being there. I felt happy among them. Suddenly I had a lot of 'sisters' who seemed to like me and talked with me quite freely. Towards eleven, when the candles neared extinction, Clara would 'see me to the corner of the street', and from there I started walking: right through the East End to Liverpool Street where, sometimes, I was lucky enough to get

a night bus all the way to Baker Street. But generally I marched along steadily to West Hampstead, pausing once or twice at a coffee stall. Not so much to enjoy the pennyworth of weak brew as to look at the people coming and going, night workers, strangely decked out women, beggars, homeless people and a few late wanderers like myself. On those two-and-a-half hours' walks I learned more about London life after dark than a dozen guide books could have taught me.

Despite Clara's original offer to show me more of her work, I had so far merely seen a few paintings on the walls of her home, the near life-size portrait of a handsome young man in sports clothes on an easel in her studio, and one or two chalk sketches of the sisters: 'bits of paper', lying around on a chair in the main entrance hall. I would have liked to see her actually painting and drawing and shyly suggested this. But she answered, apologetically: "Well--you will, soon. But, you see, I don't like being watched when I work. It makes me too aware of myself."

When spring came we often went on country walks. We would take a train to some small place recommended in the 'Country Walks'-guide published by the Underground, and then set out across the fields to a village some miles away. We were both good walkers, and having tea in the pub of some half-forgotten hamlet became a great, intimate joy. All along we talked of a thousand things: the people she met, her sisters, my country, Holland , and my ambitions--but very rarely about her art. I do not think that on those blissful outings I realized that what she wanted most of life was to follow the urging of her creative drive, to be left alone with her work, undisturbed. I was happy in her company, and she seemed pleased and gay in mine. On the days we could not meet I missed her. Sometimes I went to a public 'phone and was lucky enough to reach her and talk to her. At other times I wrote her long letters but never mailed them.

In middle June the exhibition of her drawings opened at the Leicester Galleries . I could not manage to come to the private view but during the following days bought all the newspapers I could lay hands on. I wanted to know what the

art critics had written. 'The Times' said : "There are some "remarkable drawings by Clara Klinghoffer. Her subjects are "nearly all figures and especially children, and very strong "and skilful they are." 'The Morning Post':"This collection "displays a remarkable talent. It is used unequally; there "are some bad drawings among these forty. But many of them "convey a sense of solid structure and all of them a very vivid 'awareness' of living persons in their subjects.' P.G. Konody , well-known critic of the 'Daily Mail':"The epithet " 'brilliant'may be applied to her crayon, pen and ink and "wash sketches without fear of exaggeration. She has that "rare and undefinable quality known as style, and that qua- "lity is in evidencein everything she does, whether it is "a rapidly sketched scribble of pen work with the tone masses "broadly and boldly washed in, or a pencil drawing of Leonar- "desque delicacy and precision of shading and modelling. Miss *Klinghoffer is only 23. She has a promising future before "her." The 'Westminster Gazette': "There are drawings by that "astonishing young artist Clara Klinghoffer. What distin- "guishes them is their feeling for style and the capacity shown in them for masses in bradlight and shade." The 'Daily Graphic': "Her babies' heads are not the heads of the idolized "cherubs of the rich, but the equally sweet babies of the poor. "She loves to draw sleeping children. Her 'Study of a young "woman' shows her model in a rather ragged undergarment. She "is looking in a mirror, not occupied with her features which "are far from beautiful but apparently meditating on the "hardships of her life." The 'Manchester Guardian'"Her draw- "ings are remarkable in accomplishment but inclined to empty "elegance. The examples in pen and ink are effective but ex- "press little... Better drawings are those in red and blue "chalk...". The 'Sunday Times': "Her sketches in chalk, pen- "and-ink and wash revealthe extraordinary power and vigour "of her drawing, and already her work has a distinctive "style which expresses the alertness and energy of her in- "telligence."

It was an overwhelming stream of praise; when I 'phoned Clara I expected her to be as excited and jubilant as

I. To my great surprise she said : "I haven't seen any papers yet. You know: my brother-in-law gets all the cuttings to-"gether, and I suppose he'll send them to me in a couple of days." "But," I said, "aren't you anxious to know what the reviews were like ?" There was a moment of silence; then she answered: "Hm..., yes of course I am. I'm very pleased they think so well of what I do. But in a way it doesn't really matter. I can only paint and draw in one way--and that's the way I do. So what they say, good or bad, can't mean much when it comes to my attitude towards my work."

It puzzled me at first, and then I understood how independent she was in the expression of her talent. During the days that followed thoughts of her self-sufficiency as an artist, the absence of the need for constant outside encouragement , her cool, almost neutral attitude towards destructive criticism never left me. They were still with me when on the Saturday morning I went to the Leicester Galleries and spent much time in the room where forty-three of Clara's drawings had been hung. There were few people about that morning, so that I could look in absolute silence at the sensitive portraits of the family I had got to know so well. It was like being among them again, watching them in furious action, or sitting around contemplatively. And all at once I began to feel like an interloper. I told myself that, clearly the home circle was closed; I was not really needed inside it. Least of all by Clara whose individuality as a creative being could in no way be influenced , increased or diminished by my presence.

Or was I wrong? Could my demands on her time, no matter how modest, actually be harmful to her future as an artist ? Could her concern for me and my ambitions, the intensity with which she listened to my troubles as a city worker, miles distant from what I really wished to achieve, have a bad influence upon her powers of concentration on her art? And in any case : how could I possibly hope to reach the status as a writer even remotely akin to the stature she had already attained at so young an age ?

I felt very depressed. For the first time since we had met half a year or so ago, I recognized that there was a high barricade between us.

6

Doubts and self-righteousness

When all the important dailies and weeklies had reviewed Clara's exhibition at the Leicester Galleries it could be safely said that, apart from an isolated objection to the 'facility' and 'empty cleverness' of some drawings, the critics had unanimously hailed her as an exceptionally gifted draftsman and painter. Said 'The Observer' : "She shows a "series of figure drawings in various media that should place "her in the very first rank of modern draughtsmen. There is "style and nervous life in every line of her pen or pencil, "and she is as accomplished in her swift shorthand pen-scribbles, "with broadly washed in tonemasses as in her carefully shaded "and modelled Leonardesque studies of babies. For sheer con- "centration and summary expressiveness 'At the Dentist's' "stands unrivalled." *'New Age': "She is a draftsman of ~~denitie~~ *definite ability. Some of the drawings are very remarkable "for a girl of twenty-three... She handles either wash, pen- "cil or chalk with amazing facility and appeciation of its "possibilities." 'The Spectator': 'These are John-esque draw- "ings." 'Colour': "Her draughtsmanship is quite out of the "common, and she has a fine feeling for colour." The 'Architects Journal": "She is a born draftsman whose faculty has been raised "to a high degree of intensity by the admirable teaching at the "Central School of Arts and Crafts", and the Slade. There is "living line in most of the studies here shown, and in one or "two of the larger ones a sense of living material of skin, "flesh and bones, especially of flesh, which is quite except-

5

ional except in the cases of the finest Masters." 'American Art News, New York' : This artist has an unusual feeling for "line, some of her drawings recalling in expressiveness the "earlier works in pencil of Augustus John."

Once more offers for future shows were coming in, among them one from The Whitechapel Art Gallery, that unique show place in the heart of the East End. An autumn exhibition was being planned, exclusively of works by Jewish artists. The gallery wanted several Klinghoffer paintings and drawings. 'But I've got nothing new to show," Clara complained one day. "I really must get down to work again." I did not respond but felt strangely guilty. That evening I decided to go less often to the house in King Edward Road, and to try and check my frequent impulses to call Clara on the 'phone. I would have to find a plausible reason, too, for not spending most of our Sundays together.

I tried hard to live up to my intentions; but my plan did not work. At first Clara accepted my excuses without questioning. Then, soon, she became worried, enquiring if I did not feel well, and was trying to hide it from her. There was no escaping reality any longer...

She asked was I worried about something ? Or angry ? No--I was neither the one nor the other. But I knew that Iwould, in the end, have to tell her what had been on my mind ever since that long, disturbing visit to the Leicester Galleries. All the same, whenever we were together I put off the dreaded confrontation. What wrong could there be in enjoying each other's company ?

But at that point my strict Dutch upbringing interfered, reminding me sternly that 'going out' together as often as we did, must necessarily lead to something far more serious than a mere friendship. And so , on my long marches home from Hackney, I would scold myself for being such a coward.

Finally it was not I but Clara who broke the unendurable tension. One Saturday night, after we had been walking for hours through the East End, just awoken from its Sabbath stupor, and were having a cup of coffee in a small side-street restaurant, Clara put her hand on mine and said : "I must know

what is the matter. Why are you so changed ? You seem to hold back all the time. Have I done anything ? Has anything happened to you?" I felt my face go white, and suddenly all I had suppressed with so much effort broke away from me and took on a much harsher form than I had ever intended.

What was wrong ?... Simply that I could not go on hampering her in her work. I knew quite well that the time she spent with me should really have been given to her art. There were several exhibitions to get ready for; and all I did was to keep her away from her studio, ask her attention for all sorts of trifles that made up my daily life. It just could not go on; it made me feel too guilty.

She did not answer; she looked down on her fingers and listened. And all at once I ran amuck. "What's this going to lead to?" I said heatedly. "You know as well as I: we'd want to be together always--and what would I be, then ? Just a stumbling block. I can never hope to get up to your level. You've already got a name, and it'll be greater in the future. I'd only be in your way. And besides--just look at me: what have I got to offer to you? Only my struggle to get somewhere with my...my scribbling."

I went on and on: I would only ruin the harmony between her and her family. I realized only too well that her mother already resented me now, when we were only friends. And what could we expect if one day we'd be much more than friends?

When I stopped at last, trembling, feeling empty but very self-righteous, Clara looked at me . There were tears in her eyes. "How silly you are," she said quietly. "How very little you know me."

I was not quite aware anymore of what I was saying. Alright then, I might be silly,"but I think I know what will be best for us two. We should not see each other anymore."I had no wish at all to be a hanger-on, making things hard for her. Yes, of course, I was very fond of her, and she knew it. But was that a good excuse for ruining her chances as an artist?...

Clara got up and shrugged. "Let's go."

Out in the street we walked along in silence. Suddenly she halted, and held out her hand. "Of course," she said,

"it's all nonsense. I never thought of us that way, making each other's work difficult. But if that's what you feel..., well, there's nothing I can do about it. Except saying a thousand times how wrong you are." I saw that she was crying. "Goodbye," she said and let go of my hand. "But you will write me sometimes, won't you ? Just tell me how you are--what you're doing."

I had not expected this. It was a hard blow. I had thought that she might try to persuade me.., convince me. Instead she was willing to accept my mad decision. What had made me blurt out such idiotic things ? "Wait, wait!" I cried. "I didn't mean it that way. I do want to go on seeing you.., but..." A bus stopped close by. Clara turned around and ran towards it.

I stood there for heaven knows how long, trying to remember every word I and she had said. What in hell had been the matter with me ? Why should I have believed for one moment that she'd beg me to change my mind ? ...But then--it was right what I'd said. I would be no help to her in her work. I wasn't wanted either by her parents. So then--hadn't I done 'the right thing' after all ?

Next day I sat for hours at my wonky boarding-house table, writing long 'explanations'. She must believe me: I had not wanted to hurt her. All I had wished was to show her that I did not intend to become a burden to her in the development of her career. I only had wanted to show her that I understood the situation well--rather than ignore things and go on as before, no matter what might happen... Of course, I did need her friendship--as long as we both would understand that "it could never be more than that..."

I wrote several such wordy apologies, and in the end tore them all up. No, no letters. I must speak to her. I would 'phone her early next morning, and put things straight.

*

But I did not. After a sleepless night I came to the conclusion that 'things were better this way'. And as the days rolled past I tried not to think so often of what Cla-

ra might be doing. Instead I concentrated on my Dutch articles and on the translation into Dutch of May Sinclair's 'Life and death of Harriet Frean' I also began to buy as many dailies, weeklies and glossy magazines as my restricted means allowed, to find out whether they would be saying anything on Clara's work; and it gave me a shock of pleasure whenever I saw her art mentioned. Her paintings and drawings were now to be seen in various group shows; they still met with much acclaim, mixed here and there with criticism on the choice of her subjects, or her use of colour. But not a single reviewer found fault with her draftsmanship, her innate understanding of form.

I did what she had asked me : now and again I sent her a little note, telling her in a rather business-like manner what I was doing, or copying what I had read about her. For example: in October 1923 the 'Daily News' wrote : "Among "the artists whose work is most distinguished is Clara Kling- "hoffer, who is gradually emerging from the stage in which "her chief inspiration came from Italy, and developping a "strong personality. She has a great sense of colour and de- "sign, and there is always something of the heroic in her "work." Or the 'Daily Telegraph' on 18 October 1923: "The composition of a mother and her child, entitled 'After the Bath' has been beautifully drawn with the brush. and the colour "scheme of rich blues and greens in a golden light causes "the work to be one of arresting charm."

In one of her replies Clara spoke of a holiday she was to spsnd with Mabel Greenberg, an amateur painter and one of her best friends, at Tankerton in Kent. And, recalling a painting day in Bournemouth some time previously, she added: "...I shall never forget the great peace that filled me there, while at work. Out in the open I am always thrilled and awed by the immensity of things but never troubled by it. Why and wherefore no longer exist. The charm around you gives you a sensation of tranquility, of gratitude." But there was never a hint that she would want to see me again.

It was a miserable time, and I accepted with relief an offer to guide a group of people, members of the

newly

established "Workers' Travel Association', to Switzerland and Austria. For a while i had to limit my 'letters' to Clara to picture postcards of snow-topped mountains and blue lakes. I could not possibly know that all along Clara had been trying to tell me in letters she never posted, scribbled on bits of drawing paper that came to my knowledge many, many years afterwards, how deeply she wanted to restore our old relationship.

"I have been working quite hard," she said in one such a note. I am painting my sister Leah in the nude.(*) I am eager to create something wonderful. I can work on for hours, regardless of time and everything, with flushed face--strangely happy and unhappy. But nearly always after working in this way I become apathetic and sometimes inexpressibly sad.." Or again : "It seems so strange to me that we do not see each other. I thought we had so much in common; we were such good friends... My nearest and dearest thoughts have been yours, without reserve. Have I been mistaken in you ? Knowing me, you should not... Do tell me , are things well with you ? At present I seem to have no energy left. I always work too intensely, and pay for it later. Write me. Tell me what you have been doing, will you?"

(*) see reproduction

Some time during late summer she wrote: 'I believe it is easier to write a letter when one has practically nothing to say. It is so with me, anyway. Often I have tried to write you my thoughts, but too often it has resulted in a mumble of words that vaguely, if at all, express my meaning..." Another time this scribble: "You must come and see me soon...We have such a pretty garden now, full of blossoms ans flowers..." Or: "Why do I go through those violent changes from ecstasy to despair ? To what end ? Sorrows as well as joys uplift one. Yet--I am a coward; I am weak. If you knew what it meant to have in you such a friend..."

When I came back to London, I actually found a letter from Clara; with it came a note in French from the Revuwe du Vrai et du Beau, a Paris bi-weekly , asking for 'a story' on herself and for photographs of some of her paintings. Would I, she asked, write the little article and the captions for the photographs ? Would I come and help her choose the reproductions?

"It would give me such pleasure to know that you are doing something for me. I know I should not ask you, but the impulse is overpowering... It seems so impossible, our not seeing each other. There have been so many months when I have felt from deep within me one thought: that of knowing and loving you. Perhaps I was not listening to reason, but it seemed to concentrate on one thing: the fact that we had said goodbye to each other meant nothing..."

It was so urgent and warm an appeal to common sense, so strong a proof that our painful separation of many months had been utterly ineffective that I knew only one answer. As soon as my job allowed it I set out that afternoon for the old Victorian house in King Edward Road: the 'home' which in my thoughts I had never left 'for good'.

Once I was there, we found so much to say to one another that we forgot all about the Review of the True and the Beautiful!

*

But the old, tenuous relationship was never restored. There was no place for it, since we knew that mere friendship was not what either of us had ever wanted. Yet, we never became officially engaged. There seemed to be no need for the exchange of marriage promises. We had decided to tackle life together, but at the same time we were aware that marriage was still a long way off. Not because of lasting opposition from Clara's parents; they appeared by now to have resigned themselves to seeing me added to the family circle. Whatever were their objections, they were never uttered to me direct. No--they knew quite well that I did all I could think of to find employment as a journalist and thus make a reasonable living. How that purpose was to be realized was of little interest to them; that was entirely my affair, and I made no secret of the fact that the going was very hard.

As for Clara, she worked a great deal, trying all along to widen the circles in which her art was seen and generally admired. There was nothing else left for us two to do than to make the best of a difficult time, until both our places in the realm of creative labour would have become reasonably lucrative. We rejected the very idea of getting material

help from Clara's parents who, anyway, were waging their own war to eke out a decent living.

My first break towards our distant aim came early in 1924 when on a Saturday afternoon a friend telephoned me from Amsterdam, telling me that just a couple of hours ago a famous author and playwright, Herman Heijermans, had died suddenly. I had always admired his work, and knew his output well. Some of his best plays had been translated into German and English and staged both in England and Germany. I sat down at once and wrote two biographical articles on Heijermans. Next I hurried down to Fleet Street and the offices of 'The Observer'; there one of my articles was actually accepted for publication in next morning's issue. Elated with this result, I ran over to the 'Manchester Guardian'--and lo and behold, editor Scott himself read my second article and bought it on the spot. Both Sunday papers carried my articles in full!

I was, of course, jubilant. In my imagination I saw myself hired as a member of the regular staff of either weekly. Alas--that failed to happen, but 'The Observer' gradually accepted more of my writings, mainly on important events in Holland and Belgium. Meantime a few provincial papers in Holland and the Dutch East Indies were printing my London letters. I had reached a point where it became possible to accept a half-time job with an import-export firm, and devote much more of my time to writing.

Additionally, that summer, I guided another group of TWA travellers to Switzerland , and Clara was among them. It was her first 'conscious' trip to the Continent but my tasks as 'the leader' left us little opportunity to be together. The start of the tour was particularly difficult: as the group gathered at Victoria Station, I saw to my surprise that this time I was to guide a majority of well over middle age people. They, on the other hand, did not fail to observe how young I was , and they made no effort to hide their anxiety about finding themselves 'in the care of so immature a guide.' Fortunately, we soon got used to each other--even so that many months afterwards I and Clara used to meet with a few of them to tea, from time to time.

Long before our 'separation' Clara had met and come on friendly terms with the Indian philosopher and poet Rabindranath Tagore, and Protima, his daughter-in-law. On the few occasions we visited them in the Regina Hotel, in Gloucester Road, Tagore seemed invariably to me the personification of some biblical figure: Moses maybe,or perhaps even Abraham, the patriarch. Looking much younger than his 73 years, Tagore was dressed in flowing white robes. Thick snow-white hair covered his temples, ears and neck, while his greying beard came halfway down his chest. Watching him spell-bound , I could not help feeling that he was quite out of place enthroned upon a shabby arm chair in this small Kensington caravanserai. He spoke to us of his lecture tour, his poems and his works on philosophy; but invariably the conversation would turn to Santeniketan, the school for experimental education he had founded in Calcutta in 1901. He admired Clara's work, and as he posed for her for several drawings, he would urge her over and over again to come to Calcutta, and attend his school for at least a year. He was so insistent that in the end I began to be afraid Clara would actually decide to go to India!

On our visits Protima would say very little. She listened attentively to the great man, as if all he said was as new and exhilirating to her as it was to us. Some time later, when Protima came to Clara's studio to sit for her portrait in oils--looking very attractive in her beautiful saree and glittering jewellery--she seemed to be far more at ease. At times she even became loquacious, talking to Clara of her marital troubles and about the eventful life she was leading, accompanying her famous father-in-law all over the globe.

There exists a sweet note Protima sent to Clara from Paris in August, 1920. Her knowledge of English was limited and her spelling somewhat out of the ordinary:
"At last we are in Paris. The sea was very rough and
"all the way I felt sicik. Though we have not realy
"saw much of Paris yeat, but only the glimese of people
"in the street and pleasant weather gave me an impresion
"of gay life and glorious day. I shall write you later on
"what more pleasure we find here. We have tested your deli-
"cious cakes, all the way. With best love, from your

"affectionet PROTIMA."

Gradually I got to know more of Clara's friends: Mabel Greenberg, Eric Schilsky, a gifted sculptor, Philip Naviasky, a painter, Orovida, daughter of Esther and Lucien Pissarro. We often went to the large studio in Queen's Road, near Marlborough Road Underground station, that Mabel shared with Eric Schilsky. There were some fine pieces of his sculpture in that workshop: an extraordinary study for instance of Earl Beatty: a combination of granite-hard masses and sharp, cold outlines--a most convincing portrait of a harsh, arrogant and self-sufficient military figure. In sharp contrast, Schilsky's baby studies were sensitive to a degree, without a trace of sentimentality. The variety of his approach was striking; he had most decidedly the makings of a great artist. Throughout her career Clara wondered why Schilsky's sculpture failed to attain the ranking place in art that his early work so clearly presaged.

Philip Naviasky hailed from Leeds where already he had made a name for himself. Around this time he was working on several portraits of members of the Howard de Walden family. But his great desire was to spend a considerable time painting in the South of France: that paradise for young artists, so rarely within their reach.

As to Orovida Pissarro, heavy featured and enormous, there emanated from her a puzzling aura; her watchful stare, enigmatic smile or long silences disturbed me. There was something disconcertingly brooding and oriental about her, a characteristic clearly perceptible in her predeliction for the stylized but very decorative subjects of her silk screen prints. Seated in a high-backed Chinese chair she made upon me a Buddha-like impression. At times I found it hard to talk with her about everyday things.

Now that I was free every afternoon, Clara and I often went to West End auction rooms, specially those of Bonham's in Oxford Street.We were diligently looking for 'things' that were to form a part of our future home. And indeed: in the course of several months we collected an incredible medley of objects, some of them of questionable usefulness. Just to mention a few of those extraordinary finds: a tiny writing

desk, painted a hideous white but capable of being restored to its original oak state. A somewhat faulty arm chair with fine upholstery. A smoker's cabinet, complete with porcelain containers for tobacco and a tray for pipes(I was a non-smoker...). Two ferocious-looking game carvers and two large tankards. A jam dish with green-glass lining, a paper knife, an ever so slightly chipped jug and no less than seventeen framed and glazed Beerbohm cartoons believed, with tremulous hope, to be genuine, but proving to be mere reproductions.

It was great fun, this disorganized hunt. And the more important 'things' we bought, such as tables, chairs and--of all things--an Ottoman couch were not bad at all. These treasures were proudly transported to Fanny's flat where they would be safely stored until we had our own abode.

One morning we went to a beautiful St. John's Wood home. The family that had lived there, the Jewells, had separated. and now the contents of the lovely house were sold by auction. Clara knew the place well: Renée Jewell had been a patron since some time after the Leicester Galleries exhibition. She had drawn Renée's baby and was even then well aware that the Jewell household was not a happy one. Renée, a French girl, asked her not 'to make the baby look like her husband'--a request that , naturally, she could hardly take seriously. In the end the marriage fizzled out, and now the house stood empty.

I noticed with wonder that above every step of the impressive staircase the initials AT had been built in, in shining brass. Was this something the Jewells had dreamed up, and if so what did those letters mean ?"Why," said Clara, "Alma Tadema did it! He was a fellow countryman of yours ; he painted in this house and got very rich. He made huge pictures--generally very romantic scenes on historical subjects: things that had supposedly happened in ancient Egypt, Rome and in France when it was still called Gaul. They were mostly commissions, each of them for thousands of guineas. So you see: the initials stand for Alma Tadema; he wasn't a very modest person. He died in Germany, I believe. This studio is at the top of the house: very strange. and glittering. Come--I'll show you."

The studio, embarrassingly over-decorated , was as the

painter had left it many years before. "The trouble is," said Clara, "that nobody now seems to want his pictures anymore. You want to buy one ?... You can get a very big one for about two hundred guineas..."(1)

We did not leave Alma Tadema's palace with anything of great value. Modestly, we were satisfied to get a few boxes of fragrant Spermacetti soap. a nice commodity in which Mr. Jewell had at one time been very interested.

In the new year a very busy time followed for both of us. Clara worked steadily on drawings and a painting of Harriet Cohen, the well-known pianist. At the same time she was preparing for a large scale exhibition of her work that was to take place in the Redfern Gallery, 27 Old Bond Street, in March of 1926. The plan was to show about twenty new canvases and at least thirty new drawings. As for myself, I had to go to Holland on a pilgrimage to unwilling chief editors, and I did not return to London before late in February. By then Harriet Cohen's portrait was finished(*), and several new studies in red and black chalk covered Clara's studio table. She had been working at a great pace and now felt deflated. The invitation which at this very moment came from Mabel Greenberg: to accompany her on a month's holiday in the Pyrenees was a godsend. Towards the end of April both of them came back from Amélie-les-bains, Mabel, who had been seriously ill, feeling better while Clara, refreshed, was filled with ideas she was eager to express.

(*) see reproduction

That summer I guided a long tour through France and Italy so that Clara worked undisturbed. Before we met again with any regularity autumn had set in. We went to theatres and cinemas, but at least one evening each week--and this not always, as had once been my habit, on Friday--we spent at Clara's home. Not many changes had taken place in the family picture; the most important differences were that Hilda was growing up with astounding speed and that, at times, the confusion in the basement-kitchen seemed greater than ever.

---

(1) But tastes change. Recently, towards the close of 1973, Alma Tademas were sold at Sotheby and elsewhere at very steep prices. With the trend of the art market favouring Victorian

(continued at foot of next page)

One day I was told that next evening four of the sisters were to go to a dance. Hilda was considered 'too young yet', despite her grown-up airs... "I think you had better stay away tomorrow night", Clara laughed. "You'd only be in the way. But I shall tell you all about it. I promise!" She did, and her report was so lively and humorous that I persuaded her to write it all down, make a sort of a playette out of it. What she produced was a very good picture of the kitchen-basement background at number 50, and the salient characteristics of the sisters, as displayed under the pressure of an unusual event. I simply must include it :

BEFORE THE DANCE

Playette in one Act

Dramatis personae: Rosie, Rachel,Bertha, Leah,Hilda: sisters.
Sadie, general help in the family

Scene: the kitchen-living room of the Klinghoffers

Time : early evening.

(the room is long; actually it is a combination of two rooms, the separating wall having been pulled down during a spell of prosperity. At another wall,opposite the family table which is in the centre of the room, stands an old Gothic-style bank next to a small table covered with odd pieces of china, articles of clothing and a loaf of bread. This is the servant's drawing room, dining room and reading room. Sitting at the table, she has the big kitchen stove at her right, and a dresser laden with unused crockery at her left. At the far end of the room, at the side of the family-table a small fire is burning feebly. In front of it,over the back of a chair,hangs a

---

(continued footnote from previous page:)
art, a collection of 35 Alma Tadema paintings was sold for £234,000. For example: a large canvas,'The finding of Moses' which was withdrawn at Christie's in 1960 because it failed to reach a reserve of 240 gns., now fetched £30.000. Another, 'The roses of Heliogabalus' that remained unsold in 1960 (£105 was asked), now went for £28,000. Alma Tadema originally got £4000 for this painting which, considering the present buying power of the £, equalled perhaps £15000.

The Leger Galleries bought a picture entitled "Anthony and Cleopatra" for £18,000. It had been sold at Sotheby's in 1963 for £2000.

pair of stockings emitting a faint steam in their effort to dry. Rosie and Hilda are in the room. Rosie, holding a spoon in her hand, is leaning on the mantelpiece and looking into a mirror. Hilda, near the piano, is practising on her violin. Suddenly a loud knock is heard.

ROSIE: Sadie, quick, open the back door.

SADIE (heard from the adjoining scullery):Awight..;awright!

ALL THREE ENTERING SISTERS(in voices with mingled surprise, scorn and anger): Good Lord--look at her! Not washed yet?... What's the matter?... You sleeping ?...

ROSIE: Oh, alright, won't take me a minit...(aside) Sadie dear, put a kettle on the fire.

VOICES(in tremendous disgust:)What!..you haven't got any water on yet?..Ginger fool! You'll never be ready on time...

HILDA (continues to practice:) Oh shut up. Can't hear myself play.

VOICES: Good for you... Aren't you pleased ? Ssssht...don't disturb our genius!

BERTHA: (pulling off her coat and throwing it in a corner) I'm going to wash first!

LEAH: No, you won't ! I will! I know you--you'll take ages over it.

HILDA (stops playing; meanly:) Well--she must look NICE, for the boys!

RACHEL (laughing) That's right, Hildale. See (to Leah) she knows you!

LEAH (giving Rachel a withering look) Why don't you get your coat off?I know what'll happen--we'll get to the dance around ten, when it's almost time to go home.

SADIE (enters with a large bowl of hot water):Ere you are, Rose.

ALL THE VOICES: Who's going to wash first?... I'm going to... No--you won't!..I'm going to...It won't take me ten seconds!

HILDA (scathingly): Look at them all... Can't you shut up and get the dirt off'n you?

(ROSIE gets the bowl and stripping herself half-way, proceeds to wash.)

RACHEL: Phew--look't that! Enough dirt.'spect you haven't

washed y'rself for a year!(recites, in Yiddish, sing-song fashion:) oyven shney un' hinten fley...(snow on top, but fleas below).

(The dirty water is thrown down the sink. Once more the bowl, filled with clean hot water, stands ready).

LEAH: Come on, Bertha..; what are you waiting for? Don't ye see y'r water's there? (the expression on her face changes with surprising suddenness; she adds with a smile): I wonder if Uglow will be there... Do you like my dress, Hilda ?

HILDA (a naughty gleam in her eye) Not so bad. I think I like Bertha's better.

LEAH (indignantly) You would say that! I think mine's just as nice.

LEAH: My turn now at last... Come along, Sadie!...

ROSIE: Aren't you going to have any dinner first ?(With a start:) Oh! I f'got to put the pertatoes on, Sadie. Quick--put the pertatoes on!

LEAH: She makes me laugh...We've got no time for dinner. Why--she hasn't even got the potatoes on.

RACHEL (jovially) (putting on a pair of silk stockings: Not to worry. WE don't want any dinner..

(Washing over, the sisters proceed to dress and deck themselves out. Altogether they crowd near the fire and take up their positions before the mirror.)

LEAH : Let me have a look...Can't even see if my hair is straight.

RACHEL: Wipe that flour from your nose, Leah.

LEAH: Mind your own business. Look at yourself better; you've got more on than me.

BERTHA: Oh--be quiet, Rachel. What does it matter to you ?

RACHEL: YOU're no better. One would think you're the oldest--not one of the youngest.

HILDA, (quietly): You'll be late, all of you. Look at the time!

BERTHA: I've got my dress on; I'm nearly ready...(tilting her head and gazing dreamily into space, she asks of no one in particular:) Do uou like my dress ?

LEAH:(in a panic) Sadie...Sadie..., have you seen my stockings ?

RACHEL : There she goes. We'll never get out of this house.

SADIE (holding up the stockings between two fingers) 'Ere they

are, Leah. They was in the breadbin...
RACHEL(with a tremendous laugh, holding up one of the stockings drying before the fire) Look!..Ginger's going to the dance in wet stockings.
ROSIE (amidst the general uproar) Oh--they're nearly dry. Can you lend me a pair of gaiters, Bertha ?
SADIE (with a large saucepan, coming from the scullery) The pertatoes're ready.
RACHEL : What've you got for dinner ?
ROSIE : Chopped meat.
RACHEL : I don't want that stuff. It repeats.
LEAH (sings) Ain't she sweet..., I repeat...
(Everybody laughs, Sadie the longest and with evident enjoyment. Sadie smacks a number of plates on the family table. Rosie, holding the pan against her chest, proceeds to serve out the food with a fork)
RACHEL; Aren't you going to have any, Bertha ?
LEAH: Don't you Bertha...It'll smell...
BERTHA: I don't care. I'm hungry.
RACHEL: Come along, girls. So the boys won't dance with us. I care a fat lot. I've got them elsewhere.
(She picks up a potato with her fingers and blows on it, then pops it into her mouth. For a moment the others hesitate, but then, apparently overcome by the aroma of the food--the meat has also been served by this time--they follow suit and eat lustily, but in a great hurry).
LEAH (having finished first, puts on her dress and sails into the middle of the room with a swish)
HILDA: You aren't half getting fat on the hips, Leah!
LEAH: That isn't true. You only say it because you aren't going to the dance. You're only jealous..., <u>child</u>!
HILDA:(her face the very picture of jealousy) Phew--I couldn't care less.
BERTHA: I'm ready... Oh! I forgot my shoes. Wherever did I put my hanky?
HILDA: They make me laugh... Doesn't Bertha look nice ? You <u>all</u> do, in fact--but I think Rachel looks the best.
ROSIE: Don't <u>I</u> look nice, Hilda ?

HILDA: Of course you do... Didn't I say so ?
ROSIE: Pity you can't come, Hildale. Never mind--wait till you're older. Your time will come.
RACHEL: Who's holding the dance shoes ? Haven't you got a bag for them ?
BERTHA: We'll never get out at this rate. Rosie is still putting on her stockings.
LEAH: Don't forget to take the powder and lipstick with you.
RACHEL and HILDA: That's all she thinks about.
BERTHA: Now where did I put my coat ? Sadie--where's my coat?
(After a frantic search she finds the coat in a heap with other garments on the floor.)
(By now they all have got their coats on and gather once more before the mirror, to put the final touches to their toilet. LEAH dabs her nose; BERTHA puts a curl in place; ROSIE passes a finger across her eyebrows; and RACHEL surveys herself generally and critically.)
RACHEL : come on now, girls. Got everything ?
BERTHA: Who's got the parcel? Oh--Rosie has. Are my shoes in there ?
LEAH : And mine too ?
ROSIE: Yes, yes... Goodbye, Hildale. Be careful. Don't get near the fire. Goodbye, Sadie; don't let the water on the soup dry out...
BERTHA, LEAH, RACHEL: Goodnight Hilda. Goodbye Sadie!
HILDA: Bye... Enjoy yourselves.
SADIE : Much pleasure!
(They all troup out, hatless, with just a light coat over their flimsy dresses).
HILDA and SADIE are left alone. Sudden silence that, a moment later, is broken. ROSIE comes rushing back into the room.
ROSIE : I forgot my bag. Whare is my bag ? Quick--they're shouting for me to come... Where is it ?
HILDA: Ha ha ha ! You're holding it--you fool. Ha ha ha !
ROSIE (deflated) Oh...yes..Imust be up the pole...
HILDA and SADIE : Good night... Enjoy yourself . And don't elope with more'n one nice boy... Bye bye... Goodbye!...

ROSIE runs out. The front door bangs shut.
Once more there is silence in the Klinghoffer kitchen.
SADIE slowly approaches the family table, takes away the dirty plates and brings them to the scullery.
HILDA picks up her violin ,and resumes practising.

c u r t a i n

7

A honeymoon 'à trois'

Looking through Clara's press cuttings for 1925 and the early part of 1926 it is interesting, and instructive, to observe how art criticism was then as it is now: an expression of severely personal taste, understanding or prejudice. One comes across benevolent reviews that emphasizing Clara's youth and physical size--she was barely five feet tall--give her a paternal tap on the back and assure the world that, none the less, she will do well in the future. Or there is the art critic ('The Referee',London) who admits that Clara's charcoal studies, by then universally praised, are 'beau-"tiful, but only to a point. The obstruction I take to be the "unsatisfying limits of academic instruction! Should the artist have approached this critic to tell him: 'sir, I fought with all my strength against stifling academic instruction, and I have had so little of it that its influence has been negligible..' Should she have added that just because of her dislike of academic tuition, she rejected the Orpen bursary granted her by the Slade? Should she have written a letter to 'The Times' when reading that in a show of several independent artists her drawings were described as 'stylish but rather over-modelled,' whatever that might have meant? Should she have been excessively elated when the well-known critic Frank Rutter , in his weekly 'Sunday Times'-column, said of those very same drawings : "the incisive line of Clara Klinghoffer always results in inte-"resting work, and her talent is seen to good advantage here in a number of drawings."

Actually, Clara was neither jubilant nor depressed because of these opinions. Yet, she was not indifferent to what the critics said. She took careful note of their articles, was amused by the contradictory nature of some criticisms, and slightly annoyed when the critics paid more attention to her East End background, or to her height in inches, than to the art she had created. But to change her approach to art to conform with so great a diversity of viewpoints would have been as impossible to her as to become, of a sudden, a staunch devotee of cubism.

Yet, great changes were gradually coming into her work. She no longer concentrated on the East End types who had been her favourite subjects in the early years. Studies, for example, as the portrait of 'Old Mr. Brodetsky'(*): dignified, haughty-looking patriarch; or of 'Bananas'(*), ageing Jewish pedlar with swollen, half-blind eyes, gnarled hands and shabby clothes; or of Reb Hersh, worried East End Jew, trying hard to resign himself to his fate of useless old man in a foreign country. Those portraits, so abundantly reflecting her instinctive understanding of her models' mental make-up, were there to speak for her mastery of these subjects. Now she transferred her attention to the aesthetic beauty of the female figure, painting her five sisters, young, well-formed, ideal models. The near-life size to which she had adhered for most of her pictures between 1920 and 1924, became the exceptional. She focused on smaller studies, producing such canvases as 'Young Leah'(*), her sister Bertha, semi-nude, a beautiful portrait of Rachel facing fully that, early in 1926, was bought by the Contemporary Art Society, and presented to the Aberdeen Art Museum(*). She began to make sketches for ambitious compositions, most of which were for the time being, not realized.

(*) see reproduction

(*) see reproduction

(*)(see reproduction

(*) see reproduction

Despite the preparations for a large-scale exhibition at the Redfern Gallery, scheduled to begin in March, 1926, she found time to do a large portrait of Harriet Cohen, then in the heyday of her career as a pianist. It was this

very painting that brought me into a most unexpected contact with a member of the British nobility.

Before leaving on a short trip, Clara Had asked me to telephone Harriet and arrange with her day and hour on which I was to collect her portrait, to bring it to a framer. When I called her home she was out, but I was told that the canvas was available; but when I reached the flat I was surprised to discover that the painting had not been packed, or its face protected in any way. I could do nothing about it, and carried the portrait rather gingerly under my left arm, the painted side towards me. All went well until, seeing a beautiful Old Master exhibited in the window of Wildenstein's, in New Bond Street, I stopped for a moment to enjoy looking at it. In front of me stood two ladies, both dressed in black, the one short and well-filled, the other tall and slender. Suddenly the short lady turned brusquely; in doing this her blouse rubbed against a corner of the canvas where it had been nailed to the stretcher. Unfortunately, the corner nail had not been hammered in completely. I heard a tearing sound and saw to my utter dismay that there was an inch-and-a-half tear across the lady's arm, close to her shoulder.

"Now see what you've done!" she cried. "You stupid! Can't you look out?"

I blushed, embarrassed, and murmured my apologies. "I'm very sorry...I hadn't notice that nail sticking out."

"My God," said the tall lady, disdainfully. "You are a public danger. You should keep to the middle of the road..."

"Who are you, anyway ?" the short woman went on, in a harsh voice. "Who's your employer?"

"I've got no employer," I said. "And who are <u>you</u> ?"

"I am the Countess C.," she said. "Come on boy--what's the firm called you work for ?"

"I told you--I work for nobody. I fetched the painting for a friend."

"Hm...," said the tall girl incredulously. "A friend,eh?"

The countess opened her bag, and handed me a visiting card. Indeed--she <u>was</u> the Countess C.; and suddenly I recalled that a few weeks previously I had seen an interesting story in

the newspapers about her: how she had tried to enter the United States on a visit but had been refused permission to land on the grounds, so the story went, that having the reputation of leading a most tempestuous love life, she was declared guilty of 'moral turpitude' ...

"Give me your business card," the Countess commanded. "And write your friend's name on it, too."

I did not answer. The tall woman walked slowly past me so that the face on the painting became visible to her.

"My God!" she said. "It's Harriet Cohen!"

"No!" cried the Countess, unbelievingly.

"It is," I said, and I showed them the painting. "Please , believe me : I am very very sorry. I'll gladly pay the repair cost."

"Hmmm.," said the Countess, having another look at the picture. "It does look like Harriet. Did you do this?" she asked, and without awaiting my answer she went on, exchanging a glance with her companion, "you'd better be a damn sight more careful with your pictures-or you'll get yourself into big trouble." She took another visiting card from her bag, held it out to me and said : "your name and address--quick." I scribbled name and address on the back of the card. The Countess put it away, took a silk shawl from her bag and draped it around her shoulders, covering the damage.

"You'll hear from me," she said darkly. "Don't think I'm going to let you off so easily... Come on, Helen." She took the tall girl's arm, and they walked away briskly towards Piccadilly.

I stood there, looking after them and feeling quite put out. Of course, I regretted the incident but at the same time I could not help feeling amused that it had brought me into contact with so notorious a person--and she a Countess! It had in fact been my first meeting with a member of the British aristocracy.

*

On New Year's day of 1926 Clara and I decided that we would marry as soon as the results of her exhibition at the Redfern Gallery were known, and commissions resulting from it were carried out. She was working hard, in her studio as well as in the homes of some of her patrons. For the first time I realized

how much is involved in getting ready for a show. To begin with: the gallery could not hang more than about fifty works, while the number of paintings and drawings available was much greater. Consequently, choosing the exhibits was a difficult, time-consuming affair. Then followed long sessions at the framer's, and the slow progress of this important work had to be checked over and over again. There also was the matter of a poster to be displayed in the most frequented Underground stations. It was to have a paste-on reproduction of a drawing, and on that point the gallery and the artist had rather divergent points of view. But incredibly the exhibition opened without a hitch on the morning of March 9th, and almost immediately the usual expressions of approval by the art critics began to appear.

It would serve little purpose to mention them all, but a few must be quoted, of only because the critics had seen no work of Clara's "in quantity" for over three years.'The Times': "It is perhaps being wise after the event to say that "work has feminine characteristics when an artist is known to "be a woman. But this is certainly the case with Clara Kling- "hoffer's exhibition of paintings and drawings at the Redfern Gal- "lery. That is to say : she has the power to imitate with great "skill the manner of another painter and yet of toning it down "and adapting it to her own less emphatic means of expression, "as Berthe Morisot did with Manet. Her drawings and small pict- "ures, rather than her larger oils, show that she has real ta- "lent. Her drawings are by far het best work and please at "once, though, while they are reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci, "they leave out his emphasis and thus their correctness becomes "apparent only after close exammination. As is the modern "custom,they are intended to be works of art in themselves, "not studies of works of art, and they do not show the curio- "sity of an artist who draws to find something out, not to produ- "ce a finished effect. They are sensitive, but not profoundly "sensitive.

"Miss Klinghoffer's paintings are more under the in- "fluence of Renoir than of Leonardo, and in her biggest pict- "ures she has tried to be more forcible than is in keeping with "the character shown in her drawings. " 'The Observer': "Her

"style is clearly derived from her master (Bernard Meninsky)
"although feminine delicacy takes the place of his forceful-
(*)see re- "ness. The drawing of the Sick Child(*) is exquisitively
production "felt and drawn with a touch as sure as it is delicate. In
"her paintings she uses a palette permeated with irridiscent
"opalescent colours , which play into one another, and produce
"a vague surface movement. The accentuation of settled form
"is generally achieved by the treatment of the contour. Her
'Rachel', acquired by the Contemporary Art Society, 'Madonna'
and 'In the Studio' may be mentioned as amongst the most suc-
"cessful efforts." 'Westminster Gazette':"One artist , seeing
"her work today, described her as a cross between Da Vinci and
"Renoir. Her faces are primitive and her colour is bold and
"clear" 'The Birmingam Post': "She has considerable dexterity
"in suggesting an effective pictorial arrangement, and in
"putting together the component parts of a harmonious com-
"position... " 'The Sphere';"The work of Clara Klinghoffer
"reveals an artist of great subtlety. Remarkable results are
"obtained with a very restrained use of material, as is evi-
"dent in her 'Madonna.' 'Rachel,'another study, is parti-
"cularly deserving of notice. This is the first representa-
"tive collection Miss Klinghoffer has shown since 1920. Stu-
"dents of modern art should not miss the work of this young
"artist." 'The Jewish Chronicle': "She has succeeded in pack-
"ing a very brilliant career into a small number of years,....
"Her successful exhibition at the Hampstead Art Gallery in
"1920 attracted the attention of more than one sound art cri-
"tic, and compelled their praise. Since then Miss Klinghoffer
"has held a one-man show of drawings at the Leicester Galler-
"ies, and has had work in a number of exhibitions in London
"and the provinces. Her present exhibition , too, attracts
"considerable attention and there is good reason to hope
"that her name will be added to the small list of Jewish ar-
"tists of genius who have blossomed in England..."'Drawing
and Design' reproduced a fine nude study, and devoted its
cover to a painting in full colour, of 'Leah in a New Hat'.
'The Yorkshire Post'wrote: "Striking is the picture called
'Portrait'. It is the painting of a fat, round-faced child
"in a blue frock. Yet, it has a haunting quality,a provoca-

"tive and enigmatic look in the eyes, and a challenge in the "very plainness of its garments." But--as if to throw a fierce light upon the fickleness of art criticism--H. Granville Fell, writing in'The Queen', described this 'Portrait' as "a sadly "disappointing performance by an artist hailed a few years ago "as a draughtswoman of exceptional promise."

When the excitement inherent in coping with the demands of a full-fledged exhibition had subsided, the usual reaction set in: Clara felt exhausted, did little work and was clearly in need of a total change. What better time than this to make the acquaintance of 'my' country, The Netherlands, the land where my ancestors had lived for hundreds of years? Unfortunately I had already accepted leadership of a group travelling to Italy and Austria, and so Clara would have to go by herself. But I arranged to leave my travellers on the home journey at Calais, safely installed on the ferry, so that I could join Clara in Holland, and have her meet my mother and brother who lived high-up in the north-eastern city of Groningen.

The question where Clara was to stay throughout the six weeks of my wanderings through Europe was solved in a rather peculiar manner. Years ago, on a cycling tour through the province of Gelderland, I had come to a couple of small country towns, Voorthuizen and Barneveld, both so pretty and peaceful that I would have liked to stay there for a full summer. Barneveld was particularly proud of its high, squat church tower, not only because it was an attractive example of solid medieval architecture, but especially because every schoolchild throughout the country was aware of the part it had played in Holland's eighty year-long struggle against Spain. During the late sixteenth century, when Spanish armies roamed throughout the land, the Dutch defending general and his men had ensconced themselves inside the tower; their last stronghold against a numerically overwhelming enemy force. There was no escaping a gruesome fate; the entire garrison was sure to be put to the sword the moment their means of defense were exhausted. Then their general, Jan van Schaffelaar, spoke to the enemy from the battlements: would they guarantee safe retreat for his men if he himself surrendered ? Surprised and pleased, the Spaniards readily consented. They ceased their attack on the

tower and waited for Van Scheffelaar to come through the gate and surrender. Hurriedly they placed their troops close to the tower with peaks and halbards upturned.

Time went by but the tower remained closed. The Spanish trumpetters gave a warning blast: 'surrender, general--or else!'Suddenly Van Schaffelaar was seen on the highest ramparts; he climbed across the embrassures and with arms outstretched he jumped from the tower, straight into the razor-edged points of the Spanish spears and battle axes.

True: this heroic self-sacrifice did not play much of a role in my decision to write the Burgomaster of Barneveld, asking him for the name of a family willing to give shelter to a young Englishwoman who soon was ro acquire Dutch citizenship. He replied promptly: the headmaster of Voorthuizen's primary school, recently retired and the father of several sons and a pretty daughter, would be Clara's willing host for as long as she liked.

Thus Clara landed in the middle of a big, harmonious and hospitable Dutch family, the Van Loons. The former teacher took her for long walks through the countryside, practising his faulty English on 'the miss'. She closed a lasting friendship with the daughter who, at the death of her mother, had taken the leadership of the family upon herself, and, to her great amusement, Clara found herself adored by one of the young sons. On hearing that 'the miss' was soon to marry me, he advised Clara earnestly to break off her engagement and wait for him--just a few years...

When after six weeks I came to Voorthuizen, Clara not only felt rested and quite ready for 'the welcome treadmill of the drawing board and the easel', but also had learned to speak some Dutch, enhanced by the charming local accent.

From Voorthuizen we travelled north, to my 'home-town' Groningen. Despite the language barrier Clara got on well with my mother who, being short herself, seemed very pleased that I was not going to marry a 'giantess'. As for my brother, he spoke English well and posed for his portrait with for him unusual patience ; there was no doubt that he liked the

new sister. I was particularly happy about this because he was in poor health, only slowly recuperating from a serious illness, and Clara's companionship cheered him visibly up.

When we returned to London it was the middle of June. The wedding had been set for the twenty-ninth of July, and there was much to be done yet: arrangements had to be made with the authorities of the Duke Street Synagogue, plans to be perfected for the reception at 'number 50', invitations must be printed and sent out. There were discussions with Tom Becke, a designer working in the Klinghoffer fashions' shop. He finally created a wedding gown of lace-edged white and pink organdie, with beautiful peacock tail patterns of glittering sequins. There were several fittings, also for the three bride's maids and the little page: Fanny's small son. As for myself, for the first time in my life I had a severely-dark formal suit made, bought that strange contraption: a top hat, and made certain to acquire the latest fashion in buff spats. And when all this had been done, I booked our tickets for the honeymoon trip to the south of France.

Unfortunately, Hilda fell ill and for a while it looked as if she would not be strong enough to help hold up the bride's train. But although she still was not her usual perky self, she was a very pretty bride's maid when--as I stood under the canopy in the Great Synagogue, Duke Street--I saw her come towards me among my bride's following. Leaning on her father's arm, Clara advanced slowly. She looked very lovely, and as she came close, I could see her smiling little face through the traditional veil.

Of the actual ceremony I remember clearest repeating the marriage vows in Hebrew and, as the rabbi sang the blessing over the wine that my bride and I were to drink, thinking what a handsome man he was and how very white and regular were his teeth. I crushed with emphasis a glass that had been placed below my right heel, then lifted Clara's veil and kissed her rather shyly. Next I felt myself embraced by a crowd of female relatives and friends--and everybody wished us Mazzel Tov: good luck.

*

That evening when it was time for us to leave 'number 50' to go to a West End hotel, I noticed that Clara was talking softly to Hilda whose cheeks were wet with tears.

"What's wrong ?" I asked when Clara came back to me. "Is she not feeling well yet ?"

Clara shrugged. "No, she's alright. She's just unhappy that I am leaving. She's been saying for days : I hate your leaving."

"Couldn't she be sent to the country somewhere, to get quite better?"

"Where?"

She looked up at me, and all at once I knew that we were having the same thought.

"What about her coming along with us for a while?" I said. "The sun would do her good, in the south."

"Do you mean it?"

"Of course I do--if you want it."

"Oh yes! I would love it--just for a few weeks."

"Alright then, let's tell your parents."

So we did--and although they were somewhat surprised no objection was shown to our extraordinary suggestion. Everyone agreed that yes, it would do the child a world of good.

Next morning many arrangements had to be made in a rush. Train and boat tickets had to be changed; a passport must be obtained for Hilda , and no matter how difficult this was, the passport was obtained before the day was over. Her clothes must be packed, and some farewells had to be said. It all seemed utterly fantastic, yet , at the same time quite natural. At long last, early in the evening, we sat on the ferry to Calais, starting out rather tired on a honeymoon 'a trois'. Twentyfour hours after our wedding we had already obtained parenthood of a sort: a young child had been entrusted to us and must be looked after with love and care.

In Avignon we accidentally caught up with Philip Naviasky; he had been painting landscapes to his heart's content, and took us to his hotel to display his harvest. He was a good, cheerful companion who loved the verb 'manger' and never left off praising 'the good old Sol' that shone so brightly in this part of the world and made everything look so

beautiful. He showed no surprise at our travelling as a three-some, and promised solemnly to find us later in the summer in Menton or Nice, wherever we would decide to stay.

Guided by a Workers' Travel Association pamphlet , we found a nice little pension in the heart of Menton. It was a comfortable place, but rather expensive for our restricted means. When after a week or so I approached the Armenian owner, asking him for special terms because we would be staying 'so long', he scratched his head and asked: "What is 'so long' ?"

"Maybe five, six weeks," I said, hopefully,

"Ah!--then I've just got the place for you, if you want to look after your food yourself, and don't mind keeping a large house clean."

"Oh?"

"Yes. I have a villa on the Grande Corniche: Boulevard de Garavan, very near the Italian frontier. Villa Aggradito--six bed rooms, all furnished. I only use the house in wintertime. You can have it for 400 francs per month, beginning today. Alright?"

We took Villa Aggradito without further questions, sight unseen; and that same afternoon our landlord moved us there with all our luggage. It was, indeed, a very pretty place, with stately stairs leading up to an impressive front door. The rooms were clean, with brown tile floors; there was plenty of hardware in the kitchen, and the upstairs bedrooms had far more beds in them than we needed. But best of all: there was a garden extending halfway up the slope beyond the villa, with orange and lemon trees, and a vine festooned with an abundance of large blue grapes. We felt most thankful to our Armenian host, and hoped that we had understood him well when he mentioned the astoundingly reasonable rent.

That same day we went exploring the neighbourhood , and found that a seven minutes' walk brought us to the Italian frontier. What joy to be able to walk from one country into the next without more todoment than showing the outside of our passport and exchanging smiles with the bored guard. Traffic on the Corniche was light, and on the side of the road stood long rows of pepper trees, spreading a lovely odor. On the righthand side,

when going towards the Italian border, was a staircase of some eighty steps hewn out of the living rock; it emerged onto the busy auto road and a row of shops, including a grocery and a wine shop where glorious Asti Spumante was sold for just a few francs per bottle.

The walk along the seafront to the old and most pictoresque part of Menton was rather long but always enjoyable, even in the light early morning mist; and soon Clara was drawing and painting in the crooked little streets, on the steep stairways between tall , overhanging housefronts, where ~~xxxx~~ huge arches did their best to keep the rows of ancient shuttered homes apart. Hilda, much stronger after only a few weeks, was Clara's staunch companion while I sat in our little garden reading, or writing my next 'Letter from London' which, I am ashamed to say, was sent by me to my London room mate who promptly forwarded it to the paper in Holland that set it up in type and saw to it that the various papers belonging to 'my group' got a copy. Writing mainly about London life in general and seldom about actualities, I had through carefully reading all the London papers I could find, little difficulty composing my weekly letter. If ever I felt qualms about this round-about way of brightening the Saturday pages of several Dutch dailies, they were very ~~small~~ slight.) I was, after all, not their 'London correspondent' in the real sense of the word. Whatever I wrote came from close observation of London life, in many of its endless variegations.

Though both 'working', we often took time off and went on long walks, by preference into the hills, with their ancient villages : Gorbio, rich in dark dwellings hewn out of the rocks many centuries ago; or Eze, grey and ancient, tottering on the top of a pyramid-like mountain. And of course; we stepped across the border at least once a week, walked through Grimaldi where the ancestors once lived of today's Monaco rulers. Or we went as far as Ospidaletti where the mysterious doctor Voronoff was said to be rejuvenating elderly gentlemen through the implantation of certain monkey glands... One day we even got as far as San Remo, a lovely semi-

tropical paradise. We made the trip in great state by train from Menton station and had a meal in the Europe Hotel, with a stunningly grand view on the Mediterranean. Alas, our enthusiasm waned considerably when I discovered that, after settling the bill, there was just enough money left to take a tram that ran part of the way towards Ospidaletti. From there we marched home through the dark, singing and laughing--and never a word of complaint from Hilda.

On one of our walks towards the Italian border where the road cut across the auto strada, we saw a little man with grey hair standing in the middle of the right-hand lane. He was neatly dressed in black linen trousers and jacket and carried a large guitar on a leather strap across his shoulders. He had a long egg-shaped face, burnt a red-brown by the summer sun. His straight nose had wide, sensitive nostrils; his large eyes were of a melancholy brown. His forehead, wide and furrowed, blended into his high bald dome; and above both ears were thick tufts of snowwhite hair. On his open shirt collar a neat dress tie had somehow found a foothold. All in all, he made the impression of a musician on the way to an appointment, transporting his instrumen in a somewhat unorthodox way.

As we approached he quickly placed the guitar in position , and began to play. First a gay melody, then the popular 'Valencia' tune, of which he sang the words in a small, tremulous voice.

We stopped and listened. There was nothing about him of the street singer. Rather, he seemed to be amusing himself and, accidentally, allowing us to share his enjoyment.

"Oh--I'd love to paint his picture!" said Clara.

"Okay--shall I ask him to sit for you?"

"You think he would...?"

I asked him in my 'best' Italian which wasn't very good--and he agreed at once."But," he said apologetically in a gentle, tired voice, "I could not buy the picture..." I assured him that this would not be expected ; on the contrary: we would be happy to reimburse him for his loss of time. He asked no further questions but, turning to Clara, said

slowly, as if that would make it easier for her to understand him:"I shall be most honoured, signora, to be painted by you."

Next morning, exactly at eleven, he came to our 'villa' and began by introducing himself : Torquato Simoncelli, musician. He lived at the other side of the Corniche, lower down , in a little house called 'Casa Rustica'. He hoped we would visit him and his sister Griselda. It was she who looked after him.

"Such a nice old man," said Hilda approvingly as he sat on the garden terrace, plucking the strings of his guitar. Now and then he would sing an Italian song , accompanying himself; but mostly he looked down upon the instrument, or politely, in slow, very clear Italian, answer some question I had put to him 'to keep him interested'. He came from Senegallia, had been a musician all his working life. No, not a guitarist. A pianist. He had accompanied many a singer of name. His brother, too, had been an artist. He died young, alas--such a promising talent...

But soon Torquato would fall silent again, or hum another tune.. Did he make a living, playing and singing near the border ? He answered with a smile: 'Ah signor, it keeps me busy. I see things and hear what people say. Sometimes I am approached by someone truly interested in music... Anyway--it is better than sitting at home, thinking of the past..."

A full face portrait, showing Torquato playing, eyes semi-closed, was finished after five or six sittings. Torquato who from the very first had been a welcome visitor to 'Villa Aggradito', staying invariably for a cup of coffee after posing, seemed as sorry as we that no further sittings would be needed. "But I would like to do another quick sketch of him," Clara said. "A profile study. Ask him: is he willing?" He was--on one condition: that for this second picture he would take no pay--only our promise to come and dine with Griselda and him , in their home, as soon as the second portrait was finished.

We promised. Torquato got up and pulled his guitarcover from the washing line on which he had hung it; but this time he seemed to have extraordinary difficulty pack-

ing the instrument. Suddenly Hilda burst out in a peal of laughter. "Look Clara, look!" she cried. "Look--Torquato's trying to get the guitar into your swimming gown!" Indeed he was: he had pulled the swimming gown from the line where it had been drying...

Now that the first study of him was ready, Torquato was allowed to see it. True to her habit never to show a sitter what she was doing before her study was completed, Clara had so far kept the canvas out of Torquato's sight. Now he walked to the chair on which the canvas stood, remained at some distance and looked at the portrait long and in silence. Then, turning to Clara, he said: "Signora, allow me to say...it is a masterly painting. You are a great artist. This picture should be hung in a museum."

He could hardly have known how much of a prophet he was: during the following year 'Torquato" was exhibited in England, earning high praise wherever it was shown. Finally, it was hung in the Royal Academy of Arts' 165th Exhibition in London, and acquired for the Tate Gallery, under the terms of the Chantrey Bequest.(*)

(*) see reproduction

8

To France again

Although we talked of going back to London as soon as the summer days were over, we were both of us working well and feeling so content in our comfortable 'villa' that the date of our departure was several times postponed. Finally our Armenian landlord reminded us that he would shortly wish to rent 'Villa Aggradito' for the entire winter at a much higher price; and as that figure lay well beyond our means, we looked around for another place to live until ready to travel back. Going further afield along the coast we came across an attractive ground floor and garden at St. Sylvestre, a quiet, rustic suburb of Nice. 'Villa Joséphine', a roomy white-washed house in a steeply ascending sideroad, belonged to an aged lady, Madame Rigolier. She was a friendly soul, proud of the daughter and grandchildren who lived with her, and equally fond of her well-kept garden (*) which, in its centre, contained a full-grown persimmon tree, richly loaded with luscious bitter-sweet 'kakis'. Only the very ripe fruit was carefully picked by the daughter and carried upstairs in triumph. Madame Rigolier had--kindly enough--asked us not to take the fruit; and the very manner in which from time to time she would present us each with a persimmon demonstrated beyond all doubt that this was the very limit of her generosity where the harvest was concerned of her precious tree.

(*)see reproduction

But in all other respects Madame Rigolier was gentle and helpful, especially after she was told, around the

middle of September that Clara was pregnant. She displayed an almost motherly concern for her welfare, provided us with a small coal stove that, installed in the central corridor, took the chill off in the flat after dark, and recommended earnestly her own village doctor who, though still young, had had much experience in bringing babies into the world. Knowing Clara in such trustworthy hands, I decided to bring Hilda back to London, She now looked very healthy: with rosy cheeks, well filled-out, owner of a vast amount of energy .

There would now be a spare bedroom in the flat and so, knowing that my brother was still not well enough to resume his work, we decided to invite him to come to us for the wintermonths. I met him in Paris on my return from London, and soon he was enjoying the lovely climate, making friends in our neighbourhood and posing for a portrait that remained unfinished. While he explored the immediate surroundings, Clara and I spent much time in Nice, particularly in the old 'quartier' with its narrow streets and ancient buildings. The Lascari Palace, in tortuous rue Droite, still endowed with an attractive entrance hall and majestic staircase, but otherwise reduced to sheltering a few dozen middle class families--each family in one of the building's many rooms, was sketched repeatedly. One of these drawings, a vivid impression in blue chalk of the central hall's lost glory, is now in the Drawings and Print collection of the British Museum.

So the winter passed by. My brother, much improved, travelled back to Groningen, and early in the new year we began to think seriously of our own return home. Clara's health had been reasonably good, after the first uncomfortable weeks of morning sickness. But she had little confidence in the local doctor--who turned out to be in his sixties--and the archaic set-up of his surgery. To be sure: there was an up-to-date English hospital in Nice, but it was mainly used by well-heeled visitors to Nice and charged rates that we were unable to pay. In fact: materially speaking things had not gone too well with us. My Dutch newspapers were annoyingly slow in paying what they owed me. Whatever efforts were made, via my London friend, to remind

them of their small debts, remained long unanswered.

Fortunately I had in my 'best' years in London had the foresight to buy several gold coins, English and Dutch. Now those treasures disappeared one by one into the safes of some bank along the tree-lined streets of Nice. On setting out on our adventurous honeymoon we had bought long term return tickets so that the matter of our transportation to London had been taken care of. Greater problems were awaiting us in London: foremost of all finding a place to live. To be sure, we could 'move in at number 50' for a while; but as the baby was expected some time late in May there must be a home awaiting Clara and the child. Besides, the Redfern Gallery had asked for new work to be included in its Summer Salon, and a few other galleries had requested Clara to contribute to shows during summer and autumn of 1927. She needed a place to work in.

On a lovely morning in early March we left 'Villa Joséphine' in a large-wheeled carriage drawn by a meager horse. Madame Rigolier was truly sorry to see us go and in true French fashion embraced us on both cheeks. She was disappointed; somehow she had expected the baby to be born in St. Sylvestre. She could not, by way of a parting present, give us some of her priceless kakis; they were not in season. Instead she presented us with two bottles of home-made wine, to be enjoyed on the long trek homewards; and she added a long list of articles we must acquire soonest possible, to avoid our baby being born without possessing a single stitch of clothing...

We broke the journey in Paris, staying for two days and nights in a hotel on the left bank, recommended by an acquaintance in Nice. It was a narrow but very deep building of two floors only, each floor being cut in two parts by a lengthy corridor with on either side a dozen or so bright-yellow doors. Between every three doors was a water-tap with a capacious pail; and at the very end of the corridor were 'The Watters'(lavatory), betraying its presence at a considerable distance. We soon perceived that the tenants were mainly young, and older, women who stayed in most of the day but went out on their errands towards dusk.

There was a great deal of foot-shuffling and suppressed laughter in the corridor towards two or three in the morning. And so, ignoring its official name, we christened the place 'The House of Iniquity', and felt quite comfortable in its close winter atmosphere.

*

While Clara began to work in her old Studio, uncomfortable at times because the baby now began to be restless, I tried to pick up the threads of my stagnant relationship with the Dutch papers, and walked around Hampstead and Hendon on the look-out for a flat. It was a difficult task: rents were high and much of what was offered was old, delapidated, or downright dirty. In the end I came across a ground floor flat, unfurnished, at 130 Station Road, in Hendon. That section of the street had been only partly built up; there was quite an expanse of open terrain on either side of the house--some of it used for chicken runs and rabbit hutches belonging to some enterprising people in the neighbourhood. But the street was very quiet; it had a faintly rural atmosphere which Clara--when I brought her out to see the place--particularly liked. Thus we rented the flat from its grey-haired woman owner who lived on the first floor and obtained her permission to bring in at once, even before our agreement had been signed, most of the things we had bought a year or more ago, and left with Clara's elder sister.

What joy to make the flat 'habitable', all alone--even if, in my enthusiasm, I emprisoned myself in a corner of the dining room when staining the floor boards a deep, shining black. What pleasure to lay the brand-new fawn carpet, put the sturdy table and chairs in their places and arrange our fragile Chinese dishes, the old-Dutch brass candlesticks and many other odds and ends upon the Jacobean-style sideboard! What satisfaction to fill the shelves in our bedroom with books too long packed away in bulging tea chests. What a labour of love to hang some of Clara's paintings and drawings on the light-grey papered walls. And what a great surprise, on looking out of the kitchen window, to see a gathering of half a dozen rats grouped in something approaching a

circle, pulling and tearing at a bloody, feathery object: a poor innocent chicken. Wisely, I did not mention this unpleasant discovery to Clara. Instead, I went around the neighbourhood, found out who the owner of the murdered chicken was and had a serious talk with him. mentioning the Board of Health in passing by. He promised to wipe out the rats without endangering the lives of his hens and cocks;and whatever he did, by the time we moved into the flat the rats had gone--but so had the chickens and the rabbits. Perhaps a friendly nudge by the Board of Health had persuaded the neighbours to dispose of their 'pets'. But this was almost seven weeks later.

On May 28th our daughter was born in a nursing home on the Hackney downs. She had blue eyes and a generous tuft of blond hair. We called her Sonia, because of our shared admirationfor Dostoievsky&'s Sonia in his 'Crime and Punishment'. The confinement was not an easy one; there had been some tearing, and Clara had to rest until the wound was healed. She was impatient but whiled away the time sketching her very own model. There are many beautiful drawings of the baby: smiling, laughing, sleeping.(*) But at last Clara was strong enough to move from her parents' home to our own; and her ecstatic surpriss at finding the place so 'finished' was the best reward I could have wantedfor having had to put up so long with a life divided between an empty flat of our own and a too blatantly tolerated existence under someone else's roof. For, obviously, we had not returned from our foreign travel with anything resembling a firm basis for making a living. True: Clara's work was sold here and there, but artist's materials are expensive. As a rule, after all costs including the gallery commissions, were deducted, there generally remained just about enough money to buy fresh canvases, paint, paper and other necessaries. As for myself, I succeeded now and then to sell an article to some newspaper or magazine, and my Dutch clients still wanted my weekly contribution. But all in all, the income derived from these efforts was hardly sufficient to pay our rent and run a household based on normal expenditure

(*) see reproduction

for food, clothing and the needs of a baby. Some of my in-laws strongly bewailed Clara's decision to marry a man whose profession did not appear to be a money-making occupation. One thing was clear : I must quickly find a way to earn additional income. I tried all sorts of approaches: answering newspaper ads, registering with several agencies, seeing publishers and offering them my services as a linguist-- all to no avail. Meantime we focused our hope upon the different exhibitions in which Clara's work was to be hung. Surely: with reviews so laudatory as she had had so far, there must be a rapid increase in sales !

Indeed: the critics were as generous as ever with their praise. The 'Daily News', reviewing the yearly New English Art Club's exhibition, wrote: "Clara Klinghoffer has two "finely drawn portrait heads." 'The Referee', London (on the Women's International Art Club exhibition,) said : "Clara "Klinghoffer is always an interesting artist".'The Town Crier'm,London, on the Redfern Gallery's Summer Salon, went into more detail: "Miss Klinghoffer's 'Study' a backview of "the head and shoulders of a woman. is excellent in drawing "and colour, the latter being cool, as this artist has dis-"carded the hot Renoiresque colouring of a not too distant "past." 'The Times'(on an exhibition of Jewish art in the Whitechapel Art Gallery): "the pictures are of two kinds, "the first being pictures of Jews in which the artist has "sought to give characters of his subjects. Perhaps among "the best of these is Clara Klinghoffer's study of an old Jew, "a painting which is frankly and admirably anecdotal." 'The Connoisseur': "Clara Klinghoffer's study of a seated "woman with her back towards the observer and a cloak draped "across her shoulders, is a peculiarly effective piece of "painting. This artist possesses a somewhat unusual sense "of colour, and has achieved also a distinctive method of "expressing it. Her work reveals observation, and no small "measure of sympathy with her subject, as is well seen in her 'Head of a Japanese Girl". In this the bizarre treatment of "the background, though contrasting curiously with the finish-"ed modelling of the face, in no way detracts from the effec-"tiveness of the portrait. Rather, in point of fact, having

"a contrary result. 'The Studio': (in a long illustrated article on Clara and her work by J.B. Manson, director of the Tate Gallery, and himself a painter of note)"It is "a satisfactory thing that Clara Klinghoffer's work is not "definitely and deliberately founded on that of some admired "painter. This is somewhat rare, as so many of the younger "generation of painters seem to be moved by one of three de- "sires: the desire to be original at all costs, the desire "to be modern, irrespective of personal equipment, or the de- "sire to paint like one of the later French masters, prefe- "rably Cézanne. Clara Klinghoffer has happily avoid- "ed all these obstacles, possibly even without being aware "of them. She has, it would seem, naturally a precious gift: "the power of transmuting the facts of experience into the "gold of expression."

At the Daily Express 'Young Artists' Exhibition', held at the galleries of the Royal Society of British Artists, in London, Clara's self-portrait was bought for the private collection of Lord Beaverbrook, and the Print Fund of the Contemporary Art Society acquired a blue chalk drawing of the head of a girl, in order to present it to the British Museum's department of Prints and Drawings.

By now the fame of Clara's work had penetrated into foreign countries. The leading Amsterdam 'Handelsblad'wrote: "Clara Klinghoffer is among the few of her generation who have "succeeded in circumventing the many pitfalls adhering to the "work of most younger painters in England. Her recent 'Old "Troubadour" is praised by leading critics as her best work "to date. And rightly so, for in spite of the forcefully "realistic conception of this picture, it is free of all "coarseness, while the blending of its colours may safely be "described as refined."

Another Dutch daily with a national distribution, 'De Tijd' of Amsterdam, devoted a long article to Clara's art, and said : "...her drawings, though by no means endeavour- "ing to be Old Masters, have the full finish and charm that awaken "memories of Botticelli... She is capable of achieving an al- "most aetherical beauty, an exquisite capacity to transform "sweet dreams into reality. It is this spiritual refinement

"which reaches its pinnacle in the wonderful chalk draw-
"ing called Sonia, a perfect creation despite its sparing,
"light contours... There has been talk of a possible show
"in Holland, a plan I greatly approve of..."

Her paintings were also seen in Stockholm, in a show by Swedish and English painters. The 'Svenska Dagbladet' praised her painting of an old Jewish pedler, with heavy eyelids and gnarled fingers (*). 'Social Demokraten' singled out the same picture for special praise, and 'Svenska Morgenbladet' described that canvas as 'painted with brutal force.'

(*)see reproduction

At home, in London, the 'Daily Express', reviewing its Young Artists' Exhibition, said : "Clara Klinghoffer,
"whose drawings of children excited so much talk a few years
"ago , has two admirable sketches." 'The Morning Post' on the Redfern Gallery's Summer Salon: "Clara Klinghoffer has
"a fine Titianesque study. " Frank Rutter, well-known critic, in a long article in 'The Christian Science Monitor," Boston,USA, mentions Clara's work next to that of Augustus John, William Orpen, John Nash and some others as 'contri-
"butions by famous artists, a group of painters and sculptors
"of the highest talent, many of whom are very little known at
"present on the Continent and in America. It is the best work
"of these men and women that ought to be presented to the
"foreign public... " 'The Referee', on the Redfern Gallery's Summer Salon: "A small portrait in oils of a Javanese girl
"by Clara Klinghoffer has considerable charm; the face is
"well modelled, bright and alive, and she has achieved the
"delicate copper-tone complexion of her subject." 'The New Empire', Calcutta(on the same show): "A heavy-lidded Jewish
"character with bowler hat well pressed back, is superbly
"painted by that more than promising artist Clara Klinghoffer."

Before 1927 was past, Clara's drawings and paintings had been on exhibition in various provincial centers, including Brighton and Bradford, South Kensington's Imperial Art Gallery, and in an exhibition at University College, London, of outstanding work by teachers and students of the

Slade School between 1871 and 1927. Clara's contribution to this remarkable show of over 350 works was particularly praised by 'The Referee': 'Her Madonna, bought by Mrs. Wedderburn, is a sketch well drawn, expressive and full of emotion."

*

Beyond all doubt these eulogies from several Continents were highly encouraging, but they failed to bring about a rush on Clara's work. Sales were made--but they were few and far between. Perhaps the blame for this should to a considerable extent be placed upon the diffident manner in which most galleries sat back once a show was on, to await the art-loving--and more particularly the art-buying--public. Little or nothing was done to throw the light of well-constructed and knowlingly directed publicity upon such exhibitions. To advertize on an impressive scale, quoting at least a few of the many favourable reviews available was never dreamt of, even though the theatre had long ago realized that such propaganda was of the utmost importance. It appeared to be taken for granted that possible clients had read every critical opinion on the exhibited work and need no further encouragement in any form to come and see for themselves whether the praise heaped upon the artist was truly deserved. When once I ventured to bring up this idea in a conversation with the head of a gallery, he smiled condescendingly and said that, surely, I must understand that such advertising would do nothing to enhance the pride and dignity of either the artist or his gallery... And so the exhibition rooms remained only too often virtually empty on many of the days during which an artist's creations were hanging upon its walls with the sole purpose of finding buyers.

It was an altogether disappointing state of affairs, and Clara often wondered how poorly an artist would fare who was not fortunate enough to draw the special attention of the critics.

Towards the end of the year we were materially in a little promising state and I was thinking, not without loathing, of going back to half-time work with my 'old friends' in Smithfield when, at the most critical moment, America came to our rescue! I noticed a small advertisement in a morning paper in which a young man knowing foreign languages and having travelled through Europe was invited to apply for the post of temporary secretary to an American industrialist visiting Europe. The job seemed truly cut out for me, and I lost no time applying. The result was beyond all expectation good: I was brought in touch with a hefty gentleman from Detroit who, in a ten minutes' meeting, sized up me and my knowledge of French and German, and then proceeded to engage me on the spot on the incredibly high salary of fifteen pounds weekly plus all travel expenses. I was to meet Mr. Ray Graham, one of the three Graham Brothers who headed the Graham Paige Motor Car company of Detroit, as he stepped off the trans-Atlantic liner 'Olympic' at Cherbourg, and from that moment on function as his reliable guide, philosopher and friend.

My joy at such good luck was considerably tempered by the thought that for some time to come I would not see much of Clara and our baby daughter. But there was, said my new employer, a fair chance that Mr. Graham who travelled with his wife, a son and a daughter, would spend several weeks in London; it was all a matter of my helping him to make his three months' trip through Europe most advantageous to him.

At the appointed time I stood on the quay at Cherbourg, and saw the liner coming in, then going for anchor just outside the harbour and unload many of her passengers with piles of luggage onto a large tender. The arrangement had been made that Mr. Graham was to hold a black briefcase--and there he was, right in front: short and squat, in his late forties, with dark hair and keen brown eyes. Halfway down his nose stood a thick-rimmed pair of glasses. Once on shore he greeted me by my name, introduced his family in a whirlwind fashion and then seemed quite disappointed that he and I could not sit down somewhere to

settle his schedule for the coming week.

But despite his impetuosity working with Ray Graham turned out to be pleasant. instructive and full of surprises. As when, for instance, he suddenly divulged that he planned to buy up the firm of Peugeot, one of France's leading car manufacturere, and that he wished me to act an interpreter in his talks with Monsieur Peugeot himself.

It was quite an experience: being the mouthpiece of the ageing, dignified, slow-speaking Frenchman and the loud, cigar-smoking American. Graham would instruct me, leaning back in his chair and making sweeping motions with the hand that held the cigar stump :"Now you tell'im I don' wan' no figures, not right now. I'm going to have some of me boys come over from Detroit to look into that sort'a thing'--and I would wait tensely till M'sieur Peugeot with obvious trouble had thought out his reply and uttered it in so low a voice that at times it threatened to die out completely.

But the deal fell through--and when that had become crystal-clear Ray Graham decided to 'watch the car market' from London. After several weeks of lonely, dull evenings in a room of the ancient hotel Terminus, at the Gare St.Lazare, I was home again, admiring the work Clara had done during my absence. One evening the Grahams came to visit us in our modest flat, and Mrs. Graham promptly declared that Clara was 'cha'mung' and our baby daughter 'jus wonnerful'. That night, when Graham and I had stopped working, he put his hand on my arm and said : "Joe--I wan' ye to come to Detroit. I need a guy like you, boy." I was overwhelmed by the unexpected offer, and all I could do was to stammer something like 'well--that'd be fine', and wondering what Clara would think of so drastic a change in our lives.

Of course: she thought very little of the idea. 'What?--and Detroit of all places...!" was the refrain of her many legitimate objections; and next day, truly sorry that I had to disappoint him, I told Ray that the answer had to be NO. He appeared to understand quite well, although he added laughingly :"you better tell y'r lill wife that we in Detroit know sum'thing about art as well!"

On the day before the Grahams returned to America Ray told me that he was opening a branch office in Paris, and wanted me to be his public relations officer , in charge of all Graham-Paige's advertising throughout Europe. 'Ye know all about that sort'a job, don' you?" he half-asked, half-insisted. I must have made some kind of confirming gesture; in any event: he told me to get ready for the packers and to be in Paris in 'no mo'n three months from now." This time I felt no qualms telling Clara about Ray Graham's offer, and to my delight the thought of being enabled to work in Paris for some time appealed to her. London was close enough to maintain adequate contact with the galleries there.

Of course, it was, in a way, sad to break up the little home we had only recently put together; but the removal people had little time for sentiment: in a few hours our possessions were packed and loaded in the pantechnicon. Most of Clara's work remained in her Studio at 'number 50', certain as both of us were that our stay abroad would not be of very long duration. Above all, I still wanted to devote most of my time to writing; but the Paris job would allow us to build up a handsome reserve, even if it lasted only a single year.

A Paris acquaintance found a small service flat for us in the Avenue de Chatillon, a section of Paris of which we knew nothing more than that it harboured many artists and was on the Left Bank. The place, we were told, was brandnew; it contained a dozen or so two and three room flats, provided breakfasts but no other meals and had one central kitchen only which could not be used by the tenants, except in an case of emergency. It did not sound ideal but it would have to do until we had found a place of our own.

We left London on a stormy spring day and had the most dreadful Channel crossing imaginable between Dover and Calais. A little while after we had come aboard the ferry I saw a close friend of Graham coming into the room. I had met him several times in Paris, and got on well with him. I greeted him uncertainly from afar and hoped he would not

consider this an unforgiveable boorishness . But it was rather difficult to act up to the usual standards of polite society, at that moment. Clara , looking green, was groaning while stretched out on a bench and pressing a handkerchief to her mouth. And little Sonia, in my arms, chose that very instant to unload her early luncheon all over my hands and clothes...

9

The Montmorency Years

(1928--1930)

The Chatillon's Home was worse than we had expected. The manageress, a devoted wine-imbiber of a fiery nature, appeared none too happy to have a young baby among her guests, and put all sorts of difficulties in Clara's way, including that of warming the child's milk bottles. Though the 'Home' was kept clean and sufficiently heated, the general atmosphere was icy cold and impersonal. Breakfast--coffee and buttered bread with, sometimes, a lick of jam, was served in a barren downstairs room without the slightest sign of friendliness. And so, almost from the start, we thought of nothing so much as of finding a more attractive habitat. The Cat's Home, as we had rapidly baptized it, got badly on Clara's nerves, the more so as we saw few other tenants and those mainly very aged, colourless people. The 'hotel' stood about a hundred feet back from the Avenue de Chatillon; on either side of it new housing complexes were in course of construction. One morning, after I had left on my long Métro-trek to the Graham headquarters in the Avenue de Matignon, Clara scribbled down her impressions of the Chatillon's surroundings : "High up from my window I look down upon the square, grey and desolate. The rain has not left off since

last night. The immense puddles are filled with little bubbles that swim about till they burst. The square is new, and the road still unmade. To the right a house is in the making: an incomplete red structure, bricks , mortar and wood are piled up and scattered about. The workmen have not come. Factories and many-storeyed flats arise on all sides. A distant funnel gives out a grey smoke, with irritating slowness. At the end of the square a tram passes by, then a taxi. A group of people under umbrellas go past quickly. Then, for at least four minutes, not another human soul is to be seen."

It was not a joyful beginning of our life in France. Had it not been for Père Daviet's Bar and Restaurant at the corner of the 'square' and the Avenue de Chatillon, things would have become quite unendurable. We 'discovered' Père Daviet's through sheer necessity: because of the difficulty to find a baby-sitter for more than an hour or two at a time, we had to find a place for our meals as close as possible to the 'Home'. And although Père Daviet's eating place could not boast of a very attractive exterior, its bright lights shining through net-curtained windows were very inviting. Better still: the daily menu comprised a fair choice of simple, nourishing dishes; the wine served (inclusive!) was not at all bad and the waitress (Père Daviet's daughter) in her black skirt and little white apron, smiled easily and advised us cheerfully as to what was the best 'plat du jour'(dish of the day).

From the moment we entered the little restaurant for the first time, Clara was fascinated by its owner. There he sat, behind the 'zinc', broad-shouldered and thick-necked, in his shirt sleeves, a cap covering his big head, his stubbly jowls hanging down a bit, a good size glass--never empty--and a wine bottle with fast dwindling contents within easy reach of his hefty right hand. It could not be said that Père Daviet was a typical Parisian: he was far from garrulous, would sit quite motionlessly for a long time, except for the well-nigh automatic movement of his right arm towards the bottle, the glass, his mouth and the metal-covered top of the counter.

But just because of this stolidity, rare in a Paris born and bred person, he would, Clara thought, make a marvellous model.

We hesitated asking him to pose--or rather: to be just himself for an hour or so at a time while Clara painted, her canvas set up against the back of a chair. But he agreed at once; after all--this was not the first time he was asked to pose! We must remember that this was a "quartier" with many artists! We solved the baby-sitting problem by appealing for help to the British Embassy . A kind person there put us in touch with a middle-aged lady, Mrs. Bull who--so she told us the very first time she came to watch over our little daughter, was generally known as 'Mad Bull', the 'mad' having no connection with her state of mind, but being merely the customary abbreviation of 'Madame.'

That is how the portrait of Père Daviet was painted; the first fruit of our 'French period', and beyond doubt among the best character studies Clara had so far done. In the meantime we had actually found a house all our own. A new friend, correspondent for a Dutch paper and living some ten miles out of Paris, had told us that he knew a 'nice little place' not far from his own home in Montmorency.'You know--Montmorency, where the best cherries come from?..." No, we did not, but we drove out to it one Sunday morning. First a train from the Gare du Nord to Enghien-les-Bains, once renowned because of its Casino, then up a steep hill in a peculiar two-storey train, famous in the district under the name 'La Tortilleuse'. This antiquity twisted its way up the hill, its hard-worked engine pushing the seven or eight dirty old cars with pathetic exertion and tremendous noise. But in the end it did reach Montmorency, its whistle shrieking triumphantly...

The 'nice little place' was only a few minutes' walk from the station and had a most impressive double entrance gate. Beyond the gate was a narrow strip of cobblestones, leading to a short flight of open stairs that emerged onto a kind of balcony. Here was the front door , and as we walked

through the little 'villa', from the corridor into the spacious living rooms, the kitchen and a bedroom , it was clear that the house was built against a slope, so that front and back were on very different levels. Wide steps lead to the bedrooms and the bath; all in all it was a most attractive home, especially since the French doors of the living rooms gave out onto a pleasant little garden with the indispensable 'buanderie'(laundry room), and a sand-bin: safe playground for a growing child. Yes, we liked the little house at the corner of the Rue des Berceaux and the Rue de la Forêt. Could we possibly have found a home in a street with a more appropriate name than 'rue des Berceaux' (Cradle Street) ?

*

Clara had her first one-man show abroad in April, 1928, in Amsterdam. The 'Nationale Kunsthandel(National Gallery)' organized an exhibition of over fifteen paintings and some thirty-five drawings. There were some very recent pictures among this group, particularly sketches of the baby. Sonia was even better represented among the drawings: 3 months old, 7½ months old: lovely sketches that drew the special attention of the Dutch art critics. The 'Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant," a leading daily, wrote : "On tinted "paper, with airy lines, here and there re-enforced with "white chalk , she knows how to create an attractive pro- "file, a nude back, a baby head. Her Torquato, the troubadour, sketchily painted (in various places the canvas is "still visible), is both in composition and colour one of "her best works. Bright and clear is the Girl with the large white hat (*), a model resting very naturally from tiring "posing." 'Het Volk', another daily with national distribution , devoted a column to the exhibition and said, among many other words of praise: "She is undoubtedly best in pre- "senting human figures and types... In virtually all her work "she avoids the well-known English preference for exaggerated "sweetness and effeminacy. Without unduly violating tradit- "ion she arrives at a sharp, at times well-nigh dramatic

(*) see reproduction

"typification, such as the portrait of the 'Girl with "the new hat', or that deliciously characterised old "East End Jew. Even without that dramatic characteri- "sation Clara Klinghoffer gives to all she creates her own "mark. It seems that here a masculine spirit has fruc- "tified the feminine tradition of British art... As for "her drawings, they possess the same qualities as her "paintings. They have all the sensitiveness, the light "touch of English graphic art, yet from every drawing ema- "nates the strong passionate soul of this young artist. "In the baby drawings almost melancholy tenderness domi- nates."

Hardly had this exhibition, specially satisfying because it has been so much more than a moral success, closed or the Redferm Gallery clamoured for new work to be hung in a mixed exhibition of oils and water colours. New canvases were also needed for the autumn shows in the Imperial Art Gallery, the New Ebglish Art Club and the Women's International Art Club. Fortunately we had found an au pair girl, Anne-Marie, who from the day she entered our home took to the baby as the child took to her. Moreover, she proved to be a very patient model, posing for many drawings and an excellent small painting.

Other subjects for new work were Madame Compagnon, a huge, pleasantly-efficient household help who confessed to having an additional profession: that of preparing the town's dead for their last journey. And of course: our baby became one of Clara's most reliable models: Sonia seated in her yellow high chair, banging away lustily on her table with a spoon and practising her one and only Dutch word 'mooi'(nice) upon everyone entering or leaving... Sonia in a wicker cradle (*)... Sonia ready to be taken out, wearing a white hood... Then there was Madame Juliette and her small son; and finally there were the

---

(*)This painting was bought for the Children's Hospital in Great Ormond Street,London. In the sixties efforts were made to find out whether it was still there--but to our surprise and disappointment we were told by a Hospital official that nothing was known of the picture's fate.

many drawings and oil sketches made on Clara's frequent visits to the two art schools in Paris's rue de la Grande Chaumière--not forgetting the two famous cafés on the Boulevard Raspail, the Rotonde and the Dome where artists and models chatted endlessly, and where the drinks were not too expensive.

Towards the end of May Clara took her work over to London and just a few days later the Redfern Gallery's exhibition, in which many known artists took part, began its three weeks' run. And almost simultaneously the now usual stream of favourable reviews began to flow, embracing various exhibitions in which Clara's work was to be seen. To quote only a few : P.G.Konody in the 'Daily Mail'(On the Women's International Art Club):: 'In the British section Clara Kling-
"hoffer shows a sketchy oil painting of sparkling vitality
"and great subtlety, entitled 'The Old Troubadour' "
'Apollo' on the same painting: "It is an outstanding achieve-
"ment, both as a bit of character delineation and as sheer
"painting." The 'Morning Post' (on the Redfern show): "Clara
"Klinghoffer's drawings are excellent. She has a keen
"sense of form and character, particularly of children. The
"fault with her pictures is the elaboration of surfaces until
"they and the modelling assume the appearance of bronze.
"Where she works with freedom her colour is more supple and the
"planes recede naturally in space. Among the finest are the
"Portrait of Mrs. Ede, the Dutch Girl, the High Chair, the
"Girl at the piano and the delightful Baby in a Wicker Cradle.
"Most desirable among her drawingd are the four sketches of
"jolly babies." 'Apollo' (on the Imperial Art Gallery exhi-
bition:)"Clara Klinghoffer's 'Catherine' is a fine piece of
"drawing." But 'The Queen' went into veritable ecstasy. Re-
porting on current art shows, its critic singled out Clara's
work at the Redfern for this eulogy:"Frequently her subject
"matter, the head of a young girl, small children and babies,
"was treated in a manner which betrayed a sound knowledge of
"the highest standards of painting. Her colour is rich, va-
"ried and built up with a delicate perception of tone. Her
"design is attractive; this is perhaps particularly shown in a
"large painting of a small child in a wicker cradle; and fur-

"thermore, her sense of form is decided and unaffected. It "was a real reliefto see work so free from any sign of 'let's "go one better than the men.' Work like this would be a real "asset tothe walls of a library with its rather heavy "atmosphere, or a dining room even, at its more formal mo- "ments. Yet, despite this painter-like quality throughout, "her rendering both of children and adults emanates a spirit "of delightful , kindly intimacy."

*

Work at Graham-Paige had been swiftly developping. The sales department, headed by an American, kept me constantly informed of the number of cars sold in countries as far apart as Holland and Egypt. In proportion to these results advertising funds were allocated: a task which at first almost frightened the wits out of me... To be sure, I had some idea of the importance of certain leading West-European media, but when it came to judging the publicity value of papers in Persia or Roumania, I was at a total loss. The pressure put upon me by eager representatives of scores of newspapers and magazines was stupendous, and I would beyond all doubt have made stupendous blunders if a friend--an American art director--had not brought me in touch with a colleague who had been doing my type of work for years. This good man provided me with books and pamphlets evaluating most media of importance and he helped me in many ways until I had found my feet, and was able to take up a definite stand whenever needed. I learned to ignore flattery as well as thinly-veiled offers of substantial bribes; and I was vastly amused when I heard, via the Detroit head office, that a frustrated space salesman from The Netherlands had suggested, 'in an altogether friendly manner', to throw 'that arrogant young man out, since he could not possibly have enough experience to judge the real publicity value of so many papers!' The letter was forwarded to me by my Detroit counterpart, with a characteristic footnote : "Well? What about it? Shall we..?'

All in all, my work was interesting and included short trips to important sales centres such as Utrecht, in

The Netherlands, and Berlin.

But early in 1929 disquietening news began to come from the United States. The 'two chickens in every pot, and the car in every garage', predicted by Herbert Hoover when running for the presidency, remained conspicuous by their absence. The introduction of high tariff duties to protect domestic American markets in the agricultural and other fields, influenced its foreign trade. Within a few months the sale of expensive Graham-Paige cars declined sharply. Two of the three Graham brothers, Robert and Joseph, came over to Paris and there followed much talk of drastic cuts in the staff and, first of all, in the vast amounts spent on publicity. Clearly: it was time to start thinking of employment elsewhere. Clara and I talked of returning to London, even though we were well aware that we would be facing an uncertain future over there. But only a few weeks before the terrible Stock Market crash in New York that ushered in the Great Depression, the Paris branch of the American publicity house of Erwin Wasey advertised for a linguist to assist their executive in charge of all West-European advertising for Esso products. I applied and was hired--for a while at least we were safe, even though we realised it was to a doubtful extent as already the repercussions of the American crisis began to be felt in Europe.

The general economic uncertainty could not, in the long run, fail to influence the art world in France as well as in England. Fortunately an exhibition of paintings and drawings, originally planned for the autumn had been held in London's Redfern Gallery during May and June, and its results had been exceptionally good. 'Apollo' told its readers that "Clara "Klinghoffer has won herself an assured place amongst the ar- "tists of the English school... She can draw with a good sense "of solidity, and she understands foreshortening, as evidenced "in many of her drawings. Her sense of colour is not ingratiat- "ing, but she knows how to render the quality of scintillating "light which distinguishes, for instance, her Self Portrait... "Clara Klinghoffer, it will be gathered, is accomplished all round." The magazine also reproduced a fine portrait of the artist's younger sister Bertha.

'The Times': "Always a good draughtsman, Clara Klinghoffer "has greatly improved her colour which formerly was apt to "seem irrelevant. The filling out of ideas with the stuff "of life is very marked in the portrait of Lucien Pissarro, "the High Chair, her Self Portrait and the Girl with plaits, a fine nude, among the best of the paintings... "With this exhibition Miss Klinghoffer's future seems assured." The 'Jewish Chronicle' critic wrote: "In her draughts- "manship she has a technique which seems to inspire her in- "dependently of her vision of her subject...Her potentialities "are considerable. In "The Wicker Cradle" we see a magnificent "picture below the softness and prettiness of the surface. Her "portrait of 'The Old Rabbi' has greater strength of idea sur- "viving in its construction, and is to this extent more suc- "cessful as a whole. But it is in the 'Jewish Girl' with its "bronze quality and its considerable dignity of drawing, and in "the 'Old Troubadour' (in which the artist has employed at once "a harder and a freer technique in paint, a little remini- "scent of Manet,) that we see all that is latent in Clara "Klinghoffer". 'The Daily Mail': "Clara Klinghoffer paints in "a high key and with a narrow range of tones, with the result "that sometimes the worried surface of her work shows up in a "marked manner that should be absent from her painting... Her "drawings are much more convincing; they show an increased un- "derstanding of the basic structure of human bodies, and the "effect of bodily movement upon draperies." 'The Connoisseur': ""In her drawings Miss Klinghoffer appears to best advantage, "a fact not surprising in view of her past record." 'The Studio": "Her portraits are most successful when women and "children are the subjects. Nearly all her oaintings are "tenderly conceived and are accomplished with an admirable "lack of sentimentality. On that account they are more im- "pressive for their sincerity as well as their ability of "execution." Frank Rutter, in Boston's 'Christian Science Monitor': "Clara Klinghoffer is well represented by a subtly "modelled study of a negress."

There also were the inevitable bits of non- sense, the worst of them in 'The Studio'. It described Clara

as 'a young Liverpool painter who has already accomplished important decorative work and whose mural painting has met with much appreciation.' Unfortunately, she had never been in Liverpool, had done no 'decorative' work and, although full of ideas for murals, had never put a brush to a wall!

While the exhibition in the Redfern Gallery was still in progress, Clara was approached by the owner of another gallery, known as Godfrey Phillips Galleries, in Duke Street. He was arranging a show of Jacob Epstein's drawings and sculptures and wanted to combine it with a selection of Clara's work. Although someone acquainted with the gallery owner, whose real name was Godfrey van Zwanenberg, recommended caution in dealing with him, we decided that there could be no harm in transferring some of the work that had been so well received during the Redfern's exhibition to Phillips' August show. Epstein had close contact with Phillips and, being a great admirer of Clara's work, encouraged the idea of having some of her paintings exhibited simultaneously with his sculpture. Consequently, some seven paintings and ten Klinghoffer drawings were on show in Duke Street when the otherwise stagnant summer season was 'on'. In spite of the enormous competition of an artist of Epstein's fame, the reviews on Clara's work were excellent.

But,strange enough, there were--so the gallery owner declared--no sales whatever. Of course, this can well happen in any show and to be certain: the height of the summer is not the best time for a lucrative exhibition in London.But there was something disquietening about the fact that, even though the gallery was already engaged in hanging another exhibition, Clara's work remained unreturned. All sorts of excuses were given for this delay: her works were stored somewhere and difficult to get at; she must wait until the new show had begun--andsoforth. As yet there was no suspicion that something untoward had happened. But it is easy to imagine Clara's surprise when, invited to dinner by the banker's family of Franklin--who owned several of her works--she entered the house and saw one of the paintings that had been in the Phillips gallery, displayed upon a living room

wall. She was so taken aback that she blurted out what had happened...

Both she and her patron were very indignant about this treachery, the more so when it transpired that the painting had been paid for immediately. It had been hung so conspicuously to show Clara that the Franklins had a lasting interest in her art.

Next morning Clara faced the gallery owner with the facts; he did not deny them, mubled some excuses and promised to pay within a day or two. At the same time, but only under threat of police action, he released the paintings and drawings still in his possession. When this was done, it became evident that still another painting had 'disappeared', but--so the man ssured Clara--payment for it would be made as well.

Some weeks went by without any action. Then , one morning, we got a letter from a solicitor informing Clara that the Godfrey Phillips Gallery was bankrupt and that whatever it contained was the property of Mrs. Godfrey Phillips... For a long time afterwards we received at irregular intervals statements from the solicitor, showing with obstinate repetitiveness that there were plenty of debts and only negligible assets. The two fugitive paintings were never paid for... In a gentle effort to soften the blow. Mr. Franklin presented the artist with an interesting 17th century drawing, purportedly by a well-known Master, but more likely by a not too accomplished contemporary copiist.

*

One evening, on one of the rare occasions Clara and I were able to stay in Paris till a late hour, we visited the Oubliettes Rouges. It was a modest-type night club on the Ile de la Cité, near the Notre Dame, in the very spot where during the revolution of 1789 many a prisoner died a cruel hunger death. Below the club was, indeed, a net of passages, eerie holes in the ground with, here and there, convincing bars behind which skeletons, whether genuine or fakes, grinned at the visitors who, after all, had come for that very purpose and wanted their money's worth.

The entrance to the club, at the foot of a winding staircase, was a shocking surprise, invariably eliciting much hilarity among those already present and cries of distress from those entering. With the first step taken the plank below one's foot dipped, see-saw like, sharply, causing the newcomer to cut strange capers before regaining his balance on more solid ground. This unsteady plank was supposedly covering the very mouth of the 'oubliette'(a round hole like the entrance to a sewage duct) through which in revolutionary days countless unwanted 'citoyens' were dropped into the drains of Paris, on their way to a fearful death in the waters of the river Seine...

But the Oubliettes rouges had more to offer than these gruesome subterranean passageways. The drinks were good and reasonable, and every night there was a variety of entertainment. Among the best of the ballad singers were Père François, owner of the club and of a small but neat restaurant in a near-by narrow street, and--best of all--Alathène, an oldish Frenchman with striking features, both saturnine and jocular. He was dressed in late 18th century fashion: knee breeches, white silk stockings, black shoes with silver buckles. His jacket, ochre yellow as were the breeches, had rich lace ruffles in front and at his sleeves.

When Alathène stepped onto the small central podium, he needed no words of introduction, no wise-cracks of any kind. For some long instants he would stare blankly at the public, then place his guitar into position and begin to sing in a quiet, agreeable voice, clearly pronouncing and smiling slyly whenever the words of his song carried a Rabelaisian flavour. Accompanying himself while standing quite still, merely expressing the generally coarse mood of his songs by a naughty glint in his eyes, or by a broad grin, he would eulogize 'le temps des cerises à Montmorency' and relate the experiences of a pretty young woman on her knees in a church and approached 'très doux, très doux, très doucement' by an appreciative priest. But the most successful item on his programme was the scabrous jubilation of a wine imbiber who, to his delight, finds his wife dead in the wine cellar. He calls the passing watchmen:

'Montez, montez vite pour la ramasser

Autrement je la jette derrière la porte...
Elle ne mettra plus de l'eau dedans mon ver-r-re
Cette poltronne!...La poltronne
Elle est morte!...

These irreverent outpourings of a toper appealed warmly to the audience; Alathène repeated them twice which, as he later told us, was quite a usual thing. For, as I suspected from the moment Alathène came into sight, Clara had made up her mind to paint him.

And so we approached Alathène at the end of the evening, and he agreed to sit. He lived in Monsieur François' little hotel-restaurant, and there we went a couple of days later, for the first sitting.

The only availble place to work in was Alathène's bedroom on the first floor. Most of the space there was taken up by his iron bedstead. There was just enough room left for a chair used by Alathène at the foot of the bed, and another for the painter at its head while I balanced precariously on an ancient ~~sort~~ kind of stool near the side window. I tried hard to keep some sort of conversation running with Alathène, to prevent his falling into a mood of morose silence. Somehow I managed to keep his interest alive, and in a while he began to pluck at the strings of his guitar and sing: not the songs of his nightly performance, but attractive "ballades" of centuries past. He was , evidently, a good musician, with far more knowledge of minstrelsy than he was in need of for his job as an antertainer at the Oubliettes rouges. That first sitting ended on a much better tone than it had begun , and when we came to Alathène's room for the fifth and last sitting, he welcomed us as old friends and offered us a parting drink in Monsieur François' little bar. But no matter how cautiously I tried to draw him out on the subject of his background: where he came from, what he had done before dressing up like an eighteenth century troubadour, Alathène steadily circumvented all questions. In this way he remained for us a mysterious eighteenth century troubadour, inexplicably strayed into the tumult of twentieth century Paris.

After Alathène, Clara painted several other por-

traits during our 'French period. But his picture remained outstandingly fine, superior to most others in mood and characterization.

Then, quite abruptly, the course of our lives was completely changed. We were late in July 1930, and Clara was three months pregnant with her second child.

10

The Dutch years (1)

One morning, as I was transliterating Esso publicity material into Dutch my friend Roy Forkum, art director at Lord, Thomas & Logan, American public relation experts, called me on the 'phone.

"Listen," he said softly as if afraid that someone would overhear us, "Are you working on a contract?"

"No, I don't."

"That means you can leave them at any time?"

"within decent limits yes. But why?"

"Where were you born?"

"In Holland."

"So you're Dutch?"

"Yes--I have a Dutch passport".

"I see. You still can speak Dutch?"

"Why, of course."

"Good--wamt to go back to Holland ?"

"What on earth for?"

"To work. To live there."

"What ?"

"Yes." His voice became a whisper. "They want somebody over there."

"Who's they? And what for ?"

"They's Lord & Thomas. What for?...Er...Well, I'd better tell you at lunch. See you at one."

"Okay."

The news he gave me at lunch was, to say the least of it, astonishing. Lord & Thomas & Logan were busy establishing several European branch offices, in an heroic effort to open up new territories for American clients caught in the throttling grip of the Great Recession. Foremost among them was Colgate-Palmolive, manufacturers of soap products and toothpaste. There would be offices in Germany, Belgium, Denmark, England, Italy, Switzerland and The Netherlands. For each country the firm needed managers who knew the vernicular and the population well, were conversant with market difficulties and could be of help to Americans seeking to make up for their very bad time at home by gaining fresh outlets abroad. In several of these countries managers had already been appointed; but 'via the grape vine' Roy had heard that there was a real problem finding someone with a Dutch background who, at the same time, had the necessary experience in the international publicity field.

"You'd better go and talk to those guys right away," he advised.

"Fine...But Roy, I can't just walk out of here. I've got obligations. I've got a home at Montmorency. My wife is in the middle of preparing for another exhibition."

"Then forget it", said Roy. "Or maybe you can arrange it in that way that you leave your little family here for a while, go over to Amsterdam to open up the branch office and set the wheels turning. That'll take time. After that they'll surely give you a chance to close shop over here, and get settled in Holland."

"Why are they in such a hurry?"

"Well, I've heard them say they want to finish the job. It's cost plenty of time already..."

That afternoon--all of it between two and five-thirty--I had long talks with the LTL people who had come from their Chicago head office to carry out the European plan, was appointed director of the as yet non-existing Amsterdam branch, received detailed instructions about the office space needed and how many people there would have to be on my staff.

I was asked to report back in the morning, to tell them how soon I would be available, then rushed back to my office to tell my immediate 'boss' what had happened, and waa assured that he would do all he could to obtain my release very quickly.

On my way home I felt afraid that this sudden transposition would not be warmly welcomed by Clara. All in all, she was very happy working in Montmorency and Paris, and her contacts with London had not noticeably suffered. The Leicester Galleries, for one, had work of hers on permanent exhibition, and in a letter dated April, 1930 Oliver Brown told her that a picture recently sent to him from France had arrived "and I admire it very much. It is now in our window.' The Women's International Art Club exhibited what Frank Rutter described in the 'Christian Science Monitor' as 'a "finely modelled head of a young girl." 'The Times' called this painting "an admirable head, in which a strong play of light is embodied in a remarkably plastic treatment." The 'Morning Post' saw the 'Girl's head' "painted with joyousness that de- "lights one's sense of sight." And the 'Daily News', devoting a long illustrated article to 'buying the right picture', advised the 'recruits to the ranks of art patrons' that they might do worse than start with a small drawing by Clara Klinghoffer" .

As things turned out, going to live in Holland attracted Clara. Her short stay there just before our wedding had made her like what she saw of it. Now she would know the country and its people better. Besides, the trip from Amsterdam to London was not an arduous enterprise. But she particularly enjoyed that, because of her condition, ~~that~~ she would not be rushed into a hurried removal.

My employers cooperated to the full, and let me go in a couple of weeks' time. I used those days not only to clear my desk at Erwin Wasey's but also to start packing in Montmorency. Then , towards the end of August, I came to Amsterdam, a somewhat frantic 'director' without an office but with a young secretary hurriedly engaged by a friend and 'unseen' until she turned up at my hotel and proved to be both an amiable and effective person. We soon found a large, cen-

trally-situated flat that offered all we needed and cost much less than similar space in an office building.

Next a skeleton staff was engaged, contact was made with the local branch of Colgate-Palmolive and within a week or two we were making our first advertising contracts with papers all over The Netherlands. In another month I rushed back to Montmorency, saw our possessions disappear into a huge pantechnicon, and brought my wife and daughter to Amsterdam.

*

For several weeks after Clara and the baby joined me we lived in a rather stately 'mansion' close to the famous Concertgebouw. She was anxious to work again, but there was little opportunity for painting in living quarters crammed with furniture and a vast collection of bric-à-brac. Efforts to find adequate housing in Amsterdam proved useless, and we were forced to search further afield. Some 12 miles west of Amsterdam, close to the ancient town of Haarlem, a well-planned garden city was in course of construction. It was Heemstede-Aerdenhout, had vast open spaces turned into flower-rich lawns, rows of pretty semi-detached villas built in modern style. To give the whole project a truly Dutch character, a moderately wide canal with grassy banks flowed through the centre of the complex. There was a choice of half a dozen recently finished houses, and in one of these, at number 9, P.C.Hooftkade we settled down in the autumn of 1930. Or rather, we made heroic efforts to get the place in a bearably habitable state. We bought the most necessary furniture while awaiting the arrival of the extremely slow French pantechnicon.

At the year's end Clara was virtually restricted to drawing our 3½ year old daughter, both because of the difficulties attached to running a household in a ninety per cent empty house, and because of her condition. Fortunately it was not difficult to find living-in help: economic conditions in Germany had forced thousands of young women to try and make a living outside their country. They came in droves to Holland, and generally became kitchen helps, or maids. That not all of these German maidens came with nothing but the most peaceful intentions, was not as yet realized. That became clear during the next year or so; we, too, were to get a taste of their real intentions.

Towards the end of November our belongings finally arrived, and some weeks later I left for Paris to report on progress in the Amsterdam office. Our house in Heemstede-Aerdenhout had begun to look like a home: a reason for rejoicing. None the less, the only letter I found time for to send home was in a low key. My efforts to point out at headquarters that the Amsterdam office was bound to suffer important losses as long as Colgate-Palmolive remained its only important source of earnings, failed to find a sympathetic hearing. I was told 'sit back, and be patient'; but as my income greatly depended upon the volume of business my office handled, this advice seemed of little use. "I walked along the boulevards this afternoon, and wondered whether it had been wise to leave Montmorency. I know that you are not feeling as much at home in Heemstede as you did over in France. You feel frustrated, away from the mainstream. But obviously, working 'in the old way' will be difficult for you for some time to come. I believe you'll find that it won't be long, after the baby is born, to get busy again preparing for the next London show. It saddens me to see you depressed, not caring much what you look like; weary, pale, miserable to a degree. Have some more patience; we'll get through these difficult times."

On the twentyfifth of January 1931 our second child, a boy, was born. We called him Michael Jacob--Michael because we liked the sound of it, and Jacob after my late father. On the very evening of his birth we had gone to Amsterdam to see a play; there had been no indication that Clara's confinement was near. But in the train, on our way home, the pains began, and this so violently that once in Heemstede, I got a local doctor to come immediately. At the same time I telephoned the Amsterdam doctor who had treated Clara; he rushed to our home and drove us to the Portuguese-Israelite Hospital in Amsterdam where the child , three hours later howled its way into the world.

Next morning when I came back to the hospital, Clara, looking younger and prettier than ever, was happy and very well.

It seemed that all at once the strain and frustrations of the past few months had completely fallen away. She talked of drawing the baby 'again and again...He is so handsome"; and how good it would be to settle down again to regular work. The Redfern Gallery was preparing for a summer exhibition in which they wanted 'a few Klinghoffers'--but what a pity her young sisters, her beloved and patient models, were out of reach..."so far away". It was a clear indication of her nostalgia for a return to 'the old London routine'--and how could that possibly be achieved ?

All that could be done, during the first months of Michael's life, was to get a trusted nurse and free Clara as much as feasable for her work. In a direct way this also influenced her activities: she painted the first nurse we had while she was holding out the baby over his pottie. But in a while this young woman left to return to Austria and her fiancé, and a young German girl took over. She was little more than twenty, looked after both children bearably well but showed an altogether extraordinary interest in our private affairs. She asked questions about everyone who visited us, was very curious to know what exactly my 'job' was, whether, like ourselves, our friends were Jews, where they lived, what they did for a living--and what did all of us think of the political developments in Germany ?

Of course: not a single one of those questions was put to us in a direct way. They were asked, most innocently, in the course of a conversation about our children, or our neighbours, or during the 'morning coffee', of our maid-servant, a Polish girl. It was done most naturally, in an amiable, chatting way. They were caused by the curiosity of a young German girl for the first time in a foreign country, and desirous to acquire a good understanding of the people she now lived amongst.

Of course , Clara was well aware of the questions-and-answers game Hettie had been playing with our Polish maid; but although it displeased us to keep so inquisitive a creature under our roof, there was --for practical considerations-- little sense in berating her. We asked Johanna, the servant, to be sparing in her answers, and ourselves circumvented care-

fully all efforts of the German nurse to build up a complete picture of our lives, and of that of your friends.

Until one evening, passing late through Haarlem, I happened to see Hettie leave the building in which, as everybody knew, the German Embassy had established a sort of club for German servants, nurses and other household help living in our district. In itself there seemed to be nothing suspicious in Hettie's liking of this club and the company of fellow-countrymen and -women. What made me 'sit up and take notice' was that a young Dutchman wearing the insignia of the Nationale Socialistische Beweging, the Dutch Nazi party, accompanied her.

Next day I started a thorough enquiry, talking to police authorities and to people fighting the incipient power of Mussert's Dutch Nazis. The results were startling. The Club was not only a place of rest and entertainment for German servants; it was their 'control post', the office to which they were obliged to come on their 'free days', to make statements of all they had been able to find out during the past week regarding their employers, their families and their friends. Particular interest was shown if those employers were Jews; and in order to make sure that each girl would do what was expected of her, her passport was kept 'in escrow', so that she could not go back to Germany on her own volition. Moreover, if among them there were women bold enough to refuse being mini-spies, they were informed that 'most unpleasant measures' would be taken against their closest relatives inside Germany.

Hettie, confronted with the gist of my discoveries, denied everything hotly. No--she had never talked at the Club about us or our friends. No--she had never filed weekly reports on who came to our house, and what was being talked about among ourselves. She had nothing to do with the Nationaal Socialistische Beweging (NSB). The young man ?--well, she liked him. She had met him in a cinema, and did not even know that he was a member of Mussert's party. She cried and sobbed how sorry she would be to have to leave us. Hadn't she been good for the children ? True : she had asked a lot of questions, but only because she wanted to know us better.

Hettie left next morning. Among the odds and ends we

found in the nursery cupboard were fragments of a torn-up form letter. We deciphered: "...Freunde sind wieder viele Juden, besonders von Amsterdam..."; and another significant sentence: "...immer gegen uns'ren Führer. Es sind viele Bücher da gegen Deutschland, und er schreibt für..."

Poor Hettie... She was no more than a clumsy amateur-spy. But if anything, our experience with her made us realize how great was the danger to Holland of this peaceful infiltration of German household help.

*

In April a group of Mayfair matrons got a splendid idea:they were to organize a Beauty Competition for children under eight years old. They called themselves The Cradle Rockers, and belonged one and all to London's Society. Several young mothers entered their offspring, among them Lord Revelstoke's daughter Daphne (whom Clara had drawn several years ago) and who was now married to Arthur Pollem. Also competing was Daphne's sister , Mrs. Guy Lidell. Lady Riley competed with two sons and a daughter of Lady Sybil Smith entered her two small daughters. It was one of those bright ideas that allowed Society women to be generous and socially-minded at the expense of others. For although each entrant had to pay a small fee (the proceeds to go to the Royal Free Hospital's Training School for Women), the main prizes were to cost the organizers absolutely nothing: they were to be portraits of the prize-winning children to be painted by a number of well-known artists, Clara among them. Free of charge, be it well understood.

It is not difficult to comprehend why artists of name would lend themselves to be the chief donors in this type of competition. Behind the invitation to take part lay the silent promise of possible commissions; having been 'selected' from among so many good, and even outstanding, fellow painters had undoubted publicity value, besides. For although the Cradle Rockers had invited 'all mothers with pretty babies', it was a foregone conclusion that only those belonging to the richest Mayfair circles would be in the running.

If Clara decided to donate a painting it was, however, not in the expectation of immediate gains. She well

remembered Daphne's mother's kindness in paying her more for the drawing she made of Daphne than she had asked for. Moreover, Daphne and she had been great friends at the Slade --and so she accepted the invitation to contribute a painting merely out of friendship.

The second prize-winner was baby Jane Smith, niece of Mary Smith, another of Clara's one-time Slade School friends. But for some time baby Jane had to wait; Clara was too occupied in Heemstede:looking after her own babies, this time with the help of a more reliable , politically neutral nurse of Dutch nationality , and sending work to London where it was shown in a variety of exhibitions. The Royal Society of British Artists, for example, showed a small portrait of a girl that the reviewer described as 'brilliant';and in Birkenhead, at an exhibition of contemporary art, Clara's Head of a Girl was singled out as 'a drawing of unique poetic charm." 'Colour' gave in its February issue a fine colour reproduction of 'Young Nude with Plaits': the artist's youngest sister Hilda, then not quite sixteen years old. (*)

(*)see reproduction

But despite all this Clara felt the need of having at least one, or rather, if at all possible two of her most beloved models available in Holland. Consequently,some time in June both Leah and Hilda came over from London, and stayed with us for almost six months. Their visit brought about a summer of much fun, and great creativity. With remarkable speed the two girls became used to 'the new country'; and where at times they failed to grasp the meaning of a Dutch phrase, little Sonia, just over four years old, acting as a willing and efficient translator, came to the rescue.

Before the year was over, great changes had taken place in my family. A brother of mine died in July, leaving my 76 year old mother on her own in the north-eastern town of Groningen. It was an undesirable situation, and so we decided to ask her to close down her Groningen home and come to live with us. She agreed and for the first time in her young life Sonia had an 'Oma' (grandmother) to come to whenever she felt like it. At the same time Clara found a new model: the small canvas "Old Woman Reading'(*) is among the most appealing she did between my mother joining our little family, and her death in March,1935.

(*)see reproduction

*

Nineteenthirtytwo began sadly enough. Rosie, a younger sister and for many years one of her best models, had been ill for some time. At first her illness did not seem to be a very serious one. But her pains increased and then, on being examined by a specialist, we had to face the awful truth: that the girl, just about thirty years old, was dying of cancer of the rectum. Clara travelled to London at once and stayed there for some time, drawing as she always did and making an exquisite painting of Rosie (*) Several doctors were consulted; even a Dutch physician of Utrecht who supposedly had a cure for cancer, was persuaded to send each week a bottle of his magic medicine to London. But it was, of course, all in vain. Rosie died that summer. It was a very hard blow. From now on the 'magic circle' of the seven Klinghoffer girls existed no longer.

(*)see reproduction

For some time the loss of Rosie paralyzed Clara's desire for work. Then, gradually, she took up her brushes again and painted. There were going to be several exhibitions: some one-man, other mixed shows, in which she was to be represented with fresh work. The series began with a mixed exhibition in the Redfern Gallery, where works by Augustus John, Paul Nash, Jacob Epstein and Duncan Grant could also be seen. 'The Times', as usual ranking among the first papers to review , wrote : "among drawings of special interest is Clara Klinghoffer's "Leah." The 'Sheffield Telegraph' declared :'Clara Klinghoffer's "portraits are delightful, and full of personality. One pict-"ure of a rabbi caught my attention at once. The old man, with "his black cap, is studying the Book of the Law. In his face "was the sad kindliness and wisdom of his race, drawn with "sympathy and understanding"(*). Then, in early September, followed a small exhibition of her paintings and drawings in a private home in Amsterdam. The leading "Algemeen Handelsblad", a daily with national distribution, was of the opinion that "Clara Klinghoffer is more especially interested in a kind of "racial psychology in harmony and tone. There are among her "work studies of German, Italian , Spanish and Polish girls, "attractively dressed and placed in lovely gardens, or in an "interior, close to a window. There also is a Dutch painter in the tricolors: red, white and blue, and a sketch of an old

(*)see reproduction

"Amsterdam fellow. To complete this colour chart of many "nations, she added a self portrait in a pink dress and blue hat... "Her range is wide; it embraces an old beggar woman in Capri "as well as a rough-and-ready Parisian bar owner in his shirt "sleeves, his cap indifferently clinging to his head...An old "lady reading through a magnifying glass. And all of these "done with the greatest possible ease, with an elegant,ready "hand, painted with great virtuosity." Another paper, the 'Nieuwe Dag', Amsterdam : "She excels in her portrait studies. "The few landscapes shown are, in my opinion, weaker. But her "portraits are captivating: the Girl with the Spanish mantilla; "the little sketch of Sonia, the study of the Polish girl are of "a special sensitiveness. These are excellent pictures; more- "over, THEY HAVE A FEMININE CHARM IN THEIR TENDER TREATMENT OF "LINE which harmonizes excellently with the fine colour nuances. "A 'playful' talent with strong possibilities, gifted moreover "with the womanly power to express a mood."

no caps

But the most important event of this year came for Clara when an exhibition of fortyfour of her works opened at the Leicester Galleries. hey were hung in the Reynolds room of the famous gallery, while adjoining, in the Hogarth room, Mark Gertler showed twenty-nine of his canvases.

'The Times': "Throughout her career Clara Klinghoffer "has pleased attention by her frank enjoyment of her interests "as a woman, and a swift--if not always constructive-- style of "drawing. She gets her most characteristic effects with a combi- "nation of incisive line and 'sfumato' modelling, and one would "say that her favourite Old Master was Leonardo da Vinci. But it is "questionable if her most attractive painting is not the por- "trait of Lucien Pissarro (*). As an expression of personality "in paint it is one of the most successful portraits we have ever "seen. It positively simmers with the temperamental qualities "of a veteran artist who is greatly respected and universally "liked. Another excellent piece of painting, richly dark in "colour , is 'Nude girl with plaits'. In proportion as Clara "Klinghoffer attempts solidity by sculptural rather than at- "mospheric means she is less pleasing, and the best of her more

(*) see reproduction

"elaborate compositions is the loosely handled 'Workshop', an "interior with two girls, in a scheme of golden brown and "grey (*). There are some "lovely things" among her drawings, "Hilda, for example."

(*)see reproduction

This splendid send-off by a leading art critic sent others in that field running for their pens. Frank Rutter, writing in the 'Sunday Times,'said: "Splendidly virile draughtsman-"ship and subtle tonal qualities are characteristic of the art "of Clara Klinghoffer. Her paintings include an admirable por-"trait of Lucien Pissarro which is not only 'a speaking like-ness'of the distinguished artist, but also a most skilful and "delicately executed example of impressionist portraiture. The "perfection of her draughtsmanship and modelling in paint can "be seen in 'Nude girl with Plaits' which well deserves that much "abused adjective of 'masterly'.Of the larger paintings 'The "Sisters"is one of the most impressive in its convincing atmos-pheric qualities, and it also has great charm in its colour. "A number of other paintings, and a group of excellent drawings "further demonstrate the sterling talent of this gifted artist." 'The Scotsman', Edinburgh: "Clara Klinghoffer is a most accom-"plished painter with a love of subtleness of modelling and "soft play of light and shade, most unusual in contemporary "painting.Her subjects are portraits of women, old men and nude "studies. She draws in a most scholarly way, and with a sort of "delicate and sensuous surface bloom and variety of tone which "can only be compared with the 'sfumato' of Leonardo da Vinci. "Her work is remarkably sensitive and reticent, particularly in "her paintings of girls.In an age like ours, when the ideas of "Segonzac are fashionable. it is pleasant now and then to see "flesh painted fleshily, and not with a surface like a ploughed "field." 'The Morning Post': "She paints portraits of old men and "the heads and torsos of girls with equal mastery, Her infinite-"ly caressing , sensuous treatment of flesh and hair and her "mysterious play of shadow show that she profited by the study of "the great Leonardo. Her paintings of girls have a seductive "bloom and sweetness, and a strange emotional quality that is "extremely interesting. Among the most notable paintings in the "show are three nude paintings, the brilliant portrait of Han "boskamp, a Dutch painter, and the one solitary landscape."

'The Observer':"Clara Klinghoffer, a talented artist, is at "her best as a portrait painter."Old Jewish Man" is a "lifelike rendering of a type, and Lucien Pissarro is a "strikingly characteristic impression of the sitter. Clara "Klinghoffer's lively and imaginative brushwork as well as her "constantly sound drawing, deserve nothing but praise."'The Jewish Chronicle' : "Clara Klinghoffer sees beauty, hence she "accepts natural lighting. Her approach is exemplified in 'Concetta, a Capri girl'(*) where she has seen a lovely ~~hand~~ "head and transferred it with great delicacy and charm to the "canvas... Her ability as a draughtsman cannot be doubted: "it is one of her strong points. But though the romantic ap- "proach has its aesthetic weaknesses, it has much to offer, "especially when its apostle is as talented as Clara Kling- "hoffer. She has an individual outlook , beside sympathy with "her subject matter. Such works as Alathene, Lucien Pissarro, "Old Jewish Man are excellent portraits, and 'The Workshop' "shows her exceptional way of handling foreshortening." The 'New Statesman': "Clara Klinghoffer shows a fine portrait "of Lucien Pissarro." 'The Studio': "Clara Klinghoffer once more "displays a very unusual ability in her Leicester Galleries "show.Her almost uncanny gift for realistic lighting and a feel- "ing for opulent and broken colour are well displayed. A ten- dency sometimes observable towards an overrichness of colour "seems to be corrected in some of her latest works, which have "freshness and vigour and summarize the form in a more decisive "fashion than before. The exhibition leaves an impression of "charm, while marking an advance in the artist's technique." 'Apollo': She shows quite exceptional brilliance in her drawings ..., and in her admirable portraiture she understands the psy- "chology not only of young children but also of old men--a "somewhat rare occurrence in art", The 'Jewish Weekly':"..There "is truly life in her work, and an Orpen ripeness of colour "simply adds to their vitality... There is repose, too. You "feel that her models are 'resting peacefully', yet are wide "awake as well. In her drawing there is no fear. All the re- "tentiveness and subtlety of form--but occasionally a bold "outline too unusual for the art-master of today. " 'Time and

(*) see reproduction

Tide'"Clara Klinghoffer has a sense of character, and her portraits matter. The portraits of the Old Jew, the Roman Girl and Lucien Pissarro are excellent."

But this was by no means all. Later in the autumn, when a huge exhibition of more than 4000 canvases was opened in the Whitechapel Art Gallery, then still the very centre of good art in the East End, the critics, placed before a difficult choice, generally included Clara's work among that of the very few artists they mentioned in some detail. Frank Rutter, ardent admirer of Clara's art, wrote in the 'Sunday Times' : "This is an academy without academicians , since by some curious "self-denying ordinance the most gifted East End painters do "not contribute. Or rather: there is just one academician, "Clara Klinghoffer , an exception who proves the rule. Her "three paintings which include a study of a head, 'Leah', as "exquisite in colour as it is masterly in its drawing and modelling, are in a class by themselves. Beside the ripe achieve-"ment of this highly-gifted woman painter, the remaining exhibits appear the work of novices." 'Truth': "Clara Klinghoffer "has more than a local reputation and, apart from their charm "as sympathetic interpretations of racial types, her three paint-"ings(the portrait of Leah in particular) are delightfully free "and lively in workmanship.". 'The Jewish Chronicle': ...*The "lovely semi-nude would grace any collection, and would give "life-long pleasure."

Among the commissions resulting from this show , and other successful exhibitions was one from a well-known young author, J.B.Priestley. Writing in his Diary some time in November 1932, he said : "When I came home found Jane (his wife) "with Clara Klinghoffer who is such a fine draughtsman for "children. At tea we discussed the idea of Miss K. doing a "drawing of our (only recently born) baby." She quite fell in "love with Thomas--and she drew him ; I wonder whether Thomas, now in his early forties, still has that drawing!

And so 1932 ran to its close. Emotionally it had been a bad year. Rosie's death brought deep and lasting grief. But

career-wise it had been a satisfying year: a time of much work, general critical acclaim, and the promise of a continued close contact with London.

11

The Dutch Years (2)

'The Old Troubadour', having been seen and admired all over theUnited Kingdom, finally became number 723 in the Catalogue of 1750 exhibits in the 165th Royal Academy of Arts in London, There, under the terms of the Chantrey Bequest, it was acquired for the Tate Gallery, where it is today. Much as Clara felt pleased to see Torquato Simoncelli's prophecy fulfilled, it saddened her to discover that the painting would not be on permanent exhibition; most of the time it would be hidden in the Tate Gallery's tightly-packed cellars. She saw this as an act in direct contradiction to the very acquisition of an artist's work. Surely, the canvas had been acquired with the idea in mind that it was worth being seen by the thousands who visit the Tate to get acquainted with the artistic creations of their contemporaries. True: she was told that any visitor could ask to see the painting, and that on such an occasion it would actually be produced. But how many people come to a museum with the sole purpose to ask for a certain painting which, though mentioned in the Catalogue, cannot be seen on its walls ? The fact that the 'Old Troubadour' was a small canvas made its almost permanent relegation to the Tate's 'lower regions' still more difficult to comprehend.

But there were other exhibitions to think of. The 'Women's International Club' showed 'Two young Nudes,' described by the 'Scotsman' critic as 'unusually solid and "well-constructed figures, painted with a Leonardesque "softness and delicacy of light and shade, which is rare "nowadays, when so much painting is becoming toneless arran- "gement in flat patterns". 'The Referee'said :"Klinghoffer "has come on tremendously in the past few years. Her 'Polish Girl"(*) is one of the most satisfying paintings in the ex- "hibition, and it is good enough to establish her amongst the "best woman painters of today...It stands up to carping criticism." Next came the New English Art Club where Clara's "Nude with Plaits" made the reviewer of the 'Jewish Chro- nicle" say: ""This is a lovely nude; it is completely sa- tisfactory for two thirds of the ay down, but it rather "goes to pieces below the breasts where it might well have "been cut off.None the less :it remains one of the best pict- "ures in the exhibition."

(*)see re- production

This summer Clara also had new work at the Redfern Gallery. (Apollo; reviewing that mixed exhibition, mentions Clara's 'Girl's Head': "the colour harmonies here are rich and "sonorous." 'The Studio', in its May issue , published a very good colour reproduction of the 'Polish Girl'. Newspapers as far away as Brisbane, Australia and Colombo carried reviews of her work, and the Queensland Art Fund bought one of her drawings for the Brisbane Museum.

Finally, during September and October, Clara had a one-man show in the Esher Surrey Art Galleries Ltd., at The Hague, Holland. 'De Residentiebode,' an old-established daily of that city, wrote : "The drawings in particular are excel- "lent: a baby's arm, an haphazard attitude are drawn ith cer- "tain grace. Some of the baby heads are sublime; that of a sleeping 'Sick Girl' is of an extreme sensitiveness. As for "her paintings, we only have to look at her study of "Père "Daviet, the Paris publican, to realize that French influence "seems to dominate her work."

*

Meantime significant events occurred outside the realm of art, a somber series of happenings that were dire forebodings

of worse to come. The democratic Weimar Republic in Germany collapsed. Adolf Hitler's Nazis won the majority in the Reichstag and its "Führer" obtained dictatorial powers. Rearmament of Germany became his main preoccupation, and the German withdrawal from the League of Nations was for those who wished to see the truth, another indication of Hitler's preparation for an 'inevitable war'.

Encouraged by Hitler's success, Anton Mussert's Dutch Nazi Party, the Nationaal Socialistische Beweging (NSB) grew more challenging,stressing ever stronger the anti-semitic principles of the Führer. It used the columns of its weekly 'Volk en Vaderland' to spread Jew-hatred, arousing the lowest instincts among the Dutch, and calling upon its members to spread the message of a Greater Germany, pure and Aryan, including all those inside The Netherlands who would be able to stand up to the racial tests. It was a slow, insidious boring into the unity of the Dutch nation, lacing ever louder outcries against the existence of a democratic, tolerant country. As yet most intellectual and semi-intellectual circles refused to have anything to do with Mussert and his hordes of roughnecks, but the general situation was growing more alarming by the week. On the surface nothing much appeared to change; life went on as usual, and many honest burghers were of the opinion that soon enough 'that madman in Berlin' would get his deserts, as common sense was bound to destroy him and his henchmen.

Bute even those optimists saw themselves compelled to have a closer look at things when in the night of 27/28 February 1933 The Reichstag building in Berlin was badly damaged by a fire set, so the Nazis insisted, by a half-witted Dutch youngster, Van der Lubbe, purportedly 'in the pay of the communists(' Severely restrictive measures followed against not only those known as communists inside Germany, but against the entire population. In fact: all constitutional articles which guaranteed private property, personal liberty, freedom of the spoken and printed word, secrecy of postal communication and the right to hold meetings and form associations of any kind were suspended indefinitely. As an immediate consequence all

communist and socialist publications were forbidden, and all gathering places of those political groups were closed. Armed police and armoured cars patrolled the whole of Berlin; and the Nazi dailies were filled with blasts against the 'red terror' that was threatening to take over Germany. Since in Hitler's addled brain communism equalled Jewish political activity, anti-Jewish measures now followed one another with lightning speed. Refugees, old and young, rich and poor started to cross the Dutch frontiers, and were not always warmly welcomed by a government combatting further Nazi infiltration through possible spy-planting, and a population fearing excessive competition in an already none too prosperous employment field. All the same, collections were held throughout The Netherlands, to help support those among the refugees who arrived bereft of virtually everything. Children, our own six year old daughter included, stood at street corners, shaking their collection boxes. Here and there Nazis actually contributed...: by shoving bundles of worthless German banknotes of the post World War I inflation period into the boxes. Meantime 'Volk and Vaderland' never left off warning against 'this dangerous wholesale Jewish infiltration.' Their salesmen made it a practice to ring the door bells of people who they knew were Jews, more especially on Friday evenings , and force the inhabitants to buy their paper 'or we'll remember you when the time comes.' A band of young Mussert men made a half-hearted attempt to march provocatively through the world-famous Jewish quarter of Amsterdam; but they met with such firm, hard-handed opposition that for a while this strategy to propagate Jew-hatred was abandoned.

Obviously, the developments in neighbouring Germany were causing grave anxiety in the Dutch business world. As the Nuremberg laws restricted Jewish existence inside Germany ever more, im- and exporters saw their trade connections imperilled, and the subsequent confusion was, as time went on, felt sharply in the public relations and publicity fields. Some large scale advertisers began to cut their budgets while new campaigns, some of them ready for publication, were postponed indefinitely. Even overseas firms that had found fresh

outlets for their wares in Europe after America's Great Recession, grew cautious; clearly: there was a very difficult time ahead.

Clara and I had looked forward to a time of rest and work in southern Italy where had spent a holiday inthe autumn of 1932. Our stay in Capri, then a very attractive and singularly quiet 'paradise', had in many ways been fruitful. It had set the crown on visits to some of Italy's most famous churches and museums, including--of course-- the Uffizzi Gallery in Florence. For the first time Clara had been able to see the creations of some of the Great Masters in their own surroundings. It had inspired her to some good work : 'Roman Girl' and the portrait of Concetta, a Capri youth (*), one of the few of her portrait studies in which floral and architeactural details are integrated with the background. She wanted nothing so much as to resume working in Italy; but however reluctantly, we had to postpone our next trip to the south, until the course of political events would have become less tumultuous and frightening.

(*)see reproductions

In the meantime an invitation arrived for her to take part in the 1934 Carnegie InternationalExhibition of paintings in the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh; and on a flying visit to London she painted one of her beloved models, her sister Rachel 'nude, on a red cushion'. Work of hers was also seen at the 33rd Women's International Art Club show at the Suffolk Galleries, and in various provincial centres : Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Salisbury, and others , where both her paintings and drawings found the now usual appreciative reception.

When summer came around and activities in my office appeared once more to have reached a reasonable level, we decided to visit Sicily and 'far from the madding crowd' find relief from the pressures of life under the steadily growing Nazi threat. We moved into a small hotel, the Naumachie, high up on the cliff of Taormina, enjoying the peace of the old-fashioned albergo, the gorgeous vistas across the bay and the kindness of our host, a greying Si-

cilian, called Ettore Silvestri. The only thing disturbing us, particularly in the early morning, was the deep, hollow sound of someone coughing in a room of which the yellow stuccoed balcony faced ours. We wondered who the person could be who, in so ideal a climate, was suffering from a severe cold.

Then, one morning, a young slender woman stepped out upon the balcony, and , seeing Clara at work, remained for a while to watch her painting.

I greeted her in my 'best' Italian, and she introduced herself in good English: Giuseppina Silvestri, eldest daughter of the hotel-keeper. Her voice was low and raw; obviously, it was no common cold she suffered from. As she stood there, holding on with thin fingers to the balcony rail, she looked fragile and yet very attractive. She was wearing a bright purple jacket that, she told us, had once belonged to her grandmother and was 'typically antique Sicilian' . She also confessed to being a lover of art; and when Clara suggested her posing for a portrait she immediately consented, adding hesitantly that she could not pose long at a time. She had, she said, been quite ill and was not as yet as strong as she would like to be.

That is how the sittings began on Giuseppina's portrait. At exactly eleven in the morning she would knock on the door of our room, enter with a horase 'good morning'and take her place on a chair close to the open window, smiling very patiently but speaking little. When we addressed her, she answered in her ravaged voice , using words sparingly as if the effort of longer speech lay beyond her strength. We did, of course, never ask her what had been wrong, but the one and only waiter, a bald old man who had served in the hotel for twenty-odd years, volunteered one morning the information we were dreading to get; that Giuseppina, at 23, had been ill for over five years; she was, as everyone in Taormina knew, suffering from tiberculosis of the throat and would never wholly recover.

Her eyes were of a velvety brown, had a slight upward slant and were surmounted by straight, plucked brows. Her hair, pulled back tightly, was gathered in a thick knot. In this frame the pretty, painfully emaciated face looked like a tragic mask with painted lips and rouged and powdered cheeks. She

tried hard to act 'normally' and to seem interested in what was happening. But all at once her eyes would betray her utter weariness, and the nervous twitching of her slender fingers with their cherry-polished nails, betrayed her inward misery.

From the first sitting we spoke with her in English only; she did, in fact, both speak and understand it quite well. She had travelled, stayed in Switzerland and seemed to have a sound insight into human character. She was proud and courageous, had a sense of humour, even if it was hard for her to do more than smile. We had no difficulty believing what the old waiter said: Giuseppina was a very popular girl, much wanted in the better Sicilian circles before she fell ill.

Strange enough, inside the Albergo Naumachie, Giuseppina's sickness was accepted, but as a mere fact and therefore never spoken of. Her mother, a staunch church-goer, did much for the children of the poor; yet, we never saw her take any special care of her lost eldest daughter. She looked sad and embittered. 'Ah!..che vuole?...' said the waiter. For five long years money galore had been spent to bring back youth and health to Giuseppina. Now things were hopeless; nothing further could be done. Besides, business was very bad; people had shunned the hotel. It was too well-known that a tb-patient lived in it. Anyway, there was little money left to spend. And so Giuseppina, reading, sleeping, spent her days encloistered in a cool, dark room, appearing on the hotel terrace only early in the morning or late at night, when the barbarous sun had retreated behind the ruins of the ancient Greek theatre across the hill. Then she would sit in her arm chair, legs crossed. Her white arms of terrifying thinness drooped powerlessly from narrow shoulders that had plainly suffered too much. So frail she looked at times that it seemed the very weight of her shoes might be out of all proportion to the strength of her feet.

Giuseppina did not look at the portrait until Clara declared it finished. Then she stood for a while in front of the canvas, shoulders drooping. At last she said, turning to Clara: "You are a great painter... Yes, yes, that's me. That's

me..." She shook her head and walked out of the room. During the few more days we stayed at the Naumachie --in which by then we were the only guests--we did not see Giuseppina any further. The old waiter, sighing, said wearily: "Poverina..; she is very discouraged at present. She stays in bed all day and hardly eats anything. May the Lord help us all."

In the middle of October the portrait was exhibited in the New English Art Club; some time later in the year it was bought by the Manchester City Art Gallery, where it is today.

In the beginning of September 1935 we received a black-edged little card from Taormina: "Yesterday signorina "Giuseppina Silvestri rendered her soul to the Lord. Her "parents, sisters, brothers and uncles mourn her. Taormina, "31 August 1935, year XIII of the fascist regime."

*

Shortly after we returned to Heemstede-Aerdenhout Clara complained of a swelling that for some time past she had noticed on the side of her abdomen. She had no pain, but the swelling had grown visibly during the last few months. A gynecologist examined her, and advised an immediate operation. He explained that the swelling had attached itself to the wall of the uterus, and had increased to the size of a small orange. If this disquietening diagnosis worried her, Clara did not show it in any way. She calmly arranged for a room in the small, well-run Jewish hospital of Haarlem, and the date was set for the operation. She was at her easel on the very day of entering the hospital, then cleaned her palette and brushes and said, turning to me with a smile: '...to be continued later...I hope.' It was the only way in which she expressed anxiety.

On the next day but one the operation took place and to our inexpressible happiness the growth proved to be non-malignant. It was taken out; but with it came a part of the uterus wall. We would have no more children.

For several weeks after she came back home Clara was unable to work. Only very gradually she regained her strength, and we were hopefully thinking of a short recovery holiday in

the south of France when Michael, almost four years old, fell ill. It looked as if he had caught a bad cold in his belly, and our local doctor, confirming that the child suffered from gastritis, prescribed hot compresses on thepainful spot. At the same time he gave the boy a dose of codaine, to lessen his discomfort.

All this happened early one morning, just before I caught my commuter's train to Amsterdam. But I had hardly ~~rwgxhed~~ reached the office when the 'phone rang. Clara, much upset, told me that Michael's features had swollen into a terrible mask, and the pains in his belly had much increased. I rang up a pediatrist in Haarlem who once had been recommended by a friend of ours, and asked him to go to see the boy at once. I then called a cab and drove home. When I got there the specialist had already been. He had wrapped the child in a blanket and taken him to the Haarlem hospital. The illness he diagnosed as acute appendicitus, to be operated on at once.

For hours on end Clara and I walked up and down the corridor of the little hospital, or sat in the waiting room facing each other mutely. When at long last the specialist came to us accompanied by the local doctor who had so poorly diagnosed the case, my heart almost stopped. What had happened ? Had the child been operated on?... No--he had not. A drain had been inserted in his belly to ward off the very real threat of peritonitis. The results would not be known for many hours. Clara, looking ghastly white, insisted upon waiting in the hospital. in the end, however, I persuaded her to come home.

But the evening was one long torture. When, just past eleven, the phone rang. I grabbed the receiver with trembling fingers. Fortunately, it was only my secretary who, in the goodness of her heart, enquired after the child's condition... The shock was all the same a terrible one; neither of us slept that night. In the morning the specialist called us: the boy was not doing badly. At any rate, the immediate danger seemed past.

For several weeks Michael stayed in the hospital, and while slowly recovering he became known in every ward. We had bought him a small 'motorcar'; in it he travelled through the building, ringing his bell, visiting here and there, or staying with the hospital porter who loved amusing him with all kinds of

magic tricks. But our relief was, after all, only temporarily. When towards the close of the year we fetched the child home, we knew that soon he would have to go back into the hospital; 'the appendix,' said the specialist, 'is a bomb in his belly'. It might explode again at any time. It must come out.

Throughout that winter Clara did, of course, little work. Once or twice , when he was getting better, she drew the boy in his hospital bed. But we were well into February, 1935 before she could take up her brushes and continue the half-finished painting on her easel. Michael's second operation had been successful; soon he was his old self again.

Still, the end of a bad period had not come yet. In the letter part of February my mother , visiting relatives in Amsterdam, fell ill with inflammation of the lungs. She was hurriedly brought home, and after some days her fever seemed to abate. But at the time there were no wonder drugs yet. On March 8th, 1935 she died in her eightieth year. She was buried in the little Jewish cemetery halfway between Haarlem and Amsterdam.

In the first night after her death a Jew from Haarlem came to pray for her soul, as is the habit among Jews. He was a young but oldish-looking man with thick lenses, a bald head and a strange half-smile. He spoke hesitantly, with a heavy nasal accent, as if he had suffered a stroke. But his mind was brilliant. To be sure, he could hardly be called attractive in the common sense; yet, both our children took to him immediately. Something extremely gentle and sweet emanated from this physically poorly-endowed limping young man.

When many months later he came time and again to sit for his portrait (*) , the children looked out for his visits, and impatiently awaited the moment on which Clara would 'free' him, so that he could play with them. The painting is doubtlessly one of her best character studies. We called it rather unkindly The Eccentric.

(*)see reproduction

*

Haarlem was an attractive, in many spots beautiful old town with a gorgeous church, the St. Bavo , a medley of

16th and 17th century buildings , a fine Museum rich in outstanding Dutch masters, foremost among them Haarlem's world-renowned citizen Frans Hals, and an active group of good and not so good artists working under the somewhat grandiloquent device 'Kunst zij ons Doel' (Art be our purpose). Membership of this circle was a rather exclusive affair. It therefore took some time before Albert Arens, the group's secretary, sat down to write a solemn note to Clara, informing her that she had 'been accepted as a working member of the Drawing College.' Twice weekly the members gathered in an impressive hall of the ancient Waag: long ago the official Weighing House of the city where all incoming goods were weighed and accordingly taxed. Among the professionals who attended more or less regularly were men like Matthieu Wiegman, well-known painter, Jan Boot, a somewhat eccentric gentleman who invariably dressed in formal black with stiffly starched white cuffs, and a hard blueish rubber collar; and several others. Here Clara, the only woman among many men, was soon fully accepted. She liked working in the Waag, and when the group held its yearly exhibition in the Frans Hals museum, a true event in the town, her work hung next to that of many artists much better known in The Netherlands than she. None the less, the critics of the 'Algemeen Handelsblad', Amsterdam, had this to say of Clara's work : "The portrait of Hans Boskamp, a fellow-painter, takes an entirely "different place in this exhibition. It is perhaps the best "and at the same time the most original canvas in the show. The "pose is completely natural, and the richly varied palette of "this painter has reached an expression which we miss in every-"one of the other exhibited portraits." The local 'Haarlem's Dagblad' was a trifle less abundant in its praise: "This por-"trait of Han Boskamp is full of fine colour and originality of "vision. There is something of Mephistopholes in the artist's "vision of her model, especially accentuated by the large ears, "in contrast with the small skull cap. All in all, a very in-"teresting portrait".(*)

(*) see reproduction

Almost simultaneously work of Clara's was on view in Bal-

timore, Maryalnd, and Birmingham (England). In the latter city three paintings were shown in the Ruskin Gallery--and this on a novel basis: buyers could pay for their purchases in as much as twelve instalments, with a deposit of 20%. The choice was very wide: it included work by Mark Gertler, Lucien Pissarro, Richard Sickert, Jacob Epstein, Duncan Grant and Matthew Smith. The results were disappointing; the idea of buying art on the instalment system was, it appeared, still a little too unusual to stir less well-heeled art lovers into becoming art collectors. Yet, the critical reviews were most encouraging : in the 'Birmingham Daily Mail' Clara's three paintings elicited the following opinion: "The qualities which make "Clara Klinghoffer one of her leading portraitists are excellent-"ly demonstrated in three examples..." The 'Birmingham Post' : "Clara Klinghoffer shows a group of small portraits in which "gravity and graciousness of the expressions are of secondary "interest, compared with their quality of works of art."

In the autumn exhibition of the New English Art Club, in London, Clara's 'Giuseppina' was shown for the first time. Writing in the 'Natal Witness' at Pieter Maritsburg, So. Africa, London critic F.G.Stone said: "almost like (Augustus) John's work in its bravado is Clara Klinghoffer's 'Giuseppina', which "also has Miss K's own peculiar sensitiveness. Its vitality "is not secured by any sacrifice of delicacy and its rhythmic "unity is untouched by anything else in the exhibition." In the 'Birmingham Mail' , on the same exhibition, "C.K. startles "us with two portraits which have a Rubens-like exuberance of "colour..." The 'Bournemouth Daily Echo': "Clara Klinghoffer's "portraits are vivid and appealing; I like them unreservedly." 'Birmingham Eevening Despatch' : "C.K.'s "Woman dressing her hair" is "one of the most gracious human pictures one could wish."

Finally there was the by then almost traditional summer exhibition at the Redfern Gallery. 'The Jewish Chronicle' said: "C.K. has a charming early portrait of two children, in oils." In the equally traditional East End Academy (Whitechapel Art Gallery) Clara's contributions were mentioned in The Times: "The works shown in this gallery may be devided roughly into "those which, without losing character, show a good deal of tech-"nical skill and artistic training, and those which are done so

"to speak, with the elbow. Among the first the head studies by "Clara Klinghoffer easily take the lead. No. 35 in particular, "in which a turquoise necklace and earring enter into the color- "scheme, is an entirely satisfactory piece of painting."

*

Throughout 1936 the pressure of Nazi persecution in Germany grew, till it reached the unbearable. Almost in the same tempo the fear of what was coming increased among the people of Holland, more particularly among its approximately 160,000 Jews. In Chicago the owners of Lord & Thomas decided to close down some of their branch offices in Europe, so hopefully started only a few years previously. As an alternative, they offered them for take-over to the managers concerned. I accepted this offer, not because I believed in a good future for the enterprise , but simply to gain time while thinking of the best possible solution to ~~of~~ our threatened impasse. In the end I made up my mind to travel to the United States early in 1937, and start a thorough study of its possibilities. If my conclusions were encouraging, I would apply for American immigration visas, wind up the publicity office as quickly as possible, and take my wife and children across the Atlantic to what seemed to be one of the very few civilized spots on earth where a Jewish family could live in reasonable safety.

12

Long Way to America

While thoughts of possible emigration rarely left me, I continued to run the office as much as feasible in 'the old way'. We had, after all, still a fair number of clients and at a given moment in late 1936 I managed, against all expectation, to add a new Dutch account. As for Clara , she worked with regularity in the studio which she had used since 1935 in Haarlem. It was the roomy first floor of an old house alongside the river Spaarne. On the opposite bank were low, typically Dutch buildings; all in all the atmosphere was peaceful and inspiring. Disturbance of any kind in this quiet old-world corner seemed out of the question. Things along the Spaarne had an immutable quality; it would ,so to say, not have been surprising if suddenly a group of brave 'schutters' (home guards) in full 17th century outfit , their halberts gleaming in the sun, had come marching past, with flying colours. On the way to their yearly festival in their own Guildhall, or to a final sitting for their commemorative painting by Frans Hals.

It came as a shock, therefore , when , leaving the studio one afternoon, Clara saw a flag being hoisted to the top of an adjoining building. It was the Nazi banner, its black swastika blowing back and forth aggressively on the

wind. The Haarlem division of Mussert's Nazis had opened their action centre. Soon afterwards their marches began through narrow, winding streets, and the inevitable clashes followed. The danger from beyond Holland's eastern border was slowly, uncontrollably creeping nearer.

It was, I thought, getting time to take preliminary safety measures. As a first step towards closing the office I discontinued handling the Colgate-Palmolive account. Keeping pace with the declining economy, this client had over and over again cut its budget figure for publicity, while the services it expected did not decrease proportionally. We now just about covered the cost of establishing and carrying out the intricate campaigns. Obviously, the next season was sure to leave us with a loss. Additionally, the two men in charge of the Dutch Colgate-Palmolive branch had begun to display distinct anti-Jewish tendencies.

I felt relieved when that untenable relationship ended. In January, 1937 I was to go to America; under the capable leadership of a young office manager and my trusted secretary, would be certain to get every service they might need. our remaining clients

*

For Clara 1936 was not a period of extraordinary excitement. Some of her older pictures made the rounds of various provincial exhibitions: Northampton, Rochester, Aberdeen, Burton-on-Trent, Sheffield, Stockport and Sunderland. Aberdeen acquired one of Clara's oils for its Art Gallery. The Birmingham Art Gallery organised an exhibition of five hundred paintings; Clara sent a study of her sister Bertha. The critic of the '<u>Birmingham Mail</u>' called that picture "out-"standing, because it is so carefully composed, so robust "in colour quality, and painted with such uncommon dig-"nity. One remembers a Rubens in the Midland Art Treasures "Exhibition against which this canvas could have been placed "without loss of personality". In mid-summer the same painting was seen at the Redfern Gallery.

A strange lethargy seemed to penetrate London art life. The 78th show of the New English Art Club aroused nothing faintly resembling a stir, no matter how much Frank

Rutter in the 'Sunday Times' put himself out to find exhibits worthy of praise. Apologetically he wrote:"...The New "English Art Club...has reached an age when it is almost "inevitable that it should be told that its exhibition is not "as good as it used to be, and any comparisons made this "year are likely to be more than usually odious because last "year, celebrating the Jubilee of its foundation, the Club "re-inforced its usual display with loans of early works "by some of its most distinguished members."

Even the show of French and English Nudes at the Leger Galleries in Old Bond Street, the third collection of its kind, found no more than a luke-warm reception. The 'Jewish Chronicle' mustsred up enough enthusiasm to declare that "Clara Klinghoffer is well-known to our readers, and "nothing fresh is to be said about her work except to mention "that Klinghoffer continues to paint her best... One should at "least appreciate her excellent painting..."

Early in 1937 I crossed the Atlantic on one of the comfortable United States Lines ships, taking with me a small collection of Clara's paintings and drawings. A London art dealer had provided an introduction to Mrs. Marie Sterner, a gallery owner with a painter-husband. She showed genuine admiration for the works I brought her, but then, dejectedly, shook her head. The reverberations of the Great Recession had by no means left the art collecting world untouched. In fact: she had only recently decided to close her gallery down "until better times'... She advised me to get in touch with another gallery run by two young men, the Valentine Brothers, and--it appeared--still going strong. I did--but only to discover that this 'gallery' consisted of two small rooms, for hire to anyone ready to spend several hundred dollars to see his artistic products displayed upon its walls. It was,in fact, virtually the first of the so-called 'fringe galleries' which, a couple of decades later, were to become a feature of New York's art world, much to the delight of well-heeled Sunday painters and other late-in-life inspired creators of the beautiful...

In other respects I found New York less disappointing. Wherever I went there was a strong will to work noticeable, a push to regain lost territory in commerce and industry. I had talks with some 'leaders of industry', such as a Director of the Continental Can Company, and got long interviews with men in charge of the export departments of bafflingly-large firms. I met with no totally-negative attitude. Yes: Europe still offered good chances for those daring enough to start out upon a dubious adventure. But the best device for anyone less enterprising was at this moment "Hands off".

"But", I remarked to the president of a large food-exporting house, "don't you agree that Holland will remain neutral, whatever happens ? As it did in the first World War? Surely the Germans, if they want to make war, will need a neutral country in their back--if only to ensure them of a regular supply of whatever food they can't get elsewhere." The man shrugged. "Seems to me," he said, "that you're an optimist. Whatever Hitler wants, he'll GRAB ! He won't ask you Dutch people politely to sell it to him. Tou can be sure of that."

In my heart I agreed; this American saw the actual situation clearer than most people inside Holland.

"But what about your own Nazis--those fellows of the Bund ? Why do you permit them to have training camps? Why can they march around, and spread anti-Jewish poison?"

"Well..." he said slowly, "I guess we'll let them play their little game a while longer. We'll know at least where to look for them when the time comes to wipe out the whole bloody mess."

"And what about yourselves?" I asked. "When will life here be back to normal ?"

He laughed. "Don't shoot the pianist..." he said. "He's doing his best! We're getting nicely out of the muck. Another couple of years and we'll be back on full steam. You'll see!"

Then my final question. "Would you advise anyone who realizes what's happening in western Europe to get out ? Say

...er...emigrate to America ?"

He looked at me enquiringly. Then he said slowly :"Yeah..., I think so. That is: if the fellow's got something to offer that we need."

Interviews like this one left me very thoughtful. Beyond all doubt, it would be very hard finding the right kind of niche in this extraordinary country that was struggling so very hard to make a come-back. Neither would it be an easy matter for Clara to gain a foothold with her type of art amidst the crowds of artists, good, bad and indifferent who since 1935 had to a vast extent only been able to work because of Roosevelt's Works Projects Administration(WPA) which provided them with a modest living while simultaneously filling museums and schools, or decorating walls in official buildings and institutions. But the upsurge in every phase of life was so evident, the long fight back to prosperity carried so clear a note of optimism that the thought of coming to live in New York did not particularly frighten me. I cannot honestly say that I left New York with my mind made up, but I did feel that I had found much needed reassurance: if things in Holland grew ever more threatening, leaving the country would be the wisest thing to do, and I had now, at least, some idea of the difficulties we might well have to face in 'the new country'. Yes, I would put out feelers with the American immigration officials in Holland, and find out how much time would be needed to get American immigration visas.

Back home I discussed possible developments with some writer-colleagues, some of them Jewish. Not one among them was hopeful that Holland, if a war broke out, would have much of a chance to remain neutral. The long North Sea coast, facing England, was a precious springboard for a possible attack on England. The great problem was : would the Germans force Holland into obedience by invading it ? Or would Holland join the Germans as a willy-nilly ally ? Though most of us considered that last possibility remote, it could not be ignored that within The Netherlands well over 100,000 active Mussert-men were prepared to overthrow the government and join the Hitler-prophesied 'Greater Germany'. Already Dutch Jews were secretly forming defense organisations; and during the remainder of 1937 talk

among them of leaving 'while the going was still good.', increased steadily.

*

All through that year Clara had been working for another one-man exhibition in London, a show that was to have nothing 'already seen.' From the products of so many months of constant work she chose 34 canvases, many of them painted in London, some in France and Italy and only a few in ~~London~~ Holland. She also selected 16 framed drawings.

The exhibition opened at the Redfern Gallery, then at 20 Cork Street, on April 7th and immediately drew a great deal of attention. In 'The Observer' Jan Gordon uttered a critical note: "Clara Klinghoffer gave us the promise of "becoming the most remarkable woman painter England has as "yet produced. Her work was vivid, vigorous and valiant; she "showed power in drawing and dramatic daring in her colour. "Crude it was certainly, but with all the good crudity of "youth, the crudity that should ripen well. Her present ex- "hibition, the first she has held in London for a number of "years, does not quite settle the promisory note of the past. "The vigour and ability of her drawing is still there (see Titia, Old Man, Baby Flora or the Nude); but except for the "alert and humorous vitality of Lucien Pissarro, which is a "speaking portrait, the somber harmonies of Alathène, the gui- "tar player and the character of The Eccentric, her paint- "ings seem to fall short, both in conception and in the use "of paint of what have been expected." But 'The Times' was less displeased : "...She is an artist of great natural ta- "lent, who attracted attention at a very early age by the "old masterly" qualities of her drawing. It is still un- "certain how she will develop; and her present exhibition gives " a little the impression that she is trying to combine too "many things in the same picture. Formerly the artist's work "recalled the style of Leonardo, and it must be remembered "that Leonardo was primarily a tone painter. Now she has "plumped for strong colour and it does not accord very well "with the tone convention. The impression is that she must "either subdue her colour or else loosen the treatment of "form in order to give it room. At the same time her work

"pleases by its strong personal flavour; and both Lucien "Pissarro and the Guiter Player are excellent pieces of work, "while Sleeping Girl has the charm of an unashamed sentimen- "tality. Among the other paintings Cornelia and The Blue Hat "make the best impression. Among her drawings several deserve "special praise." 'The Scotsman': "In the Redfern Gallery "Clara Klinghoffer shows some of her brilliant portraits, nudes "and character studies. What skill of draughtsmanship, what "warmth of tone and range of chiaroscouro." 'The Sketch': "This "private view is an event in the world of art, and Clara "Klinghoffer has many followers... She has lived up to her "old master"-tradition, for several of the portraits in her "present show are definitely comparable in manner and colour "to that indefinite quantity 'Old Master'. They are lovely, "especially Titia, portrait of a woman. Her landscapes, how- "ever, are modern, very fine work indeed, showing both Dutch "and Italian scenes, including several of Capri. Texas Ranger (*) "is a delightful study of a small boy, her own, on a hobby "horse." 'Apollo' : "Clara Klinghoffer used to draw, one might "say, in the round. I do not recollect that one ever particular- "ly noticed her colour which seems to me always tohave been "neutrally subservient. In this exhibition her drawings still "have their old qualities. In her paintings, however, one "finds colour as a new, self-assertive element, and it is gene- "rally not good. It jumps and does not 'belong'. Yet, in the "portrait of The Rabbi we have an academic representation of a "soul; it is highly emotional. (*) Only in such more restrained "works as Lucien Pissarro, or the gold-grey harmony of Ala- "thene the guitar player have we that unity added to her power "of representation which raises a painting to a work of art. "Can it be that she finds the continental air of Holland too "disturbingly disturbed at present, and inimical to that "tranquillity which is essential ?" 'The Birmingham Post': "There is a warm, glowing light on the face of Titia, a woman "in red , with jewels on hands and at her throat; and the "beautiful details in two portraits of old men are suggestive "of Rembrandt...One of the finest paintings is of her small "son dressed up as a Texas Ranger riding a rocking horse.

(*)see re- production

(*)see re- production

"There is another portrait of him: just a head in a brown hood...
"There are two charming impressions of Capri, and a view of
(*) See re- "an old monastery corner at Amalfi (*)." Mary Chamot, in
production her Modern painting in England , said : "Clara Klinghoffer's
"drawings must be recognized as comparable to the great Ita-
"lian masters."

But there were other grumbles. 'The Jewish Chro-
nicle' wrote: "While her drawings are as perfect as ever, she
"seems to need inspiration...She appears to show little in-
"terest in composition and when she abandons the lovely loose
(*) see re- painting of The Mantilla (*), she seems to have nothing to put
production "in its place. This may, of course, only be a phase of de-
"velopment that will in the long run produce results...At present
"she finds only draughtsmanship, lighting and painting--all of
"them supremely good--but they are not enough..."

Perhaps some answer to these various 'plaints' can be found in one or two sentences Clara spoke during a subsequent "In Town Tonight" BBC broadcast. Mentioning the countries where lately she had worked, she hastened to add : "But more "than half my work has been done here, in England. I began "to paint in London when I was only fourteen. That means a "great deal to me...At one time I had a studio room overlook-"ing the entrance to Hessel Street Market, in the East End... "In that street I found my most attractive models...poor, beauti-"ful, picturesque...: a weird assortment. I spent my days "there , and children would be waiting for me to arrive in the "morning, sometimes almost a dozen of them. And at night they "insisted upon accompanying me back to my bus... The East End "had a peculiar lighting, an atmosphere of its own."

Nothing could have better expressed her attachment to London: its colouring, its ambiance. The 'new hues' of Holland, with is deep horizons, flat plains and extraordinary skies at dawn and dusk, undoubtedly influenced her palette, resulting in works which, as can be seen from the reviews I have quoted, were alien to those among the critics who had followed her career from the days of her first one-man show, now eighteen years ago.

( ) see re- That summer Clara's painting 'The Scribe' (*) was
production hung on the line in the Royal Academy. The New English Art

club showed the portrait of a Dutch model, 'Geertruida', which in the Paris edition of the New York Herald Tribune was described as 'one of the best portrait studies in the exhibition. "An unflattering but faithful picture of a woman in evening "dress". Adrian Bury wrote a two-page, well-illustrated article on Clara's work in The Studio: "...Her approach to her subjects "has a superb touch of realism that places her in the category "of brilliant interpreters of humanity. How memorably vital "is the study called 'The Eccentric'. The head is painted with "great intensity of feeling. The eyes behind the glasses, the "tolerant smile, the nervous hands, the loose overcoat are ob- "served as much psychologically as physically. This is far "more than a likeness: it is a revelation!...She paints with "her mind, and not with her hands. She, too, is a philosopher me- "ditating upon the exciting diversity of species, always re- "membering that a very face is a cosmic fragment in the soli- "tude of life, something unique and mysterious. She looks at "landscapes and houses with the same passionate curiosity, "and very beautiful in their brilliant colouring and lively "drawing are her paintings of Italy."

"I try to paint what I see, and I hope with hard work to "reach a technique, eventually, that will make it possible to "put down in paint just those aspects of life that thrill me "most," Clara Klinghoffer said. "My model is nature and as far as I can I want to give back the jewels that she spreads so richly before us."

There is admirable wisdom and reverence in such senti- "ments..."

Some time during 1938 the portrait "Young woman with pearls" was purchased by the Public Libraries, Museums and Gymnasium Committee of Stoke-on-Trent, for the Hanley Museum Art Gallery. The discovery of this sale, through a press cutting from the Staffordshire Sentinel, came as a surprise to Clara. The fact was that just before she left London, after a lengthy stay that stretched into the winter of 1938, she had been told by the Redfern Gallery that there had been no sales. At that time the bad news had not upset her: her large-scale spring exhibition had been a success, but to 'a small extent

only." Times were far from good, and it was a surprise that several drawings had found buyers all the same. Now there had been no buying interest at all , a disappointment in which the gallery recognised abundant proof of steadily worsening conditions in the art field. The menace of Nazi belligerency, deeply influencing England's economy, had influenced trading in art as well. "Things will be getting worse," was the dealers' melancholy prognosis; and even Austin Chamberlain's pathetic waving with his melo-dramatic 'Peace In Our Time'-message, brought back in late September from his conference with Hitler, did not appear to change the general situation for the better.

Of course: Clara requested the Redfern Gallery to pay her for the picture already on show in Stoke-on-Trent. Their reply revealed that the picture without the artist's consent had been sent out 'for sale or return' to the Brook Street Art Gallery, London whose owners, so Clara was informed, 'had not so far confirmed the sale.' Obviously , the Redfern Gallery to whom the painting had been entrusted, remained responsible for its payment. But despite many efforts, reaching far into the summer of 1939, and strongly supported by the Imperial Arts League, no payment was made, even though the Stoke-on-Trent authorities confirmed, via their City Treasurer, that the picture had been bought and duly paid for.Many months later, in January 1940, the Imperial Arts League reported that 'payment will be met eventually, "and under the present circumstances (war had begun in September, 1939) 'they (the Redfern Gallery) advise that "drastic action should not be taken."

Not a word was ever heard about this 'sale'...

*

One day in April 1938, while Clara was in London for the opening of her Redfern Gallery exhibition, our nurse told me that a little boy next-door had been bitten by a Shepherd dog while the child played in the front garden of his home. Our son, Michael, had seen it happen, got very frightened and ran to the nurse, crying and begging her to chase the wild dog away. Shouldn't I, she asked, do something about this ?

I knew that the dog, a huge wolf-like animal, belonged to the owner of a villa two doors away from our home. So I went up to this man's house, and rang the bell. Mr. Kelder himself came to the door; leaning against the doorpost he asked me what I wanted. I had seen the man on many occasions, had never before had I spoken to him. I told him what had happened: his dog frightened playing children, including my young son. Would he please muzzle the animal until he was quite sure that it would not do any harm ?

For a few moments the man looked at me disdainfully. Then he said : "I've had no complaints. I'm not going to "muzzle my dog. I don't care if he frightens your son. "What does it matter anyway whether we get you, damn Jews, "now or next week...?" He spit into the street, just past me and banged his door shut.

I felt utterly shattered. Now the Nazi plague had reached our peaceful suburb, a place supposedly inhabited by civilized people. It was high time to stop prevaricating.

That same afternoon I travelled to Rotterdam and put in my application for immigration visas to the United States. There were droves of people in the Immigration building, all come for the same purpose: 'to get out while the going was good'. I was told by an official that it would take 'a few months' before my application would be considered in Washington.

When Clara returned from London and heard the story of the dog and its master, she agreed fully that we must not stay in Holland any longer than absolutely necessary for winding up our affairs. Why, she asked, had I so hurriedly applied for American immigration visas ? Why could we not settle in London, far more 'trusted territory', so absolutely her real home and so important for her work as an artist ?

I tried to make the reasons for my decision clear to her: the uncertainty about the direction in which Holland would go in case of a war, for one. Were it to join Germany, I, being Dutch , would be considered an enemy-alien in England, and most certainly be interned in a camp for the

duration. But even if Holland would not be involved, or overrun by the Nazis, how was I to make a living without a work permit, that valuable little bit of cardboard the English were so very loath to give to workers from outside their borders? And even if such a work permit was granted, how was I to find a place in English journalism and /or public relations institutions when both these professions were so frighteningly 'exclusive' ?

Clara admitted the validity of my reasoning, but it saddened her to think that we would have to go 'so far away' from all that had meaning and value to her: her relatives, London itself and the British world of art. Perhaps, she suggested hopefully, we could <u>try</u> England. If things over there did not materialize in the way we wanted, we might still change our plans and continue our travels, all the way to America.

I realized that there was a very difficult time ahead. Discouraged, Clara worked very little. We did not speak very much of the great problem that must soon be solved, but I knew that she spent whole days in her Haarlem studio, worrying and thinking of some acceptable solution that would exclude the need to emigrate to the United States.

Things worsened when a close relative, coming to us as a guest, abused our hospitality by trying to convince Clara that she should go back to London under any circumstances, and alone, independent of what I believed would be the most advisable way to follow. It grew into an unhappy time, torn as I was between the ~~wish~~ desire to do what Clara wished and the warnings of common sense which so irrefutably pointed to emigration to America as the only way to flee from growing danger and yet allow us to retain complete personal freedom of action.

Meantime I had been in regular contact with the American immigration authorities in Rotterdam. I had dutifully submitted every detail on the four of us that was wanted. But official machinery grinds slowly; time and again

more information was requested , often a sheer repetition of what already had been provided. Finally, in the early part of December the long-awaited message arrived: we were to have the immigration visas but they would be valid for a period of three months only. The whole little family set out for Rotterdam, met with crowds of people eager to leave Holland and waiting, waiting for their turn to be heard and judged by the gentlemen in power behind their impressively-large desks. We underwent a physical check-up, went through a number of other formalities and left the building--last hope for untold thousands in the years to come--triumphantly. We had our permits to enter the Promised Land...

A maddeningly hectic month followed. Not only must the last vestiges of the publicity firm be wound up, but there also was our home, to be back-breakingly divided into what was to go into storage and what was to come to America with us. As 'our ship', a United States liner, was to sail from Southampton some time in March, we decided to forward most of Clara's work and our household linen to England, whence it would eventually join us aboard the boat. Several dozen objects of minor importance went to a local auction; the remainder was placed in storage in an old-established, trustworthy place in Haarlem.

By this time Clara was so dejected by the prospect of the coming separation from all she had ever, since the early days of her artistic career cared for, that I made a great effort to meet her half-way. I would go to London alone and try to find employment with one of the many publicity houses that hsd been in regular contact with my office. Obviously, this would mean that, should I fail to find soon what I was searching for, I would need more time than the three months' immigration permits-limit allowed. Consequently, I once more appeared before the American authorities in Rotterdam, and hesitantly asked for an extension of our visas, if in any way possible for a further two months.

"Good God!" said the official, looking at me incredulously. "You can't be serious."

But I was; and I tried to explain that I needed this additional time to wind up a business that had been under my direction for several years.

The man gave me a long, searching look. Then he said: "Would you rather I cancelled the visas ? There are'--and his voice increased in volume--'literally HUNDREDS who are waiting..., who would consider themselves very lucky if they could get away in March."

I knew. I was apologetic, tried to make clear why winding up a public relations firm is not the same as closing the front door of a shop, and turn the key. In the end the official stretched out his hand. "Gimme y'r passports', he said. "I'll grant you a six weeks' extension--and no more." He did--and I thanked him profusely, and left, sweating profusely. I had gambled, played a dangerous game stalling for time, and I had won...,but only by a hair.

I got in touch with the United States Lines ; they had been my clients and were very helpful. I requested them to keep me informed of every ship sailing from Southampton before the beginning of May.

*

Soon afterwards I spent a miserable ten days in wintery, shivery London, going from one 'interview' to the next, only to meet with some sort of sympathy and the inevitable information that 'times were bad' and that with the best will in the world no new executive personnel could be hired. In the British Museum's reading room I wrote a desperate letter to Clara. I begged her to try to understand the true world situation, and realize the absolute need of our emigration... I mailed the letter and continued my vain pilgrimage. In the end all I discovered was the possibility of getting a temporary job, a sort of trouble-shooter's task for an enterprising man who had recently started a weighing-scale factory and needed someone to keep his often untrustworthy salesmen in line...

When I came home , Clara had more or less resigned herself to the inevitable. She would 'stand by me and our children under all circumstances.' There was no other way.

13

Doubts and perseverance

Her second stay in London during 1938's late autumn months had brought Clara a number of disappointments. A few commissions, among them one to paint Jonathan Miller, a young boy, were cancelled because of England's deteriorating economy. Two others, both portraits of children, w ere duly carried out but never paid for as the person concerned discovered belatedly that times were bad, that his wife had commissioned the portraits without consulting him and that, anyway, he could not afford to pay for them. Disgusted, Clara left the portraits were they were, unpaid for, and tried to forget the whole unpleasant business.

Next she wrote the following letter to George Bernard Shaw, bringing it in person to his home in Whitehall Court: "Dear Mr. Shaw--May I paint your portrait ? I called "Mrs. Shaw this morning and waa advised to write you personal-"ly. The photographs I enclose are of pictures I have "painted. If you would be kind enough to give me some sittings "I could, if you should prefer it, do the painting at your "home. I would be very grateful", Promptly GBS sent the reproductions, including one of Lucien Pissarro's portrait, back, and included this handwritten note : "Dear Miss Kling-"hoffer: If I were 4o years younger I would certainly give "you the desired sittings, for the enclosures show you as

"a painter of very considerable talent. But there are al-
"ready too many busts and portraits of me in the world; and
"my vanity forbids me to join your collection of pitiable
"old men. Besides, there are some distinguished painters
"on the waiting list. I am afraid you haven't a chance with
(*)see re-production "me. Try the younger celebrities. Faithfully, G.Bernard Shaw."(*)
It was a kind enough, typically contradictory, typically Shavian retort; but the disappointment was great. "If I can paint Lucien Pissarro the way I did," Clara wrote me,"I can do full justice to George Bernard Shaw, old or young."

But there were some consolations. She had seen old friends back: Harriet Cohen, just ready to go on tour in The Netherlands; J. B. Priestley; her faithful patrons the Franklin family... But the Leicester Galleries, worried about the world situation, were not ready to take her new work. 'Times were hard and slow"; that was, in effect, the refrain she heard wherever she went. It was most disheartening.

Apart from all this, an eager press agency had for several months distributed strange stories about Clara and her career: fantasies about her 'very poor parents' and the 'dreadful sacrifices they had to make to buy for her, in her early days, 'canvases of ten by ten feet... Now she had to stop this medley of absurdities and silliness, based partly upon extraordinarily distorted facts, partly unadulterated fantasy. It was cheap twaddle turned out by poorly-informed hack-writers because it may have a sentimental appeal. At the time this flood of nonsense started, I had written her "It is ludicrous to see your work within the thirty or so lines of a news item compared with Rembrandt, Pieter de Hoogh and Jan Vermeer. Too much empty flattery can kill your sales. Whoever writes this rubbish should be told to stick to facts and not attempt to judge the quality of your work. No true art-collector will take this kind of information seriously; and the rest of the newspapers-reading public will not, I am afraid, be your potential buyers. This kind of prattle might be harm-

ful, even if you were on a lecture tour, and it was used by way of introducing you. I believe with you that publicity for a painter cannot be made in the same way as for a music hall artist. Fancy thinking up such utter nonsense as this: that you painted Michael when he was two days old. It sounds like a circus act!"

When she returned to Heemstede Clara needed a rest. She got it, but it did not last long. Having obtained our immigration visas, the Haarlem studio had to be closed down. Her work must be crated and our Heemstede home was being emptied, making do with two young children in an almost completely denuded house. Of necessity, her own work came to a standstill; little work, be it in the form of drawings or paintings, exists of the period between December 1938 and May 1939.

This did not signify that her art was nowhere to be seen. Several of her pictures and drawings were 'making the round' of various English art centres. One portrait in particular came in for much additional praise: the study of our old friend Lucien Pissarro, painted in 1928 when he and his wife Esther were staying at the Hotel Thérèse, in Paris' Montmartre. Jan Gordon of 'The Observer' mentioned, for example, that this portrait was 'a marvellous likeness'. 'The Sketch' called it 'a very capable piece of work' , and the 'Nottingham Journal' said: "one of the most interesting "pictures in the show was Clara Klinghoffer's portrait of "another artist : Lucien Pissarro."

*

The very pessimistic mood in which I had left London late in December 1938 after having decided--with much trepidation--to accept the trouble-shooter's job in Mr. B's weighing scale factory some time towards the end of January, assailed me anew when I became convinced that Clara, despite her assurances, still did not comprehend the necessity of our coming emigration. A fortnight later she was back in London; we were now playing a game of musical chairs... I thought it right to explain to her once more, this time in writing, how I saw the immediate international future: "I hope you will under-

stand that I am not accepting Mr. B's 'job' with exaggerated expectations. First of all there is the matter of political developments... Chamberlain's trip to Rome has not worked out; this time he has not made concessions and it seems obvious that Mussolini will now begin to worry France as much as possible. France will retaliate...; England has declared that it must stand shoulder to shoulder with France... Additionally there is the Spanish problem: Franco is trying hard to beat the republicans, and this time he will succeed. Finally, only last week the Germans made a decided attack on Holland, pretending that its consulates at Amsterdam and The Hague had been shot at... It is obvious that the Nazis are trying to pick a quarrel with Holland. So far the Dutch press has refrained from answering, but the signs are clear. Hitler is at last angrily turning towards this country with its riches and its colonies. This could well mean war: for England certainly, for France most probably. For Holland...?? Then why on earth should we, to gratify an unreasoned desire to stay in London, face one or all of such terrible possibilities ? Think of this, in all fairness to ourselves and to our children; how then can you defend your attitude any longer ? You may say again, as you have done : but look at the people around you! <u>They</u> don't plan to go away. No, true enough--but it is mainly because they can't. The masses are bound to stay and wait for the bombs to drop. What <u>can</u> they do ? Most people do not have the means to emigrate; others feel bound to their offices, factories, their possessions of all kinds. Plenty of others have already gone, or are emigrating to avoid the storm and the terrible havoc it is bound to cause. Also remember this : the English government cannot chase its own citizens out of their country. But it <u>can</u> throw me out. Also, under war conditions a law might be passed forbidding 'suspected' foreigners to do any kind of work in England. Internment of 'enemy aliens' would promptly follow. That would merely be a repetition of what happened in the war of 1914-1918.

There are hundreds of thousands of people who would gladly pay £100 for each of the immigration visas we have got. Yet, we talk of throwing them to the four winds in a blind trust that <u>we</u> shall not suffer in the coming conflict, that

we shall be alright and happy ever after in the ruins of some English city. Is that common sense ? Can you bear that responsibility towards your children ?

Then, you will ask, why accept that job of Mr. B. at all ? Well, it has made me approach the American authorities with a request for extension of the visas' validity. It was a difficult thing to do. The official said to me, more or less :'(well then , drop the whole affair...Come back later. ' Finally he granted us some extra time; the visas will now last till the first days of May. So you see: I can allow myself a trial run in Mr. B's service of at the utmost 2½ months. This I am willing to do.

...Of course, I do not know what will happen to us in the United States; maybe it will ~~last~~ a long time before I come across an offer half as good...Yet, I feel I am doing wrong in giving up my chances over there, or wait for a moment when I shall be unable to get the necessary visas anymore. ...If Europe is to be in a turmoil, let us try to see it happen from afar. In such a time as this we must stick together. If not, we shall not be able to face doubtlessly difficult times in America. It would make life barren, and worse than a mere struggle."

This letter made an end to the doubts that had assailed me at every phase of loosening our links with Holland, because in her immediate reply Clara said : "Although I am glad about the step you took (in accepting the job), it has left me with all sorts of feelings. I want to tell you this : if you had said to me I have thought the matter carefully over and I have decided not to take the job but go to America to try our luck, I should not have said anything and have been quite prepared to come along with you and the children. When I said in a previous letter 'I would not desert you', I meant it. And I still stick to my word; when, after the 2½ months have elapsed, the European situation suggests an earlier departure, I am still with you. I do not for a moment underrate the critical state of things now... I am fully aware of the trend of politics and I know what is going on.. Do you really think that up till

May nothing truly serious could happen ? I do not want to be considered 'the stumbling block', nor feel responsible for your decision..."

*

It was a constant 'going and returning' now between Holland and London. When Clara came back home again, I left Heemstede 'for good' and for the time being lived in a Belsize Park Gardens boarding house. Almost immediately I started my work for the weighing scale magnate, but found 'the sledding pretty hard'. I wrote Clara : "...There is plenty of work around, but few people to do it; quite a few persons are in command, but few to obey them... As for the quality of the salesmen, this is on the whole very poor. The payment for these men is appallingly low and there are a number of rules and regulations that can make a man lose all the commission he has worked for so that he keeps around £2 per week to live on. You can imagine the demoralizing effect of this..."

There was to me some thing incomprehensible in the hard fact that the home at Heemstede-Aerdenhout was no longer ours. "Only now I begin to feel that I have given up very much.. I suppose I am a creature of attachment...The children will also miss many things; their habits have depended upon their surroundings."

In those last weeks in our Dutch home Clara was working hard on a bust of our young daughter. She had done sculpture before, but this fine head and shoulders unquestionably showed her great ability as a sculptor. "I want to get Sonia's bust ready; the casting in bronze will take about two weeks. So I have decided to have it done in plaster and take it with me as luggage in a box, well packed. Eventually it can be bronzed in London. My Studio is now very cold; often the new tenant (who allowed her to finish the bust where it was begun) is not there; then I have no fire at all. I usually come home frozen to the marrow."(The bust is in the possession of our daughter Sonia and, at the time of writing in her New York home. It has never been cast in bronze, but the plaster cast is in perfect condition.)

Despite all difficulties Clara found time to go once

more to the Haarlem art club 'Kunst zij ons doel'. It was 'farewell' to her colleagues, including formally dressed Mr. Jan boot: "so nice an old man, very courteous and charming. What a pity I did not do his portrait after all."

And so came the last day of February, the official closing day of the Heemstede-Aerdenhout home. I wrote Clara: "I have often been nostalgic, lately, for Heemstede with its lovely view across the dreamy curve of the canal, and our sunny garden that protected our children and gave me such a feeling of security."

On March 5th Clara and the children arrived in London with all their suitcases, packages and parcels, and immediately moved into a pretty little house in Shirehall Park, that I had rented on a month to month basis. I was not there to welcome them; I was somewhere up North, shooting all sorts of troubles. But no matter. We were, I liked to believe, now really 'on our way to the United States.'

*

The great expectations Clara had fostered about 'a chance of a lifetime' with Mr. B. and his weighing scales was, I became convinced after the first few weeks of strenuous efforts to get salesmen to behave, sales to be genuine and laments from buyers to be investigated, never to materialize. The whole set-up seemed to be too loosely bound together, the production was on too small a scale (no pun intended...) and, though the finished article may for all I know well have been the best on the market, it had little chance to surpass the popularity of other, world-renowned makes. Besides, and this from a purely personal point of view, I found no satisfaction in being a travelling supervisor, away from wife and children five days each week, restricted to the solitude of poorly-heated northern hotel rooms at night and being paid on so modest a scale that each week's household expenses necessitated a considerable bite into our reserves. Though I was glad to sse that Clara had taken up her brushes again and was joyfully painting some of her beloved sister-models, I also knew that sustained efforts had failed

to arrive at another exhibition of her latest pictures. London dealers were now overly cautious; there was--they contended--little interest in the collectors' world. The doubt about a lasting peace was 'ruining the art trade'.

As to Holland, friends wrote us that the government had closed the borders against the continuing influx of German refugees. Many of these unfortunate people were forced to go back to the certainty of ever more frightful abuse. It seemed to us an incomprehensibly callous act in a country that throughout many centuries had built up a record of compassion for those in danger of their lives. If anything, it reflected the fear in ruling circles of possible Nazi revenge for a too generous display of humanitarian feelings.

I was keeping in constant touch with the United States Lines. With great regularity I submitted to my contact in the USL my weekly travel schedule so that he always knew where I could be reached. But for six long weeks there was no sign of any message. Then, returning to my hotel in Leeds one afternoon from a trouble-shooting tour in the surroundings, I found a note asking me to call my contact.

"We got two cabins open on the ss. Manhattan for April 21st. Want them?"

"Good!... When must you know my decision ?"

"NOW!"

"Look... Couldn't I just call my wife, talk with her and then call you back at once ?"

"Listen boy--there's a waiting list a mile long of people who want to leave. What d'ye want from my life ? Must I tell 'em: wait till Joe makes up his mind?"

I hesitated for a moment. There was silence.

"Hello!" he called out. "You still there ?"

"Yes...Okay--I'll take the two cabins. Will pay you when I'm back in London..."

"No hurry. I'll send all the documents to your home. Okay ?"

"Okay--and thanks a million."

"Don't mention it. See you soon. Want to wish you happy

voyage in person!'

For quite a while I sat near that telephone, my heart pounding. The die was cast. And then I realized that we would have just about two weeks in which to get ready for sailing. My impulse was to phone Clara; but it was Thursday afternoon. I would be going home next day: it would be much better discussing things with her face to face. I decided to write my letter of resignation to Mr. B. right away, and show her the copy on my homecoming.

I had made it a condition when accepting Mr. B's job that the first few months would be looked upon as 'a try out' and also that, if international conditions deteriorated, I would be free to leave when I thought fit. Now it was clear to me that events were moving quickly in the direction of a clash 'and so I regret that I must end my work with your enterprise. I would like to conclude my short employment with a General Report in which I shall...point out certain things and come with suggestions that perhaps may prove to be useful to your enterprise."

*

We sailed from Southampton on the comfortable Manhattan; all Clara's work was, well packed, in the baggage hold--with the exception of two cases that were packed 'in the last minute': one containing several paintings, the other some twenty framed and glazed drawings. We were never to see those works back.

The arrival in New York was tumultuous and utterly confusing. It was icy-cold in the customs' shed, and a friend, made during my first visit to America two years previously, took pity on my freezing little family and brought them to the old-fashioned but roomy and well-heated Ansonia Hotel, at the corner of Broadway and 73rd Street. I was left to battle with a bevy of custom officers who insisted upon opening at least a few crates filled with Clara's work, then pounced upon the frames and exacted 'a king's ransom' for their importation.

When I reached Ansonia, I found Clara and the children sitting before one of the large windows giving out onto mad

Broadway, looking at the preposterously bright lights, listening to the screams and shrieks of police cars and ambulances that appeared to be the main contenders in a senseless race up and down the avenue. We remained there silent-;y, in a kind of stupour--until the children, tired out after the eventful day, nibbled listlessly at some sandwiches our good friend had gone out to buy, and then fell asleep on their chairs. Clara , too, was dumbfounded, most of all by the terrible noise that penetrated deafeningly all night into our rooms, even though these were on the seventh floor.

We were facing a rowdy, overwhelmingly boisterous 'new life'.

*

In the first months it was all hard to take. While I studied, early every morning, the 'Help Wanted' advertisements in the New York Times, and wrote scores of letters that remained unanswered, Clara tried to get used to the feverish pace of life. What she missed above all was a degree of kindness, politeness, civilized behaviour, especially in shops, in the streets and on the hideous, sadly antiquated underground trains. Shopping with the children anywhere in Heemstede or Haarlem, there had always been a pleasing remark, a friendly word, maybe a sweet offered to the little ones. Here no notice whatever was taken of them; and the grown-ups often used their elbows to get the salesman's attention and be attended to. Close by the hotel there was a sort of embrionic supermarket, and one morning Clara saw the shop owner beat a negro about the head with a stick because the man had stolen a bar of soap. It made her physically sick, and she came home crying.

Things did not get better when we had found a flat in 97th Street, just off Broadway. It was available for five to six months only, and formed part of a well-built old-fashioned house that had obviously known better times. The rooms were fairly large and had high ceilings. But the sun penetrated only in the afternoons between four and six, and despite the broiling heat of an early spring there hung a dank smell throughout the flat. On the east side was a huge shaft on which the forty or fifty flats of the building emerged. Towards eleven at night,

the army of tenants began to unload its empty food tins of the past day. The bits of metal rattled down the shaft with the regularity of machinegun fire, while from various flats came the mixed sound of voices, radio music and--at times--vociferous disputes.

It was too trying a situation to last , and we were glad to hear through an acquaintance that the lower section of a two-family house would be for rent in the suburb of Jamaice around the middle of September.

The house stood in an unattractive street, filled with similar products of unimaginative architecture. But it had a tiny garden, and within walking distance was the remnant of what in former times must have been a small forest. The top floor was inhabited by two small families whose every movement reverberated throughout the house. But we planned our removal to Jamaica to be a mere stop-gap, an improvement anyway over rowdy Broadway, and the air would be less polluted. Also, we had made sure that close-by was a new primary school. It was said to be 'a peaceful school'; it had no history as yet of fighting among the pupils, or with the teachers.

I cannot say that we were very happy with our new abode; but life for Clara would be made a little easier when we 'found' a reliable coloured girl to take care of the children when Clara was away. For she as well as I were doing all we could 'to make connections.'

With letters of introduction from some leading London galleries Clara started her 'attacks' on the art galleries along 57th Street, meeting with much appreciation for the high quality of her work and little or no practical encouragement. As for myself I had, while still in Europe, often thought of approaching the New York headquarters of Lord & Thomas. After all : they knew of me and of my work in Holland. They had seen me make profits in the Amsterdam office under ever-increasing difficulties; on more than one occasion they had assured me of their satisfaction. So, during the second week of our Ansonia-life I had gone to see the firm. I met young Emmanuel Lasker, the president's son: a lively, aggressive young man who welcomed me as if I were his long-lost brother, took me to a good

restaurant for lunch and then regretted, in a variety of ways, 'that things were still so bad'. In short: there was no place for an additional Account Executive, unless--he added smilingly--he could bring with him a small new account, say worth a mere one hundred thousand dollars... I had ,of course, not the faintest idea where to find so 'small' a new client and thus, thanking him for his 'good intentions' I went my way. It did not immediately lead anywhere. A Dutchman I met had started some kind of import business but he required a large investment from his eventual partner... Another Hollander had acquired the rights to a Clinical Abstracts Magazine that once enjoyed a good name in Germany. He needed an assistant and offered me a salary well below what we had to pay for weekly rent and the simplest of nourishment. But I accepted the job; it would at least prevent us from eating up our reserves with so frightening a speed.

Clara and I spoke little of the anxieties we both felt. But she had grown listless, and her low mood at that time was best described by herself in a draft letter to a sister that was left lying around, and came into my hands. Nostalgically she wrote : "Sometimes my mind is swamped with things I want to tell you; but when I sit in front of a sheet of paper, pen in hand, I am completely inarticulate and wonder what on earth I could write about...

I fear the onslaught of the heat that is due now--it knocks you out and saps your energy... I would like to go to New Mexico, or some such place. I want to see things different, perhaps get fresh inspiration to paint. I feel in a rut, would like to be surrounded by a new atmosphere. It is hard to explain. I am tired, and want to forget all the work I have done so far. It is often hard to concentrate, to create, as someone has said, a 'void' for yourself. A void like a serene expanse in which you are the central point, a radius as it were into which no disturbing factor can enter. I have known this at times, and during such periods I have produced my best work. I often dream of

working like that, shut off from everyone, alone with my model and time to be limitless. I sometimes think it will be impossible to work like that here in America--or maybe it is New York. Yet, I really think it lies within oneself; within oneself is the source of all experiences. Though it must be that external things awaken your perceptions...; am I becoming too involved ? It is all very clear to me.

You see, that great serenity that I seek I thought to have many years ago, but I was inexperienced. How to recapture those golden moments and have them merge with the sterner aspects of life ? Because life is crude and harsh, and art is the only hope--that for which we are eternally reaching out...

When you talked about going to the country, I felt envious. At present I would give the earth to know the joy of spending some serene days away from people--just walk somewhere in the fields for hours. I cannot now imagine a greater joy. I am filled with despair and hopelessness when I walk the streets of New York, and see the mob. The ugly, unspiritual faces--hard or vulgar. You look in vain for a pair of sweet, responsive eyes, or a tolerant smile. I am no match for them, and feel lost and lonely among them...The belief that this city holds out golden opportunities to whoever wishing to use them, is a myth. The struggle for life is as hard, if not harder, than in any other country I know. For people who come here with plenty of cash, life can be good, as it can be elsewhere. But God help the poor man who has pinned his hope on this country. They tell me that, though life is expensive here, you earn higher wages accordingly. That is another myth. Thousands just earn moderate wages, like in England. Mind you: fortunes <u>are</u> made here, if you are lucky and have the right kind of friends who mix in the right kind of circles. Well, that is for the favoured few..."

Exaggerated as this bitter effusion was, its basic truth was undeniable. To make your fortune quickly other qualities were needed than, clearly, either of us possessed: a shrewd business instinct, a degree of ruthlessness, a lack of moral responsibility and the capacity to 'get the better of the other fellow'.

But a few sparks of light showed through the darkness of those early months. The children were reasonably happy, spending much time in the playgrounds along Riverside Drive. Also, we had heard that the versatile writer Hendrik Willem van Loon --once a Hearst papers-journalist who developped into the creator of several books that popularized difficult subjects for mass readership, was living at Greenwich, Connecticut, not very far from New York proper. His books had made him a well-known figure throughout America and in many other countries. But in spite of his renown as an American author, Van Loon had remained 'a true Dutchman', proud of his ancestry and hospitable to all and sundry who came to see him in his pleasant home close to Long Island's bay, the Sound. On Sunday afternoons Van Loon had 'open houses'; and so, one Sunday, we travelled to Greenwich and met the Van Loons, 'Jimmy' and Hendrik Willem, and their peripatetic guests who strolled about the house and the huge gardens, and had a very good time. That afternoon Clara made the acquaintance of two new models: Hendrik Willem himself and a close friend of his, Grace Castagnetta, a young pianist.

Huge of stature, quite fat and with an in comparison with his body girth small head, Van Loon was unashamedly vain, utterly convinced of his right to be recognised as the capable and unique enlightener of the semi-cultured American masses. But he also was a friendly and generous man, willing to give a worthy cause the full support of his status and his capacities. He stood in close contact with the Netherlands authorities in Washington and wholeheartedly supported every movement that had for its purpose 'doing away with the Nazis'. He was, besides, a personal friend of President Roosevelt.

Being very proud of his limited gifts as an illustrator of his own books, he was very curious to see Clara's work. When he did, in the form of photographs, he waxed enthusiastic and offered to sit--an offer that was eagerly accepted. His portrait was the first large picture Clara did on American soil; working again changed her mood and made life more endurable. Setting out one day with a rather large canvas and all

her other paraphernalia, she reached the Greenwich house and set up her easel. When everything was ready and Hendrik Willem had taken his 'pose'--which was not really a pose since he simply continued to write at his desk, as he had done before Clara came--he suddenly got up, strolled over to the artist, laid his large hand upon her shoulder and said, looking down from the height of his six foot three upon her four feet eleven: "Now just see...: isn't it extraordinary what the pituitary gland has done for you...and me!" Then he went back to his work. But at the end of the sitting he gave her a drawing of his, showing in picture form what in reality the pituitary gland had done for model and artist.(*)

(*) see reproduction

It was at one of these Sunday get-togethers that we met a Dutch writer of renown: Maurits Dekker from Amsterdam. His books, as splendidly realistic as they could be metaphysical, had brought him fame. Yet, all efforts so far to bring his work to the attention of foreign readers by presenting them with first class translations had borne one single result: one of his minor historical works on the struggle for liberty of William the Silent and his 'Geux', had appeared in America, but had failed to cause anything resembling a stir. A poor beginning, that inevitably did not help later useless attempts to get translations published of several of his more valuable works.

Meeting in Greenwich pleased him as well as us. He became our faithful visitor while we were still living in 97th Street. Together we walked through the highways and byeways of New York; and when the summer came and Clara was well entrenched in her work, he and I decided to go on a six-thousand mile round trip through the United States, travelling on Greyhound buses, or using whatever other cheap means of transportation we might come across.

While Maurits and I were underway Clara kept me abreast of her work in Greenwich. She had finished both the portraits: Van Loon's and Grace Castagnetta's. She was now doing a portrait of 'Jimmy', Hendrik Willem's wife, but found her 'a difficult sitter'. Fortunately there was some solace in the fact that Clara's sister Fanny and her family had come

over for an unlimited time and were living on the seaside, in a Brooklyn flat.

People now came from time to time to see Clara's work; but these visits were as a rule only tiresome and tiring: "It means dragging pictures from all corners in the hope of selling something, wearing yourself out, being agreeable, hoping that at least someone would ask the price of something withthe idea in mind of buying. But no--nothing. And that in the broiling heat of this horrible summer... It takes every grain of energy out of you, and it is hard on the children too. To keep them occupied, contented...; when they are in bed I feel I have accomplished a complete daily task.

This morning I had a very nice letter from Claire Leighton. She is here in America, on a holiday in Maine. In the middle of September she will be in New York. It seems she is thinking of settling here as, so she says,'everything seems to go to pieces for me in England'. I do not know what she means; perhaps she is divorced. She will 'phone me when she is in town."(*)

Clara had heard that her people in London , certain that a war would break out, had taken a place in Tring ,'but perhaps there won't be a war after all;just a patched-up peace. France seems to think that today, August 30th, will decide whether there will be war or peace...'

On the same date I wrote her from Chicago: "I believe the European situation is at this moment a little less scaring. Maybe Hitler realizes that he would surely lose the battle against the united democracies. And yet...:on the other hand would it not be better if the damn thing is fought out? What will happen to democracy and Europe anyway if this menace of Germany and Italy continues ?"

But on September 1st, the next day but one, the bomb burst. Clara wrote: "I have been following everything very closely these last few weeks, and sometimes I was so afraid we were going to have another Munich. I did not hope for war, but I feared for peace.That is peace on Hitler's

---

(*) Claire Leighton, a fellow artist, was one of Clara's old London friends.

terms, and the end of western civilization. Strange as it may seem, I felt today that I would give anything to be in London, not as an onlooker but to do something. To show with deeds the sympathy I feel for all that are suffering for a just cause. I felt as if twentyfive years had slipped by, that I was a kid again, watching the troops march past. Khaki everywhere and the old songs like 'Tipperary' on everybody's lips."

Maurits Dekker who had hurriedly travelled back to New York, was--she told me--already on his way to Holland... "He said : the only thing that attracted him about America was the physical safety it offered in these uncertain times."

I was in Buffalo, in northern New York State, when the war began. "It was hard to think of it without feeling miserable," I wrote to Clara. "The only hope I have is that slaughter on a terrible scale will be avoided--as it can if a civil war were to break out inside Germany... It is horrible to realize that the madness of one man is leading the world to renewed bloodshed... What will happen in Holland ? Will it be left alone, and if so, for how long ? This war has seemed unavoidable for years. I have always scowled at the optimists who knew there was not going to be another European war for centuries. That kind of regime (the Nazis) cannot go unchallenged unless it is allowed to infect the whole world. It was time to stop it. However, I hope that Hitler's exit will not be as easy as was that of the old Kaiser, his predecessor. He and all his henchmen should be well tortured before they disappear from the earth for ever."

When I came home a few days later there were no 'I told you so's; but I knew that at long last Clara realised the validity of the caution, foresight or whatever else it was that prodded me into carrying out completely my long-standing emigration plans.

14

New York critics say 'welcome'

Towrads the end of 1939 the portraits of Hendrik Willem van Loon en Grace Castagnetta were ready: two creditable works created under difficult circumstances in a strange country to which Clara did not easily get attuned. When early in the next year Hendrik Willem had an exhibition of his own, mainly two or three colour pen and watercolour drawings, the originals of illustrations for his books, Clara's two portraits went equally on show. But the Ferargil Galleries, though on the East--that is: the good--side of 57th Street, was not the place for a one-man show of her type of art. Plenty of words of appreciation were spoken about the paintings during the couple of weeks in which they were exhibited, but that was all. When the show closed she was as far removed from a true entry into the New York art world as she had been before. Neither did Van Loon buy the picture, despite the fact that 'Life', that powerful weekly illustrated magazine of the forties, reproduced it in colour. On that occasion Margit Varga, the editor of Life's art section, put some interesting questions about herself and her working methods to Clara. Fortunately Clara's answers have been preserved, and some of them are significant enough to be quoted:

How long do you work on a portrait ? Miss Varga asked, and Clara answered : "That depends on the sitter. There have been instances in which I have almost immediately after the start been able to say that it would not take me more than

a few sittings to complete the work.At other times I have known at once that quite a few sittings would be required for a satisfactory result. The great factor is whether there exists sufficient harmony between painter and model. The artist should not be worried by the feeling that his model feels unhappy posing , snd easily gets 'jumpy'. There is in my belief nothing that disturbs more than continuous wondering on the part of the model 'when the painting will be ready'. In such a case I have found it best to stop working for a while, have a chat with my model and try to create an atmosphere of harmony. Until the artist can fully concentrate, lose himself in his work, he cannot give his best.

Another cause of slow progress may lie in too great a curiosity shown by the model or his relatives during painting. I am apt to get exasperated when people crowd around my easel when I am working, either praising or criticizing an unfinished picture. Remarks like 'the mouth is too thin' or 'the eyes aren't large enough' put off the sitter as well as the painter. To my mind, the artist should not show his work to anyone before he considers it finished.

Question: What are your favourite subjects ? Answer: I have not really been aware of favourite subjects, except to say that essentially I am interested in the human figure and head. But I have also experienced great enjoyment doing a still life, or a landscape. As to the human figure, painting an old man has often been just as rewarding to me as painting a young woman, or a mature person. I think this also applies to drawing, although I must make one exception: I simply love drawing babies.

Question: How do you go about a commission? Answer: The most difficult problem is to get the full cooperation of my models. This is obviously hard in the case of children, but by no means limited to them. I have had very fidgety grown-up sitters.That, and the well-meant interference of onlookers, have always been my greatest difficulty in carrying out commissions. As for landscape painting, there can be--and often is--a curious crowd. One learns to cope with that,

but I can't deny that oftimes it is a real nuisance. No--I do not always make preparatory drawings. I make my first outline sketch in charcoal on the canvas, then wipe the drawing almost entirely off and start with colour right away. But when the number of sittings is for some reason or other limited, I do make work drawings that enable me to continue painting on certain details while the model is temporarily unavailable.

Question: Who were your best models so far ? Answer: Beyond all doubt my six sisters, curious enough all of them of different types: from high blond and blue-eyed to brunette and jet-black. One sister, a lovely red-head whom I drew and painted numerous times, died a few years ago. It was a great loss--in every sense of the word.... My good luck has been that all my sisters liked sitting for me. But of course, I have also had restless models, such as Jagadas Bose, a famous Indian botanist. His sittings must have been real torture to him. They were for me, anyway...

I never insist upon complete quiet around me when I work. I have worked well under truly-noisy conditions. As long as the noise does not disturb the essential harmony, the understanding between my model and me. I have, for example, painted the portrait of a New York antique dealer while her shop was a real 'beehive of Christmas time activity'. It enhanced the colourfulness of the place and did not worry me in the least".

*

Meantime the political scene in western Europe had greatly changed. The Nazis had overrun Belgium and The Netherlands as well as France. The little news that reached us from relatives and friends in Holland betrayed, no matter how cautiously it was written, their growing anxiety, especially if they were Jews. Maurits Dekker was a half-Jew and therefore as yet more or less safe, the more so as he was married to a Christian woman. Others, caught in the Nazi trap , had--we were told--suddenly disappeared. No doubt they were trying to escape along one of those 'underground' routes that in subsequent years became the calvary of countless thousands.

The Netherlands government had found asylum in London;

queen Wilhelmina and her courtiers were in England as well. Princess Juliana and her three small children had safely reached the protection of Canada. With a grandiose gesture Hendrik Willem van Loon had offered the use of his pretty Greenwich home to the princess and her retinue; but the offer had been thankfully declined.

It was from Van Loon that I heard the Netherlands government-in-exile planned to open a full-fledged information bureau in New York. A bi-lingual press officer was urgently needed to work with James Huizinga, son of the famous Dutch historian whose 'Homo Sapiens' and other works were well known in many countries beside Holland. Immediately I went for an interview with Mr. Adriaan Pelt , head of the Dutch government's Information Bureau in London, and was engaged on the spot to start my work practically at once. Offices had already been set up in one of Rockefeller Center's enormous blocks that henceforth was to be known as Holland House. There I met my colleagues-to-be: a colourful group of Dutch intellectuals and one-time executives, former government officials and recently arrived escapists from under the Nazi heel. The leader of this group was Nico Slotemaker de Bruine, son of a former Minister of Education in Holland, himself once a missionary in the Netherlands East Indies--a handsome man with a winning air and little or no knowledge of how to use the press, the radio and other media for well-directed propaganda.

In no time at all Huizinga and I were headlong engaged in bringing out the first issue of the 'Netherlands News", a 48 to 64 page veritype-printed fortnightly magazine that was to appear throughout the war years. It won an immense following all over the United States and--greatest compliment possible--was soon imitated by France and others. My sources were diverse: microfilm of Nazi-directed German and Dutch newspapers, 'underground' pamphlets, instructions to resistance groups and a medley of other data, reaching us in quick tempo from the London office and in other ways which, even now, better remain unrevealed. It

was, of course, most interesting but time-consuming work. Family life was bound to suffer; I saw little of Clara and the children. All the same, she and I made time to see several art dealers who, as yet, seemed not too paralyzed by the terrifying events in Europe. Among those galleries was a new one that called itself plainly the '460 Park Avenue Gallery':its address. A large, well-lighted place just around the corner of 57th Street, it specialized in figure painting and was bringing together a group of known and not so known artists who would take portrait commissions at reasonable rates. The owners, two enterprising women, had seen Van Loon's portrait in the Ferargil Galleries and approached Clara to send in some of her work. Resulting from this a one-man exhibition was planned for early January, 1941.

There was, as usual, much work to be done in a comparatively short time, and Clara set to painting with a will. Though the little house in Jamaica was far from ideal, the light there was not bad and there was no scarcity of models. A Ducth family that had left Holland at almost the same time as we, yielded two models: a small daughter and a sister of the wife, Connie who, from then on, became a regular 'subject' of many drawings and paintings. We made the acquaintance of a tenor singer, Sergei Radamsky who lived somewhere in 40th Street, near the heart of the town, and looked like Rembrandt in the beginning of his impoverished days. He became another excellent model. In this man's home Clara found still another subject: the handsome young wife of Alexander King, well-known author and at one time one of the main collaborators of 'Life'. Gretchen Green, the owner of the shop where Clara worked at Christmas-time without being distracted by hordes of eager buyers, came next. And then there was a lovely Greek child, Anita. We had met her at a Greek hotel in the Catskill Mountains, where we had stayed for a short holiday. There were, besides, our own children: always good, but not always very willing models, and quite a few of the paintings and drawings Clara had created

just before we started out for America.

Her exhibition opened on the sixth of January 1941 and had an enthusiastic reception. Emily Genauer, leading art critic for traditional work, wrote this about Clara's drawings: "One can go through a year of New York exhibitions and not encounter this sort of draughtsmanship. It is parsimonious, assured, succinct. It is also incredibly sensitive with a tremolous, tender, poetic quality. It manages along with all this to be penetrating; it reveals the artist's philosophical insight and sympathy." 'Pictures on Exhibit', a glossy paper art magazine, said : "...her drawings are poignantly sensitive". 'Art News', a weekly, wrote: "She is one of the greatest talents sent to us by the war! Her work is divisible, and the gallery has properly seen fit to divide it into soft crayon and sanguine drawings, and oils. From all of them one can see what Epstein means when he says: '...her understanding of form places her in the very first rank of draughtsmen in the world!' She has a fascinating grasp of the essentials. Her portraits have soft focus, but what inner life! It is erroneous to think that hard light gives character to a portrait better than soft light. Clara Klinghoffer's Sergei Radamsky (*) is Rembrandtesque in feeling and spiritual quality. Highly sensitive, it is one of the best portraits we have seen in a dog's age...Of the drawings look carefully at the 'Model with Cane' and 'Man's Head' : in each of them you will find the talisman of form and sensitivity that spiritualizes." The 'New York Herald Tribune': "The first one-man show of Clara Klinghoffer at the 460 Park Avenue Galleries gives gallery-goers an opportunity to see portrait painting of a high order... The portraits show the influence of Rembrandt, and also Hals, in the dark-brown tones and the striking and sparing use of light, but this tempered by a granular surface texture and simplification of detail which is unmistakably modern. She paints her models like H.W. van Loon and Sergei Radamsky in austere poses, eliminating non-essentials and skilfully using light, to illuminate the sitters. There are some beautifully drawn hands in the por-

*) see reproduction

traits and the painting of the eyes is electric. Not all the paintings are portraits. There is a nude on view and also a canal scene which is notable for the curious purple light that diffuses it." 'Time', the world-renowned weekly, said in its own peculiar language : "Last week the 460 Park Avenue Galleries added another artist to their stable: a tiny, rusty-haired, Austrian-born portrait painter, Clara Klinghoffer. The gallery spruced up one of its best rooms to put on a show of 28 drawings and paintings, including portraits of such notables as tenor Sergei Radamsky, tun-bellied author Hendrik Willem van Loon. For a portrait painter with such a good address, Klinghoffer is medium-priced, will do a muscled Michelangelesque drawing for $60, a Rembrandtesque oil for $650. An expert at accurate anatomy and spitting imagery, artist Klinghoffer has been working with charcoal, pen and pencil ever since she can remember. Says she : "I drew that before I ever saw any Old Masters'." 'Art Digest'. another weekly of note; "The show reveals the artist as one absorbed with people, and chiefly children and old men. Possibly it is the tenderness she finds in those two subjects and which she expresses through suffused colour, that impels Miss Klinghoffer to choose such sitters. Her work, on the quiet side, is eminently masterly, and such drawings as 'Old Man'(*) , is faultless. She achieves in this, and in some oils, a nice balance between inert realism and lyricism."

(*) see reproduction

The 'World Telegram', a widely-read evening paper, wrote : "One hates to see a label used with which European critics have long ago described this type of work. But it really is what the critics said it is : "Old Master drawings'. Only occasionally does the tender understanding and curious serenity of her drawings come out in her paintings as well. They are, however, commendable for their opulent tone and texture. " 'Cue', a weekly guide to New York, said: "England's best known woman artist is seen here for the first time. Rare indeed is such mastery of line as shown in her drawings, such subtlety and warmth of paint as in her canvases of women, men, children and types. First portraits to come to this gallery that are entirely unmundane, masterful to a degree. It is

definitely our gain if we can claim her as our own.". 'The New York Times': (Howard de Vree): "If her oils are sometimes still frankly experimental, as some of them proclaim, her drawings are so masterly as to cause us little regret over Jacob Epstein's enthusiasm. Something of the charm of the great 19th century French artists, modernized and on more of a broad human basis, is to be found in such examples as the sketchy Head of a Man, the study of a Sick Child (*), the sculptural figures and the ~~sanguine~~ black chalk of an Old Man seated and waiting with the patience of the neglected old. This is admirable stuff, drawings one may well be enthusiastic about. In the oils, while she realizes character, the artist is not as sure, and her paint qualities seem a little heavy-handed. But in the drawings she has achieved work of lasting beauty." The 'Morning Journal',(a Yiddish daily): "For the last 20 years Clara Klinghoffer has been a popular name in European art. One feels in her present exhibition the love and tenderness of the artist to the subjects of her brush. Great sensitivity forms an important part of the means this artist uses in her creative work. She does not pretend to search for new values in art; she displays no connection with any of the modern -isms. It has, therefore, not been hard for her to build a bridge linking Old Mastery with modernism. Modern, for example, is the large portrait of author H.W. van Loon; it is obvious that, when posing, he was so sure the painter saw him 'through and through' that he rejected every idea of striking up an attitude--and she painted him as such: the human being called H.W.v.L."

(*) see reproduction

*

No artist could have wished for a better, more exciting reception of his 'introductory exhibition' in a new country. An enthusiastic visitor to the show, Rolf Kaltenborn, son of the then famous 'first' radio news commentator H. von Kaltenborn, fell in love with a nude drawing, bought it and then, finding it impossible to wait till the close of the show, begged the art dealer to let him take his purchase home right away... There were other sales--but the cost of arranging the exhibition, of printed matter, a grand scale

preview night, membership of the Portrait Painters' Clearing House, publicity, photographs and a host of other details were such that at the close of the morally highly- successful exhibition, the Gallery owed Clara the sum of ...one dollar and ninetyfour cents. A cheque for that amount was solemnly handed to her. She kept it as a memento; and for history's sake I reproduce it here.(*)

(*) see reproduction

But there were other, less direct reverberations. It was clear that people interested in Clara's work would not come all the way to the suburb of Jamaica to see it. Besides, the little house was too small to contain an adequate Studio. So the search for a 'real studio' began, and in a while Clara found a small one--alas without the luxury of a skylight, on the top floor of an old building on 13th Street, West. Unfortunately the place was not available before October; in the meantime Clara painted as much as possible away from Jamaica. There was, for instance, the painting of Rolf v. Kaltenborn's mother Olga: a stately lady of German stock.(*) Or the large scale picture of Albert Boni, a publisher we had met through H.W. van Loon. In conjunction with a partner by the name of Liveright, he had published Van Loon's first 'popularizing' books, and had been extremely successful with them.(*) Both these paintings were done in the homes of the sitters.

(*) see reproduction

(*) see reproduction

But all these new contacts, no matter how pleasant they were, did nothing to help bring about what Clara needed most of all : an active gallery with a good following. The connection with the Park Avenue Gallery had become somewhat strained after the discouraging material results of the exhibition. A single drawing commission, worth $35, could hardly cause great jubilation. As the right to exhibit at the Gallery necessitated membership of the so-called Portrait Painters' Clearing House, at a fee of $120 yearly, it was not worth continuing this relationship. Besides, the type of academic portrait which the clients of the Gallery evidently wanted, was not what Clara could paint. Looking at a single portrait of hers among the work of a score of American portrait

painters proved this indisputably.

And so, throughout the spring and summer of 1941 Clara carried her heavy 'samples-portfolio' from dealer to dealer: Kraushaar on Fifth Avenue who were 'very interested' but had nothing positive to offer. Wildenstein, whose London branch knew her work so well but who, in New York, had no interest in a living artist. Marie Sterner, whose gallery still existed though it could no longer be ranked among New York's 'art palaces'. Having evidently forgotten that I had shown her a fair choice of Clara's work in 1937, she looked at her paintings and drawings again, loved them, and was willing to organize an exhibition of...ten paintings, and then retreated 'because times were bad, and people did not buy art'. I was in Chicago for business reasons, and Clara wrote me : "When I asked her what, in these circumstances, an artist should do, she answered 'sell your pictures for whatever you can get for them.' 'Ten dollars each ?' I suggested. 'No,' she said, 'not quite that low--but not much more.' I laughed and said that fortunately, I was not that hard up..."

For a long time we lived in the hope that Kraushaar or Wildenstein would recognize the importance of Clara's work and bring about the show that would satisfactorily introduce her to the immense public of American art buyers. But nothing happened; and when the summer heat of New York became unbearable Clara travelled to the Catskill Mountains, only a hundred miles or so north of New York, to make the acquaintance of Woodstock, the art colony, with its strange but colourful summer population of artists and their divergent hangers-on.

Her first impression was good and soothing: 'the countryside," she wrote me, "is wonderful. Not formidable or gigantic, but sweet and gracious. It is much like England--I keep thinking that I am there... Today I met the people that own a tiny art gallery: Ruth and Dave. They took me for a long ride through heavenly landscape, and then to their little home, right in the woods. They rent it for the summer, but have some nice antique things of their own in it. She paints; he is a cartoonist. No money, but happy. Married six

months."

The pleasant surroundings awakened her desire to paint. "Yesterday I found a lovely spot; there is so much to choose from. I worked well for a number of hours. The landscape I'm doing looks good; I'll go on with it tomorrow."

Within a week she had started her third picture. "It's an apple orchard, a beautiful place with soft tones. (*) I'd like to stay here a bit longer, if you can manage without me. I think I can finish the pictures within another week. I do want to do that....What do you think of the Speichers ?"

Speicher, a painter of some repute, lived somewhere in Woodstock, and Olga v. Kaltenborn had given Clara a letter of introduction , since the Speichers and she were close friends. But when Clara called at the Speicher home and handed the letter to a servant, the girl came back with the message that 'Mr. Speicher is much too busy!..Would you come back some other time ?' Of course, this rudeness of one painter to another was completely new to her; in the more that twenty years of her career in England she had never experienced it.

When the summer was nearly over and her return to New York in time for the children's home-coming from summer camp, became a necessity, Clara wrote me that she wanted to discontinue the 13th Street studio. The owner had increased the rent by 20%, and besides : "the light is poor, especially in the winter when I work there most. I am sure I shall find a place with better light for fifty dollars per month, and with less stairs to climb. I was told here of a studio in New York that will be available in October and if that is true,it is much better than what I have now. But then--there is all of September left to search in, and I feel confident that I'll land something. I don't want to hang on to thet 13th Street studio just for the sake of giving parties..."

But the 'parties' had been , I answered, 'a well-calculated move to give your work a little 'advertising', much needed in this land. I don't think such efforts can be looked upon as unimportant; they serve to lift one out of the back-

(*) Now ownedby Dr. L. Samuels, New York.

stage shadows, and have helped to bring your work to the attention of a variety of people."

Publicity remained, none the less, Clara's pet dislike. Her initial one-man show had yielded a truly astonishing amount of excellent publicity. Going by her long experience in England, this should--in her estimation--be sufficient to carry her fame out to a medley of people: dealers, art critics, buyers. Thus, when Hans v. Kaltenborn suggested soon after the 460 Park Avenue exhibition, to have an efficient public relations man make a brochure about her and her work, using the splendid reviews to best advantage, she refused indignantly. "If my work cannot sell itself on its own merits, then what good will it do to send people some more printed matter to throw away unread?"

It was to take a long, long time before Clara recognized the wisdom of von Kaltenborn's advice. But then: we were new to America and would have to experience that in many ways.

*

After Labor Day, the first Monday in September and the date on which most summer holidays became mere history, Clara set about finding another studio with better light--and actually found one! It was in 29th Street, close to lower Fifth Avenue. It had a skylight and was in all respects 'a better deal'. In one way, however, it was not different from her former studio: it was very high up in the building. Five very steep stairs had to be climbed to reach her roomy workshop.

But now something could be done to have a showing of Olga v. Kaltenborn's portrait. We had become very friendly with the Kaltenborns, and in their home met many interesting people in the worlds of international politics and art. There was, for example, Count Coudenhove-Kalergi who dreamt of a pan-Europa that would get nowhere near realization in the decades to come. We talked with Del Vayo, Spain's foreign minister in the days before the Civil War and a most interesting man whose English was interlarded with so many harsh Spanish 'j's that it asked for great concentration to follow him. The Mexican painter Rufino Tamayo and his handsome young wife were also among the guests (*). Olga invited these people and many others to a 'vernissage' of her portrait in Clara's new studio. It took

(*) see note next page

* see page 194.

place on November 25th and attracted several dozen people. Most of them had not been to the studio before; to give them courage in their long climb up to it, Clara had drawn a huge poster, showing a rotund lady wiping her perspiring face while looking up anxiously to a seemingly endless flight of steps. Below this cartoon she wrote in large letters: "Don't despair! Only two more short ones!" She placed it at the second landing; but when the reception was over it had mysteriously disappeared. I wonder if and where it will one day turn up described as 'a rare Klinghoffer'...

That same night Albert Boni's portrait had a similar unveiling in his home. We saw only the beginning of it: the painting hung in a huge, smoke-filled room, and the many guests were much concerned about their drinks.

"This kind of social acclaim won't influence my work," Clara wrote to a sister in London. "I know the value of it. Nothing of this sort will turn my head. I love art too much for that, and have put it on a plane where no one can reach it to contaminate it. On the contrary--I find all this highly interesting--but somehow I feel that I stand outside of it, and can view it objectively. The real me has nothing to do with it."

She had come in touch with a British-Indian dancer in Javanese dancing attire. Her name was Sushila--and she was the first person to pose in the new studio.

"she has the most wonderful figure and an interesting head, " Clara wrote to London. "Epstein would go crazy about her. I could do a number of pictures of her, and to model (sculpt) her head eventually would be my greatest jpy. I also plan doing a composition of her and her partner, a man." Sushila was, indeed, painted (*), but of the other plans nothing materialized since the dancer had engagements all over the world and stayed only a short time in America.

But the year did not end with Clara solely concentrating on art. We had met a man who was a teacher of drama at New York University. He was to produce the winter's play for the drama students and had chosen Sutton Vane's "Outward

Bound". Everything was running well--but he was in trouble all the same. There was among the students no acceptable Mrs. Midget, the tiny London charwoman who finds herself among the 'intellectual' crowd on the 'outward bound' ship of life. He looked long at Clara,and listened carefully to her voice. "Can you speak Cockney?" he asked. "A little; I grew up among a lot of Cockney-speaking Londoners". "Good!.. Will you play Mrs. Midget?" Clara laughed. "You're not serious, are you ?"... "I am..., I am!" "Well, then I'll try." And so, although the rehearsals cost much more time than she had expected, Clara studied her part as Mrs. Midget conscientiously...

The three performances were a great success. The University Newspaper had a long article about"the English painter who could as well have been a fine actress."

Despite this time-consuming 'extra' Clara managed to produce two more canvases before the year's end. The first was a study of a negress, 'the first American negress to sit for me. There are wonderful types among them. When you come here first, you are very conscious of them and are apt to stare at them in trains and buses. Later you notice them less and less, and only look at them if they are very striking and beautiful. " The second painting was of our son Michael, now almost eleven years old and a first rate baseball fan. Clara painted him in his baseball outfit, red cap and all--a small canvas but an appealing picture. Michael thought the world of it; it was, he said, the best painting his mother had ever done! It had to be: it glorified baseball!

Obviously, we were now well on the way to become 'good Americans'.

NOTE for page 192: Of the four leading Mexican painters (Diego Rivera, Sequieros, Orozco and Tamayo) only Tamayo ignores politics in his work. Hie vibrant colours merely delight awakened sense conceptions. After an epoch of shocking pink watermelon, he has pared down his colour,making it an integral part of form.He is a great artist in his own right.

15

The -isms rule the roost

As the war progressed, work in the Netherlands Information Bureau increased steadily. To bringing out the Netherlands News and the daily contact with American newspapers and radio, was now added the interviewing of those fortunate people who, often in incredible ways, had managed to flee from the occupied Netherlands and had arrived in New York via London, Spain or unoccupied France. There also were the regular weekly meetings with the press chiefs of other occupied countries, lectures for all sorts of audiences , at times hundreds of miles away from New York,and the research necessary for special articles requested by leading papers and magazines. It kept my three assistants and myself abnormally active: days of twelve working hours were a frequent occurrence. To top it all, I had taken upon myself to write a book on The Netherlands in war time. At first it was to be 'a mare translation' of 'Je Maintiendrai'(I shall maintain), a book written by a Dutch member of the London staff, and created to acquaint Hollanders in exile with the true conditions in their Nazi-occupied homeland. But it did not take me long to ascertain that a translation would not do for an American reading public. The

book simply was too Dutch, too full of details that only people well acquainted with normal conditions in Holland would understand. Basing my version upon 'Je Maintiendrai' I re-wrote the book entirely, expanded it considerably and attuned it to the demands of the American readers' market. Most of this work was done after office hours, with the help of a single secretary.

It stands to reason that under such conditions our family life had to suffer. Clara worked 'downtown', in her 29th Street studio, when the children were at school. But in the afternoon she had to hurry home to Jamaica, where a multitude of household duties was awaiting her. Only when summer came and the children left for a camp in the mountains, could she give herself entirely to her work. Her liking for Woodstock had not diminished, even though she knew it better now, and recognized easily the variety of 'cliques' and the vast number of would-be artists who clung with desperation to their little place in the Woodstock sun.

*

Shopping in the village, Clara made the acquaintance of a young woman, a doctor's wife who had several good-looking children. One of these, Candy, a girl of about ten, Clara painted life size, dressed in an eighteenth century costume.(*) Using the garden-studio of some newly-made friends, she also painted a young Dutch nude: a picture that has never left off reminding me strongly of a mural in one of Pompeii's richer villas (*).

(*) see reproduction

(*) see reproduction

There was a drawing class in Woodstock, organized by some resident painters. "I work there with great pleasure," Clara wrote me. I did several nudes of Louise B., the wife of a local painter. But yesterday I worked out of doors at a landscape. There is no end to good subjects here!"

I had written her that the long-dreaded deportation of Jews from Holland was a tragic fact. The Dutch 'underground' forces had provided me with ample, gruesome details. She answered: "It is so terrible that I do not know what to say. It makes my heart ache for all our friends in

Holland who are possibly involved in this mass deportation. I hate to read a newspaper these days; one gets so hopeless, so afraid of the future..." Then, about her work : "The Apple Orchard is finished. I looked at it this morning, and the feeling of sunlight and air makes you feel to be there, and forget everything else."

Finally I got a couple of weeks' freedom, and decided to spend them ina New England coastal town, Ogunquit while Clara continued to work in Woodstock with remarkable inspiration. She wrote me: "What do I care that Woodstock is a hotbed of gossip and intrigue ? Nothing seems to escape the eyes and ears of anyone here--except mine! I think I must be dumb, that I neither notice these scandals, nor am much interested in tittle-tattle. But I work here with great pleasure; and that's all that matters to me."

An art dealer, Rudolf, had taken a couple of her smaller paintings on consignemnt. "His enthusiasm is quite wonderful--a real treat after that indifferent, blasé attitude of the New York dealers... I met a Mr. Easton, an art teacher at New York University who had seen my exhibition at the 460 Park Avenue Gallery. He asked me if I would give an informal talk to his students one day,and I promised to do so. It will be fun!"

"This hotel," I wrote Clara from Ogunquit, "is a place where life is truly stagnant.At night there is Bingo--and other suchlike highbrow diversions. But never mind; I feel more rested than I have been for too long. I have sworn a holy oath to myself that when I am back I shall take more time for myself, and stop wearing myself out so thoroughly 'in the service of the fatherland'. As things are, I seem to be on the way to become all efficiency; the rest of 'living' has become quite indifferent to me. I feel that very painfully--almost as something to be ashamed of."

When the season ended Clara looked back on a productive summer. "I have worked very well, these last few weeks, painting every day. I also draw twice weekly at the

sketch Club abd I have done lots of drawings. But the garden-studio has been taken up by a tenant, the writer Alexander King: the ex-husband of the woman I painted at Sergei Radamsky's home--remember ?..."

Both in the spring and after her return from Woodstock Clara renewed her efforts to discover a gallery ready to handle her work. At the same time, she approached different art schools to find a post as a teacher. But all her efforts in both directions remained fruitless. The head of 'Parson's School of Design', 'The Art Students' League of New York', and half a dozen others--they all admired her work but had no opening for an additional teacher. Only much later would we understand why: the majority of professional painters could not possibly make a living from their art. They had to have a teaching job to pay for their daily bread. For them painting remained the 'luxury' of the evening hours, and the week-ends.

*

That autumn we made a great change. We left the ugly, cramped little Jamaica house and moved into an eight room flat at 800, Riverside Drive, the uptown section of Manhattan. It had huge, high under the ceiling dining and drawing rooms with a good north light--ideal for a Studio. It was close to Broadway and its shops, almost opposite an underground station with a line directly leading to Times Square, and with bus routes going in the same direction. The building was only eight floors high, counted 82 flats and was mainly inhabited by professionals. Now the downtown Studio became superfluous; the whole problem of looking after the family's needs and yet find time to work, was less impossible to live with--although far from having been completely solved. Happy with the new abode, Clara wrote to her sisters in London:"This is a beautiful apartment, modern and comfortable. The drawing room is enormous; my Studio, separated from the drawing room by glass doors, is quite large and has north light. I am very happy with this arrangement, and hope to do a lot of

work here. I have found a nice girl to come in six mornings each week. But she doesn't cook. I don't mind doing the cooking as I am on the spot and don't have to rush home from downtown Fifth Avenue. Hortense, the girl, is a very attractive and interesting negress; I hope she will consent to be my model. She loves the idea of being painted; only--she mustn't be painted in red. What a pity--because red is such a wonderful colour of contrast with negroes. She would be fine for a nude study too; I did broach that--but she seemed shy... We are here close to the coloured district, and you can see such wonderful faces. I think I could spend a lifetime painting them.

"Though it is December, it is like spring outside today. We have much sunshine all the year round. It does a lot to your humour to get up in the morning and the sunshine streams into your room. Perhaps you might find the light rather harsh and clearcut. Of course, it has nothing of the mellowness of England, France or Italy. I can think of no more beautiful light than that of Venice; the Canal Grande at sunset is something I shall never be able to forget.

We are beginning to feel the pressures of war now. Though everything is plentiful, things are expensive. There are dim-outs all the time and now and again we have black-outs. The children have air raid drill very often and they wear identification medals. Yes, I realize you must steel your heart against the tragedies that today are being enacted all over the world. It is only when one thinks of the Nazi atrocities that you cannot do so, but are filled with feelings of revenge. Never in the future should such barbarians be given a chance to repeat their horrifying crimes... I am at times very homesick for London, and would give a year of my life to be back and see the old spots, and talk again with all of you. I often think of our old friends, wondering how they are. Ring some of them up and give them my love--that would be wonderful."

But some of them, in London, she would never see again. Foremost among them her father who died on January 1st, 1943. He had been ill for quite some time; but the shock of

his death was great and for ~~quite some time~~ many weeks made working difficult. "I had hoped," Clara wrote to London, "that one day soon there would be a wonderful reunion. Dad, just as always, would be sitting in his armchair--the chair with the pile of newspapers, stockings and what not..., you know. He'd be smoking, saying little but looking handsome and fine. It was something worth waiting for. And now I pray and hope that soon I'll be in London again, with mother and all of you. We shall have such a time together; we'll talk, as I always loved to, in the kitchen. I mean : when I came over from Holland.. The children ? Sonia is now a head taller than I, very charming, with a beautiful singing voice. Michael, on the other hand, is no ardent reader ; he is a sportsman, loves baseball and flying.

As for myself, I am working again, have by now settled in our new apartment. I am having a travelling exhibition of drawings: it goes from one University to another all over America. I don't expect much of it in the way of sales, but it certainly helps to make one's name as an artist known throughout that enormous stretch of land called the United States of America."

*

Ala Storey, a woman who for some time had been connected with London's Redfern Gallery, started a gallery in New York and called it the American-British Art Center. Among the well-known artists whose work could be seen there were Matthew Smith, Milton Avery, Max Weber, Emily Wilkinson and Clara. At the private view a 'special guest' was present: a short, thick-set, grey-haired man with a marvellous smile and humorous eyes : Charles Chaplin. He was a most charming person, talking blithely with whoever came his way, audibly admiring some of the exhibits and remaining significantly silent before others... Katherine Cornell, the great American actress, was there too; but for once she played second fiddle. The crowd followed 'Charlie' wherever he went all over the gallery.

But in spite of this colourful beginning, the gallery suffered as much from the war mood that ~~had by now~~

had by now engulfed America, as any other long-established competitor. Clara took part in several of its 'mixed' shows; and then, realizing the uselessness of focusing upon this gallery as a means of reaching a wider art-buying public, she regretfully decided not to send her work there anymore.

She wrote me of this decision to Kingston, on the Caribbean island of Jamaica where I had gone to contact a couple of hundred refugees from The Netherlands, brought together through the assistance of the Dutch authorities in unoccupied France, Spain and Portugal. The British, having evacuated the people of Gibraltar to Jamaica at the outset of the war, had housed them in a huge camp, appropriately named Gibraltar Camp. This camp was for the greater part now 'loaned' to the Dutch government-in-exile; and here the escaped Hollanders, Jewish and non-Jewish, lived in reasonable comfort, every family having a separate part of a larger hut.

Each morning I listened to what several of the refugees, each in turn, could tell me of conditions in the occupied homeland, and of the ways in which they had planned and carried out their escape. "It is only too often a tale of incredible horror," I wrote Clara. "At times I feel it will be quite impossible for me to go on, day after day, listening to these tales of sadism. Almost all these people have relatives missing and have gone through such hardships that, looking at them sitting opposite me and calmly talking of their times of terror, it is hard to believe them." I stayed in the camp for six weeks, and then wrote a long report for the Netherlands Ambassador, in Washington. In it I pointed out that the worst side effect of keeping these people indefinitely in a camp was their demoralizing, debilitating lack of occupation. Efforts <u>were</u> made to find out whether a group of diamond workers could be transferred to the Dutch colonies of Curaçao and Surinam, to establish themselves there, but little was done to find employment for the remainder. Against the advice of my chief,

I submitted the report to Washington, feeling it my duty to point out what I had so strongly felt when living amidst these displaced people. Of course: I was duly reprimanded by the Ambassador for 'doing what I had not been instructed to do', but gradually several of the refugees were actually syphoned off to temporary employment in America.

Among the refugees who reached New York 'direct': that is, via London and with the assistance of the Dutch authorities in England, was a nurse who had been working in a Rotterdam hospital when it was bombed by the invading Nazis. She became the first woman to join De Gaulle's 'Free France ' army. Thin and keen looking, a latter-day Joan of Arc, she was painted by Clara while she was awaiting orders to join the Dutch troops in Australia. The painting was only just finished when the orders came and 'Annie de Hoogh', as we had re-baptized her, left. The last I heard of her was that she lay ill in Sydney, and wondered whether she would ever see Holland again...(*)

(*) see reproduction

*

About this time Clara had a for her new, and somewhat disturbing experience. The doctor whose little daughter Candy she had painted, held back payment contending that the price of the picture was much too high, and anyway: he could not afford to pay more than about one third of the actual price. This led to an unpleasant altercation, partly the artist's fault because she had not, when accepting the commission, confirmed the size of her fee in writing. It was entirely a matter between her and a client, an affair in which I had no desire to mix. But on a lift the doctor gave me to Woodstock he himself brought up this sore subject, complaining bitterly that 'Clara asked me much too much.' I then thought it timely to give him my point of view. "Look," I said, "you are a well-known and highly-paid specialist, and you charge your patients accordingly. I am a writer and set my prices in accordance with what I produce. Now then-- Clara is an artist with an international repute. She asked you a price that is in harmoney with her standing. Why should she, the painter, be placed in a different niche from

you and me ? Why do so many people--you evidently included--expect the artist to be satisfied with 'anything' for his unique type of labour, representing not only his talent, but also years of experience? To my mind, Clara is far too easy-going. People abuse her lack of business sense. They try to get the better of her--and often succeed..."

That little sermon settled things, for the time being anyway. For several minutes a deep silence reigned in the doctor's car.

This second summer in Woodstock had been as fertile a time for Clara as had been last year's. Her 'harvest' consisted of several paintings and a batch of drawings. After the moist heat of New York in July and August, Woodstock proved to be a veritable haven, with an invigorating mountain climate and much artistic activity. We were thinking of finding a small house in or near Woodstock, where the children could spend the summer with us , rather than going to expensive camps for a couple of months' stay. After much searching we hit upon an old farmhouse, dating back to Victorian days. It looked impressive with its fine entrance gate, its nine blue-shuttered street-side windows and its dormers that stared like two watchful eyes down the country lane. It had generous living space and a medley of bedrooms, and seemed to be in as good a state as might be expected of so old a house. But its greatest attraction was the old-fashioned kitchen with its huge kerosene-fed cooking stove. Moreover, it had seven acres of gently-sloping land to come with it; a vast territory stretching out southwards, towards the home of our nearest neighbours. Also with the House came the remnant of a one-time apple orchard, with some twenty gnarled trees loaded with apples of all kinds and sizes. Being typical 'city slickers', we were so taken by these various charms that we failed to enquire after exterior conditions: the roof, the water supply, the electric power system...Disturbing discoveries on those points were to be made at a later time...But we were wise enough not to close the deal before the next spring. That

suited the present owners, an elderly couple, well; and so, when we returned to New York around Labour Day, we were the owners-in-name of a country house on which, I had made sure, we would be able to get a substantial mortgage.

*

Resumption of her efforts to get connected with a reputable gallery ended for Clara in as many disappointments. But by now the reasons for this constant rebuff by dealers, who in unison sang the praises of her work, became clearer. Abstract impressionism was slowly but surely pushing itself into the foreground: as 'the first American School of Painting' it did everything to be the new world leader, stressing its independence from traditional European art and its American counterpart. Hans Hofmann, in his sixties, and Jackson Pollock, a mere thirty years old,(to name only two of the new movement's leaders) became 'household words' in no time at all. Though traditional work was not as yet completely excluded from public exhibitions, it had clearly become a less popular 'product'. The few New York galleries that remained true to traditional artists were mainly those who had fostered a certain number of artists and in the course of time had made them into remunerative members of their very own 'stables'.

In these circumstances a comparative newcomer like Clara, no matter how good her work, had little or no chance to find a hearing. Countless artists, good, mediocre or bad, and their hordes of dilletants and mainly female Sunday painters, hurriedly jumped onto the bandwaggon. In the next few years art centres such as Woodstock were to concentrate ever more upon action painting, daring collage and a wide choice of fresh view points on what art-for-our-time should be like, and what is was destined to do for humanity at large. A new breed of art critics appeared, as quickly as mushrooms grow, upon the scene, contributing to the general confusion their lengthy explanatory appreciations of exhibited work in oftimes incomprehensible jargon. New art magazines were published, one of them under the significant masthead "IT". In fact: it became fully evident that traditional art, the representational

expression of the artist's experience was--if not outright and for ever rejected--decidedly and for an unlimited time 'in the doghouse'. Then, as if to remove all possible doubt of the people's sanity in pressing the New Art to their hearts while solemnly rejecting all former allegiances, Nelson Rockefeller, millionaire, art collector of sorts and powerful politician, used the driving force of His Museum of Modern Art. In a very short time that institution acquired five huge splatter canvases by Jackson Pollock at the price of twenty thousand dollars each.

The paintings were, indeed, colourful enough creations, vaguely reminiscent of some natural phenomenon such as that of hot sunshine glittering upon pools of mixed discarded paint outside a delapidated dye-works. Now, beyond all doubt, abstract art was in, had become 'de rigueur'. But if in former days cubism, fauvism, expressionism had shown themselves able to live more or less peacefully with traditional art, the New Art turned out to be far more fanatically aggressive. It was jubilantly welcomed by all who immaterial of their natural bent would be painters, and grew ever less tolerant. Finally, it resolutely pushed representational art into a corner--and there the traditionalists stood: relics of the past, waiting miserably for critical and public opinion to veer around and re-discover them...

What did Clara think of thesse rapidly spreading 'new directions' in art ? She expressed her opinion in various ways, and by no means always appreciative , though often reiterating that art had never been, and would never be, stagnant. But when the 'New Directions' bred arrogance, a holier-than-thou attitude among artists and would-be artists, whose conceptions of form and line had unmistakably gone haywire, when they turned into irrational deviation, into cerebral exercises, ignoring all aesthetic values and practically telling the onlooker 'I don't care what you make of my product.. I didn't try to copy nature: my creation came from my subconscious mind and if you don't get what I mean--well, too bad for you...', then (to quote the closing sentences of a

talk Clara gave some time during 1945): "I feel convinced in the deepest of my being that these 'new developments' no doubt try to intimidate, and may well be out to throttle, such artists as dare to be inspired by the physical world around them. I mean those who want to express themselves with clarity, in understandable terms; in full and joyful communication with all who, like they themselves, search for harmony and beauty. Those who find no pleasure, sensuous or otherwise, in degrading, distorting, tearing apart and making irrecognizable all that, in itself, is the greatest gift to the true artist: his power to make others share in his discoveries, his anxieties, his ecstasies, his awarenesss of beauty and of some nobility, no matter its form, in literally everything with which Creation has so generously endowed mankind."

Meantime the summers in our Lake Hill farmhouse had not exactly panned out as foreseen. The waterpipe system, made of galvanised iron, was very old. It spouted forth a brownish liquid, rather than crystal-clear well water. The roof was leaking in many spots and needed urgent repair; and the electric current system was too weak to use modern kitchen gadgets--so that the entire house had to be rewired. Next, the asthmatic old motor, sucking up water from a large well some twohundredfifty feet south of the main house, gave up the ghost and was disdainfully described by the repair man as 'a bit of old junk'. And the sunniest spot in the gardens turned out to be the favourite basking spot of two brown-and-black striped snakes who, an expert assured us, were despite their size utterly harmless. They would, he promised, free us from droves of field mice. This they actually did, for a considerable time. Then, evidently disliking our company, they disappeared, never to return.

To be sure: these and other shortcomings were nuisances; yet, after a few years we felt a certain degree of attachment to the place. The orchard remnant provided us, our neighbours and friends with huge quantities of apples. I planted corn, hoping to get at least a few stalks by way of reward; instead the harvest was so great that our son suggested buying

a push cart, and sell the corn to automobilists on the near-by main road!

But by far the most interesting phenomenon around the farmhouse was the presence of a choice of wild life. In the early autumn, around seven in the morning, does and their young appeared on the path leading from the orchard to the adjoining hills, and made short shrift of whatever apples were within their reach. At night foxes barked around the back of the house, and skunks left their 'fragrant' mark on the surrounding bushes. We also had a couple of regular night visitors: two colossal porcupines who came for their milk-and-bread with admirable punctuality and always left a spike or two behind by way of thanks. The most unusual callers, however, were two 'bob cats', or mountain lions, better known outside America as lynxes. In moon-lit summer nights they would stage a 'concert' somewhere inside our seven acres, and finish up loving each other in bloody battle. We sometimes watched them from the flat roof of our side-porch; and I would have liked nothing better than to sound-film those two indefatigable protagonists!

*

When in May, 1945 The Netherlands were at long last freed from the utter misery brought upon them by five years of Nazi suppression, the New York Information Bureau had to change its tactics. The stress must now be laid upon the Netherlands East Indies, once Holland's colonies, now occupied by the Japanese. I had, some time earlier, got the assistance of a fellow-Dutchman of Portuguese-Jewish descent, an excellent researcher and good writer. To him the new restricted scope of my department could well be entrusted for some time. Thus freed, I was to fly to Holland to gather facts on the immediate post war conditions, needs and changes, with the purpose in mind of using this material for a fresh campaign in America to bring help to a thoroughly rifled, blood-soaked country.

In September, 1945 my plans for this trip were completed; I was undergoing the last of a series of protective 'shots'. But that week-end, working in Lake Hill, I was suddenly

taken ill with an attack of appendicitis. Next day, in New York, I arranged for my appendectomy in the largest, most up to date hospital, Doctors' Hospital. With the war just ending this place, so I was assured , still had sufficient nurses...

Unfortunately, things did not fulfil that promise. In my first post-operative night I lay forgotten , covered with a single sheet, in a bed close to a window. Gradually the sheet slid off my body; my feeble efforts to get help were in vain: no nurse answered my feverish pressing of a warning light. When finally, around seven in the morning, a nurse appeared, I had 104° fever and was close to collapse. Now immediate care was taken of me--and lo and behold: I survived! A few days after that unforgettable night I was home again, weak but thinking once more in terms of leaving soon on the European trip.

Instead, I began all at once to show the signs of a nervous breakdown. Hard, relentless, self-driving work in the Information Bureau, throughout five unnaturally strenuous years, the lack of sufficiently-long rest periods, the shock of post-operative neglect and the accumulation of whatever other difficulties the war years had presented to me, now claimed their toll.

My carefully worked out plan de campagne, the horrible injections against this, that and the other disease, the measures taken so that Clara would not, during my absence, be prevented from working by extra cares--all of it had been in vain.

For the next half year I tried hard to regain my balance, to look forward to a new and better time. Gradually all I had done, or had meant to do, receded into the background of my thinking. Only one overwhelming desire remained: to get back onto my feet, be a totally free man for once and see my homeland again, not so much as a sharply-observing writer, but above all as a son returning to his father's house.
