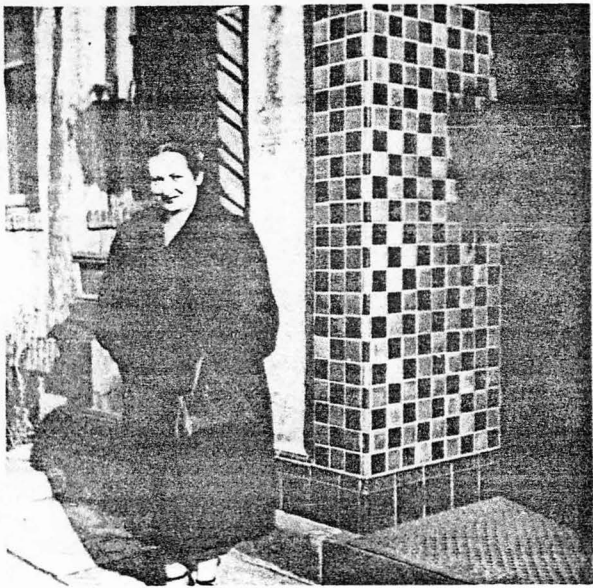


## CHAPTER 40

## SUCCESS.

On the 15th of December came the long expected letter, which told me that I had passed the State Board examination. I was very, very happy and so was Hedy. For that occasion she had prepared a gift for me, a doctors bag, a blood pressure apparatus, and a fine stethoscope. I did not feel too comfortable in Crown Heights Hospital and switched with January 1st, 1945 to Williamsburgh Maternity Hospital in Bushwick Avenue in Brooklyn. It was a little more distant, but I could reach it relatively easy by bus. I had to take care only of women who gave birth, a field that I liked very much, and I stayed there for 1½ years, had a nice salary and besides earned money from deliveries of Welfare patients, who had come to the clinic, without having their own private doctors.

At about the beginning of 1945, Hedy and Mrs. Glueck got busy to look for an apartment for us that would be suitable for a doctors office and at the same time for living quarters, and they found one on Ocean Avenue at the corner of Lincoln



FEB. 1942



to mother.  
and father

Will try

To work hard.

To keep papers  
off the floor

To be quiet

To be clean.

To walk in school

To raise our hand.

To watch our look.

To write neatly.

To say words

To sit still

To be polite

Joan

Road, across the street from Prospect Park. The apartment was small, but we were lucky that we got it, because there was a shortage in apartments at that time. The rent was high for us, \$ 115.- a month, but it was a nice apartment house with about 80 apartments, and we liked it. We had two rooms for the office, a small windowless waiting room and a good-sized office room, and one bedroom and a living room, kitchen and bathroom for our living quarters.

There arose now the difficult problem of getting furniture for the apartment and equipment for the office. We had some savings, but by far not enough. The most important things were furniture for our bedroom. A trip to Fulton Street to the company Loeser solved that problem. We bought a beautiful complete set, to be paid up in relatively small instalments.

Then we had again enormous luck. The administrator of the Crown Heights Hospital, where I had my first job, was a Mrs. Wattell. She had taken a liking to me right from the beginning, and when I had told her later on, when I was already working in the Williamsburgh Maternity Hospital, that I had rented an apartment on Ocean Avenue, she told me that she had a lot of furniture for me, since she and her husband had decided to move to Florida. It so happened that they lived in the same block on Ocean Avenue, and they had stored a lot of their furniture in the basement. I went there to look at it and I did not believe my eyes. It were fine furniture, covered with linen to protect them from dust, 2 big armchaires, 1 sofa, 1 table, which could be converted from a small table into a big dining room table, chairs, fine small tables of all kinds, floor lamps, carpets, big and small ones etc., etc. They did

not want to give us all that as an outright gift, asked only for \$ 150.-. I looked at them and knew what they meant. And a short time later all these things were in our apartment. We had now enough, even for our waiting room, where the table often was opened and made big, when we had guests in the evening. All we needed now was office equipment and that we got also quickly from a company Beeber in Manhattan, complete, including 2 instrument cabinets, a scale, a waste receptacle, examining table, a fluoroscope, a floor lamp, an electro-cardiograph, a diathermy apparatus, to be paid up in small instalments. The only things I bought and paid in cash was a beautiful big desk, an upholstered desk chair, an upholstered chair for the patient, a filing cabinet, a waste-paper basket, a microscope, and great many instruments. All that, furniture and office equipment was paid up in the course of 2 or 3 years.

We had the bedroom for us and Johanna, and Francis slept in the livingroom on a couch. What helped me very much was my Spanish, which I spoke at that time already fluently. There were Spanish speaking nurses in the hospital, who started to send me Spanish speaking patients to my office, and Spanish speaking patients, whom I had delivered of their babies, who remained loyal and kept coming as patients to my office, some for many years. I had office hours every afternoon. The schedule in the hospital was arranged in such a way that I was free every afternoon. We were 3 doctors there, besides me a Dr. Kessler and a Dr. Kirchhausen. The latter came every day at 3 P.M. and stayed till 11 P.M. At 11 P.M. I came and stayed till 3 P.M. on the next day, when Dr. Kirchhausen came and stayed till 11 P.M. when Dr. Kessler came, who also stayed till 3 P.M. on the next

day. That meant that Dr. Kirchhausen worked daily for 8 hours, whereas I and Dr. Kessler worked each time for 16 hours, but were then free for 32 hours, and, what was especially good was that we were free every afternoon for our office hours. Only few patients came in the beginning, but the number increased with every day. My fee was rather low, between \$ 3.- and 5.- per office visit.

As mentioned before, we were members of the Ethical Culture Society and attended Sunday meetings quite often. Johanna attended the Sunday school and Francis was engaged as a Sunday school pianist and received a small salary, with which he contributed to our living expenses. I remember that he used to ask me almost every day how much I had earned, and was quite satisfied, when I could tell him that the income had increased.

I got once as a patient a very rich man from Venezuela, a Mr. Jugo, who liked besides me especially Francis, since he spoke Spanish. Francis was at that time already a pupil of our cousin Leon Erdstein, who was professor of music at the Young Men's Hebrew Association, a fine pianist, whom we called uncle Leon, and Francis had to go for lessons once a week to the Steinway Hall on West 57th Street in Manhattan. Mr. Jugo wanted to buy a fine piano and asked Francis to help him with that. Francis went to different piano companies and found a very fine one at the Baldwin company. He told them that he would bring them a customer and they promised him a commission. Mr. Jugo went then there with Francis and he really bought that very expensive piano, which was later shipped to Caracas in Venezuela, and as a result Francis got about \$ 500.- as commission and bought with that money an upright piano, of which

uncle Leon had approved, and so we got a piano into our apartment. Francis practiced then daily for hours. He also continued to paint, did not need Mr. Lerner anymore, and produced great many beautiful paintings, went out often into the Prospect Park with easel, canvas, and paints, painted also often in the house, and on Saturday afternoons he went often to the Art Students League on 57th Street in Manhattan, for drawing of nude models. After we had moved to Ocean Avenue, Johanna switched to another school on Washington Avenue at the corner of Classon Avenue, which she liked much better than the school on 2nd Street. She had a lot of new friends in our new neighborhood, who all went to that school on Washington Avenue. It should also be mentioned that Francis had become a Boy Scout and attended regularly meetings in the evening. He made great progress in piano playing under the guidance of uncle Leon, who was quite proud of him.

Success! Success! What a country! What a marvel of a country, which opened the doors for me and my family to immigrate. And then to allow me to work again in my profession as a doctor. No wonder that so many people, when they arrived here, threw themselves down and kissed the ground. A great, great country. They did not make it easy for anyone to come in. You had to have relatives or good friends to guarantee for you with an affidavit. They checked you out before they let you in. Hedy had to wait in Vienna for her visa, after I had left for Cuba, for over a year, oppressed by the Gestapo and threatened with deportation to Poland. And just at the time when the war had already broken out they arrived safely in Holland with Johanna, and they could still get on a boat and sail for America.