

1930

## CHAPTER 18

## OPENING MY PRIVATE OFFICE. OUR NEW HOME.

For the last two months, I returned to the surgical department of the Wiedener Krankenhaus, and on January 1st, 1930, I opened my practice at 64 Taborstrasse in the 2nd district. My father-in-law had written shortly before a letter to the Arbeiter-Krankenkasse, announcing his retirement as rayons physician with December 31st, 1929, and indicating that I will substitute for him, till the position will be filled again. I was now all of a sudden a busy practitioner. My office hours for the patients of the Arbeiter-Krankenkasse were from 12 to 1 o'clock. But the patients came in droves and filled my waiting room completely,

so that many had to stand in the middle of the room. It was a nice, big waiting room with fine furniture and a grand piano standing in one corner, and a fine, antique candelabra hanging in the middle of the room. The office hours usually lasted till 3 P.M., often longer, and in between and afterwards there were private patients or patients, who belonged to the railway-workers-Krankenkasse and other institutions. For the Arbeiter-Krankenkasse I had to take care of patients, who either lived in my rayon, which was outlined by certain streets or worked in that area, and it included office visits as well as house visits. These latter were quite numerous, and since I had no car, they kept me busy in the morning, before my office hours, as well as in the afternoon after my office hours. Payment was on a monthly basis, increasing every year by a certain amount. Only night calls were paid separately.

Of course I had called Mr. Aladar von Duda, as soon as my father-in-law had sent in his letter of resignation, and he told me not to worry. The position was offered in a medical journal and there were, of course, great many competitors. One day, I was called to the office of the director of the Krankenkasse, Dr. Trautmann, and he told me that I was selected for the position of rayons physician as successor of Dr. Ziegler. I was quite happy and thanked him. He told me that I must have been quite busy looking for connections to the Krankenkasse, and he gave me, among other papers, a letter, which Mr. Kunz had written on my behalf. I still have it. Translated into English, it reads as follows: "Dr. Mechner, whom I have met as house doctor in the Sanatorium Loew as an amiable, competent doctor, always ready to help, has applied for the po-

sition of the rayons physician Dr. Ziegler, who, after 36 years of service, is retiring. He heard about my relations to the Krankenkasse, and asked me to intervene on his behalf. What can I do? November 20, 1929.

(signed) Heinrich Kunz".

Under his name was written with pencil: "Chairman of the superintendence committee. Received on Nov. 21, 1929 by deputy director Dr. Trautmann."

I could not understand, why Dr. Trautmann gave me this letter of Mr. Heinrich Kunz. After much speculation I concluded that he did it to show me that a lot of pressure was used to force him to give me this position. Otherwise somebody else, whom he would have preferred, would have gotten it. So, he wanted me to know that pressure was used. It made no difference to me.

So, that was it. It was now definitely a jackpot. A new, very pleasant life had started. My inlaws, Lisa, and Erich, lived only three short blocks away on Taborstrasse 87, and we also had a nice social life on account of the innumerable uncles, aunts, and cousins, about 100 of them, not all living in Vienna, but coming in all the time, mostly from Tchechoslovakia. And we were frequent theatre goers and opera and concert enthusiasts. And we still went on weekends on excursions to the mountains. We had a maid, of course, right from the beginning.

My practice increased from day to day and I had all reasons to be satisfied. Since we had a relatively big apartment and one room free, we invited one of Hedy's cousins, Minny Landler, from Bruenn, to live with us. We had pleasant

times together and went often on excursions on weekends. She had come to Vienna to learn how to make leather gloves, and later founded a company in Tchechoslovakia, which became quite successful.