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A TREASURY OF RUSSIAN LIFE AND HUMOR

A Treasury of
RUSSIAN LIFE AND HUMOR

Edited, with an Introduction

BY

JOHN COURNOS

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To

HELEN

WHO HAS BEEN KNOWN TO READ DOSTOEVSKY BEFORE
BREAKFAST, THIS FEAST FROM MUSCOVY,
FOR ALL WEATHERS AND ALL HOURS,
AFFECTIONATELY OFFERED

Editor's Note

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INTRODUCTION

A new Russian anthology requires some explanation. The Russian anthologies with which the book market has been flooded in the past have been devoted almost exclusively to fiction, usually the short story. The last one which included forms of literary creation other than fiction was Leo Wiener's *Anthology of Russian Literature,* in two volumes, published over forty years ago. It is a recognized standard work (now out of print) whose merits are obvious, but whose shortcomings for our time are equally clear.

In the first place, the first volume of this immense work was given wholly to the centuries preceding the nineteenth; it is chiefly valuable on that account. Yet prior to the nineteenth century Russia produced little that gave the Russian spirit the universal significance it was to gain in what is now known as the Golden Age of Russian literature. This age began with Pushkin and Gogol in the early part of the nineteenth century—after certain hindering influences were overcome —and ended in 1881, the year in which Turgenev was doubtless still writing his *Senilia,* the year in which Dostoevsky died, the year, too, in which Tolstoy more firmly than ever turned to pamphleteering.

The years which followed may be termed the Twilight In this period the men who made literary fame included Chekhov, Gorky, Andreyev, Artzibashev, figures distinguished but lacking the stature of the giants who went before them. This new period coincided with the transformation of Russia from an agricultural into an industrialized people

The year 1881 is significant for yet another reason In that year, on the eve of granting Russia a constitution, Czar Alexander II was assassinated, bringing political reaction and bitter disillusion This spirit of repression and disillusion is evident in all the leading literary works preceding the great Revolution of 1917.

The second volume of Wiener's anthology presented an excellent sheaf of the productions of the Golden Age, but only a fringe of the Twilight still in progress at the time of the publication of the book. A serious fault, in my opinion, is the fact that the work, having been compiled by a man primarily a scholar, tended to completeness in the matter of worthy names, rather than to a careful selection of salient works which might throw highlights on what is essential in Russian life and thought and which might offer to the uninitiated some meas-

ure of elucidation of the nature of Russian genius and aspiration. This lack the present book attempts to fill.

Indeed, since Wiener's anthology was published, the confusion in the public's mind as to the true significance of the Russian contribution to universal culture has increased rather than diminished. After all, the great Russian Revolution has taken place, an event bound to knock some fond preconceptions about Russia and the Russians on the head.

Thanks to popular Anglo-American criticism current in pre-Revolution days, the reader of Russian novels talked glibly of the "Russian soul"—as though that and the samovar and ikons and such phrases as "Little Father" and "Little Pigeon" (how delightful it all was!) explained everything one needed to know. There were writers who expatiated romantically on the Russian soul and fostered the idea that the Russian people were a lot of charming nitwits, the even, kindly tenor of whose ways was being disrupted by a few disgruntled intellectuals and revolutionaries.

In the face of such bitter truths as were told by Gogol, Goncharov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Nekrasov, Saltykov-Shchedrin, etc, romantic criticism nevertheless babbled of a Russia which had no existence except in the minds of the writers. Actually, the peasants were not such fools as they were painted—peasants rarely are, whether in Russia or in France They knew only too well that they were being exploited by their masters; they also knew (as their saying went) that the Czar wouldn't hear, and God was far away, or is it the other way round? The result is the same.

Russia's great writers, no less than writers of other countries, reflected the life, the thought, and the aspirations of their people Indeed, above all other writers they have been praised for their realism, their directness, their simplicity, their truth. This being admittedly the case, it behooves us to go to the sources, to the Russian writers themselves, for a picture of the Russian mind and heart; it behooves us to look into the pages of the Russian novelist, the Russian poet, the Russian dramatist, the Russian critic. After all, what do the Russians know and think of themselves?

There is, it goes without saying, a certain growth, a certain natural progression, in the modes of living and thinking of any people. Allowing for all that, it can scarcely be disputed, though doctrinaires have attempted this folly, that human nature—or should we in this instance say Russian human nature?—does not permit itself to suffer any fundamental change Russians are a great deal like other human beings; if there are any deviations in them, they are not deviations from human nature, rather, they are exaggerations of certain aspects of human nature, inherent in the race or resulting from certain geographic or climatic conditions, or from historical experiences We do allow that certain peoples are more mystical than others (the Hindus),

some more rational (the French), some more romantic (the Poles and the Irish), some more law-abiding (the English); but none of these things indicates any difference in the core of human nature, which remains the same at all times, everywhere. There may be differences in degree, but not in kind

It is hoped that this anthology will be useful in that, while stressing the universal essence of human nature, it will also indicate such divergences as distinguish specifically Russian human nature from human nature elsewhere. Thus, to illustrate the point I wish to make by a theme more familiar, there has been a tendency among certain persons erroneously to speak of English hypocrisy, as though hypocrisy were a vice monopolized by the English. The more reasonable human being would more truthfully say that the practical mind of the English, balking at difficulties and trying to evade them, has an unfortunate tendency to compromise which, in fact, is translated into a tendency in the individual to do or say things he does not really want to say or do, things he does not quite believe, producing in the result something which resembles hypocrisy, yet not quite the article usually implied Of course, there are real hypocrites among the English, as there are among other peoples; but, on the whole, it is the tendency to compromise that is most marked in the British and not hypocrisy, a vice equally possessed by other peoples. Again, the English (as Madariaga has pointed out) think only while they act, while the French think first and act afterward. These are real racial differences; for, in the final analysis, both the English and the French think and act, irrespective of whether the one or the other comes first.

What is important, then, is to discover the principle which animates the differences that distinguish Russians from other peoples, and in the present instance to show how this principle is applied in Russian literature as its predominant factor Or, in simpler words, what is it that gives Russian literature its specifically Russian quality; above all, what, precisely, is this quality? Obviously, this is a matter that calls for definition It is clear that we had one opinion of the Russians in Czarist days, and another after the Revolution, and have yet another today If we are to get anywhere, it is up to the critic to disentangle the essential Russian from the confusion of succeeding preconceptions.

There was a time when the critics—I must own to having been one of them—quite mistakenly wrote of pity as the significantly predominant feature of the Russian literary landscape. At the same time Russia was credited with a feminine temperament which presumably corresponded with it Still later, in her literature as in her life, we observed an increasing ruthlessness and cruelty, which demanded some measure of modification in our earlier thoughts about her. We recall that in the period of Allied intervention the great poet, Alexander Blok, wrote threatening lines addressed to the West—to Europe:

Of you there are millions. Of us—hordes, and hordes, and hordes.
Just try—to measure your strength with us!
Yes, we are Scythians. Yes, we are Asiatics,
With slant and avaricious eyes!

For you whole ages, for us a single hour.
We, like obedient serfs,
Upheld the shield between two hostile races
Of Mongols and of Europe!

. . . .

O old world! While you are still in life,
While you are still in the throes of sweet anguish,
Pause, O world, as wise as Oedipus,
Before the Sphinx with the ancient riddle!

Russia is a Sphinx! Exultant and afflicted,
And drenched in blackest blood,
She gazes, gazes, gazes into you,
Yes, with hatred, and with love!

The poet appeals:

Come to us! From the horrors of war
Come to a peaceful embrace!
Ere it is too late—return sword to sheath,
Comrades! Let us become brothers!

If not—we have nought to lose,
We too can be perfidious!
Centuries shall curse you,
You ailing, tardy generation!

. . . .

We shall close our ranks like the savage Hun,
Ghoul-like, rifle the pockets of corpses,
Burn down towns, drive human hordes into churches,
And roast the flesh of our white brothers!.

For the last time—old world, take heed!
We call to a fraternal feast of peace and labor,
For the last time to a radiant fraternal feast
You are called by the barbaric trumpet!

This poem (of part of which I have given a rough translation), written in the years immediately following the Revolution, when British and French troops were sent to intervene on behalf of the Whites, is highly revealing—more especially in the light of the Rus-

sian writings of a century whose meaning we chose to ignore. It is clear that the poet, Russia's greatest during our own century, who in his earlier works has shown himself something of a mystic, is angry; that he speaks out of vexation and chagrin. Nevertheless, it is also clear that in his intoxication of rage he reveals a truth about Russians made patent in writings by other authors reproduced in this collection.

The point to be made here is that, more than any other people, Russians have a duality of nature which, depending on this or that circumstance, prompts them, in great crises, to fly to extremes.

This inner duality, this Janus quality, reflected in the great Russian writers, makes it possible for them to experience the heights and depths of the human spirit.

We have seen in the poem quoted how the sensitive, perceptive, mystical Alexander Blok speaks in one breath of peaceful fraternal embraces and in the next, in the event of rejection of proffered love, of turning upon civilization with the ferocity of Genghis Khan, who fecundated Russia with a ferocious blood. To be sure, he reminds Europe that it was only thus, by taking upon herself the burden of the Mongol invasion, that she had saved Europe from a like fate.

We read Dostoevsky for his marvelous story-telling art, which is only right, but it would be a grave error to overlook the fact that here was a writer who was also a great psychologist and, at times, a prophet—in a very precise sense of the word. More than any other writer, Dostoevsky was able to peer not only behind the specifically Russian mask but also behind the mask of civilized Europe. It was no less than eighty years ago that this author, in his *Memoirs from Underground,* suggested the possibility of the sudden and unexpected appearance "in the midst of this Universal Reason that is to be" of "some common-faced or rather cynical and sneering gentleman who with his arms akimbo will say. 'Now then, you fellows, what about smashing all this Reason to bits, sending their logarithms to the devil, and living according to our own silly will?'" It is as though Dostoevsky had already foreseen Hitler, who, for all the veneer of Europe's culture and science, lay even then within the womb of Germany.

This duality revealed itself in a thousand ways It spoke in Ivan Karamazov when he confessed that he accepted God but not God's world, hence respectfully "returned His ticket."

No less conspicuously it is revealed in *Fathers and Sons* when, as Masaryk suggests in his profound *Spirit of Russia,* Turgenev's nihilist, Bazarov, unable to believe in God, transfers his devotion to the frog he is vivisecting in the interests of science The Russian, avers Masaryk, cannot live without faith; he "must have something to believe in. It may be the railway (Belinsky); it may be the frog (Bazarov); it may be Byzantianism (Leontiev); and so on." One thing is certain—a

skeptic a Russian cannot remain: "Leontiev actually forces himself away from skepticism, positively talks himself into belief."

When a Russian turns atheist it is not evidence of unbelief; on the contrary, he merely transfers his belief to Karl Marx, to science, etc. The Catholics, at least, recognize the truth of this; in approving in communism everything but its godlessness, they have logically called it "a Catholic heresy."

This Russian duality is like a shuttle which shoots across from one extreme to the other, never pausing in the middle, if there is one class no thinking Russian believes in—if we should accept Berdyaev's judgment—it is the middle class—the bourgeoisie. (Berdyaev vehemently insists upon this in "The Russian Revolution.")

This tendency to extremes, concomitant to her duality, may in any case be due to Russia's earlier nonparticipation in European history. She saved Europe from Genghis Khan's Mongols by taking the brunt of the invasion, but herself—before Peter the Great—took but little interest in the world to the west. It is true that in Elizabeth's day English merchants ventured into Muscovy, but when Ivan the Terrible proposed that the English send a princess to be his bride, they were properly horrified and on one pretext or another refrained from the proposed alliance. The Church—Byzantium—ruled Russia; its opinion of foreigners was by no means a flattering one. Thus, when a group of English merchants happened to visit a monastery in the north of Russia, they came upon a painting of the Last Judgment; and they must have been duly entertained to discover that the saved righteous on one side of the picture were Russians, while the damned sinners on the other side were foreigners

At any rate Russia wholly escaped the influence of the Renaissance; and Humanism did not materially affect her until the nineteenth century—a belated result of the dictatorial reforms of Peter the Great, who, in building St. Petersburg, opened for Russia "a window on Europe."

In this connection the dilemma of Peter Chaadayev, as recorded by the Westernizer, Herzen, is of peculiar interest Chaadayev saw in the absence of a tradition an incalculable loss for Russia, and in his soberly patriotic zeal advocated as a corrective the acceptance by Russia of the Roman Catholic faith.

Until the coming of the bolshevists Russian duality resolved itself into a conflict between Moscow and St. Petersburg—that is to say, between Slavophilism and Westernism. Each of these schools of thought and feeling—thought and feeling being inseparable in a country in which the poets were regarded as the true educators of the people—"I philosophize like a poet," Dostoevsky's phrase—had its own writers passionately proclaiming opposite truths.

The new light of Western culture, pouring through that "window

on Europe" by way of the city erected on northern swamps, must have stunned the country living under the iron, autocratic rule of the Czars. How write for the *tiumnyye liudi,* "dark folk" (a phrase I often heard in Russia as late as the fall of 1917), unprepared to receive the fruits of enlightened centuries, the product of ages of progressive and intensive culture?

To be sure, in the latter part of the eighteenth century there were preliminary tunings-up. Catherine the Great, by correspondence, flirted with the redoubtable freedom-lover, Voltaire, though at home she saw to it that a knout was kept handy for her humble subjects. And there had been the great Lomonosov, a universal genius who shone equally in chemistry, physics, mathematics, mining and poetry—and working, if less successfully, on history and mosaics besides; in another country he would have been acclaimed in his lifetime as a genius of the first order, an intellectual glory; but here in Russia he had to deal with a government which had little use for his gifts. Discouraged, he became addicted to drink and passed his last years a mere ruin of what he might have been For literature he left a valuable heritage behind; the rules of prosody he established still hold good in most Russian poetry to this day.

Western culture fell on fallow soil; possibly because of the newness of the experience, the resulting product had a freshness and spontaneity which astonished the world Its simplicity, directness, and honesty had something pristine about it; yet with it all, it probed the depths of the human soul as no other literature has before or since. This simplification of the most recondite thoughts, this ability to crystallize in words the inner burdens of a troubled humanity, words which the foreigner as well as the native can understand, may in some measure be due to the natural universality of the Russian spirit, this universality the Russian writers themselves repeatedly harp on.

Dostoevsky spoke eloquently and specifically of it in his famous Moscow address at the grave of Pushkin, while Turgenev's choice of Hamlet and Don Quixote as a theme for a lecture (not included, by the way, in his *Collected Works*) is a sufficient indication of the high regard in which the Russian holds universal types. It is interesting to note that in the past Hamlet was the character who most awakened the understanding sympathy of the Russians; it is equally clear from later events—the Revolution, etc.—that in the reaction the Russians were more akin to Don Quixote, the man of action, the man who was out to save the world. And so we return to the point made at the beginning: Russian duality.

The present collection lays stress on matters calculated to help us to understand the Russia of yesterday and today If Russia of the future remains an enigma—she has been referred to as the Sphinx both in Russia and abroad—it is so in her very nature. Gogol's famous

troika passage—"Russia, whither flyest thou?"—retains to this day its Delphic character. One thing we do know: this troika with its dynamic steeds is still speeding along, much to our satisfaction and to Nazi discomfort—maybe no longer a troika but a mechanized tank; call it what you will. Dipping into Russian literature, you may even discover the secret which moves Russians to "scorch" their earth in the face of a ruthless invader, be he Napoleon or Hitler.

If Russia has been afflicted with a national duality, it is no less true that her authors have been afflicted with a personal duality, a duality which has been the cause of inner conflicts celebrated in literary history. The only writer free from such conflicts, according to Merezhkovsky (see his famous essay, "The Giants of Russian Literature") is Pushkin. He alone was whole; he almost alone did not break under that inner ordeal from which the great writers suffered If they probed life, they probed themselves no less; and in the effort to merge their life with their art they usually brought about a breakdown of both.

Thus, we know that the genius of Gogol could cope with the materials of his novels only as long as he maintained an aloofness from life, recording only what he saw as an observer. As soon, however, as he began to delve into his own soul and sought salvation for himself, the artist in him could not stand the strain. Gogol the artist went to pieces; but Gogol the man did not find the personal salvation he so ardently sought.

Thus, we also know that Tolstoy, in his later years, recanted his best creative work, took to social and religious pamphleteering, and thought that to make poor peasant shoes was better than to make great literature.

It is true that Dostoevsky almost alone managed to maintain a precarious equilibrium between the artist and the man in him By a magic all his own he managed to integrate his ideas in his characters, living up to his wholly admirable dictum, "I philosophize like a poet."

It is an irony that Merezhkovsky, who elaborates this tragedy of conflicts in the essay referred to, should himself in his later years have undergone a complete change of heart, even as Gogol and Tolstoy before him Under the blows of fate which, during the Revolution, drove him into unhappy exile, he began to write moral, religious and prophetic books Maybe Pushkin wasn't the pagan Merezhkovsky thought he was; in any case, Pushkin died at 37 in a duel. After all, there is no telling what would have happened had he lived longer. Who knows whether, like Gogol and Tolstoy, the great poet might not have turned religious philosopher and moralist?

Not that this inner breakdown of the artist always culminated in disaster Sometimes it evolved an art of its own, a great art too A case

in point is Tolstoy's *Confession* (reproduced in part in this volume), which so distinguished a critic as Mirsky has pronounced to be "one of the world's masterpieces...of a class with the Book of Job, with Ecclesiastes, and with the *Confessions* of St. Augustine."

If it is true, as Masaryk says, that Russian thinkers were her poets, then we must accept even the inevitable disasters as part of the Russian pattern. After all, the conflicts which gave rise to them are absorbingly interesting; a knowledge of them is requisite for an understanding of Russian life, as of Russian art. In these conflicts resides something of the Russian character and the Russian temperament.

There is a legend to the effect that Russians are a sober-minded people lacking in humor. How it came into currency is wholly incomprehensible to me. Perhaps not enough Russian humor has been translated; perhaps some of it has been indifferently translated Humor has a way of eluding the translator, especially indigenous humor. Moreover, in order to appreciate the humor that does come through, we must learn to appreciate the circumstances in which it was created. We know that satire, to take a single aspect of humor, does come through—often superbly. An excellent example is Gogol's great comedy, *The Inspector-General;* not only is it the supreme piece of humor in the Russian language, but it can hold up its head with the greatest examples of world humor. So superb is it, indeed, as a combination of comedy and satire that after considerable hesitation I could not resist the temptation of including the whole of the play in this collection. I felt it to be cruelty to the reader to whet his appetite with a single act and subject him to the unhappiness of wishing for the whole!

I have included a short piece by Ostrovsky which is pure comedy. It is odd to reflect, by the way, that while the Russian novel is, on the whole, a tragic art, Russian drama leans decidedly toward comedy and, until Chekhov, classical comedy at that.

Even the great tragic novelists, however, are not wholly free of the comic, as I have tried to show with generous extracts from the great novels. Humor has a way of creeping even into Dostoevsky. Gogol, of course, had a great deal of it in *Dead Souls.*

Let us be frank about it: humor brims over the works of a host of writers. Witness the crystalline humor of the fabulist Krylov, admirably conveyed in Sir Bernard Pares's translation; the nuanced humor of Goncharov in *Oblomov;* the quiet folk humor of Lyeskov in *Cathedral Folk,* the gentle laughter-through-tears humor of Chekhov in "The Darling"; the satirical and sometimes profound humor of Sologub in *Little Tales,* and of Zozulya in his "Tale About Ak and Humanity"; the exuberant quixotic humor of Ilf and Petrov in *The Little Golden Calf;* the Stephen Leacock kind of humor in Ardov's "Drastic Action"; the sheer farcical humor of Zostchenko's short pieces

Not at all a bad variety, and not at all a poor exhibit of humor for

a people credited by few with that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin

If humor is difficult to render into a foreign language, how much more difficult is poetry! It is more difficult to translate Russian poetry into English than English poetry into Russian. It is claimed, indeed, that Byron's poetry, at any rate, reads better in Russian than it does in English. Apparently it is easier to translate into an inflected language than into the more rigid English.

One difficulty about translating Russian poetry is due to the avoidance by Russian poets of what we would call "poetic language" "There is a matter-of-factness in Russian poetry which is unique," says Maurice Baring To illustrate this point, Mr. Baring has translated—very admirably, too—a famous poem of Lermontov's, "The Testament" (reproduced in this volume).

> The words of this poem are the words of familiar conversation, they are exactly what the soldier would say in such circumstances There is not a single literary or poetical expression used And yet the effect in the original is one of poignant poetical feeling and consummate poetical art. I know of no other language where the thing is possible . . What is needed for this are the Russian temperament and the Russian language.

In this connection it is worthy of note that it was a poem that first gave rise to the Russian novel as we know it. Pushkin's *Evgeny Onegin* was, indeed, called by its author "A Novel in Verse," and divided into "chapters" The style of portraiture employed here, we are told by so discerning a critic as Mirsky:

> . . . was inherited from Pushkin by Turgenev and other Russian novelists, but not by Tolstoy or Dostoevsky. Onegin and Tatyana are the forefathers of a whole race of characters in Russian fiction, Lermontov's, Goncharov's and Turgenev's especially, are entirely of this family. Finally the construction of the story . . . became the standard for the Russian novel.

The English rendering of Tatyana's letter, by Oliver Elton, who, with Maurice Baring, shares the honor of being the best English translator of Russian verse, gives some quality of the original.

The difficulty of translation, of which I have spoken, is the chief cause of our relative ignorance of Russian poetry, the quality of which is not one whit behind that of the great Russian novel. Some fair examples, nevertheless, are available in English, even though vast gaps must inevitably remain until some great translator, himself a great poet, shall arrive and think it worth while to give us adequate renderings—at least of Pushkin and Lermontov In the circumstances, rather than have a fuller representation of Russian poets available in English, I have limited myself to the choice of those renderings which have quality

The series of early Bolshevik poems of my own translation I have included chiefly for their value as landmarks of Bolshevik ideology. Some of them, I believe, are not without rugged merit as poems. The interest of their authors in the machine has significance in that it reveals the part mechanism has played in proletarizing Russia. They were written for the most part in free verse; it is likely that Walt Whitman had some influence here

I wish I could have reproduced Alexander Blok's "The Twelve," a truly great Bolshevik poem. Unfortunately there is no adequate version in English. I also regret the omission, for the same reason, of something by Pasternak, the greatest living Russian poet. A poem by Sergey Esyenin might have found a fitting place in this collection, but he is also a poet whose music would suffer by an inadequate rendering. I have less compunction about Mayakovsky, whose Futurist antics do not, in my opinion, affect the Russian essence in one way or another. Rather would I have chosen another lyric by Pushkin, such as, for example, that exquisite evocation, Tatyana's Dream; yet, on the whole, Pushkin is well represented, and besides, I had to think of the restrictions of space imposed by the war.

I need hardly point out that a goodly portion of this volume consists of examples of realistic fiction, for which Russia is justly famous The short stories speak for themselves; at this late day, comment on them is superfluous I have, however, also included a number of "highlights" from the famous long novels—in order to illustrate aspects which have their unique expression in Russian fiction It was Arnold Bennett who, when asked to name the twelve examples of world fiction, chose about ten (if I remember aright) from among Russian novels I hope these brief extracts will serve to drive the reader to the complete works.

It is only because Andrey Bely's *Petersburg* (an immense work translated by me but not yet published) is not available in English that I have decided to omit a passage from this great novel; it is rather unfair to whet the reader's appetite without giving him the opportunity for its complete satisfaction And, for the same reason, I have omitted a great chapter from a novel by Mamin-Siberiak, whose title at this moment, when I am away from my library, escapes me. Heaven knows, the things I have left out by circumstances quite beyond my control would fill another book as big as this. They would be on my conscience, were it not for the fact that I feel the satisfaction of having done my best within the limits permitted me.

Above all, in the heterogeneous fragments of this collection, I have sought to present such examples of Russian life and thought and literary expression as would together compose an intelligible and progressive pattern of the Russian scene for a little over a century. It

has been, I may truthfully add, a labor of love. I have chosen for inclusion in a single volume much of what I should wish preserved of Russian literature on my own shelf—provided, of course, no other alternative were offered me.

JOHN COURNOS.

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RUSSIA'S MISSION

Ivan Turgenev

THE RUSSIAN TONGUE

In days of doubt, in days of sad brooding on my country's fate, thou alone art my rod and my staff—mighty, true, free Russian speech! But for thee, how not fall into despair, seeing all that happens at home? Yet who can think that such a tongue is not the gift of a great people!

Feodor Dostoevsky

The greatest literary event of 1880 was the publication of Brothers Karamazov, *considered by many the high mark of Dostoevsky's career. Not a few, however, held that the speech he delivered the same year at the dedication of the first statue erected to Pushkin surpassed it in importance Opinions differed then, even as they do now, as to its intrinsic worth But there is no doubt that it was the sensation of the hour and remains a landmark in Russian political and literary history. In praising Russia's great poet for his "pan-humanity," Dostoevsky characterized as his country's supreme gift the tendency to universality, the understanding of all peoples and cultures In this capacity Russia alone was qualified to unite the peoples of the world into a brotherhood of common comprehension. In Dostoevsky's opinion Pushkin was a universal as well as a national poet, in Aleko and Onegin he had created two essentially Russian "wanderer" types, and in Tatyana, equally, the symbol of the Russian ideal of duty and constancy In this speech he reconciled the Slavophile and the Westernizer—the radicals he had criticized in his books In Edward Hallett Carr's words, Dostoevsky's synthesis resolves the antipathy of the two camps· "By making herself most essentially Russian, Russia would be become most completely European."*

THE MISSION OF RUSSIA

Speech Delivered June 8, 1880, before the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature at Moscow.*

Pushkin is an extraordinary, perhaps unique, manifestation of the Russian spirit, said Gogol. I will add "and a prophetic manifestation." There is in his life, for all us Russians, something incontestably prophetic. Pushkin appeared simultaneously with our achievement of self-consciousness, just a century after Peter's reforms, and helped us mightily in our darkness with his guiding light. Thus Pushkin has been to us a prophecy and a revelation.

I separate the activity of our great poet into three periods. I do not speak as a literary critic. I stress Pushkin's creative activity only to clarify my conception of his prophetic significance to us, and the interpretation I give to the word prophetic. I must, however, make the comment that the periods of Pushkin's activity seem not to be differentiated with definiteness. The beginning of *Evgeny Onegin,* for example, belongs to my mind to the first period, while its end should be placed in the second period, when Pushkin had discovered his ideals in his country, had absorbed them in his heart and domiciled them in his affectionate and clear-seeing soul. It may be that in his first period Pushkin was influenced by European poets, Parny and André Chénier, and by Byron above all Doubtless these European poets greatly influenced his developing genius, and maintained that influence throughout his life Not even Pushkin's very earliest poems, however, were mere imitations, and even in these the extraordinary originality of his genius expressed itself Such personal suffering and such deep self-consciousness as Pushkin's are never found in an imitation; certainly not, for instance, in "The Gypsies," a poem to be ascribed entirely to his first period; nor would his work have shown such force and impetuosity had it been merely imitative The character of Aleko, hero of "The Gypsies," displays a strong, deep, and wholly Russian concept, to appear later in harmonious perfection in Onegin, where nearly the same Aleko appears, not fantastically, but as definite, real, and understandable. Pushkin had already realized

* In preparing this free rendering of Dostoevsky's magnificent speech, the writer has thankfully availed himself of the assistance and inspiration afforded by numerous earlier translators In especial, he is glad to admit his frequent obligation to the translations of Frances Henry Pritchard (*Great Essays of All Nations*) and the joint labors of Messrs S Koteliansky and John Middleton Murry (*Pages from the Journal of an Artist*) — Editor, *Pushkin The Man and Artist* (The Paisley Press, 1937).

with genius in Aleko the unhappy wanderer in the land of his nativity, the Russian sufferer of all time, whose reincarnation, uprooted from the people's ranks, was a historic necessity. The character is true and admirably realized; it is an eternal character, long since native to Russia. These wanderers are wandering still, and it will be long before they disappear. In our day they no longer visit gypsy camps, seeking to discover their universal ideals and their consolation in that wild life, far from the confused and pointless activity of Russian intellectuals; now, with a new faith, they adopt socialism which did not exist in Aleko's day, and labor eagerly, thinking like Aleko that they may reach so their final goal, not for themselves alone, but for all men. Only so, in the happiness of all men, can the Russian wanderer find peace, in theory at least he will be content with nothing less. It is the same essential man, appearing at a different time. This man was born at the beginning of the second century after Czar Peter's reforms, cast up from the people into a society of intellect The greatest number of intellectual Russians in the time of Pushkin served then, even as now, as civil servants in government positions, in railways, banks, or other ways, or even engaged in science or lecturing—earning money in a regular peaceful, leisured fashion, even playing cards, without desire for escape, whether to the gypsies or other refuge of more modern days. They only played at liberalism, "with a tinge of European socialism," which in Russia assumes a certain benignity—but that is after all only a matter of time One man is not even yet annoyed while another, encountering a bolted door, furiously beats his head against it All men meet destiny in their turn, unless they choose the saving road of humble identification with the people. Even though some escape, this must remain truth for the majority.

Aleko still fails wholly to express his sorrow—he fails to achieve the concrete; he yearns for nature, cherishes a grudge against the higher classes, feels aspirations for all mankind; yearns too for the truth, somehow and somewhere lost, which he can nowhere find. He cannot tell wherein this truth resides, when this truth was lost, nor where it can be found, suffering nonetheless Meanwhile a restless and fantastic creature searches for salvation in external things, as needs he must. Truth continues external to him, perhaps in some European country, with its more stable organization and settled mode of life. Nor can he understand that truth is after all within him How could he understand this? For a century he has not been himself in his own country He has no culture of his own He has forgotten how to work. He has grown up within closed walls, as in a convent. He has had to fulfill unaccountable obligations, associated with one or another of the fourteen classes in educated Russian society. He is for the moment but a blade of grass torn from its roots and blown upon the

wind. He feels it, suffers for it, suffers acutely! What if for once he allowed himself the liberty of a nobleman, his privilege from birth, the pleasing whim of joining men who live "without laws," and leading a performing bear among the gypsies? A woman, "a wild woman," might bring him hope of deliverance from anguish; therefore he throws himself with fatalistic, passionate credulity into the arms of Zemphira "Here is escape, here is happiness, here in the bosom of nature far from the crowd, here among men without law or civilization" What follows? He cannot bear the wild life of nature, and his hands are blood-stained The poor dreamer, unequal to the "harmony of the spheres," is no more equal to the conditions of gypsydom; they cast him forth without malice, without desire for revenge, in simple dignity

> Depart, proud soul,
> We are lawless and wild,
> We torment you not nor punish.

Fantastic or not, the proud soul is genuine enough, his profile clearly limned. Let us remember that Pushkin was the first to immortalize this type The man is ready to torture and punish others for his wrongs whene'er he is displeased, for he can never forget his membership in the fourteen classes, and will himself appeal to law—it has happened often—to revenge his private wrong with its punishment and torture. No, this is genius in verse—no imitation! Here indeed we have the answer to the Russian question, "the accursed question," in terms of the faith and the equity of the people "Humble yourself, proud soul, humble your pride Humble yourself in your idleness, and labor on your native land"—that is the answer of the people, in justice and in wisdom "Truth is within thee, not without. Find thyself in thyself. Humble thyself to thyself. Be master of thine own soul, and see the truth Not without, nor abroad is this truth; not in things, but in thee and in thine own labor upon thyself. If thou conquerest thyself, then wilt thou be free beyond dreams, and make others free; thou wilt labor upon a great task, and will find in it happiness and fulfillment, and, at long last, understanding of thine own people and their holy truth If thou art thyself unworthy, proud, and given to malice, if thou demandest life as a gift, without payment, neither with the gypsies nor in any other place whatsoever shalt thou discover the 'harmony of the spheres.'" This answer is clearly seen in Pushkin's poem It is seen yet more clearly in *Evgeny Onegin,* a realistic and tangible tale, in no sense a fantasy, in which the life of Russia is recreated with a force and a truth beyond any predecessor and perhaps equally beyond any successor to Pushkin.

Onegin is of Petersburg—inevitably of Petersburg· It is imperative for the poem that its hero so derives, nor could Pushkin avoid it.

Onegin is, I repeat, the same Aleko, most especially where he cries out in anguish:

> "Why am I not, like the assessor of Tula,
> Stricken with palsy?"

Only at the poem's beginning is he still a man of the world and half a coxcomb; as yet he has not lived long enough for complete disillusion, but he already knows

> The Satanic king of secret weariness ...

In the remote heart of his fatherland, he is yet in exile. Conscious of his aim, he yet knows not where to turn. Later, he still feels himself in the midst of strangers, even more a stranger to himself, despite his brains and his sincerity, wherever he may roam, at home or abroad He loves his country, but cannot trust it. He knows its ideals, but he has no faith in them. He cannot see the possibility of any work in his own country, and he can feel only sorrow and derision for those few who can believe in it Lensky he had killed out of spleen born of yearning for the unattainable—that was very Russian, altogether probable.

Tatyana is quite another person—strong of character, strongly bestriding her own ground Deeper than Onegin, and wiser, she divines truth with a noble instinct, and her mind finds full expression in the poem's end Perhaps that poem might better have been called Tatyana, not Onegin—she is so undeniably the protagonist Positive, not negative, the beautiful apothesis of Russian womanhood, the poet's conception of her and of his poem is expressed in the superb scene of her final meeting with Onegin So beautiful, so finished a type of Russian womanhood does not appear in all our literature, except perhaps for Liza in Turgenev's "A Nest of Gentle Folk" Onegin never understood Tatyana, since he looked down on her from above—not even when he met her first, a pure, shy, innocent girl in a remote place. He could not realize her complete perfection—perhaps he even took her for a "moral embryo" She, the embryo! She, after her letter to Onegin! It is Onegin who is the embryo, if there be one, Onegin beyond all doubt. And he could not understand her. Does he know the soul? All his life he has been a restless dreamer, living in abstractions. No more can he understand her later as a grand lady in Petersburg, despite the words of his letter to her, "he and his soul understood all her perfections" These are but words. Unrecognized by him and unappreciated, she crossed his stage—therein lay the tragedy of their love Only if Childe Harold or, by some miracle, Lord Byron himself, had pointed out to him at their first meeting her timid modest beauty, would Onegin have been struck with admiration—so much spiritual servility resides in these universal sufferers. Without

this he could only have read her a sermon, after which the seeker for universal harmony, having done very honestly by her, departs with his anguish and with the blood of his friend, spilled in senseless anger, on his hands, to wander, forgetful of Tatyana far afield; and, full to the brim of health and strength, exclaims with a curse:

"Young am I yet, and life is strong within me
Yet anguish, anguish, anguish, still awaits me."

Tatyana understood. In the deathless verse of this romantic tale, she is shown coming to behold the house of the lover who is still to her so marvelous, and yet so ill to understand. The depth and beauty, the supreme art of the verse, needs not to be spoken of here. She is in his study; she sees his books and his possessions; she seeks still, through them, to pierce his soul, to answer her everlasting question, and "the moral embryo" gently whispers after a thoughtful pause, with a foreboding that it is at last her answer:

"Perhaps he is only a parody?"

Yes, it was this that she whispered—she had understood him. When again, long afterwards in St. Petersburg, they meet once more, she knows him completely. Who was it that said that life at court and in society, that her new position as a lady of fashion, had so changed her soul, that the new ideas so engendered were partly the reason for her refusal of Onegin? It is not true She is the same Tanya, the same country Tanya as before! She is not spoiled; no, she is tortured by the magnificent life of St Petersburg, she is tormented by it, and she suffers, she hates her position in society, and no one who understands what Pushkin was trying to say, could think otherwise. With firmness, she tells Onegin.

"Now am I to another given·
To him I will be faithful unto death."

This is indeed the sum total of her character, in the typical phrase of a Russian woman Her character symbolizes the truth of the verses. I shall not touch upon her religious convictions, her feeling about the sacrament of marriage. After she herself had said to him "I love you," did she nevertheless refuse to follow him? Was it because "as a Russian woman" she was incapable of so bold a step, or lacked force to sacrifice the allure of honor, riches, social position, the convention of virtue? No, she was brave like all Russian women; she would boldly do what she believed, and her actions prove it Rather she "is to another given"; to him she will be faithful unto death. To what, to whom, will she be true? To what code be faithful? Is her obligation to that elderly general whom she could not possibly love, whom she had married because "with tears and abjurations her mother did

beseech her," and in her wounded and betrayed soul was there only despair, without hope or a ray of light? She is indeed true to the general, her husband, in the character of an honest man who loves and respects her, and has pride in her Her mother "did beseech her" indeed, but it was she alone who consented with an oath to be his faithful wife. Though she had married him in despair, he is her husband, and the shame and disgrace of any perfidy on her part would be his death. Can any happiness be truly built on the unhappiness of another? Happiness lies rather in the higher harmony of the spirit than in the delights of love How could that spirit be content after an inhuman, merciless, dishonorable act? Dare one run away for happiness alone? What kind of happiness would that be? Conceive that you will build a monument to destiny with the end of giving all men happiness, rest, and peace. Conceive again that it is necessary and inevitable thereby to torture one single being, not great and even perhaps ridiculous, no Shakespeare but simply the honest old husband of a young wife whom he trusts implicitly, and whom, knowing her heart not at all, he yet respects, is proud and happy and at peace in her company. He has to be dishonored, disgraced, and tortured, that upon his suffering your palace may be built. Would you be satisfied to be the architect of that palace on such conditions? That is the ultimate question. If that palace were built upon suffering, though but the suffering of an insignificant person, cruelly and unjustly put to death, could you for an instant believe that the inhabitants of the building would thank you for happiness on such terms? Could the great heart of Tatyana, so ennobled by suffering, have answered otherwise? No, the soul of the pure Russian woman replies: "I will not be happy through having ruined an old man; though he know not nor appreciate my sacrifice, let me alone be deprived of happiness, rather than that he suffer." So the tragedy transpires—Tatyana sends Onegin away. One may say she has saved one at the expense of another—Onegin, too, is unhappy. That involves the most important question, perhaps, in the whole poem. That question, why did not Tatyana run away with Onegin, has, in our literature, a most characteristic importance, wherefore I allow myself to consider it at length The most important fact is that the answer to that question should so long have been doubtful. To my mind, even had Tatyana been released by her husband's death, even then she would not have gone away with Onegin. It was in her character to realize Onegin as he was He, the eternal wanderer, had discerned in a new and more precious setting the jewel he had scorned. That setting was perhaps the essence. the present jewel, socially adored, is the same he had despised, but now sanctioned by the halo of society, the final authority for him of all his aspirations. Therefore, dazzled, he is at her feet. Here at last, he cries, is my ideal, my future, my escape from everlasting agony. Formerly,

when "happiness was so possible, so near," I failed to see her truly. Thus Onegin turns now to Tatyana, as Aleko turned to Zemphira, hoping to find in this new fancy the answer to his destiny. Does Tatyana realize this, has she not realized it long since? Beyond a doubt she realizes that it is not her he loves, but her new incarnation She sees that he loves no one, is incapable of loving anyone, despite his suffering; that it is not she whom he loves, but her position. It is a fancy, as he himself is but a fancy, that he loves. Were she to go away with him, tomorrow he would be disillusioned and mock at his own infatuation. He is but a blade of grass, without roots, blown upon the wind. Even in her despair in the wounded contemplation of a ruined life, she is herself, solid, unshakable. Even in her childhood was she thus, even in her memories of her remote natal village, that village in which her pure and simple life began it is

The woven shade of branches that o'erhang her nurse's grave.

Priceless to her now are these memories and pictures of the past—nought else is left to save her from despair. That is her single foundation, permanent and unshakable. Therein is her contact with her birthplace, her family, the ideals of her youth. And what by contrast has he to offer? Nothing save that she may follow him out of her pity, and use him, gratify him with an illusive happiness out of her pitying love, with foreknowledge that tomorrow he himself will deride his illusive happiness No, her deep true soul could never sanction dishonor, even in the infinity of compassion. No, Tatyana could never go away with Onegin.

Thus in this incomparable, this immortal poem, did Pushkin reveal himself as an unexcelled, supreme, and truly national writer. With exactness and insight, he etched, in this tour de force, the very inmost essence of Russian society. Imperishably he delineated the Russian wanderer of all time; with the flair of genius, he realized the type, and its tremendous significance in the national destiny. Alongside that type, he posed the rare beauty of Russian womanhood. As in his other works, he set down a very gallery of exquisite types drawn from the Russian people. The exquisiteness is in their truth, their positive and undeniable truth. You cannot deny them, they stand as though in stone I feel no duty upon me to clarify my thought by a detailed and critical dissertation on these works of Pushkin's genius. As well might one write an entire book in the spirit of the old monkish chroniclers, to establish the meaning of one of the noble figures unearthed by Pushkin, and established for all time in exquisite beauty, as evidence of that most potent spirit of Russia which can project types of just such indubitable beauty. Such a type is herein set forth, exists for all time beyond cavil, in reality not in fancy. In that existence lives and flourishes the spirit of his nation, vast, potent, and

eternal. All the writing of Pushkin affirms the spiritual force of Russia and the Russian character; that character expressed in the eternal lines:

In the hope of glory and good
I look ahead without fear.

No Russian writer was ever so intimately at one with the Russian people as Pushkin. Those multitudinous writers who have taken the people as their theme, compared with Pushkin, are, with one or at most two exceptions, only "gentlemen" writing about the masses. Even in the two gifted exceptions * I have just mentioned, there is apt to appear on occasion a flash of haughtiness, which seems like an effort to bring happiness to the people by raising them to the writer's level But in Pushkin there resides an emotionalism almost naive, which makes him seem the ally and equal of the people Remember his story of "The Bear" and the killing of the bear's mate by a peasant; or recall the line, "Kinsman John, when we begin to drink. ." and you will comprehend my meaning

All these gems of art and insight remain as a landmark for Pushkin's successors, for the writers of later days. It is not too much to say that without Pushkin the gifted authors who succeeded him would never have transpired At best, despite all their gifts of expression, they would have lacked the power and clarity from him derived Without him we should have lost, not literature alone, but much of our irresistible force, our faith in our national individuality, our belief in the people's powers, and most of all our belief in our destiny All this is most especially true of the great achievement of what I have called the third period of Pushkin's activity

As I have said, there are no positive divisions between the periods Pushkin was always a complete whole, homogeneous, individual—so that some of the works of even his last period are almost indistinguishable from those of his first. Impulses from without called forth in him only the response of what was already within him His development, in all its phases, could be recognized best by its indigenous peculiarities and the normal development of each period out of its predecessor. Thus his third period reflects chiefly universal ideas, in which the genius of other nations is re-embodied and reflected Some of the works of this period appeared only after the poet's death. And in this period Pushkin revealed a miracle, a capacity for universal sympathy unequaled even by the colossi of Europe—Schiller, Cervantes, Shakespeare. By this capacity, pre-eminently Russian, he marks himself our true national poet No poet of Europe could, equally with Pushkin, embody in himself the genius and the hidden spirit of neighboring peoples European poets, on the contrary, were at one

* Turgenev and Tolstoy

with their own people and with no one else. Even in the case of Shakespeare, his Italians remain almost always Englishmen. The characters of Pushkin alone possess the individuality of their nations. Read again his "Don Juan," his "Miser Knight," his ballad "Once There Lived a Poor Knight," his scenes from *Faust*. Without Pushkin's signature you might have supposed them written by a Spaniard. How deep and strange is his fantasy in the poem "A Feast in Time of Plague" But in this fantasy you discover the genius of England; as in the hero's marvelous song of the plague, and in Mary's song:

"Our children's voices in the noisy school
Were heard. . . ."

These songs are English; they express the longing of British genius, its tears, its unhappy forecast of its future. Recall the symbolical line:

"Once I wandered through the valley wild"

These verses, with their sad, ecstatic music are the key to the first pages of a mystical book, written in prose by an old Englishman and sectarian. These lines aren't solely a key, for they embody the very soul of Northern Protestantism, of British doctrinal controversy, and the slow-witted, dour mystic, with his spiritual dreams and their impulsive power, and his determined but unbounded aspirations. You hear in the sound of these verses the very spirit of the times, of the Reformation. They bring home the hostile fury of early Protestantism, and you understand why Thought was swept by the times, walked through their sectarian camps, sang their Psalms, wept with them in their religious ecstasies, and joined in their belief. Compare this religious mysticism with the religious verses from the Koran or *Imitations from the Koran,* and do we not find a similarity to Mohammedanism in the very spirit of its naive grandeur of faith and its appalling power? We find also the ancient world; the Egyptian Nights, where the gods of earth sit, who ruled over their people like gods, despising their aspirations and their genius These gods, in isolation, exerted their power, until they were overcome by madness from their utter weariness of isolation and strove to drive it off by diverting themselves with inordinate brutalities, the sensual fascination of creeping things, of a female spider devouring its male Emphatically I say, there never has been a poet like Pushkin, with his universal sympathy, his extraordinary profundity, and the miraculous reincarnation of his spirit in the spirit of other nations—miraculous, because the gift has never been repeated in any other poet in the world. This universality is only in Pushkin; therefore, I repeat, he is a phenomenon, a prophetic phenomenon, because he expressed in his poetry the national spirit—the national spirit in its future development, and the national spirit of our future, which, already, has come

to pass. For there is no power in the spirit of Russian nationality, if not to aspire to universality, and an all-embracing humanitarianism. No sooner had Pushkin become a really national poet than he discovered the national power, and in anticipating the great future of that power, he was a true prophet, a real diviner.

Let us look at the vast reform of Peter the Great, not only for its effect on the future, but on that which has already been plainly shown to us. What did this great reform mean to us? Surely not just the adoption of European inventions, science, and ways of life. Let us examine it closely. It may be probable that Peter began his reform in this restricted, everyday sense, but with time his idea grew, and, with it, his inner instinct was drawing him and his task to future purposes, with grander and broader perceptions. Thus the Russian people did not confine their acceptance of the reform to its first and narrower conception; but, with an instinctive presentiment, they felt forewarned of a distant but incomparably higher goal than that of everyday habit and custom Although unconscious, the purpose was implicit and vital. We then began surely and vigorously to turn to the unity of all mankind. Not in a hostile spirit, but in a spirit of friendliness and perfect love We absorbed in our very being the geniuses of foreign nations, without preference of race. In our eagerness to unite with the great Aryan family, we were quickly able by instinct to discern, to discount, distinctions, and to excuse and reconcile them Beyond all doubt, the destiny of a Russian is pan-European and universal To become a true Russian is to become the brother of all men, a universal man All our narrower nationalism, as our Slavophilism, though necessary to history, is only a great misunderstanding. For Europe and the destiny of all the powerful Aryan family is as close to the hearts of all true Russians as the future of Russia herself Our future lies in Universality, not won by violence, but by the strength derived from our great ideal—the reuniting of all mankind.

If you delve into our history since Peter's reforms, you will find this ideal, this dream of mine already beginning to make itself felt—both by the nature of our relations with Europe, and by the policies of state For Russian policy for the last two centuries has been one of service to Europe, perhaps exceeding any service she has given herself. I do not believe that this was a result of the incapacity of our statesmen, but rather that the nations of Europe know how to value them. And, given time, I feel sure that our future generations will all realize and understand that to be a true Russian, means the hope of achieving the reconciliation of the contradictions of Europe and putting an end to the hankering for Europe which lingers in our souls; and to take unto ourselves, in a spirit of brotherly love and harmony, all our brethren, and unite in a spirit of International peace and communion, in accordance with the law of the gospel of Christ.

My goal may seem too ecstatic, too incredible and too elusive, but let it appear so. I have no apologies to make The goal must be reiterated time and again, especially now, the moment we have chosen to honor Pushkin, whose genius and artistic powers were the embodiment of this ideal. The idea is not new; it has been given expression many times in the past. My fear is that lack of originality may appear presumptuous. "Is this our destiny, the destiny of our poor land? Are we predestined among mankind to utter the new world?"

I speak only of the brotherhood of man, not of the triumphs of the sword, the achievements of science, or of economic grandeurs. For I am convinced that the heart of Russia, more than any other nation, is dedicated to this universal union of all mankind; I see this from our history, our great men, and the artistic spirit of Pushkin. Our land may not flourish, but this poor land "Christ traversed with blessing, in the garb of a serf" Should we, then, not content ourselves with His word? Was not He Himself born in a manger? I repeat, at least we have Pushkin, his philosophy, and genius of universality, and all-embracing humanitarianism to point to. He harbored in his soul, as his own, the genius of many lands, revealing in his creative efforts the universality of the aspiration of the Russian spirit. We may well take joy in this, as a promise for the future. If our goal appears a dream, Pushkin at least lends it reality If he had lived longer, he might, through the power of his genius, have been able to immortalize the spirit of the Russian soul, bringing it closer and making it more comprehensible to our European family; perhaps succeeding in attracting them to us, more than they are now, and enabling them to see the truth of our hopes and desires—even giving them a better insight into our natures, that they might learn to regard us with less suspicion and with better understanding Had Pushkin lived longer, or had we been able to fathom his great secret, we might find that among Russians, too, there would be less strife and less misunderstanding But God willed it otherwise, and Pushkin, at the height of his career, died—and his great secret was lost to posterity.

Dmitry Merezhkovsky

In this essay Merezhkovsky evaluates the conflicts which have, in some measure, made Russian literature of the Golden Age what it is, and in equal measure destroyed it The pagan and the Christian, he thinks, have made their battleground in Russian literature, in the result, art has suffered The situation is not without irony, for Merezhkovsky himself, when he wrote this essay, did not know that the day would come when his own paganism would dissolve into a mystical Christianity, which has been the end of so many Russians.

THE GIANTS OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE
(From the essay on Pushkin)

Gogol, the nearest of Pushkin's disciples, was the first to understand and express the meaning of Pushkin for Russia, as no one after him has been able to do. In his best creations, *The Inspector-General* and *Dead Souls*, Gogol carried out the plans with which his teacher had inspired him. It is difficult to find a case of closer adaptation in the history of any literature. Gogol drew directly from Pushkin, that deep and pure source of Russian harmony. Well? Did the disciple execute the injunction of the teacher? Gogol was the first who unconsciously and involuntarily betrayed Pushkin; he was the first who became a victim of the great disorganization which was later more and more to take possession of Russian poetry; he was the first to experience the attacks of the all-devouring sickly mysticism which was to undermine also the creative powers of others than himself.

It is a tragic fact in Russian literature that, in departing with every step more and more from Pushkin, in destroying the most precious creation of his spirit—the co-ordination and equipoise of two worlds—it at the same time has regarded itself as the true guardian of Pushkin's legacies. Great men have no more dangerous enemies than their nearest disciples, those who recline upon their breast; for no one can, loving and adoring, with such innocent cunning distort the real image of their teacher.

Turgenev and Goncharov made conscious attempts to overcome the incipient discord within them, the ill-omened dissonance of Lermontov and Gogol, to return to Pushkin's objective calm and equipoise. If not with their hearts, they understood with their minds the heroic deed of Peter the Great, remaining strangers to the Slavophile pride of Dostoevsky; and they consciously, like Pushkin, bowed before the

majesty of Western culture. Turgenev appears in a certain measure as the legal heir of Pushkin's harmony, on account both of the perfect clearness of the artistic architecture and of the gentle grace of language.

But all that resemblance, all that harmony, is superficial and deceptive. Neither Turgenev nor Goncharov succeeded in the attempt to conquer the approaching disorganization, to return to Pushkin. In Turgenev's exceedingly soft, feminine, and pliable language there is no longer Pushkin's manliness, his sturdy strength and simplicity In Turgenev's bewitching melody you continually hear a penetrating, plaintive tone like the sound of a cracked bell—a sign of deepening spiritual discord—the terror of life, the terror of death, which Leo Tolstoy will later carry to appalling limits.

Turgenev has created an endless gallery of what in his opinion are real Russian heroes—that is, heroes of weakness, cripples, unsuccessful men He has reached the highest degree of his accessible inspiration by pointing out the superiority of weakness over strength, of the little man over the great, of the humble over the proud, of Don Quixote's simple-minded insanity over Hamlet's evil wisdom. The only strong Russian in Turgenev is the nihilist, Bazarov Of course, the author of *Fathers and Sons* was enough of an objective artist to treat his hero without anger or bias, but he nevertheless was afraid of him and could not forgive him his strength. The poet seemed to say, as he pointed to Bazarov, without noticing that he was not at all a hero but just such an abortion, just such an unsuccessful man as the rest of his superfluous people, who created nothing and who was doomed to ruin: "You wanted to see a strong Russian—here is a strong man! See for yourselves what narrowness and limitation of will power, which is directed to destruction! What coarseness and awkwardness before the tender mystery of love! What insignificance before the majesty of death! That is what your heroes, your strong men, are like! Oh, do you not a hundred times prefer my weak, superfluous, little, gentle heroes of Russian wretchedness, indolence, and carelessness, my magnanimous unsuccessful men and Don Quixotes?"

If a foreigner were to believe Gogol, Turgenev, and Goncharov, the Russian nation must represent itself to him as unique in history, as denying the very essence of heroic will. If the depth of the Russian spirit were exhausted by *only* Christian meekness, *only* self-sacrifice, *only* the poetry of the pariahs, the humbled, and the offended—whence, then, comes that "Divine Storm," that blissful and terrifying grandeur, that superabundance of success, will, and merriment that are felt in Peter and in Pushkin? How could arise these two demoniac phenomena of infinite beauty and infinite love in the country of *Dead Souls* and *Living Relics* in the Siloam Pool of the maimed and the halt? Or are Peter and Pushkin not our own, not Russians?

Goncharov has gone even farther on this dangerous path. The critics

saw in *Oblomov* a satire, a moral. But Goncharov's novel is more venomous and more terrible than any satire. For the poet himself there is in that all-embracing artistic synthesis of Russian helplessness and Russian "do-nothingness" neither praise nor blame, but there is only a full justice, the representation of Russian reality in all its terror and in all its beauty. In his best moments Oblomov, a bookish dreamer who with the childlike serenity and azure chastity of his infinitely deep and simple heart is unfit for too coarse a human existence, is surrounded with the same aureole of quiet poetry as the *Living Relics* of Turgenev. Goncharov would, perhaps, have liked to be unjust to Oblomov, but he could not because he loved him, he no doubt intended to be just to Stolz, but he could not because he secretly hated him. The German hero—he did not try to represent a Russian hero, so unnatural did such a phenomenon seem to him—came out dead, cold and formless. Art reveals the secret feeling which the poet dares not express: is not the resignation from stern life, the primitive simplicity, the wise inactivity of the gentle hero of Russian indolence a thousand times more noble than the prosaic bustle of the hero of German precision? From Mahomet, Napoleon, Byron, the Bronze Rider, to a puny, hoarding, bourgeois German, and to a gawky seminarist, a provincial tempting demon, Mark Volokhov—what a sad metamorphosis, what a fall of the Pushkin demigod!

But that is not yet the lowest step. Gogol, Turgenev, and Goncharov appear as writers full of objective equipoise, health, and harmony in comparison with Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy. The emaciated and half-dead Russian heroes, the Russian strong men, Bazarov and Mark Volokhov, come once more to life in the person of Raskolnikov, Ivan Karamazov, in the monstrous visions of the *Devils,* in order to undergo the last degrading punishment, the most refined, hellish torture—in the terrible hands of that demon of wretchedness and torment, the great inquisitor Dostoevsky.

How much stronger and more truthful he was than Turgenev and Goncharov! Dostoevsky did not hide his dissonance, his discord, did not deceive himself nor the reader, did not make vain attempts to re-establish the disturbed equilibrium, the harmony of Pushkin's form. And yet he valued and understood this harmony with more penetration than Turgenev and Goncharov—he loved Pushkin, as the most inaccessible, the most opposite to his nature, just as the mortally ill man values health—he loved him, but no longer strove after that harmony.

The author of *Brothers Karamazov* has maimed and violated the artistic form of the epos, has with unheard-of audacity transformed it into a terrible instrument of psychological torture. It is hard to believe that the language that still possesses such vernal freshness and chaste serenity in Pushkin has been so transformed as to serve for the rep-

resentation of the horrible nightmares and gloomy, fiery visions of Dostoevsky.

Dostoevsky was more consistent than Turgenev and Goncharov in yet another respect: he did not hide his immeasurable Slavophile pride; he did not ogle the civilization of the West. Hellenic beauty was to him Sodom, and Roman force the kingdom of the Antichrist. What could meek, youthful, God-harboring Russia learn from the haughty, decrepit, godless West? The Russian nation is not to strive after the ideal of the West, that is, after universal paganism; but the West is to strive after the ideal of the Russian nation, that is, after universal Christianity.

Nevertheless, as an artist he is nearer to Pushkin than Turgenev and Goncharov. He is the only one of the Russian authors who consciously reproduces the struggle of two worlds. It is even possible that his dualism is deeper than Pushkin's. Yet it is withal, to its very depths, a discord, a struggle, a torment. Dostoevsky's great soul is like a battlefield, agitated, bloody, full of gnashing teeth and sobbing of the wounded, a field on which two irreconcilable foes have met. Who will be the victor? No one, never. It is a hopeless, unending struggle. On whose side is the poet? We only know on whose side he wants to be. But in those very moments when you most trust his Christian humility, his wretchedness, and his chastity, there suddenly happens something unusual and evil somewhere in the dark, dangerous corner of the author's psychological labyrinth where he slowly, like a spider, entices and entangles the inexperienced reader, so that you look and hardly know whether it is he or not, and whether it really is, or you only imagine it to be, a terrible werewolf, a double, or a wolf in a sheepskin. And the great inquisitor whispers with scarcely audible, insane laughter which sends a chill through your body, and through the meekness of the martyr flickers the unlimited conceit of the devil, through the wretchedness and chastity of the pious sufferer the lustful cruelty of the devil.

To such monstrous insanity, to such epileptic fits of demonism, has been changed the beneficent dualism of Pushkin, the harmony of two worlds, the divine music of the spheres that unite their voices to glorify the One. Such is the vengeance of the vilified pagan gods.

It would seem the limit was reached, and that one could go no farther. But Leo Tolstoy has proved that one may go farther on the same road—into the abyss, into self-torment, into the terror of dualism, into the Titanic disorganization.

Dostoevsky to his last breath suffered, thought, struggled, and died, without finding what he sought most in life—spiritual peace. Leo Tolstoy no longer seeks or struggles, or, at least, he wishes to assure himself and others that he has nothing to struggle for, nothing to seek.

This calm, this silence and petrifaction of a whole subdued world which once was free and beautiful, but from the present standpoint of its creator is to its very depths pagan and criminal, a world which majestically evolved itself before us in *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*—that tranquillity of *The Kingdom of God* produces a more disquieting, a more oppressive impression than the sanguinary struggle, contrition, sobs, and eternal agony of Dostoevsky. Of course, Leo Tolstoy did not suddenly, and not without painful efforts, reach the final tranquillity, the final victory over the pagan world But even in *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* we are present at a very strange phenomenon: two elements there meet, without running together, like two streams of one river. Where paganism is, all is life and passion, luxury and ardor of physical sensations. Outside of good and evil—as if good and evil had never existed—the poet expresses with infinite truthfulness, with a childish and divine inability of being ashamed, of hiding the nakedness of his heart, a thirsty, unquenchable love for everything mortal and transitory—a love for this great billowing ocean of matter, for everything which from the Christian point of view ought to appear as vain and sinful—for powerful physical health, for country, glory, woman, and children.

Here is the whole gamut of physical pleasures, and they are told with fearless openness, such as has never been in any other literature: the sensation of muscular strength, the charm of field labor in the fresh air, the gentleness of a child's sleep, the intoxication with the first games, with the mirth of youthful banquets, with the tranquil manliness in sanguinary battles, with the speechlessness of eternal Nature, with the bracing cold of Russian snows, with the aromatic warmth of the deep summer grass.

Here is the whole gamut of pain, told with the same inexorable candor, which sometimes rises to cynical coarseness and shamelessness —all the terrors of pain, beginning with the inhuman cries of a beloved woman dying in the agony of childbirth, up to the terrible, crushing sound when the spine of the horse racing in the hippodrome is broken. What a terror, what an intoxication of unlimited sensuality!

How could he himself, how could others, believe in the icy, reflective Christianity, and how did they not recognize in him a great, hidden pagan? This paganism is proclaimed in all the best productions of Tolstoy by all the voices of the human flesh, which is fresh and joyous in the baby in the mother's embrace, covered with the sweat of the agony and half rotten on the terrible bed of Ivan Ilyitch, blooming and lusty in Anna Karenina, and racked and bloody under the knives of the surgeons on the operating tables of the military hospitals. Flesh everywhere, the pagan soul of flesh, the one of the two struggling souls of which Goethe sings:

Die eine halt in derber Liebeslust
Sich an die Welt mit klammernden Organen.

But in these very productions there come also to the surface insipid and offensive parts that are connected by no inner tie with the artistic woof of the production, as if written by a different man. Such are the murderous sophistry of Pierre Bezukhov and the childishly clumsy and unnatural Christian regenerations of Konstantin Levin. In these dead pages the mighty carnal life, which had just been welling up in a stream, suddenly becomes stark and frozen. The very language which had reached Pushkin's in simplicity and clearness, the greatest in Russian literature, abruptly changes: as though a gloomy ascetic took vengeance upon him for his recent candor, his un-Christian luxury and audacity, with which but a moment ago had been described the torments and pleasures of sinful flesh The ascetic unsparingly violates the language, breaks, maims, stretches out, and forces into the Procrustean bed towering, intricate syllogisms "Two souls" that were united in Pushkin, that struggled in Gogol, Goncharov, Turgenev, and Dostoevsky, forever abandon each other in Tolstoy, so that the one does not see, nor hear, nor answer the other.

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Leo Tolstoy is the antipode, the complete opposite and negation of Pushkin in Russian literature. And, as often happens, opposites deceive the superficial observers by their external resemblances. Both in Pushkin and in our Leo Tolstoy there is oneness, equilibrium, peace. But Pushkin's oneness is based on the harmonious union of two worlds; the oneness of Tolstoy is based on the complete disunion, disruption and violence committed against one of the two equally great, equally divine elements. Pushkin's calm and tranquillity witness to a fullness of life; Leo Tolstoy's calm and tranquillity witness to a petrified immobility, to a deadening of the whole world. In Pushkin the thinker and artist are welded into one being; in Leo Tolstoy the thinker despises the artist, and the artist does not care for the thinker. Pushkin's chastity presupposes passion subject to the feeling of divine moderation; Leo Tolstoy's chastity flows from a desperate ascetic negation of love for a woman. Pushkin's hope, like Peter the Great's, was Russia's participation in the universal life of the spirit, in universal civilization; but for that participation neither Pushkin nor Peter denied the native element, the peculiarities of the Russian spirit. Leo Tolstoy, an anarchist without violence, preaches the amalgamation of the warring nations into a universal brotherhood; but for that brotherhood he renounces love of country—that jealous tenderness that filled the hearts of Pushkin and Peter; and with unsparing haughtiness despises those peculiar, for him too-impassioned, pagan features of the separate nations, which he would like to weld like the living

colors of the rainbow into one white, dead color—into a cosmopolitan abstraction.

It is significant that the greatest of Tolstoy's productions discrowns that last incarnation of the heroic spirit in history, which for good reasons had an irresistible charm for all those who in the democracy of the nineteenth century had preserved a spark of the Promethean fire—Byron, Goethe, Pushkin, and Lermontov and Heine. Napoleon, the Delphic god of strength, anger, and glory, "that wondrous man, the messenger of Providence, the fateful executor of the nameless order, that vanished king, vanished like a dream, like the shadow of the dawn," is transformed in Tolstoy not even into the nihilist, Raskolnikov, not even into one of the monstrous devils of Dostoevsky, who are still surrounded with the aureole of terror, but into a puny, low-born parvenu, a self-satisfied and prosaic bourgeois, perfumed with eau-de-cologne, with fat calves, a pusillanimous and coarse-souled French shopkeeper, into a comic-general Bonaparte of the Moscow chap-books. That is where the last step into the abyss has been reached, when it is not possible to go any farther, for here the spirit of the mob, the spirit of triumphant vulgarity, blasphemes the Divine Spirit, the sanctity of fate, the beneficent and awful appearance of the hero The most insinuating and modern of all the devils, the devil of equality, the devil of the small and numberless, whose name is *Legion*, has possessed the last great artist, the blind Titan, in order to proclaim with his thunderous voice to the whole world "Behold, here is your hero, your god—*he is as small as we as vulgar as we!*"

[Translation from Leo Wiener's *Anthology of Russian Literature*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902]

Nikolay Gogol

"RUSSIA, WHITHER FLYEST THOU?"
(Selection from *Dead Souls*)

And so here we have the full-length portrait of our hero, just as he was! But perhaps the reader will insist on a definite answer in regard to one particular: What sort of man was he as regards moral qualities?

That he was not a hero filled with virtues and perfections is evident What was he then? He must have been a scoundrel, I suppose. Why a scoundrel? Why be so severe to others? There are no scoundrels among us nowadays. there are well-intentioned, agreeable people, but you will scarcely find above two or three men who would risk the public ignominy of a slap in the face, and even those talk about virtue nowadays. It would be more just to call him a good manager, a man bent on making money. Making money is the universal vice: things have been done which the world describes as not very honest for the sake of it. It is true that there is something repellent in such a character, and the very readers who on their way through life would make friends with such a man, would entertain him in their house and spend their time agreeably with him, will look at him askance if he is made the hero of a drama or a poem But wise is he who does not disdain any character but, probing it with searching eye, investigates its primary elements Everything is rapidly transformed in a man, before you have time to look round, a terrible worm has grown up within him and is sucking all his vital sap. And more than once some passion—not merely a great passion, but some insignificant little propensity for something petty—has sprung up in a man born for better things, has made him forget great and sacred duties and see something great and holy in insignificant baubles Innumerable as the sands of the sea are the passions of man and all are different, and all, base and noble alike, are first under a man's control, and afterwards cruel tyrants dominating him Blessed is the man who has chosen from among them a noble passion. it grows and with every hour and minute increases his immense happiness, and he enters further and further into the infinite paradise of his soul. But there are passions, the choice of which lies not in a man's hands. They are born with him at the moment of his birth into the world, and he has not been given the strength to turn away from them. They work upon some higher plan, and there is in them something that forever calls to one and is never silent all one's life. They are destined to complete the grand pageant of the earth, whether they appear in gloomy, sinister form or as a bright apparition that rejoices the world—they are equally called up for some good unknown to man And maybe in this very Tchitchikov, the passion that led him on was not due to him, and in his cold existence there lies hidden what will one day reduce a man to ashes and to his knees before the wisdom of the heavens. And it is another mystery why this type has appeared in the poem that is now seeing the light.

But what weighs upon me is not that my readers will be displeased with my hero. What weighs upon me is the conviction which nothing can shake in my soul, that my readers would have been delighted with the same hero, this same Tchitchikov, if the author had not looked

too deeply into his soul, had not stirred up in its depths what slips away and hides from the light, had not displayed the most secret thoughts which a man does not trust to any other, but had shown him such as he appeared to all the town, to Manilov and others; then everyone would have been delighted with him, and would have welcomed him as an interesting man. It would not have mattered that neither his face nor his whole figure would have moved as though living before their eyes; on the other hand, when they had finished the book, their souls would have been untroubled and they could go back to the card table, which is the solace of all Russia. Yes, my gentle readers, you would rather not see the poverty of human nature exposed. "What for?" you say; "what is the use of it? Do you suppose we don't know that there is a great deal that is stupid and contemptible in life? We often have to see what is by no means cheering, apart from you. You had better show us what is noble and attractive. Better let us forget."

"Why do you tell me that my estate is in a bad way, my lad?" says the landowner to his steward. "I know that, my dear fellow, without your telling me; have you nothing better than that to say? Let me forget it; let me not know it, then I shall be happy." And so the money which might to some extent have saved the situation is wasted on all sorts of ways of inducing forgetfulness. The mind from which, perhaps, great resources might have sprung sleeps; and the estate is knocked down at auction and the owner is cast adrift to forget his troubles, with his soul ready in his extremity for base deeds at which he would once have been horrified

The author will incur censure also from the so-called patriots who as a rule sit quietly at home and busy themselves about quite other matters, making money, making their fortunes at the expense of others; but as soon as anything happens which they regard as insulting to their country, if a book appears in which some bitter truth is told, they run out of every corner like spiders when they see a fly caught in their web, and immediately raise outcries· "Is it right to bring such a thing to light, to proclaim it aloud? Why, all the things that are described here are our private affairs—is it right? What will foreigners say? Is it pleasant to hear a low opinion of oneself? Do they imagine that it isn't painful? Do they imagine that we are not patriots?" I must confess that I cannot find a fitting answer to these sage observations, especially the one concerning the opinion of foreigners Unless perhaps this Two citizens lived in a remote corner of Russia. One, whose name was Kifa Mokievitch, was the father of a family, and a man of mild disposition, who passed his life in a dressing-gown and slippers; he did not trouble his head about his family; his time was devoted rather to speculative inquiries and engrossed with the following philosophical—as he called it—questions: "Now for instance the animal is born naked," he would say as he walked up and down

the room. "Why is it that he is naked? Why isn't he born like a bird: why isn't he hatched out of an egg? It really is...er....The more you look into nature, the harder it is to understand!..." Such were the mediations of the worthy citizen Kifa Mokievitch. But that is not what matters. The other citizen was Moky Kifovitch, his son. He was what is called in Russia a *bogatyr*, and while his father was absorbed in the question of the problem of the birth of animals, this muscular young man of twenty craved for self-expression. He could not do anything by halves: somebody's arm was always broken or somebody else had a bump on his nose. Everyone in the house or the neighborhood—from the serf girl to the yard dog—fled at the sight of him: he even smashed his own bedstead into fragments. Such was Moky Kifovitch, but yet he had a kind heart. But that is not the point either. The point really is this: "Mercy on us, kind sir, Kifa Mokievitch," said all the servants of his own and the neighboring households to his father, "your Moky Kifovitch is too much for us Nobody has any peace for him, he is such a pestering fellow!" "Yes, he is mischievous, he is mischievous," his father usually replied: "but there, what's to be done? It's too late to knock him about; besides, everyone would blame me for cruelty, and he is sensitive; reproach him before two or three other people, he'll be meek, but then the publicity! That is what is so dreadful! All the town would be calling him a cur. Do you really imagine that would not be painful—am I not his father? Because I am absorbed in philosophy and have not time to attend to my family, do you suppose I am not a father? No, indeed, I am his father! his father, hang it all, his father. Moky Kifovitch is very near and dear to me!" At this point Kifa Mokievitch smote himself on the chest with his fist and became greatly excited. "If he is to remain a cur, don't let people learn it from me, don't let me give him away!" And having thus displayed his paternal sentiments, he left Moky Kifovitch to persevere in his heroic exploits and returned again to his favorite subject, asking himself some such question as: "Well, if an elephant were hatched out of an egg, I expect the shell would be pretty thick, you wouldn't break it with a cannon ball, they would have to invent some new explosive." So thus they went on living, these two citizens who have so unexpectedly peeped out of their quiet retirement as out of a window into the end of our poem, in order to furnish a modest answer to the censures of some ardent patriots who have hitherto been quietly engaged in philosophical pursuits or in increasing their fortunes at the expense of the finances of the country they love so dearly, not caring about avoiding wrong-doing, but very anxious that people should not talk of their wrong-doings. But, no, not patriotism nor genuine feeling is at the root of their censure. Another feeling lies concealed under it. Why hide the truth? Who if not an author is bound to speak the holy

truth? You are afraid of anyone's looking deeply below the surface, you dread looking below the surface yourselves, you like to glide over everything with heedless eyes. You even laugh heartily at Tchitchikov, perhaps you will even praise the author—and will say: "He has neatly hit it off, though, he must be an amusing fellow!" And after saying that you look at yourself with redoubled pride, a self-satisfied smile comes on to your face, and you add: "There is no denying that there are very queer and funny people in some provinces, and thorough rogues too!" And which of you, full of Christian meekness, not in public, but alone in private, at the moment of solitary inward converse, asks in the depths of your own soul this painful question: "Is there not a bit of Tchitchikov in me too?" And it is pretty sure to be so indeed! And if some friend, not of too low or too high a grade in the service, should chance to pass by at that moment, you will immediately nudge your neighbor and will say, almost guffawing: "Look, look, there goes Tchitchikov, there's Tchitchikov!" And then like a child, forgetting all decorum befitting your age and position, you will run behind him, mimicking and repeating: "Tchitchikov! Tchitchikov! Tchitchikov!"

But we have begun talking too loudly, forgetting that our hero who was asleep all the while we have been telling his story, is by now awake and might easily hear his name so frequently repeated He easily takes offense, and will be annoyed if anyone speaks disrespectfully about him. It is no great matter to the reader whether Tchitchikov is angry with him or not, but an author ought never under any circumstances to fall out with his hero—they have still to go a long way hand in hand together; two long parts are to come, that is no trifling matter.

"Hey, hey! What are you about?" said Tchitchikov to Selifan.

"What's the matter?" said Selifan in a deliberate voice.

"What's the matter indeed, are you a goose! How are you driving? Come, get on!"

And, indeed, Selifan had for a long time been driving with closed eyes, only occasionally shaking the reins about the sides of the horses, who were also dozing; and Petrushka's cap had fallen off long ago, and he had sunk back with his head poking Tchitchikov's legs so that the latter was obliged to give him a nudge Selifan pulled himself together and, giving the dappled gray a few switches on the back, after which the latter fell into a trot, and flourishing the whip over them all, cried in a thin singsong voice: "Never fear" The horses bestirred themselves and carried the chaise along as though it were as light as a feather.

Selifan brandished the whip and kept shouting, "Ech! ech! ech!" smoothly rising up and down on the box, as the three horses darted

up or flew like the wind down the little hills which dotted the high road that sloped scarcely perceptibly downhill. Tchitchikov merely smiled as he lightly swayed on his leather cushion, for he loved rapid driving. And what Russian does not love rapid driving? How should his soul, that craves to be lost in a whirl, to carouse without stint, to say at times, "Damnation take it all!"—how should his soul not love it? How not love it when there is a feeling in it of something ecstatic and marvelous? One fancies an unseen force has caught one up on its wing and one flies onself, and everything flies too: milestones fly by, merchants on the front seats of their tilt-carts fly to meet one, the forest flies by on both sides with dark rows of firs and pines, with the ring of the ax and caw of the crows; the whole road flies into the unknown retreating distance; and there is something terrible in this rapid flitting by, in which there is no time to distinguish the vanishing object and only the sky over one's head and the light clouds and the moon that struggles through them seem motionless. Ah! troika, bird of a troika! Who was it first thought of thee? Sure, thou couldst only have been born among a spirited people—in that land that does not care to do things by halves, but has spread, a vast plain, over half the world, and one may count its milestones till one's eyes are dizzy! And there is nothing elaborate, one would think, about thy construction; it is not held together by iron screws—no, a deft Yaroslav peasant fitted thee up and put thee together, hastily, roughly, with nothing but ax and drill. The driver wears no German top boots: he has a beard and gauntlets, and sits upon goodness knows what; but when he stands up and swings his whip and sets up a song—the horses fly like a whirlwind, the spokes of the wheels are blended into one revolving disk, the road quivers, and the pedestrian cries out, halting in alarm—and the troika dashes away and away!...And already all that can be seen in the distance is something flinging up the dust and whirling through the air.

And, Russia, are not thou too flying onward like a spirited troika that nothing can overtake? The road is smoking under thee, the bridges rumble, everything falls back and is left behind! The spectator stands still struck dumb by the divine miracle: is it not a flash of lightning from heaven? What is the meaning of this terrifying onrush? What mysterious force is hidden in this troika, never seen before? Ah, horses, horses—what horses! Is the whirlwind hidden under your manes? Is there some delicate sense tingling in every vein? They hear the familiar song over their heads—at once in unison they strain their iron chests and, scarcely touching the earth with their hoofs, are transformed almost into straight lines flying through the air—and the troika rushes on, full of divine inspiration....Russia, whither flyest thou? Answer! She gives no answer. The ringing of the bells melts into music; the air, torn to shreds, whirs and rushes

like the wind, everything there is on earth is flying by, and the other states and nations, with looks askance, make way for her and draw aside.

[Translation by Constance Garnett]

Ivan Turgenev

For some unexplained reason this lecture of Turgenev's was never included in English translations of his complete works It is not without value in revealing the Slavic drift to the "universal," that essential Russian spirit which Dostoevsky speaks of in his dissertation on Pushkin. For generations Russia has lived the role of Hamlet—is it now enacting the role of Don Quixote?

HAMLET AND DON QUIXOTE

The first edition of Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet,* and the first part of the *Don Quixote* of Cervantes, appeared in one and the same year, at the very beginning of the seventeenth century . .

This has struck us as a remarkable coincidence ...

We have said that the contemporaneous appearance of Don Quixote and Hamlet has struck us as worthy of note, for it seems to us that in these two characters two opposite types of human nature are incarnate —the ends, as it were, of the axle on which it turns. It seems to us that all men belong, in a greater or lesser degree, to one of these types, that almost all of us go astray either after Don Quixote's manner or after Hamlet's....

What is it that finds expression in Don Quixote? Faith, first of all, faith in something eternal, immovable, in truth, to speak briefly, in truth which is outside the individual man, which he may not easily attain, which demands hard service and sacrifice.... Don Quixote is entirely devoted to his ideal, for the sake of which he is willing to endure all possible privation, to lay down his very life, that life of his which he values only in so far as it can assist in the realization of his ideal, the establishing of truth, of righteousness upon the earth Men say that, after all, this ideal is only constructed by his own disordered imagination out of the fantastic world of medieval romances;

and so it is, and herein consists the humor of Don Quixote. But an ideal it remains on account of its stainless purity. Don Quixote considered it shameful to live for one's self, to labor for one's self.... There is in him no trace of egotism.. .Don Quixote may appear crazy upon some occasions; the most material substance disappears before his eyes, melts like wax before the fire of his enthusiasm.... Don Quixote is an enthusiast, a servant of the ideal, and therefore his figure is illuminated by its rays.

And Hamlet, what does he express?

Introspection, first of all, then egotism and consequent unfaith. He lives entirely for himself, he is an egotist; but an egotist cannot even believe in himself; we can only believe in what is without and above ourselves. But this *ego* in which he does not believe is none the less dear to Hamlet. It is the central point to which he is perpetually returning, because he can find no one in the world to which he can attach himself, he is a skeptic, always busied, always vexed with himself alone, he is always thinking not of his duty, but of his own dignity. Mistrusting all, Hamlet of course mistrusts himself also; his intellect is too highly cultured to rest satisfied with what he finds within himself; he knows his own weakness, but all self-knowledge is strength thence flows his irony, the antithesis to Don Quixote's enthusiasm. Hamlet revels in exaggerated self-reproach, is constantly observing himself, examining himself; he is acutely conscious of his own shortcomings, he despises himself; and yet at the same time, one may say that he lives and nourishes himself upon this contempt. He does not believe in himself, yet he is given to boasting, he knows not what he wants, nor why he lives—yet he clings to life...."O God, God!" (he exclaims in the second scene of the first act) "that the Everlasting had not fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter!...How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable seems to me all the uses of this world!" Yet he does not lay down his dull and empty life; he meditates suicide until the appearance of his father's ghost...yet he does not destroy himself. His love of life finds expression in his very dreams of its embellishment!...

But we must not judge too harshly of Hamlet: he suffers, and his sufferings are more painful, more intense, than those of Don Quixote. Rough shepherds whom he has delivered from their enemies chastise Don Quixote, but Hamlet wounds and torments himself; there is a sword in his hands also: the two-edged sword of introspection.

We are compelled to admit that Don Quixote is very absurd. Surely his personality is the most comical that ever was imagined by any writer. His name is a common name of derision even in the mouths of Russian peasants....One laughs at Don Quixote...but there is a reconciling, redeeming force in laughter, and if the saying, "Whom you laugh at, to him you listen," be not a vain one, then one

may add: "Whom you laugh at, you forgive, and come near to loving."... Hamlet was, on the contrary, personally attractive.... One feels him sympathetic· almost everyone recognizes his own features in Hamlet, but we repeat, it is impossible to love him because he himself loves no one....

But Don Quixote is a poor, almost indigent man, who, without either means or connections, old, solitary, takes upon himself the reform of abuses, the defense of the oppressed (though they be strangers to him) throughout the whole world. What matter though his first attempt at the defense of the innocent from the oppressor result in bringing down double injury upon the head of the innocent... (we refer to that scene in which Don Quixote endeavors to shield a lad from his master's blows, and the latter beats the victim more cruelly than ever as soon as the deliverer's back is turned); what matter though, thinking to have to do with dangerous giants, Don Quixote belabor the sails of a windmill? ... The comical side of these incidents should not hinder our eyes from discerning the thought which lies hid below the surface. He who, before sacrificing himself, could think of turning over in his mind, of weighing the consequences, the probable utility of his action, such a one would hardly be capable of self-sacrifice. No such thing could befall Hamlet; how could he, with his shrewd, subtle, skeptical intellect, fall into so gross an error? No; there is no danger of his joining battle with windmills, he does not believe in the existence of giants, and, even if such there were, he would not fight them....

Hamlet doubts the existence of goodness, but not that of evil, for against evil he wages a bitter war He doubts of goodness, that is, he suspects its truth, its sincerity; and he attacks it not as good, but as pretended good, under whose mask lurk evil and deceit, his immemorial foes. Hamlet does not laugh with the fiendish indifference of Mephistopheles; there is a tenderness even in his bitter smile, which tells of suffering, and so atones for the bitterness Hamlet's skepticism is not indifferentism also, and in this lies its significance, its dignity; good and evil, truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness do not for him combine to form a dumb, dull something The skepticism of Hamlet, which does not believe in any, so to speak, present truth, still wages relentless war against falsehood, and becomes thereby one of the principal champions of that truth in which he is unable to believe. But in negation, as in fire, there is a certain destructive force, and how can we keep this force in check, how evoke it when needed, how direct it to destroy this and to spare that when component parts are inextricably intermingled? This is just the tragic side of human life which has so often been touched upon. In order to act one must think; but thought and will are bound together, and the bonds tighten every day we live....

And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought

says Shakespeare by the mouth of Hamlet....And so, on one side stand the Hamlets, thinkers, of ripe judgment, with minds often all-comprehensive, but generally useless and condemned to inaction; and, on the other side, the half-witted Quixotes who, for this reason, are of use and have influence with the masses, because they see and know but one point—one which is often quite different in reality from the form in which they see it Involuntarily we ask ourselves: Must one then be insane in order to believe in truth? And does the mind of man indeed lose power by gaining self-knowledge?...

We will content ourselves with remarking that, in this disunion, in this dualism...it behooves us to descry a fundamental law of all human life: the life of man is nothing else than the perpetual reconciliation and perpetual strife between these principles, which are forever uniting and forever parting with one another....These two forces of inertia and action, of conservatism and progress, are the fundamental forces of all existence. They explain the growth of the flower, and supply the key by which we can explain the development of the mightiest nations.

...The Don Quixotes discover territory, the Hamlets cultivate it. But how, you ask, can Hamlets cultivate, since they doubt all, and believe in nothing? We answer that nature has wisely ordained that there should be no perfect Hamlets, any more than perfect Don Quixotes. They are but the extreme expression of two tendencies, two posts, as it were, set up by the two writers on roads leading in opposite directions. Life strains toward them, as it were, but never reaches them. We must not forget that, as the principle of analysis is carried to a tragic issue in Hamlet, so the principle of enthusiasm is carried to that of comedy in Don Quixote, whereas, in life, the purely tragic or the purely comic are seldom met with....

Both Hamlet and Don Quixote die in an affecting manner, but how different are the deaths of the two men! Beautiful, indeed, are Hamlet's last words. He is resigned, calm, he enjoins Horatio to live, devotes his dying voice to the service of young Fortinbras, the blameless representative of hereditary right...but Hamlet's gaze does not look beyond...."The rest is silence," says the dying skeptic—and is silenced forever. The death of Don Quixote makes us unspeakably sad. In this moment the great calling of his personality becomes patent to us all. When his former esquire, wishing to soothe him, tells him that soon he will be once more setting out on some chivalrous enterprise· "Nay," answers the dying man, "all that is passed, I have bid farewell to all such things: already I am no longer Don Quixote, but

once more 'Alonzo the Good,' as I used to be called—*Alonzo el bueno.*"

These are wonderful words; how deeply the mention of that name, for the first, for the last time, moves the reader! Yes! this name alone retains its meaning in the presence of death. All things pass away, all vanish—dignity, glory, and genius, which embraces all—all crumble into dust....

All the mightiest things of earth
Pass away like smoke . .

But good actions do not pass away like smoke; they outlive the most radiant beauty. "All things pass away," said the Apostle, "only love remaineth."

[Translation by Lena Milman, in the *Fortnightly Review*]

THE THRESHOLD

I see a great structure The narrow door in the front wall is wide open Stern gloom is beyond the door Before the high threshold stands a girl, a Russian girl A breath of frost is wafted from the impenetrable gloom, and together with the freezing wave a slow voice is coming from the depth of the building.

"To you who desire to cross this threshold, do you know what awaits you here?"

"I know," replied the girl.

"Cold, hunger, abhorrence, derision, contempt, abuse, prison, disease, and death!"

"I know, I am ready I shall endure all sufferings, all blows"

"Not from enemies alone, but also from relatives, from friends"

"Yes, even from them"

"Very well You are ready for the sacrifice. You shall perish, and nobody, nobody will ever know whose memory to honor."

"I need neither gratitude nor compassion I need no home."

"Are you ready even to commit a crime?"

The girl lowered her head.

"I am ready for crime, too—"

The voice lingered for some time before resuming its questions

"Do you know," it said at length, "that you may be disillusioned in that which you believe at present, that you may discover that you were mistaken, and that you ruined your young life in vain?"

"I know this, too."

"Enter!"

The girl crossed the threshold, and the heavy curtain fell behind her.
"Fool!" said someone, gnashing his teeth.
"Saint!" someone uttered in reply.

Nikolay Berdyaev

Nikolay Berdyaev is the leading religious thinker of our time. The essay below is from his book, called in English The End of Our Time, *published in 1933, though the Russian edition was published ten years earlier. The book contains remarkable prophecies of the coming "new Middle Ages," some of which have already proved singularly accurate. In this particular essay Berdyaev stresses the general Russian antipathy to the class known as "the bourgeoisie."*

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The Russian Revolution has turned out just as Dostoevsky foresaw it. With prophetic vision he drew its portrait and told us the dialectic of its ideas; he understood that Socialism in Russia was a religious matter, a question of atheism, and that the real concern of the pre-revolutionary intellectuals was not politics but the salvation of mankind without the help of God. If you want to understand the meaning of the Revolution, you must make these intuitions of Dostoevsky your own. Its causes were numberless, and several of them jump to the eye, among them the ghastly war, which Russia was able to bear neither morally nor materially, the underdevelopment of a sense of law among the Russians, their lack of real culture, the defective agrarian organization among the peasants, the hold of false ideas over the intellectuals. But the deeper meaning of the Revolution is not to be sought in these directions, but rather in its primary spiritual phenomenon. The science of history tells us of the causes which lead to events, but the philosophy of history is concerned with discovery of the essential spiritual phenomena which must be examined if the meaning of historical developments is to be understood. For modern history we find this phenomenon in Humanism and its internal dialectic; this was at the bottom of the French Revolution, though there were of course numerous specific causes as well. And I maintain that the revolution in Russia, an unloosing of elemental forces, half-Asiatic,

half-barbarian, in the midst of a failing war, had as its principle a religious fact in consonance with the Russian religious nature. The Russians are incapable of bringing forth a "happy medium" humanitarian kingdom; they do not want a juridical state as understood by Europeans. They are spiritually a nonpolitical people who aspire only to the highest point of history, the actualization of the Kingdom of God; they tend either to this kingdom, to brotherhood in Christ, or to comradeship in Antichrist, the kingdom of the prince of this world

The Russians have always been informed by a spirit of detachment from the world quite unknown to Western peoples, it is their main characteristic. They have never felt themselves tied and bound to earthly things, to property, family, the state, to their rights, to an external way of life; and in so far as they were attached to these things it was through their sins, and their sins were not less but graver than those of European peoples. As a people they are probably less simply well-behaved, less "decent," than Westerners. But, whereas the very virtues of these last tie them down to earth and their material possessions thereon, the Russian virtues cut the people off from earth and turn their hearts to heaven, and the Orthodox religion directs them into the same path. To a man of western Europe property is sacred, and he will not let himself be robbed without a forcible defense, and he holds a system of ideas that justifies that attitude. Though the passions of greed and avarice belong no less to his nature, a Russian does not look on his property as sacred, he has no philosophical justification for having temporal possessions at all, and he believes in his heart that it would be better for him to be a monk or a wandering pilgrim The ease with which private property has been abolished in Russia is due as well to this national spirit of detachment from earthly goods as to the weakness of their idea of law and to the absence of certain "solid" qualities which flourish among the middle classes: what is a virtue in the eyes of a European bourgeois may well seem sin to a native of Russia where even landed proprietors did not have an absolute conviction that they had a just title to the lands which they held A. S Khomiakov * was no isolated example when he claimed to occupy his lands only by virtue of a mandate from the people in order that they might be properly worked. The merchant likewise was persuaded that he made his profits by very doubtful means and that sooner or later he would have to do penance for them. The Christianity of the Orthodox Church emphasizes the idea of duty rather than that of legal right; we do not fulfill these duties, for we are sinners, but neither do we regard law as an end itself. Bourgeois ideology has never been valid for us or acted on our hearts; we have never accepted its clearly idealistic basis of rights. Radically,

* Slavophile writer and lay theologian, 1804-1860 He is considered to be the founder of a purely Russian school of theological thought—Tr

practically all of us looked on the bourgeois regime as sinful: not only the revolutionary socialists, but also the Slavophiles, the believers, all the men of letters, and even the bourgeois themselves, who always suffered moral humiliation from their status.

It is no good opposing the European bourgeois to the Russian Communist, the spiritual formation of the Russian people prevents any victory over Communism by a bourgeois regime in the name of its own ideas. Khomiakov and Leontiev,* Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy, Vladimir Solovyov and Nicholas Fedorov † abolished the bourgeois spirit and system not less than did the Socialists and Communists. That is the Russian "idea" and vocation, and patriots should keep it in mind. The Russian Christian holds that, before God, the European bourgeois is no better than the Russian Communist, and no Russian wants the one to supplant the other: he refuses to substitute for Communist wickedness those bourgeois virtues whose goodness he denies; a secular culture, a well-established and thoroughly respectable civilization, do not tempt him. That is why Socialism has with us taken on a sacred character, and why we now have a pseudo-church and a pseudo-theocracy. We have always been at enmity in spirit with the rule of the bourgeois nineteenth-century civilization; we do not like it and see in it a degradation of the soul The revolutionary Herzen ‡ and the reactionary Leontiev were in entire agreement on this point. Nor is it any good to think of teaching to Russians German or French patriotism, the nationalism of western Europe; Russian nationalists and patriots in this sense seem completely foreign to the soul of their race. All these things must be taken into account if our revolution is to be understood. And we have not adopted an ideology of the state any more than of the bourgeois; Katkov § was not one of our characteristic thinkers. Our moral spirit cannot accept the supremacy of the state-idea, it remains always subordinate and often disappears altogether· a certain anarchism is proper to us That the people of Russia tend always toward the Kingdom of God accounts for their virtues—and for many of their vices as well. For paradise eludes us. And yet there is a duty of obedience to the world that man has to

* A writer of the last century who in theory advocated exconservatism and aristocracy He began his career in diplomacy and died a monk of the Troitza Monastery near Moscow in 1891 —Tr

† Librarian in a Moscow public library He was well known as an original thinker and ascete Author of the amazing *Philosophy of the Common Work* —Tr.

‡ A political writer of revolutionary tendencies, born in 1812 Emigrated in 1847 and never returned to Russia From London he published his paper, *Kolokol*, which had great influence in Russian liberal circles of the time. Died in 1870 —Tr

§ Journalist and writer of extreme conservative views, 1818-1887. His paper, the *Moskovskia Vedomosti*, had much and often bad influence upon Russian politics —Tr

shoulder on earth; it exists in relation to historical development, and this duty is often forgotten by Russians. That is the chief reason why our hideous revolution must be called national. Though the soul of the Russian man reaches out to the Kingdom of God, he easily yields to temptation, he is deceived by shams and illusions, he succumbs before the powers of darkness, and the reign of falsehood and deceit is now established in his land There is something of another world, from "beyond," about the Bolshevists. That, I think, is what makes them so sinister. Currents as it were of preternatural energy emanate from the most ordinary among them Behind every Bolshevist there is a collective sorcery which bewitches the people into a magic sleep, encloses them in a charmed circle. Russia must be exorcised That is the capital task.

• • •

The Russian Revolution must be experienced in the depths of the soul in order that there shall be a catharsis, an interior cleansing. It cannot be lived spiritually by the covetous who want their lost possessions back, by those whose hearts are angry, who clamor for punishment that is a worldly way to receive its sufferings, indicative of a bourgeois attitude Nor is the Revolution lived in spirit by him who accommodates himself to it and does not guard the freedom of his interior being, and still less by him who dreams, without the least awareness of his own sin, of a restoration of the prerevolutionary social life. Sincere repentance will allow these sufferings to be undergone only in a spiritual sense. New life begins with the mystery, the sacrament, of penance; only that can free us from the tyranny of a dark past, from oppression by specters and ghosts The psychology of Christian repentance is diametrically opposed not only to the psychology of the Revolution, but also to that of the restoration, which is always vindictive and angered Desire for revenge and for the restoration of the old life with all its sinfulness is not compatible with penitence, which strains toward a new life. such wishes belong to impenitent offenders.

To experience the Revolution in spirit and in one's being is to gauge the importance and depth of this crisis for Russia and for the world. It will not do to give an impression of thinking that nothing exceptionally serious has happened, that it is only a series of outrages, infamies, and scandals which can easily be stopped by the police and the military. What can be more pitiable than to see those who have been thrown down from the highest places in society console themselves in this way, by denying the very fact of the Revolution and referring to it as "troubles" or "outbreaks of violence"? I am convinced that there has been a revolution in Russia—and that there is a revolution going on in the world analogous to the collapse of the

world of antiquity. I am convinced that to advocate a return to the prewar situation is to declare oneself blind to all that is happening and to evince a judgment unequipped with historical perspective; it is to want to restore outworn and crumbling principles whose decay has already bred frightful carnage and revolution; it is to grasp at a life that is a life of injustice and iniquity. Neither in Russia nor in Europe can we return to that life, nor ought we to be able to. if we could, the miseries and sufferings of our day would be without meaning and justification. This desire to go back to a near past is precisely what is blameworthy and dangerous in the reactionaries. Truly, the Revolution has not made a new and better life, it only shows the dissolution of the sinful old ways; but the spiritual experience which we should gain from it can lead us toward a new life that will be better. Every right-minded man should be able to see that, whether his view of the immediate future be optimistic or pessimistic. And the new life will be before all a spiritual life. The watchword for each one is Do what I can, come what may. There is no going back to the old liberalism of the intellectuals, to popular policies, to Socialism, any more than to the former monarchy and the life of its nobility.

The Russia of lords and masters is no more, and nothing that was temporal or bad in it can be revived but what was good and eternal cannot see corruption and it must form a part of all new life There is an eternal element in aristocracy and the world cannot live without it, but the social importance which our nobility, considered as a class and caste, had in the past will never be again; desire for it can produce only bitterness and hate. No more will the bourgeoisie ever recover its position, for their system of ideas has been turned upside down interiorly. The Revolution is not in the interest of the lower classes only, but of all in so far as people give up saying "thou" * in favor of "you." Herein is an irrevocable disturbance in our social usages the old attitude of "the lord" toward "the people" is made impossible. Probably the change from "thou" to "you" will remain the supreme achievement of the Revolution so far as manners and customs are concerned But there would have to be a greater revolution still before the people of the whole world would come to *tutoyer* one another. And it is not external revolutions that bring about such a result. the French Revolution failed to achieve it, despite all its efforts.

* It was the custom in Russia to use the second person singular when addressing the lower class, a custom which was often bitterly resented.—Tr.

CONFESSIONAL, BIOGRAPHICAL, EPISTOLARY

Alexander Pushkin

ON RELIGION

I was reading Locke, and I found that his is a religious mind, but one which confines knowledge to the feasible, though he himself had stated that in matters of faith the Bible, more than anything else, teaches us the truth, and that all problems of religious belief, while exceeding reason, do not contradict it ... Finally, I came to the conviction that man found God precisely because He exists. It is impossible, even in the world of plastical forms, to discover anything that does not exist—a thought which was conveyed to me by Art.... A form cannot be devised. it has to be derived from something that actually is Nor is it possible to invent sentiments, thoughts, and ideas not planted in us, those having a common root with the mysterious instinct which distinguishes a creature who at once feels and reasons, from that which merely feels. This reality is as real as everything that we can touch, experience, or behold. The people possess an innate longing for this kind of reality—the religious sentiment—which they even refuse to analyze Religion created art and literature, in fact, everything that was great in ancient times Everything is dependent upon the religious feeling...and without it there would have been no philosophy, no poetry, no ethics

Nikolay Gogol

Gogol's inner conflicts and self-laceration are celebrated in Russian literary history His country's greatest humorist, he was, like most authentic comic authors, a man essentially sad at heart. As long as he could write on the wickedness of man, he found scope for his genius; but the moment he set out to do something constructive, to depict the good side of Russia, he went to pieces The second part of his famous novel, Dead Souls, *was never published he burned the manuscript either in remorse or in a fit of abstraction. No one knows. More than likely, however, he burned it because his terrible gift for observing the trivialities of life, in himself as well as in others, was not a gift to be transmuted into a gift for apotheosizing goodness. He broke upon*

the rock of his own contradictions; in the effort to merge the man and the artist in himself, both the man and the artist were destroyed. The secret of Gogol's tragedy is, perhaps, to be found in his essential character, of which these brief excerpts from his correspondence give ample glimpses.

HIS INNER CONFLICTS

(Selections from Letters)

To his Uncle Kossyarovsky. October 3, 1827:

Cold sweat pours down my face at the idea that I shall perhaps perish in dust, without making my name known by a single remarkable deed—to live in this world without making my existence worth while would be terrible....I have meditated upon all careers, and I have decided to take up jurisprudence. I see that here there is more work to be done than anywhere else, and that here alone I can be a real benefactor to humanity.

. . .

To his mother. 1829:

I have often wondered how it is that God has created a unique and rare heart, a soul which is full of ardent love for all that is lofty and beautiful—and why He has enveloped all this in such a rough exterior? Why has He combined all this with such a terrible mixture of contradictions, obstinacy, insolent conceit and base humility? But my perishable mind is not strong enough to fathom the great designs of the Almighty.

. . .

From the Author's Confession:

I never created anything out of mere imagination. Only in those things was I successful which I took from reality and which were based on the data I knew. I could fathom a man then only when I had seen all the minutest details of his exterior Yet I never *painted* a portrait by simply copying it. I *created* portraits, but I created them on the ground of consideration rather than on that of mere imagination. The more details I had and considered, the better were my productions. My mind is in this respect thoroughly Russian, that is, a mind capable of deriving rather than of inventing.

. . .

I saw that in my former works I laughed for nothing, uselessly, without knowing why. If it is necessary to laugh, then let us laugh

at that which really deserves to be laughed at by all. In my *Revizor** I decided to gather in one place and deride all that is bad in Russia, all the evils which are being perpetrated in those places where the utmost rectitude is required from man.

. . .

Those who have dissected my literary abilities were not able to find out the essential characteristics of my nature Only Pushkin was able to do it He always asserted that no author except myself has such a capacity for bringing out all the trivialities of life, of describing so well the vulgarity of the mediocre man, or of opening one's eyes on those small things which generally remain unobserved.

. . .

To Zhukovsky December, 1836·

I am working again at my *Dead Souls,* which I had begun at St. Petersburg. I have remade all that was done before, I have reconsidered the whole plan, and now am working it out quietly as if I were writing a chronicle.... If I ever complete this work in the manner I should like to—what a colossal, what an original subject! What a varied crowd! The whole of Russia will appear in it! This is going to be the first production of mine that will preserve my name.

. . .

Confession in 1847:

None of my readers knows that in laughing at my characters they laughed at myself In me there was a collection of all possible defects and in a greater quantity than in any other man... If they had suddenly and all together appeared before my eyes I would have hanged myself. ..I began to depict in my heroes my own nastiness. This is how I did it Having taken some bad feature of mine or other, I persecuted it under a different name and in a different style, endeavoring to make it appear before my eyes as my deadly enemy—an enemy who had inflicted a terrible injury upon me; I persecuted it with malice, with irony, with anything I could get hold of. Had anyone seen those monsters which came from under my pen at the beginning, he would have shivered with fear.

. . .

To Father Matthew December 24, 1847

I am not sure whether I shall give up literature, because I don't know whether such be the will of God; in any case, my reason tells me not to publish anything for a long time until I get more mature—inwardly and spiritually. But meanwhile I am going to Jerusalem to pray at our Saviour's Tomb, to pray as much as I can Do pray for me, good soul, so that I myself shall be able to pray fervently and deeply.

* *The Inspector-General*—Ed

Do pray to God that in the very place where His divine Son had been treading, my heart should reveal to me all I need to do. I wish that from the very day of that worship of mine I should carry the image of Christ in my heart wherever I go, and that I should have Him all the time before my soul's eyes.

. . .

To Father Matthew February 12, 1848

Alas, it is not easy to pray. How can one pray if God does not want one to? I see so much that is bad in me, such an abyss of self-love and incapacity to sacrifice earthly things for the sake of the heavenly principle Only now I am surprised at my own conceit, wondering how it is that God has not struck me and wiped me off from the face of the earth O my friend, my confessor, whom God Himself has sent to me! I am burning with shame and don't know where to hide my face—so much am I now overwhelmed with the incredible quantity of weaknesses and vices which I did not even suspect before. And here is my confession—no longer with regard to my authorship! I could write entire pages about my pusillanimity, superstition, fear. It even seems to me that I have no religion I confess Christ only because my reason and not my religion commands me to do so .. *I only wish to believe,* and in spite of this I now dare to go on a pilgrimage to our Saviour's Tomb Oh, do pray for me....

. . .

To Father Matthew April, 1848

I must tell you that never before had I been so little pleased with the state of my own soul as in Jerusalem and after Jerusalem I only had the opportunity of seeing more clearly than ever my hardness, my self-love—that's the whole result.

. . .

To Zhukovsky. February, 1850

I was fortunate enough to spend a whole night at our Saviour's Tomb, to communicate there, and yet I did not become better than I was

. . .

Jotted down a few days before his death. 1852

Have mercy on me, O Lord! Bind the Satan again through the power of the mysterious Cross!

His last words

Give me the ladder, the ladder!

Sergey Aksakov

Sergey Aksakov's series of autobiographies are indubitably the most successful expression of their kind in any literature known to us In Years of Childhood *he appears to have forestalled Proust in the minutiae of interrelated associations which outwardly present a running panorama of unruffled calm In* A Chronicle of a Russian Family *the mood is at once more episodic and dramatic. One of the most remarkable portraits in it is of Stepan Mikhailovich Bagrov. The episode related below is but a fragment of the portrait. It throws a light on the serf-owning class, which later was to form the theme of Turgenev's* Sportsman's Sketches, *a book that led to the emancipation of the serfs.*

STEPAN MIKHAILOVICH BAGROV: A PORTRAIT

Scarcely had my grandfather established himself in his new surroundings than, with his characteristic energy and perseverance, he set himself to work on agriculture and cattle breeding The peasants, encouraged by his example, developed into willing and skillful laborers, and soon nothing remained to be done in the building or carpentering line The threshing floor of New Bagrovo occupied an area three times the size of the village itself; and the magnificent herds of horses, cattle, and swine, and flocks of sheep bore striking witness to the wealth of the new settler It really seemed as if Stepan Mikhailovich had set the fashion of emigration; for a stream of folks flowed into Ufa and Orenburg From all sides came the Steppe Mordvins, Tscheremisses, Tschuvasches, Tartars, and Meschtcheriaks nor was there any lack of Russian emigrants, of Crown Peasants from various districts, and of more or less well-to-do owners of serfs My grandfather soon had neighbors His brother-in-law, Ivan Nasilievich Neklyudov, purchased a tract of land twenty versts distant from New Bagrovo, transferred his serfs to this estate, built a wooden church, called the place Neklyudovo, and established himself there with his family—a circumstance by no means pleasing to my grandfather. For he detested all his wife's relations—the whole Neklyudovery, as he called them. A landed proprietor—Bachmetev—bought an estate still nearer at hand, only about ten versts from Bagrovo, near the source of the Sovruscha, which flows parallel with the Bruguruslan in the southeast. He brought along his serfs, and called his place Bachmetevka. On the other side, on the banks of the Nasjagai (or Motschagai, as

the natives now call this river) lay the demesne of Polibino, which is not the property of the Karaimzins. The Nasjagai is wider and more beautiful than the Buguruslan; deeper and more full of fish; and aquatic birds are found in greater abundance on its shores. On the road to Polibino, eight versts from Bagrovo, and lying directly to the east, is the big Mordvin village of Noikino Two versts farther on, a mill was built on the Bokla, a stream which flows parallel to the Buguruslan toward the south. Not far from this mill the Bokla joins the Nasjagai, which whirls its mighty current from northeast to southwest Seventeen versts from New Bagrovo, our own Buguruslan is drawn into the flood, which, strengthened by this new volume of water, finally unites itself with the Kinel, thereby losing its sonorous and significant name *

In the end, quite a little Mordvin village grew up under the name of Kiwazkoie, only two versts away from Bagrovo, but farther toward Buguruslan. Stepan Mikhailovich at first was somewhat inclined to pull a long face at such near neighbors, who reminded him of the old days at Troizkoie. But the case was different here. These were decent, quiet folk, who never caused the slightest trouble to my grandfather in his capacity of district inspector. In a few years my grandfather had gained the love and respect of the whole countryside. He was a true benefactor to all, far and near; old and new neighbors; especially to the latest comers, who, as is so frequently the case with emigrants, came poor and empty-handed into a strange land, frequently unprovided with seed, corn, and with no money to buy any To all such my grandfather's bursting granaries lay open "Take all you need; and if the first harvest yields enough and to spare, you can repay me. If not—accept it as a gift in God's name." With such words as these my grandfather shared his store generously with those who lacked corn or bread. And here let me add that, with all this, he was so clear-sighted, so charitable, and sympathized so heartily with all in need and want, and kept his plighted word and promise so faithfully and constantly—that he came to be a veritable oracle in those parts. And not only a friend in the day of distress was he; but an adviser and a prudent guide to all who needed advice. Only tell him the plain truth, and his assistance might be reckoned upon But those who had lied to him to excite his compassion were well advised never to show themselves on his land again. They would get nothing more, and well for them if they escaped with whole skins. Many a family quarrel was healed by him—many a lawsuit nipped in the bud. From every part of the country people sought him out for advice and arbitration; and his decision was respected, and observed to the uttermost degree. I have known grandsons and even great-grandsons of that bygone generation who have testified their gratitude and indebtedness

* Nasjagai means "Swift Pursuer"—Tr S R.

to the firm and just decisions of Stepan Mikhailovich, as handed down to them by their fathers and grandfathers. To many a simple, but strangely moving story have I listened, and the narrator at the end would cross himself and pray for the repose of the soul of Stepan Mikhailovich. Small wonder, then, that the peasants had a genuine affection for such a master; but this affection was equally shared by the house servants, who frequently had to bear the brunt of his ungovernable outbursts of passion In years to come, many an ancient servitor of my grandfather ended his days under my roof; and often have these old men—while tears rained down their cheeks—spoken lovingly to me of their choleric, but generous and just, old master.

And this noble, magnanimous, often self-restrained man—whose actual character presented an image of the loftiest human nature—was subject to fits of rage in which he was capable of most barbarous cruelty. I recollect having seen him in one of these mad fits in my earliest childhood (at a much later date than that of the foregoing narrative) I see him now. He was angry with one of his daughters, who had lied to him and persisted in the lie. There he stood, supported between two servants, for his legs refused their office; I could hardly recognize him as my grandfather: he trembled in every limb, his features were distorted, and the frenzy of rage glared from his enraged eyes. "Give her to me!" he howled in a strangled voice. (All this remains clearly in my memory; what came later has often been related to me.) My grandmother threw herself at his feet, beseeching him to have pity and forbearance, but the next instant off flew her kerchief and cap, and Stepan Mikhailovich seized his corpulent and already aged better half by the hair of her head Meanwhile, the culprit as well as all her sisters—and even her brother, with his young wife and little son—had fled into the woods behind the house; and there they remained all night only the young daughter-in-law crept home with the child, fearing he might take cold, and slept with him in the servants' quarters. My grandfather raved and stormed about the empty house to his heart's content At last he grew too tired to drag his poor old Arina Vasilyevna about by her plaits, and fell exhausted upon his bed, where a deep sleep overpowered him, which lasted until the following morning. He awoke calm, and in a good humor, and called to his Arischa in a cheery tone My grandmother immediately ran to him from the adjoining chamber, just as if nothing had happened the day before. "Give me some tea! Where are the children? Where are Alexey and his wife? Bring little Sergey to me!" said this erstwhile lunatic, now that he had slept off his rage, and everyone—with the exception of the daughter-in-law and her son—made their appearance with bright and serene countenances This daughter-in-law was a woman of strong character, and no entreaties would induce her to betake herself so promptly to the madman of

yesterday and greet him civilly; and the child kept crying: "I won't go near my grandfather! I'm afraid of him!"

As she really was not very well, she pleaded indisposition, and kept her son with her in her own apartments. All held a terrified council, and awaited a fresh storm. But the man had conquered the wild beast of the previous evening. After Stepan Mikhailovitch had drunk his tea and chatted amicably with his children, he went himself to visit the young wife, who was in fact in a very shattered condition, and lay, pale and exhausted, on her bed The old man seated himself beside her, kissed and embraced her, called her dear, beautiful little girl; caressed his little grandson, and at last left the room saying he felt lonely without his beloved daughter-in-law Half an hour later the door of my grandfather's room was gently opened, and in walked his daughter-in-law, elegantly dressed in a gown which the old gentleman had once declared became her better than anything else in her wardrobe My grandfather was much touched. "What's this?" he said tenderly. "My poor, sick little daughter has got up and dressed in spite of her illness, and come to cheer up the old man!" The mother-in-law and her daughters, who could not endure the young wife, cast down their eyes and bit their lips, while she responded gaily and respectfully to the friendly greeting of her father-in-law, and cast a glance of sly triumph at her malevolent relations....

[Translation by M C. Beverley]

Mikhail Bakunin

Mikhail Bakunin, the great anarchist and internationalist, was a contemporary of Karl Marx, who eventually ousted him from rival leadership of radical social forces. He was a far more colorful character than Marx, and at one time the Continent rang with his eloquence and exploits. A stormy petrel, if there ever was one. It was he who proclaimed that destruction was also an act of creation.

ON SLAV UNITY

In a letter to his sister-in-law, Natalie Bakunin. June, 1862:

I am busy solely with the Polish, the Russian, and the Pan-Slav cause, and am preaching, systematically and with fervent conviction,

hatred of the Germans. I say, as Voltaire said of God, that if there were no Germans, we should have to invent them, since nothing so successfully unites the Slavs as a rooted hatred of them.

ON GOD AND MAN, THE ETERNAL DILEMMA

God exists, therefore man is a slave Man is free, therefore there is no God. Escape this dilemma who can!

Feodor Dostoevsky

Although Dostoevsky used the following episode in his fiction, it is an episode from his own life. Few men have had such an opportunity —or the genius—to describe five "last minutes" of their life before the arrival of an unexpected reprieve. Dostoevsky letters, which follow, reveal better than tons of biography the character of the man. Light is thrown on his relations with the Westernizer, Turgenev. He was, perhaps, the most celebrated of all Slavophiles.

THE LAST FIVE MINUTES OF A MAN'S LIFE

"There may be two opinions about life in prison," said Myshkin. "A man who spent twelve years in prison told me something He was one of the invalids in the care of my professor He had fits, he was sometimes restless, wept, and even tried to kill himself. His life in prison had been a very sad one, I assure you, but not at all petty. Yet he had no friends but a spider and a tree that grew under his window.... But I'd better tell you how I met another man last year. There was one very strange circumstance about it—strange because such things rarely happen. This man had once been led out with others to the scaffold and a sentence of death was read over him He was to be shot for a political offense. Twenty moments later a reprieve was read to them, and they were condemned to another punishment instead. Yet the interval between those two sentences, twenty minutes or at least a quarter of an hour, he passed in the fullest conviction that he would die in a few minutes. I was always eager to listen when he

recalled his sensations at that time, and I often questioned him about it. He remembered it all with extraordinary distinctness and used to say that he never would forget those minutes Twenty paces from the scaffold, round which soldiers and other people were standing, there were three posts stuck in the ground, as there were several criminals. The three first were led up, bound to the posts, the death-dress (a long white gown) was put on, and white caps were pulled over their eyes so that they should not see the guns, then a company of several soldiers was drawn up against each post My friend was the eighth on the list, so he had to be one of the third set. The priest went to each in turn with a cross. He had only five minutes more to live. He told me that those five minutes seemed to him an infinite time, a vast wealth; he felt that he had so many lives left in those five minutes that there was no need yet to think of the last moment, so much so that he divided his time up He set aside time to take leave of his comrades, two minutes for that; then he kept another two minutes to think for the last time; and then a minute to look about him for the last time He remembered very well having divided his time like that. He was dying at twenty-seven, strong and healthy. As he took leave of his comrades, he remembered asking one of them a somewhat irrelevant question and being particularly interested in the answer. Then when he had said good-by, the two minutes came that he had set apart for *thinking* to himself. He knew beforehand what he would think about. He wanted to realize as quickly and clearly as possible how it could be that now he existed and was living and in three minutes he would be *something*—someone or something. But what? Where? He meant to decide all that in those two minutes! Not far off there was a church, and the gilt roof was glittering in the bright sunshine. He remembered that he stared very persistently at that roof and the light flashing from it; he could not tear himself away from the light. It seemed to him that those rays were his new nature and that in three minutes he would somehow melt into them . . The uncertainty and feeling of aversion for that new thing which would be and was just coming was awful. But he said that nothing was so dreadful at that time as the continual thought, 'What if I were not to die! What if I could go back to life—what eternity! And it would all be mine! I would turn every minute into an age; I would lose nothing. I would count every minute as it passed, I would not waste one!' He said that this idea turned to such a fury at last that he longed to be shot quickly"

Myshkin suddenly ceased speaking; everyone expected him to go on and draw some conclusion.

"Have you finished?" asked Aglaia

"What? Yes," said Myshkin, rousing himself from a momentary dreaminess.

"But what did you tell that story for?"

"Oh . something in our talk reminded me of it...."

"You are very disconnected," observed Alexandra. "You probably meant to show, Prince, that not one instant of life can be considered petty, and that sometimes five minutes is a precious treasure That's all very laudable, but let me ask, how did that friend who told you such horrors. he was reprieved, so he was presented with that 'eternity of life' What did he do with that wealth afterwards? Did he live counting each moment?"

"Oh, no, he told me himself. I asked him about that too. He didn't live like that at all, he wasted many, many minutes."

"Well, there you have it tried. So it seems it's impossible really to live 'counting each moment' For some reason, it's impossible"

"Yes, for some reason it is impossible," repeated Myshkin "I thought so myself...and yet I somehow can't believe it ."

"Then you think you will live more wisely than anyone?" said Aglaia.

"Yes, I have thought that too sometimes"

"And you think so still?"

"Yes...I think so still," answered Myshkin, looking at Aglaia with the same gentle and even timid smile; but he laughed again at once and looked gaily at her.

"That's modest," said Aglaia almost irritably.

"But how brave you are, you laugh! But I was so impressed by his story that I dreamt of it afterwards I...dreamt of that five minutes..."

[From *The Idiot,* translation by Constance Garnett]

MEETING WITH TURGENEV

To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov. Geneva, August 16 (28), 1867.

So long have I kept silence, and not answered your welcome letter, my dear and unforgettable friend, Apollon Nikolayevitch I call you unforgettable friend, and feel deep in my heart that that description is just, we are both such old and accustomed friends that life, which sometimes parted us and even separated us, not only has not succeeded in really "separating" us but has actually drawn us closer together You write that you feel my absence to a certain extent, much more do I feel yours Quite apart from the fact that every day shows me more clearly the likeness and sympathy between our thoughts and feelings, I beg you to observe as well that I, since I lost you, have come

over into a strange land, where not only are there no Russian faces, Russian books, Russian thoughts and concerns, but no friendly faces of any sort. I truly cannot understand how any Russian living abroad, if he be a man of heart and intelligence, can fail to notice this and be made miserable by it. Perhaps all these faces are friendly to one another; I can only say that I feel they're not friendly to us. It really is so! How can people endure this living abroad? By God, without home, life is torture! I can understand going abroad for six months, or even a year. But to travel, as I do, without knowing or even guessing when one will get home again, is very bad and grievous. The mere thought of it is hard to bear. I need Russia for my work, for my life (I speak of no life but that). I am like a fish out of water; I lose all my energies, all my faculties.... You know in what circumstances I left home, and for what reason. There are two principal reasons in the first place, I had to save my health and even my life The attacks were recurring every eight days, and it was unbearable to feel and recognize the destruction of my nerves and brain. I really was beginning to lose my senses—that is a fact. I felt it; the ruin of my nerves often drove me to the very edge of things. The second reason is that my creditors would wait no longer, and on the day of my departure several summonses were out against me....

[He pursues the topic of his debts]

...The burden was unbearable. I departed, with death in my heart I had no faith in foreign lands—rather, I believed they might have a bad moral effect upon me. I was wholly isolated, without resources, and with a young creature* by my side who was naively delighted at sharing my wandering life; but I saw that that naive delight arose partly from inexperience and youthful ardor, and this depressed and tormented me I was afraid that Anna Grigorovna would find life with me a tedious thing. For up to the present we have been literally alone. Of myself I could hope little: my nature is morbid, and I anticipated that she would have much to bear from me. (N B.—Anna Grigorovna indeed proved herself to be of a nature much stronger and deeper than I had expected; in many ways she has been my guardian angel; at the same time, there is much that is childish and immature in her, and very beautiful and most necessary and natural it is, only I can hardly respond to it All this I saw vaguely before our departure; and although, as I said, Anna Grigorovna is finer and stronger than I had guessed, I am not even now free from all uneasiness) Finally, our insufficient means caused me much anxiety; we had only a very little money, and owed Katkov an advance of three thousand (!) roubles To be sure, I intended to begin work immediately after our departure. But what actually came to pass? Up to the present I have accomplished nothing, or almost nothing, and want

* His second wife, Anna Grigorovna, born Snitkin.—Ed

now to set seriously to work at last. I must confess that I don't feel sure I've really accomplished nothing, for I have lived through so much, and framed so much in my mind; still, in black and white I have set down very little as yet; and only what stands written in black and white is valid and money-making

We left tedious Berlin as soon as we could (I could only stop one day there, for the tiresome Germans made me nervous and irascible, and I had to take refuge in the Russian baths), and went to Dresden In Dresden we took lodgings and installed ourselves for a time.

The effect was very singular; instantly this question presented itself to me: Why am I in Dresden, just Dresden, and not in any other town; and why on earth had I to leave one place and go to another? The answer was most clear (my health, the debts, etc). But worse is the clear perception that now I don't in the least care where I may have to dwell In Dresden or another town—everywhere, in foreign lands, I feel like a slice cut from the loaf I had meant to set to work the very first day, but I felt that I could not possibly work there, that all my impressions were topsy-turvy. What did I do? I vegetated. I read, wrote a few lines now and then, nearly died of homesickness, and, later, of heat The days went monotonously by.. .

I can't possibly tell you all my thoughts. I collected many impressions. I read Russian newspapers and solaced myself thus. I felt eventually that so many new ideas had been garnered up that I could write a long article on Russia's relations to western Europe, and on the upper classes of Russian society. I should, indeed, have had plenty to say! The Germans got on my nerves; and our Russian way of living, the life of the upper classes, the faith in Europe and civilization in which those upper classes are steeped—all that got on my nerves also. The incident in Paris upset me frightfully.* Impressive, weren't they? the Paris lawyers who cried *"Vive la Pologne!"* Faugh, how nauseous, how stupid, how insipid! I felt more than ever confirmed in my view that it is rather advantageous for us that Europe does not know us in the least and has such a disgusting idea of us. And the details of the proceedings against Beresovsky! How ugly, how empty; I can't imagine how they can ever recover from such twaddle and get on to the next point!

Russia, seen from here, looks to a Russian much more plastic. On the one hand is the rare fact that our people have shown such unexpected independence and maturity in the initiation of reforms (as, for example, the judicial ones); on the other there is that news of the flogging of a merchant of the first guild in the Orenburg Government by the Chief of Police. One thing is clear: that the Russian people, thanks to its benefactor and his reforms, is at last in such a situation that it must of necessity accustom itself to affairs and self-

* Beresovsky's attempt upon the life of Alexander II —Ed

criticism; and that's the principal thing. By God, our age, in regard to reforms and changes, is almost as important as that of Peter the Great. How goes it with the railways? We must get down as quickly as possible to the south;* this is tremendously important. Before then, we must have equitable tribunals everywhere; how great will be the transformation! (I, over here, keep thinking of all these things, and my heart beats fast) I see hardly anyone here; it is quite impossible, though, not to come across somebody or other. In Germany I met a Russian who always lives abroad; he goes to Russia for about three weeks each year, and then returns to Germany, where he has wife and family; they have all become German through and through. Among other things I asked him: "Why actually did you leave home?" He answered me hotly and curtly: "Because here is civilization, and with us is barbarism." This gentleman belongs to the Young Progressives, but seems to keep himself aloof from them all to some extent. What snarling, peevish curs all these absentees do become!

At last, Anna Grigorovna and I could no longer bear our homesickness in Dresden. . .We decided to spend the winter somewhere in Switzerland or Italy But we had no money at all What we had brought with us was all spent. I wrote to Katkov, described my situation, and begged him for a further advance of 500 roubles And what do you think: he sent me the money! What an excellent fellow he is! So we came to Switzerland. Now I am going to confess to you my baseness and my shame.

My dear Apollon Nikolayevitch, I feel that I may regard you as my judge. You have heart and feeling, as I have always, and of late freshly, been convinced; and therefore I have ever prized your judgment highly. I don't suffer in confessing my sins to you. What I write you today is meant for you alone. Deliver me not to the judgment of the mob.

When I was traveling in the neighborhood of Baden-Baden, I decided to turn aside and visit the place. I was tortured by a seductive thought: 10 louis-d'or to risk, and perhaps 2,000 francs to win; such a sum would suffice me for four months, even with the expenses that I have in Petersburg The vile part of it is that in earlier years I had occasionally won. But the worst is that I have an evil and exaggeratedly passionate nature. In all things I go to the uttermost extreme; my life long I have never been acquainted with moderation.

The devil played his games with me at the beginning; in three days I won, unusually easily, 4,000 francs. Now I'll show you how I worked matters out: on the one hand, this easy gain—from 100 francs I had in three days made 4,000; on the other, my debts, my

* Referring to Russia's efforts to get down to the Bosphorus and Constantinople—Ed

summonses, my heartfelt anxiety and the impossibility of getting back to Russia; in the third place, and this is the principal point, the play itself. If you only knew how it draws one on! No—I swear to you it was not the love of winning alone, though I actually needed the money for the money's sake. Anna Grigorovna implored me to be contented with the 4,000 francs and depart at once. But that easy and probable possibility of bettering my situation at one blow! And the many examples! Apart from my own gains, I saw every day how the other gamblers won from 20,000 to 30,000 francs (one never sees anyone lose). Why should those others do better than I? I need the money more than they do. I risked again, and lost. I lost not only what I had won, but also my own money down to the last farthing; I got feverishly excited, and lost all the time. Then I began to pawn my garments. Anna Grigorovna pawned her last, her very last, possession. (That angel! How she consoled me, how she suffered in that cursed Baden, in our two tiny rooms above the blacksmith's forge, the only place we could afford!) At last I had had enough; everything was gone. (How base are these Germans! They are all usurers, rascals, and cheats! When our landlady saw that we could not leave, having no money, she raised our prices!) At last we had to save ourselves somehow and flee from Baden. I wrote again to Katkov and begged him for 500 roubles (I wrote nothing of the circumstances, but as the letter came from Baden, he probably guessed the state of affairs) And he sent me the money! He did really! So now I have had altogether from the Roussky Viestnik 4,000 roubles in advance.

Now to end my Baden adventures We agonized in that hell for seven weeks. Directly after my arrival there, I met Goncharov at the railway station. At first Ivan Alexandrovitch was cautious before me That State Councillor—or State Councillor that ought-to-be—was occupied in gambling But when he realized that it could not be kept a secret, and as I myself was playing with gross publicity, he soon ceased to pretend to me. He played with feverish excitement (though only for small stakes). He played during the whole fortnight that he spent in Baden, and lost, I think, quite a good deal. But God give this good fellow health, when I had lost everything (he had, however, seen me with large sums in my hands), he gave me, at my request, 60 francs. Certainly he lectured me terribly at the same time, because I had lost all, and not only half, like him!

Goncharov talked incessantly about Turgenev; I kept putting off my visit to him—still, eventually I had to call. I went about noon, and found him at breakfast. I'll tell you frankly—I never really liked the man. The worst of it is that since 1857,* at Wiesbaden, I've owed him 50 dollars (which even today I haven't yet paid back!) I can't stand the aristocratic and pharisaical sort of way he embraces one, and

* An error. He can refer only to the year 1862 or 1863—Ed

offers his cheek to be kissed. He puts on monstrous airs; but my bitterest complaint against him is his book, *Smoke* He told me himself that the leading idea, the point at issue, in that book, is this: "If Russia were destroyed by an earthquake and vanished from the globe, it would mean no loss to humanity—it would not even be noticed." He declared to me that that was his fundamental view of Russia. I found him in irritable mood; it was on account of the failure of *Smoke*. I must tell you that at the time the full details of that failure were unknown to me. I had heard by letter of Strachov's article in the *O Z.*, but I didn't know that they had torn him to pieces in all the other papers as well and that in Moscow, at a club, I believe, people had collected signatures to a protest against *Smoke*. He told me that himself. Frankly, I never could have imagined that anyone could so naively and clumsily display all the wounds in his vanity as Turgenev did that day, and these people go about boasting that they are atheists. He told me that he was an uncompromising atheist. My God! It is to Deism that we owe the Saviour—that is to say, the conception of a man so noble that one cannot grasp it without a sense of awe—a conception of which one cannot doubt that it represents the undying ideal of mankind. And what do we owe to these gentry—Turgenev, Herzen, Utin, Tchernychevsky? In place of that loftiest divine beauty on which they spit, we behold in them such ugly vanity, such unashamed susceptibility, such ludicrous arrogance, that it is simply impossible to guess what it is that they hope for, and who shall take them as guides He frightfully abused Russia and the Russians But I have noticed this· all those Liberals and Progressives who derive chiefly from Bielinsky's school find their pleasure and satisfaction in abusing Russia. The difference is that the adherents of Tchernychevsky merely abuse, and in so many words desire that Russia should disappear from the face of the earth (that, first of all!). But the others declare, in the same breath, that they love Russia. And yet they hate everything that is native to the soil, they delight in caricaturing it, and were one to oppose them with some fact that they could not explain away or caricature—any fact with which they were obliged to reckon—they would, I believe, be profoundly unhappy, annoyed, even distraught. And I've noticed that Turgenev—and for that matter all who live long abroad—have no conception of the true facts (though they do read the newspapers), and have so utterly lost all affection and understanding for Russia that even those quite ordinary matters which in Russia the very nihilists no longer deny but only, as it were, caricature after their manner—these fellows cannot so much as grasp. Amongst other things he told me that we are bound to crawl in the dust before the Germans, that there is but one universal and irrefutable way—that of civilization—and that all attempts to create an independent Russian culture are but folly and pig-

headedness. He said that he was writing a long article against the Russophiles and Slavophiles I advised him to order a telescope from Paris for his better convenience. "What do you mean?" he asked. "The distance is somewhat great," I replied; "direct the telescope on Russia, and then you will be able to observe us; otherwise you can't really see anything at all." He flew into a rage. When I saw him so angry, I said with well-simulated naiveté: "Really, I should never have supposed that all the articles derogatory to your new novel could have discomposed you to this extent, by God, the thing's not worth getting so angry about. Come, spit upon it all!" "I'm not in the least discomposed What are you thinking of?" he answered, getting red.

I interrupted him and turned the talk to personal and domestic matters. Before going away, I brought forth, as if quite casually and without any particular object, all the hatred that these three months have accumulaetd in me against the Germans. "Do you know what swindlers and rogues they are here? Verily, the common people are much more evil and dishonest here than they are with us; and that they are stupider there can be no doubt. You are always talking of civilization; with what has your 'civilization' endowed the Germans, and wherein do they surpass us?" He turned pale (it is no exaggeration), and said "In speaking thus, you insult me personally You know quite well that I have definitely settled here, that I consider myself a German and not a Russian, and am proud of it " I answered: "Although I have read your *Smoke,* and have just talked with you for a whole hour, I could never have imagined that you would say such a thing Forgive me, therefore, if I have insulted you "

Then we took leave of one another very politely, and I promised myself that I would never again cross Turgenev's threshold The next day Turgenev came at exactly ten o'clock in the morning to my abode and left his card with the landlady But as I had told him the day before that I never saw anyone till noon, and that we usually slept till eleven, I naturally took his ten-o'clock call as a hint that he doesn't wish to see any more of me During the whole seven weeks, I saw him only once more, at the railway station. We looked at one another, but no greeting passed The animosity with which I speak of Turgenev, and the insults we offered one another, will perhaps strike you unpleasantly But, by God, I can no other; he offended me too deeply with his amazing views. Personally, I really feel little affected, though his uppish manners are quite disagreeable enough in themselves; but I simply can't stand by and listen when a traitor who, if he chose, could be of service to his country, abuses Russia in the way he does. His tail-wagging to the Germans, and his hatred for the Russians, I had noticed already—four years ago. But his present rage and fury against Russia arises solely, solely, from the failure of *Smoke,*

and from the fact that Russia has dared refuse to hail him as a genius. It is nothing but vanity, and therefore all the more repulsive.

Hear now, my friend, what I have in view. Of course it was vile in me to gamble away so much. But I have lost a relatively small sum of my own actual money. Still, it would have lasted us for two months—in our present mode of living, even for four. I have already told you that I can't resist winning. If, right at the beginning, I had lost the 10 louis-d'or that I chose to stake, I should certainly have played no more, and gone away at once. But the gain of 4,000 francs destroyed me. The temptation of winning more (which appeared so easy) and in that way paying all my debts, and being able to provide for myself and mine—Emilie Fyodorovna, Pasha, and the others... it was too much for me, I could not resist it But even this is no excuse, for I was not alone I had with me a young, warm-hearted, pretty creature who trusted me, whom I should have protected and sheltered, and whom consequently I ought not to have dragged down with myself to destitution by setting my entire, though certainly not very great, possessions upon the turn of a game My future appears to me very dark, above all, I cannot, for the reasons I have mentioned, return to Russia, and most heavily am I oppressed by the question: What is to become of those who depend on my help? All these thoughts murder me ..

You alone, my dear friend, are kind to me; you are my Providence. Help me in the future, too. For in all my great and small matters, I shall call upon your aid.

You well understand the basis of all my hopes: it is clear that only under one condition can everything be arranged so as to bring forth fruit—namely, that my novel really succeeds. To that I must devote all my powers Ah, my dear fellow, how grave, how unendurably grave it was for me, three years ago, to yield to the crazy hope that I should be able to pay all those debts, and therefore to sign the many bills of exchange Whence shall I draw the needful energy and vitality? Experience indeed has shown that I can make a success; but what are the conditions? These alone that every one of my works so succeeds as to awaken the keenest public interest; else all goes crash And is that really possible? Is there any use in reckoning on it?...

[The letter ends with a request for a loan and a further description of Dostoevsky's desperate situation.]

THE ETERNAL PROBLEM—MONEY!

To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov. Dresden, October 16 (28), 1869:

[The greater part of the letter deals with a business misunderstanding with the staff of the *Sarya*]

What am I to do now? When shall I get my money now? Why does he [Kachpirev, the editor of the *Sarya*] wait for my telegram, and request me to return to him the letter of exchange ("Then I shall send you the money in the course of post," he said) instead of sending me now, directly, the second installment of seventy-five roubles, which was due ten days ago? Does he think that the letter in which I described my destitute condition was a piece of fine writing and nothing more? How can I work, when I am hungry, and had to pawn my very pantaloons to get the two thalers for the telegram? The devil take me and my hunger! But she, my wife, who now is suckling her infant, she had to go herself to the pawnshop and pledge her last warm woolen garment! And it has been snowing here for the last two days (I am not lying: look at the newspapers!). How easily may she catch cold! Isn't he capable of understanding, then, that I am ashamed of telling him all these things? And it's nothing like the whole of them either, there are other things of which I'm ashamed· we haven't yet paid either the midwife or the landlady; and all these vexations must fall upon her precisely in the first month after her accouchement! Doesn't he see that it's not only me, but my wife, whom he insults by taking my letter so frivolously, for I told him of my wife's great need. Indeed he has grossly insulted me!

Perhaps he may say "Confound him and his poverty! He must plead, and not demand, for I am not bound to pay him his fee in advance" Can't he understand that by his favorable answer to my first letter he did bind me! Why did I turn to him with my request for 200 roubles, and not to Katkov? Only and solely because I believed that I should get the money sooner from him than from Katkov (whom I did not wish to trouble); if I had written to Katkov then, the money would have been in my hands at least a week ago! But I did not Why? Because he (Kachpirev) had bound me by his answer Consequently he has no right to say that he confounds me and my poverty, and that it's an impertinence in me to urge him to make haste

But of course he will say that he has nothing to do with it, and that I'm impertinent. Of course he'll say he has done all that lay in his power, that he sent off the letter of exchange in the course of post, that he is nowise to blame, that there is a misunderstanding, and so forth. And by God, he really believes that he's right! Can he not see,

then, that it's unforgivable to leave my despairing letter, in which I told him that through his negligence I had been so long penniless—to leave it unanswered for twelve days. Yes, for twelve days, I am not telling a lie; I still have the envelope with the postmark intact. It's unheard of—not to reply for six days to a telegram, that he himself made me send, when a letter would have taken only four days! Such negligence is unpardonable, insulting! It is a personal offense. For I had told him about my wife and her accouchement. He had bound himself to me in advance, by making it seem superfluous that I should apply to Katkov· it is a serious personal offense!

He requests me to explain by telegram what my first telegram meant, and adds. "Of course at my expense"! Doesn't he know, then, that an unstamped telegram is accepted nowhere, and that consequently I must have two thalers before I can send one? After all my letters, is he unable to divine that it's possible I may not have those two thalers? It is the thoughtlessness of a man who cares nothing for his fellow's perplexity. And then they demand of me lucid art, effortless and untroubled poetry, and point me to Turgenev and Goncharov! If they but knew the conditions under which I have to work!...

ON IMMORTALITY

To N L. Osmidov. Petersburg, February 1878·

My Dear and Kind Nickolay Lukitch,

Let me beg you, first, to forgive my having, by reason of illness and various bothers, taken so long to answer you In the second place, what can I say in reply to your momentous question which belongs to the eternal problem of humanity? Can one treat such matters in the narrow compass of a letter? If I could talk with you for some hours, it would be a different thing, and even then I might well fail to achieve anything Least of all by words and arguments does one convert an unbeliever Would it not be better if you would read, with your best possible attention, all the epistles of St. Paul? Therein much is said of faith, and the question could not be better handled. I recommend you to read the whole Bible through in the Russian translation. The book makes a remarkable impression when one thus reads it. One gains, for one thing, the conviction that humanity possesses, and can possess, no other book of equal significance Quite apart from the question of whether you believe or don't believe. I can't give you any sort of idea. But I'll say just this Every single organism exists on earth but to live—not to annihilate itself Science has made this clear, and has laid down very precise laws upon which to ground the axiom.

Humanity as a whole is, of course, no less than an organism. And that organism has, naturally, its own conditions of existence, its own laws. Human reason comprehends those laws. Now suppose that there is no God, and no personal immortality (personal immortality and God are one and the same—an identical idea). Tell me then: Why am I to live decently and do good, if I die irrevocably here below? If there is no immortality, I need but live out my appointed day, and let the rest go hang. And if that's really so (and if I am clever enough not to let myself be caught by the standing laws), why should I not kill, rob, steal, or at any rate live at the expense of others? For I shall die, and all the rest will die and utterly vanish! By this road, one would reach the conclusion that the human organism alone is not subject to the universal law, that it lives but to destroy itself—not to keep itself alive For what sort of society is one whose members are mutually hostile? Only utter confusion can come of such a thing as that. And then reflect on the "I" which can grasp all this. If the "I" can grasp the idea of the universe and its laws, then that "I" stands above all other things, stands aside from all other things, judges them, fathoms them. In that case, the "I" is not only liberated from the earthly axioms, the earthly laws, but has its own law, which transcends the earthly Now, whence comes that law? Certainly not from earth, where all reaches its issue and vanishes beyond recall Is that no indication of personal immortality? If there were no personal immortality, would you, Nikolay Lukitch, be worrying yourself about it, be searching for an answer, be writing letters like this? So you can't get rid of your "I," you see, your "I" will not subject itself to earthly conditions, but seeks for something which transcends earth, and to which it feels itself akin. But whatever I write falls short altogether—as it must I cordially press your hand, and take my leave Remain in your unrest—seek farther—it may be that you shall find.

HE CONFESSES TO DUALITY

To Mlle. N N Petersburg, April 11, 1880.

MUCH-HONORED AND GRACIOUS LADY,

Forgive my having left your beautiful kind letter unanswered for so long; do not regard it as negligence on my part I wanted to say something very direct and cordial to you, but my life goes by, I vow, in such disorder and hurry that it is only at rare moments that I belong to myself at all Even now, when at last I have a moment in which to write to you, I shall be able to impart but a tiny fragment of all that fills my heart, and that I should like to touch upon with you.

Your opinion of me is extraordinarily precious to me; your lady-mother has shown me the passage in your letter to her which relates to myself, and your words moved me profoundly, nay! even astonished me: for I know that as a writer I have many faults, and even I myself am never satisfied with myself. I must tell you that in those frequent and grievous moments wherein I seek to judge myself, I come to the painful conclusion that in my works I never have said so much as the twentieth part of what I wished to say, and perhaps could, actually, have said My only refuge is the constant hope that God will some day bestow upon me such inspiration and such power as are requisite to bring to full expression all that fills my heart and imagination. Recently there took place here the public debate by the young philosopher Vladimir Solovyov (a son of the renowned historian) of his thesis for doctor's degree; and I heard him make the following profound remark: "I am firmly convinced that mankind knows much more than it has hitherto expressed either in science or art." Just so it is with me I feel that much more is contained in me than I have as yet uttered in my writings And if I lay all false modesty aside, I must acknowledge that even in what I have written there is much that came from the very depth of my heart. I swear to you that though I have received much recognition, possibly more than I deserve, still the critics, the literary newspaper critics, who certainly have often (no, rather, very seldom) praised me, nevertheless have always spoken of me so lightly and superficially that I am obliged to assume that all those things which my heart brought forth with pain and tribulation, and which came directly from my soul, have simply passed unperceived From this you can divine what a pleasant impression must have been made upon me by the delicate and searching comments on my work which I read in your letter to your lady-mother

But I am writing only of myself, which after all, in a letter to the discerning and sympathetic critic whom I perceive in you, is natural enough You write to me of the phase which your mind is just now undergoing. I know that you are an artist—a painter Permit me to give you a piece of advice which truly comes from my heart: stick to your art, and give yourself up to it even more than hitherto I know, for I have heard (do not take this ill of me), that you are not happy To live alone, and continually to reopen the wounds in your heart by dwelling upon memories, may well make your life too drear for endurance. There is but one cure, one refuge, for that woe art, creative activity. But do not put it upon yourself to write me your confession that would assuredly tax you too far. Forgive me for offering you advice; I should very much like to see you and say a few words face to face After the letter that you have written, I must necessarily regard you as one dear to me, as a being akin to my soul,

as my heart's sister—how could I fail to feel with you? But now to what you have told me of your inward duality. That trait is indeed common to all... that is, all who are not wholly commonplace. Nay, it is common to human nature, though it does not evince itself so strongly in all as it does in you. It is precisely on this ground that I cannot but regard you as a twin soul, for your inward duality corresponds most exactly to my own. It causes at once great torment, and great delight. Such duality simply means that you have a strong sense of yourself, much aptness for self-criticism, and an innate feeling for your moral duty to yourself and all mankind. If your intelligence were less developed, if you were more limited, you would be less sensitive, and would not possess that duality Rather the reverse: in its stead would have appeared great arrogance. Yet such duality is a great torment. My dear, my revered Mlle. N. N., do you believe in Christ and in His commandments? If you believe in Him (or at least have a strong desire to do so), then give yourself wholly up to Him; the pain of your duality will be thereby alleviated, and you will find the true way out—but belief is first of all in importance. Forgive the untidiness of my letter. If you only knew how I am losing the capacity to write letters, and what a difficulty I find it! But having gained such a friend as you, I don't wish to lose her in a hurry.

[Translation by Ethel Colburn Mayne]

OF OUR CIVILIZATION

I shall not be a bit surprised if in the midst of this Universal Reason that is to be there will appear, all of a sudden and unexpectedly, some common-faced, or rather cynical and sneering, gentleman who with his arms akimbo will say to us: "Now then, you fellows, what about smashing all this Reason to bits, sending their logarithms to the devil, and living as we like according to our own silly will?"

[From *Letters from the Underworld*]

Leo Tolstoy

The drama of Count Tolstoy's life is, in a measure, revealed in the series of self-explanatory documents reproduced below. His Confession, *in particular, has importance not only as great autobiography—on a par with St Augustine's and Rousseau's, says Prince Mirsky—but also as a major literary masterpiece which should live as long as any of his great novels, if not longer.*

CONFESSION (1879)

I was baptized and brought up in the Orthodox Christian faith. I was taught it in childhood and throughout my boyhood and youth But when I abandoned the second course of the university at the age of eighteen, I no longer believed any of the things I had been taught

Judging by certain memories, I never seriously believed them but had merely relied on what I was taught and on what was professed by the grown-up people around me, and that reliance was very unstable

I remember that before I was eleven a grammar school pupil, Vladimir Milyutin (long since dead), visited us one Sunday and announced as the latest novelty a discovery made at his school This discovery was that there is no God and that all we are taught about Him is a mere invention (this was in 1838) I remember how interested my elder brothers were in this information They called me to their council, and we all, I remember, became very animated, and accepted it as something very interesting and quite possible

I remember also that when my elder brother, Dmitry, who was then at the university, suddenly, in the passionate way natural to him, devoted himself to religion and began to attend all the Church services, to fast and to lead a pure and moral life, we all—even our elders—unceasingly held him up to ridicule and for some unknown reason called him "Noah" I remember that Musin-Pushkin, the then Curator of Kazan University, when inviting us to a dance at his house, ironically persuaded my brother (who was declining the invitation) by the argument that even David danced before the Ark I sympathized with these jokes made by my elders and drew from them the conclusion that, though it is necessary to learn the catechism and go to church, one must not take such things too seriously. I remember also that I read Voltaire when I was very young, and that his raillery, far from shocking me, amused me very much.

My lapse from faith occurred as is usual among people on our

level of education. In most cases, I think, it happens thus· a man lives like everybody else, on the basis of principles not merely having nothing in common with religious doctrine but generally opposed to it; religious doctrine does not play a part in life, in intercourse with others it is never encountered, and in a man's own life he never has to reckon with it. Religious doctrine is professed far away from life and independently of it If it is encountered, it is only as an external phenomenon disconnected from life

Then as now, it was and is quite impossible to judge by a man's life and conduct whether he is a believer or not If there be a difference between a man who publicly professes Orthodoxy and one who denies it, the difference is not in favor of the former Then as now, the public profession and confession of Orthodoxy was chiefly met with among people who were dull and cruel and who considered themselves very important Ability, honesty, reliability, good-nature, and moral conduct were more often met with among unbelievers

The schools teach the catechism and send the pupils to church, and government officials must produce certificates of having received communion But a man of our circle who has finished his education and is not in the government service may even now (and formerly it was still easier for him to do so) live for ten or twenty years without once remembering that he is living among Christians and is himself reckoned a member of the Orthodox Christian Church.

So that, now as formerly, religious doctrine, accepted on trust and supported by external pressure, thaws away gradually under the influence of knowledge and experience of life which conflict with it, and a man very often lives on, imagining that he still holds intact the religious doctrine imparted to him in childhood, whereas in fact not a trace of it remains.

S., a clever and truthful man, once told me the story of how he ceased to believe. On a hunting expedition, when he was already twenty-six, he once, at the place where they put up for the night, knelt down in the evening to pray—a habit retained from childhood. His elder brother, who was at the hunt with him, was lying on some hay and watching him. When S had finished and was settling down for the night, his brother said to him. "So you still do that?"

They said nothing more to one another But from that day S. ceased to say his prayers or go to church And now he has not prayed, received communion, or gone to church, for thirty years. And this not because he knows his brother's convictions and has joined him in them, nor because he has decided anything in his own soul, but simply because the word spoken by his brother was like the push of a finger on a wall that was ready to fall by its own weight The word only showed that where he thought there was faith, in reality there had long been an empty space, and that therefore the utterance of

words and the making of signs of the cross and genuflections while praying were quite senseless actions. Becoming conscious of their senselessness, he could not continue them.

So it has been and is, I think, with the great majority of people. I am speaking of people of our educational level who are sincere with themselves, and not of those who make the profession of faith a means of attaining worldly aims. (Such people are the most fundamental infidels, for if faith is for them a means of attaining any worldly aims, then certainly it is not faith) These people of our education are so placed that the light of knowledge and life has caused an artificial erection to melt away, and they have either already noticed this and swept its place clear, or they have not yet noticed it.

The religious doctrine taught me from childhood disappeared in me as in others, but with this difference, that as from the age of fifteen I began to read philosophical works, my rejection of the doctrine became a conscious one at a very early age. From the time I was sixteen I ceased to say my prayers and ceased to go to church or to fast of my own volition I did not believe what had been taught me in childhood but I believed in something. What it was I believed in I could not at all have said. I believed in a God, or rather I did not deny God—but I could not have said what sort of God. Neither did I deny Christ and his teaching, but what his teaching consisted in I again could not have said.

Looking back on that time, I now see clearly that my faith—my only real faith—that which apart from my animal instincts gave impulse to my life—was a belief in perfecting myself. But in what this perfecting consisted and what its object was, I could not have said I tried to perfect myself mentally—I studied everything I could, anything life threw in my way; I tried to perfect my will, I drew up rules I tried to follow; I perfected myself physically, cultivating my strength and agility by all sorts of exercises, and accustoming myself to endurance and patience by all kinds of privations And all this I considered to be the pursuit of perfection. The beginning of it all was of course moral perfection, but that was soon replaced by perfection in general· by the desire to be better not in my own eyes or those of God, but in the eyes of other people And very soon this effort again changed into a desire to be stronger than others: to be more famous, more important, and richer than others.

Some day I will narrate the touching and instructive history of my life during those ten years of my youth. I think very many people have had a like experience With all my soul I wished to be good, but I was young, passionate and alone, completely alone when I sought goodness. Every time I tried to express my most sincere desire, which

was to be morally good, I met with contempt and ridicule, but as soon as I yielded to low passions I was praised and encouraged.

Ambition, love of power, covetousness, lasciviousness, pride, anger, and revenge—were all respected.

Yielding to those passions, I became like the grown-up folk and felt that they approved of me. The kind aunt with whom I lived, herself the purest of beings, always told me that there was nothing she so desired for me as that I should have relations with a married woman: *'Rien ne forme un jeune homme, comme une liaison avec une femme comme il faut.'** Another happiness she desired for me was that I should become an aide-de-camp, and if possible aide-de-camp to the Emperor. But the greatest happiness of all would be that I should marry a very rich girl and so become possessed of as many serfs as possible

I cannot think of those years without horror, loathing, and heart-ache. I killed men in war and challenged men to duels in order to kill them I lost at cards, consumed the labor of the peasants, sentenced them to punishments, lived loosely, and deceived people Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, murder—there was no crime I did not commit; and in spite of that people praised my conduct, and my contemporaries considered and consider me to be a comparatively moral man.

So I lived for ten years

During that time I began to write from vanity, covetousness, and pride. In my writings I did the same as in my life To get fame and money, for the sake of which I wrote, it was necessary to hide the good and to display the evil. And I did so. How often in my writings I contrived to hide under the guise of indifference, or even of banter, those strivings of mine towards goodness which gave meaning to my life! And I succeeded in this and was praised

At twenty-six years of age** I returned to Petersburg after the war, and met the writers. They received me as one of themselves and flattered me. And before I had time to look round I had adopted the views on life of the set of authors I had come among, and these views completely obliterated all my former strivings to improve—they furnished a theory which justified the dissoluteness of my life.

The view of life of these people, my comrades in authorship, consisted in this. that life in general goes on developing, and in this development we—men of thought—have the chief part; and among men of thought it is we—artists and poets—who have the greatest influence. Our vocation is to teach mankind. And lest the simple question should suggest itself: What do I know, and what can I teach?

* Nothing so forms a young man as an intimacy with a woman of good breeding —Tr

** Tolstoy makes a slip here. he was twenty-seven.—Tr

it was explained in this theory that this need not be known, and that the artist and poet teach unconsciously. I was considered an admirable artist and poet, and therefore it was very natural for me to adopt this theory. I, artist and poet, wrote and taught without myself knowing what. For this I was paid money; I had excellent food, lodging, women, and society; and I had fame, which showed that what I taught was very good.

This faith in the meaning of poetry and in the development of life was a religion, and I was one of its priests. To be its priest was very pleasant and profitable. And I lived a considerable time in this faith without doubting its validity. But in the second and still more in the third year of this life I began to doubt the infallibility of this religion and to examine it. My first cause of doubt was that I began to notice that the priests of this religion were not all in accord among themselves. Some said: We are the best and most useful teachers; we teach what is needed, but the others teach wrongly. Others said: No! we are the real teachers, and you teach wrongly. And they disputed, quarreled, abused, cheated, and tricked one another. There were also many among us who did not care who was right and who was wrong, but were simply bent on attaining their covetous aims by means of this activity of ours. All this obliged me to doubt the validity of our creed.

Moreover, having begun to doubt the truth of the authors' creed itself, I also began to observe its priests more attentively, and I became convinced that almost all the priests of that religion, the writers, were immoral, and for the most part men of bad, worthless character, much inferior to those whom I had met in my former dissipated and military life; but they were self-confident and self-satisfied as only those can be who are quite holy or who do not know what holiness is. These people revolted me, I became revolting to myself, and I realized that that faith was a fraud.

But strange to say, though I understood this fraud and renounced it, yet I did not renounce the rank these people gave me. the rank of artist, poet and teacher. I naively imagined that I was a poet and artist and could teach everybody without myself knowing what I was teaching, and I acted accordingly.

From my intimacy with these men I acquired a new vice: abnormally developed pride and an insane assurance that it was my vocation to teach men, without knowing what.

To remember that time, and my own state of mind and that of those men (though there are thousands like them today), is sad and terrible and ludicrous, and arouses exactly the feeling one experiences in a lunatic asylum.

We were all then convinced that it was necessary for us to speak, write, and print as quickly as possible and as much as possible, and

that it was all wanted for the good of humanity And thousands of us, contradicting and abusing one another, all printed and wrote—teaching others. And without noticing that we knew nothing, and that to the simplest of life's questions. What is good and what is evil? we did not know how to reply, we all talked at the same time, not listening to one another, sometimes seconding and praising one another in order to be seconded and praised in turn, sometimes getting angry with one another—just as in a lunatic asylum.

Thousands of workmen labored to the extreme limit of their strength day and night, setting the type and printing millions of words which the post carried all over Russia, and we still went on teaching and could in no way find time to teach enough, and were always angry that sufficient attention was not paid us

It was terribly strange, but is now quite comprehensible. Our real innermost concern was to get as much money and praise as possible. To gain that end we could do nothing except write books and papers. So we did that. But in order to do such useless work and to feel assured that we were very important people, we required a theory justifying our activity And so among us this theory was devised "All that exists is reasonable. All that exists develops And it all develops by means of Culture And Culture is measured by the circulation of books and newspapers And we are paid money and are respected because we write books and newspapers, and therefore we are the most useful and the best of men." This theory would have been all very well if we had been unanimous, but as every thought expressed by one of us was always met by a diametrically opposite thought expressed by another, we ought to have been driven to reflection. But we ignored this, people paid us money and those on our side praised us, so each of us considered himself justified

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It is now clear to me that this was just as in a lunatic asylum; but then I only dimly suspected this and, like all lunatics, simply called all men lunatics except myself

So I lived, abandoning myself to this insanity for another six years, till my marriage. During that time I went abroad Life in Europe and my acquaintance with leading and learned Europeans * confirmed me yet more in the faith of striving after perfection in which I believed, for I found the same faith among them That faith took with me the common form it assumes with the majority of educated people of our day It was expressed by the word "progress" It then appeared to me that this word meant something I did not as yet understand that, being tormented (like every vital man) by the question how it is best for me to live, in my answer, "Live in conformity with progress," I was like a man in a boat who when carried along by

* Russians generally make a distinction between Europeans and Russians Tr.

wind and waves should reply to what for him is the chief and only question, "whither to steer," by saying, "We are being carried somewhere."

I did not then notice this. Only occasionally—not by reason but by instinct—I revolted against this superstition so common in our day, by which people hide from themselves their lack of understanding of life ...So, for instance, during my stay in Paris, the sight of an execution revealed to me the instability of my superstitious belief in progress. When I saw the head part from the body and how they thumped separately into the box, I understood, not with my mind but with my whole being, that no theory of the reasonableness of our present progress could justify this deed; and that, though everybody from the creation of the world had held it to be necessary, on whatever theory, I knew it to be unnecessary and bad; and therefore the arbiter of what is good and evil is not what people say and do, nor is it progress, but it is my heart and I. Another instance of a realization that the superstitious belief in progress is insufficient as a guide to life was my brother's death. Wise, good, serious, he fell ill while still a young man, suffered for more than a year, and died painfully, not understanding why he had lived and still less why he had to die. No theories could give me, or him, any reply to these questions during his slow and painful dying. But these were only rare instances of doubt, and I actually continued to live professing a faith only in progress. "Everything evolves and I evolve with it: and why it is that I evolve with all things will be known some day." So I ought to have formulated my faith at that time.

On returning from abroad I settled in the country and chanced to occupy myself with peasant schools. This work was particularly to my taste because in it I had not to face the falsity which had become obvious to me and stared me in the face when I tried to teach people by literary means. Here also I acted in the name of progress, but I already regarded progress itself critically. I said to myself: "In some of its developments progress has proceeded wrongly, and with primitive peasant children one must deal in a spirit of perfect freedom, letting them choose what path of progress they please." In reality I was ever revolving round one and the same insoluble problem, which was: how to teach without knowing what to teach. In the higher spheres of literary activity I had realized that one could not teach without knowing what, for I saw that people all taught differently, and by quarreling among themselves only succeeded in hiding their ignorance from one another. But here, with peasant children, I thought to evade this difficulty by letting them learn what they liked It amuses me now when I remember how I shuffled in trying to satisfy my desire to teach, while in the depth of my soul I knew very well that I could not teach anything needful, for I did not know what was

needful. After spending a year at school work I went abroad a second time to discover how to teach others while myself knowing nothing.

And it seemed to me that I had learned this abroad, and in the year of the peasants' emancipation (1861) I returned to Russia armed with all this wisdom, and having become an Arbiter,* I began to teach, both the uneducated peasants in schools and the educated classes through a magazine I published. Things appeared to be going well, but I felt I was not quite sound mentally and that matters could not long continue in that way. And I should perhaps then have come to the state of despair I reached fifteen years later had there not been one side of life still unexplored by me which promised me happiness: that was marriage.

For a year I busied myself with arbitration work, the schools, and the magazine; and I became so worn out—as a result especially of my mental confusion—and so hard was my struggle as Arbiter, so obscure the results of my activity in the schools, so repulsive my shuffling in the magazine (which always amounted to one and the same thing: a desire to teach everybody and to hide the fact that I did not know what to teach), that I fell ill, mentally rather than physically, threw up everything, and went away to the Bashkirs in the steppes, to breathe fresh air, drink kumys,** and live a merely animal life

Returning from there I married. The new conditions of happy family life completely diverted me from all search for the general meaning of life. My whole life was centered at that time in my family, wife and children, and therefore in care to increase our means of livelihood My striving after self-perfection, for which I had already substituted a striving for perfection in general, i.e, progress, was now again replaced by the effort simply to secure the best possible conditions for myself and my family.

So another fifteen years passed.

In spite of the fact that I now regarded authorship as of no importance, I still continued to write during those fifteen years I had already tasted the temptation of authorship—the temptation of immense monetary rewards and applause for my insignificant work—and I devoted myself to it as a means of improving my material position and of stifling in my soul all questions as to the meaning of my own life or life in general.

I wrote: teaching what was for me the only truth, namely, that one should live so as to have the best for oneself and one's family.

So I lived; but five years ago something very strange began to happen to me. At first I experienced moments of perplexity and arrest of life, as though I did not know what to do or how to live;

* To keep peace between peasants and owners—Tr

** A fermented drink prepared from mare's milk—Tr.

and I felt lost and became dejected. But this passed, and I went on living as before. Then these moments of perplexity began to recur oftener and oftener, and always in the same form. They were always expressed by the questions: What is it for? What does it lead to?

At first it seemed to me that these were aimless and irrelevant questions. I thought that it was all well known, and that if I should ever wish to deal with the solution it would not cost me much effort; just at present I had no time for it, but when I wanted to I should be able to find the answer. The questions, however, began to repeat themselves frequently, and to demand replies more and more insistently; and, like drops of ink always falling on one place, they ran together into one black blot.

Then occurred what happens to everyone sickening with a mortal internal disease. At first trivial signs of indisposition appear to which the sick man pays no attention; then these signs reappear more and more often and merge into one uninterrupted period of suffering. The suffering increases and, before the sick man can look round, what he took for a mere indisposition has already become more important to him than anything else in the world—it is death!

That was what happened to me. I understood that it was no casual indisposition, but something very important, and that if these questions constantly repeated themselves they would have to be answered And I tried to answer them. The questions seemed such stupid, simple, childish ones; but as soon as I touched them and tried to solve them I at once became convinced, first, that they are not childish and stupid, but the most important and profound of life's questions; and, second, that, try as I would, I could not solve them. Before occupying myself with my Samara estate, the education of my son, or the writing of a book, I had to know *why* I was doing it. As long as I did not know why, I could do nothing and could not live. Amid the thoughts of estate management which greatly occupied me at that time, the question would suddenly occur: "Well, you will have 6,000 *desyatinas** of land in Samara Government and 300 horses, and what then?"...And I was quite disconcerted and did not know what to think. Or when considering plans for the education of my children, I would say to myself. "What for?" Or when considering how the peasants might become prosperous, I would suddenly say to myself: "But what does it matter to me?" Or when thinking of the fame my works would bring me, I would say to myself, "Very well; you will be more famous than Gogol or Pushkin or Shakespeare or Molière, or than all the writers in the world—and what of it?" And I could find no reply at all. The questions would not wait, they had to be answered at once, and if I did not answer them it was impossible to live But there was no answer.

* The *desyatina* is about 2¾ acres—Tr.

I felt that what I had been standing on had collapsed and that I had nothing left under my feet. What I had lived on no longer existed, and there was nothing left.

My life came to a standstill. I could breathe, eat, drink, and sleep, and I could not help doing these things; but there was no life, for there were no wishes the fulfillment of which I could consider reasonable. If I desired anything, I knew in advance that whether I satisfied my desire or not, nothing would come of it. Had a fairy come and offered to fulfill my desires, I should not have known what to ask. If in moments of intoxication I felt something which, though not a wish, was a habit left by former wishes, in sober moments I knew this to be a delusion and that there was really nothing to wish for. I could not even wish to know the truth, for I guessed of what it consisted. The truth was that life is meaningless. I had as it were lived, lived, and walked, walked, till I had come to a precipice and saw clearly that there was nothing ahead of me but destruction It was impossible to stop, impossible to go back, and impossible to close my eyes or avoid seeing that there was nothing ahead but suffering and real death—complete annihilation.

It had come to this—that I, a healthy, fortunate man, felt I could no longer live; some irresistible power impelled me to rid myself one way or other of life. I cannot say I *wished* to kill myself The power which drew me away from life was stronger, fuller, and more widespread than any mere wish. It was a force similar to the former striving to live, only in a contrary direction. All my strength drew me away from life. The thought of self-destruction now came to me as naturally as thoughts of how to improve my life had come formerly. And it was so seductive that I had to be cunning with myself lest I should carry it out too hastily. I did not wish to hurry, because I wanted to use all efforts to disentangle the matter. "If I cannot unravel matters, there will always be time" And it was then that I, a man favored by fortune, hid a cord from myself lest I should hang myself from the crosspiece of the partition in my room where I undressed alone every evening, and I ceased to go out shooting with a gun lest I should be tempted by so easy a way of ending my life. I did not myself know what I wanted: I feared life, desired to escape from it, yet still hoped something of it.

And all this befell me at a time when all around me I had what is considered complete good fortune. I was not yet fifty; I had a good wife who loved me and whom I loved, good children, and a large estate which without much effort on my part improved and increased. I was respected by my relations and acquaintances more than at any previous time. I was praised by others and without much self-deception could consider that my name was famous. And far from being

insane or mentally diseased, I enjoyed on the contrary a strength of mind and body such as I have seldom met with among men of my kind; physically I could keep up with the peasants at mowing, and mentally I could work for eight and ten hours at a stretch without experiencing any ill results from such exertion. And in this situation I came to this—that I could not live, and, fearing death, had to employ cunning with myself to avoid taking my own life.

My mental condition presented itself to me in this way: my life is a stupid and spiteful joke someone has played on me. Though I did not acknowledge a "someone" who created me, yet such a presentation—that someone had played an evil and stupid joke on me by placing me in the world—was the form of expression that suggested itself most naturally to me.

Involuntarily it appeared to me that there, somewhere, was someone who amused himself by watching how I lived for thirty or forty years. learning, developing, maturing in body and mind, and how, having with matured mental powers reached the summit of life from which it all lay before me, I stood on that summit—like an arch-fool—seeing clearly that there is nothing in life, and that there has been and will be nothing. And *he* was amused.

But whether that "someone" laughing at me existed or not, I was none the better off I could give no reasonable meaning to any single action or to my whole life I was only surprised that I could have avoided understanding this from the very beginning—it has been so long known to all. Today or tomorrow sickness and death will come (they had come already) to those I love or to me; nothing will remain but stench and worms Sooner or later my affairs, whatever they may be, will be forgotten, and I shall not exist. Then why go on making any effort? ... How can man fail to see this? And how go on living? That is what is surprising! One can only live while one is intoxicated with life; as soon as one is sober it is impossible not to see that it is all a mere fraud and a stupid fraud! That is precisely what it is: there is nothing either amusing or witty about it, it is simply cruel and stupid.

There is an Eastern fable, told long ago, of a traveler overtaken on a plain by an enraged beast. Escaping from the beast he gets into a dry well, but sees at the bottom of the well a dragon that has opened its jaws to swallow him And the unfortunate man, not daring to climb out lest he should be destroyed by the enraged beast, and not daring to leap to the bottom of the well lest he should be eaten by the dragon, seizes a twig growing in a crack in the well and clings to it. His hands are growing weaker and he feels he will soon have to resign himself to the destruction that awaits him above or below, but still he clings on. Then he sees that two mice, a black and a white one, go regularly round and round the stem of the twig to which he is

clinging and gnaw at it. And soon the twig itself will snap and he will fall into the dragon's jaws The traveler sees this and knows that he will inevitably perish, but while still hanging he looks around, sees some drops of honey on the leaves of the twig, reaches them with his tongue and licks them. So I too clung to the twig of life, knowing that the dragon of death was inevitably awaiting me, ready to tear me to pieces; and I could not understand why I had fallen into such torment. I tried to lick the honey which formerly consoled me, but the honey no longer gave me pleasure, and the white and black mice of day and night gnawed at the branch by which I hung I saw the dragon clearly and the honey no longer tasted sweet. I only saw the inescapable dragon and the mice, and I could not tear my gaze from them. And this is not a fable but the real unanswerable truth intelligible to all

The deception of the joys of life which formerly allayed my terror of the dragon now no longer deceived me. No matter how often I may be told, "You cannot understand the meaning of life so do not think about it, but live," I can no longer do it· I have already done it too long I cannot now help seeing day and night going round and bringing me to death. That is all I see, for that alone is true. All else is false.

The two drops of honey which diverted my eyes from the cruel truth longer than the rest my love of family, and of writing—art as I called it—were no longer sweet to me.

"Family"... said I to myself. But my family—wife and children—are also human They are placed just as I am· they must either live in a lie or see the terrible truth. Why should they live? Why should I love them, guard them, bring them up, or watch them? That they may come to the despair that I feel, or else be stupid? Loving them, I cannot hide the truth from them· each step in knowledge leads them to the truth. And the truth is death.

"Art, poetry?"... Under the influence of success and the praise of men, I had long assured myself that this was a thing one could do though death was drawing near—death which destroys all things, including my work and its remembrance; but soon I saw that that too was a fraud. It was plain to me that art is an adornment of life, an allurement to life But life had lost its attraction for me, so how could I attract others? As long as I was not living my own life but was borne on the waves of some other life—as long as I believed that life had a meaning, though one I could not express—the reflection of life in poetry and art of all kinds afforded me pleasure: it was pleasant to look at life in the mirror of art. But when I began to seek the meaning of life and felt the necessity of living my own life, that mirror became for me unnecessary, superfluous, ridiculous, or painful. I could no longer soothe myself with what I now saw in the mirror,

namely, that my position was stupid and desperate. It was all very well to enjoy the sight when in the depth of my soul I believed that my life had a meaning. Then the play of lights—comic, tragic, touching, beautiful, and terrible—in life amused me. But when I knew life to be meaningless and terrible, the play in the mirror could no longer amuse me No sweetness of honey could be sweet to me when I saw the dragon and saw the mice gnawing away my support.

Nor was that all Had I simply understood that life had no meaning, I could have borne it quietly, knowing that that was my lot. But I could not satisfy myself with that. Had I been like a man living in a wood from which he knows there is no exit, I could have lived; but I was like one lost in a wood who, horrified at having lost his way, rushes about wishing to find the road. He knows that each step he takes confuses him more and more, but still he cannot help rushing about.

It was indeed terrible. And to rid myself of the terror I wished to kill myself. I experienced terror at what awaited me—knew that that terror was even worse than the position I was in, but still I could not patiently await the end. However convincing the argument might be that in any case some vessel in my heart would give way, or something would burst and all would be over, I could not patiently await that end. The horror of darkness was too great, and I wished to free myself from it as quickly as possible by noose or bullet. That was the feeling which drew me most strongly toward suicide.

"But perhaps I have overlooked something, or misunderstood something?" said I to myself several times "It cannot be that this condition of despair is natural to man!" And I sought for an explanation of these problems in all the branches of knowledge acquired by men. I sought painfully and long, not from idle curiosity or listlessly, but painfully and persistently day and night—sought as a perishing man seeks for safety—and I found nothing.

I sought in all the sciences but, far from finding what I wanted, became convinced that all who, like myself, had sought in knowledge for the meaning of life had found nothing And not only had they found nothing, but they had plainly acknowledged that the very thing which made me despair—namely, the senselessness of life—is the one indubitable thing man can know.

I sought everywhere; and thanks to a life spent in learning, and thanks also to my relations with the scholarly world, I had access to scientists and scholars in all branches of knowledge, and they readily showed me all their knowledge, not only in books but also in conversation, so that I had at my disposal all that science has to say on this question of life.

I was long unable to believe that it gives no other reply to life's

questions than that which it actually does give. It long seemed to me, when I saw the important and serious air with which science announces its conclusions which have nothing in common with the real questions of human life, that there was someting I had not understood. I long was timid before science, and it seemed to me that the lack of conformity between the answers and my questions arose not by the fault of science but from my ignorance; but the matter was for me not a game or an amusement but one of life and death, and I was involuntarily brought to the conviction that my questions were the only legitimate ones, forming the basis of all knowledge, and that I with my questions was not to blame, but science if it pretends to reply to those questions.

My question—that which at the age of fifty brought me to the verge of suicide—was the simplest of questions, lying in the soul of every man, from the foolish child to the wisest elder. it was a question without an answer to which one cannot live, as I had found by experience. It was: "What will come of what I am doing today or shall do tomorrow? What will come of my whole life?"

Differently expressed, the question is: "Why should I live, why wish for anything, or do anything?" It can also be expressed thus: "Is there any meaning in my life that the inevitable death awaiting me does not destroy?"

To this one question, variously expressed, I sought an answer in science. And I found that in relation to that question all human knowledge is divided as it were into two opposite hemispheres at the end of which are two poles: the one a negative and the other a positive, but that neither at the one nor the other pole is there an answer to life's questions.

. . .

In my search for answers to life's questions I experienced just what is felt by a man lost in a forest.

He reaches a glade, climbs a tree, and clearly sees the limitless distance, but sees that his home is not and cannot be there; then he goes into the dark wood and sees the darkness, but there also his home is not.

So I wandered in that wood of human knowledge, amid the gleams of mathematical and experimental science which showed me clear horizons, but in a direction where there could be no home, and also amid the darkness of the abstract sciences where I was immersed in deeper gloom the further I went, and where I finally convinced myself that there was, and could be, no exit.

Yielding myself to the bright side of knowledge, I understood that I was only diverting my gaze from the question. However alluringly clear those horizons which opened out before me might be, however alluring it might be to immerse oneself in the limitless expanse of

those sciences, I already understood that the clearer they were the less they met my need and the less they replied to my question.

"I know," said I to myself, "what science so persistently tries to discover, and along that road there is no reply to the question as to the meaning of my life." In the abstract sphere I understood that notwithstanding the fact, or just because of the fact, that the direct aim of science is to reply to my question, there is no reply but that which I have myself already given: "What is the meaning of my life?" "There is none." Or: "What will come of my life?" "Nothing." Or: "Why does everything exist that exists, and why do I exist?" "Because it exists"

Inquiring for one region of human knowledge, I received an innumerable quantity of exact replies concerning matters about which I had not asked about the chemical constituents of the stars, about the movement of the sun toward the constellation Hercules, about the origin of species and of man, about the forms of infinitely minute imponderable particles of ether; but in this sphere of knowledge the only answer to my question, "What is the meaning of my life" was: "You are what you call your 'life'; you are a transitory, casual cohesion of particles. The mutual interactions and changes of these particles produce in you what you call your 'life.' That cohesion will last some time, afterwards the interaction of these particles will cease and what you call 'life' will cease, and so will all your questions. You are an accidentally united little lump of something. That little lump ferments. The little lump calls that fermenting its 'life.' The lump will disintegrate and there will be an end of the fermenting and of all the questions." So answers the clear side of science and cannot answer otherwise if it strictly follows its principles.

From such a reply one sees that the reply does not answer the question I want to know the meaning of my life; but that it is a fragment of the infinite, far from giving it a meaning, destroys its every possible meaning The obscure compromises which that side of experimental exact science makes with abstract science when it says that the meaning of life consists in development and in co-operation with development, owing to their inexactness and obscurity, cannot be considered as replies.

The other side of science—the abstract side—when it holds strictly to its principles, replying directly to the question, always replies, and in all ages has replied, in one and the same way: "The world is something infinite and incomprehensible. Human life is an incomprehensible part of that incomprehensible 'all.'"

. . .

And I began to draw near to the believers among the poor, simple, unlettered folk: pilgrims, monks, sectarians, and peasants. The faith

of these common people was the same Christian faith as was professed by the pseudo-believers of our circle Among them, too, I found a great deal of superstition mixed with the Christian truths; but the difference was that the superstitions of the believers of our circle were quite unnecessary to them and were not in conformity with their lives, being merely a kind of epicurean diversion, but the superstitions of the believers among the laboring masses conformed so with their lives that it was impossible to imagine them to oneself without those superstitions, which were a necessary condition of their life The whole life of believers in our circle was a contradiction of their faith, but the whole life of the working-folk believers was a confirmation of the meaning of life which their faith gave them. And I began to look well into the life and faith of these people, and the more I considered it the more I became convinced that they have a real faith which is a necessity to them and alone gives their life a meaning and makes it possible for them to live In contrast with what I had seen in our circle—where life without faith is possible and where hardly one in a thousand acknowledges himself to be a believer—among them there is hardly one unbeliever in a thousand In contrast with what I had seen in our circle, where the whole of life is passed in idleness, amusement, and dissatisfaction, I saw that the whole life of these people was passed in heavy labor, and that they were content with life. In contradistinction to the way in which people of our circle oppose fate and complain of it on account of deprivations and sufferings, these people accepted illness and sorrow without any perplexity or opposition, and with a quiet and firm conviction that all is good In contradistinction to us, who the wiser we are the less we understand the meaning of life, and see some evil irony in the fact that we suffer and die, these folk live and suffer, and they approach death and suffering with tranquillity and in most cases gladly. In contrast to the fact that a tranquil death, a death without horror and despair, is a very rare exception in our circle, a troubled, rebellious, and unhappy death is the rarest exception among the people. And such people, lacking all that for us and for Solomon is the only good of life and yet experiencing the greatest happiness, are a great multitude. I looked more widely around me I considered the life of the enormous mass of the people in the past and the present. And of such people, understanding the meaning of life and able to live and to die, I saw not two or three, or tens, but hundreds, thousands, and millions. And they all—endlessly different in their manners, minds, education, and position, as they were—all alike, in complete contrast to my ignorance, knew the meaning of life and death, labored quietly, endured deprivations and sufferings, and lived and died seeing therein not vanity but good.

And I learned to love these people. The more I came to know their life, the life of those who are living and of others who are dead

of whom I read and heard, the more I loved them and the easier it became for me to live. So I went on for about two years, and a change took place in me which had long been preparing and the promise of which had always been in me. It came about that the life of our circle, the rich and learned, not merely became distasteful to me but lost all meaning in my eyes. All our actions, discussions, science and art, presented itself to me in a new light. I understood that it is all merely self-indulgence, and that to find a meaning in it is impossible; while the life of the whole laboring people, the whole of mankind who produce life, appeared to me in its true significance. I understood that *that* is life itself, and that the meaning given to that life is true: and I accepted it.

[Translation by Louise and Aylmer Maude]

HIS ANSWER TO EXCOMMUNICATION

[On February 22, 1901, the Russian Holy Synod issued a Decree of Excommunication, which read in part:

"...In our days God has permitted a new false teacher to appear—Count Leo Tolstoy. A writer well known to the world, Russian by birth, Orthodox by baptism and education, Count Tolstoy, under the seduction of his intellectual pride, has insolently risen against the Lord and His Christ and against His holy heritage, and has publicly in the sight of all men repudiated the Orthodox Mother Church which reared and educated him, and has devoted his literary activity and the talent given him by God, to disseminating among the people teachings repugnant to Christ and the Church, and to destroying in the minds and hearts of men their national faith, the Orthodox faith which has been confirmed by the universe and in which our forefathers lived and were saved, and to which till now Holy Russia has held, and in which it has been strong....

"Therefore the Church does not reckon him as its member, and cannot so reckon him until he repents and resumes his communion with her."

To this edict Tolstoy replied]

...Whether these beliefs of mine offend, grieve, or prove a stumbling-block to anyone, or hinder anything, or give displeasure to anybody or not, I can as little change them as I can change my body. I must myself live my own life, and I must myself alone meet death (and that very soon), and therefore I cannot believe otherwise than as I—preparing to go to that God from Whom I came—do believe. I do not believe my faith to be the one indubitable truth for all time, but I see

no other that is plainer, clearer, or answers better to all the demands of my reason and my heart. Should I find such a faith, I shall at once accept it; for God requires nothing but the truth. But I can no more return to that from which with such suffering I have escaped, than a flying bird can re-enter the eggshell from which it has emerged.

[Translation by Louise and Aylmer Maude]

HIS PARTING LETTER

To his wife before setting out on his last pilgrimage in 1897:

DEAR SONYA,

I have long been troubled by the inconsistency between my life and my convictions. I could not make you change your way of life and the habits in which I had trained you... and I have now determined on what I have long wanted to do—to go away.... Approaching my seventieth year, I long with my whole soul for peace, solitude, and if not complete harmony, at least to avoid glaring discord between my life and my conviction and conscience.

If I were to do this openly there would be entreaties, upbraidings, arguments and complaints. I should perhaps lose courage and not carry out my decision—though it must be carried out. And therefore, Sonya, if my action hurts you, please forgive me and in your soul especially let me go with good will....

That I have gone away from you does not mean that I am displeased with you. I know that you literally could not see and feel as I do, and therefore could not and cannot change your life and make sacrifices for what you do not recognize. And therefore I do not blame you, but on the contrary remember with love and gratitude the thirty-five long years of our life together, especially the first half of it when, with the motherly self-devotion which is part of your nature, you so earnestly and unflinchingly carried out what you considered your duty. You have given me and the world what you could—a great deal of motherly love and self-sacrifice—and one cannot but esteem you for it. But in the later period of our life—the last fifteen years—we have grown apart. I cannot think that I am to blame, for I know I have changed not for my own sake or other people's, but because I could do no other. I cannot blame you either for not following me, but think of you and always shall think of you, with love and thank you for what you have given me.

Farewell, dear Sonya,

Your loving, LEO TOLSTOY

[Translation by Louise and Aylmer Maude]

Ivan Turgenev

DYING PLEA TO TOLSTOY

Bougeval, June 27 or 28, 1883

[Written in pencil, and unsigned]

KIND AND DEAR LEO NIKOLAEVICH,

For long I have not written to you because, to tell the truth, I have been, and am, on my deathbed. I cannot recover: that is out of question. I am writing to you specially to say how glad I have been to be your contemporary, and to express my last and sincere request. My friend, return to literary activity! That gift came to you from whence comes all the rest. Ah, how happy I should be if I could think my request would have an effect on you! I am played out—the doctors do not even know what to call my malady, *névralgie stomacale goutteuse.* I can neither walk, nor eat, nor sleep. It is wearisome even to repeat it all! My friend—great writer of our Russian land—listen to my request! Let me know you have received this scrap of paper, and allow me yet once more cordially to embrace you, your wife, and all yours....I can write no more....I am tired.

[Translation by Louise and Aylmer Maude]

Anton Chekhov

Chekhov is the first manifestation of the Twilight period of Russian literature fostered by the spirit of science and industry which in the eighties began to take possession of all aspects of Russian life. The giants are dead; henceforth a race of smaller men takes possession. Chekhov's letters themselves no longer deal with those cosmic themes which obsessed Gogol, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky. It is an age, too, in which the short story begin to flourish. Moments of life replace the eternities which interested the great writers formerly. But the mood remains realistic and honest, and wholly without false or superfluous adornments.

ON THE FUNCTION OF LITERATURE

To Mme. M. V. Kissielyov. January 14, 1887:

...Human nature is imperfect, and therefore it would be strange to see on earth none but the righteous. To believe that it is the duty of literature to dig out "pearls" from the heap of scoundrels is to reject literature itself. Fiction is called artistic because it draws life as it actually is. Its aim is absolute and honest truth. To narrow its function to the special task of digging for "pearls" is just as deadly for it as if you were to make Levitan paint a tree and ordered him not to include the dirty bark nor the yellow leaves. I agree that a "pearl" is a fine thing, but then a writer is not a confectioner, not a cosmetician, not an entertainer; he is a man bound, under contract, by awareness of his duty and his conscience; having taken the rope he must not say he can't pull; and whatever dread he may feel he must overcome his fastidiousness, he must sully his imagination with the dirt of life....He is like any ordinary reporter. What would you say if a newspaperman, out of fastidiousness or from a desire to give pleasure, described only honest mayors, high-minded ladies, and virtuous railway contractors?

To chemists there is nothing unclean on earth. And a writer has to be just as objective as a chemist; he must renounce everyday subjectivity and remember that muck-heaps in a landscape play a very respectable part, and that evil passions are as peculiar to life as good ones.

Writers are the children of their age, and therefore, like the rest of the public, they must submit to the external conditions of social life. Thus, for instance, they must be absolutely decent....

ON HAVING TWO OCCUPATIONS

To A. S Suvorin. August 29, 1888

. .You advise me not to hunt after two hares at once and not to think of practicing medicine. I do not know why one should not hunt two hares, even in the literal sense. If there are hounds, then why not hunt?...I feel more contented when I remember that I have two professions and not one Medicine is my lawful wife and literature my mistress. When I am bored with one I spend the night with the other. Though this is irregular it is not monotonous, and, besides, neither really loses anything through my infidelity. If I had not my medical work I could hardly give my leisure and my spare thoughts to literature. There is no discipline in me....

ON FAILURE AND SUCCESS

To A. S. Suvorin. November 27, 1888:

M. Merezhkovsky calls my Monk, who composes the chants of praise, a failure. How is he a failure? God grant us all that we live like him: he believed in God, earned his living, and knew how to compose....To divide people into successes and failures is to look at human nature from a narrow, preconceived point of view....Are you a success or not? Am I? And Napoleon? Your butler Basil? What is the criterion? One needs to be a god to be able to distinguish successes from failures without being mistaken....

DISCOURAGEMENT

To A. S. Suvorin. December 23, 1888:

...There are moments when I positively lose heart. For whom and for what do I write? For the public? But I do not see it, and believe in it less than I do in ghosts: it is uncivilized, badly educated, and even its best elements are unfair and insincere to us. Does the public need me or not? I cannot make it out. Burenin [a reactionary literary critic] says I am not wanted and am spending myself on trifles; but the Academy gives me a prize. The devil himself could make nothing of it. Write for money? But I never have money, and from want of the habit of it I am become almost indifferent to it. For the sake of money I work poorly. Write for praise? But praise only irritates me. The literary society, students, Mme. Yevreyinov [editor of *Severny Vestnik*], Plescheyev, girls, and so on, praised my "Fit" to the skies, but Grigorovich alone noticed the description of the first snow. And so on and so on. If we had real criticism, then I should know that I formed material—whether good or bad does not matter—that to men who devote themselves to the study of life I am as necessary as a star is to an astronomer. And then I would exert myself to work and should know for what I was working. But as things are, I, Muravlin, etc., are like maniacs who write books and plays merely for our own pleasure. One's own pleasure, of course, is excellent; one feels it while one writes; but what then?...

ON LOVE OF COUNTRY

To A. S. Suvorin. December 9, 1890:

...God's world is a good place. The one thing not good is—we. How little there is in us of justice and humility! How little we understand love of country! A drunken, worn-out debauchee of a husband loves his wife and children, but of what use is that love? We—so the papers say—love our great country, but how is that love expressed? Instead of knowledge—impertinence and conceit beyond measure; instead of work—idleness and swinishness; there is no justice; the conception of honor goes no further than the "honor of the uniform" —the uniform which serves as an everyday decoration of the prisoners' dock. No, we must work, and all the rest can go to the devil. The chief thing is we must be just, and all the rest will be added unto us ...

DISILLUSIONMENT WITH TOLSTOY

To A. S Suvorin. March 27, 1894:

...Tolstoyan philosophy moved me profoundly and held me for six or seven years; and it was not the fundamental principles, which were familiar to me before, that affected me, but the Tolstoyan manner of expressing himself, his sagacity, and probably a kind of hypnotism But now something within me protests; reason and justice tell me that in electricity and steam there is more love of man than there is in chastity and abstinence from meat. War is evil and law is evil, but it does not follow from that that I must wear wooden shoes and sleep on the oven with my laborer and his wife, and so on, and so on. But the point is not in that, not in the "pro and con," but in this: that in one way or another Tolstoy has passed for me, he is in my soul no more, he has departed from me, saying, "I leave thy house empty." I am tenantless.

ON TOLSTOY: THE SUPREME TEST

To A. S. Suvorin. October 26, 1895·

...Tolstoy's daughters are very sympathetic. They adore their father and believe in him fanatically, and that means that Tolstoy is a great moral force, for were he insincere and not irreproachable, his daughters would be the first to be skeptical about him, daughters being like sparrows: they can't be deceived with chaff... One can deceive a

sweetheart or a mistress as much as one likes, and even an ass seems a philosopher in the eyes of the woman he loves, but daughters—that is a different story....

Maxim Gorky

In the opinion of such a discerning critic as Mirsky, the best and most enduring works of Gorky are his autobiographies, which are about everyone except himself, they deal with great people and little people, and in Gorky's words, "Russia is a wonderful country, where even fools are original" From one of these remarkable autobiographies, Fragments from a Diary, *are reproduced the following studies of Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Blok; they tell us something about Russia as well as about these great men; perhaps by implication, they tell us something about Gorky himself. Nothing is more difficult than to praise judiciously, Gorky surely, at least, does that.*

ON LEO TOLSTOY

One hot day he overtook me on the low road. He was riding in the direction of Livadia, mounted on a quiet little Tartar horse. Gray and shaggy, in a light, white, mushroom-shaped felt hat, he looked very much like a gnome.

Holding back his horse he hailed me, and I walked along by his side, telling him, among other things, that I had just had a letter from V. G. Korolenko Tolstoy shook his beard angrily.

"Does he believe in God?" he asked.

"I do not know."

"That means you do not know the chief thing about him He is a believer, but he is afraid to admit it in front of atheists"

He spoke in a grumbling and peevish voice, peering angrily at me through half-closed eyelids. It was clear that he was in no mood to talk to me, but when I showed an inclination to go he stopped me.

"Where are you off to?" he inquired. "I am not going too fast am I?"

And he began to grumble again:

"Your Andreyev is also afraid of atheists, but he, too, believes in God—and God keeps him in awe of Him."

When we came to the edge of the estate belonging to the Grand Duke A. M Romanov, we met three Romanovs who were standing talking on the road, very close to each other. One was the master of Ai-Todor, another was George, and the third, I think, was Piotr Nikolaevich from Dulbert—all of them strong, masterful men. The road was blocked by a one-horse vehicle, and a saddled horse was standing a little to one side. Leo Nikolaevich (Tolstoy) could not pass between them He stared sternly and expectantly at the Romanovs, but they had turned aside before he came up At length the saddled horse pranced nervously and stepped aside, allowing Tolstoy's horse to pass.

After riding on in silence for some minutes he exclaimed "They recognized me, the fools" And added, a few moments later. "That horse knew that it must make way for Tolstoy!"

. . .

"Take care of yourself first—and you will have plenty of care left for other people."

. . .

"What do we mean when we say we 'know'? I know, of course, that I am Tolstoy, the writer, that I have a wife and children, gray hair, an ugly face and a beard—all that is written down in my passport. But of the soul the passport says not a word, and of the soul I know this that it wants to be near to God.

"But what is God? God is that of which my soul is an atom That is all He who has learned to meditate finds it hard to believe; yet it is only through faith that one can live in God So Tertullian wrote 'Thought is evil.'"

. .

In spite of the monotony of his preaching, what infinite variety is to be found in this almost legendary man! In the park, today, when he was talking with the Mullah of Haspre, he behaved like a trusting, simple-minded little peasant, for whom the time has arrived when he must take thought for his last days Small of stature and shriveled up, he appeared, beside the broad, corpulent Tartar, like a little old man whose soul had just awakened to the sense of something that lay buried within it, and who feared the questions which that awakening might bring

He lifted his shaggy eyebrows in amazement, blinking shyly with his piercing little eyes, and extinguishing the intolerably penetrating fire which burned within them. His all-seeing eye was riveted upon the broad face of the Mullah, the pupil losing that sharpness which so confused people.

To the Mullah he put childish questions on the meaning of life, on

the soul, and on God, substituting the verses of the Bible and the Prophets for the verses of the Koran with incredible agility. Altogether he was acting with the marvelous skill of which only a man who is at once a great artist and a great sage is capable.

Again, a few days ago, when he was talking about music to Taneyev and Suler, he went into raptures over it like a child One could see that he was admiring his own enthusiasm, or, to be more precise, his capacity for enthusiasm He held that Schopenhauer had written more wisely and profoundly about music than anyone else; told us, in parenthesis, a comic anecdote about Fet, and described music as "the dumb prayer of the soul."

"Why dumb?" asked Suler.

"Because it uses no words There is more soul in a sound than there is in a thought A thought is like a purse—it contains pennies, mere trifles; while a sound remains unsoiled—pure through and through"

With evident delight and in charming, simple words, he expressed his ideas, choosing—this was unusual with him—the finest and the most tender he could think of. And unexpectedly smiling into his beard, he murmured softly, caressingly

"All musicians are stupid people, and the more gifted the musician, the more shallow he is It is curious that they should all be so pious...."

. . .

To Chekhov, at the telephone, he once said·

"It is such a good day for me today; my soul is so full of gladness that I want you too to be joyful You particularly. You are a very fine man, a very fine man."

. . .

When you speak to Tolstoy of things which he can put to no use, he listens with indifference and incredulity In fact he does not ask—he merely inquires Like a collector of valuable curios, he only collects things which are in keeping with the rest of his collection.

. . .

One day he was sorting his letters:

"They all make a great fuss about me," he said, "writing and so on. But in the end, when I die, in a year or so, people will say: 'Tolstoy? Ah, that is the count who tried to make boots; and then something curious happened to him. Is that the fellow you mean?'"

. . .

Several times I noticed on his face, in his look, the cunning and contented smile of a man who unexpectedly discovers something which he has hidden away. He hides it and then forgets about it.

Where can it be? He spends long days of secret anguish pondering incessantly: "Where, oh, where did I put that thing that I want so much?" He is terrified lest the people round him should notice his anguish, should get to know of his loss and worry him about it or injure him in any way. Then he suddenly remembers and finds it. Delighted at his success and no longer afraid to show his feelings to others, he watches those about him with a cunning glance, as much as to say. "You can't hurt me now!"

But as to what he has found and where he found it—that remains a secret.

One never tires of speculating about him, but it is trying to meet him often. Personally I should find it impossible to live in the same house with him, not to mention in the same room. His surroundings become like a desert where everything is scorched by the sun and the sun itself is smoldering away, threatening a black and eternal night.

ALEXANDER BLOK

It seems to me at times that the Russian mind is sick with the fear of its own self; in its attempt to stand outside all reason it resents reason and is afraid of it.

That wise and crafty serpent V V. Rosanov laments bitterly in *Uedinennos* ("In Retirement") · "Oh, what a sad experience is mine! Why did I want to know everything? Now I shall not be able to die in peace, as I hoped to do"

In Leo Tolstoy's *Diary of My Youth from 1851,* occurs this stern pronouncement "Consciousness is the greatest moral evil which can take hold of a man"

The same thing has been said by Dostoevsky: "...To be too acutely conscious is a failing, a real, a thorough failing; too much consciousness—I should even say every kind of consciousness—is a failing. I maintain that this is so."

The realist, A F Pisemsky, exclaimed in his letter to Melnikov-Pechersky, "Confound this habit of thinking, this mange of the soul!"

L. Andreyev has remarked, "Reason has in itself something of the spy, of the *agent provocateur.*" And he also made the following surmise· "It is very probable that reason is the old witch Conscience in disguise"

One can collect a good number of such aphorisms from Russian writers, and they all bear witness to a lack of confidence in the power of reason. This is characteristic of the people of a country in which, more than in any other, life is built on principles which lack all reason It is curious to note that even P. F Nikolayev, the author of

Active Progress, a man to whom such a line of thought ought not to have come naturally, wrote in 1906: "Knowledge augments requirements, requirements breed discontent, a discontented man is miserable and unhappy—therefore socially valuable and personally attractive." A perfectly incomprehensible and somewhat Buddhist thought!

Montaigne, too, lamented. "Why do we arm ourselves with futile knowledge? How sweet and comfortable is the pillow of the chosen—ignorance and simplicity of the heart!" He explained the longevity of primeval peoples by their ignorance of all science and religion—ignoring the fact that they possessed them all in the germ The Epicurean Montaigne lived in the period of religious wars. He was full of bright, gay wisdom and considered that cannibalism was less repulsive than the tortures of the Inquisition. Three hundred years later L. Tolstoy said of him "Montaigne is common and vulgar."

Tolstoy's mind was religious in its shape as well as in its essence. I do not think that dogmatism attracted him, and it is hardly probable that the process of thought itself caused him the same delight as it undoubtedly did such philosophers as, for instance, Schopenhauer, who used to contemplate with tenderness the development of his own thoughts. In my opinion Leo Tolstoy considered all thought, all reflection, as a kind of cursed duty, and I think he always remembered the words of Tertullian, words which express the despair of a fanatic, stung by doubt "Thought is evil."

Maybe the sources of fear inspired by the mind and the hatred of it are buried for all dogmatists in the Bible.* VI. I. 4

"Azazel taught man to make knives and swords...he initiated them into different arts...explained the ways of the stars and of the moon. And then came the time of great godlessness and corruption on earth, and the ways of men became tortuous..."

. .

I recalled all this after an unexpected conversation I had yesterday with Alexander Blok. I left the office of the *Universal Literature* in his company and he asked me what I thought of his book, *The Decline of Humanism.* A few days ago he had delivered something like a lecture on that question in the form of a short article. The article seemed to me to be somewhat incomplete, but full of tragic forebodings. Blok, while reading it, reminded me of a child in a fairy tale, lost in the woods. a child sensing the approach of monsters out of the darkness and murmuring incoherent exorcisms in the hope that they will frighten the monsters away. His fingers trembled as he turned the leaves of the manuscript. I could not understand whether the decline of humanism was causing him sorrow or joy. His talent

* This quotation is not from the Bible, but from the Book of Enoch, Sec. I, Chap viii —Tr

is not so supple in prose as it is in verse, but he is undoubtedly a man of a deep and destructive mind—in a word a man of the "decadent" period. It seemed to me that Blok himself was not perfectly clear as to what he believed in; words, like lichen on a stone, do not penetrate into the depths of the thoughts which are causing his destruction, as well as what he calls the destruction of humanism. Some of his thoughts seemed to me not to have been pondered over carefully enough. For instance:

"It is impossible and unnecessary to try to civilize the masses." "Inventions take the place of discoveries."

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries are so enormously rich in inventions precisely because they embrace the period of the most numerous and the greatest discoveries of science. And to speak of the impossibility and uselessness of civilization for the Russian people is evidently "Scythian," and I can only understand it as a concession to the organic lack of "state" instinct in the Russian masses. But why need Blok be a "Scythe"? *

I told him all this as tactfully and gently as I could It is very difficult to talk to him—he gives me the impression that he despises everybody to whom his world appears in any way weird and incomprehensible—and certainly it appears as such to me. Lately I have been sitting twice a week at his side at the editors' meetings in the *Universal Literature* and have often argued with him on the imperfections of translations from the point of view of the spirit of the Russian language. This kind of work does not bring people together. As it is with nearly all the men on the managing committee, his attitude toward his work is an indifferent and formal one. He said he was glad to note that I was freeing myself from the "habit, dear to the intelligentsia, of solving the problems of social existence."

"I have always felt that this is not your real self," he said. "Already in *Little Town Okurow* one can see that you are worried by 'childish questions'—the most deep and terrible of all."

He is mistaken, but I did not protest, I let him think what he liked.

"Why do you not write on these questions?" he inquired insistently.

I told him that the questions on the purpose of life, death, and love, were strictly intimate, personal matters, concerning only myself. I do not care to drag them out into the street, and if ever I do it involuntarily, it is always artlessly and without any skill. "To speak of oneself is a subtle art—I do not possess it."

We entered the Summer Gardens and sat down on a bench. Blok's eyes shone with what seemed to me very like an insane light. By their gleam, by the trembling of his cold, tormented face, I could

* The Russian "Eurasian" movement which places Russia at the point midway between Europe and Asia

see that he was possessed with a hungry desire to speak, to ask questions. Trying to rub out a sun-ray on the gravel path with the sole of his boot, he said reproachfully:

"You are hiding your real self. You conceal your thoughts on the spirit, on truth. Why do you do it?"

And before I had time to answer he began to speak of the Russian intelligentsia with hackneyed words of condemnation—words which are especially out of place now, after the Revolution.

I told him that to my mind the negative attitude toward the intelligentsia is one that is bred by the intelligentsia itself It could not have been born among the peasants, who knew the educated people only as represented by the self-denying district doctor or the exalted village teacher; neither among the workmen, who owe all their political education to that same intelligentsia. This attitude is an erroneous and unwholesome one, in addition to which it kills the self-respect of the intelligentsia, kills their esteem for their own historic works of culture.

For ever and ever it has played, and will continue to play, the part of the pack horse of history Owing to its indefatigable work, it has lifted the proletariat to the heights of a revolution unparalleled in the vastness and depth of the problems which it has placed before us for immediate solution

I do not think that he was listening to me, for he was sullenly staring at the ground under his feet, and as soon as I stopped he began again to speak of the hesitation which the intelligentsia has displayed in adopting the principles of bolshevism. Among other things he remarked very justly:

"Having invoked the spirit of destruction from the darkness, it is not honest for the intelligentsia to say: 'This was not done by us, but by those people over there' Bolshevism is the unavoidable result of the work of the intelligentsia in various pulpits, in editors' offices, and in their 'underground' teachings."

A nice-looking young woman who happened to pass by at that moment bowed her head to him in affectionate greeting, he answered drily, almost contemptuously—and she went on, smiling a little confusedly. Glancing after her small footsteps as she walked hesitatingly away, Blok asked me:

"What do you think of eternity, of the likelihood of eternity?"

He asked in a determined way and his eyes scanned my face unflinchingly. I replied that perhaps Lamennais was right; if we admit that the amount of matter in the universe is limited, it is to be presumed that its combinations are repeated in infinite variety in the infinity of time. This point of view makes it possible that in some millions of years, on a foggy spring afternoon in Petrograd, Blok and

Gorky shall again be sitting on a bench in the Summer Gardens, talking of eternity.

"You are not serious, are you?" said he.

His persistence both astonished and annoyed me, although I felt that he was not asking out of sheer curiosity but was being driven by a desire to crush and extinguish some heavy thought that troubled him.

"I have no reason to consider Lamennais' point of view on that question less convincing than all the other ones," I replied.

"But you, personally, what do you think of it?" He stamped his foot impatiently. Until that night he had always seemed to me so composed, so unwilling to talk

"Personally, I prefer to imagine man as a machine, which transmutes in itself the so-called 'dead matter' into a psychical energy and will, in some faraway future, and transforms the whole world into a purely psychical one"

"I do not understand—this is panpsychism, isn't it?"

"No For at that time nothing will exist except thought. Everything will disappear, being transmuted into pure thought, which alone will exist, incarnating the entire mind of humanity from the first flashes of it until the moment of its last explosion."

"I do not understand," Blok repeated, shaking his head.

I proposed that he should picture to himself the world in an uninterrupted process of dissociation of matter Matter, dissolving, continually gives off such species of energy as light, electricity, electromagnetic waves, Hertzian waves, etc To these are added, of course, all signs of radioactivity. Thought is the result of the dissociation of the atoms of the brain; the brain is composed of the elements of "dead" inorganic matter. In the brain substance of man this matter is uninterruptedly transformed into psychical matter. I myself believe that at some future time all matter absorbed by man shall be transmuted by him and by his brain into a sole energy—a psychical one. This energy shall discover harmony in itself and shall sink into self-contemplation—in a meditation over all the infinitely varied creative possibilities concealed in it.

"What a dismal phantasy," said Blok, smiling sarcastically "It is pleasant to know that the law of preservation of matter contradicts it."

"As for me, I am pleased to remember that the laws issuing from laboratories do not always coincide with the laws of the universe, unknown to us I am convinced that if we could weigh our planet from time to time, we should see that its weight was gradually diminishing"

"All this is very dreary," Blok said, shaking his head. "It is all—simpler; the thing is that we have become too clever to believe in God and not strong enough to believe in our own selves. As a support for life and faith—there is only God and myself. Humanity? But can one

have any faith in the wisdom of humanity after this war and on the eve of other still more cruel ones? No, this picture of yours...it is a terrible one!...But I still think that you are not serious."

He sighed. "If only we could entirely stop thinking, were it only for ten years! If we could extinguish this treacherous, misty little light that draws us deeper and deeper into the night of the world, and listen to the harmony of the universe with our hearts. The brain, the brain ...It is not an organ to be relied upon—it is monstrously large, monstrously developed. It is a swelling, like a goiter."

He remained silent for some minutes, his lips pressed together, then he said in a low voice: "To stop every movement, to make time 'mark time'!"

"It would, if all the different types of motion were given the same speed."

Blok looked at me out of the corner of his eye, raising his eyebrows. Then he began speaking quickly, incoherently, in such a delirious manner that I was unable to follow him. It was a strange impression —as though he were tearing worn rags off his body. Then he suddenly got up, stretched out his hand to me, and walked away to catch a tram. At the first glance his gait appears to be a firm one, but on looking more intently one notices that he walks without any assurance, shifting his balance from one foot to the other. And however well he may be dressed, one always wants to see him dressed differently from other people. Gumilev, even in the fur coat of a Samoyed or a Lapp, would seem to be dressed like everybody else. Blok requires an unusual attire.

• • •

Just as I had written down this conversation with Blok, W——, a sailor from the Baltic fleet, came to beg me to lend him "an interesting book" to read. He loves science dearly, expects it to solve all the riddles of life, and speaks of it always with rapture and faith. Today he announced the astonishing news·

"D'you know, they say that a learned American has invented a machine, a wonderfully simple one, just a telescope, a wheel and a handle. You turn the handle and you can see everything. analysis, trigonometry, criticism, in fact the whole meaning of the world's history. The machine shows you all this—and whistles as well!"

What I like best about that machine is the fact that it whistles.

CHEKHOV

For five days now my temperature has been above normal, but the idea of staying in bed is hateful to me.

A fine gray rain is sprinkling the earth with a fine wet dust. I can hear the guns rumbling at Fort Iko—they are being attacked by the enemy. The long tongue of the searchlight licks the clouds at night; it is a disturbing sight, for it does not allow one to forget this devil's invention—war.

I have been reading Chekhov. If he had not died ten years ago the war would certainly have killed him, having first poisoned him with hatred toward mankind. I remembered his funeral.

The coffin of the writer so "dearly loved" by Moscow was brought in a green freight car labeled in huge letters on the side· FOR OYSTERS. A part of the great crowd that had assembled at the station to meet the writer followed the coffin of General Keller, which had been brought from Manchuria at the same time, and was profoundly astonished to find that Chekhov was being buried with full military honors. When the mistake was discovered, certain cheerful spirits began to giggle and crack jokes. Chekhov's coffin was followed by only about a hundred people, not more I recall particularly two lawyers, both in new shoes and speckled neckties, evidently "fiancés" Walking behind them I could hear one of them, V. A. Maklakov, discoursing on the sagacity of dogs; the other, a man unknown to me, boasted of the comforts of his country home and the beauty of its surroundings. A lady in a lilac dress, carrying a lace-fringed umbrella, was trying to convince an old gentleman in large spectacles of the merits of the deceased. "Ah! he was wonderfully charming, and *so* witty..." The old gentleman coughed incredulously. The day was a hot and dusty one At the head of the procession a big, stout policeman rode majestically on a fat white horse. It all seemed cruelly common and vulgar, and quite incompatible with the memory of a great and subtle artist.

• • •

In a letter to old A. S. Suvorin,* Chekhov wrote:

"There is nothing more tiresome and unpoetical, so to speak, than the prosaic struggle for existence which takes all the joy out of life and drives one to apathy."

Those words express an intensely Russian vein of thought, which, to my mind, was not characteristic of A. P. Chekhov. In Russia, where there is such an abundance of everything but where people lack the love of work for itself, the majority thinks in that way. The

* Editor of the *Novoye Vremya*

Russian admires energy, but finds it hard to believe in it. A writer with an active mind like Jack London, for instance, is impossible in Russia. Although his books are very popular there, I do not find that they inspire the Russian with a desire to act; they merely excite his imagination

But Chekhov is not intensely Russian from that point of view. With him this "struggle for life" began in early youth, with the drudgery, the sordidness of everyday life, the cares and worries necessary to obtain a loaf of bread—and not for himself alone; for a very large loaf of bread was needed in his family. To those joyless cares he had given up all the strength of his youth, and we can only marvel how it was that he managed to retain his sense of humor. He saw life merely as a colorless aspiration for satiety and peace; the great dramas and tragedies of it were hidden for him under a thick layer of everyday matters And it was only after he had to some extent freed himself from the care of seeing all the mouths round him properly fed that he was able to throw a long-sighted glance at the essence of those dramas.

I have never known a man to feel the importance of work as the foundation of all culture so deeply, and for such varied reasons, as did Chekhov. This feeling expressed itself in all the trifles of his life· in his habits, in his choice of things, and in that noble love for man's works which, knowing no desire of collecting them, never tires of admiring them as the product of man's creative spirit. He loved to build, plant gardens, ornament the earth; he felt the poetry of labor. With what touching care did he watch the growth of the fruit trees and ornamental shrubs which he had planted in his garden. Full of plans for the building of his house in Autka, he used to say

"If every man did all he could on the piece of earth belonging to him, how beautiful would this world be!"

I had started to write a play called *Vasska Busslaev,** and one day I read to him Vasska's boastful monologue

Ha, were I only endowed with more strength and power
I'd breathe a hot breath—and make the snows melt!
I'd go round the earth and plow it through and through!
I'd walk for years and years and build town after town,
Put up churches without number, and grow gardens without end,
I'd adorn the earth—as though it were a maiden fair;
Clasp it in my arms—as though it were my bride;
Lift it to my heart, and carry it to God·
Just look, my God, at this earth down here,
Look how finely Vasska has adorned it!
You just threw it like a stone into the sky,
While I have made a precious diamond out of it!

* A hero of the Novgorod epos.

Just look, my God, and rejoice with me!
Look how bright it flashes in the sun's rays!
I'd have given it to you, Lord, as a fine gift—
Only—no—it would not do—I am too fond of it myself!

Chekhov liked this monologue very much and, coughing excitedly, he said to me and Dr. A. H. Alexin, who was present:

"That's very fine indeed! Very true, and very human! In this lies the essence of all philosophy. Man has made the earth habitable—therefore he must also make it comfortable for himself"

He shook his head in obstinate affirmation and repeated:

"He will!"

He asked me to read Vasska's boastful speech over again. I did so and he listened attentively to the end, then he remarked.

"The two last lines are unnecessary—they are impertinent. There is no necessity for that..."

. . .

Of his own literary works he spoke very little and very unwillingly; I should like to add with a certain chastity, and with the same caution as he used when speaking of Leo Tolstoy Very rarely, when in a cheerful mood, he would tell us, laughingly, of a new idea he had had —usually a humorous one.

"You know, I am going to write about a schoolteacher; she will be an atheist, adore Darwin, be convinced of the necessity of fighting with the superstitions and prejudices of the people—but this will not prevent her from boiling a black cat in the bathhouse at midnight in order to obtain from it a certain bone which is popularly supposed to be a potent love-charm"

His plays he described as very "gay" ones, and I think he honestly believed that the plays he wrote were "gay." Probably it was due to his influence that Savva Mozozov * used to persist in saying: "Chekhov's plays ought to be staged as lyric comedies."

But in general he followed literature with a serious attention that was particularly touching with regard to "beginners." With marvelous patience he would read carefully through numerous manuscrips by B Lazarevsky, N. Oligee, and many others

"We need more writers," he used to say. "Literature is still a novelty in our country, even for the elect. In Norway there is one writer to every 226 men of the whole population, while in Russia there is only one to a million...."

. . .

His illness at times made him hypochondriacal, almost misanthropic. On such days he was capricious in his judgments and morose in his

* A great Moscovite merchant—both a revolutionary and a patron of the arts.

attitude toward all people. One day, lying on a couch, coughing and playing with a thermometer, he said:

"To live in order that we may die is not very pleasant; but to live knowing that we shall die before our time is up is profoundly stupid...."

Another time, sitting at an open window and watching the far-away horizon of the sea, he murmured angrily, all of a sudden:

"We have got accustomed to living in hopes of fine weather, good crops, a pleasant love affair, of becoming rich or getting an appointment as chief of police, but I have never come across people who live in the hope of growing more clever. We think 'things will be better under a new Czar, and still better in two hundred years'—but no one troubles himself about improving things tomorrow. Altogether life gets more and more complicated every day and just moves along of its own accord, while people become more and more stupid every day and more and more of them just potter about on the outskirts of life."

He remained deep in thought for some minutes, then, puckering his eyebrows, he added:

"Like crippled beggars during a church procession"

He was a doctor—and illness for a doctor is always harder to bear than for a patient, the patient only *feels,* while the doctor, in addition to feeling, *knows* the processes by which his organism is being destroyed. In such cases we may consider knowledge as causing the approach of death

. . .

When he laughed his eyes were very fine· tender, caressing and soft as a woman's. And his laugh, which was an almost silent one, was such an unusual kind of laugh One could see that he delighted in it, reveled in it; I never met anyone who could laugh in—if I may say so—such a "spiritual" way. Coarse anecdotes never provoked even a smile.

Laughing in his delightful manner one day, he said to me:

"Do you know why Tolstoy's attitude toward you is so changeable? He is jealous, he thinks Suleryitzky likes you better than he does him. Yes, it is so. He said to me yesterday· 'I cannot treat Gorky with sincerity—I do not know why it is so—but I cannot. It is even unpleasant to me to know that Suler lives with him. It is bad for Suler. Gorky is an unkind man. He reminds me of a theological student who has been forced against his will to take the hood and has thereby become embittered toward everybody. He has the soul of a spy, he has come into the land of Canaan, where he feels himself a stranger, watches everything that goes on around him, notices everybody and reports to a god of his own. And his god is a monster, something like

a satyr or a water-sprite such as you find in the tales of peasant women."

Chekhov laughed till the tears came while telling me this and, wiping his eyes, he continued:

"I said to him 'Gorky is a very kind man!' But he insisted 'No, no, I know all about him! He has the nose of a duck—only unhappy and unkind men have a nose like that Women, too, don't love him, and women are like dogs, they can scent a good man. Suler—that's another matter—he possesses the truly precious capacity of loving people disinterestedly He is a genius in that line! To know how to love—means to know everything.'"

Chekhov paused for a moment and then went on:

"Yes, the old man is jealous.... What a wonderful old fellow he is!..."

. . .

He always spoke of Tolstoy with a peculiar, hardly perceptible yet tender and anxious smile in his eyes, lowering his voice as though speaking of something mysterious and fairylike, that demanded soft, cautious words He often complained that there was no Eckermann at Tolstoy's side, no one could write down conscientiously all the sharp, sudden, and often contradictory thoughts of the old wizard.

"You ought to do it," he said to Suleryitzky "Tolstoy is so fond of you, he talks to you so well and tells you such a lot .. "

Concerning Suler, Chekhov once said to me: "He is a wise child...." Which was very true.

. . .

One day Tolstoy was speaking with rapture about some tale of Chekhov's, I think it was *Dushenka* * "It is like lace," he said, "made by a chaste young girl; there were such lacemakers in olden times; they used to depict all their lives, all their dreams of happiness, in the lace-design They dreamed in designs of all that was dear to them, wove all their pure, uncertain love into their lace"

Tolstoy spoke with great agitation, his eyes full of tears. It happened that that very day Chekhov's temperature had gone up, and he was sitting there with a high flush on his cheeks, his head bowed, carefully wiping the glasses of his spectacles. He was silent for a long time, then he sighed deeply and said in a low, bashful voice:

"There are many misprints in it...."

. . .

A lot could be written about Chekhov, but it would have to be done in a fine and subtle way which I do not possess. It would be well to

* *The Darling.*—Ed

write about him in the same manner as he himself wrote *The Steppe*, a tale with a peculiar atmosphere, so light and so pensively sad in a Russian way. A tale—just for oneself. It does one good to recall the memory of such a man, it brings renewed energy into one's life, a clear definite meaning.

Man is the axle of the world, in spite of his sins and defects. We all hunger for the love of our fellow men, and when one is hungry even an underbaked loaf is sweet.

BLOK AND THE HARLOT

One day, in the Pekar teashop, I was talking to a young woman from the Nevsky.

"This book of yours," she said, "is written by the famous Blok, isn't it? I knew him too, although it's true I met him only once.

"Late one autumn night, through the damp fog—you know how damp it is—the clock on the Duma was pointing to midnight. I was beginning to feel very tired and had decided to go home. Suddenly, at the corner of the Italianska, a very smartly dressed man came up and invited me to go with him. He was extremely handsome and had such a proud face that I took him to be a foreigner.

"We went on foot—it was not very far—to Karavannaia 10—a rendezvous for lovers. As we walked along I talked to him, but he made no reply to any of my remarks, which I thought was both unusual and unpleasant....It's beastly when they're rude ...

"We arrived and I ordered some tea The waiter didn't come back, so my companion went out into the hall to call him, and I, you see, being so tired and cold, went to sleep straightaway, curled up on the sofa. Then, suddenly, I woke up and found him sitting opposite me with his head in his hands, leaning on the table with his elbows and watching me with such stern eyes—awful eyes they were.

"But I wasn't a bit frightened, I felt rather ashamed of myself for going to sleep. I thought 'Heavens, he must be a musician, his hair is so curly.'

"'Forgive me,' I said, 'I was so cold and tired'

"But he only smiled politely and said· 'Don't you worry.' Then he came and sat beside me on the sofa, took me in his lap and stroked my hair: 'Go to sleep again for a while,' he said. And do you know, I actually went to sleep again! There's fine behavior for you! I knew it was stupid of me, but I simply couldn't help it.

"He rocked me gently to and fro and I felt so cozy with him. I just opened my eyes and smiled at him and he smiled back So I slept on until he shook me very gently by the arm.

"'Well, good-by,' he said, 'I'm afraid I must go now.' He got up and put 25 roubles on the table.

"'Look here,' I said, 'what's that for?'

"I felt rather confused and asked him to forgive me—it was all so funny and unusual. But he only laughed gently, pressed my hand and—actually kissed it. Then he went off and the waiter came up.

"'Do you know who he is?' I asked.

"'He's Blok, the poet—look here.' And he showed me a photograph in a paper.

"It was quite true, it was he, all right. 'Heavens,' I thought, 'how stupidly I behaved!'"

As she spoke, her aggressive little tilted face puckered with regret; and in her eyes, mischievous, but pathetic as a homeless puppy's, I could see the reflection of sorrow. I gave her all the money I had with me and from that hour felt very close to Blok.

I like his proud face and his head—the head of a Renaissance Florentine.

Vsevolod Ivanov

With Vsevolod Ivanov we enter into the Soviet aspects of life. Not even Gorky has experienced a greater variety of hardship and adventure than Ivanov. Many years ago he wrote "Since 1917 there has been one road for me, the road of death. And because I am still alive I rejoice." The same spirit lives in his work. In his brief Autobiography *he says: "At fourteen I began to tramp about. For seven years I was by turns a printer, a sailor, a clown, and a fakir—'dervish Ben-Ali-Bey,' I was called. I swallowed swords, stuck pins into myself, jumped over knives and torches. I roamed about Tomsk with a barrel-organ, performed in country-fair tents, recited couplets at circuses, and at times was even billed as a wrestler." The sketch below perpetuates his experience as Ben-Ali-Bey.*

WHEN I WAS A FAKIR

When I left Doctor Voskresensky I felt weary in spirit. So intense was my weariness that it was as if I had grown gray in one morning. I thought, if the doctor would only give me a prescription, then I would willingly part with the only pair of trousers I possessed in order

to buy cocaine. But to sell one's trousers for food and to sit well-fed but without trousers is stupid.

My landlady, who was short-sighted and had a sniveling nose, was bending over and reading slowly the announcement lying on the table:

> FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TOWN!
>
> *Gala Performance*
>
> Introducing the world-famous Fakir
> and Dervish
>
> BEN — ALI — BEY!

"Where did you learn this?" she asked, ingeniously twisting her sniveling nose

"In India," I replied gloomily

What else could I have answered? I could scarcely tell her that, instead of accepting three roubles for my folding bed, I had agreed to take from the old-clothes man two swords which were stamped with the word "Hamburg." The swords resembled one another in every particular. But if you examined them closely, you found that one of them was solid, while the other folded into three sections and had three press-buttons in the hilt. The buttons were white, perhaps of ivory. If you pressed one button, the third blade disappeared. If you pressed the second—the following third vanished. And, finally, the whole triad hid within the hilt.

"Just think of the money you'll earn with this!" said the old-clothes man affably.

I was in great need of a pleasant word, a word of encouragement. And, for this reason, I answered myself rather than him:

"But surely swords alone are not enough!"

Then the old-clothes man added a tattered book, issued, as I now remember, by Kholmushin in Moscow: *A Manual of Black and White Magic, With a Supplement of Card Tricks.*

"Here you'll find the very life for you, young man."

Indeed, the old man hadn't made at all a bad guess. A part of my life actually had its origin here.

My landlady suffered with stomach trouble, and the only light in the house was furnished by a small oil lamp in the bathroom. It goes without saying that my little room was wholly without such a luxury. That night when she knocked on the bathroom door she heard the answer: "I'm not feeling well!" The fact is, I was taking advantage of the light to study my book of black magic.

In the morning I went to the People's Playhouse, where a troupe of actors consisting of five persons was giving presentations of the *Red Lantern, Evgeny Onegin,* and *Misfortune from Being Too Clever.* When I told Pudozhgorsky (the theatrical manager) that I could swallow swords he smiled askance.

"Swords, what's swords? Why, everybody knows it's German work. Now if you could only hypnotize the masses! Say, take an eye out of its socket and then replace it. Now that would fetch a crowd!"

"I haven't yet learned the eye trick," I replied, with a show of courage, "but I can quite painlessly stick women's steel hat pins into my arms, breast, and cheeks, and then suspend three-pound weights on these same pins."

"Why didn't you say so before?"

"I haven't the pins."

"We'll get them for you. From our actresses. How in the world," he asked not without respect, "did you manage to get to the pins and yet can't do anything with the eyes?" He sighed. "Well, I suppose it's all a matter of science and time."

And that was how the landlady came to read the huge announcement. According to this announcement, I, an old, cunning Hindu, was prepared "to swallow burning hemp, swords, jump on knives, and *pierce* the body *painlessly* with hatpins, on which are suspended three-pound weights." It was further intended to include in the announcement that I would take white-hot irons in my bare hands, but I had not been able to make the test successfully. I read the directions in Kholmushin's *Black Magic.* It was stated there that it was necessary to rub one's hands with the yolk of an egg, to smear them then with a paste and besprinkle with "one part of coarsely ground powder made from grindstone." And that was exactly what I did. Then I lightly heated the samovar tongs and touched the palms of my hands with them. There was an odor of burning flesh in the room, and, in answer to my outcry, the landlady came running. I dipped my hand into curdled milk Supporting her stomach with her lean hands, the landlady compassionately looked at me and at the spoiled curdled milk. I was hungry and I scornfully thought that only my obvious and sudden agony had impelled the landlady to sacrifice for me some curdled milk.

Once in three days I dined in the monastery which stood above green Tobol. There were green bells in the monastery, and well-fed blue pigeons, at the sight of which the cats and I licked our chops. I must add that in those days I wished to eat everything in sight or to exchange for something edible. The monk, who poured lenten soup into my wooden bowl, asked me:

"What's that? A splinter?"—and added affectionately, "A carpenter by any chance?"

"It's the Italian gangrene," I replied, feeling my throat dry.

The monk's eyes glowed with sympathy. From pity and astonishment he gave me an extra slice of bread.

"I've been told that in Italy," he said with scorn and curiosity, "there are no wooden houses at all?"

"Absolutely," I confirmed his statement. "There is only stone and volcanic lava."

"That means," he asked with a slight show of fear, "there're no carpenters there?"

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Evsey, in the priestly service."

"A carpenter, are you?"

The monk looked pleased, and gave me another slice of bread. He lifted the ends of his cassock from the greasy bench

"Surely, surely... I'm from Perm All our prelates there made their own cells! Wasn't Christ Himself a carpenter?"

Evsey bowed low to me, gave me another slice of bread, and quietly asked:

"Now, you're a reader of books, one can see. That's why you wear specs. Is it written anywhere whether Christ used a smoothing-plane or whether He used to trim with a plain ax?"

I made no answer, and after the meal Evsey asked me to follow him to the monastery gates, where the blind wailed and the fat doves flitted about.

"It's clear, young fellow," I thought, "you don't believe in God!"

I had my fill, I felt gay, the mysterious vocation of fakir had straightened my life. I often thought of India, and I was mentally preparing some introductory words to my experiments. All the same I did not wish to hurt the feelings of hospitable Evsey, who had apparently entered the monastery for no other reason than that Christ had also been a carpenter.

"Have you ever been to the theater, Father? To a performance, I mean?"

"I never had the chance."

"I'll give you a ticket, Evsey!"

"What are you going to do there?"

"I'll swallow fire and I'll stick pins into myself without pain...."

Evsey recoiled. His gray ragged cassock immediately became lighter than his face. His small beard suddenly stood out sharply as if it had been newly clipped. His hands were light, yet he could not raise them in order to make a sign of the cross.

"S-satan!..." he hissed. "You're trying to tempt me, you unbelieving Satan!" Then he straightened out, throwing his arms forward, and said dully. "I don't see what use I am to you, but I'll find you out. Do

you want to deprive me of God? I'll not give up God to you. You're subtle, Satan!"

He put out a light hand, and I placed an entrance ticket in it, and left.

No sooner had the huge bills appeared on the billboards than in the rooms occupied by Pudozhgorsky there showed up a lot of decrepit women who desired to see me, the magician, wizard, and conjurer. There arrived from the district treasury an official who, through an error, had a deficit of five hundred roubles and wanted to know if the money would be returned to him Pudozhgorsky took a rouble from him and said that an answer in writing would be forthcoming on the morrow. Young women who wanted their fortunes told also appeared A merchant came who wanted to know what sort of vodka they had in India, and if he would have time to get a bottle for his birthday. My heart beat as fast as my fame. And the tickets in the booking office beat hardly less fast.

Did the urchins who ran after their iron hoops realize that the morose man sitting on a cliff above their heads turning the leaves of *Magic* was that famous fakir whose lightning-bearing fame was agitating the heart of the small town with insatiable tremors?

It is hard nowadays to astonish us. We have become too sophisticated. The last time I witnessed astonishment was when black bread was again sold freely in the streets, and yet once more when an elephant from Bokhara was brought to Moscow. But even then the astonishment was of this sort "What, elephants? In a year our elephant should bring another hundred elephants into the world. What is astonishing is what we shall do with them!"

There were different times then. The times are worse, and more ridiculous. I am now proud and arrogant and have also learned not to be astonished. I am not even impressed when I remember how I smeared my face with brown make-up, wound round my head a green turban smelling of roaches, donned red cotton trousers stuck into Caucasian boots. Pudozhgorsky, stammering and squinting an eye, boasted of the huge crowd By the side of the make-up, on a clean plate, several huge hatpins gleamed loathsomely. Here also, decorated with bows of faded ribbon still faintly redolent of heliotrope, lay the weights, the smallest being a pound, the largest three; and the German swords, and a torch, and benzine, and knives within a hoop, through which I should have to jump.

On the stage the orchestra of the Voluntary Fire Company was drinking vodka, and indulging in a snack consisting of baked eggs, and many fingers simultaneously were testing the instruments, mostly wind. It seemed to me that the musicians as well as I understood that nothing would come of our performance. Tomorrow everyone in town would be pointing a finger at me, the urchins with hoarse

autumnal voices would shout: "Fakir-r—rotter-r!" The urchins are amused that autumnal leaves are clinging to my somewhat ragged trousers; I am tired of this autumnal muddy lyricism; I want good fat soup with doughballs, cigarettes, "twenty for seven kopeks," and a coarse book with plenty of laughs in it at other people's expense.

The flutist, a man sufficiently drunk and shrewd, came in to me and, taking a heavy bell, struck with it three times. Pudozhgorsky was energetically trying to sell another dozen tickets.

The curtain, gnawed by mice and full of holes made by fingers of drama lovers, twitched nervously as it ascended. Pudozhgorsky, attired in a frock coat with a paper flower half of which, to the good-natured amusement of the public, had fallen on the floor, appeared on the stage, and while he was delivering his introductory speech he went on stamping on the flower, and this fact attracted attention to the fact that instead of patent leather shoes he was wearing rubber galoshes. I don't remember what Pudozhgorsky said and what they sang after his speech, nor how hot and stifling it was in the auditorium. I suffered no stage fright. I remember, with great precision, my intense desire not to fall over the slips. Why I entertained this fear, I don't know. Perhaps it was due to the din of moving stage scenery still remaining in my ears.

"Are you ready?"

My introductory speech (I remember every word of it) began thus:

"Dear ladies and dear gentlemen! Before I begin my experiments, I must tell you where and when fakirs first appeared on earth. In very remote times there existed on earth a warlike nation—the Hindus. They had a custom before accepting a young man for the army they subjected him to many tests and tortures. For example, they put over his head a bag of full live ants and, to the accompaniment of girls' singing, conducted him round the village...."

I further said that there was neither magic nor mystery in my experiments, that it was wholly a matter of personal magnetism and power of will, inherited from the Hindus.

"Music, a march!" shouted Pudozhgorsky.

I showed the sword without the white buttons to rows of spectators; returning to the table, I began to wipe my hands with the towel, which I then placed over the sword. I then took the sword with the buttons and, of course, without any trouble held up at the mouth the hilt with the three blades which had slipped within the hilt. Then I pressed the reverse side of the buttons, and the blades slid out again. After that I jumped through a wooden wheel edged with knives, the blades being placed at an angle away *from me,* so that if I had the mischance to graze any of the knives, which were not firmly fixed, it would have simply fallen out of the wheel without doing me any harm. But the jump was no complicated matter, it was only necessary

to be stubborn and that one's body should learn from second to second to repeat the same movement. Later I was to jump through the same wheel as easily and as thoughtlessly as I put on my spectacles. As for swallowing fire—well, though it is difficult just now to obtain the book on magic—and the Gosizdat* does concern itself with such a profitable business—the truth is, I have no desire now to talk about magic.

I grew tired, and sweat appeared on my neck I feared sweat above all. The muscles then slip under one's fingers, one feels like a fish. I straightened out and began to count how many people sat in the first row. I counted up to eighteen. How many men were there, and how many women? I tried to marry them off, grew more cheerful, and I stopped perspiring.

As a matter of fact, I had been on the stage once before. There was a circus in Pavlodar, and I had entered one of the wrestling contests as an amateur. My competitor threw me in five seconds, slapped my buttocks, and said: "Where are you poking your nose, you snot-face. Learn to stand on your legs first!"

Even now I haven't much love for the stage. Drunken musicians dinned, "On the Volcanoes of Manchuria." I was full of loathing for these thundering trumpets. The auditorium stank of roast meat and unfulfilled human desires. Huge heels dinned on wooden floors and I experienced the sensation as if the first pin I was on the point of sticking into my breast was being pushed in by these enormous heels.

I don't remember whether or not I had thought so at the time—hardly likely. But I remember clearly· a fine salivating pain pierced my eyelids, the head of the pin bounced in my hands; I was about to tremble, when, glancing at these eighteen snouts in the first row, I dully and voluptuously, with the faith of those gazing at me in my will, pushed the pin even deeper into my body "Only I mustn't pierce an artery," I went on ceaselessly repeating to myself, "Only I mustn't pierce an artery!" I watched the tiny rose tongue of steel slide out of my flesh and, gleaming a slight red, creep in further.

A portion of my breast, the size of a matchbox in area, was pierced through and through.

I even felt a kind of pride and quickly seized another pin. My cheeks burned, my mouth was parched, but I felt the need of making haste. Pudozhgorsky watched me from behind the wings in perplexity, and I understood that I had forgotten to smile I then smiled bashfully. The audience clapped, and for an instant I thought that they had applauded my smile.... No, I already had the third pin in my breast, and I picked up a pound-weight to hang on the pin. And then an ancient, sempiternal pain struck my temples and diffused itself in my brain. It seemed to me as if my breast had been torn away and the

* The State Press—which publishes most Russian books today.

blood gushed. I did not at all feel the weight, but I felt as if a huge nail were piercing my ribs. I realized that I might perspire from the pain. And that must not happen, an infection might ensue. I began to count the people in the first row. I could not manage to see them all and at this moment, seizing a plate, I quickly pressed my teeth together and forgot about the smile—the changeless circus smile for which the dullards and the idiots have such sympathy, not understanding that the smile is a triumph over oneself and the sole reward of one's body, because when one smiles one truly feels happier.

And now, mocking myself, I, without a smile, but with impudent stubbornness and pride, began to stick pins into my body and to hang weights on them.

People in the audience cried:

"Enough! Enough!..."

Some woman or other, with fair hair, the wife of an official, fainted, and no one made an effort to carry her out.

Then I straightened. I smiled, as far as my pierced cheeks would allow, and descended the steps into the auditorium.

I walked past five rows, and in the sixth I espied the wedgelike beard of Evsey. His beard was wet with perspiration. His eyes, with their swollen lids, turned away from me. He made a gesture with his hands.

In the din of clapping palms I failed to hear what he said. I felt sick, and I felt that my mouth was full of blood.

For some reason I began by removing the lighter weights, and I drew out the pins which pierced the muscles of my arms. I repaired to the lavatory and quickly spat into the towel. No, it had only seemed to me; there was no blood in my mouth.

"Does it hurt?" asked Pudozhgorsky, counting the cash in the drawer.

"Not much."

"It's a matter of habit. I too...Ah, some scoundrel's worked off a counterfeit note on me. My wife said it's terribly painful to bear children."

He glanced above my head.

"Are you going to have a drink now, and then look up the girls? What do you think?"

Later, when Pudozhgorsky had counted out what had been agreed upon, Doctor Voskresensky made his appearance in the lavatory· he had an all-knowing, hairless face; he was a member of a society of amateurs in astronomy and was greatly interested in Saturn.

"Of course, you'll forgive me," he said "You see, I had thought you were a drug fiend. That's why I refused you a prescription for cocaine. Now that I see your suffering face I curse myself. Cocaine can assuage pain, and you are working without it"

"I've suffered no pain," said I, drinking my third glass of water. "Pain is only imaginary. It's all a matter of self-hypnosis. I wanted the cocaine for the disinfection of the steel. In any case, I managed to get it without you...."

"It's possible to obtain anything in our town," the doctor answered with assurance. "Did I ever tell you the story about Saturn?...How without a telescope we..."

"I'm busy," I said, rubbing my breast with iodine, unobserved, under a shawl. "But fire away!"

The all-knowing doctor sat down, and for an hour and a half recounted about Saturn. Pudozhgorsky was writing an announcement about the next performance "Many new numbers of the world-famous fakir and dervish..." which accomplished, he hired a cabby and went to see the girls. It was necessary for me to ask the doctor for a prescription for cocaine, but I loathed his all-knowing physiognomy, his rubber collar, and the long nail on his small finger; I knew that I would not ask him, and that again the steel pins, undisinfected by cocaine, would pierce my body....

And I shared his reflection that it would be nice to spend one's time in the Pulkovsk observatory....

At last, Doctor Voskresensky was convinced how much more clever he was than I. He began to be bored speaking to me

The wooden handrails of the staircase, rough and smelling of damp, shook for the last time from the blows inflicted by the palms of the self-confident doctor.

And I knew that Evsey was waiting for me at the gates. Under the dim street lamp I was able to descry his cassock, the hems of which were bespattered with mud. He had already managed to change his attire—it followed that he was happier in the monastical garb

"I understand thee," said Evsey, grasping me with a hot hand. "I understand thee through and through. I'll bring thee some oil to put on your wounds. Thou, brother...if thou hadst only believed in God, thou wouldst have been an apostle at least...I looked into thine eyes—and there's nothing satanic in thine eyes...I look—and I think. 'This life of ours is a stifling, sickly affair.' And I grew sad, young man ...I'll bring thee some healing oil for thy wounds."

I did not take his oil, but it came to pass that his soul was to be left in my hands. He was in the beginning a carpenter who helped to build the structure for our show at the Slavgorod fair, then he went to Kulunda as a clown, then to the valley of Rok-Saya as a trick-rider and match-maker The cheerful history of his marriage, which had occurred on the Semirechensk highway, I shall relate later.

[Translation by John Cournos]

POETRY

Alexander Pushkin

Anything that can be said of Pushkin in the brief lines permitted in an anthology, which pretends to include characteristic examples of prose and poetry of a great literature during a whole century and longer, must be at best hopelessly inadequate. The anthologist must, indeed, decline to say anything. The best he can do is to direct the reader to these splendid books: Pushkin, *by Prince D. S. Mirsky,* A History of Russian Literature, *by the same author, and* Verse From Pushkin, *by Oliver Elton. The examples of Pushkin's verse offered here are the best available in English; the anthologist is particularly happy in being able to include "The Bronze Horseman," translated by Oliver Elton, Russian critics, however they may otherwise differ, all agree that Pushkin has written no greater poem than this "The Bronze Horseman," a poetic apotheosis of Peter the Great, became a symbol of Russia herself, indeed created a sort of tradition of which writers yet to come were to be a part.*

THE PROPHET

With fainting soul athirst for Grace,
I wandered in a desert place,
And at the crossing of the ways
I saw the sixfold Seraph blaze;
He touched mine eyes with fingers light
As sleep that cometh in the night:
And like a frighted eagle's eyes,
They opened wide with prophecies.
He touched mine ears, and they were drowned
With tumult and a roaring sound;
I heard convulsion in the sky,
And flights of angel hosts on high,
And beasts that move beneath the sea,
And the sap creeping in the tree.
And bending to my mouth he wrung
From out of it my sinful tongue,
And all its lies and idle rust,
And 'twixt my lips a-perishing
A subtle serpent's forked sting
With right hand wet with blood he thrust.
And with his sword my breast he cleft,
My quaking heart thereout he reft,

And in the yawning of my breast
A coal of living fire he pressed.
Then in the desert I lay dead,
And God called unto me and said:
"Arise, and let My voice be heard,
Charged with My Will go forth and span
The land and sea, and let My Word
Lay waste with fire the heart of man"

—Translation by Maurice Baring

REMEMBRANCE

When the loud day for men who sow and reap
  Grows still, and on the silence of the town
The unsubstantial veils of night and sleep,
  The meed of the day's labor, settle down,
Then for me in the stillness of the night
  The wasting, watchful hours drag on their course,
And in the idle darkness comes the bite
  Of all the burning serpents of remorse;
Dreams seethe, and fretful infelicities
  Are swarming in my over-burdened soul,
And Memory before my wakeful eyes
  With noiseless hand unwinds her lengthy scroll.
Then, as with loathing I peruse the years.
  I tremble, and I curse my natal day,
Wail bitterly, and bitterly shed tears,
  But cannot wash the woeful script away.

—Translation by Maurice Baring

I'VE LIVED TO BURY MY DESIRES

I've lived to bury my desires
And see my dreams corrode with rust;
Now all that's left are fruitless fires
That burn my empty heart to dust.

Struck by the storms of cruel fate
My crown of summer bloom is sere;
Alone and sad I watch and wait
And wonder if the end is near,

As conquered by the last cold air
When winter whistles in the wind,
Alone upon a bough that's bare,
A trembling leaf is left behind.

—Translation by Maurice Baring

DEMONS

Clouds are shifting, clouds are flying,
  Scarce the hidden moon's pale light
On the drifting snow is lying,—
  Wild the heavens, wild the night
Swiftly o'er the stormswept lowland—
  Jingle, jingle bells amain!
Swiftly still, though heavy-hearted,
  Drive I o'er the frozen main.

"Ho there! driver, onward!" "Faster,
  Good my lord, we may not go,
For the stormwind blinds me, master,
  And the road is choked with snow."
Useless all! the track is hidden;
  We are lost to help and home,
From afar the demon spies us—
  Closer circling see him come!

Ha! beside us he's careering,
  Hissing, spitting,—now, I ween,
Round the steeds so madly veering
  On the brink of yon ravine
There—if near or far I know not—
  He was whirling in my sight.
There again he pined and dwindled,
  Vanished into the empty night!

Clouds are shifting, clouds are flying,
  Scarce the hidden moon's pale light
On the drifting snow is lying,—
  Wild the heavens, wild the night.
Courage fails to struggle longer,
  Suddenly the sleigh bells cease—
Pause the team—Declare thou yonder—
  Wolf or tree-stem—is it peace?

Hark, the wind is wailing sadly,
  Loudly snort the startled team.
There, see there he gambols madly,
  Through the murk his eyeballs gleam.
Once again the team has started—
  Jingle, jingle bells amain!
Lo, the spirit-hosts assemble
  O'er the faintly gleaming plain!

Form they have not, have no number,
  Lightly whirling round, they seem
Like the dead leaves of November
  In the moon's uncertain beam.
Are they endless? Whither fly they?
  Why this wailful chanting, say!
Mourn they now their dead? In marriage
  Give they, else, some witch away?

Clouds are shifting, clouds are flying,
  Scarce the hidden moon's pale light
On the drifting snow is lying,—
  Wild the heavens, wild the night.
Still they come and still they vanish
  In the darkness o'er the plain,
Still their moaning and imploring
  Rends my very heart in twain!

—Translation by Miss H. Frank, in the *Anglo-Russian Literary Society,* No 34

THE WINTER ROAD

Through the eddying haze and shadows
  Now the moon is making way,
And on melancholy meadows
  Pours a melancholy ray.

Down the wintry road and dreary
  Flies the troika, swift, alone,
And forever tinks its dreary
  Tiny bell, in monotone;

And the driver's ditty drawling
  Has a homelike sound for me,
Sickness of the heart recalling,
  Or old reckless revelry.

Ah, these snows and wastes, no lonely
  Fire, or blackened hut, beguiles!
But, in slow procession, only
  Motley posts that mark the miles!

—Nina, I return tomorrow,
  And beside thy hearth, dear friend,
Drown my tedium and sorrow,
  Gazing, gazing without end.

While the clock, with ticking finger,
  Circles round, so evenly,
None shall pester us, none linger!
  Midnight parts not thee and me.

—Nina, sad my way, and weary;
  Mute, the driver nods at last;
Still the small bell tinkles, dreary,
  And the moon is overcast.

—Translation by Oliver Elton

TATYANA SENDS A LETTER TO ONEGIN

(iii, 31, 32)

"That I am writing you this letter
Will tell you all; and you are free
Now to despise me; and how better,
I wonder, could you punish me?
But you, if you are sparing ever
One drop of pity for my fate,
Will not have left me desolate.
I wished at first, believe me, never
To say word, and then my shame
Had been unknown to you; small blame
Could I have hoped, but once a week
Here in our village, when you came,
To see you, and to hear you speak,

And pass a single word of greeting,
Think of you only, night and day,
And wait—until another meeting.
You are not sociable, they say;
The solitude, the country, bore you.
We are not smart in any way;
But always had a welcome for you.
"Why came you? why to us? alone,
In this forgotten hamlet hidden,
I never should have known you, known
This bitterness of pangs unbidden
And these emotions would have slept,
My soul its quiet ignorance kept:
—So, in due season, might I find,
Who knows? a husband to my mind;
Have been a true wife—to another,
A pious, honorable mother.

"'Another'!...I would ne'er have given
To living man, this heart of mine!
This was the will of highest heaven,
This was appointed —I am thine!
All my past life assurance gave
That we should meet—as though to bind me;
God sent thee here, I know, to find me,
And thou wilt guard me to my grave....

"Thou camest oft in visions to me;
Wert dear, although I knew not thee;
Thy tones reverberated through me,
Thy gaze absorbed, enchanted me
Long since....But no, I was not dreaming!
Straight, when thou camest, not in seeming,
I knew thee, I took fire, stood numb,
And my heart told me, 'He is come!'
Is it not so? Of old, believing
I heard thee speak, I listened there
To thee in quiet, giving care
To my poor folk, or while relieving
My sick and troubled soul in prayer.
Art thou, today, not he who came,
Flashed through the luminous darkness, nearing
My very pillow? Just the same
Beloved vision, reappearing?

"Art thou a guardian angel to me,
Or crafty tempter, to undo me?
Resolve my doubts and my confusion;
It may be, this is all for nought
And an untutored soul's illusion,
And fate quite otherwise has wrought.
But be it thus; henceforth I yield me,
And all my fate, into thy hand;
I weep, and here before thee stand,
Entreating only that thou shield me.

"Conceive it. I am here, and lonely;
None understands me; and if only
My reason were not faint and weak!
But I am lost, unless I speak.
I wait on thee; one look will waken
The hopes with which my heart is shaken;
Or—the dream snap its heavy spell
At one reproach—deserved too well!

"No more of this; I dread to read it;
Yet, though I sink with fear and shame,
Your honor keeps me safe; I plead it,
And to it boldly trust my name."

Tatyana moaning sits, or sighing,
And grasps the quivering written sheet;
The rosy wafer shrivels, drying
Upon her tongue at fever-heat;
Upon her shoulder she is propping
Her head; the thin light robe is dropping
Down from the charming shoulder.—See,
The radiance of the moon will be
Gone presently, the mists are breaking,
The valley clears; and on the stream
Yonder there steals a silver gleam
Morning! The shepherd's horn is waking
The village; now the world's astir.
But Tanya—all is one to her

—Translation by Oliver Elton

THE BRONZE HORSEMAN

(A Tale of Petersburg)

The occurrence related in this tale is based on fact. The details of the flood are taken from the journals of the day. The curious may consult the information collected by V. I. Berkh.—Pushkin.

There, by the billows desolate,
He stood, with mighty thoughts elate,
And gazed, but in the distance only
A sorry skiff on the broad spate
Of Neva drifted seaward, lonely.
The moss-grown miry banks with rare
Hovels were dotted here and there
Where wretched Finns for shelter crowded;
The murmuring woodlands had no share
Of sunshine, all in mist beshrouded.
And thus He mused: "From here, indeed
Shall we strike terror in the Swede;
And here a city by our labor
Founded, shall gall our haughty neighbor;
'Here cut'—so Nature gives command—
'Your window * through on Europe; stand
Firm-footed by the sea, unchanging!'
Ay, ships of every flag shall come
By waters they had never swum,
And we shall revel, freely ranging."
A century—and that city young,
Gem of the Northern world, amazing,
From gloomy wood and swamp upsprung,
Had risen, in pride and splendor blazing.
Where once, by that low-lying shore,
In waters never known before
The Finnish fisherman, sole creature,
And left forlorn by stepdame Nature,
Cast ragged nets,—today, along
Those shores, astir with life and motion,
Vast shapely palaces in throng
And towers are seen: from every ocean,
From the world's end, the ships come fast,
To reach the loaded quays at last.
The Neva now is clad in granite

* Algarotti has somewhere said: *"Petersbourg est la fenêtre, par laquelle la Russie regarde en Europe"*—Pushkin

With many a bridge to overspan it;
The islands lie beneath a screen
Of gardens deep in dusky green.
To that young capital is drooping
The crest of Moscow on the ground,
A dowager in purple, stooping
Before an empress newly crowned.
  I love thee, city of Peter's making;
I love thy harmonies austere,
And Neva's sovran waters breaking
Along her banks of granite sheer;
Thy traceried iron gates; thy sparkling,
Yet moonless, meditative gloom
And thy transparent twilight darkling;
And when I write within my room
Or, lampless, read,—then, sunk in slumber,
The empty thoroughfares, past number,
Are piled, stand clear upon the night,
The Admiralty spire is bright;
Nor may the darkness mount, to smother
The golden cloudland of the light,
For soon one dawn succeeds another
With barely half-an-hour of night
I love thy ruthless winter, lowering
With bitter frost and windless air,
The sledges along Neva scouring,
Girls' cheeks—no roses so bright and fair!
The flash and noise of balls, the chatter,
The bachelor's hour of feasting, too,
The cups that foam and hiss and spatter,
The punch that in the bowl burns blue.
I love the warlike animation
On playing-fields of Mars; to see
The troops of foot and horse in station,
And their superb monotony,
Their ordered, undulating muster;
Flags, tattered on the glorious day;
Those brazen helmets in their lustre
Shot through and riddled in the fray
I love thee, city of soldiers, blowing
Smoke from thy forts: thy booming gun;
—A Northern empress is bestowing
Upon the royal house a son!
Or when, another battle won,
Proud Russia holds her celebration;

Or when the Neva breaking free
Her dark blue ice bears out to sea
And scents the spring, in exultation.
  Now, city of Peter, stand thou fast,
Foursquare, like Russia, vaunt thy splendor!
The very element shall surrender
And make her peace with thee at last.
Their ancient bondage and their rancors
The Finnish waves shall bury deep
Nor vex with idle spite that cankers
Our Peter's everlasting sleep!
  There was a dreadful time, we keep
Still freshly on our memories painted;
And you, my friends, shall be acquainted
By me, with all that history.
A grievous record it will be.

I *

O'er darkened Petrograd there rolled
November's breath of autumn cold,
And Neva with her boisterous billow
Splashed on her shapely bounding wall
And tossed in restless rise and fall
Like a sick man upon his pillow.
'Twas late, and dark had fallen; the rain
Beat fiercely on the window-pane;
A wind that howled and wailed was blowing.
  'Twas then that young Evgeny came
Home from a party—I am going
To call our hero by that name,
For it sounds pleasing, and moreover
My pen once liked it;—why discover
The needless surname?—True, it may

* Mickiewicz, in one of his best poems, *Oleszkiewicz*, has in most beautiful lines described the day preceding the Petersburg flood It is only a pity that his description is inaccurate There was no snow—the Neva was not covered with ice Our description is correct, although it has none of the brilliant colours of the Polish poet—Pushkin

Oleszkiewicz, the painter, mystic, and friend of Mickiewicz, in this poem appears at night in a boat on the Neva, hears the storm rising, and forebodes the flood that is coming on the morrow He also, under the palace walls, apostrophizes the sleepless Czar, Alexander I, not, like Pushkin, as a benevolent and sorrowing monarch, but from the Polish standpoint, as one in whose soul the evil principle has prevailed "God will shake the steps of the Assyrian throne" —Tr

Have been illustrious in past ages,
—Rung, through tradition, in the pages
Of Karamzin; and yet, today
That name is never recollected,
By Rumour and the World rejected.
Our hero—somewhere—served the State;
He shunned the presence of the great;
Lived in Kolomna; for the fate
Cared not of forbears dead and rotten,
Or antique matters long forgotten
So, home Evgeny came, and tossed
His cloak aside; undressed, and sinking
Sleepless upon his bed, was lost
In sundry meditations—thinking
Of what?—How poor he was; how pain
And toil might some day hope to gain
An honored, free, assured position;
How God, it might be, in addition
Would grant him better brains and pay.
Such idle folk there were, and they,
Lucky and lazy, not too brightly
Gifted, lived easily and lightly;
And he—was only in his second
Year at the desk
He further reckoned
That still the ugly weather held;
That still the river swelled and swelled;
That almost now from Neva's eddy
The bridges had been moved already;
That from Parasha he must be
Parted for some two days, or three
And all that night he lay, so dreaming,
And wishing sadly that the gale
Would bate its melancholy screaming
And that the rain would not assail
The glass so fiercely....But sleep closes
His eyes at last, and he reposes.
But see, the mists of that rough night
Thin out, and the pale day grows bright;
That dreadful day!—For Neva, leaping
Seaward all night against the blast
Was beaten in the strife at last,
Against the frantic tempest sweeping;
And on her banks at break of day

The people swarmed and crowded, curious,
And reveled in the towering spray
That spattered where the waves were furious.
But the wind driving from the bay
Dammed Neva back, and she receding
Came up, in wrath and riot speeding;
And soon the islands flooded lay.
Madder the weather grew, and ever
Higher upswelled the roaring river
And bubbled like a kettle, and whirled
And like a maddened beast was hurled
Swift on the city. All things routed
Fled from its path, and all about it
A sudden space was cleared; the flow
Dashed in the cellars down below;
Canals above their borders spouted
Behold Petropol floating lie
Like Triton in the deep, waist-high!
  A siege! the wicked waves, attacking
Climb thief-like through the windows; backing,
The boats stern-foremost smite the glass,
Trays with their soaking wrappage pass;
And timbers, roofs, and huts all shattered,
The wares of thrifty traders scattered,
And the pale beggar's chattels small,
Bridges swept off beneath the squall,
Coffins from sodden graveyards—all
Swim in the streets!
....And contemplating
God's wrath, the folk their doom are waiting.
All will be lost; ah, where shall they
Find food and shelter for today?
  The glorious emperor, now departed,
In that grim year was sovereign
Of Russia still. He came, sick-hearted,
Out on his balcony, and in pain
He said: "No Tsar, with God, is master
Over God's elements!" In thought
He sat, and gazed on the disaster
Sad-eyed, and on the evil wrought;
For now the squares with lakes were studded,
Their torrents broad the streets had flooded,
And now forlorn and islanded
The palace seemed. The emperor said

One word: and see, along the highways
His generals* hurrying, through the byways!
From city's end to end they sped
Through storm and peril, bent on saving
The people, now in panic raving
And drowning in their houses there.
  New-built, high up in Peter's Square
A corner mansion then ascended;
And where its lofty perron ended
Two sentry lions stood at guard
Like living things, and kept their ward
With paw uplifted. Here, bare-headed,
Pale, rigid, arms across his breast,
Upon the creature's marble crest
Sat poor Evgeny But he dreaded
Nought for himself; he did not hear
The hungry rollers rising near
And on his very footsoles plashing,
Feel on his face the rainstorm lashing,
Or how the riotous, moaning blast
Had snatcht his hat. His eyes were fast
Fixt on one spot in desperation
Where from the deeps in agitation
The wicked waves like mountains rose,
Where the storm howled, and round were driven
Fragments of wreck ... There, God in Heaven!
Hard by the bay should stand, and close,
Alas, too close to the wild water,
A paintless fence, a willow-tree,
And there a frail old house should be
Where dwelt a widow, with a daughter
Parasha—and his dream was she!
His dream—or was it but a vision,
All that he saw? was life also
An idle dream which in derision
Fate sends to mock us here below?
  And he, as though a man enchanted
And on the marble pinned and planted
Cannot descend, and round him lie
Only the waters. There, on high,
With Neva still beneath him churning,
Unshaken, on Evgeny turning

* Count Miloradovich and Adjutant-General Benchkendorff.—Pushkin.

His back, and with an arm flung wide,
Behold the Image sit, and ride
Upon his brazen horse astride!

II

But now, with rack and ruin sated
And weary of her insolence
And uproar, Neva, still elated
With her rebellious turbulence,
Stole back, and left her booty stranded
And unregarded. So a bandit
Bursts with his horde upon a village
To smash and slay, destroy and pillage;
Whence yells, and violence, and alarms,
Gritting of teeth, and grievous harms
And wailings, then the evildoers
Rush home; but dreading the pursuers
And sagging with the stolen load
They drop their plunder on the road.
Meanwhile the water had abated
And pavements now uncovered lay;
And our Evgeny, by dismay
And hope and longing agitated,
Sore-hearted to the river sped.
But still it lay disquieted
And still the wicked waves were seething
In pride of victory, as though
A flame were smouldering below;
And heavily was Neva breathing
Like to a horse besprent with foam
Who gallops from the battle home.
Evgeny watches, and descrying
By happy chance a boat, goes blying
To hail the ferryman; and he,
Unhired and idle, willingly
Convoys him for a threepence, plying
Through that intimidating sea.
The old tried oarsman long contended
With the wild waters, hour by hour,
Sunk in the trough, the skiff descended
Mid rollers, ready to devour
Rash crew and all—at last contriving
To make the farther shore.
Arriving,

Evgeny—evil is his lot!—
Runs to the old familiar spot
Down the old street,—and knows it not.
All, to his horror, is demolished,
Leveled or ruined or abolished.
Houses are twisted all awry,
And some are altogether shattered,
Some shifted by the seas; and scattered
Are bodies, flung as bodies lie
On battlefields. Unthinkingly,
Half-fainting, and excruciated,
Evgeny rushes on, awaited
By destiny with unrevealed
Tidings, as in a letter sealed.
  He scours the suburb; and discerning
The bay, he knows the house is near;
And then stops short, ah, what is here?
Retreating, and again returning,
He looks—advances—looks again.
'Tis there they dwelt, the marks are plain;
There is the willow. Surely yonder
The gate was standing, in the past;
Now, washt away! No house!—O'ercast
With care, behold Evgeny wander
For ever round and round the place,
And talk aloud, and strike his face
With his bare hand. A moment after,
He breaks into a roar of laughter.
  The vapors of the night came down
Upon the terror-stricken town,
But all the people long debated
The doings of the day, and waited
And could not sleep The morning light
From pale and weary clouds gleamed bright
On the still capital, no traces
Now of the woes of yesternight!
With royal purple it effaces
The mischief; all things are proceeding
In form and order as of old;
The people are already treading,
Impassive, in their fashion, cold,
Through the cleared thoroughfares, unheeding;
And now official folk forsake
Their last night's refuge, as they make

Their way to duty. Greatly daring,
The huckster now takes heart, unbaring
His cellar, late the prey and sack
Of Neva,—hoping to get back
His heavy loss and wasted labor
Out of the pockets of his neighbor.
The drifted boats from each courtyard
Are carried.
To a certain bard,
A count, a favourite of heaven
To one Khvostov, the theme was given
To chant in his immortal song
How Neva's shores had suffered wrong.
But my Evgeny, poor, sick fellow!—
Alas, the tumult in his brain
Had left him powerless to sustain
Those shocks of terror For the bellow
Of riotous winds and Neva near
Resounded always in his ear;
A host of hideous thoughts attacked him,
A kind of nightmare rent and racked him,
And on he wandered silently;
And as the week, the month, went by,
Never came home His habitation,
As time ran out, the landlord took,
And leased the now deserted nook
For a poor poet's occupation.
Nor ever came Evgeny home
For his belongings; he would roam,
A stranger to the world, his ration
A morsel tendered in compassion
Out of a window; he would tramp
All day, and on the quay would camp
To sleep; his garments, old and fraying,
Were all in tatters and decaying.
And the malicious boys would pelt
The man with stones; and oft he felt
The cabman's whiplash on him flicking;
For he had lost the skill of picking
His footsteps,—deafened, it may be,
By fears that clamored inwardly.
So, dragging out his days, ill-fated,
He seemed like something miscreated,
No beast, nor yet of human birth,
Neither a denizen of earth

Nor phantom of the dead.
Belated
One night, on Neva wharf he slept.
Now summer days toward autumn crept;
A wet and stormy wind was blowing,
And Neva's sullen waters flowing
Plashed on the wharf and muttered there
Complaining—beat the slippery stair
As suitors beat in supplication
Unheeded at a judge's door.
In gloom and rain, amid the roar
Of winds,—a sound of desolation
With cries of watchmen interchanged
Afar, who through the darkness ranged,—
Our poor Evgeny woke; and daunted,
By well-remembered terrors haunted,
He started sharply, rose in haste,
And forth upon his wanderings paced;
—And halted on a sudden, staring
About him silently, and wearing
A look of wild alarm and awe.
Where had he come? for now he saw
The pillars of that lofty dwelling
Where, on the perron sentinelling,
Two lion-figures stand at guard
Like living things, keep watch and ward
With lifted paw. Upright and glooming,
Above the stony barrier looming,
The Image, with arm flung wide,
Sat on his brazen horse astride.*
And now Evgeny, with a shiver
Of terror, felt his reason clear.
He knew the place, for it was here
The flood had gamboled, here the river
Had surged, here, rioting in their wrath,
The wicked waves had swept a path
And with their tumult had surrounded
Evgeny, lions, square,—and Him
Who, moveless and aloft and dim,
Our city by the sea had founded,
Whose will was Fate. Appalling there
He sat, begirt with mist and air.

* See description of the monument in Mickiewicz It is borrowed from Rhuban, as Mickiewicz himself observes —Pushkin

What thoughts engrave his brow! what hidden
Power and authority he claims!
What fire in yonder charger flames!
Proud charger, whither art thou ridden,
Where leapest thou? and where, on whom,
Wilt plant thy hoof?—Ah, lord of doom
And potentate, 'twas thus, appearing
Above the void, and in thy hold
A curb of iron, thou sat'st of old
O'er Russian, on her haunches rearing!
About the Image, at its base,
Poor mad Evgeny circled, straining
His wild gaze upward at the face
That once o'er half the world was reigning.
His eye was dimmed, crampt was his breast,
His brow on the cold grill was pressed,
While through his heart a flame was creeping
And in his veins the blood was leaping.
He halted sullenly beneath
The haughty Image, clenched his teeth
And clasped his hands, as though some devil
Possessed him, some dark power of evil,
And shuddered, whispering angrily,
"Ay, architect, with thy creation
Of marvels.. .Ah, beware of me!"
And then, in wild precipitation
He fled.
For now he seemed to see
The awful Emperor, quietly,
With momentary anger burning,
His visage to Evgeny turning!
And rushing through the empty square,
He hears behind him as it were
Thunders that rattle in a chorus,
A gallop ponderous, sonorous,
That shakes the pavement At full height,
Illumined by the pale moonlight,
With arm outflung, behind him riding
See, the bronze horseman comes, bestriding
The charger, clanging in his flight
All night the madman flees; no matter
Where he may wander at his will,
Hard on his track with heavy clatter
There the bronze horseman gallops still.
Thereafter, whensoever straying

Across that square Evgeny went
By chance, his face was still betraying
Disturbance and bewilderment.
As though to ease a heart tormented
His hand upon it he would clap
In haste, put off his shabby cap,
And never raise his eyes demented,
And seek some byway unfrequented.
A little island lies in view
Along the shore; and here, belated,
Sometimes with nets a fisher-crew
Will moor and cook their long-awaited
And meagre supper. Hither too
Some civil servant, idly floating,
Will come upon a Sunday, boating.
That isle is desolate and bare;
No blade of grass springs anywhere.
Once the great flood has sported, driving
The frail hut thither. Long surviving,
It floated on the water there
Like some black bush. A vessel plying
Bore it, last spring, upon her deck.
They found it empty, all a wreck;
And also, cold and dead and lying
Upon the threshold, they had found
My crazy hero In the ground
His poor cold body there they hurried,
And left it to God's mercy, buried

—Translation by Oliver Elton

Mikhail Lermontov

I remember the keen pleasure of an evening in Petrograd in 1918, when I heard an actor recite with attractive diction, from memory, the poem reproduced below. So happily impressed was I with the reading of the poem in the Russian original that then and there I resolved to translate it into English. Yet when I tried it, I encountered difficulty. A poem is a poem by reason of its rhythm rather than by its content, however attractive that may be, and to reproduce the rhythm and the spirit of the poem is no small task. I worked on this "Song about Tsar Ivan Vasilyevitch" *at odd tranquil moments through several years, devoting myself to it only when the mood was upon me. The poem eventually appeared in this country in* The Dial *and in England in a private de luxe edition. I am happy for this opportunity to make it available in its present form And let the reader remember the good old dictum "Don't shoot the pianist. He is doing his best."*

A SONG ABOUT TSAR IVAN VASILYEVITCH

His Young Body-Guard and the Valiant Merchant Kalashnikov

Hail to thee, Tsar Ivan Vasilyevitch!
Of thee we have devised our song,
Of thy beloved body-guard,
And of the merchant, bold Kalashnikov,
In fashion old devising it,
To sing it to the dulcimer.
We've crooned and have lamented
And all the folk, all true believers, have been comforted,
And the boyard, Matvey Romodanovsky,
Brought us frothing mead,
While on a silver tray,
His snow-white lady brought
A new white towel all knit with silk.
They feasted us three days—three nights—
Intently listening, craving more.

I

No great red sun rode in the sky,
No small blue clouds were basking there.
But feasting in the banquet-hall,

Resplendent in his golden crown,
Sat Tsar Ivan Vasilyevitch, the terrible,
His bondsmen at his back,
Boyards and princes facing him,
At either side his body-guard.
To God's glory feasted he;
Full pleased and merry, he

The Tsar smiled and commanded then
That wine sweet from across the seas,
Be poured into his gilded shell
And borne before the body-guard.
All drank, all praised the Tsar.

Of all the guard but one alone
A laddie bold that none could curb
Wet not his lips within the gilded scoop;
But on the ground let rest his deep dark eyes,
Upon his breast he hung his head
And in that breast was heaviness.

The Tsar knit his raven brows
And on the brave lad turned his fiery eyes—
As from heaven's heights a hawk
May sight a young and blue-winged dove—
The brave lad did not lift his eyes

The Tsar then fiercely struck the ground,
Driving the ferrule of the stick deep into the oaken floor
And still the brave lad did not flinch.
The Tsar then spake an angry word; and suddenly
The brave lad roused himself.

"Ho thou, our servant true, Kiribeyevitch,
Hast thou been hiding an ungodly thought?
Dost envy thou our regal glory?
Art weary of thy henchman-fealty?
At rising of the moon the stars rejoice
That light should now be shed upon their way,

But mark—that star which loses itself in the clouds
Must straightway fall
And it does not become thee, Kiribeyevitch,
To scorn our royal merriment;
For thou art to the Skuratovs kin,
And fostered in the Maliutin clan!"

Bowing, then answered Kiribeyevitch:
"O thou our Lord, Ivan Vasilyevitch!
Reproach not thine unworthy slave·
A heart of fire will not be quenched with wine,
Dark thoughts yield not to feasting!
I have angered thee—O lordly will!
Prescribe thou punishment; cut off my head:
My stalwart shoulders feel its weight;
Toward the damp earth it droops."

Then spake Tsar Ivan Vasilyevitch:
"Why should a brave lad be thus sorrowful?
Is thy brocaded mantle old?
Has thy fine cap of sable lost its shape?
Or has thy treasure slipped away?
Or is thy tempered sabre notched?
Or has thy horse, ill shod, begun to limp?
Has someone in a fisticuff
Surprised thy guard and knocked thee down,
There by the river, the Moskva—
Perchance a merchant's son?"

Then answered Kiribeyevitch—
Tossing his curling locks:
"There's not been born that wizard arm,
In boyard or merchant race;
My fleet horse of the steppe is in his stride;
My sabre gleams like glass;
And holidays, by thy grace,
I'll be decked out not worse than any one.

"I mount, and gallop off on my swift horse
Beyond the river, the Moskva,
Tightening my silken girdle round and
Pulling my velvet cap awry
With its sable edge so dark and fine about.
At the wooden gates a cluster
Of maidens young and sweet
See all and whisper in delight;
But there is one who does not glance
Nor does she show delight.
She draws a flowery veil across her face....

"In holy Russia—mother dear—
Is not found one so fair;
She floats along—a little swan,

Glancing sweetly like a dove;
She speaks; one hears the nightingale;
Her cheeks aflame are like the sunrise in God's sky;
Her braids of hair are flaxen gold
With ribbons bright twined in the plaits,
Over her shoulders they run and wind,
Kiss her bosom that is white.
She is of the merchant race,
Is called Alena Dmitrevna.

"When I see her I am not I:
My arms fall slack,
My keen eyes blur,
O orthodox Tsar, he is in misery,
Who must live, pining, in this world alone.
I have grown weary of swift steeds,
Of fine brocade attire,
Am not in want of hoarded gold,
Who have not one with whom my gold to share,
Whom I may dazzle with my fearlessness,
Whom I might dazzle with my fine attire!

"Let me depart to the endless steppes,
To a free life, a Cossack's life
Where I may bow my restless head—
Upon a heathen spear.
Let cursed Tartars share the spoil,
The keen-edged sword, the gallant horse,
And warrior's saddle, the Circassian.
Let ravens pick my tearful eyes,
Rains scour my orphan bones,
And let the winds disperse my wretched dust...."

Then laughing, said Ivan Vasilyevitch:
"My servant true,
Thy woe shall have my aid.
Take this my sapphire ring,
And my pearl necklace take.
First to a match-maker make thou thy bow,
Then send these precious gifts
To thy Alena Dmitrevna:
If she be pleased then call a wedding feast,
If not, then take it sensibly."

"O thou my Lord, O Tsar Ivan Vasilyevitch!
Thou art deceived by this thy wily slave,

He has not told thee all the truth,
He has not said that the fair maid
Has wedded been,
Is wedded to a merchant's son
And by the church's Christian law...."

Hey, my children, sing—make the dulcimer ring!
Hey, my children, drink—don't take time to think!
Give cheer to our good boyard
And to the boyard's lady,
The snow-white one!

II

Behind the counter the young merchant sat,
The sturdy lad, Stepan Paramonovitch,
Surnamed Kalashnikov,
Silken goods he spread to show,
With gracious words alluring guests
Gold and silver reckoned up.
But no luck befell that day:
Heedlessly the lords walked by,
Never glancing toward the shop.
In holy church the vespers had been rung;

Behind the Kremlin sunset blazed
And in the sky the gathered clouds
Drove with the wind and snow along;
Deserted now the market place
As Stepan Paramonovitch
Draws to the oaken door
And springs the lock of German steel
And chains the growling, white-fanged dog
And hastens home, all lost in thought,
Across the river, the Moskva.

But when he walked into his steep-roofed house
Astonished was Stepan Paramonovitch.
No wife to greet him there.
On the oaken table no white table-cloth,
The image-candle dimly flickering.
He then besought the aged servitor:
"Tell me, tell me, Erimeyevna,
Where is she gone or hid?
The hour is late. My little ones—
Are they still at their games? Asleep?"

"O master mine, Stepan Paramonovitch!
I tell a marvel marvelous:
To vespers went Alena Dmitrevna;
The priest came by, the priest's young wife also—
Returned both from the parish-church;
They lit a taper and sat down to dine,
But she not yet, thy sweet young wife.
Thy little ones are not asleep,
They're not at play,
They weep and weep,
And they will not be comforted,"

Perturbed, absorbed in troubled thought,
The merchant young, Kalashnikov,
Stood by the window looking down the street,
The night was dark, the white snow fell
In spreading flakes, obscuring every human trace.
A sound—he heard the outer door;
Quick steps.
There in the name of Christ!
His young wife stood,
Head bare of covering,
The braids of her flaxen hair untwined,
And all with snow and frost bedecked,
Glazed her two eyes, bereft of reason,
Her lips muttering speeches out of season.

"Where—tell me—wife, where hast thou been?
Strayed in what yard, what market place?
Thy hair unkempt, thy dress so torn,
Hast thou been reveling,
A guest perchance of the young sons, the boyarian?...
Was it for this that thou and I
Before the holy ikons were betrothed,
Exchanging rings of gold?
I'll turn iron locks on thee,
Behind oaken doors ironbound,
That God's own light thou shalt not see,
That thou shalt not dishonor me...."

Thereat the best-beloved Alena Dmitrevna,
Shook violently and trembled like an aspen-leaf,
And there most bitterly poured out her grief
And weeping at his feet,
Begged of her husband his reprieve.

"My lord, my lovely one,
Kill me, or let me speak!
Thy words pierce like a sword
And cut my very heart.
I fear not death,
Nor neighbors' tongues;
I fear but thy inclemency.

"Returning home from vespers I,
Down the deserted street,
Heard suddenly a crunching sound
And turned to see—a man sped to catch up with me.
My poor knees shook,
I drew my silken veil across my face
But clutching fiercely both my hands,
He whispered low these words to me:
'Why art thou frightened, lovely one?
I am no thief, no highwayman;
The Tsar I serve, the terrible Tsar;
My name is Kiribeyevitch,
Of noble blood, of the Maliutin clan ...'

"These words but frightened me the more;
My poor head swam;
And then he kissed, and tried to comfort me,
And went on whispering as he kissed:
'What dost thou lack?
But tell me, lovely one. Gold? Pearls?
Gems, bright brocades?
Thou shalt be decked out like a queen
And all shall envy thee.
Spare me a cruel death,
Grant me thy love, thy dear embrace
But once, and then farewell!'

"Devouring, like a living flame,
His kisses covered me;
My cheeks burn yet,
His kisses, cursed be they.
The neighbors' wives at wicket gates
Laughed, and derided us.

"I tore myself from his embrace
And straightway ran for home;
But captive in the robber's hands

Stayed my flowered kerchief, thine own gift,
And my veil, the Bucharian.
I am dishonored, shamed! Alas!
The chaste, the faithful one!
What thing will spiteful tongues devise,
How can I show myself?

"Preserve me, save me, thy true wife,
From scandalmongers' evil tongues.
Of whom else shall I ask help?
In whom else put my trust?
I am an orphan in this world of winter white—
My father dead, in the cold ground,
And at his side my mother dear
My eldest brother lost, as thou dost know,
In a far land, my youngest brother but a child,
A babe—a child—as yet without a thought ..."

So spake with bitter tears Alena Dmitrevna.

Then summoned Stepan Paramonovitch
His younger brothers twain.
The two came straightway, bowed to him,
And in such wise they spake:
"O elder brother, tell us pray,
That on so cold and dark a night thou hast thus sent for us?
What has befallen thee, what woeful thing—"

"My brothers dear, declare I now
What woe has come to me:
The Tsar's guard, Kiribeyevitch,
Dishonors us and our fair name;
My soul brooks not the shame;
No valiant heart could suffer it.
To-morrow then we fight, we two,
Before the Tsar, beside the river, the Moskva.
I fight his body-guard—
Fight to the death, the bitter end.
And if he smite me, come ye then
And stand for holy mother-truth.
Faint not, O brothers dear to me—
Of fresher strength and younger years than I,
Less touched by sin—
The Lord shall be merciful to you!"

This answer then his brothers made:
"The wind blows thither in the sky
And thither the clouds drift;
In the vale of blood, the battleground,
The dark blue eagle sets his feast,
Cries, 'Gather up the dead,'
And the young eaglets congregate.
Thou art a father to us twain;
Do as thou wilt, make trial of us.
Be confident; our kinsman we shall not betray."

Hey, my children, sing—make the dulcimer ring!
Hey, my children, drink—don't take time to think!
Give cheer to our good boyard
And to the boyard's lady
The snow-white one.

III

Upon Moskva the great, the golden-crowned,
Upon Kremlin, the white-stone-walled,
From the far woods,
From beyond the far woods,
From beyond the blue hills,
Playing on wooden roofs,
Dispersing the small grey clouds,
Flamed the sunrise, ruby-red;
It spread its golden locks,
Immersed in the sand-like snow;
As though a fair maid in the mirror glanced,
It looked into the sky and smiled.
To what end didst thou wake, O sunrise ruby-red?
For what joy didst prepare thy spreading rays?

How they did come, flocking,
The bold fighting lads, the Muscovian,
To the river Moskva, to see the fight,
To divert themselves in the holiday.
And in warlike array,
The Tsar also, with boyards and with body-guard.
He bade them stretch the silver chain
Of welded links, held up by other links, of gold.
A square of sixty yards' extent
They marked off for the best matched pair,
The combat of the challengers.

Commanded then the Tsar, Ivan Vasilyevitch:
"Shout in a mighty voice,
'Ho, dauntless ones, come forth;
Come and divert little father, the Tsar!
Step into the broad ring;
Who wins, the Tsar's reward he shall receive;
Who loses, him God will forgive!'"

Then boldly stepped forth Kiribeyevitch,
In silence bowed low to the Tsar,
And there, with velvet coat thrown off,
His right hand resting at his side,
His left disposing his red cap,
He waited for a challenger.
Thrice rang the mighty shout—
No fighter stirred,
The company stood dubious.

Jauntily the body-guard
Strolled to and fro,
Mocked the halting fighting-lads:
"How quiet ye are, how thoughtful,
Fear not, 'tis a feast day,
I'll let you off penitent but alive,
I wish but to divert little father, the Tsar!"

Then suddenly dividing into two, the crowd gave way,
And Stepan Paramonovitch strode forth,
A merchant young, a fighter strong,
Surnamed Kalashnikov.
To the terrible Tsar he first made reverence,
Then to white Kremlin and the holy churches,
Then to the Russian people, bowed.
His eyes were fire—a falcon's eyes;
Upon the body-guard they fixed themselves.
He stopped there, facing him,
And sheathed his hands against the fight
And squared his back
And stroked his full-grown beard.

To him Kiribeyevitch then said:
"Tell me, my gallant fellow,
Thy breed and family?
By what name art thou known?
'Tis just to know for whom mass shall be said,
That after victory,
The victor may in boasting name his luckless foe."

Stepan Paramonovitch replied:
"I am by name Stepan Kalashnikov,
An honest father mine;
According to God's law I've lived:
I have dishonored no man's wife,
I've robbed none, under cover of the night,
I have not hid from broad daylight....
Thou prophesiest God's own truth.
For one of us mass shall be read
Not later than to-morrow noon;
And one shall boast
And one shall celebrate with friends....
I jest no jest, I reck not of diversion for the folk,
I come to meet thee, son of a Turk,
I have come to a terrible fight, to mine or thy last fight!"

At these words Kiribeyevitch
Grew pale in face like autumn snow;
His bold eyes quailed,
A chill coursed through his mighty frame,
And on his lips apart to speak,
The half-formed words congealed....
Then silently they drew back, each,
And the heroic fight began.

Swung his arm then Kiribeyevitch,
Struck first Kalashnikov,
Struck in the middle of the breast,
Loudly resounded the blow on the heroic breast,
Reeled Stepan Paramonovitch,
On his breast hung a cross of brass,
With holy relics from Kieff town,
The cross bent in, cut into the breast,
Like drops of dew, drops of blood appeared.
"As it is fated so the end shall be,"
Said Stepan Paramonovitch within himself.
"For honor's sake I shall stand valiantly."
He then drew back, and braced himself
And gathered all his strength
And struck his hated foe
On the left temple, a full-shouldered blow.

The young bodyguard softly groaned,
Reeled, fell dead,
Rolled upon the cold snow—
Upon the cold snow, like a sapling pine,

Like a sapling pine of the virgin wood
Cut where the sap flows, at the root.

Then Tsar Ivan Vasilyevitch,
Angry with an anger great,
Stamped his foot upon the earth
Frowned fearfully,
Commanded that the merchant bold be caught
And straightway in his presence brought.

Thus spake the orthodox Tsar:
"Tell me in truth, conscientiously;
Of free will, or unwillingly—
Hast thou thus killed my servant true,
My champion, Kiribeyevitch?"

"O Tsar, I killed with full free will,
For why I will not tell;
I will tell but to God alone.
Command my punishment; send to the block
My guilty head;
This only I implore—aid for my little ones
And for my sweet young wife—
And for my brothers twain;
Vouchsafe of thy bounty, Tsar...."

"'Tis well for thee, my child,
O merchant's son, O fighter bold,
That thou hast answered on thy soul.
Thy children, also thy young wife,
Shall have a grant from my treasury.
Thy brothers twain shall from this day
Trade with no tax to pay
From end to end of mighty Russia.
But thou, thou must ascend the scaffold high
And on the block lay down thy restless head.
But they shall sharpen well the axe.
The headsman's dress be gay;
I shall command that the great bell be rung,
That all may know,
All the folk, the Moscovian,
That thou too of my bounty hast not been forgot."

To the square flocked all the folk;
Dolefully droned-moaned the bell,
Tolled the evil news.
On high, the scaffold-place,

Cheerily the headsman strolled to and fro.
In scarlet blouse with sparkling belt-buckle,
And great axe with new-whetted edge;
Smoothing his hands until
The fighter strong, the merchant young,
Had bade his brothers two farewell.

"Ho ye, my brothers, friends by blood,
Let us kiss and embrace
Before we part forever more, I charge you:
Greet for me Alena Dmitrevna
Bid her not to mourn too much,
Not to let my little ones be kept in mind of me,
Greet for me my father's house,
Greet our companions dear.
I charge you both, in God's own church,
Pray for my soul, my sinful soul!"

Stepan Kalashnikov, alas,
Then suffered death, a shameful death;
And his unhappy head
Rolled on the block in blood.

Beyond the river, the Moskva,
They made his grave then,
In an open field between three roads—
The Tull, the Ryazan, the Vladimir;
And they heaped up a little mound
And placed a maple cross on it.
Winds howl and sweep
Across his nameless grave.
Good men pass by:
An old man pauses in his walk, to cross himself,
A young man walks by, solemn and downcast,
A maiden walks by sorrowful,
The dulcimer-players walk by, singing a little song.

Hey, ye happy lads,
Dulcimer-players young,
With voices strong!
We've well begun—ye must end well;
Render to all truth and honor
To the generous boyard, glory!
To the boyard's lady, glory!
To all the Russian people, glory!

—Translation by John Cournos

TESTAMENT.

I want to be alone with you,
  A moment quite alone.
The minutes left to me are few,
  They say I'll soon be gone.
And you are going home on leave,
Then say... but why? I do believe
There's not a soul, who'll greatly care
To hear about me over there.

And yet if someone questions you,
  Whoever it may be,—
Tell them a bullet hit me through
  The chest,—and did for me
And say I died, and for the Tsar,
And say what fools the doctors are—
And that I shook you by the hand,
And spoke about my native land.

My father and my mother, both,
  By now are surely dead—
To tell the truth, I would be loth
  To send them tears to shed.
If one of them is living, say
I'm bad at writing home, and they
Have told the regiment to pack,—
And that I shan't be coming back.

We had a neighbor, as you know,
  And you remember I
And she... How very long ago
  It is we said good-bye!
She won't ask after me, nor care,
But tell her ev'rything, don't spare
Her empty heart; and let her cry;—
To her it doesn't signify.

—Translation by Maurice Baring

THE PRAYER

In life's hard, trying moments,
  With sorrow in my breast,
I breathe a prayer most wonderful,
  Which ever brings me rest.

There is a power of blessedness
  In those sweet words enshrined,
Thought cannot grasp their sacred charm
  That calms the anxious mind.

Doubt stays no more, the soul is free,
  Her burden rolls away,
Her faith renewed, tears bring relief,
  With this sweet prayer I pray.

—Translation by F. P. Marchant, in the *Anglo-Russian Literary Society*, No. 11

REMEMBER'ST THOU THE DAY

Remember'st thou the day when we—
  Late was the hour—were forced to part?
The night-gun boomed athwart the sea;
  In painful silence beat each heart;
The lovely day found cloudy close;
  A heavy mist the landscape palled;
And seemed it, when that shot arose,
  An echo from the ocean called.

Alone I wander by the flood;
  And when a gun booms in its might,
I think in pain how we once stood
  Together on that parting night.
And as the mournful echoes roll,
  Muffled, along the fluid walls,
From out the caverns of my soul
  Death answeringly calls and calls

—From W R. Alger, *The Poetry of the Orient*, 1865

Feodor Tyutchev

There is little of Tyutchev available in English; yet he is generally considered one of the three most important poets that Russia has produced, the others, of course, being Pushkin and Lermontov. Some critics place him second only to Pushkin. There is a mystical, nocturnal note in his poetry, familiar perhaps in English poetry, but absent in the earlier Russian poets. He was actually a contemporary of Pushkin, but he was not "discovered" until 1850, then lost again, only to be "rediscovered" by the moderns, notably by Alexander Blok, the greatest of them, and by Feodor Sologub, a close second Tyutchev deserves a better representation, but in the circumstances I must content myself with these three brief pieces

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SUNRISE

In solemn calm the Orient waits,
  A deep, mysterious silence keeping;
  No sign to tell if Day be sleeping
Or if he halts before her gates.

Now, now the mountain tops grow white,
  The mists the vales below still cumber,
  Still towns and peaceful hamlets slumber—
But heavenward turn your eager sight!

Behold it! Now a gleam awakes
  And like young Passion's timid blushes
  The red glows brighter, rosier flushes,
Then high above the zenith breaks!

A moment passes: swift the light
  Throughout the Ether's vast dominions
  Sweeps onward on her glittering pinions
And conquers all the hosts of Night.

—Translation by N H Dole, in
Schirmer's Octavo Choruses, No. 623

DE PROFUNDIS

When again the earth shall return to chaos,
And all that men have wrought
Be hidden beneath the waters—
The waters will again reflect the face of God.

—Translation by John Cournos

THE SNOW STILL WHITENS ON THE LEA

The snow still whitens on the lea,
  But spring is in the noisy streams.
They wake the slumbering banks, and flee;
  They flee with voices and with gleams.

And far and near their voices ring:
  "The spring, the spring is on her way;
We are the messengers of spring,
  Her avant-couriers today!"

The spring, the spring is on her way;
  With choral dance and rosy-bright
The warm and tranquil hours of May
  Haste after her in joyous flight!

—Translation by Oliver Elton

Alexey K. Tolstoy

That critic of exquisite taste, Maurice Baring, asserts that the two finest poems of death he knows, in modern languages, were written by a Spaniard and a Russian. The Spaniard's (Don Gustavo A Becquer's) poem need not concern us here. The Russian poem is by Count Alexey K. Tolstoy, it is called Tropar, *and was employed in the funeral service of the Eastern Church, blent with other motifs in the same service. The original is in rhyme, but even Mr Baring, for all his amazing skill in verse, must have found it impossible to give anything like an adequate metrical version; hence the next best thing, a prose version from his pen, good enough to provoke admiration.*

TROPAR

What joy does this life possess that is not mingled with earthly sorrow? What hope is not in vain and where among mortals is there one who is happy? Of all the fruits of our labor and toil there is nothing which shall endure nor anything of any value Where is the earthly glory that shall abide and pass not away? All things are but ashes, phantom, shadow, and smoke. Everything shall vanish as the dust of a whirlwind; and face to face with death we are unarmed and without defense; the right hand of the mighty is feeble and the commands of kings are as nothing. Receive, O Lord, Thy departed Servant into Thy happy dwelling place!

Death, like a furious knight-at-arms, encountered me, and like a robber he hath laid me low; the grave hath opened its jaws and hath taken away from me all that was alive. Save yourselves, kinsmen and children I call to you from the grave Be saved, O my brothers, O my friends, so that you behold not the flames of hell! Life is a kingdom of vanity, and as we breathe the corruption of death, we wither away like flowers Why do we toss about in vain? Our thrones are nothing but graves and our palaces but ruins Receive, O Lord, Thy departed Servant into Thy happy dwelling place!

Amidst the heap of rotting bones, who is king or servant or judge or warrior? Who shall deserve the Kingdom of God, and who shall be the outcast and the evil-doer? O brothers, where is the gold and the silver, where are the hosts of servants? Among the forgotten graves who is the rich man and who is the poor man? All is but ashes and smoke, and dust and mold, phantom and shadow and dream; only with Thee in Heaven, O Lord, is there refuge and salvation; all that was once flesh shall disappear and our pomps shall fall into decay

Receive, O Lord, Thy departed Servant into Thy happy dwelling place!

And Thou who dost intercede on behalf of us all, Thou the defender of the oppressed: To Thee, most blessed among women, we cry on behalf of our brother who lies here. Pray to Thy Divine Son, pray, O most Immaculate, for him That having fulfilled his life upon earth, he may leave his sorrow behind him. All things are but ashes, dust and smoke and shadow O friends, put not your faith in a phantom! When, on some sudden day, the corruption of death shall breathe upon us, we shall perish like wheat, mown down by the sickle in the cornfields. Receive, O Lord, Thy departed Servant into Thy happy dwelling place!

I follow I know not what path; half in hope and half in fear I go; my sight is dimmed, my heart has grown chill, my hearing is faint, my eyelids are closed; I am lying voiceless and I cannot move, I cannot hear the wailing of the brethren, and the blue smoke from the censer brings to me no fragrance; yet, until I sleep the eternal sleep, my love shall not die, and in the name of that love I implore you, O my brothers, that each one of you may thus call upon God "Lord, on that day, when the trumpet shall sound the end of the world, receive Thy departed Servant into Thy happy dwelling place!"

—Translation by Maurice Baring

Nikolay Nekrasov

Nekrasov has been called "the Russian Burns." The fact of the matter is, you can't call Burns "the Scotch Nekrasov." Such comparisons have their own irrelevance. It is true, however, that Nekrasov was one of the first of the greater poets to love the people, and to use them in his themes. No Russian poet has told of the life of the peasant more realistically and more sympathetically. And no poet has been more greatly beloved by his people. His funeral was the occasion of one of the greatest popular demonstrations ever accorded a poet in any land

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THE UNMOWN STRIP

Late in the autumn, the rooks are diverted;
Bare is the forest, the field is deserted.

Only one strip which is lying unmown:
Sad are its musings in stillness alone.

"Truly," each blade to the other is sighing,
"Weary are we of the autumn wind crying:

Weary of bowing to earth as we must,
Burying our grain-laden heads in the dust.

Scarce is it night, when the birds flocking near us
Halt on their passage to greedily tear us.

Hares tread us down, and the storm vents its hate.—
Where is our peasant? What more does he wait?

Were we, then, worse at our birth than all others?
Have we not sprouted and grown like our brothers?

No! We're not worse than the rest Long in vain
In us hath germed and hath ripened the grain

Was it for this he was ploughing and sowing,
That we should bend to the autumn gales blowing?"

Borne on the breeze the sad answer came back:
"It is the power your peasant doth lack.

He knew the why of his ploughing and sowing,
Started his work, but his strength all unknowing.

Ill fares the wight, he can drink not nor eat;
For his sick heart is the canker-worm's seat.

And the strong arms that his plough used to guide him,
Dried to dead stalks, now like whips hang beside him.

Dim were his eyes, and his voice hollow rang;
Mournful indeed was the song that he sang

When with his hand at the plough ever present,
Wrapped in his thoughts, o'er the strip moved the peasant"

—Translation by A C Coolidge,
in the *Harvard Monthly*, 1895

THE BIRTHPLACE

Behold it once again, the old familiar place,
Wherein my fathers passed their barren, vacant days!
In muddy revels ran their lives, in witless bragging,
In little bullying ways, in gluttonies unflagging;
The swarm of shivering serfs in their oppression found
An enviable thing the master's meanest hound;
And here to see the light of heaven I was fated,
And here I learned to hate, and bear the thing I hated;
But all my hate I hid within my soul for shame,
And I at seasons too a yokel squire became;
And here it was my soul, untimely spoilt and tainted,
With blessed rest and peace too soon was disacquainted;
Unchildish trouble then, and premature desires,
Lay heavy on my heart, and scorched it with their fires.
The days of a man's youth in memory, 'tis notorious,
Are like a sumptuous dream, are trumpeted as glorious;
—Those beauteous memories file in order before me,
Only to fill my breast with anger and ennui!

Here is the dark, dark close. See, where the branches thicken,
What figure glimpses down the pathway, sad and stricken?
Too well the cause I know, my mother, of thy tears;
Too well I know who marred and wasted all thy years.
Forever doomed to serve a sullen churl untender,
Unto no hopeless hope thy spirit would surrender;
To no rebellious dream thy timorous heart was stirred;
Thy lot, like any serf's, was borne without a word.
No frigid soul was thine, I know, or void of passion,
But resolute, and framed in proud and lovely fashion;
And all the wrongs that still thy ebbing strength could bear
Thy last faint words forgave thy slayer, watching there!
And thou, too, with that sad mute sufferer partaking
Her dreadful lot, and all the outrage and the aching,
Thou also art no more, my heart's own sister, mine!
Out of those doors by cur and servile concubine
Infested, thou must flee from shame unto disaster,
Commit thy lot unto a strange, an unloved master,
Aye, and rehearse afar the doom that fell on her,
Thy mother. Even he, thy executioner,
Shuddered before thy bier, was once betrayed to weeping,
To see thee with that smile so cold and rigid sleeping.

—Now it is blind and blank, that mansion old and gray;
Women and dogs, buffoons and lackeys, where are they?
Gone: but, of old, I know not what oppression leaden
Weighed upon great and small, the weary heart to deaden.
—Unto the nurse I fled. But ah! the nurse! how smarted
The tears I wept for her, when all too heavy-hearted!
To hear her name may stir the springs of old emotion,
But long, how long! has been extinct my heart's devotion;
Chance memories arise to trace and trace again
How her insensate love and kindness were my bane;
And lo! my heart again with wrath and rancor swelling!

Nay, from those younger years of harshness and rebelling
No recollection brings one comfortable ray;
But all that from the first ensnared my life, and lay
Upon me like a ban irrevocably blasting,
All, all began at home, in this my birthplace. Casting
My gaze in loathing round, it gives me comfort still
To see that they have felled the dark pinewood, the chill
Shelter for tired men from summer heats reposing;
The fallows are burnt up, the herds are idly dozing
And hang their heads above the streamlet parched with drought;
The crazy mansion, void and sullen, bulges out,
Where once the long dull note of stifled lamentation
Chimed with the clash of cups and shouts of exultation;
Where he who ground the rest beneath him—only he
To live his life, or act, or draw his breath, was free

—Translation by Oliver Elton

Alexey Pleshchyev

A LEGEND

Christ, when a child, a garden made,
And many roses flourished there
He watered them three times a day
To make a garland for His hair;

And when in time the roses bloomed,
  He called the children in to share
They tore the flowers from every stem,
  And left the garden stript and bare

"How wilt Thou weave Thyself a crown
  Now that Thy roses are all dead?"
"Ye have forgotten that the thorns
  Are left for me," the Christ-child said.
They plaited then a crown of thorns,
  And laid it rudely on His head,—
A garland for His forehead made;
  For roses, drops of blood instead.

—Translation by N. H. Dole

Apollon Maykov

WHO WAS HE?

(A Story of Peter the Great)

Upon the mighty Neva's bank,
  Along the winding woodland way,
A Horseman rode, in forest wilds
  Of elms, of pine, of mosses grey.

Before him rose a Fisher's hut,
  Beneath a pine, by the blue stream,
An aged, bearded Fisherman
  Was mending his boat's broken beam.

The Horseman said, "Grandsire! Good-day!
  God help thee, friend! how livest thou?
Dost thou catch much? and tell me, pray,
  Where dost thou sell thy takings now?"

The old man answered sullenly,
  "Are fishes in the river few?
And other market have I none
  Except the town, there, close to you

"And how am I to fish today?
  What kind of turmoil's here, you see!
You fight, and, in the fight, a shell
  Has smashed my fishing-boat for me!"

The Horseman bounded from his horse,
  Without a word the tools he grasped;
And in a twinkling planked the boat,
  The rudder in the stern set fast.

"See, now, old friend, thy boat's all right!
  Out on the water boldly set;
And, in the name of Peter's luck,
  Cast forth into the deep thy net."

He vanished. Mused the stern old man:
  "I wonder who the de'il was he!
In every inch he looked a king,
  But plied the hatchet splendidly."

—Translation by J Pollen, in
Rhymes From the Russian

Feodor Sologub

COMPENSATION

I roam in the cruel paths of life
Without home or shelter.
But the green of the earth is mine,
For me she puts on her gay raiment.

For me the nightingales sing—full-throated,
In the heart of spring night.
The stream, a captive, kisses
My dust-covered feet.

And the day's proud torch
Casts its golden rays humbly before me
Upon the earth,
Scatters in the grey dust.

—Translation by John Cournos

PRAISE OF SORROW

O my life,
I praise your sorrows.
Even as the murmurings of a quiet stream,
So my prayers sound on my lips.

I do not hide my soul's wounds,
I bless my rambling among stones.
Even as a willow over a quiet stream,
So ecstasy broods over my soul.

—Translation by John Cournos

Alexander Blok

Alexander Blok, the greatest Russian poet of our own century, was not only a great poet (possibly in the Tyutchev tradition), but also an exquisite poet. Everything he touched, no matter how crude the material, he transformed into delicate beauty. One should know Russian to appreciate how true this is. It would take a Shelley to translate "The Twelve" and a Keats to translate "The Strange Woman", these are his two best as well as most popular poems. If these cannot be our offering, other examples presented here, beautifully translated by Oliver Elton, are not devoid of loveliness.

MY SPIRIT IS OLD

My spirit is old; and some black lot awaits me
  On my long road.
Some dream accurst, inveterate, suffocates me
  Still, with its load.

So young—yet hosts of dreadful thoughts appal me,
  Sick and opprest.
Come! and from shadowy phantoms disenthral me,
  Friend unconfest!

——I have no friend but this dim road, far-winding
Through night and rain;
There, as on some dark sea, no sojourn finding,
But only pain.

My spirit is old; and some black lot awaits me
On my long road.
Some dream accurst, inveterate, suffocates me
Still, with its load.

—Translation by Oliver Elton

DIM GROW THE EDGES OF THE RIVER

Dim grow the edges of the river;
Float, onward bound,
Float still, my skiff, without a shiver,
Whilst I sleep sound.
No monster wave its rest to shatter
Shall e'er avail,
Though it come moaning down, to batter
That skiff so frail.
There, in the clean deep vapor yonder,
My skifflet, float,
Whilst on immortal things I ponder
In dreams remote.

—Translation by Oliver Elton

Alexey Remizov

The following two poems in prose more properly belong to poetry than to prose, hence their appearance in this section. Remizov is a Slav of Slavs in thought and in feeling, and few have exploited the native folk element more than he.

THE BETROTHED

Three years a lad played with a lass, three autumns. Countless were the words spoken in whispers That was how Maria loved Ivan!

Who among us, nowadays, loves like that?

The time came to put blossoms in the hair. And Maria was given to another; she was not given to Ivan.

Quickly the parents made the match between them. A nice, well-to-do son-in-law was found, the old folk were pleased with themselves.

And there was no more honey in life for her; dark grew the face of Maria, even darker than an autumnal night. Only her eyes flickered, flickered like two candles.

Her soul was weary, a frosty cold congealed her heart. Desolate, she sang in the evening her dolorous songs. Death itself would have been welcomer Yet bravely she resigned herself, and bravely endured

Three years Maria lived with the ungracious one, three autumns And one day she fell ill. She did not pine a long time, but died during the feast of Kusma and Demian.

And they buried Maria.

Oh, ho! the winter had come, with its frosts; white snow covered the grave! And Maria lay under the white snow; no longer flickered those eyes, the eyelids were sealed over them.

One night Maria rose from her grave; she went to her husband

A sign of the cross made he, Feodor her husband, the ungracious one.

"What does she want, the accursed one?" and he would not let his wife in.

Then went Maria to her father, to her mother she went.

"At whom are you gaping?" said her father.

"Where, witch, are you going?" said her mother.

The father was frightened, the mother was frightened; they would not let their daughter into the house.

Maria went to her godmother.

"Get you away, soul of a sinner, where you will, there is no room for you here," and away sent the godmother her godchild.

And Maria was now left alone, a stranger in this wide world; no other roof had she than the sky.

"I will go to him, to my first one, my earlier one," thought Maria suddenly. "He will take me in!"

And she appeared before Ivan's window.

Near the window she could see Ivan sitting, he was painting a picture of the Virgin Mary.

She knocked on the window.

Then Ivan wakened his servant It was night, and together they went out with hatchets.

The servant, when he saw Maria, was frightened. Without looking round once, he ran away

She looked at Ivan.

"Take me in. I will not harm you"

Ivan was overjoyed; he approached her, and he embraced her.

"Stop!" she cried. "Don't press me so tightly; my bones have lain idle for so long a time"

And she herself kept looking at him, she could not tear her eyes away; she caressed him, and could not caress him enough. That was how Maria loved Ivan!

Who among us, nowadays, loves like that?

Ivan took Maria into his house. He did not show her to anyone; he gave her dresses, also food and drink. And thus they lived until Christmas together

On Christmas Day they went to church. In the church all began to look at Maria—her father and her mother, her husband Feodor and her godmother.

When the service ended Maria went over to her mother.

"Yes, I am your own," said Maria. "You will remember that one night I came to you, and none of you would let me in, and so I went to my first one, my earlier one, and he took me in"

And they all acknowledged Maria, and they gave judgment; they gave her not to her old husband Feodor, but they gave her to Ivan

Oh, ho! the spring had come, the snows had thawed away, the green grass sprang up, and upon the little Red Hill were wedded Ivan and Maria.

Here is an end to my tale, an end to my novel.

—Translation by John Cournos

EASTER

Great was the dark of night and great the sadness that spread on Easter Eve across the Russian land, from the Volga to the sea, from the sea to the mountains.

The sad night was lost in the sad stillness—there was neither sound nor glimmer of light.

The old bell-ringer climbed to the belfry The old bell-ringer would sound the large Easter bell.

"Why such gloom and sadness across the whole Russian land?"

"There is gloom and sadness across the Russian land ...It is the souls of the sinners and of the cutthroats, rising from the depths, from the darkness, from the abysses, from across the river of fire, from the blackest of gaols—swarming in a respite to their radiant native land, to rest from agonizing torments, to find a drop of dew wherewith to wet their lips. The native dead rise up from the native fields—there is my mother, there are my brothers and my sisters I also see there are many of them, the weary and the forsaken; the downtrodden, and those without shelter; whole hosts of these are coming to greet their kin. I see also a pilgrim; he is dressed in white, and there is a cross in his hand ..."

And the gloom and the sadness dim one's eyes.

Midnight was near.

The people raised up the sacred banners, they lit the red candles, they carried out in procession the ikons of the altar

And the bell-ringer sounded the resonant bell

The resonant bell rang, and the darkness turned into a whirlwind and dispersed itself

The souls of the sinners and of the cutthroats began to sob, their blood-red tears became white. The dead scattered through the street—they kissed their dear ones, those whom they loved; they exchanged the Easter kiss with the living, just as the living do.

And the Holy Mother, the Three-day Resurrection, having washed herself with spring dew, set alight the dawn, and, after Mass had been said, she led her all-adorned upon a high mountain.

And the dawn spread out from the east to the west, from the Volga to the sea, from the sea to the mountains.

And a life-giving cross arose in the dawn.

The cross of resurrection flamed in the sun across the Russian land; it flamed in the dawn at sunrise, and until broad daylight.

And he who awaited Him saw the cross.

Glory be to Thee, Blessed Sun, glory to Thee.

—Translation by John Cournos

Anna Akhmatova

THE CALL

Why do you come masked
As the wind, as a stone, as a bird?
Why do you smile at me from the sky
In the dawn's flashing light?

Torture me no more,
Do not touch me;
Leave me to eloquent cares...
A drunken flame reels
On the dry grey bogs;
The Muse in torn shawl
Croons a sorrowful tune;
Her young cruel grief
Leads down tortuous ways,
Toward lyric valleys,
Where enchantment dwells.

—Translation by John Cournos

THE WOUNDED CRANE

Even thus, unto the wounded crane
The rest their trumpet-call repeat,
When, all around, the autumnal plain
Lies crumbling in the heat.

Pining, I hear their summons loud,
Their whir, on wings of gold,
Out of that bank of lowering cloud
And tangled thicket's hold.

"This time that we take wing, take wing
O'er stream and field today!
For thou hast lost the skill to sing;
Thy hand is all too frail a thing
To dash thy tears away."

—Translation by Oliver Elton

EARLY BOLSHEVIK POEMS

The compiler translated the following poems in 1919 for an article on proletarian culture, as it was then conceived, for New Europe *They are extremely interesting as a landmark in proletarian ideology in the transition years. They glorify the machine for the good reason that the machine made proletarians possible, moreover, had given unity to the proletarians thus created They are not wholly without merit as poetry, and one suspects their creators had learned a trick or two from Walt Whitman.*

M. P. Gerasimov

I HAVE BROKEN FRIENDSHIP WITH THE FREE WIND

I have broken friendship with the free wind,
Have forgotten its impetuous sweep.
And the quiet of native pleasures
And the soft earth covered with flowers....

From delightful springs I have come
To the call of triumphant sirens...
Into the gardens of iron and granite,
Into the alleys of stone houses

V. Kirillov

WE HAVE FORGOTTEN THE AROMA OF GRASS

We have forgotten the aroma of grass and spring flowers,
We have fallen in love with the strength of steam and the force of dynamite.
With the singing of sirens and the motion of axles and wheels.
We have become one blood with the metal, our souls have merged with machines.

. . .

The muscles of our arms are eager for gigantic labours,
With the torment of creation burns the collective breast.

. . .

We are our own Divinity, our own Judge and Law.

TO THE FUTURE

I have caught these songs of near, joyous ages
In the resounding whirlwind of fire-faced, immense towns.
I have caught these songs of coming golden days
In the din of factories, in the shouts of steel, in the malignant rustle of belts.
I saw my comrade forging golden steel,
And in that instant the Dawning Sunrise revealed a wondrous face.
I then learnt the world's wisdom was all in this hammer,
In this firm, sure and stubborn hand.
The harder the loud hammer will strike, break and forge,
The more radiant will joy in the gloomy world shine
The more nimbly the communicators, the pinions, shall move,
The more alluring and bright our days will flame
These songs have been sung to me by millions of voices,
By millions of blue-bloused, strong and daring smiths
These songs are a mutinous call, a strong, red, clear peal,
Which says that ended is the dead dream of the long night.
These songs are a mighty call to the sun, to life, to combat
A proud, angry challenge to a malignant and oppressive fate.

THE IRON MESSIAH

Here is our saviour—the earth's master,
The lord of forces titanic,
In the din of countless steel machines,
In the radiance of suns electric.
They thought he would appear in starry vestments,
In the aureole of divine mystery.
But he came to us in dark blue smoke
From factories, from works of the town's outskirts.
They thought he would appear in lustre and glory,
Meek and clement and gentle.
But he came like flaming lava,
He came many-faced, mutinous.
Here he comes striding across fathomless seas
Of steel, unswerving, impetuous,
Throwing out sparks of mutinous ideas,
Pouring forth a purifying flame.
Where he sounds his mighty shout
There the earth's wombs open.
The mountains part in the twinkling of an eye for him,
The poles of the earth grow closer.

. . .

A new sun he brings to the world,
He destroys prisons, thrones.
To eternal brotherhood he calls,
Effaces lines and frontiers.

WE

In the name of our Tomorrow we will burn Rafael,
Destroy museums, crush under foot the flowers of art.
Maidens in the radiant kingdom of the Future
Will be more beautiful than Venus de Milo.

A. K. Gastev

THE FACTORY SIRENS

When the morning sirens sound in the working suburbs, it is not at all a call to subjection. It is the song of the future.
Some time ago we toiled in wretched workshops and began to work in the morning at various times.
And now the sirens sound at eight o'clock for a whole million
A whole million take up the hammer at one and the same instant.
Our first strokes thunder together.
Of what sing the sirens?
It is the morning hymn of unity.

WE GROW OUT OF IRON

Look—I stand among them: the machines, the hammers, the furnaces and forges, and among a hundred comrades.
Above is the forged iron space.
On the sides are girders, beams.
They rise to a height of ten sazhenes.
They bend right and left.
They are joined by rafters into arches and, like the shoulders of a giant, they hold up the whole iron structure.
They are bold, they are impetuous, they are strong.
They demand yet more strength.
I look upon them and straighten myself out.
A new iron blood pours into my veins.
I have grown yet more.
I am also growing iron shoulders and immeasurably strong hands.
I have merged with the iron of the structure.
I have grown taller.
With my shoulders I push out the rafters, the upper girders, the roof
My feet are yet upon the ground, but my head is higher than the building.
I am still out of breath from my superhuman exertions and already I cry out·
"I want to speak, comrades, I want to speak!"
The iron echo veils my words, the whole structure trembles with impatience.

And I rise still higher, I am already as high as the chimneys.
Not a story, not a speech, but only one thing, my own, of iron, will
I shout:
"We shall conquer!"

—Translation by John Cournos

LENIN IN MYTH

The power of personality was never better exemplified than in these "folk poems." Lenin was a contemporary person; but for the simple people of the remote Soviet republics he had acquired the quality of a great myth. These are by no means isolated examples. A whole folk literature had grown up around the personality of Lenin but a few years after his death. What will folklore students say of these? Will they call these strange evocations, rendered in the ancient spirit, propaganda? And is, then, Homer's Odyssey *propaganda? For what? For whom? Maybe for Glaukopis Athene. If so, has a goddess ever received a better advertisement?*

Anonymous

A KIRZHIZ SONG

In Moscow, the great stone-built city,
Where all the people's chiefs are gathered,
In the heart of the city is a tent,
And therein reposes Lenin.

If thou be sad and weary,
And nothing console thee,
Come hither to this tent
And gaze on Lenin.

From our steppes
We raise a sorrowful groan,
For dead is Lenin,
And never will there be another like him.

We love Lenin as we love our steppes.
Nay, even more—we would give away
All our tents and steppes,
All our camels and wives and children,
But to bring him back...

Where shall we seek him?
We cry, and the steppe cries with us...
The moon and the stars weep with us...

—Translation from *Voks*

A FERGHANA FOLK SONG

Many are we on this earth set free by Lenin:
Uzbeks, Urus, Tadjiks, and other peoples.
All of us have in our blood a drop of Lenin's blood,
And we will defend our freedom.

Our swords are keen and bright,
Our rifles loaded,
Our guns are ready for the fray,
We have saddled our horses.

And in the battle soon to come,
Mighty Lenin will join us from on high.
His fiery sword will gleam with a new light,
The world will hear his thundering words.

He will march before us,
We will behind him make an onslaught on our foes,
Like a storm sparing nought, sweeping all on its way.
Much blood will flow, our foes will break,
They shall flee before us.

And we, with Lenin, shall march ever onward,
With Lenin's name we will rouse all the slaves:
To the old there shall be no return,
A new sun shall rise over the earth.

—Translation from *Voks*

SHORT FICTION

Alexander Pushkin

THE QUEEN OF SPADES

A card party was going on at the rooms of Lieutenant Narumov of the Horse Guards The long winter night passed unobserved, and it was five o'clock in the morning when the company sat down to supper. Those who had won, ate heartily; the others sat staring listlessly at their empty places. When the champagne appeared, the conversation grew animated, and general.

"And how did you fare, Surin?" asked the host.

"I lost, as usual I must confess I am unlucky· I play mirandole, I always keep cool, I never allow anything to put me out, yet I always lose!"

"And you did not once allow yourself to be tempted to back the red? . .Your persistence astonishes me"

"And what do you think of Hermann?" said one of the guests, indicating a young Engineer. "he has never touched a card in his life, he has never laid a wager; yet he sits here till five o'clock in the morning watching our play."

"Cards interest me very much," said Hermann· "but I am not in the position to sacrifice what I need in the hope of winning the extras."

"Hermann is a German and economical—that is all!" observed Tomsky. "But if there is one person that I cannot understand, it is my grandmother, the Countess Anna Fedotovna."

"How so?" asked the guests

"I cannot understand," continued Tomsky, "how it is that my grandmother never plays."

"What is there remarkable about an old lady of eighty not playing?" said Narumov.

"Then you do not know the reason why?"

"No, I haven't the faintest notion."

"Oh! then I'll tell you About sixty years ago, my grandmother went to Paris She created a sensation there. People used to run after her to catch a glimpse of the 'Muscovite Venus' Richelieu made love to her, and my grandmother maintains that he almost blew out his brains because of her indifference. At that time women used to play faro. On one occasion at the Court, she lost a considerable sum to the Duke of Orleans On returning home, grandmother removed the patches from her face, took off her hoops, informed my grandfather of her loss at the gaming-table, and insisted on his paying the debt. My

deceased grandfather, as far as I remember, was a sort of house-steward to my grandmother He dreaded her like fire; but, on hearing of her heavy loss, he was beside himself. He calculated the various sums she had lost, and pointed out that in six months she had spent half a million francs, that neither their Moscow nor Saratov estates were in Paris, and finally refused point-blank to pay the debt. My grandmother gave him a box on the ear and slept by herself as a sign of her displeasure. The next day she sent for her husband, hoping that this domestic punishment had the desired effect, but she found him inflexible. For the first time in her life, she reasoned and expostulated with him, hoping to convince him by pointing out that there are debts and debts, and that there is a great difference between a Prince and a coachmaker. It was all in vain; my grandfather still remained obdurate

"The matter did not rest there. My grandmother did not know what to do. She had shortly before become acquainted with a very remarkable man. You have heard of Count St. Germain, about whom so many marvelous stories are told You know that he represented himself as the Wandering Jew, as the discoverer of the elixir of life, of the philosopher's stone, and so forth Some deemed him a charlatan; but Casanova, in his memoirs, says that he was a spy Be that as it may, St. Germain, for all the mystery surrounding him, was a very fascinating person, and was much sought after in the best circles of society. To this day my grandmother retains an affectionate recollection of him, and becomes quite angry if anyone speaks disrespectfully of him. My grandmother knew that St. Germain had large sums of money at his disposal. She resolved to appeal to him. She wrote him a letter asking him to come to her without delay The strange old man came and found her overwhelmed with grief. She described to him in the blackest colors the barbarity of her husband, and ended by declaring that her whole hope depended wholly upon his friendship and goodness.

"St. Germain reflected.

"'I could advance you the sum you want,' said he; 'but I know that you would not rest easy until you had paid me back, and I should not like to bring fresh troubles upon you. There is another way out: You can win back your money.'

"'But, my dear Count,' replied my grandmother, 'I tell you that I haven't any money left.'

"'Money is not necessary,' replied St. Germain: 'be good enough to listen to me.'

"Then he revealed to her a secret, which each of us would give a good deal to know.. ."

The young officers listened with increased attention. Tomsky lit his pipe, took a puff or two, then went on:

"That same evening my grandmother went to Versailles to the *jeu de la reine* The Duke of Orleans kept the bank. Grandmother excused herself in an off-hand manner for not having yet paid her debt, by inventing some little story, and then began to play against him. She chose three cards and played them one after the other; and my grandmother recovered every penny she had lost."

"Pure chance!" said one of the guests.

"A tall yarn!" observed Hermann

"Perhaps they were marked cards!" said a third.

"I do not think so," replied Tomsky gravely.

"What!" said Narumov, "you have a grandmother who knows how to hit upon three lucky cards in succession, and you have never yet succeeded in getting the secret of it out of her?"

"That's the deuce of it!" replied Tomsky· "she had four sons, of whom my father was one; all four were confirmed gamblers, and yet not to one of them did she ever reveal her secret, though it would have been worth something to them and to me But this is what I heard from my uncle, Count Ivan Ilyich, and he assured me, on his honor, that it was true The late Chaplitzky—the same who died in poverty after having squandered millions—once lost, in his youth, about three hundred thousand roubles—to Zorich, if I remember rightly. He was in despair. My grandmother, who was always very severe upon the extravagance of young men, took pity, however, upon Chaplitzky. She gave him three cards, telling him to play them one after the other, at the same time exacting from him a solemn promise that he would never play at cards again as long as he lived Chaplitzky then went to his victorious opponent, and they began a fresh game. On the first card he staked fifty thousand roubles and won; he doubled the stake and won again; till at last, by pursuing the same tactics, he won back more than he had lost....

"But it is time to go to bed· it is getting towards six"

Indeed it was already beginning to dawn: the young men emptied their glasses and took leave of each other.

The old Countess A—— was seated in her dressing room in front of a mirror. She was attended by three maids One held a small pot of rouge, another a box of hairpins, and the third a tall cap with bright red ribbons. The Countess had no longer the slightest pretensions to beauty, but she retained the habits of her youth, dressed in strict accordance with the fashion of the seventies, and made as long and as careful a toilet as she would have done sixty years ago Near the window, at an embroidery frame, sat a young lady, her ward.

"Good morning, Grandmamma," said a young officer, entering the room. "*Bon jour,* Mademoiselle Lise. Grandmamma, I've come to ask you something"

"What is it, Paul?"

"I want you to let me introduce one of my friends to you, and allow me to bring him to the ball on Friday."

"Bring him direct to the ball and introduce him to me there. Were you at B——'s yesterday?"

"Yes; everything went off jollily, and there was dancing until five o'clock. How charming Yeletzkaya was!"

"So, my dear, you think her charming? You should have met her grandmother, the Princess Daria Petrovna. She must be very old, the Princess Daria Petrovna."

"How do you mean, old?" cried Tomsky thoughtlessly; "she died seven years ago."

The young lady raised her head and made a sign to the young officer He then recollected that the old Countess was never to be informed of the death of any of her contemporaries, and he bit his lips. But the old Countess heard the news with great indifference.

"Dead!" said she; "and I did not know it. We were appointed maids of honor at the same time, and when we were presented to the Empress..."

And for the hundredth time the Countess related to her grandson one of her anecdotes.

"Come, Paul," said she, when she had finished her story, "help me to get up Lizanka, where is my snuff-box?"

And the Countess with her three maids went behind a screen to finish her toilet. Tomsky was left alone with the young lady

"Who is the man you wish to introduce to the Countess?" asked Lizaveta Ivanovna in a whisper

"Narumov. Do you know him?"

"No Is he a soldier or a civilian?"

"A soldier."

"Is he in the Engineers?"

"No, in the Cavalry. What made you think that he was in the Engineers?"

The girl smiled, but made no reply

"Paul," cried the Countess from behind the screen, "send me some new novel, only pray don't let it be one of the modern sort."

"How is that possible, Grandmother?"

"I want a novel in which the hero strangles neither his father nor his mother, and in which there are no drowned bodies. I have a horror of drowned persons"

"There are no such novels nowadays. Would you like a Russian one?"

"Are there any Russian novels? Send me one, by all means, my dear!"

"Good-by, Grandmother: I must go.... Good-by, Lizaveta Ivanovna. What made you think that Narumov was in the Engineers?"

And Tomsky left the boudoir.

Lizaveta Ivanovna was left alone· she laid aside her work and looked out of the window. A few moments later, a young officer appeared round the street corner. A deep blush covered her cheeks; she resumed her work, bending her head low over the frame. At the same moment the Countess returned fully dressed.

"Order the carriage, Lizaveta," said she; "we will go for a drive."

Lizaveta rose from the frame and began to put away her work.

"What is the matter with you, my child, are you deaf?" cried the Countess. "Order the carriage."

"I will do so at once," replied the young lady, hastening into the anteroom.

A servant entered and gave the Countess some books from Prince Paul Alexandrovich.

"Thank him for me," said the Countess. "Lizaveta! Lizaveta! where are you off to?"

"I am going to dress."

"There is plenty of time, my dear. Sit down here. Open the first volume and read to me."

Her companion took the book and read a few lines.

"Louder," said the Countess. "What is the matter with you, my child? Have you lost your voice? Wait—give me that footstool—a little nearer—that will do."

Lizaveta Ivanovna read two more pages. The Countess yawned.

"Put the book down," said she. "what a lot of nonsense! Send it back to Prince Paul with my thanks... But where is the carriage?"

"It is waiting," said Lizaveta, looking out into the street.

"Why are you not dressed?" the Countess asked. "I must always wait for you It is intolerable, my dear!"

Liza hastened to her room. She had not been there two minutes before the Countess rang violently. The three waiting-maids came running in at one door, and a footman at another

"How is it that you cannot hear me when I ring for you?" said the Countess "Tell Lizaveta Ivanovna that I am waiting for her."

Lizaveta returned with her cloak and hat.

"At last you are here!" said the Countess "But why such an elaborate toilet? Whom do you intend to charm? What sort of weather is it? It seems rather windy."

"No, Your Ladyship, there is no wind," replied the footman.

"You are never careful of what you say. Open the window. You see, it is windy, and bitterly cold, too. Unharness the horses. Lizaveta, we won't go out—there was no need for you to deck yourself like that"

"What a life I lead!" thought Lizaveta Ivanovna.

And, in truth, Lizaveta Ivanovna was a very unhappy being. "The bread of the stranger is bitter," says Dante, "and his staircase hard to climb." But who can know what the bitterness of dependence is so well as the poor companion of an old lady of quality? The Countess A—— had by no means a bad heart, but she was capricious, a woman spoiled by the world, and mean and egotistical, like all old people who have seen their best days, and whose thoughts are in the past and not in the present She participated in the vanities of the great world; went to balls, where she sat in a corner, painted and dressed in old-fashioned style, like a deformed but indispensable ornament of the ballroom; all the guests on entering approached her and made a ceremonious bow, but after that nobody took the least notice of her. She received the whole town at her house, and observed the strictest etiquette, although she could no longer recognize faces. Her numerous domestics, growing fat and old in her corridors and servants' hall, did just as they liked, and vied with each other in robbing the aged Countess in the most barefaced manner. Lizaveta Ivanovna was the household martyr. She made tea, and was reproached with using too much sugar; she read novels aloud to the Countess, and was blamed for the author's shortcomings; she went with the Countess on her walks, and was held answerable for the weather or the state of the pavement. A salary was attached to the post, but she seldom received it, although she was expected to dress like everybody else, that is to say, like the rare few. In society she played the most pitiable role Everybody knew her, and nobody paid her any attention. At balls she danced only when a partner was wanted, and ladies would only take hold of her arm when they wanted her to help them with their dresses She was very sensitive, and felt her position keenly, and she looked about her eagerly for a deliverer to come to her rescue; but the young men, calculating in their giddiness, honored her with but very little attention, although Lizaveta Ivanovna was a hundred times prettier than the barefaced and cold-hearted marriageable girls around whom they hovered. Many a time did she quietly slink away from the glittering but wearisome drawing room, to go and cry in her own poor little room, in which stood a screen, a chest of drawers, a looking glass and a painted bedstead, and where a tallow candle burned feebly in a copper candlestick.

One morning—this was about two days after the evening party described at the beginning of this story, and a week previous to the scene at which we have just assisted—Lizaveta Ivanovna was seated near the window at her embroidery frame, when, happening to look out into the street, she caught sight of a young Engineer officer, standing motionless with his eyes fixed upon her window She lowered her head and resumed her task About five minutes later she looked out again—the young officer was standing on the same spot Not being in the habit of flirting with passing officers, she did not again look out

into the street, but went on sewing for two hours, without raising her head. Dinner was announced. She rose and put her embroidery away, but, glancing casually out of the window, perceived the officer again. This seemed to her very strange. After dinner she went to the window not without perturbation, but the officer was no longer there—and she thought no more about him.

Two days later, just as she was stepping into the carriage with the Countess, she saw him again. He was standing close behind the door, with his face half-concealed by his fur collar, but his dark eyes sparkled beneath his cap. Lizaveta felt alarmed, without knowing why, and she trembled as she took her seat in the carriage.

On returning home, she hurried to the window—the officer was standing in his accustomed place, with his eyes fixed upon her She drew back, a prey to curiosity and agitated by a feeling which was quite new to her.

Thenceforward not a day passed without the young officer's making his appearance under the window at the customary hour, and between him and her there was established a sort of mute acquaintance Sitting in her place at work, she used to feel his approach; and, raising her head, she would look at him longer and longer each day The young man appeared to be grateful to her: she saw with the sharp eye of youth how a sudden flush covered his pale cheeks each time that their glances met. After about a week she began to smile at him....

When Tomsky asked his grandmother, the Countess, to be allowed to present one of his friends to her, the young girl's heart beat violently. But hearing that Narumov was not an Engineer, she regretted having betrayed her secret to the volatile Tomsky.

Hermann was the son of a Russianized German who had left him a small fortune. Firmly convinced of the need of preserving his independence, Hermann did not touch his private income, but lived on his pay, without allowing himself the slightest indulgence Moreover, he was reserved and ambitious, and his companions rarely had an opportunity of making fun of his extreme parsimony He had strong passions and an ardent imagination, but his strong character preserved him from the common errors of young men Thus, though a gamester at heart, he never touched a card, for he considered his position did not allow him—as he said—"to risk what he needed in the hope of winning the extras," yet he would sit for nights together at the card table and follow with feverish anxiety the different turns of the game.

The story of the three cards had produced a powerful impression upon his imagination, and all night long he could think of nothing else. "If," he thought to himself the following evening, as he walked along the streets of St. Petersburg, "if the old Countess would but reveal her secret to me! If she would only tell me the names of the three winning cards Why shouldn't I try my luck? I must get intro-

duced to her and win her favor—even become her lover....But all that would take time, and she is eighty-seven years old· she might be dead in a week, in a couple of days even! ...But the story itself. can it really be true?.. No! Economy, temperance, and industry· those are my three winning cards; by their means I shall be able to double my capital—increase it sevenfold, and procure for myself ease and independence."

Musing in this manner, he walked on until he found himself in one of the principal streets of St. Petersburg, in front of a house of antiquated architecture. The street was lined with carriages, which one after the other drew up in front of the brilliantly illuminated doorway. At one moment there stepped out on to the pavement the well-shaped little foot of some young beauty, at another the heavy boot of a cavalry officer, and then the silk stockings and shoes of a member of the diplomatic world. Furs and cloaks passed in rapid succession before the handsome footman at the entrance.

Hermann stopped. "Whose house is this?" he asked of the policeman at the corner.

"The Countess A——'s," replied the policeman.

Hermann started. The extraordinary story of the three cards again presented itself to his imagination. He paced up and down before the house, thinking of its owner and her singular secret. Returning late to his modest lodging, he could not go to sleep for a long time, and when at last he did doze off, he could dream of nothing but cards, green tables, and piles of banknotes He played one card after the other, winning uninterruptedly, and then he gathered up the gold and stuffed the notes into his pockets. When he woke up late the next morning, he sighed over the loss of his imaginary wealth, then sallied out into the town; he found himself once more before the Countess's residence Some strange power seemed to have attracted him thither. He stopped and looked up at the windows At one of these he saw a head with luxuriant black hair, which was bent down probably over some book or an embroidery frame The head was raised. Hermann saw a fresh complexion and a pair of dark eyes. The moment decided his fate.

Lizaveta Ivanovna had scarcely taken off her hat and cloak, when the Countess sent for her and again ordered the carriage The vehicle drew up before the door, and they were about to take their seats. Just at the moment when two footmen were assisting the old lady into the carriage, Lizaveta saw her Engineer standing beside the wheel, he grasped her hand; her terror caused her to lose her presence of mind, and the young man disappeared—but not before he had left a letter between her fingers. She concealed it in her glove, and during the whole of the drive she neither saw nor heard anything. It was the

habit of the Countess, when out on her drives, to be constantly asking such questions as: "Who was that person that met us just now? What is the name of this bridge? What does it say on that signboard?" On this occasion, however, Lizaveta replied so listlessly and irrelevantly, that the Countess became angry.

"What is the matter with you, my dear?" she asked. "Have you taken leave of your senses, or what is it? Do you not hear me or understand what I say?.. Heaven be thanked, I am still in my right mind and speak plainly enough!"

Lizaveta Ivanovna did not hear her Once home, she ran to her room and drew the letter out of her glove it was not sealed Lizaveta read it The letter contained a declaration of love; it was tender, respectful, and taken word for word from a German novel But Lizaveta did not know anything of the German language, and she was quite delighted.

For all that, the letter caused her to feel exceedingly uneasy. For the first time in her life she was entering into secret and intimate relations with a young man. His boldness alarmed her She reproached herself for her imprudence, and did not know what to do. Should she cease to sit at the window and, by assuming an appearance of indifference toward him, put a check upon the young officer's ardor? Should she return his letter, or should she answer him in a cold and resolute manner? In her dilemma she did not know to whom she could turn, for she had no girl friend or counselor ...At length she resolved to reply to him.

She sat down at her little writing table, took pen and paper, and began to think. Several times she began her letter, and then tore it up: the way she had expressed herself seemed to her either too inviting or too cold and final At last she succeeded in writing a few lines which more or less satisfied her.

"I am assured," she wrote, "that your intentions are honorable, and that you do not wish to offend me by any imprudent behavior, but our acquaintance should not have begun in such a manner. I return you your letter, and I hope that I shall never have any cause to complain of this undeserved disrespect."

As soon as Hermann made his appearance on the following day, Lizaveta rose from her embroidery, went into the drawing room, opened the window and flung the letter into the street, trusting that the young officer would pick it up.

Hermann hastened forward, picked up the note and then repaired to a confectioner's shop. Breaking the seal of the envelope, he found inside it his own letter and Lizaveta's reply. He had expected this, and he returned home, his mind deeply engrossed in his intrigue.

Three days later, a bright-eyed young girl from a milliner's establishment brought Lizaveta a note. Lizaveta opened it with great un-

easiness, fearing it to be a demand for money, when suddenly she recognized Hermann's handwriting.

"You have made a mistake, my dear," said she: "this letter is not for me."

"Oh, yes, it is for you," replied the girl, smiling very knowingly. "Have the goodness to read it."

Lizaveta glanced at the letter. Hermann requested an interview.

"Impossible!" she cried, alarmed at the audacious demand, and the way in which it was made. "This letter is certainly not for me."

And she tore it into fragments.

"If the letter was not for you, why have you torn it up?" said the girl. "I should have given it back to the person who sent it."

"Be good enough, my dear," said Lizaveta, disconcerted by this remark, "not to bring me any more letters in the future. And tell the person who sent you that he ought to be ashamed...."

Hermann was not the man to be thus put off. Every day Lizaveta received from him a letter, sent now in one way, now in another. They were no longer translations from the German. Hermann wrote them under the inspiration of passion, and in his own language, and they bore full testimony to the fierceness of his desire and the disordered condition of his unbridled imagination. Lizaveta no longer thought of sending them back. she became intoxicated with them and wrote replies; little by little her answers became longer and more tender. At last she threw the following letter out of the window to him·

This evening there is going to be a ball at the Embassy. The Countess will be there We shall remain until two o'clock You will have an opportunity of seeing me alone As soon as the Countess is gone, the servants will very probably go out, there will be nobody left but the Swiss, but he usually goes to sleep in his lodge Come about half-past eleven Walk straight upstairs If you meet anybody, ask if the Countess is at home. You will be told "No," in which case there will be nothing left for you to do but to go away again But most likely you will meet no one The maids will all be together in their own quarters. On leaving the anteroom, turn to the left, and walk straight on until you reach the Countess's bedroom In the bedroom, behind a screen, you will find two doors the one on the right leads to a cabinet, which the Countess never enters; the one on the left leads to a corridor, at the end of which is a little winding staircase; this leads to my room.

Hermann trembled like a tiger as he waited for the appointed hour. At ten o'clock in the evening he was already in front of the Countess's house. The weather was frightful; the wind blew with violence; the sleety snow fell in large flakes; the lamps emitted a feeble light, the streets were deserted; from time to time a sledge, drawn by a sorry-looking hack, passed by, on the look-out for a be-

lated fare. Hermann was enveloped in a thick overcoat, and felt neither wind nor snow.

At last the Countess's carriage drew up Hermann saw two footmen hold up the bent form of the old Countess under the arms, as she appeared, wrapped in sable fur, and just behind her, clad in a cloak, and her head adorned with fresh flowers, followed Lizaveta. The carriage door was closed. The vehicle rolled away heavily through the soft snow. A footman shut the street door; the window lights were extinguished.

Hermann began to pace up and down in front of the deserted house. At last he stopped under a lamp, and glanced at his watch: it was a quarter past eleven. He remained standing under the lamp, his eyes fixed upon the watch, waiting impatiently for the minutes to pass. At half-past eleven precisely, Hermann mounted the steps of the house, and made his way into the brightly illuminated reception room. The footman was not there. Hermann hastily ascended the staircase, opened the door of the anteroom, and saw a footman sitting asleep in an antique chair by the side of a lamp With a light firm step Hermann passed him. The drawing room and ballroom were in darkness, but a faint reflection penetrated thither from the lamp in the anteroom.

Hermann entered the Countess's bedroom. Before a shrine, adorned with old ikons, a golden lamp was burning. Faded upholstered chairs and couches with soft cushions stood in melancholy order around the room, the walls of which were hung with China silk. On one side of the room hung two portraits painted in Paris by Madame Lebrun One of these revealed a stout, red-faced man of about forty years of age in a bright-green uniform and with a star upon the breast; the other—a beautiful young woman, with an aquiline nose, curls over her forehead and a rose in her powdered hair. In the corners stood porcelain shepherds and shepherdesses, dining-room clocks by the celebrated Lefroy, bandboxes, roulettes, fans, and various feminine playthings which had been in vogue at the end of the last century, when Montgolfier's balloons and Mesmer's magnetism were the rage Hermann stepped behind the screen. At the back of it stood a little iron bedstead; on the right was the door which led into the study; on the left—the other which led into a corridor. He opened it and saw the little winding staircase which led to the room of poor Lizaveta.... But he retraced his steps and entered the dark study.

The time passed slowly. All was still. The clock in the drawing room struck twelve; the strokes echoed through the rooms one after the other, and everything grew quiet once more. Hermann stood leaning against the cold stove. He was calm; his heart beat evenly, like that of a man resolved upon a perilous but inevitable undertaking. One o'clock struck, then two, and he heard the distant sound of carriage

wheels. An involuntary excitement took possession of him. The carriage drew near and stopped. He heard the carriage-steps being let down. All was bustle within the house. The servants were running hither and thither, there was a hubbub of voices, and the lights went up. Three maids entered the bedroom, supporting the Countess who, more dead than alive, sank into a Voltaire armchair. Hermann peeped through a chink in the door. Lizaveta Ivanovna passed close by him, and he heard her hurried steps up the little spiral staircase. For a moment his heart was assailed by something like a pricking of conscience. Then he became petrified.

The Countess began to undress before her looking glass. Her rose-bedecked cap was removed, then her powdered wig from off her white closely cut hair. Hairpins fell in showers around her. Her yellow satin dress, brocaded with silver, dropped at her swollen feet.

Hermann witnessed the repugnant mysteries of her toilet; at last the Countess was in her nightcap and dressing gown, and in this costume, more suitable to her age, she appeared less hideous and deformed.

Like most old people, the Countess suffered from sleeplessness. Having undressed, she seated herself at the window in an armchair and dismissed her maids. The candles were removed; once more the room was left with a single lighted ikon lamp. The Countess sat there looking quite yellow, mumbling with her flaccid lips and swaying to and fro. Her dull eyes expressed complete inner vacancy, and, looking at her, one would have thought that the rocking of her body was automatic action produced unconsciously.

Suddenly the mask-like face assumed an inexplicable expression. The lips ceased to quaver, the eyes grew animated. before the Countess stood a man—a stranger.

"Don't be alarmed, for Heaven's sake, don't be alarmed!" said he in a low but clear voice. "I have no intention of doing you any harm. I have only come to ask a favor of you."

The old woman stared at him in silence, appearing not to have heard. Hermann thought that she was deaf, and, bending down toward her ear, he repeated what he had said. The aged Countess remained silent.

"You can insure my happiness," went on Hermann, "and it will cost you nothing. I know that you can name three cards in order—"

Hermann stopped. The Countess appeared now to understand what he wanted; she seemed to be seeking for words to reply.

"It was a jest," she replied at last: "I assure you it was only a jest."

"There is no jesting about the matter," replied Hermann angrily. "Remember Chaplitzky, whom you helped to win."

The Countess became visibly uneasy. Her features expressed strong feeling, but they quickly resumed their former apathy.

"Can you tell me the three winning cards?" Hermann insisted.

The Countess remained silent; Herman continued:

"For whom do you preserve your secret? For your grandsons? They are rich enough as it is; they do not understand the worth of money. Your cards would be of no use to a spendthrift He who cannot preserve his father's inheritance, will die in want, even though he had a demon to command his service. I am not that kind of man; I know the value of money. Your three cards will not be wasted upon me. Come!"...

He paused and agonizingly awaited her reply. The Countess remained silent; Hermann went down on his knees

"If your heart has ever loved," said he, "if you remember your rapture, if you have ever smiled at the cry of your new-born child, if any human feeling has ever touched your heart, I entreat you by your feelings as wife, lover, mother, by all that is most sacred in life, not to reject my prayer. Tell to me your secret. Of what use is it to you? ...Maybe it is connected with some terrible sin, with the loss of eternal salvation, with some bargain with the devil....Reflect—you are old; you have not long to live—I am ready to take your sins upon my soul. Only tell to me your secret. Think of it—the happiness of a man is in your hands; not only I, but my children, and grandchildren will bless your memory and revere you as a saint...."

The old Countess did not respond.

Hermann rose to his feet.

"You old hag!" he exclaimed, grinding his teeth, "then I will force you to answer!"

With these words he drew a pistol from his pocket.

At the sight of the pistol, the Countess for the second time betrayed strong emotion. She shook her head and raised her hands as if to shield herself...then fell backwards insensible.

"Come, an end to this childish fiddle-daddle!" said Hermann, taking her hand. "I ask you for the last time: Will you tell me the names of your three cards, or will you not?"

The Countess made no reply. Hermann saw that she was dead!

Lizaveta Ivanovna was sitting in her room, still in her ball dress, wrapped in thought. On returning home, she had hastily dismissed the maid who very reluctantly came to assist her, saying that she would undress herself, and with a trembling heart had gone up to her own room, expecting to find Hermann, yet hoping he would not be there. A glance convinced her of his absence, and she thanked the fates which kept him from keeping the appointment. She sat down without undressing, and tried to recall to mind all the circumstances which in so short a time had carried her so far It was not three weeks since she first saw the young officer from the window—yet already she had been

indulging in a correspondence with him, and he had succeeded in inducing her to grant him a nocturnal interview! She knew his name only through his having signed it to his letters; she had never spoken to him, had never heard his voice, and had never heard him spoken of until that evening. Oddly enough, that very evening at the ball, Tomsky, vexed with the young Princess Pauline N——, who, contrary to her usual custom, did not flirt with him, wished to revenge himself by assuming an air of indifference, whereupon he danced an endless mazurka with Lizaveta Ivanovna. Throughout the dance he went on teasing her about her partiality for Engineer officers; he assured her that he knew far more than she imagined, and some of his jests were so happily aimed, that Lizaveta thought now and again that her secret was known to him.

"From whom have you learned all this?" she asked, smiling.

"From a friend of a person very well known to you," replied Tomsky, "from a very distinguished man."

"And who is this distinguished man?"

"His name is Hermann."

Lizaveta made no reply; her hands and feet grew numb.

"This Hermann," Tomsky went on, "is quite a romantic person. He has the profile of a Napoleon, and the soul of a Mephistopheles. He must have at least three crimes upon his conscience....How pale you've grown!"

"I have a headache....But what did this Hermann—or whatever his name is—tell you?"

"Hermann is very unhappy about his friend: he says that in his place he would have behaved very differently ...I even suspect that Hermann himself has designs upon you; at least, he listens attentively to all that his friend has to say about you."

"And where has he seen me?"

"In church, perhaps; or in the street—God alone knows. It may have been in your room, while you were asleep, for there's nothing that he—"

Three ladies approaching him with the question: *"Oubli ou regret?"* interrupted the conversation, which had become so provokingly interesting to Lizaveta.

The lady chosen by Tomsky was the Princess Pauline herself. She succeeded in effecting a reconciliation with him during the several turns of the dance, after which he conducted her to her chair. On returning to his place, Tomsky thought no more either of Hermann or Lizaveta. She yearned to renew the interrupted conversation, but the mazurka was over, and soon after the old Countess took her departure.

Tomsky's words were nothing more than the customary small talk of the dance, but they sank deep into the young dreamer's soul. The

portrait, sketched by Tomsky, fitted with the picture she had formed within her own mind, and thanks to the latest novels, the common place countenance of her admirer became invested with attributes capable of alarming her and fascinating her imagination at the same time. Her bare arms crossed, she sat with head bowed on her bare breast, the flowers still in her hair Suddenly the door opened and Hermann entered. She shuddered.

"Where were you?" she asked in a terrified whisper

"In the Countess's bedroom," replied Hermann. "I have just left her. The Countess is dead."

"My God! What are you saying?"

"And I am afraid," added Hermann, "that I am the cause of her death."

Lizaveta looked at him, and Tomsky's words found an echo in her soul: "This man has at least three crimes upon his conscience!" Hermann sat down by the window near her, and told her everything

Lizaveta listened to him in horror. So all those passionate letters, this ardent eloquence, this audacious, stubborn pursuit—all this had not been love! Money—that was what his soul craved! She could not have appeased his desire or made him happy! The poor girl had been nothing but the blind tool of a robber, of the murderer of her benefactress!... She wept bitter tears of anguished repentance. Hermann looked at her in silence: his heart, too, was a prey to violent emotion, but neither the poor girl's tears, nor her wondrous charm, enhanced by grief, could produce any impression upon his hardened soul. He was not conscience-stricken over the old woman's death. Only one thing grieved him: the irreparable loss of the secret from which he had expected to obtain great wealth.

"You are a monster!" said Lizaveta at last

"I did not desire her death," replied Hermann: "my pistol was not loaded."

Both were silent.

The day was dawning. Lizaveta extinguished her candle: a pale light filled her room. She wiped her tear-stained eyes and raised them toward Hermann: he was sitting near the window, his arms crossed and a fierce frown upon his forehead. In this attitude he bore a striking resemblance to the portraits of Napoleon. Lizaveta could not help observing this.

"How shall I get you out of the house?" said she at last "I thought of conducting you down the secret staircase, but then it would be necessary to go through the Countess's bedroom, and I am afraid."

"Tell me where this secret staircase is and I will find my own way."

Lizaveta rose, took a key from her drawer, handed it to Hermann and gave him instructions. Hermann pressed her cold, limp hand, kissed her bowed head, and left the room.

He descended the winding staircase, and once more entered the Countess's bedroom. The dead old lady sat as if petrified; her face expressed profound tranquillity. Hermann stopped before her, and gazed long and earnestly at her, as if he wished to convince himself of the horrible truth. At last he entered the study, felt behind the tapestry for the door, and, filled with strange emotions, began to descend the dark staircase. "Down this very staircase," thought he, "perhaps coming from the very same room, and at this very same hour sixty years ago, there may have stolen past, in a rich embroidered coat, with his hair dressed *à l'oiseau royal* and pressing to his heart his three-cornered hat, some young gallant, who has long been moldy in the grave, but the heart of his aged mistress has only just ceased to beat...."

At the bottom of the staircase Hermann found a door, which he opened with a key, and then traversed a passage which led him into the street.

Three days after the fatal night, at nine o'clock in the morning, Hermann went to the Convent of ——, where the last honors were to be paid to the mortal remains of the old Countess. Though he felt no remorse, he could not wholly stifle the voice of his conscience, which said to him: "It was you who murdered the old woman!" A man of little faith, he was, for all that, very superstitious; and, believing that the dead Countess might exercise an evil influence on his life, he resolved to be present at her last rites in order to implore her pardon.

The church was full. It was with difficulty that Hermann made his way through the crowd. The coffin was placed upon a magnificent catafalque beneath a velvet baldachin. The dead woman lay within it, her hands crossed upon her breast, a lace cap upon her head, and dressed in a white satin robe. Around the catafalque stood the members of her household: the servants in black *caftans,* with armorial ribbons upon their shoulders, and candles in their hands; the relatives —children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren—in deep mourning.

Nobody wept; tears would have been an affectation The Countess was so old, that her death could have surprised no one; her kin had long looked upon her as being out of the world. In simple and touching words the officiating priest described the peaceful death of the righteous, who had passed long years in humble preparation for a Christian end. "The angel of death found her," said the orator, "engaged in pious meditation and waiting for the nocturnal bridegroom."

The service was conducted amid a solemn silence. The relatives went forward first to take farewell of the corpse. Then followed the numerous guests, who had come to render the last homage to her who for so many years had been a sharer in their social amusements.

These were followed by members of the Countess's household. The last was an old woman of the same age as the deceased. Two young women led her forward. She had not the strength to bow down to the ground—she merely shed a few tears and kissed the cold hand of her mistress.

Hermann now resolved to approach the coffin. He knelt down upon the cold stones and remained thus for some minutes; at last he rose, as pale as the dead Countess herself; he mounted the steps of the catafalque and bent over the corpse.... It seemed to him that the dead woman darted a mocking look at him and winked an eye. Hermann started back, took a false step, and fell to the ground Several persons hurried forward and raised him up. At the same moment Lizaveta Ivanovna was carried out unconscious. The incident briefly disturbed the solemnity of the ceremony A deep murmur arose among the congregation. A tall gaunt chamberlain, a close relative of the de ceased, whispered in the ear of an Englishman who was standing near him, that the young officer was a natural son of the Countess, to which the Englishman coldly replied· "Oh!"

During the whole of that day, Hermann was strangely distraught Repairing to a secluded restaurant to dine, he drank a great deal of wine, contrary to his usual custom, in the hope of deadening his inward perturbation. But the wine only served to excite his imagination still more. On returning home, he threw himself upon his bed without undressing, and fell into a deep sleep.

When he woke up it was night. The moon was shining into the room. He looked at his watch it was a quarter to three Sleep had left him; he sat on his bed and thought of the funeral of the old Countess.

At this moment someone in the street peeped into his window, then withdrew. Hermann paid no attention to this incident. A few moments later he heard the door of his outer room open. Hermann thought that it was his orderly, drunk as usual, returning from some nocturnal expedition, but presently he caught the sound of an unfamiliar step; some one was walking softly over the floor in slippers. The door opened; a woman dressed in white entered the room. Hermann mistook her for his old nurse, and wondered what could bring her there at that hour But the white woman glided rapidly across the room and stood before him. Hermann recognized the Countess!

"I have come to you against my wish," she said in a firm voice: "but I have been commanded to grant your request. Three, seven, ace, will win for you if played in succession, but only on these conditions: that you do not play more than one card in twenty-four hours, and that you never play again during the rest of your life I forgive you my death, on condition that you marry my ward, Lizaveta Ivanovna."

With these words she turned quietly, and with a shuffling gait dis-

appeared through the door. Hermann heard the street door open and shut, and again he saw someone look in at him through the window.

It was some time before he recovered. He rose and went into the next room His orderly was lying asleep upon the floor, and he had some difficulty in waking him The orderly was drunk as usual, and no information could be obtained from him. The street door was locked. Hermann returned to his room, lighted a candle, and wrote down the details of his vision.

Two fixed ideas can no more exist together in the moral world than two bodies can occupy one and the same place in the material world. "Three, seven, ace," soon banished from Hermann's mind the thought of the dead Countess. "Three, seven, ace," were perpetually running through his head and continually being repeated by his lips. If he saw a young girl, he would say "How slender she is! quite like the three of hearts." If anybody asked him, "What is the time?" he would reply: "Five minutes to seven." Every portly, rotund man he saw reminded him of the ace "Three, seven, ace" haunted him in his sleep, and assumed all possible shapes. Now and again the threes bloomed before him in the forms of magnificent flowers, the sevens were represented by Gothic portals, and the aces became transformed into gigantic spiders. One thought alone obsessed him—to make a profitable use of the secret which he had bought so dearly He thought of applying for a furlough so as to travel abroad He wanted to go to Paris and tempt fortune in some of the public gambling houses that abounded there. Chance spared him this trouble

There was in Moscow a society of rich gamblers, presided over bv the celebrated Chekalinsky, who had spent all his life at the card table and had acquired millions, accepting bills of exchange for his winnings and paying his losses in cash. His long experience gained him the confidence of his friends, and his open house, his famous cook, and his attractive manners gained for him the respect of the public. He came to St. Petersburg. The young men of the capital flocked to his rooms, forgetting balls for cards, and preferring the emotions of faro to the seductions of the other sex. Narumov conducted Hermann to Chekalinsky's residence

They passed through a suite of magnificent rooms, filled with attentive domestics. The place was crowded. Generals and Privy Councillors were playing whist; young men were lounging upon the velvet-covered sofas, and smoking pipes. In the drawing room, at the head of a long table, around which were gathered about a score of players, sat the master of the house keeping the bank. He was a man of about sixty years of age, of dignified appearance; his head was covered with silvery-white hair; his full, florid countenance expressed good-nature, and his eyes sparkled with a perpetual smile. Narumov introduced

Hermann to him. Chekalinsky shook him by the hand in a friendly manner, requested him not to stand on ceremony, and then went on dealing.

The game lasted for some time. On the table lay more than thirty cards. Chekalinsky paused after each throw, in order to give the players time to arrange their cards and note down their losses, listened politely to their requests, and more politely still, put straight the corners of cards that some player's hand had chanced to bend. At last the game was finished Chekalinsky shuffled the cards and prepared to deal again.

"Will you allow me to take a card?" said Hermann, stretching out his hand over the shoulder of a stout gentleman.

Chekalinsky smiled and bowed silently, in token of consent. Narumov laughingly congratulated Hermann on his renouncement of that abstention from cards which he had practiced for so long a period, and wished him a lucky start

"Stake!" said Hermann, writing some figures with chalk on the back of his card

"How much!" asked the banker, contracting the muscles of his eyes; "excuse me, I can't see very clearly."

"Forty-seven thousand roubles," replied Hermann.

At these words all heads turned suddenly round, and all eyes were fixed upon Hermann

"He has taken leave of his senses!" thought Narumov.

"Allow me to inform you," said Chekalinsky, with his unceasing smile, "that you are playing very high; nobody here has ever staked more than two hundred and seventy-five roubles at one go!"

"Very well," replied Hermann, "but do you accept my card or not?"

Chekalinsky nodded in the affirmative.

"I only wish to observe," said he, "that although I have the greatest confidence in my friends, I can play only against ready money. For my own part, I am quite sure that your word is sufficient, but for the sake of the order of the game, and to facilitate the reckoning up, I must ask you to put the money on your card."

Hermann drew from his pocket a banknote and handed it to Chekalinsky, who, after examining it in a cursory manner, placed it on Hermann's card.

He began to deal. On the right a nine turned up, and on the left a three

"I have won!" said Hermann, showing his card.

A murmur of astonishment arose among the players. Chekalinsky frowned, but the smile promptly returned to his face.

"Do you wish me to settle with you?" he said to Hermann.

"If you please," was the reply

Chekalinsky drew from his pocket a number of banknotes and paid

at once. Hermann took his money and left the table. Narumov could not recover from his astonishment. Hermann drank a glass of lemonade and left for home.

The following evening saw him again at Chekalinsky's The host was dealing. Hermann walked up to the table, the players immediately made room for him. Chekalinsky greeted him with a gracious bow

Hermann waited for the next deal, took a card and placed upon it his forty-seven thousand roubles, together with his winnings of the previous evening.

Chekalinsky began to deal. A knave turned up on the right, a seven on the left.

Hermann showed his seven.

There was a general exclamation. Chekalinsky was apparently ill at ease, but he counted out the ninety-four thousand roubles and handed them over to Hermann, who pocketed them in the coolest manner possible and immediately left the place

The following evening Hermann again appeared at the table Everyone was expecting him The generals and Privy Councillors left their whist in order to watch such extraordinary play The young officers quitted their sofas, and even the servants crowded into the room All pressed round Hermann. The other players left off playing, impatient to see how it would end. Hermann stood at the table and prepared to play alone against the pale, but still smiling Chekalinsky. Each opened a pack of cards. Chekalinsky shuffled Hermann took a card and covered it with a pile of banknotes. It was like a duel. Deep silence reigned.

Chekalinsky began to deal; his hands trembled. On the right a queen turned up, and on the left an ace.

"Ace has won!" cried Hermann, showing his card.

"Your queen has lost," said Chekalinsky politely.

Hermann started; instead of an ace, there lay before him the queen of spades! He could not believe his eyes, nor could he understand how he had made such a mistake.

At that moment it seemed to him that the queen of spades smiled ironically and winked her eye at him. He was struck by her remarkable resemblance...

"The old Countess!" he exclaimed, seized with terror.

Chekalinsky gathered up his winnings For some time, Hermann remained perfectly motionless When at last he left the table, there was a general commotion in the room.

"Splendidly played!" said the players. Chekalinsky shuffled the cards afresh, and the game went on as usual.

. . .

Hermann went out of his mind, and is now confined in Ward 17 of the Obukhov Hospital. He refuses to answer questions, and he constantly mutters with unusual rapidity: "Three, seven, ace!" "Three, seven, queen!"

Lizaveta Ivanovna married a splendid young man, a son of the former steward of the old Countess He is in the service of the State somewhere, and is in receipt of a good income. Lizaveta is also supporting a poor relative.

Tomsky was promoted to the rank of captain, and had become the husband of Princess Pauline.

Mikhail Lermontov

TAMAN

Taman is the nastiest little hole of all the seaports of Russia. I was all but starved there, to say nothing of having a narrow escape from being drowned.

I arrived late at night by the post-car. The driver stopped the tired troika * at the gate of the only stone-built house that stood at the entrance to the town. The sentry, a Cossack from the Black Sea, hearing the jingle of the bell, cried out sleepily in his barbarous voice, "Who goes there?" An under-officer of Cossacks and a headborough ** came out. I explained that I was an officer bound for the active-service detachment on government business, and I proceeded to demand official quarters. The headborough conducted us round the town Whatever hut we drove up to we found to be occupied. The weather was cold; I had not slept for three nights; I was tired out, and I began to lose my temper.

"Take me somewhere or other, you scoundrel!" I cried; "to the devil himself, as long as there's a place to put up at!"

"There *is* one other lodging," answered the headborough, scratching his head. "Only you won't like it, sir It is uncanny!"

Failing to grasp the exact signification of the last phrase, I ordered him to go on, and, after a lengthy peregrination through muddy by-

* Team of three horses abreast

** *Desyatnik*, a superintendent of ten (men or huts), i e., an officer like the old English tithing-man or headborough

ways, at the sides of which I could see nothing but old fences, we drove up to a small cabin, right on the shore of the sea

The full moon was shining on the little reed-thatched roof and the white walls of my new dwelling In the courtyard, which was surrounded by a wall of rubble-stone, there stood another miserable hovel, smaller and older than the first and all askew. The shore descended precipitously to the sea, almost from its very walls, and down below, with incessant murmur, plashed the dark-blue waves. The moon gazed softly upon the watery element, restless but obedient to it, and I was able by its light to distinguish two ships lying at some distance from the shore, their black rigging motionless and standing out, like cobwebs, against the pale line of the horizon

"There are vessels in the harbor," I said to myself. "Tomorrow I will set out for Gelenjik."

I had with me, in the capacity of soldier-servant, a Cossack of the frontier army Ordering him to take down the portmanteau and dismiss the driver, I began to call the master of the house No answer! I knocked—all was silent within! . What could it mean? At length a boy of about fourteen crept out from the hall.

"Where is the master?"

"There isn't one."

"What! No master?"

"None!"

"And the mistress?"

"She has gone off to the village"

"Who will open the door for me, then?" I said, giving it a kick.

The door opened of its own accord, and a breath of moisture-laden air was wafted from the hut. I struck a lucifer match and held it to the boy's face It lit up two white eyes. He was totally blind, obviously so from birth. He stood stock-still before me, and I began to examine his features.

I confess that I have a violent prejudice against all blind, one-eyed, deaf, dumb, legless, armless, hunchbacked, and such-like people. I have observed that there is always a certain strange connection between a man's exterior and his soul; as if when the body loses a limb, the soul also loses some power of feeling.

And so I began to examine the blind boy's face. But what could be read upon a face from which the eyes were missing? ... For a long time I gazed at him with involuntary compassion, when suddenly a scarcely perceptible smile flitted over his thin lips, producing, I know not why, a most unpleasant impression upon me. I began to feel a suspicion that the blind boy was not so blind as he appeared to be In vain I endeavored to convince myself that it was impossible to counterfeit cataracts; and besides, what reason could there be for doing such

a thing? But I could not help my suspicions. I am easily swayed by prejudice.

"You are the master's son?" I asked at length.

"No."

"Who are you, then?"

"An orphan—a poor boy."

"Has the mistress any children?"

"No, her daughter ran away and crossed the sea with a Tartar."

"What sort of a Tartar?"

"The devil only knows! A Crimean Tartar, a boatman from Kerch."

I entered the hut. Its whole furniture consisted of two benches and a table, together with an enormous chest beside the stove. There was not a single ikon to be seen on the wall—a bad sign! The sea-wind burst in through the broken windowpane I drew a wax candle-end from my portmanteau, lit it, and began to put my things out. My saber and gun I placed in a corner, my pistols I laid on the table. I spread my felt cloak out on one bench, and the Cossack his on the other. In ten minutes the latter was snoring, but I could not go to sleep—the image of the boy with the white eyes kept hovering before me in the dark.

About an hour passed thus The moon shone in at the window and its rays played along the earthen floor of the hut Suddenly a shadow flitted across the bright strip of moonshine which intersected the floor. I raised myself up a little and glanced out of the window Again somebody ran by it and disappeared—goodness knows where! It seemed impossible for anyone to descend the steep cliff overhanging the shore, but that was the only thing that could have happened. I rose, threw on my tunic, girded on a dagger, and with the utmost quietness went out of the hut. The blind boy was coming toward me. I hid by the fence, and he passed by me with a sure but cautious step He was carrying a parcel under his arm. He turned toward the harbor and began to descend a steep and narrow path.

"On that day the dumb will cry out and the blind will see," I said to myself, following him just close enough to keep him in sight.

Meanwhile the moon was becoming overcast by clouds and a mist had risen upon the sea. The lantern alight in the stern of a ship close at hand was scarcely visible through the mist, and by the shore there glimmered the foam of the waves, which every moment threatened to submerge it. Descending with difficulty, I stole along the steep declivity, and all at once I saw the blind boy come to a standstill and then turn down to the right. He walked so close to the water's edge that it seemed as if the waves would straightway seize him and carry him off. But, judging by the confidence with which he stepped from rock to rock and avoided the water-channels, this was evidently not the first time that he had made that journey. Finally he stopped, as

though listening for something, squatted down upon the ground, and laid the parcel beside him. Concealing myself behind a projecting rock on the shore, I kept watch on his movements. After a few minutes a white figure made its appearance from the opposite direction. It came up to the blind boy and sat down beside him At times the wind wafted their conversation to me.

"Well?" said a woman's voice. "The storm is violent; Yanko will not be here."

"Yanko is not afraid of the storm!" the other replied

"The mist is thickening," rejoined the woman's voice, sadness in its tone.

"In the mist it is all the easier to slip past the guard-ships," was the answer.

"And if he is drowned?"

"Well, what then? On Sunday you won't have a new ribbon to go to church in"

An interval of silence followed. One thing, however, struck me—in talking to me the blind boy spoke in the Little Russian dialect, but now he was expressing himself in pure Russian.

"You see, I am right!" the blind boy went on, clapping his hands. "Yanko is not afraid of sea, nor winds, nor mist, nor coast guards! Just listen! That is not the water plashing, you can't deceive me—it is his long oars."

The woman sprang up and began anxiously to gaze into the distance. "You are raving!" she said. "I cannot see anything"

I confess that, much as I tried to make out in the distance something resembling a boat, my efforts were unsuccessful About ten minutes passed thus, when a black speck appeared between the mountains of the waves! At one time it grew larger, at another smaller Slowly rising upon the crests of the waves and swiftly descending from them, the boat drew near to the shore.

"He must be a brave sailor," I thought, "to have determined to cross the twenty versts of strait on a night like this, and he must have had a weighty reason for doing so."

Reflecting thus, I gazed with an involuntary beating of the heart at the poor boat. It dived like a duck, and then, with rapidly swinging oars—like wings—it sprang forth from the abyss amid the splashes of the foam. "Ah!" I thought, "it will be dashed against the shore with all its force and broken to pieces!" But it turned aside adroitly and leaped unharmed into a little creek. Out of it stepped a man of medium height, wearing a Tartar sheepskin cap He waved his hand, and all three set to work to drag something out of the boat. The cargo was so large that, to this day, I cannot understand how it was that the boat did not sink.

Each of them shouldered a bundle, and they set off along the shore,

and I soon lost sight of them. I had to return home; but I confess I was rendered uneasy by all these strange happenings, and I found it hard to await the morning.

My Cossack was very much astonished when, on waking up, he saw me fully dressed. I did not, however, tell him the reason. For some time I stood at the window, gazing admiringly at the blue sky all studded with wisps of cloud, and at the distant shore of the Crimea, stretching out in a lilac-colored streak and ending in a cliff, on the summit of which the white tower of the lighthouse was gleaming. Then I betook myself to the fortress, Phanagoriya, in order to ascertain from the Commandant at what hour I should depart for Gelenjik.

But the Commandant, alas! could not give me any definite information. The vessels lying in the harbor were all either guard-ships or merchant vessels which had not yet even begun to take in lading

"Maybe in about three or four days' time a mailboat will come in," said the Commandant, "and then we shall see."

I returned home sulky and wrathful. My Cossack met me at the door with a frightened countenance.

"Things are looking bad, sir!" he said.

"Yes, my friend; goodness only knows when we shall get away!"

Hereupon he became still more uneasy, and, bending toward me, he said in a whisper:

"It is uncanny here! I met an under-officer from the Black Sea today—he's an acquaintance of mine—he was in my detachment last year When I told him where we were staying, he said, 'That place is uncanny, old fellow, they're wicked people there!'...And, indeed, what sort of a blind boy is that? He goes everywhere alone, to fetch water and to buy bread at the bazaar. It is evident they have become accustomed to that sort of thing here."

"Well, what then? Tell me, though, has the mistress of the place put in an appearance?"

"During your absence today, an old woman and her daughter arrived"

"What daughter? She has no daughter!"

"Goodness knows who it can be if it isn't her daughter; but the old woman is sitting over there in the hut now."

I entered the hovel. A blazing fire was burning in the stove, and they were cooking a dinner which struck me as being a rather luxurious one for poor people. To all my questions the old woman replied that she was deaf and could not hear me. There was nothing to be got out of her. I turned to the blind boy who was sitting in front of the stove, putting twigs into the fire.

"Now, then, you little blind devil," I said, taking him by the ear. "Tell me, where were you roaming with the bundle last night, eh?"

The blind boy suddenly burst out weeping, shrieking and wailing.

"Where did I go? I did not go anywhere.... With the bundle?... What bundle?"

This time the old woman heard, and she began to mutter:

"Hark at them plotting, and against a poor boy too! What are you touching him for? What has he done to you?"

I had enough of it, and went out, firmly resolved to find the key to the riddle.

I wrapped myself up in my felt cloak and, sitting down on a rock by the fence, gazed into the distance. Before me stretched the sea, agitated by the storm of the previous night, and its monotonous roar, like the murmur of a town over which slumber is beginning to creep, recalled bygone years to my mind, and transported my thoughts northward to our cold capital Agitated by my recollections, I became oblivious to my surroundings

About an hour passed thus, perhaps even longer Suddenly something resembling a song struck upon my ear It *was* a song, and the voice was a woman's, young and fresh—but where was it coming from?...I listened, it was a harmonious melody—now long-drawn-out and plaintive, now swift and lively I looked around me—there was nobody to be seen. I listened again—the sounds seemed to be falling from the sky I raised my eyes. On the roof of my cabin was standing a young girl in a striped dress and with her hair hanging loose—a regular water-nymph Shading her eyes from the sun's rays with the palm of her hand, she was gazing intently into the distance At one time, she would laugh and talk to herself, at another, she would strike up her song anew.

I have retained that song in my memory, word for word:

At their own free will
They seem to wander
O'er the green sea yonder,
Those ships, as still
They are onward going,
With white sails flowing.

And among those ships
My eye can mark
My own dear barque:
By two oars guided
(All unprovided
With sails) it slips.

The storm-wind raves·
And the old ships—see!
With wings spread free,
Over the waves
They scatter and flee!

The sea I will hail
With obeisance deep·
"Thou base one, hark:
Thou must not fail
My little barque
From harm to keep!"

For lo! 'tis bearing
Most precious gear,
And brave and daring
The arms that steer
Within the dark
My little barque.

Involuntarily the thought occurred to me that I had heard the same voice the night before I reflected for a moment, and when I looked up at the roof again there was no girl to be seen Suddenly she darted past me, with another song on her lips, and, snapping her fingers, she ran up to the old woman Thereupon a quarrel arose between them. The old woman grew angry, and the girl laughed loudly. And then I saw my Undine running and gamboling again. She came up to where I was, stopped, and gazed fixedly into my face as if surprised at my presence Then she turned carelessly away and went quietly toward the harbor But this was not all. The whole day she kept hovering around my lodging, singing and gamboling without a moment's interruption. Strange creature! There was not the slightest sign of insanity in her face, on the contrary, her eyes, which were continually resting upon me, were bright and piercing Moreover, they seemed to be endowed with a certain magnetic power, and each time they looked at me they appeared to be expecting a question. But I had only to open my lips to speak, and away she would run, with a sly smile

Certainly never before had I seen a woman like her. She was by no means beautiful; but, as in other matters, I have my own prepossessions on the subject of beauty. There was a good deal of breeding in her....Breeding in women, as in horses, is a great thing: a discovery, the credit of which belongs to young France It—that is to say, breeding, not young France—is chiefly to be detected in the gait, in the hands and feet, the nose, in particular, is of the greatest significance. In Russia a straight nose is rarer than a small foot

My songstress appeared to be not more than eighteen years of age. The unusual suppleness of her figure, the characteristic and original way she had of inclining her head, her long, light-brown hair, the golden sheen of her slightly sunburned neck and shoulders, and especially her straight nose—all these held me fascinated Although in her sidelong glances I could read a certain wildness and disdain, al-

though in her smile there was a certain vagueness, yet—such is the force of predilections—that straight nose of hers drove me crazy. I fancied that I had found Goethe's Mignon—that queer creature of his German imagination. And, indeed, there was a good deal of similarity between them. the same rapid transitions from the utmost restlessness to complete immobility, the same enigmatical speeches, the same gambols, the same strange songs.

Toward evening I stopped her at the door and entered into the following conversation with her.

"Tell me, my beauty," I asked, "what were you doing on the roof today?"

"I was looking to see from what direction the wind was blowing"

"What did you want to know for?"

"Whence the wind blows comes happiness."

"Well? Were you invoking happiness with your song?"

"Where there is singing there is also happiness."

"But what if your song were to bring you sorrow?"

"Well, what then? Where things won't be better, they will be worse; and from bad to good again is not far."

"And who taught you that song?"

"Nobody taught me; it comes into my head and I sing; whoever is to hear it, he will hear it, and whoever ought not to hear it, he will not understand it."

"What is your name, my songstress?"

"He who baptized me knows."

"And who baptized you?"

"How should I know?"

"What a secretive girl you are! But look here, I have learned something about you"—she neither changed countenance nor moved her lips, as though my discovery was of no concern to her—"I have learned that you went to the shore last night"

And, thereupon, I very gravely retailed to her all that I had seen, thinking that I should embarrass her. Not a bit of it! She burst out laughing heartily.

"You have seen much, but know little; and what you do know, see that you keep it under lock and key."

"But supposing, now, I was to take it into my head to inform the Commandant?" and here I assumed a very serious, not to say stern, demeanor.

She gave a sudden spring, began to sing, and hid herself like a bird frightened out of a thicket. My last words were altogether out of place. I had no suspicion then how momentous they were, but afterwards I had occasion to rue them.

As soon as the dusk of the evening fell, I ordered the Cossack to heat the teapot, campaign fashion. I lighted a candle and sat down by the

table, smoking my traveling-pipe. I was just about to finish my second tumbler of tea when suddenly the door creaked and I heard behind me the sound of footsteps and the light rustle of a dress. I started and turned around

It was she—my Undine Softly and without saying a word she sat down opposite to me and fixed her eyes upon me. Her glance seemed wondrously tender, I know not why; it reminded me of one of those glances which, in years gone by, so despotically played with my life. She seemed to be waiting for a question, but I kept silence, filled with an inexplicable sense of embarrassment. Mental agitation was evinced by the dull pallor which overspread her countenance, her hand, which I noticed was trembling slightly, moved aimlessly about the table At one time her breast heaved, and at another she seemed to be holding her breath. This little comedy was beginning to pall upon me, and I was about to break the silence in a most prosaic manner, that is, by offering her a glass of tea; when suddenly, springing up, she threw her arms around my neck, and I felt her moist, fiery lips pressed upon mine Darkness came before my eyes, my head began to swim. I embraced her with the whole strength of youthful passion. But, like a snake, she glided from between my arms, whispering in my ear as she did so:

"Tonight, when everyone is asleep, go out to the shore"

Like an arrow she sprang from the room.

In the hall she upset the teapot and a candle which was standing on the floor

"Little devil!" cried the Cossack, who had taken up his position on the straw and had contemplated warming himself with the remains of the tea.

It was only then that I recovered my senses.

In about two hours' time, when all had grown silent in the harbor, I awakened my Cossack.

"If I fire a pistol," I said, "run to the shore."

He stared open-eyed and answered mechanically:

"Very well, sir."

I stuffed a pistol in my belt and went out. She was waiting for me at the edge of the cliff. Her attire was more than light, and a small kerchief girded her supple waist.

"Follow me!" she said, taking me by the hand, and we began to descend

I cannot understand how it was that I did not break my neck. Down below we turned to the right and proceeded to take the path along which I had followed the blind boy the evening before. The moon had not yet risen, and only two little stars, like two guardian lighthouses, were twinkling in the dark-blue vault of heaven. The heavy waves, with measured and even motion, rolled one after the

other, scarcely lifting the solitary boat which was moored to the shore.

"Let us get into the boat," said my companion.

I hesitated. I am no lover of sentimental trips on the sea; but this was not the time to draw back. She leaped into the boat, and I after her; and I had not time to recover my wits before I observed that we were adrift.

"What is the meaning of this?" I said angrily.

"It means," she answered, seating me on the bench and throwing her arms around my waist, "it means that I love you!"...

Her cheek was pressed close to mine, and I felt her burning breath upon my face Suddenly something fell noisily into the water. I clutched at my belt—my pistol was gone! Ah, now a terrible suspicion crept into my soul, and the blood rushed to my head! I looked round We were about fifty fathoms from the shore, and I could not swim a stroke! I tried to thrust her away from me, but she clung like a cat to my clothes, and suddenly a violent wrench all but threw me into the sea. The boat rocked, but I righted myself, and a desperate struggle began.

Fury lent me strength, but I soon found that I was no match for my opponent in point of agility .

"What do you want?" I cried, firmly squeezing her little hands.

Her fingers crunched, but her serpentlike nature bore up against the torture, and she did not utter a cry.

"You saw us," she answered "You will tell on us."

And, with a supernatural effort, she flung me onto the side of the boat; we both hung half-overboard; her hair touched the water. The decisive moment had come I planted my knee against the bottom of the boat, caught her by the tresses with one hand and by the throat with the other; she let go my clothes, and, in an instant I had thrown her into the waves.

It was now rather dark; once or twice her head appeared for an instant amidst the sea foam, and I saw no more of her.

I found the half of an old oar at the bottom of the boat, and somehow or other, after lengthy efforts, I made fast to the harbor. Making my way along the shore toward my hut, I involuntarily gazed in the direction of the spot where, on the previous night, the blind boy had awaited the nocturnal mariner. The moon was already rolling through the sky, and it seemed to me that somebody in white was sitting on the shore Spurred by curiosity, I crept up and crouched down in the grass on the top of the cliff. By thrusting my head out a little way I was able to get a good view of everything that was happening down below, and I was not very much astonished, but almost rejoiced, when I recognized my water-nymph. She was wringing the seafoam from her long hair. Her wet garment outlined her supple figure and her high bosom

Soon a boat appeared in the distance; it drew near rapidly; and, as on the night before, a man in a Tartar cap stepped out of it, but he now had his hair cropped round in the Cossack fashion, and a large knife was sticking out behind his leather belt.

"Yanko," the girl said, "all is lost!"

Then their conversation continued, but so softly that I could not catch a word of it.

"But where is the blind boy?" said Yanko at last, raising his voice.

"I have told him to come," was the reply

After a few minutes the blind boy appeared, dragging on his back a sack, which they placed in the boat.

"Listen!" said Yanko to the blind boy. "Guard that place! You know where I mean? There are valuable goods there Tell"—I could not catch the name—"that I am no longer his servant Things have gone badly. He will see me no more. It is dangerous now I will go seek work in another place, and he will never be able to find another daredevil like me. Tell him also that if he had paid me a little better for my labors, I would not have forsaken him. For me there is a way anywhere, if only the wind blows and the sea roars"

After a short silence Yanko continued

"She is coming with me. It is impossible for her to remain here. Tell the old woman that it is time for her to die, she has been here a long time, and the line must be drawn somewhere. As for us, she will never see us any more."

"And I?" said the blind boy in a plaintive voice.

"What use have I for you?" was the answer.

In the meantime my Undine had sprung into the boat She beckoned to her companion with her hand. He placed something in the blind boy's hand and added.

"There, buy yourself some gingerbreads."

"Is this all?" said the blind boy.

"Well, here is some more."

The money fell and jingled as it struck the rock.

The blind boy did not pick it up. Yanko took his seat in the boat, the wind was blowing from the shore; they hoisted the little sail and sped rapidly away For a long time the white sail gleamed in the moonlight amid the dark waves Still the blind boy remained seated upon the shore, and then I heard something which sounded like sobbing The blind boy was, in fact, weeping, and for a long, long time his tears flowed ...I grew heavy-hearted. For what reason should fate have thrown me into the peaceful circle of *honorable smugglers?* Like a stone cast into a smooth well, I had disturbed their quietude, and I barely escaped going to the bottom like a stone.

I returned home In the hall the burned-out candle was spluttering on a wooden platter, and my Cossack, contrary to orders, was fast

asleep, with his gun held in both hands. I left him at rest, took the candle, and entered the hut Alas! my cashbox, my saber with the silver chasing, my Daghestan dagger—the gift of a friend—all had vanished! It was then that I guessed what articles the cursed blind boy had been dragging along. Roughly shaking the Cossack, I woke him up, rated him, and lost my temper. But what was the good of that? And would it not have been ridiculous to complain to the authorities that I had been robbed by a blind boy and all but drowned by an eighteen-year-old girl?

Thank heaven an opportunity of getting away presented itself in the morning, and I left Taman.

What became of the old woman and the poor blind boy I know not. And, besides, what are the joys and sorrows of mankind to me—me, a traveling officer, and one, moreover, with an order for post-horses on government business?

Nikolay Gogol

THE CLOAK

In the department of ——, but it is better not to name the department. Nothing is more touchy in the world than departments, regiments, courts of justice, in a word, all branches of public service. Nowadays each individual thinks all society insulted in his person But lately a complaint was received from a district chief of police in which he clearly demonstrated that all the imperial institutions were going to the dogs, and that the Czar's sacred name was being taken in vain; and in proof he attached to the complaint a tale, in which the district chief of police is made to appear about once in every ten pages, and often enough in a downright drunken condition. Therefore, in order to avoid all unpleasantness, it will be better to call the department in question simply a certain department.

So, in a certain department there was a certain official—by no means a noteworthy one—short of stature, somewhat pockmarked, red-haired, and mole-eyed, with a bald forehead, wrinkled cheeks, and a complexion of the kind known as florid The St. Petersburg climate was responsible for this. As for his official rank—with us Russians the rank comes first—he was what is called a perpetual titular councillor, over which, as is well known, some writers make merry and crack their

jokes, obeying the praiseworthy custom of attacking those who cannot hit back.

His family name was Bashmachkin. This name is apparently derived from *bashmak* ("shoe"); but, when, at what time, and in what manner, is not known. His father and grandfather, and all the Bashmachkins, always wore boots, which were resoled three times a year. His name was Akaky Akakiyevich. It may strike the reader as rather singular and far-fetched; but he may rest assured that it was by no means far-fetched, and that the circumstances were such that it would have been quite out of the question to give him any other.

This was how it came about.

Akaky Akakieyevich was born, if my memory serves me right, on the evening of the 23d of March His mother, the wife of a government official, and a splendid woman, made all due arrangements for having the child baptized. She was lying on the bed opposite the door; on her right stood the godfather, Ivan Ivanovich Eroshkin, a most estimable man, who served as the head clerk of the senate, and the godmother, Arina Semyonovna Bielobrinshkova, the wife of an officer of the quarter, and a woman of rare virtues. They offered the mother her choice of three names, Mokiya, Sossiya, or that the child should be called after the martyr Khozdazat. "No," said the good woman, "none of these names will do" In order to please her, they opened the calendar at another place; three more names appeared, Triphily, Dula, and Varakhasy. "This is deadful," said the old woman. "What names! I truly never heard the like. I might have put with Varadat or Varukh, but not Triphily and Varakhasy!" They turned to another page and found Pavsikakhy and Vakhtisy. "Now I see," said the old woman, "that it is simply fate And since such is the case, it will be better to name him after his father. His father's name was Akaky, so let his son's name be Akaky too." In this manner he became Akaky Akakiyevich. They christened the child, whereat he wept, and made a wry face, as though he foresaw that he was to be a titular councillor.

In this manner did it all come about. We have mentioned it in order that the reader might see for himself that it was all inevitable, and that it was out of the question to give him any other name.

When and how he entered the department, and who appointed him, no one could remember. No matter how often the directors and chiefs of all kinds were changed, he was always to be seen in the same place, the same posture, the same occupation—always the letter-copying clerk—so that it was afterwards affirmed that he had been born in uniform with a bald head. No respect was shown him in the department. The porter not only did not rise from his seat when he passed, but never even glanced at him, any more than if a fly had flown through the reception room. His superiors treated him with cool condescension and downright rudeness. Some petty assistant to the head

clerk would thrust a paper under his nose without so much as saying, "Copy," or, "Here's an interesting little case," or anything else agreeable, as is usual among well-bred officials. And he took it, looking only at the paper, and not observing who handed it to him, or whether he had the right to do so; he simply took it, and set about copying it.

The young officials laughed at and made fun of him, so far as their official wit allowed; told in his presence all sorts of stories concocted about him, and about his landlady, an old woman of seventy; declared that she beat him; asked when the wedding was to be; and strewed bits of paper over his head, calling them snow. Akaky Akakiyevich answered with not a word, it was as if there had been no one there besides himself. And it had no effect upon his work. Amid all these annoyances he never made a single mistake in a letter. If the joking became unbearable, as when they jogged his elbow, and interfered with his work, he would exclaim:

"Leave me alone! Why do you insult me?"

There was something strange in the words and the voice in which they were uttered. There was in it something which moved to pity; so much so that one young man, a newcomer, who, following the example of the others, had permitted himself to make sport of Akaky, suddenly stopped short, as if all about him had undergone a transformation, and presented itself in a new aspect. Some unseen force repelled him from the comrades whose acquaintance he had made, on the supposition that they were decent, well-bred men. Long afterwards, in his gayest moments, there would come to his mind the little clerk with the bald forehead, with his heart-rending words, "Leave me alone! Why do you insult me?" These moving words seemed to echo other words—"I am thy brother." And the young man covered his face with his hand; and many a time afterwards, in the course of his life, shuddered at seeing how much inhumanity there is in man, how much savage coarseness is concealed beneath cultured, worldly refinement, and even, O God! in that man whom the world acknowledges as honorable and upright.

It would be hard to find another man so obsessed by his duties. It is not enough to say that Akaky labored with zeal; no, he labored with love. In his copying, he found a varied and pleasant employment. Enjoyment was written on his face, some letters were even favorites with him; and when he encountered these, he smiled, winked, and worked with his lips, till it seemed as if each letter might be read in his face, as his pen traced it. If his pay had been in proportion to his zeal, he would, perhaps, to his great surprise, have been made even a councillor of state. But he worked, as his companions, the wits, put it, like a horse in a mill.

Yet it would be untrue to say that no attention was paid to him. One director, being a kindly man and desirous of rewarding him for

his long service, ordered him to be given something more important than mere copying. So he was asked to make a report of an already concluded affair, to another department; the duty consisting simply in changing the heading and altering a few words from the first to the third person. This caused him so much toil, that he broke into a perspiration, wiped his forehead, and finally said, "No, give me rather something to copy." Henceforth they let him copy on forever.

Apart from this copying, nothing seemed to exist for him. He gave no thought to his clothes. His uniform was not green, but a sort of rusty-meal color. The collar was low, so that his by no means long neck appeared inordinately long as it emerged from it, like the necks of the plaster cats which peddlers carry about on their heads. And something was always sticking to his uniform, either a bit of hay or some trifle. Moreover, he had a peculiar knack, as he walked along the street, of arriving beneath a window just as all sorts of rubbish was being dumped out of it; hence he always bore about on his hat scraps of melon rinds, and other such articles Never once in his life did he give heed to what was going on about him in the street; while it is well known that his young colleagues trained the range of their glances till they could see when anyone's trouser-straps came undone upon the opposite sidewalk, which always brought a malicious smile to their faces. As for Akaky Akakiyevich, he saw in all things the clean, even strokes of his written lines; and only when a horse thrust his nose, from some unknown quarter, over his shoulder, and sent a whole gust of wind down his neck from his nostrils, did he observe that he was not in the middle of a line, but in the middle of the street.

On reaching home, he sat down at once at the table, sipped his cabbage soup up quickly, and swallowed a bit of beef with onions, oblivious of their taste, and gulping down everything with flies and anything else which the Lord happened to send at the moment. When he saw that his stomach was beginning to swell, he rose from the table and copied papers which he had brought home If there happened to be none, he took copies for himself, for his own pleasure, especially if the document was unusual, not because of its style, but because of its being addressed to some distinguished person.

Even at the hour when the gray St. Petersburg sky had vanished, and the governmental world had eaten or dined, each as he could, according to the salary he received and his own fancy; when all were resting from the department scratching of pens, running to and fro, for their own and other people's indispensable occupations, and from all the work that an uneasy man makes willingly for himself, rather than what is necessary; when officials hasten to dedicate to pleasure the time which is left to them, one bolder than the rest going to the theater; another, into the street looking under the bonnets; another,

wasting his evening in compliments to some pretty girl, the star of a small official circle; another—and this is the most usual thing—visiting his comrades on the third or fourth floor, in two small rooms with an anteroom or kitchen, and some pretensions to fashion, such as a lamp or some other trifle which has cost many a sacrifice of dinner or pleasure trip—in a word, at the hour when all officials disperse among the contracted quarters of their friends, to play whist, as they sip their tea from glasses with a kopek's worth of sugar, smoke long pipes, relate at times some bits of gossip which a Russian man can never, in any circumstances, refrain from, and when there is nothing else to talk of, repeat eternal anecdotes about the commandant to whom they had sent word that the tails of the horses on the Falconet Monument had been cut off; when all strive to divert themselves, Akaky Akakiyevich indulged in no kind of diversion. No one could even say that he had seen him at any kind of evening party After writing to his heart's content, he would lie down to sleep, smiling at the thought of the coming day—of what God might send him to copy on the morrow.

Thus flowed on the peaceful life of the man, who, with a salary of four hundred roubles, understood how to be content with his lot; and thus it might have flowed on, perhaps, to extreme old age, were it not that there are various ills strewn along the path of life for titular councillors as well as for private, actual, court, and every other species of councillor, even for those who never give any advice or take any themselves

There exists in St. Petersburg a formidable foe of all who receive a salary of four hundred roubles a year, or thereabouts. This foe is none other than the northern cold, although it is said to be very healthy. At nine o'clock in the morning, at the very hour when the streets are filled with men bound for the various official departments, it begins to bestow such powerful and piercing nips on all noses impartially, that the poor officials really do not know what to do with them At an hour when the foreheads of even those who hold exalted positions ache with the cold, and tears start to their eyes, the poor titular councillors are sometimes quite unprotected Their only salvation lies in traversing as quickly as possible, in their thin little cloaks, five or six streets, and then warming their feet in the porter's room, and so thawing all their talents and qualifications for official service, which had become frozen on the way.

Akaky Akakiyevich had felt for some time that his back and shoulders were aching with peculiar poignancy, in spite of the fact that he tried to cover the distance with all possible speed. Finally he began to wonder if the fault did not lie in his cloak He examined it thoroughly at home, and discovered that in two places, namely, on the back and shoulders, it had become thin as gauze The cloth was

worn to such a degree that he could see through it, and the lining had fallen into pieces. You must know that Akaky Akakiyevich's cloak served as an object of ridicule to the officials. They even refused it the noble name of cloak, and called it a cape. Indeed, it was of an odd make, its collar diminishing year by year to serve to patch its other parts. The patching did not reveal great skill on the part of the tailor, and was, in fact, baggy and ugly. Seeing how the matter stood, Akaky Akakiyevich decided that it would be necessary to take the cloak to Petrovich, the tailor, who lived somewhere on the fourth floor up a dark staircase, and, who, in spite of his having but one eye and pockmarks all over his face, busied himself with considerable success in repairing the trousers and coats of officials and others; that is to say, when he was sober and not nursing some other scheme in his head.

There is no need to say much about this tailor, but as it is the custom to have the character of each personage in a novel clearly defined, there is no help for it, so here is Petrovich the tailor. At first he was called only Grigory, and was some gentleman's serf He began calling himself Petrovich from the time when he received his free papers, then to drink heavily on all holidays, at first on the great ones, and later on all church festivals without discrimination, wherever a cross stood in the calendar. On this point he was faithful to ancestral custom, and when quarreling with his wife, he called her a low female and a German. As we have mentioned his wife, it will be necessary to say a word or two about her. Unfortunately, little is known of her beyond the fact that Petrovich had a wife, who wore a cap and a dress, but could not lay claim to beauty, at least, no one but the soldiers of the guard even looked under her hat when they met her

Mounting the stairs which led to Petrovich's abode—stairs but lately washed with dishwater and reeking with the smell of spirits which affects the eyes, the inevitable characteristic of all dark stairways in St. Petersburg houses—mounting the stairs, Akaky Akakiyevich pondered how much Petrovich would ask, and mentally resolved not to give more than two roubles. The door was open, for the mistress, in cooking some fish, had raised such fumes in the kitchen that not even the beetles were visible. Akaky Akakiyevich passed through the kitchen unobserved by the housewife, and reached a room where he beheld Petrovich seated on a large unpainted table, with his legs tucked under him like a Turkish pasha. His feet were bare, after the fashion of tailors as they sit at work; and the first thing which caught the eye was his thumb, with a deformed nail thick and strong as a turtle's shell About Petrovich's neck hung a skein of silk and thread, and upon his knees lay some old garment He had been trying unsuccessfully for three minutes to thread his needle, and was

enraged at the darkness and even at the thread, growling in a low voice, "It won't go through, the wretch! you pricked me then, you rascal!"

Akaky Akakiyevich was vexed at arriving at the precise moment when Petrovich was in a temper. He liked to order something of Petrovich when he was a little downhearted, or, as his wife expressed it, "when he had settled himself with brandy, the one-eyed devil!" Under such circumstances Petrovich usually came down in his price very readily, and even bowed and returned thanks. Afterwards, to be sure, his wife would come, complaining that her husband had been drunk, and so had fixed the price too low; but, if only a ten-kopeck piece were added, then the matter would be settled. Now it appeared that Petrovich was in a sober condition, and therefore rough, taciturn, and inclined to demand Satan alone knew what price. Akaky Akakiyevich felt this, and would gladly have beat a retreat, but he was in for it Petrovich screwed up his one eye very intently at him, and Akaky Akakiyevich involuntarily said, "How do you do, Petrovich?"

"I wish you a good morning, sir," said Petrovich squinting at Akaky Akakyievich's hands, to see what sort of booty he had brought

"Ah! I—to you, Petrovich, this—" It must be known that Akaky Akakiyevich expressed himself for the most part by prepositions, adverbs, and scraps of phrases which had no meaning whatsoever. If the matter was a very difficult one, he had a habit of never finishing his sentences, so that often, having begun a phrase with the words, "This, in fact, is quite—" he forgot to go on, thinking he had already finished it.

"What is it?" asked Petrovich, and with his one eye scanned Akaky Akakiyevich's whole uniform from the collar down to the cuffs, the back, the tails, and the buttonholes, all of which were well known to him, since they were his own handiwork. Such is the habit of tailors; it is the first thing they do on meeting one.

"But I, here, this—Petrovich—a cloak, cloth—here you see, everywhere, in different places, it is quite strong—it is a little dusty and looks old, but it is new, only here in one place it is a little—on the back, and here on one of the shoulders, it is a little worn, yes, here on this shoulder it is a little—do you see? That is all. And a little work—"

Petrovich took the cloak, spread it out, to begin with, on the table, looked at it hard, shook his head, reached out his hand to the window sill for his snuff-box, adorned with the portrait of some general, though what general is unknown, for the place where the face should have been had been rubbed through by the finger and a square bit of paper had been pasted over it. Having helped himself to a pinch of snuff, Petrovich held up the cloak, inspecting it against the light,

and again shook his head. Then he turned it, lining upwards, and once more shook his head. After which he again lifted the general-adorned lid with its bit of pasted paper and, having stuffed his nose with snuff, closed and put away the snuff-box, and said with finality, "No, it is impossible to mend it. It is a wretched garment!"

Akaky Akakiyevich's heart sank at these words.

"Why is it impossible, Petrovich?" he said, almost in the pleading voice of a child "All that ails it is that it is worn on the shoulders. You must have some pieces—"

"Yes, patches could be found, patches are easily found," said Petrovich, "but there's nothing to sew them to The thing is quite rotten. If you put a needle to it—see, it will give way"

"Let it give way, and you can put on another patch at once"

"But there is nothing to put the patches on to. There's no use in strengthening it. It is too far gone. It's lucky that it's cloth, for, if the wind were to blow, it would fly away."

"Well, strengthen it again. How this, in fact—"

"No," said Petrovich firmly, "there is nothing to be done with it. It's a thoroughly bad job. You'd better, when the cold winter weather comes on, make yourself some gaiters out of it, because stockings are not warm. The Germans invented them in order to make more money." Petrovich loved on all occasions to have a fling at the Germans. "But it is plain you must have a new cloak"

At the word "new" all grew dark before Akaky Akakiyevich's eyes, and everything in the room began to whirl round The only thing he saw clearly was the general with the paper face on the lid of Petrovich's snuff-box. "A new one?" said he, as if still in a dream. "Why, I have no money for that."

"Yes, a new one," said Petrovich, with savage composure.

"Well, if it came to a new one, how—it—"

"You mean how much would it cost?"

"Yes"

"Well, you would have to lay out a hundred and fifty or more," said Petrovich, and pursed up his lips significantly He liked to produce powerful effects, liked to stun utterly and suddenly, and then to glance sidewise to see what face the stunned person would put on the matter.

"A hundred and fifty roubles for a cloak!" shrieked poor Akaky Akakiyevich, perhaps for the first time in his life, for his voice had always been distinguished for softness.

"Yes, sir," said Petrovich, "for any kind of cloak. If you have a marten fur on the collar, or a silk-lined hood, it will mount up to two hundred."

"Petrovich, please," said Akaky Akakiyevich in a beseeching tone, not hearing, and not trying to hear, Petrovich's words, and disregard-

ing all his "effects": "some repairs, in order that it may wear yet a little longer."

"No, it would only be a waste of time and money," said Petrovich. And Akaky Akakiyevich left after these words, in utter despair. Petrovich stood for some time after his departure, with significantly compressed lips, and without betaking himself to his work, satisfied that he would not be dropped, and an artistic tailor employed.

Akaky Akakiyevich went out into the street as if in a dream. "What a mess!" he said to himself. "I did not think it had come to—" and then after a pause he added, "Well, so it is! See what it's come to at last; and I never imagined that it was so!" Then followed a long silence, after which he exclaimed, "Well, so it is! See what already—nothing unexpected that—it would be nothing—what a strange circumstance!" Saying which, instead of going home, he went in exactly the opposite direction without suspecting it. On the way, a chimney-sweep bumped up against him and blackened his shoulder, and a whole hatful of rubbish landed on him from the top of a house which was building He did not notice it, and only when he ran against a watchman, who, having planted his halberd beside him, was shaking some snuff from his box into his horny hand, did he recover himself a little, and that only because the watchman said, "Why are you poking yourself into a man's very face? Haven't you the pavement?" This caused him to look about him and turn homewards.

There only he began to collect his thoughts, and to survey his position in its clear and actual light, and to argue with himself, sensibly and frankly, as with a reasonable friend with whom one can discuss private and personal matters. "No," said Akaky Akakiyevich, "it is impossible to reason with Petrovich now. He is that—evidently, his wife has been beating him I'd better go to him on Sunday morning. After Saturday night he will be a little cross-eyed and sleepy, for he will want to get drunk, and his wife won't give him any money, and at such a time, a ten-kopek piece in his hand will—he will become more fit to reason with, and then the cloak and that—" Thus argued Akaky Akakiyevich with himself, regained his courage, and waited until the first Sunday, when, seeing from afar that Petrovich's wife had left the house, he went straight to him

Petrovich was indeed very much out of sorts after Saturday. His head drooped and he was very sleepy; but for all that, as soon as he knew what it was a question of, it seemed as though Satan jogged his memory. "Impossible," said he. "Please to order a new one" Thereupon Akaky Akakiyevich handed over the ten-kopek piece. "Thank you, sir. I will drink your good health," said Petrovich. "But as for the cloak, don't trouble yourself about it; it is good for nothing. I will make you a capital new one, so let us settle about it now."

Akaky Akakiyevich still held out for mending the garment, but Petrovich would not hear of it and said, "I shall certainly have to make you a new one, and you may depend upon it that I shall do my best It may even be, as the fashion goes, that the collar can be fastened by silver hooks under a flap."

Akaky Akakiyevich's spirits fell, as he realized that there was no way out but to order a new cloak And how was it to be done? Where was the money to come from? He must have new trousers, and pay an old debt to the shoemaker for putting new tops to his old boots, and he must order three shirts from the seamstress, and a couple of pieces of linen In short, he had other uses for his money And even if his chief should be so kind as to order him to receive forty-five or even fifty roubles instead of forty, it would be a mere nothing, a mere drop in the ocean toward the funds necessary for a cloak, although he knew that Petrovich was often wrong-headed enough to blurt out some outrageous price, so that even his own wife could not refrain from exclaiming, "Have you lost your senses, you fool?" At one time he would not work at any price, and now it was quite likely that he had named a higher sum than the cloak would cost.

Yet though he knew that Petrovich would come down to eighty roubles, still, where was he to get the eighty roubles? He might possibly manage half. Yes, half might be procured, but where was the other half to come from? But the reader must first be told where the first half came from.

Akaky Akakiyevich had a habit of putting, for every rouble he spent, two kopeks into a small box, fastened with lock and key, and with a slit in the top for the reception of money. At the end of every half-year he counted over the heap of coppers and changed it for silver. This he had done for a long time, and in the course of years, the sum had mounted up to over forty roubles Thus he had one half on hand. Where was he to find the other half? Where was he to get another forty roubles? Akaky Akakiyevich, after some cogitation, decided to curtail his ordinary expenses: for a year at least, to dispense with tea in the evening, to burn no candles, and, if there was anything which he must do, to go into his landlady's room and work by her light. When he went into the street, he must walk as lightly as he could, and as cautiously, upon the stones, almost upon tiptoe, in order not to wear his heels down in too short a time He must give the laundress as little to wash as possible; and in order not to wear out his clothes, he must take them off as soon as he got home, and wear only his cotton dressing gown, which had been long and carefully saved.

To tell the truth, it was a little hard for him at first to accustom himself to these deprivations. But he got used to them at length, after

a fashion, and all went smoothly. He even got used to being hungry in the evening, but he made up for it by treating himself, so to say, in spirit, by bearing ever in mind the idea of his future cloak. Thenceforth his existence seemed to become in some way fuller, as if he were married, or as if some other man lived in him, as if in fact he were not alone and some amiable friend had agreed to travel along life's path with him, the friend being no other than the cloak, with thick wadding and a strong lining incapable of wearing out. He became more lively, and even his character grew firmer, like that of a man who has made up his mind and set himself a goal From his face and gait all doubt and indecision, all hesitation vanished. There was a new glow in his eyes, and now and then the boldest and most audacious ideas flitted through his mind. Why not, for instance, have marten fur on the collar? The thought of this almost made him absent-minded Once, in copying a letter, he nearly made a mistake, so that he exclaimed almost aloud, "Ugh!" and crossed himself Once a month he had a conference with Petrovich on the subject of the cloak: where it would be better to buy the cloth, and the color, and the price He always returned home satisfied, though troubled, reflecting that the time would come at last when it could all be bought, and the cloak made.

The affair progressed more briskly than he had expected For beyond all his hopes, the director awarded neither forty nor forty-five roubles for Akaky Akakiyevich's share, but sixty. Whether he suspected that Akaky Akakiyevich needed a cloak, or whether it was merely chance, at all events, twenty extra roubles were by this means provided This circumstance hastened matters. Two or three months more of hunger, and Akaky Akakiyevich had accumulated about eighty roubles His heart, generally so quiet, began to throb. On the first possible day, he went shopping in company with Petrovich. They bought some very good cloth, and at a reasonable price too, for they had been considering the matter for six months and had rarely let a month pass without their visiting the shops to ask about prices. Petrovich himself said that no better cloth could be had. For lining, they selected a cotton stuff, but so firm and thick that Petrovich declared it to be better than silk, and even prettier and more glossy. They did not buy the marten fur, because it was, in fact, dear; but in its stead they picked out the very best of cat-skin which could be found in the shop and which might, indeed, be taken for marten at a distance.

Petrovich worked at the cloak two whole weeks, for there was a great deal of quilting; otherwise it would have been finished sooner. He charged twelve roubles for the job, it could not possibly have been done for less It was all sewed with silk, in small double seams,

and Petrovich went over each seam afterwards with his own teeth, stamping in various patterns.

It was—it is difficult to say precisely on what day, but probably the happiest in Akaky Akakiyevich's life—when Petrovich at length brought home the cloak He brought it in the morning, just before it was necessary to start for the department. Never did a cloak arrive so exactly in the nick of time, for the severe cold had set in, and it seemed to threaten to get worse. Petrovich brought the cloak himself, as befits a good tailor. On his face was a significant expression, such as Akaky Akakiyevich had never beheld there He seemed fully aware that he had done no small deed, and crossed a gulf separating tailors who put in linings, and execute repairs, from those who make new things. He took the cloak out of the pocket-handkerchief in which he had brought it The handkerchief was fresh from the laundress, and he put it in his pocket for use Taking out the cloak, he gazed proudly at it, held it up with both hands, and flung it skillfully over the shoulders of Akaky Akakiyevich Then he pulled it and fitted it down behind with his hand, and draped it around Akaky Akakiyevich without buttoning it Akaky Akakiyevich, like an experienced man, wished to try the sleeves. Petrovich helped him on with them, and it turned out that the sleeves were also satisfactory In short, the cloak appeared to be perfect, and most seasonable Petrovich did not neglect to observe that it was only because he lived in a narrow street, and had no signboard, and had known Akaky Akakiyevich so long, that he had made it so cheaply; but that if he had been in business on the Nevsky Prospect, he would have charged seventy-five roubles for the making alone Akaky Akakiyevich did not care to argue this point with Petrovich. He paid him, thanked him, and set out at once in his new cloak for the department. Petrovich followed him and, pausing in the street, gazed long at the cloak in the distance, after which he went to one side expressly to run through a crooked alley, and emerge again into the street beyond to gaze once more upon the cloak from another point, namely, directly in front.

Meantime Akaky Akayiyevich went on in a festive mood. He was conscious every second of the time that he had a new cloak on his shoulders, and several times he laughed with inner satisfaction. Indeed, there were two advantages; one was its warmth, the other its beauty. He saw nothing of the road, but suddenly found himself at the department He took off his cloak in the anteroom, looked it over carefully, and confided it to the special care of the attendant. It is impossible to say precisely how it was that everyone in the department knew at once that Akaky Akakiyevich had a new cloak, and that the "cape" no longer existed. All rushed at the same moment into the anteroom to inspect it. They congratulated him, and said pleasant

things to him, so that he began at first to smile, and then to grow ashamed. When all were gathered about him, and someone said that the new cloak must be "christened," and that he must at least give them all a party, Akaky Akakiyevich lost his head completely, and he did not know where he stood, what to answer, or how to get out of it. He stood blushing all over for several minutes, trying to assure them with great simplicity that it was not a new cloak, that it was in fact the old "cape."

At last one of the officials, assistant to the head clerk, in order to show that he was not at all uppish, and friendly with his inferiors, said:

"I'll tell you what—I will give the party instead of Akaky Akakiyevich; I invite you all to tea with me tonight. It just happens to be my name-day too."

The clerks naturally offered the assistant clerk their congratulations, and accepted the invitation with pleasure. Akaky Akakiyevich would have declined; but they all agreed that it was discourteous, that it was simply a sin and a shame, and that he could not possibly refuse. Besides, the notion became pleasant when he recollected that he should have a chance of wearing his new cloak in the evening also.

That whole day was truly a memorable one for Akaky Akakiyevich. He returned home in a happy frame of mind, took off his cloak, and hung it carefully on the wall, admiring afresh the cloth and the lining Then he brought out his old, worn-out cloak, for comparison. He looked at it and laughed, so great was the difference. And long after dinner he laughed again when the condition of the "cape" recurred to his mind. He dined cheerfully and after dinner wrote nothing, but took his ease for a while on the bed until it got dark. Then he dressed himself leisurely, put on his cloak, and stepped out into the street.

Where the host lived, unfortunately we cannot say. Our memory begins to fail us badly The houses and streets in St Petersburg have become so mixed up in our head that it is very difficult to get anything out of it again in proper order. This much is certain, that the assistant clerk lived in the best part of the city; hence, anything but near to Akaky Akakiyevich's abode. Akaky Akakiyevich was first obliged to traverse a kind of wilderness of deserted, dimly lighted streets But as he approached the quarter of the city in which his host lived the streets became more lively, more populous, and more brilliantly lighted. Pedestrians began to appear; handsomely dressed ladies were more frequently encountered, the men had otter skin collars to their coats; shabby sleigh-men with their wooden, railed sledges stuck over with brassheaded nails, became rarer; while, on the other hand, more and more drivers in red velvet caps, lacquered

sledges, and bearskin coats became visible, and carriages with rich hammer-cloths flew swiftly through the streets, their wheels scrunching the snow.

Akaky Akakiyevich gazed upon all this as upon a novel sight He had not been in the streets during the evening for years. He halted out of curiosity before a shop window, to look at a picture representing a handsome woman, who had thrown off her shoe, thereby baring her whole foot in a very pretty way; while behind her the head of a man with whiskers and a handsome mustache peeped through the doorway of another room. Akaky Akakiyevich shook his head, and laughed, and then went on his way. Why did he laugh? Either because he had met with a thing utterly unknown, but for which everyone cherishes, nevertheless, some sort of feeling, or else he thought, like many officials, "Ah, those French! What's there to be said? If they do go in for anything of that sort why—" But possibly he did not think at all.

Akaky Akekiyevich at last reached the house in which the head clerk's assistant lodged. He lived in grand style. The staircase was lighted by a lamp; his apartment was on the second floor. On entering the vestibule, Akaky Akakiyevich beheld rows of galoshes on the floor. Among them, in the middle of the floor, stood a samovar, humming and emitting clouds of steam On the walls hung all sorts of coats and cloaks, among which there were even some with beaver collars, or velvet facings. Beyond, the hubbub of voices was audible, and became clear and loud when the servant came out with a trayful of empty glasses, cream-jugs, and sugar-bowls. It was evident that the company had arrived long before and had already finished their first glasses of tea.

Akaky Akakiyevich, after hanging up his own cloak, entered the inner room Before him all at once appeared lights, officials, pipes, and card tables, and he was bewildered by the sound of conversation rising from all the tables, and the noise of moving chairs. He halted very awkwardly in the middle of the room, wondering what he ought to do. But they had already seen him. They received him with a shout, and all thronged at once into the anteroom and there took another look at his cloak Akaky Akakiyevich, although somewhat confused, frankly rejoiced when he saw how they praised his cloak. Then, promptly, they forgot him and his cloak, and returned to the tables set out for whist.

The crowd, the noise and the talk overwhelmed Akaky Akakiyevich. He was at a loss as to what to do with his hands, his feet, and his whole body. He sat down by the players, looked at the cards, gazed at the face of one and another, and after a while began to yawn, and to feel bored all the more, as the hour was already long past when he usually went to bed He wanted to take leave of the

host, but they would not let him go, insisting that he drink a glass of champagne in honor of his new cloak. In the course of an hour, supper, consisting of vegetable salad, cold veal, pastry, confectioner's pies, and champagne, was served. They made Akaky Akakiyevich drink two glasses of champagne, after which he felt things grow livelier.

Still he could not forget that it was twelve o'clock, and that he should have been at home long ago. Fearing lest the host might think of some excuse for detaining him, he stole out of the room quickly, sought out, in the anteroom, his cloak, which, to his sorrow, he found lying on the floor, brushed it, picked off every speck upon it, put it on his shoulders, and descended the stairs to the street.

In the street it was still bright. Some petty shops, those permanent clubs of servants and all sorts of folks, were open. Others were shut, but showed a streak of light the whole length of the door-crack, indicating that they were not yet free of company and that probably some domestics, male and female, were finishing their stories and conversations whilst leaving their masters in complete ignorance as to their whereabouts. Akaky Akakiyevich went on in a happy frame of mind. He even started to run, without knowing why, after some lady who flew past like a flash of lightning. But he stopped short, and went on very quietly as before, wondering why he had quickened his pace. Soon there spread before him those deserted streets which are not cheerful in the daytime, to say nothing of the evening. Now they were even more dim and lonely. The lanterns began to grow more rare; oil, evidently, had been less generously supplied. Then came wooden houses and fences. Not a soul anywhere; only the snow sparkled in the streets and mournfully veiled the low-roofed cabins with their closed shutters. He approached the spot where the street crossed a vast square with houses barely visible on its farther side, a square which seemed like fearful waste.

Afar, a tiny spark glimmered from some watchman's-box, which seemed to stand on the edge of the world Akaky Akakiyevich's cheerfulness diminished at this point in a marked degree. He entered the square, not without foreboding, as if his heart warned him of some evil. He glanced back, and on both sides it was like a sea about him. "No, it is better not to look," he thought, and went on, closing his eyes. When he opened them to see whether he was near the end of the square, he suddenly beheld, standing just before his very nose, some bearded individuals whose appearance he could not make out. All grew dark before his eyes, and his heart throbbed.

"The cloak is mine!" shouted one of them, seizing hold of his collar. Akaky Akakiyevich was about to cry for help when the second man thrust a fist, about the size of an official's head, at his very mouth, muttering, "Just you dare to make a noise!"

Akaky Akakiyevich felt them strip off his cloak and give him a kick. He fell headlong upon the snow, and felt no more.

Soon he recovered consciousness and rose to his feet, but no one was there. He felt cold and realized that his cloak was gone He began to shout, but his voice did not appear to reach the other end of the square In despair, continuing to shout, he started to run across the square straight toward the watch-box, beside which stood the watchman, leaning on his halberd and apparently curious to know what kind of a customer was running toward him shouting. Akaky Akakiyevich ran up to him and in a sobbing voice began to abuse him for being asleep and not attending to his business The watchman replied that he had seen two men stop him in the middle of the square but supposed that they were friends of his, and that instead of scolding vainly he had better go to the police on the morrow so that they might make a search for whoever had stolen the cloak.

Akaky Akakiyevich ran home and arrived in a state of complete disorder, his hair, which grew very thinly upon his temples and the back of his head, all tousled, his body, arms and legs covered with snow. The old woman who was mistress of his lodgings, on hearing a terrible knocking, sprang hastily from her bed and, with only one shoe on, ran to open the door, pressing the sleeve of her chemise to her bosom out of modesty. When she had opened it, she fell back on beholding Akaky Akakiyevich in such a condition When he told her about the affair, she clasped her hands and said that he must go straight to the district chief of police, for his subordinate would turn up his nose, promise well, and drop the matter there. The very best thing to do, therefore, would be to go to the district chief, whom she knew, because Finnish Anna, her former cook, was now nurse at his house. She often saw him passing the house, and he was at church every Sunday, praying but at the same time gazing cheerfully at everybody; so that he, judging from all appearances, must be a good man Having listened to this opinion, Akaky Akakiyevich betook himself sadly to his room. And how he spent the night there, anyone who can put himself in another's place may readily imagine

Early next morning, he presented himself at the district chief's, but was told the official was asleep. He went again at ten and was again informed that he was asleep. At eleven, and they said, "The superintendent is not at home." At dinner time the clerks in the anteroom would not admit him, and insisted upon knowing his business. So that at last, for once in his life, Akaky Akakiyevich felt an inclination to show some spirit, and said curtly that he must see the chief in person, that they ought not to presume to refuse him entrance, that he came from a government office, and that when he complained, they would see.

The clerks dared make no reply to this, and one of them went to

call the chief, who listened to the strange story of the theft of the cloak. Instead of directing his attention to the principal points of the matter, he began to question Akaky Akakiyevich. Why was he going home so late? Was he in the habit of doing so, or had he been to some disorderly house? So that Akaky Akakiyevich got quite confused, and left him, without knowing whether the affair of his cloak would receive any attention or not.

All that day, for the first time in his life, he never went near the department. The next day he made his appearance, very pale and in his old cape, which had become even more shabby. The news of the theft of the cloak touched many, although there were some officials present who never lost an opportunity, even at such a time, of ridiculing Akaky Akakiyevich. They decided to make a collection for him then and there, but the officials had already spent a great deal in subscribing for the director's portrait, and for some book, at the suggestion of the head of that division who was a friend of the author; and so the sum was trifling.

One of them, moved by pity, resolved to help Akaky Akakiyevich with some good advice, at least, and told him that he ought not to go to the police, for although it might happen that a police officer, wishing to win the approval of his superiors, might hunt up the cloak by some means, still, his cloak would remain in the possession of the police if he did not offer legal proof that it belonged to him. The best thing for him, therefore, would be to apply to a certain prominent personage; since this prominent personage, by entering into relation with the proper persons, could greatly expedite the matter.

As there was nothing else to be done, Akaky Akakiyevich decided to go to the prominent personage. What was the exact official position of the prominent personage, remains a mystery to this day. The reader should know that the prominent personage had but recently become a prominent personage, having up to then been only an insignificant person. Moreover, his present position was not considered prominent in comparison with others still more prominent. But there is always a circle of people to whom what is insignificant in the eyes of others, is important enough. Moreover, he strove to increase his importance by various devices He managed, for instance, to have the inferior officials meet him on the staircase when he entered upon his service; no one was to presume to come directly to him, but the strictest etiquette must be observed; the collegiate recorder must make a report to the government secretary, the government secretary to the titular councillor, or whatever other man was proper, and so on until it finally reached him. In Holy Russia, all is thus contaminated with apishness; every man imitates his superior. They even say that a certain titular councillor, when promoted to the head of some small separate office, immediately partitioned off a private room for him-

self, called it the audience chamber, and posted at the door a lackey with red collar and braid, who grasped the handle of the door and opened to all comers, though the audience chamber would hardly hold an ordinary writing table.

The manners and customs of the prominent personage were imposing, if rather exaggerated. The main foundation of his system was strictness. "Strictness, strictness, always strictness!" he generally said; and at the last word he looked severely into the face of the person to whom he spoke There was no necessity for this, for the halfscore of subordinates who formed the entire force of the office were properly afraid. On catching sight of him afar off, they left their work and waited, drawn up in line, until he had passed through the room. His ordinary converse with his inferiors smacked of sternness and consisted chiefly of three phrases: "How dare you?" "Do you know to whom you are speaking?" "Do you realize who is before you?"

Otherwise he was a very kindhearted man, good to his comrades, and ready to oblige. But the rank of general threw him off his balance. On receiving any one of that rank, he became confused, lost his way, as it were, and never knew what to do. If he chanced to be among his equals, he was still a very nice kind of man, a very good fellow in many respects, and by no means stupid; but the moment he found himself in the society of people but one rank lower than himself, he became silent And his situation aroused sympathy, all the more as he felt himself that he might have been making an incomparably better use of his time. In his eyes there was sometimes perceptible a desire to join some interesting conversation or group, but he was kept back by the thought, "Would it not be a very great condescension on his part? Would it not be familiar? And would he not thereby lose his importance?" In consequence of such reflections he always remained in the same taciturn state, uttering from time to time a few monosyllabic sounds and thereby earning the reputation of being a bore.

To this prominent personage Akaky Akakiyevich presented himself, and this at the most unfavorable time for himself, though propitious for the prominent personage. The prominent personage was in his study, conversing gaily with an old acquaintance and companion of his childhood whom he had not seen for several years and who had just arrived, when it was announced that a person named Bashmachkin wished to see him. He asked abruptly, "Who is he?"—"Some official," he was informed. "Ah, he can wait! This is no time for him to call," said the important man.

It must be remarked here that the important man lied outrageously. He had said all he had to say to his friend long before, and the conversation had been interspersed for some time with very long pauses, during which they merely slapped each other on the

thigh and said, "You think so, Ivan Abramovich!" "Just so, Stepan Varlamovich!" Nevertheless, he ordered that the official should be kept waiting, in order to show his friend, a man who had not been in the service for a long time but had lived at home in the country, how long he could keep a man waiting.

At last, having talked himself out, and more than that, having had his fill of pauses and smoked a cigar in a very comfortable arm chair with reclining back, he suddenly seemed to recollect, and said to the secretary, who stood by the door with papers of reports, "So it seems that there is an official waiting to see me. Tell him that he may come in." On perceiving Akaky Akakiyevich's modest appearance and worn uniform, he turned abruptly to him and said, "What do you want?" in a brusque, hard voice, which he had practiced in his room in private, and before the looking glass, for a whole week before being raised to his present rank.

Akaky Akakiyevich, who was already imbued with a due measure of fear, became confused, and, as well as his tongue would permit, explained, with a rather more frequent addition than usual of the word "that," that his cloak was quite new, and had been stolen in the most inhuman manner, that he had applied to him in order that he might, in some way, by his intervention—that he might enter into correspondence with the chief of police, and find the cloak.

For some inexplicable reason this conduct seemed out of place to the prominent personage.

"What, my dear sir!" he said rudely, "are you not acquainted with the procedure? Why did you come to me? Don't you know how such matters are managed? You should first have presented a petition to the office. It would have gone to the head of the department, then to the chief of the division, then it would have been handed over to the secretary, and the secretary would have given it to me."

"But, Your Excellency," said Akaky Akakiyevich, trying to summon what little courage he had left, and conscious at the same time that he was perspiring terribly, "I, Your Excellency, presumed to trouble you because secretaries—are not a dependable folk."

"What, what, what!" said the exasperated important personage. "Where did you get your cheek? Where did you get such ideas? What impudence toward their chiefs and superiors has spread among the young generation!" The prominent personage apparently had not observed that Akaky Akakiyevich was already in the neighborhood of fifty. If he could be called a young man, it must have been in comparison with someone who was seventy. "Do you know to whom you are speaking? Do you realize who is before you? Do you realize it? Do you realize it, I ask you!" Then he stamped his foot, and raised his voice to such a pitch that it would have frightened even a less timid man than Akaky Akakiyevich.

Akaky Akakiyevich's senses failed him. He staggered, trembled in every limb, and, if the porters had not run in to support him, would have fallen to the floor They carried him out insensible. But the prominent personage, gratified that the effect should have surpassed his expectations, and quite intoxicated with the thought that his word could even deprive a man of his senses, glanced sidewise at his friend in order to see how he looked upon this and perceived, not without satisfaction, that his friend was in a most uneasy frame of mind and was even beginning, on his part, to feel a trifle frightened.

Akaky Akakiyevich could not remember how he managed to walk down the stairs and into the street He felt conscious of neither his hands nor feet Never in his life had he been so severely scolded by a high official, let alone a strange one. He went staggering on through the raging snowstorm with his mouth wide open. The wind, in St. Petersburg fashion, darted upon him from all quarters, and down every cross-street. In a twinkling it had blown a quinsy into his throat, and he reached home unable to utter a word. His throat was swollen, and he lay down on his bed So potent can a good scolding sometimes be!

The next day he had a violent fever. Thanks to the generous aid of the St. Petersburg climate, the malady progressed more rapidly than could have been expected, and when the doctor arrived, he found, on feeling the sick man's pulse, that there was nothing to be done, except to prescribe a poultice, so that the patient might not be left altogether without the beneficent aid of medicine At the same time, he predicted his end in thirty-six hours. After this he turned to the landlady, and said, "And as for you, don't waste your time on him Order his pine coffin now, for an oak one will be too expensive for him"

Did Akaky Akakiyevich hear these fatal words? And if he heard them, did they produce any overwhelming effect upon him? Did he lament the bitterness of his life?—We know not, for there was no abatement of his delirium Visions incessantly appeared to him, each stranger than the other. Now he saw Petrovich, and ordered him to make a cloak, with some traps for robbers, who seemed to him to be always under the bed; and he cried every moment to the landlady to pull one of them from under his coverlet. Then he inquired why his old mantle hung before him when he had a new cloak Next he fancied that he was standing before the prominent person, listening to a good dressing-down and saying, "Forgive me, Your Excellency!" but at last he began to curse, uttering the most horrible words, so that his aged landlady crossed herself, never in her life having heard anything of the kind from him, all the more as these words followed directly after the words "Your Excellency." Later on he talked utter nonsense, of which nothing could be made, all that was clear being

that these incoherent words and thoughts hovered ever about one thing, his cloak.

Soon poor Akaky Akakiyevich breathed his last. They sealed up neither his room nor his effects, because, in the first place, there were no heirs, and, in the second, there was very little to inherit beyond a bundle of goose-quills, a quire of white official paper, three pairs of socks, two or three buttons which had burst off his trousers, and the mantle already known to the reader. To whom all this fell, God knows. I confess that the person who told me this tale took no interest in the matter. They carried Akaky Akakiyevich out, and buried him.

And St. Petersburg was left without Akaky Akakiyevich, as if he had never lived there A being disappeared who was protected by none, dear to none, interesting to none, and who never even attracted to himself the attention of those students of human nature who omit no opportunity of thrusting a pin through a common fly and examining it under the microscope A being who bore meekly the jibes of the department, and went to his grave without having done one unusual deed, but to whom, none-the-less, at the close of his life, appeared a bright visitant in the form of a cloak, which momentarily cheered his poor life, and upon him, thereafter, an intolerable misfortune descended, just as it descends upon the heads of the mighty of this world!

Some days after his death, the porter was sent from the department to his lodgings, with an order for him to present himself there immediately, the chief commanding it The porter had to return unsuccessful, with the answer that he could not come; and to the question, "Why?" replied, "Well, because he is dead! he was buried four days ago." In this manner did they hear of Akaky Akakiyevich's death at the department And the next day a new official sat in his place, with a handwriting by no means so upright, but more inclined and slanting.

Yet who could have imagined that this was not really the end of Akaky Akakiyevich, that he was destined to raise a commotion after death, as if in compensation for his utterly insignificant life? Thus, indeed, it happened, and our poor story unexpectedly gains a fantastic ending.

A rumor suddenly spread through St. Petersburg that a dead man had taken to appearing on the Kalinkin Bridge, and its neighborhood, at night in the form of an official seeking a stolen cloak, and that, under the pretext of its being the stolen cloak, he dragged, without regard to rank or calling, everyone's cloak from his shoulders, be it catskin, beaver, fox, bear, sable, in a word every sort of fur and skin which men adopted for their covering. One of the department officials saw the dead man with his own eyes and promptly recognized in him Akaky Akakiyevich This, however, filled him with such terror that

he ran off as fast as his legs could carry him; hence, he did not scan the dead man closely, but only saw how the latter threatened him from afar with his finger. Constant complaints poured in from all quarters, that the backs and shoulders, not only of titular but even of court councillors, were exposed to the danger of a cold, on account of the frequent deprivation of their cloaks.

Efforts were made by the police to catch the corpse, alive or dead, at any cost, and punish him as an example to others, in the most severe manner. In this they nearly succeeded, for a watchman, on guard in Kirinshkin Lane, caught the corpse by the collar on the very scene of his evil deeds, in the act of pulling off the cloak of a retired musician Having seized him by the collar, he summoned, with a shout, two of his comrades, whom he enjoined to hold him fast, while he himself felt for a moment in his boot, in order to draw out his snuff-box and refresh his frozen nose. But the snuff was of a sort which even a corpse could not endure. The watchman having closed his right nostril with his finger, had no sooner succeeded in holding half a handful up to the left, than the corpse sneezed so violently that he completely filled the eyes of all three. While they raised their hands to wipe them, the dead man vanished completely, so that they positively did not know whether they had really had him in their grip at all. Thereafter the watchmen conceived such a terror of dead men that they were afraid even to seize the living, and only shouted from a distance, "Hey, there! go your way!" So the dead official began to appear even beyond the Kalinkin Bridge, causing no little terror to all timid people

We have wholly neglected that certain prominent personage who may really be considered the cause of the fantastic turn taken by this true history. First of all, justice prompts us to say, that after the departure of poor, crushed Akaky Akakiyevich, he felt something like remorse. Suffering was unpleasant to him, for his heart was accessible to good impulses, in spite of the fact that now and again his rank prevented his showing his true self. As soon as his friend had left his study, he began to think about poor Akaky Akakiyevich And from that day forth, poor Akaky Akakiyevich, who could not bear up under an official reprimand, recurred to his mind almost every day. The thought troubled him to such an extent that a week later he even resolved to send an official to him, to learn whether he really could assist him. And when it was reported to him that Akaky Akakiyevich had died suddenly of fever, he was startled, hearkened to the reproaches of his conscience, and was out of sorts for the whole day.

Wishing to divert his mind in some way and banish the unhappy impression, he set out that evening for a friend's house, where he found quite a large party assembled What was even better, nearly everyone was of the same rank as himself, so that he need not feel in the least

constrained This had an exhilarating effect upon his mental state. He grew expansive, made himself agreeable in conversation; in short, he passed a delightful evening. After supper he drank a couple of glasses of champagne—not a bad recipe for cheerfulness, as everyone knows. The champagne put him in an adventurous mood, and he decided not to return home, but to go and see a certain well-known lady, of German extraction, Karolina Ivanovna, a lady, it appears, with whom he was on a very friendly footing.

It must be mentioned that the prominent personage was no longer a young man, but a good husband and respected father of a family. Two sons, one of whom was already in the service, and a good-looking sixteen-year-old daughter, with a slightly arched but pretty little nose, came every morning to kiss his hand and say, "*Bon jour,* papa." His wife, a still fresh and good-looking woman, first gave him her hand to kiss, and then, reversing the procedure, kissed his. But the prominent personage, though perfectly satisfied in his domestic relations, considered it stylish to have a friend in another quarter of the city. This friend was scarcely prettier or younger than his wife; but there are such riddles in the world, and it is not for us to pass judgments on them So the important personage descended the stairs, stepped into his sledge, said to the coachman, "To Karolina Ivanovna's," and, wrapping himself luxuriously in his warm cloak, found himself in that delightful frame of mind than which a Russian can conceive nothing better, namely, when you think of nothing yourself, yet when the thoughts creep into your mind of their own accord, each more agreeable than the other, giving you no trouble either to drive them away or seek them Fully satisfied, he recalled all the gay aspects of the evening just past, and all the mots which had made the little circle laugh Many of them he repeated in a low voice, and found them quite as amusing as before; so it is not surprising that he should laugh heartily at them. Now and then, however, he was interrupted by gusts of wind which, coming suddenly, God knows whence or why, cut his face, drove masses of snow into it, filled out his cloak-collar like a sail, or suddenly blew it over his head with supernatural force, and thus caused him constant trouble to disentagle himself.

Suddenly the important personage felt someone clutch him firmly by the collar Turning round, he perceived a man of short stature, in an old, worn uniform, and recognized, not without terror, Akaky Akakiyevich. The official's face was as white as snow, and looked like the face of a ghost The horror of the important personage transcended all bounds when he saw the dead man's mouth open, and heard it utter the following remarks, while it breathed upon him the terrible odor of the grave: "Ah, I've got you at last! I've got you—by the collar! I want your cloak. You took no trouble about mine, and gave me a scolding too. So now hand over your own "

The prominent personage almost died of fright. Brave as he was in the office and in the presence of inferiors generally, and although, at the sight of his manly form and appearance, everyone said, "Ugh! how much character he has!" at this crisis, he, like many possessed of a heroic exterior, experienced such terror that, not without cause, he began to fear an attack of illness. He flung his cloak hastily from his shoulders and shouted to his coachman in an unnatural voice, "Home at full speed!" The coachman, hearing the tone which is generally employed at critical moments, and even accompanied by something much more tangible, drew his head down between his shoulders in case of an emergency, flourished his whip, and sped like an arrow. In a little more than six minutes the prominent personage was at the entrance of his own house. Pale, thoroughly frightened, and cloakless, he went home instead of to Karolina Ivanovna's, reached his room somehow or other, and passed the night in the direst distress; so that the next morning over their tea, his daughter said, "You are very pale today, papa" But papa remained silent, and said not a word to anyone of what had happened to him, where he had been, or where he had intended to go.

This occurrence made a deep impression upon him. He even began to say, "How dare you? Do you realize who is before you?" less often to the under-officials, and, if he did utter the words, it was only after first having learned the bearings of the matter. But the most noteworthy point was, that from that day forward the apparition of the dead official ceased to be seen. Evidently the prominent personage's cloak just fitted his shoulders. At all events, no more instances of his dragging cloaks from people's shoulders were heard of. But many active and solicitous persons could by no means reassure themselves, and asserted that the dead official still showed himself in remote parts of the city.

In fact, one watchman in Kolomen saw with his own eyes the apparition come from behind a house. But the watchman was not a strong man, and he was afraid to arrest him, though he followed him in the dark until, at length, the apparition looked round, paused, and inquired "What do you want?" at the same time showing such a fist as is never seen on living men. The watchman said, "Nothing," and turned back instantly. The apparition was much too tall, wore immense mustaches, and, directing his steps apparently toward the Obukhov Bridge, disappeared in the darkness of the night

Ivan Turgenev

THE DISTRICT DOCTOR

One day in autumn on my way back from a remote part of the country I caught cold and fell ill Fortunately the fever attacked me in the district town at the inn; I sent for the doctor. In half an hour the district doctor appeared, a thin, dark-haired man of middle height. He prescribed me the usual sudorific, ordered a mustard plaster to be put on, very deftly slid a five rouble note up his sleeve, coughing drily and looking away as he did so, and then was getting up to go home, but somehow fell into talk and remained I was exhausted with feverishness; I foresaw a sleepness night and was glad of a little chat with a pleasant companion. Tea was served. My doctor began to converse freely. He was a sensible fellow and expressed himself with vigor and some humor Queer things happen in the world: you may live a long while with some people, and be on friendly terms with them, and never once speak openly with them from your soul; with others you have scarcely time to get acquainted, and all at once you are pouring out to him—or he to you—all your secrets, as though you were at confession I don't know how I gained the confidence of my new friend—anyway, with nothing to lead up to it, he told me a rather curious incident, and here I will report his tale for the information of the indulgent reader. I will try to tell it in the doctor's own words

"You don't happen to know," he began in a weak and quavering voice (the common result of the use of unmixed Berezov snuff); "you don't happen to know the judge here, Mylov, Pavel Lukich? ..You don't know him? ..Well, it's all the same." (He cleared his throat and rubbed his eyes) "Well, you see, the thing happened, to tell you exactly without mistake, in Lent, at the very time of the thaws I was sitting at his house—our judge's, you know—playing preference Our judge is a good fellow, and fond of playing preference Suddenly"—the doctor made frequent use of this word, suddenly—"they tell me, 'There's a servant asking for you.' I say, 'What does he want?' They say, 'He has brought a note—it must be from a patient' 'Give me the note,' I say So it is from a patient—well and good—you understand—it's our bread and butter .. But this is how it was a lady, a widow, writes to me; she says, 'My daughter is dying. Come, for God's sake!' she says, 'and the horses have been sent for you.'.. Well, that's all right But she was twenty miles from the town, and it was midnight out of doors, and the roads in such a state, my word! And as she was poor herself, one could not expect more than two silver roubles, and

even that problematic; and perhaps it might only be a matter of a roll of linen and a sack of oatmeal in payment. However, duty, you know, before everything: a fellow-creature may be dying. I hand over my cards at once to Kalliopin, the member of the provincial commission, and return home. I look; a wretched little trap was standing at the steps, with peasant's horses, fat—too fat—and their coat as shaggy as felt; and the coachman sitting with his cap off out of respect. Well, I think to myself, 'It's clear, my friend, these patients aren't rolling in riches.'... You smile; but I tell you, a poor man like me has to take everything into consideration.... If the coachman sits like a prince and doesn't touch his cap, and even sneers at you behind his beard, and flicks his whip—then you may bet on six roubles. But this case, I saw, had a very different air. However, I think there's no help for it; duty before everything I snatch up the most necessary drugs and set off. Will you believe it? I only just managed to get there at all. The road was infernal: streams, snow, watercourses, and the dyke had suddenly burst there—that was the worst of it! However, I arrived at last. It was a little thatched house. There was a light in the windows; that meant they expected me. I was met by an old lady, very venerable, in a cap. 'Save her!' she says; 'she is dying.' I say, 'Pray don't distress yourself—Where is the invalid?' 'Come this way.' I see a clean little room, a lamp in the corner; on the bed a girl of twenty, unconscious. She was in a burning heat, and breathing heavily—it was fever. There were two other girls, her sisters, scared and in tears. 'Yesterday,' they tell me, 'she was perfectly well and had a good appetite; this morning she complained of her head, and this evening, suddenly, you see, like this.' I say again 'Pray don't be uneasy.' It's a doctor's duty, you know —and I went up to her and bled her, told them to put on a mustard plaster, and prescribed a mixture. Meantime I looked at her; I looked at her, you know—there, by God! I had never seen such a face!—she was a beauty, in a word! I felt quite shaken with pity. Such lovely features, such eyes! ... But, thank God! she became easier; she fell into a perspiration, seemed to come to her senses, looked round, smiled, and passed her hand over her face.... Her sisters bent over her. They ask, 'How are you?' 'All right,' she says, and turns away I looked at her; she had fallen asleep. 'Well,' I say, 'now the patient should be left alone.' So we all went out on tiptoe; only a maid remained, in case she was wanted. In the parlor there was a samovar standing on the table, and a bottle of rum, in our profession one can't get on without it. They gave me tea; asked me to stop the night.... I consented: where could I go, indeed, at that time of night? The old lady kept groaning. 'What is it?' I say, 'She will live; don't worry yourself, you had better take a little rest yourself; it is about two o'clock.' 'But you will send to wake me if anything happens?' 'Yes, yes.' The old lady went away, and the girls too went to their own room; they made up a bed for me

in the parlor. Well, I went to bed—but I could not get to sleep, for a wonder! for in reality I was very tired. I could not get my patient out of my head. At last I could not put up with it any longer; I got up suddenly; I think to myself, 'I will go and see how the patient is getting on.' Her bedroom was next to the parlor. Well, I got up, and gently opened the door—how my heart beat! I looked in· the servant was asleep, her mouth wide open, and even snoring, the wretch! But the patient lay with her face toward me, and her arms flung wide apart, poor girl! I went up to her... when suddenly she opened her eyes and stared at me! 'Who is it? who is it?' I was in confusion. 'Don't be alarmed, madam,' I say; 'I am the doctor; I have come to see how you feel.' 'You the doctor?' 'Yes, the doctor, your mother sent for me from the town; we have bled you, madam; now pray go to sleep, and in a day or two, please God! we will set you on your feet again.' 'Ah, yes, yes, doctor, don't let me die.... Please, please' 'Why do you talk like that? God bless you!' She is in a fever again, I think to myself; I felt her pulse; yes, she was feverish. She looked at me, and then took me by the hand. 'I will tell you why I don't want to die; I will tell you ..Now we are alone; and only, please don't you... not to anyone... Listen....' I bent down; she moved her lips quite to my ear; she touched my cheek with her hair—I confess my head went round—and began to whisper.... I could make out nothing of it. .. Ah, she was delirious!... She whispered and whispered, but so quickly, and as if it were not in Russian; at last she finished, and shivering dropped her head on the pillow, and threatened me with her finger. 'Remember, doctor, to no one.' I calmed her somehow, gave her something to drink, waked the servant, and went away."

At this point the doctor again took snuff with exasperated energy, and for a moment seemed stupefied by its effects.

"However," he continued, "the next day, contrary to my expectations, the patient was no better I thought and thought, and suddenly decided to remain there, even though my other patients were expecting me ...And you know one can't afford to disregard that; one's practice suffers if one does But, in the first place, the patient was really in danger, and secondly, to tell the truth, I felt strongly drawn to her. Besides, I liked the whole family. Though they were really badly off, they were singularly, I may say, cultivated people.. .Their father had been a learned man, an author; he died, of course, in poverty, but he had managed before he died to give his children an excellent education; he left a lot of books too. Either because I looked after the invalid very carefully, or for some other reason—anyway, I can venture to say all the household loved me as if I were one of the family.... Meantime the roads were in a worse state than ever, all communications, so to say, were cut off completely; even medicine could with difficulty be got from the town.... The sick girl was not getting better.

...Day after day, and day after day...but...here..." (The doctor made a brief pause) "I declare I don't know how to tell you."...(He again took snuff, coughed, and swallowed a little tea.) "I will tell you without beating about the bush. My patient...how should I say? ...Well, she had fallen in love with me...or, no, it was not that she was in love...however...really, how should one say?" (The doctor looked down and grew red.) "No," he went on quickly, "in love, indeed! A man should not overestimate himself. She was an educated girl, clever and well-read, and I had even forgotten my Latin, one may say, completely. As to appearance"—(the doctor looked himself over with a smile)—"I am nothing to boast of there either. But God Almighty did not make me a fool, I don't take black for white; I know a thing or two; I could see very clearly, for instance, that Aleksandra Andreyevna—that was her name—did not feel love for me, but had a friendly, so to say, inclination—a respect or something for me. Though she herself perhaps mistook this sentiment, anyway this was her attitude; you may form your own judgment of it. But," added the doctor, who had brought out all these disconnected sentences without taking breath, and with obvious embarrassment, "I seem to be wandering rather—you won't understand anything like this...There, with your leave, I will relate it all in order."

He drank off a glass of tea, and began in a calmer voice.

"Well, then. My patient kept getting worse and worse. You are not a doctor, my good sir; you cannot understand what passes in a poor fellow's heart, especially at first, when he begins to suspect that the disease is getting the upper hand of him. What becomes of his belief in himself? You suddenly grow so timid; it's indescribable. You fancy then that you have forgotten everything you knew, and that the patient has no faith in you, and that other people begin to notice how distracted you are, and tell you the symptoms with reluctance, that they are looking at you suspiciously, whispering...Ah! it's horrid! There must be a remedy, you think, for this disease, if one could find it. Isn't this it? You try—no, that's not it! You don't allow the medicine the necessary time to do good ...You clutch at one thing, then at another Sometimes you take up a book of medical prescriptions—here it is, you think! Sometimes, by Jove, you pick one out by chance, thinking to leave it to fate....But meantime a fellow-creature's dying, and another doctor would have saved him. 'We must have a consultation,' you say; 'I will not take the responsibility on myself' And what a fool you look at such times! Well, in time you learn to bear it; it's nothing to you. A man has died—but it's not your fault; you treated him by the rules. But what's still more torture to you is to see blind faith in you, and to feel yourself that you are not able to be of use. Well, it was just this blind faith that the whole of Aleksandra Andreyevna's family had in me, they had forgotten to think that their daugh-

ter was in danger I, too, on my side assure them that it's nothing, but meantime my heart sinks into my boots. To add to our troubles, the roads were in such a state that the coachman was gone for whole days together to get medicine. And I never left the patient's room; I could not tear myself away; I tell her amusing stories, you know, and play cards with her. I watch by her side at night. The old mother thanks me with tears in her eyes; but I think to myself, 'I don't deserve your gratitude' I frankly confess to you—there is no object in concealing it now—I was in love with my patient. And Aleksandra Andreyevna had grown fond of me, she would not sometimes let anyone be in her room but me She began to talk to me, to ask me questions; where I had studied, how I lived, who are my people, whom I go to see. I feel that she ought not to talk, but to forbid her to—to forbid her resolutely, you know—I could not. Sometimes I held my head in my hands, and asked myself, "What are you doing, villain?"...And she would take my hand and hold it, give me a long, long look, and turn away, sigh, and say, 'How good you are!' Her hands were so feverish, her eyes so large and languid ...'Yes,' she says, 'you are a good, kind man; you are not like our neighbors .. No, you are not like that ..Why did I not know you till now!' 'Aleksandra Andreyevna, calm yourself,' I say.... 'I feel, believe me, I don't know how I have gained ..but there, calm yourself....All will be right; you will be well again.' And meanwhile I must tell you," continued the doctor, bending forward and raising his eyebrows, "that they associated very little with the neighbors, because the smaller people were not on their level, and pride hindered them from being friendly with the rich. I tell you, they were an exceptionally cultivated family, so you know it was gratifying for me. She would only take her medicine from my hands . she would lift herself up, poor girl, with my aid, take it, and gaze at me....My heart felt as if it were bursting. And meanwhile she was growing worse and worse, worse and worse, all the time. "She will die," I think to myself, "she must die" Believe me, I would sooner have gone to the grave myself; and here were her mother and sisters watching me, looking into my eyes...and their faith in me was wearing away. 'Well? how is she?' 'Oh, all right, all right!' All right, indeed! My mind was failing me. Well, I was sitting one night alone again by my patient. The maid was sitting there, too, and snoring away in full swing; I can't find fault with the poor girl, though; she was worn out too Aleksandra Andreyevna had felt very unwell all the evening; she was very feverish Until midnight she kept tossing about; at last she seemed to fall asleep; at least, she lay still without stirring. The lamp was burning in the corner before the holy image. I sat there, you know, with my head bent; I even dozed a little Suddenly it seemed as though someone touched me in the side; I turned round....Good God! Aleksandra Andreyevna was gazing with intent eyes at me...her lips parted, her

cheeks seemed burning. 'What is it?' 'Doctor, shall I die?' 'Merciful Heavens!' 'No, doctor, no; please don't tell me I shall live...don't say so....If you knew....Listen! for God's sake don't conceal my real position,' and her breath came so fast. 'If I can know for certain that I must die...then I will tell you all—all!' 'Aleksandra Andreyevna, I beg!' 'Listen; I have not been asleep at all...I have been looking at you a long while....For God's sake!...I believe in you; you are a good man, an honest man; I entreat you by all that is sacred in the world—tell me the truth! If you knew how important it is for me.... Doctor, for God's sake tell me....Am I in danger?' 'What can I tell you, Aleksandra Andreyevna, pray?' 'For God's sake, I beseech you!' 'I can't disguise from you,' I say, 'Aleksandra Andreyevna; you are certainly in danger; but God is merciful' 'I shall die, I shall die' And it seemed as though she were pleased; her face grew so bright; I was alarmed. 'Don't be afraid, don't be afraid! I am not frightened of death at all.' She suddenly sat up and leaned on her elbow. 'Now...yes, now I can tell you that I thank you with my whole heart ..that you are kind and good—that I love you!' I stare at her, like one possessed; it was terrible for me, you know 'Do you hear, I love you!' 'Aleksandra Andreyevna, how have I deserved—' 'No, no, you don t—you don't understand me'...And suddenly she stretched out her arms, and taking my head in her hands, she kissed it....Believe me, I almost screamed aloud....I threw myself on my knees and buried my head in the pillow. She did not speak; her fingers trembled in my hair, I listen; she is weeping I began to soothe her, to assure her . I really don't know what I did say to her 'You will wake up the girl,' I say to her; 'Aleksandra Andreyevna, I thank you. .believe me . calm yourself.' 'Enough, enough!' she persisted; 'never mind all of them, let them wake, then; let them come in—it does not matter; I am dying, you see....And what do you fear? why are you afraid? Lift up your head ...Or, perhaps, you don't love me; perhaps I am wrong. ...In that case, forgive me.' 'Aleksandra Andreyevna, what are you saying!...I love you, Aleksandra Andreyevna.' She looked straight into my eyes, and opened her arms wide. 'Then take me in your arms' I tell you frankly, I don't know how it was I did not go mad that night I feel that my patient is killing herself; I see that she is not fully herself; I understand, too, that if she did not consider herself on the point of death, she would never have thought of me; and, indeed, say what you will, it's hard to die at twenty without having known love; this was what was torturing her; this was why, in despair, she caught at me—do you understand now? But she held me in her arms, and would not let me go. 'Have pity on me, Aleksandra Andreyevna, and have pity on yourself,' I say. 'Why,' she says, 'what is there to think of? You know I must die'. .This she repeated incessantly....'If I knew that I should return to life, and be a proper young lady again,

I should be ashamed...of course, ashamed...but why now?' 'But who has said you will die?' 'Oh, no, leave off! You will not deceive me; you don't know how to lie—look at your face.'...'You shall live, Aleksandra Andreyevna; I will cure you; we will ask your mother's blessing...we will be united—we will be happy.' 'No, no, I have your word; I must die...you have promised me...you have told me.'... It was cruel for me—cruel for many reasons. And see what trifling things can do sometimes; it seems nothing at all, but it's painful. It occurred to her to ask me what is my name; not my surname, but my first name. I must needs be so unlucky as to be called Trifon. Yes, indeed; Trifon Ivanich. Everyone in the house called me doctor. However, there's no help for it. I say, 'Trifon, madam.' She frowned, shook her head, and muttered something in French—ah, something unpleasant, of course!—and then she laughed—disagreeably, too Well, I spent the whole night with her in this way. Before morning I went away, feeling as though I were mad When I went again into her room it was daytime, after morning tea Good God! I could scarcely recognize her, people are laid in their grave looking better than that. I swear to you, on my honor, I don't understand—I absolutely don't understand—now, how I lived through that experience. Three days and nights my patient still lingered on. And what nights! What things she said to me! And on the last night—only imagine to yourself—I was sitting near her, and kept praying to God for one thing only: 'Take her,' I said, 'quickly, and me with her.' Suddenly the old mother comes unexpectedly into the room I had already the evening before told her—the mother—there was little hope, and it would be well to send for a priest When the sick girl saw her mother she said 'It's very well you have come; look at us, we love one another—we have given each other our word' 'What does she say, Doctor? what does she say?' I turned livid. 'She is wandering,' I say; 'the fever.' But she. 'Hush, hush, you told me something quite different just now, and have taken my ring. Why do you pretend? My mother is good—she will forgive—she will understand—and I am dying....I have no need to tell lies; give me your hand.' I jumped up and ran out of the room. The old lady, of course, guessed how it was.

"I will not, however, weary you any longer, and to me too, of course, it's painful to recall all this. My patient passed away the next day God rest her soul!" the doctor added, speaking quickly and with a sigh. "Before her death she asked her family to go out and leave me alone with her."

" 'Forgive me,' she said; 'I am perhaps to blame toward you ..my illness...but believe me, I have loved no one more than you...do not forget me. keep my ring' "

The doctor turned away; I took his hand.

"Ah!" he said, "let us talk of something else, or would you care to

play preference for a small stake? It is not for people like me to give way to exalted emotions. There's only one thing for me to think of: how to keep the children from crying and the wife from scolding. Since then, you know, I have had time to enter into lawful wedlock, as they say....Oh...I took a merchant's daughter—seven thousand for her dowry. Her name's Akulina; it goes well with Trifon. She is an ill-tempered woman, I must tell you, but luckily she's asleep all day ...Well, shall it be preference?"

We sat down to preference for halfpenny points. Trifon Ivanich won two roubles and a half from me, and went home late, well pleased with his success.

[Translation by Constance Garnett]

Leo Tolstoy

GOD SEES THE TRUTH, BUT WAITS

In the town of Vladimir lived a young merchant named Ivan Dmitrich Aksionov. He had two shops and a house of his own.

Aksionov was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing. When quite a young man he had been given to drink, and was riotous when he had had too much; but after he married he gave up drinking, except now and then.

One summer Aksionov was going to the Nizhny Fair, and as he bade good-by to his family, his wife said to him, "Ivan Dmitrich, do not start today; I have had a bad dream about you."

Aksionov laughed and said, "You are afraid that when I get to the fair I shall go on a spree."

His wife replied: "I do not know what I am afraid of; all I know is that I had a bad dream I dreamed you returned from the town, and when you took off your cap I saw that your hair was quite gray."

Aksionov laughed. "That's a lucky sign," said he. "See if I don't sell out all my goods and bring you some presents from the fair."

So he said good-by to his family and drove away

When he had traveled halfway, he met a merchant whom he knew, and they put up at the same inn for the night. They had some tea together, and then went to bed in adjoining rooms.

It was not Aksionov's habit to sleep late, and, wishing to travel while it was still cool, he aroused his driver before dawn and told him to put in the horses.

Then he made his way across to the landlord of the inn (who lived in a cottage at the back), paid his bill, and continued his journey.

When he had gone about twenty-five miles, he stopped for the horses to be fed Aksionov rested awhile in the passage of the inn, then he stepped out into the porch, and, ordering a samovar to be heated, got out his guitar and began to play

Suddenly a troika drove up with tinkling bells and an official alighted, followed by two soldiers. He came to Aksionov and began to question him, asking him who he was and whence he came. Aksionov answered him fully, and said, "Won't you have some tea with me?" But the official went on cross-questioning him and asking him, "Where did you spend last night? Were you alone, or with a fellow-merchant? Did you see the other merchant this morning? Why did you leave the inn before dawn?"

Aksionov wondered why he was asked all these questions, but he described all that had happened, and then added, "Why do you cross-question me as if I were a thief or a robber? I am traveling on business of my own, and there is no need to question me"

Then the official, calling the soldiers, said, "I am the police officer of this district, and I question you because the merchant with whom you spent last night has been found with his throat cut. We must search your things."

They entered the house. The soldiers and the police officer unstrapped Aksionov's luggage and searched it Suddenly the officer drew a knife out of a bag, crying, "Whose knife is this?"

Aksionov looked and, seeing a blood-stained knife taken from his bag, he was frightened.

"How is it there is blood on this knife?"

Aksionov tried to answer, but could hardly utter a word, and only stammered "I—don't know—not mine."

Then the police officer said. "This morning the merchant was found in bed with his throat cut. You are the only person who could have done it. The house was locked from inside, and no one else was there. Here is this blood-stained knife in your bag, and your face and manner betray you! Tell me how you killed him, and how much money you stole?"

Aksionov swore he had not done it; that he had not seen the merchant after they had had tea together; that he had no money except eight thousand roubles of his own, and that the knife was not his. But his voice was broken, his face pale, and he trembled with fear as though he were guilty.

The police officer ordered the soldiers to bind Aksionov and to put

him in the cart. As they tied his feet together and flung him into the cart, Aksionov crossed himself and wept. His money and goods were taken from him, and he was sent to the nearest town and imprisoned there. Enquiries as to his character were made in Vladimir. The merchants and other inhabitants of that town said that in former days he used to drink and waste his time, but that he was a good man. Then the trial came on: he was charged with murdering a merchant from Ryazan, and robbing him of twenty thousand roubles

His wife was in despair, and did not know what to believe. Her children were all quite small; one was a baby at her breast. Taking them all with her, she went to the town where her husband was in jail. At first she was not allowed to see him, but, after much begging, she obtained permission from the officials, and was taken to him When she saw her husband in prison dress and in chains, shut up with thieves and criminals, she fell down, and did not come to her senses for a long time. Then she drew her children to her, and sat down near him. She told him of things at home, and asked about what had happened to him. He told her all, and she asked, "What can we do now?"

"We must petition the Czar not to let an innocent man perish."

His wife told him that she had sent a petition to the Czar, but it had not been accepted

Aksionov did not reply, but only looked downcast.

Then his wife said, "It was not for nothing I dreamed your hair had turned gray You remember? You should not have started that day." And, passing her fingers through his hair, she said. "Vanya dearest, tell your wife the truth was it not you who did it?"

"So you, too, suspect me!" said Aksionov, and, hiding his face in his hands, he began to weep Then a soldier came to say that the wife and children must go away; and Aksionov said good-by to his family for the last time.

When they were gone Aksionov recalled what had been said, and when he remembered that his wife also had suspected him, he said to himself, "It seems that only God can know the truth, it is to Him alone we must appeal, and from Him alone expect mercy."

And Aksionov wrote no more petitions; gave up all hope, and only prayed to God.

Aksionov was condemned to be flogged and sent to the mines So he was flogged with a knot, and when the wounds made by the knot were healed, he was driven to Siberia with other convicts.

For twenty-six years Aksionov lived as a convict in Siberia. His hair turned as white as snow, and his beard grew long, thin, and gray. All his mirth went; he stooped; he walked slowly, spoke little, and never laughed; but he often prayed.

In prison Aksionov learned to make boots, and earned a little money,

with which he bought *The Lives of the Saints*. He read this book when there was light enough in the prison; and on Sundays in the prison church he read the lessons and sang in the choir, for his voice was still good.

The prison authorities liked Aksionov for his meekness, and his fellow-prisoners respected him: they called him "Grandfather," and "The Saint." When they wanted to petition the prison authorities about anything, they always made Aksionov their spokesman, and when there were quarrels among the prisoners they came to him to put things right, and to judge the matter.

No news reached Aksionov from his home, and he did not even know if his wife and children were still alive.

One day a fresh gang of convicts came to the prison. In the evening the old prisoners collected round the new ones and asked them what towns or villages they came from, and what they were sentenced for. Among the rest Aksionov sat down near the newcomers, and listened with downcast air to what was said.

One of the new convicts, a tall, strong man of sixty, with a closely-cropped gray beard, was telling the others what he had been arrested for

"Well, friends," he said, "I only took a horse that was tied to a sledge, and I was arrested and accused of stealing. I said I had only taken it to get home quicker, and had then let it go; besides, the driver was a personal friend of mine. So I said, 'It's all right.' 'No,' said they, 'you stole it' But how or where I stole it they could not say I once really did something wrong, and ought by rights to have come here long ago, but that time I was not found out Now I have been sent here for nothing at all. ..Eh, but it's lies I'm telling you; I've been to Siberia before, but I did not stay long"

"Where are you from?" asked someone.

"From Vladimir. My family are of that town. My name is Makar, and they also call me Semyonich."

Aksionov raised his head and said "Tell me, Semyonich, do you know anything of the merchants Aksionov of Vladimir? Are they still alive?"

"Know them? Of course I do The Aksionovs are rich, though their father is in Siberia: a sinner like ourselves, it seems! As for you, Gran'dad, how did you come here?"

Aksionov did not like to speak of his misfortune. He only sighed, and said, "For my sins I have been in prison these twenty-six years"

"What sins?" asked Makar Semyonich.

But Aksionov only said, "Well, well—I must have deserved it!" He would have said no more, but his companions told the newcomers how Aksionov came to be in Siberia; how someone had killed a mer-

chant, and had put the knife among Aksionov's things, and Aksionov had been unjustly condemned.

When Makar Semyonich heard this, he looked at Aksionov, slapped his own knee, and exclaimed, "Well, this is wonderful! Really wonderful! But how old you've grown, Gran'dad!"

The others asked him why he was so surprised and where he had seen Aksionov before; but Makar Semyonich did not reply. He only said: It's wonderful that we should meet here, lads!"

These words made Aksionov wonder whether this man knew who had killed the merchant; so he said, "Perhaps, Semyonich, you have heard of that affair, or maybe you've seen me before?"

"How could I help hearing? The world's full of rumors. But it's a long time ago, and I've forgotten what I heard."

"Perhaps you heard who killed the merchant?" asked Aksionov.

Makar Semyonich laughed, and replied: "It must have been him in whose bag the knife was found! If someone else hid the knife there, 'He's not a thief till he's caught,' as the saying is. How could anyone put a knife into your bag while it was under your head? It would surely have woke you up."

When Aksionov heard these words, he felt sure this was the man who had killed the merchant. He rose and went away. All that night Aksionov lay awake He felt terribly unhappy, and all sorts of images rose in his mind. There was the image of his wife as she was when he parted from her to go to the fair. He saw her as if she were present; her face and her eyes rose before him; he heard her speak and laugh. Then he saw his children, quite little, as they were at that time: one with a little cloak on, another at his mother's breast And then he remembered himself as he used to be—young and merry. He remembered how he sat playing the guitar in the porch of the inn where he was arrested, and how free from care he had been. He saw, in his mind, the place where he was flogged, the executioner, and the people standing around; the chains, the convicts, all the twenty-six years of his prison life, and his premature old age. The thought of it all made him so wretched that he was ready to kill himself.

"And it's all that villain's doing!" thought Aksionov And his anger was so great against Makar Semyonich that he longed for vengeance, even if he himself should perish for it. He kept repeating prayers all night, but could get no peace During the day he did not go near Makar Semyonich, nor even look at him.

A fortnight passed in this way. Aksionov could not sleep at night, and was so miserable that he did not know what to do

One night as he was walking about the prison he noticed some earth that came rolling out from under one of the shelves on which the prisoners slept. He stopped to see what it was Suddenly Makar Semyonich crept out from under the shelf, and looked up at Aksionov

with frightened face. Aksionov tried to pass without looking at him, but Makar seized his hand and told him that he had dug a hole under the wall, getting rid of the earth by putting it into his highboots, and emptying it out every day on the road when the prisoners were driven to their work.

"Just you keep quiet, old man, and you shall get out too. If you blab, they'll flog the life out of me, but I will kill you first."

Aksionov trembled with anger as he looked at his enemy. He drew his hand away, saying, "I have no wish to escape, and you have no need to kill me; you killed me long ago! As to telling of you—I may do so or not, as God shall direct."

Next day, when the convicts were led out to work, the convoy soldiers noticed that one or other of the prisoners emptied some earth out of his boots. The prison was searched and the tunnel found. The Governor came and questioned all the prisoners to find out who had dug the hole. They all denied any knowledge of it. Those who knew would not betray Makar Semyonich, knowing he would be flogged almost to death. At last the Governor turned to Aksionov, whom he knew to be a just man and said:

"You are a truthful old man; tell me, before God, who dug the hole?"

Makar Semyonich stood as if he were quite unconcerned, looking at the Governor and not so much as glancing at Aksionov. Aksionov's lips and hands trembled, and for a long time he could not utter a word. He thought, "Why should I screen him who ruined my life? Let him pay for what I have suffered. But if I tell, they will probably flog the life out of him, and maybe I suspect him wrongly. And, after all, what good would it be to me?"

"Well, old man," repeated the Governor, "tell me the truth· who has been digging under the wall?"

Aksionov glanced at Makar Semyonich, and said, "I cannot say, your honor. It is not God's will that I should tell! Do what you like with me; I am in your hands."

However much the Governor tried, Aksionov would say no more, and so the matter had to be left.

That night, when Aksionov was lying on his bed and just beginning to doze, someone came quietly and sat down on his bed He peered through the darkness and recognized Makar

"What more do you want of me?" asked Aksionov. "Why have you come here?"

Makar Semyonich was silent So Aksionov sat up and said, "What do you want? Go away, or I will call the guard!"

Makar Semyonich bent close over Aksionov, and whispered, "Ivan Dmitrich, forgive me!"

"What for?" asked Aksionov.

"It was I who killed the merchant and hid the knife among your things. I meant to kill you too, but I heard a noise outside, so I hid the knife in your bag and escaped out of the window."

Aksionov was silent and did not know what to say. Makar Semyonich slid off the bed-shelf and knelt upon the ground. "Ivan Dmitrich," said he, "forgive me! For the love of God, forgive me! I will confess that it was I who killed the merchant, and you will be released and can go to your home"

"It is easy for you to talk," said Aksionov, "but I have suffered for you these twenty-six years. Where could I go to now?...My wife is dead, and my children have forgotten me. I have nowhere to go...."

Makar Semyonich did not rise, but beat his head on the floor. "Ivan Dmitrich, forgive me!" he cried "When they flogged me with the knot it was not so hard to bear as it is to see you now...yet you had pity on me, and did not tell For Christ's sake forgive me, wretch that I am!" And he began to sob.

When Aksionov heard him sobbing he, too, began to weep.

"God will forgive you!" said he "Maybe I am a hundred times worse than you." And at these words his heart grew light, and the longing for home left him. He no longer had any desire to leave the prison, but only hoped for his last hour to come.

In spite of what Aksionov had said, Makar Semyonich confessed his guilt. But when the order for his release came, Aksionov was already dead.

[Translation by Louise and Aylmer Maude]

Feodor Dostoevsky

THE CHRISTMAS TREE AND THE WEDDING

The other day I saw a wedding ...But no! I would rather tell you about a Christmas tree. The wedding was grand I liked it hugely. But the little episode it brings back to mind is even better. I don't know why it is that the sight of the wedding reminded me of the Christmas tree. This is how it happened·

Exactly five years ago, on New Year's Eve, I was asked to a children's ball by a man high up in the business world, who had his connections, his circle of acquaintances, and his intrigues. It seemed as if the children's ball were a mere pretext for the parents to come together and discuss matters of interest to themselves, quite innocently and casually.

An outsider there, I had no special matters to air, and was able to spend the evening without mingling with the others. There was another gentleman present who, like myself, had just stumbled upon this scene of domestic bliss. He was the first to attract my attention. His appearance was not that of a man of good birth. He was tall, lean, earnest in manner, and well dressed Apparently his heart was not in the family festivities. The instant he went off into a corner by himself the smile disappeared from his face, and his thick dark brows knitted into a frown He knew no one except the host and showed every sign of being bored to death, though bravely sustaining the role of thorough enjoyment to the end. Later I learned that he was a provincial, had come to the capital on some important brain-racking business, had brought a letter of recommendation to our host, who had taken him under his protection, not at all *con amore*. It was merely out of politeness that he had asked him to the children's ball.

No one played cards with him, and he was not offered a cigar No one entered into conversation with him Possibly they recognized the bird by its feathers from a distance. Thus, my gentleman, not knowing what to do with his hands, was compelled to spend the evening stroking his whiskers His whiskers were really splendid, but he stroked them so assiduously that one got the feeling that the whiskers had come into the world first and the man afterward in order that he might stroke them.

There was another guest who interested me. He was of quite a different order. He was a personage They called him Julian Mastakovich At first glance one could tell he was an honored guest and stood in the same relation to the host as the host to the gentleman of the whiskers The host and hostess said no end of amiable things to him, were most attentive, wining him, hovering over him, bringing guests up to be introduced, but never leading him to anyone else. I observed tears glisten in our host's eyes when Julian Mastakovich remarked that he had rarely spent such a pleasurable evening. Somehow I began to feel uncomfortable in this personage's presence So, after amusing myself with the children, five of whom, remarkably well-fed young persons, were our host's, I went into a little sitting room, wholly unoccupied, and seated myself at the end that was a conservatory and took up almost half the room.

The children were charming. They utterly refused to be like their elders, for all the efforts made by their mothers and governesses In

a jiffy they had denuded the Christmas tree down to the very last sweet and had already succeeded in breaking half of their playthings before they even found out which belonged to whom.

One of them was a particularly handsome little lad, dark-eyed, curly-haired, who stubbornly persisted in aiming at one with his wooden gun. But the child that attracted the greatest attention was his sister, a girl of about eleven, lovely as a Cupid. She was quiet and thoughtful, with large, full, dreamy eyes The children had somehow offended her, and she left them and walked into the same room in which I had taken refuge. There she seated herself with her doll in a corner.

"Her father is an immensely rich business man," the guests informed each other in tones of awe. "Three hundred thousand roubles set aside for her dowry already."

As I turned to look at the group from which I learned this tid-bit, my glance met Julian Mastakovich's. He stood listening to the insipid chatter in an attitude of concentrated attention, with his hands behind his back and his head inclined to one side.

For some time I was quite lost in admiration of the shrewdness our host displayed in the dispensing of the gifts The little maid of the many-roubled dowry received the handsomest doll, and the rest of the gifts were graded in value according to the diminishing scale of the parents' stations in life. The last child, a tiny chap of ten, thin, red-haired, freckled, came into possession of a small book of nature stories without illustrations or even head and tail pieces. He was the governess's child. She was a poor widow, and her little boy, clad in a sorry-looking little nankeen jacket, looked thoroughly crushed and unhappy He took the book of nature stories and circled slowly about the children's toys He would have given anything to play with them. He did not dare. You could tell he already knew his place.

I like to observe children It is fascinating to watch the individuality in them struggling for self-assertion. I could see that the other children's things had tremendous charm for the red-haired boy, especially a toy theater, in which he was so eager to take a part that he resolved to fawn upon the other children. He smiled and began to play with them His one and only apple he handed over to a puffy urchin whose pockets were already crammed with sweets, and he even carried another youngster pickaback—all simply that he might be allowed to stay with the theater.

In a few moments, however, an impudent young person fell on him and gave him a pummeling. He did not dare even to cry. The governess came and told him to stop interfering with the other children's games, and he crept away to the same room which held the little girl and me. She let him sit down beside her, and the two set themselves busily to dressing the expensive doll.

Almost half an hour passed, and I was nearly dozing off, as I sat there in the conservatory half listening to the chatter of the red-haired boy and the dowered beauty, when Julian Mastakovich entered suddenly He had slipped out of the drawing room under cover of a noisy scene among the children. From my secluded corner it had not escaped my notice that a few moments before he had been eagerly conversing with the rich girl's father, to whom he had only just been introduced.

He stood still for a while reflecting and mumbling to himself, as if counting something on his fingers.

"Three hundred—three hundred—eleven—twelve—thirteen—sixteen—in five years! Let's say four per cent—five times twelve—sixty, and on these sixty— Let us assume that in five years it will amount to—well, four hundred. Hm—hm! But the shrewd old fox isn't likely to be satisfied with four per cent. He gets eight or even ten, perhaps. Let's suppose five hundred, five hundred thousand, at least, that's sure. Anything above that for pocket money—hm—"

He blew his nose and was about to leave the room when he spied the girl and stood still. I, behind the plants, escaped his notice. He seemed to me to be quivering with excitement It must have been his calculations that upset him. He rubbed his hands and danced from place to place, and kept getting more and more excited. At last, however, he restrained his emotions and came to a standstill. He cast a determined look at the future bride and wanted to move toward her, but glanced about first Then, as if with a guilty conscience, he stepped over to the child on tiptoe, smiling, and bent down and kissed her head

His coming was so unexpected that she uttered a shriek of alarm.

"What are you doing here, dear child?" he whispered, looking around and pinching her cheek.

"We're playing."

"What, with him?" said Julian Mastakovich with a look askance at the governess's child. "You should go into the drawing room, my lad," he said to him.

The boy remained silent and looked up at the man with wide-open eyes. Julian Mastakovich glanced round again cautiously and bent down over the girl.

"What have you got, a doll, my dear?"

"Yes, sir." The child quailed a little, and her brow wrinkled.

"A doll? And do you know, my dear, what dolls are made of?"

"No, sir," she said weakly, and lowered her head.

"Out of rags, my dear. You, boy, you go back to the drawing room, to the children," said Julian Mastakovich, looking sternly at the boy.

The two children frowned. They caught hold of each other and refused to be parted

"And do you know why they gave you the doll?" asked Julian Mastakovich, dropping his voice lower and lower.

"No."

"Because you were a good, very good little girl the whole week."

Saying which, Julian Mastakovich was seized with a fit of perturbation. He looked round and said in a tone faint, almost inaudible with excitement and impatience:

"If I come to visit your parents will you love me, my dear?"

He tried to kiss the sweet little creature, but the red-haired boy saw that she was on the verge of tears, and he caught her hand and sobbed out loud in sympathy That enraged the man.

"Go away! Go away! Go back to the other room, to your playmates."

"I don't want him to. I don't want him to! You go away!" cried the girl. "Let him alone! Let him alone!" She was almost weeping.

There was a sound of footsteps in the doorway Julian Mastakovich started and straightened up his respectable body. The red-haired boy was even more alarmed. He let go the girl's hand, sidled along the wall, and escaped through the drawing room into the dining room.

Not to attract attention, Julian Mastakovich also made for the dining room He was red as a lobster The sight of himself in a mirror seemed to embarrass him. Presumably he was vexed with his own ardor and impatience. Without due respect to his importance and dignity, his calculations had lured and pricked him to the greedy eagerness of a boy, who makes straight for his object—though this was not as yet an object; it only would be so in five years' time. I followed the worthy man into the dining room, where I witnessed a remarkable play.

Julian Mastakovich, all flushed with vexation, venom in his look, began to threaten the red-haired boy. The red-haired boy retreated further and further until there was no place left for him to retreat to, and he did not know where to turn in his fright

"Get out of here! What are you doing here! Get out, I say, young wretch! Stealing fruit, are you? Oh, so, stealing fruit! Get out, you freckle face, go to your own kind!"

The frightened child, as a last desperate resort, crawled quickly under the table. His persecutor, now thoroughly infuriated, pulled out his large linen handkerchief and used it as a lash to drive the boy out of his position.

Here I must remark that Julian Mastakovich was a somewhat corpulent man, heavy, well-fed, puffy-cheeked, with a paunch and ankles as round as nuts He perspired and puffed and panted So strong was his dislike (or was it jealousy?) of the child that he actually began to carry on like one who had lost his wits

I laughed heartily Julian Mastakovich turned He was utterly con-

fused and for a moment, apparently, quite oblivious of his immense importance. At that moment our host appeared in the doorway opposite. The boy crawled out from under the table and wiped his knees and elbows. Julian Mastakovich hastened to carry his handkerchief, which he had been dangling by the corner, to his nose. Our host looked at the three of us rather suspiciously. But, like a man who knows the world and can readily adjust himself, he seized upon the opportunity to lay hold of his very valuable guest and get what he wanted out of him.

"Here's the boy I was talking to you about," he said, indicating the red-haired child. "I took the liberty of presuming on your goodness in his behalf"

"Oh," replied Julian Mastakovich, not yet quite master of himself

"He's my governess's son," our host went on in a beseeching tone "She's a poor creature, the widow of an honest official. That's why, if it were possible for you—"

"Impossible, impossible!" Julian Mastakovich cried hastily. "You must excuse me, Philip Alexeyevich, I really cannot. I've made inquiries. There are no vacancies, and there is a waiting list of ten who have a greater right—I'm sorry."

"Too bad," said our host. "He's a quiet, well-behaved lad."

"A very naughty little rascal, I should say," said Julian Mastakovich, wryly "Go away, boy Why are you here still? Be off with you to the other children"

Unable to control himself, he gave me a sidelong glance I could not control myself. I laughed straight in his face. He turned away and asked our host, in tones quite audible to me, who that odd young fellow was. They whispered to each other and left the room, disregarding me

I shook with laughter Then I, too, went to the drawing room. There the great man, already surrounded by the fathers and mothers and the host and the hostess, had begun to talk eagerly with a lady to whom he had just been introduced The lady held the rich little girl's hand Julian Mastakovich went into fulsome praise of her. He waxed ecstatic over the dear child's beauty, her talents, her grace, her excellent breeding, plainly laying himself out to flatter the mother, who listened, scarcely able to restrain tears of joy, while the father showed his delight by a gratified smile

The joy was contagious Everybody shared in it. Even the children were obliged to stop playing so as not to disturb the conversation The atmosphere was surcharged with awe. I heard the mother of the important little girl, touched to her profoundest depths, ask Julian Mastakovich in the choicest language of courtesy, whether he would honor them by coming to see them I heard Julian Mastakovich accept the invitation with unfeigned enthusiasm. Then the guests scattered

decorously to different parts of the room, and I heard them, with veneration in their tones, extol the businessman, the businessman's wife, the businessman's daughter, and, especially, Julian Mastakovich.

"Is he married?" I asked out loud of an acquaintance of mine standing beside Julian Mastakovich.

Julian Mastakovich gave me a venomous look.

"No," answered my acquaintance, profoundly shocked by my—intentional—indiscretion.

Not long ago I passed the Church of ——. I was struck by the crowd of people gathered there to witness a wedding. It was a dismal day. A drizzling rain was beginning to fall. I made my way through the throng into the church. The bridegroom was a round, well-fed, pot-bellied little man, very much dressed up. He ran and fussed about and gave orders. At last word was passed that the bride was coming. I pushed through the crowd, and I beheld a marvelous beauty whose first spring was scarcely beginning. The beauty was pale and sad. She looked distraught It seemed to me that her eyes were red from recent weeping. The classic severity of every line of her face imparted a peculiar significance and solemnity to her beauty. But through that severity and solemnity, through the sadness, shone the innocence of a child. There was something inexpressibly naïve, unsettled, and young in her features, which, without words, seemed to plead for mercy.

They said she was just sixteen years old. I looked at the bridegroom carefully. Suddenly I recognized Julian Mastakovich, whom I had not seen again in all those five years. Then I looked at the bride again. —Good God! I made my way, as quickly as I could, out of the church. I heard gossiping in the crowd about the bride's wealth—about her dowry of five hundred thousand roubles—so and so much for pocket money.

"Then his calculations were correct," I thought, as I pressed out into the street

Anton Chekhov

IN EXILE

Old Simeon, nicknamed Wiseacre, and a young Tartar, whose name no one knew, were sitting on the bank of the river by a wood fire The other three ferrymen were in the hut. Simeon, who was an old man of about sixty, gaunt and toothless, but broad-shouldered and robust, was drunk He would long ago have gone to bed, but he had a bottle in his pocket and feared lest his comrades ask him for vodka. The Tartar was ill and miserable, and, pulling his rags about him, he went on talking about the good things in the province of Simbirsk, and what a beautiful and clever wife he had left at home He was not more than twenty-five, and now, by the light of the wood fire, with his pale, sorrowful, sickly face, he looked a mere boy.

"Of course, it's not a paradise here," said Wiseacre. "You see water, the bare bushes by the river, clay everywhere—nothing else.... It is long past Easter and there is still ice on the water and this morning there was snow. .."

"Wretched! Wretched!" said the Tartar with a haunted look.

A few yards away flowed the dark, cold river, muttering, dashing against the holes in the clayey bank as it tore along to the distant sea. By the bank on which they were sitting, loomed a great barge, which the ferrymen call a *karbass* Far away and away, flashing out, flaring up, were fires crawling like snakes—last year's grass being burned. And behind the water again was darkness Little banks of ice could be heard knocking against the barge.... It was very damp and cold.

The Tartar glanced at the sky. There were as many stars as at home, and the darkness was the same, but something was lacking. At home in the Simbirsk province the stars and the sky were quite different.

"Bad! Bad!" he repeated.

"You'll get used to it," said Wiseacre with a laugh. "You are young yet and foolish; the milk is hardly dry on your lips, and in your folly you imagine that there is no one unhappier than you, but there will come a time when you will say: 'God grant everyone such a life!' Just look at me. In a week's time the floods will be gone, and we will fix a ferry here, and all of you will go away into Siberia and I shall stay here, going to and fro. I have been living thus for the last two-and-twenty years, but, thank God, I want nothing. God grant everyone such a life."

The Tartar threw some branches onto the fire, crawled near to it, and said.

"My father is ill When he dies, my mother and my wife have promised to come here."

"What do you want your mother and your wife for?" asked Wiseacre. "Just foolishness, my friend It's the devil tempting you, plague take him Don't listen to the Evil One. Don't give way to him. When he talks to you about women you should answer him sharply: 'I don't want them!' When he talks of freedom, you should stick to it and say. I don't want it I want nothing. No father, no mother, no wife, no freedom, no home, no love! I want nothing' Plague take 'em all."

Wiseacre took a swig at his bottle and went on:

"My brother, I am not an ordinary peasant. I don't come from the servile masses I am the son of a deacon, and when I was a free man at Rursk, I used to wear a frock coat, and now I have brought myself to such a point that I can sleep naked on the ground and eat grass. God grant everyone such a life. I want nothing. I am afraid of nobody, and I think there is no man richer or freer than I. When they sent me here from Russia I set my teeth at once and said· 'I want nothing!' The devil whispers to me about my wife and my kindred, and about freedom, and I say to him 'I want nothing!' I stuck to it, and, you see, I live happily and have nothing to grumble at. If a man gives the devil the least chance and listens to him just once, then he is lost and has no hope of salvation· he will be over ears in the mire and will never get out. Not only peasants the like of you are lost, but the well-born and the educated too. About fifteen years ago a certain nobleman was banished here from Russia. He had had some trouble with his brothers and had made a forgery in a will. People said he was a prince or a baron, but maybe he was only a high official—who knows? Well, he came here and at once bought a house and land in Moukhzyink. 'I want to live by my own work,' said he, 'in the sweat of my brow, because I am no longer a nobleman but an exile' 'Why,' said I, 'God help you, for that is good.' He was a young man then, fiery and eager; he used to mow and go fishing, and he would ride sixty miles on horseback Only one thing was wrong; from the very start he was always driving to the post office at Guyrin He used to sit in my boat and sigh· 'Ah! Simeon, it is a long time since they sent me any money from home' 'You are better without money, Vassily Andreich,' said I. 'What's the good of it? You just fling away the past, as if it had never happened, as if it were only a dream, and start life afresh Don't listen to the devil,' I said, 'he won't do you any good, and he will only tighten the noose. You want money now, but in a little while you will want something else, and then again something else. If,' said I, 'you want to be happy you must want nothing. That's it.... If,' I said, 'fate has been hard on you and me, it is no good asking her for charity and falling at her feet We must ignore her and make mock of her.' That's what I said to him....

Two years later I ferried him over and he rubbed his hands and laughed. 'I'm going,' said he, 'to Guyrin to meet my wife. She has taken pity on me, she says, and she is coming here She is very kind and good.' And he gave a gasp of joy. Then one day he came with his wife, a beautiful young lady with a little girl in her arms and a lot of luggage. And Vassily Andreich kept turning and looking at her and could not look at her or praise her enough 'Yes, Simeon, my friend, even in Siberia people live' Well, thought I, all right, it won't last And from that time on, mark you, he used to go to Guyrin every week to find out if money had been sent from Russia. A big heap of money was wasted. 'She stays here,' said he, 'for my sake, and her youth and beauty wither away here in Siberia She shares my bitter lot with me,' said he, 'and I must give her all the pleasure I can afford ...' To make his wife happier he took up with the officials and any kind of riff-raff. And they couldn't have company without giving food and drink, and they must have a piano and a fluffy little dog on the sofa....Luxury, in a word, and all kinds of silliness. The lady did not stay with him long. How could she? Clay, water, cold, no vegetables, no fruit; uneducated people and drunkards, coarse as you make 'em, and she was a pretty pampered young lady from the big city....To be sure, she got bored And her husband was no longer a gentleman, but an exile—quite another thing. Three years later, I remember, on the eve of the Assumption, I heard shouts from the other bank I went over in the ferry and saw the lady, all bundled up, with a young gentleman, a government official, in a troika....I ferried them across, they got into the carriage and off they went, and I saw no more of them. Toward the morning Vassily Andreich came racing up in a coach and pair. 'Has my wife been across, Simeon, with a gentleman in spectacles?' 'She has,' said I, 'but you might as well look for the wind in the fields.' He chased after them and kept it up for five days and nights. When he came back he jumped onto the ferry and began to knock his head against the side and to cry aloud 'You see,' said I, 'there you are' And I laughed and reminded him: 'Even in Siberia people live' But he went on beating his head all the harder....Then he began to yearn for freedom His wife had gone to Russia, and he longed to go there to see her and take her away from her lover. And he went to the post office every day, and then to the authorities of the town. He was always sending applications or personally handing them to the authorities, asking them to have his term remitted and to be allowed to go, and he told me that he had spent over two hundred roubles on telegrams He sold his land and mortgaged his house to the money-lenders. His hair went gray, he grew round-shouldered, and his face got yellow and consumptive-looking. He used to cough whenever he spoke and tears would come into his eyes He spent eight years on his applications, and at last he became

cheerful again and lively: he had thought of a new consolation. His daughter, you see, had grown up. He doted on her and couldn't take his eyes off her. And, it's a fact, she was mighty pretty, dark and clever. Every Sunday he used to go to church with her at Guyrin. They would stand side by side on the ferry, and she would smile and he would devour her with his eyes. 'Yes, Simeon,' he would say. 'Even in Siberia people live. Even in Siberia there is happiness. Look what a fine daughter I have. You wouldn't find one like her in a thousand miles' journey' 'She's a nice girl,' said I. 'Oh, yes.'...And I thought to myself 'You wait....She is young. Young blood will have its way; she wants to live, and what life is there here?' And she began to pine away....Wasting, wasting away, she withered away, fell ill and had to keep to her bed....Consumption. That's Siberian happiness, plague take it, that's Siberian life....He rushed all over the place after the doctors and dragged them home with him If he heard of a doctor or a quack three hundred miles off he would rush off after him. He spent a mighty big lot of money on doctors and, in my opinion, it would have been much better spent on drink. All the same she had to die. No help for it. Then it was all up with him. He thought of hanging himself, and of trying to escape to Russia. That would be the end of him. He would try to escape: he would be caught, tried, penal servitude, flogging"

"Good! Good!" muttered the Tartar with a shiver. "What is good?" asked Wiseacre.

"Wife and daughter. What does penal servitude and suffering matter? He saw his wife and his daughter You say one should want nothing. But nothing—is evil! His wife spent three years with him. God granted him that. Nothing is evil, and three years is good. Can't you see it?"

Trembling and stammering as he groped for Russian words, of which he knew only a few, the Tartar began to say: "God forbid he should fall ill among strangers, and die and be buried in the cold sodden earth, and then, if his wife could come to him if only for one day or even for one hour, he would gladly endure any torture for such happiness, and would even thank God. Better one day of happiness than nothing."

Then once more he said what a beautiful, clever wife he had left at home, and with his head in his hands he began to cry, assuring Simeon that he was innocent, and had been falsely accused. His two brothers and his uncle had stolen some horses from a peasant and beaten the old man nearly to death, and the community never investigated the affair at all, and judgment was passed by which all three brothers were exiled to Siberia, while his uncle, a rich man, remained at home

"You'll get used to it," said Simeon.

The Tartar relapsed into silence and stared into the fire with eyes red from weeping; he looked perplexed and frightened, as if he could not understand why he was in the cold and the darkness, among strangers, and not in the province of Simbirsk. Wiseacre lay down near the fire, smiled at something, and began to say in an undertone:

"But what a joy she must be to your father," he muttered after a pause. "He loves her and she is a comfort to him, eh? But, my man, don't tell me. He is a strict, harsh old man. And girls don't want strictness; they want kisses and laughter, scents and pomade. Yes.... Ah! What a life!" Simeon swore. "No vodka left! That means it's time to go to bed. I must be going!"

Left alone, the Tartar threw more branches on the fire, lay down, and, looking into the blaze, began to think of his native village and of his wife; if she could come if but for a month, or even a day, and then, if she liked, go back again! Better a month or even a day, than nothing. But even if his wife came, how could he provide for her? Where was she to live?

"If there is nothing to eat, how are we to live?" asked the Tartar aloud.

For working at the oars day and night he was paid two kopecks a day; the passengers gave tips, but the ferrymen shared them out and gave nothing to the Tartar, and only laughed at him. And he was poor, cold, hungry, and afraid....With his whole body aching and shivering, he thought it would be good to go into the hut and sleep; but there was nothing to cover himself with, and it was colder there than on the bank He had nothing to cover himself with there, but he could make up a fire....

In a week's time, when the floods had subsided and the ferry would be fixed up, all the ferrymen except Simeon would not be wanted any longer and the Tartar would be forced to go from village to village, begging and looking for work. His wife was only seventeen; beautiful, soft, and shy . .Could she go unveiled begging through the villages? No. The idea of it was revolting.

It was already dawning. The barges, the bushy willows above the water, the swirling flood began to take shape, and up above in a clayey cliff a hut thatched with straw, and above that the straggling houses of the village, where the cocks had begun to crow.

The ginger-colored clay cliff, the barge, the river, the strange wild people, hunger, cold, illness—perhaps all these things did not really exist. Perhaps, thought the Tartar, it was only a dream. He felt that he must be asleep, and he heard his own snoring....Of course. he was at home in the Simbirsk province; he had but to call his wife and she would reply; and his mother was in the next room....What awful dreams there are! Why? The Tartar smiled and opened his eyes What river was that? The Volga?

It was snowing.

"Hi! Ferry!" someone shouted from the opposite bank. *"Karba-a-ass!"*

The Tartar awoke and went to fetch his companions to row over to the other side. Hurrying into their sheepskins, swearing sleepily in hoarse voices, and shivering from the cold, the four men appeared on the bank After their sleep, the river, from which there came a piercing blast, seemed to them horrible and loathsome. They stepped slowly into the barge.... The Tartar and the three ferrymen took the long, broad-bladed oars, which in the dim light looked like a crab's claw, and Simeon flung himself with his belly against the tiller. And on the other side the voice kept on shouting, and a revolver was fired twice, for the man probably thought the ferrymen were asleep or gone to the village inn.

"All right. Plenty of time!" said Wiseacre in the tone of one who was sure that there is no need for hurry in this world—and, indeed, there is no reason for it.

The heavy, clumsy barge left the bank and heaved through the willows, and by the willows slowly receding it was possible to tell that the barge was moving. The ferrymen plied the oars with a slow measured stroke; Wiseacre hung over the tiller with his stomach pressed against it and swung from side to side. In the dim light they looked like men sitting on some antediluvian animal with long limbs, swimming out to a cold dismal nightmare land.

They got clear of the willows and swung out into midstream The thud of the oars and the splash could be heard on the other bank and shouts came· "Hurry! Hurry!" After another ten minutes the barge bumped clumsily against the landing-stage.

"And it is still snowing, always snowing," Simeon murmured, wiping the snow from his face. "God knows where it comes from!"

On the other side a tall, gaunt old man was waiting in a short fox-fur coat and white astrakhan hat. He stood stock-still some distance from his horses; he had a severe concentrated expression as if he were trying to remember something and were angry with his uncompliant memory. When Simeon went up to him and took off his hat with a smile he said·

"I'm in a hurry to get to Anastasievka. My daughter is worse again, and they tell me there's a new doctor at Anastasievka"

The coach was clamped onto the barge and they rowed back. All the while as they rowed the man, whom Simeon called Vassily Andreich, stood motionless, pressing his thin lips tight and staring in front of him. When the driver asked for leave to smoke in his presence, he did not reply, as if he did not hear. And Simeon hung over the rudder and looked at him mockingly and said:

"Even in Siberia people live. L-i-v-e!"

On Wiseacre's face was an expression of triumph as if he were proving something, as if pleased that things had happened just as he thought they would The unhappy, helpless look of the man in the fox-fur coat seemed to give him considerable pleasure.

"The roads are now muddy, Vassily Andreich," he said, when the horses had been harnessed on the bank. "You'd better wait a couple of weeks, until it gets dryer....If there were any point in going—but you know yourself that people are always on the move day and night and there's no point in it. Sure!"

Vassily Andreich said nothing, gave him a tip, took his seat in the coach, and drove away

"Look! He's gone galloping after the doctor!" said Simeon, shivering in the cold. "Yes. To look for a real doctor, trying to overtake the wind in the fields, and catch the devil by the tail, plague take him! What strange fish there are! God forgive me, a miserable sinner."

The Tartar went up to Wiseacre and, peering at him with mingled hatred and disgust, and mixing Tartar words up with his broken Russian, said with a quaver:

"He good ..good. And you...bad! You are bad! The gentleman is a good soul, very good, and you are a beast, you are bad! The gentleman is alive and you are dead....God made man that he should be alive, that he should have joy, sorrow, grief, and you want nothing, so you are not alive, but a stone! A stone wants nothing, and you want nothing ...You are a stone—and God does not love you, but the gentleman He loves."

They all laughed· the Tartar fiercely knit his brows, waved his hand, drew his rags round him, and went to the fire The ferrymen and Simeon went slowly to the hut.

"It's cold," said one of the ferrymen hoarsely, as he lay down on the straw with which the damp clay floor was covered

"Yes. It's not warm," another acquiesced. "It's a hard life"

All of them lay down. The wind blew the door open. Snow drifted into the hut. No one could bring himself to get up and shut the door; it was cold, but they put up with it.

"And I am happy," muttered Simeon as he fell asleep. "God grant everyone such a life"

"You surely are the devil's own. Even the devil needn't bother to take you."

Sounds like the barking of a dog came from outside

"Who is that? Who is there?"

"It's the Tartar crying."

"Oh! he's an odd one."

"He'll get used to it!" said Simeon, and soon fell asleep. Soon the others slept too, and the door was left open.

Maxim Gorky

ONE AUTUMN NIGHT

Once in the autumn I happened to be in a very unpleasant and inconvenient position. In the town where I had just arrived and where I knew not a soul, I found myself without a farthing in my pocket and without a night's lodging.

Having sold during the first few days every part of my costume without which it was still possible to go about, I passed from the town into the quarter called Yste, where were the steamship wharves—a quarter which during the navigation season fermented with boisterous, laborious life, but now was silent and deserted, for we were in the last days of October.

Dragging my feet along the moist sand, and obstinately scrutinizing it with the desire to discover in it any sort of fragment of food, I wandered alone among the deserted buildings and warehouses, and thought how good it would be to get a full meal.

In our present state of culture hunger of the mind is more quickly satisfied than hunger of the body. You wander about the streets, you are surrounded by buildings not bad-looking from the outside and—you may safely say it—not so badly furnished inside, and the sight of them may excite within you stimulating ideas about architecture, hygiene, and many other wise and high-flying subjects. You may meet warmly and neatly dressed folks—all very polite, and turning away from you tactfully, not wishing offensively to notice the lamentable fact of your existence. Well, well, the mind of a hungry man is always better nourished and healthier than the mind of the well-fed man, and there you have a situation from which you may draw a very ingenious conclusion in favor of the ill-fed

The evening was approaching, the rain was falling, and the wind blew violently from the north. It whistled in the empty booths and shops, blew into the plastered windowpanes of the taverns, and whipped into foam the wavelets of the river which splashed noisily on the sandy shore, casting high their white crests, racing one after another into the dim distance, and leaping impetuously over one another's shoulders. It seemed as if the river felt the proximity of winter, and was running at random away from the fetters of ice which the north wind might well have flung upon her that very night. The sky was heavy and dark; down from it swept incessantly scarcely visible drops of rain, and the melancholy elegy in nature all around

me was emphasized by a couple of battered and misshapen willow trees and a boat, bottom upwards, that was fastened to their roots

The overturned canoe with its battered keel and the miserable old trees rifled by the cold wind—everything around me was bankrupt, barren, and dead, and the sky flowed with undryable tears.... Everything around was waste and gloomy... it seemed as if everything were dead, leaving me alone among the living, and for me also a cold death waited.

I was then eighteen years old—a good time!

I walked and walked along the cold wet sand, making my chattering teeth warble in honor of cold and hunger, when suddenly, as I was carefully searching for something to eat behind one of the empty crates, I perceived behind it, crouching on the ground, a figure in woman's clothes dank with the rain and clinging fast to her stooping shoulders. Standing over her, I watched to see what she was doing. It appeared that she was digging a trench in the sand with her hands—digging away under one of the crates.

"Why are you doing that?" I asked, crouching down on my heels quite close to her

She gave a little scream and was quickly on her legs again. Now that she stood there staring at me, with her wide-open gray eyes full of terror, I perceived that it was a girl of my own age, with a very pleasant face embellished unfortunately by three large blue marks. This spoiled her, although these blue marks had been distributed with a remarkable sense of proportion, one at a time, and all were of equal size—two under the eyes, and one a little bigger on the forehead just over the bridge of the nose. This symmetry was evidently the work of an artist well inured to the business of spoiling the human physiognomy.

The girl looked at me, and the terror in her eyes gradually died out. ...She shook the sand from her hands, adjusted her cotton headgear, cowered down, and said

"I suppose you too want something to eat? Dig away then! My hands are tired. Over there"—she nodded her head in the direction of a booth—"there is bread for certain. . .and sausages too.. . That booth is still carrying on business."

I began to dig. She, after waiting a little and looking at me, sat down beside me and began to help me.

We worked in silence I cannot say now whether I thought at that moment of the criminal code, of morality, of proprietorship, and all the other things about which, in the opinion of many experienced persons, one ought to think every moment of one's life. Wishing to keep as close to the truth as possible, I must confess that apparently I was so deeply engaged in digging under the crate that I completely forgot

about everything else except this one thing: What could be inside that crate?

The evening drew on. The gray, moldy, cold fog grew thicker and thicker around us. The waves roared with a hollower sound than before, and the rain pattered down on the boards of that crate more loudly and more frequently. Somewhere or other the night-watchman began springing his rattle.

"Has it got a bottom or not?" softly inquired my assistant. I did not understand what she was talking about, and I kept silence.

"I say, has the crate got a bottom? If it has we shall try in vain to break into it. Here we are digging a trench, and we may, after all, come upon nothing but solid boards How shall we take them off? Better smash the lock; it is a wretched lock."

Good ideas rarely visit the heads of women, but, as you see, they do visit them sometimes. I have always valued good ideas, and have always tried to utilize them as far as possible.

Having found the lock, I tugged at it and wrenched off the whole thing. My accomplice immediately stooped down and wriggled like a serpent into the gaping-open, four-cornered cover of the crate whence she called to me approvingly, in a low tone:

"You're a brick!"

Nowadays a little crumb of praise from a woman is dearer to me than a whole dithyramb from a man, even though he be more eloquent than all the ancient and modern orators put together. Then, however, I was less amiably disposed than I am now, and, paying no attention to the compliment of my comrade, I asked her curtly and anxiously:

"Is there anything?"

In a monotonous tone she set about calculating our discoveries.

"A basketful of bottles—thick furs—a sunshade—an iron pail"

All this was uneatable. I felt that my hopes had vanished....But suddenly she exclaimed vivaciously.

"Aha! here it is!"

"What?"

"Bread...a loaf...it's only wet...take it!"

A loaf flew to my feet and after it herself, my valiant comrade I had already bitten off a morsel, stuffed it in my mouth, and was chewing it....

"Come, give me some too!...And we mustn't stay here....Where shall we go?" she looked inquiringly about on all sides....It was dark, wet, and boisterous.

"Look! there's an upset canoe yonder...let us go there."

"Let us go then!" And off we set, demolishing our booty as we went, and filling our mouths with large portions of it....The rain grew more violent, the river roared; from somewhere or other resounded a

prolonged mocking whistle—just as if Someone great who feared nobody was whistling down all earthly institutions and along with them this horrid autumnal wind and us its heroes. This whistling made my heart throb painfully, in spite of which I greedily went on eating, and in this respect the girl, walking on my left hand, kept even pace with me.

"What do they call you?" I asked her—why I know not.

"Natasha," she answered shortly, munching loudly.

I stared at her. My heart ached within me; and then I stared into the mist before me, and it seemed to me as if the inimical countenance of my Destiny was smiling at me enigmatically and coldly.

The rain scourged the timbers of the skiff incessantly, and its soft patter induced melancholy thoughts, and the wind whistled as it flew down into the boat's battered bottom through a rift, where some loose splinters of wood were rattling together—a disquieting and depressing sound. The waves of the river were splashing on the shore, and sounded so monotonous and hopeless, just as if they were telling something unbearably dull and heavy, which was boring them into utter disgust, something from which they wanted to run away and yet were obliged to talk about all the same. The sound of the rain blended with their splashing, and a long-drawn sigh seemed to be floating above the overturned skiff—the endless, laboring sigh of the earth, injured and exhausted by the eternal changes from the bright and warm summer to the cold, misty and damp autumn The wind blew continually over the desolate shore and the foaming river—blew and sang its melancholy songs....

Our position beneath the shelter of the skiff was utterly devoid of comfort; it was narrow and damp; tiny cold drops of rain dribbled through the damaged bottom; gusts of wind penetrated it We sat in silence and shivered with cold. I remembered that I wanted to go to sleep Natasha leaned her back against the hull of the boat and curled herself up into a tiny ball. Embracing her knees with her hands, and resting her chin upon them, she stared doggedly at the river with wide-open eyes; on the pale patch of her face they seemed immense, because of the blue marks below them She never moved, and this immobility and silence—I felt it—gradually produced within me a terror of my neighbor. I wanted to talk to her, but I knew not how to begin.

It was she herself who spoke.

"What a cursed thing life is!" she exclaimed plainly, abstractedly, and in a tone of deep conviction.

But this was no complaint. In these words there was too much of indifference for a complaint. This simple soul thought according to her understanding—thought and proceeded to form a certain conclusion which she expressed aloud, and which I could not confute for fear of

contradicting myself. Therefore I was silent, and she, as if she had not noticed me, continued to sit there immovable.

"Even if we croaked... what then...?" Natasha began again, this time quietly and reflectively, and still there was not one note of complaint in her words. It was plain that this person, in the course of her reflections on life, was regarding her own case, and had arrived at the conviction that, in order to preserve herself from the mockeries of life, she was not in a position to do anything else but simply "croak"—to use her own expression.

The clearness of this line of thought was inexpressibly sad and painful to me, and I felt that if I kept silence any longer I was really bound to weep.... And it would have been shameful to have done this before a woman, especially as she was not weeping herself. I resolved to speak to her.

"Who was it that knocked you about?" I asked For the moment I could not think of anything more sensible or more delicate.

"Pashka did it all," she answered in a dull and level tone.

"And who is he?"

"My lover.... He was a baker."

"Did he beat you often?"

"Whenever he was drunk he beat me.... Often!"

And suddenly, turning toward me, she began to talk about herself, Pashka, and their mutual relations. He was a baker with red mustaches and played very well on the banjo. He came to see her and greatly pleased her, for he was a merry chap and wore nice clean clothes He had a vest which cost fifteen roubles and boots with dress tops. For these reasons she had fallen in love with him, and he became her "creditor." And when he became her creditor, he made it his business to take away from her the money which her other friends gave to her for bonbons, and, getting drunk on this money, he would fall to beating her; but that would have been nothing if he hadn't also begun to "run after" other girls before her very eyes.

"Now, wasn't that an insult? I am not worse than the others. Of course, that meant that he was laughing at me, the blackguard. The day before yesterday I asked leave of my mistress to go out for a bit, went to him, and there I found Dimka sitting beside him drunk. And he, too, was half-seas over. I said, 'You scoundrel, you!' And he gave me a thorough hiding. He kicked me and dragged me by the hair But that was nothing to what came after. He spoiled everything I had on—left me just as I am now! How could I appear before my mistress? He spoiled everything... my dress and my jacket too—it was quite a new one; I gave a fiver for it... and tore my kerchief from my head.... O Lord! What will become of me now?" she suddenly whined in a lamentable overstrained voice.

The wind howled, and became ever colder and more boisterous. ..

Again my teeth began to dance up and down, and she, huddled up to avoid the cold, pressed as closely to me as she could, so that I could see the gleam of her eyes through the darkness.

"What wretches all you men are! I'd burn you all in an oven; I'd cut you in pieces. If any one of you was dying I'd spit in his mouth, and not pity him a bit. Mean skunks! You wheedle and wheedle, you wag your tails like cringing dogs, and we fools give ourselves up to you, and it's all up with us! Immediately you trample us underfoot. ...Miserable loafers!"

She cursed us up and down, but there was no vigor, no malice, no hatred of these "miserable loafers" in her cursing that I could hear. The tone of her language by no means corresponded with its subject matter, for it was calm enough, and the gamut of her voice was terribly poor

Yet all this made a stronger impression on me than the most eloquent and convincing pessimistic books and speeches, of which I had read a good many and which I still read to this day. And this, you see, was because the agony of a dying person is much more natural and violent than the most minute and picturesque descriptions of death.

I felt really wretched—more from cold than from the words of my neighbor. I groaned softly and ground my teeth

Almost at the same moment I felt two little arms about me—one of them touched my neck and the other lay upon my face—and at the same time an anxious, gentle, friendly voice uttered this question:

"What ails you?"

I was ready to believe that someone else was asking me this and not Natasha, who had just declared that all men were scoundrels and expressed a wish for their destruction. But she it was, and now she began speaking quickly, hurriedly

"What ails you, eh? Are you cold? Are you frozen? Ah, what a one you are, sitting there so silent like a little owl! Why, you should have told me long ago that you were cold Come ..lie on the ground ...stretch yourself out and I will lie...there! How's that? Now put your arms round me .. Tighter! How's that? You shall be warm very soon now... And then we'll lie back to back....The night will pass so quickly, see if it won't I say.. have you too been drinking?... Turned out of your place, eh? .It doesn't matter."

And she comforted me....She encouraged me.

May I be thrice accursed! What a world of irony was in this single fact for me! Just imagine! Here was I, seriously occupied at this very time with the destiny of humanity, thinking of the reorganization of the social system, of political revolutions, reading all sorts of devilishly wise books whose abysmal profundity was certainly unfathomable by their very authors—at this very time, I say, I was trying with all my might to make of myself "a potent active social force." It even seemed

to me that I had partially accomplished my object; anyhow, at this time, in my ideas about myself, I had got so far as to recognize that I had an exclusive right to exist, that I had the necessary greatness to deserve to live my life, and that I was fully competent to play a great historical part therein. And a woman was now warming me with her body, a wretched, battered, hunted creature, who had no place and no value in life, and whom I had never thought of helping till she helped me herself, and whom I really would not have known how to help in any way even if the thought of it had occurred to me.

Ah! I was ready to think that all this was happening to me in a dream—in a disagreeable, an oppressive dream.

But, ugh! it was impossible for me to think that, for cold drops of rain were dripping down upon me, the woman was pressing close to me, her warm breath was fanning my face, and—despite a slight odor of vodka—it did me good. The wind howled and raged, the rain smote upon the skiff, the waves splashed, and both of us, embracing each other convulsively, nevertheless shivered with cold. All this was only too real, and I am certain that nobody ever dreamed such an oppressive and horrid dream as that reality.

But Natasha was talking all the time of something or other, talking kindly and sympathetically, as only women can talk. Beneath the influence of her voice and kindly words a little fire began to burn up within me, and something inside my heart thawed in consequence

Then tears poured from my eyes like a hailstorm, washing away from my heart much that was evil, much that was stupid, much sorrow and dirt which had fastened upon it before that night Natasha comforted me.

"Come, come, that will do, little one! Don't take on! That'll do! God will give you another chance... you will right yourself and stand in your proper place again... and it will be all right ..."

And she kept kissing me... many kisses did she give me... burning kisses.. and all for nothing....

Those were the first kisses from a woman that had ever been bestowed upon me, and they were the best kisses too, for all the subsequent kisses cost me frightfully dear, and really gave me nothing at all in exchange.

"Come, don't take on so, funny one! I'll manage for you tomorrow if you cannot find a place" Her quiet persuasive whispering sounded in my ears as if it came through a dream....

There we lay till dawn....

And when the dawn came, we crept from behind the skiff and went into the town.... Then we took friendly leave of each other and never met again, although for half a year I searched in every hole and corner for that kind Natasha, with whom I spent the autumn night just described.

If she be already dead—and well for her if it were so—may she rest in peace! And if she be alive... still I say, "Peace to her soul!" And may the consciousness of her fall never enter her soul... for that would be a superfluous and fruitless suffering if life is to be lived....

Leonid Andreyev

THE ABYSS

The day was coming to an end, but the young pair continued to walk and to talk, observing neither the time nor the way. Before them, in the shadow of a hillock, there loomed the dark mass of a small grove, and between the branches of the trees, like the glowing of coals, the sun blazed, igniting the air and transforming it into a flaming golden dust So near and so luminous the sun appeared that everything seemed to vanish; it alone remained, and it painted the road with its own fiery tints It hurt the eyes of the strollers, they turned back, and all at once everything within their vision was extinguished, became peaceful and clear, and small and intimate Somewhere afar, barely a mile away, the red sunset seized the tall trunk of a fir, which blazed among the green like a candle in a dark room, the ruddy glow of the road stretched before them, and every stone cast its long black shadow, and the girl's hair, suffused with the sun's rays, now shone with a golden-red nimbus A stray thin hair, wandering from the rest, wavered in the air like a golden spider's thread.

The newly fallen darkness did not break or change the course of their talk It continued as before, intimately and quietly; it flowed along tranquilly on the same theme on strength, beauty, and the immortality of love They were both very young the girl was no more than seventeen; Nemovetsky was four years older. They wore students' uniforms: she the modest brown dress of a pupil of a girls' school, he the handsome attire of a technological student And, like their conversation, everything about them was young, beautiful, and pure. They had erect, flexible figures, permeated as it were with the clean air and borne along with a light, elastic gait, their fresh voices, sounding even the simplest words with a reflective tenderness, were like a rivulet in a calm spring night, when the snow had not yet wholly thawed from the dark meadows.

They walked on, turning the bend of the unfamiliar road, and their lengthening shadows, with absurdly small heads, now advanced separately, now merged into one long, narrow strip, like the shadow of a poplar. But they did not see the shadows, for they were too much absorbed in their talk. While talking, the young man kept his eyes fixed on the girl's handsome face, upon which the sunset had seemed to leave a measure of its delicate tints. As for her, she lowered her gaze on the footpath, brushed the tiny pebbles to one side with her umbrella, and watched now one foot, now the other as alternately, with a measured step, they emerged from under her dark dress.

The path was intersected by a ditch with edges of dust showing the impress of feet. For an instant they paused. Zinotchka raised her head, looked round her with a perplexed gaze, and asked·

"Do you know where we are? I've never been here before"

He made an attentive survey of their position.

"Yes, I know. There, behind the hill, is the town. Give me your hand. I'll help you across"

He stretched out his hand, white and slender like a woman's, and which did not know hard work Zinotchka felt gay. She felt like jumping over the ditch all by herself, running away and shouting "Catch me!" But she restrained herself, with decorous gratitude inclined her head, and timidly stretched out her hand, which still retained its childish plumpness. He had a desire to squeeze tightly this trembling little hand, but he also restrained himself, and with a half-bow he deferentially took it in his and modestly turned away when in crossing the girl slightly showed her leg.

And once more they walked and talked, but their thoughts were full of the momentary contact of their hands. She still felt the dry heat of his palms and his strong fingers, she felt pleasure and shame, while he was conscious of the submissive softness of her tiny hand and saw the black silhouette of her foot and the small slipper which tenderly embraced it. There was something sharp, something perturbing in this unfading appearance of the narrow hem of white skirts and of the slender foot, with an unconscious effort of will he crushed this feeling Then he felt more cheerful, and his heart so abundant, so generous in its mood that he wanted to sing, to stretch out his hands to the sky, and to shout: "Run! I want to catch you!"—that ancient formula of primitive love among the woods and thundering waterfalls.

And from all these desires tears struggled to the throat

The long, droll shadows vanished, and the dust of the footpath became gray and cold, but they did not observe this and went on chatting. Both of them had read many good books, and the radiant images of men and women who had loved, suffered, and perished for pure love were borne along before them. Their memories resurrected frag-

ments of nearly forgotten verse, dressed in melodious harmony and the sweet sadness investing love.

"Do you remember where this comes from?" asked Nemovetsky, recalling: "...once more she is with me, she whom I love; from whom, having never spoken, I have hidden all my sadness, my tenderness, my love..."

"No," Zinotchka replied, and pensively repeated: "all my sadness, my tenderness, my love..."

"All my love," with an involuntary echo responded Nemovetsky.

Other memories returned to them They remembered those girls, pure like the white lilies, who, attired in black nunnish garments, sat solitarily in the park, grieving among the dead leaves, yet happy in their grief They also remembered the men, who, in the abundance of will and pride, yet suffered, and implored the love and the delicate compassion of women The images thus evoked were sad, but the love which showed in this sadness was radiant and pure. As immense as the world, as bright as the sun, it arose fabulously beautiful before their eyes, and there was nothing mightier or more beautiful on the earth.

"Could you die for love?" Zinotchka asked, as she looked at her childish hand.

"Yes, I could," Nemovetsky replied, with conviction, and he glanced at her frankly "And you?"

"Yes, I too." She grew pensive "Why, it's happiness to die for one you love. I should want to."

Their eyes met They were such clear, calm eyes, and there was much good in what they conveyed to the other. Their lips smiled. Zinotchka paused.

"Wait a moment," she said. "You have a thread on your coat."

And trustfully she raised her hand to his shoulder and carefully, with two fingers, removed the thread.

"There!" she said and, becoming serious, asked "Why are you so thin and pale? You are studying too much, I fear You mustn't overdo it, you know."

"You have blue eyes; they have bright points like sparks," he replied, examining her eyes.

"And yours are black. No, brown. They seem to glow. There is in them..."

Zinotchka did not finish her sentence, but turned away. Her face slowly flushed, her eyes became timid and confused, while her lips involuntarily smiled. Without waiting for Nemovetsky, who smiled with secret pleasure, she moved forward, but soon paused

"Look, the sun has set!" she exclaimed with grieved astonishment.

"Yes, it has set," he responded with a new sadness.

The light was gone, the shadows died, everything became pale,

dumb, lifeless. At that point of the horizon where earlier the glowing sun had blazed, there now, in silence, crept dark masses of cloud, which step by step consumed the light blue spaces. The clouds gathered, jostled one another, slowly and reticently changed the contours of awakened monsters, they unwillingly advanced, driven, as it were, against their will by some terrible, implacable force Tearing itself away from the rest, one tiny luminous cloud drifted on alone, a frail fugitive.

Zinotchka's cheeks grew pale, her lips turned red; the pupils of her eyes imperceptibly broadened, darkening the eyes. She whispered:

"I feel frightened It is so quiet here. Have we lost our way?"

Nemovetsky contracted his heavy eyebrows and made a searching survey of the place.

Now that the sun was gone and the approaching night was breathing with fresh air, it seemed cold and uninviting To all sides the gray field spread, with its scant grass, clay gullies, hillocks and holes. There were many of these holes; some were deep and sheer, others were small and overgrown with slippery grass; the silent dusk of night had already crept into them; and because there was evidence here of men's labors, the place appeared even more desolate Here and there, like the coagulations of cold lilac mist, loomed groves and thickets and, as it were, hearkened to what the abandoned holes might have to say to them.

Nemovetsky crushed the heavy, uneasy feeling of perturbation which had arisen in him and said

"No, we have not lost our way I know the road First to the left, then through that tiny wood. Are you afraid?"

She bravely smiled and answered

"No. Not now. But we ought to be home soon and have some tea."

They increased their gait, but soon slowed down again. They did not glance aside, but felt the morose hostility of the dug-up field, which surrounded them with a thousand dim motionless eyes, and this feeling bound them together and evoked memories of childhood. These memories were luminous, full of sunlight, of green foliage, of love and laughter. It was as if that had not been life at all, but an immense, melodious song, and they themselves had been in it as sounds, two slight notes one clear and resonant like ringing crystal, the other somewhat more dull yet more animated, like a small bell.

Signs of human life were beginning to appear Two women were sitting at the edge of a clay hole. One sat with crossed legs and looked fixedly below She raised her head with its kerchief, revealing tufts of entangled hair Her bent back threw upward a dirty blouse with its pattern of flowers as big as apples; its strings were undone and hung loosely. She did not look at the passers-by. The other woman

half reclined near by, her head thrown backward. She had a coarse, broad face, with a peasant's features, and, under her eyes, the projecting cheekbones showed two brick-red spots, resembling fresh scratches. She was even filthier than the first woman, and she bluntly stared at the passers-by. When they had passed by, she began to sing in a thick, masculine voice.

For you alone, my adored one,
Like a flower I did bloom . . .

"Varka, do you hear?" She turned to her silent companion and, receiving no answer, broke into loud, coarse laughter.

Nemovetsky had known such women, who were filthy even when they were attired in costly handsome dresses; he was used to them, and now they glided away from his glance and vanished, leaving no trace But Zinotchka, who nearly brushed them with her modest brown dress, felt something hostile, pitiful and evil, which for a moment entered her soul. In a few minutes the impression was obliterated, like the shadow of a cloud running fast across the golden meadow; and when, going in the same direction, there had passed them by a barefoot man, accompanied by the same kind of filthy woman, she saw them but gave them no thought....

And once more they walked on and talked, and behind them there moved, reluctantly, a dark cloud, and cast a transparent shadow.... The darkness imperceptibly and stealthily thickened, so that it bore the impress of day, but day oppressed with illness and quietly dying Now they talked about those terrible feelings and thoughts which visit man at night, when he cannot sleep, and neither sound nor speech give hindrance, when darkness, immense and multiple-eyed, that is life, closely presses to his very face.

"Can you imagine infinity?" Zinotchka asked him, putting her plump hand to her forehead and tightly closing her eyes

"No. Infinity...No. ." answered Nemovetsky, also shutting his eyes.

"I sometimes see it I perceived it for the first time when I was yet quite little. Imagine a great many carts There stands one cart, then another, a third, carts without end, an infinity of carts...It is terrible!" Zinotchka trembled

"But why carts?" Nemovetsky smiled, though he felt uncomfortable.

"I don't know. But I did-see carts. One, another...without end."

The darkness stealthily thickened. The cloud had already passed over their heads and, being before them, was now able to look into their lowered, paling faces. The dark figures of ragged, sluttish women appeared oftener; it was as if the deep ground holes, dug for some unknown purpose, cast them up to the surface. Now solitary,

now in twos or threes, they appeared, and their voices sounded loud and strangely desolate in the stilled air.

"Who are these women? Where do they all come from?" Zinotchka asked in a low, timorous voice.

Nemovetsky knew who these women were. He felt terrified at having fallen into this evil and dangerous neighborhood, but he answered calmly:

"I don't know. It's nothing. Let's not talk about them. It won't be long now. We only have to pass through this little wood, and we shall reach the gate and town It's a pity that we started out so late."

She thought his words absurd How could he call it late when they started out at four o'clock? She looked at him and smiled But his eyebrows did not relax, and, in order to calm and comfort him she suggested:

"Let's walk faster. I want tea. And the wood's quite near now"

"Yes, let's walk faster."

When they entered the wood and the silent trees joined in an arch above their heads, it became very dark but also very snug and quieting.

"Give me your hand," proposed Nemovetsky.

Irresolutely she gave him her hand, and the light contact seemed to lighten the darkness Their hands were motionless and did not press each other. Zinotchka even slightly moved away from her companion. But their whole consciousness was concentrated in the perception of the tiny place of the body where the hands touched one another. And again the desire came to talk about the beauty and the mysterious power of love, but to talk without violating the silence, to talk by means not of words but of glances. And they thought that they ought to glance, and they wanted to, yet they didn't dare.

"And here are some more people!" said Zinotchka cheerfully.

In the glade, where there was more light, there sat near an empty bottle three men in silence, and expectantly looked at the newcomers. One of them, shaven like an actor, laughed and whistled in such a way as if to say:

"Oho!"

Nemovetsky's heart fell and froze in a trepidation of horror, but, as if pushed on from behind, he walked straight on the sitting trio, beside whom ran the footpath. These were waiting, and three pairs of eyes looked at the strollers, motionless and terrifying And, desirous of gaining the good will of these morose, ragged men, in whose silence he scented a threat, and of winning their sympathy for his helplessness, he asked:

"Is this the way to the gate?"

They did not reply. The shaven one whistled something mocking and not quite definable, while the others remained silent and looked

at them with a heavy, malignant intentness. They were drunken, and evil, and they were hungry for women and sensual diversion One of the men, with a ruddy face, rose to his feet like a bear, and sighed heavily. His companions quickly glanced at him, then once more fixed an intent gaze on Zinotchka.

"I feel terribly afraid," she whispered with lips alone.

He did not hear her words, but Nemovetsky understood her from the weight of the arm which leaned on him. And, trying to preserve a demeanor of calm, yet feeling the fated irrevocableness of what was about to happen, he advanced on his way with a measured firmness. Three pairs of eyes approached nearer, gleamed, and were left behind one's back "It's better to run," thought Nemovetsky and answered himself· "No, it's better not to run."

'He's a dead 'un! You ain't afraid of him?" said the third of the sitting trio, a bald-headed fellow with a scant red beard. "And the little girl is a fine one May God grant everyone such a one!"

The trio gave a forced laugh.

"Mister, wait! I want to have a word with you!" said the tall man in a thick bass voice and glanced at his comrades.

They rose.

Nemovetsky walked on, without turning round

"You ought to stop when you're asked," said the red-haired man. "An' if you don't, you're likely to get something you ain't counting on!"

"D'you hear?" growled the tall man, and in two jumps caught up with the strollers.

A massive hand descended on Nemovetsky's shoulder and made him reel He turned and met very close to his face the round, bulgy, terrible eyes of his assailant They were so near that it was as if he were looking at them through a magnifying glass, and he clearly distinguished the small red veins on the whites and the yellowish matter on the lids. He let fall Zinotchka's numb hand and, thrusting his hand into his pocket, he murmured:

"Do you want money? I'll give you some, with pleasure."

The bulgy eyes grew rounder and gleamed And when Nemovetsky averted his gaze from them, the tall man stepped slightly back and, with a short blow, struck Nemovetsky's chin from below Nemovetsky's head fell backward, his teeth clicked, his cap descended to his forehead and fell off; waving with his arms, he dropped to the ground. Silently, without a cry, Zinotchka turned and ran with all the speed of which she was capable. The man with the clean-shaven face gave a long-drawn shout which sounded strangely.

"A-a-ah!..."

And, still shouting, he gave pursuit.

Nemovetsky, reeling, jumped up, and before he could straighten

himself he was again felled with a blow on the neck. There were two of them, and he one, and he was frail and unused to physical combat. Nevertheless, he fought for a long time, scratched with his fingernails like an obstreperous woman, bit with his teeth, and sobbed with an unconscious despair. When he was too weak to do more they lifted him and bore him away. He still resisted, but there was a din in his head; he ceased to understand what was being done with him and hung helplessly in the hands which bore him. The last thing he saw was a fragment of the red beard which almost touched his mouth, and beyond it the darkness of the wood and the light-colored blouse of the running girl. She ran silently and fast, as she had run but a few days before when they were playing tag; and behind her, with short strides, overtaking her, ran the clean-shaven one Then Nemovetsky felt an emptiness around him, his heart stopped short as he experienced the sensation of falling, then he struck the earth and lost all consciousness.

The tall man and the red-haired man, having thrown Nemovetsky into a ditch, stopped for a few moments to listen to what was happening at the bottom of the ditch But their faces and their eyes were turned to one side, in the direction taken by Zinotchka From there arose the high stifled woman's cry which quickly died The tall man muttered angrily:

"The pig!"

Then, making a straight line, breaking twigs on the way, like a bear, he began to run.

"And me! And me!" his red-haired comrade cried in a thin voice, running after him He was weak and he panted, in the struggle his knee was hurt, and he felt badly because the idea about the girl had come to him first and he would get her last. He paused to rub his knee; then, putting a finger to his nose, he sneezed, and once more began to run and to cry his plaint.

"And me! And me!"

The dark cloud dissipated itself across the whole heavens, ushering in the calm, dark night The darkness soon swallowed up the short figure of the red-haired man, but for some time there was audible the uneven fall of his feet, the rustle of the disturbed leaves, and the shrill, plaintive cry:

"And me! Brothers, and me!"

Earth got into Nemovetsky's mouth, and his teeth grated. On coming to himself, the first feeling he experienced was consciousness of the pungent, pleasant smell of the soil His head felt dull, as if heavy lead had been poured into it, it was hard to turn it His whole body ached, there was an intense pain in the shoulder, but no bones were broken Nemovetsky sat up, and for a long time looked above him,

neither thinking nor remembering. Directly over him, a bush lowered its broad leaves, and between them was visible the now clear sky. The cloud had passed over, without dropping a single drop of rain, and leaving the air dry and exhilarating. High up, in the middle of the heavens, appeared the carven moon, with a transparent border. It was living its last nights, and its light was cold, dejected, and solitary Small tufts of cloud rapidly passed over in the heights where, it was clear, the wind was strong, they did not obscure the moon, but cautiously passed it by. In the solitariness of the moon, in the timorousness of the high bright clouds, in the blowing of the wind barely perceptible below, one felt the mysterious depth of night dominating over the earth.

Nemovetsky suddenly remembered everything that had happened, and he could not believe that it had happened All that was so terrible and did not resemble truth. Could truth be so horrible? He, too, as he sat there in the night and looked up at the moon and the running clouds, appeared strange to himself and did not resemble reality. And he began to think that it was an ordinary if horrible nightmare. Those women, of whom they had met so many, had also become a part of this terrible and evil dream.

"It can't be!" he said with conviction, and weakly shook his heavy head. "It can't be!"

He stretched out his hand and began to look for his cap His failure to find it made everything clear to him, and he understood that what had happened had not been a dream, but the horrible truth. Terror possessed him anew, as a few moments later he made violent exertions to scramble out of the ditch, again and again to fall back with handfuls of soil, only to clutch once more at the hanging shrubbery.

He scrambled out at last, and began to run, thoughtlessly, without choosing a direction For a long time he went on running, circling among the trees. With equal suddenness, thoughtlessly, he ran in another direction. The branches of the trees scratched his face, and again everything began to resemble a dream. And it seemed to Nemovetsky that something like this had happened to him before: darkness, invisible branches of trees, while he had run with closed eyes, thinking that all this was a dream Nemovetsky paused, then sat down in an uncomfortable posture on the ground, without any elevation And again he thought of his cap, and he said·

"This is I. I ought to kill myself Yes, I ought to kill myself, even if this is a dream"

He sprang to his feet, but remembered something and walked slowly, his confused brain trying to picture the place where they had been attacked It was quite dark in the woods, but sometimes a stray ray of moonlight broke through and deceived him; it lighted up the

white tree trunks, and the wood seemed as if it were full of motionless and mysteriously silent people All this, too, seemed as if it had been, and it resembled a dream.

"Zinaida Nikolaevna!" called Nemovetsky, pronouncing the first word loudly, the second in a lower voice, as if with the loss of his voice he had also lost hope of any response.

And no one responded

Then he found the footpath, and knew it at once. He reached the glade. Back where he had been, he fully understood that it all had actually happened. He ran about in his terror, and he cried·

"Zinaida Nikolaevna! It is I! I!"

No one answered his call. He turned in the direction where he thought the town lay, and shouted a prolonged shout·

"He-l-l-p!"...

And once more he ran about, whispering something while he swept the bushes, when before his eyes there appeared a dim white spot, which resembled a spot of congealed faint light. It was the prostrate body of Zinotchka

"Oh, God! What's this?" said Nemovetsky, with dry eyes, but in a voice that sobbed. He got down on his knees and came in contact with the girl lying there.

His hand fell on the bared body, which was so smooth and firm and cold but by no means dead. Trembling, he passed his hand over her.

"Darling, sweetheart, it is I," he whispered, seeking her face in the darkness

Then he stretched out a hand in another direction, and again came in contact with the naked body, and no matter where he put his hand it touched this woman's body, which was so smooth and firm and seemed to grow warm under the contact of his hand. Sometimes he snatched his hand away quickly, and again he let it rest; and just as, all tattered and without his cap, he did not appear real to himself, so it was with this bared body: he could not associate it with Zinotchka. All that had passed here, all that men had done with this mute woman's body, appeared to him in all its loathsome reality, and found a strange intensely eloquent response in his whole body He stretched forward in a way that made his joints crackle, dully fixed his eyes on the white spot, and contracted his brows like a man thinking. Horror before what had happened congealed in him, and like a solid lay on his soul, as it were, something extraneous and impotent.

"Oh, God! What's this?" he repeated, but the sound of it rang untrue, like something deliberate

He felt her heart· it beat faintly but evenly, and when he bent toward her face he became aware of its equally faint breathing. It

was as if Zinotchka were not in a deep swoon, but simply sleeping. He quietly called to her:

"Zinotchka, it is I!"

But at once he felt that he would not like to see her awaken for a long time. He held his breath, quickly glanced round him, then he cautiously smoothed her cheek; first he kissed her closed eyes, then her lips, whose softness yielded under his strong kiss. Frightened lest she awaken, he drew back, and remained in a frozen attitude But the body was motionless and mute, and in its helplessness and easy access there was something pitiful and exasperating, not to be resisted and attracting one to itself With infinite tenderness and stealthy, timid caution, Nemovetsky tried to cover her with the fragments of her dress, and this double consciousness of the material and the naked body was as sharp as a knife and as incomprehensible as madness.... Here had been a banquet of wild beasts...he scented the burning passion diffused in the air, and dilated his nostrils.

"It is I! I!" he madly repeated, not understanding what surrounded him and still possessed of the memory of the white hem of the skirt, of the black silhouette of the foot and of the slipper which so tenderly embraced it As he listened to Zinotchka's breathing, his eyes fixed on the spot where her face was, he moved a hand. He listened, and moved the hand again.

"What am I doing?" he cried out loudly, in despair, and sprang back, terrified of himself

For a single instant Zinotchka's face flashed before him and vanished He tried to understand that this body was Zinotchka, with whom he had lately walked, and who had spoken of infinity; and he could not understand. He tried to feel the horror of what had happened, but the horror was too great for comprehension, and it did not appear.

"Zinaida Nikolaevna!" he shouted, imploringly. "What does this mean? Zinaida Nikolaevna!"

But the tormented body remained mute, and, continuing his mad monologue, Nemovetsky descended on his knees. He implored, threatened, said that he would kill himself, and he grasped the prostrate body, pressing it to him.. The now warmed body softly yielded to his exertions, obediently following his motions, and all this was so terrible, incomprehensible and savage that Nemovetsky once more jumped to his feet and abruptly shouted

"Help!"

But the sound was false, as if it were deliberate.

And once more he threw himself on the unresisting body, with kisses and tears, feeling the presence of some sort of abyss, a dark, terrible, drawing abyss There was no Nemovetsky, Nemovetsky had

remained somewhere behind, and he who had replaced him was now with passionate sternness mauling the hot, submissive body and was saying with the sly smile of a madman:

"Answer me! Or don't you want to? I love you! I love you!"

With the same sly smile he brought his dilated eyes to Zinotchka's very face and whispered:

"I love you! You don't want to speak, but you are smiling, I can see that. I love you! I love you! I love you!"

He more strongly pressed to him the soft, will-less body, whose lifeless submission awakened a savage passion He wrung his hands, and hoarsely whispered

"I love you! We will tell no one, and no one will know I will marry you tomorrow, when you like I love you I will kiss you, and you will answer me—yes? Zinotchka..."

With some force he pressed his lips to hers, and felt conscious of his teeth's sharpness in her flesh; in the force and anguish of the kiss he lost the last sparks of reason It seemed to him that the lips of the girl quivered For a single instant flaming horror lighted up his mind, opening before him a black abyss.

And the black abyss swallowed him.

[Translation by John Cournos]

Feodor Sologub

THE GLEAM OF HUNGER

Sergey Matveyevich Moshkin had dined very well that day—that is, comparatively well—when you stop to consider that he was only a village schoolmaster who had lost his place, and had been knocking about already a year or so on strange stairways, in search of work. Nevertheless, the gleam of hunger persisted in his dark, sad eyes, and it gave his lean, smooth face a kind of unlooked-for significance.

Moshkin spent his last three-rouble note on this dinner, and now a few coppers jingled in his pocket, while his purse contained a smooth fifteen-kopeck piece. He banqueted out of sheer joy He knew quite well that it was stupid to rejoice prematurely and without sufficient cause. But he had been seeking work so long, and had

been having such a hard time of it, that even the shadow of a hope gave him joy.

Moshkin had put an advertisement in the *Novo Vremya*. He announced himself a pedagogue who had command of the pen; he based his claim on the fact that he corresponded for a provincial newspaper. This, indeed, was why he had lost his place, it was discovered that he had written articles reflecting unfavorably on the authorities, the chief official of the district called the attention of the inspector of public schools to this, and the inspector, of course, would not brook such doings by any of his staff.

"We don't want that kind," the inspector said to him in a personal interview.

Moshkin asked: "What kind do you want?"

The inspector, without replying to this irrelevant question, remarked dryly: "Good-by. I hope to meet you in the next world."

Moshkin stated further in his advertisement that he wished to be a secretary, a permanent collaborator on a newspaper, a private tutor; also that he was willing to accompany his employer to the Caucasus or the Crimea, and to make himself useful in the house, etc. He gave an assurance of his reasonableness, and that he had no objections to traveling.

He waited One postcard came. It inspired him with hope; he hardly knew why.

It came in the morning while Moshkin was drinking his tea The landlady brought it in herself There was a glitter in her dark, snake-like eyes as she remarked tauntingly: "Here's some correspondence for Mr Sergey Matveyevich Moshkin"

And while he was reading she smoothed her black hair down her triangular yellow forehead, and hissed: "What's the good of getting letters? Much better if you paid for your board and lodging. A letter won't feed your hunger; you ought to go among people, look for a job, and not expect things to come to you."

He read:

Be so good as to come in for a talk, between 6 and 7 in the evening, at Row 6, House 78, Apartment 57.

There was no signature.

Moshkin glanced angrily at his landlady. She was broad and erect, and as she stood there at the door quite calm, with lowered arms, she was like a doll; she seemed deliberately malicious, and she looked at him with her motionless, anger-provoking eyes.

Moshkin exclaimed *"Basta!"*

He hit the table with his fist. Then he rose, and paced up and down the room. He kept on repeating: *"Basta!"*

The landlady asked quietly and spitefully "Are you going to pay

or not, you Kazan and Astrakhan correspondent, you impudent face?"

Moshkin stopped in front of her, put out his empty palm, and said: "That's all I have."

He said nothing about his last three-rouble note. The landlady hissed "I'm not hard on you, but I need money. Wood's seven roubles a load now. How am I to pay it? You can't live on nothing. Can't you find someone to look after you? You're a young man of ability, and you have quite a charming appearance You can always get hold of some goose or other. But how am I to pay? Whichever way you turn you've got to put down money."

Moshkin replied· "Don't worry, Praskovya Petrovna, I am getting a job tonight, and I'll pay what I owe you"

He began to pace the room again, making a flapping noise with his slippers.

The landlady paused at the door, and kept on with her grumbling. When she went at last, she cried out· "Another in my place would have shown you the door long ago"

For some time after she had left, there still remained in his memory her strange, erect figure, with relaxed arms; her broad, yellow forehead, shaped like a triangle under her smoothly oiled hair, her worn yellow dress, cut away like a narrow triangle; and her red, sniffling nose shaped like a small triangle Three triangles in all.

All day long Moshkin was hungry, cheerful, and indignant. He walked aimlessly in the streets. He looked at the girls, and they all appeared to him to be lovable, happy, and accessible—to the rich He stopped before the shop windows, where expensive goods were displayed. The gleam of hunger in his eyes grew keener and keener.

He bought a newspaper He read as he sat on a form in the square, where the children laughed and ran, where the nurses tried to look fashionable, where there was a smell of dust and of consumptive trees—and where the smells of the street and of the garden mingled unpleasantly, reminding him of the smell of gutta-percha Moshkin was very much struck by an account in the newspaper of a hungry fanatic who had slashed a picture by a celebrated artist in the museum

"Now that's something I can understand!"

Moshkin walked briskly along the path He repeated "Now that's something I can understand!"

And afterwards, as he walked in the streets and looked at the huge and stately houses, at the exposed wealth of the shops, at the elegant dress of the people of fashion, at the swiftly moving carriages, at all these beauties and comforts of life, accessible to all who have money, and inaccessible to him—as he looked and observed and envied, he felt more and more keenly the mood of destructive rage.

"Now that's something I can understand!"

He walked up to a stout and pompous house porter, and shouted: "Now that's something I can understand!"

The porter looked at him with silent scorn Moshkin laughed joyously and said: "Clever chaps, those anarchists!"

"Be off with you!" exclaimed the porter angrily. "And see that you don't overeat yourself."

Moshkin was about to leave him but stopped short in fright. There was a policeman quite near, and his white gloves stood out with startling sharpness. Moshkin thought in his sadness:

"A bomb might come in handy here."

The porter spat angrily after him, and turned away.

Moshkin walked on. At six o'clock he entered a restaurant of the middle rank. He chose a table by the window. He had some vodka, and followed it with anchovies. He ordered a seventy-five-kopeck dinner He had a bottle of chablis on ice; after dinner a liqueur. He got slightly intoxicated His head went round at the sound of music. He did not take his change. He left, reeling slightly, accompanied respectfully by a porter, into whose hand he stuck a twenty-kopeck piece

He looked at his nickeled watch. It was just past seven. In was time to go. He had to make haste. They might hire another. He strode impetuously toward his destination.

He was hindered by dug-up pavements; superannuated, eternally somnolent cabbies, at street crossings; passers-by, especially *muzhiks* and women; those who came toward him, without stepping aside at all, or who stepped aside more often to the left than to the right—while those whom he had to overtake joggled along indifferently on the narrow way, and it was hard to tell at once on which side to pass them; beggars—these clung to him; and the mechanical process of walking itself.

How difficult to conquer space and time when one is in a hurry! Truly the earth drew him to itself and he purchased every step with violence and exhaustion He felt pains in his legs. This increased his spite, and intensified the glimmer of hunger in his eyes.

Moshkin thought

"I'd like to chuck it all to the devil! To all the devils!"

At last he got there.

Here was the Row, and here was House No 78 It was a four-story house, in a state of neglect; the two approaches had a gloomy look, the gates in the middle stood wide agape. He looked at the plates at the approaches; the first numbers were here, and there was no No 57. No one was in sight There was a white button at the gates; and on the brass plate below, buried under dirt, was the word "porter"

He pressed the button and entered the gate to look for the directory

of the tenants. Before he had got that far he was met by the porter, a man of insinuating appearance, with a black beard.

"Where is apartment No. 57?"

Moshkin asked the question in a careless manner, borrowed from the district official who had caused him to lose his place He also knew from experience that one must address porters just like this, and not like that. Wandering in strange gates and on strange staircases gives one a certain polish.

The porter asked somewhat suspiciously· "Who do you want?"

Moshkin drawled out his words with artless carelessness "I don't exactly know I've come in answer to an advertisement I've received a letter, but the name is not signed Only the address is given Who lives at No. 57?"

"Madame Engelhardova," said the porter.

"Engelhardt?" asked Moshkin

The porter repeated "Engelhardova"

Moshkin smiled. "And what's her Russian name?"

"Elena Petrovna," the porter answered.

"Is she a bad-tempered hag?" asked Moshkin for some reason or other

"No-o, she's a young lady Quite stylish Turn to the right of the gate"

"Only the first numbers are given there," said Moshkin

The porter said· "No, you'll also find 57 there At the very bottom"

Moshkin asked "What does she do? Does she run a business of some sort? A school? Or a journal?"

No. Madame Engelhardova had neither a school, nor a journal

"She lives on her capital," explained the porter

Madame Engelhardova's maid, who looked like a village girl, led him into the drawing room, to the right of the dark anteroom, and asked him to wait.

He waited. It was tedious and annoying. He began to examine the contents of the elaborately furnished room There were armchairs, tables, stools, folding screens, firescreens, bookshelves, and small columns upon which rested busts, lamps, and artistic gewgaws; there were mirrors, lithographs, and clocks on the walls; while the windows were decorated with hangings and flowers All these made the room crowded, oppressive, and dark Moshkin paced through this depression over the rugs. He looked at the pictures and the statues with hate.

"I'd like to chuck all this to the devil! To all the devils!"

But when the mistress of the house walked in suddenly he lowered his eyes, and hid his gleam of hunger

She was young, pink, and tall, and quite good-looking She walked quickly and with decision, like the mistress of a village house, and

swung, not altogether gracefully, her strong, handsome white arms bared from above the elbows.

She came to him and held out her hand, a little high—to be pressed, or to be kissed, as he chose. He kissed it. There was spite in his kiss He did it with a quick, resounding smack, and one of his teeth scratched her skin slightly, so that she winced. But she said nothing. She walked toward the divan, got behind the table, and sat down She showed him an armchair

When he had seated himself, she asked him: "Was that your advertisement in yesterday's paper?"

He said: "Mine"

He reconsidered, and said more politely "Yes, mine."

He felt vexed, and he thought to himself "I'd like to send her to the devil!"

She went on talking She asked him what he could do, where he had studied, where he had worked She approached the subject very cautiously, as if afraid to say too much before the proper time

He gathered that she wished to publish a journal—she had not yet decided what sort. Some sort. A small one She was negotiating for the purchase of a property Of the nature of the journal she said nothing.

She needed someone for the office. As he had said in his advertisement that he was a pedagogue, she thought that he had taught in one of the higher schools.

In any case, she wanted someone to keep the books in the office, to receive subscriptions, to carry on the editorial and the office correspondence, to receive money by post, to put the journals in wrappers, to send them to the post, to read proofs, and something else...and still something else .

The young woman spoke for half an hour She recounted the various duties in an unintelligent way.

"You need several people for all these tasks," said Moshkin sharply.

The young woman grew red with vexation. She made a wry face as she remarked eagerly "The journal will be a small one, of a special nature. If I hired several people for such a small undertaking, they would have nothing to do."

He smiled, and observed. "Well, anyhow, there'll be no chance for boredom How many hours a day will you want me to work?"

"Well, let us say from nine in the morning until seven in the evening. Sometimes, when the work is in a hurry, you might remain a little longer, or you might come in on a holiday— I believe you are single?"

"How much do you think of paying?"

"Would eighteen roubles a month be enough for you?"

He reflected a while then laughed.

"Too little."

"I can't afford more than twenty-two"

"Very well."

He rose suddenly in his rage, thrust his hand into his pocket, drew out the latchkey to his house, and said quietly but resolutely: "Hands up!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the young woman, and she quickly raised her arms.

She was sitting on the divan She was pale and trembling.

They formed a contrast—she large and strong, he small and meager

The sleeves of her dress fell to her shoulders, and the two bare white arms, stretching upward, seemed like the plump legs of a woman acrobat practicing at home. She was evidently strong enough to hold up her arms for a long time But her frightened face betrayed the deep terror of her ordeal

Moshkin, enjoying her plight, uttered slowly and sternly: "Move, if you dare! Or give a single whisper!"

He approached a picture.

"How much does this cost?"

"Two hundred and twenty, without the frame," said the young woman in a trembling voice.

He searched in his pocket and found a penknife. He cut the picture from top to bottom, and from right to left.

"Oh!" the young woman cried out.

He approached a small marble head.

"What does this cost?"

"Three hundred."

He used his latchkey and struck off the ear and the nose, and he mutilated the cheeks The young woman sighed quietly; and it was pleasant to hear her quiet sighing.

He cut up a few more pictures, and the armchair coverings, and broke a few of the gewgaws.

He then approached the young woman, and exclaimed: "Get under the divan!"

She obeyed.

"Lie there quietly, until someone comes Or else I'll throw a bomb"

He left. He met no one, either in the anteroom or on the stairs

The same house porter stood at the gates Moshkin went up to him and said "What a strange young lady you have in your house"

"Why?"

"She doesn't know how to behave. She loves a brawl. You had better go to her."

"No use my going as long as I'm not called"

"Just as you please."

He left. The gleam of hunger grew fainter in his eyes.

Moshkin continued to walk the streets. His mind realized in a slow, dull way the drawing-room scene, the mutilated pictures, and the young woman under the divan.

The dull waters of the canal lured him The receding light of the setting sun made their surface beautiful and sad, like the music of a mad composer. How rough the stone slabs were on the canal's banks, and how dusty the stones of the pavements, and what stupid and dirty children ran to meet him! Everything seemed shut against him, and everything seemed hostile to him

The green, golden waters of the canal lured him, and the gleam of hunger in his eyes went out forever

What a noise the swift splash of water made, as, ring after ring, the dead black rings spread out and out, and cut the green golden waters of the canal.

[Translation by John Cournos]

THE UNITER OF SOULS

Garmonov was extremely young, and had not yet learned to time his visits; he usually came at the wrong hour and did not know when to leave. He at last realized that he was boring Sonpolyev almost to madness. It dawned upon him that he was taking Sonpolyev from his work. He recalled that Sonpolyev had borne himself with a constrained politeness toward him, and that at times a caustic phrase escaped his lips.

Garmonov grew painfully red, a sudden flame spread itself under the smooth skin of his drawn cheeks He rose irresolutely. Then he sat down again, for he saw that Sonpolyev was about to say something. Sonpolyev took up the thread of conversation in a depressed voice

"So you've put a mask on! What do you want me to understand by that?"

Garmonov muttered in a confused way.

"It's necessary to dissemble sometimes"

Sonpolyev would not listen further, but gave way to his irritation:

"What do you understand about it? What do you know of masks? There is no mask without a responding soul. It is impossible to put on a mask without harmonizing your soul with its soul. Otherwise the mask is uncovered"

Sonpolyev grew silent, and looked miserably before him. He did not look at Garmonov. He felt again a strange, instinctive hate for him, such as he had felt at their first meeting He had always tried to hide this hate under a mask of great heartiness; he had urged

Garmonov most earnestly to visit him, and praised Garmonov's verses to everyone. But from time to time he spoke coarse, malicious words to the timid young man, who then flushed violently and shrank back within himself Sonpolyev was quick to pity him, but soon again he detested his cautious, sluggish ways; he thought him secretive and cunning.

Garmonov rose, said good-by, and went out. Sonpolyev was left alone. He felt miserable because his work had been interrupted He no longer felt in the same working mood A secret malice tormented him Why should this seemingly insignificant youth, Garmonov, evoke such bitterness in him? He had a large mouth, a long, very smooth face; his movements were slow, his voice had a drawl; there was something ambiguous about him, and enigmatical

Sonpolyev began sadly to pace the room He stopped before the wall, and began to speak There are nowadays many people who have long conversations with the wall—the wall, indeed, makes an interested interlocutor, and a faithful one.

"It is possible," he said, "to hate so strongly and so poignantly only that which is near to one. But in what does this devilish nearness consist? By what impure magic has some demon bound our souls together? Souls so unlike one another! Mine, that of a man of action with a bent for repose; and his, the soul of a large-mouthed fledgling, who is as cunning as a conspirator and as cautious as a coward And what is there in his character that conflicts so strangely with his appearance? Who has stolen the best and most needful part from this mollycoddle's soul?"

He spoke quietly, almost in a whisper Then he exclaimed almost in a rage:

"Who has done this? Man, or the enemy of man?"

And he heard the strange answer

"I!"

Someone spoke this word in a clear, shrill voice. It was like the sharp yet subdued ring of rusty steel Sonpolyev trembled nervously. He looked round him. There was no one in the room.

He sat down in the armchair and looked, scowling, on the table, buried under books and papers; and he waited. He awaited something The waiting grew painful He said loudly·

"Well, why do you hide? You've begun to speak, you might as well appear. What do you wish to say? What is it?"

He began to listen intently His nerves were strained He felt as if the slightest noise would sound like an archangel's trumpet.

Then there was sudden laughter. It was sharp, and it was like the sound of rusty metal The spring of some elaborate toy seemed to unwind itself, and trembled and tinkled in the subdued quiet of the evening. Sonpolyev put the palms of his hands over his temples, and

rested upon his elbows He listened intently. The laugh died away with mechanical evenness. It was evident that it came from somewhere quite near, perhaps from the table itself.

Sonpolyev waited. He gazed with intent eyes at the bronze inkstand. He asked derisively: "Ink sprite, was it not you that laughed?"

The sharp voice, quite unlike the muffled voice of phantoms, answered with the same derision· "No, you are mistaken; and you are not very clever. I am not an ink sprite Don't you know the rustling voices of ink sprites? You are a poor observer"

And again there was laughter, again the rusty spring tinkled as it unwound itself.

Sonpolyev said: "I don't know who you are—how should I know! I cannot see you. Only I think that you are like the rest of your fraternity: you are always near us, you poke your noses into everything, and you bring sidness and evil spells upon us; yet you dare not show yourselves before our eyes"

The metallic voice replied "The fact is, I have come to have a talk with you I love to talk with such as yourself—with half-folk"

The voice grew silent, and Sonpolyev waited for it to laugh He thought· "He must punctuate his every phrase with that hideous laughter."

Indeed, he was not mistaken The strange visitor really talked in this way· first he would speak a few words, then he would burst out into his sharp, rusty laughter It seemed as if he used his words to wind up the spring, and that later the spring relaxed itself with his laughter.

And while his laughter was still dying away with mechanical evenness, the guest showed himself from behind the inkstand.

He was small, and no taller from head to foot than the fourth finger. He was gray-steel in color Owing to his small stature and to his rapid movements, it was hard to tell whether the dim glow came from the body, or from a garment that stretched lightly over it In any case it was something smooth, something expressly simple. The body seemed like a slender keg, broader at the belt, narrower at the shoulders and below The arms and legs were of equal length and thickness, and of like nimbleness and flexibility, it seemed as though the arms were very long and thick, and the legs disproportionately short and thin The neck was short The face was hardy. The legs were widely astride. At the end of the back something was visible in the nature of a tail or a thick cone; like growths were upon the sides, under the elbows. The strange figure moved quickly, nimbly, and surely.

The monster sat down on the bronze ridge of the inkstand, pushing aside the wooden penholder with his foot in order to be more comfortable He grew quiet.

Sonpolyev examined his face It was lean, gray, and smooth His

eyes were small and glowed brightly His mouth was large. His ears stuck out and were pointed at the top.

He sat there, grasping the ridge with his hands, like a monkey. Sonpolyev asked: "Gracious guest, what do you want to say to me?"

And in answer a slight voice—mechanically even, unpleasantly sharp, and rather rusty in tone—made itself heard· "Man with a single head and a single soul, recall your past, your primitive experience of those ancient days when you and he lived in the same body."

And again there was laughter, shrill and sharp, piercing the ear.

While he was still laughing, the guest, with mechanical agility, turned a somersault, he stood on his hands, and Sonpolyev saw for the first time what he had taken for a tail was really a second head. This head did not differ in any way, as far as he could see, from the other head. Whether the heads were too small for him to observe, or whether the heads did not actually differ, it was quite certain that Sonpolyev did not see the slightest distinction between them. The arms reversed themselves as on hinges, and became quite like the legs; the first head, then losing its color, hid itself between these arm-legs; while the former legs reversed themselves mechanically and became the arms

Sonpolyev looked at the strange visitor with astonishment The visitor made wry faces and danced. And when at last he grew still and his laughter gradually died away, the second head began to speak· "How many souls have you, and how many consciousnesses? Can you tell me that? You pride yourself on the amazing differentiation of your organs, you have an idea that each member of your body fulfills its own well-defined functions. But tell me, stupid man, have you anything whereby to preserve the memory of your previous existences? The other head contains the rest of you, your early memories and your earlier experience. You argue subtly and craftily across the threshold of your pitiful consciousness, but your misfortune is that you have only one head"

The visitor again burst out into rusty, metallic laughter; this time he laughed rather long He laughed and he danced at the same time. He turned somersaults, or he rested upon one arm and upon one leg, thereby causing one of his sides to turn upward—until it was impossible to distinguish any of his four extremities. Afterwards his limbs again turned mechanically, and it became obvious that the growths on his sides were also heads Each head spoke and laughed in its turn. Each head grimaced, mocked at him.

Sonpolyev exclaimed in great fury "Be silent!"

The visitor danced, shouted, and laughed

Sonpolyev thought: "I must catch him and crush him. Or I must smash the monster with a blow of the heavy press"

But the guest continued to laugh and to make wry faces.

"I dare not take him with my hands," thought Sonpolyev "He might burn or scorch me. A knife would be better."

He opened his penknife. Then he quickly directed its sharp point toward the middle of the visitor's body The four-headed monster gathered himself into a ball, flapped his four paws, and burst into piercing laughter. Sonpolyev threw his knife on the table and exclaimed "Hateful monster! What do you want of me?"

The visitor jumped upon the sharply pointed lid of the inkstand, perched himself upon one foot, stretched his arms upward, and exclaimed in an ugly, shrill voice "Man with one head, recall your remote past when you and he were in the same body The time you shared a dangerous adventure together. Recall the dance of that terrible hour."

Suddenly it grew dark The laughter resounded, hoarse and hideous Sonpolyev's head was going round ...

Light columns moved forward out of the darkness. The ceiling was low. The torches glowed dimly The red tongues of flame wavered in the scented air. The flute poured out its notes. Handsome young limbs moved in measure to its music.

And it seemed to Sonpolyev that he was young and powerful, and that he was dancing round a banqueting table A shriveled, insolent, drunken face was looking at him; the banqueter was laughing uproariously, he was happy, and the dance of the half-naked youths pleased him Sonpolyev felt that a furious rage was strangling him, and was hindering him from carrying out his project He danced past the carousing man and his hands trembled. A reddish mist of hate dimmed his sight

His second soul wakened at the same time, it was the cunning, the sidling, the feline soul This time the youth smiled at the happy man; he floated gracefully past him, a sweet, gentle boy. The banqueter laughed loudly. The youth's naked limbs and bared torso cheered the lord of the feast.

And again there was hate, which dimmed his eyes with a red haze, and caused his hands to tremble with fury

Someone whispered angrily. "Are we going to twirl so long fruitlessly? It is time. It is time Put an end to it!"

The friendly spirits prevailed. The two souls flowed together. Hate and cunning became one There was a light, floating movement, then a powerful stroke; nimble feet swept the youth into the swift, beautiful dance. There was a hoarse outcry. Then an uproar. Everything became confused. ..

And again there was darkness.

Sonpolyev awoke· the same small monster was dancing on the table, grimacing and laughing unroariously

Sonpolyev asked. "What's the meaning of this?"

The visitor replied "Two souls once dwelt in this youth, and one of them is now yours; it is a soul of exultant emotions and of passionate desires; it is an ever-insatiable, trembling soul."

Then there was laughter, jarring on the ears. The monster danced on.

Sonpolyev shouted "Stop, you dance devil! It seems to me you wish to say that the second soul of this primitive youth lives in the feeble body of this despicable, smooth-faced youngster?"

The visitor ceased laughing and exclaimed: "Man, you have at last understood what I wished to tell you. Now perhaps you will guess who I am, and why I have come."

Sonpolyev waited until the trembling, shrill laughter ceased, and he answered his visitor "You are the uniter of souls. But why did you not join us at our birth?"

The monster hissed, curled up, then stopped and threw upward one of his side heads and exclaimed·

"We can repair this if you like Do you wish it?"

"I wish it," Sonpolyev replied quickly.

"Call him to you on New Year's Eve, and call me This hair will enable you to summon me"

The monster ran quickly to the lamp and, placing upon its stand a short, thin black hair, continued speaking "When you light it I'll come. But you ought to know that afterward neither you nor he will preserve a separate existence. And the man who will depart from here shall contain both souls, but it will be neither you nor he"

Then he disappeared His shrill, rusty laughter still resounded and tormented the ears, but Sonpolyev no longer saw anyone before him. Only a black hair on the flat stand of the lamp reminded him of his visitor.

Sonpolyev took the hair and put it into his purse.

The last day of the year was approaching midnight

Garmonov was sitting once more at Sonpolyev's They spoke quietly, in subdued voices It was painful. Sonpolyev asked. "You do not regret coming to my lonely party?"

The smooth-faced young man smiled, and this made his teeth appear very white He drawled out his words very slowly, and what he said was so tedious and so empty that Sonpolyev had no desire to listen to him Sonpolyev, without continuing the conversation, asked quite bluntly "You remember your earlier existence?"

"Not very well," answered Garmonov.

It was clear that he did not understand the question, and that he thought Sonpolyev had asked him about his childhood.

Sonpolyev frowned in his vexation He began to explain what he wished to say. He felt that his speech was involved and long. And this vexed him still more.

But Garmonov had understood. He grew cheerful. He flushed slightly. His words had a more animated sound than usual "Yes, yes, I sometimes feel that I have lived before. It is such a strange feeling. It's as if that life were fuller, bolder and freer, and that I dared to do things that I dare not do now."

"And isn't it true," asked Sonpolyev in some agitation, "that you feel as if you had lost something, as if you now lack the most significant part of your being?"

"Yes," answered Garmonov with emphasis. "That's precisely my feeling."

"Would you like to restore this missing part?" Sonpolyev went on to question him. "To be once more as before, whole and bold; to contain in one body—which shall feel itself light and young and free —the fullness of life and the union of the antagonistic identities of our human breed To be, indeed, more than whole; to feel, as it were, in one's breast the beating of a doubled heart; to be this and that; to join two clashing souls within oneself, and to wrest the necessary manhood and hardihood for great deeds from the fiery struggle of intense contradictions."

"Yes, yes," said Garmonov "I, too, sometimes dream about this"

Sonpolyev was afraid to look at the irresolute, confused, smooth face of his young visitor He vaguely feared that Garmonov's face would disconcert him He made haste.

Besides, midnight was approaching Sonpolyev said quietly: "I have the means in my hands to realize this dream. Do you wish to have it realized?"

"I should like to," said Garmonov irresolutely.

Sonpolyev raised his eyes He looked at Garmonov with firmness and decision, demanding from him, as it were, something urgent and indispensable. He looked with a fixed intentness into the dark youthful eyes, which should have flamed fire; but instead they were the cold, crafty eyes of a little man with half a soul

But it seemed to Sonpolyev that under his fixed fiery gaze Garmonov's eyes were becoming inflamed with enthusiasm and burning wrath The young man's smooth face had suddenly become significant and stern.

"Do you wish it?" Sonpolyev asked him once more.

Garmonov replied quickly, with decision· "I wish it"

And then a strange, sharp, shrill voice pronounced· 'Oh, small and cunning man; you who once during your ancient existence did a deed

of great hardihood—that was when you joined your crafty soul to the flaming soul of an indignant man—tell us in this great, rare hour, have you firmly decided to merge your soul with the other, the different soul?"

And Garmonov answered even more quickly and more decisively: "I wish to!"

Sonpolyev listened to the shrill voice of the questioner. He recognized him. He was not mistaken the "I wish to!" of Garmonov had already lost itself in the rusty, metallic laughter of that extraordinary visitor.

Sonpolyev waited until the laughter ceased; then he said· "But you should know that you will have to reject all dissembling. And all the joys of separate existence. Once I achieve my magic we shall both perish, and we shall set free our souls, or rather we shall fuse them together, and there shall be neither I nor you—there will be one in our place, and he shall be fiery in his conception, and cold in his execution. Both of us will have to go, in order to give a place to him in whom both of us will be united. My friend, have you resolved upon this terrible thing? It is a great and terrible thing"

Garmonov smiled a strange, faltering smile. But the fiery glance of Sonpolyev extinguished the smile; and the young man, as if submitting to some inevitable and fated command, pronounced in a dim, lifeless voice· "I have decided. I wish it I am not afraid"

Sonpolyev took the hair out of his wallet with trembling fingers. He lit a candle Behind it hid the four-headed visitor His gray body appeared to quake; and it vacillated in the wavering flame that fondled in its flickering embraces the white body of the submissive candle.

Garmonov opened his eyes wide, and they steadfastly followed Sonpolyev's movements. Sonpolyev put one end of the hair to the flame The hair curled slightly, grew red, gave a flare. It burned very slowly, with a quiet rhythmic crackle, which resembled the laugh of the nocturnal guest.

The words of the strange visitor were simple but terrible. At first Sonpolyev was barely conscious of them; he was so agitated and so absorbed by the burning of the magic hair that he could see no connection with the simple, familiar words of the monster Suddenly terror came upon him He had understood There was derision in those simple, terribly simple words.

"Little soul, failing little soul, timid little soul"

Sonpolyev, frightened, looked at Garmonov The smooth-faced young man sat there strangely shrunken. His face was pale Beads of perspiration showed on his forehead A pitiful, forced smile twisted his lips When he saw that Sonpolyev was looking at him he shrunk even more, and whispered is a broken, hollow voice, as if against his will· "It is terrible It is painful It is unnecessary"

Suddenly he hunched like a cat—a cunning, timid, evil cat—and sprang forward; thus deformed, he pushed out his over-red lips and blew upon the almost consumed hair. The flame flickered upward, trembled and died. A tiny cloud of blue smoke spread itself in the still air. The shrill laughter of the nocturnal visitor pierced the ears.

The hideous words resounded: "Miscarried! Miscarried!"

Garmonov sat down. He smiled guiltily and cunningly. Sonpolyev looked at him with unseeing eyes.

The clock began to strike in the next room. And to each stroke the uniter of souls responded with the hoarse outcry: "Miscarried!"

And he laughed again his metallic laughter like a wound-up spring. He whirled round and grimaced; he seemed to lose himself in the lifeless yellow electric light

At the twelfth stroke, the last voice of the passing year, the hideous voice grew silent.

"Miscarried!"

And the horrible laughter of the vanishing monster died away. Garmonov, truly rejoicing over his deliverance from an unhappy fate, rose, and said: "A happy New Year!"

[Translation by John Cournos]

Ivan Bunin

SUNSTROKE

They had had their dinner, and they left the brilliantly lighted dining room and went on deck, where they paused by the rail. She closed her eyes and, palm turned outward, pressing her hand to her cheek, laughed with unaffected charm Everything was charming about this little woman She said.

"I'm quite intoxicated .. Or I've gone wholly out of my mind Where did you drop down from? But three hours ago I scarcely suspected your existence. I don't even know where you came on board. Was it Samara? Well, it doesn't matter, my dear Really, my head's in a whirl, or is it the boat turning?"

Before them was darkness—and lights. Out of the darkness a strong soft breeze blew in their faces, while the lights glided past them

with Volga friskiness the steamer cut a sharp curve, as it approached the small pier.

The lieutenant took her hand, lifting it to his lips. The strong small hand smelled of sunburn Bliss and anguish caused his heart to grow tremulous at the thought that underneath this light linen dress she was doubtless all strong and tanned after a whole month's lying under the southern sun upon the hot sea sands (she had said she was coming from Anapu). The lieutenant murmured:

"Let's get off here . "

"Where?" she asked in astonishment.

"Here, on this pier"

"Why?"

He was silent. Again she laid the back of her hand upon her hot cheek

"You're mad.. "

"Let's get off," he repeated dully "I implore you ."

"Ach, do as you like," she said, turning away

The moving steamer crashed with a thud against the dimly lighted pier, and the pair almost fell upon each other The end of a cable came flying above their heads, then the ship receded and the water clamorously seethed, the gang-plank rattled.. .The lieutenant ran for the luggage.

In a few moments they passed through the tiny drowsy pier shed and, once out-of-doors, found themselves ankle-deep in sand In silence they seated themselves in the dust-covered hackney cab The ascent of the steep road, slow and soft with dust, punctuated with an infrequent lamppost standing awry, seemed endless At last they emerged on top, the carriage rattled along a paved street; here was a square, some administrative buildings, a belfry, the warmth and the smells of a summer night in a provincial town ...The cabby stopped before a lighted entrance. Through the open doors could be seen the steep wooden stairway. A servant, old and unshaven and wearing a pink shirt and frock coat, reluctantly took their bags and went forward on his tired feet They entered a large but terribly stuffy room still hot from the day's sun, its windows hung with white curtains, its mirror-topped mantelpiece decorated with two unused candles—and no sooner had the servant closed the door upon them than the lieutenant impetuously flung himself upon her and they both lost themselves in a kiss of such agonizing rapture that the moment was long to be remembered by them nothing like it had ever been experienced by either one or the other....

At ten o'clock the next morning, a morning hot and sunny and gay with the ringing of church bells, with the humming in the market place facing the hotel, with the smell of hay and tar and all those complex odors with which every provincial Russian town reeks, she,

this nameless little woman, for she refused to reveal her name, jestingly calling herself the lovely stranger, left him, resuming her journey. They had slept little, but when she emerged from behind the screen near the bed, within five minutes all washed and dressed, she looked as fresh as a seventeen-year-old girl. Was she embarrassed? Very little. As before, she was simple, gay and—quite rational.

"No, no, my dear," she said in response to his suggestion that they pursue the journey together. "No, you must remain here until the next boat. If we go on together, everything will be spoiled. I wouldn't like that. Please believe me, I'm not at all the sort of woman I may have led you to think All that happened here never happened before and never will again. It's as if I had suffered an eclipse. .Or, to be more precise, it's as if we both experienced something in the nature of a sunstroke ..."

The lieutenant rather lightly agreed with her In gay happy spirits he escorted her in a carriage to the pier, which they reached just as the steamer, looking rose-tinted in the morning sunlight, was on the point of departure, and, on deck, in the presence of other passengers, he kissed her, and barely managed to jump on to the already receding gang-plank.

With the same lightness of spirit he returned to the hotel. Yet something had changed Their room without her seemed quite different. It was still full of her—and empty That was strange! It still smelled of her excellent English eau-d'cologne, her unfinished cup was still on the tray, but she was no longer there. ..And the lieutenant's heart suddenly felt such tremors of tenderness that he made haste to smoke and, slapping his boot-leg with a crop, he paced up and down the room

"A strange thing!" he said aloud, laughing, yet conscious of tears in his eyes. "'Please believe me, I'm not at all the sort of woman I may have led you to think ...' And now she's gone ...An absurd woman!"

The screen was pushed to one side, the bed had not yet been made. And he felt that now he simply hadn't the courage to look upon this bed He arranged the screen around it, closed the windows that he might avoid hearing the market hum and the creaking of cartwheels, lowered the blown-out white curtains, and sat down on the divan .. Well, so that was the end to the "chance encounter!" She was gone—and was now far away, doubtless sitting in the glassed-in white salon or on deck, gazing at the immense sun-glinting river, at the passing barges, the yellow sandbanks, the distant radiance of water and sky, at the whole immeasurable expanse of the Volga.. .And farewell, forever, for eternity....For how could they ever meet again?—"I can't, after all," he mused, "for one reason or another, visit the town

where her husband is, and her three-year-old daughter, and the rest of her family, the place where she leads her everyday life!"—And that town suddenly appeared to him as a most exceptional, a forbidden town, and the thought that she would go on living in it her lonely life, perhaps frequently remembering him, remembering their chance transient encounter, while he would never see her again, this thought stunned and unmanned him. No, this could not be! It was wholly absurd, unnatural, incredible!—And he felt such anguish, such futility of existence in the years to come, that he was seized with terror, with despair.

"What the devil!" he thought, rising, and, again pacing up and down the room, he tried to avoid the sight of the bed behind the screen "What's the matter with me? Who'd have thought it possible that the first time—and there....What is there about her, and what exactly has happened? Really, it is as if it were some sort of sunstroke! But the main thing is, how am I to spend the whole day without her in this God-forsaken place?"

He remembered her vividly as she was, with all her most intimate traits; he remembered the smell of her sunburn and of her linen dress, of her strong body, the live, simple, gay sound of her voice . . The mood of but lately experienced delights of her feminine loveliness was still singularly strong upon him; nevertheless, the main thing was another, altogether new mood—that strange, incomprehensible mood, nonexistent while they were still together, a mood which he could not have even imagined yesterday, when he first made this new, merely diverting, as he had thought, acquaintance, and concerning which he could no longer speak to anyone, no, not to anyone!—"Yes, the main thing," he went on thinking, "is that you'll never be able to talk about it! And what is one to do, how is one to pass this endless day, with these memories, with this intolerable anguish, in this God-forsaken little town by that same radiant Volga upon whose waters this rose-colored steamer has borne her away!"

It was necessary to save himself, to occupy himself with something, to find amusement, to go somewhere. He resolutely put his cap on, strode vigorously, clinking his spurs, down the empty corridor; ran down the steep stairway toward the entrance....Well, where should he go? At the entrance was a young cabby in a smart peasant's coat, calmly smoking a tiny cigar, apparently waiting for someone. The lieutenant glanced at him in distraught wonder how was it possible for anyone to sit so calmly on a coach-box, and smoke, and seem so unconcerned, so indifferent?—"Evidently, in this whole town I alone am so terribly unhappy," he thought, turning in the direction of the market place

The market was dispersing. Unwittingly he trod upon the fresh

manure among the wagons, among the cartloads of cucumbers, among the new pots and pans; and the women, who sat on the ground, vied with one another in trying to call his attention to their pots, which they took in their hands and made ring with their fingers, demonstrating their quality, while the peasants dinned in his ears: "Here are first-class cucumbers, Your Honor!"—All this was stupid, absurd, and he ran from the place. He entered the church, where chanting was going on; it was loud and cheerful and determined, as if the chanters were conscious of the fulfillment of a duty, then he strode on through the streets, and in the heat of the sun wandered along the paths of a tiny neglected garden on the slope of a hill, overlooking the broad river with its splendor as of glinting steel ... The shoulder-straps and buttons of his white summer uniform grew so hot that it was impossible to touch them. The inner band of his cap was wet with perspiration, his face flamed. . .

On returning to the hotel he found delicious relief in the shelter of the large, empty, cool dining room; he removed his cap, sat down at a little table before an open window, through which the heat blew, a breeze for all that, and ordered an iced soup of pot-herbs. Everything was good, in everything there was immeasurable happiness, intense joy, even in this sultriness and in these market smells; in the whole unfamiliar little town and in this old provincial hotel it was present, this happiness, and, with it all, his heart was simply being torn to shreds He drank several small glasses of vodka, and made a snack of pickled cucumbers, and he felt that, without the least faltering, he would choose to die tomorrow, if only by some miracle he could return her and spend but this one day with her—if only to have a chance to tell her and somehow prove to her, persuade her of his harrowing and marvelous love ... But why prove it to her? Why persuade her? He could not tell why, yet it seemed more necessary than life itself.

"My nerves are playing me pranks!" he thought, as he poured himself a fifth glass of vodka

He consumed an entire small decanter, hoping in intoxication to forget, to bring to an end his agonized exultation. But, no, it only grew more intense.

He pushed away the cold herb soup, asked for black coffee, and began to smoke and to deliberate resolutely upon ways and means of freeing himself from this unexpected, sudden love. But to free himself—he felt this acutely—was impossible. And, suddenly, with a rapid movement, he rose, picked up his cap and crop, and, asking where the post office was, quickly went in the direction indicated, with the phrasing of a telegram already in his head —"Henceforth my life is wholly yours, unto death, to do with what you will."—

On reaching the thick-walled house, which sheltered the post and telegraph office, he paused in horror he knew the town where she lived, he knew that she had a husband and a three-year-old daughter, but he knew neither her first name nor her surname! Several times in the course of the evening he had asked her, and each time she laughed and said:

"Why must you know who I am? I am Maria Green, Fairyland Queen....Or simply the lovely stranger... Isn't that enough for you?"

On the corner, near the post office, was a photographic showcase. He looked steadily at a large portrait of a military man with elaborate epaulettes, with bulging eyes and low forehead, with surprisingly magnificent whiskers and expansive chest, all decorated with orders. ...How absurdly ridiculous, how horribly ordinary it all was, because his heart had been vanquished—yes, vanquished, he understood it now—by this terrible "sunstroke," this intense love, this intense happiness! He glanced at a bridal couple—a young man in a long frock coat and white necktie, his hair cut in hedgehog style, on his arm, in bridal veil—but he then diverted his gaze to the portrait of a good-looking, spirited girl in a student's cap perched at an angle....Then, tormented by a harrowing envy toward all these strangers, *non-suffering* human beings, he began to look fixedly down the street.

"Where can I go? What can I do?" the insoluble, oppressive question persisted in his mind and soul

The street was deserted. The houses were all alike, white, two-storied, middle-class, with large gardens, and all giving the appearance of being uninhabited, a thick white dust covered the pavement; all this dazzled; everything was drenched with the hot, flaming, joyous, seemingly aimless sunshine In the distance the street rose, humped and pressed against the pure, cloudless, grayish horizon, reflecting lilac There was something southern in this, reminiscent of Sebastopol, Kertch....Anapu. The thought of the last was particularly unbearable. And the lieutenant, with lowered head, screwing up his eyes against the light, with fixed gaze on the ground, reeling, stumbling, spur catching on spur, retraced his footsteps.

He returned to the hotel, shattered with fatigue, as if he had performed a long journey in Turkestan or the Sahara Gathering his last strength, he entered his large, desolate room The room had already been cleaned, and her last traces removed—only a solitary hairpin, forgotten by her, lay on the tiny table by the bed! He took off his jacket and glanced in the mirror. his face—the ordinary face of an officer, swarthy from sunburn, with whitish sun-bleached mustaches and bluish-white eyes, seeming against the sunburn whiter than they were—now showed a distraught, insane expression, and in his thin

white shirt with standing starched collar there was something youthful and infinitely pathetic He lay down on the bed, on his back, and rested his dust-covered boots on the footboard. The windows were open, the curtains lowered, and from time to time the light breeze filled them, blowing into the room sultriness and the odor of hot roofs and of all that luminous, now quite desolate, mute, unpeopled world of the Volga He lay with his arms under his head and gazed fixedly into space. His head held the dim picture of the remote south, of the sun, the sea, Anapu, and it was something fabulous—as if the town to which she had gone, the town in which she had doubtless already arrived, was like no other town—and with it all there ripened the persistent thought of suicide He closed his eyes and felt on his cheeks the trickle of pungent, hot tears—and at last fell asleep. When he again opened his eyes there was already visible, through the curtains, the darkening reddish evening sun. The breeze had died down, the room was stuffy and dry, as in a wind-furnace.... And he remembered yesterday and the morning precisely as if they had been ten years ago.

In no great haste he rose, in no great haste washed himself, then he pulled the curtains aside, rang for the servant, asked for a samovar and his bill, and for a long time he drank tea with lemon Then he ordered a cab and had his luggage taken out, and, seating himself in the reddish, burnt-out seat of the carriage, he gave the servant a whole five roubles as a tip.

"It looks, Your Honor, as though I brought you here last night!" said the cabby cheerfully, as he seized the reins.

When they reached the pier, the blue summer night already darkened above the Volga and many varicolored flames were scattered upon the river and a flame of color hung in the mast of the approaching steamer

"Got you here just in time!" said the cabby ingratiatingly.

The lieutenant also gave him five roubles, then with ticket in hand went to the pier. .Even as yesterday there was the soft sound of the hawsers, and the light dizziness from the vacillation underfoot, then came the flying end of the cable, the clamor of the seething waters under the wheels of the steamer receding from the impact.... And the sight of the crowded steamer, ablaze with light, and the smells of its kitchens, seemed to extend a warm welcome.

Another minute, and the steamer was under way, going up the river, in the direction in which it had borne her away that same morning.

Ahead of it, the dark summer sunset was becoming extinguished, gloomily, dreamily and diversifiedly reflected in the river, showing patches glimmering with tremulous ripples in the distance under the

sunset, and the flames scattered in the darkness round the steamer were receding and receding.

The lieutenant sat under cover on deck, conscious of having aged by ten years

[Translation by John Cournos]

THE GENTLEMAN FROM SAN FRANCISCO

Alas, alas, that great city Babylon,
that mighty city!
—THE APOCALYPSE

The gentleman from San Francisco—neither at Naples nor at Capri had anyone remembered his name—was journeying to the Old World for two full years, with wife and daughter, wholly for recreation

He felt firmly assured that he had every right to take a rest, pleasure in a prolonged and comfortable journey, and other things besides For such an assurance he had the good reason that, in the first place, he was rich; and that, in the second, in spite of his fifty-eight years, he was only just taking his first plunge into life Before this he had not lived but merely existed—to be sure, not so badly, but none the less putting all his hopes in the future. He had labored diligently—the coolies, whom he had employed by the thousands, knew well what this meant!—and at last he saw that much had been achieved, that he was now equal to those he had at one time appointed as his models, and he decided to give himself a well-earned rest It was a custom among his kind of people to begin the enjoyment of life with a journey to Europe, to India, to Egypt He proposed to follow their example Before all, of course, he desired to reward himself for his years of hard toil, nevertheless, he was happy also for his wife's and daughter's sakes His wife had never been distinguished for any particular susceptibility to fresh impressions, but then all elderly American women are ardent travelers. As for his daughter, a girl no longer young and somewhat ailing, the journey would do her positive good to say nothing of the benefits her health would derive, was there not always the likelihood of happy encounters during journeys? While traveling one may indeed, at times, sit at the same table with a multi-millionaire, or enjoy looking at frescoes in his company.

The itinerary planned by the gentleman from San Francisco was an extensive one In December and January he hoped to enjoy the sun of southern Italy, the monuments of antiquity, the *tarantella,* the serenades of strolling singers, and another thing for which men of his

age have a peculiar relish. the love of young Neapolitan women, conferred—let us admit—not with wholly disinterested motives; he planned to spend the Carnival in Nice, in Monte Carlo, toward which the most select society gravitated at this season—that society upon which all the blessings of civilization depend not alone the cut of the smoking jacket, but also the stability of thrones, and the declaration of wars, and the welfare of hotels—where some devote themselves with ardor to automobile and sail races, others to roulette, while a third group engages in what is called flirting; a fourth in shooting pigeons which, emerging from their shelters, gracefully soar upward above emerald-green lawns, against the background of a sea of the color of forget-me-nots, only in the next instant to strike the ground as crumpled little shapes of white The beginning of March he wanted to devote to Florence, on the eve of the Passion of our Lord to arrive at Rome, in order to hear the *Miserere* there, his plans also included Venice, and Paris, and bull-fights in Seville, and sea-bathing in the British Isles, and Athens, and Constantinople, and Palestine, and Egypt, and even Japan—naturally, on the return journey ...And everything went splendidly at first

It was the end of November; almost to Gibraltar itself the ship proceeded now through an icy mist, now through a storm with wet snow; but it sailed on unperturbed and even without rolling; the passengers on the steamer were many, and all of them persons of consequence, the ship—the famous *Atlantis*—resembled the most expensive of European hotels, with all conveniences; an all-night bar, Turkish baths, a newspaper of its own—and life upon it flowed in accordance with a splendid system of regulations: the passengers rose early, to the sound of bugles, sharply reverberating through the passages at the yet dark hour when day was so slowly and reluctantly dawning above the gray-green watery desert, ponderously restless in the mist They put on their flannel pajamas, drank coffee, chocolate, cocoa; then they reclined in marble bathtubs, performed exercises, awakening an appetite and a sense of well-being, attended to their daily toilet, and went to breakfast. Until eleven they were supposed to promenade the decks lustily, breathing in the cool freshness of the ocean, or to play at shuffleboard and other games for a renewed stimulation of the appetite; and at eleven, to seek refreshment in bouillon and sandwiches, after which they read their newspaper with pleasure and calmly awaited lunch, a meal even more nourishing and varied than the breakfast; the following two hours were dedicated to repose, all the decks were then arranged with chaises longues, upon which the travelers reclined, covered up with plaid rugs, contemplating the cloudy sky and the foaming billows flashing by beyond the rail, or else gently drowsing. At five o'clock, enlivened and refreshed, they were served with strong fragrant tea and pastries; at seven, the bugle

call announced dinner, consisting of nine courses.... At this point the gentleman from San Francisco, greatly cheered, would hurry to his magnificent cabin de luxe, to dress.

In the evening the tiers of the *Atlantis* gaped through the dusk as with fiery, countless eyes, and a great multitude of servants worked with especial feverishness in the kitchens, sculleries, and wine vaults. The ocean, heaving on the other side of the walls, was terrifying, but none gave it a thought, firmly believing it under the sway of the captain—a red-haired man of monstrous bulk and ponderousness, always seeming sleepy, resembling, in his uniform frock coat, with its golden chevrons, an enormous idol, it was only very rarely that he left his mysterious quarters to appear in public A siren on the forecastle howled ceaselessly in hellish sullenness and whined in frenzied malice, but not many of the diners heard the siren—it was drowned by the strains of a splendid string orchestra, playing exquisitely and without pause in the two-tiered hall, decorated with marble, its floors covered with velvet rugs; festively flooded with the lights of crystal lusters and gilded *girandoles,* filled to capacity with diamond-bedecked ladies in *décoletté* and men in smoking jackets, graceful waiters and deferential maîtres d'hôtel—among whom one, who took orders for wines exclusively, even walked about with a chain around his neck, like a lord mayor. A smoking jacket and perfect linen made the gentleman from San Francisco appear very much younger. Spare, not tall, awkwardly but strongly built, groomed until he shone, moderately animated, he sat in the aureate-pearly refulgence of this palatial room, at a table with a bottle of amber Johannesberg, with countless goblets, small and large, of the thinnest glass, with a fragrant bouquet of curly hyacinths. There was something Mongolian about his yellowish face with clipped silvery mustache; his large teeth gleamed with gold fillings; his stalwart, bald head glistened like old ivory. Rich, yet in keeping with her years, was the attire of his wife—a big, broad, calm woman; elaborate, yet light and diaphanous, with an innocent frankness, was that of his daughter—a girl innocently frank, tall, slender, with magnificent hair, exquisitely dressed, with breath aromatic from violet cachous and with the tenderest of tiny moles about her lips and between her shoulder blades, slightly powdered. ..

The dinner went on for two whole hours, after dinner there was dancing in the ballroom, during which the men—the gentleman from San Francisco among their number, of course—with their feet cocked up, decided, upon the basis of the latest political and stock-exchange news, the destinies of nations, smoking Havana cigars and drinking liqueurs until their faces were flushed, while seated in the bar, where the waiters were Negros in red jackets, the whites of their eyes resembling peeled, hard-boiled eggs. The ocean, with a dull roar, was moving in black mountains on the other side of the wall, the snow-gate

whistled fiercely through the soaked rigging; the whole ship quivered as it mastered both the gale and the mountains, sundering to either side, as though with a plow, their shifting masses, which again and again boiled up and flung themselves high, with tails of foam; the siren, stifled by the fog, was moaning with a deathly anguish; the lookouts up in their crow's-nest froze with the cold and grew dazed from straining their attention beyond their strength. Akin to the grim sultry depths of the infernal regions, akin to their ultimate, their ninth circle, was the womb of the steamer, below the water line—that womb where dully gurgled the gigantic furnaces, devouring with their fiery maws mountains of hard coal, cast into them by men stripped to the waist, purple from the flames, and with smarting, filthy sweat pouring over them, while here, in the bar, men threw their legs over the arms of their chairs, with never a care, sipping cognac and liqueurs, and were wafted among clouds of spicy smoke as they indulged in refined conversation; in the ballroom everything was radiant with light and warmth and joy; couples were now whirling in waltzes, now swaying in the tango—and the music insistently, in some delectably shameless melancholy, supplicated always of one, always of the same thing .. There was an ambassador among this brilliant throng—a lean, modest little old man, there was a rich man—clean-shaven, lanky, of indeterminate years, and with the appearance of a prelate, in an old-fashioned frock coat, there was a well-known Spanish writer, there was a world-celebrated beauty, already just the very least trifle faded and of an unenviable morality; there was an exquisite couple in love with each other, whom all watched with curiosity and whose happiness was unconcealed *he* danced only with *her*, sang—and with great ability—only to *her* accompanment, everything they did was carried out so charmingly; and only the captain knew that this pair was hired by Lloyd's to play at love for good money, and that they had been sailing for a long time, now on one ship, now on another.

At Gibraltar everybody was gladdened by the sun—it seemed like early spring; a new passenger, whose person aroused the general interest, made his appearance on board the *Atlantis*—he was the hereditary prince of a certain Asiatic kingdom, traveling incognito; a little man who somehow seemed to be all made of wood, even though he was agile in his movements, broad of face, with narrow eyes, in gold-rimmed spectacles; a trifle unpleasant owing to the fact that his skin showed through his coarse black mustache like that of a corpse; on the whole, however, he was charming, simple, and modest On the Mediterranean Sea there was a whiff of winter again; the billows ran high, were as multi-colored as the tail of a peacock, and had snowy-white crests, due, in spite of the sparklingly bright sun and perfectly clear sky, to a *tramontana*, a chill northern wind from beyond the mountains, that was joyously and madly rushing to meet the ship ..Then, on the

second day, the sky began to pale, the horizon became covered with mist, land was nearing; Ischia, Capri appeared, through the binoculars, Naples—lumps of sugar strewn at the foot of some dove-colored mass—could be seen; while over it and this dove-colored object were visible the ridges of distant mountains, vaguely glimmering with the dead whiteness of snow. There was a great number of people on deck; many of the ladies and gentlemen had already put on short, light fur coats, with the fur outside; Chinese boys, patient and always speaking in a whisper, bow-legged striplings with pitch-black queues reaching to their heels and with eyelashes as long and thick as those of young girls, were already dragging, little by little, sundry plaids, canes, and portmanteaux and grips of alligator hide toward the companionways ... The daughter of the gentleman from San Francisco was standing beside the prince, who had been, by a happy chance, presented to her yesterday evening, and she pretended to be looking intently into the distance, in a direction he was pointing out to her, telling, explaining something or other to her, hurriedly and quietly. On account of his height he seemed a boy by contrast with others—he was odd and not at all prepossessing of person, with his spectacles, his bowler, his English greatcoat, while his scanty mustache looked just as if it were of horsehair, and the swarthy, thin skin seemed to be drawn tightly over his face, and somehow had the appearance of being lacquered—but the young girl was listening to him, without understanding, in her perturbation, what he was saying; her heart was thumping from an incomprehensible rapture in his presence and from pride that he was speaking with her, and not someone else; everything about him that was different from others—his lean hands, his clear skin, under which flowed the ancient blood of kings, even his wholly unpretentious, yet somehow singularly neat, European dress—everything held a secret, inexplicable charm, evoked a feeling of amorousness. As for the gentleman from San Francisco himself—he, in a high silk hat, in gray spats over patent-leather shoes, kept on glancing at the famous beauty, who was standing beside him—a tall blonde of striking figure, with eyes painted in the latest Parisian fashion; she was holding a diminutive, hunched-up, mangy lap dog on a silver chain and was chattering to it without pause. And the daughter, in some vague embarrassment, tried not to notice her father.

Like all Americans of means, he was very generous while traveling, and, like all of them, believed in the full sincerity and good will of those who brought him food and drink with such solicitude, who served him from morn till night, anticipating his slightest wish; of those who guarded his cleanliness and rest, lugged his things around, summoned porters for him, delivered his trunks to hotels. Thus had it been everywhere, thus had it been on the ship, and thus it had to be in Naples as well Naples grew, and drew nearer; the musicians, the

brass of their instruments flashing, had already clustered upon the deck, and suddenly deafened everybody with the triumphant strains of a march; the gigantic captain, in his full-dress uniform, appeared upon his stage, and, like a gracious pagan god, waved his hand amiably to the passengers—and to the gentleman from San Francisco it seemed that it was for him alone that the march so beloved by proud America was thundering, that it was he whom the captain was felicitating upon a safe arrival And every other passenger felt similarly about himself—or herself. And when the *Atlantis* finally entered the harbor, heaved to at the wharf with her many-tiered mass, black with people, and the gang-planks clattered down—what a multitude of porters and their helpers in caps with gold braid, what a multitude of different *commissionaires,* whistling gamins, and strapping ragamuffins with packets of colored postalcards in their hands, made a rush toward the gentleman from San Francisco with offers of their services! And he smiled, with a kindly contemptuousness, at these ragamuffins, as he went toward the automobile of precisely that hotel where there was a likelihood of the prince's stopping He drawled through his teeth, now in English, now in Italian:

"Go away! *Via!*"

Life at Naples at once assumed its wonted, ordered routine· in the early morning, breakfast in the gloomy dining room with its damp draught from windows opening on some sort of a stony little garden The sky was overcast, holding out little promise, and there was the usual crowd of guides at the door of the vestibule; then came the first smiles of a warm, rosy sun. From the high hanging balcony Vesuvius came into view, enveloped to its foot by radiant morning mists, and the silver-and-pearl eddies on the surface of the Bay, and the delicate contour of Capri against the horizon One could see tiny burros, harnessed in twos to little carts, running down below over the quay, sticky with mire, and detachments of diminutive soldiers, marching somewhere to lively and exhilarating music. Next came the procession to the waiting automobile and the slow progress through populous, narrow, and damp corridors of streets, between tall, many-windowed houses, the inspection of lifelessly clean museums, evenly and pleasantly, yet bleakly, lighted, seemingly illuminated by snow; or of cool churches, smelling of wax, which everywhere and always contain the same things a majestic portal, screened by a heavy curtain of leather, and inside—empty vastness, silence, quiescent tiny flames of a seven-branched candlestick glowing redly in the distant depths, on an altar bedecked with laces; a solitary old woman among the dark wooden pews; slippery tombstones underfoot; and someone's "Descent from the Cross"—it goes without saying, a celebrated one At one o'clock there was luncheon upon the mountain of San Martino, where, toward noon, not a few people of the very first quality gathered, and where

the daughter of the gentleman from San Francisco had once almost fainted away for joy, because she thought she saw the prince sitting in the hall, although she already knew through the newspapers that he had left for a temporary stay at Rome. At five came tea at the hotel, in the showy salon, so cozy with its rugs and flaming fireplaces, and after that it was already time to prepare for dinner—and once more came the mighty clamor of the gong reverberating through the hotel; once more the moving queues of ladies in *décolleté,* rustling in their silks upon the staircases and reflected in all the mirrors; once more the palatial dining room, widely and hospitably opened, and the red jackets of the musicians upon their platform, and the black cluster of waiters about the maître d'hôtel, who, with inordinate skill, was ladling some sort of thick, reddish soup into plates ... The dinners, as everywhere else, were the crowning glory of each day, the guests dressed for them as for a party, and these dinners were so abundant in edibles, and wines, and mineral waters, and sweets, and fruits, that toward eleven o'clock at night the chambermaids were distributing through all the rooms rubber bags with hot water to warm the stomachs.

As it happened, the December of that year proved to be not a wholly successful one for Naples, the porters grew confused when one talked with them of the weather, and merely shrugged their shoulders guiltily, muttering that they could not recall such a year—although it was not the first year that they had been forced to mutter this, and to base their statement on that "something terrible is happening everywhere"; there were unheard-of storms and torrents of rain on the Riviera; there was snow in Athens; Etna was also all snowed over and was aglow at night, tourists were fleeing from Palermo in all directions, to escape from the cold. The morning sun deceived the Neapolitans every day that winter: toward noon the sky became gray and a fine rain began falling, but grew heavier and colder all the time; then the palms near the entrance of the hotel glistened as though they were of tin, the town seemed especially dirty and cramped, the museums curiously alike; the cigar stumps of the corpulent cabmen, whose rubber coats flapped in the wind like wings, seemed to have an insufferable stench, while the energetic snapping of their whips over their scrawny-necked nags was patently false; the footgear of the *signori* sweeping the rails of the tramways seemed horrible; the women, splashing through the mud, their black-haired heads bared to the rain, appeared hideously short-legged, as for the dampness, and the stench of putrid fish from the sea foaming at the quay—there was nothing to be said. The gentleman and the lady from San Francisco began quarreling in the morning, their daughter either walked about pale, with a headache, or, coming to life again, went into raptures over everything, and was, at such times, both charming and beautiful: beautiful were those tender and complex emotions which had been awakened within her by meet-

ing that unsightly man through whose veins flowed uncommon blood; for, after all is said and done, perhaps it is of no actual importance just what it is, precisely, that awakens a maiden's soul—whether it be money, or fame, or illustrious ancestry.... Everybody asserted that things were quite different in Sorrento, in Capri—there it was both warmer and sunnier, and the lemons were in blossom, and the customs were more honest, and the wine was better. And so the family from San Francisco resolved to set out with all its trunks to Capri, and, after seeing it all, after treading the stones where the palace of Tiberius had once stood, after visiting the fairy-like caverns of the Blue Grotto, and hearing the bagpipers of Abruzzi, who for a whole month preceding Christmas wander over the island and sing the praises of the Virgin Mary, they meant to settle in Sorrento.

On the day of departure—a most memorable one for the family from San Francisco!—there was no early-morning sun. A heavy fog hid Vesuvius to the very base; this gray fog spread low over the leaden swell of the sea that was lost to the eye at a distance of a half a mile. Capri was quite invisible—as if there had never been such an island in the world. And the tiny steamer that set out for it was so tossed from side to side that the family from San Francisco was laid prostrate upon the divans in the sorry general cabin of this tiny steamer, their feet wrapped up in plaid rugs and their eyes closed. The mother suffered—so she thought—more than anybody; she was overcome by seasickness several times; it seemed to her that she was dying, while the stewardess, who always ran up to her with a small basin—she had been, for many years, day in and day out, rolling on these waves, in sultry weather and in cold, and yet was still tireless and kind to everybody—merely laughed. The daughter was dreadfully pale and held a slice of lemon between her teeth; now she could not have been comforted even by the hope of a chance meeting with the prince at Sorrento, where he intended to be about Christmas. The father, who was lying on his back, in roomy overcoat and large cap, never opened his jaws all the way over; his face had grown darker and his mustache whiter, and his head ached dreadfully: during the last days, thanks to the bad weather, he had been drinking too heavily of evenings, and had too much admired the "living pictures" in the haunts of manufactured libertinage. But the rain kept on lashing against the jarring windows, the water from them running down on the divans; the wind, howling, bent the masts, and at times, aided by the onslaught of a wave, careened the little steamer entirely to one side, and then something in the hold would roll with a rumble. During the stops at Castellamare, at Sorrento, things were a trifle more bearable, but even then the rocking was fearful—the shore, with all its cliffs, gardens, pine groves, its pink and white hotels and hazy mountains clad in wavy greenery, swayed up and down as if on a swing; boats bumped up against the

sides of the ship; sailors and steerage passengers were shouting fiercely; somewhere, as if it had been crushed, a baby was wailing and smothering, a raw wind was blowing in at the door; and, from a swaying boat with the flag of the Hotel Royal, a lisping gamin was screaming, luring travelers "Kgoya-al! Hotel Kgoya-al!..." And the gentleman from San Francisco, feeling himself to be incredibly old—which was as it should be—was already thinking with sadness and loathing of all these Royals, Splendids, Excelsiors, and of these greedy, insignificant little men, reeking of garlic, called Italians Once, having opened his eyes and raised himself from the divan, he saw underneath the craggy barrier on the shore a cluster of stone hovels, moldy through and through, stuck one on top of another near the very edge of the water, near boats, near all sorts of rags, tins, and brown nets—hovels so wretched that, at the recollection this was the very Italy he had come here to enjoy, he felt despair....Finally, at twilight, the dark mass of the island began to draw near, seemingly bored through and through by little red lights near its base; the wind became softer, warmer, more fragrant; over the abating waves, as opalescent as black oil, golden serpents flowed from the lanterns on the wharf... Then came the sudden rumble of the anchor, and it fell with a splash into the water; the savage shouts of the boatmen, vying with one another, floated in from all quarters—and at once the heart grew lighter, the lamps in the general cabin shone more brightly, a desire arose to eat, to drink, to smoke, to be stirring....Ten minutes later the family from San Francisco had descended into a large boat; within fifteen minutes it had set foot upon the stones of the wharf, and had then got into a bright little railway car and to its buzzing started the ascent of the slope, amid the stakes of the vineyards, half-crumbled stone enclosures, and wet, gnarled orange trees, some of them under coverings of straw—trees with thick, glossy foliage, aglimmer with the orange fruits, all these objects were sliding downward, past the open windows of the little car, toward the base of the mountain....Sweetly smells the earth of Italy after rain, and her every island has its own, its especial aroma!

On this evening the island of Capri was damp and dark. But now for an instant it came to life; lights sprang up here and there, as always on the steamer's arrival At the top of the mountain, where stood the station of the *funicular,* there was another throng of those whose duty it was to receive fittingly the gentleman from San Francisco. There were other arrivals, but they merited no attention—several Russians who had settled in Capri—absent-minded because of their bookish meditations, unkempt, bearded, spectacled, the collars of their old frayed overcoats turned up; and a group of long-legged, long-necked, round-headed German youths in Tyrolean costumes, with canvas knapsacks slung over their shoulders, these stood in no need

of anybody's services, feeling themselves at home everywhere, and knowing how to practice the strictest economies The gentleman from San Francisco, on the other hand, who was calmly keeping aloof from both the one group and the other, was immediately observed. He and his ladies were promptly helped out, some men running ahead of him to show him the way. Again he was surrounded by urchins, and by those stalwart Caprian wives who bear on their heads the portmanteaux and trunks of respectable travelers. The wooden pattens of these women clattered over a little square, which seemed to belong to some opera, an electric globe swaying above it in the damp wind. The rabble of urchins burst into sharp, birdlike whistles—and, as if on a stage, the gentleman from San Francisco proceeded in their midst toward some medieval arch underneath houses that had become merged into one mass, beyond which a little echoing street—with the tuft of a palm above flat roofs on its left, and with blue stars in the black sky overhead—led slopingly to the now visible grand entrance of the hotel, all agleam with light.... And again it seemed that it was in honor of the guests from San Francisco that this damp little town of stone on a craggy little island of the Mediterranean Sea had come to life, that it was they who had made the proprietor of the hotel so happy and affable, that it was only for them that the Chinese gong began to sound the summons to dinner through all the stories of the hotel, the instant they had set foot in the vestibule

The proprietor, a young man of courtly elegance, who had met them with a polite and exquisite bow, for a minute dumfounded the gentleman from San Francisco. After a glance at him, the gentleman from San Francisco suddenly remembered that just the night before, among the confusion of numerous images which had beset him in his sleep, he had seen precisely this gentleman—just like him, down to the least detail: in the same sort of frock with rounded skirts, and with the same pomaded and painstakingly combed head. Startled, he almost paused But since, from long, long before, there was not even a mustard seed of any sort of so-called mystical emotions left in his soul, his astonishment was dimmed the same instant, as he proceeded through a corridor of the hotel, he spoke jestingly to his wife and daughter of this strange coincidence of dream and reality And only his daughter glanced at him with alarm at that moment her heart suddenly contracted from sadness, from a feeling of their loneliness upon this dark alien island—a feeling so strong that she almost burst into tears. Nevertheless, she said nothing of her feelings to her father—as always.

An exalted personage—Rais XVII—who had been visiting Capri, had just taken his departure And now the guests from San Francisco were conducted to the same apartments that he had occupied. To them was assigned the ablest and handsomest chambermaid, a Belgian, whose waist was slenderly and firmly corseted, and whose tiny starched

cap looked like a scalloped crown; also, the best-looking and most dignified of flunkies, a fiery-eyed Sicilian, black as coal; and the nimblest of bell-boys, the short and stout Luigi—a fellow who was very fond of a joke, and who had served many masters in his time. And a minute later there was a slight tap at the door of the room of the gentleman from San Francisco—the French maître d'hôtel had come to find out if the newly arrived guests would dine, and, in the event of an answer in the affirmative—of which, of course, there was no doubt—to inform them that the *carte de jour* consisted of crawfish, roast beef, asparagus, pheasants, and so forth. The floor was still rocking under the gentleman from San Francisco—so badly had the atrocious little Italian steamer tossed him about—but, without hurrying, with his own hands, although somewhat awkwardly from being unaccustomed to such things, he shut a window that had banged when the maître d'hôtel had entered and had let in the odors of the distant kitchen and of the wet flowers in the garden, and with a lingering deliberateness replied that they would dine, that their table must be placed as far as possible from the door, at the other end of the dining room, that they would drink local wine and champagne—moderately dry and only slightly chilled. The maître d'hôtel approved every word of his, in most varied intonations, having, in any case, but one significance—that there was never a doubt, nor could there possibly be any, about the correctness of the wishes of the gentleman from San Francisco, and that everything would be carried out with precision. In conclusion he inclined his head, and asked deferentially.

"Will that be all, sir?"

And, having received in answer a leisurely "Yes," he added that the *tarantella* would be danced in the vestibule tonight—the dancers would be Carmella and Giuseppe, known to all Italy and to "the entire world of tourists"

"I have seen her on postcards," said the gentleman from San Francisco in a wholly inexpressive voice. "As for this Giuseppe—is he her husband?"

"Her cousin, sir," answered the maître d'hôtel.

And, after a brief pause during which he appeared to be considering something, the gentleman from San Francisco dismissed him with a nod.

And then he once more began his preparations, as if for a wedding ceremony· he turned on all the electric lights, filling all the mirrors with reflections of light and glitter, of furniture and opened trunks; he began shaving and washing, ringing the bell every minute, while other impatient rings from his wife's and daughter's rooms sounded through the entire corridor and interrupted his. And Luigi, in his red apron, was rushing forward to answer the bell, with an agility peculiar to many stout men, not omitting grimaces of horror that made the

chambermaids, running by with glazed porcelain pails in their hands, laugh till they cried. He knocked on the door with his knuckles, and asked with an assumed timidity, with a deference which verged on idiocy·

"Ha sonato, signore?"

And from the other side of the door came an unhurried, grating voice, humiliatingly polite:

"Yes, come in...."

What were the thoughts, what were the emotions of the gentleman from San Francisco on this evening, that was to be of such significance to him? He felt nothing exceptional—for the trouble in this world is just that everything is apparently all too simple! And even if he had sensed within his soul that something was impending, he would, nevertheless, have thought that this thing would not occur for some time to come—in any case, not immediately Besides that, like everyone who has experienced the rocking of a ship, he wanted very much to eat, was looking forward to the first spoonful of soup, the first mouthful of wine, and performed the usual routine of dressing, even with a certain degree of exhilaration that left no time for reflections.

After shaving and washing himself, after inserting several artificial teeth properly, he remained standing before a mirror, while he wetted the remnants of his thick, pearly-gray hair and plastered it down around his swarthy yellow skull, with brushes set in silver; drew a suit of cream-colored silk underwear over his strong old body, beginning to be full at the waist from excesses in food, and put silk socks and dancing slippers on his shriveled, splayed feet, sitting down, he put in order his black trousers, drawn high by black silk braces, as well as his snowy-white shirt, with the bosom bulging out; put the links through the glossy cuffs, and began the agonizing manipulation of the collar button underneath the stiffly starched collar. The floor was still swaying beneath him, the tips of his fingers pained him greatly, the collar button at times nipped hard the flabby skin in the hollow under his Adam's apple, but he was persistent; and at last, his eyes glittering from the exertion, his face all livid from the collar that was choking his throat—a collar far too tight—he did succeed in accomplishing his task, and sat down in exhaustion in front of the pier glass He was reflected in it from head to foot, a reflection that was repeated in all the other mirrors.

"Oh, this is dreadful!" he muttered, lowering his strong bald head, and without trying to understand, without considering just what, precisely, was dreadful; then, with an accustomed and attentive glance, he inspected his stubby fingers, with gouty hardenings at the joints, and his convex nails of an almond color, and repeated, with conviction· "This is dreadful . "

At this point the second gong, sonorously, as in some pagan temple, dinned through the entire house. And, getting up quickly from his seat, the gentleman from San Francisco drew his collar still tighter with the necktie and his stomach by means of the low-cut vest, put on his smoking jacket, arranged his cuffs, surveyed himself once more in the mirror.... This Carmella, swarthy, with eyes which she knew well how to use tellingly, resembling a mulatto woman, clad in a dress of many colors, with the color of orange predominant, must dance exceptionally, he imagined And, stepping briskly out of his room and walking over the carpet to the next one—his wife's—he asked, loudly, if they would be ready soon?

"In five minutes, Dad!" a girl's voice, ringing and by now gay, responded from the other side of the door.

"Very well," said the gentleman from San Francisco

And, leisurely, he walked through red-carpeted corridors and down staircases, in quest of the reading room The servants he met stood aside and hugged the wall to let him pass, but he kept on his way as though he had never even noticed them. An old woman who was late for dinner, already stooping, with milky hair but *décolletté* in a light-gray gown of silk, was hurrying with all her might, but drolly, in a henlike manner, and he easily outstripped her. Near the glass doors of the dining room, where all the guests had already assembled and were beginning their dinner, he stopped before a little table piled with boxes of cigars and Egyptian cigarettes, took a large Manila cigar, and flung three *lire* upon the little table Walking on the terrace, he glanced, in passing, through the open window, out of the darkness he felt a breath of the balmy air upon him, thought he saw the tip of an ancient palm. Its gigantic fronds seemed to reach out across the stars. He heard the distant, measured din of the sea .. In the reading room —snug, quiet, and illuminated only above the tables, some gray-haired German was standing, rustling the newspapers—unkempt, resembling Ibsen, in round silver spectacles and with mad, astonished eyes. After scrutinizing him coldly, the gentleman from San Francisco sat down in a deep leather chair in a corner near a green-shaded lamp, put on his pince-nez, twitching his head because his collar was choking him, and hid himself completely behind the newspaper. He rapidly ran through the headlines of certain items, read a few lines about the never-ceasing Balkan war, with an accustomed gesture turned the newspaper over—when suddenly the lines flared up before him with a glassy glare, his neck became taut, his eyes bulged out, the pince-nez flew off his nose.... He lunged forward, tried to swallow some air—and made a wild horse sound, his lower jaw sank, lighting up his entire mouth with the reflection of the gold fillings; his head dropped back on his shoulder and began to sway; the bosom of his shirt bulged out like a basket—and his whole body, squirming, his heels catching

the carpet, slid downward to the floor, desperately struggling with someone.

Had the German not been in the reading room, the hotel attendants would have managed, quickly and adroitly, to hush up this dreadful occurrence; instantly, through back passages, seizing him by the head and feet, they would have rushed off the gentleman from San Francisco as far away as possible—and not a soul among the guests would have found out what he had been up to. But the German had dashed out of the reading room with a scream—he had aroused the entire house, the entire dining room. And many jumped up from their meal, overturning their chairs; many, paling, ran toward the reading room. "What—what has happened?" was heard in all languages—and no one gave a sensible answer, no one comprehended anything, since even to this day men are amazed most of all by death, and will not, in any circumstances, believe in it The proprietor dashed from one guest to another, trying to detain those who were running away and to pacify them with hasty assurances that this was just a trifling occurrence, a slight fainting spell of a certain gentleman from San Francisco.... No one listened to him; many had seen the flunkeys and corridor attendants tearing the necktie, the vest, and the rumpled smoking jacket off this gentleman, and even, for some reason or other, the dancing slippers off his splayed feet, clad in black silk. He was still struggling He was still obdurately wrestling with death; he absolutely refused to yield to her, who had so unexpectedly and inconsiderately fallen upon him. His head was swaying, he rattled hoarsely, like one with his throat cut, his eyes had rolled up, like a drunkard's ... When he was hurriedly carried in and laid upon a bed in Room Number Forty-three—the smallest, the poorest, the dampest and the coldest, situated at the end of the bottom corridor—his daughter ran in, with her hair down, in a little dressing-gown that had flown open, her bosom, raised up by the corset, uncovered; then his wife, big and ponderous, already dressed for dinner—her mouth rounded in terror.... But by now he had ceased even wagging his head.

A quarter of an hour later everything in the hotel had assumed a semblance of order. Nevertheless, the evening was irreparably spoiled. Some guests, returning to the dining room, finished their dinner, but in silence, with aggrieved faces, while the proprietor would approach now one group, now another, shrugging his shoulders in polite yet impotent irritation, feeling himself guilty without guilt, assuring everybody that he understood very well "how unpleasant all this was," and pledging his word that he would take "all measures within his power" to remove this unpleasantness The *tarantella* had to be called off, all superfluous electric lights were extinguished, the majority of the guests withdrew into the bar, and it became so quiet that one heard distinctly the ticking of the clock in the vestibule, whose sole

occupant was a parrot, dully muttering something, fussing in his cage before going to sleep, contriving to doze off at last with one claw ludicrously stretched up to the upper perch.... The gentleman from San Francisco was lying upon a cheap iron bed, under coarse woolen blankets, upon which the dull light of a single bulb beat down from the ceiling. An ice-bag was askew on his moist and cold forehead. The livid face, already dead, was gradually growing cold; the hoarse rattling, expelled from the open mouth, illuminated by the reflection of gold, was growing fainter. This was no longer the gentleman from San Francisco rattling—he no longer existed—but some other. His wife, his daughter, the doctor, and the servants were standing, gazing at him dully Suddenly, that which they awaited and feared was consummated—the rattling ceased abruptly. And slowly, slowly, before the eyes of all, a pallor suffused the face of the man who had died, and his features seemed to grow finer, to become irradiated with a beauty which had been rightfully his in the long ago....

The proprietor entered. *"Già è morto,"* said the doctor to him in a whisper. The proprietor, with dispassionate face, shrugged his shoulders. The wife, down whose cheeks the tears were quietly coursing, walked up to him and timidly said that the deceased ought now to be carried to his own room.

"Oh, no, madam," hastily, correctly, but now without any amiability and not in English, but in French, retorted the proprietor, who was not at all interested now in such trifling sums as the arrivals from San Francisco might leave in his coffers. "That is absolutely impossible, madam," he said, and added in explanation that he valued the apartments occupied by them very much; that, were he to carry out her wishes, everybody in Capri would know it and the tourists would shun those apartments.

The young woman, who had been all this time gazing at him strangely, sat down on a chair and, pressing a handkerchief to her mouth, burst into sobs. The wife dried her tears immediately, her face flaring up She adopted a louder tone, making demands in her own language, and still incredulous of the fact that all respect for them had been completely lost. The proprietor, with polite dignity, cut her short. if madam was not pleased with the customs of the hotel, he would not venture to detain her; and he firmly announced that the body must be gotten away this very day, at dawn, that the police had already been notified, and one of the police officers would be here very soon and would carry out all the necessary formalities. Was it possible to secure even a common coffin in Capri?—madam asked. Regrettably, no—it was beyond possibility, and no one would be able to make one in time. It would be necessary to have recourse to something else.... He had a suggestion.—English soda water came in

large and long boxes....It was possible to knock the partitions out of such a box....

At night the whole hotel slept. The window in Room Number Forty-three was opened—it gave out upon a corner of the garden where, near a high stone wall with broken glass upon its crest, a consumptive banana tree was growing; the electric light was switched off; the key was turned in the door; and everybody went away. The dead man remained in the darkness—the blue stars looked down upon him from the sky, a cricket with a pensive insouciance began his song in the wall....In the dimly lit corridor two chambermaids were seated on a window sill, at some darning. Luigi, in slippers, entered with a pile of clothing in his arms.

"Pronto?" he asked solicitously, in an audible whisper, indicating with his eyes the fearsome door at the end of the corridor. And, he waved his hand airily in that direction....*"Partenza!"* he called out in a whisper, as though he were speeding a train, the usual phrase used in Italian depots at the departure of trains—and the chambermaids, choking with silent laughter, let their heads sink on each other's shoulder.

Thereupon, hopping softly, he ran up to the very door, gave it the merest tap, and, inclining his head to one side, in a low voice, asked with the utmost deference:

"Ha sonato, signore?"

And, squeezing his throat, thrusting out his lower jaw, in a grating voice, slowly and sadly, he answered his own question, in English, as though from the other side of the door:

"Yes, come in...."

And at dawn, when it had become light beyond the window of Room Number Forty-three, and a humid wind had begun to rustle the tattered leaves of the banana tree; when the blue sky of morning had lifted and spread out over the island of Capri, and the pure and clear-cut summit of Monte Solaro had grown golden against the sun that was rising beyond the distant blue mountains of Italy; when the stonemasons, who were repairing the tourists' paths on the island, had set out to work—a long box that had formerly been used for soda water was brought to Room Number Forty-three. Soon it became very heavy, and was pressing hard against the knees of the junior porter, who bore it off briskly on a one-horse cab over the white paved highway that was sinuously winding over the slopes of Capri, among the stone walls and the vineyards, ever downwards, to the sea itself. The cabby, a puny little man with reddened eyes, in an old jacket with short sleeves and in much-worn shoes, was suffering the aftereffects of drink—he had spent the whole night long in playing with dice in a *tratoria*—and kept on lashing his sturdy little horse, rigged out in Sicilian fashion, with all sorts of little bells livelily jingling upon the bridle

with its tufts of colored wool, and upon the brass points of its high pad; with a yard-long feather stuck in its cropped forelock—a feather that shook as the horse ran. The cabby kept silent; he was oppressed by his shiftlessness, his vices—by the circumstance that he had, that night, lost to the last mite all those coppers with which his pockets had been filled. But the morning was fresh; in air such as this, with the sea all around, under the morning sky, the aftereffects of drink quickly evaporate, and a man is soon restored to a carefree mood, and the cabby was furthermore consoled by that unexpected windfall, conferred upon him by some gentleman from San Francisco, whose lifeless head was bobbing from side to side in the box at his back... The little steamer—a beetle lying far down below, against the tender and vivid deep blue with which the Bay of Naples is so densely and highly flooded—was already blowing its final whistles, that reverberated loudly all over the island, whose every bend, every ridge, every stone, was as distinctly visible from every point as if there were absolutely no such thing as atmosphere. Near the wharf the junior porter was joined by the senior, who was speeding with the daughter and wife of the gentleman from San Francisco in his automobile—they were pale, with eyes hollow from tears and a sleepless night. And ten minutes later the little steamer was again noisily making its way through the water, again running toward Sorrento, toward Castellamare, carrying away from Capri, for all time, the family from San Francisco.... And again peace and quiet reigned upon the island.

Upon this island, two thousand years ago, had lived a man who had become completely enmeshed in his cruel and foul deeds, who had for some reason seized the power over millions of people in his hands, and who, having himself lost his head at the senselessness of this power and from the fear of death by assassination by someone, lurking round the corner, had committed cruelties beyond all measure—and humankind has remembered him for all time; and those who, in their collusion, just as incomprehensively and, in substance, just as cruelly as he, reign at present in power over this world, gather from all over the earth to gaze upon the ruins of that stone villa where he had dwelt on one of the steepest ascents of the island. On this marvelous morning all those who had come to Capri for just this purpose were still sleeping in the hotels, although, toward the entrances, were already being led little mouse-gray burros with red saddles, upon which, after awaking and sating themselves with food, Americans and Germans, men and women, young and old, would again ponderously clamber up the steep paths this day, and after whom would again run the old Caprian beggar women, with sticks in their gnarled hands—would run over stony paths, and always uphill, up to the very summit of Mount Tiberio Comforted by the knowledge that the dead old man from San Francisco, who had likewise been planning to go with

them but instead of that had only frightened them with a reminder of death, had already been shipped off to Naples, the travelers slept on heavily, and the quiet of the island was still undisturbed, the shops in the town were still shut. The market place in the little square alone was carrying on traffic—in fish and greens; and the people there were all simple folk, among whom, without anything to do, as always, was standing Lorenzo, the boatman, famous all over Italy—a tall old man, a carefree rake and a handsome fellow, who had served more than once as a model to many artists; he had brought, and had already sold for a trifle, two lobsters that he had caught that night and which were already rustling in the apron of the cook of that very hotel where the family from San Francisco had passed the night, and now he could afford to stand in calm idleness even until the evening, looking about him with a kingly bearing, consciously and flauntingly picturesque with his tatters, clay pipe, and a red woolen *beretta* drooping over one ear.

And along the precipices of Monte Solaro, upon the ancient Phœnician road, hewn out of the crags, down its stone steps, two mountaineers of Abruzzi were descending from Anacapri. One had bagpipes under his leathern mantle—a large bag made from the skin of a she-goat, with two pipes; the other had something in the nature of wooden Pan's-reeds They went on—and all the land, joyous, lovely, sun-swept, spread out below them: the stony humps of the island, which was lying almost in its entirety at their feet; and that fairy-like deep blue in which it was afloat; and the shining morning vapors over the sea, toward the east, under the blinding sun, that was now beating down hotly, rising ever higher and higher, and, still in their morning vagueness, the mistily blue massive outlines of Italy, of her mountains near and far, whose beauty human speech is impotent to express ...Halfway down, the pipers slackened their pace· over the path, within a grotto in the craggy side of Monte Solaro, all bright in the sun, all bathed in its warmth and glow, in snowy-white raiment of gypsum, and in a royal crown, golden-rusty from inclement weathers, stood the Mother of God, meek and gracious, Her orbs lifted up to heaven, to the eternal and happy abodes of Her thrice-blessed Son. The pipers bared their heads, put their reeds to their lips—and there poured forth their naive and humbly jubilant praises to the sun, to the morning, to Her, the Immaculate Intercessor for all those who suffer in this evil and beautiful world, and to Him Who had been born of Her womb in a cavern at Bethlehem, in a poor shepherd's shelter in the distant land of Judaea....

Meanwhile, the body of the dead old man from San Francisco was returning to its home, to a grave on the shores of the New World. Having gone through many humiliations, through much human neglect, having wandered for a week from one port warehouse to

another, it had finally gotten once more on board that same famous ship upon which but lately, with so much deference, he had been borne to the Old World. But now he was already being concealed from the quick—he was lowered in his tarred coffin deep into the black hold. And once more the ship was sailing on and on upon its long sea voyage. By night it sailed past the Island of Capri, and, to one watching them from the island, there was something sad about the ship's lights, slowly disappearing over the dark sea. But, upon the ship itself, in its brilliant salons, resplendent with lusters and marble, there was, as usual, a crowded ball that night.

There was a ball on the second night, and also on the third—again in the midst of a raging snow gale, whirling over an ocean booming like a burial mass, and rolling in mountains arrayed in mourning by the silvery foam. The innumerable fiery eyes of the ship were barely visible, because of the snow, to the devil watching from the crags of Gibraltar, from the stony gateway of two worlds, the ship receding into the night and the snow gale. The devil was as enormous as a cliff, but even more enormous was the ship, many-tiered, many-funneled, created by the pride of the New Man with an ancient heart. The snow gale smote upon its rigging and wide-throated funnels, white from the snow, but the ship was steadfast, firm, majestic—and terrifying. Upon its topmost deck were reared, in their solitude among the snowy whirlwinds, those snug, dimly lighted chambers where, plunged in a light and uneasy slumber, was its ponderous guide who resembled a pagan idol, reigning over the whole ship. He heard the pained howlings and the ferocious squealings of the storm-stifled siren, but comforted himself by the proximity of that which, in the final summing up, was incomprehensible even to himself, that which was on the other side of his wall that large cabin, which had the appearance of being armored, and was constantly filled by the mysterious rumbling, quivering, and crisp sputtering of blue flames, flaring up and exploding around the pale-faced operator with a metal half-hoop upon his head. In the very depths, in the submerged womb of the *Atlantis,* were the thirty-thousand-pound masses of boilers and of all sorts of other machinery—dully glittering with steel, hissing out steam and exuding oil and boiling water—of that kitchen, made red-hot from infernal furnaces underneath, wherein was brewing the motion of the ship. Forces, fearful in their concentration, were bubbling, were being transmitted to its very keel, into an endlessly long dungeon, into a tunnel, illuminated by electricity, wherein slowly, with an inexorableness that was crushing to the human soul, was revolving within its oily couch the gigantic shaft, exactly like a living monster that had stretched itself out in this tunnel.

Meanwhile, amidship the *Atlantis,* its warm and luxurious cabins, its dining halls and ballrooms poured forth radiance and joyousness,

were humming with the voices of a well-dressed gathering, were fragrant with fresh flowers, and the strains of the string orchestra were their song. And again excruciatingly coiled and at intervals feverishly came together among this throng, among this glitter of lights, silks, diamonds, and bared feminine shoulders, the pliant pair of hired lovers. the sinfully modest, very pretty young woman, with eyelashes cast down, with a chaste coiffure, and the well-built young man, with black hair that seemed to be pasted on, with his face pale from powder, shod in the most elegant of patent-leather footgear, clad in a tight-fitting dress coat with long tails—a handsome man who resembled a huge leech. And none knew that, already for a long time, this pair had grown weary of languishing dissemblingly in their blissful torment to the sounds of the shamelessly sad music—nor that far, far below, at the bottom of the black hold, stood a tarred coffin, neighboring on the gloomy, sultry depths of the ship that was ponderously overcoming the darkness, the ocean, the gale....

Mikhail Prishvin

A WEREWOLF OF THE STEPPE

Ramazan, the ninth month of the lunar year, was in its last days. On a clear morning the mountains of the steppe showed, like the tall blue tents of giant nomads. The steppe wavered, the road became uneven; the pail of water, tied to the shaft of our wagon, splashed and tinkled.

"This is the backbone of the earth, the land of Arka," said Isaac.

Happy land! Here the mutton is fat and the *koumiss* intoxicating—it is the best land in the world for shepherds.

Seven tents at the foot of the mountain, as it were, seven white birds, slept, hiding their heads among their wings. By the well, laid round with stones, a girl is sitting and shearing a sheep.

"Will Janas take us in?" we ask, just as the heathen had asked Abraham in the land of Canaan.

"He'll take you in...."

Here he is, a gray-haired old man, coming out of the tent with two of his sons. The old man puts his hand to his heart.

His hands are healthy. His feet are healthy. His sheep are healthy,

their camels, their horses—they are all healthy, just as ours are. Thank God, amen!

His sons are lifting the tent door of felt The father, bowing, bids us enter, a girl, with tinkling trinkets, is running to the well to shear the sheep.

Inside the shepherd's tent you feel as though you were inside of a balloon, and there is even an opening at the top which may be opened or closed.

Above may be seen a circle of blue sky; below on the ground are three black burnt stones and a log—it is the hearth. Behind the hearth, just opposite the entrance, facing the Caaba, there is a rug spread out for the guest; here also, beside the rug, feather-grass grows. Things are hanging all around.

The host himself gives water to his guest to wash his hands His sons are holding the towels ready One of them looks at the guest with sharp insolent eyes; the other is more noticeable for his naked yellow feet which give the impression of goodness and for his disheveled heap of hair. The Bible comes to mind Cain was a tiller of the soil, Abel a shepherd.

The sun still shines on the steppe. when the door of felt is lifted and someone enters, one's eyes are blinded, and afterwards for a long time there float before them violet-radiant slopes and fiery horses One by one the kinsmen of the host enter, and one is like unto the other. One enters and sits down, cross-legged, by the hearth; another enters and sits down, and it seems as if someone were reading from a big ancient book· Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob. .

But looked at more closely, they are not all alike: one, a very robust fellow, has such a small seal-like head; another has small black mouse-like tails hanging from his upper lip; a third has the same kind of tails but, as it were, bitten short; a fourth is smaller in stature than the others, and his face is copper-red.

They all sit in a circle between the bed and the oxen-yoke, and look at the guest in silence

For a whole month now I have wandered in the steppe on nomadic highways, and with me has wandered my double, the Black Arab From one end of the land to the other, Long Ear has spread tidings of his presence He is on his way from Mecca, but whither—no one knows. Now, at last, he has strayed hither.

"Where is the Arab going?"

From all sides the watchful eyes of the steppe are fixed on the stranger Somewhere, a white sharp tooth glistens from a half-open mouth, as if ready to bite into the Arab, to see what he is made of. And here is one sitting ever so close, and looks so intently and so long until, weary, he drops back on to the pillow and snores Another draws nearer....

Enough of mirages....

"I'm not an Arab!"

"Ee-oh!" exclaimed the robust fellow with the seallike head.

"Ee-oh! Allah! He's not an Arab!" said the others.

And they all open their mouths wide.

"Who is he, then? What does he want?"

"He does not want anything," explains Isaac. "He's a scholar, he takes nothing from the steppe: neither anything hard nor anything soft, neither anything bitter nor anything salt"

"Ee-oh, Khoodai! *—Is it not the spirit of our forefathers, *aoorakh?"*

"No He eats biscuits, drinks tea, asks about the grass, the sheep, the stars, the songs. He hunts, does his own cooking, eats like the Kirzhis, with his hands; he does not pray to God...."

"He's a robber!" whispers the thick-set fellow with the mice-tails on his upper lip

"He's not a robber!" Isaac says reassuringly. "Robbers are wicked people, and this scholar from Petersburg is a good man...."

"Has he a soft finger on his right hand?" asks the other robust fellow with the bitten-off mice-tails on his upper lip.

The allusion is to Khidir, beggar and holy man, whose big finger on his right hand is quite boneless.

They all look at my hand, they touch the big finger: it is quite hard. The guest is not an Arab, nor an *aoorakh,* nor a robber, nor a holy man

Isaac expostulates with them—for an hour—for two—the faces redden, the eyes burn, but the riddle of the Black Arab remains unsolved

They go on chattering.

"Jock! No, it's not clear at all!"

New people, and still more new people, enter the tent; they all take up seats by the hearth, look on, ask questions, and go on chattering.

"Jock! No, it's not clear at all!"

The felt door of the tent is slightly wavering: someone outside is digging a small hole in it, and before long a narrow dark eye is to be seen gleaming through it. If you look there, the eye vanishes; when you stop looking, it reappears The peeper has peeped his fill, and disappeared, the little hole shines with light, like a star. Now that eye is surely meeting with other like narrow dark eyes. There all the women have gathered, you can hear them whisper—and the Arab, like a *werewolf of the steppe,* becomes transformed from the tiniest thing into the head of a pin, from a genie into the terrible *albasti* **

* Oh, Lord!

** A yellow-haired sterile woman, the enemy of all women desiring children, and capable of working a spell on them

Who knows? It may be, the spell of the Black Arab is working right here, among the bushes, ready to stop the kisses of loving couples; it may be, the childless wife, preparing to spend the night in the holy mountains, has had her chaste thoughts confounded?

But it all ended simply.

Someone asked:

"Has the guest a father?"

All were overjoyed at the simple question and moved nearer.

"Yes, he has a father."

"And a mother?"

"Yes. He has also a mother, and brothers, and sisters, and a grandmother, and a grandfather, just as you have in the steppes and as it is written in the holy books: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob."

"Are they all living?"

"All are living, and all are living in Petersburg."

"Ee-oh!" rejoices the old man, who resembles Abraham.

"How many houses are there in Petersburg?"

"Thousands!"

"Oh!" broke the happy cry from the open mouths.

"And are there sheep in Petersburg?" asked Abraham.

"There are, but they don't have fat tails like here in the steppe, but so!"

"How so?"

"They haven't fat tails, but tails like goats."

Like a spark, the smile flew from the lips of the interpreter into these open mouths with white sharp teeth. The dusty folds under the broad gowns kindled, and our balloon, as it were, exploded into fragments—such is the laughter of the steppe!

The one who had fallen asleep on the pillow suddenly sprang up. Rubbing his eyes, he asks what has happened.

They answer him:

"In Petersburg the sheep don't have fat tails, but slender tails like goats."

He falls back on the pillow in convulsions, like one mown down. They all fall backward on their spines, holding their stomachs· all. the thin man with the copper-red face, the big-bellied man with the mice-tails, and the robust man who resembles him, and the man with the seal-like head, and the clever young man with the split beard, and Abraham, and even Isaac. They raise themselves, glance at their guest, and again fall back, and shake their gowns with their stomachs. He who can moves nearer and caresses the good-natured man, only a little while before the mysterious, terrible Arab.

And one can hear behind the thin walls the coins tinkle against the scythes. The loving couples in the bushes are no longer afraid. No longer do thoughts confound the childless wives ready for a journey

among the holy mountains. He is not terrible, this Black Arab, and it is as if he had lived here always, thousands and thousands of years.

[Translation by John Cournos]

S. Sergeyev-Tzensky

THE MAN YOU COULDN'T KILL

I

One man beats another with none too great assurance He may even entertain a fear that the other, whom he is beating, should suddenly play a trick on him.

He beats his victim with the bigger half of his being, while the smaller observes and weighs the act

The smaller whispers "Enough!" The bigger goes on beating. The smaller says unmistakably: "It's folly! Stop it!" The bigger goes on beating, but more feebly, with some restraint. The smaller, at last, commands: "Stop it, I tell you!"—and in an instant takes the place of the bigger. The man who did the beating walks away, outwardly righteous and indignant, but inwardly sometimes quite ashamed.

Not so the crowd. Delicate feelings are unknown to it. When a crowd shouts, it does not shout but judges; does not discuss but pronounces; does not beat but punishes; and anyone whom the crowd has beaten knows he will not rise again.

And Feodor—Feodor Titkov, from the Cossacks' village, Ouriupinskaya—knew this He was of low stature and inconspicuous, but compact of body and with bright red face, still young and slenderish, his small eyes not set into hollows but resting, as it were, on the immediate surface of his angular cheeks.

But he managed to see, even as did another comrade, Manolati, a Bessarabian gypsy, whose dark face was marked with white scars; and a third, a cobbler from Akhtirka, named Karavanchenko, otherwise Comrade Semyon, a lugubrious fellow with caved-in chest, loud voice, and eyes which shone.

When they were seized in the village and their arms bound, they were asked curtly·

"Bolsheviks?"

They replied with equal curtness:

"Bolsheviks."

And Manolati, stretching out his neck, added vehemently:

"Never mind! Just wait and see We'll be on top yet!"

Then they were led to a well with a very high crane on it, and no one shouted or mocked at them, only a thick dust rose from heavy boots, and someone sneezed, or coughed, or spat Now Cossack women appeared on either side, standing by their homes, and scampering small boys.

Just before he had been caught here at work, Titkov had been eating a herring, and hadn't had time to quench his thirst; then, with his comrades, he was locked for the night in a barn.

The day had been very hot and he craved water. As he approached the well, he felt with his whole compact, swollen body that he was being led precisely where he needed to be led, and his eyes sought the pail

The pail was large enough to be a tub, and stood, as it happened, with its wet-gleaming chain on the well shelf, and he could not take his eyes from it.

They were near it now· it was full to the brim Someone had just given his horse a drink and had refilled the pail, but the horse wouldn't drink any more.

Around the well the sand was damp: there was a smell of cattle. A gadfly settled on Titkov's cheek; he got rid of it by wiping his face against his left shoulder, never once removing his gaze from the pail. When they had come to a halt, he said, without pleading, but simply yet audibly

"Comrades, let us have a drink!"

To this the Cossack nearest to him, a red-bearded fellow with blue veins on his nose and wet locks showing under his cap, responded no less simply·

"Drink to your content!"—and vigorously struck him across the cheek from which the gadfly had just been brushed off.

And at the same moment he saw that they had knocked down Comrade Semyon, whose feet, in the upset, kicked his own; and it seemed to him that Manolati's dark head flew upward, above the other heads, as if it actually flew, and, just as he observed this, something struck him on the back of his head and brought him to his knees, and he murmured distinctly·

"So this is the end of us!"

And he drew his head into his shoulders, like a turtle, and stretched out his legs. He lay flat, upon his face, he felt the wet sand upon his lips, and it smelled strongly of the water of horses.

He tried to work his hands round under him, but they were bound tight and the rope resisted his most desperate efforts.

They kept beating him, except for brief interjections, in silence they did it in earnest, as if they were killing a pig

At first Titkov was able to tell where it hurt him most afterwards, it pained equally, no matter where they struck. He merely gritted his teeth and swallowed spittle.

The shrill outcries of Semyon could no longer be heard Titkov thought· "They've killed him!" and drew his head in further. But Manolati still managed to make himself heard. Again and again he cried

"Ours! They'll be on top yet! They will!...They will!...On top! .."

Titkov had time to think about him "He's a tough one....He'll have to get it a hundred times!..."

Then, suddenly, he was hit on his right arm, so hard, the pain went to his head, and was hit again on the head, so he ceased to hear Manolati and everything else.

The cold woke him.

He was wet from head to foot.

He could not at once recall what had happened to him; then remembered the well, and the Cossacks, and how they had beaten him. He thought: "They have thrown me into the well!" But quickly corrected himself "Why soil the well? It would have to be cleaned out afterwards. "

And, opening the eye which was higher above the ground than the other, he saw the wet tawny point of a boot almost at his very nose, and understood someone's quite good-natured words:

"Eheh!...This devil's still alive!"

Then he heard another voice:

"The gypsy, too, is stirring!"

He scarcely had time to think that men had come to their rescue when the boot, with a hard crack, struck him just under his eyes.

Again he lowered his face and drew in his head.

"On top!" came the stertorous sound somewhere near Manolati.

Then they began to hammer with their boots, and someone who was very heavy sprang on his back and jumped up and down.

Titkov tightened his stomach, but the iron-shod heels with their sharp points tore the skin from his arms....At last, the other arm, as yet unhurt, cracked above the wrist under the onslaught.

Titkov was in the act of moistening his lips with his tongue when he ceased to feel.

Once more they poured ice-cold well-water on his body. Again he

opened one eye—the other was swollen and would not open—again he saw the huge wet point of the boot.

They turned him over. Someone's beard, as it were a paternal one, bent over him, and he murmured into it:

"A drink! . ."

Then, simultaneously, a deafening concord of voices:—

"Alive! .. The devil himself! ... The gypsy, and the other, have pegged out, but this one's still alive! ..."

He lay thus for a few moments and saw above him fragments of beards, and red noses, and, as if the men were not at all the ones who had been trying to beat him to death, he again whispered:

"A drink ... brothers!"

Then, above his eye, a fist flashed out and broke his teeth.

Someone asked, with astonishment and not a little distress:

"Where did he get it all? The strength of an anathema! Whew!"

And no matter how Titkov braced his stomach, he felt the full force of the iron-shod boot.

Five minutes later the three bodies near the well were motionless

The Cossacks washed, coughed intermittently, and blew their noses, as they did in the morning after sleep; one even wetted his hair and drew a small metal comb through it.

Cossack women with infants in their arms approached to have a look. The sun was inclining toward midday when a cart drove up The three bodies were dumped into it and were borne four versts from the village—toward a ravine.

Two young Cossacks walked beside the cart. Their shouldered rifles gleamed in the sun.

They never left the village without their rifles, even a small matter of four versts. It was a turbulent time—the eighteenth year.

And it so happened that when Titkov, lying uppermost of the others, opened his eye, he was blinded instantly by the gleam of the rifles at the backs of the Cossacks walking side by side.

Cossacks and rifles—he remembered them afterward—he had seen them before, but the gleam seemed extraordinary, had something unearthly about it....

And the pain, all at once, went through his whole frame: his throat, and every organ in his body burned unbearably.

He had come to himself just as the horses were approaching the ravine, and he once more tried to recover his memory, to find out what was the matter with him, where he was, and why he felt pain everywhere, when he heard one Cossack say to the other:

"Here's a nice slope.... They'll fly like jackdaws...."

And the second voice said.

"Here, of course! The very place...."

Titkov could make neither head nor tail of this. And when, all wet, he was being dragged from the cart by four hands, amidst curses, he groaned with his whole broken body, and looked with his single eye, so that the four superstitious hands perceptibly relaxed, and as he struck the earth he groaned even louder.

Then the horses snorted and moved their heads about, and the pair with the rifles sprang back twenty paces....

He listened, and heard one of the Cossacks, after prolonged cursing, add:

"And you, unholy power, when will you give up your accursed breath?"

And when Titkov looked again, he saw how the other snatched his rifle off his back, aimed and fired. ..

Titkov trembled as he lay It was as if someone had driven a huge nail into his breast... And here, a jot higher, another nail was driven in a bullet fired by the second Cossack.

His mouth opened to let the blood out; twice he jerked his head, then grew quiet.

The Cossacks dragged the stiffened body of Semyon, with its broken head, toward the chasm, and, swinging it first by the feet and shoulders, flung it down in silence. The corpse of the gypsy Manolati, with its head to one side, they threw after it, with the remark:

"Well, that's where your 'On top' will be!"

As for Titkov's body, when they had dragged it to the edge of the ravine, they paused:

"Suppose, suddenly, this devil..." began one.

"D'you think he's alive?" said the other.

They even pulled up his wet shirt to see where the bullets were. But when they saw the whole body blue with bruises, and that the bullets had pierced the right breast, they merely shook the tufts of hair at the edge of their caps and pushed him down genially and watched the body turning somersaults, now catching vegetation by the feet, now by the head, until, at last, it lay at the bottom of the slope beside the first bodies.

Evening was coming on. The sun was no longer shining in the valley. There were shadows and coolness.

Three women from a neighboring farm descended into the ravine for wood. At the bottom, and here and there on the slopes, there were bushes hacked down each year, and not the less persistent in growing again. And the women brought with them knives and rope.

When they stumbled on the corpses, they fled in fright They looked behind and paused. Each pushed the other forward until again they confronted the bodies.

They gazed, shook their heads, and held the ends of their headkerchiefs against their eyes.

"They must stink by this time?" asked one, doubtfully.

"They look fresh, I think," said the second, feeling her nose.

"An' yesterday I was rummaging here, my dears—them wasn't here then!" said the third, clasping her hands. "What kind o' scoundrels did it to them?"

Corpses should lie quiet. It is terrifying when a corpse tries to lift its head. It is enough to frighten anyone.

And when, slightly opening an eye, Titkov's head weakly turned, the women groaned and screamed all together, and the place was full of gleaming white ankles and running feet.

Scarcely a quarter of an hour had passed when, one encouraging the other, the women returned for the third time, and heard the whisper:

"Little women, a drink, please...."

A tiny spring had broken a way through the ravine two hundred paces below. The women knew this, but they had neither jugs nor cups, only knives and rope.

They suddenly noticed a blood-stained cap on the slope. It had fallen off Semyon Karavanchenko's head when his body had been flung down. They washed it as best they could and brought water to Titkov, and, bending over him, with the cap full of water in their hands, they thirstily watched as he thirstily drank it.

He drank the whole contents of the cap and, breathing with difficulty, glanced from woman to woman

"My poor man, what kind of villains beat you like this?" one of the women asked, but in a whisper, which came as it were from his vitals, he responded:

"My dears...mayn't I have a little more water?"

It had grown dark when the women, at last, lifted him and bore him from the ravine.

Several times they paused wearily, while he again lost consciousness, and they said one to the other, reproachfully:

"What was the good of disturbing the poor soul? .Better had he died there, in the night. He'll only suffer now...."

Nevertheless, they dragged him out, unbound his hands, and took him to the hospital in town, some twelve versts away.

And all, during the journey, went on reproaching one another. They said it would have been better if they had let him alone, if they had not brought him water, if they had left him to die back there in the ravine. They said they would never get him to the hospital alive, and that it was all for nothing. They'd only lose their sleep, and tire out their horse.

If they comforted themselves at all, it was that there were but few moujiks left on the farm, and their households were without any, and they could do as they pleased: it pleased them to be taking this man to the hospital, that was all there was to it...they'd take him there....Let him die in the hospital if he must. there was something good in that, he'd at least have a proper burial.

To the questions asked them in the hospital. "Who is he?" and "Who beat him up?" the women answered:

"An' how should we know?...We found him like that...in the ravine...."

"What's the good of bringing him here?" they said. "It's all the same, he'll die in the end!"

"If he dies, we'll fetch a wreath to put on his grave," said the women. "We've got to hurry home now, and be there by morning. There are cows to feed "

The women returned home in time, just as the first light showed in the sky. That morning the physicians in the hospital sought and marked off Titkov's broken ribs with the same dispassionateness with which the ribs had been broken in the village, by the well.

2

A month had passed

It was a holiday—there was little to do.

The three women from the farm journeyed to town, bringing with them a wreath of simple country flowers to put on the grave of the man whose thirst they had quenched and whom they had rescued from the ravine.

Much had happened during the month, and everyone knew all about the corpses and how they came to be in the ravine.

It was a summer day, and the women, having started at luncheon-time, thought to return in the evening. They had no business of any kind in town. Their one thought was to pay a visit to the grave, place the wreath there, and return home.

They harnessed a pair of horses, both well-fed beasts.

And while the hoofs and the wheels sounded their measured pace along the little-frequented road, the women recalled how but a month before they had covered the same ground with the man in their cart.

"Did anyone ever carry in a cart such a cripple?" said the eldest, who was about forty years of age and was called Lukerya and had faded eyes. "That shaking-up was enough to be the end of him!"

"Yes, pulling at the reins, it was all I could do to keep my eyes off him, lying there so pitiful-like..." said Aksinya, who was somewhat younger and had dark arched eyebrows.

"An' he lying there with his head on my knees all the time, and

me never moving for fear of disturbing him, though my legs did ache," said Likonida, the youngest of all, grief in her gray eyes. "If we only knew his name!"

Thus rode the women with the wreath, and on their sides there stretched first the Cossack fields, then the peasant fields. The boundary of the district lay not far from the farm; they were across the frontier of another province.

Hordes of men had not long since passed over these fields and in places had trodden the wheat down. The women observed these traces of indifferently treading feet.

The sun, however, shone friendly, and the earth, like a warm body, exhaled odors comprehensible to the women—was not the earth like a woman's body?

A hawk circled overhead, a mere dot in the blue. A cuckoo sounded its note in the ravine. Flies settled on the horses, who vigorously switched their tails but could effect nothing and had to depend on the reins to drive the flies off.

There had been a fire on one of the farms. The women knew of this, they had seen the flames a week before; and now, fastening their eyes on the spot where some charred cottages and barns were standing:

"Cattle must have been lost, too!" said Aksinya, holding the reins.

"How long do you think it will keep up?" said Lukerya, arranging the straw under her.

Likonida, who was holding the wreath, tore off a leaf that seemed to her superfluous, held it between her lips; then, throwing it on the road, said sadly:

"Fool-ish, fool-ish women.... What's the good of going? Why go?"

But the belfries of the town were already appearing from behind the dark green of the gardens, and the other two said:

"It's all the same now—it won't take long."

As it happened, in approaching the hospital they had to pass the graveyard, which lay to the right of the road. And the women said one to the other:

"If we only knew his name! You'd get down and ask the watchman. He's obliged to know the names of the dead."

They stopped the horses, but found no one they could ask.

They drove on, and at two o'clock reached the hospital.

They left the horses at the gate after giving them hay. For fear someone passing by would steal the wreath, gray-eyed Likonida took it with her. And thus the trio, carrying it, marched across the hospital courtyard, to ask where they should find the grave of him they had brought a month before, and what his name was.

Simple people remember their illnesses and the illnesses of those

near them during holidays—never on workdays. And now amid the bustle in the hospital courtyard, with grass between the cobbles, the three women with the wreath wandered, not knowing of whom to ask what they wanted to know.

They ran into a stocky figure in an apron and asked him, but he only grunted angrily.

"Can't you see? I am the cook."

They met another, this time a bareheaded man, also in an apron, carrying an ill-smelling pail. He listened to them, then said that he hadn't been long here, and went off at a trot.

They turned to a woman, all in white with a red cross, and she answered by asking:

"And what's his name?"

"An' how should we know, my dear?" said the women, in astonishment.

"If you don't know, what's the good of looking?"

And she hurried away from them on her high heels.

Then they stopped an old woman, who chanced to be the matron. She did not know, but conducted them to the assistant surgeon, a red-mustached, beardless man, in a white smock.

He greatly astonished them.

"You say he died a month ago?...It sounds simple, to say a month ago! It'll take a little searching. You couldn't count them....Do you know what it's like now? Do you know how many people die here? You can't imagine it!"

"But you see, this man of ours—he was killed," they tried to jog his memory. But the assistant surgeon, staring at them, said·

"Everybody's killed nowadays....There's no such a thing as a live man."

In any case, they'd look up the books.

The women looked to their horses, who were standing where they had left them, munching their hay They made a complete circuit of the courtyard, glanced into the laundry, into the kitchen, into the cesspool (Likonida holding on to the wreath), and walked into the garden to sit in the cool for a while, until the assistant surgeon should find in the books what they wanted to know.

The garden was small; it had but two narrow pathways. There were a few patients sitting on forms painted yellow. They were in white—dressed all alike; only their caps were their own. One lay on a folding stretcher and read a newspaper—they looked at him critically—while another sat in a wheelchair and gazed high at the foliage; his arms were bandaged, and his head was also bound in white....Two patients had relatives sitting with them; near one of them a tiny girl sucked at a sweet in a rose paper.

Timidly, holding to one another, the women went along one of

the paths, staring hard with country eyes such were the patients, such was the three-flounced frock worn by one woman, such were the brown stockings worn by the little girl...

They walked past the man who was reading the newspaper. They studied him attentively, each for herself noting his thin fingers—like straws, they thought—however did he manage to hold the paper with them!—what keen eyes he had . . Then they walked past the one in the chair, and they scrutinized him as well His eyes were sunken and large, and his arms supported from the neck by a sling .. and they noticed another thing, that the wheelchair was in the full sun, and they thought it might better have been in the shade ... And they went farther.

It was impossible to go very far in this small garden They had come to the green fence, and so they retraced their steps along the same path, past the little girl with the sweet, past the stretcher, past the wheelchair

They pushed back their kerchiefs on their heads to allow coolness to reach them, while Likonida bore the wreath over the crook of her elbow, like a basket. As they approached the wheelchair, it occurred to her to look at the flowers and say regretfully

"See, they've withered, dragging 'em about "

The patient with the white swathe around his head, and his arms bandaged as far as the neck, darted a perturbed look at them suddenly, and said in a low voice:

"My d-dears Is it you. . ?"

And the women stopped short.

"It's you—yes! my dears! ." he repeated with an uncommon joy, all radiant

"It's our man! Our man! In God's truth, ours!.. " the women cried it loud enough for everyone in the garden to hear "Our very own! ..And we, with a wreath for your grave....Look it's he! .. come to life again!. ."

It was so unlooked-for, so marvelous, so exquisite, it transported their very souls, and unable to do otherwise, they fell each after the other on their knees by the wheelchair, full of prayer and praise.

[Translation by John Cournos]

Isaac Babel

THE LETTER

Here is a letter home, dictated to me by a youngster in our detachment named Kurdiakov. It does not deserve oblivion. I wrote it down without embellishment, and I present it here word for word, without the least exaggeration.

"My dear mamma, Evdokia Feodorovna.

"In the first lines of this letter I hasten to let you know that, thanks to God, I am alive and well, and I wish I could hear the same from you I likewise greet you—I humbly bow to you, my white face touching the damp ground " (Here follows a list of kinsmen, godfathers and godmothers. But we'll let this pass. Let us look to the next paragraph.)

"My dear mamma, Evdokia Feodorovna Kurdiakova. I hasten to write to you that I find myself in the Red Horse Army of Comrade Budeny, and here also is to be found your godfather, Nikon Vasilyitch, who at the present time is a Red hero. They took me into the expedition of the Politotdel, where we transport to the positions literature and newspapers—the Moscow *Izvestia* and the Moscow *Pravda* and our own merciless *Red Cavalryman*, which every fighter in the front line likes to read, after which, with heroic spirit, he slashes the filthy Polish gentry, and I am living very handsomely with Nikon Vasilyitch.

"My dear mamma, Evdokia Feodorovna Send me anything that's in your power to send I beg you to kill the speckled boar and send the parcel addressed to Vasily Kurdiakov, in the Politotdel of Comrade Budeny. Every night I lie down to rest hungry and without any blankets, so that I am mighty cold Write me a letter about my Stepka, if he's alive or not, I beg you to let me know all about him—if he still has the itch, and also if he still has the scabs on his forelegs, and if he has been shoed or not? I beg you, my dear mother, Evdokia Feodorovna, wash his forelegs without fail with soap, which I left behind the images, and if father used up the soap, then please buy some in Krasnodar and may God reward you I am also able to tell you that the country here is quite poor, the moujiks with their horses hide from our Red eagles in the woods, there is little wheat to be seen, and it is so small we laugh at it The owners sow rye, the same with oats Hops here grow on sticks, it all looks in order; they make illegal spirits with it.

"After this I want to tell you in this letter about father, how he

killed my brother Feodor Timofeitch Kurdiukov a year or thereabouts since. Our Red brigade of Comrade Pavlichenko attacked the town Rostov, when there was treachery in our ranks. At that time father was commander of a company in Denikin's army. The people that have seen them, those people said they wore medals on them like during the old regime. And because of that treachery we were all made prisoners and brother Feodor Timofeitch came under father's eyes. And father began to cut Fedya about, saying—you filthy hide, you Red dog, you son of a bitch and the like, and they cut him about until dusk, until brother Feodor Timofeitch died. I then wrote you a letter, how your Fedya was lying under ground without a cross. But father catched me with that letter and he said: 'You are mother's children, her roots are in you, and she a tart, I belied your mother and I'll belly her some more, my life's gone as it is, I'll destroy my own for truth and much more the like of it. I suffered from them like the Saviour Jesus Christ.' Only soon I ran away from father and managed to reach my detachment of Comrade Pavlichenko. And our brigade received an order to go to the town of Voronezh to fill its quota there and we filled our quota there, and we also got some horses, kit-bags, revolvers, and everything we wanted. About Voronezh, dear mamma, Evdokia Feodorovna, I can tell you that it's a fine little town, bigger than Krasnodar, the people in it are very handosme, the river fit for bathing. They gave us two pounds of bread a day there, half a pound of meat and enough sugar, so that on getting up we drank sweet tea, we did the same in the evening and forgot what hunger was, as for dinner I went to brother Semyon Timofeitch for pancakes or roast goose and after that I would lie down to rest. At that time because of his desperate bravery the whole regiment wanted Semyon Timofeitch for commander and Comrade Budeny sent such an order and he received two horses, excellent clothes, a cart for his equipment all to himself and the order of the Red Standard, and they knew me for his brother And now if some neighbor tries to bother you any—then Semyon Timofeitch has the right to cut him up. Then we began to go after General Denikin, and we drove him straight into the Black Sea, only we couldn't see father anywhere and Semyon Timofeitch looked for him everywhere in all the lines, because he missed so much his brother Fedya Only you see, dear mamma, as you know father for his obstinate character, so this is what he did—he brazenly painted his red beard and made it black in the town of Maikop in mufti, so that no one in town knew that he was a policeman under the old regime But there's no getting away from truth, your godfather Nikon Vasilyitch saw him by chance in the cottage of an inhabitant, and he wrote Semyon Timofeitch a letter. We hopped on our horses and galloped two hundred versts—I, brother Senka, and some other lad who wanted to join in the fun.

"And what did we see in the town of Maikop? We saw that the people who lived in the rear had no kind of sympathy for the fighters at the front and everywhere in town we saw nothing but treachery and Jews, just as in the old regime And Semyon Timofeitch was as large as life there wrangling with the Jews, who would not let father go but put him in jail under lock and key, saying—an order had come from Comrade Trotsky not to kill the prisoners, we ourselves will judge him, don't growl, he'll get what's coming to him. But Semyon Timofeitch got his way and proved that he was the commander of the regiment and had from Comrade Budeny all the orders of the Red Standard and threatened to do them all in, those who held on to father and refused to give him up and the other lads from our camp were with him in this But as soon as Semyon Timofeitch got hold of father he began to lay on him with a whip and drew up his men around him like they do on parade. And then Senka splashed some water on father Timofey Rodionovitch and the water trickled red down his beard. And Senka asked Timofey Rodionovitch:

"'How d'you like it, father, being in my hands?'

"'No,' said father, 'I don't like it.'

"Then Senka asked·

"'And when you cut up Fedya, did he like being in your hands?'

"'No,' said father, 'Fedya didn't like it.'

"Then Senka asked:

"'And did you think then, father, that your turn would come?'

"'No,' said father, 'I didn't think my turn would come.'

"Then Senka turned to the crowd and said·

"'And it's my opinion that if I get into your hands, then no mercy will be shown me And now, father, we'll put an end to you ..'

"And Timofey Rodionovitch began insolently to curse Senka and did not spare mother nor the Virgin and he hit Senka on the jaw and Semyon Timofeitch sent me from the yard, so that I can't, dear mamma Evdokia Feodorovna, describe to you how they finished father, because I was sent away from the yard.

"After that we had our camp moved to the town of Novorossisk. As for this town I can tell you that on the other side of it there isn't any dry land but only water, the Black Sea, and we stayed there as late as May, when we went to the Polish front and are beating up the Polish gentry in proper fashion....

"I remain your loving son Vasily Timofeitch Kurdiokov. Dear mamma, be sure to look after Stepka and God will reward you...."

This is Kurdiukov's letter, word for word. When I finished writing it for him, he took the covered sheet and hid it in his bosom, next to the skin.

"Kurdiakov," I asked the boy, "was your father a wicked man?"

"My father was a dog," he replied gloomily.

"And is your mother better?"

"I've nothing to complain of there Here's our family, if you'd like to have a look...."

He handed me a broken photograph. On it was Timofey Kurdiukov, a broad-shouldered police officer in uniform, with a well-combed beard, motionless, with high cheekbones, with a gleam in his colorless, insipid eyes. At his side, in a bamboo arm chair, was a tiny peasant woman in a loose blouse, with emaciated, bright, timid features. And against the wall, with its pitiful provincial background of flowers and pigeons, two young men were postured—monstrously huge, stupid, broad-shouldered, starry-eyed, moping as if at lessons—the two Kurdiukov brothers, Feodor and Semyon.

[Translation by John Cournos]

SALT

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR.

I want to write to you about some silly women, who are injurious to our cause, I trust that when you made the rounds of the citizens' fronts, which you have undertaken to observe, you did not overlook the ancient station of Fastov, to be found beyond the many lands, in a remote kingdom far, far away, of course I was there, and drank illegal beer, it wet my mustaches but missed the mouth * Concerning this aforementioned station there is much one can write, but as the saying goes in our simple life—there's no use in bothering with the muck of gentry. And so I will describe to you only that which my eyes have actually seen.

It was a fine quiet night seven days ago, when our worthy train of the Horse Army stopped there, loaded with warriors. We were all burning to further our cause and we were going in the direction of Berditchev. But we soon saw that our train was not going on, that our engine stopped dead, and the warriors began to suffer doubts and to talk the matter over between themselves—why was the train stopping here? And, really, the stopping here was great for our cause, for we found it overrun with bagmen,** these evil enemies, among whom also was to be found an infinite number of the fair sex, they used the rail-

* This sentence is written in imitation of the conventional ending of some Russian fairy tales

** Small tradesmen, carrying on illegal trade, so called because of the bags which contain their wares

ways in insolent fashion. Without fear, they caught at the handrails, these evil enemies, they trotted at will on the tops of the railway vans, they did fuss and carry on a lot, and everyone had in his hands, known to all, a sack of salt, weighing sometimes five *poods* * to the sack But not for long did the capital of the bagmen keep up its triumph. The initiative of the warriors, who climbed out of their vans, gave the worsted authority of the railway men a chance to breathe. Only the fair sex alone with their bags remained in the neighborhood Taking pity, the warriors let some women come into the vans with them, and others they would not let in. And in our van of the second platoon we found ourselves face to face with two maidens, and when the first bell rang there came up to us a respectable-looking woman with a child, saying:

"Please let me in, dear little Cossacks, during the whole war I've suffered at railway stations with a babe in arms and now I want to see my husband, but on account of the railway it is impossible to make the journey, surely I deserve better of you, dear little Cossacks?"

"Woman, I must tell you at the very start," say I to her, "as the platoon decides, so your fate shall be." And, turning to the platoon, I explain to them that this respectable woman begs to be allowed to go see her husband at the place of appointment and the child is really with her and so what is your decision—is she to be allowed to come in or not?

"Let her in!" the lads cry. "After us, she won't want a husband!"

"No," I say to the lads sufficiently politely, "I bow low to you, comrades of the platoon, but I'm really astonished to hear you go on with this stallion talk. Remember, comrades of the platoon, your life and how you yourselves were once children by your mothers, and it comes to that it doesn't become you to talk like this...."

And the Cossacks, talking it over among themselves, what sort of persuasive fellow this Balmashev was, began to let the woman into the van, and she with gratitude crawling in. And everyone, boiling over with my truth, helps her to be comfortable-like, one outdoing the other:

"Sit yourself, woman, in the corner there, and love your child after the fashion of mothers, no one will touch you in the corner there, and you'll arrive, untouched, to your husband, as your desire is, and we count on your conscience that you'll do the right thing by the young, for what is old is getting older, and what is young there's not much of. We've seen grief, woman, real and often almost beyond endurance, and hunger oppressed us, and cold consumed us. But you, woman, sit here, and must not doubt us...."

The third bell having sounded, the train moved. And a fine night opened before us like a tent, studded with stars. And the warriors

* A pood is about 36 pounds

remembered the nights in Kuban and the green Kuban star. And the memory flew past like a bird. While the wheels go on whirring, whirring....

After a passage of time, when the night was relieved at her post and the Red drummers began to beat the tattoo on their red drums, then the Cossacks came up to me, seeing that I had been sitting without sleep and seemed in the depths of despair.

"Balmashev," the Cossacks said to me, "why do you look so down in the mouth and sit there without sleep?"

"I bow low to you, warriors, and I beg slight forgiveness, only allow me to exchange a few words with this citizenness...."

And trembling in all my body, and rising from my cot, from which sleep had flitted, like a wolf from a pack of evil hounds, I walk up to her and take the child from her arms and tear away its swaddling and rags and, behold, under the swaddling and the rags there's a small *pood* of salt.

"Here's an interesting child, comrades, which doesn't ask for teats, doesn't wet his clothes, and doesn't disturb folks in their sleep...."

"Forgive me, dear little Cossacks," breaks in the woman on our conversation very cold-bloodedly, "it wasn't I that fooled you, it was my evil spirit...."

"Balmashev will forgive your evil spirit," I answer the woman "That doesn't cost Balmashev much, what Balmashev has paid for a thing, for the same price he sells it. But turn, woman, to the Cossacks, who have exalted you as a hard-working mother in the Republic. Turn to these two maidens, who are weeping at this moment as sufferers from us during this night. Turn to our wives in our wheaten Kuban, who are spending their woman's strength without their husbands, and these men not less lonely, from no wicked will of their own, violating girls who cross the path of their lives.... But they did not touch you, though it is only such as you that ought to be touched. Then turn to Russia, in agonies of pain...."

Then she to me:

"I've brought my own salt, I'm not afraid of the truth. You're not thinking of Russia, you're saving the Jews Lenin and Trotsky...."

"We're not discussing the Jews now, you wicked citizenness. Jews have nothing to do with this. And let me tell you, I'll not speak up for Lenin, but Trotsky is the desperate son of the Governor of Tambov and, though of another class, has joined up with the workers as their champion. As sentenced hard-labor prisoners, they are pulling us out —are Lenin and Trotsky—onto the free road of life, and you, base citizenness, are more of a counter-revolutionary than that White general, the same who with a sharp sword and a thousand men on horse is threatening us.... He, that general, is to be seen from all the roads, and the worker has his thought and dream of cutting him up, but you,

countless citizenness, with your interesting children, which don't beg for bread and don't run out to the wind—you're as invisible as a flea, and you gnaw, and gnaw, and gnaw...."

And I really must admit that we threw this citizenness from the moving train down the slope, but she, coarse creature that she was, sat for a little while, then shook her skirts and walked on in her vile path. And seeing this injurious woman and great Russia all around her and the peasants' meadows without an ear of corn, and the abused maidens, and the comrades, who go in such numbers to the front and return so few, I wanted to jump out of the moving train and to put an end to myself or to her. But the Cossacks had pity on me and said:

"Give her one from your rifle!"

So taking from the wall my faithful rifle, I wiped this infamy from the face of the workers' earth and the republic.

And we, warriors of the second platoon, take the oath before you, dear comrade editor, and before you, comrade colleagues, to treat ruthlessly all traitors who are dragging us into an abyss and who want to turn the course of the river back and to cover Russia with dead bodies and dead grass.

For all warriors of the second platoon

NIKOLAY BALMASHEV, soldier of the revolution.

[Translation by John Cournos]

Boris Pilniak

THE HUMAN WIND

Ten years of human life—one has but to glance back on a decade—it is as if it happened yesterday: one recalls everything to the pettiest detail, to the tiniest wrinkle under the eyes, to the aroma in the room. But every ten years one-fifth of all the living on earth depart from this life, tens of millions of human beings depart to rot in the earth, to feed the worms. Again, during these same ten years millions of human beings come into life; they are born, they grow, live, journey to new lands, multiply, contend with the torrents of spring, enjoy the abundance of summer, the pensive tranquillity of autumn, and are consumed in the red sunsets of winter. And every epoch of human

life, every country, every city, every house, every room, has its own aroma—even as every human being, every family, every generation, has its own aroma. Decades sometimes, indeed often, intrude on one another, and when whole epochs, and events in towns and countries are forgotten, the wrinkles under the eyes, the aroma of the room, are still remembered as something more material and significant than epochal events.

Its own winds blow over every land.

This particular human being, Ivan Ivanovitch Ivanov, remembered life as a town with wooden pavements, with wooden fences along the streets, with little gardens entered by means of small swinging gates, with heavy aromas of human life pervading the passages, with low-ceiled rooms looking out on the grass in the courtyards. And over his life there blew that wind which has the breath of human life. A crushed leather divan stood in his room, and behind the divan, for ages, cigar ends collected. The books on the table in his room rarely changed and the cloth was always the same: it was a writing table, the cigar ashes had changed the color of the cloth from green to yellow, they were encrusted and it was impossible to blow them off. In the garden, behind the low windows, there were tall grass, nettles, henbane, and weeds. Over his life there blew the wind which has the breath of human life, and this wind stuck him fast in his room.

And there, behind the decades, he remembered the eternally autumnal, rancid evening, reeking of humanness in a degree that brought tremors to the throat. It was the evening in which he had driven away his wife. Until then there had been the bloom of flowers, and the torrents of spring in the fields, and nights abundant with the words, "I love you, I love you, forever, forever!" There had been avalanches of bloom, when in the blooming world there were the sun, the universe, and the lakes of her eyes in which it was possible to submerge the universe and the sun; for she it was who filled the universe and the sun. In human joy there was then born an infant, a new Ivan. In the twilight the eyes of the mother were lovely with all the lovely motherhood of the world—in the twilight he used to come to her to kiss her pale hand: the infant slept then, the new Ivan All this had been. Then there had come that rancid evening, an evening in which a human being feels lonely, and it becomes terrible for him upon the earth, crushed as he is by a surfeit of humanness.

It was not really evening, it was midnight Outside the windows the rain poured, and it was pitch-dark. A candle burned on the table, and drops of tallow dropped from it on the tablecloth, which since that evening had never been changed. The woman's eyes were puffed, and there were wrinkles under them He stood by the table, she by the door.

She said:

"Ivan, please understand me, it's all a lie. Forgive me. It was nothing but a moment of incitement. Why, you and I had real happiness together, we loved one another."

Ivan Ivanovitch was bending over the candle and for the hundredth time was reading with deliberation the fragment of paper on which she had written: "Nikolay, it is mere infatuation, but I can't do without you. My husband won't be home today. The gate will be open. Come at eleven, when all will be asleep."

Ivan Ivanovitch put his hand with the piece of paper into his pocket, then, turning from the flame, spoke slowly, as before with deliberation:

"What's forgiveness to do with it? The word does not fit in here. I am not interested in incitements, and what has incitement to do with it? The facts are simple. You've abused my bed with another man.... Get out!"

"Ivan, remember—we have a child, a son...."

Ivan mocked her:

"We have a colt And I don't want any of your colts.... Get out!"

Then the wrinkles disappeared under her eyes, and there were only eyes alone, full of hatred, contempt, and effrontery. She whispered to him, also with deliberation.

"Wretch! I love him, I love him—him, and not you!"

Ivan, taken aback, made no reply. She turned sharply, and slammed the door He did not go after her. It was quiet behind the door. He stood still. It was quiet behind the door. A quarter of an hour, perhaps, passed thus. Then he rushed toward the door. It was empty behind the door, the infant's bed was empty, a candle burned near the bed. The door was open. He rushed to the passage, into the heavy aroma of a human habitation. The door to outdoors was open. He rushed into the rain, to the front yard. The gate to the street was open. Then he cried out helplessly, humiliatingly and piteously:

"Alenushka—"

There was no response. The street was lost in the darkness and the rain.

Then in the morning a serving-woman brought a note: "Ivan Ivanovitch, be so good"—she begged him in the note to send her things—hers and her son's only He gathered all her things together, he spent all day in gathering them, the woman helped him. The woman had twice departed to drink tea and to dine, but he had no thought of eating; each time the woman left he sat down to continue a long letter. In the evening the woman carried away the things in a cart and put the letter in her bosom Ivan helped her with the cart as far as the street, and in the street he pressed the woman's hand and begged her not to forget to bring an answer. The woman felt awkwardly while he was pressing her hand and, withdrawing it, said sensibly·

"What's that to me? If she gives me one, I'll bring it. There's nothing wrong with my feet!"

There was to be no answer, neither today, nor tomorrow, nor the day after tomorrow. But the day after tomorrow he was to learn that she had left town—for somewhere or other by railway, with all her things; so apparently for good. And, actually, she did leave for good. Ivan Ivanovitch never saw her again In the course of a year he learned that she was living somewhere in Moscow—in the course of three he learned that she had borne another child, a boy by the name of Nikolay. The boy's surname was his—Ivan Ivanovitch Ivanov's—Nikolay Ivanov.

Behind the crushed leather divan the cigar ends were collecting.

She, the mother of these two children, the wife of Ivan Ivanovitch, comprehended love as many women comprehend it, when they follow every step of the man, when they want to know his every thought—in reality hinder him to live, hinder him to think and to work—when women lose everything of their own, parting first of all with their dignity; such loves inevitably end in ruin, because even the bondage of love is nevertheless bondage, and such loves are destructive. Every human life and every human love may be described in an image, and the life of this woman, in the years after she had left her husband, resembled a very bright red kerchief, a gypsy shawl, which long worn round dubious habitations had gathered unto itself the odor of many kinds of tobaccos and perfumes, but still within its folds retained something of its old aroma of humanness. Then this shawl, unfolding, fell into the rubbish of a Moscow suburb, into very stifling human rubbish. Her son Ivan lived with her sister in the provinces Her son Nikolay lived with her at the beginning, but later she put him in an orphanage Seven years from birth he knew the pain of falling sickness for the first time. It happened there, in the resounding corridor of the stone orphanage. His mother had already discovered then that his father, who had not even given his name to the boy, was simply a wretch, for only such wretches dare beget ailing children; moreover, the mother had long considered even herself a wretch in daring to bear a child. In any event, the judgment of human beings should not, and could not, be so stern as the judgment of a human being over himself.

Then the mother died. She died worthily, having found herself capable of inspiring her children with love and respect for her. Both Ivan, who lived in a remote place and was well, and Nikolay, who lived within orphanage walls and was afflicted with the falling sickness. She died from typhoid, but the significance of her life was that she had managed to live out her role in life

The children did not know one another. And only after several

years did Nikolay, who lived in the orphanage, receive a letter from his brother Ivan, who lived in the provinces. Ivan wrote to make his brother's acquaintance, to establish his brotherly rights. Nikolay sent an answer. Brother Ivan wrote about the river near which he lived, about the hayloft which stood in the yard, about his comrades in high school, about birds and meadows. Brother Nikolay wrote about his corridors, about his trade school, about his dormitories. After many letters brother Nikolay wrote to brother Ivan about his illness. Both wrote a great deal about their mother. Each told the other everything to the pettiest deail, all that memory had preserved of what was sacred to both of them—their mother. And when Ivan in his province had reached his fourteenth year, and his aunt had told him about his father, Ivan wrote to Nikolay and told him that they had a father living. This news made a strange impression on Nikolay (and, perhaps, it was the sort of impression to be expected;) Nikolay began to dream about his father. Nikolay hid deep in his heart, which he had learned to conceal in the orphanage dormitories, his dream and thought of his father, the inherited memory and tenderness. Ivan wrote to his father, and his father replied tenderly and at length. Ivan sent his father's letter to his brother Nikolay. Nikolay wrote to Ivan Ivanovitch Ivanov, and the latter did not reply.

(It is necessary, in parenthesis, to say that these days of existence were passed by Ivan and Nikolay during the great Russian Revolution)

Ten years of human life is not a long period. And ten days of human life is a tremendous period! Ivan Ivanovitch Ivanov, the father, gathered more and more cigar ends behind the crushed leather divan—and as before, the town lay there with its wooden pavements, its wooden fences lining the streets, its gates leading into gardens, with heavy aromas of life in the passages, and tall grasses behind the windows. It is of no real relevance to say what Ivan Ivanovitch was or might have been, an instructor in a high school or a district statistician; over his life there blew the wind which has the breath of human life. And there, in that decade of years, Ivan Ivanovitch remembered the letter from his son, Ivan. It was brought to him early in the morning, the first line said: "I greet you, my dear papa," and in that day Ivan Ivanovitch grew younger by ten years, remembered the sun, the bloom of fresh grass, the spring torrents of the years, and only slightly recalled the terrible night, that moment when he passed from one open door to another, to the gate itself, when he shouted through the darkness of the street: "Alenushka!" and during all that day he was tempted again to cry out, only loudly, only something all forgiving, only joyously And he had then answered his son with joy and at length. It was shortly after this that he received another letter, this time from Nikolay, and it began with the same words as Ivan's

letter: "I greet you, my dear papa," and with all his blood, all his hatred, with all the memory of that rancid night redolent of humanness, he had again and again a longing to cry out: "Get out! Get out! To your colts! . I don't want any of your mongrels!"

It happened during the autumnal twilight, when the rain caused stifling odors to pervade the passages of the house and it was necessary to light the candles early (it was during the days when the thunders of revolution had receded into the distance) The street gate creaked, someone made a noise with a stick on the steps leading to the passage. The door opened into the vestibule, and someone quietly asked.

"Be so good, does Ivan Ivanovitch Ivanov live here?"

"Yes, here I am he," answered Ivan Ivanovitch.

A man of low stature entered the room, with a rubber-topped stick, such as cripples use. His shoulders were raised And in the twilight his face with its thin mustaches like cords appeared very pale, very tired. Thus this human being was to be remembered by Ivan Ivanovitch He, this human being, strode into the room and hesitatingly and joyously paused at the threshold He said

"It's you—Ivan Ivanovitch?" and he broke into sobs, and stretched forward his hands (his stick had fallen on the floor).

"Papa—it is I ..yours...your son Nikolay!"

Ivan Ivanovitch stood by the table (by the same table on which the cloth had no longer its original color), and he did not reach out his hands, he turned away from Nikolay—he felt how all of a sudden that night of decades ago had entered the room. He said quietly:

"Sit down How may I serve you?"

Nikolay did not reply, and submissively and quickly sat down in the chair near the door.

"How may I serve you?" repeated Ivan Ivanovitch, more loudly this time.

Nikolay did not understand the question, and hesitated to speak

"How may I serve you?" shouted Ivan Ivanovitch, in a shrill voice.

"Forgive me, I don't understand . ."

Ivan Ivanovitch dragged his arm chair across the floor, seated himself opposite Nikolay, and leaned his arms on the arms of the chair. Ivan Ivanovitch picked up the stick and handed it to Nikolay Nikolay took it. Ivan Ivanovitch intently looked at Nikolay with screwed-up eyes.

"Forgive me, I do not know your paternity," began Ivan Ivanovitch in a whisper, screwing up his eyes more and more. "I do not know your paternity," he repeated louder ..."Excuse me. It is necessary for us to have an explanation so as to end this misunderstanding You bear my name because of a misunderstanding I do not know who your... " Ivan Ivanovitch paused, and pulled out a cigarette case. "I

beg your pardon, do you smoke? No? So! Forgive me, I haven't the honor to know your... father...."

Nikolay rose from his chair. Ivan Ivanovitch also rose. The stick again fell to the floor. Ivan Ivanovitch quickly handed it to Nikolay. The eyes of Ivan Ivanovitch were convulsively shut.

"Yes, yes...forgive me! I haven't the honor. I have nothing to do with it! I haven't the honor! I haven't the honor to know with whom ....with whom your mother had conceived you!"

Nikolay did not wait to hear more from Ivan Ivanovitch He quickly left the room. He walked hurriedly, stumbling on his right foot. The stick was in his right hand, the right shoulder was raised in a way it is raised only by very ailing men.

"Yes, yes...I haven't the honor! I haven't the honor!" shouted Ivan Ivanovitch after the departing man.

The brothers Nikolay and Ivan had agreed between them to meet in the town where their father lived. Nikolay had arrived several hours before Ivan. Ivan went from the station to an hotel. He learned that his brother was already there. They had never met before. A candle was burning on the table in the room when Ivan entered, a tall, healthy man in the military uniform of a colonel. A candle was burning on the table in the room, but Ivan found no one in the room. He asked the corridor attendant, "Where's my brother?" The attendant replied.

"I did not see him go out"

Then Ivan, looking on the floor, saw there behind the table a prostrate man. The man was embracing the back of a chair. Ivan, a strong man, entangled in straps from the sword and revolver, lifted him in his arms.

"Nikolay, my dear, what's the matter?" he asked, with perturbation. "A fit?"

Nikolay answered quietly:

"Nothing of the sort. I feel well. I was...." His words fatigued him. ...."I was at Ivan Ivanovitch's, at your father's He told me that our mother had been...that he does not know who my father is, with whom, as he said, my mother had conceived me."

"What?...Our mother...?"

A candle was burning on the table in the room. The strong man held the weak by the shoulders. Outside the windows the streets were lost in darkness. On the table, near the candle, there were cigar ends. Soon the strong man was sitting by the side of the weak on the floor. It was thus the two brothers met Two human beings who had never seen one another but who from the first conscious childhood knew everything about one another. They talked of their mother, whom one of them remembered And for the human being who lived in that

town, to whom they had come, they had a dry word—*wretch*—for he was a wretch to cast aspersions on their mother's memory.

The wooden pavements in provincial towns serve not only to force people to walk in dirt, the pavements serve also the purpose of spreading all sorts of provincial news. And the human being, Ivan Ivanovitch Ivanov, a human being whose life reeked of humanness, had to live through yet another night like the night in which all the doors had been open. It was a night of incitements, those incitements which had at one time, there, years before, led away his wife. The streets were lost in darkness, the earth wept with rain, and Ivan Ivanovitch stood by the gate and awaited his son, son Ivan, who was round the corner in a room in the Hotel Moskva. And father Ivan Ivanovitch cried into the darkness:

"Ivanushka!"

Son Ivan did not come to his father. And in the morning father Ivan saw his son...for the only and the last time, at the railway station. He, the father, stood in a crowd. Two human beings passed him. One leaning on a rubber-topped stick, the other supporting the cripple, a tall, healthy military commissar, harnessed in straps to which a sword and a revolver were attached. He was a fair, red-cheeked, physically fit, self-contained young man. And his father observed the young man's eyes were startingly like his mother's, like those lakes in which he could at one time sink the world and the sun. The train departed very quickly, whistling as it went and leaving a trail of smoke behind. The father walked away along the wooden pavements, past wooden fences. The wind blew in the streets. In the streets, on wooden pavements, walked a decrepit, gray-haired man....

The passages in the houses were redolent of humanness.

In any case, human judgment should not and could not be so stern as the judgment of a human being over himself.

[Translation by John Cournos]

Valentin Kataev

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN

"Women love me," said the young handsome soldier with short bristly hair to his ailing comrades.

He stood in the middle of the hut. Besides him, there were three other sick men. They were lying on wide boards, which were covered with dry rotted straw. Two of them were indifferently gazing at the ceiling, while the third lay still in a corner, all wrapped up like a woman in tatters. He was frozen.

It was a northern winter, deep and overcast. There were wooden cottages, and firs which resembled pencils. Above the railway station there were patches of steam from an engine, and slanting clouds of crows. There were good trucks with red crosses and stacks of spotted birch logs.

The ailing soldiers were weary of tedium and inactivity. Nevertheless, they were not anxious to return to the lines where their battery was entrenched, because it was necessary there to obey the command, to dig trenches, and, besides, there was always the danger from enemy fire. One of the party suffered from rheumatism. Another was having the boils on his legs treated The one wrapped in rags had only lately contracted typhoid. The soldier with the bristly hair had a vile disease.

"Women love me," he said slowly. "Do you think I'm lying? By God, it's the truth! Why they love me—the devil alone knows. I understand how to handle women. The main thing is, you shouldn't try to take a woman with insolence. You've got to know how to handle them. That's so. Because not every woman respects insolence. Of course, there are some. I don't say anything against that. It doesn't always work. With a good woman you've got to be honorable. She says yes to you, and you say yes to her. She says no to you, and you say no to her. That should be understood. That's so. I once served in real service with Captain Viren. He was an independent man, was Captain Viren. There was a wench serving in his house too. She was the housemaid. She was a good, clean wench. Quite a young lady. Her manners were not at all bad. At first I thought I'd win her with insolence. Nothing came of it. Then I took to other ways. When she says yes, I say yes. When she says no, I say no. I go to this and that place with her, I go to the theater with her. I bought her chocolate too. I had my way. She going this way and that way—but it was too late. I went to see her every night.... Well, I grew tired of her. That's the truth. Women love me—everyone says so."

The assistant surgeon came into the room with a thermometer.

"And you, countryman, are you again telling lying yarns about women loving you?" he asked. "Go on lying, go on! It's quite evident how women love you."

And he winked an eye.

"Sure enough, they've rewarded you."

"Ah, these women!" with feigned unconcern said the former orderly. "Be they thrice accursed! It's possible they've ruined my life."

The assistant surgeon shook the man in the rags by the shoulder.

"Countryman, are you asleep? Wake up, won't you? It's necessary to take the temperature. How you quake! I'm afraid it'll show forty degrees at least."

"I'd like to have a drink," said the ailing man quietly.

"There, stick the thermometer under your armpit."

The sick man obediently took the thermometer and grew silent. He felt hot and uncomfortable.

It grew dark in the cottage. The assistant surgeon went away and returned with a cup and a tiny tin oil lamp without a chimney. The little lamp emitted a reddish smoky flame. The assistant surgeon placed it on the oven, and immediately the windows appeared blue and it grew bright in the room, but at the same time it became crowded and dirty.

"Do you feel badly?" asked the assistant surgeon.

"Yes."

"I must report to the surgeon."

Within half an hour they got used to the red flicker of the little lamp, and it grew tedious again. The soldier who had rheumatism began to scratch. Insects were biting him.

"The devil take them! The cursed things are biting again. I don't like the Minsk province for that, there's no hut without them."

He restlessly rose to his knees, drew from his pocket a small greasy box, and, lighting a match, began to draw the flame along the wall.

"Are you burning them again?" asked the soldier with the boils.

"Yes, I'm burning the anathemas. They've made life miserable for me."

"Only see that you don't burn the hut down!"

"Never fear!"

A long silence followed.

"That's all there's to it—the women love me," said the orderly. "Why they love me—it's more than I can say. Not one's been able to stand up against me. By God, it's true Only last year I was on leave, and I couldn't keep the women off. Soldiers' wives. You wouldn't believe it of them!"

"Yes, that's true as to soldiers' wives," said the man who was burning the insects. "You wouldn't believe it of them! Yet everyone knows it. The husbands aren't at home."

"What have they to be afraid of?" said the man with the boils angrily. "The husband is in the trenches. Far away. It's hard to live without a man! *Ekh!* Our life is like serving a sentence of hard labor. Only if I ever found out that my little wife was tricking me, I'd kill her. By God, I'd kill her!"

"Good. All the same you wouldn't do it!" said the orderly. "As I was saying, I arrived there during my leave. Everybody taking off their hat to you! Well, I had a jolly good time. I couldn't pass by for the women. Only I don't want such women. What I want is that a woman should be young and sprucelike. And in our village, where I was stopping, the third hut from the end, there was living a woman, a good sort. A soldier's wife She was called Dasha. That means, Darya. A proper sort of woman Good I am for her There's nothing at first She holds her own, and won't hear anything. I tried insolence—nothing in that. I tried the honor game—nothing in that either. A hard nut to crack, thought I And an artilleryman to boot! I approach her this way and that—she won't give in. I take a stroll with her every blessed day—she won't give in I say to her. I'll come to you tonight. She sits there all white like that oven there. If she'd only smile—but nothing. I see people laughing at me. But no! Just think of it, she came to me herself, of her own good will. 'I can't,' says she, 'stand it any longer without my husband.' And she breaks out crying because it's two years since she's seen her husband. Of course, I kissed her gentle-like, take her hands in mine, and all that. I lived with her during my whole leave as with a wife: I come to see her in the evening, and she takes off my boots for me, and trembles all over. It was wonderful! She followed me wherever I went, like a shadow. Such a quiet one she was. A fine woman. And the main thing, if another young fellow went up to her—she wouldn't have anything to do with him. But against me she wouldn't stand up. Women love me, and it's a fact!"

"And what province do you come from?" asked the soldier with the boils suspiciously.

"The Kherson, the Ananyevsky district. We're not fellow-countrymen by any chance?"

"No. I'm from Tavrichesk."

"Yes. She was a fine woman, was Dasha. In a word, tea with cream. Just to think of her, is enough to—"

A sufficiently long silence followed.

"What village do you come from?" suddenly asked the man wrapped in rags, in a weak voice.

They all turned to him. From the dark corner gleamed a single attentive eye.

"I'm from Nikolaevka, the Ananyevsky district. Countrymen, by any chance?"

"Yes, we're countrymen," replied the man in rags. "I too am from Nikolaevka."

"Ah!" The orderly grew animated. "That means, you know Dasha, the soldier's wife?"

"I know her," uttered the weak voice. "She's my wife. My wife. So we're fellow-countrymen."

It became so quiet that the dim booming of a gun in the lines, eight versts away, was clearly audible. The soldier with boils coughed.

"If only I could have a drink..." said the man wrapped in rags.

He felt frozen again. He was cold and uncomfortable He wished he might neither see nor hear anything, nor feel the fever that burned at his eyes and temples. It seemed to him there was no war, and no stranger's hut, and no bristly soldier—he was in his fancy in his own hut—and all this appeared to be only a horrible nightmare.

[Translation by John Cournos]

Leonid Leonov

IVAN'S MISADVENTURE

She laughed at his wretched gift and, crumpling it into a ball, flung it on the snow at Ivan's feet Then, her arms akimbo, she laughed at his love's sorrow, but Ivan did not hear.... While still an orphan lad, working on the soil, Ivan had caught a fever and suffered for a long time, until he was urged to visit the mistress of the estate The proprietress lived alone and gave medical attendance to the peasants from sheer boredom She gave Ivan quinine, great quantities of it, and said: "You'll be deaf, but you'll be well!" And, to be sure, Ivan was cured of the ague, and in his joy did not notice his sudden deafness It did not hinder him from bearing his peasant yoke, it saved him from village quarrels, it saved him from the war; and although his deafness stupefied him, he got used to it and even grew fond of inviolate silence.

The world became in his eyes soundless and wistful; clouds and birds floated in it, the grass grew in it, and the snow fell.. .Ivan did not notice human beings in this world, but much dropped to his share from them. Among other things he was regarded as a carpenter, but he lived for the most part half hungry. He did not offend his world,

his birds, his grass; but it pleased the priest not to pay him for digging graves, while the lads made diversion for themselves by throwing Ivan's simple tools into the pond His life abounded in such misadventures. It was precisely with this word that he expressed his guileless astonishment at the order of the world. And though it seemed as if nothing could darken the lowly joy of his existence, his failure to win Lenka Bragina's heart deeply wounded him.

Humbly he picked up the head-kerchief crumpled up by Lenka, smoothed it out and put it to his bosom. The village urchins danced in the snow round the simple fellow and taunted him, but Ivan did not hear them The sole creature capable of dissipating his confusion before his lot was his aunt, and it was toward her he was now wending his way. His aunt lived in a rich village twenty versts away. She was living out her time as a nurse at the priest's house. She was good, and she was called Maria. He often came to her with his griefs, and, after three days as her guest, he would return to his own village more happily reconciled to his fate. The sorrows of the world did not perturb him.

In that same stern year the war had broken out. The world was in agony, and in its convulsions it gnawed the ground poisoned by its own blood Maddened by the thirst to see their own home and family and to build a new life, the soldiers abandoned the front and became scattered wanderers in the land In hostile bands they passed by the village, because the village in which Ivan Esakov lived stood on one of the main highways The road ran on a high embankment, and against the blazing evening sunset were to be seen the dragging, drooping figures, dark with anger and weighed down with weapons, which they bore with them for every untoward occasion. These appearances awakened forebodings of misfortune in the hearts of the peasants to whom the soldiers came for bread, but they did not frighten Ivan, locked as in a fastness in his impenetrable silence.

Ivan was oblivious of the things which happened round him. A soft, gentle snow was falling, the road was comfortable, covered as with down; it was pleasant to wander upon it in the obscure darkness toward the remote welcoming flame in his aunt's window and to think about Lenka. Proud and handsome creature that she was, it was not for her to marry a white-browed journeyman, and when Ivan understood this he at once decided to present the head-kerchief to Aunt Maria in gratitude for her solicitude, so that she might wear it during holy days and remember the orphan.

It was darkening when, having passed the wood, he began to climb upward toward the village. It stood on the hill, the belfry stuck into the heavens, and under it the evening birds careered. He took the usual path toward the priest's house and knocked. The door was opened to him not by his aunt, but by the priest's daughter, and all at once Ivan's

heart beat violently at the ostensible incongruity. Guiltily smiling and clutching at the hat in his hands, he gazed at the girl, who crossly stamped her foot clad in a felt boot and bade him go.

In answer to her cry, the sleepy priest came out. He was dressed in striped wadded trousers, and he was unkempt and angry.

"The old woman has died," he said, digging his fingers deep into his abundant hair. "She's died and is lying under a stone."

Then Ivan began to bow low and humbly to thank the priest, and he did this for a long time, and when he came to his senses he was sitting on a bench in the porch, and before him stood his aunt's meagre suitcase, while his hat lay before the closed door He put his hat on his thinnish hair, and drew the kerchief from his bosom. He no longer had anyone to whom he might offer it, and, dumfounded, he gazed at it. The kerchief was a cheap one, with a narrow flowery border, but it was red and pretty, he thought. In the half-darkness it flamed, and it burned Ivan's hands. He quickly thrust it into its former place, in his bosom, and descended the steps. The dim shafts of light from the priest's windows pierced the half-darkness, and in these shafts of light he could see the snow falling.

"A misadventure," he said, smiling in a lost way at himself; for there was no place for him in the big village, and the wolves hindered his returning to Lenka. So he decided to look for a night's lodging at the pothouse, which was kept by a widow The woman made a decoction from apples, and the drink was famed throughout the district. With tucked-up sleeves and buxom bosom and looking very much the Amazon, she took Ivan's money in a businesslike way and brought him out a bottle.

"It's turned out thick enough to dilute," said the widow, and pricked up her ears at a whining sound audible in the nocturnal silence. "Again Efim is beating his wife He loves to do it across the face. Tell me, what passions exist on earth!" Suddenly recognizing in her customer a deaf man, she took it into her head to use him for diverting her from her widowed boredom.

Putting her cloudy face close to Ivan's, she slapped him in a manlike fashion on his back and, bursting into guffaws, pushed him into the hut A red jacket she had been sewing was lying on the table near the lamp, and because of it the vapors rising from the vat in which the spiced drink was cooking appeared red. With his habitual confused smile Ivan went into the hut, and, sitting down by the stove, he watched the widow prepare a repast on the table, consisting of soaked apples, nuts, and the bottle already bought by Ivan. Then, with hands folded across her stomach, she gravely seated herself on a bench, and bade Ivan to make himself at home. Making an effort not to look at the unsightly hole in the widow's strong teeth, a souvenir left by her bullying first husband, Ivan took the glass from the table and for a

moment watched his own reflection in the liquid, dark as fate itself; then, with a frown, he drank the contents of the glass at one gulp and stretched his hand out for a second glass, but for some reason hesitated and sat down on the bench.

Sadly, yet with the dignity of assurance, the widow observed his incoherent movements.

"Why do you sit there lamenting-like, and don't liven up a bit?" she asked, gnawing at a tough apple skin "Why be angry at anybody . ..you look as though you hadn't anything or anybody in life. Every crow crawls into its hole at night, but you are alone, without a nest, an orphan!" With a bitter tear of sympathy the widow was preparing the way for love's solace. "And your eye is uneasy, sickly....How can a man look at a woman with an eye like that? A woman is a hornless beast, a cunning creature...a woman wants good cheer. Another one in my place would have shown you the door long ago! Only I'm sorry for you "

Ivan was silent, without ceasing watching the yellow leaf of flame in the lamp, and he was thinking that it was well to have matches against wolves The widow had already edged her way to his side and was petting him and making love to him, inciting him to passion, but he paid no attention to her contacts. Not being used to drink, he became intoxicated at once, and, though he thought of his aunt's suitcase, he had no will to rise. It was then that she extinguished the flame of the lamp Ivan turned in confusion, but in the widow's place there was darkness, satiated with the same red, odorous vapors. The dead silence rose, rang and darted away, quickly he hit out and struck something stony, but the red vapors merely laughed, mocking his resistance .. He fell asleep only toward dawn and in a dream he saw the quiet road of the wood, the tree branches bepowdered with snow inclined over the road, and all this was enveloped in a confused, restless longing for Lenka.

With the object of avoiding gossip and entertaining no hopes of further amorous actions on the part of Ivan, the widow quickly awakened him and jostled him, unfed, across the yard into the street. On her sated face it was impossible to note any traces of the night just passed, though it left Ivan weary. Tired of her solitude, she had not sated her longing with Ivan, and the respectable moujiks had not yet returned from the war. Burning with shame for this, the first misadventure of its kind in his life, Ivan made no effort to remain any longer with the woman.

For a minute, while the bolt made a malignant noise behind the gates, he stood irresolutely, then he trembled and ran away across the chaste snow. His body was in pain, until once more he entered the wood which he had just seen in his dream Here everything was stilled, the pain as well as the shame, because his own inner silence

fell in with the silence of the world. Every step he took here across space was pleasantly familiar. He secretly knew his favorite tree by name, he remembered by face every juniper bush. He had been here hundreds of times, but now he was glad at the mute solemnity of the morning, in which, as it were, his own underided truth had taken shelter. His breast became filled with cheer and blitheness, while his body became light, and the bearing of it to meet its fate was no onerous task. Suddenly Ivan wanted to shout, and he refrained only because in the distance he espied some sledges in the road.

"Ah, you'd better hurry, lad ..there, at the Krutilins, someone got away with a horse last night!" shouted an old man quickly from his sledge, but recognizing the deaf man he merely waved his hand and smacked his lips to hurry his mare The perturbation in his words did not touch Ivan, and at the end of his journey his sorrows of yesterday were wholly lifted, he felt only hunger, and when the plain in all its snowy magnificence opened before him, he was again ready for his astounding misadventures. It was near midday, and Ivan was already coming face to face with unfamiliar persons attired in military tatters.

Ascending a mound which overlooked the village, Ivan sadly paused on its height. Below him, near the storehouses, where, from time immemorial, crowds gathered, there was a huge throng. Angry fists rose above human heads, and many men's feet attired in felt boots were urged across the snow by rage; the dense vapors of breathing floated above the throng. Intermittently, with the moujiks, strange soldiers stamped their feet, there was about a dozen of them, and they joined in discussing the occurrence of the night. Two good-natured bearded moujiks held the blacksmith Zotov under the arms, while the others formed a tight ring to prevent an escape. The blacksmith, who was a notorious horse-thief in the district, smiled sullenly at the stern judges; he hardened himself and he spat; he had apparently reconciled himself to his fate At the same time a tall lean moujik, Foma Krutilin himself, was holding forth before the villagers...not so much before them as before the strange soldiers...and not so much before the soldiers as before the dark power of their guns, at which he looked askew with an enraged eye.

"I ask you, fellow moujiks, what does it mean?" asked Foma, turning to the provisional court of justice. "And what's one to do? Bring the horse for the night into one's hut?...The authorities have bunked, so it's up to you fellows to take the law into your own hands...for if you don't watch out, the thief will take your breeches off and carry away your hut on his shoulders Look at Zotov now! There isn't any shame in him nor a tear He's willing enough to talk a heap, but as for repenting he's not thinking of it a bit! Repent, scoundrel, did you get away with my Crow?" shouted Krutilin in a shrill voice, and from rage flung his hat on the ground

"What if I did!" the blacksmith admitted sulkily, rolling a small cigar in his fingers and spitting out blood from blows he had received.

They were about to execute the sentence pronounced by strangers against the villain when, suddenly, Vasily Bragin stepped into the midst of the throng He was low of stature, sharp of tongue, unmerciful of heart. His sickly eyes always emitted tears and he never looked anyone in the face, and for this reason the village valued and feared Vasily Bragin's judgments.

"I am thinking," he began, stroking his bristly gray hair in his habitual manner, "the blacksmith won't think again of fooling with other people's horses...." He had in mind the blows the blacksmith had received on the night. "Only why should one punish Zotov? We might as well shoot our horses with our own hands, and be done with it. We have but one blacksmith, fellow moujiks, for a whole district and a half...he shoes our mare, and our colt, and is a regular veterinary, so to speak, and he stretches the hoop over the wheel. Zotov is the first nail in our management. It's too early to think of digging Zotov's grave! We're grateful to the soldier boys here...how they've devoted themselves to the war and live everywhere in military fashion ...but now we'll speak straight, the chaps need a bit of work to do. But we're going to stand up for our blacksmith, and we shan't give him up to the soldier boys for amusement!" He paused for a respite and lifted his screwed-up eyes toward the mound from which Ivan was descending to the village; at that moment the speaker's tearful eyes looked dispassionately and sagely. "And to let such a chance pass is not to be thought of...to be sure, we ought to make a warning of death to wicked people. Fellow moujiks, we have but one blacksmith, and we have four carpenters. Now it seems to me we can easier spare a carpenter than the blacksmith...."

He jumped down from the log and was immediately lost in the crowd. No one looked at Vasily Bragin, but everyone thought his thought and was in accord with his decision. At this moment Ivan, propelled by the perilous curiosity of a deaf man, nudged his way through the crowd into the circle. All were silent, and suddenly he observed that they were all looking at him. He was an orphan, he was a carpenter, he was a poor wretch, and there was no one to weep over him, he was guilty, because his guilt was necessary to the community. He smiled now to one side, now to the other, but the faces in the crowd all assumed the same pattern, cold and forbidding

"Submit, Ivan, it's all the same to you!" said an old man who stood nearest to him, warning him with a raised finger.

"Have a pity on the community, Vaniusha. You can see for yourself, horse-thieves have overcome us...and we shan't forget you!"

"We'll bury you like our own son...Woh!" came a shout from

behind, and the voice conquered by its real despair, but Ivan did not hear.

He was astonished at the hands outstretched toward him from all sides, but the crowd had already moved from the spot and drew him along beyond the village. Fearlessly smiling and making no attempt at justification, because not even in thought had he sinned against the world, he went with the crowd; he only thought that his misadventures had gone rather fast It even seemed to him that he was deceiving the world with his nameless guilt—and this was the cause of his confused smile Once outside the village, the crowd moved across the chaste snow of the fields; in the rear the old men briskly limped along, and in front ran the little children to witness Ivan's last misadventure He was placed near a gully, and two soldiers, whose eyes deeper than those of the others were sunken under their foreheads, loaded their rifles In the same instant, as during a betrothal, the women raised their voices.

It was a windy place, and in the driven snow were thrust upward the black heads of milfoil Ivan tore one of them off and, after rubbing it between his fingers in a bewildered way he smelt its aroma, dense and poignant in the frosty air He was still smiling and, on meeting the glance of the soldiers' screwed-up eyes, comprehended much in his fate and, above all, his bitter nonconformity with the impetuous tempests of the world. Ivan again remembered the forgotten suitcase of his aunt's, his heritage, but this was no time to think about a suitcase.

"Greet Lenka for me!" was all he shouted into the air, where a bird soared, and for the second time in the course of the day his own silence merged with the silence of the world.

[Translation by John Cournos]

F. Panferov

WITH THEIR OWN EYES

I

MAJOR SHILOV

It was said of Major Shilov that he was a man of more than usual courage—courage alone won't get you very far in modern warfare—a man given to thought, of sound military judgment and initiative Many other things were said about him that time and again he had penetrated far behind the German lines, blown up their munition dumps, and wiped up their staff headquarters. Rumor had it that he had "been round the world," seen service in Spain, in the Sahara, in China Many other things were said about him. At the front people not only fight, they also weave legends.

Regimental Commissar Levchenko offered to accompany us. He was about twenty-eight, perhaps even less, and his youthful face and winning smile at times gave him the appearance of a boy in his teens. Four years ago he had graduated from the Agricultural Academy, and recently he had been the senior agronomist in one of the large state farms in the Ukraine

The front-line trenches were only about two or three kilometers away, but it was a dangerous stretch.

"The Germans pot away from Hill N at anything and everything, whether it's on four wheels, two wheels, or on two legs," Levchenko said

That's why we set out only at dusk.

At first the three of us walked side by side, but as we drew nearer to our objective, Levchenko insisted that we walk Indian file.

"And for heaven's sake keep to the track; the field all around here is mined," he said. A little while later he whispered: "Duck down, as low as you can, and dash after me."

We dived into a narrow trench and ran. The bullets whizzed by overhead.

"They've got this spot well covered," Levchenko explained when we scrambled out of the trench. "From time to time they treat us to a burst of machine-gun fire Just on the off chance The other day one of our sergeants was killed here. He was a splendid chap. He was killed through his own carelessness, though"

Again we dived into a dark hole, and shortly afterwards we reached the dugout.

A lamp was burning, shedding a light on the walls of the dugout, the birch logs of the roof, a bunk strewn with sweet-smelling hay, a small table, and a samovar.

"But where is Major Shilov?"

"He's in action," Levchenko replied. "The day before yesterday we received orders to drive the Germans from Hill N." He unfolded a map and indicated the place with the blunt end of a pencil and began to explain "the lay of the land." "Here you have Hill N, which is held at present by the Germans. As you see, it isn't very big, but, from a military standpoint, it's of vital importance: the Germans have dug themselves in here and are sitting tight; they have a fine eagle's nest from which to observe the disposition of our troops and to keep them under fire. Our orders are to drive them from the hill. We've been at it since yesterday"

"What? Since yesterday? And a thing no bigger than a mole hill?"

"Yes. Since yesterday."

"The enemy are cunning. We must outwit them All last night Major Shilov simply drove them crazy, he kept on harassing them, wearing them down with a series of small sorties. Finally, when they imagined that we had about exhausted all our forces, they themselves launched an attack. That's what Major Shilov was waiting for: he simply wiped the Germans out with his trench mortars. And today? Well, today Major Shilov has something special up his sleeve.... We may as well go along and see for ourselves."

The night was pitch-black, the sky overcast, and the wind as chilly as in the morning. Only the sky seemed alive, heaving like a gigantic sea, illumined by flare rockets, bursting shells, and flashes from trench mortars.

"This way, this way," Levchenko said, leading us along a dark and narrow communication trench behind a haystack.

How wonderfully the hay smelled.

"Everything has changed here except the smell of the dry grass," Levchenko said thoughtfully.

Just then three flare rockets lit up the scene of action

Hill N was quite near· about a kilometer away It seemed to be covered with underbrush. A well-worn track wound up the hillside. To the right was a potato patch, black as a pool of spilt oil To the left lay a hollow, somewhat resembling a lake

The light from the flare rockets had barely died away when the Germans opened up a hurricane of fire from their artillery, trench mortars, and machine guns Suddenly this ceased. A pall of darkness enveloped everything Only the wind continued to howl. Somewhere to one side, a single tracer bullet clove the sky.

A rumbling sound came from the direction of Hill N Again three

flare rockets soared skyward, lighting up everything. We could see a company of German soldiers marching down in serried ranks toward the hollow, their rifles pressed firmly to their shoulders

"A psychological attack," Levchenko whispered.

Three more flare rockets ... The company had almost reached the hollow.... One of the men could not keep himself in hand and jumped up. The Germans, marching in step, came on and on Now they'd almost reached the potato patch. Every now and then rockets were sent up from their lines as though to demonstrate how calmly German soldiers went into the attack.

Suddenly two searchlights swept the potato patch, throwing a beam of light on the company. The company came to a halt as though suddenly faced with a stream of molten lava And at that very moment, from somewhere to the right, from the brushwood, machine guns began to splutter The Germans, apparently, were still blinded by the glare of the searchlights, when the machine guns began to mow them down. Those who remained alive scattered in various directions, followed by the beam of the searchlights and a hail of bullets On they ran, stumbling, falling, like hares caught in the glare of headlights, and the bullets going home cut short their lives, right there and then, on Russian soil

All this happened in a flash

And it seemed that the insanity of this psychological attack was apparent to everybody—even to the German command

But the ruthless machine had been set in motion and from the height, again marching in serried ranks, and again lit up by the flare of rockets, a second company came marching down They, too, were caught by the beam of the searchlights, and, at that very instant, the machine guns came into action. The ruthless machine, however, rolled on, and a third company left the hilltop, marching as before in serried ranks.

The beams of the searchlights swept upward, swerved this way and that, and then, as though in play, went out.

Again a pall of darkness enveloped the fields, the woods, and the height. Only the wind continued to howl.

"What swine they are!" Levchenko said viciously, breaking the silence. "Major Shilov was splendid, he had everything figured out." Again everything was still.

Suddenly the fields and gullies, all covered in gloom, resounded to a ripping cheer.

"They've gone into the attack," Levchenko said with a tremor in his voice. He spoke in a whisper as though afraid that his words might hamper the attack.

Just then another rousing cheer was given and, then, somewhere on the approaches to the hill, the German trench mortars, spitting out

fire, began a hideous croaking, but it was too late: hand grenades were hurtling already into the trenches and dugouts, the Red Army men were tearing into the trenches and dugouts From where we stood we could hear the desperate cries of the Germans.

"Aha-a-a," Levchenko exclaimed exultantly.

At daybreak, about an hour after Hill N. had been taken, Political Instructor Pshentsov was brought into the dugout. He had been with the machine-gunners during the entire engagement, in the brushwood, from where they had mowed down the three German companies He had gone to report to Major Shilov that orders had been carried out, but on the way had stumbled on a mine Now he was lying on the bunk—deathly pale, his face covered with blood, blood caked with gunpowder and earth on his lips. Levchenko wiped Pshentsov's face, forced half a glass of cognac between his teeth, but the wounded man continued to shiver as though with the ague He kept on muttering something, pointing all the time in one and the same direction, but nobody understood him.

"Vasya! What is it? Vasya!"—Levchenko bent over him, looking into his dimming eyes and, unable to understand a word of his jabber, he took a notebook and put a pencil and paper into Pshentsov's hand

Pshentsov tried to write something but what he scrawled was absolutely undecipherable. The pencil fell from his fingers, he began to tear at his tunic, helplessly, like one delirious. This was already the throes of death

Shortly afterwards he was sent to the hospital He died on the way

Those who were in the dugout sat silent, saddened by the death of Pshentsov. We sat and waited for Major Shilov, hoping that he would dispel our gloom But Major Shilov did not show up Levchenko looked into the major's dugout several times, but every time he came back he reported that the major was either dressing, or busy with some new plan, or writing letters home. Only when he came back from the major the last time did Levchenko tell us the real truth

"It's terrible. The major simply cannot get over it He's terribly cut up about Pshentsov's death." And after a pause he added. "It's nothing to be surprised at Pshentsov was a brilliant mathematician. At twenty-four he was a professor at the Moscow University"

Major Shilov's adjutant entered the dugout.

"Major Shilov will see you now," he said in a clear and distinct voice.

Again we entered the dugout in which we had been the evening before. The dugout had been tidied up, a small mirror hung from the wall, and the samovar even had been polished up a bit. Judging from the scratches on the surface, a brick or a rasp had evidently been used for the purpose. The table had been laid and there were even a couple

of bottles of cognac to wash down the various dishes. A soldier stood near by; he was about twenty years of age, stocky but nimble When we entered he drew himself up and reported to Regimental Commissar Levchenko:

"Major Shilov's orders are to wait. He'll be here in a minute or so" All this he said in a tone as though not he was subordinate to Major Shilov, but Major Shilov was subordinate to him. Addressing himself again to Levchenko he blurted out warmly:

"Now you, Comrade Levchenko, put me in a very awkward position the other day—the samovar, you said, hadn't had a scrub for ages See what a polish it has now? Like a real mirror"

"Gee, Kolya," Levchenko said with a laugh. "You have really scratched it up. Once or twice more and there'll be holes in it"

"There's no fear of that. It'll do for another couple of years. I'll polish it up once a year."

We all laughed.

When Major Shilov entered the dugout he impressed us as being a big, burly man He was dressed neatly in a perfectly ironed tunic. His hair was carefully brushed. He was clean-shaven. It seemed to us at first that he would greet us in an official tone. Instead he said to us simply:

"I was told, comrades, that you were here, but I couldn't come at once, I was busy"

He sat down and we saw that he wasn't such a big man after all. He had open features, his eyes were real blue, just like children have. His face was lit up by an attractive smile

"Haven't you overdone it, Kolya?" he said pointing to the bottles of cognac. "A glass apiece will do us nicely."

"It's all that's left of the wine cellar, Comrade Major. I think we came to an arrangement that at table you're my subordinate."

"Not when guests are present, Kolya"

"Because," Kolya continued, without paying the slightest attention to what the major had said, "I feed you and not you me. And that's that. And since we gained the day, I propose that you eat and drink ..."

"What a chap you are," Shilov said with a smile, but at the same instant his eyes grew sad.

"Was it Pshentsov's death that upset you so?" we asked

The major gave a start and turned his head away

"Yes, in wars bullets don't spare even the most gifted of people Sometimes I think that, say, in five hundred, or maybe three hundred, years' time, or possibly sooner people will get to have a physical repulsion not only to killing but even striking a man."

"But even then I think people won't think badly of us," Levchenko declared.

Major Shilov smiled and, turning to us, said:

"Of course, of course. That's understood. People will consider us and our country as pioneers in inculcating this sentiment." He got up. Apparently he was in the habit of pacing to and fro when thinking, but here the place was cramped. And yet he did manage it—a step in one direction and then a step in the opposite direction. "And...yes, and that's the very reason why we'll wipe up the ground with this scum. For Pshentsov alone I'll exterminate them like lice. Remember Gorky's splendid words: 'The enemy must be destroyed like lice,' that's to say, without mercy, with the same feeling of loathsomeness. That's how we will give it to them, Kolya," he said, bringing his fist down on the table with a bang and looking altogether a different man.

"Why, of course, of course, we'll make it hotter than hell for them, Comrade Major." Kolya also seemed to be transformed. He became more serious, more thoughtful. He tugged the Major by the sleeve "But eat something, Comrade Major, you simply make my heart ache For two days you haven't had a proper bite, you've been all the time on the go. You can't do things like that. You've got to keep up your strength," he said in the tone of a mentor; "you've got to harbor your strength for the enemy."

"That's true, Kolya. Well, sit down, comrades. We might as well make an affair of it. Let's ask Sasha Krainov to play us something."

A young ruddy-cheeked soldier entered the dugout, followed by a second soldier, a thick-set chap.

"He's our pet," the major said introducing Sasha Krainov and patting him affectionately on the back. "He's an excellent accordion player. That you, Uraz?"—He turned to the thick-set soldier who had almond-shaped eyes with a touch of gold in them. "He comes from the Astrakhan steppes. Uraz Buzakarov is as skillful with the machine gun as in rendering a song. Well, sit down, comrades, and let's have our favorite song." He was the first to strike up the opening bars of the "Stalin Song."

We had never heard the song rendered like that before. Everybody joined in, there, deep down under the ground, and as they sang beneath that roof of birch logs they looked like men inspired, entirely different than when in action—tender, mild, thoughtful. Major Shilov's weatherbeaten face became cheerful, young.

While we were singing, Junior Lieutenant Yartsev entered the dugout. It was his company that had been the first to break into the German trenches. He was black from the "smoke of battle," a thick growth of stubble on his chin, and there was such a tired look in his eyes that it seemed to us that in a moment he would lean against the wall of the dugout and fall fast asleep. But as soon as the song ended he drew up to attention and reported.

"Hill N has been strengthened, Comrade Major"

"Excellent," and, addressing everybody in general, Major Shilov said with feeling: "Comrades! Junior Lieutenant Yartsev deserves the place of honor, he's the hero of the day."

We made room for Junior Lieutenant Yartsev, giving him the place of honor. He sat down. It seemed to us that now he would lean against the wall of the dugout for certain and go to sleep. But no sooner had Major Shilov struck up a new song than Yartsev pulled himself together and, with his hand to his ear in the manner of peasants, chimed in with his rich, deep bass.

Major Shilov suddenly stopped singing. Everybody looked at him in surprise.

"Why, yes. I forgot to tell you. Baby has a contusion....Her condition is serious."

"Baby? Tony?" Levchenko asked in alarm. "Where is she?"

"She's been taken to hospital."

"Then I...I'll run along....I'll go there," and Levchenko, his face white as a sheet, left the dugout.

2.

BABY TONY

Everybody called her that—Baby Tony—although as a matter of fact she was twenty-four, had graduated from the Medical Institute, and had a medical degree. And her height, too, was about the average. But for some reason or other everybody, from the commissar down to the rank-and-file soldier, or even we, who had only just arrived at the front, all called her Baby Tony. Maybe it was because of her hands, so tiny and so tender, and her smile—just like an infant's. Or perhaps it was because she was so frank, because she loved people, loved them disinterestedly, just like children love adults. Why that nickname stuck to her nobody knew, considering that she was far from helpless. When she came to the front she knew only what she had acquired at the medical school, but here she soon became a lecturer who could speak popularly, was excellent in reading newspapers to the men, and in a short while she learned to drive a car. Whatever she did, she did efficiently. Only one thing she somehow could not master, and that was how to handle firearms Major Shilov once presented her with a Browning in a leather holster.

"Baby! You roam all over the place, you'd better take it, in case of accidents."

But the Browning, in its leather holster, hung in its usual place on the wall above her bed. It's true that the first evening she examined it long and carefully, inquired even how to shoot with it, but when she was asked to try it out of doors, she screwed up her eyes and said:

"No. Some other time. I might by chance kill somebody."

"Whom? At night? In the air? A bat perhaps?" the senior surgeon, Innokentii Gavrilovich, said reproachingly.

"Supposing even a bat? It also wants to live"

"You're being silly. At the front and afraid to kill a bat!" Tony put her head on one side and, looking into the corner, her lips slightly curled, said in her quick, offhand way:

"Why, of cour-s-e! I'm silly! And you're not silly always sitting down to table in your helmet?"

"There's no harm in being cautious," Innokentii Gavrilovich retorted, somewhat hotly. It was his one weak point. He never parted with his helmet. He would always have it on—at dinner, in the street, in the hospital, and even when he went to bed it was always under his pillow. "There's no harm in being cautious," he repeated, shielding his face with his hands to hide the vivid color that suffused his cheeks. "Trying to tease me," he said to himself. "But you wait, I'll get my own back one of these days."

Nothing more was said on the subject at the time.

Today Innokentii Gavrilovich had decided to be firm.

Only the day before yesterday the Germans, from Hill N., had shelled the living quarters of the Red Cross staff. On the roof of the building was an enormous red cross which was visible from far off. The Germans, however, had deliberately fired on the building. Several members of the staff had been killed or wounded Today, the command had decided to drive the Germans from the height

"That means that Baby Tony will be wanting to be off to the front lines, there's no doubt about that She's got to be stopped Rather than let her I'll go myself After all, I can order her to stay I'm senior surgeon after all" And ruminating in this way Innokentii Gavrilovich entered the hut where the field station was located and where Baby Tony had her quarters.

She was in her corner, busy with something, humming a song to herself.

Innokentii Gavrilovich coughed He wanted to take his helmet off, but on second thought he didn't, deciding that this would serve to stress the fact that the situation, today, was complicated, tense and even dangerous.

Tony looked up from her corner.

"That you, Innokentii Gavrilovich!" she exclaimed "Take it off Take your helmet off After all, we're not being bombed here," and she went up to him, in full kit already, with her first-aid bag slung across her shoulder.

"So-o," he ejaculated, adjusting his helmet more firmly on his head.

"So-o?" She looked at him questioningly.

"Just s-o, s-o. I mean no. Not that. I don't mean that," Innokentii Gavrilovich blurted out, afraid that she, too, would repeat his "just s-o, s-o" and that this sort of conversation might go on without end.

"What are your interjections supposed to mean today, Innokentii Gavrilovich?"

He said nothing in reply. He sat down.

"Maybe," he thought, "I'm not doing the right thing wanting to detain her here." In general, Innokentii Gavrilovich was fond of putting himself questions, but he never answered them He probably would have gone on asking himself endless questions, but she took a step toward the door as though about to leave the hut "And without your pistol?"—burst from his lips—"No, you can't do that. Attach it to your belt. I insist!"

With his own hands he adjusted the gun for her. He adjusted it and became scared.

"Do you know how many of our ambulance men were killed yesterday?" he said. "No, I don't mean only in the living quarters, but out there, in the front lines? Do try and understand that those thugs are hunting after people like us out there too, at the front lines. It's savage Do you realize it? A thing like that never happened in any war before Do you realize it?"

"Of course I realize it! But it's time for me to be going. We can't leave the wounded to shift for themselves out there."

Innokentii Gavrilovich frowned and said in a voice that was deliberately rough

"Weren't you writing to your mother today? Better look out, be more careful, otherwise that letter might never be finished," and slamming the door he left the hut.

Innokentii Gavrilovich had hardly left when Tony took from a book the letter she had begun writing to her mother "Mama, everybody loves me here And I want to tell you . ." she hadn't written any further, and now, for an instant, she leaned over the letter vividly picturing to herself her old mother, Auntie Grunya, as everybody called her. Taking out a photograph and slowly stroking her mother's head, with a caressing motion of her small finger, she said to herself·

"Darling! How white the hair on your temples is ... and yet maybe ... no, no!" She at once dispelled the gloomy thought and a sweet smile hovered on her lips as she recalled how her mother had seen her off! She hadn't shed a tear and while making her daughter comfortable in the train she had kept on grumbling all the time in a manner that was deliberately rough, every now and then adjusting the blue beret on Tony's head It was only after the train had started to move that the tears suddenly came Tony recalled this just now.

"Darling mother!" and, hiding the photograph she darted out of the hut.

Night had fallen, pitch-dark, thick and heavy as though weighted down with lead. The rumbling of guns could be heard from the front-line trenches. Trench-mortar shells whizzed over Tony's head with a hoarse spluttering, and it seemed that, at any moment, she might be hit by one. From time to time flare rockets soared upward. They burst high up in the sky lighting up an enormous expanse and then going out, dropped. Suddenly the sky was cloven by tracer bullets—blue rapid flashes. And although this was happening at the front and spelled death, Tony could not but stop for a moment to admire this nocturnal display of fire and explosion. Then she sped along the familiar track and soon after reached Major Shilov's dugout.

Major Shilov was seated at the telephone issuing orders that were totally incomprehensible to Tony, first calling up "Volga," then "Tver," and then for some reason or other "Paris." Having done with his telephoning, turning to Tony, he said with a smile·

"A-a! Baby! You've come? Good. Just in time." He looked at his watch. "The attack will begin in a few minutes' time You'd better go out there. Only don't go alone. Take an orderly with you, Yasha. He's here, in the next dugout. Well, run along"

Yasha was younger than Tony Freckled, with a turned-up nose, he had a peculiar way of talking all his own. For instance, if something took his fancy, he would say: "This is most excellent, awfully so."

Together with Tony they made their way to Junior Lieutenant Yartsev's company. When he saw Tony, Yartsev, who was always taciturn in the manner peculiar to peasants, and even stern, let the news out to the men· "Baby Tony has come." The men livened up; everybody at once seemed to feel much jollier. Baby Tony was well known to all of them. She had spoken to them more than once and read the newspapers to them.

And now Junior Lieutenant Yartsev, with a deft turn of his flash lamp, looked at his watch. It was exactly twelve. Turning to Tony he whispered:

"Stay here. Don't show your nose over there in the trenches. I'm going to give the order now," and raising himself to his full height, a strapping figure of a man, he shouted: "For our country, comrades! Forward!" He was the first over the top, making for the German trenches.

The company was after him like a shot. Moving rapidly, with fixed bayonets glinting in the light of a flare rocket, the whole countryside resounded to their stirring "Hurrah," and, bounding over humps and hollows, the men tore into the enemy's trenches with the force of a torrent that carried all before it.

Baby Tony stayed where she was, her hands pressed tightly to her

breasts, like one spellbound, her eyes all the time on the headlong rush of the men.

Yasha shouted to her:

"Wounded!"

She dashed after Yasha, who was already busy bandaging a wounded Red Army man. Administering first aid, he muttered to the man in his slow, hesitant manner: "The way you're ferreting out those Germans from their lairs is something wonderful. Awfully so."

Tony lent him a hand. Her tiny firm hands were nimble, efficient, and tender in putting on a bandage.

Junior Lieutenant Yartsev's company had already driven the Germans from the first line of trenches and dugouts, after that they stormed the second line, and then the third.

The "Hurrah" of the men resounded now quite a distance away, muffled. Yasha and Tony moved after the company. Busy over their work, they did not even notice how the dawn lit up the fringe of the forest.

Near one dugout a wounded German was writhing on the ground in pain, screaming.

"Bandage him," Tony said to Yasha, herself making for a Red Army man who was moaning with pain.

The man was lying in a small dip in the ground and, like all wounded in such circumstances, he was trying to crawl to a ditch so as to be completely under cover from stray bullets Tony went down on her knees and set to work deftly bandaging his leg, which had been pierced by a bullet. The man began to speak rapidly, his breath coming in short gasps, stressing the "o's" in the manner of the people along the Volga:

"Leave me my leg, Comrade Doctor. Without a leg I'm a goner. Do what you like but leave it, you understand me, Doctor?"

"It doesn't require much to understand. It stands to reason you'd be a goner without a leg," Tony replied, involuntarily dropping into his style of speaking and laying stress on the "o's."

The man was overjoyed when she spoke to him like a native from his part of the country and, breaking into a smile, he said to her in a tone of familiarity:

"So you're one of us. You speak like my sister Marusya does. You're really one of us, upon my word."

"Really and truly, from your parts. When the war's over I'll certainly pay a visit to your village."

The man nodded his head to her welcomingly.

And just then something happened that was entirely unexpected. Not far from where Tony was, a German soldier scrambled out of a hole that had been carefully camouflaged in the brushwood. He was in tatters, dirty, unkempt. He seemed to be demented at first. Getting

to his feet and glancing in the direction of Yasha, who was bandaging the wounded German, he hurled a hand grenade at him. What happened next became seared in Tony's mind. She saw how the hand grenade burst, how Yasha's arm was torn off as though it had been tied with a bit of string, how the wounded German was tossed into the air, and how the second German, turning toward her, sent a second hand grenade hurtling in her direction.

Tony dashed forward. "You swine!" she shouted. She saw the German throw up his hands as though to shield his face from the dust and fall flat on the ground. A bullet, sent with unerring aim by a soldier who had suddenly appeared from somewhere behind her, had found its mark.

"A-a! he's killed!" was the thought that flashed through her mind and just then something hit her heavily on the head and she collapsed in a heap like a teeny-weeny sparrow Somewhere at the back of her mind was the thought My old mother, grouchy, but kind Innokentii Gavrilovich, the wounded Red Army man, the unwritten letter to her mother, the savage face of the German and ... suddenly everything became blurred and Baby Tony seemed to be dropping down and down...

A groan burst from Major Shilov when he saw the German fall, and when the hand grenade burst and threw Baby Tony off her feet He ran up to her, caught her up in his arms and carried her away from the battlefield.

"Oh, you poor thing!" he whispered. "Poor little Tony."

Baby Tony recovered consciousness a few days later, and a few days after that she again regained her power of speech Today she was lying in the ward, the very same ward she had been in and out of so often as doctor. She was writing a letter to her mother She was lying near the window. Winter had set it. The first soft flakes of snow covered the ground. Glancing every now and then at the snow she wrote

"Mama! Everybody loves me here. The first snow has fallen The men brought me some pine branches from the front lines instead of flowers And how fragrantly they smell, mama...."

The letter was disjointed, but straight from her heart, warm and frank, just as frank as Baby Tony's own soul.

N. Shpanov

THE MAN WITH THE EYE-GLASSES

You will understand with what impatience and perturbation we awaited his return when I relate to you the object of his undertaking. Prokhor had been commanded to make a landing in the enemy's rear and there to pick up the leader of the guerrilla group and bring him to us with important information collected by members of that group.

The time appointed for Prokhor's return had long since passed. In vain we sought the skies: there was no token there of his airplane. Well, failure is something we must reckon with. That's a pity. Prokhor was a remarkable flier. A bit too ardent, perhaps, but then there beat within him a warm Russian heart ...

Scarcely did the dawn of the following day break when unexpectedly we saw Prokhor's airplane when it was already over the landing field. I saw at once that he was out of sorts Drily he recounted to the Colonel the execution of his errand and, without answering the questions of his comrades, he went to his place. Silently I followed him. He did not speak even to me Thus we arrived at the hut He threw off his leather jacket and, without breaking silence, lay down on his cot. The boards creaked under his heavy body. I thought that the flight had overfatigued him and I decided to leave him alone But when a ray of light from the door I had flung open fell on his face, I saw that he was not asleep His eyes were concentrated on a single point In their expression I thought I saw something which I had not observed before. It was a kind of perplexity, some sort of grievous question which he did not know how to solve.

I returned and sat down on the edge of his cot.

This is what I gathered.

Prokhor had seated himself, as was appointed, at daybreak and awaited the appearance of his passenger. Whether it was because he had mistaken the meeting place or because something had delayed the guerrilla fighter, he did not come An hour passed, then another hour It was full daylight now Even if the guerrilla had shown up now, there could not be any question of making the return flight. As best he could, Prokhor camouflaged his machine and once again resumed his place of observation in the bushes. At last the guerrilla came. He was a small gaunt man of about forty years, with a small rather straggly round beard, such as is sometimes grown by men without intention

He was dressed in an old worn leather jacket. On his nose was a pair of eye-glasses held together by a thread.

There was nothing military in his appearance, little indeed in any way to associate him with the tales of his guerrilla prowess.

The cause of his lateness was the suddenly occurring possibility of liquidating a group of staff officers, who stopped for the night in the village. The operation was performed successfully. The guerrilla commander found himself in possession of very important materials—an entire portfolio of them, in fact.

The man in the eye-glasses opened up his portfolio—the ordinary dilapidated portfolio of the petty Soviet worker, and before Prokhor's eyes there lay revealed a packet of German maps.

"They have no way of tracing you—here?" Prokhor asked.

"No."

"They can't hinder us from flying away?"

"No," the guerrilla repeated with conviction. After some reflection he added: "Except for my wife and little son, no one knows where I am."

In astonishment, Prokhor looked at the man:

"You don't mean to say they were with you?"

Silently he nodded; then, smiling, said:

"She's my best assistant—a wonderful assistant."

"So, so," Prokhor managed to say. "Well, we'll remain here until evening.... What's your business, by the way?"

"A farmer," replied the guerrilla briefly. "We'll fly up at sunset?"

"We need just enough light to ascend," said Prokhor. "And the way is well known to me We'll manage to get through the dark"

"So, so," said the farmer, then lapsed into a long silence. Then, with the same friendly smile, he said: "They'll be on that road to see us fly away." His light-blue near-sighted eyes amiably scanned the road which led to the village.

Thus they lay there until evening. When the sun was already close to the horizon, Prokhor said: "It is time."

But the farmer made no reply. With a sign he commanded, "Lie down" His glance was directed at the road. Against the sunset Prokhor saw two figures: those of a woman and of a child They were walking slowly on the road which led to a small wood. He understood that they were the wife and son of the farmer.

"Well, my friend," said Prokhor, "it is time."

The other angrily whispered:

"Lie still, I say."

Reluctantly Prokhor lowered himself into the dew-wet grass, and as he suddenly looked in the same direction in which the farmer's gaze was concentrated, his heart stood still. From the direction of the village, behind the figures sharply outlined against the red sunset there came

dashing several motorcycles: Germans. It was no longer a question of trying to take off in their presence. Greatly vexed, Prokhor struck the ground with his fist.

The Germans had overtaken the woman and the child when they were already some distance from the bushes which hid Prokhor and the farmer. In the bushes every word was audible from the road, and every petty detail could be observed. Prokhor could see the woman very clearly. She was small in stature, like her husband, and seemed rather frail. Her angular shoulders were covered with a torn kerchief. She wore no head covering. The tiny boy stood near his mother and gazed on the ground. He was pale and meager.

"You're a teacher?" the German asked the woman.

"Yes," she calmly replied.

"In your school there was an attack on the German staff."

"I don't live in the school." The same inordinate calm as before pervaded her voice.

"Answer my question!" the German shouted. "Was it in your school that the officers were killed?"

"Yes."

"You must know who did the killing."

The woman made no reply. Silently she gazed somewhere to one side, as though precisely there she would see something that would help her to find an answer.

"Answer me!" the German shouted and took a step toward her.

The woman seemed startled, like one who suddenly remembered the soldier's presence, and quietly answered:

"I can't "

"You can. We know, we know everything."

She looked dubiously at the speaker.

"You know nothing." She shook her head. "Nothing."

The German dug into a wallet and thrust it before her eyes:

"Your husband."

The woman made no reply and turned away The two men in the bushes realized that she was shown a photograph of her husband.

With a quick movement the small boy tried to snatch the picture from the German's hand, but the German struck him across the hand. The youngster cried from pain.

"He'll tell," said the German with conviction and gave the boy a jolt forward "Go ahead of us "

"No, no," the woman quickly said, and for the first a note of fear sounded in her voice. "It's not necessary ... I'll tell ..."

Prokhor stirred, his entire body would have presently hurled itself in the direction of the road; but the farmer's hand held him firmly by the arm.

"Then speak. You'll remain alive, and also this boy of yours," said the German, indicating him.

"But... I can't."

"Now, no opera, please," mocked the German. "We haven't much time."

"I can't—not in his presence," the woman said in a low voice, barely audible to the men in the bushes. She pointed to the boy. "He'll tell his father."

"He'll not say anything to anyone," said the German with assurance, while his hand, with an accustomed movement, drew an automatic from its pocket. At this movement the boy flung himself toward his mother with a desperate outcry:

"Mamma!"

There was nothing more he could say. Two shots, following in quick succession, felled him. A third shot hit the child's body as it already lay lifeless on the ground.

Prokhor felt the farmer's trembling hand on his arm

The woman stood like a statue Her head was thrown back, her gaze was motionless, directed at the sky which was suffused with the red of the sunset.

"Now speak!" the German shouted.

Flinging out her arms as if for a crucifixion, the woman uttered in a tremulous voice:

"You are wild beasts... you would have tortured him, to force him to speak... but the little boy died an easy death."

Her head bowed helplessly, her arms fell to her sides, like the wings of a maimed bird.

The Germans drove her in the direction of the village

When in the distance the beat of the motorcycles ceased, Prokhor suddenly realized that his arm had quite gone to sleep under the firm pressure of the farmer's hand The light blue eyes of the farmer were concentrated on the red horizon against which were visible the gabled roofs of the tiny huts of the village.

They took off at dawn.

"How did you manage to stand it?" I asked Prokhor in astonishment.

"If there weren't at my side the little man with eye-glasses, I'd have failed to carry out my orders," said Prokhor and closed his eyes. "Now go along and let me sleep a little"

I left the hut, though I saw that his eyes, as before, were open, and that he by no means expected to sleep.

[Translation by John Cournos]

Alexander Poliakov

How closely akin to life is Russian realism! The following story by the author of Russians Don't Surrender *and* White Mammoths *(it is taken from the latter) is a true story, yet it reads as well as fiction, and the temptation to include it in this collection was not to be resisted.*

TROPHY

Our KV tanks tore into the village, amid the crackle of rifles and machine guns and the explosions of hand grenades. Two or three houses in the center of the village, which the retiring Germans had set on fire, were blazing brightly Huge flames dancing in the wind licked the heavy hoar-frost from the near-by poplars.

Speeding by the burning houses, Tank Commander Kalinichev thought for a second· "The Germans themselves should be in the place of these poplars so that the flames could kiss them till their eyes burst ..." Then the commander's gaze was once again directed forward along the smoking street, toward the alleys where certain stubborn Fritzes were still moving about and offering resistance Now and then he commanded his driver, Dormidontov, to stop and send a shell into a stone cellar where Germans were concealed, thus transforming it into their tomb.

The tanks raced about, playing havoc with the enemy. Excited by the battle, the crews saw only the German grenade-throwers and anti-tank batteries—targets to be hit and smashed relentlessly, without mercy.... Suddenly, amid this raging sea of fire and death, driver Dormidontov noticed an enormous and beautiful dog, a pointer, rushing about from house to house. As though he were being baited, he ran now into the empty houses, now to the nests of the maddened Germans. "I'll make him jump with his paws upward," exclaimed machine-gunner and radio operator Shishkov, taking aim "What's the matter with you?" cried Dormidontov, giving Shishkov an angry poke in the ribs. "Are you out of your mind? That's a dog, not a fascist."

Shishkov stopped, lowering his gun, and the rattling burst that followed cut down two Nazi grenade-throwers who happened just then to jump out from behind a corner. "There are your dogs, you can shoot them," said Dormidontov cheerfully, without taking his eyes off the observation slit.

The battle began to subside, but the copper-coated dog still ran along

the streets of the village sniffing the corpses of the fallen Germans. He had lost his master.

Now the battle was over, the village was ours At the first opportunity, Dormidontov asked the commander's permission to "get out to have a look at that dog" Twenty minutes later, at the entrance of the house where we were quartered, Dormidontov appeared with the great coppery dog who obediently followed him. The tankmen gave him a gay and noisy reception

"Some prisoner you've got there, Eugene!"

"Here, 'Fritz,' here!"

"Sit up, 'Copper,' beg!"

The purebred pointer, despite his seemingly enormous strength, actually behaved as though he felt himself a prisoner. There was a frightened expression in his restless eyes Apparently Dormidontov had managed to gain the dog's confidence, for the animal kept close to him and cast suspicious glances at the other tankmen. The driver stroked the dog and with a gesture invited him to sit down beside him The pointer obediently lay down, but continued to show signs of fear From time to time his satin-smooth nervous body shuddered and he turned his big head abruptly toward the noisy crew He kept his flappy ears close to his head and his enormous lips turned back to show his dazzling sharp white teeth. The well-fed creature shone from the tip of his ears to the tip of his tail.

"This is a German dog, boys," said Dormidontov. "Here's his number and description on his collar"

"He belongs to some officer, no doubt," said one of the boys.

"I suppose so," said Konstantinov "His dirty dog of a master is lying somewhere in the gutter, while his noble dog is with us, sheltered from the cold"

Everybody laughed. "True, and it was I who saved his life," said Dormidontov "Shishkov was about to kill him off with all the other dogs"

The tankmen cast reproachful glances at Shishkov. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Shishkov Such a nice dog, and you took him for a fascist ..."

"And that's why I'm going to take care of this dog," Dormidontov went on "The commander gave me permission to keep him in the battalion."

"Well, let's give him a name," said someone From all sides came suggestions· "Fascist," "Gangster," "Adolf," "Hitler," "Goebbels," and so forth.

"None of these will do, boys," Dormidontov interrupted his friends. His eyes flashed gaily as he drawled in a mock reproachful tone: "Comrades, is it really proper to give such a name to a dog? Why insult an animal?"

His words were drowned out in a loud burst of laughter.

"Then what name shall we give him?" insisted the tankmen.

"Well," said Dormidontov, "we took the dog along with other German war materials. He's one of our trophies. Let's call him 'Trophy'"

This suggestion was enthusiastically accepted.

Several months passed. Trophy became inseparable from the battalion. He quickly grew accustomed to his new name. He was particularly attached to Dormidontov, and when the jolly driver was away with his group, Trophy visibly missed him. All the tankmen became fond of the big pointer They especially appreciated his good manners. He never bothered anyone for food until the regular meal hours. At dinnertime he accompanied his master to the field kitchen and ate what he was given out of a soldier's tin can. During the periods of Dormidontov's absence, Trophy walked alone to the kitchen and the cook fed him.

He richly deserved his daily bread. Trophy accompanied the tankmen on patrol duty, ran around the tanks, looked under them, made short excursions, sniffed and listened and tried to discover the presence of strangers. "A useful animal," was the tankmen's verdict

One day someone teasingly remarked that the dog might someday take it into his head to run back to the German lines Dormidontov took this warning seriously, and began to train the dog intensively. In a short time Trophy learned to carry reports from headquarters to the tank group He could also carry machine-gun ribbons and rifles.

"But you wouldn't dare to send him for your dinner," Dormidontov's comrades teased him. "He could never resist the temptation. He'd eat it up"

Trophy's attachment and fidelity to his master grew from day to day On his way to battle, Dormidontov would take leave of the dog, shaking his paw, stroking him, giving him a lump of sugar When all five tanks of the group returned from battle to the base, Trophy would jump up to meet them, always racing directly to Dormidontov's tank. "Trophy, old man, come here," Dormidontov would call from his hatch. In one bound, the dog would be on the tank, sticking his nose into the opening and rubbing it against Dormidontov's helmet and his almost unrecognizable sooty face One day, when his comrades reiterated their doubts as to the dog's ability to bring him his dinner, Dormidontov said firmly: "I'm going to send him In ten minutes he will be back with my dinner pail." And he was right. The dog brought his meal intact. The tankmen were as enthusiastic as little children over this display of trustworthiness

Meanwhile, the battles grew fiercer and fiercer Dormidontov's tank sometimes was away for two or three days, and on such occasions Trophy was restless and worried Several times he ran away to the

front lines but, failing to find his master, returned, gloomy and hungry. Only once did he succeed in breaking through to the battle line, during a violent tank fight. Our crews saw him running in confusion amidst violent explosions and careening tanks, and finally making his way toward the German lines. For five days he failed to appear. The boys thought that he had been killed or that he had returned to the Germans. But Dormidontov refused to believe that Trophy had betrayed him. He was so obviously depressed by the dog's disappearance that his comrades, although their tongues itched with the desire to make jokes about a "deserting Trophy," refrained from doing so in order not to hurt his feelings.

Suddenly the dog returned. He came back covered with mud and limping. His legs were bleeding from having waded through melting ice. "Poor Trophy," said Dormidontov, embracing his dog with tears in his eyes. Trophy only whimpered and wagged his tail, pressing himself close to his owner.

"Aha, you son of a bitch, so you did not like life with your old masters. You've come back as hungry as a German. Now you won't run away again."

"It's lucky that those devils didn't eat him up," someone said

A few days later, Trophy's wounds healed and he was ready once again to carry out every order of his master.

One night an urgent call came ordering all five of the KV tanks to go to our advance positions. The crews rushed to their machines, started the motors, and waited for the command to go into battle. As usual, Dormidontov found time to say good-by to his dog The other members of the crew, Kalinichev, Shishkov, Solovyov, and Pisarev, also said kind words to Trophy. The dog realized that they were his master's closest friends, and showed more regard for them than for the other crews. By now Trophy was known as the "sixth member" of Dormidontov's crew.

The tanks were being sent up to prevent the Germans from recapturing a recently lost position on a river. They had launched a powerful attack After two hours of fighting the enemy withdrew The five KV tanks fought like lions. Kalinichev's machine, which bore a large number 512 on its turret, aroused general admiration Skillfully driven by Eugene Dormidontov, it executed the most difficult maneuvers, attacking the Germans from the flank and from the rear. Its crew had long been famed for their skill in smashing Germans guns and mortars without damaging their own caterpillars.

In this battle, too, Dormidontov cracked the German emplacements by sudden raids. His tank smashed over a dozen German medium guns and mortars. When the pursuit of the retreating enemy began, he raced far ahead . .

After the battle, Kalinichev's tank, driven by Dormidontov, failed to return Trophy desperately sniffed every other tank, but he could not find his master. Dormidontov had remained somewhere on the battlefield. As the hours went by the commanding officer and the returned crews grew more and more concerned over the fate of his tank. It could not be found anywhere in No Man's Land.

"They surely went too deep into the enemy lines, and were disabled," Senior Lieutenant Astakhov said gloomily.

Twelve hours passed, and still nothing was heard of Kalinichev's machine. A few scouts sent to reconnoiter as far as the German advance positions failed to discover any trace of it. Someone in the battalion suggested sending Trophy. "He'll recognize it from a distance, and the Nazis won't touch him because of the German badge on his collar," he said.

Early in the morning, before sunrise, Trophy was brought near a track made by one of the tanks and let loose. Apparently he had been waiting for just this moment. The intelligent animal bounded forward as though he understood clearly what was wanted of him. A few hours later he returned to the assembling center. He seized the first tankman he met by his overalls and began to drag him toward No Man's Land. "He's found them, he's found them," exclaimed the tankman admiringly.

Scouts Valin, Arovsky, and Malchenko followed Trophy to the advance positions. The dog passed them and continued straight on toward the German lines, whence came bursts of rifle and machine-gun fire. It was dangerous to proceed, but Trophy moved stubbornly forward. If he advanced a few steps and saw that our men were not following him, he returned with an angry bark and tried to drag them after him. Our boys decided to move ahead cautiously They crawled through the bushes, still led by the pointer. Suddenly the dog stopped, squatted, put his front paws on something black and turned his head toward the scouts When they approached, they found the body of a Soviet tankman. It was Vanya Pisarev, Kalinichev's gunner.

"Poor Vanya, how did you get here?" whispered one of the scouts sadly. Pisarev's body was riddled with bullets. In his pockets there were some papers, the notebooks of all the crew. Apparently he had tried to make his way back to our lines to inform us of the position of his tank and had been killed by the Nazis while making the attempt "Is the rest of the crew alive? Where are they?" the scouts wondered They examined the notebooks found on Pisarev. But they found no answer to their question.

Among the papers was a large leatherette pocketbook belonging to Dormidontov. Trophy, who restlessly sniffed at every new object drawn out of Pisarev's overalls, suddenly jumped at this pocketbook and roaring fiercely ran on, heedless of the scouts who tried to call

him back. He kept the precious object in his formidable jaws and, after making a few circles, rushed off toward the German lines.

"Where is he going? He must have lost his mind!" exclaimed Arovsky

"Don't you see? He is surely following Pisarev's tracks. He'll find the tank now," said Malchenko confidently.

Our scouts took cover and decided to wait for developments, but a few minutes later they were noticed by the Germans, who opened fire. They were forced to withdraw. An hour later, Trophy appeared with the same pocketbook in his jaw. He put it down in front of the scouts and stood as if petrified. The scouts opened the pocketbook and to their great joy found a fragment of a note signed by Kalinichev: "... Even a little bit. Maybe through Trophy We are still alive Using up the rest of our ammunition. Have killed about a hundred of the beasts Will not surrender."

The tankmen remembered that Trophy had been trained to carry cartridges and rifles, as though Dormidontov had foreseen the present plight of his crew The scouts got a machine-gun ribbon from the infantrymen, wrapped it up in a rag, and put it in Trophy's jaw. The dog without hesitation raced in the direction of his own tracks.

The bold and intelligent pointer made three more trips with ammunition We computed that the disabled tank was about three kilometers behind the enemy lines. From his third trip, Trophy returned with his skin singed in spots and with a note attached to his collar. "Dear comrades Thanks to you and to Trophy There's a dog for you! He helped us kill another four dozen of the bloody German dogs. Good-by, boys! These are our last minutes They're pouring gasoline over us We are going to die, but we know that our country will win Send our greetings to our families We are dropping Trophy through the lower hatch He will get through. Good-by" The note was signed by Kalinichev, Dormidontov, Shishkov, and Solovyov.

A week later we pushed the Germans back and occupied the place where tank No 512 had been disabled Both its caterpillars were smashed. The Germans had poured gasoline over it and set it on fire Thus perished the heroic crew of one of the KV tanks which traveled from the Ural to Staraya Russa, and with it Eugene Dormidontov, the favorite of the whole battalion

Today there rises like a black rock on the battlefield the steel tomb of the four heroic tankmen Our soldiers often visit it. Baring their heads, they grieve for their fallen comrades and honor their exploits. On all these visits they are accompanied by Dormidontov's friend, Trophy, who is now the pet of all the tankmen

[Translation by Norbert Guterman]

HIGH LIGHTS FROM NOVELS

Ivan Turgenev

FATHERS AND SONS

The appearance of Turgenev's Fathers and Sons *(1861) caused a storm to break among Russia's radicals, who passionately attacked its author for his creation of Bazarov, the nihilist. They considered Bazarov a caricature of themselves. All that Turgenev apparently sought to do was to give a picture of the new scientific spirit which, not alone in Russia but elsewhere, sprang up as a result of Darwinian ideas then current. It is true that Bazarov, an aggressive materialist, showed contempt for art and religion, it is equally true that this dynamic young man had merely sublimated the human aspiration into a faith in frogs, the dissection of which had become a kind of passion with him, or, as Mirsky puts it, "the mystical rite of Darwinian naturalism and antispiritualism." The real trouble was that everything in Russia has always been regarded from the political aspect, and the radicals had the erroneous idea that Turgenev was ridiculing the younger generation for its effort to emancipate itself from old conceptions Later they accepted the title of nihilist with pride and did not think Bazarov at all a bad ideal to follow.*

BAZAROV, THE NIHILIST

About a fortnight passed by. Life at Maryino went on its accustomed course, while Arkady was lazy and enjoyed himself, and Bazarov worked. Every one in the house had grown used to him, to his careless manners and his curt and abrupt speeches. Fenitchka, in particular, was so far at home with him that one night she sent to wake him up; Mitya had had convulsions; and he had gone, and, half-joking, half-yawning as usual, he stayed two hours with her and relieved the child On the other hand, Pavel Petrovich had grown to detest Bazarov with all the strength of his soul; he regarded him as stuck-up, impudent, cynical, and vulgar; he suspected that Bazarov had no respect for him, that he had all but a contempt for him—him, Pavel Kirsanov! Nikolay Petrovich was rather afraid of the young "nihilist," and was doubtful whether his influence over Arkady was for the good, but he was glad to listen to him and was glad to be present at his scientific and chemical experiments. Bazarov had brought with him a microscope, and busied himself for hours together with it. The servants, too, took to him, though he made fun of them; they felt, all

the same, that he was one of themselves, not a master. Dunyasha was always ready to giggle with him, and used to cast significant and stealthy glances at him when she skipped by like a rabbit; Piotr, a man vain and stupid to the last degree, forever wearing an affected frown on his brow, a man whose whole merit consisted in the fact that he looked civil, could spell out a page of reading, and was diligent in brushing his coat—even he smirked and brightened up directly Bazarov paid him any attention; the boys on the farm simply ran after the "doctor" like puppies. The old man Prokofitch was the only one who did not like him; he handed him the dishes at table with a surly face, called him a "butcher" and "an upstart," and declared that with his great whiskers he looked like a pig in a sty. Prokofitch in his own way was quite as much of an aristocrat as Pavel Petrovitch.

The best days of the year had come—the first days of June. The weather kept splendidly fine; in the distance, it is true, the cholera was threatening, but the inhabitants of that province had had time to get used to its visits. Bazarov used to get up very early and go out for two or three miles, not for a walk—he couldn't bear walking without an object—but to collect specimens of plants and insects. Sometimes he took Arkady with him On the way home an argument usually sprang up, and Arkady was usually vanquished in it, though he said more than his companion.

One day they had lingered rather late; Nikolay Petrovitch went to meet them in the garden, and as he reached the arbor he suddenly heard the quick steps and voices of the two young men. They were walking on the other side of the arbor, and could not see him.

"You don't know my father well enough," said Arkady.

"Your father's a nice chap," said Bazarov, "but he's behind the times; his day is done."

Nikolay Petrovitch listened intently....Arkady made no answer.

The man whose day was done remained two minutes motionless, and stole slowly home.

"The day before yesterday I saw him reading Pushkin," Bazarov was continuing meanwhile. "Explain to him, please, that that's no earthly use. He's not a boy, you know; it's time to throw up that rubbish. And what an idea to be a romantic at this time of day! Give him something sensible to read."

"What ought I to give him?" asked Arkady.

"O, I think Buchner's *Stoff und Kraft* to begin with."

"I think so too," observed Arkady approvingly. "*Stoff und Kraft* is written in popular language...."

"So it seems," Nikolay Petrovich said the same day after dinner to his brother, as he sat in his study, "you and I are behind the times, our day's over. Well, well. Perhaps Bazarov is right; but one thing, I confess, makes me feel sore, I did so hope, precisely now, to get on to

such close, intimate terms with Arkady, and it turns out I'm left behind, and he has gone forward, and we can't understand one another."

"How has he gone forward? And in what way is he so superior to us already?" cried Pavel Petrovitch impatiently. "It's that high and mighty gentleman, that nihilist, who's knocked all that into his head. I hate that doctor fellow; in my opinion, he's simply a quack; I'm convinced, for all his tadpoles, he's not got very far even in medicine."

"No, brother, you musn't say that; Bazarov is clever and knows his subject."

"And his conceit's something revolting," Pavel Petrovitch broke in again.

"Yes," observed Nikolay Petrovitch, "he is conceited But there's no doubt without that, it seems; only that's what I did not take into account. I thought I was doing everything to keep up with the times; I have started a model farm; I have done well by the peasants, so that I am positively called a "Red Radical" all over the province; I read, I study, I try in every way to keep abreast with the requirements of the day—and they say my day's over. And, brother, I begin to think that it is"

"Why so?"

"I'll tell you why This morning I was sitting reading Pushkin ... I remember, it happened to be *The Gipsies* ... all of a sudden Arkady came up to me, and, without speaking, with such a kindly compassion on his face, as gently as if I were a baby, took the book away from me, and laid another before me—a German book ... smiled, and went away, carrying Pushkin off with him."

"Upon my word! What book did he give you?"

"This one here."

And Nikolay Petrovitch pulled the famous treatise of Buchner, in the ninth edition, out of his coat-tail pocket.

Pavel Petrovitch turned it over in his hands. "Hm!" he growled "Arkady Nikolaevitch is taking your education in hand. Well, did you try reading it?"

"Yes, I tried it"

"Well, what did you think of it?"

"Either I'm stupid, or it's all—nonsense. I must be stupid, I suppose."

"Haven't you forgotten your German?" queried Pavel Petrovitch.

"Oh, I understand the German."

Pavel Petrovitch again turned the book over in his hands, and glanced from under his brows at his brother. Both were silent.

"Oh, by the way," began Nikolay Petrovitch, obviously wishing to change the subject, "I've got a letter from Kolyazin."

"Matvy Ilyitch?"

"Yes. He has come to—to inspect the province. He's quite a bigwig

now; and writes to me that, as a relation, he should like to see us again, and invites you and me and Arkady to the town."

"Are you going?" asked Pavel Petrovitch.

"No; are you?"

"No, I shan't go either. Much object there would be in dragging oneself over forty miles on a wild-goose chase. Mathieu wants to show himself in all his glory. Damn him! he will have the whole province doing him homage, he can get on without the likes of us. A grand dignity, indeed, a privy councillor! If I had stayed in the service, if I had trudged on in official harness, I should have been a general adjutant by now. Besides, you and I are behind the times, you know."

"Yes, brother; it's time, it seems, to order a coffin and cross one's arms on one's breast," remarked Nikolay Petrovitch, with a sigh.

"Well, I'm not going to give in quite so soon," muttered his brother. "I've got a tussle with that doctor fellow before me, I feel sure of that."

A tussle came off that same day at evening tea. Pavel Petrovitch came into the drawing room, all ready for the fray, irritable and determined. He was only waiting for an excuse to fall upon the enemy; but for a long while an excuse did not present itself. As a rule, Bazarov said little in the presence of the "old Kirsanovs" (that was how he spoke of the brothers), and that evening he felt out of humor, and drank off cup after cup of tea without a word. Pavel Petrovitch was all aflame with impatience; his wishes were fulfilled at last.

The conversation turned on one of the neighboring landowners. "Rotten aristocratic snob," observed Bazarov indifferently. He had met him in Petersburg

"Allow me to ask you," began Pavel Petrovitch, and his lips were trembling, "according to your ideas, have the words 'rotten' and 'aristocrat' the same meaning?"

"I said 'aristocratic snob,'" replied Bazarov, lazily swallowing a sip of tea.

"Precisely so; but I imagine you have the same opinion of aristocrats as of aristocratic snobs I think it my duty to inform you that I do not share that opinion. I venture to assert that everyone knows me for a man of liberal ideas and devoted to progress; but, exactly for that reason, I respect aristocrats—real aristocrats. Kindly remember, sir"—at these words Bazarov lifted his eyes and looked at Pavel Petrovitch—"kindly remember, sir," he repeated, with acrimony, "the English aristocracy. They do not abate one iota of their rights, and for that reason they respect the rights of others; they demand the performance of what is due to them, and for that reason they perform their own duties. The aristocracy has given freedom to England, and maintains it for her."

"We've heard that story a good many times," replied Bazarov; "but what are you trying to prove by that?"

"I am tryin' to prove by that, sir" (when Pavel Petrovitch was angry he intentionally clipped his words in this way, though, of course, he knew very well that such forms are not strictly grammatical. In this fashionable whim could be discerned a survival of the habits of the times of Alexander. The exquisites of those days, on the rare occasions when they spoke their own language, made use of such slipshod forms; as much as to say, "We, of course, are born Russians, at the same time we are great swells, who are at liberty to neglect the rules of scholars"); "I am tryin' to prove by that, sir, that without the sense of personal dignity, without self-respect—and these two sentiments are well developed in the aristocrat—there is no secure foundation for the social .. *bien public*... the social fabric. Personal character, sir—that is the chief thing; a man's personal character must be firm as a rock, since everything is built on it. I am very well aware, for instance, that you are pleased to consider my habits, my dress, my refinements, in fact, ridiculous; but all that proceeds from a sense of self-respect, from a sense of duty—yes, indeed, of duty. I live in the country, in the wilds, but I will not lower myself. I respect the dignity of man in myself."

"Let me ask you, Pavel Petrovitch," commented Bazarov; "you respect yourself, and sit with your hands folded; what sort of benefit does that do to the *bien public?* If you didn't respect yourself, you'd do just the same."

Pavel Petrovitch turned white. "That's a different question. It's absolutely unnecessary for me to explain to you now why I sit with folded hands, as you are pleased to express yourself. I wish only to tell you that aristocracy is a principle, and in our days none but immoral or silly people can live without principles. I said that to Arkady the day after he came home, and I repeat it now. Isn't it so, Nikolay?"

Nikolay Petrovitch nodded his head. "Aristocracy, liberalism, progress, principles," Bazarov was saying meanwhile; "if you think of it, what a lot of foreign... and useless words! To a Russian they're good for nothing."

"What is good for something according to you? If we listen to you, we shall find ourselves outside humanity, outside its laws. Come—the logic of history demands..."

"But what's that logic to us? We can get on without that too"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, this. You don't need logic, I hope, to put a bit of bread in your mouth when you're hungry. What's the object of these abstractions to us?"

Pavel Petrovitch raised his hands in horror.

"I don't understand you, after that. You insult the Russian people.

I don't understand how it's possible not to acknowledge principles, rules! By virtue of what do you act then?"

"I've told you already, uncle, that we don't accept any authorities," put in Arkady.

"We act by virtue of what we recognize as beneficial," observed Bazarov. "At the present time, negation is the most beneficial of all—and we deny—"

"Everything?"

"Everything!"

"What, not only art and poetry...but even...horrible to say..."

"Everything," repeated Bazarov, with indescribable composure.

Pavel Petrovitch stared at him. He had not expected this; while Arkady fairly blushed with delight.

"Allow me, though," began Nikolay Petrovitch. "You deny everything; or, speaking more precisely, you destroy everything.... But one must construct too, you know."

"That's not our business now.... The ground wants clearing first."

"The present condition of the people requires it," added Arkady, with dignity; "we are bound to carry out these requirements, we have no right to yield to the satisfaction of our personal egoism."

This last phrase obviously displeased Bazarov; there was a flavor of philosophy, that is to say, romanticism about it, for Bazarov called philosophy, too, romanticism, but he did not think it necessary to correct his young disciple.

"No, no!" cried Pavel Petrovitch, with sudden energy. "I'm not willing to believe that you young men know the Russian people really, that you are the representatives of their requirements, their efforts! No; the Russian people is not what you imagine it. Tradition it holds sacred; it is a patriarchal people; it cannot live without faith—"

"I'm not going to dispute that," Bazarov interrupted. "I'm even ready to agree that in that you're right."

"But if I am right..."

"And, all the same, that proves nothing."

"It just proves nothing," repeated Arkady, with the confidence of a practiced chess player who has foreseen an apparently dangerous move on the part of his adversary and so is not at all taken aback by it.

"How does it prove nothing?" muttered Pavel Petrovitch, astounded. "You must be going against the people then?"

"And what if we are?" shouted Bazarov. "The people imagine that, when it thunders, the prophet Ilya's riding across the sky in his chariot. What then? Are we to agree with them? Besides, the people's Russian; but am I not Russian, too?"

"No, you are not Russian, after all you have just been saying! I can't acknowledge you as Russian."

"My grandfather plowed the land," answered Bazarov with haughty

pride. "Ask anyone of your peasants which of us—you or me—he'd more readily acknowledge as a fellow-countryman. You don't even know how to talk to them."

"While you talk to him and despise him at the same time."

"Well, suppose he deserves contempt. You find fault with my attitude, but how do you know that I have got it by chance, that it's not a product of that very national spirit, in the name of which you wage war on it?"

"What an idea! Much use in nihilists!"

"Whether they're of use or not, is not for us to decide. Why, even you suppose you're not a useless person."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, no personalities, please!" cried Nikolay Petrovitch, getting up.

Pavel Petrovitch smiled and, laying his hand on his brother's shoulder, forced him to sit down again.

"Don't be uneasy," he said; "I shall not forget myself, just through that sense of dignity which is made fun of so mercilessly by our friend —our friend, the doctor. Let me ask," he resumed, turning again to Bazarov: "you suppose, possibly, that your doctrine is a novelty? That is quite a mistake. The materialism you advocate has been more than once in vogue already, and has always proved insufficient—"

"A foreign word again!" broke in Bazarov He was beginning to feel vicious, and his face assumed a peculiar coarse coppery hue. "In the first place, we advocate nothing; that's not our way."

"What do you do, then?"

"I'll tell you what we do. Not long ago we used to say that our officials took bribes, that we had no roads, no commerce, no real justice..."

"Oh, I see, you are reformers—that's what that's called, I fancy. I too should agree to many of your reforms, but—"

"Then we suspected that talk, perpetual talk, and nothing but talk, about our social diseases, was not worth while, that it all led to nothing but superficiality and pedantry; we saw that our leading men, so-called advanced people and reformers, are no good, that we busy ourselves over foolery, talk rubbish about art, unconscious creativeness, parliamentarism, trial by jury, and the deuce knows what all; while, all the while, it's a question of getting bread to eat, while we're stifling under the grossest superstition, while all our enterprises come to grief, simply because there aren't honest men enough to carry them on, while the very emancipation our government's busy upon will hardly come to any good, because peasants are glad to rob even themselves to get drunk at the gin shop."

"Yes," interposed Pavel Petrovitch, "yes; you were convinced of all this, and decided not to undertake anything seriously, yourselves."

"We decided not to undertake anything," repeated Bazarov grimly.

He suddenly felt vexed with himself for having, without reason, been so expansive before this gentleman.

"But to confine yourselves to abuse?"

"To confine ourselves to abuse."

"And that is called nihilism?"

"And that's called nihilism," Bazarov repeated again, this time with peculiar rudeness.

Pavel Petrovitch puckered up his face a little. "So that's it!" he observed in a strangely composed voice. "Nihilism is to cure all our woes, and you, you are our heroes and saviors. But why do you abuse others, those reformers even? Don't you do as much talking as everyone else?"

"Whatever faults we have, we do not err in that way," Bazarov muttered between his teeth.

"What, then? Do you act, or what? Are you preparing for action?"

Bazarov made no answer. Something like a tremor passed over Pavel Petrovitch, but he at once regained control of himself

"Hm!...Action, destruction..." he went on. "But how destroy without even knowing why?"

"We shall destroy, because we are a force," observed Arkady.

Pavel Petrovitch looked at his nephew and laughed.

"Yes, a force is not to be called to account," said Arkady, drawing himself up.

"Unhappy boy!" wailed Pavel Petrovitch; he was positively incapable of maintaining his firm demeanor any longer. "If you could only realize what it is you are doing for your country. No, it's enough to try the patience of an angel! Force! There's force in the savage Kalmuck, in the Mongolian; but what is it to us? What is precious to us is civilization; yes, yes, sir, its fruits are precious to us And don't tell me those fruits are worthless; the poorest dauber, *un barbouilleur,* the man who plays dance music for five farthings an evening, is of more use than you, because they are the representatives of civilization, and not of brute Mongolian force! You fancy yourselves advanced people, and all the while you are only fit for the Kalmuck's hovel! Force! And recollect, you forcible gentlemen, that you're only four men and a half, and the others are millions, who won't let you trample their sacred traditions under foot, who will crush you and walk over you!"

"If we're crushed, serves us right," observed Bazarov "But that's an open question. We are not so few as you suppose"

"What? You seriously suppose you will come to terms with a whole people?"

"All Moscow was burned down, you know, by a farthing dip," answered Bazarov.

"Yes, yes. First a pride almost Satanic, then ridicule—that, that's what it is attracts the young, that's what gains an ascendancy over the

inexperienced hearts of boys! Here's one of them sitting beside you, ready to worship the gound under your feet. Look at him!" (Arkady turned away and frowned.) "And this plague has spread far already. I have been told that in Rome our artists never set foot in the Vatican. Raphael they regard as almost a fool, because, if you please, he's an authority; while they're all the while most disgustingly sterile and unsuccessful, men whose imagination does not soar beyond 'Girls at a Fountain,' however they try! And the girls even out of drawing. They are fine fellows to your mind, are they not?"

"To my mind," retorted Bazarov, "Raphael's not worth a brass farthing; and they're no better than he"

"Bravo! bravo! Listen, Arkady... that's how young men of today ought to express themselves! And if you come to think of it, how could they fail if they followed you! In old days, young men had to study; they didn't want to be called dunces, so they had to work hard whether they liked it or not. But now, they need only say, 'Everything in the world is foolery!' and the trick's done. Young men are delighted. And, to be sure, they were simply geese before, and now they have suddenly turned nihilists."

"Your praiseworthy sense of personal dignity has given way," remarked Bazarov phlegmatically, while Arkady was hot all over, and his eyes were flashing. "Our argument has gone too far; it's better to cut it short, I think. I shall be quite ready to agree with you," he added, getting up, "when you bring forward a single institution in our present mode of life, in family or in social life, which does not call for complete and unqualified destruction."

"I will bring forward millions of such institutions," cried Pavel Petrovitch—"millions! Well—the Mir, for instance."

A cold smile curved Bazarov's lips. "Well, as regards the Mir," he commented; "you had better talk to your brother. He has seen by now, I should fancy, what sort of thing the Mir is in fact—its common guarantee, its sobriety, and other features of the kind."

"The family, then, the family as it exists among our peasants!" cried Pavel Petrovitch.

"And that subject, too, I imagine, it will be better for yourselves not to go into in detail. Don't you realize all the advantages of the head of the family choosing his daughters-in-law? Take my advice, Pavel Petrovitch, allow yourself two days to think about it; you're not likely to find anything on the spot. Go through all our classes, and think well over each, while I and Arkady will—"

"Will go on turning everything into ridicule," broke in Pavel Petrovitch.

"No, will go on dissecting frogs. Come, Arkady; good-by for the present, gentlemen!"

The two friends walked off. The brothers were left alone, and at first they only looked at one another.

"So that," began Pavel Petrovitch, "so that's what our young men of this generation are! They are like that—our successors!"

"Our successors!" repeated Nikolay Petrovitch, with a dejected smile. He had been sitting on thorns all through the argument, and had done nothing but glance stealthily, with a sore heart, at Arkady. "Do you know what I was reminded of, brother? I once had a dispute with our poor mother; she stormed, and wouldn't listen to me. At last I said to her, 'Of course, you can't understand me; we belong,' I said, 'to two different generations.' She was dreadfully offended, while I thought, 'There's no help for it It's a bitter pill, but she has to swallow it.' You see, now, our turn has come, and our successors can say to us, 'You are not of our generation; swallow your pill.'"

"You are beyond everything in your generosity and modesty," replied Pavel Petrovitch. "I'm convinced, on the contrary, that you and I are far more in the right than these young gentlemen, though we do perhaps express ourselves in old-fashioned language, *vieilli*, and have not the same insolent conceit....And the swagger of the young men nowadays! You ask one, 'Do you take red wine or white?' 'It is my custom to prefer red!' he answers, in a deep bass, with a face as solemn as if the whole universe had its eyes on him at that instant...."

Feodor Dostoevsky

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Feodor Dostoevsky's novels are so full of famous passages which cry for an inclusion in an anthology of this kind that the compiler has indeed been hard put in making his selections. The task has been made all the more difficult because of all Russian geniuses none has more facets than Dostoevsky. To give even a partial representation of the types he has created—and more than any other Russian he has created *his types—is no easy matter. The anthologist has had to arrive at his selections by the process of elimination, at best a heartbreaking performance. Of the selections presented here, that from* Crime and Punishment *should have perhaps the more popular appeal, while the passages from* The Brothers Karamazov, *including the famous tale of*

The Grand Inquisitor, should strike a response in the highbrow reader. A short story and a comic episode from Dostoevsky are printed in other groupings of this book.

RASKOLNIKOV BOWS BEFORE SONYA

"Impossible! No! impossible!" exclaimed Sonya, cut to the quick as by a dagger. "God will not permit such a thing!"

"But He permits much!"

"No, I tell you! No, God will protect her!" repeated Sonya, beside herself.

"For all you know; besides there may be no God," answered Raskolnikov bitterly, and looking at the young woman with a smile.

A sudden change took place in the girl's countenance; the muscles of her face grew hard She cast on her interlocutor a look of reproach, seemed anxious to speak, but not a word fell from her Sobbing, she covered her face with her hands.

"You tell me that Catherine Ivanovna is troubled in her mind? So are you!" he remarked, after an interval. Several minutes went by while he continued his tramp, not noticing her. Suddenly he approached her. His eyes gleamed, his lips trembled, and, resting his two hands on her shoulders, he cast an angry look on this face bathed in tears In a moment, he bent downwards, kissing the girl's feet She started back frightened, as she would have done from a madman. For Raskolnikov's face at this moment was that of one.

"What are you doing? And to me?" stammered Sonya, growing pale with sorrow-smitten heart

Upon this he rose. "I did not bow down to you, personally, but to suffering humanity in your person," said he somewhat strangely, going to lean against the window. "Listen to me!" he pursued, on coming back to her a moment after. "Just now, I have told some overbearing fellow that he was not a patch on you, and that this very day I have honored my mother by inviting her to associate with you."

"And how could you say such a thing? and that in her presence?" exclaimed Sonya, beside herself. "An honor to associate with me? I, who am a fallen creature! How could you? How could you?"

"When I said what I did, I thought neither of your dishonor nor of your faults. I thought only of your great sufferings. Doubtless you have erred," he continued with increasing emotion, "but you have only done so because you have sacrified yourself to no kind of purpose. I know you to be unhappy! To live in this mire which you detest, and to know at the same time (for you cannot delude yourself) that it is to no purpose, and that your sacrifice will avail no one! But tell me, pray," he went on, getting more and more excited, "how can you, with your

refined soul, resign yourself to such shame? Better a thousand times be drowned, to end it in a moment!"

"And as for them, what will become of them?" asked Sonya feebly, looking at him with a martyr-like gaze; though she seemed in no wise astonished at his advice. Raskolnikov examined her with singular curiosity.

Her look had told him all. She herself had had the same idea. Many a time and oft, in the height of despair, she had thought of the same thing, had thought of it so seriously that now she experienced no kind of surprise at this proposed solution. The cruelty of the words she had not noticed, and, as may be thought, the import of the young man's reproach had left no sting; Raskolnikov observing at the same time that his way of looking at her sin had escaped her. He understood, however, perfectly well to what extent the thought of her wretched condition tortured her, and he asked himself more than once what it was that, up to the present, could have prevented her from committing suicide His only answer to the question was the girl's devotion to those poor little children, and to Catherine Ivanovna, the consumptive and demented woman who beat her head against the wall. Nevertheless, it was clear to him that Sonya, with her temperament and education, could not go on indefinitely. He had already found it difficult to understand how, failing suicide, madness had not severed her from such a life. He saw, of course, that Sonya's position was an exceptional social phenomenon, but was not that all the more reason that shame would have killed her at the outset of such a life, a life against which her former state, as well as her relatively high mental culture, ought to have nauseated her? What was it, then, that did brace her up? Had she perhaps a taste for debauch? Surely not!—vice had not affected her character; her body alone was soiled. Raskolnikov understood this, for he read the girl's heart like a book.

RASKOLNIKOV CONFESSES TO SONYA

"Tell me, candidly, what have you to say?" cried Sonya. "As yet, you are only using subterfuges. Have you only come to torture me?"

She could no longer bear it, and burst into tears. For five minutes he watched her with a gloomy air. "You are right, Sonya," he said at last, in a low tone. A sudden change had taken place in him; his forced self-possession, the offhand manner which he had previously affected, had suddenly disappeared—he could hardly be heard now. "I told you, yesterday, that I would not come to beg pardon, and yet I have almost commenced this interview by doing so. When speaking of Looshin, I was seeking to excuse myself, Sonya!"

He wished to smile, but, do what he would, his countenance retained

its sorrow-stricken look. He lowered his head, covering his face with his hands. All at once, he fancied that he was beginning to hate Sonya. Surprised, frightened even, at so strange a discovery, he suddenly raised his head and attentively considered the girl, who, in her turn, fixed on him a look of anxious love. Hatred fled from Raskolnikov's heart. It was not that; he had only mistaken the nature of the sentiment he experienced. It signified that the fatal moment had come. Once more he hid his face in his hands and bowed his head. Suddenly he grew pale, rose, and, after looking at Sonya, he mechanically went and sat on her bed, without uttering a single word. Raskolnikov's impression was the very same he had experienced when standing behind the old woman—he had loosened the hatchet from the loop, and said to himself: "There is not a moment to be lost!"

"What is the matter?" asked Sonya, in bewilderment.

No reply. Raskolnikov had relied on making explanations under quite different conditions, and did not himself understand what was now at work within him. She gently approached him, sat on the bed by his side, and waited, without taking her eyes from his face. Her heart beat as if it would break. The situation was becoming unbearable; he turned toward the girl his lividly pale face; his lips twitched with an effort to speak. Fear had seized upon Sonya.

"What is the matter with you?" she repeated, moving slightly away from him.

"Nothing, Sonya; don't be afraid. It is not worth while, it is all nonsense!" he murmured, like a man absent in mind. "Only, why can I have come to torment you?" added he all at once, looking at his interlocutress. "Yes, why? I keep on asking myself this question, Sonya."

Perhaps he had done so a quarter of an hour before, but at this moment his weakness was such that he scarcely retained consciousness; a continued trembling shook his whole frame.

"Oh! how you suffer!" said she, in a voice full of emotion, while looking at him.

"It is nothing! But this is the matter in question, Sonya." (For a moment or so, a pale smile hovered on his lips.) "You remember what I wished to tell you yesterday?" Sonya waited anxiously. "I told you, on parting, that I was, perhaps, bidding you farewell forever, but that if I should come today, I would tell you who it was that killed Elizabeth." She began to tremble in every limb. "Well, then, that is why I have come."

"I know you told me that yesterday," she went on in a shaky voice. "How do you know that?" she added vivaciously. Sonya breathed with an effort. Her face grew more and more pale.

"I know it."

"Has *he* been discovered?" she asked timidly, after a moment's silence.

"No, *he* has not been discovered."

For another moment she remained silent. "Then how do you know it?" she at length asked, in an almost unintelligible voice.

He turned toward the girl, and looked at her with a singular rigidity, while a feeble smile fluttered on his lips. "Guess!" he said.

Sonya felt on the point of being seized with convulsions. "But you—why frighten me like this?" she asked, with a childlike smile.

"I know it, because I am very intimate with *him!*" went on Raskolnikov, whose look remained fixed on her as if he had not strength to turn his eyes aside. "Elizabeth—he had no wish to murder her—he killed her without premeditation. He only intended to kill the old woman, when he should find her alone. He went to her house—but at the very moment Elizabeth came in—he was there—and he killed her."

A painful silence followed upon those words. For a moment both continued to look at one another. "And so you can't guess?" he asked abruptly, feeling like a man on the point of throwing himself from the top of a steeple.

"No," stammered Sonya, in a scarcely audible voice.

"Try again."

At the moment he pronounced these words, Raskolnikov experienced afresh, in his heart of hearts, that feeling of chilliness he knew so well. He looked at Sonya, and suddenly read on her face the same expression as on that of Elizabeth, when the wretched woman recoiled from the murderer advancing toward her, hatchet in hand. In that supreme moment Elizabeth had raised her arm, as children do when they begin to be afraid and, ready to weep, fix a glaring immovable glance on the object which frightens them. In the same way Sonya's face expressed indescribable fear. She also raised her arm, and gently pushed Raskolnikov aside, while touching his breast with her hand, and then gradually drew back without ceasing to look hard at him. Her fear affected the young man, who, for his part, began to gaze on her with a scared expression.

"Have you guessed?" he murmured at last.

"My God!" exclaimed Sonya.

Then she sank exhausted on the bed, and buried her face in the pillows; a moment after, however, she rose with a rapid movement, approached him, and, seizing him by both hands, which her slender fingers clutched like nippers, she fixed on him a long look. Had she made a mistake? She hoped so, but she had no sooner cast a look on Raskolnikov's face than the suspicion which had flashed on her mind became certainty.

"Enough, Sonya! enough! Spare me!" he implored in a plaintive voice. The event upset all his calculations, for it certainly was not *thus* that he had intended to confess his crime.

Sonya seemed beside herself; she jumped from her bed, went to the middle of the room wringing her hands, she then quickly returned in the same way, sat once more by the young man's side, almost touching him with her shoulder. Suddenly she shivered, uttered a cry, and, without knowing why, fell on her knees before Raskolnikov. "You are lost!" she exclaimed, with an accent of despair. And, rising suddenly, she threw herself on his neck and kissed him, while lavishing on him tokens of tenderness.

Raskolnikov broke away and, with a sad smile, looked at the girl: "I do not understand you, Sonya. You kiss me after I told you *that*—You cannot be conscious of what you are doing."

She did not hear the remark. "No, at this moment there cannot be a more wretched man on earth than you are!" she exclaimed with a transport of passion, while bursting into sobs.

Raskolnikov felt his heart grow soft under the influence of a sentiment which for some time past he had not felt. He did not try to fight against the feeling; two tears spurted from his eyes and remained on the lashes "Then you will not forsake me, Sonya?" said he with an almost suppliant look.

"No, no; never, nowhere!" she cried. "I shall follow you, shall follow you everywhere! Heaven! Wretch that I am! And why have I not known you sooner? Why did you not come before? Heaven!"

"You see I have come."

"Now? What is to be done now? Together, together!" she went on, with a kind of exaltation, and once more she kissed the young man. "Yes, I will go with you to the galleys!"

These words caused Raskolnikov a painful feeling; a bitter and almost haughty smile appeared on his lips. "Perhaps I may not yet wish to go to the galleys, Sonya," said he.

The girl rapidly turned her eyes on him. She had up to the present experienced no more than immense pity for an unhappy man. This statement, and the tone of voice in which it was pronounced, suddenly recalled to the girl that the wretched man was an assassin. She cast on him an astonished look. As yet, she did not know how nor why he had become a criminal. At this moment, these questions suggested themselves to her, and, once more doubting, she asked herself· "He, he a murderer? Is such a thing possible? But no, it cannot be true! Where am I?" she asked herself, as if she could have believed herself the sport of a dream. "How is it possible that you, being what you are, can have thought of such a thing? Oh! why?"

"To thieve, if you wish to know. Cease, Sonya!" he replied in wearied and rather vexed accents.

Sonya remained stupefied; suddenly a cry escaped her· "Were you hungry? Did you do so to help your mother? Speak!"

"No, Sonya! no!" he stammered, drooping his head. "I was not so

poor as all that. It is true I wanted to help my mother, but that was not the real reason— Do not torment me, Sonya!"

The girl beat her hands together. "Is it possible that such a thing can be real? Heaven! is it possible? How can I believe such a thing? You say you killed to rob; you, who deprive yourself of all in favor of others! Ah!" she cried suddenly. "That money you gave to Catherine Ivanovna!—that money! Heavens! can it be that?"

"No, Sonya!" he interrupted somewhat sharply. "This money comes from another source, I assure you. It was my mother who sent it to me during my sickness, through the intervention of a merchant, and I had just received it when I gave it. Razoumikhin saw it himself, he even went so far as to receive it for me. The money was really my own property." Sonya listened in perplexity, and strove to understand. "As for the old woman's money, to tell the truth, I really do not know whether there was any money at all," he went on hesitatingly "I took from her neck a well-filled chamois-leather purse But I never examined the contents, probably because I had no time to do so. I took different things, sleeve-links, watch-chains. These things I hid, in the same way as the purse, on the following day, under a large stone in a yard which looks out on the V—— Prospect. Everything is still there."

Sonya listened with avidity. "But why did you take nothing, since, as you tell me, you committed murder to steal?" she went on, clinging to a last and very vague hope.

"I don't know—as yet I am undecided whether to take this money or not," replied Raskolnikov in the same hesitating voice; then he smiled. "What silly tale have I been telling you?"

"Can he be mad?" Sonya asked herself, but she soon dispelled such an idea; no, it was something else, which she most certainly did not understand.

"Do you know what I am going to tell you, Sonya?" he went on in a convinced tone: "If nothing but need had urged me to commit a murder," laying stress on every word, and his look, although frank, was more or less puzzling "I should now be *happy!* Let me tell you that! And what can the motive be to you, since I told you just now that I had acted badly?" he cried despairingly, a moment afterwards "What was the good of this foolish triumph over myself? Ah! Sonya, was it for that I came to you?" She once more wished to speak, but remained silent. "Yesterday, I made a proposal to you that we should both of us depart together, because you are all that is left to me"

"Why did you wish me to accompany you?" asked the girl timidly.

"Not to rob or to kill, I assure you," answered Raskolnikov, with a caustic smile. "We are not of the same way of thinking. And—do you know, Sonya?—it is only of late that I have known why I asked you yesterday to accompany me. When I asked you to do so, I did not as yet know what it would lead to I see it now. I have but one wish—it is

that you should not leave me. You will not do so, will you, Sonya?" She clasped his hand. "And why have I told her this? Why make such a confession?" he exclaimed a moment afterwards. He looked at her with infinite compassion, while his voice expressed the most profound despair. "I see, Sonya, that you are waiting for some kind of explanation, but what am I to say? You understand nothing about the matter, and I should only be causing you additional pain. I see you are once more commencing to weep and to embrace me. Why do so at all? Because, failing in courage to bear my own burden, I have imposed it on another—because I seek in the anguish of others some mitigation for my own. And you can love a coward like that?"

"But you are likewise suffering!" exclaimed Sonya.

For a moment he experienced a new feeling of tenderness. "Sonya, my disposition is a bad one, and that can explain much. I have come because I am bad. Some would not have done so But I am an infamous coward. Why, once more, have I come? I shall never forgive myself for that!"

"No, no!—on the contrary, you have done well to come," cried Sonya; "it is better, much better, I should know all!"

Raskolnikov looked at her with sorrowful eye. "I was ambitious to become another Napoleon; that was why I committed a murder. Can you understand it now?"

"No," answered Sonya, naively and in a timid voice. "But speak! speak!—I shall understand all!"

"You will, say you? Good! we shall see!" For some time Raskolnikov collected his ideas. "The fact is, that one day I asked myself the following question: 'Supposing Napoleon to have been in my place, supposing that to commence his career he had neither had Toulon, nor Egypt, nor the crossing of Mont Blanc, but, in lieu of all these brilliant exploits, he was on the point of committing a murder with a view to secure his future, would he have recoiled at the idea of killing an old woman, and of robbing her of three thousand roubles? Would he have agreed that such a deed was too much wanting in prestige and much too—criminal a one?' For a long time I have split my head on that question, and could not help experiencing a feeling of shame when I finally came to the conclusion that he not only would not have hesitated, but that he would not have understood the possibility of such a thing. Every other expedient being out of his reach, he would not have flinched, he would have done so without the smallest scruple. Hence, I ought not to hesitate—being justified on the authority of Napoleon! You think that laughable? You are quite right."

The girl had no kind of desire to laugh. "Tell me frankly—without precedents," she said in a more timid and almost indistinct voice

He turned toward her, looked at her sadly, and took her hands. "You are indeed right, Sonya. What I have been saying is absurd—is

nothing but gibberish! As you know already, my mother is almost penniless. Circumstances have given my sister the opportunity of a good education, and in consequence she is condemned to the drudgery of teaching. I was their sole hope. I entered the university, but for want of means was obliged to put a stop to my studies. Supposing even I had continued them.—I might, looking at everything in a most favorable light, at the expiration of ten or fifteen years have been appointed to a mastership at a public school, or have obtained some kind of government position with a salary of a thousand roubles." (He gave the impression of repeating a lesson) "But, in the meanwhile, care and sorrow would have ruined my mother's health, and as for my sister—something worse might have happened to her. To deprive oneself of everything, to leave one's mother in want, to submit to a sister's dishonor—is that life? And to undergo all that to obtain—what? After having buried my kith and kin, I might have reared a fresh family, with the probability of leaving, at my death, wife and children without a mouthful of bread! Well—well, I argued with myself that with the old woman's money, I should cease to be on my mother's hands, that I could again return to the university, and thus secure an introduction to life—that was all. Of course I was wrong to kill the woman—but enough!" Raskolnikov seemed exhausted, and sank his head with dejection.

"That was not it! that was not it!" cried Sonya plaintively. "Is it possible?—no, there was something else!"

"You are of opinion that there was something else! And yet I have told you the whole truth!"

"The whole truth! Oh! heavens!"

"After all, Sonya, all I did was to kill some ignoble malevolent vermin."

"But the vermin was a human being"

"I am well aware that it was not vermin in the literal meaning of the word," continued Raskolnikov, looking at her with a strange look. "Besides, I am not talking common sense," he added. "You are right, Sonya, that is not it Totally different motives impelled me! For some time past I have avoided human intercourse, Sonya—and this conversation has given me a violent headache."

His eyes glistened with a feverish gleam. Delirium had almost affected him again; a restless smile hovered on his lips. Beneath his forced animation could be read extreme lassitude. Sonya knew that he was suffering. She also was beginning to lose her self-control. "What singular language! To offer similar explanations as plausible ones!" She was thoroughly amazed and wrung her hands in an excess of despair.

"No, Sonya, it is not that!" he went on, suddenly raising his head; his thoughts had all at once taken a new turn, and he seemed to have

acquired, in consequence, another lease of vivacity. "It is not that! Conceive rather that I am excessively vain, envious, ill-disposed, vindictive, and, what is more, inclined to folly I told you just now that I had been obliged to leave the university. I might perhaps have been able to remain My mother would have paid my fees, and I could have gained enough by work of some kind for food and clothing, I could have accomplished that! My lessons were bringing me in fifty kopecks each. Razoumikhin works hard, I can tell you! But I was exasperated and would not. Yes, exasperated is the word! Then I took to my rooms as the spider does to its corner. You know my den—you visited me once, I think. Do you know, Sonya, that a man's mind becomes paralyzed in small poky rooms? How I used to detest the place! And yet I could not leave them. I stopped there whole days, always in bed, unwilling to read, indifferent even to food I used to say to myself, 'If Natasia brings me up anything, I will take it; if not, I will go without.' I was too angry to ask for anything! I had given up reading and sold my books; my notebooks are covered with an inch of dust. In the evening I was without light, for want of means to buy candles; I ought to have studied, but would not—no, I preferred musing on my couch. I need not tell you what my vagaries were all about. Then it was that I commenced to think—But I am wrong! I am not telling things correctly! I used to keep on asking myself: 'As you know that the majority are fools, why not try and be more enlightened than they?' Then I admitted, Sonya, that, if a man were to wait for the moment when everybody else should be enlightened, very considerable patience would be required Later on, I got so far as to acknowledge that that moment would never come about, that men would never change, and that one would lose one's time in striving to improve them! I am quite correct! Such is the rule. I now know, Sonya, that the foremost among them is he who possesses marked intelligence. The man who dares much is the right man in his fellow's opinion The one who defies and scorns them acquires their respect! That has always been and always will be! Not to be able to observe that is a sign of blindness!"

While speaking thus, Raskolnikov looked at Sonya, but he was no longer troubled to know if she understood. He was a prey to a gloomy fanaticism. For a very long time he had had no kind of dealing with other men. The girl understood that this austere code was his belief as well as his law.

"Then I became certain, Sonya," he went on, growing more and more excited, "that power is only given to the man who dares stoop to pick it up. Nothing more is needed, except courage. From the moment this truth had dawned upon me—a truth as clear as the light of the sun—I longed to dare, and I committed murder. All I wanted was to do some daring thing, Sonya, that was my sole motive!"

"Cease, cease, I pray!" cried the girl, beside herself. "You turned away from God, and God has punished you by giving you up to Satan!"

"Then, by the way, Sonya, do you mean to infer that when those ideas came upon me in my room, it was Satan who was tempting me?"

"Cease! Jest not, unbelieving man; you understand nothing! O Lord! will he ever understand?"

"I am not jesting, Sonya; I am not, indeed. I know that it was Satan who was tempting me. But, Sonya, say no more, I ask of you!" he repeated, with gloomy persistency. "I know all. Whatever you may say to me, I have said to myself, over and over again, while dreaming in the dark. Oh! the inner struggles I have had! How unbearable my reflections were, and how I longed to throw them off forever! Do you think that I went thither like a harebrained madman! Far from it. I acted on ripe reflection, and that was my loss! Do you think I indulged in illusions? When I examined myself as to how far I really had a right to power, I knew full well that my right was naught, from the fact of doubting such a thing. When I asked myself if a human creature was so much vermin, I comprehended that it was not so for me, but for some audacious individual who would not have questioned such an idea, and would have gone on his way without vexing himself about such a thing Why, the very fact of asking myself· 'Would Napoleon have murdered this woman?' was sufficient proof that I was no Napoleon. At last I gave up looking for subtle justifications. I wished to commit murder without casuistic argument—to do so only for myself, and nothing else! Even in so terrible a thing, I scorned beguiling my conscience. When I committed murder, it was not to relieve my mother's misfortunes, nor to devote to the well-being of humanity the power and wealth which, in my opinion, such a deed ought to help me to acquire No, no, such thoughts were not mine At that moment, I did not in any way care to know if I should ever benefit anyone, or if I should continue, for the remainder of my life, a social parasite! Neither was money the main factor in the deed—no, another reason induced me to commit it I see that now Understand me if the past could be recalled, I should most probably not do so again. But, at the time being, I longed to know if I was vermin, like the majority—or a Man, in the full acceptance of the word—whether, in fact, I had the power to break through obstacles; if I was a timorous creature, or if I had the right—"

"What! the right to kill?" cried Sonya, stupefied

"Yes, Sonya!" was the irritable reply; a longer reply was on his lips, but he scornfully abstained from putting it into shape. "Do not interrupt me, Sonya! I only wished to prove one thing to you: Satan led me to the house of the old woman, making me understand that I had no kind of right to go there, considering that I am vermin as much as

others! He mocked me—hence I am here with you! If I were no vermin, should I have paid you this visit? Listen! Upon going to the house of the old woman, I only wished to make an *experiment*—Don't forget that!"

"And you committed murder, murder?"

"But let us see how I did so! Do men kill as I did? Do they set about the matter in the way I set about it, when starting with such an intention? You shall know all the details some day— Did I really kill the old woman? No, it was myself I killed!—it was myself I have irrevocably ruined! As for the old woman, it was Satan, and not I, who killed her. But enough, enough Sonya, enough! leave me!" he cried all at once in a heartrending voice; "leave me!" Raskolnikov rested his elbow on his knees and convulsively gripped his head between his hands.

"How he is suffering!" groaned Sonya.

"And what must be done now? Tell me!" he asked, suddenly raising his head. His features were terribly distorted.

"What must be done?" exclaimed the girl, rushing up to him, while her eyes, which had hitherto been filled with tears, brightened up all of a sudden. "Rise!" (Saying which, she seized Raskolnikov by the shoulder; he rose slightly, looking at Sonya with astonishment) "Go forthwith, go this very moment, to the nearest public place, prostrate yourself, kiss the earth you have stained, bow down in every direction, and proclaim at the top of your voice to the passers-by, 'I am a murderer!' And God will give you peace again! Will you go? Will you go?" she asked, trembling, while seizing his hands with tenfold strength and fixing on him a burning glance.

The girl's sudden exaltation plunged Raskolnikov in a profound stupor. "You wish me to go to the galleys, then, Sonya? You wish me to accuse myself, is it not so?" he asked in his depressed way.

"You must make atonement, so that you may be redeemed thereby!"

"I shall not accuse myself, Sonya!"

"And yet live? And how will you live?" she replied forcibly. "Is such a thing possible under existing circumstances? How look your mother in the face? (What, oh! what will become of them now?) But what am I talking about? Have you not already left mother and sister? I now see why you have broken with friends and family Heavens!" she continued, "he himself understands it all now! How keep from human intercourse? What will become of you?"

"Be reasonable, Sonya," continued Raskolnikov gently. "Why give myself up to the authorities? What should I say to them? What has occurred is of no importance—they themselves make away with thousands of people, and even take a pride in doing so. They are cowardly scamps, Sonya! I will not go. What should I say to them? That I have been guilty of murder, and that, not daring to benefit by the stolen

money, I went and hid it under a stone?" he added with a splenetic smile. "Why, they would laugh at me, they would call me a fool, for not having made use of it. Fancy!—a cowardly fool! They could not understand such a thing, Sonya, they are incapable of understanding. Why, then, give myself up? No, I shall do no such thing. Therefore, Sonya, be reasonable, I beg—"

"And to carry a burden like that—a lifetime!"

"I shall get used to it," he replied in a fierce tone. "Listen!" he went on a moment later, more or less moved, "it is time to speak seriously; I am here to tell you that the police are in search of me, that they are going to arrest me—"

"Ah!" exclaimed Sonya, alarmed.

"Well, what is the matter with you? Since you are anxious that I should go to the galleys, why be afraid? But one thing, however—they have not got me yet. I will give them some trouble, and everything will end in smoke. Positive clue they have none whatever. I certainly did run great danger yesterday, and I really believed that it was all up with me. Today, the danger is over. All their proofs go either way—I mean, the charges against me I am able to explain away to my advantage, do you hear? and I should have no difficulty in doing so, for I have gained experience. And yet, I am positive that I shall be imprisoned. It would have happened today, but for a lucky circumstance; and I still run the risk of finding myself under lock and key before night. But that is nothing, Sonya They will arrest me, but they will also be compelled to let me go, because they are without actual proof, and, you may depend, will get none out of me With suppositions only, such as they have got, a man is not condemned. But, enough! I only wished to warn you. As for my mother and sister, I shall manage in such a way that they shall not be upset. My sister is now out of reach of want; all I have to do is to make sure as far as my mother is concerned. That is all. Whatever you do, be prudent; and as soon as I am in prison you will come and see me?"

"Yes, yes!"

They were seated side by side, sad and dejected, like two shipwrecked persons whom the tempest had cast on some desert shore. In looking at Sonya, Raskolnikov was convinced of her love; and, strange to say, the tender love, of which he was the object, suddenly caused him a pang of grief. He had visited Sonya, saying that his sole refuge, his sole hope, was in her; he had yielded to an irresistible desire to air his grief, and now that she had given him her whole heart, he acknowledged that he was infinitely more unhappy than before.

"Sonya," said he, "it would be better that you should not come and see me in prison!"

The girl made no reply, but wept. A few moments went by. "Are you wearing a cross?" she asked unexpectedly, as if struck with a

sudden idea. He did not at first understand the question. "You have none, I see? Well, take this one, it is made of cypress wood. I have another of brass, which was left me by Elizabeth. We made an exchange—she gave me her cross, and I gave her an image. I shall now wear hers, and you—you may wear this one. Take it, it is mine!" she insisted. "As we shall mutually go and make atonement, so shall we mutually wear the cross."

"Give it to me!" said Raskolnikov to save her pain; and he held out his hand, which, however, he immediately withdrew. "Not now, Sonya. Later on—that will be better," added he, by way of concession.

"Yes, yes, later on," she replied with animation "You shall have it at the moment of your expiation. You shall come to me, I will put it round your neck, we will say one short prayer, and then we will go."

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

IVAN KARAMAZOV'S CONFESSION OF FAITH

"I must make you one confession," Ivan began. "I could never understand how one can love one's neighbors. It's just one's neighbors, to my mind, that one can't love, though one might love those at a distance. I once read somewhere of John the Merciful, a saint, that when a hungry, frozen beggar came to him, he took him into his bed, held him in his arms, and began breathing into his mouth, which was putrid and loathsome from some awful disease. I am convinced that he did that from 'self-laceration,' from the self-laceration of falsity, for the sake of the charity imposed by duty, as a penance laid on him. For anyone to love a man, he must be hidden, for as soon as he shows his face, love is gone."

"Father Zossima has talked of that more than once," observed Alyosha. "He, too, said that the face of a man often hinders many people not practiced in love, from loving him But yet there's a great deal of love in mankind, and almost Christlike love. I know that myself, Ivan."

"Well, I know nothing of it so far, and can't understand it, and the innumerable mass of mankind are with me there. The question is, whether that's due to men's bad qualities or whether it's inherent in their nature. To my thinking, Christlike love for men is a miracle impossible on earth. He was God. But we are not gods. Suppose I, for instance, suffer intensely. Another can never know how much I

suffer, because he is another and not I. And what's more, a man is rarely ready to admit another's suffering (as though it were a distinction). Why won't he admit it, do you think? Because I smell unpleasant, because I have a stupid face, because I once trod on his foot. Besides, there is suffering and suffering; degrading, humiliating suffering such as humbles me—hunger, for instance—my benefactor will perhaps allow me; but when you come to higher suffering—for an idea, for instance—he will very rarely admit that, perhaps because my face strikes him as not at all what he fancies a man should have who suffers for an idea. And so he deprives me instantly of his favor, and not at all from badness of heart. Beggars, especially genteel beggars, ought never to show themselves, but to ask for charity through the newspapers. One can love one's neighbors in the abstract, or even at a distance, but at close quarters it's almost impossible If it were as on the stage, in the ballet, where if beggars come in, they wear silken rags and tattered lace and beg for alms dancing gracefully, then one might like looking at them. But even then we should not love them. But enough of that. I simply wanted to show you my point of view. I meant to speak of the suffering of mankind generally, but we had better confine ourselves to the sufferings of the children. That reduces the scope of my argument to a tenth of what it would be. Still, we'd better keep to the children, though it does weaken my case. But, in the first place, children can be loved even at close quarters, even when they are dirty, even when they are ugly (I fancy, though, children never are ugly). The second reason why I won't speak of grown-up people is that, besides being disgusting and unworthy of love, they have a compensation—they've eaten the apple and know good and evil, and they have become 'like gods.' They go on eating it still. But the children haven't eaten anything, and are so far innocent. Are you fond of children, Alyosha? I know you are, and you will understand why I prefer to speak of them. If they, too, suffer horribly on earth, they must suffer for their fathers' sins, they must be punished for their fathers, who have eaten the apple; but that reasoning is of the other world and is incomprehensible for the heart of man here on earth. The innocent must not suffer for another's sins, and especially such innocents! You may be surprised at me, Alyosha, but I am awfully fond of children, too. And observe: cruel people, the violent, the rapacious, the Karamazovs, are sometimes very fond of children. Children while they are quite little—up to seven, for instance—are so remote from grown-up people; they are different creatures, as it were, of a different species. I knew a criminal in prison who had, in the course of his career as a burglar, murdered whole families, including several children. But when he was in prison, he had a strange affection for them. He spent all his time at his window, watching the children playing in the prison yard. He trained one little boy to come up to his window and made

great friends with him....You don't know why I am telling you all this, Alyosha? My head aches and I am sad"

"You speak with a strange air," observed Alyosha uneasily, "as though you were not quite yourself."

"By the way, a Bulgarian I met lately in Moscow," Ivan went on, seeming not to hear his brother's words, "told me about the crimes committed by Turks and Circassians in all parts of Bulgaria through fear of a general rising of the Slavs. They burn villages, murder, outrage women and children, they nail their prisoners by the ears to the fences, leave them so till morning, and in the morning they hang them —all sorts of things you can't imagine. People talk sometimes of bestial cruelty, but that's a great injustice and insult to the beasts; a beast can never be so cruel as a man, so artistically cruel. The tiger only tears and gnaws, that's all he can do He would never think of nailing people by the ears, even if he were able to do it. These Turks took a pleasure in torturing children, too; cutting the unborn child from the mother's womb, and tossing babies up in the air and catching them on the points of their bayonets before their mothers' eyes. Doing it before the mothers' eyes was what gave zest to the amusement. Here is another scene that I thought very interesting. Imagine a trembling mother with her baby in her arms, a circle of invading Turks around her. They've planned a diversion· they pet the baby, laugh to make it laugh. They succeed, the baby laughs. At that moment a Turk points a pistol four inches from the baby's face. The baby laughs with glee, holds out its little hands to the pistol, and he pulls the trigger in the baby's face and blows out its brains. Artistic, wasn't it? By the way, Turks are particularly fond of sweet things, they say."

"Brother, what are you driving at?" asked Alyosha.

"I think if the devil doesn't exist, but man has created him, he has created him in his own image and likeness."

"Just as he did God, then?" observed Alyosha.

"'It's wonderful how you can turn words,' as Polonius says in *Hamlet,*" laughed Ivan. "You turn my words against me Well, I am glad Yours must be a fine God, if man created Him in his image and likeness. You asked just now what I was driving at. You see, I am fond of collecting certain facts, and, would you believe, I even copy anecdotes of a certain sort from newspapers and books, and I've already got a fine collection. The Turks, of course, have gone into it, but they are foreigners. I have specimens from home that are even better than the Turks. You know we prefer beating—rods and scourges—that's our national institution. Nailing ears is unthinkable for us, for we are, after all, Europeans. But the rod and the scourge we have always with us and they cannot be taken from us. Abroad now they scarcely do any beating. Manners are more humane, or laws have been passed, so that they don't dare to flog men now. But they make up for it in another

way just as national as ours. And so national that it would be practically impossible among us, though I believe we are being inoculated with it, since the religious movement began in our aristocracy. I have a charming pamphlet, translated from the French, describing how, quite recently, five years ago, a murderer, Richard, was executed—a young man, I believe, of three and twenty, who repented and was converted to the Christian faith at the very scaffold. This Richard was an illegitimate child who was given as a child of six by his parents to some shepherds on the Swiss mountains They brought him up to work for them. He grew up like a little wild beast among them. The shepherds taught him nothing, and scarcely fed or clothed him, but sent him out at seven to herd the flock in cold and wet, and no one hesitated or scrupled to treat him so. Quite the contrary, they thought they had every right, for Richard had been given to them as a chattel, and they did not even see the necessity of feeding him. Richard himself describes how in those years, like the Prodigal Son in the Gospel, he longed to eat of the mash given to the pigs, which were fattened for sale But they wouldn't even give him that, and beat him when he stole from the pigs. And that was how he spent all his childhood and his youth, till he grew up and was strong enough to go away and be a thief. The savage began to earn his living as a day laborer in Geneva. He drank what he earned, he lived like a brute, and finished by killing and robbing an old man. He was caught, tried, and condemned to death. They are not sentimentalists there. And in prison he was immediately surrounded by pastors, members of Christian brotherhoods, philanthropic ladies, and the like. They taught him to read and write in prison, and expounded the Gospel to him. They exhorted him, worked upon him, drummed at him incessantly, till at last he solemnly confessed his crime. He was converted He wrote to the court himself that he was a monster, but that in the end God had vouchsafed him light and shown grace. All Geneva was in excitement about him—all philanthropic and religious Geneva. All the aristocratic and well-bred society of the town rushed to the prison, kissed Richard and embraced him. 'You are our brother, you have found grace.' And Richard does nothing but weep with emotion. 'Yes, I've found grace! All my youth and childhood I was glad of pigs' food, but now even I have found grace. I am dying in the Lord.' 'Yes, Richard, die in the Lord; you have shed blood and must die. Though it's not your fault that you knew not the Lord, when you coveted the pigs' food and were beaten for stealing it (which was very wrong of you, for stealing is forbidden); but you've shed blood and you must die.' And on the last day, Richard, perfectly limp, did nothing but cry and repeat every minute 'This is my happiest day. I am going to the Lord.' 'Yes,' cry the pastors and the judges and philanthropic ladies. 'This is the happiest day of your life, for you are going to the Lord!' They all walk or

drive to the scaffold in procession behind the prison van. At the scaffold they call to Richard: 'Die, brother, die in the Lord, for even thou hast found grace!' And so, covered with his brothers' kisses, Richard is dragged onto the scaffold, and led to the guillotine. And they chopped off his head in brotherly fashion, because he had found grace. Yes, that's characteristic. That pamphlet is translated into Russian by some Russian philanthropists of aristocratic rank and evangelical aspirations, and has been distributed gratis for the enlightenment of the people. The case of Richard is interesting because it's national. Though to us it's absurd to cut off a man's head because he has become our brother and has found grace, yet we have our own specialty, which is all but worse. Our historical pastime is the direct satisfaction of inflicting pain. There are lines in Nekrassov describing how a peasant lashes a horse on the eyes, 'on its meek eyes,' everyone must have seen it It's peculiarly Russian. He describes how a feeble little nag has foundered under too heavy a load and cannot move. The peasant beats it, beats it savagely, beats it at last not knowing what he is doing in the intoxication of cruelty, thrashes it mercilessly over and over again 'However weak you are, you must pull, if you die for it.' The nag strains, and then he begins lashing the poor defenseless creature on its weeping, on its 'meek eyes.' The frantic beast tugs and draws the load, trembling all over, gasping for breath, moving sideways, with a sort of unnatural spasmodic action—it's awful in Nekrassov But that's only a horse, and God has given horses to be beaten. So the Tatars have taught us, and they left us the knout as a remembrance of it. But men, too, can be beaten. A well-educated, cultured gentleman and his wife beat their own child with a birch-rod, a girl of seven. I have an exact account of it. The papa was glad that the birch was covered with twigs. 'It stings more,' said he, and so he began stinging his daughter. I know for a fact there are people who at every blow are worked up to sensuality, to literal sensuality, which increases progressively at every blow they inflict. They beat for a minute, for five minutes, for ten minutes, more often and more savagely The child screams. At last the child cannot scream, it gasps, 'Daddy! daddy!' By some diabolical unseemly chance the case was brought into court. A counsel is engaged. The Russian people have long called a barrister 'a conscience for hire.' The counsel protests in his client's defense. 'It's such a simple thing,' he says, 'an everyday domestic event. A father corrects his child. To our shame be it said, it is brought into court.' The jury, convinced by him, give a favorable verdict The public roars with delight that the torturer is acquitted. Ah, pity I wasn't there! I would have proposed to raise a subscription in his honor! Charming pictures.

"But I've still better things about children. I've collected a great, great deal about Russian children, Alyosha. There was a little girl of five who was hated by her father and mother, 'most worthy and respectable

people, of good education and breeding.' You see, I must repeat again, it is a peculiar characteristic of many people, this love of torturing children, and children only. To all other types of humanity these torturers behave mildly and benevolently, like cultivated and humane Europeans; but they are very fond of tormenting children, even fond of children themselves in that sense. It's just their defenselessness that tempts the tormentor, just the angelic confidence of the child who has no refuge and no appeal, that sets his vile blood on fire. In every man, of course, a demon lies hidden—the demon of rage, the demon of lustful heat at the screams of the tortured victim, the demon of lawlessness let off the chain, the demon of diseases that follow on vice, gout, kidney disease, and so on.

"This poor child of five was subjected to every possible torture by those cultivated parents. They beat her, thrashed her, kicked her for no reason till her body was one bruise. Then they went to greater refinements of cruelty—shut her up all night in the cold and frost in a privy, and because she didn't ask to be taken up at night (as though a child of five sleeping its angelic, sound sleep could be trained to wake and ask), they smeared her face and filled her mouth with excrement, and it was her mother, her mother did this. And that mother could sleep, hearing the poor child's groans! Can you understand why a little creature, who can't even understand what's done to her, should beat her little aching heart with her tiny fist in the dark and the cold, and weep her meek, unresentful tears to dear, kind God to protect her? Do you understand that, friend and brother, you pious and humble novice? Do you understand why this infamy must be and is permitted? Without it, I am told, man could not have existed on earth, for he could not have known good and evil. Why should he know that diabolical good and evil when it costs so much? Why, the whole world of knowledge is not worth that child's prayer to 'dear, kind God'! I say nothing of the sufferings of grown-up people, they have eaten the apple, damn them, and the devil take them all! But these little ones! I am making you suffer, Alyosha, you are not yourself. I'll leave off if you like."

"Never mind. I want to suffer too," muttered Alyosha.

"One picture, only one more, because it's so curious, so characteristic, and I have only just read it in some collection of Russian antiquities. I've forgotten the name. I must look it up. It was in the darkest days of serfdom at the beginning of the century, and long live the Liberator of the People! There was in those days a general of aristocratic connections, the owner of great estates, one of those men—somewhat exceptional, I believe, even then—who, retiring from the service into a life of leisure, are convinced that they've earned absolute power over the lives of their subjects. There were such men then. So our general, settled on his property of two thousand souls, lives in pomp, and domineers over his poor neighbors as though they were depend-

ents and buffoons. He has kennels of hundreds of hounds and nearly a hundred dog boys—all mounted, and in uniform. One day a serf boy, a little child of eight, threw a stone in play and hurt the paw of the general's favorite hound. 'Why is my favorite dog lame?' He is told that the boy threw a stone that hurt the dog's paw 'So you did it.' The general looked the child up and down. 'Take him.' He was taken—taken from his mother and kept shut up all night. Early that morning the general comes out on horseback, with the hounds, his dependents, dog boys, and huntsmen, all mounted around him in full hunting parade. The servants are summoned for their edification, and in front of them all stands the mother of the child. The child is brought from the lock-up. It's a gloomy, cold, foggy autumn day, a capital day for hunting The general orders the child to be undressed; the child is stripped naked He shivers, numb with terror, not daring to cry....'Make him run,' commands the general 'Run! run!' shout the dog boys The boy runs. . ..'At him!' yells the general, and he sets the whole pack of hounds on the child. The hounds catch him, and tear him to pieces before his mother's eyes! ..I believe the general was afterwards declared incapable of administering his estates Well—what did he deserve? To be shot? To be shot for the satisfaction of our moral feelings? Speak, Alyosha!"

"To be shot," murmured Alyosha, lifting his eyes to Ivan with a pale, twisted smile.

"Bravo!" cried Ivan delighted "If even you say so ..You're a pretty monk! So there is a little devil sitting in your heart, Alyosha Karamazov!"

"What I said was absurd, but—"

"That's just the point, that 'but'!" cried Ivan. "Let me tell you, novice, that the absurd is only too necessary on earth. The world stands on absurdities, and perhaps nothing would have come to pass in it without them. We know what we know!"

"What do you know?"

"I understand nothing," Ivan went on, as though in delirium. "I don't want to understand anything now. I want to stick to the fact I made up my mind long ago not to understand. If I try to understand anything, I shall be false to the fact, and I have determined to stick to the fact."

"Why are you trying me?" Alyosha cried, with sudden distress. "Will you say what you mean at last?"

"Of course I will; that's what I've been leading up to. You are dear to me, I don't want to let you go, and I won't give you up to your Zossima."

Ivan for a minute was silent, his face became all at once very sad.

"Listen! I took the case of children only to make my case clearer. Of the other tears of humanity with which the earth is soaked from its

crust to its center, I will say nothing. I have narrowed my subject on purpose. I am a bug, and I recognize in all humility that I cannot understand why the world is arranged as it is. Men are themselves to blame, I suppose; they were given paradise, they wanted freedom, and stole fire from heaven, though they knew they would become unhappy, so there is no need to pity them. With my pitiful, earthly, Euclidian understanding, all I know is that there is suffering and that there are none guilty; that cause follows effect, simply and directly; that everything flows and finds its level—but that's only Euclidian nonsense, I know that, and I can't consent to live by it! What comfort is it to me that there are none guilty and that cause follows effect simply and directly, and that I know it?—I must have justice, or I will destroy myself. And not justice in some remote infinite time and space, but here on earth, and that I could see myself. I have believed in it I want to see it, and if I am dead by then, let me rise again, for if it all happens without me, it will be too unfair. Surely I haven't suffered, simply that I, my crimes and my sufferings, may manure the soil of the future harmony for somebody else. I want to see with my own eyes the hind lie down with the lion and the victim rise up and embrace his murderer. I want to be there when everyone suddenly understands what it has all been for All the religions of the world are built on this longing, and I am a believer But then there are the children, and what am I to do about them? That's a question I can't answer. For the hundredth time I repeat, there are numbers of questions, but I've only taken the children, because in their case what I mean is so unanswerably clear. Listen! If all must suffer to pay for the eternal harmony, what have children to do with it, tell me, please? It's beyond all comprehension why they should suffer, and why they should pay for the harmony. Why should they, too, furnish material to enrich the soil for the harmony of the future? I understand solidarity in sin among men. I understand solidarity in retribution, too; but there can be no such solidarity with children. And if it is really true that they must share responsibility for all their fathers' crimes, such a truth is not of this world and is beyond my comprehension. Some jester will say, perhaps, that the child would have grown up and have sinned, but you see he didn't grow up, he was torn to pieces by the dogs, at eight years old. Oh, Alyosha, I am not blaspheming! I understand, of course, what an upheaval of the universe it will be when everything in heaven and earth blends in one hymn of praise and everything that lives and has lived cries aloud: 'Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed.' When the mother embraces the fiend who threw her child to the dogs, and all three cry aloud with tears, 'Thou art just, O Lord!' then, of course, the crown of knowledge will be reached and all will be made clear. But what pulls me up here is that I can't accept that harmony. And while I am on earth, I make haste to take my own measures. You

see, Alyosha, perhaps it really may happen that if I live to that moment, or rise again to see it, I, too, perhaps, may cry aloud with the rest, looking at the mother embracing the child's torturer, 'Thou art just, O Lord!' but I don't want to cry aloud then. While there is still time, I hasten to protect myself, and so I renounce the higher harmony altogether. It's not worth the tears of that one tortured child who beat itself on the breast with its little fist and prayed in its stinking outhouse, with its unexpiated tears to 'dear, kind God'! It's not worth it, because those tears are unatoned for. They must be atoned for, or there can be no harmony. But how? How are you going to atone for them? Is it possible? By their being avenged? But what do I care for avenging them? What do I care for a hell for oppressors? What good can hell do, since those children have already been tortured? And what becomes of harmony if there is hell? I want to forgive. I want to embrace. I don't want more suffering. And if the sufferings of children go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth, then I protest that the truth is not worth such a price. I don't want the mother to embrace the oppressor who threw her son to the dogs! She dare not forgive him! Let her forgive him for herself, if she will, let her forgive the torturer for the immeasurable suffering of her mother's heart. But the sufferings of her tortured child she has no right to forgive; she dare not forgive the torturer, even if the child were to forgive him! And if that is so, if they dare not forgive, what becomes of harmony? Is there in the whole world a being who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? I don't want harmony. From love for humanity I don't want it I would rather be left with the unavenged suffering I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering and unsatisfied indignation, *even if I were wrong*. Besides, too high a price is asked for harmony; it's beyond our means to pay so much to enter on it. And so I hasten to give back my entrance ticket, and if I am an honest man I am bound to give it back as soon as possible. And that I am doing. It's not God that I don't accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return Him the ticket."

"That's rebellion," murmured Alyosha, looking down.

"Rebellion? I am sorry you call it that," said Ivan earnestly. "One can hardly live in rebellion, and I want to live. Tell me yourself, I challenge you—answer. Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature—that baby beating its breast with its fist, for instance—and to found that edifice on its unavenged tears, would you consent to be the architect on those conditions? Tell me, and tell the truth."

"No, I wouldn't consent," said Alyosha softly.

"And can you admit the idea that men for whom you are building

it would agree to accept their happiness on the foundation of the unexpiated blood of a little victim? And accepting it would remain happy forever?"

"No, I can't admit it, Brother," said Alyosha suddenly, with flashing eyes; "you said just now, is there a being in the whole world who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? But there is a Being and He can forgive everything, all and for all, because He gave His innocent blood for all and everything. You have forgotten Him, and on Him is built the edifice, and it is to Him they cry aloud, 'Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed!'"

"Ah! the One without sin and His blood! No, I have not forgotten Him; on the contrary I've been wondering all the time how it was you did not bring Him in before, for usually all arguments on your side put Him in the foreground. Do you know, Alyosha—don't laugh! I made a poem about a year ago. If you can waste another ten minutes on me, I'll tell it to you."

"You wrote a poem?"

"Oh, no, I didn't write it," laughed Ivan, "and I've never written two lines of poetry in my life But I made up this poem in prose and I remembered it. I was carried away when I made it up. You will be my first reader—that is, listener Why should an author forego even one listener?" smiled Ivan. "Shall I tell it to you?"

"I am all attention," said Alyosha.

"My poem is called 'The Grand Inquisitor'; it's a ridiculous thing, but I want to tell it to you."

THE GRAND INQUISITOR

"Even this must have a preface—that is, a literary preface," laughed Ivan, "and I am a poor hand at making one. You see, my action takes place in the sixteenth century, and at that time, as you probably learned at school, it was customary in poetry to bring down heavenly powers on earth. Not to speak of Dante, in France, clerks as well as the monks in the monasteries, used to give regular performances in which the Madonna, the saints, the angels, Christ, and God Himself were brought on the stage. In those days it was done in all simplicity. In Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* an edifying and gratuitous spectacle was provided for the people in the Hôtel de Ville of Paris in the reign of Louis XI in honor of the birth of the dauphin. It was called *Le bon jugement de la très sainte et gracieuse Vierge Marie,* and she appears herself on the stage and pronounces her *bon jugement.* Similar plays, chiefly from the Old Testament, were occasionally performed in Moscow too, up to the times of Peter the Great But besides plays there

were all sorts of legends and ballads scattered about the world, in which the saints and angels and all the powers of heaven took part when required. In our monasteries the monks busied themselves in translating, copying, and even composing such poems—and even under the Tatars. There is, for instance, one such poem (of course, from the Greek), *The Wanderings of Our Lady through Hell,* with descriptions as bold as Dante's. Our Lady visits hell, and the Archangel Michael leads her through the torments. She sees the sinners and their punishment. There she sees among others one noteworthy set of sinners in a burning lake; some of them sink to the bottom of the lake so that they can't swim out, and 'these God forgets'—an expression of extraordinary depth and force. And so Our Lady, shocked and weeping, falls before the throne of God and begs for mercy for all in hell—for all she has seen there, indiscriminately Her conversation with God is immensely interesting. She beseeches Him, she will not desist, and when God points to the hands and feet of her Son, nailed to the Cross, and asks, 'How can I forgive His tormentors?' she bids all the saints, all the martyrs, all the angels and archangels to fall down with her and pray for mercy on all without distinction. It ends by her winning from God a respite of suffering every year from Good Friday till Trinity Day, and the sinners at once raise a cry of thankfulness from hell, chanting, 'Thou art just, O Lord, in this judgment.' Well, my poem would have been of that kind if it had appeared at that time He comes on the scene in my poem, but He says nothing, only appears and passes on. Fifteen centuries have passed since He promised to come in His glory, fifteen centuries since His prophet wrote, 'Behold, I come quickly'; 'Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father,' as He Himself predicted on earth. But humanity awaits him with the same faith and with the same love. Oh, with greater faith, for it is fifteen centuries since man has ceased to see signs from heaven.

No signs from heaven come today
To add to what the heart doth say.

"There was nothing left but faith in what the heart doth say It is true there were many miracles in those days. There were saints who performed miraculous cures; some holy people, according to their biographies, were visited by the Queen of Heaven herself. But the devil did not slumber, and doubts were already arising among men of the truth of these miracles. And just then there appeared in the north of Germany a terrible new heresy. 'A huge star like to a torch' (that is, to a church) 'fell on the sources of the waters and they became bitter.' These heretics began blasphemously denying miracles. But those who remained faithful were all the more ardent in their faith. The

tears of humanity rose up to Him as before, awaited His coming, loved Him, hoped for Him, yearned to suffer and die for Him as before. And so many ages mankind had prayed with faith and fervor, 'O Lord, our God, hasten Thy coming,' so many ages called upon Him, that in His infinite mercy He deigned to come down to His servants. Before that day He had come down, He had visited some holy men, martyrs and hermits, as is written in their lives. Among us, Tyutchev, with absolute faith in the truth of his words, bore witness that

> Bearing the Cross, in slavish dress,
> Weary and worn, the Heavenly King
> Our mother, Russia, came to bless,
> And through our land went wandering.

And that certainly was so, I assure you.

"And behold, He deigned to appear for a moment to the people, to the tortured, suffering people, sunk in iniquity, but loving Him like children. My story is laid in Spain, in Seville, in the most terrible time of the Inquisition, when fires were lighted every day to the glory of God, and 'in the splendid *auto da fé* the wicked heretics were burned.' Oh, of course, this was not the coming in which He will appear according to His promise at the end of time in all His heavenly glory, and which will be sudden 'as lightning flashing from east to west.' No, He visited His children only for a moment, and there where the flames were crackling round the heretics. In His infinite mercy He came once more among men in that human shape in which He walked among men for three years fifteen centuries ago. He came down to the 'hot pavements' of the southern town in which on the day before almost a hundred heretics had, *ad majorem gloriam Dei,* been burned by the cardinal, the Grand Inquisitor, in a magnificent *auto da fé,* in the presence of the king, the court, the knights, the cardinals, the most charming ladies of the court, and the whole population of Seville.

"He came softly, unobserved, and yet, strange to say, everyone recognized Him. That might be one of the best passages in the poem I mean, why they recognized Him. The people are irresistibly drawn to Him, they surround Him, they flock about Him, follow Him. He moves silently in their midst with a gentle smile of infinite compassion. The sun of love burns in His heart, light and power shine from His eyes, and their radiance, shed on the people, stirs their hearts with responsive love. He holds out His hands to them, blesses them, and a healing virtue comes from contact with Him, even with His garments. An old man in the crowd, blind from childhood, cries out, 'O Lord, heal me and I shall see Thee!' and, as it were, scales fall from his eyes and the blind man sees Him. The crowd weeps and kisses the earth under His feet. Children throw flowers before Him, sing, and cry hosannah. 'It is He—it is He!' all repeat. 'It must be He, it can be

no one but Him!' He stops at the steps of the Seville cathedral at the moment when the weeping mourners are bringing in a little open white coffin. In it lies a child of seven, the only daughter of a prominent citizen. The dead child lies hidden in flowers. 'He will raise your child,' the crowd shouts to the weeping mother. The priest, coming to meet the coffin, looks perplexed, and frowns, but the mother of the dead child throws herself at His feet with a wail. 'If it is Thou, raise my child!' she cries, holding out her hands to Him. The procession halts, the coffin is laid on the steps at His feet. He looks with compassion, and His lips once more softly pronounce, 'Maiden, arise!' and the maiden arises. The little girl sits up in the coffin and looks round, smiling with wide-open wondering eyes, holding a bunch of white roses they had put in her hand.

"There are cries, sobs, confusion among the people, and at that moment the cardinal himself, the Grand Inquisitor, passes by the cathedral He is an old man, almost ninety, tall and erect, with a withered face and sunken eyes, in which there is still a gleam of light. He is not dressed in his gorgeous cardinal's robes, as he was the day before, when he was burning the enemies of the Roman Church—at this moment he is wearing his coarse old monk's cassock. At a distance behind him come his gloomy assistants and slaves and the 'holy guard.' He stops at the sight of the crowd and watches it from a distance. He sees everything; he sees them set the coffin down at His feet, sees the child rise up, and his face darkens. He knits his thick gray brows and his eyes gleam with a sinister fire. He holds out his finger and bids the guards take Him And such is his power, so completely are the people cowed into submission and trembling obedience to him, that the crowd immediately makes way for the guards, and in the midst of deathlike silence they lay hands on Him and lead Him away The crowd instantly bows down to the earth, like one man, before the old Inquisitor. He blesses the people in silence and passes on. The guards lead their prisoner to the close, gloomy vaulted prison in the ancient palace of the Holy Inquisition and shut Him in it. The day passes and is followed by the dark, burning, 'breathless' night of Seville. The air is 'fragrant with laurel and lemon.' In the pitch darkness the iron door of the prison is suddenly opened and the Grand Inquisitor himself comes in with a light in his hand. He is alone; the door is closed at once behind him. He stands in the doorway and for a minute or two gazes into His face. At last he goes up slowly, sets the light on the table and speaks.

"'Is it Thou? Thou?' but, receiving no answer, he adds at once, 'Don't answer, be silent. What canst Thou say, indeed? I know too well what Thou wouldst say And Thou hast no right to add anything to what Thou hast said of old. Why, then, art Thou come to hinder us? For Thou hast come to hinder us, and Thou knowest that. But

dost Thou know what will be tomorrow? I know not who Thou art and care not to know whether it is Thou or only a semblance of Him, but tomorrow I shall condemn Thee and burn Thee at the stake as the worst of heretics. And the very people who have today kissed Thy feet, tomorrow at the faintest sign from me will rush to heap up the embers of Thy fire. Knowest Thou that? Yes, maybe Thou knowest it,' he added with thoughtful penetration, never for a moment taking his eyes off the Prisoner."

"I don't quite understand, Ivan. What does it mean?" Alyosha, who had been listening in silence, said with a smile. "Is it simply a wild fantasy, or a mistake on the part of the old man—some impossible *quid pro quo?*"

"Take it as the last," said Ivan, laughing, "if you are so corrupted by modern realism and can't stand anything fantastic If you like it to be a case of mistaken identity, let it be so. It is true," he went on, laughing, "the old man was ninety, and he might well be crazy over his set idea. He might have been struck by the appearance of the Prisoner. It might, in fact, be simply his ravings, the delusion of an old man of ninety, overexcited by the *auto da fé* of a hundred heretics the day before. But does it matter to us, after all, whether it was a mistake of identity or a wild fantasy? All that matters is that the old man should speak out, should speak openly of what he has thought in silence for ninety years."

"And the Prisoner too is silent? Does He look at him and not say a word?"

"That's inevitable in any case," Ivan laughed again. "The old man has told Him He hasn't the right to add anything to what He has said of old. One may say it is the most fundamental feature of Roman Catholicism, in my opinion at least. 'All has been given by Thee to the Pope,' they say, 'and all, therefore, is still in the Pope's hands, and there is no need for Thee to come now at all Thou must not meddle for the time, at least.' That's how they speak and write too—the Jesuits, at any rate. I have read it myself in the works of their theologians. 'Hast Thou the right to reveal to us one of the mysteries of that world from which Thou hast come?' my old man asks Him, and answers the question for Him. 'No, Thou hast not; that Thou mayest not add to what has been said of old, and mayest not take from men the freedom which Thou didst exalt when Thou wast on earth. Whatsoever Thou revealest anew will encroach on men's freedom of faith; for it will be manifest as a miracle, and the freedom of their faith was dearer to Thee than anything in those days fifteen hundred years ago Didst Thou not often say then, "I will make you free"? But now Thou hast seen these "free" men,' the old man adds suddenly, with a pensive smile. 'Yes, we've paid dearly for it,' he goes on, looking sternly at Him, 'but at last we have completed that work in Thy name. For fifteen centuries we

have been wrestling with Thy freedom, but now it is ended and over for good. Dost Thou not believe that it's over for good? Thou lookest meekly at me and deignest not even to be wroth with me. But let me tell Thee that now, today, people are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom, yet they have brought their freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet. But that has been our doing. Was this what Thou didst? Was this Thy freedom?'"

"I don't understand again," Alyosha broke in. "Is he ironical, is he jesting?"

"Not a bit of it! He claims it as a merit for himself and his Church that at last they have vanquished freedom and have done so to make men happy. 'For now' (he is speaking of the Inquisition, of course) 'for the first time it has become possible to think of the happiness of men. Man was created a rebel, and how can rebels be happy? Thou wast warned,' he says to Him. 'Thou hast had no lack of admonitions and warnings, but Thou didst not listen to those warnings; Thou didst reject the only way by which men might be made happy But, fortunately, departing Thou didst hand on the work to us. Thou hast promised, Thou hast established by Thy word, Thou hast given to us the right to bind and to unbind, and now, of course, Thou canst not think of taking it away. Why, then, hast Thou come to hinder us?'"

"And what's the meaning of 'no lack of admonitions and warnings'?" asked Alyosha.

"Why, that's the chief part of what the old man must say

"'The wise and dread spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-existence,' the old man goes on, 'the great spirit talked with Thee in the wilderness, and we are told in the books that he "tempted" Thee Is that so? And could anything truer be said than what he revealed to Thee in three questions and what Thou didst reject, and what in the books is called "the temptation"? And yet if there has ever been on earth a real stupendous miracle, it took place on that day, on the day of the three temptations The statement of those three questions was itself the miracle If it were possible to imagine simply for the sake of argument that those three questions of the dread spirit had perished utterly from the books, and that we had to restore them and to invent them anew, and to do so had gathered together all the wise men of the earth—rulers, chief priests, learned men, philosophers, poets—and had set them the task to invent three questions, such as would not only fit the occasion, but express in three words, three human phrases, the whole future history of the world and of humanity—dost Thou believe that all the wisdom of the earth united could have invented anything in depth and force equal to the three questions which were actually put to Thee then by the wise and mighty spirit in the wilderness? From those questions alone, from the miracle of their statement, we can see that we have here to do not with the fleeting human intelli-

gence, but with the absolute and eternal. For in those three questions the whole subsequent history of mankind is, as it were, brought together into one whole, and foretold, and in them are united all the unsolved historical contradictions of human nature. At the time it could not be so clear, since the future was unknown; but now that fifteen hundred years have passed, we see that everything in those three questions was so justly divined and foretold, and has been so truly fulfilled, that nothing can be added to them or taken from them.

"'Judge Thyself who was right—Thou or he who questioned Thee then? Remember the first question; its meaning, in other words, was this: "Thou wouldst go into the world, and art going with empty hands, with some promise of freedom which men in their simplicity and their natural unruliness cannot even understand, which they fear and dread—for nothing has ever been more insupportable for a man and a human society than freedom. But seest Thou these stones in this parched and barren wilderness? Turn them into bread, and mankind will run after Thee like a flock of sheep, grateful and obedient, though forever trembling, lest Thou withdraw Thy hand and deny them Thy bread." But Thou wouldst not deprive man of freedom and didst reject the offer, thinking, what is that freedom worth, if obedience is bought with bread? Thou didst reply that man lives not by bread alone. But dost Thou know that for the sake of that earthly bread the spirit of the earth will rise up against Thee and will strive with Thee and overcome Thee, and all will follow him, crying, "Who can compare with this beast? He has given us fire from heaven!" Dost Thou know that the ages will pass, and humanity will proclaim by the lips of their sages that there is no crime, and therefore no sin, there is only hunger? "Feed men, and then ask of them virtue!" that's what they'll write on the banner which they will raise against Thee, and with which they will destroy Thy temple. Where Thy temple stood will rise a new building; the terrible Tower of Babel will be built again, and though, like the one of old, it will not be finished, yet Thou mightest have prevented that new tower and have cut short the sufferings of men for a thousand years; for they will come back to us after a thousand years of agony with their tower. They will seek us again, hidden underground in the catacombs, for we shall be again persecuted and tortured. They will find us and cry to us, "Feed us, for those who have promised us fire from heaven haven't given it!" And then we shall finish building their tower, for he finishes the building who feeds them. And we alone shall feed them in Thy name, declaring falsely that it is in Thy name. Oh, never, never can they feed themselves without us! No science will give them bread so long as they remain free. In the end they will lay their freedom at our feet, and say to us, "Make us your slaves, but feed us." They will understand themselves, at last, that freedom and bread enough for all are inconceivable to-

gether, for never, never will they be able to share between them! They will be convinced, too, that they can never be free, for they are weak, vicious, worthless, and rebellious. Thou didst promise them the bread of Heaven, but, I repeat again, can it compare with earthly bread in the eyes of the weak, ever-sinful, and ignoble race of man? And if for the sake of the bread of Heaven thousands shall follow Thee, what is to become of the millions and tens of thousands of millions of creatures who will not have the strength to forego the earthly bread for the sake of the heavenly? Or dost Thou care only for the tens of thousands of the great and strong, while the millions, numerous as the sands of the sea, who are weak but love Thee, must exist only for the sake of the great and strong? No, we care for the weak too. They are sinful and rebellious, but in the end they too will become obedient. They will marvel at us and look on us as gods, because we are ready to endure the freedom which they have found so dreadful and to rule over them—so awful it will seem to them to be free But we shall tell them that we are Thy servants and rule them in Thy name. We shall deceive them again, for we will not let Thee come to us again. That deception will be our suffering, for we shall be forced to lie.

" 'This is the significance of the first question in the wilderness, and this is what Thou hast rejected for the sake of that freedom which Thou hast exalted above everything Yet in this question lies hid the great secret of this world Choosing "bread," Thou wouldst have satisfied the universal and everlasting craving of humanity—to find someone to worship So long as man remains free he strives for nothing so incessantly and so painfully as to find someone to worship. But man seeks to worship what is established beyond dispute, so that all men would agree at once to worship it. For these pitiful creatures are concerned not only to find what one or the other can worship, but to find something that all would believe in and worship; what is essential is that all may be *together* in it. This craving for *community* of worship is the chief misery of every man individually and of all humanity from the beginning of time. For the sake of common worship they've slain each other with the sword. They have set up gods and challenged one another, "Put away your gods and come and worship ours, or we will kill you and your gods!" And so it will be to the end of the world, even when gods disappear from the earth; they will fall down before idols just the same. Thou didst know, Thou couldst not but have known, this fundamental secret of human nature, but Thou didst reject the one infallible banner which was offered Thee to make all men bow down to Thee alone—the banner of earthly bread; and Thou hast rejected it for the sake of freedom and the bread of Heaven. Behold what Thou didst further. And all again in the name of freedom! I tell Thee that man is tormented by no greater anxiety than to find someone quickly to whom he can hand over that gift of freedom with

which the ill-fated creature is born. But only one who can appease their conscience can take over their freedom. In bread there was offered Thee an invincible banner; give bread, and man will worship thee, for nothing is more certain than bread. But if someone else gains possession of his conscience—oh! then he will cast away Thy bread and follow after him who has ensnared his conscience. In that Thou wast right. For the secret of man's being is not only to live but to have something to live for. Without a stable conception of the object of life, man would not consent to go on living, and would rather destroy himself than remain on earth, though he had bread in abundance. That is true But what happened? Instead of taking men's freedom from them, Thou didst make it greater than ever! Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil? Nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience, but nothing is a greater cause of suffering. And behold, instead of giving a firm foundation for setting the conscience of man at rest forever, Thou didst choose all that is exceptional, vague, and enigmatic; Thou didst choose what was utterly beyond the strength of men, acting as though Thou didst not love them at all—Thou who didst come to give Thy life for them! Instead of taking possession of men's freedom, Thou didst increase it, and burdened the spiritual kingdom of mankind with its sufferings forever. Thou didst desire man's free love, that he should follow Thee freely, enticed and taken captive by Thee. In place of the rigid ancient law, man must hereafter with free heart decide for himself what is good and what is evil, having only Thy image before him as his guide. But didst Thou not know that he would at last reject even Thy image and Thy truth, if he is weighed down with the fearful burden of free choice? They will cry aloud at last that the truth is not in Thee, for they could not have been left in greater confusion and suffering than Thou hast caused, laying upon them so many cares and unanswerable problems.

"'So that, in truth, Thou didst Thyself lay the foundation for the destruction of Thy kingdom, and no one is more to blame for it. Yet what was offered Thee? There are three powers, three powers alone, able to conquer and to hold captive forever the conscience of these impotent rebels for their happiness—those forces are miracle, mystery, and authority. Thou hast rejected all three and hast set the example for doing so. When the wise and dread spirit set Thee on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Thee, "If Thou wouldst know whether Thou art the Son of God, then cast Thyself down, for it is written: the angels shall hold him up lest he fall and bruise himself, and Thou shalt know then whether Thou art the Son of God and shalt prove then how great is Thy faith in Thy Father." But Thou didst refuse and wouldst not cast Thyself down. Oh, of course, Thou didst proudly and well, like God; but the weak, unruly race of men, are they gods? Oh, Thou didst

know then that in taking one step, in making one movement to cast Thyself down, Thou wouldst be tempting God and have lost all Thy faith in Him, and wouldst have been dashed to pieces against that earth which Thou didst come to save. And the wise spirit that tempted Thee would have rejoiced. But I ask again, are there many like Thee? And couldst Thou believe for one moment that men, too, could face such a temptation? Is the nature of men such, that they can reject miracle, and at the great moments of their life, the moments of their deepest, most agonizing spiritual difficulties, cling only to the free verdict of the heart? Oh, Thou didst know that Thy deed would be recorded in books, would be handed down to remote times and the utmost ends of the earth, and Thou didst hope that man, following Thee, would cling to God and not ask for a miracle. But Thou didst not know that when man rejects miracle he rejects God too; for man seeks not so much God as the miraculous. And as man cannot bear to be without the miraculous, he will create new miracles of his own for himself, and will worship deeds of sorcery and witchcraft, though he might be a hundred times over a rebel, heretic, and infidel. Thou didst not come down from the cross when they shouted to Thee, mocking and reviling Thee, "Come down from the cross and we will believe that Thou art He." Thou didst not come down, for again Thou wouldst not enslave man by a miracle, and didst crave faith given freely, not based on miracle Thou didst crave for free love and not the base raptures of the slave before the might that has overawed him forever. But Thou didst think too highly of men therein, for they are slaves, of course, though rebellious by nature. Look round and judge; fifteen centuries have passed, look upon them. Whom hast Thou raised up to Thyself? I swear, man is weaker and baser by nature than Thou hast believed him! Can he, can he do what Thou didst? By showing him so much respect, Thou didst, as it were, cease to feel for him, for Thou didst ask far too much from him—Thou who hast loved him more than Thyself! Respecting him less, Thou wouldst have asked less of him. That would have been more like love, for his burden would have been lighter. He is weak and vile. What though he is everywhere now rebelling against our power, and proud of his rebellion? It is the pride of a child and a schoolboy. They are little children rioting and barring out the teacher at school But their childish delight will end; it will cost them dear. They will cast down temples and drench the earth with blood. But they will see at last, the foolish children, that, though they are rebels, they are impotent rebels, unable to keep up their own rebellion. Bathed in their foolish tears, they will recognize at last that He who created them rebels must have meant to mock at them. They will say this in despair, and their utterance will be a blasphemy which will make them more unhappy still, for man's nature cannot bear blasphemy, and in the end always avenges it on

itself. And so unrest, confusion, and unhappiness—that is the present lot of man after Thou didst bear so much for their freedom! The great prophet tells in vision and in image, that he saw all those who took part in the first resurrection and that there were of each tribe twelve thousand. But if there were so many of them, they must have been not men but gods. They had borne Thy cross, they had endured scores of years in the barren, hungry wilderness, living upon locusts and roots—and Thou mayest indeed point with pride at those children of freedom, of free love, of free and splendid sacrifice for Thy name But remember that they were only some thousands; and what of the rest? And how are the other weak ones to blame, because they could not endure what the strong have endured? How is the weak soul to blame that it is unable to receive such terrible gifts? Canst Thou have simply come to the elect and for the elect? But if so, it is a mystery and we cannot understand it. And if it is a mystery, we too have a right to preach a mystery, and to teach them that it is not the free judgment of their hearts, not love that matters, but a mystery which they must follow blindly, even against their conscience So we have done. We have corrected Thy work and have founded it upon *miracle, mystery,* and *authority.* And men rejoiced that they were again led like sheep, and that the terrible gift that had brought them such suffering was, at last, lifted from their hearts. Were we right teaching them this? Speak! Did we not love mankind, so meekly acknowledging their feebleness, lovingly lightening their burden, and permitting their weak nature even sin with our sanction? Why hast Thou come now to hinder us? And why dost Thou look silently and searchingly at me with Thy mild eyes? Be angry. I don't want Thy love, for I love Thee not. And what use is it for me to hide anything from Thee? Don't I know to Whom I am speaking? All that I can say is known to Thee already. And is it for me to conceal from Thee our mystery? Perhaps it is Thy will to hear it from my lips Listen, then. We are not working with Thee, but with *him*—that is our mystery. It's long—eight centuries—since we have been on *his* side and not on Thine. Just eight centuries ago, we took from him what Thou didst reject with scorn, that last gift he offered Thee, showing Thee all the kingdoms of the earth We took from him Rome and the sword of Caesar, and proclaimed ourselves sole rulers of the earth, though hitherto we have not been able to complete our work. But whose fault is that? Oh, the work is only beginning, but it has begun. It has long to await completion and the earth has yet much to suffer, but we shall triumph and shall be Caesars, and then we shall plan the universal happiness of man. But Thou mightest have taken even then the sword of Caesar. Why didst Thou reject that last gift? Hadst Thou accepted that last counsel of the mighty spirit, Thou wouldst have accomplished all that man seeks on earth—that is, someone to worship, someone to keep his conscience,

and some means of uniting all in one unanimous and harmonious antheap, for the craving for universal unity is the third and last anguish of men. Mankind as a whole has always striven to organize a universal state. There have been many great nations with great histories, but the more highly they were developed, the more unhappy they were, for they felt more acutely than other people the craving for world-wide union. The great conquerors, Timours and Ghenghis Khans, whirled like hurricanes over the face of the earth, striving to subdue its people, and they too were but the unconscious expression of the same craving for universal unity. Hadst Thou taken the world and Caesar's purple, Thou wouldst have founded the universal state and have given universal peace. For who can rule men if not he who holds their conscience and their bread in his hands? We have taken the sword of Caesar, and in taking it, of course, have rejected Thee and followed *him*. Oh, ages are yet to come of the confusion of free thought, of their science and cannibalism For, having begun to build their Tower of Babel without us, they will end, of course, with cannibalism. But then the beast will crawl to us and lick our feet and spatter them with tears of blood. And we shall sit upon the beast and raise the cup, and on it will be written, "Mystery." But then, and only then, the reign of peace and happiness will come for men. Thou art proud of Thine elect, but Thou hast only the elect, while we give rest to all And besides, how many of those elect, those mighty ones who could become elect, have grown weary waiting for Thee, and have transferred and will transfer the powers of their spirit and the warmth of their heart to the other camp, and end by raising their *free* banner against Thee. Thou didst Thyself lift up that banner. But with us all will be happy and will no more rebel nor destroy one another as under Thy freedom Oh, we shall persuade them that they will only become free when they renounce their freedom to us and submit to us. And shall we be right or shall we be lying? They will be convinced that we are right, for they will remember the horrors of slavery and confusion to which Thy freedom brought them. Freedom, free thought and science, will lead them into such straits and will bring them face to face with such marvels and insoluble mysteries, that some of them, the fierce and rebellious, will destroy themselves; others, rebellious but weak, will destroy one another; while the rest, weak and unhappy, will crawl fawning to our feet and whine to us· "Yes, you were right, you alone possess His mystery, and we come back to you; save us from ourselves!"

"'Receiving bread from us, they will see clearly that we take the bread made by their hands from them, to give it to them, without any miracle. They will see that we do not change the stones to bread, but in truth they will be more thankful for taking it from our hands than for the bread itself! For they will remember only too well that in old

days, without our help, even the bread they made turned to stones in their hands, while since they have come back to us, the very stones have turned to bread in their hands. Too, too well will they know the value of complete submission! And until men know that, they will be unhappy. Who is most to blame for their not knowing it?—speak! Who scattered the flock and sent it astray on unknown paths? But the flock will come together again and will submit once more, and then it will be once for all. Then we shall give them the quiet, humble happiness of weak creatures such as they are by nature. Oh, we shall persuade them at last not to be proud, for Thou didst lift them up and thereby taught them to be proud. We shall show them that they are weak, that they are only pitiful children, but that childlike happiness is the sweetest of all. They will become timid and will look to us and huddle close to us in fear, as chicks to the hen. They will marvel at us and will be awe-stricken before us, and will be proud at our being so powerful and clever that we have been able to subdue such a turbulent flock of thousands of millions. They will tremble impotently before our wrath, their minds will grow fearful, they will be quick to shed tears like women and children, but they will be just as ready at a sign from us to pass to laughter and rejoicing, to happy mirth and childish song. Yes, we shall set them to work, but in their leisure hours we shall make their life like a child's game, with children's songs and innocent dance. Oh, we shall allow them even sin, they are weak and helpless, and they will love us like children because we allow them to sin. We shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for these sins we take upon ourselves. And we shall take it upon ourselves, and they will adore us as their saviors who have taken on themselves their sins before God. And they will have no secrets from us. We shall allow or forbid them to live with their wives and mistresses, to have or not to have children—according to whether they have been obedient or disobedient—and they will submit to us gladly and cheerfully. The most painful secrets of their conscience, all, all they will bring to us, and we shall have an answer for all. And they will be glad to believe our answer, for it will save them from the great anxiety and terrible agony they endure at present in making a free decision for themselves. And all will be happy, all the millions of creatures except the hundred thousand who rule over them. For only we, we who guard the mystery, shall be unhappy. There will be thousands of millions of happy babes, and a hundred thousand sufferers who have taken upon themselves the curse of the knowledge of good and evil. Peacefully they will die, peacefully they will expire in Thy name; and beyond the grave they will find nothing but death. But we shall keep the secret, and for their happiness we shall allure them with the reward of heaven and eternity. Though if there were anything in the other

world, it certainly would not be for such as they. It is prophesied that Thou wilt come again in victory, Thou wilt come with Thy chosen, the proud and strong; but we will say that they have only saved themselves, but we have saved all. We are told that the harlot who sits upon the beast and holds in her hands the *mystery,* shall be put to shame, that the weak will rise up again, and will rend her royal purple and will strip naked her loathsome body. But then I will stand up and point out to Thee the thousand millions of happy children who have known no sin. And we who have taken their sins upon us for their happiness will stand up before Thee and say: "Judge us if Thou canst and darest." Know that I fear Thee not. Know that I too have been in the wilderness, I too have lived on roots and locusts, I too prized the freedom with which Thou hast blessed men, and I too was striving to stand among Thy elect, among the strong and powerful, thirsting "to make up the number." But I awakened and would not serve madness. I turned back and joined the ranks of those *who have corrected Thy work.* I left the proud and went back to the humble, for the happiness of the humble. What I say to Thee will come to pass, and our dominion will be built up. I repeat, tomorrow Thou shalt see that obedient flock who at a sign from me will hasten to heap up the hot cinders about the pile on which I shall burn Thee for coming to hinder us. For if anyone has ever deserved our fires, it is Thou. Tomorrow I shall burn Thee. *Dixi.*'"

Ivan stopped. He was carried away as he talked, and spoke with excitement; when he had finished, he suddenly smiled.

Alyosha had listened in silence; toward the end he was greatly moved and seemed several times on the point of interrupting, but restrained himself Now his words came with a rush

"But... that's absurd!" he cried, flushing. "Your poem is in praise of Jesus, not in blame of Him—as you meant it to be. And who will believe you about freedom? Is that the way to understand it? That's not the idea of it in the Orthodox Church.... That's Rome, and not even the whole of Rome It's false—those are the worst of the Catholics, the Inquisitors, the Jesuits!... And there could not be such a fantastic creature as your Inquisitor. What are these sins of mankind they take on themselves? Who are these keepers of the mystery who have taken some curse upon themselves for the happiness of mankind? When have they been seen? We know the Jesuits, they are spoken ill of, but surely they are not what you describe? They are not that at all, not at all.... They are simply the Romish army for the earthly sovereignty of the world in the future, with the Pontiff of Rome for Emperor—that's their ideal, and there's no sort of mystery or lofty melancholy about it.... It's simple lust of power, of filthy earthly gain, of domination—something like a universal serfdom with them as masters—that's

all they stand for. They don't even believe in God, perhaps. Your suffering Inquisitor is a mere fantasy."

"Stay, stay," laughed Ivan, "how hot you are! A fantasy you say; let it be so! Of course it's a fantasy. But allow me to say. do you really think that the Roman Catholic movement of the last centuries is actually nothing but the lust of power, of filthy earthly gain? Is that Father Paissy's teaching?"

"No, no, on the contrary, Father Païssy did once say something rather the same as you... but of course it's not the same, not a bit the same," Alyosha hastily corrected himself.

"A precious admission, in spite of your 'not a bit the same.' I ask you why your Jesuits and Inquisitors have united simply for vile material gain Why can there not be among them one martyr oppressed by great sorrow and loving humanity? You see, only suppose that there was one such man among all those who desire nothing but filthy material gain—if there's only one like my old Inquisitor, who had himself eaten roots in the desert and made frenzied efforts to subdue his flesh to make himself free and perfect. But yet all his life he loved humanity, and suddenly his eyes were opened, and he saw that it is no great moral blessedness to attain perfection and freedom, if at the same time one gains the conviction that millions of God's creatures have been created as a mockery, that they will never be capable of using their freedom, that these poor rebels can never turn into giants to complete the Tower, that it was not for such geese that the great idealist dreamed his dream of harmony Seeing all that, he turned back and joined—the clever people. Surely that could have happened?"

"Joined whom, what clever people?" cried Alyosha, completely carried away "They have no such great cleverness and no mysteries and secrets.... Perhaps nothing but atheism, that's all their secret. Your Inquisitor does not believe in God, that's his secret!"

"What if it is so! At last you have guessed it It's perfectly true, it's true that that's the whole secret; but isn't that suffering, at least for a man like that, who has wasted his whole life in the desert and yet could not shake off his incurable love of humanity? In his old age he reached the clear conviction that nothing but the advice of the great dread spirit could build up any tolerable sort of life for the feeble, unruly, 'incomplete, empirical creatures created in jest.' And so, convinced of this, he sees that he must follow the counsel of the wise spirit, the dread spirit of death and destruction, and therefore accept lying and deception, and lead men consciously to death and destruction, and yet deceive them all the way so that they may not notice where they are being led, that the poor blind creatures may at least on the way think themselves happy. And note, the deception is in the name of Him in Whose ideal the old man had so fervently believed all his life long. Is not that tragic? And if only one such stood at the head of the whole

army 'filled with the lust of power only for the sake of filthy gain'—would not one such be enough to make a tragedy? More than that, one such standing at the head is enough to create the actual leading idea of the Roman Church with all its armies and Jesuits, its highest idea. I tell you frankly that I firmly believe that there has always been such a man among those who stood at the head of the movement. Who knows, there may have been some such even among the Roman Popes. Who knows, perhaps the spirit of that accursed old man who loves mankind so obstinately in his own way, is to be found even now in a whole multitude of such old men, existing not by chance but by agreement, as a secret league formed long ago for the guarding of the mystery, to guard it from the weak and the unhappy, so as to make them happy. No doubt it is so, and so it must be indeed. I fancy that even among the Masons there's something of the same mystery at the bottom, and that that's why the Catholics so detest the Masons as their rivals breaking up the unity of the idea, while it is so essential that there should be one flock and one shepherd.... But from the way I defend my idea I might be an author impatient of your criticism. Enough of it."

"You are perhaps a Mason yourself!" broke suddenly from Alyosha "You don't believe in God," he added, speaking this time very sorrowfully. He fancied besides that his brother was looking at him ironically. "How does your poem end?" he asked, suddenly looking down. "Or was it the end?"

"I meant to end it like this: When the Inquisitor ceased speaking, he waited some time for his Prisoner to answer him. His silence weighed down upon him. He saw that the Prisoner had listened intently all the time, looking gently in his face and evidently not wishing to reply. The old man longed for him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But He suddenly approached the old man in silence and softly kissed him on his bloodless aged lips. That was all his answer. The old man shuddered. His lips moved. He went to the door, opened it, and said to Him: 'Go, and come no more...come not at all, never, never!' And he let Him out into the dark alleys of the town. The Prisoner went away."

"And the old man?"

"The kiss glows in his heart, but the old man adheres to his idea."

"And you with him, you too?" cried Alyosha, mournfully. Ivan laughed.

"Why, it's all nonsense, Alyosha. It's only a senseless poem of a senseless student, who could never write two lines of verse. Why do you take it so seriously? Surely you don't suppose I am going straight off to the Jesuits, to join the men who are correcting His work? Good Lord, it's no business of mine. I told you, all I want is to live on to thirty, and then...dash the cup to the ground!"

"But the little sticky leaves, and the precious tombs, and the blue sky, and the woman you love! How will you live, how will you love them?" Alyosha cried sorrowfully. "With such a hell in your heart and your head, how can you? No, that's just what you are going away for, to join them... if not, you will kill yourself, you can't endure it!"

"There is a strength to endure everything," Ivan said with a cold smile.

"What strength?"

"The strength of the Karamazovs—the strength of the Karamazov baseness"

"To sink into debauchery, to stifle your soul with corruption, yes?"

"Possibly even that... only perhaps till I am thirty I shall escape it, and then—"

"How will you escape it? By what will you escape it? That's impossible with your ideas."

"In the Karamazov way, again."

"'Everything is lawful,' you mean? Everything is lawful, is that it?"

Ivan scowled, and all at once turned strangely pale.

"Ah, you've caught up yesterday's phrase, which so offended Miusov—and which Dmitry pounced upon so naively and paraphrased!" he smiled queerly. "Yes, if you like, 'everything is lawful,' since the word has been said. I won't deny it. And Mitya's version isn't bad."

Alyosha looked at him in silence.

"I thought that, going away from here, I have you at least," Ivan said suddenly, with unexpected feeling; "but now I see that there is no place for me even in your heart, my dear hermit. The formula 'all is lawful' I won't renounce—will you renounce me for that, yes?"

Alyosha got up, went to him, and softly kissed him on the lips.

"That's plagiarism," cried Ivan, highly delighted. "You stole that from my poem. Thank you, though. Get up, Alyosha, it's time we were going, both of us"

They went out, but stopped when they reached the entrance of the restaurant.

"Listen, Alyosha," Ivan began in a resolute voice, "if I am really able to care for the sticky little leaves, I shall only love them, remembering you. It's enough for me that you are somewhere here, and I shan't lose my desire for life yet. Is that enough for you? Take it is a declaration of love if you like. And now you go to the right and I to the left. And it's enough, do you hear, enough. I mean even if I don't go away tomorrow (I think I certainly shall go) and we meet again, don't say a word more on these subjects. I beg that particularly. And about Dmitry too, I ask you specially, never speak to me again." He added, with sudden irritation, "it's all exhausted, it has all been said over and over again, hasn't it? And I'll make you one promise in return

for it. When, at thirty, I want to 'dash the cup to the ground,' wherever I may be I'll come to have one more talk with you, even though it were from America, you may be sure of that. I'll come on purpose. It will be very interesting to have a look at you, to see what you'll be by that time. It's rather a solemn promise, you see. And we really may be parting for seven years or ten. Come, go now to your Pater Seraphicus, he is dying. If he dies without you, you will be angry with me for having kept you. Good-by, kiss me once more; that's right, now go."

Ivan turned suddenly and went his way without looking back. It was just as Dmitry had left Alyosha the day before, though the parting had been very different. The strange resemblance flashed like an arrow through Alyosha's mind in the distress and dejection of that moment. He waited a little, looking after his brother. He suddenly noticed that Ivan swayed as he walked and that his right shoulder looked lower than his left. He had never noticed it before. But all at once he turned too, and almost ran to the monastery. It was nearly dark, and he felt almost frightened; something new was growing up in him for which he could not account. The wind had risen again as on the previous evening, and the ancient pines murmured gloomily about him when he entered the hermitage copse. He almost ran. "Pater Seraphicus—he got that name from somewhere—where from?" Alyosha wondered. "Ivan, poor Ivan, and when shall I see you again?.. Here is the hermitage. Yes, yes, that he is, Pater Seraphicus, he will save me—from him and forever!"

Several times afterwards he wondered how he could on leaving Ivan so completely forget his brother Dmitry, though he had that morning, only a few hours before, so firmly resolved to find him and not to give up doing so, even should he be unable to return to the monastery that night.

Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin

THE GOLOVLYOV FAMILY

When Arnold Bennett was asked to name the world's twelve greatest novels, he gave about nine or ten Russian titles, including Saltykov-Shchedrin's Golovlyov Family. *It is a Russian classic, and the best creation in it, on a universal scale, is Porphyry Golovlyov, nicknamed Iudushka—Little Judas. You'd have to go far to find a greedier person, one who lets nothing stand in the way of aggrandizement. In the powerful picture reproduced below we see Little Judas at the deathbed of his brother whose property he covets and whom he seeks to speed on his way before he can make a will. It is an unforgettable picture*

LITTLE JUDAS SPEEDS HIS BROTHER ON THE WAY

No sooner had Arina Petrovna come downstairs than a coach-and-four appeared on the hill by the Dubrovino church. Porphyry Golovlyov was solemnly sitting in the back seat with his hat off, crossing himself at the church; opposite him sat his two sons Volodenka and Petenka. Arina Petrovna's heart sank. "The Fox must have scented a carcase," she thought. The young ladies, too, felt alarmed, and clung helplessly to their grandmother. There was a commotion in the house that had only a minute before been so quiet: doors banged, people ran to and fro, there were shouts of "The master is coming!" "The master is coming!" and the whole population of the place rushed out onto the front steps. Some were crossing themselves, others simply stood in an expectant attitude; everyone apparently was aware that what had so far been going on at Dubrovino was merely temporary, but that now they were in for the real thing, with a real master at the head. Many of the old people, former house serfs, had been receiving a monthly allowance of provisions; many fed their cows on the "old" master's hay, had their own kitchen gardens, and altogether had an easy time of it; so that, naturally, all were anxious to know whether the "new" master would leave things as they were or introduce his own Golovlyovo ways.

Iudushka had meanwhile driven up to the house, and from the greeting accorded to him concluded that his brother's end was approaching rapidly. In leisurely fashion he stepped out of the carriage, waved away the servants who had rushed to kiss his hand, folded his hands de-

voutly, and slowly walked up the steps whispering a prayer. His face expressed both sorrow and an unswerving submission to destiny. As a man he sorrowed—as a Christian he did not dare to repine. He was praying for grace but, above all, hoping for the best and bowing before the will of Providence. His sons walked behind him, side by side. Volodenka was mimicking his father, folding his hands, rolling his eyes and moving his lips; Petenka was thoroughly enjoying his brother's performance. A crowd of servants followed them in silence.

Iudushka kissed his mamma's hand, then her lips, then her hand again, patted the "dear friend" on the waist, and said, sadly shaking his head:

"You are despondent, I see! It's wrong, dear! Oh, it's very wrong! You should ask yourself, 'And what would God say to that?' Why, He would say, 'Here I arrange everything for the best in My wisdom, and she repines!' Ah, mamma, mamma!"

Then he kissed both his nieces, and with the same bewitching familiarity in his voice said to them:

"You in tears too, grasshoppers! Now, I will have none of this! Smile at once, if you please, and that's the end of it!"

And he stamped, or rather pretended to stamp, while letting them see it was only a gracious jest.

"Look at me," he went on. "As a brother—I am grieved. More than once, in fact, I may have wept. I am grieving over my brother, grieving deeply....I shed tears, but then I think: 'And what about God? Doesn't God know better than we do?' One considers this and feels cheered. That's what everyone ought to do. You, mamma, and you, dear nieces, and everyone...everyone." He added, turning to the servants, "Look at me. See how well I'm bearing up!"

And with the same bewitching playfulness he showed how he was bearing up; that is, he drew himself up and took a step forward, puffing out his chest. Everyone smiled, but rather sourly, as though saying to himself, "The spider has begun on his web!"

Having finished the performance in the hall, Iudushka passed to the drawing room and kissed his mother's hand again

"So that's how it is, dear friend mamma!" he said, settling down on the sofa. "Here's my brother Pavel now..."

"Yes, Pavel too," Arina Petrovna echoed quietly.

"Yes, yes, yes It seems much too soon, much too soon. You know, mamma, though I try to keep up my courage, in my heart I too...grieve for my brother very, very much He has always disliked me, I know. Who knows, perhaps that's why God is punishing him."

"You might forget it at a moment like this. You shouldn't think of your old quarrels now...."

"I forgot them long ago, mamma! I merely mentioned, by the way, that Pavel never did care for me—I don't know why. I tried all I

could. I did my best to get round him. 'Brother darling,' I called him, but it wasn't a bit of good. He simply wouldn't let me come near him! And, all unseen to us, God has judged it best to shorten his days."

"I tell you, you musn't think of the past. The man is at his last gasp."

"Yes, mamma, death is a great mystery. You know not the day or the hour—that's the kind of mystery it is. Here he'd been making all sorts of plans; he thought he was so exalted there was no reaching up to him—and all of a sudden God contraverted all his ideas in one moment. He might be only too glad now to cover up his sins—but no, they are all written down in the Book of Life. And what is written in that book is not easily scratched out, mamma!"

"But you may be sure repentance is accepted."

"I hope so, I sincerely hope so. My brother never cared for me, but I wish him well. I wish well to everyone. To those who hate me and injure me—to all, in fact. He was unfair to me, and so God sent him this illness. It was God's doing, not mine. And does he suffer much, mamma?"

"No, not so very....The doctor has given us hope, in fact," Arina Petrovna lied.

"There, that's splendid now! Don't you grieve, dear mamma, he may get over it yet. Here we are sorrowing for him and repining against the Creator, and perhaps he is sitting up in bed quietly and thanking God for his recovery."

Iudushka was so pleased with the idea that he positively simpered

"I have come to stay with you for a few days, mamma," he went on, as though announcing a pleasant surprise. "I have to, you know.... It's a family matter. Anything may happen, and, after all, as a brother I can comfort him and give advice and make arrangements. You'll allow me, won't you?"

"It's not for me to give permissions—I too am only a guest here."

"I'll tell you what then, dear. As it's Friday today, will you order a Lenten dinner for me, if you would be so kind? Say, a little salt fish and a few mushrooms and a bit of cabbage. I don't want much, you know And meanwhile I'll do my duty as a brother and go upstairs to the invalid. Who knows, I may succeed. I may do something for his soul if not for his body. And it seems to me in his condition the soul is of more importance. The body can be mended with tonics and compresses, mamma, but the soul needs a more serious remedy."

Arina Petrovna did not object. The thought that "the end" was inevitable took possession of her so completely that she watched in a kind of stupefaction all that was happening around her. She saw Iudushka get up from the sofa and shuffle along, clearing his throat and bending his back. (He liked to pretend to be an invalid on occasion; he fancied he looked more venerable.) She understood that his sudden appearance upstairs was bound to upset the sick man and perhaps hasten his

death, but she was overcome with such weariness after the emotions of the day that she felt as though she were in a dream.

While all this was going on Pavel Vladimiritch was in a state of indescribable agitation. He lay quite alone upstairs and heard some unusual commotion in the house. There was something mysterious about the banging of doors and the footsteps in the passage. He called, shouting at the top of his voice for several minutes, but, seeing that shouts were useless, he mustered all his strength and, sitting up in bed, listened intently. The running about and loud conversation of many voices were followed by a deadly stillness. Something unknown and terrible seemed to close in upon him the daylight hardly penetrated through the window curtains, and the sanctuary lamp burning before the ikon in the corner made the dusk that filled the room appear darker and more dense. Pavel fixed his gaze on that mysterious corner as though something in the depths of it had struck him for the first time The ikon in its gilded setting lit up by the direct rays of the lamp stood out of the darkness with a startling vividness like some living thing; a circle of light flickered on the ceiling, bright one instant and faint the next, as the lamp flared up or burned low. Everything below was in semi-darkness and shadows flitted across it. On the wall next to the lighted corner hung a dressing gown that seemed to move as the patches of light and shadow passed over it. Pavel Vladimiritch gazed and gazed at it, and it suddenly seemed to him that everything was astir in that corner. Solitude, helplessness, deadly stillness, and shadows swarming in the midst of it! He fancied that those shadows were gliding, gliding toward him.... In indescribable terror he stared, open-eyed and open-mouthed, at the mysterious corner; he could not scream and only moaned. His hoarse, spasmodic groans sounded like a bark. He did not hear the creaking of the stairs nor the cautious, shuffling footsteps in the room next to his—and suddenly Iudushka's hated figure appeared by his bedside He imagined that it had come out of there, out of the darkness stirring so mysteriously before his eyes, that there were more shadows there... endless shadows coming toward him

"What have you come for? Where from? Who let you in?" he cried, sinking helplessly on to his pillow.

Iudushka was standing at his bedside, looking intently at him and sorrowfully shaking his head.

"Are you in great pain?" he asked, in a voice as unctuous as he was able to make it.

Pavel Vladimiritch said nothing, and stared at him senselessly, as though trying to understand. Iudushka meanwhile went up to the ikon, knelt down feelingly, bowed three times to the ground, and, getting up, came to the bedside once more

"Well, brother, get up God has sent us blessings!" he said in such a joyful voice, settling down in the arm chair, that one might think he had the "blessings" in his pocket.

Pavel Vladimiritch understood at last that this was no shadow but the bloodsucker in the flesh, and he seemed to shrink together suddenly, as though in a shivering fit Iudushka's eyes had a bright, brotherly expression, but the sick man knew very well that there was a snare in them which would clutch him by the throat in a minute.

"Ah, brother, you don't look pretty, you know!" Iudushka went on with his brotherly jokes. "Come, try and take yourself in hand! See if you can't get up and run! Trit-trot, trit-trot—let mamma see what a fine fellow you are! Make a good show!"

"Go away, you bloodsucker!" the sick man cried desperately.

"A-ah, brother, brother! I have come to you with comfort and affection, and you...what a word you used. Oh, how very wrong! I wonder you could bring yourself to say such a thing to your own brother. It's a shame, my dear, a real shame. Wait a bit, I'll straighten your pillow for you." Iudushka got up and dug his finger into the pillow. "That's right," he went on, "that's splendid now. You can lie as snug as you please—no need to straighten it for the next twenty-four hours."

"Go away...you."

"Ah, how illness has spoiled you! Your temper has grown quite sour 'Go away,' you keep on saying, but how can I go? If you want a drink, I am here to give it you. The ikon lamp there isn't burning properly, I'll put it right and add a nice little drop of oil to it. You'll lie and I'll sit by you in peace and quiet. We'll never notice the time pass."

"Go away, you bloodsucker!"

"Here you are abusing me, but I will pray for you I know that it isn't you who are saying this but your illness I am used to forgiving people, my dear boy. I forgive everyone. Today, for instance, as I was coming to you, I met a peasant in the road, and he said something Well, Christ be with him! He defiled his own tongue, that's all. And I...I wasn't in the least angry with him. Why, I actually made the sign of the cross over him—really!"

"I suppose you had robbed...that peasant?"

"Who? I? No, my friend, I don't rob people. Highwaymen do that, but I always adhere to the law. I caught his horse in my meadow, and so I said: 'Come to the magistrate, my dear man. If the magistrate says you may graze your horses on other people's meadows, so be it. But if he says you mustn't, there is nothing for it, you have to pay a fine.' I always adhere to the law, my dear boy, always."

"You Judas...you ruined your mother."

"You may be angry if you like, but I will say again that you are not

talking sensibly. And if I weren't a Christian I might... bring it up against you."

"You did ruin her... you took every penny from her."

"Stop now, do. I will pray for you; that may calm you."

Iudushka controlled himself, but he was so stung by the dying man's abuse that his lips were white and twitching. Hypocrisy was, however, so much a part of his nature that he simply could not stop acting the part he had chosen. With the last words he actually did kneel down, and spent a quarter of an hour raising his arms to heaven and whispering. Having done this he returned to the dying man's side, with a calm, almost bright expression on his face.

"You know, brother, I have come to talk to you of a serious matter," he said, settling down in the arm chair. "Here you are abusing me, but I am thinking of your soul. Tell me, please, when did you last partake of the Holy Sacrament?"

"Good heavens, this is too awful.... Take him away. Ulita! Agashka! Who is there?" the invalid moaned.

"There, there, calm yourself, my dear. I know you don't like talking of it. Yes, brother, you have always been a bad Christian, and you remain one to this day. But, oh, what a good thing it would be to think of your soul at a moment like this! Our soul, you know... ah, how careful one must be about it, my friend! You know what the Church prescribes? Bring thanksgivings and supplications, it says .. And another thing, we pray for a Christian end to our life, painless, peaceful, and unashamed. That's what it ought to be, my dear. You should send for the priest, and with sincere penitence.... Very well, very well, I won't. But it would be a good thing, you know."

Pavel Vladimiritch was purple in the face, and almost choking; if at that moment he could have smashed his head he would certainly have done so.

"About the estate too. Perhaps you have made some arrangement?" Iudushka continued. "It's a dear little estate you have here, there's no gainsaying it. The land is even better than at Golovlyovo, the soil is more sandy. And there's your capital, too. Of course I know nothing about it I merely know that you let your peasants redeem their land, but I have never been interested to inquire about the details. Today, for instance, I was saying to myself as I drove here: 'I expect my brother Pavel has some capital.' But if he has, I thought, he is sure to have made some arrangement about it."

The sick man turned away, sighing deeply.

"You haven't? Well, that's all the better, my friend. Let the law decide—it's fairer so. The property won't go to strangers in any case, but to your own relatives. Take me now· my health is as frail as can be I have one foot in the grave, and yet I think, why should I make a will if the law can settle it all for me? And what a good thing that is,

my dear! There can be no quarrels or envy or intrigues—it's the law."

It was terrible. Pavel Vladimiritch fancied he had been buried alive and lay fettered by lethargy, unable to stir a limb, while he listened to the bloodsucker jeering at his corpse.

"Go away, for Christ's sake, go!" he began imploring his tormentor at last.

"There, there, calm yourself, I'll go. I know you dislike me.... It's a shame, my friend, a very great shame, to dislike your own brother. But I am fond of you. I always say to my children, 'Though my brother Pavel has wronged me, I love him all the same.' So, then, you haven't made a will? Well, that's excellent, my friend. But sometimes even in one's lifetime the capital may be filched away, especially if one lives by oneself, with no relatives. Well, I'll see to it. Yes? What? I've bored you? Very well, so be it, I'll go. Let me just say a prayer."

He stood up, folded his hands, and whispered hurriedly to himself.

"Good-by, dear, don't worry. Have a nice little sleep, and perhaps, God willing, you'll be better. And meanwhile I'll have a chat with mamma, and maybe we'll think of something I have asked them to cook a Lenten dinner for me, brother.... A bit of salt fish, a few mushrooms, a bit of cabbage.... You must excuse me. What is it? Am I boring you again? Ah, brother, brother! Very well, very well, I am going The chief thing, my dear, is not to worry, not to excite yourself. Sleep peacefully. *Hrr... hrr.*"... He jokingly pretended to snore, deciding to go away at last

"Bloodsucker!" The shriek that followed him was so piercing that it made even Iudushka feel hot.

While Porphyry Vladimiritch was having his chat upstairs, Arina Petrovna collected the young people round her downstairs (partly with the object of finding something out from them) and engaged them in conversation.

"Well, and how are you getting on?" She turned to her eldest grandson Petenka.

"Fairly well, grandmamma I shall get my commission next year"

"Will you? You promised it last year, and the year before. I can't make it out. Are your examinations so hard, or what?"

"He failed at the last exams in 'First Principles,' grandmamma. The priest asked him, 'What is God?' and he said, 'God is a spirit—and a spirit ..and to the Holy Spirit.'"

"You poor boy! However could you? Why, even my orphans here know it."

"I should think so! God is a spirit, invisible..." Anninka hastened to show off her knowledge.

"No one has seen Him anywhere," Lubinka interrupted her.

"All merciful, omniscent, omnipotent, omnipresent," Anninka continued.

"Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit; or whither shall I go then from Thy presence: if I climb up into heaven Thou art there; if I go down to hell Thou art there also."

"You too should have answered like this, and you'd have had your epaulettes by now. And what do you think of doing, Volodya?"

Volodya turned crimson and said nothing.

"You are another such, I see! Ah, children, children! You look bright enough, and yet learning seems too much for you! And it isn't as though your father spoiled you.... How does he treat you now?"

"Just the same, grandmamma."

"Does he thrash you? I heard he had given that up."

"Not so much, but still... the worst of it is, he pesters one so...."

"I don't understand that. How can one's father pester one?"

"He does, grandmamma, very much so. We mayn't go out without permission, mayn't take anything.... Beastly!"

"Well, you should ask permission—it wouldn't hurt you to do it!"

"Not we! If one says anything to him there is simply no end to it. 'Wait and see, more haste less speed,' and all the rest of it.... His talk is so boring, grandmamma!"

"You know, grandmamma, he listens behind the door to what we are saying! The other day Petenka caught him at it."

"You naughty boy! And what did he do?"

"Nothing. I said to him, 'It's not the thing to listen behind doors, papa. One might easily smash your nose, you know,' and he merely said, 'There, there! There's no harm in it. I am like a thief in the night, my boy!'"

"The other day he picked up an apple in the orchard, grandmamma, and put it in his cupboard—and I went and ate it. There was such a to-do! He searched for it all over the place, cross-questioned all the servants...."

"Has he grown so stingy, or what?"

"No, it isn't that he is stingy but... he is always after such trifles. He hides away bits of paper, looks for windfalls."

"He says Mass in his study every morning, and afterwards gives us a bit of the church bread... stale as stale could be! But we played a trick on him one day: we found out where he keeps the church bread, cut a hole in the bottom, scraped out the soft part, and put in a lump of butter!"

"Well, I must say you are a pair of daredevils!"

"No, just imagine his surprise the next day! Church bread with butter in it!"

"I expect you caught it badly?"

"Oh, no.... He merely kept spitting all day and saying, as though to himself, 'The blackguards!' But of course we pretended that it wasn't meant for us. You know, grandmamma, he is afraid of you!"

"Why should he be afraid of me? I am not a scarecrow!"

"He is afraid—that's true. He thinks you will curse him. He is simply terrified of those curses."

Arina Petrovna pondered. "And what if I really do...curse him?" came into her mind. "Suppose I say suddenly: 'I curse you!' " This idea was replaced by one of more practical importance: "What is Iudushka doing? What tricks is he playing upstairs? I expect he is simply turning himself inside out!" At last a happy thought struck her:

"Volodya, darling," she said, "you are light on your feet; how would it be for you to walk up quietly and listen to what's going on *there?*"

"With pleasure, grandmamma"

Volodya tiptoed to the door and disappeared behind it.

"How is it you thought of paying us a visit today?" Arina Petrovna began, questioning Petenka.

"We had long been meaning to come, grandmamma, and this morning Ulita sent a messenger to say that the doctor had been and that uncle is sure to die today or tomorrow."

"Well, and have you had any conversation...about the legacy?"

"We talk of nothing but legacies, grandmamma! He keeps telling us of how things were in the old days before grandpapa's time.... He actually remembers Goryushkino! 'If Auntie Varvara Mihailovna had had no children, Goryushkino would have been ours!' he says, 'and goodness only knows by whom she had those children, but we should not judge others. We see a mote in our neighbor's eye and don't notice a beam in our own.... That's how it is,' he says."

"What a man! Auntie was married—even if there had been anything, the husband made it right!"

"But he does say it, grandmamma. He repeats it every time we drive past Goryushkino. 'My grandmother Natalya Vladimirovna came from Goryushkino,' he says. 'It ought by all rights to have remained in the Golovlyov family, but papa went and gave it as dowry to his sister. What melons used to grow at Goryushkino!' he says. 'Twenty pounds in weight—that's the kind of melons they were.' "

"Twenty pounds indeed! I have never heard of such. And what are his plans about Dubrovino?"

"Oh, the same sort of thing—melons and pumpkins...such silly things, you know. Though the last few days he kept asking: 'And how much capital do you think, children, my brother Pavel has?' He reckoned it all out long ago, grandmamma...what the redemption money came to, and when the estate was mortgaged, and how much has been paid off.... We saw the paper on which he made all these calculations, grandmamma, and we carried it off! We nearly drove him crazy with that paper.... He put it in his table, and we moved it to the cupboard, he locked it up in the cupboard, and we found a key to match and put the paper inside one of the church rolls.... He went

to the bathhouse one day and suddenly saw that paper on the shelf there!"

"You have a gay time of it!"

Volodenka returned; all turned their eyes to him.

"One can't hear properly," he said in a whisper. "I only heard my father saying, 'Painless, peaceful, unashamed,' and uncle replying, 'Go out, you bloodsucker.'"

"And about the will.... Have you heard anything?"

"I think they did speak of it, but I couldn't catch it.... Father closed the door very tight, grandmamma. I could only hear his buzzing. And then uncle shouted suddenly, 'Go away!' So I rushed off."

"I wish he'd give it to the orphans," Arina Petrovna pondered dejectedly.

"If my father gets it he won't give anything to anybody, grandmamma!" Petenka assured her. "I think he won't leave us a penny, either!"

"Well, he can't carry it into the grave with him, can he?"

"No, but he will think of some way. It's not for nothing he was talking to the priest the other day. He asked him, 'Suppose one were to build the Tower of Babel, Father—how much would it cost?'"

"Oh, that's nothing ... He may have just asked out of curiosity...."

"No, grandmamma, he really has some sort of scheme If it's not the Tower of Babel, he'll leave his money to the Athos Monastery, but certainly not to us!"

"And will father have much when uncle dies?" Volodya inquired.

"God alone knows who will die first."

"No, grandmamma, father is quite certain. When we drove past the Dubrovino boundary this morning he took off his cap, crossed himself, and said, 'Thank God, it's going to be our own land once more!'"

"He has settled it already, grandmamma He saw a copse and said, 'A lovely copse, that, if properly looked after!' Then he saw the meadow, and said, 'A fine meadow! Just see how many haystacks there are! There used to be sheds and stables here.'"

"Yes, yes.... The copse and the meadow—all shall be yours, my dears." Arina Petrovna sighed. "Goodness me, I believe the stairs are creaking."

"Hush, hush, grandmamma. That's he... like a thief in the night ... eavesdropping."

There was a silence, but it proved to be a false alarm

Arina Petrovna sighed and whispered to herself, "Ah, children, children." The young men were staring at the girls, as though ready to swallow them; the girls said nothing, they were feeling envious.

"Have you seen Mademoiselle Lotare, cousin?" Petenka asked.

Anninka and Lubinka glanced at each other as though asking whether this was a question on history or geography.

"In the *Belle Hélène*... she acts the part of Helen."

"Oh, yes... Helen... and Paris, isn't it? 'Being young and handsome, he inflamed the goddesses' hearts?' We know, we know," Lubinka cried joyfully.

"That's it, that's it. The way she does that *cas-ca-ader,* ca-as-cader... wonderful!"

"The doctor this morning kept singing, 'Headlong, headlong, headlong he will fly.'"

"Headlong—that was Lyadova's song.... She was a most charming creature. When she died a crowd of two thousand followed her coffin. ...People thought there would be a revolution."

"Why, I believe you are talking of theaters," Arina Petrovna interposed. "Theaters aren't for them, my dear, the convent is their place."

"You are bent on burying us in a convent, grandmamma," Anninka complained.

"You come to Petersburg instead of the convent, cousin. We'll show you everything there."

"They must think pious thoughts, my dear, not be hankering after pleasures," Arina Petrovna went on sententiously.

"We'll take them for a drive to the Sergiev Monastery, grandmamma —that will be pious as well."

The girls' eyes positively glowed, and the tips of their noses turned red when they heard this.

"They say the singing at Sergiev is simply beautiful," Anninka exclaimed.

"You may be sure of that, cousin The way they sing 'Let us put away all earthly care'—even my father couldn't do it so well. And afterwards we'd drive you down the Podyacheskaya Street."

"We'd teach you everything, everything, cousin. There are many young ladies like you in Petersburg, you know. You can hear their heels patter-patter down the streets."

"I dare say you could teach them that," Arina Petrovna interrupted. "Leave them alone, for Christ's sake... you teachers! The idea of it! A nice sort of science you'd teach them! When Pavel dies I will go with them to the Hotkov Convent... we'll live very nicely there."

"You are still at your ribald talk?" a voice said suddenly at the door.

During the conversation nobody heard Iudushka stealing up like a thief in the night. His head was bowed, his face pale and tearstained, his hands were folded on his chest, and his lips were whispering. He looked round for an ikon, and, finding it, lifted up his heart for a few moments.

"Oh, what a state he is in! Dreadful!" he exclaimed at last, embracing "dear friend mamma."

"So bad as all that?"

"Very, very bad, darling.... And do you remember what a fine-looking fellow he used to be?"

"I can't say that I do.... He never looked particularly fine."

"Oh, don't say that, mamma! He always looked splendid.... I remember so well his leaving the cadet corps—broad-shouldered, well set up, the picture of health! Yes, yes... that's how it is, dear friend mamma! We are all in God's hands. Today we are well and strong and want to live, to have a gay time and good things to eat, and tomorrow..."

He made a gesture of despair and shed a tear.

"Did he talk to you, at any rate?"

"Very little, dear; he only said 'Good-by, brother.' And you know, he feels it, mamma He feels that he is in a bad way"

"I should think anyone would feel it with a splitting cough like his."

"No, mamma, I don't mean that. I was thinking about prophetic insight; they say some people have it; when a man is going to die he feels it beforehand But sinners, I understand, are denied this comfort"

"Oh, indeed! Has he said anything about the will?"

"No, mamma. He was going to say something but I stopped him No, I said, don't let us speak of it. I shall be pleased with anything you like to leave me in your kindness—and if you don't leave me anything I shall pray for your soul just the same But he does so want to live, mamma He clings to life—how he clings to it!"

"So does everybody."

"No, mamma, speaking of myself, for instance—if it should please the Lord to call me to Him, I am ready to go any moment"

"It's all very well if you are called to God, but what if it's to Satan?"

The conversation went on in this style till dinner, during dinner, and after dinner. Arina Petrovna could hardly sit still with impatience While Iudushka was holding forth, the thought came more and more often into her mind, "And what if I really... curse him?" But Iudushka had no suspicion of the storm raging in his mother's heart. He looked perfectly serene and went on torturing dear friend mamma with his hopeless twaddle.

"I'll curse him I will. I will." Arina Petrovna was saying to herself more and more decisively.

There was a smell of incense in the rooms, melancholy singing resounded through the house; the doors were wide open, those who wished to take leave of the dead man came and went While Pavel Vladimiritch lived, none took any notice of him, when he died, everyone felt sorry for him. They recalled that "he never wronged anyone," "never said a rude word to anybody," "never looked askance at one." These facts, that before had seemed merely negative, suddenly appeared as something positive; and from the desultory, idle talk usual at funerals, one could form a picture of a "good master." Many seemed

to repent of something, confessing that they had on occasion taken advantage of the dead man's simplicity—but, then, who could have known that that simplicity would come to so early an end? While it was there to exploit they thought it would last forever, and all of a sudden—But were they given another chance, they would have fleeced him just the same: "Don't spare him, lads! No need to mind a fool!" One peasant brought Iudushka three roubles and said: "It's my debt to Pavel Vladimiritch. There was no note of hand—but here's the money."

Iudushka took it, praised the peasant, and said that he would give those three roubles toward the oil for an "everburning" sanctuary lamp.

"You will be able to see it, my friend, and so will everyone, and the dead man's soul will rejoice. And perhaps he will be able to do something for you there with his prayers. You may not be expecting anything—and suddenly God will send you luck."

Very likely comparison played a certain part in the people's verdict on the dead man's character. Iudushka was not liked. One could get round him, of course, but he was fussy over silly trifles and always pestering people. Few peasants ventured to farm his land, for if they plowed or mowed an inch more ground than was legally theirs, he immediately went to law He ruined many in this way, with no profit to himself (his pettifogging habits were so well known that the court refused his claims almost without going into the case), and the litigation meant expense and loss of time to the peasants. "Buy a neighbor rather than a house," says the proverb—and everyone knew what kind of neighbor the master of Golovlyovo was It was little comfort that the magistrate decided in one's favor. Iudushka worried one to death with his devilish casuistry. And since spite combined with hypocrisy (and it was not even spite but rather a moral deadness) always inspires a kind of superstitious fear, the new neighbors—to whom Iudushka always suavely referred as "dear neighbors"—timorously bowed down to the waist as they walked past the bloodsucker, who stood by the coffin dressed in black, with his hands folded in prayer and his eyes raised to heaven.

While the dead man was in the house, the whole household walked about on tiptoe, shook their heads, whispered, and kept peeping into the dining room, where the coffin stood on the table. Iudushka pretended to be at his last gasp, shuffled along the corridor, came in to have a look at the dear dead, shed a tear, straightened the pall, and whispered with the Police Superintendent, who was making the inventory and sealing up chests and cupboards. Petenka and Volodenka were busy round the coffin, putting up candles and lighting them, holding the censer, etc. Anninka and Lubinka wept, and through their tears seconded the choristers in high-pitched little voices during the requiems Women servants in black calico dresses wiped with their aprons their noses, red with crying.

As soon as Pavel Vladimiritch had passed away, Arina Petrovna withdrew into her room and shut herself up there. She had no time for tears because she felt that she had to decide at once what she was to do. She had no intention of staying at Dubrovino—certainly not. Consequently the only thing that remained to her was to go to Pogorelka, the orphans' little estate—the "piece" she had once chucked to her daughter Anna Vladimirovna.

Having once made up her mind to do this, she felt relieved, as though Iudushka had suddenly lost all power over her. She calmly counted up her 5 per cent bonds (it appeared she had fifteen thousand roubles of her own and fifteen thousand that she had saved up for the orphans), and calmly considered how much she must spend to put the Pogorelka house in order. Then she immediately sent for the Pogorelka foreman, gave the necessary orders about hiring carpenters and sending the carts to Dubrovino to fetch her and the girls' luggage, told them to get the chaise ready (she had her own chaise at Dubrovino, and she had proof that it was her own), and began to pack. She was neither hostile nor friendly to Iudushka; she simply felt that she could not bear to have anything to do with him. She no longer enjoyed her food, and ate very little, because she now had to eat what belonged not to Pavel but to Iudushka. Porphyry Vladimiritch looked into her room more than once to have a chat with dear friend mamma (he understood very well that she was making ready to go, though he pretended not to notice it), but Arina Petrovna did not let him in.

"Go along, dear, I haven't time for you," she said.

In three days Arina Petrovna was quite ready to leave. They all went to Mass and attended the burial service. At the burial everything happened exactly as Arina Petrovna had pictured it on the morning of Iudushka's arrival at Dubrovino. He called out, "Good-by, brother!" when the coffin was lowered into the grave, just as she thought he would, and then immediately turned to Ulita and said hastily:

"Be sure to take the fromenty back and put it on a nice clean tablecloth in the dining room. We'll have to eat it in my brother's memory, you know."

Three priests (including the Father Superintendent) and the deacon had been invited to the dinner, which was served, as the custom is, as soon as they had returned from the funeral. A table apart was set in the hall for the sextons. Arina Petrovna and the girls came to dinner in their traveling clothes, but again Iudushka pretended not to notice it. Coming up to the hors d'œuvres table, Porphyry Vladimiritch asked the Father Superintendent to bless the food and drink, then poured out a glass of vodka for each of the clergy and himself, and said, in a voice full of feeling:

"Eternal memory to the deceased! Ah, brother, brother, you have left us. And one would have thought you were the very man to live long. Oh, you bad, bad brother!"

He crossed himself and drank the vodka, then he crossed himself again and swallowed a piece of caviar, crossed himself again and took a piece of smoked salmon.

"Have some, Father," he begged the Father Superintendent. "It's all my brother's provisions. My brother was fond of good fare. He used to eat well, and he liked other people to have plenty too. Ah, brother, brother, you have forsaken us. Naughty, naughty brother!"

He was so carried away by his eloquence he actually forgot his mother. He only thought of her when he was about to put into his mouth a spoonful of pickled mushrooms.

"Mamma! Darling!" he cried in alarm. "To think of foolish me stuffing myself—how dreadful! Mamma, have some caviar, some mushrooms. Dubrovino is famous for its mushrooms, you know!"

But Arina Petrovna merely nodded without speaking and did not stir. She seemed to be listening to something with interest. It was as though a new light had suddenly dawned before her, and all this comedy to which she had been used from a child and in which she had herself always taken part suddenly struck her as quite new and unexpected.

The dinner began with family altercations. Iudushka insisted that his mother should sit at the head of the table. Arina Petrovna refused.

"No, you are master here, so you must sit where you want to," she said drily.

"You are the mistress. You are mistress both at Golovlyovo and at Dubrovino—everywhere," Iudushka was persuading her.

"No, you sit there If, God willing, I have a home of my own, I'll sit where I like without being asked. But you are master here, so you must take the master's place."

"I'll tell you what we'll do then," Iudushka said with feeling; "we'll leave the place empty. As though my brother were present here invisibly....He is the host and we are his visitors."

They did so. While soup was being served, Iudushka selected a suitable subject and engaged the priests in conversation, addressing himself chiefly to the Father Superintendent.

"Many people nowadays do not believe in immortality...but I believe in it," he said.

"Only some desperate characters, I expect," the Father Superintendent responded

"No, not desperate characters, but there's a science to that effect—that man does it all of himself, you know....He lives and lives—and suddenly he dies."

"There are much too many of these sciences nowadays, they ought to be cut down. People believe in science and don't believe in God. Even peasants have ambitions and want to be learned"

"Yes, Father, you are right. They certainly do have ambitions. Take my neighbors at Naglovka, for instance; they have nothing to eat, but they decided the other day to open a school in the village. Men of learning, indeed!"

"There is a science for everything now. There's a science to give you rain and a science to bring fine weather. In the old days it was simple: people came and had a service sung, and God granted what they asked. If fine weather was needed, God sent fine weather; if rain was needed, God had rain enough and to spare. God has plenty of everything. But since people took to science it has all come to an end. Everything happens at the wrong season now. When it's sowing time there's a drought, and when it's haymaking it rains."

"It's the holy truth, what you are saying, Father. In the old days, when people used to pray more, the earth yielded better harvests too. One reaped not as now, four- or fivefold what one had sown, but a hundredfold. I expect my mother remembers those days. Do you remember, mamma?" Iudushka turned to Arina Petrovna, intending to draw her into conversation.

"I haven't heard of it happening in our parts. You were thinking of Canaan, perhaps; they did have such harvests there, they say," Arina Petrovna responded drily.

"Yes, yes, yes," Iudushka said, as though he had not heard his mother's remark. "They don't believe in God, they don't admit immortality...but they want their dinner."

"That's it—all they care for is food and drink," Father Superintendent assented, turning up the sleeves of his cassock to help himself to a piece of the funeral pie

Everyone began on soup; for a time the only sound heard was the jingle of spoons and the priests snorting as they blew at the hot liquid.

"Or take the Roman Catholics now," Iudushka continued, putting down his spoon. "They don't deny immortality, yet they say that the soul does not go straight to hell or to heaven, but finds itself for a time in a kind of intermediate place."

"That too is groundless."

"I am not so sure, Father," Porphyry Vladimiritch replied thoughtfully "Speaking from the point of view of—"

"It's no use speaking of idle fancies. How does the Holy Church pray? It prays that the soul may rest in a cool green place where there is neither sorrow nor sighing. How can there be any 'intermediate' place, then?"

Iudushka was not altogether convinced, however, and was just

about to reply when Arina Petrovna, who had had enough of this conversation, cut him short.

"There, now, eat your soup, you theologian. I expect it's quite cold," she said, and, to change the subject, asked Father Superintendent, "Have you harvested your rye, Father?"

"Yes, madam, the rye is splendid this year, but the spring crop doesn't seem up to much. The oats hadn't formed the grain properly before they began flopping. There will be neither grain nor straw."

"Everyone is complaining about the oats this year," Arina Petrovna sighed, watching Iudushka scoop out the last of the soup with his spoon.

The next course was served: ham and green peas. Iudushka took advantage of the opportunity to renew the interrupted conversation.

"The Jews, now, don't eat ham," he said.

"The Jews are a vile race," the Father Superintendent replied, "that's why people jeer at them."

"But the Tatars don't eat pork either.... There must be some reason for it."

"The Tatars are a vile people too, that's the reason."

"We don't eat horse-flesh, and Tatars look down on pork. They say that in Paris, during the siege, people ate rats."

"Oh well, that's the French."

So the dinner went on. When carp fried in sour cream was served, Iudushka said:

"Please have some, Father. This carp is something special; my brother was very fond of it."

When asparagus was served Iudushka said:

"Now, this is something like asparagus. In Petersburg one would have to pay a silver rouble for it. My brother looked after it himself. Just look how thick it is, bless it."

Arina Petrovna's heart was boiling within her: an hour had passed and they were only halfway through dinner. Iudushka seemed to dawdle on purpose; he would swallow a few mouthfuls and then put down his knife and fork and talk, then tackle his food again, and again begin talking. How often in the old days Arina Petrovna used to shout at him, "Get on with your dinner, you Satan!" but he had evidently forgotten his mother's admonitions, or perhaps he had not forgotten but did it on purpose, out of revenge, and perhaps it was not even a conscious revenge, but just his spiteful nature playing tricks of itself. At last the roast was served, but at the very moment when all stood up and Father Deacon intoned the prayer for the deceased, there was a scuffle and shouts in the corridor that completely spoiled the effect.

"What's this noise?" Porphyry Vladimiritch cried, "this isn't a public-house, you know."

"Don't shout, if you please. It's me...they are carrying out my boxes," Arina Petrovna said, and added with a touch of irony, "Would you like to inspect them?"

Everyone was silent; even Iudushka was at a loss and actually turned pale. He immediately grasped, however, that he must do something to cover up his mother's unpleasant remark, and, turning to Father Superintendent, he began:

"Take woodcock, for instance. In Russia there are lots of them, but in other countries—"

"Get on with your dinner, for Christ's sake. We have over fifteen miles to drive, and we must arrive there before dark," Arina Petrovna interrupted him. "Petenka dear, do go and tell them to hurry with the pudding."

There was a silence of several minutes. Porphyry Vladimiritch quickly finished his piece of woodcock and sat pale and with twitching lips, tapping the floor with his foot.

"You wound me, kind friend mamma You hurt me very much," he brought out at last, without looking at his mother, however.

"You aren't easily wounded, I should have thought. And how could I have hurt you so much?"

"I am very, very much hurt....Very much indeed Going away at such a moment You have lived here for years and suddenly... And then those boxes. .and talking of inspection.. It's insulting."

"If you really want to know, I can give you an answer. I lived here so long as my son Pavel was living; he is dead—I am going away. And as to my boxes, Ulita has been spying on me for days at your orders. But I think it is better to tell your mother straight out that she is suspect than to hiss at her like a snake behind another person's back"

"Mamma! Darling! Why, you...why, I..." Iudushka groaned.

"That will do," Arina Petrovna cut him short. "I have said enough."

"But, dear mamma, in what way could I have—"

"I tell you I have said enough—leave it at that. Let me go in peace, for Christ's sake. I hear my carriage is ready."

Indeed there was the jingle of bells and the rattle of carriage wheels in the yard. Arina Petrovna was the first to get up from the table; the others got up too.

"Well, now let us sit down for a moment, and then we must be off," she said, going to the drawing room.

They sat in silence for a few moments; Iudushka meanwhile recovered completely.

"But wouldn't you like to stay at Dubrovino a bit longer, mamma? See how nice it is here," he said, looking at his mother ingratiatingly, like a dog that knows it has done wrong.

"No, my dear, I have had enough of it. I don't want to say anything unpleasant to you at parting, but I cannot stay here. There's nothing to hold me here. Father, let us pray."

All stood up and said a prayer, then Arina Petrovna kissed and blessed everyone, as good relatives do, and walked to the door treading heavily.

Porphyry Vladimiritch, at the head of all the household, accompanied her to the front steps, but when he saw the carriage he was disturbed by the devil of cupidity. "It's my brother's chaise," the thought flashed through his mind.

"We shall be seeing each other, dear friend mamma," he said, helping his mother into the carriage and casting sidelong glances at it.

"If it be God's will...why not."

"Ah, mamma, mamma, you are a naughty girl, you know. Tell them to unharness the horses and come back into your old nest, with God's blessing...really." Iudushka prattled amiably.

Arina Petrovna did not answer. She had quite settled in her place in the carriage and had already made the sign of the cross, but the girls were not quite ready.

Iudushka meanwhile kept glancing at the carriage.

"And what about the carriage, mamma? Will you send it back, or would you like us to fetch it?"

Arina Petrovna positively shook with indignation.

"The carriage is mine," she cried in a voice so strained that everyone felt slightly uncomfortable. "Mine, mine. It's my carriage. I bought it. ...I have proofs... I have witnesses And you...I'll...well, I'll wait and see...what you'll do next. Children, are you going to be much longer?"

"Why, mamma, I wasn't objecting....Even if the carriage belonged to Dubrovino..."

"It's my carriage! Mine! It doesn't belong here. Don't you dare to say it does, do you hear?"

"Certainly, mamma. ..Well, don't forget us, darling . .Come and see us without ceremony. We'll call on you and you call on us... like good relatives."

"Are you ready? Go," Arina Petrovna cried, hardly able to control herself.

The carriage moved and drove away at a jog-trot.

Iudushka stood on the steps waving his handkerchief, and so long as the carriage was in sight shouted after it: "Like good relatives. We'll call on you and you call on us."

[Translation by Natalie Duddington]

Alexey K. Tolstoy

IVAN THE TERRIBLE

The following extract is from Prince Serebryany *(1863), the last Russian novel in the Walter Scott tradition. As a portrait of Ivan the Terrible, pendulating between his natural tendency to cruelty and equally natural tendency to remorse, it is impressive.*

Czar Ivan Vasilyevitch was praying. The perspiration was already rolling down his face; the bloody marks, imprinted upon his high forehead by former prostrations, were now more clearly defined by the new devotion. Suddenly a rustling sound in the room caused him to turn around. He saw his nurse, Onufrevna.

His nurse was an old woman. She had been taken to the Upper Apartments by Grand Prince Vasily Ivanovich of blessed memory; she had served under Elena Glinsky. Iohann was born in her arms, and in her arms did the dying father bless him They said of Onufrevna that much was known to her which nobody even suspected. During the minority of the Czar, the Glinskys had been afraid of her; the Shuyskys and Byelskys tried in every way to gain her favor.

Onufrevna discovered many hidden things through divination, and she was never mistaken. She predicted of Prince Telepnev during his very greatness—Iohann was then only four years old—that he would die of starvation. And so it happened. Many years had passed since then, but that prediction was still fresh in the memory of old men.

It was now almost the tenth decade that Onufrevna was ending. She was bent nearly double; the skin of her face was so wrinkled that it resembled tree bark, and as moss grows out on old bark, so gray tufts burst out of her chin. She had long ago lost her teeth; her eyes, it seemed, could not see; her head shook convulsively

Onufrevna bent with her bony hand on a staff She looked at Iohann for a long time, drawing in her sered lips as if she were chewing or muttering something.

"Well?" at last said the nurse with a dull, trembling voice, "are you praying, father? Pray, pray, Ivan Vasilyevitch! It will take a great deal of praying to get forgiveness If you had only your old sins upon your soul! God is merciful, and He might have forgiven you! But you add every day a new sin, and many a day even two or three of them."

"Hush, Onufrevna," said the Czar, rising. "You do not know what you are saying!"

"I do not know what I am saying! Have I grown witless—or what?"

And the lifeless eyes of the old woman suddenly sparkled.

"What have you been doing at the table today?—Why did you poison the boyar? You thought I did not know it! Well, why do you frown? Wait, when your hour of death will strike, just wait! Your sins will stick to you like a thousand puds; they will pull you down to the bottom of hell. And the devils will run up and will catch you on their hooks!"

The old woman again began to chew.

The fervent prayer had prepared the Czar for pious thoughts. His irritable imagination had more than once presented to him a picture of the future chastisement, but his power of will vanquished the terror of the torments beyond the grave Iohann assured himself that this new fear and his bites of conscience were provoked in him by the fiend of the human race, in order to distract the anointed of God from his high purposes. The Czar opposed prayer to the cunning of the devil, but he often succumbed to the cruel onrush of his imagination Then despair took possession of him as with iron claws. The unrighteousness of his acts appeared in all its nakedness, and the abyss of hell yawned terribly before him But that lasted only a short time. Iohann immediately regretted his pusillanimity In anger at himself and at the spirit of darkness, he, to spite hell and to oppose his conscience, again started upon his work of blood and villainy, and never did his cruelty reach such dimensions as after an involuntary exhaustion.

Now the thought of hell, illuminated by the approaching storm and the prophetic voice of Onufrevna, stirred him through and through with a feverish chill. He seated himself upon the bed. His teeth chattered against one another.

"Well, father?" said Onufrevna, softening her voice. "What is the matter with you? Are you ill? That's it, you are ill! I have given you a good fright! But you needn't be frightened, father. Only repent, and stop sinning. I, too, am praying for you, day and night, and now I shall pray more than ever. Why shouldn't I? I had rather forfeit heaven, if I could gain forgiveness for you."

Iohann looked at his nurse—she seemed to be smiling, but her stern face was not lit up by a smile that was reassuring

"Thank you, Onufrevna, thank you. I am feeling easier; go, the Lord be with you!"

"Yes, yes, easier! Your terror leaves you the moment you are consoled! And you at once drive me away! The Lord be with me, you say! But you, father, had better not count too much upon God's long-suffering Even God's patience will give way in your case. Beware, He will renounce you, and Satan will rejoice and—plump!

will enter into you. There, you have begun to shake again! It will not hurt you to drink a glass of mulled honey. Drink a glass, father! Your father, the kingdom of heaven be his, used to drink mulled honey at night! And your mother, God grant her soul rest, was fond of mulled honey. And it was with mulled honey that the accursed Shuyskys poisoned her."

The old woman became absent-minded. Her eyes were dimmed; she again began to chew, all the time shaking her head.

Suddenly something knocked on the window. Ivan Vasilyevich shuddered.

The old woman made the sign of the cross with her trembling hand.

"Just see," she said, "how it is raining! And it is beginning to lighten! And there is also thunder, father; God have mercy upon us!"

The storm increased in fury, and soon the sky was disturbed by uninterrupted peals of thunder and a continuous sheet of lightning.

Iohann shuddered at every thunderclap.

"What a chill you have, father! Wait a moment, I'll have them make you some mulled honey."

"It is not necessary, Onufrevna, I am well."

"Well! Why, your face does not show it! You had better lie down on your bed and cover yourself with a quilt. What a bed you have here! Nothing but boards. What a queer notion! Is that proper for a Czar? That is all right for a monk, but you are not a monk!"

Iohann did not answer. He was intent on listening to something.

"Onufrevna," he suddenly said in fright, "who is walking there in the corridor? I hear somebody's steps!"

"Christ be with you, father! Who should be walking now? It is your imagination."

"No, there is someone walking there! Somebody is coming here! Go and look, Onufrevna!"

The old woman opened the door. A cold wind burst into the room. Beyond the door appeared Malyuta.

"Who is that?" asked the Czar, leaping up.

"Your red dog, father," answered the nurse, casting an angry glance at Malyuta. "Grishka Skuratov. How the accursed one has frightened me!"

"Lukyanych!" said the Czar, made happy by the arrival of his favorite, "you are welcome; where do you come from?"

"From the prison, sir. I was at the inquest, and I have brought the keys."

Malyuta bowed low to the Czar and looked askance at the nurse.

"The keys!" grumbled the old woman. "They will flog you in the other world with red-hot keys, you Satan! Upon my word, you are Satan! Your very face is that of a devil! Though somebody else may escape the eternal fire, you won't. You, Grishka, will be licking hot

pans for all your calumnies! You, accursed one, will be boiling in pitch, remember my word!"

Lightning illuminated the threatening woman, and she was terrible with her uplifted staff and her sparkling eyes.

Malyuta himself felt a little uncomfortable; but Iohann was emboldened by the presence of his favorite.

"Pay no attention to her, Lukyanych," he said. "Know what you are about, and don't listen to woman's babble. But you, old fool, go away and leave us!"

Onufrevna's eyes sparkled once more.

"Old fool?" she repeated. "You will think of me in the next world! All your companions, Vanya, will receive their retribution, and they will receive it even in this world, every one of them; Gryaznoy, Basmanov, and Vyazemsky. Each of them will receive his due, but this one," she continued, pointing with her staff at Malyuta, "this one will not receive his due: there is no adequate punishment for him in this world; his punishment is in the lowermost pit of hell; there is a place ready for him, and the devils are waiting for him and rejoicing! And there is a place there for you, too, Vanya—a big, warm place!"

The old woman went out, shuffling her feet and making a noise with her staff.

Iohann was pale. Malyuta did not speak a word. The silence lasted quite a while

"Well, Lukyanych?" said the Czar at last, "do the Kolychevs confess?"

"Not yet, sir. But they will, or they won't get off so easily from me"

Iohann asked for the details of the inquest. The conversation about the Kolychevs gave another direction to his thoughts. It appeared to him that he might be able to fall asleep. He sent Malyuta away, lay down upon his bed, and lost consciousness.

He was awakened as if by a sudden jolt. The room was weakly lighted by the lamps before the images. A moonbeam passed through the low window and glittered on the painted flourishes of the couch. A cricket chirped behind the couch. A mouse nibbled somewhere in the wood.

Ivan Vasilyevich was again terrified amidst this silence.

Suddenly it seemed to him as though the floor was being raised and a poisoned boyar looked out from underneath

Such visions were common occurrences with Iohann He ascribed them to the persecutions of the devil. To get rid of the apparition, he made the sign of the cross.

But the apparition did not disappear, as it did formerly

The dead boyar kept on looking at him awry. The eyes of the old man bulged out, and his face was as blue as then, at dinner, when he drank the cup sent him by Iohann.

"That's again the devil's incitement!" thought the Czar. "But I will not submit to the power of Satan, and I will crush the cunning of the devil. Let God arise, and may His foes be dispersed!"

The dead man slowly rose from the floor and came nearer to Iohann.

The Czar wanted to cry out, but he could not. There was a terrible din in his ears.

The dead man bowed before the Czar.

"Hail, Ivan!" spoke a hollow, unearthly voice. "I greet you, who have destroyed an innocent man."

These words re-echoed in the very depth of Iohann's soul He did not know whether he heard them from the apparition, or whether his own thought found expression in sounds tangible to the ear.

Then another board was raised; underneath appeared the face of Danila Adashev, who had been executed by Iohann four years before.

Adashev, too, rose from the floor, bowed to the Czar, and said:

"Hail, Ivan! I greet you who have executed an innocent man!"

After Adashev there appeared the boyar's wife, Maria, who had been executed together with her children. She rose from the floor, with her five sons They all bowed to the Czar, and all said:

"Hail, Ivan! I greet you!"

Then appeared Prince Kurlyatev, Prince Obolensky, Nikita Sheremetev, and other persons who had been killed or executed by Iohann

The room was filled with dead people. They all bowed low to the Czar, and all said

"Hail, hail, Ivan! I greet you!"

And there rose monks, hermits, nuns, all in black garments, all pale and blood-covered

And there appeared warriors who had been at Kazan with the Czar Upon them gaped terrible wounds that were not gained in battle but were inflicted by the executioner.

And there appeared maidens in torn garments, and young women with suckling babes. The children stretched their bloody hands to Iohann and lisped:

"Hail, hail, Ivan, who have made us innocent ones to perish!"

The room was ever more filled with apparitions The Czar could no longer distinguish his imagination from reality. The words of the apparitions were repeated in hundredfold echoes, while the prayers for the dead and the singing of the vigils resounded above Iohann's ears. His hair stood on end.

"In the name of the living God," he spoke, "if you are evil spirits sent by the power of the devil—perish! If you are, in truth, the souls of those I have executed—for the terrible judgment of the Lord! God will judge us all!"

The dead people moaned and circled around Iohann, like autumn leaves driven by the whirlwind. The singing of the vigils sounded

more pitifully, the rain beat against the window, and amidst the howl of the wind the Czar thought he heard the sound of trumpets and a voice calling:

"Ivan, Ivan, to the judgment, to the judgment!"

The Czar cried out aloud. The sleeping guards ran from the adjoining apartments into the bedroom.

"Rise," cried the Czar, "all who are asleep now! The last day has come! The last hour has come! Let us to the church, all after me!"

The courtiers besturred themselves. The large bell was rung. The *oprichniks* who had just fallen asleep heard the familiar sound, and they jumped up from their couches and hastened to dress themselves

Many were feasting at the house Vyazemsky. They were sitting at the wine cups and singing drinking songs. When they heard the sound of the bell, they jumped up from their seats, donned black cloaks over their rich garments, and covered their heads with high hoods The whole palace quarter came into motion. The Church of the Mother of God was brilliantly illuminated. The excited inhabitants rushed to their gates and saw a multitude of lights that wandered in the palace from room to room. Then the lights formed a long chain, and the procession meandered along the outward corridors that connected the palace with the temple of God.

All the *oprichniks,* who were dressed in the identical black cloaks and hoods, carried pitch torches. Their light was wonderfully reflected upon the carved pillars and wall decorations. The wind scattered the cloaks, and the moonlight and the light of the torches was reflected on the cloth, the pearls, and the costly stones The Czar marched in front, dressed as a monk, and he beat his breast and called out, sobbing aloud

"Lord, have mercy on me, sinful man! Have mercy on me, stinking dog! Have mercy on my evil head! Pacify, O Lord, the souls of those who have been innocently killed by me!"

Before the doors of the temple Iohann fell down exhausted The torches illuminated an old woman who was sitting on the steps. She stretched out her trembling hand to the Czar.

"Rise, father!" said Onufrevna. "I will help you. I have been waiting for you for a long while. Come, Vanya, let us pray together!"

Two *oprichniks* held up the Czar under his arms. He entered the church.

New processions, also in black cloaks, also in high hoods, were hastening over the streets with lighted torches. The doors of the temple swallowed ever new *oprichniks,* and the gigantic forms of the saints looked at them with disfavor from the walls and the vault of the church.

In the night, which had till then been speechless, there was suddenly heard the singing of several hundred voices, and the sound of the bell and the chant of the psalms were borne afar.

The prisoners awoke in their dungeons and, rattling their chains, began to listen.

"The Czar is reading the matins!" they said. "O Lord, soften his heart, put mercy into his soul!"

Small children that were sleeping by the side of their mothers awoke in terror and began to cry. Many a mother could not quiet her babe for a long time.

"Hush!" she finally said. "Hush, or Malyuta will hear you!"

At the mention of Malyuta the child stopped crying and in its fright pressed close to its mother, and during the stillness of the night there were again heard the psalms of the *oprichniks,* and the continuous ringing of the bell.

Leo Tolstoy

WAR AND PEACE

Many celebrated writers of our own time have called War and Peace *the greatest novel ever written. Certainly no one can possibly disagree with the assertion that it is the greatest historical novel ever written. A whole epoch lives in it. It is not merely a vast panorama of the Napoleonic invasion of Russia; it is also a vast panorama of the processes of human nature as revealed in a whole host of individuals, great and small. It is universal in its scope, as few books are universal. There is a tonal grandeur about its conception as well as its execution. What an infinite variety of characters and motives and situations! Yet everything finds its place, every detail merges in the whole. The material is chaos itself, chaos of human differences, of conflicting emotions, of historical movements and convulsions; but there is no chaos in the writing, which is simple, direct, lucid, and, above all, prompted by a sense of order—order as only a great man and a great artist can conceive it. It is the hardest of all great novels from which to make selections; for, though each fragment is well-nigh perfect, all the fragments together are of a piece, and their very cumulation is a matter of consecutive growth, like the growth of a cathedral stone upon stone, without superfluity and without adornment other than that dictated by nature itself, and truth itself. The best proof of its living quality is that, though written in another day, its power to move us and to make*

us think was never greater than today when chaos is once more upon us and another conqueror is here, emulating Napoleon and doomed to go the way of Napoleon. In War and Peace *Tolstoy has set the pattern of military conquest for all time, equally for all time is the pattern of human nature portrayed in the individuals whose lives are described in this human, very human, novel.*

BEFORE THE BATTLE

"So you think we shall win tomorrow's battle?" asked Pierre.

"Yes, yes," answered Prince Andrew absently. "One thing I would do if I had the power," he began again. "I would not take prisoners. Why take prisoners? It's chivalry! The French have destroyed my home and are on their way to destroy Moscow, they have outraged and are outraging me every moment They are my enemies. In my opinion they are all criminals. And so thinks Timokhin and the whole army. They should be executed! Since they are my foes, they cannot be my friends, whatever may have been said at Tilsit."

"Yes, yes," muttered Pierre, looking with shining eyes at Prince Andrew "I quite agree with you!"

The question that had perturbed Pierre on the Mozhaysk hill and all that day now seemed to him quite clear and completely solved. He now understood the whole meaning and importance of this war and of the impending battle. All he had seen that day, all the significant and stern expressions on the faces he had seen in passing, were lit up for him by a new light. He understood that latent heat (as they say in physics) of patriotism which was present in all these men he had seen, and this explained to him why they all prepared for death calmly, and as it were, lightheartedly.

"Not take prisoners," Prince Andrew continued· "That by itself would quite change the whole war and make it less cruel. As it is we have played at war—that's what's vile! We play at magnanimity and all that stuff Such magnanimity and sensibility are like the magnanimity and sensibility of a lady who faints when she sees a calf being killed: she is so kindhearted that she can't look at blood, but enjoys eating the calf served up with sauce. They talk to us of the rules of war, of chivalry, of flags of truce, of mercy to the unfortunate, and so on. It's all rubbish! I saw chivalry and flags of truce in 1805, they humbugged us and we humbugged them. They plunder other people's houses, issue false paper money, and worst of all they kill my children and my father, and then talk of rules of war and magnanimity to foes! Take no prisoners, but kill and be killed! He who has come to this as I have through the same sufferings...."

Prince Andrew, who had thought it was all the same to him whether or not Moscow was taken as Smolensk had been, was suddenly checked in his speech by an unexpected cramp in his throat. He paced up and down a few times in silence, but his eyes glittered feverishly and his lips quivered as he began to speak again.

"If there was none of this magnanimity in war, we should go to war only when it was worth while going to certain death, as now. Then there would not be war because Paul Ivanovich had offended Michael Ivanovich. And when there was a war, like this one, it would be war! And then the determination of the troops would be quite different. Then all these Westphalians and Hessians whom Napoleon is leading would not follow him into Russia, and we should not go to fight in Austria and Prussia without knowing why. War is not courtesy, but the most horrible thing in life; and we ought to understand that and not play at war We ought to accept this terrible necessity sternly and seriously It all lies in that: get rid of falsehood and let war be war and not a game As it is now, war is the favorite pastime of the idle and frivolous. The military calling is the most highly honored.

"But what is war? What is needed for success in warfare? What are the habits of the military? The aim of war is murder; the methods of war are spying, treachery, and their encouragement; the ruin of a country's inhabitants, robbing them or stealing to provision the army; and fraud and falsehood termed military craft The habits of the military class are the absence of freedom, that is, discipline, idleness, ignorance, cruelty, debauchery, and drunkenness. And in spite of all this, it is the highest class, respected by everyone. All the kings, except the Chinese, wear military uniforms, and he who kills most people receives the highest rewards.

"They meet, as we shall meet tomorrow, to murder one another; they kill and maim tens of thousands, and then have thanksgiving services for having killed so many people (they even exaggerate the number), and they announce a victory, supposing that the more people they have killed, the greater their achievement How does God above look at them and hear them?" exclaimed Prince Andrew in a shrill, piercing voice "Ah, my friend, it has of late become hard for me to live. I see that I have begun to understand too much And it doesn't do for man to taste of the tree of knowledge of good and evil....Ah, well, it's not for long!" he added.

NAPOLEON'S COLD. WHY THE BATTLE HAD TO BE FOUGHT

Many historians say that the French did not win the Battle of Borodino because Napoleon had a cold, and that if he had not had a cold the orders he gave before and during the battle would have been still

more full of genius, and Russia would have been lost and the face of the world have been changed. To historians who believe that Russia was shaped by the will of one man—Peter the Great—and that France from a republic became an empire and French armies went to Russia at the will of one man—Napoleon—to say that Russia remained a power because Napoleon had a cold on the twenty-fourth of August may seem logical and convincing.

If it had depended on Napoleon's will to fight or not to fight the Battle of Borodino, and if this or that other arrangement depended on his will, then evidently a cold affecting the manifestation of his will might have saved Russia, and consequently the valet who omitted to bring Napoleon his waterproof boots on the twenty-fourth would have been the savior of Russia. Along that line of thought such a deduction is indubitable, as indubitable as the deduction Voltaire made in jest (without knowing what he was jesting at) when he saw that the Massacre of St. Bartholomew was due to Charles IX's stomach's being deranged. But to men who do not admit that Russia was formed by the will of one man, Peter I, or that the French Empire was formed and the war with Russia begun by the will of one man, Napoleon, that argument seems not merely untrue and irrational, but contrary to all human reality. To the question of what causes historic events, another answer presents itself; namely, that the course of human events is predetermined from on high—depends on the coincidence of the wills of all who take part in the events, and that a Napoleon's influence on the course of these events is purely external and fictitious.

Strange as at first glance it may seem to suppose that the Massacre of St. Bartholomew was not due to Charles IX's will, though he gave the order for it and though it was done as a result of that order; and strange as it may seem to suppose that the slaughter of eighty thousand men at Borodino was not due to Napoleon's will, though he ordered the commencement and conduct of the battle and thought it was done because he ordered it— strange as these suppositions appear, yet human dignity—which tells me that each of us is, if not more, at least not less a man than the great Napoleon—demands the acceptance of that solution of the question, and historic investigation abundantly confirms it.

At the Battle of Borodino Napoleon shot at no one and killed no one. That was all done by the soldiers. Therefore it was not he who killed the people.

The French soldiers went to kill and be killed at the Battle of Borodino not because of Napoleon's orders, but by their own volition. The whole army—French, Italian, German, Polish, and Dutch—hungry, ragged, and weary of the campaign, felt at the sight of an army blocking their road to Moscow that the wine was drawn and must be drunk. Had Napoleon then forbidden them to fight the

Russians, they would have killed him and have proceeded to fight the Russians because it was inevitable.

When they heard Napoleon's proclamation offering them, as compensation for mutilation and death, the words of posterity about their having been in the battle before Moscow, they cried *"Vive l'Empereur!"* just as they had cried *"Vive l'Empereur!"* at the sight of the portrait of the boy piercing the terrestrial globe with a toy stick, and just as they would have cried *"Vive l'Empereur!"* at any nonsense that might be told them. There was nothing left for them to do but cry *"Vive l'Empereur!"* and go to fight, in order to get food and rest as conquerors in Moscow. So it was not because of Napoleon's commands that they killed their fellow-men.

And it was not Napoleon who directed the course of the battle, for none of his orders were executed, and during the battle he did not know what was going on before him So the way in which these people killed one another was not decided by Napoleon's will, but occurred independently of him, in accord with the will of hundreds of thousands of people who took part in the common action It only seemed to Napoleon that it all took place by his will. And so the question whether he had or had not a cold has no more historic interest than the cold of the least of the transport soldiers.

Moreover, the assertion made by various writers that his cold was the cause of his dispositions' not being as well planned as on former occasions and of his orders' during the battle not being as good as previously, is quite baseless, which again shows that Napoleon's cold on the twenty-sixth of August was unimportant.

The dispositions cited above are not at all worse, but are even better, than previous dispositions by which he had won victories. His pseudo-orders during the battle were also no worse than formerly, but much the same as usual. These dispositions and orders only seem worse than previous ones because the Battle of Borodino was the first Napoleon did not win. The profoundest and most excellent dispositions and orders seem very bad, and every learned militarist criticizes them with looks of importance, when they relate to a battle that has been lost, and the very worst dispositions and orders seem very good, and serious people fill whole volumes to demonstrate their merits, when they relate to a battle that has been won.

The dispositions drawn up by Weyrother for the Battle of Austerlitz were a model of perfection for that kind of composition, but still they were criticized—criticized for their very perfection, for their excessive minuteness.

Napoleon at the Battle of Borodino fulfilled his office as representative of authority as well as, and even better than, at other battles. He did nothing harmful to the progress of the battle; he inclined to the most reasonable opinions, he made no confusion, did not contradict

himself, did not get frightened or run away from the field of battle, but with his great tact and military experience carried out his role of appearing to command, calmly and with dignity.

NAPOLEON SURVEYS MOSCOW FROM THE POKLONNY HILL. HE AWAITS A DEPUTATION OF "LES BOYARS"

Kutuzov's order to retreat through Moscow to the Ryazan road was issued at night on the first of September.

The first troops started at once, and during the night they marched slowly and steadily without hurry At daybreak, however, those nearing the town at the Dorogomilov bridge saw ahead of them masses of soldiers crowding and hurrying across the bridge, ascending on the opposite side and blocking the streets and alleys, while endless masses of troops were bearing down on them from behind, and an unreasoning hurry and alarm overcame them. They all rushed forward to the bridge, onto it, and to the fords and the boats Kutuzov himself had driven round by side streets to the other side of Moscow.

By ten o'clock in the morning of the second of September, only the rearguard remained in the Dorogomilov suburb, where they had ample room. The main army was on the other side of Moscow or beyond it.

At that very time, at ten in the morning of the second of September, Napoleon was standing among his troops on the Poklonny Hill looking at the panorama spread out before him. From the twenty-sixth of August to the second of September, that is from the Battle of Borodino to the entry of the French into Moscow, during the whole of that agitating, memorable week, there had been the extraordinary autumn weather that always comes as a surprise, when the sun hangs low and gives more heat than in spring, when everything shines so brightly in the rare clear atmosphere that the eyes smart, when the lungs are strengthened and refreshed by inhaling the aromatic autumn air, when even the nights are warm, and when, in those dark warm nights, golden stars startle and delight us continually by falling from the sky.

At ten in the morning of the second of September this weather still held.

The brightness of the morning was magical. Moscow seen from the Poklonny Hill lay spaciously spread out with her river, her gardens, and her churches, and she seemed to be living her usual life, her cupolas glittering like stars in the sunlight.

The view of the strange city with its peculiar architecture, such as he had never seen before, filled Napoleon with the rather envious and uneasy curiosity men feel when they see an alien form of life that has

no knowledge of them. This city was evidently living with the full force of its own life. By the indefinite signs which, even at a distance, distinguish a living body from a dead one, Napoleon from the Poklonny Hill perceived the throb of life in the town and felt, as it were, the breathing of that great and beautiful body.

Every Russian looking at Moscow feels her to be a mother; every foreigner who sees her, even if ignorant of her significance as the mother city, must feel her feminine character, and Napoleon felt it.

"*Cette ville asiatique aux innombrables églises, Moscou la sainte. La voilà donc enfin, cette fameuse ville! Il était temps* [That Asiatic city of the innumerable churches, holy Moscow! Here it is then at last, that famous city! It was high time]," said he, and dismounting he ordered a plan of Moscow to be spread out before him, and summoned Lelorgne d'Ideville, the interpreter.

"A town captured by the enemy is like a maid who has lost her honor," thought he (he had said so to Tuchkov at Smolensk) From that point of view he gazed at the Oriental beauty he had not seen before. It seemed strange to him that his long-felt wish, which had seemed unattainable, had at last been realized. In the clear morning light he gazed now at the city and now at the plan, considering its details, and the assurance of possessing it agitated and awed him.

"But could it be otherwise?" he thought. "Here is this capital at my feet. Where is Alexander now, and of what is he thinking? A strange, beautiful, and majestic city, and a strange and majestic moment! In what light must I appear to them!" thought he, thinking of his troops "Here she is, the reward for all those faint-hearted men," he reflected, glancing at those near him and at the troops who were approaching and forming up. "One word from me, one movement of my hand, and that ancient capital of the Czars would perish. But my clemency is always ready to descend upon the vanquished. I must be magnanimous and truly great. But, no, it can't be true that I am in Moscow," he suddenly thought. "Yet here she is lying at my feet, with her golden domes and crosses scintillating and twinkling in the sunshine. But I shall spare her. On the ancient monuments of barbarism and despotism I will inscribe great words of justice and mercy . It is just this which Alexander will feel most painfully, I know him" (It seemed to Napoleon that the chief import of what was taking place lay in the personal struggle between himself and Alexander) "From the height of the Kremlin—yes, there is the Kremlin, yes—I will give them just laws; I will teach them the meaning of true civilization, I will make generations of boyars * remember their conqueror with love.

* In ancient and medieval Russia the boyars were the chief assistants of the Czars. The class and title were abolished by Peter I, and the last of the boyars died in 1750 Napoleon's repeated use of the word is meant to indicate the superficiality of his knowledge of Russia —Tr

I will tell the deputation that I did not, and do not, desire war, that I have waged war only against the false policy of their court, that I love and respect Alexander and that in Moscow I will accept terms of peace worthy of myself and of my people. I do not wish to utilize the fortunes of war to humiliate an honored monarch. "Boyars," I will say to them, "I do not desire war, I desire peace and welfare of all my subjects." However, I know their presence will inspire me, and I shall speak to them as I always do: clearly, impressively, and majestically. But can it be true that I am in Moscow? Yes, there she lies."

"*Qu'on m'amène les boyars* [Bring the boyars to me]," said he to his suite.

A general with a brilliant suite galloped off at once to fetch the boyars.

Two hours passed. Napoleon had lunched and was again standing in the same place on the Poklonny Hill awaiting the deputation. His speech to the boyars had already taken definite shape in his imagination. That speech was full of dignity and greatness as Napoleon understood it.

He was himself carried away by the tone of magnanimity he intended to adopt toward Moscow. In his imagination he appointed days for assemblies at the palace of the Czars, at which Russian notables and his own would mingle. He mentally appointed a governor, one who would win the hearts of the people. Having learned that there were many charitable institutions in Moscow he mentally decided that he would shower favors on them all. He thought that, as in Africa he had to put on a burnoose and sit in a mosque, so in Moscow he must be beneficent like the Czars. And in order finally to touch the hearts of the Russians—and being, like all Frenchmen, unable to imagine anything sentimental without a reference to *ma chère, ma tendre, ma pauvre mère* [my dear, my tender, my poor mother]—he decided that he would place an inscription on all these establishments in large letters: "This establishment is dedicated to my dear mother." Or no, it should be simply. *Maison de ma Mère* [House of my Mother], he concluded "But am I really in Moscow? Yes, here it lies before me, but why is the deputation from the city so long in appearing?" he wondered.

Meanwhile an agitated consultation was being carried on in whispers among his generals and marshals at the rear of his suite. Those sent to fetch the deputation had returned with the news that Moscow was empty, that everyone had left it. The faces of those who were not conferring together were pale and perturbed. They were not alarmed by the fact that Moscow had been abandoned by its inhabitants (grave as that fact seemed), but by the question how to tell the Emperor—without putting him in the terrible position of appearing ridiculous—that he had been awaiting the boyars so long in vain: that there were

drunken mobs left in Moscow but no one else. Some said that a deputation of some sort must be scraped together, others disputed that opinion and maintained that the Emperor should first be carefully and skillfully prepared, and then told the truth.

"He will have to be told, all the same," said some gentlemen of the suite. "But, gentlemen..."

The position was the more awkward because the Emperor, meditating upon his magnanimous plans, was pacing patiently up and down before the outspread map, occasionally glancing along the road to Moscow from under his lifted hand with a bright and proud smile.

"But it's impossible," declared the gentlemen of the suite, shrugging their shoulders but not venturing to utter the implied word—*le ridicule....*

At last the Emperor, tired of futile expectation, his actor's instinct suggesting to him that the sublime moment, having been too long drawn out, was beginning to lose its sublimity, gave a sign with his hand. A single report of a signaling gun followed, and the troops, who were already spread out on different sides of Moscow, moved into the city through the Tver, Kaluga, and Dorogomilov gates. Faster and faster, vying with one another, they moved at the double or at a trot, vanishing amid the clouds of dust they raised and making the air ring with a deafening roar of mingling shouts.

Drawn on by the movement of his troops, Napoleon rode with them as far as the Dorogomilov gate, but there again stopped and, dismounting from his horse, paced for a long time by the Kammer-Kollezski rampart, awaiting the deputation.

PIERRE'S CONVERSION

As generally happens, Pierre did not feel the full effects of the physical privation and strain he had suffered as prisoner until after they were over. After his liberation he reached Orel, and on the third day there, when preparing to go to Kiev, he fell ill and was laid up for three months. He had what the doctors termed "bilious fever." But despite the fact that the doctors treated him, bled him, and gave him medicines to drink, he recovered.

Scarcely any impression was left on Pierre's mind by all that happened to him from the time of his rescue till his illness. He remembered only the dull gray weather now rainy and now snowy, internal physical distress, and pains in his feet and side. He remembered a general impression of the misfortunes and sufferings of people and of being worried by the curiosity of officers and generals who questioned him; he also remembered his difficulty in procuring a conveyance and

horses, and above all he remembered his incapacity to think and feel all that time. On the day of his rescue he had seen the body of Petya Rostov. That same day he had learned that Prince Andrew, after surviving the Battle of Borodino for more than a month, had died in the Rostovs' house at Yaroslavl, and Denisov who told him this news also mentioned Hélène's death, supposing that Pierre had heard of it long before. All this at the time seemed merely strange to Pierre: he felt he could not grasp its significance. Just then he was only anxious to get away as quickly as possible from places where people were killing one another, to some peaceful refuge where he could recover himself, rest, and think over all the strange new facts he had learned; but on reaching Orel he immediately fell ill When he came to himself after his illness he saw in attendance on him two of his servants, Terenty and Vaska, who had come from Moscow; and also his cousin, the eldest princess, who had been living on his estate at Elets and, hearing of his rescue and illness, had come to look after him.

It was only gradually during his convalescence that Pierre lost the impressions he had become accustomed to during the last few months and got used to the idea that no one would oblige him to go anywhere tomorrow, that no one would deprive him of his warm bed, and that he would be sure to get his dinner, tea, and supper. But for a long time in his dreams he still saw himself in the conditions of captivity. In the same way little by little he came to understand the news he had been told after his rescue, about the death of Prince Andrew, the death of his wife, and the destruction of the French

A joyous feeling of freedom—that complete inalienable freedom natural to man which he had first experienced at the first halt outside Moscow—filled Pierre's soul during his convalescence. He was surprised to find that this inner freedom, which was independent of external conditions, now had as it were an additional setting of external liberty. He was alone in a strange town, without acquaintances. No one demanded anything of him or sent him anywhere. He had all he wanted. the thought of his wife, which had been a continual torment to him, was no longer there, since she was no more.

"Oh, how good! How splendid!" said he to himself when a cleanly laid table was moved up to him with savory beef tea, or when he lay down for the night on a soft clean bed, or when he remembered that the French had gone and that his wife was no more. "Oh, how good, how splendid!"

And by old habit he asked himself the question: "Well, and what then? What am I going to do?" And he immediately gave himself the answer: "Well, I shall live. Ah, how splendid!"

The very question that had formerly tormented him, the thing he had continually sought to find—the aim of life—no longer existed for him now. That search for the aim of life had not merely disappeared

temporarily—he felt that it no longer existed for him and could not present itself again. And this very absence of an aim gave him the complete, joyous sense of freedom which constituted his happiness at this time

He could not see an aim, for he now had faith—not faith in any kind of rule, or words, or ideas, but faith in an ever-living, ever-manifest God. Formerly he had sought Him in aims he set himself. That search for an aim had been simply a search for God, and suddenly in his captivity he had learned not by words or reasoning but by direct feeling what his nurse had told him long ago: that God is here and everywhere. In his captivity he had learned that in Karataev God was greater, more infinite and unfathomable than in the Architect of the Universe recognized by the Freemasons. He felt like a man who, after straining his eyes to see into the far distance, finds what he sought at his very feet. All his life he had looked over the heads of the men around him, when he should have merely looked in front of him without straining his eyes.

In the past he had never been able to find that great inscrutable infinite something. He had only felt that it must exist somewhere and had looked for it In everything near and comprehensible he had seen only what was limited, petty, commonplace, and senseless He had equipped himself with a mental telescope and looked into remote space, where petty worldliness hiding itself in misty distance had seemed to him great and infinite merely because it was not clearly seen. And such had European life, politics, Freemasonry, philosophy, and philanthropy seemed to him. But even then, at moments of weakness as he had accounted them, his mind had penetrated to those distances and he had there seen the same pettiness, worldliness, and senselessness. Now, however, he had learned to see the great, eternal, and infinite in everything, and therefore—to see it and enjoy its contemplation—he naturally threw away the telescope through which he had till now gazed over men's heads, and gladly regarded the ever-changing, eternally great, unfathomable, and infinite life around him. And the closer he looked the more tranquil and happy he became. That dreadful question, "What for?" which had formerly destroyed all his mental edifices, no longer existed for him To that question, "What for?" a simple answer was now always ready in his soul· "Because there is a God, that God without whose will not one hair falls from a man's head."

[Translation by Louise and Aylmer Maude]

THE COSSACKS

This is no place to go into the history of the Cossacks, a warlike people that came into being toward the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century, coincidently with the appearance in Europe of brotherhoods and knighthood orders. In its early days this race, welded together by encroachments of marauders, became marauders for protection, it also warred for its faith, which was Orthodox Greek. Subject to external pressure, the Cossacks underwent a series of developments, even during the century covered by this anthology. These changes are revealed by three writers separated in the century by time—Gogol, Tolstoy, and Sholokhov. Of these, Gogol and Sholokhov were Cossacks themselves, but the genius of Tolstoy was able to overcome his apparent disadvantage by the sheer power of observation and insight.

The selection from Gogol is the first chapter of Taras Bulba, *a work unique of its kind in Russian literature, often called a Homeric epic, but full of the characteristic Gogolian humor.*

The Tolstoy selection is from The Cossacks, *the scene of which is laid in the Caucasus in the middle of the century. Both Eroshka and Maryanka were real characters, and the episodes are not without a measure of autobiography.*

The Sholokhov selections are, of course, from his Silent Don, *the collective title of his splendid Don series; and these bring us to the Cossacks of our own time, and to their conquest, inner and outer, by the Soviets.*

Nikolay Gogol

TARAS BULBA

TARAS BULBA AND HIS SONS

"Turn round, my boy! How ridiculous you look! What sort of a priest's cassock have you got on? Does everybody at the academy dress like that?"

With such words did old Bulba greet his two sons, who had been absent for their education at the Royal Seminary of Kiev and had now returned home to their father.

His sons had but just dismounted from their horses. They were a couple of stout lads who still looked bashful, as became youths recently released from the seminary Their firm healthy faces were covered with the first down of manhood, down which had, as yet, never known a razor. They were greatly discomfited by such a reception from their father, and stood motionless with eyes fixed upon the ground.

"Stand still, stand still! let me have a good look at you," he continued, turning them round. "How long your gaberdines are! What gaberdines! There never were such gaberdines in the world before. Just run, one of you! I want to see whether you will not get entangled in the skirts, and fall down"

"Don't laugh, don't laugh, father!" said the eldest lad at length.

"How touchy we are! Why shouldn't I laugh?"

"Because, although you are my father, if you laugh, by heavens, I will strike you!"

"What kind of a son are you? What, strike your father!" exclaimed Taras Bulba, retreating several paces in amazement.

"Yes, even my father. I don't stop to consider persons when an insult is in question."

"So you want to fight me? with your fist, eh?"

"Any way"

"Well, let it be fisticuffs," said Taras Bulba, turning up his sleeves. "I'll see what sort of a man you are with your fists"

And father and son, in lieu of a pleasant greeting after long separation, began to deal each other heavy blows on ribs, back, and chest, now retreating and looking at each other, now attacking afresh.

"Look, good people! The old man has gone mad! He has lost his

senses completely!" screamed their pale, ugly, kindly mother, who was standing on the threshold and had not yet succeeded in embracing her darling children. "The children have come home, we have not seen them for over a year; and now he has taken some strange freak—he's pommeling them."

"Yes, he fights well," said Bulba, pausing. "Well, by heavens!" he continued, rather as if excusing himself, "although he has never tried his hand at it before, he will make a good Cossack! Now, welcome, son! embrace me" And father and son began to kiss each other. "Good lad! See that you hit everyone as you pommeled me; don't let anyone escape. Nevertheless, your clothes are ridiculous all the same. What rope is this hanging here?—And you, you lout, why are you standing there with your hands hanging beside you?" he added, turning to the youngest. "Why don't you fight me? you son of a dog!"

"What an idea!" said the mother, who had managed in the meantime to embrace her youngest "Whoever heard of children fighting their own father? That's enough for the present, the child is young, he has had a long journey, he is tired." The child was over twenty, and about six feet high. "He ought to rest and eat something; and you set him to fighting!"

"You are a gabbler!" said Bulba "Don't listen to your mother, my lad; she is a woman, and knows nothing What sort of petting do you need? A clear field and a good horse, that's the kind of petting for you! And do you see this sword? That's your mother! All the rest people stuff your heads with is rubbish—the academy, books, primers, philosophy, and all that, I spit upon it all!" Here Bulba added a word which is not used in print. "But I'll tell you what is best: I'll take you to Zaporozhe* this very week. That's where there's science for you! There's your school; there alone will you gain sense."

"And are they only to remain at home a week?" said the worn old mother sadly and with tears in her eyes. "The poor boys will have no chance of looking around, no chance of getting acquainted with the home where they were born, there will be no chance for me to get a look at them."

"Enough, you've howled quite enough, old woman! A Cossack is not born to run around after women You would like to hide them both under your petticoat, and sit upon them as a hen sits on eggs. Go, go, and let us have everything there is on the table in a trice. We don't want any dumplings, honey cakes, poppy cakes, or any other such messes: give us a whole sheep, a goat, mead forty years old, and as much corn brandy as possible, not with raisins and all sorts of stuff, but plain scorching corn brandy, which foams and hisses like mad."

Bulba led his sons into the principal room of the hut; and two

* The Cossack country beyond (*za*) the falls (*porozhe*) of the Dnieper.

pretty servant girls, wearing coin necklaces, who were arranging the apartment, ran out quickly. They were either frightened at the arrival of the young men, who did not care to be familiar with anyone, or else they merely wanted to keep up their feminine custom of screaming and rushing away headlong at the sight of a man, and then screening their blushes for some time with their sleeves The hut was furnished according to the fashion of that period—a fashion concerning which hints linger only in the songs and lyrics, no longer sung, alas! in the Ukraine as of yore by blind old men, to the soft tinkling of the native guitar, to the people thronging round them—according to the taste of that warlike and troublous time, of leagues and battles prevailing in the Ukraine after the union. Everything was cleanly smeared with colored clay On the walls hung sabers, hunting whips, nets for birds, fishing nets, guns, elaborately carved powder horns, gilded bits for horses, and tether ropes with silver plates The small window had round dull panes, through which it was impossible to see except by opening the one movable one. Around the windows and doors red bands were painted. On shelves in one corner, stood jugs, bottles, and flasks of green and blue glass, carved silver cups, and gilded drinking vessels of various makes—Venetian, Turkish, Tscherkessian, which had reached Bulba's cabin by various roads, at third and fourth hand, a thing common enough in those bold days. There were birchwood benches all around the room, a huge table under the holy pictures in one corner, and a huge stove covered with parti-colored patterns in relief, with spaces between it and the wall. All this was quite familiar to the two young men, who were wont to come home every year during the dog days, since they had no horses and it was not customary to allow students to ride afield on horseback. The only distinctive things permitted them were long locks of hair on the temples, which every Cossack who bore weapons was entitled to pull. It was only at the end of their course of study that Bulba had sent them a couple of young stallions from his stud.

Bulba, on the occasion of his sons' arrival, ordered all the *sotniks,* or captains of hundreds, and all the officers of the band who were of any consequence, to be summoned, and when two of them arrived with his old comrade, the *Osaul,* or sub-chief, Dmitro Tovkatch, he immediately presented the lads, saying, "See what fine young fellows they are! I shall send them to the Setch * shortly." The guests congratulated Bulba and the young men, telling them they would do well and that there was no better knowledge for a young man than a knowledge of that same Zaporozhian Setch.

"Come, brothers, seat yourselves, each where he likes best, at the table; come, my sons. First of all, let's take some corn brandy," said

* The village or, rather, permanent camp of the Zaporozhian Cossacks

Bulba. "God bless you! Welcome, lads; you, Ostap, and you, Andrii. God grant that you may always be successful in war, that you may beat the Mussulmans and the Turks and the Tatars; and that when the Poles undertake any expedition against our faith, you may beat the Poles. Come, clink your glasses. How now? Is the brandy good? What's corn brandy in Latin? The Latins were stupid· they did not know there was such a thing in the world as corn brandy. What was the name of the man who wrote Latin verses? I don't know much about reading and writing, so I don't quite know. Wasn't it Horace?"

"What a dad!" thought the elder son, Ostap. "The old dog knows everything, but he always pretends the contrary."

"I don't believe the archimandrite allowed you so much as a smell of corn brandy," continued Taras. "Confess, my boys, they thrashed you well with fresh birch twigs on your backs and all over your Cossack bodies; and perhaps, when you grew too sharp, they beat you with whips And not on Saturday only, I fancy, but on Wednesday and Thursday."

"What is past, father, need not be recalled; it is done with."

"Let them try it now," said Andrii. "Let anybody just touch me, let any Tatar risk it now, and he'll soon learn what a Cossack's sword is like!"

"Good, my son, by heavens, good! And when it comes to that, I'll go with you; by heavens, I'll go too! What should I wait here for? To become a buckwheat reaper and housekeeper, to look after the sheep and swine, and loaf around with my wife? Away with such nonsense! I am a Cossack, I'll have none of it! What's left but war? I'll go with you to Zaporozhe to carouse; I'll go, by heavens!" And old Bulba, growing warm by degrees and finally quite angry, rose from the table and, assuming a dignified attitude, stamped his foot. "We will go tomorrow! Wherefore delay? What enemy can we besiege here? What is this hut to us? What do we want with all these things? What are pots and pans to us?" So saying, he began to knock over the pots and flasks, and to throw them about.

The poor old woman, well used to such freaks on the part of her husband, looked sadly on from her seat on the wall bench. She did not dare say a word; but when she heard the decision which was so terrible for her, she could not refrain from tears. As she looked at her children, from whom so speedy a separation was threatened, it is impossible to describe the full force of her speechless grief, which seemed to quiver in her eyes and on her lips convulsively pressed together.

Bulba was terribly headstrong. He was one of those characters which could only exist in that fierce fifteenth century, and in that half-nomadic corner of Europe, when the whole of southern Russia, deserted by its princes, was laid waste and burned to the quick by pitiless troops of Mongolian robbers; when men deprived of house and home

grew brave there; when, amid conflagrations, threatening neighbors, and eternal terrors, they settled down and, growing accustomed to looking these things straight in the face, trained themselves not to know that there was such a thing as fear in the world; when the old, peaceable Slav spirit was fired with warlike flame, and the Cossack state was instituted—a free, wild outbreak of Russian nature—and when all the riverbanks, fords, and like suitable places were peopled by Cossacks, whose number no man knew. Their bold comrades had a right to reply to the Sultan when he asked how many they were, "Who knows? We are scattered all over the steppes: wherever there is a hillock, there is a Cossack"

It was, in fact, a most remarkable exhibition of Russian strength, forced by dire necessity from the bosom of the people. In place of the original provinces with their petty towns, in place of the warring and bartering petty princes ruling in their cities, there arose great colonies, *kurens,** and districts, bound together by one common danger and hatred against the heathen robbers. The story is well known how their incessant warfare and restless existence saved Europe from the merciless hordes which threatened to overwhelm her. The Polish kings, who now found themselves sovereigns, in place of the provincial princes, over these extensive tracts of territory, fully understood, despite the weakness and remoteness of their own rule, the value of the Cossacks, and the advantages of the warlike, untrammeled life led by them They encouraged them and flattered this disposition of mind. Under their distant rule, the *hetmans,* or chiefs, chosen from among the Cossacks themselves, redistributed the territory into military districts It was not a standing army, no one saw it, but in case of war and general uprising, it required a week, and no more, for every man to appear on horseback, fully armed, receiving only one ducat from the king, and in two weeks such a force had assembled as no recruiting officers would ever have been able to collect. When the expedition was ended, the army dispersed among the fields and meadows and the fords of the Dnieper, each man fished, wrought at his trade, brewed his beer, and was once more a free Cossack. Their foreign contemporaries rightly marveled at their wonderful qualities There was no handicraft which the Cossack was not expert at: he could distill brandy, build a wagon, make powder, and do blacksmith's and gunsmith's work, in addition to committing wild excesses, drinking and carousing as only a Russian can—all this he was equal to Besides the registered Cossacks, who considered themselves bound to appear in arms in time of war, it was possible to collect at any time, in case of dire need, a whole army of volunteers. All that was required was for the *Osaul,* or sub-chief, to traverse the market places and squares of

* Cossack villages In the Setch, a large wooden barrack

the villages and hamlets, and shout at the top of his voice, as he stood in his wagon, "Hey, you distillers and beer-brewers! you have brewed enough beer, and lolled on your stoves, and stuffed your fat carcasses with flour, long enough! Rise, win glory and warlike honors! You plowmen, you reapers of buckwheat, you tenders of sheep, you danglers after women, enough of following the plow, and soiling your yellow shoes in the earth, and courting women, and wasting your warlike strength! The hour has come to win glory for the Cossacks!" These words were like sparks falling on dry wood The husbandman broke his plow; the brewers and distillers threw away their casks and destroyed their barrels; the mechanics and merchants sent their trade and their shop to the devil, broke the pots and everything else in their homes, and mounted their horses. In short, the Russian character here received a profound development and manifested a powerful outward expression.

Taras was one of the band of old-fashioned leaders; he was born for warlike emotions, and was distinguished for his uprightness of character. At that epoch the influence of Poland had already begun to make itself felt upon the Russian nobility. Many had adopted Polish customs, and began to display luxury in splendid staffs of servants, hawks, huntsmen, dinners, and palaces This was not to Taras' taste He liked the simple life of the Cossacks, and quarreled with those of his comrades who were inclined to the Warsaw party, calling them serfs of the Polish nobles. Ever on the alert, he regarded himself as the legal protector of the Orthodox faith. He entered despotically into any village where there was a general complaint of oppression by the revenue farmers and of the addition of fresh taxes on necessaries He and his Cossacks executed justice, and made it a rule that in three cases it was absolutely necessary to resort to the sword Namely, when the commissioners did not respect the superior officers and stood before them covered; when anyone made light of the faith and did not observe the customs of his ancestors; and, finally, when the enemy were Mussulmans or Turks, against whom he considered it permissible, in every case, to draw the sword for the glory of Christianity.

Now he rejoiced beforehand at the thought of how he would present himself with his two sons at the Setch and say, "See what fine young fellows I have brought you!" How he would introduce them to all his old comrades, steeled in warfare; how he would observe their first exploits in the sciences of war and of drinking, which was also regarded as one of the principal warlike qualities. At first he had intended to send them forth alone; but at the sight of their freshness, stature, and manly personal beauty, his martial spirit flamed up and he resolved to go with them himself the very next day, although there was no necessity for this except his obstinate self-will He began at once to hurry about and give orders; selected horses and trappings for

his sons, looked through the stables and storehouses, and chose servants to accompany them on the morrow. He delegated his power to Osaul Tovkatch, and gave with it a strict command to appear with his whole force at the Setch the very instant he should receive a message from him. Although he was jolly, and the effects of his drinking bout still lingered in his brain, he forgot nothing. He even gave orders that the horses should be watered, their cribs filled, and that they should be fed with the finest corn; and then he retired, fatigued with all his labors.

"Now, children, we must sleep, but tomorrow we shall do what God wills. Don't prepare us a bed. we need no bed; we will sleep in the courtyard."

Night had but just stolen over the heavens, but Bulba always went to bed early. He lay down on a rug and covered himself with a sheepskin pelisse, for the night air was quite sharp and he liked to lie warm when he was at home. He was soon snoring, and the whole household speedily followed his example. All snored and groaned as they lay in different corners. The watchman went to sleep the first of all; he had drunk so much in honor of his young masters' homecoming.

The mother alone did not sleep. She bent over the pillow of her beloved sons, as they lay side by side; she smoothed with a comb their carelessly tangled locks, and moistened them with her tears. She gazed at them with her whole soul, with every sense; she was wholly merged in the gaze, and yet she could not gaze enough She had fed them at her own breast, she had tended them and brought them up, and now to see them only for an instant! "My sons, my darling sons! What will become of you? What fate awaits you?" she said, and tears stood in the wrinkles which disfigured her once beautiful face. In truth, she was to be pitied, as was every woman of that period. She had lived only for a moment of love, only during the first ardor of passion, only during the first flush of youth; and then her grim betrayer had deserted her for the sword, for his comrades and his carouses. She saw her husband two or three days in a year, and then, for several years, heard nothing of him And when she did see him, when they did live together, what a life was hers! She endured insult, even blows; she felt caresses bestowed only in pity; she was a misplaced object in that community of unmarried warriors, upon which wandering Zaporozhe cast a coloring of its own Her pleasureless youth flitted by; her ripe cheeks and bosom withered away unkissed and became covered with premature wrinkles. Love, feeling, everything that is tender and passionate in a woman, was converted in her into maternal love She hovered around her children with anxiety, passion, tears, like the gull of the steppes. They were taking her sons, her darling sons, from her—taking them from her, so that she should never see them again! Who knew? Perhaps a Tatar would cut off their heads in the very

first skirmish, and she would never know where their deserted bodies might lie, torn by birds of prey; and yet for each single drop of their blood she would have given all hers Sobbing, she gazed into their eyes, even when all-powerful sleep began to close them, and thought, "Perhaps Bulba, when he wakes, will put off their departure for a day or two, perhaps it occurred to him to go so soon because he had been drinking"

The moon from the summit of the heavens had long since lit up the whole courtyard filled with sleepers, the thick clump of willows, and the tall steppe-grass, which hid the palisade surrounding the court She still sat at her sons' pillow, never removing her eyes from them for a moment, nor thinking of sleep. Already the horses, divining the approach of dawn, had ceased eating and lain down upon the grass, the topmost leaves of the willows began to rustle softly, and little by little the rippling rustle descended to their bases She sat there until daylight, unwearied, and wishing in her heart that the night might prolong itself indefinitely From the steppes came the ringing neigh of the horses, and red streaks shone brightly in the sky. Bulba suddenly awoke, and sprang to his feet He remembered quite well what he had ordered the night before "Now, my men, you've slept enough! 'Tis time, 'tis time! Water the horses! And where is the old woman?" He generally called his wife so. "Be quick, old woman, get us something to eat; the way is long"

The poor old woman, deprived of her last hope, slipped sadly into the hut.

While she, with tears, prepared what was needed for breakfast, Bulba gave his orders, went to the stable, and selected his best trappings for his children with his own hand

The scholars were suddenly transformed Red morocco boots with silver heels took the place of their dirty old ones, trousers wide as the Black Sea, with countless folds and pleats, were kept up by golden girdles from which hung long slender thongs, with tassels and other tinkling things, for pipes Their jackets of scarlet cloth were girt by flowered sashes into which were thrust engraved Turkish pistols, their swords clanked at their heels Their faces, already a little sunburned, seemed to have grown handsomer and whiter; their slight black mustaches now cast a more distinct shadow on this pallor and set off their healthy, youthful complexions They looked very handsome in their black sheepskin caps with cloth-of-gold crowns.

When their poor mother saw them, she could not utter a word, and tears stood in her eyes.

"Now, my lads, all is ready; no delay!" said Bulba at last. "But we must first all sit down together, in accordance with Christian custom before a journey."

All sat down, not excepting the servants, who had been standing respectfully at the door.

"Now, mother, bless your children," said Bulba. "Pray God that they may fight bravely, always defend their warlike honor, always defend the faith of Christ; and, if not, that they may die, so that their breath may not be longer in the world."

"Come to your mother, children; a mother's prayer protects on land and sea."

The mother, weak as mothers are, embraced them, drew out two small holy pictures, and hung them, sobbing, around their necks. "May God's mother—keep you! Children, do not forget your mother —send some little word of yourselves—" She could say no more.

"Now, children, let us go," said Bulba.

At the door stood the horses, ready saddled. Bulba sprang upon his "Devil," which bounded wildly, on feeling on his back a load of over thirty stone, for Taras was extremely stout and heavy.

When the mother saw that her sons were also mounted, she rushed toward the younger, whose features expressed somewhat more gentleness than those of his brother. She grasped his stirrup, clung to his saddle, and with despair in her eyes, refused to loose her hold. Two stout Cossacks seized her carefully and bore her back into the hut. But before the cavalcade had passed out of the courtyard, she rushed with the speed of a wild goat, quite disproportionate to her years, to the gate, stopped a horse with irresistible strength, and embraced one of her sons with mad, unconscious violence. Then they led her away again.

The young Cossacks rode on sadly, repressing their tears out of fear of their father, who, on his side, was somewhat moved, although he strove not to show it. The morning was gray, the green sward bright, the birds twittered rather discordantly. They glanced back as they rode. Their paternal farm seemed to have sunk into the earth. All that was visible above the surface were the two chimneys of their modest hut and the tops of the trees up whose trunks they had been used to climb like squirrels. Before them still stretched the field by which they could recall the whole story of their lives, from the years when they rolled in its dewy grass down to the years when they awaited in it the dark-browed Cossack maiden, running timidly across it on quick young feet. There is the pole above the well, with the wagon wheel fastened to its top, rising solitary against the sky; already the level which they have traversed appears a hill in the distance, and now all has disappeared. Farewell, childhood, games, all, all, farewell!

Leo Tolstoy

THE COSSACKS

EROSHKA, THE OLD COSSACK

It was quite true that Olenin had been walking about the yard when Maryanka entered the gate, and had heard her say, "That devil, our lodger, is walking about." He had spent that evening with Daddy Eroshka in the porch of his new lodging. He had had a table, a samovar, wine, and a candle brought out, and over a cup of tea and a cigar he listened to the tales the old man told seated on the threshold at his feet. Though the air was still, the candle dripped and flickered: now lighting up the post of the porch, now the table and crockery, now the dropped white head of the old man. Moths circled round the flame and, shedding the dust of their wings, fluttered on the table and in the glasses, flew into the candle flame, and disappeared in the black space beyond Olenin and Eroshka had emptied five bottles of *chikhir*. Eroshka filled the glasses every time, offering one to Olenin, drinking his health, and talking untiringly. He told of Cossack life in the old days: of his father, "The Broad," who alone had carried on his back a boar's carcass weighing three hundredweight, and drank two pails of *chikhir* at one sitting He told of his own days and his chum Girchik, with whom during the plague he used to smuggle felt cloaks across the Terek. He told how one morning he had killed two deer, and about his "little soul" who used to run to him at the cordon at night. He told all this so eloquently and picturesquely that Olenin did not notice how time passed. "Ah yes, my dear fellow, you did not know me in my golden days; then I'd have shown you things. Today it's 'Eroshka licks the jug,' but then Eroshka was famous in the whole regiment. Whose was the finest horse? Who had a Gurda * sword? To whom should one go to get a drink? With whom go on the spree? Who should be sent to the mountains to kill Ahmet Khan? Why, always Eroshka! Whom did the girls love? Always Eroshka had to answer for it. Because I was a real brave: a drinker, a thief (I used to seize herds of horses in the mountains), a singer; I was a master of every art! There are no Cossacks like that nowadays. It's disgusting to look at them. When they're that high (Eroshka held his hand three feet from the ground) they put on idiotic boots and keep looking at them—that's all the pleasure they know. Or they'll drink themselves foolish, not like men

* The swords and daggers most highly valued in the Caucasus are called by the name of the maker—Gurda.

but all wrong. And who was I? I was Eroshka, the thief; they knew me not only in this village but up in the mountains. Tartar princes, my *kunaks,* used to come to see me! I used to be everybody's *kunak.* If he was a Tartar—with a Tartar; an Armenian—with an Armenian; a soldier—with a soldier; an officer—with an officer! I didn't care as long as he was a drinker. He says you should cleanse yourself from intercourse with the world, not drink with soldiers, not eat with a Tartar"

"Who says all that?" asked Olenin.

"Why, our teacher! But listen to a Mullah or a Tartar Cadi. He says, 'You unbelieving Giaours, why do you eat pig?' That shows that everyone has his own law. But I think it's all one. God has made everything for the joy of man. There is no sin in any of it Take example from an animal. It lives in the Tartar's reeds or in ours. Wherever it happens to go, there is its home! Whatever God gives it, that it eats! But our people say we have to lick red-hot plates in hell for that. And I think it's all a fraud," he added after a pause.

"What is a fraud?" asked Olenin.

"Why, what the preachers say. We had an army captain in Chervlena who was my *kunak*· a fine fellow just like me. He was killed in Chechnya. Well, he used to say that the preachers invent all that out of their own heads. 'When you die the grass will grow on your grave and that's all!'" The old man laughed. "He was a desperate fellow."

"And how old are you?" asked Olenin.

"The Lord only knows! I must be about seventy. When a Tsaritsa reigned in Russia* I was no longer very small. So you can reckon it out I must be seventy."

"Yes you must, but you are still a fine fellow."

"Well, thank Heaven I am healthy, quite healthy, except that a woman, a witch, has harmed me...."

"How?"

"Oh, just harmed me."

"And so when you die the grass will grow?" repeated Olenin.

Eroshka evidently did not wish to express his thought clearly. He was silent for a while.

"And what did you think? Drink!" he shouted suddenly, smiling and handing Olenin some wine.

"Well, what was I saying?" he continued, trying to remember. "Yes, that's the sort of man I am I am a hunter. There is no hunter to equal me in the whole army. .I will find and show you any animal and any bird, and what and where. I know it all! I have dogs, and two guns, and nets, and a screen and a hawk. I have everything, thank

* Catherine the Great died in 1799

the Lord! If you are not bragging but are a real sportsman, I'll show you everything. Do you know what a man I am? When I have found a track—I know the animal. I know where he will lie down and where he'll drink or wallow. I make myself a perch and sit there all night watching. What's the good of staying at home? One only gets into mischief, gets drunk. And here women come and chatter, and boys shout at me—enough to drive one mad. It's a different matter when you go out at nightfall, choose yourself a place, press down the reeds, and sit there and stay waiting, like a jolly fellow. One knows everything that goes on in the woods. One looks up at the sky: the stars move, you look at them and find out from them how the time goes. One looks round—the wood is rustling; one goes on waiting, now there comes a crackling—a boar comes to rub himself; one listens to hear the young eaglets screech and then the cocks give voice in the village, or the geese. When you hear the geese you know it is not yet midnight. And I know all about it! Or when a gun is fired somewhere far away, thoughts come to me. One thinks, 'Who *is that firing? Is it another Cossack like myself who has been watching* for some animal? And has he killed it? Or only wounded it so that now the poor thing goes through the reeds smearing them with its blood all for nothing? I don't like that! Oh, how I dislike it! Why injure a beast? You fool, you fool!' Or one thinks, 'Maybe an *abrek* has killed some silly little Cossack.' All this passes through one's mind. And once as I sat watching by the river I saw a cradle floating down. It was sound except for one corner, which was broken off. Thoughts did come that time! I thought some of your soldiers, the devils, must have got into a Tartar village and seized the Chechen women, and one of the devils has killed the little one· taken it by its legs and hit its head against a wall. Don't they do such things? Sh! Men have no souls! And thoughts came to me that filled me with pity. I thought: 'They've thrown away the cradle and driven the wife out, and her brave has taken his gun and come across to our side to rob us' One watches and thinks. And when one hears a litter breaking through the thicket, something begins to knock inside one Dear one, come this way! 'They'll scent me,' one thinks; and one sits and does not stir while one's heart does dun! dun! dun! and simply lifts you. Once this spring a fine litter came near me, I saw something black. 'In the name of the Father and of the Son,' and I was just about to fire when she grunts to her pigs, 'Danger, children,' she says, 'there's a man here,' and off they all ran, breaking through the bushes. And she had been so close I could almost have bitten her."

"How could a sow tell her brood that a man was there?" asked Olenin.

"What do you think? You think the beast's a fool? No, he is wiser than a man, though you do call him a pig! He knows everything.

Take this, for instance: A man will pass along your track and not notice it; but a pig as soon as it gets onto your track turns and runs at once: that shows there is wisdom in him, since he scents your smell and you don't. And there is this to be said too: You wish to kill it and it wishes to go about the woods alive. You have one law and it has another. It is a pig, but it is no worse than you—it too is God's creature. Ah, dear! Man is foolish, foolish, foolish!" The old man repeated this several times and then, letting his head drop, he sat thinking.

Olenin also became thoughtful, and, descending from the porch with his hands behind his back, began pacing up and down the yard.

Eroshka, rousing himself, raised his head and began gazing intently at the moths circling round the flickering flame of the candle and burning themselves in it.

"Fool, fool!" he said. "Where are you flying to? Fool, fool!" He rose and with his thick fingers began to drive away the moths.

"You'll burn, little fool! Fly this way, there's plenty of room" He spoke tenderly, trying to catch them delicately by their wings with his thick fingers and then letting them fly again. "You are killing yourself and I am sorry for you!"

He sat a long time chattering and sipping out of the bottle. Olenin paced up and down the yard Suddenly he was struck by the sound of whispering outside the gate. Involuntarily holding his breath, he heard a woman's laughter, a man's voice, and the sound of a kiss. Intentionally rustling the grass under his feet, he crossed to the opposite side of the yard, but after a while the wattle fence creaked A Cossack in a dark Circassian coat and a white sheepskin cap passed along the other side of the fence (it was Luke), and a tall woman with a white kerchief on her head went past Olenin. "You and I have nothing to do with one another" was what Maryanka's firm step gave him to understand He followed her with his eyes to the porch of the hut, and he even saw her through the window take off her kerchief and sit down. And suddenly a feeling of lonely depression and some vague longings and hopes, and envy of someone or other, overcame the young man's soul.

The last lights had been put out in the huts. The last sounds had died away in the village. The wattle fences and the cattle gleaming white in the yards, the roofs of the houses and the stately poplars, all seemed to be sleeping the laborers' healthy peaceful sleep Only the incessant ringing voices of frogs from the damp distance reached the young man. In the east the stars were growing fewer and fewer and seemed to be melting in the increasing light, but overhead they were denser and deeper than before. The old man was dozing with his head on his hand. A cock crowed in the yard opposite, but Olenin still paced up and down thinking of something The sound of a song sung by several voices reached him and he stepped up to the fence

and listened. The voices of several young Cossacks caroled a merry song, and one voice was distinguishable among them all by its firm strength.

"Do you know who is singing there?" said the old man, rousing himself "It is the Brave, Lukashka. He has killed a Chechen and now he rejoices. And what is there to rejoice at?...The fool, the fool!"

"And have you ever killed people?" asked Olenin.

"You devil!" shouted the old man "What are you asking? One must not talk so. It is a serious thing to destroy a human being.... Ah, a very serious thing! Good-by, my dear fellow. I've eaten my fill and am drunk," he said, rising. "Shall I come tomorrow to go shooting?"

"Yes, come!"

"Mind, get up early; if you oversleep you will be fined!"

"Never fear, I'll be up before you," answered Olenin.

The old man left. The song ceased, but one could hear footsteps and merry talk A little later the singing broke out again but farther away, and Eroshka's loud voice chimed in with the other. "What people, what a life!" thought Olenin with a sigh as he returned alone to his hut.

Daddy Eroshka was a superannuated and solitary Cossack: twenty years ago his wife had gone over to the Orthodox Church and run away from him and married a Russian sergeant major, and he had no children. He was not bragging when he spoke of himself as having been the boldest daredevil in the village when he was young. Everybody in the regiment knew of his old-time prowess. The death of more than one Russian, as well as Chechen, lay on his conscience. He used to go plundering in the mountains, and robbed the Russians too; and he had twice been in prison. The greater part of his life was spent in the forests, hunting. There he lived for days on a crust of bread and drank nothing but water. But, on the other hand, when he was in the village he made merry from morning to night. After leaving Olenin he slept for a couple of hours and awoke before it was light. He lay on his bed thinking of the man he had become acquainted with the evening before. Olenin's "simplicity" (simplicity in the sense of not grudging him a drink) pleased him very much, and so did Olenin himself. He wondered why the Russians were all "simple" and so rich, and why they were educated, and yet knew nothing. He pondered on these questions and also considered what he might get out of Olenin.

Daddy Eroshka's hut was of a good size and not old, but the absence of a woman was very noticeable in it. Contrary to the usual cleanliness of the Cossacks, the whole of this hut was filthy and exceedingly un-

tidy. A blood-stained coat had been thrown on the table, half a dough-cake lay beside a plucked and mangled crow with which to feed the hawk. Sandals of rawhide, a gun, a dagger, a little bag, wet clothes, and sundry rags lay scattered on the benches. In a corner stood a tub with stinking water, in which another pair of sandals were being steeped, and near by was a gun and a hunting screen. On the floor a net had been thrown down and several dead pheasants lay there, while a hen tied by its leg was walking about near the table pecking among the dirt. In the unheated oven stood a broken pot with some kind of milky liquid. On the top of the oven a falcon was screeching and trying to break the cord by which it was tied, and a molting hawk sat quietly on the edge of the oven, looking askance at the hen and occasionally bowing its head to right and left. Daddy Eroshka himself, in his shirt, lay on his back on a short bed rigged up between the wall and the oven, with his strong legs raised and his feet on the oven. He was picking with his thick fingers at the scratches left on his hands by the hawk, which he was accustomed to carry without wearing gloves. The whole room, especially near the old man, was filled with that strong but not unpleasant mixture of smells that he always carried about with him

"*Uyde-ma,* Daddy?" ("Is Daddy in?") came through the window a sharp voice, which he at once recognized as Lukashka's.

"*Uyde, Uyde, Uyde.* I am in!" shouted the old man. "Come in, neighbor Mark, Luke Mark. Come to see Daddy? On your way to the cordon?"

At the sound of his master's shout the hawk flapped his wings and pulled at his cord.

The old man was fond of Lukashka, who was the only man he excepted from his general contempt for the younger generation of Cossacks. Besides that, Lukashka and his mother, as near neighbors, often gave the old man wine, clotted cream, and other home produce which Eroshka did not possess. Daddy Eroshka, who all his life had allowed himself to get carried away, always explained his infatuations from a practical point of view. "Well, why not?" he used to say to himself. "I'll give them some fresh meat, or a bird, and they won't forget Daddy· they'll sometimes bring a cake or a piece of pie"

"Good morning, Mark! I am glad to see you," shouted the old man cheerfully, and, quickly putting down his bare feet, he jumped off his bed and walked a step or two along the creaking floor, looked down at his out-turned toes, and suddenly, amused by the appearance of his feet, smiled, stamped with his bare heel on the ground, stamped again, and then performed a funny dance step. "That's clever, eh?" he asked, his small eyes glistening. Lukashka smiled faintly. "Going back to the cordon?" asked the old man.

"I have brought the *chikhir* I promised you when we were at the cordon"

"May Christ save you!" said the old man, and he took up the extremely wide trousers that were lying on the floor, and his *beshmet*, put them on, fastened a strap round his waist, poured some water from an earthenware pot over his hands, wiped them on the old trousers, smoothed his beard with a bit of comb, and stopped in front of Lukashka. "Ready," he said.

Lukashka fetched a cup, wiped it and filled it with wine, and then handed it to the old man.

"Your health! To the Father and the Son!" said the old man, accepting the wine with solemnity "May you have what you desire, may you always be a hero, and obtain a cross"

Lukashka also drank a little after repeating a prayer, and then put the wine on the table The old man rose and brought out some dried fish, which he laid on the threshold, where he beat it with a stick to make it tender; then, having put it with his horny hands on a blue plate (his only one), he placed it on the table.

"I have all I want I have victuals, thank God!" he said proudly. "Well, and what of Mosev?" he added

Lukashka, evidently wishing to know the old man's opinion, told him how the officer had taken the gun from him.

"Never mind the gun," said the old man "If you don't give the gun you will get no reward."

"But they say, Daddy, it's little reward a fellow gets when he is not yet a mounted Cossack, and the gun is a fine one, a Crimean, worth eighty roubles."

"Eh, let it go! I had a dispute like that with an officer, he wanted my horse 'Give it me and you'll be made a cornet,' says he I wouldn't, and I got nothing!"

"Yes, Daddy, but you see I have to buy a horse; and they say you can't get one the other side of the river under fifty roubles, and mother has not yet sold our wine"

"Eh, we didn't bother," said the old man; "when Daddy Eroshka was your age he already stole herds of horses from the Nogay folk and drove them across the Terek. Sometimes we'd give a fine horse for a quart of vodka or a cloak."

"Why so cheap?" asked Lukashka

"You're a fool, a fool, Mark," said the old man contemptuously. "Why, that's what one steals for, so as not to be stingy! As for you, I suppose you haven't so much as seen how one drives off a herd of horses? Why don't you speak?"

"What's one to say, Daddy?" replied Lukashka "It seems we are not the same sort of men as you were."

"You're a fool, Mark, a fool! 'Not the same sort of men!'" retorted

the old man, mimicking the Cossack lad. "I was not that sort of Cossack at your age."

"How's that?" asked Lukashka.

The old man shook his head contemptuously.

"Daddy Eroshka was *simple,* he did not grudge anything! That's why I was *kunak* with all Chechnya A *kunak* would come to visit me and I'd make him drunk with vodka and make him happy and put him to sleep with me, and when I went to see him I'd take him a present—a dagger! That's the way it is done, and not as you do nowadays. the only amusement lads have now is to crack seeds and spit out the shells!" the old man finished contemptuously, imitating the present-day Cossacks cracking seeds and spitting out the shells.

"Yes, I know," said Lukashka; "that's so!"

"If you wish to be a fellow of the right sort, be a brave and not a peasant! Because even a peasant can buy a horse—pay the money and take the horse"

They were silent for a while.

"Well, of course it's dull both in the village and the cordon, Daddy: but there's nowhere one can go for a bit of sport All our fellows are so timid Take Nazarka The other day when we went to the Tartar village, Girey Khan asked us to come to Nogay to take some horses, but no one went, and how was I to go alone?"

"And what of Daddy? Do you think I am quite dried up?...No, I'm not dried up Let me have a horse and I'll be off to Nogay at once"

"What's the good of talking nonsense!" said Luke "You'd better tell me what to do about Girey Khan He says, 'Only bring horses to the Terek, and then even if you bring a whole stud I'll find a place for them' You see he's also a shaven-headed Tartar—how's one to believe him?"

"You may trust Girey Khan, all his kin were good people. His father too was a faithful *kunak* But listen to Daddy and I won't teach you wrong· make him take an oath, then it will be all right And if you go with him, have your pistol ready all the same, especially when it comes to dividing up the horses I was nearly killed that way once by a Chechen I wanted ten roubles from him for a horse. Trusting is all right, but don't go to sleep without a gun"

Lukashka listened attentively to the old man.

"I say, Daddy, have you any stone-break grass?" he asked after a pause

"No, I haven't any, but I'll teach you how to get it You're a good lad and won't forget the old man....Shall I tell you?"

"Tell me, Daddy"

"You know a tortoise? She's a devil, the tortoise is!"

"Of course I know!"

"Find her nest and fence it round so that she can't get in. Well, she'll come, go round it, and then will go off to find the stone-break grass and will bring some along and destroy the fence. Anyhow, next morning come in good time, and where the fence is broken there you'll find the stone-break grass lying. Take it wherever you like. No lock and no bar will be able to stop you."

"Have you tried it yourself, Daddy?"

"As for trying, I have not tried it, but I was told of it by good people. I used only one charm: that was to repeat the Pilgrim rhyme when mounting my horse; and no one ever killed me!"

"What is the Pilgrim rhyme, Daddy?"

"What, don't you know it? Oh, what people! You're right to ask Daddy. Well, listen, and repeat after me:

"Hail! Ye, living in Sion,
This is your King,
Our steeds we shall sit on,
Sophonius is weeping;
Zacharias is speaking,
Father Pilgrim,
Mankind ever loving"

"Kind ever loving," the old man repeated. "Do you know it now? Try it"

Lukashka laughed

"Come, Daddy, was it that that hindered their killing you? Maybe it just happened so!"

"You've grown too clever! You learn it all, and say it It will do you no harm Well, suppose you have sung 'Pilgrim'; it's all right," and the old man himself began laughing. "But just one thing, Luke, don't you go to Nogay!"

"Why?"

"Times have changed. You are not the same men You've become rubbishy Cossacks! And see how many Russians have come down on us! You'd get to prison. Really, give it up! Just as if you could! Now Girchik and I, we used. ."

And the old man was about to begin one of his endless tales, but Lukashka glanced at the window and interrupted him.

"It is quite light, Daddy It's time to be off Look us up some day"

"May Christ save you! I'll go to the officer; I promised to take him out shooting. He seems a good fellow."

Mikhail Sholokhov

THE SILENT DON

URIUPIN

During August the Twelfth Cavalry Division took town after town by storm and by the end of the month they were deployed around the town of Kamenka-Strumilovo. The reconnaissance patrols reported that considerable forces of enemy cavalry were approaching the town. In the woods along the roads little battles broke out where the Cossack outposts came into collision with the enemy advance guards.

During all the days since he saw his brother, Gregor Melekhov had sought to put an end to his painful thoughts and to recover his former tranquillity of spirit But he was unable. Among the last reinforcements from the second line of reservists a Cossack from the Kazan district, Alexey Uriupin, had been drafted into Gregor's troop. Uriupin was tall, round-shouldered, with an aggressive lower jaw and drooping Kalmyk whiskers His merry, fearless eyes were always smiling, and he was bald, with only scanty ruddy hair around the edges of his angular cranium. On the very first day of his arrival he was nicknamed "Tufty."

After fighting around Broda the regiment had a few days' respite. Gregor and Uriupin were quartered in the same hut. One evening after feeding their horses they were smoking, their backs against a moss-grown, decrepit fence. Hussars were riding four abreast along the street; dead bodies were littered in the yards, for fighting had occurred in the suburbs. The town was one immense destruction and loathsome emptiness in the colorful early evening hour.

Suddenly Uriupin remarked·

"You know, Melekhov, you're molting or something."

"What do you mean by 'molting'?" Gregor asked, his face clouding.

"You're all limp, as though you're ill," Uriupin explained.

"I'm all right," Gregor spat out, not looking at the other.

"You're lying! I've got eyes to see!"

"Well, and what can you see?"

"You're afraid! Is it death you fear?"

"You're a fool!" Gregor said contemptuously, staring at his fingernails.

"Tell me, have you killed anyone?"

"Yes. What of it?"

"Does it weigh on your mind?"

"Weigh on my mind?" Gregor laughed.

Uriupin drew his saber from its sheath. "Would you like me to chop your head off?" he asked.

"What for?"

"I can kill a man without sighing over it I have no pity." Uriupin's eyes were smiling, but by his voice and the rapacious quiver of his mouth Gregor realized that he meant what he said.

"You've got a soft heart," Uriupin added. "Do you know this stroke? Watch!" He selected an old birch tree in the hedge and went straight toward it, measuring the distance with his eyes. His long, venous arms with their unusually broad wrists hung motionless. "Watch!"

He slowly raised his saber and suddenly swung it slantwise with terrible force. Completely severed four feet from the ground, the birch toppled over, its branches scraping at the window and clawing the walls of the hut.

"Did you see that? I'll teach you the stroke. You could cut a horse in two like that."

It took Gregor a long time to master the technique of the new stroke. "You're strong, but you're a fool with your saber. This is the way!" Uriupin instructed him. "Cut a man down boldly! Man is as soft as butter! Don't think about the why and the wherefore. You're a Cossack, and it's your business to cut down without asking questions. To kill your enemy in battle is a holy work. For every man you kill, God will wipe out one of your sins, just as He does for killing a serpent. You mustn't kill an animal unless it's necessary, but destroy man! He's a heathen, unclean; he poisons the earth; his life is like a toadstool!"

When Gregor raised objections he only frowned and lapsed into an obstinate silence.

Gregor noticed with astonishment that all horses were afraid of Uriupin. When he went near them, they would prick up their ears and bunch together as though an animal were approaching, and not a man. On one occasion the company had to attack over a wooded and swampy district and took to their feet, the horses being led aside into a dell. Uriupin was among those assigned to take charge of the horses, but he flatly refused.

"Uriupin, why the devil don't you lead away your horses?" The troop sergeant flew at him.

"They're afraid of me. God's truth, they are!" he replied.

He never took his turn at minding the horses. He was kind enough to his own mount, but Gregor observed that whenever he went up to it a shiver ran down the animal's back, and it fidgeted uneasily.

"Tell me, why are the horses afraid of you?" Gregor once asked him.

"I don't know," he replied with a shrug of his shoulders. "I'm kind enough to them."

"They know a drunken man and are afraid of him; but you're always sober."

"I have a hard heart, and they seem to feel it."

"You have a wolf's heart. Or maybe it's a stone you've got and not a heart at all."

"Maybe," Uriupin willingly agreed.

A COSSACK WOMAN'S PITY

That day Kudynov called a strictly secret conference at the staff headquarters and did not invite Gregor to be present. The Don Army officer who had arrived in the airplane briefly communicated that at any day now the Red front would be broken by the forces of the shock column concentrated around Kamenskaya, and a mounted division of the Don Army, commanded by General Sekretov, would march to link up with the insurgents. The officer proposed that means of crossing the river should be prepared immediately, so that, after linking up with Sekretov's division, insurgent cavalry regiments could be thrown across to the right bank of the Don. He advised moving the reserve troops closer to the river and, right at the end of the conference, after the plan for transferring the troops across the river and their further operations had been worked out, he asked:

"But why have you got prisoners in Vieshenska?"

"We've got nowhere else to keep them; there aren't any suitable buildings in the hamlets outside," one of the staff answered.

The officer carefully wiped his clean-shaven, sweating head with a handkerchief, unbuttoned the collar of his khaki tunic, and said with a sigh.

"Send them to Kazanska."

Kudynov raised his eyebrows in amazement.

"And then?" he asked.

"And from there—back to Vieshenska," the officer condescendingly explained, screwing up his cold blue eyes. Pressing his lips together, he added harshly: "Really, gentlemen, I don't know why you're standing on ceremony with them. I should have thought the times were hardly suitable at the moment. These scum, who are spreading all kinds of diseases, both physical and social, have got to be exterminated. There's no point in playing the nursemaid with them. That's what I'd do if I were in your place."

The following day the first party of prisoners, numbering two hundred men, was marched out into the sands. Emaciated, deathly pale, hardly able to shift their legs, the Red Army men moved like shades. A mounted convoy closely surrounded the irregularly striding crowd. Some seven miles beyond the village the two hundred prisoners were sabered to the very last man. In the early evening a second party was driven out. The convoy was strictly enjoined only to saber the stragglers, and to fire only in the last resort. Of these one hundred and fifty men not more than seventeen reached Kazanska. One of the prisoners, a gypsy-looking young Red Army man, went out of his mind on the road All the way he sang, danced, and wept, pressing a bunch of scented thyme to his chest. He fell again and again face downwards in the burning sands, the wind played with the dirty rags of his cotton shirt, and then the convoy could see the tightly drawn skin of his bony back and the cracking soles of his feet. They picked him up, splashed water over him from a flask, and he opened his black, maniacally glittering eyes, laughed quietly, and, swaying, went on again.

At one of the hamlets on the road compassionate women surrounded the prisoners, and one majestic and portly old woman said sternly to the man in charge of the convoy

"You set that black one free! He's touched, he's drawn nearer to God, and it'll be a great sin for you if you bring such a one to his end."

The head of the convoy, a dashing, red-whiskered ensign, laughed sarcastically:

"We aren't afraid of taking another sin on our souls, old woman. In any case, righteous men can't be made out of us!"

"But you set him free, don't refuse me," the old woman insistently asked "Death is waving its wings over everyone of you"

The other women energetically supported her, and the ensign agreed.

"I don't mind; take him. He can't do any harm now. But as we're so good-hearted you can give us a pipkin of fresh milk for each man."

The old woman led the madman away to her own little hut, fed him, and made up a bed for him in the best room. He slept a whole day through, then awoke, stood with his back to the window, and began to sing quietly. The old woman came into the room, rested her cheek on her palm, long and keenly stared at the youngster's emaciated face, then said in a deep voice·

"They say your people aren't far away ..."

The madman was silent for a brief second, then fell to singing again, but more quietly.

The old woman said sternly:

"You stop playing about, my lad, and don't get it into your head

that you can fool me. I've lived a lifetime, you can't take me in, I'm no fool! You're quite well in your mind, I know that....I heard you talking in your sleep, and you talked good sense."

The Red Army man went on singing, but more and more quietly. The old woman continued:

"Don't be afraid of me, I don't wish you any evil. I lost two sons in the German war, and my youngest died at Cherkass during this war. And yet I had carried them all below my heart I'd given them milk, given them food, and had no sleep at night when they were young....And so I'm sorry for all the youngsters who serve in the army and fight in the war." She was silent for a few moments.

The Red Army man was silent also. He closed his eyes, and a barely perceptible flush suffused his swarthy cheeks; a blue vein began to pulsate tensely on his thin, scraggy neck.

For a minute he stood maintaining an expectant silence, then half opened his black eyes. Their look was intelligent and they gleamed with such impatient expectation that the old woman smiled slightly.

"Do you know the road to Shumilinska?" she asked.

"No, mother," the man answered, hardly moving his lips.

"Then how will you get there?"

"I don't know ..."

"That's just the point! Now what am I to do with you?" She waited a long time for him to answer, then asked:

"But can you walk?"

"I'll manage somehow."

"These are not the times when you can manage somehow. You have to go by night and walk fast, oh, as fast as you can! Stay here another day, and then I'll give you victuals, and my little grandson as guide, to show you the road, and—Godspeed! Your Reds are just outside Shumilinska, I know that for sure. And you go and get to them. But you can't take the highroad, you'll have to strike across the steppe, along the valleys and through the forests, off the roads, or the Cossacks will come upon you and it'll be the worse for you. And that's that, my darling!"

Next day, as soon as dusk fell, the old woman made the sign of the cross over her twelve-year-old grandson and the Red soldier, whom she had fitted out with a Cossack coat, and said harshly:

"Now go, and God be with you! But see you don't fall into the hands of our soldiers ...Not on any account, darling, not on any account! Don't bow to me, but to the Lord God. I'm not the only one, we're all good mothers....We're sorry for you poor devils, mortally sorry! Now, now, off with you, and the Lord keep you safe!" She slammed the yellow, clay-daubed, crooked door of her hut.

WIT, HUMOR, AND SATIRE

Ivan Krylov

A characteristic example from Russia's great fabulist, superbly translated.

THE QUARTET

The tricksome little monkey.
The goat with tangled hair,
The donkey,
And the clumsy-fingered bear
A great quartet had planned to start;
They got the notes, viola, fiddles, bass,
And sat beneath a lime-tree, on the grass,
To charm creation with their art.
They struck the sounding strings, what discord, oh, my heart!
"Stop, boys," cries little Monkey, "wait a bit;
It can't go right like that; you don't know how to sit!
You face viola, Bear, with your bassoon;
First fiddle faces second; then, you'll see,
We'll play to quite another tune
And make the hills and forest dance for glee."
They change their places, start again;
Yet all attempts at tune are vain.
"Here, stop!" says Donkey, "I'll explain.
I'm sure we'll make it go
By sitting in a row."
The donkey's plan they tried,
Of sitting side by side;
But did it answer? No.
Why, only all the worse they got entangled,
And all the more they wrangled,
Of where to sit and why.
Attracted by the noise, a nightingale came by.
To him they all appeal to show them what's the way:
"Have patience with us, please," they say,
"We're trying a quartet, which will not go a bit;
"We've notes, we've instruments; do tell us how to sit!"
The nightingale replies: "To sit is not enough.
Besides, my friends, your ears are much too rough.
Then change your seats, and fiddles too.
Yet chamber music's not for you!"

—Translation by Sir Bernard Pares

Alexander Griboyedov

Alexander Sergeyevich Griboyedov was Russia's first great dramatist in the nineteenth century, his Gore Ot Uma, *sometimes translated as* Woe from Wit *and sometimes* The Misfortune of Being Clever, *having been written in 1822-3, hence contemporaneous with Pushkin. Like all Russian comedies before Chekhov, it is classical in mood, definitely in the tradition of Molière, but tinged with the inescapable Russian realism. The character drawing is superb, and the dialogue is brilliant, done in rhymed verse, which does not affect the realism. The sense of real conversation remains in spite of the poetical form. Mirsky, the most competent of all critics, justly asserts that the greatness of this play is due to the fact that its characters are individuals as well as types. The best translation of* The Misfortune of Being Clever *in English is by Sir Bernard Pares, though even he fails to convey the sprightly raciness of the original. An extract of his rendition is given below The scene consists for the most part of a monologue by the leading male character, Chatsky, who expresses here something of his revolt against a corrupt society which apes the French and will not admit that anything good could come out of Russia. Though he is obviously the one thoroughly sane character in the play, the action gains in effect from the rumor spread by the heroine, Sophya, that he is not quite right in his wits, and that it is taken seriously.*

THE MISFORTUNE OF BEING CLEVER

(Selection)

ACT III, SCENE XXII

NATALYA DMITRIYEVNA: He's here!
COUNTESS GRANDDAUGHTER Hush!
ALL: Hush!
(*They withdraw to the opposite side of the stage from him*)
HLESTOVA See how his eyes he rolls!
He's fixing who to fight; he's itching for a row.
FAMUSOV (*apprehensively*). O Lord, have mercy on our sinful souls!
Dear boy, you're rather out of sorts just now;
You're tired and want a rest. Your pulse! You're quite upset!
CHATSKY: Yes, worried and worn out all round,
My chest from each new shove I get,
My legs with clicking heels, my ears with all this sound,
And most of all my head, from rubbish I'd forget.

(*Goes up to* SOPHYA.)
My spirit is oppressed with some strange misery,
And here, in all this crowd, I am lost. I don't feel right!
No! Moscow's disabused me quite.
HLESTOVA: It's Moscow's fault, you see.
FAMUSOV (*gesticulating to* SOPHYA): Look, Sophya! Keep away!
She doesn't see! What next?
SOPHYA (*to* CHATSKY): Do tell me why you seem so vexed.
CHATSKY: A trifling incident! Puffed up with pride,
A Frenchy from Bordeaux—in that next room I found him—
Had called a kind of council round him,
Relating what he felt when forth he hied
To Russia, to the bears, with fear and lamentations
He came, and what d'you think? They're kind as kind can be.
No Russian word you'll hear, no Russian face you'll see
As if you were at home, your friends and your relations,
Exactly like Bordeaux! Now look: so kind we are,
He's feeling here tonight he's quite a little tsar
The ladies talk the same, the style of dress no other!
So pleased—but we aren't, brother!
He stops—on every side there rise
Such tender groans, such yearning sighs.
"Oh, France! Dear France! There's not a country like it!"
Say three young princesses: of course at once they strike it,
The old refrain that first the childish ear impresses.
Oh, where's a place with no princesses?
I breathed a pious supplication
Aside, though half aloud, that God
Would crush the unclean thing till from our souls he trod
This empty slavish cant of wholesale imitation:
If just a spark he'd throw in any man of spirit,
Whose words and deeds might sharply school,
Till we unlearned beneath such wholesome rule
Our sickening desire the strangers' tastes to inherit!
Declare me reprobate, old-fashioned fool,
But as for me, I find our North is ten times worse,
Since everything was changed for all that's its reverse,
Our manners and our tongue and all we once revered,
Our gracious flowing robes for something new and weird—
A veritable clown's costume,
A monkey's tail behind, a swelling bulge in front,
Against all common sense, to nature an affront,
The movements all constrained, the face without its bloom,
The chin absurd, clean-shaved, with bristles of gray hair,
Short coats, short locks, and wits still shorter than the hair.

Though born with the idea that every country's finer,
A little we might take from our good friends in China,
Of their most wise contempt for ways that aren't their own.
When shall the foreigner have ceased his endless sermons,
That even if by our speech alone,
Our good, our clever folk may tell us from the Germans?
"The European style! What is there sounds so well?
Our home-bred Russian—it's so queer
Now, how could you translate *Madame, Mademoiselle?*"
"Sudarynya?" "Oh, no!" they drawl into my ear.
Believe me, at the word, I see,
They all burst out and laugh at me.
"Sudarynya! Ha! Ha! Ha! What a jawfull
"Sudarynya! Ha! Ha! Ha! How awful"
I cursed my life and cursed my pride,
I thought I'd tell them something true,
But every one had turned aside.
Well, that's what happened to me—that's not new!
Moscow and Petersburg, if all around we glance,
Are like this person from Bordeaux in France.
He opes his mouth—his luck he blesses,
He wins the hearts of all princesses.
In Petersburg and Moscow city,
The man who's foe to fake, in face, in manners, speech,
Whose hapless head—the more's the pity—
Has half a dozen sound ideas in reach,
If once he has the pluck to bring them all to book—
Look!

(*He looks round: all are waltzing with the greatest energy: the older folk are all seated at the card tables.*)

Nikolay Gogol

THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL

CHARACTERS

ANTON ANTONOVICH, Governor of a Russian provincial town.
ANNA ANDREYEVNA, his wife.
MARYA ANTONOVNA, his daughter
LUKA LUKICH, Director of Schools.
His wife
AMMOS FYODOROVICH, a Judge.
ARTEMI PHILIPPOVICH, Charity Commissioner and Warden of the Hospital.
IVAN KUZMICH, a Postmaster.
IVAN ALEXANDROVICH * KHLESTAKOV, a St. Petersburg *chinovnik* (official).
OSIP, his servant
DOBCHINSKI, } independent
BOBCHINSKI, } gentlemen.
HUBNER, a District Doctor.
LYULYUKOV, }
RASTAKOVSKI, } ex-officials.
KAROBKIN, }
UKHAVYORTOV, a Police Superintendent. (*Chastni Pristav,* or Police-Commissary.)
SVISTUNOV, }
PUGOVKIN, } Police-Officers. (*Kvartalniye,* or Ward-Inspectors.)
DERZHIMORDA, }
ABDULIN, a merchant.
Lock-smith's Wife.
Sergeant's Wife.
MISHKA, servant of the Governor.
Waiter at the inn.
Gentlemen and ladies, guests, merchants, citizens, and petitioners.

In order to simplify for English readers the somewhat formidable cast, the *surnames* of the first eight characters are omitted, as they would not be used in familiar intercourse Khlestakov's name is, how-

* The second of the three names which Russians possess is the *otchestvo,* or patronymic It is formed by adding to the father's *Christian* name *ovich* or *evich* (sometimes contracted into *ich*) for men, and *ovna* or *evna* for women

ever, retained in full. The surnames only of the rest, who are of lower social standing, are given. (Osip and Mishka are nicknames) The full names of nearly all the characters occur either in the text or the notes.

NOTES* ON THE CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

THE GOVERNOR.—A man who has grown old in the State service—in his own opinion, a smart official He wears an air of dignified respectability, but is by no means incorruptible He speaks to the point, generally avoiding extremes, but sometimes launching into an argument. His features are harsh and stern, like those of a *chinovnik* who has worked his way up from the lowest rank. His coarse and ill-educated nature causes him to pass with rapidity from fear to joy, and from servility to arrogance He is dressed in uniform with loops and facings, and wears Hessian boots with spurs.

ANNA ANDREYEVNA.—His wife, still tolerably young, and a provincial coquette, brought up on novels and albums and household trivialities. She is very inquisitive, and displays now and then a vain disposition. Henpecks and ridicules her husband to a certain extent on minor points, when she can get the best of him in argument. Changes her dress four times in the course of the piece.

KHLESTAKOV—A young man, about twenty-three years old, mean and insignificant to look at. Not overburdened with common-sense, being, as they say, "without a czar in his head" He would be designated as "very frivolous" in the Government offices Speaks and acts without reflection, and lacks concentration. His style of address is abrupt, and his remarks are totally unexpected. (The actor should sustain this role with the greatest possible naiveté.) Dresses in the latest fashion.

OSIP,† his servant, resembles other middle-aged persons of his class. Talks seriously, looks downward, and is fond of arguing and lecturing his master. He scarcely varies the tone of his voice, addressing Khlestakov bluntly and even rudely He is the cleverer of the two, and sees through things quicker; is silent and uncommunicative, and a rogue. Wears a rather worn-out overcoat of a gray or blue color.

BOBCHINSKI and DOBCHINSKI are short, fat, inquisitive, and remarkably like each other They both wear short waistcoats, and speak rapidly, with an excessive amount of gesticulation. Dobchinski is the taller and steadier, Bobchinski the more free-and-easy, of the pair.

LYAPKIN-TYAPKIN, the Judge.—Has read five or six books, and so is somewhat of a freethinker. He is very fond of philosophic speculation,

* By Gogol.
† Colloquial form of *Yosiph*—"Joe."

carefully weighing each word. (The player should be careful to preserve a judicial and consequential style.) Speaks with a bass voice and a prolonged drawl, clearing his throat beforehand, like an old-fashioned clock, which buzzes before it strikes.

ZEMLYANIKA, the Charity Commissioner, is very fat, slow, and awkward, nevertheless an intriguing rascal, most obliging and officious.

The POSTMASTER is an artless simpleton.

The other characters require no special explanation, as their prototypes can be met almost anywhere.

The company should pay especial attention to the final scene. The last word uttered must strike them like an electric shock, suddenly and simultaneously, and the whole group should fall into position at the same instant. The ladies must all ejaculate the cry of astonishment, as if it proceeded from a single throat. The neglect of these directions will ruin the whole effect.

ACT I

SCENE—*A room in the Governor's house.*

SCENE I.

(*The* GOVERNOR, *the* CHARITY COMMISSIONER, *the* DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS, *the* JUDGE, *the* POLICE SUPERINTENDENT, *the* DOCTOR, *and two Police Officers*)

GOVERNOR: I have called you together, gentlemen, to receive a very unpleasant piece of news: there's an Inspector-General coming.

JUDGE *and* CHARITY COMMISSIONER: What, a Revizor?

GOVERNOR: Yes, an Inspector from Petersburg, *incognito* With secret instructions, too.

JUDGE. Well, I declare!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER. We've escaped hitherto, so now it's *our* turn!

LUKA LUKICH (*the School Director*): Good Lord! with secret instructions!

GOVERNOR I had a sort of presentiment of it: all last night I dreamed about a pair of monstrous rats. Upon my word, I never saw the like of 'em—so black and enormous. They came and snuffed about —and vanished ...Here's a letter which I will read you from Andrei Ivanovich Chmikov. *You* know him, Artemi Philippovich (*to the* CHARITY COMMISSIONER). This is what he says. "My dear friend, my comrade and benefactor... (*He mutters over quickly the first few sentences*) ...and to let you know"—Ah! that's it—"I hasten to let you know, among other things, that an official has been sent with instructions to inspect the whole province, and your district especially.

(*Lifts his finger significantly*) That he *is* coming I know from very reliable sources, but he pretends to be a private person. So, as you have your little faults, you know, like everybody else (you're a sensible man, and don't let your little perquisites slip through your fingers)..." (*Stopping*) H'm, that's after a manner of speaking...."I advise you to take precautions, for he may come any hour—if he has not already done so, and is staying somewhere *incognito*....Yesterday..." Oh, then come family matters. "My cousin,* Anna Kirillovna, paid us a visit, with her husband; Ivan Kirillovich has got very fat, and is always playing the fiddle..." etcetera, etcetera. Now, here's a pretty business!

JUDGE: Yes, extraordinary, simply extraordinary. There must be some reason for it.

LUKA: But why, Anton Antonovich,† why is it? Why should *we* have an Inspector?

GOVERNOR (*sighing*): Oh, it's fate, I suppose! (*Sighs again*) Till now, thank goodness, they've pried into other towns; but now our time has come.

JUDGE It's my opinion, Anton Antonovich, that it's a deep political move, and it means—let me see—that Russia...yes, that's it...Russia wants to make war, and the Government has surreptitiously sent an official to see if there's any disaffection anywhere.

GOVERNOR: Ah, *you've* got it! *you* know a thing or two! The idea of treason in an inland town! As if it lay on the frontier! Why, from here you may gallop for three years before you reach a foreign country.

JUDGE: No, I'll tell you how it is—you don't understand—the Government looks very closely into matters; it *may* be far away, yet it observes everything—

GOVERNOR (*cutting him short*): It may or it may not—anyhow, gentlemen, I have warned you. I have made some arrangements on my own behalf, and I advise you to do the same. You especially, Artemi Philippovich! (*to the* CHARITY COMMISSIONER) Without doubt, this *chinovnik* will want first of all to inspect your hospital, and so you had better see that everything is in order; that the nightcaps are clean, and that the sick persons don't go about as they usually do—looking like blacksmiths.

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Oh, that's all right. They shall have clean nightcaps, if you like.

GOVERNOR: And you might write up over each bed, in Latin or some other lingo—that's *your* business, Christian Ivanovich (*to the*

* In the original it is *sestra* (*sister*), for *dvoyurodnaya sestra* (first cousin). The *sister* of the writer, who is Andrei *Ivanovich*, would, according to Russian custom, have the patronymic *Ivanovna*, not *Kirillovna*.

† It is polite in Russian to address everyone by his or her paternal, as well as Christian, name.

DOCTOR)—the name of each complaint, when the patient got ill, the day of the week and month...and I don't like your invalids smoking such strong tobacco; it makes you choke when you come in. It would be better too if there weren't so many of them, otherwise it will be at once ascribed to bad supervision or unskillful doctoring.

CHARITY COMMISSIONER. Oh, Christian Ivanovich and I have settled all about the *doctoring;* the nearer we get to *nature* the better. we don't go in for costly medicines. A man is a simple affair—if he dies, he dies; if he gets well, why, then he gets well. And it wouldn't be easy for the sick people and Christian to understand one another; he doesn't know a word of Russian. (*The* DOCTOR *grunts unintelligibly*)

GOVERNOR: Also I would recommend you, Ammos Fyodorovich—(*to the* JUDGE)—to turn your attention to the court-house buildings. There's the ante-chamber, where the petitioners usually wait, you've let the attendants breed geese there, and the goslings go poking their beaks among people's legs. Of course, rearing geese is a laudable object, and there's no reason why an usher should not do so, only, you see, the County Court is not exactly the place for it .. I intended to mention it before, but it somehow quite escaped my memory.

JUDGE: Well, I'll tell them to take 'em all into the kitchen today. Will you come to dinner?

GOVERNOR (*not noticing*): Besides that, it doesn't do for the court chamber to get so full of rubbish of all sorts: why, there was a sporting whip lying among the papers on your very desk I know you're fond of sport, but there is a proper time and place for everything—when the Inspector is gone you can put it back again Then your assessor.. he's certainly a learned man, but he reeks of spirits, as if he had just come out of a distillery; that also is undesirable I meant to tell you of this some while ago, but something or other put it out of my head There are ways of remedying it, if it is really, as he says, a natural failing: you can recommend him to eat onions or garlic, or something of the sort. Christian Ivanovich can help him there with some of his nostrums. (*The* DOCTOR *grunts as before*)

JUDGE: No, it's quite impossible to get rid of it; he says his nurse knocked him down when he was a child, and ever since he has smelt of vodka.

GOVERNOR: Well, I just reminded you of it As regards the local administration, and what Andrei Ivanovich is pleased to call one's "little faults" in his letter, I don't understand what he means Why, of course, there isn't a man living who has not *some* peccadilloes to account for: Heaven made him so—let *freethinkers* say what they like.

JUDGE: What do you mean by peccadilloes, Anton Antonovich? There are peccadilloes and peccadilloes. I tell every one plainly that I take bribes, but what kind of bribes? Why, greyhound puppies. That's a totally different matter.

GOVERNOR: H'm, whether they're puppies or anything else, they're all bribes alike.

JUDGE: No, indeed, Anton Antonovich. But suppose, for example, one receives a *cloak* worth five hundred roubles, or your good lady receives a *shawl*...

GOVERNOR (*testily*): Yes; but what has that got to do with your being bribed with puppy greyhounds? Besides, you're an atheist; you never go to church; while I, at least, am a firm believer, and attend service every Sunday. Whereas *you*—oh, I know *you*, when I hear you talking about the Creation my hair simply stands on end.

JUDGE: What of that? I have reasoned it all out with my own unaided intellect.

GOVERNOR: Anyhow, too much knowledge is worse than none at all... However, I only made a remark about the County Court, and I dare say nobody will ever look at it, there's an odor of sanctity about the place. But you, Luka Lukich, as Director of Educational Establishments, ought to have an eye on the teachers They're very clever people, no doubt, and are blessed with a college education, but they have very funny habits—inseparable from their profession, I suppose. One of them, for instance, the fat-faced man—I forget his name—can't get along without screwing up his phiz like this—(*imitates him*)—when he's got into his chair; and then he sets to work clawing his neck-tie and scratching his chin. It doesn't matter, of course, if he makes a face at a pupil—perhaps it's even necessary—I'm no judge of that; but you yourselves will admit, that if he grimaces at a visitor, it may leave a very bad impression The honorable Inspector, or anyone else, might take it as meant for himself—and then the deuce knows what might come of it.

LUKA· What can I do with him, I ask? I have told him of it time after time Only the other day, when our headmaster came into class, your friend made such a face at him as I had never seen before. I daresay it was with the best intentions, but people come complaining to me about radical notions being instilled into the juvenile mind.

GOVERNOR: And then you should look to the master of the history class. He has a learned head, that is evident, and has picked up any amount of knowledge, but he lectures with such ardor that he quite forgets himself. I once listened to him As long as he was holding forth about the Assyrians and Babylonians, it was all right; but when he got on Alexander of Macedon, I can't describe his behavior Good heavens, I thought, there's a fire! He jumped out of his chair, and smashed a stool on the ground with all his might! Alexander of Macedon was a hero, we all know, but that's no reason for breaking the furniture; besides, the State has to pay for the damages.

LUKA. Yes, he *is* fiery! I have spoken to him about it several times.

He only says: "As you please, but in the cause of learning I will even sacrifice my life!"

GOVERNOR: Yes, it's a mysterious law of fate; your clever man is either a drunkard, or he makes such frightful grimaces that you have to carry out the saints.*

LUKA: Ah, Heaven save us from being schoolmasters! You're afraid of everything, everybody meddles with you, and wants to show you that he's as learned as you are.

GOVERNOR: Oh, all that's nothing; it's this cursed *incognito!* All of a sudden he'll look in "Ah, so you're here, my friends! And who's the judge here?" he'll say. "Lyapkin-Tyapkin" † "Well, bring Lyapkin-Tyapkin here, then!" "And who is the Charity Commissioner?" "Zemlyanika." ‡ "Call Zemlyanika, too!" There'll be a pretty kettle of fish!

SCENE II

(*Enter the* POSTMASTER)

POSTMASTER: Tell me, gentlemen, who's coming? What sort of *chinovnik?*

GOVERNOR: What, haven't you heard?

POSTMASTER: I heard something from Bobchinski; he was just now with me at the post office.

GOVERNOR: Well, what do you think about it?

POSTMASTER: What do *I* think about it? Why, there'll be a war with the Turks.

JUDGE: Exactly; that's just what I thought!

GOVERNOR: Well, you're both wide of the mark ¶

POSTMASTER: It'll be with the Turks, I'm sure. It's all the Frenchman's doing ||

GOVERNOR: Pooh! War with the Turks, indeed! It's *we* who are going to get into trouble, not the Turks. That's quite certain. I've a letter to say so.

POSTMASTER: Oh, then we shan't go to war with the Turks.

GOVERNOR: Well, how do *you* feel, Ivan Kuzmich? (*To the* POSTMASTER)

POSTMASTER: How do *I* feel? How do *you,* Anton Antonovich?

GOVERNOR: I? Well, I'm no coward, but I *am* just a little uncomfortable. The shopkeepers and townspeople bother me. It seems I'm

* To avoid shocking them. An ikon or picture of the patron saint is placed in the *krasni ugol* (beautiful, or sacred corner) of rooms or shops in Russia

† His surname

‡ His surname

¶ *Literally,* you both hit the sky.

|| At the period of the play the Russians and French were bitter enemies

unpopular with them; but, the Lord knows, if I've blackmailed anybody, I've done it without a trace of ill-feeling. I even think—(*buttonholes him, and takes him aside*)—I even think there will be some sort of complaint drawn up against me.... Why should we have a *revizor* at all?...Look here, Ivan Kuzmich, don't you think you could just slightly open every letter which comes in and goes out of your office, and read it (for the public benefit, you know), to see if it contains any kind of information against me, or only ordinary correspondence? If it is all right, you can seal it up again; or simply deliver the letter opened.

POSTMASTER: Oh, I know *that* game....Don't teach me *that!* I do it from pure curiosity, not as a precaution; I'm death on knowing what's going on in the world. And they're very interesting to read, I can tell you! Now and then you come across a love letter, with bits of beautiful language, and so edifying...much better than the *Moscow News!*

GOVERNOR· Tell me, then, have you read anything about any *chinovnik* from Petersburg?

POSTMASTER No, nothing about anyone from Petersburg, but plenty about the Kostroma and Saratov * people. It's a pity you don't read the letters There's some very fine passages in them. For instance, not long ago a lieutenant writes to a friend, describing a ball in first-rate style—splendid! "Dear friend," he says, "I live in Elysium; heaps of girls, music playing, flags flying,"...quite a glowing description, quite! I've kept it by me, on purpose. Would you like to read it?

GOVERNOR: Thanks; there's no time now. But oblige me, Ivan Kuzmich—if ever you chance upon a complaint or a denouncement, keep it back, without the slightest compunction.

POSTMASTER. I will, with the greatest pleasure.

JUDGE (*who has overheard a little*)· You had better mind; you'll get into trouble over that sometime or other.

POSTMASTER (*innocently*): Eh? The saints † forbid!

GOVERNOR It was nothing—nothing It would be different if it concerned you or the public—but it was a private affair, I assure you!

JUDGE: H'm, *some* mischief was brewing, *I* know!. But I was going to say, Anton Antonovich, that I had got a puppy to make you a present of—own sister to the dog you know about. I daresay you've heard that Cheptovich and Varkhovinski have gone to law with one another; so now I live in clover—I hunt hares first on one's estate, and then on the other's.

GOVERNOR: I don't care about your hares now, my good friend; I've

* Kostroma is a town and "government" in Great Russia, N E. of Moscow. Saratov is in S E Russia Both towns are on the Volga

† *Batyushki,* little fathers

got that cursed *incognito* on the brain! I expect the door to be opened, and all of a sudden...

SCENE III

(*Enter* BOBCHINSKI *and* DOBCHINSKI, *out of breath*)

BOBCHINSKI: What an extraordinary occurrence!

DOBCHINSKI: An unexpected piece of news!

ALL What is it—what is it?

DOBCHINSKI Something quite unforeseen, we got into the inn—

BOBCHINSKI (*interrupting*). Yes, Pyotr * Ivanovich and I go into the inn—

DOBCHINSKI (*takes him up*): All right, Peter Ivanovich, let *me* tell it!

BOBCHINSKI: No, no, allow me—allow me ...You haven't got the knack—

DOBCHINSKI: Oh, but you'll get mixed up and forget it all

BOBCHINSKI: Oh, no, I shan't—good heavens, no! There, don't interrupt me—*do* let me tell the news—don't interrupt! Pray oblige me, gentlemen, and tell Dobchinski not to interrupt.

GOVERNOR. Well, say on, for God's sake, what is it? My heart is in my mouth! Sit down, sirs; take seats! Pyotr Ivanovich, here's a chair for you! (*They all sit round* BOBCHINSKI *and* DOBCHINSKI) Well, now, what is it, what is it?

BOBCHINSKI: Permit me—permit me; *I* can relate it properly.... H'm, as soon as I had the pleasure of taking my leave after you were good enough to be bothered with the letter which you had received, sir—yes, then I ran out—now please don't keep on taking me up, Dobchinski; I know all about it, all, I tell you, sir.—So, as you'll kindly take notice, I ran out to see Karobkin. But not finding Karobkin at home, I went off to Rastakovski, and not seeing *him,* I went, you see, to Ivan Kuzmich,† to tell him of the news you'd got; yes, and going on from there I met Dobchinski—

DOBCHINSKI (*breaking in*). By the stall where they sell tartlets—

BOBCHINSKI —by the stall where they sell tartlets Well, I meet Dobchinski and say to him, "Have you heard the news that Anton Antonovich has got?—the letter may be depended on!" But Peter Ivanovich had already heard of it from your housekeeper, Avdotya, ‡ who, I don't know why, had been sent to Philip Antonovich Pachechuyev—

* They both have the same *imya* and *otchestvo* (Christian and paternal names), but I have given one the Russian and the other the English form, for the sake of distinction

† Shpyokin, the Postmaster.

‡ Popular form of "Eudoxia"

DOBCHINSKI (*interrupting*): With a bottle for some French brandy.

BOBCHINSKI: —yes, with a bottle for some French brandy. Then I went with Dobchinski to Pachechuyev's—*will* you stop, Peter Ivanovich—there, *do* have done with your interfering!—So off we go to Pachechuyev's, and on our way Dobchinski says, "Let's go," says he, "to the inn. I've eaten nothing since morning... there's such a rumbling in my inner man". .Yes, sir, in Peter Ivanovich's internals. "But they've got some fresh salmon in the inn," he says; "so we can have a snack" We hadn't been in the public-house a moment, when in comes a young man—

DOBCHINSKI (*as before*): Rather good-looking and well-dressed.*

BOBCHINSKI: —yes, rather good-looking and well-dressed—and walks into the room, with such an expression on his face—such a physiognomy—and style—so distinguished a headpiece (*moves his hand round his forehead*). I had a kind of presentiment, and I say to Dobchinski, "There's something up here, sir!" Yes—and Dobchinski beckoned, and called up the landlord, Vlas,† the innkeeper, you know—three weeks ago his wife presented him with a baby—such a fine, forward boy—he'll grow up just like his father, and keep a public-house. Well, we called up Vlas, and Dobchinski asks him quite privately, "Who," says he, "is that young man?" And Vlas replies, "That," says he—oh, don't interrupt me so, Peter Ivanovich, please; good Lord! *you* can't tell the story, you can't tell it—you don't speak plainly, with only one tooth in your head, and a lisp—"That young man," says he, "is a *chinovnik*,"—yes, sir—"who is on his way from Petersburg, and his name," says he, "is Ivan Alexandrovich Khlestakov, sir, and he's off," says he, "to the government of Saratov," says he, "and his goings-on are very peculiar—he's stayed here over a fortnight, he doesn't leave the house, he takes everything on account, and doesn't pay a kopek." When he told me that, I felt illuminated from above, and I said to Peter Ivanovich, "Hey!"—

DOBCHINSKI: No, Pyotr Ivanovich, *I* said "Hey!"

BOBCHINSKI: Well, first *you* said it, and then *I* did. "Hey!" said both of us, "and why does he stay here, when he's bound for Saratov?" Yes, sir, that *chinovnik* is HE!

GOVERNOR Who—what *chinovnik?*

BOBCHINSKI· Why, the *chinovnik* of whom you were pleased to get the notification—the Revizor.

GOVERNOR (*in a panic*). Great God! *what* do you say? It *can't* be he!

DOBCHINSKI: It *is*, though! Why, he pays no money, and he doesn't

* *v partikulyarnom platye*, in town or morning dress, as opposed to *mundir*, uniform.

† Blaise

go. Who else could it be? And his *padarozhnaya** is made out for Saratov.

BOBCHINSKI: It's he, it's he, good God,† it's he!...Why, he's so observant, he noticed everything. He saw that Dobchinski and I were eating salmon—all on account of Dobchinski's insides. and he looked at our plates like this (*imitates*). I was in an awful fright.

GOVERNOR: Lord, have mercy upon sinners like us! Where is he staying now, then?

DOBCHINSKI: In room No. 5, first floor.

BOBCHINSKI: In the same room where the officers quarreled last year on their way through.

GOVERNOR How long has he been here?

DOBCHINSKI. A fortnight or more. He came on St. Vasili's Day. ‡

GOVERNOR· A fortnight! (*Aside*) Holy Fathers and Saints, preserve me! In that fortnight the sergeant's wife was flogged! No provisions given to the prisoners! Dram-shops and dirt in the streets! Shameful—scandalous! (*Tears his hair*)

CHARITY COMMISSIONER What do you think, Anton Antonovich—had we better go to the inn in gala uniform?

JUDGE· No, no! First send the Mayor, then the clergy and the tradespeople; it's all in the book, *The Acts of John the Freemason* ¶..

GOVERNOR: No—no! Leave it to me! I've had ticklish jobs before now, and I've managed 'em all right, and even been thankful for them. Maybe, the Lord will help us out this time as well (*Turns to* BOBCHINSKI) You say he's a *young* man?

BOBCHINSKI: Yes, about twenty-three or -four at the outside

GOVERNOR· So much the better—it's easier to ferret anything out. It's the devil, if you've got an old bird to deal with; but a young man's all on the surface You, gentlemen, had better get your departments in order, while I'll go by myself, or with Dobchinski here, and have a private stroll round, *to see that travelers are treated with due consideration*. Here, Svistunov! (*to one of the police-officers*).

SVISTUNOV: Sir?

* The posting system was well organized in the Russian Empire before the introduction of railways A *padarozhnaya,* or order for relays of post-horses, could be obtained before starting at an average inclusive cost for a troika (team of three horses) of about 4 cents per mile The traveler could then post at his leisure and convenience between any two stations in the empire, from Poland to the Pacific

† *Yei Bohu,* an asseveration which is much more used than its equivalent is in English

‡ St Vasili of Egypt, whose day is kept on February 28, Old Style (March 12, New Style), by the Orthodox Church The Russian lower classes generally reckon by saints' days instead of by the date of the month

¶ The Freemasons are considered to be a dangerous society, and, as such, are suppressed in Russia The freethinking Judge alludes to a forbidden book.

GOVERNOR: Go at once to the Police Superintendent; or no—I shall want you. Tell somebody to send him as quick as possible to me, and then come back here. (SVISTUNOV *runs out at full speed*)

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Let us go, let us go, Ammos Fyodorovich. Some mischief may happen, I do believe.

JUDGE: What's there for *you* to be afraid of? Give the sick clean nightcaps, and the thing's done!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Nightcaps—bosh! The sick were ordered to have oatmeal porridge. Instead of that, there's such a smell of cabbages in all my corridors that you're obliged to hold your nose.

JUDGE: Well, *my* mind's at ease on *that* score. As to the County Court, who'll visit *that?* Supposing he *does* look at any of the papers, he'll wish he'd left it alone. Why, I've been sitting fifteen years on the bench—and do I ever look at a charge-sheet? No, thank you! Solomon himself couldn't make head or tail of 'em!

(*The* JUDGE, CHARITY COMMISSIONER, SCHOOL INSPECTOR, and POSTMASTER *go out, and bump violently up against the* POLICE OFFICER *in the doorway as the latter returns*)

SCENE IV

(*The* GOVERNOR, BOBCHINSKI, DOBCHINSKI *and the* POLICE OFFICER, SVISTUNOV)

GOVERNOR: Well, is the droshky ready?

SVISTUNOV: Yes.

GOVERNOR Go into the street ..or, no, stop!...go and bring... Why, were are the others? How is it you are alone? Didn't I give orders for Prokhorov to be here? Where's Prokhorov?

SVISTUNOV. Prokhorov's in the police office, and can't be employed on duty just now.

GOVERNOR: How's that?

SVISTUNOV: Well—they brought him back this morning dead drunk. They've soused his head in water, but he's not got sober yet.

GOVERNOR (*tearing his hair*): *Akh, Bozhe moi, Bozhe moi!* *... Go out into the street, quick!—or no! run to my room, sharp, d'ye hear? and fetch my new hat and sword. Now, Peter Ivanovich (*to* DOBCHINSKI), let us be off!

BOBCHINSKI: And me—me too!...Let me come too, Anton Antonovich!

GOVERNOR: No, no, Bobchinski, it's impossible! Three's no company, you know, and we couldn't find room in the droshky either.

BOBCHINSKI. Oh, that doesn't matter; I'll manage it—I'll trot be-

* Oh, my God!

hind the droshky on foot—on foot—on foot! I only just want to peep through a chink, *so,* to see what his ways are like....

GOVERNOR (*turning to the* POLICE OFFICER *and taking the sword*): Run directly and get the constables together—let 'em each take a... there, see how this sword has got rusted! It's that dog of a trader, Abdulin—he sees the Governor's sword's worn out, and he doesn't provide me with a new one! Oh, the scurvy set of tricksters! And I'll bet the scoundrels have got their petitions against me ready under their coat-tails!...Let each of 'em take hold of a street...d—n! I don't mean a street—a broom...and sweep the whole of the street that leads to the inn, and sweep it *clean,* mind!...Do you hear? And just look here—I know you, my friend; I know your little ways. you worm your way in * there, and walk off with silver spoons in your boots—just you, look out, I have a quick ear . What have you been up to with the merchant Chornyaiev, eh? He gave you two yards † of cloth for your uniform, and you stole the whole piece. Take care! Don't you rob more than your station warrants! Be off!

SCENE V

(*Enter the* POLICE SUPERINTENDENT)

GOVERNOR: Hullo, Stepan Ilyich, where to goodness have you been hiding yourself? What kind of behavior do you call *that?*

SUPERINTENDENT· I was only beyond the door for a moment

GOVERNOR· Well, listen, Stepan Ilyich! There's a *chinovnik* come from Petersburg What arrangements have you made?

SUPERINTENDENT Exactly as you ordered I have sent the *Kvartalni,* ‡ Pugovitsin, with the constables to clean up the streets.

GOVERNOR. But where's Derzhimorda?

SUPERINTENDENT. He's gone off with the fire engine.

GOVERNOR And Prokhorov's drunk?

SUPERINTENDENT· Yes.

GOVERNOR How is it you allowed that?

SUPERINTENDENT: The Lord only knows! Yesterday there was a row outside the town—he went there to stop it, and was brought back drunk

GOVERNOR· Well, hear me, then—this is what you are to do: the police lieutenant—he is tall, so he's to stand on the bridge—that will give a good effect. Then the old fence, near the bootmaker's, must be pulled down at once and scattered about, and a post stuck up with a

* Literally, you become a *kum* or sponsor—*i e*, you get intimate.
† Two *arshins* An *arshin* is 28 inches
‡ Inspector of a ward

wisp of straw, so as to look like building operations. The more litter there is the more it will show the Governor's zeal and activity.... Good God! though, I forgot that about forty cartloads of rubbish have been shot behind that fence. What a dirty town this is! No matter where you put a monument, or even a paling, they collect all kinds of rubbish from the devil knows where, and upset it there!...And if the newly come *chinovnik* asks any of the officials if they are contented, they're to say: "Perfectly, Your Honor", and if anybody is *not* contented, I'll give him something afterwards to be discontented about.... (*Heaves a sigh*) Ah-h-h! I'm a sinner—a terrible sinner! (*Takes the hat-box instead of his hat*) Heaven only grant that I may soon get quit of the matter, and then I'll give such a taper for a thank-offering as has never been given before! I'll levy three puds * of wax from every merchant for it! *Akh Bozhe moi, Bozhe moi!* Let's be going, Peter Ivanovich! (*Tries to put the hat-box on his head instead of the hat*)

SUPERINTENDENT: Anton Antonovich, that's the hat-box, not your hat!

GOVERNOR (*throwing the box down*): D—n it! so it is!...And if he asks why the hospital chapel has not been built, for which the money was voted five years ago, they must mind and say that it began to be built, but got burned down. Why, I drew up a report about it. But of course some idiot is sure to forget, and let out that the building was never even begun ...And tell Derzhimorda that he's not to give such free play to his fists, guilty or innocent, he makes them all see stars, in the cause of public order....Come on, come on, Dobchinski. (*Goes out and returns*) And the soldiers are not to be allowed in the streets with next to nothing on: that scoundrelly garrison only put their tunics on over their shirts, with nothing at all below. (*All go out*)

SCENE VI

(ANNA ANDREYEVNA *and* MARYA ANTONOVNA *rush on the scene*)

ANNA: Where are they, where are they? *Akh Bozhe moi!*... (*Opening the door*) Husband! Antosha! Anton! (*Hurriedly, to* MARYA) And it's all your fault!—dawdling, and saying, "I want a pin —I want a handkerchief." (*Runs up to the window and shouts*) Anton, where are you, where are you? Has he come—eh? the Inspector? Has he got a mustache? What's it like?

VOICE OF THE GOVERNOR: Wait a bit, ma'am,† wait a little!

ANNA: Wait? What an idea! *Wait,* forsooth!.. Not a bit of it! I only want one word—is he a colonel, or what is he, eh? (*With dis-*

* A *pud* = 40 Russian lb = 36 lb Avoirdupois
† *Matushka*—literally, *little mother* or *good wife*

gust) There! he's gone! I won't forgive him for that!...And *you* kept saying, "Mamma dear, do stop a moment while I pin back my scarf; I'll come directly." *Directly,* indeed, drat you! It's all through *you* we've missed the news! It's all your abominable vanity. You heard the Postmaster was here, and so you must needs mince before the looking-glass and strike all sorts of attitudes. You fancy he's smitten with you; but I can tell you, miss, he simply makes a face at you as soon as your back is turned.

MARYA. But what's to be done then, mamma? It's all right; we shall know all about him in an hour or two.

ANNA: An hour or two, forsooth! Much obliged to you, I'm sure! A pretty answer to give me! Why didn't you say—we shall know more in a *month!*...(*She leans out of the window*) Here, Avdotya! I say!...Have you heard whether anybody's come, Avdotya?...No? you booby—*no?* Well, you should have *asked!* Oh, *you* can't find out anything with your head full of lovers and flim-flams!...Eh, what? They went off in a hurry? Well, you should have run after the droshky! Be off at once, d'you hear? run and ask everybody where they are—ask nicely, and find out what he's like—do you hear me? Peep through the keyhole and find out all about it—what sort of eyes he's got—see if they're black or not, and be back here at once this minute, d'you understand? Quick, quick, quick! (*She keeps on shouting, and they both stand at the window until the curtain drops*)

ACT II

SCENE—*A small room in the inn. Bed, table, portmanteau, empty bottle, books, clothes' brush, etc.*

SCENE I

OSIP (*lying on his master's bed*) Devil take it! I'm so hungry; there's a noise in my inside like a whole troop of trumpeters We shall never get home at this rate! What are we to do, I'd like to know? There's two months gone since we left "Peter"! * He's chucked away all his cash on the journey, the gay young dog, so now he's got to stick here, with his tail between his legs! We should have had plenty to pay for the fare, but no, he must needs cut a dash in every town in *this* style! (*Imitates him*) "Heah, Osip, go and engage me the best room they've got, and order the very best dinner they can cook; I can't stand anything cheap and nasty; I must have the best!" Anything reasonable wouldn't have mattered, but for an ordinary copyin'-clerk † to go on

* Slang for *St Petersburg* Gogol elsewhere uses the short form "Petersburg"

† *Yelistratishka,* corruption of (*Kollezhki*) *Registrator,* an official of the fourteenth and lowest rank in the Civil Service

like that! Then he goes and makes friends on the road; plays cards, and gets rooked, of course! Oh, I'm sick of this sort o' life! Reelly, it's better in our village; there's not so much going on, but there's less to worrit you; you lie the whole while over the stove * and eat tartlets.... Still, there's nothing like life in "Peter," that's a fack, and there's no denyin' of it. All you want is money, and then you live like a lord—theayters, dancing dogs, everythink. And everybody talks so perlite—it's reelly almost like bein' at Court; if you go to the Shchukin Bazaar,† the shop-keepers call you "my lord"; you sit with the *chinovniks* in the ferry boat; if you want company, you can go into a shop, a gent will tell you there what's going on in the army, and all about the stars in the sky, just as if you had 'em all in your 'and. Then an old officer's wife will try and flirt with you, or a pretty chambermaid will give you such a look. Aha, you dog! (*Smirks and wags his head*) What doosid fine manners they have too; you never hear any disrespeckful langwidge; they always say *you* ‡ to you! If you're tired of walking, why you take a droshky, and sit there like a nob; and if you don't want to pay, why you needn't; every house has got a door open, and you can pop in, and the devil himself couldn't catch you. There's one objection though: sometimes you get a fust-class feed, and sometimes you're starved—as we are now. It's all *his* fault! What's to be done with him? The old man sends him money—enough to rub along with—and what for? ..Why, he goes on the bust with it; hires droshkies, says every day, "Go and get a theayter ticket"; and then look at him in a week—he has to pop his new tail-coat! Another time he parts with everything to his last shirt, except p'raps an old coat or a worn-out cape, s'help me, it's the truth! Selling such beautiful English cloth! Every dress suit costs him a hundred and fifty roubles, and he lets his uncle have it for twenty. I won't speak of his breeches; they can't get a buyer. And what's it all for? Why, because he's never at his business; instead of attending to his dooties, he gallivants along the Proshpect,¶ and goes off card playing. Ah, if the Governor only knew it! He wouldn't stop to think that you're a *chinovnik*, but he'd lift up your little shirt-tail and whip you so that you would feel sore for a week || If you have dooties you ought to attend to 'em. Here's the landlord now, says he won't let you have anything to eat unless you pay beforehand, and if we

* *Na palatyakh*, on the shelves which are placed over the large square oven or stove in Russian cottages, at a height of about six or seven feet from the ground

† The Shchukin Dvor is a bazaar in the Bolshaya Sadovaya (Great Garden Street), behind the Gostinni Dvor or Great Bazaar of the Nevski Prospekt, St Petersburg

‡ *Vui* instead of the more familiar *Ti*, thou. The usage of these pronouns is the same as in other continental countries

¶ The Nevski Prospekt in St Petersburg

|| Literally, you would rub yourself for four days or so.

don't pay? (*Sighs*) Oh, good Lord! for a little *shchi!* * I'll bet everyone else has had a square meal. Hullo! there's a knock; he's coming! (*Gets off the bed hastily*)

Scene II

(*Enter* Khlestakov)

Khlestakov: Here, take these. (*Hands him his cap and walking stick*) What, you've been rolling on the bed again?

Osip: Me rolling on the bed! I haven't seen any bed!

Khlestakov: *That's* a lie; you *have* been. Look here, it's all tumbled about!

Osip: Why blame *me* for it? *I* don't know what a bed feels like. I've got legs, and I stand. What do I want with your bed?

Khlestakov (*walks about the room*): Just see if there's any tobacco left in the pouch there.

Osip: Tobacco, indeed! Why, you smoked the last of it four days ago.

Khlestakov (*paces up and down, biting his lips; then, loudly and peremptorily*): Here, Osip, d'you hear?

Osip: What do you want?

Khlestakov (*less firmly*): Go down there.

Osip: Where?

Khlestakov (*in an almost supplicating tone*): Downstairs to the buffet... and tell 'em there... to give me something to eat.

Osip: No, indeed, that I will not!

Khlestakov: What, you dare to refuse, you blockhead?

Osip: Yes, it's all the same, if I *do* go—you won't get anything from there. The landlord said he'll let you have nothing more.

Khlestakov: How does he dare to say so? Bosh, I say!

Osip. He even says, though: "I'll go to the Governor—it's the third week your master has not paid his bill. You and your master," he says, "are a pair of sharpers, and your master's a scoundrel as well. We've had to do with rogues and hangers-on like you before," says he.

Khlestakov: And you, you beast, repeat it all to me, and enjoy it.

Osip: "Yes," says he; "all that sort come here, and make themselves at home, run up a bill, and then you can't get rid of them I'm not joking," he said; "I'll go straight and make a complaint, and have him taken to the police-office, and then clapped into jail."

Khlestakov: Now, now, stop it, you fool. Do go and speak to him! The ill-mannered brute!

Osip: I'd better call the landlord here himself.

* Cabbage soup.

KHLESTAKOV: What do *I* want him for? You go and talk to him yourself.

OSIP: But reelly, sir—

KHLESTAKOV: Well, go to the devil, and call the landlord here. (OSIP *goes out*)

SCENE III

KHLESTAKOV (*alone*): How infernally hungry I am! I took a little walk, thinking my appetite would go; d—n it, not a bit of it! I'm as ravenous as ever. Yes, if I hadn't had that spree in Penza,* I'd have had enough money to get home with. That infantry captain cheated me finely—the way the villain cut the cards was astounding. He wasn't at it more than a quarter of an hour, and he cleaned me out entirely. But, all the same, I'd give anything to have another turn with him, only I shan't have the chance!...

What a beastly little town! They'll give you nothing on tick at the grocers' shops It's simply disgusting! (*Whistles an air from "Robert the Devil"; then "Nye shei ti mnye, matushka";* † *then variations of his own*)...H'm, nobody seems likely to come.

SCENE IV

(*Enter* OSIP *and the* WAITER)

WAITER· The landlord wants to know what you want.

KHLESTAKOV· Ah, good day, my friend! And how are you?

WAITER Pretty well, thank you. ‡

KHLESTAKOV. And how are you getting on in the inn? Business going on nicely?

WAITER: Yes—*slava Bohu*—very nicely.

KHLESTAKOV: Plenty of visitors?

WAITER Yes, we've got enough.

KHLESTAKOV Look here, my friend, I haven't had my dinner brought up yet—just hurry up with it, please, as soon as possible.... You see, I've got something particular to do directly after dinner.

* A town and government southeast of Moscow, on the way to Saratov

† A Russian popular song, generally known under the name *"Krasni Sarafan"* ("The Red Gown") The first four lines commence thus *"Nye shei ti mnye," matushka, krasni sarafan, Nye vkhodi, rodimushka, po-pustu v izyan!"*—i e, "Do not sew the red gown for me, mother, spend not useless money, my own mother!" These words are supposed to be sung by a young girl who does not wish to marry, she is, however, persuaded by her mother The air in question is a simple but tuneful one

‡ *Slava Bohu*—literally, "Glory to God," "Thank the Lord"—the usual reply to the question, *"Kak vui pazhivayete?"* ("How are you?"), the words *"Ya zdarov"* ("I am well") being understood

WAITER: But the landlord said they're not to send anything more. He was all but going to the Governor today to complain of you.

KHLESTAKOV: *Complain* of me! Why, consider for yourself, my good fellow—I must eat. If this goes on I shall become a skeleton. I really *am* very hungry, joking apart.

WAITER. Quite so, sir. He said, "I'll give him no dinner till he pays for what he's had already." That was his answer.

KHLESTAKOV: But you reason with him—talk him over!

WAITER: Yes, but what am I to say?

KHLESTAKOV. You speak to him seriously, and say I *must have something* to eat. As for the *money*...why, he seems to think that, because a muzhik such as *he* is can go the whole day without food, anyone else can also. What an idea! (*Exeunt* OSIP *and* WAITER)

SCENE V

KHLESTAKOV (*alone*): It will be *too* disgusting, though, if he flatly refuses to let me have anything. I never felt so ravenous as I do now. ...Shall I try to raise anything on my *clothes?* Shall I pop my *trousers?* . .No, better starve than not go home in Petersburg dress! . What a shame that Yokhim * wouldn't let me have a carriage on hire, it would have been d—d fine to go home in a proper turnout, and drive up in style under some squire or other's porch, with carriage lamps alight, and Osip behind in livery How they'd all flutter with excitement, I guess! "Who's that? What's that?" Then my footman goes up in a gold livery (*Draws himself up and imitates him*), and announces "Ivan Alexandrovich Khlestakov, of Petersburg; *are they receiving?*" Those bumpkins, though, don't know what that phrase means. If any boor of a farmer pays them a visit, he waddles in like a bear, straight into the drawing room. ..And then you walk up to a pretty girl, and say, "How charmed I am, Sudarinya † ..." (*Rubs his hands and makes a bow*) ...*Tfu!* (*Spits*) I feel quite sick, I'm so hungry.

SCENE VI

(*Enter* OSIP, *and afterwards the* WAITER)

KHLESTAKOV: Well, what is it?

OSIP· They're bringing dinner.

KHLESTAKOV: (*claps his hands, and jumps briskly to a chair*): Aha! Dinner! dinner! dinner! ‡

* Joachim, a celebrated horse and carriage dealer of St Petersburg

† The term *sudarinya* ("madame") is applied to married and unmarried ladies alike It is a short form of *gosudarinya.*

‡ *Nyesut*—literally, they are bringing it

WAITER (*with plates and a napkin*): This is the last time the landlord will send you dinner.

KHLESTAKOV: Well, the landlord...the landlord is a...I *spit* on your landlord! What have you got there?

WAITER: Soup and roast beef.

KHLESTAKOV. What, only two dishes?

WAITER: That's all, sir.

KHLESTAKOV: What nonsense! I won't have it! Ask him what he means by it!...That's too little!

WAITER: No, the landlord says it's a *good deal too much!*

KHLESTAKOV: But isn't there any *sauce?*

WAITER: No, there isn't any.

KHLESTAKOV: Pray, why not? I saw 'em myself getting a lot ready, as I went past the kitchen. And at the ordinary this morning two undersized little men were eating salmon and all sorts of good things

WAITER: Well, if you please, sir, there *is* some, and there isn t.

KHLESTAKOV: How not?

WAITER: There *isn't* any, then.

KHLESTAKOV: What, no salmon—no fish—no cutlets?

WAITER. Only for the gentlemen as *pays,* sir!

KHLESTAKOV: What a *fool* you are!

WAITER Yessir.

KHLESTAKOV: You beastly pig!...Why are *they* eating, while *I* mayn't? Why mayn't I too, confound it? Ain't I a *bona-fide* traveler too, as good as they?

WAITER· No, sir, not exactly, that's certain.

KHLESTAKOV: How's that, pray?

WAITER· Well, the difference is pretty plain: they *settles up!*

KHLESTAKOV: Oh, I won't argue with you, you booby! (*Pours out the soup and tastes it*) What! do you call *that* soup? Why, you've simply poured hot water into a cup, it's got no taste, it only stinks! None of that for *me,* thank you. Bring me some other soup!

WAITER: Very well, sir, I'll take it away. The governor said if you didn't like it, you could leave it.

KHLESTAKOV (*holding onto his plate*): Well, well ..leave it alone, I say, you fool! You may be very familiar with *others,* but I'm not that sort, my man! I advise you not to try it on with *me..* (*Tastes it again*) My God! what soup! (*Goes on eating it*) I should think no one in the world ever ate such soup Here's some feathers floating about instead of butter! (*Comes across a piece of chicken*) Well, I declare! *Ai, ai!* what a fowl!...Give me the roast beef! There's a little soup left, Osip; take it yourself. (*Cuts the meat*) What, is *that* what you call roast meat? *That's* not roast beef!

WAITER: What is it, then?

KHLESTAKOV: Devil knows *what* it is—only it's not roast beef. It's more like roast iron * than meat! (*Eats it*) Rogues and scoundrels! The stuff they give one! Why, my jaws ache with eating a single mouthful! (*Picks his teeth with his fingers*) Villains! it's as tough as the bark of a tree; I can't get it out, anyhow. Such messes are enough to ruin one's teeth, curse the blackguards! (*Wipes his mouth with the napkin*) Is there nothing more?

WAITER: No.

KHLESTAKOV: Scoundrels, blacklegs, that they are! There might have been some pastry! Rascals! It's only travelers that they fleece!

(WAITER *removes and carries the dishes out, accompanied by* OSIP)

SCENE VII

KHLESTAKOV (*alone*): I swear it's just as if I'd eaten nothing at all: it has only whetted my appetite. If I *only* had a trifle to send to the market and buy a bun with!

OSIP (*re-entering*). The Town Governor has come for some reason or other, he has announced himself, and is asking for you.

KHLESTAKOV (*in great alarm*). *What* do you say?.. There, that brute of an innkeeper has gone and reported me!...Suppose he really hauls me off to jail! How would it be if I went in aristocratic style... no, no, I won't! There are the officers and people strolling about the town, and I have regularly set the fashion and ogled a merchant's daughter.... No, I *can't*...and pray, who is *he*, that he has the audacity? Treating me as if I was actually a shopkeeper or a day-laborer! (*Puts on a courageous air and draws himself up* (I'll just say straight out to him "How *dare* you to—"

(*The door handle is turned,* KHLESTAKOV *turns pale and collapses*)

SCENE VIII

(*Enter the* GOVERNOR *and* DOBCHINSKI *The former advances a few steps and halts They stare at each other in great trepidation for some moments*)

GOVERNOR (*plucking up courage a little, and saluting deferentially* †): I hope you are well, sir!

KHLESTAKOV (*bows*): My respects to you, sir!

GOVERNOR Excuse my intruding. ..

KLESTAKOV: Pray don't mention it....

GOVERNOR: It is my duty, as chief magistrate of this town, to take

* *Tapor*—literally a hatchet

† *Ruki po shvam*—literally, with arms down the seams (of one's uniform).

all due measures to prevent travelers and persons of rank from suffering any inconvenience....

KHLESTAKOV (*hesitates a little at first, but toward the end adopts a loud and confident tone*): We-ell, what was to be done? It's no-ot *my* fault....I really am...going to pay...they'll send me money from home. (BOBCHINSKI *peeps in at the door*) *He's* to blame most: he sends me up beef as hard as a board; and the soup! the devil only knows *what* he'd mixed up with it: I was obliged to pitch it out of the window. He starves me the whole day...and the tea's so peculiar—it smells of fish and nothing else! Why, then, should I...A *fine* idea, indeed!

GOVERNOR (*nervously*): I assure you, its not my fault, really. I always get very good beef from the market. The Kholmogori* drovers bring it, and they are sober and well-principled people. I'm sure I don't know where he gets it from. But if anything's wrong... allow me to suggest that you come with me and get other quarters.

KHLESTAKOV No, that I will *not! I* know what "other quarters" means, it's another word for *jail!* And, pray, what right have you—how dare you...? Why, I...I'm a Government official at Petersburg ...(*Defiantly*) Yes I.. I...I...

GOVERNOR (*aside*): Oh, my God! how angry he is! He knows all! Those cursed merchants have told him all!

KHLESTAKOV (*aggressively*): *That* for you and your governorship together! I'll *not* go with you! I'll go straight to the Minister. (*Bangs his fist on the table*) Who are *you,* pray, who are you?

GOVERNOR (*starting and shaking all over*): Have pity on me! don't ruin me! I have a wife and small children! Don't make me a miserable man!

KHLESTAKOV: No, I'll *not* go with you! What's that got to do with me? Why am *I* to go to jail because *you've* got a wife and small children? I like that—that's beautiful! (BOBCHINSKI *looks in through the door and disappears in terror*) No, much obliged to you, sir, but I'll *not* leave here!

GOVERNOR (*quaking*): It was only my inexperience, I swear, only my inexperience! and insufficient means! Judge for yourself—the salary I get is not enough for tea and sugar. And if I *have* taken any bribes, they were *very* little ones—something for the table, or a coat or two.... As for the sergeant's widow, who took to shopkeeping—whom they say I flogged†—it's a slander, I swear, it's a slander. My enemies invented it—they're the kind of people who are ready to murder me in cold blood!

*Kholmogori, a town on the estuary of the Northern Dvina, 70 versts (46 miles) from Archangel, celebrated for its fine breed of cattle. Lomonosov, the founder of modern Russian literature, was born near here

†For engaging in trade without a license.

KHLESTAKOV: Yes, yes, but I've nothing to do with *them*.... (*Reflects*) I don't see, though, why you should dilate about your enemies to me, or talk about sergeant's widows....A sergeant's *wife* would have been quite a different matter...Don't you try to flog *me*, though—your arm's not long enough for *that!*...Enough! Look you here!...I'll pay, I'll pay the bill all right, but at present I'm out of cash. That's just why I stay here, because I haven't a kopeck left.

GOVERNOR (*aside, recovering*): Oh, the cunning rascal! That's a *nice* yarn! a pretty piece of mystification! You may believe as much of *that* as you please!...One doesn't know how to begin with him. Still, I've got to try—come of it what will, I must have a try somehow! (*Aloud*) H'm, if you really are in want of funds, or anything else, I am ready to oblige you at once. It is—ahem!—my duty to assist travelers.

KHLESTAKOV: Lend me, then—lend me a trifle! and then I'll settle up immediately with the landlord. I only want two hundred roubles, or even less.

GOVERNOR (*getting out his pocketbook*): There's exactly two hundred roubles—don't trouble to count them!

KHLESTAKOV: I am very much obliged to you! I'll return it you directly I get home...it was a sudden case of impecuniosity....I see you are a *gentleman*. *Now* the state of things is altered.

GOVERNOR (*aside*): Well, thank the Lord! he's taken my money. *Now* I guess we shall hit it off. I shoved four hundred instead of two into his hand.

KHLESTAKOV: Hi, Osip! (OSIP *enters*) Call the waiter here! (*To the* GOVERNOR *and* DOBCHINSKI) But why are you standing all this while? Pray oblige me, take a seat! (*To* DOBCHINSKI) Please take a seat, I beg of you!

GOVERNOR: Oh, no! We can very well stand.

KHLESTAKOV. But please, please, be seated! I see now completely the generosity and sincerity of your character: at first I confess I thought you had come with the object of putting me in— (*To* DOBCHINSKI) Do take a chair!

(*The* GOVERNOR *and* DOBCHINSKI *at last sit down*. BOBCHINSKI *looks in at the door and listens*)

GOVERNOR (*aside*): Now I must be a little bolder. He wants his *incognito* kept up. Good, *we'll* talk a little nonsense too—we'll pretend we don't know in the least what he really is. (*Aloud*) I was going my rounds in the performance of my duty with Peter Ivanovich Dobchinski here—he's a landed proprietor of this place—and we came into the inn to ascertain whether travelers are being well entertained—because I am not like other governors, who never attend to their business; no, out of pure Christian philanthropy, apart from my duty, I wish every mortal to be treated well—and lo! as a reward for my pains, the

occasion has presented itself of making so agreeable an acquaintance.

KHLESTAKOV. I too am delighted Without your kind assistance I confess I should have had to stay here for a *pretty* long while—I hadn't the least idea how to pay my bill.

GOVERNOR (*aside*): Oh, yes, fib away. *Didn't know* how to pay his bill! (*Aloud*) May I venture to inquire into what locality you are pleased to be going?

KHLESTAKOV: I am going to my own estate in the Saratov government.

GOVERNOR (*aside, with an ironical expression on his face*): To the Saratov government! Oh indeed! And he doesn't even *blush!* One must keep a sharp look-out with *this* gentleman! (*Aloud*) You have deigned, indeed, to engage on a pleasant enterprise! It is quite true that journeys are disagreeable, as they say, on account of the delays in posting; but, on the other hand, they furnish an agreeable diversion for the mind. You are traveling for your own amusement, I suppose?

KHLESTAKOV: No, my father wants me. The old man's angry because up till now I've made no advance in the service in Petersburg He thinks that the moment you get there they stick the Vladimir * in your buttonhole. No, indeed, and I'd like to send *him* to knock about a chancellor's office for a while!

GOVERNOR (*aside*). Just observe, I ask you, how he romances! and drags in his old father too! (*Aloud*) And, may I ask, are you going there for a long time?

KHLESTAKOV: Really, I don't know You see, my father is stupid and obstinate, like a block of wood—the old duffer! I shall tell him straight out: "Do as you please, but I can't live away from Petersburg" Why should I be condemned to rot away among rustics? That's not my ideal—my soul craves for civilization!

GOVERNOR (*aside*): Well, he *is* a fine hand at spinning yarns, and no mistake! He lies, and lies, but doesn't trip anywhere! Why, the ugly, insignificant little whipper-snapper, I could crush him with my fingernail! But stop, he'll soon betray himself under *my* management! I'll let him fib a little longer! (*To* KHLESTAKOV) You condescended to observe, quite rightly—what *can* one do in a dead-alive place? Why, see what it's like here: you lie awake at night, you toil for your country's good, you spare no effort or exertion—and I should like to know how much reward you get for your pains!... (*He looks round the room*) Rather damp, this room, isn't it?

KHLESTAKOV: Yes, it's a dirty hole, and the *insects*—well, I've never seen the like of 'em, they bite like dogs!

GOVERNOR: You don't say so! An illustrious visitor like you to be

* The St. Vladimir of the Fourth Class (the sixth Russian order in point of seniority)

incommoded with—with disgusting insects, that have no business to *exist!* And I daresay it's dark in this room?

KHLESTAKOV: Dark? I should think so! The landlord has started the custom of not allowing me any candles. Now and then I want to do something, to read a bit, or the fancy strikes me to compose a little —not a bit of it, it's as dark as pitch!

GOVERNOR: May I venture to ask you...but no, I am unworthy!

KHLESTAKOV: What do you mean?

GOVERNOR: No, no; I am unworthy, unworthy of the honor!

KHLESTAKOV: But what *do* you mean?

GOVERNOR: If I might be so bold...I have a charming little room for you at home, light and comfortable....But no! I feel it is too great an honor....Don't be offended, *yei Bohu,* I only meant well by the offer!

KHLESTAKOV: On the contrary, I accept it with pleasure. I should be much more comfortable in a private residence than in this pot-house

GOVERNOR: I am only too delighted! How glad my wife will be! It's a little habit I have; I always *was* hospitable from childhood, especially when my guest is distinguished and enlightened Don't think I say this by way of flattery; no, I have not *that* vice. I only speak from the fullness of my heart.

KHLESTAKOV: I am greatly obliged to you. I myself hate two-faced people I'm very much struck with your open-heartedness and generosity; and, I assure you, I expect nothing more than that people should treat me with consideration and esteem, ahem! esteem and consideration!

SCENE IX

(*Enter the* WAITER, *escorted by* OSIP. BOBCHINSKI *peeps in again*)

WAITER: You were pleased to require—?

KHLESTAKOV Yes, bring me the bill.

WAITER: I gave you the second account not long ago.

KHLESTAKOV: Oh, I can't remember your stupid accounts! Tell me what it comes to!

WAITER: You were pleased to order dinner the first day, and the second day you only took salmon, and after that everything was put down on credit—

KHLESTAKOV· *Durak!* * you've begun to add it all up again! How much is it all together?

GOVERNOR: Please don't let it bother you; he can very well wait. (*To the* WAITER) Get out of this; the money will be sent you.

* Fool, booby

KHLESTAKOV: Yes, of course; that will be the best.

(*Pockets the notes. The* WAITER *goes out.* BOBCHINSKI *looks in again through the doorway*)

SCENE X

(*The* GOVERNOR, KHLESTAKOV, *and* DOBCHINSKI)

GOVERNOR Wouldn't you like now to inspect a few of the institutions in our town—say, the hospital, and so on?

KHLESTAKOV. But what is there to see?

GOVERNOR. Well, you will see how we manage matters—what excellent order there is....

KHLESTAKOV Oh, with the greatest pleasure; I am ready. (BOBCHINSKI *puts his head in at the door*)

GOVERNOR: And then, if you wish, we can go on from there and inspect the district high school, and see the good discipline with which our instruction is administered.

KHLESTAKOV: Oh, by all means!

GOVERNOR· Afterwards, if you like to visit the prison and the town jail, you will be able to notice how carefully our criminals are kept.

KHLESTAKOV: Yes, yes, but why go to the *jail?* We had *very* much better look at the hospital

GOVERNOR· As you please Do you propose to ride in your own carriage, or go with me in a droshky?

KHLESTAKOV: Well, I prefer to go with you in a droshky.

GOVERNOR (*to* DOBCHINSKI): Now, Dobchinski, there will be no room for *you.*

DOBCHINSKI. Oh, it doesn't matter, I'll manage!

GOVERNOR (*aside, to* DOBCHINSKI): Listen will you run, as fast as you can, and take a couple of notes—one to Zemlyanika at the hospital, the other to my wife. (*To* KHLESTAKOV) May I take the liberty of asking you to permit me to write a line to my wife in your presence, to tell her to get ready to receive her honored guest?

KHLESTAKOV But why all this...? However, there's the ink...I don't know about *paper,* though...Would that *bill* do?

GOVERNOR· Oh, yes! I'll write on that! (*Writes, talking to himself at the same time*) We'll see how business goes after *lunch,** and a pot-bellied bottle or two! We have some Russian "Madeira,"† not much to look at, but it will roll an elephant under the table. If I only knew what he really is, and how far I've got to be on my guard.

* *Fruhstuck Khlestakov* has already had an early Russian *abyed,* or dinner.
† *Gubernskaya madyera,* grown in the "government" or province

(*Finishes writing, and gives the note to* DOBCHINSKI, *who is just going out, when the door suddenly flies off its hinges, and* BOBCHINSKI, *who was listening on the other side, tumbles forward with it on the floor. All utter exclamations of surprise.* BOBCHINSKI *gradually picks himself up*)

KHLESTAKOV What, have you hurt yourself anywhere?

BOBCHINSKI· Oh, nothing, nothing, sir, nothing to bother about, sir, only a little knock on the nose! I'll run over to Doctor Hubner's—he has some splendid plaster—it'll soon get right.

GOVERNOR (*making an angry gesture at* BOBCHINSKI, *to* KHLESTAKOV): Oh, *that* doesn't matter, sir! With your kind permission we will go; but I'll tell your servant to take your portmanteau across (*Calls* OSIP) Here, my good fellow, take everything over to my house, the Governor's—anyone will show it you....By your leave, sir! (*Makes way for* KHLESTAKOV, *and follows him; then turns, and severely addresses* BOBCHINSKI) *You* again! Couldn't you find some *other* place to tumble in! and sprawling there, like the devil knows what!

(*Goes out; after him* BOBCHINSKI. *Curtain falls*)

ACT III

SCENE—*The same apartment as in Act I.*

SCENE I

(ANNA ANDREYEVNA *and* MARYA ANTONOVNA *standing at the window, in the same positions as at the end of Act I*)

ANNA: There now, we've been waiting a whole hour, and it's all through your stupid vanity; you were quite ready dressed, but no! you must still be dawdling!...Oh, dear! not a sound to be heard of her.* . How vexatious it is!...There's not a soul to be seen, of course; it's just as if the whole place were dead.

MARYA: There, mamma, *really* we shall know *all* about it in a minute or two. Avdotya *must* come back soon. (*Looks out of the window and screams*) Oh, *mamenka,* mamma dear! someone *is* coming—away there at the end of the street!

ANNA: *Who's* coming? *Where?* You've always got some fancy or other!...Ah, so there *is!* Who is it, now? He's short—in a dress coat! Who can it be? Eh? How tiresome not to know! Who*ever* can it be?

MARYA: It's Dobchinski, mamma.

ANNA: Dobchinski, indeed! One of your random guesses, miss! It's certainly *not* Dobchinski. (*Waves her handkerchief*) Hi! you! come here! quick!

MARYA: It's *really* Dobchinski, *mamenka!*

* The servant Avdotya

ANNA: There now, you only want to contradict, of course. You're *told* it's *not* Dobchinski.

MARYA: But look, mamma, look! You see it *is* Dobchinski.

ANNA: Well, so it is... I see now Why do you want to *argue* about it? (*Shouts at the window*) Hurry up, quick! How *slow* you walk!... Well, *where* are they—eh? Tell me from where you are; it'll do just as well! What, is he very severe? Eh? How about my husband —my *husband?* (*Moves away from the window a little, disgusted*) How *stupid* he is! Not a single word will he utter till he's got into the room!

SCENE II

(*Enter* DOBCHINSKI)

ANNA: Now, if you please, tell me—aren't you *ashamed* of yourself? I used to think you were the only one of them who was a *gentleman* They all bolted off, and *you* after them! and here have *I* been all this while without a soul to tell me about it all Isn't it *disgraceful* of you? I stood godmother to your little Ivan and Liza, and this is the way you treat me!

DOBCHINSKI: I vow, my dear lady,* I ran so fast to pay my respects to you, that I'm quite out of breath....I have the honor to salute you, Marya Antonovna!

MARYA: Good afternoon, Peter Ivanovich!

ANNA: Well, tell us now, what's going on there?

DOBCHINSKI: Anton Antonovich has sent you this note.

ANNA· Yes, but what is he—a general?

DOBCHINSKI: No, not a general, but he's quite as big a swell. Such manners—such dignified ways!

ANNA· Ah, it's the very same that was mentioned in the letter to my husband!

DOBCHINSKI: Precisely. Bobchinski and I were the first to discover him.

ANNA: Good! Now tell me all about it!

DOBCHINSKI: I will. Thank the Lord, everything's all right now. At first he received Anton Antonovich rather roughly; I assure you, ma'am, he got angry, and said that the inn was *most* uncomfortable, that he wouldn't come to the Governor's house, nor go to jail for him; but afterwards, when he found out Anton Antonovich's innocence, and had had a short conversation with him, he changed his opinion directly, and then, thank Heaven, all went well. They have now gone to inspect the hospital....I confess, though, that Anton Antonovich

* *Kumushka,* a familiar term of address. Like the English word "gossip," it strictly means "fellow-sponsor," "godmother"

quite thought that a secret information would be lodged against him. I myself also was a little alarmed.

ANNA: Why should *you* be afraid? you're not an official, you know.

DOBCHINSKI: Yes, but you see, when a bigwig speaks you can't help feeling a bit frightened.

ANNA: Well, well...all this is trifling, though; describe what he's like personally—is he young or old?

DOBCHINSKI. Young, quite young—about twenty-three years old; but he talks quite like an old man. "Permit me," he says, "I will go *there,* and *there"*—(*Gesticulates*)—all in very distinguished style "I am fond," says he, "of writing and reading; it's a bore, though," he says, "that it's rather dark in my room."

ANNA. But what's he like *to look at,* dark or fair?

DOBCHINSKI· No, auburn* rather, and his eyes flash like a wild beast's—they quite unnerve you.

ANNA: H'm—let's see what's written in this note. (*Reads*) "I hasten to let you know, my dear, that I was in a very critical predicament; but, relying on the mercy of God, two pickled gherkins *à part* and a half-portion of caviar—1 rouble 25 kopeks. " (*Stops*) What-*ever* does he mean by pickled gherkins and caviar, there?

DOBCHINSKI. Oh, Anton Antonovich wrote on a piece of paper that had been used before, to save time, there's some bill or other made out on it.

ANNA· Oh, I see, exactly. (*Goes on reading*) "But, relying on the mercy of God, I think all will come to a happy conclusion Get a room ready quickly—the one with the gold wallpaper—for our distinguished guest, don't have anything extra for dinner, because we shall lunch at the hospital with Artemi Philippovich, but order in some more wine; tell Abdulin to send some of his very best—otherwise I will wreck his whole cellar. I kiss your hand, my dear, and remain thine, Anton Skvaznik-Dmukhanovski . " *Akh, Bozhe moi!* there's not a moment to lose! Hi, who's there? Mishka! †

DOBCHINSKI (*runs to the door and shouts*)· Mishka! Mishka! Mishka! (MISHKA *enters*)

ANNA· Attend run over to Abdulin the merchant . Stop, I will give you a note. (*Sits at the table and writes, talking at the same time*) Give that note to the coachman Sidor, he's to run to Abdulin's with it, and bring back the wine Then return here directly, and get a room ready for a visitor. Put a bed, washstand, etcetera, there.

DOBCHINSKI: Well, I'll hurry off now, Anna Andreyevna, and see how he does the inspecting!

ANNA: Go, then, go, I'll not detain you.

* *Shantret,* a corruption of the French *châtain.*
† Diminutive of *Mikhail*

SCENE III

ANNA: Now, Mashenka,* we must think about our toilet. He's a young dandy from town—the Lord forbid that he should laugh at us! You had better put on your blue dress with the little flounces.

MARYA: Lor', mamma, the *blue* dress! I don't like it at all! The Lyapkin-Tyapkin goes about in blue, and Zemlyanika's daughter in blue too No, I'd much better put on my light pink † gown.

ANNA· Your light pink gown!...really, you only say that for the sake of contradiction! You will look much better in blue, because I wish to wear my favorite shade—straw-color.

MARYA: Oh, mamma, that doesn't suit you at all!

ANNA: What! straw-color doesn't suit me?

MARYA: No I'll bet anything you won't look well: your eyes ought to be quite dark to go with pale yellow.

ANNA: Oh, I *like* that! As if my eyes *weren't* dark! They're as dark as they can be! What rubbish you talk! How can they *help* being dark, when I always draw the queen of *clubs,* if I tell my fortune by the cards?

MARYA: Oh, *mamenka,* the queen of *hearts* is much more your style!

ANNA: Fiddlesticks! Nonsense! I never was a queen of hearts! (*Exit hastily with* MARYA, *and speaks behind the scenes*) *What* an idea—queen of hearts! Goodness gracious!

(*On their departure a door is opened, and* MISHKA *sweeps dust out* OSIP *enters from another door, with a portmanteau on his head*)

SCENE IV

OSIP· Where's this to go?

MISHKA: Here, mister, ‡ this way!

OSIP. Stop! I must take breath first. Oh, what a miserable time I'm having! On an empty stomach any load seems heavy.

MISHKA: Eh, uncle, will the general be here soon?

OSIP: The general?—who?

MISHKA: Why, your *barin!* ¶

OSIP: My *barin? Him* a general?

MISHKA: Ain't he, then, a general?

OSIP: Oh, yes, but in a different kind o' way.

MISHKA: What is he, then?—higher or lower than a real general in rank?

* Diminutive of *Masha,* the familiar form for *Marya.*
† Tsuyetnoye—literally any bright color
‡ *Dyadyushka,* diminutive of *dyadya,* uncle.
¶ Master, strictly speaking, a nobleman.

OSIP: Oh, *higher!*

MISHKA: There now! that's why there's all this to-do here.

OSIP: Look here, young 'un! I see you're a smart chap—just get us somethin' to eat!

MISHKA: But for the likes of you, uncle, there's nothing good enough ready. You won't eat plain stuff—but they'll send you something when your master sits down to table.

OSIP: Well, but what "plain stuff" have you got?

MISHKA: Cabbage soup, and porridge, and pastry.

OSIP: Let's have the cabbage soup, porridge, and pastry—it doesn't matter—I'll eat it all. Now let's take the portmanteau! What, is there another door?

MISHKA: Yes. (*They both carry the portmanteau into the side chamber*)

SCENE V

(*The* POLICE OFFICERS *throw both folding doors open.* KHLESTAKOV *enters, after him the* GOVERNOR, *then the* CHARITY COMMISSIONER, *the* DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS, *and* BOBCHINSKI *with plaster on his nose. The* GOVERNOR *points out a piece of paper lying on the floor to the* POLICE OFFICERS, *who rush breathlessly to pick it up, and butt against each other*)

KHLESTAKOV: Splendid institutions! I'm charmed with the way you have of showing strangers all that's to be seen in your town! In other places they showed me nothing.

GOVERNOR: In *other* towns, I venture to suggest, the authorities and officials care most for their own advancement, but *here,* one may say, there is no other thought than how to win the recognition of the Government by good order and vigilance

KHLESTAKOV That lunch was excellent; I've quite overeaten myself D'you then have a spread like that every day?

GOVERNOR: No, it was in honor of such an acceptable guest!

KHLESTAKOV: I'm fond of my dinner! What does one live for but to pluck the flowers of pleasure? What was that fish called?

CHARITY COMMISSIONER (*stepping forward*): *Labardan,** sir!

KHLESTAKOV It was exquisite! Where was it we lunched? In the infirmary, wasn't it?

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Precisely so, sir; in the hospital

KHLESTAKOV: I remember, I remember—there were beds there. But have the sick got well? There were not many of them, it seemed.

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Ten or so remain, not more; the rest have all recovered The place is so well organized—there's such good disci-

* Salted or dried codfish.

pline. It may seem incredible to you, perhaps, but ever since I've undertaken the management they all get well like flies.* The patient no sooner gets into the sick-ward than he's well again. It's not so much done by the doctoring as by honesty and regularity.

GOVERNOR: And I venture to point out what a head-splitting business is the office of a Town Governor! How many multifarious matters are referred to him, concerning the cleanness of the town and repairs and alterations alone!... in a word, the most competent of men might get into hopeless difficulties. God be thanked, though, everything progresses favorably here! Any *other* governor, to be sure, would look after his own profit, but, believe me, that when I lie down to rest, my sole prayer is "O Lord my God, grant that Government may see my zeal and be satisfied!"... They may, or may not, reward me—that is as they please, of course—but, at any rate, my conscience is clear. When there is order throughout the town, when the streets are swept clean, and the prisoners are well kept and locked up, when the number of drunkards is small—what more do I want? Ah, I long for no honors! They are, without doubt, alluring, but to the upright all dust and vanity!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER (*aside*): Ah, the villain, how he can spout! It's a gift of Heaven!

KHLESTAKOV: Quite true. I don't mind saying I also like to declaim now and then, sometimes it's in prose, and sometimes I throw off verses.

BOBCHINSKI (*to* DOBCHINSKI): How well, how very well that was put, Pyotr Ivanovich! Such an observation... shows he's studied the liberal arts!

KHLESTAKOV: By the way, could you tell me if you have any amusements here, any places where you could get a game of *cards*, for instance?

GOVERNOR (*aside*) Oho, my young friend,† *I* know who you mean *that* for! ‡ (*Aloud*) God forbid! We've never even heard of such a thing as a card club here! I've not dealt a card in my life; I don't even know how cards are played. I can't bear to *look* at 'em—if ever I happen to see a king of diamonds or such like, I'm so overcome with disgust that I just have to spit to relieve myself It *did* once happen that, to please the children, I built a house of cards, but I had a nightmare of the cursed things the night after! Lord forgive 'em—how *can* people waste precious time over card playing?...

LUKA (*aside*): But, the rascal, he rooked me to the tune of a hundred roubles at faro yesterday!

* In allusion to the Russian popular saying, *"Umrut kak mukhi muzhiki"* ("The muzhiks *die* like flies")

† *Golubchik*, my little pigeon

‡ Literally, in whose garden you throw stones—a proverbial expression

GOVERNOR: ...No, I think it better to employ my time for the Empire's benefit!

KHLESTAKOV: Well, I don't quite agree with you, though...It all depends how you look at it. As long as you stop, say, after losing three-quarters of your cash,* it's all right....No, don't say that cards are not good fun, now and then!

SCENE VI

(*Enter* ANNA ANDREYEVNA *and* MARYA ANTONOVNA)

GOVERNOR: May I take the liberty of introducing my family· my wife and daughter!

KHLESTAKOV (*bowing to each*): How fortunate I am, madam, in being permitted the pleasure of meeting you!

ANNA: It is far more agreeable to *us* to make the acquaintance of so distinguished a personage!

KHLESTAKOV (*with an air of gallantry*): Pardon me, *Sudarinya,* it is quite the contrary, the pleasure is on *my* side!

ANNA: Impossible, sir—you allow yourself to say that by way of compliment! I beg of you to take a seat.

KHLESTAKOV: To *stand* near you is happiness enough, still, if you insist on it, I will sit. How favored I am, to sit at length by your side!

ANNA: Pardon me, but I cannot dare to take that as meant sincerely....You have found the journey very disagreeable, I should think, after life in the capital?

KHLESTAKOV: Excessively so! After being used, *comprenez-vous,* to living in society—to find myself all at once on my travels—with dirty inns, in the depths of uncivilization!...If it were not, I must say, for the circumstances which...(*Looks meaningly at* ANNA, *showing off*) which recompense me for all the—

ANNA Really, how unpleasant it must have been for you!

KHLESTAKOV: I find it quite the reverse, though, madame, at the present moment!

ANNA: Oh, how can you say so, sir! You do me much honor. I do not deserve it!

KHLESTAKOV: Why *not,* indeed? *Sudarinya,* you *do* deserve it!

ANNA: Oh, I live only in the country....

KHLESTAKOV: Ah, but the country, all the same, has its charming hills and rivulets....To be sure, who could compare it to St Petersburg? Ah, Petersburg—what a life it is, indeed! I dare say you think

* Literally, after bending down three corners of your scoring-card

I am only a copying-clerk; on the contrary, I'm on most friendly terms with the chief of our department. He slaps me on the back and says, "Come and dine, my boy!" I only look in at my office for a couple of minutes or so, just to say, "This is to be done *so,* and that *so.*" There's a rat of a clerk there, who scribbles away—*tr—tr—*...! for dear life. They wanted even to make me a "College Assessor."* I can guess pretty well why. And the porter flies after me on the stairs with the blacking-brush: "Allow me, Ivan Alexandrovich," says he, "to clean your boots for you!" (*To the* GOVERNOR) But why do you *stand,* gentlemen? Pray be seated!

Together { GOVERNOR: Our rank is not high enough; we must stand!
CHIEF COMMISSIONER: Oh, we had rather remain standing!
LUKA. Don't allow yourself to bother about *us!*

KHLESTAKOV: No ceremony! I entreat you to take seats! (*The* GOVERNOR *and the rest sit down*) I do not care to stand on my dignity; on the contrary, I always try to slip away unobserved! But it's impossible to hide oneself Quite impossible! No matter where I go, they cry at once: "There goes Ivan Alexandrovich!" Once they even took me for the Commander in Chief; the soldiers rushed out of the guard-house and saluted An officer, whom I knew very well, said to me afterwards: "Hullo, my boy, we completely mistook you for the Commander in Chief!"

ANNA: You don't say so!

KHLESTAKOV: I know nearly all the pretty actresses, and compose all sorts of vaudevilles. I frequently see literary men, I'm on a very friendly footing with Pushkin—often say to him. "Well, how de do, Pushkin, my boy!" † "So-so, old man," † he'd reply. "Things might be better....." A regular original, is Pushkin! ‡

ANNA: So you *write* too? How delightful it must be to be an author! And do you really write for the papers?

KHLESTAKOV: Yes, I write for the papers too. Besides that, there are a good many of my productions, such as *Figaro's Wedding, Robert the Devil, Norma* ¶—I really forget some of their names. It all happened by chance. I didn't intend to write, but a theater-manager said, "*Do* turn me off something, old man" I consider a bit: "You may as well, brother!" And so I knocked it off in one evening, I daresay I have a marvelous flow of ideas, you know. All that came out under the name

* *Kollezhki Assessor,* the eighth grade or *chin* in the Civil Service, with the title of *Vuisokoblaghaiodye* (Nobility).

† *Brat,* literally "brother," the most common form of address to an equal or inferior, *batyushka* (little father) being applied to superiors

‡ Pushkin, the greatest of Russian poets, was a friend of Gogol's, and was alive (aged 37) at the date of the production of this play

¶ The well-known operas by Mozart, Meyerbeer, and Bellini, respectively

of *Baron Brambeus,** and *The Frigate of Hope,*† and the *Moscow Telegraph* ‡—all that was *my* composition!

ANNA: Is it possible; and so you were really "Brambeus"?

KHLESTAKOV: Of course, and I correct all their verses. Smirdin ¶ gives me forty thousand for that.

ANNA: And, I daresay, "Yuri Miloslavski" || was composed by you.

KHLESTAKOV: Yes, that's by me.

ANNA: I thought so at once.

MARYA: But, mamma dear, it says on the title page that Zagoskin was the author.

ANNA: There! of course: I *knew* you would want to argue!

KHLESTAKOV: Ah, so it was; that's true, that particular work *was* by Zagoskin; but there's another *Yuri Miloslavski*, and that was written by *me*.

ANNA: Ah, to be sure! I read yours. How beautifully it is written!

KHLESTAKOV: I must admit, I live by my pen. My house is the first in Petersburg; it's well known there as "Ivan Alexandrovich's" (*Addresses the company generally*) Do me the favor, if any of you are ever in Petersburg, to pay me a visit—I beg, I beg of you! I give balls too, you know.

ANNA: I can fancy with what good taste and magnificence the balls are given!

KHLESTAKOV: It's a simple affair, not worth talking about! On the table, for instance, is a watermelon that costs seven hundred roubles. The soup comes straight from Paris by steamer in the tureen: there's nothing in the world to be compared with its flavor! I go to a ball every day. We have our whist club there too: the Foreign Minister, the French Ambassador, the German Ambassador, and myself. We regularly kill ourselves over cards; there's nothing to be seen like it! How I rush home, and clamber up four flights of stairs, and just have strength to say to the cook, "Here, Mavrusha, take my greatcoat!"... What do I say? I was forgetting that I live on the first floor—Why, the staircase alone cost me I don't know how much....And it's a curious sight to see my ante-chamber counts and princes jostling and humming there like bees; all you can hear is *buzz, buzz, buzz!* Once there was a Minister... (*The* GOVERNOR *and the rest start from their chairs in alarm*) They even write "Your Excellency" on their letters to me.

* The pseudonym of Josef I Sienkowski, a popuar journalist, critic, orientalist, and encyclopædic writer of the time, and editor of the *Biblioteka dlya chteniya* ("Library for Reading").

† A novel by A Bestuzhev, written under the pseudonym of "Marlinski."

‡ A newspaper, edited by N Polevoi.

¶ A celebrated publisher of St Petersburg.

|| A story of the *Smutnoye Vremya*, or "time of troubles," between the death of Theodore I, the last of Rurik's dynasty (1598), and the accession of Michael, the first of the Romanovs (1613).

...On one occasion I took charge of a Department. It was a funny story: the Director went off somewhere—nobody knew where. So, naturally, people began to ask how was his place to be taken? who was to fill it? Any number of generals coveted the post and tried it, but they soon gave the thing up—too difficult for 'em! It looked easy enough, but, on closer inspection, it proved a devil of a business! There was nothing to be done, but come to *me*. In a twinkling the streets were choke-full of couriers, couriers after couriers. Just picture to yourselves thirty-five thousand couriers! How's that for a situation, I ask you? "Ivan Alexandrovich, come and direct the Department!" I own I was a little taken aback. I went out in my dressing gown and wanted to refuse, but, thinks I, it'll get to the Emperor's ears, and it wouldn't look well on my record of service* either...so, "All right," I say, "I'll undertake the job, I'll undertake it! So be it!" I say, "I'll take it; only remember, sharp's the word with me—*sharp's the word*, mind!" And so it *was;* I go through the Department like an earthquake; they all shake and tremble like an aspen leaf. (*The* GOVERNOR and others *quake with terror,* KHLESTAKOV *proceeds with redoubled vehemence*) Oh, it's no joke, I can tell you. I gave them all a jobation! Even the Council of the Empire is in awe of me. And why not, indeed? I'm such a...I don't spot anyone in particular. I address them all generally, and say, "*I* know my power, *I* know my business!" I'm everywhere—everywhere! I go to Court every day Why, tomorrow they're going to make me a field marsh—

(*Slips off his chair, and sprawls on the floor, but is respectfully helped up by the* chinovniks)

GOVERNOR (*approaches, trembling all over, and struggles to speak*): But, your E—e—ex...(*gasps*)

KHLESTAKOV (*sharply*): What's the matter?

GOVERNOR: Your E—e—ex...

KHLESTAKOV (*as before*): I can't make out a word you say; it's all nonsense.

GOVERNOR: Yo—ur E—e—xlncy,† Excellency, won't you be pleased to rest a little?...Here is a room, and all you require.

KHLESTAKOV. Bosh! Rest a little?!...Stay, I think I will!...Your lunch, gentlemen, was excellent....I'm delighted, delighted! (*Theatrically*) Labardan! Labardan!!

(*Exit into the side room, followed by the* GOVERNOR)

* He refers to his official record kept by the clerk of his special department, with a duplicate at the office of the corresponding ministry.

† *Va—va—vashestvo,* for *Vashe prevoskhoditelstvo*

SCENE VII

(*The same, without* KHLESTAKOV *and the* GOVERNOR)

BOBCHINSKI. There, Pyotr Ivanovich, there's a man for you! That's what I call a *man!* Never have I been before in the presence of such a swell—I nearly died of fright! What's his rank, do you think, Dobchinski?

DOBCHINSKI: I should think he's almost a general.

BOBCHINSKI: Well, *I* think that a general wouldn't do for the sole of his boots! Or if he is a general, then he must be the very Generalissimo himself! Did you hear how he bullies the Council of State? Let's go quick, and tell Ammos Fyodorovich and Karobkin. Good afternoon, Anna Andreyevna!

DOBCHINSKI: Good afternoon, *Kumushka!* (*Both go out*)

CHARITY COMMISSIONER (*to* LUKA LUKISH): It's a terrible anxiety, and one doesn't know who's the culprit. We're not in uniform either! As soon as he wakes he'll send a report about us to Petersburg! (*Exit dejectedly with the* SCHOOL INSPECTOR, *both saying to* ANNA) Good-by, *Sudarinya!*

SCENE VIII

(ANNA *and* MARYA)

ANNA: Oh, what a charming young man!

MARYA: *Akh,* how delightful he is!

ANNA. But what refinement of manners! You can see at once he's in society His deportment and all *akh,* how fine! I'm passionately fond of young men like that— I'm simply beside myself! However, I'm sure I charmed him exceedingly: I noticed—he kept looking at me all the time.

MARYA. Oh, mamma dear, he looked at *me!*

ANNA: Get along with your rubbish; your remarks are quite out of place!

MARYA: But, mamma, he *did,* really!

ANNA: There you are, *arguing* again! You're *not* to; that's flat! *When* did he look at you, pray? and why should he look at *you?*

MARYA Really, mamma dear, he *gazed* at me the whole time. When he began to talk about literature he looked at me, and when he described how he played whist with the ambassadors he kept his eyes on me.

ANNA· Well, perhaps he did once or twice, and that was only for the sake of appearances. He thought, "Oh, I suppose I had better give her a glance or two!"

Scene IX

Governor (*entering on tiptoe*): Sh—sh—

Anna: What?

Governor. I'm vexed that he has drank so much....Now supposing *half* of what he said was true! (*Reflects*) And why shouldn't it be so? When a man's tipsy he lets everything out: what's in his heart flies to his tongue. Of course he invented a little; but then no story is ever told without a little ornamentation....So he plays whist with ministers, and goes to court....Upon my word, the more one thinks about it—the devil knows what to make of it—I feel as giddy as if I stood on the top of a steeple, or they were going to hang me.

Anna. *I* don't feel the slightest nervousness, I merely saw in him an educated, polished, well-bred young man; but I don't bother myself about his rank.

Governor. Oh, that's just like you *women!* That one word *woman* explains everything! You women only care about fiddle-faddle,* and fire off remarks without rhyme or reason. *You* may be let off with a flogging, but *your husband* will never more be heard of. You treat this gentleman, my dear, as familiarly as if he was another Dobchinski.

Anna: I recommend you not to trouble about *that.* We shall see what we shall see... (*Glances significantly at her daughter*)

Governor (*soliloquizing*): Oh, it's no good talking to you! *What* a state of things this is! I haven't yet been able to recover from my fright. (*Opens the door, and calls off*) Mishka, call the police officers Svistunov and Derzhimorda; they are somewhere about near the gate. (*After a short silence*) It's a very queer world now. One *ought* to be able to recognize such people by their distinguished appearance; but *this* miserable stripling—how is one to know *who* he is? A military man reveals himself at once. When he puts on civilian dress he looks like a fly with its wings clipped....But then he obstinately remained at the inn, and just now gave vent to such allegories and ambiguities, that it would take you an age to make head or tail of 'em However, he has surrendered at last. Yes, and said a good deal more than he'd need to. It's pretty plain he's *quite* young!

Scene X

(*Enter* Osip. *All rush to him, beckoning*)

Anna: Come here, my friend!

Governor Hush!...Is he—is he asleep?

Osip: No, he's still stretching himself.

* Or, it is a trifle to *you* (but it is a serious matter to *me*). The Russian is ambiguous

ANNA: Tell me—what's your name?

OSIP: Osip, ma'am.

GOVERNOR (*to his wife and daughter*): There, that's enough, that'll do for *you*. (*To* OSIP) Well, my friend, have you been well looked after?

OSIP: Fust-rate, sir, fust-rate; and thank you kindly.

ANNA Tell me now—a good many counts and princes visit your master, don't they?

OSIP (*aside*): What shall I say now? I dessay, if I tell 'em *yes*, they'll feed me even better still. (*Aloud*) Oh, yes, a lot of counts come and see him.

MARYA: Ah, my dear Osip, how handsome your *barin* is!

ANNA: But tell me, please, Osip, how does he—?

GOVERNOR: Now stop it, please! You only hinder me with such foolish remarks. Well now, my friend—

ANNA: But what is your master's rank?

OSIP. Oh—the *usual* rank!

GOVERNOR (*to* ANNA): *Akh, Bozhe moi*, how you keep on with your senseless questions! You don't say a single word to the point! Now, my man, what is your master *like*—eh? strict? Is he given to scolding you or not?

OSIP. Yes, he likes orderliness. He must have everything exact.

GOVERNOR: Well, I like your face, my friend. I'm sure you're one of the right sort. Now what—

ANNA: Listen, Osip, what does your master wear in town; does he go about in uniform or—

GOVERNOR: Now that'll do; really, what a magpie you are! This is a serious business—a matter of life and death.... (*To* OSIP) Yes, I'm very pleased with you, my man; an extra cup of tea on a journey is always acceptable; it's a trifle cold now, so there's a couple of silver roubles for tea.

OSIP (*takes the money*): Oh, thank you kindly, sir! The Lord give you very good health! It's a great help to a poor man.

GOVERNOR· Certainly, certainly; and I'm very glad to help you. Now, my friend, what—

ANNA· Listen to me, Osip. What colored eyes does your master like best—?

MARYA Osip, my life! what a charming little nose your master has!

GOVERNOR Have done! Let me speak.... (*To* OSIP) Just tell me, please, my good fellow, what does your *barin* pay most attention to—I mean, what pleases him most on his journeys?

OSIP: Oh, he's fond of finding out all about everything. Most of all, he likes being well received, being well entertained.

GOVERNOR: Well entertained?

OSIP: Yes. As for me, I'm only a serf; but he sees that I'm well treated too. Lor' bless us! One day we set off somewhere. He says, "Well, Osip, have they treated you well?" "Shabbily, your nobility," says I. "Oho," says he, "then he's no good as a host, Osip. You remind me of him when I come along again!" "Ah!" thinks I to myself—(*Gesticulates*)—"God help him!—and I'm only a nobody."

GOVERNOR: Very good; you speak to the point. What I gave you was for *tea*—here's something extra for biscuits!

OSIP: Oh, you're too liberal, your high nobility! (*Pockets the money*) I'll make sure to spend it all in drinking your honor's health!

ANNA: Come to me, Osip, and you'll get something more.

MARYA: Osip, my life, kiss your master for me!

(KHLESTAKOV *is heard to cough slightly in the next room*)

GOVERNOR: Sh! (*Walks on tiptoe; the rest of the scene is conducted in an undertone*) Good God! don't make a noise! Get out of the room! (*To* ANNA) We've had quite enough of you!

ANNA Let us go, Mashenka, I'll tell you something I noticed about our guest that can only be said in *private*.

GOVERNOR: Oh, they're at it again! Just go and listen to them—you'll have to stop up your ears pretty quick! (*Turns to* OSIP) Now, my friend—

SCENE XI

(*Enter* DERZHIMORDA *and* SVISTUNOV)

GOVERNOR: Sh! Those bandy-legged bears—how they stump with their boots! They blunder about as if someone's throwing forty *puds* out of a wagon. Where's the devil taking you to?

DERZHIMORDA (*loudly*): My orders were—

GOVERNOR: Sh! (*Stops his mouth*) You bark like a raven! (*Shakes him*) *Your orders were*—were they indeed! Bellowing like a bull in a barrel! (*To* OSIP) Now, my man, you go and get ready there—order anything that there is in the house! (OSIP *goes out*) But *you* ...stand on the landing, and don't stir from the spot! And let no stranger into the house, and above all, no merchants! If you let *one* even slip past you, then I'll...! And just mind, if anyone comes with a petition, or even *without* one, if he looks like a person who would present a petition against me—then you kick him out head-foremost—straight! So! (*Business*) Do you understand? Sh! now, sh! (*Exit on tiptoe with the Police Officers*)

ACT IV

SCENE—*The same apartment in the Governor's house.*

SCENE I

(*Enter cautiously, almost on tiptoe,* AMMOS FYODOROVICH (*the Judge*), ARTEMI PHILIPPOVICH (*the Charity Commissioner*), *the* POSTMASTER, LUKA LUKICH, DOBCHINSKI, *and* BOBCHINSKI, *all in full gala uniform. The whole scene is played in an undertone*)

JUDGE (*arranging them all in a semicircle*) · For God's sake, gentlemen, form your circle quicker; let's have better order! Good heavens —he goes to court, you know, and bullies the Council of State! Draw up in military order, absolutely in military order! Peter Ivanovich, you must stand *there!* (*Both* BOBCHINSKI *and* DOBCHINSKI *run on tiptoe to the place assigned*)

CHARITY COMMISSIONER It's as you please, Ammos Fyodorovich; but we certainly *ought* to make the attempt.

JUDGE · What attempt?

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: *You* know what I mean.

JUDGE *Palm-oil?*

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Yes, try a little palm-oil

JUDGE: It's risky—he'll storm at us; he's a State functionary, you know. Perhaps it had better take the form of a *testimonial* from the nobility and gentry—some sort of souvenir.

POSTMASTER · Or perhaps, say—there's some money been sent by post, and we don't know who it's for.

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Mind he doesn't send *you* by post somewhere farther than you care for. I tell you, these little matters are *not* so managed in a well-ordered State. Why is there a whole squadron of us here? We ought to approach him one by one, and do...what is needful in a private interview, so that nobody knows anything about it. *That's* how things are done in a well-managed community. So, Ammos Fyodorovich, you ought to begin first.

JUDGE Much better *you,* the illustrious visitor broke bread in *your* hospital.

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: No, no! then Luka Lukich had better, as the enlightener of youth.

LUKA: I can't, I can't, really, gentlemen! I confess I've been so brought up that, if anyone a single degree above me in rank addresses me, I just lose my head, and my tongue's as if stuck in the mud. No, sirs, excuse me; really I *must* beg to be let off!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Then there's no one but *you,* Ammos

Fyodorovich! Why, every word you utter sounds like another Cicero talking!

JUDGE: What nonsense! *Cicero,* indeed! *what* an idea! Just because one now and then spouts a little about house dogs or bloodhounds!

ALL (*surrounding him*) No, not only about dogs—about the building of the *Tower of Babel** too... No, Ammos Fyodorovich, don't desert us—be our father!...Don't desert us, Ammos Fyodorovich!

JUDGE· Release me, gentlemen! (*At this moment footsteps and expectorations are heard in* KHLESTAKOV'S *room All rush headlong to the door, jostling and struggling to get out. They squeeze and crush one another a good deal, and half-suppressed exclamations are heard*)

BOBCHINSKI'S VOICE Ugh! Pyotr Ivanovich, you've trod on my toe!

ZEMLYANIKA'S VOICE: I'm stifling, stifling; give me room—only give me time to repent!—you're squeezing the life out of me!

(*Other ejaculations of* "Ahh!" "Oohh!" *etc. At last they all get through, and the room is left empty*)

SCENE II

KHLESTAKOV (*coming out alone, with the look of a man who has overslept himself*): I've had a proper snooze, it seems. Where did they get such mattresses and feather beds from? I regularly perspired.... They must have plied me fairly well after lunch. my head aches yet. ...As far as I can see, I can pass the time here very comfortably I like generosity and hospitality—all the more if I think they've not got a deep game to play... And the Governor's daughter's not at all bad; while her mother, well...No, I don't know, but this sort of life just suits me to a T.

SCENE III

JUDGE (*enters and stops still, soliloquizing*) O Lord, O Lord! grant me success! How my knees knock together! (*Aloud, drawing himself up and steadying himself with his sword*) I have the honor to present myself: County Court Judge of this district and College Assessor Lyapkin-Tyapkin!

KHLESTAKOV Pray take a seat! So you are the judge here?

JUDGE. I was elected judge for three years by the nobility and gentry in the year 1816, and have continued in the office ever since.

KHLESTAKOV: You find it profitable, I dare say, being a judge?

JUDGE: After three periods of the three years I was decorated with the Vladimir of the Fourth Class, with commendation from the Gov-

* A discussion where all are talking at the same time, and nobody is listening to anyone else, is called *stolpotvorenie,* or "building the Tower of Babel" But here the allusion is to the Judge's skepticism.

ernment. (*Aside*) This money is regularly burning a hole through my hand!

KHLESTAKOV: Well, I like the Vladimir; it's better than the Anna of the Third Class at any rate.

JUDGE (*thrusting his clenched fist somewhat forward, aside*): Oh, Lord God! I don't know *where* I'm sitting! I feel as if I was on hot burning coals!

KHLESTAKOV: What have you got in your hand there?

JUDGE (*loses his head, and drops the banknotes on the floor*): No—othing, sir!

KHLESTAKOV: Nothing? How's that? Why, I see there's some money dropped!

JUDGE (*shaking all over*): I—impos-sible, sir! (*Aside*) O Lord, now *I'm* before the judge! They've brought the cart to take me to Siberia!

KHLESTAKOV (*picks the notes up*): Yes, so it is; it's money.

JUDGE Now, all is over! I'm lost! I'm lost!

KHLESTAKOV: I say, *lend* me this!

JUDGE (*eagerly*): If you wish, sir, if you wish—with the greatest of pleasure! (*Aside*) Now, courage—courage! Aid me, Most Holy Mother!

KHLESTAKOV: I spent all my money on the road, you know, over one thing and another.... However, as soon as I get home I'll return it you

JUDGE: Don't mention it; it's quite unnecessary! The *honor* of lending it you is enough.... Indeed, with my feeble powers, but with all zeal and loyalty to the Government... I shall endeavor to deserve... (*Rises and stands erect, hands down his sides*) I will not venture to disturb you further with my presence.* ... Will there be any injunction?

KHLESTAKOV: *Injunction*—what injunction?

JUDGE: I mean, will you not give any injunction to the judge of this district?

KHLESTAKOV: *Why* should I? I've no need for him at present; no, thank you—thanks very much!

JUDGE (*bowing and going out, aside*): *Now* the town is ours!

KHLESTAKOV (*alone*). H'm, the Judge is an excellent fellow!

SCENE IV

(*Enter the* POSTMASTER *in uniform, sword in hand*)

POSTMASTER: I have the honor to present myself. Postmaster and Court Councillor Shpyokin!

* Readers of the play in the original will notice that the identical formula, *nye smyeyu boleye bezpakoit svayim prisutstviem,* is used in this and the three following scenes, I therefore employ the same set of words in the translation

KHLESTAKOV: Ah, welcome! I'm very fond of agreeable company! Take a seat! And so you live here always?

POSTMASTER: Yes, sir, just so.

KHLESTAKOV: Well, I like this little town of yours. Cert'nly, there are not many people in it, but what of that? it's not the capital That's true, isn't it—it's *not* the capital?

POSTMASTER: That's quite true, sir.

KHLESTAKOV: You see, it is only in the capital you get *bon-ton,* and no country bumpkins. That's your opinion, isn't it?

POSTMASTER: Exactly so, sir! (*Aside*) Well, he's not at all *haughty* he talks about anything!

KHLESTAKOV: Still you admit you *can* live happily in a small town?

POSTMASTER: Precisely so, sir!

KHLESTAKOV: What does one want? In *my* opinion, all you want is that people should respect you, and sincerely like you—isn't that so?

POSTMASTER: Absolutely correct.

KHLESTAKOV: I must say I'm glad we are of the same mind. I daresay I'm called eccentric, but it's my nature. (*Catches the other's eye, and speaks sotto voce*) I may as well borrow a trifle of this Postmaster too. (*Aloud*) A very odd thing has happened to me I've spent my last coin on the way. Can you lend me three hundred roubles?

POSTMASTER: Of course! I shall count it a very great happiness. Here it is—take it, sir, please—delighted to oblige you!

KHLESTAKOV: Thanks, very much. You see, I've a mortal hatred of stinting myself when I'm traveling—why should I? Ain't I right?

POSTMASTER *Quite* right, sir! (*Rises and draws himself up, with his hand on his sword*) I will not venture to disturb you further with my presence.... Have you any observation to make with reference to the postal administration?

KHLESTAKOV: No, nothing!

(*The* POSTMASTER *bows and exits*)

KHLESTAKOV (*lighting a cigar*). The Postmaster, it seems to me, is also a very good fellow—at least, he's ready to oblige; that's the sort of people I like.

SCENE V

(*Enter* LUKA LUKICH, *unceremoniously propelled from behind. A voice in his rear is heard saying, almost aloud,* "Go on, what are you afraid of?")

LUKA (*saluting nervously, with his hand on his sword*): I have the honor to present myself: Director of Schools and Honorary Councillor Khlopov!

KHLESTAKOV: Ah, how d'ye do! Take a seat! Take a seat! Won't you have a weed? (*Offers him one*)

LUKA (*aside, irresolutely*): Good gracious now! I never *thought* of that! Shall I take it or not?

KHLESTAKOV: Take it, take it; it's of an excellent brand To be sure, it's not a Petersburg one. I used to smoke cigars *there,* my good sir, that cost twenty-five roubles the hundred Ah! you'd lick your fingers after smoking *them!* Here's a match—light up! (*Gives him a match.* LUKA *tries to smoke, shaking all over*) There, don't put *that* end in your mouth!

LUKA (*throws the cigar down, spits, and gesticulates. Aside*): Devil take it all; my cursed nervousness spoils everything!

KHLESTAKOV· I see you're not very fond of cigars, but I own they're one of *my* weaknesses. Not the only one, though—I'm rather susceptible to the charms of the fair sex too. What's *your* taste? Do you prefer brunettes, or blondes?

(LUKA *is completely dumbfounded*)

KHLESTAKOV: No, out with it!—brunettes, or blondes!

LUKA: I daren't give an opinion.

KHLESTAKOV: No, no; don't get out of it *that* way I particularly want to know your taste.

LUKA. I will venture to say then ... (*Aside*) *I* don't know what I'm saying—my head's in a whirl!

KHLESTAKOV: Aha! Aha! So you won't commit yourself! I'm sure you're smitten with some little brunette or other! Confess it now—you *are!* (LUKA *is speechless*) Oho, you're blushing Look, look! Why won't you speak?

LUKA: I'm too shy, your nob—excell—enity! (*Aside*) Confound my tongue, it's done for me, done for me!

KHLESTAKOV: Too shy—eh? Well, there's a certain something in my look which inspires that feeling; at least I know that not a woman can resist it—can they?

LUKA. Certainly not, sir!

KHLESTAKOV: Now, there's a very funny thing happened to me: I've spent all I possess in coming here. You couldn't lend me three hundred roubles, could you?

LUKA (*aside, grabbing at his purse*): What a case, if I haven't got them! ... Ah, I have, I have! (*Takes some notes out, and hands them, trembling, to* KHLESTAKOV)

KHLESTAKOV: I'm deeply indebted to you!

LUKA I will not venture to disturb you further with my presence!

KHLESTAKOV: Good-by, then!

LUKA (*disappears hastily, remarking, aside*): There! thank Heaven! perhaps he won't visit the schools now!

Scene VI

(*Enter the* Charity Commissioner, Artemi Philippovich. *He draws himself up, like the others, in a military attitude of respectful attention, with his hand on his sword*)

Charity Commissioner: I have the honor to present myself: Charity Commissioner and Court Councillor Zemlyanika.

Khlestakov: *Zdravstvuitye,** won't you take a seat?

Charity Commissioner: I had the honor of receiving and personally conducting you through the charitable institutions committed to my charge.

Khlestakov: Ah, so you did, I remember. You gave me an excellent luncheon.

Charity Commissioner: I am glad to labor in the service of my Fatherland.

Khlestakov: It's my weakness—I confess it— I'm fond of good cookery....But it seems as if you weren't so tall and erect yesterday, were you?

Charity Commissioner: It's very possible. (*After a short silence*) I can only say that I spare no effort to perform my duty zealously. (*Draws his chair a little closer, and speaks in a lower tone*) There's this Postmaster here does absolutely nothing Everything is in the greatest state of neglect letters and packages are kept back...pray investigate the matter yourself The Judge too, who was here just before me, does nothing but hunt hares, and keeps his dogs in the County Court buildings; while his general conduct, if I *must* unburden my mind to you—certainly it's for my country's good that I have to do it, though he's my friend and connection—well, his conduct is most deplorable. There's a certain proprietor here, Dobchinski by name—you have deigned to meet him—and as soon as ever Dobchinski goes away anywhere, his wife and the Judge are having a *tête-à-tête* I am ready to swear to it. and the *children,* down to the youngest little girl, have a very strong likeness to the Judge—

Khlestakov: Well, I declare! I never should have thought it!

Charity Commissioner. Then there's the Director of Schools. I can't think *how* the Government could have appointed him. He's worse than a Jacobin,† and he poisons the minds of the young generation with revolutionary doctrines that simply baffle description. Hadn't I better put all this down on paper?

Khlestakov. Do, by all means; I shall be very glad to have it! I

* "How do you do?"—literally, "Be in good health," the usual Russian salutation

† Referring to the Jacobins of the French Revolution

like to read something amusing when I'm bored....By the way, what is your name? * I keep forgetting!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER. Zemlyanika.

KHLESTAKOV Ah, of course—Zemlyanika. And tell me, please, have you any children?

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: To be sure I have, sir, five of 'em; two are now grown up.

KHLESTAKOV: You don't say so; grown up! And, now...what are their—?

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: I understand, you are pleased to ask what their names are?

KHLESTAKOV. Yes, what are their names?

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Nikolay, Ivan, Yelizaveta, Marya, and Perepetuya †

KHLESTAKOV: Good, good!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: As I will not venture to disturb you further with my presence, or take up the time which you consecrate to the performance of your duties... (*Bows and prepares to leave*)

KHLESTAKOV (*accompanying him out*): Oh, don't mention it! All you've told me is very amusing....It's a great treat to me ..(*Turns back, and reopens the door, calling after him*) Hi, there! what are your ...I quite forget your Christian and paternal names!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Artemi Philippovich.

KHLESTAKOV Oh, I beg your pardon, Artemi Philippovich, but an odd thing has happened to me—I've cleaned myself out coming here. You haven't got four hundred roubles to lend me?

CHARITY COMMISSIONER Yes, I have. (*Gives it*)

KHLESTAKOV Well, that *is* lucky! I thank you most sincerely!

SCENE VII

(*Enter* BOBCHINSKI *and* DOBCHINSKI)

BOBCHINSKI: I have the honor to present myself: Peter, son of Ivan Bobchinski, citizen of this town ‡

DOBCHINSKI And I am Pyotr, son of Ivan Dobchinski, landed proprietor.

KHLESTAKOV Ah, but I've met you before! I think you had a fall then? How is your nose now?

BOBCHINSKI. *Slava Bohu!* Quite well, thank you! Please don't trouble about it—it's healed now, quite healed up!

* *Kak vasha familya*—literally, what is your family, *i e*, surname Further on, he asks for his *imya* and *otchestvo*, his Christian name and his patronymic.

† Slavonic form of *Perpetua*

‡ They use the antiquated and provincial form, *Ivanov sin*, instead of *Ivanovich*

KHLESTAKOV: That's all right—I'm glad to hear it ... (*Suddenly*) You haven't got any money about you?

DOBCHINSKI: Money! What for?

KHLESTAKOV: Lend me a thousand!

BOBCHINSKI: Good God! I haven't got such a sum! Haven't you, though, Pyotr Ivanovich?

DOBCHINSKI: No more have I, sir; because, if you care to know, all my money is deposited with the Board of Guardians.*

KHLESTAKOV: Well, then, if you haven't a thousand, say a *hundred* roubles.

BOBCHINSKI (*rummaging in his pockets*): Haven't you got a hundred, Dobchinski? I have only got forty in paper, altogether.

DOBCHINSKI I've no more than twenty-five roubles

BOBCHINSKI: Have another good look, then, Pyotr Ivanovich! You've a hole in your right pocket, I know—I daresay there's some dropped through.

DOBCHINSKI. No, there's nothing in the hole, I'm positive.

KHLESTAKOV Never mind, then—I'll do with that. Very well, let it be sixty-five roubles ... That's all right. (*Takes the notes*)

DOBCHINSKI: I was going to presume to ask you a favor with reference to a very delicate question—

KHLESTAKOV: Well, what is it?

DOBCHINSKI It is a matter of a *very* delicate nature, sir: my eldest son, will you condescend to observe, was born a little before my marriage—

KHLESTAKOV Hullo?

DOBCHINSKI: And so, if you please, I wish him to be quite my—well, *legitimate* son now, sir, and to be called Dobchinski, like me, sir

KHLESTAKOV: All right, that's quite possible; *let* him be called so.

DOBCHINSKI: I wouldn't trouble you, sir, only it was a pity, with all his capabilities. The boy really gives me the greatest hopes: he repeats whole poems by heart; and if he finds a knife anywhere, he'll at once make a little toy droshky as neatly as a conjurer, sir Here's Bobchinski will testify to that.

BOBCHINSKI: Yes, he has wonderful talents!

KHLESTAKOV: Very good, very good! I'll do my best for him.... I'll speak about it ... I hope to.. that shall all be arranged—yes, yes! . (*Turns to* BOBCHINSKI) Haven't *you* something to ask me for?

BOBCHINSKI: Yes, I have a very humble request to make.

KHLESTAKOV: Well then, what about?

BOBCHINSKI: I most respectfully beg of you, when you return to Petersburg, to tell all the different grandees there—the senators and

* Local bodies, which used to act as Savings Banks, with State security, before the reorganization of the Imperial Bank

admirals—that *here,* your Serenity—I mean, your Excellency—in this very town lives Peter Ivanovich Bobchinski—merely to say that: Peter Ivanovich Bobchinski lives here.

KHLESTAKOV. Very good!

BOBCHINSKI And if the Emperor should get to hear of it, then will you say to the Emperor too May it please your Imperial Majesty, that is the town where Peter Ivanovich Bobchinski lives.

KHLESTAKOV: Certainly!

DOBCHINSKI } (*together*): Pardon us for troubling you so with our
BOBCHINSKI } presence.

KHLESTAKOV. Don't mention it, don't mention it! It's a great pleasure to me (*Conducts them out*)

SCENE VIII

KHLESTAKOV (*solus*): There's a good many *chinovniks* here! It seems to be, though, they take me for a Government official! I certainly drew the long bow yesterday.... What a set of flats they are! I must send an account of it all to Tryapichkin at Petersburg. he writes articles—he'll scribble off a fine description of them. Hi, Osip! bring me some ink and paper! (OSIP *looks in at the door and says,* "Directly, sir!") But I must be careful with Tryapichkin—this may strike him as a good joke—he'll sell his own father for a jest,* and he won't refuse a chance of making money. Besides, these officials are a good sort of people: their lending me money is a decided point in their favor. I'll just see how much I've got.. .There's three hundred from the Judge, and three hundred from the Postmaster.... Six, seven, eight hundred—what a greasy bit of paper—eight hundred, nine hundred.... Oho! it tots up to more than a thousand.... Now then, my friend the captain, just let me catch you *now*—we'll see who'll be the winner!

SCENE IX

(*Enter* OSIP, *with inkstand and paper*)

KHLESTAKOV: Now, booby, you see how well they entertain me! (*Begins to write*)

OSIP· Yes, thank the Lord! Only, do you know, Ivan Alexandrovich—?

KHLESTAKOV· Know *what?*

OSIP: You ought to be starting! *Yei Bohu* it's high time!

KHLESTAKOV (*writing*): What nonsense! Why?

OSIP: I mean it. The Lord be with 'em all! You've been a-going it here for two days—reelly, it's quite enough! Why hobnob with 'em

* Russian proverb

any longer? Spit on 'em! You don't know what may happen next * —somebody else may turn you.... *Yes Bohu,* Ivan Alexandrovich! And there's splendid 'orses here—they'd go like lightning!

KHLESTAKOV (*writes*): No, I'd like to stay on here a little longer. Tomorrow will do.

OSIP: Tomorrow! Lord love us! We *must* go, Ivan Alexandrovich! If they make a lot of you just now, it's all the better reason for starting at once. You see, they've been and mistook you for somebody else; and the guv'nor will be angry at your loitering here.... Those 'orses would go famous, *I'll* undertake—they'd give you real good 'uns here.

KHLESTAKOV (*still writing*): Very well then. Only take this letter first, please, and then get an order for post-horses—and mind you see that they're good ones. Tell the postboys I'll give them each a rouble for drink, if they drive like *feldjagers,*† and sing their loudest. .. (*Continues writing*) There, I fancy Tryapichkin will die of laughing—

OSIP: I'll send it off, sir, by the man here. I'd better be packing up, so's not to lose time.

KHLESTAKOV. Very good—bring me a light, though!

OSIP (*goes out, and speaks behind the scene*): Hi there, mate! You take a letter to the post, and tell the Postmaster he's to frank it—and order them to bring round their very best courier's troika for my master at once, and say that the *barin* don't pay any fare—he travels at the Government's expense, tell 'em. They're to look alive, or the *barin* will be furious Stop, the letter ain't ready yet.

KHLESTAKOV (*goes on with his letter*): I should like to know where he's living now—whether it's the *Pochtamtskaya* or the *Garokhovaya* ‡ He likes to change his quarters pretty often—saves paying the rent. I'll make a shot at it, and address to the *Pochtamtskaya.* (*Folds the letter up and addresses it*)

(OSIP *brings the light* KHLESTAKOV *seals the letter At the same time* DERZHIMORDA'S *voice is heard exclaiming* "Where are you coming to, old stick-in-the-mud? ¶ You've been told no one's to be let in.")

KHLESTAKOV (*gives* OSIP *the letter*): There, take it out!

MERCHANTS' VOICES: Let us in, *batyushka*—you can't prevent us: we've come on business!

DERZHIMORDA'S VOICE: Be off! Be off! He's not receiving any one! He's asleep. (*The noise increases*)

* *Nye roven chas*—literally, one hour is unlike (another).

† Imperial couriers, who have precedence at the post-stations

‡ Two of the great thoroughfares of St Petersburg The word *ulitsa* (street) is understood after their names, which mean Post Office and Peas Street respectively

¶ *Barada*—literally, "beard."

KHLESTAKOV: What's up there, Osip? See what the row's about!

OSIP (*looks through the window*): Some tradesmen want to come in, and the police officer won't let 'em. They're waving papers about —they want to see you, I'm sure.

KHLESTAKOV (*going to the window*): Well, what do you want, my friends?

MERCHANTS' VOICES: We throw ourselves on your favor! Give orders that your lordship will receive our petition.

KHLESTAKOV: Let them in, let them in! Let them come! Osip, tell them they're to come in. (*Exit* OSIP. KHLESTAKOV *takes some petitions in through the window, turns them over, and reads*) "To his High Well-born Illustrious Financial Lordship from the Merchant Abdulin"... the devil knows what it's about, and what a *title,* too!

SCENE X

(*Enter the* MERCHANTS, *with sugar loaves and a basket of wine*)

KHLESTAKOV Now, my friends, what is it?

MERCHANTS: We implore your favor!

KHLESTAKOV: Well, say what you want!

MERCHANTS· Do not ruin us, your lordship! we are grievously and unjustly oppressed!

KHLESTAKOV· By whom?

ONE OF THE MERCHANTS· It's all by the Governor of this town. There never was such a governor, sir! It is impossible to describe the outrages he commits. We're so ruined by constant billeting that we may as well hang ourselves! He catches us by the beard and says, "Ah, you dog of a Tartar!" My God! if we don't pay him due respect . ! But we've always done our duty peaceably. we've never refused anything that his lady or his daughter might want for dress. But no, you see, that is not enough for him; why, he comes into a shop, and anything he lights upon—he collars the lot he'll see a piece of cloth, and say, "Ah, my friend, that's a nice little piece of stuff; just carry it to my house!" So we have to take it, and the piece will be fifty *arshins** or so in length.

KHLESTAKOV. Is it possible? *Akh,* what a blackguard he is!

MERCHANTS: Yes, by God! No one ever remembers such a governor. So we cover up everything in the shop when we see him coming along. And, let alone choice articles, he'll take any sort of rubbish: some prunes had been lying in the barrel for seven years, too bad for my shop-boy to eat—he stuffs a whole handful of them

* Nearly 39 yards

into his pocket. He says his name-day * is the feast of St. Anthony, and then you have to bring him all kinds of things he doesn't even want—that's no matter, you've got to keep on bringing them; and more, he says St. Onufri's † Day is another name-day of his, so there's nothing to be done but come with your contributions on *that* day too.

KHLESTAKOV: Why, he's nothing more nor less than a brigand!

MERCHANT: That's true! But try to thwart him, and he'll quarter a whole regiment of soldiers in your house. And if we have the doors barred in his face, he says, "I will not submit you to corporal punishment or torture, as that is forbidden by the law, but, my dear, I will make you swallow red herrings." ‡

KHLESTAKOV: What a thorough-paced villain! He ought to be sent straight to Siberia for that!

MERCHANT: Yes, if you by your favor will only remove him, all will be well, provided only he does not stay in our neighborhood Do not, our father, despise our bread and salt; ¶ we pay our respects to you with this sugar loaf and this basket of wine!

KHLESTAKOV: No, don't you imagine *that,* I never accept bribes. But if you offered me a *loan* of, say, three hundred roubles, that would be quite another matter. I *could* take that

MERCHANTS Take it then, our father. (*They produce the money*) But what is three hundred—better have five hundred; only help us!

KHLESTAKOV: If you wish it—it's a *loan*—I'll not say a word!... I'll take it!

MERCHANTS (*offering the money on a silver tray*): Please accept the tray also!

KHLESTAKOV: Well, I may perhaps take the tray.

MERCHANTS (*bowing*) Then take the sugar loaf as well!

KHLESTAKOV Oh, no! I never accept any kind of *bribes*—

OSIP: Your High Nobility! why won't you have it! Take it—it will come in very useful on the journey!...Give me the sugar loaves and the packing case—it'll all do. What's that? Cord? Let's have the cord as well—the cord will be handy on the road: the carriage 'll get damaged, or something or other—it'll do to tie it up with!

MERCHANTS. Show us this favor then, Your Excellency. If you refuse to aid us in our prayer, we don't know what will happen—we may as well go and hang ourselves!

* A Russian does not celebrate his birthday, but his *imyenini,* or the feast of his patron saint, on whose day, and after whom, he was christened Hence an Orthodox Russian can only be called after one of the saints of the Greek Calendar

† In English, Humphrey.

‡ To produce excessive thirst This indirect form of torture was employed, to extort confession, by the secret police of the notorious "Third Section" of the Imperial Chancellery.

¶ The *khlyeb-sol* is a token of hospitality and good will.

KHLESTAKOV: Most undoubtedly I will, undoubtedly! I'll do my best!

(*The* MERCHANTS *take their leave. A woman's voice is heard without* "No, you daren't stop me! I'll complain to *him* of you! Don't you push me so roughly!")

KHLESTAKOV: Who's there? (*Goes to the window*) Well, what's the matter, *matushka?*

VOICES OF TWO WOMEN: Take pity on us, father! Say that your worship will listen to us!

KHLESTAKOV (*at the window*): Let them come in.

SCENE XI

(*Enter the* LOCKSMITH'S WIFE *and the* SERGEANT'S WIFE)

LOCKSMITH'S WIFE (*bowing to the ground*): Have pity on me!

SERGEANT'S WIFE: Have pity on me too!

KHLESTAKOV: Who are you, women?

SERGEANT'S WIFE: I am the sergeant Ivanov's wife.

LOCKSMITH'S WIFE: I live here, my father; I'm the locksmith's wife, Fevronya Pyetrova Pashlyopkina—

KHLESTAKOV: Stop, *one* of you speak at a time—what do *you* want?

LOCKSMITH'S WIFE: Have mercy on me—I beg for vengeance on the Governor! May the Lord curse him with every kind of curse, so that neither the villain himself, nor his children, nor his uncles, nor his aunts, may ever prosper in anything they undertake!

KHLESTAKOV: But why?

LOCKSMITH'S WIFE: Why, wretch that he is! He's ordered my husband to shave his forehead * as a recruit, and the lot didn't fall on us, and it's against the law, for he's married!

KHLESTAKOV: How then *could* he do it?

LOCKSMITH'S WIFE: He *has* done it, though, the villain; he's done it! May God blast him in this world and the next! And his aunt, if he has an aunt—may every sort of evil blight *her*—may his father, if he's alive, may he rot to death, the scoundrel, and may he choke forever for his villainy! They ought to have taken the tailor's drunken son, but the parents gave him a big present; so he sneaked off for the son of Panteleyeva the merchant's wife, but Panteleyeva privately sent her ladyship three pieces of linen, so he pitches on *me*. "What do *you* want a husband for?" he says; "he's no use to you" Well, *I'm* the person to know whether he's any use or not! "Then," he says, "your husband is a thief—if he hasn't stolen already, he *will* do so; it's all

* The shaving of the forehead was formerly practiced in order to prevent desertion The phrase now means merely "to enlist"

the same, and so they shall take him next year for a soldier." And how shall I do without my husband? Blackguard! may none of your family ever come to see the blessed light of God! may your mother-in-law, if you *have* a mother-in-law—

KHLESTAKOV: There, there! that will do! (*Motions the old woman out*) Now what have *you* to say? (*To the other*)

LOCKSMITH'S WIFE (*going out*): Don't forget me, my father!

SERGEANT'S WIFE: I have come to beg for justice against the Governor!

KHLESTAKOV Well, well, what is it? Cut it short!

SERGEANT'S WIFE He has flogged me, little father!

KHLESTAKOV: How?

SERGEANT'S WIFE By mistake, my father! Our old women were quarreling in the market, and the police came up and took and caught and reported *me*—and I couldn't sit down for two days after it!

KHLESTAKOV What's to be done *now*, then?

SERGEANT'S WIFE· To be sure, *that* can't be altered But command him to pay compensation for the mistake. I must bear my lot without complaining—but a little money would be very acceptable now!

KHLESTAKOV *Kharasho, kharasho!* * You can go now—be off—I'll see to it. (*Hands with petitions are thrust in through the window*) What! any *more* of 'em there? (*Goes to the window*) No, no, I can't attend to you—it's impossible, impossible! (*Going out*) What a nuisance they are, devil take 'em. Don't let 'em in, Osip!

OSIP (*calls out of the window*)· Go away, go away, there's no time now—come tomorrow!

(*The door opens, and a figure appears in a frieze greatcoat with unkempt beard, swollen lips, and head bound up, others are seen behind him in the background*)

OSIP· Be off with you, be off! Where are you a-coming to?

(*He pushes his fists into the first man's stomach, shoves him into the passage, and goes out himself, shutting the door*)

SCENE XII

(*Enter* MARYA ANTONOVNA)

MARYA: *A—kh!*

KHLESTAKOV· Why are you so frightened, mademoiselle?

MARYA: Oh, no! I was not frightened.

KHLESTAKOV (*showing off*). Pardon me, *sudarinya*, if I say that it is very agreeable to me to think you have taken me for one who. . May I venture to inquire where you thought of going?

MARYA: Really, I was going nowhere.

* Good!

KHLESTAKOV: Might I ask, then, why you were going nowhere?

MARYA: I wondered if mamma were here—

KHLESTAKOV: No; but I should really like to know why you were *going nowhere?*

MARYA: Oh, I'm disturbing you. You were engaged on important business!

KHLESTAKOV (*with a lady-killing air*): But a *glance* from your eyes is better than any important business!...*You* could never disturb me—that's quite impossible; on the contrary, you afford me the very greatest pleasure!

MARYA: Ah, you compliment as they do in the capital!

KHLESTAKOV: A charming lady like you should only be so addressed! May I dare to be so happy as to offer you a chair? But no! you should have a *throne,* not a chair!

MARYA: Indeed, I do not know....I ought to be going (*Takes a seat*)

KHLESTAKOV: What a beautiful scarf you have!

MARYA: You are making fun of me—you're only laughing at countrified people!

KHLESTAKOV: How I should long, mademoiselle, to be that scarf, so as to clasp your lily neck!

MARYA: I don't in the least understand what you mean....What singular weather we are having today!

KHLESTAKOV: Your little lips, though, *sudarinya,* are worth all the weather in the world!

MARYA: You only say that because you...I was going to ask you to write some verses in my album as a souvenir. You know a good many, of course.

KHLESTAKOV For *you,* mademoiselle, I will do anything you wish. Say the word, what verses will you have?

MARYA: Oh, anything—so long as they're good and new!

KHLESTAKOV: Let me see—verses! I know a lot of them!

MARYA: Well, will you tell me what you are going to write?

KHLESTAKOV: Why should I repeat them? I know them without that!

MARYA: I'm *so* fond of poetry....

KHLESTAKOV: Yes, and I know a quantity of all sorts Would you like this, say, "O thou, mortal man, who vainly in thine anguish murmurest against God"*...Or there's others I can't just remember 'em now—they're all of no account Instead, I offer you my *love,* which ever since your first glance... (*Moves his chair closer*)

* *Oti, shto v goresti naprasno na Bogha ropshchesh, chelavyek,* a hackneyed quotation from an Ode on the Book of Job, by Lomonosov, the earliest Russian poet (1711-1765)

MARYA: Love? I don't understand what *love* is!...I've never known what love is like... (*Moves her chair away*)

KHLESTAKOV: But why do you move your chair away? We had much better sit close to each other!

MARYA (*moves it still farther*): Why *close?* We're just as well apart!

KHLESTAKOV (*moves his chair up*): Why *apart?* We're just as well close together!

MARYA: But why do you do that?

KHLESTAKOV (*edging nearer*): I only *seem* near you—*fancy* that I'm far away!

MARYA (*looks out of the window*): Ah! what was that, seemed to fly past? Was it a magpie or what?

KHLESTAKOV (*kisses her on the shoulder, and looks at the window*): Yes, that was a magpie!

MARYA (*rises indignantly*): No, that's *too* much....What *rudeness!*

KHLESTAKOV (*holding her back*): Forgive me, mademoiselle—I did it for *love,* only for love of you!

MARYA: And so you think I'm a country hoyden.... (*Struggles to free herself*)

KHLESTAKOV (*still holding her*): It was for love, really, for love! .. I was only joking, Marya Antonovna, don't be angry! I'm ready to beg your pardon on my knees! (*Falls on his knees*) *Do* forgive me, forgive me! You see, you see, I'm on my knees!

SCENE XIII

(*Enter* ANNA ANDREYEVNA)

ANNA (*sees* KHLESTAKOV *kneeling*): *Akh,* what a situation!!

KHLESTAKOV (*rising*) Oh, con-found it!

ANNA (*to her daughter*): *Well,* miss, what's the meaning of *this* behavior?

MARYA: Mamma, dear, I—

ANNA Be off from here: d'you hear me, be off, I say! and don't dare to show your face to me again! (MARYA *goes out in tears*) Excuse me, sir, but, I confess, I was so astonished at these proceedings...

KHLESTAKOV (*aside*) But *she* isn't bad-looking, either. (*Throws himself at her feet*) *Sudarinya,* you see, I burn with love!

ANNA: What's this, you on your knees? Oh, get up, sir, get up! The floor is quite dirty here!

KHLESTAKOV: No, on my knees—indeed, on my knees, I wish to know my *fate*—life or death!

ANNA: But allow me, sir; I don't quite comprehend the meaning

of your words. If I am not mistaken, you were making a proposal to my daughter!

KHLESTAKOV: No, I'm in love with *you!* My life hangs on a thread! If you will not crown my constant love, then I am unfit for earthly existence! With a flame at my heart, I ask for your hand!

ANNA: But permit me to mention that I am, so to speak... well, I am *married!*

KHLESTAKOV: What matter? Love knows no difference! Has not Karamzin said: "The *laws* may condemn...."* We will fly under the canopy of heaven! Your hand— I crave your hand—

SCENE XIV

(MARYA ANTONOVNA *suddenly runs in*)

MARYA: Mamma, dear, papa says, will you... (*Sees* KHLESTAKOV *on his knees, and shrieks*): *Akh,* what a situation!!

ANNA: What is it, then? What do you want? What have you come for? What do you mean by this flightiness? Bursting in all of a sudden, like a cat in a fit! †.. Well, what have you seen that's so surprising? What's got into your head, then? Why, really, you act like a three-year-old child—*not* like, not in the least like, what one would expect from a girl of *eighteen!* I wonder when you *will* get more sensible, and behave as a well-brought-up young lady *should,* and learn good manners and steadiness of conduct!

MARYA (*through her tears*): Really, mamma, dear, I didn't know—

ANNA: Oh, your head's always empty ‡—you copy Lyapkin-Tyapkin's daughters What do you want to follow them for—you've no business to take them as your pattern. You have *other* examples, miss, before you—your own mother! That's the model you ought to imitate!

KHLESTAKOV (*seizing* MARYA'S *hand*): Anna Andreyevna, do not oppose our happiness, but give your blessing to a constant love!

ANNA (*astounded*): So it's *her* you're—

KHLESTAKOV: Decide my fate! is it life or death?!

ANNA (*recovering, to* MARYA): There, *now* you see, minx, now you see—it was all on *your* account, you baggage, that our guest was pleased to fall on his knees; and then you suddenly blunder in, as if you had taken leave of your senses It would have served you *quite* right if I had refused—you're not worthy of such good fortune.

MARYA: I won't do it any more, mamma; I'll never do so again—

* Quoted from some verses in the romance, *Bornholm Island,* by Karamzin, the great Russian historian (1766-1826).

† *Ugoryelaya*—literally, suffocated

‡ *Skvaznoi vyeter razgulivayet*—literally, a draught blows through (your head).

Scene XV

(*Enter the* Governor, *breathlessly*)

Governor: I will never do so again, Your Excellency! Don't ruin me—don't ruin me!

Khlestakov: Why, what's the matter?

Governor: The merchants have been here, complaining to Your Excellency....I swear, on my honor, not half of what they say is true. They cheat and rob the people themselves. The sergeant's wife lied when she told you I flogged her—it's false, *yes Bohu,* it's false. Why, *she flogged herself!*

Khlestakov: The sergeant's wife may go to the devil—I'm not going to bother about *her!*

Governor: Don't believe 'em—don't believe 'em! they're such liars ...not a *child* will trust 'em even! The whole town knows they're liars, and as for cheating, I'll go so far as to say the world has never bred such a gang!

Anna: But do you know the honor Ivan Alexandrovich has conferred on us? He has asked for our daughter's hand!

Governor: What? what?...You're *mad, matushka*....Don't be offended, Your Excellency; but she's a little wrong in the head sometimes—she takes after her mother.

Khlestakov: But I do really ask for her hand! I'm deeply in love!

Governor: I can't believe it, Your Excellency—!

Anna: Not when he *tells* you so?

Khlestakov: I'm not joking ..I'm madly in love with her!

Governor: I daren't believe it; I'm not worthy of such an honor!

Khlestakov: If you refuse me Marya Antonovna's hand, the devil knows what I'm not ready for!

Governor: I *can't* believe you—you are pleased to be jesting, Excellency!

Anna: Oh, what a *blockhead* you are, to be sure! How many times are you to be told?

Governor: No, no—it's incredible!

Khlestakov: Give me your consent, give me your consent! I'm a desperate man—capable of anything! If I blow my brains out, *you* will be held responsible.

Governor: Oh, my God! I am innocent, body and soul! Don't take offense, I beg! Please do what your honor thinks fit! My head's in such a whirl now...I can't realize what's going on....I've become a regular tomfool—such as I never was before!

Anna: There now, give them your blessing!

(Khlestakov *and* Marya *approach him*)

Governor: May the Lord bless you—but I am innocent of it!

(KHLESTAKOV *kisses* MARYA. *The* GOVERNOR *stares at them, and at last realizes that it is not all a plot*) *What?* what the devil! They're really...! (*Rubs his eyes*) *So* they are, they're kissing each other; they actually *are*—just as if they were engaged! Aha! Oho! What a stroke of luck! *Well,* I'm blest!!

SCENE XVI

(*Enter* OSIP)

OSIP: The horses are ready!

KHLESTAKOV: All right— I'll come directly!

GOVERNOR: Are you, then, going away?

KHLESTAKOV: Yes, I'm starting.

GOVERNOR: But just when—that is to say...you condescended to hint at a marriage, I thought!

KHLESTAKOV: I have to leave, though, at a minute's notice; but I'm only going for a day to see my uncle—he's a wealthy old boy—and I'll be back again tomorrow!

GOVERNOR: We won't venture to detain you then—we'll only hope for your safe return!

KHLESTAKOV: Thanks, thanks; I'll come back directly! (*To* MARYA) Good-by, my love!...No, I can't bear to say it! Farewell, darling. (*Kisses her hand*)

GOVERNOR: Will you want anything for your journey? You were good enough, I think, to say you were short of funds?

KHLESTAKOV: Oh, no, it doesn't matter.... (*Reflects a little*) Well ...all the same...since you *are* so kind—

GOVERNOR: How much do you want?

KHLESTAKOV: Well, you know, you have lent me two hundred—that's to say, it wasn't *two* hundred, but *four*—I don't want to profit by your mistake—so, if you like to lend me as much again, that will make it a round sum, just eight hundred.

GOVERNOR: You shall have it at once! (*Takes the notes out of his purse*) There, as if on purpose, there's some brand-new notes!

KHLESTAKOV: Ah, so they are! (*Takes the notes and examines them*) That's fine! They say new banknotes mean good luck, don't they?

GOVERNOR: So they do, sir; exactly so!

KHLESTAKOV: Well, good-by, Anton Antonovich! I'm deeply grateful to you for your hospitality—I've never been so well treated as here. Good-by, Anna Andreyevna! Farewell, Marya Antonovna, my darling!

(*They go off, and their voices are heard behind the scenes*)

KHLESTAKOV: Farewell, Marya Antonovna, angel of my soul!

GOVERNOR: Oh, how's this? you're going to ride in a post-carriage? *

KHLESTAKOV: Yes, it's a way I have. Springs give me a headache

DRIVER. *Tprr*....Whoa then!

GOVERNOR: Have something, then, laid there; a rug, say. Won't you let me tell them to get you one?

KHLESTAKOV: Oh, no, why? it's needless—still, if you like, let's have the rug!

GOVERNOR· Here, Avdotya, run to the cupboard and get out the very best rug, the Persian one with the blue ground—make haste!

DRIVER: *Tprrr*—

GOVERNOR· How long are we to wait for your return?

KHLESTAKOV: Oh, tomorrow, or the day after!

OSIP: Ah, is that the rug? let's have it here—lay it *so!* And now put some hay this side!

DRIVER: Whoa, then, whoa—

OSIP· Here, on this side! this way! more—that's right! that'll do famous! (*Pats the rug with his hand*) Now you can take your seat, your honor!

KHLESTAKOV Good-by, Anton Antonovich!

GOVERNOR Good-by, Your Excellency!

WOMEN'S VOICES Good-by, Ivan Alexandrovich!

KHLESTAKOV Good-by, *mamenka!*

DRIVER. Gee-up, my beauties! (*Bell tinkles, the curtain falls*)

ACT V

SCENE—*As before.*

SCENE I

(*The* GOVERNOR, ANNA ANDREYEVNA, *and* MARYA ANTONOVNA)

GOVERNOR Well, Anna Andreyevna—eh? Had you any idea of *that,* now? There's a prize, if you *like!* Now, confess it candidly—you never dreamed of such a thing! You were a simple town governor's wife, and *now* see who you've hooked for a son-in-law—a devil of a swell, confound you!

ANNA· Not at all—I knew it ages ago. It's *you* that's taken by surprise; you're only a commonplace person, and have never met people of quality!

GOVERNOR· Why, madame, I'm one of the quality myself!... Just think, though, Anna Andreyevna, what a fine pair of birds we've become—eh? Anna Andreyevna! We can fly pretty high now—devilish high!...Stop, won't I pepper up all the gentlemen who

* *Na perekladnoi*—literally, "with relays of horses," and a hired sledge or springless tarantas

were so free with their petitions and complaints! Hi, who's there? (*A* POLICE OFFICER *enters*) Oh, that's you, Ivan Karpovich! Just summon the merchants here, brother. Won't I let the blackguards have it! Informing about *me,* indeed! Wait a little, you cursed pack of Jews, you little turtle-doves! I chastised you before with whips, now I'll try the scorpions! Take note of all who came to protest against me, and especially the scribblers who concocted their petitions. And be sure to let 'em all know, from me, what an honor Heaven has sent the Governor: he's going to marry his daughter, not to a nobody, but to a man whose equal the world's never seen, who can accomplish everything—everything—everything! Make them all understand *that!* Shout it in everyone's ears, ring the bells—devil take it! Now's my triumph, and triumph I *will!* (*The* POLICE OFFICER *goes out*) Now, Anna Andreyevna, what d'you think—eh? Things being as they are, where shall we take up our abode—here, or in "Peter"?

ANNA: Oh, in Petersburg, of course. How could we remain here?

GOVERNOR: Very well, Petersburg be it then!—only it's not bad here even. I fancy, though, the governorship can go to the devil—eh, Anna Andreyevna?

ANNA: Of course, what's a governorship, indeed!

GOVERNOR: *Now,* don't you think, Anna Andreyevna, we shall really get to the top of the tree, as he's hail-fellow-well-met with all the ministers, and goes to court; so he'll get me promoted, until in time I shall find myself among the generals What do you think, Anna Andreyevna, shall I *do* as a general?

ANNA: I should *say* so—beautifully!

GOVERNOR: Ah, confound it! it's splendid to be a general! They'll hang a ribbon across my shoulder! Which do you say's the best order to have—the red one or the blue? *

ANNA: Oh, decidedly the blue is the best.

GOVERNOR: Oh, that's what you aim at! The red one's pretty good, too Why does one want to be a general? Why, because, when you travel anywhere you have couriers and orderlies always galloping in front, shouting "horses!" and no one else can have 'em at the stations —everyone waits for you—all the councillors, captains, and town governors—and you don't turn a hair! † You dine with the lord lieutenant, ‡ wherever it may be, and snub the town governor! ¶ Ha, ha, ha! (*Laughs till the tears roll down his cheeks*) *That's* what I call tempting, d—n it!

* The red ribbon is for the Order of St Anne, 1st class, the blue, for the White Eagle

† Literally, "your breath does not even turn your mustache"—*i.e.*, you don't concern yourself

‡ *Gubernator,* chief of a *guberniya* or province

¶ *Gorodnichi,* like the speaker, governor, or burgomaster of a town The phrase here is, *Stoi gorodnichi!*—literally, the town governor can stand or wait

ANNA: Anything rude like that just pleases you. But you really must remember that we shall have to live a quite different kind of life—it won't do for you to know any of your dog-fancier judges, whom you go hare-hunting with, or people like Zemlyanika; on the contrary, your acquaintances will be persons of distinction—counts and fashionables, all of them...only I'm anxious about you: you will go and let out some expression or other, which is never heard in polite society.

GOVERNOR: Well, what of that—a word doesn't hurt!

ANNA: No, perhaps not, when you're only a town governor; but *there,* you know, our circumstances will be totally altered.

GOVERNOR. Yes, indeed! You can get two good sorts of fish, they say, there—the sea-eel and the smelt, and they make your mouth water when you begin to eat 'em.

ANNA: That's all he thinks about—*fish! I* shall wish our house to be the very first in the capital, and my boudoir to be full of such amber and perfume that you can't go in without shutting your eyes—*so!* (*Screws up her eyes and sniffs*) A—h! how exquisite!

SCENE II

(*Enter the* MERCHANTS)

GOVERNOR Oh, good-day, little falcons.*

MERCHANTS (*bowing*) We wish you health, little father!

GOVERNOR: Well, my little pigeons,† and how are you getting on? and how's business? (*Changes his tone*) And so you would report me, you tea-swillers, you peddling hucksters! You *would,* would you, you utter ruffians, you ringleaders of blackguardism, you sharks, you pirates, you—! Eh? Complaining of *blackmail?* Oh, you thought, here's a chance to clap him in prison!...May the seven fiends and a she-devil catch you! Do you *know* that—?

ANNA: *Akh, Bozhe moi!* what *language* you use, Antosha!

GOVERNOR (*impatiently*) Oh, I can't be picking and choosing my words now! (*To the* MERCHANTS) Are you aware that the very same *chinovnik* to whom you complained is now engaged to my daughter? I'll pay you out!...Why, you fleece the whole nation!...You make a contract with the Government, and cheat it out of a hundred thousand with the rotten cloth you supply; and then, if you're asked to give one a present of fifteen or twenty yards, you expect a consideration for it! Ay, if they only knew, they'd come down upon you! And the *side* you put on! ‡ He's a *merchant*—don't you touch him! *"We*

* *Sokoliki*

† *Golubchiki,* terms of endearment; here, of course, used ironically

‡ Literally, your belly wags in front

don't rank after gentlefolk," say you—but gentlemen have had an education, you ape! I daresay they are flogged at school—otherwise they'd learn nothing. But what do *you* learn? Why, the ABC of swindling, for your master beats you if you don't manage to rob properly. While you're still a small boy you don't know the Lord's Prayer, but you can *do* anybody; and *then,* don't you give yourself airs when you get bigger, and your purse gets fuller! My! what a sight for sore eyes! Just because you blow out sixteen samovars * a day you put a swagger on! I spit on your head and your bumptiousness!

MERCHANTS (*bowing low*): We are guilty, Anton Antonovich!

GOVERNOR: You complained of me? But who was it that winked at your jobbery when you built the bridge and charged twenty thousand for less than a hundred roubles' worth of wood? It was I, you goat's-beard! † Have you forgotten *that?* If I had rounded on you I could have sent you to Siberia! What say you to *that*—eh?

ONE OF THE MERCHANTS: God knows, we are guilty, Anton Antonovich—the devil tempted us! We will never inform against you again! Tell us what compensation you wish...only don't be angry!

GOVERNOR: *Don't be angry!* Oh, *now* you wallow at my feet—because I've got the upper hand! But if I was in your position for a moment, you would roll me in the mud, you rabble, and club me on the head into the bargain!

MERCHANTS (*prostrating themselves*): Spare us, Anton Antonovich!

GOVERNOR: *Spare you,* indeed! It's *"spare us!"* now, but what was it before—eh? I have a good mind to...but no! (*Waves his hands condescendingly*) There, may the Lord forgive you! Enough—I bear no malice, only beware, and mind your P's and Q's! for I'm not giving my daughter to any ordinary gentleman; so see that the wedding presents are...you understand? And don't flatter yourselves you can put me off with your dried fish or sugar loaves . There, now, you can go, and the Lord be with you! (*Exeunt* MERCHANTS)

SCENE III

(*Enter the* JUDGE, *the* CHARITY COMMISSIONER, *and afterward* RASTAKOVSKI)

JUDGE (*almost before he has entered the room*): Are we to believe the report, Anton Antonovich? Has an extraordinary piece of good fortune befallen you?

* Alluding to the immoderate consumption of weak tea by Russian traders over their bargains

† At the date of the play, only the lower classes wore beards, hence the expression, *Kozlinaya barada,* is a term of abuse

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: I have the honor to congratulate you* on your extraordinary good fortune! I was heartily pleased when I heard of it! (*Kisses* ANNA'S *hand*) Anna Andreyevna! (*Kisses* MARYA'S) Marya Antonovna!

RASTAKOVSKI (*entering*): I congratulate Anton Antonovich! May the Lord grant long life to you and the bridal pair, and bless you with grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and many descendants to succeed you! Anna Andreyevna! (*Kisses her hand*) Marya Antonovna! (*Kisses* MARYA'S *hand*)

SCENE IV

(*Enter* KAROBKIN *and his wife, and* LYULYUKOV)

KAROBKIN: I have the honor to congratulate Anton Antonovich! Anna Andreyevna! Marya Antonovna! (*Kissing their hands*)

KAROBKIN'S WIFE: I sincerely congratulate you, Anton Antonovich, on your good fortune!

LYULYUKOV: I have the honor to congratulate you, Anna Andreyevna! (*Kisses her hand and turns to the audience, smacking his lips with an air of bravado*) Marya Antonovna! I have the honor. (*Goes through the same performance*)

SCENE V

(*Enter a number of visitors with overcoats and in full dress; they first shake* ANNA'S *hand, and then* MARYA'S, *saying,* "Anna Andreyevna!" "Marya Antonovna!" *Enter also* BOBCHINSKI *and* DOBCHINSKI, *eagerly jostling each other*)

BOBCHINSKI: I have the honor to congratulate you...

DOBCHINSKI: Anton Antonovich, I have the honor to congratulate you!

BOBCHINSKI...On the happy occurrence!

DOBCHINSKI: Anna Andreyevna!

BOBCHINSKI: Anna Andreyevna!

(*They both approach at the same moment, and knock their foreheads together.*)

DOBCHINSKI: Marya Antonovna! (*Kisses her hand*) I have the honor of congratulating you! May you enjoy the greatest, greatest happiness, and walk about in cloth of gold, and eat all sorts of choicely flavored soups, and always pass your time very agreeably...

BOBCHINSKI (*interrupting him*): Marya Antonovna, I have the honor to congratulate you! May God grant you wealth of every kind

* All the characters in this and the following scenes use the same form of congratulation; I therefore keep the similarity in the translation

and ducats and a baby boy, as *tiny*, yes, as tiny as this!—(*measures with his hand*)—small enough to sit on the palm of your hand! yes, and may the little darling cry all the time: *wah—wah—wah!*

Scene VI

(*Enter more Visitors, who kiss hands, then the* School Director (Luka Lukich) *and his wife*)

Luka: I have the honor—

Luka's Wife (*running forward*): I congratulate you, Anna Andreyevna! (*They kiss each other*) But really I am *so* delighted! They tell me Anna Andreyevna has betrothed her daughter. *"Akh, Bozhe moi!"* thinks I to myself, and I was so delighted that I say to my husband, "Just listen, Lukanchik What a stroke of good luck for Anna Andreyevna!" "Yes, *slava Bohu!"* I say to myself, and I tell him I'm so enchanted that I'm burning with impatience to go and say so to Anna Andreyevna myself... *"Akh, Bozhe moi!"* I think, "that's exactly what Anna Andreyevna has been looking out for—a match for her daughter, and now there's a piece of good fortune—just what she wanted has happened!" And I assure you I was *so* delighted that I couldn't *speak*—I could only cry and cry; yes, I regularly *sobbed!* Then Lukanchik says "What are you sobbing for, Nastenka?"* "Lukanchik," I say, "I don't know myself, but see, the tears are streaming down in a torrent!"

Governor: Kindly sit down, gentlemen! Here, Mishka, bring some more chairs! (*The Visitors take seats*)

Scene VII

(*Enter the* Police Superintendent *and the* Police Officers)

Superintendent: I have the honor to congratulate you, your high Nobility,† and to wish you happiness for many years!

Governor Thanks—thanks! Please be seated, gentlemen! (*They sit down*)

Judge Now tell us, please, Anton Antonovich, how it all came about—give us the whole history of it!

Governor It's an extraordinary story—he condescended to make the proposal himself in person!

Anna: In a *most* respectful and delicate way He said quite *too* nicely: "Anna Andreyevna, you have simply made a conquest of me!" Such a handsome, well-bred young man; *such* distinguished manners!

* Diminutive of Anastasia

† *Vuisokoblaghorodye,* the form of address applied to *chinovniks* of the sixth, seventh, and eighth degrees.

"Believe me, Anna Andreyevna," he said, "I don't value my life at a kopek—it is only on account of your rare and charming qualities that I..."

MARYA: Oh, mamma, really that's what he said to *me!*

ANNA. Be quiet! You know nothing about it! Don't you meddle with what doesn't concern you! "I love to distraction, Anna Andreyevna!" Such were his flattering words...and when I began to say, "We dare not hope for so high an honor!" down he went on his knees in the most aristocratic manner. "Anna Andreyevna," he exclaimed, "don't make me the most miserable of men! Consent to respond to my passion, or with death I will cut short my existence!"

MARYA: But of course, mamma, he meant that for *me.*

ANNA· Oh, no doubt, no doubt...he meant it for you; I'm not denying that at all

GOVERNOR: And how he frightened us too: he said he would blow his brains out. "I'll shoot myself, I'll shoot myself!" he cried.

SEVERAL OF THE VISITORS: Good gracious, you don't say so!

JUDGE What a character!

LUKA: In truth, this is the work of fate!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Don't say it's *fate, batyushka;* fate's an old turkey-hen! The Governor's public services have earned him this honor! (*Aside*) They always cast pearls before swine, like that!

JUDGE: If you like, Anton Antonovich, I'll make you a present of the dog we were bargaining about.

GOVERNOR Oh, no! I can't bother about dogs now!

JUDGE Oh, if you don't like *that* one, we'll arrange about another!

KAROBKIN'S WIFE Ah, Anna Andreyevna, how glad I am at your good fortune!—you can't imagine!

KAROBKIN: May I ask where your distinguished guest is now? I heard he had left for some reason or other.

GOVERNOR: Yes, he has gone away for a day on very important business—

ANNA: ...to see his uncle, and to ask for his blessing.

GOVERNOR Yes, to ask for his blessing; but tomorrow ..(*Sneezes; the rest simultaneously ejaculate* "Bless you!") Many thanks! he'll be back again, I say, tom— (*Sneezes again, the ejaculations are repeated, and several of the company speak at the same time*):

SUPERINTENDENT: I wish you good health, your high Nobility!

BOBCHINSKI: A sack of ducats and a hundred years!

DOBCHINSKI: May the Lord prolong them to a thousand! *

CHARITY COMMISSIONER (*aside*): May you go to perdition!

KAROBKIN'S WIFE (*aside*): May the devil fly away with you!

GOVERNOR: I thank you sincerely, and wish you the same!

ANNA: We intend to live in Petersburg now. *Here,* there's such an

* *Na sorok-sarakov*—literally, "to forty times forty."

air, I must say ... it's really too rustic! ... *I* find it excessively disagreeable ... my husband too ... he will get general's rank there!

GOVERNOR: Yes, I own, gentlemen, I've a consuming ambition to be a general!

LUKA And may God grant it!

RASTAKOVSKI: With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible!

JUDGE: A great voyage befits a great ship *

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Your public services deserve the honor!

JUDGE (*aside*): And a *nice* blunder he'll make when he gets it! Why, a generalship will suit him as well as a saddle does a cow! No, my friend, it's a far cry to *that*. There's plenty of people cleverer than *you* who are not yet generals!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER (*aside*): *General,* indeed! Confound him! It's not impossible, after all. He *may* get made one. With his bumptiousness, the devil wouldn't have him at any price! (*Turns to him*) When you are a general, Anton Antonovich, don't forget *us!*

JUDGE· And if any little business difficulty crops up, don't fail to help us out!

KAROBKIN: Next year I am going to take my son to the capital to serve his country; please be so kind as to take him under your protection—be a father to the little orphan!

GOVERNOR: I'm quite ready, on my part—quite ready to help him!

ANNA: You're always free with your promises, Antosha! But, in the first place, you'll not have time to think about that How can you possibly burden yourself with such engagements?

GOVERNOR· Why not, my love? One can sometimes—

ANNA. Of course! But you really cannot bother to be a friend and protector of all sorts of nobodies!

KAROBKIN'S WIFE (*aside*): Do you hear how she treats us?

A VISITOR Oh, she was always like that—*I* know her; seat her at table, and she'll put her feet on it—†

SCENE VIII

(*Enter the* POSTMASTER, *out of breath, with an opened letter in his hand*)

POSTMASTER: Here's an astounding thing happened, sirs! The *chinovnik* we took to be the REVIZOR is *not* a *revizor!*

ALL· What? *not* a *revizor?*

POSTMASTER: Not a *revizor* at all—I've found· that out from the letter.

* Russian proverb.
† Russian proverb

GOVERNOR: What do you mean—what do you mean—from *what* letter?

POSTMASTER: Why, from the letter he wrote *himself* They bring me a letter to post. I look at the address, and see "Post Office Street"—I was regularly stunned Well, I say to myself, he's without doubt found something wrong in the postal department, and he's reporting it to the authorities. So I took the letter and—opened it.

GOVERNOR: How could you—?

POSTMASTER: *I* don't know—a supernatural force impelled me. I had already ordered a courier to take it by express, but such a feeling of curiosity overpowered me as I had never known before. "I can't do it, I can't—I can't!" I hear myself saying; but I feel drawn, drawn to it! "Oh, don't open it, or you'll be utterly ruined!" That's what sounds in one ear; and in the other, like a devil whispering, "Open it, open it, open it!" And so I broke the sealing-wax—my veins were on fire; but after I had done it they froze, by God, they froze My hands shook, and everything whirled

GOVERNOR· And so you *dared* to open the letter of so powerful a personage?

POSTMASTER: That's where the joke is—he's neither a personage nor powerful!

GOVERNOR: What *is* he then, according to you?

POSTMASTER· Neither the one nor the other; the devil knows *what* he is!

GOVERNOR (*furiously*)· What do you mean? How do you dare to call him neither the one nor the other, nor the devil knows what? I'll put you under arrest—!

POSTMASTER: Who? You?

GOVERNOR: Yes—*I* will!

POSTMASTER: Pooh! That's beyond your power!

GOVERNOR. Are you aware that he is going to marry my daughter? That I shall become a grandee? That I shall have power to send to *Siberia?*

POSTMASTER· Eh, Anton Antonovich—*Siberia?* that's a long way off ... But I had better read you the letter. Gentlemen, let me read it you!

ALL: Yes, read it, read it!

POSTMASTER (*reads*): "I hasten to let you know, my dear Tryapichkin, all about my adventures. On the way an infantry captain cleared me out completely, so that the innkeeper wanted to send me to jail; when all of a sudden, owing to my Petersburg get-up and appearance, the whole town took me for the Governor General. So now I am living at the Governor's; I do just as I please; I flirt madly with his wife and daughter—but I can't settle which to begin with. Do you remember how hard up we were, how we dined at other folk's

expense, and how the pastry cook once pitched me out neck-and-crop, because I had put some tarts I had eaten down to the account of the King of England? It is quite a different state of things now! They all lend me as much money as ever I please. They are an awful set of originals—you would die of laughing if you saw them! You write articles, I know bring these people in. First and foremost, there's the Governor—he's as stupid as a mule..."*

GOVERNOR: Impossible! It can't be there!

POSTMASTER (*showing him the letter*): Read it yourself!

GOVERNOR (*reads*) "Stupid as a mule." It can't be so—you've written it yourself!

POSTMASTER How *could* I have written it?

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Read!

LUKA: Read on!

POSTMASTER (*resuming*): "The Governor—he's as stupid as a mule..."

GOVERNOR: Oh, devil take it! Is it necessary to repeat *that?* As if it wasn't there without that!

POSTMASTER (*continues*): Hm...hm. hm .."as a mule The Postmaster too is a good fellow..." (*Stops*) Well, he says something uncomplimentary about *me* too

GOVERNOR: No—read it out!

POSTMASTER: But what's the good?

GOVERNOR: No, no—confound it, if you read *any* of it, read it all! Read it through!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Allow me; I'll have a try! (*Puts on his spectacles, and reads*) "The Postmaster is exactly like our office-beadle Mikheyev, and a rascal into the bargain—he drinks like a fish."

POSTMASTER (*to the company*): Well, the young blackguard ought to be flogged—that's all!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER (continuing): The Charity Com...er.. er..." (*Hesitates*)

KAROBKIN: But what are you stopping for?

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: It's badly written. .however, it's clearly something insulting.

KAROBKIN: Give it to me! My eyes are better, I fancy. (*Tries to take the letter*)

CHARITY COMMISSIONER (*holding it back*). No, we can leave that part out—further on it's plain enough.

KAROBKIN: But allow me— I can read!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER. Why, so can *I*—further on, I tell you, it's quite easy to make out.

POSTMASTER: No, read it all! It was all read before!

* Literally, a gray gelding

ALL: Give it up, Artemi Philippovich; give the letter up! (*To* KAROBKIN) You read it!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Certainly! (*Hands the letter*) There, if you please... (*Covers the passage with his finger*) *That's* where you begin (*All crowd round*)

POSTMASTER: Read it, read it through; what nonsense! Read it *all!*

KAROBKIN (*reading*): "The Charity Commissioner, Zemlyanika, is a regular pig in a skull-cap"

CHARITY COMMISSIONER (*to the rest*): That's supposed to be *witty!* Pig in a skull-cap! Who ever saw a pig in a skull-cap?

KAROBKIN (*continues*): "The School Director reeks of onions—"

LUKA (*to the rest*): Good God! And an onion has never crossed my lips!

JUDGE (*aside*): Thank goodness, there's nothing, at any rate, about *me!*

KAROBKIN (*reading*): "The Judge—"

JUDGE (*aside*). Now for it! . (*Aloud*) I think this letter is tedious. What the devil's the good of reading all that rubbish?

LUKA No!

POSTMASTER: No, go on with it!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: No, read it through!

KAROBKIN (*resumes*): "The Judge, Lyapkin-Tyapkin, is in the utmost degree *moveton* *..." (*Stops*) That must be a *French* word!

JUDGE But the devil knows what's the meaning of it! It's bad enough if it's only—*swindler,* but it may be a good deal worse.

KAROBKIN (*goes on*): "But, after all, the people are hospitable and well-meaning Farewell, my dear Tryapichkin. I myself should like to follow your example and take up literature. It's a bore, my friend, to live as I do—one certainly wants food for the mind; one must, I see, have some elevated pursuit. Write to me at the village of Podkalitovka, Saratov government." (*He turns the letter over and reads the address*) "To the Well-born and Gracious Mister Ivan Vasiliyevich Tryapichkin, Saint Petersburg, Post Office Street, Number Ninety-seven, within the Courtyard, Third Floor, on the right"

ONE OF THE LADIES: What an unexpected rebuff!

GOVERNOR: He has as good as cut my throat! I'm crushed, crushed—regularly crushed! I can see nothing—only pigs' snouts instead of faces, nothing else ...Catch him, catch him! (*Gesticulates wildly*)

POSTMASTER How can we catch him? Why, as if on purpose, I told the manager to give him his very best troika †—and the devil persuaded me to give him an order for horses in advance.

* They are puzzled by the phonetic rendering of the French phrase, *mauvais ton.*

† A sledge or carriage with three horses. The center horse is trained to trot, while the two outsiders gallop

KAROBKIN'S WIFE: Well, here's a pretty mess! The like of it has never happened!

JUDGE: Besides, sirs, confound it! he has borrowed three hundred roubles of me!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: And three hundred of *me* too!

POSTMASTER (*groans*): Ah! and three hundred of me as well!

BOBCHINSKI: Yes, and Dobchinski and I, sirs, gave him sixty-five, sirs, in banknotes!

JUDGE (*with a gesture of perplexity*): How was it, gentlemen, that we came to make such a mistake?

GOVERNOR (*beats himself on the shoulders*): How *could* I? There's not such another old blockhead as I am! I must be in my dotage, idiot of a mutton-head that I am.... Thirty years have I been in the service; not a tradesman or contractor could cheat me; rogues after rogues have I overreached, sharpers and rascals I have hooked, that were ready to rob the whole universe! three governors general I've duped!... Pooh! what are governors general? (*With a contemptuous wave of the hand*) They're not worth talking about!...

ANNA: But this can't be so, Antosha; he's engaged to Mashenka!...

GOVERNOR (*furiously*): *Engaged!* Bosh! A fig for your "engaged"! Confound your engagement! (*In desperation*) Look at me, look—all the world, all Christendom, all of you see how the Governor's fooled! Ass! booby! dotard that I am! (*Shakes his fists at himself*) Ah, you fat-nose! Taking an icicle, a rag, for a man of rank! And now he's rattling along the road with his bells, and telling the whole world the story! Not only do you get made a laughing-stock of, but some quill-driver, some paper-stainer will go and put you in a play! It's maddening! He'll spare neither your rank nor your calling, and all will grin and clap their hands.... Who are you laughing at? laugh at *yourselves!*... Ah! you... (*Stamps on the ground ferociously*) I would do for all the pack of scribblers! Ugh! the quill-splitters! damned liberals! devil's brood! I would scrag you all, I'd grind you to powder! You'd be a dish for the foul fiend, and the devil's cap your resting place! (*Shakes his fist and grinds his heel on the ground. Then, after a short silence*): I can't collect myself yet. It's true, that if God will punish a man, he first drives him mad. To be sure, what was there like a *revizor* in that crack-brained trifler? Nothing at all! Not the resemblance of half a little finger—and all of them shout at once: the Revizor, the Revizor! Who was it then who first gave out he was the Revizor? Answer me!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER (*shrugging his shoulders*): It all happened in such a way that I wouldn't tell you, if you were to kill me. Our wits were befogged—it was the devil's doing!

JUDGE: Who started the idea? Why, there they are—those enterprising young bucks! (*Points to* DOBCHINSKI *and* BOBCHINSKI)

BOBCHINSKI: I swear it wasn't *me!* I never thought—

DOBCHINSKI: I hadn't the *least* idea—

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: Undoubtedly it was *you!*

LUKA: Why, certainly it was; they ran like mad from the inn with the news—"He's here, he's come, he pays no money!..." A *fine* bird you discovered!

GOVERNOR: Of course, it was *you*—you gossiping busy-bodies, you damnable liars!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER: I wish you had gone to the devil with your *revizor* and your stories!

GOVERNOR. All you do is to run about the town and meddle with everybody, you confounded chatterboxes, you tittle-tattling scandal-mongers, you short-tailed jackdaws!

JUDGE: You confounded bunglers!

LUKA: You dirty nightcaps!

CHARITY COMMISSIONER. You pot-bellied drivelers!

(*All crowd up to them threateningly*)

BOBCHINSKI: *Yei Bohu,* it wasn't *me,* it was Dobchinski!

DOBCHINSKI No, Peter Ivanovich, you certainly were the first to—

BOBCHINSKI: No, I did *not—you* began it.

LAST SCENE

(*Enter a Gendarme*)

GENDARME· The Inspector-General sent by Imperial command has arrived, and requests your attendance at once. He awaits you in the inn.

(*They are thunderstruck at this announcement. The ladies utter simultaneous ejaculations of amazement; the whole group suddenly shift their positions and remain as if petrified*)

SCENE WITHOUT WORDS

(*The* GOVERNOR *is seen standing in the center, stiff as a post, with outstretched arms and head bent back. At his right are his wife and daughter, turning to him; beyond them the* POSTMASTER, *turning to the audience with a look of interrogation; behind him* LUKA LUKICH, *with an innocent expression; and farther, at the extreme edge of the scene, three ladies* (*visitors*), *who exchange satirical glances, sneering at the* GOVERNOR *and his family. To the* GOVERNOR'S *left is* ZEMLYANIKA, *with his head slightly on one side, as if listening, behind him the* JUDGE, *shrugging his shoulders, bending low, and moving his lips, as if he were going to whistle or say, "Here's a Saint George's Day for you, old woman!"* Next to him is* KAROBKIN, *winking at the audience and making a contemptuous gesture at the* GOVERNOR;

* *I e*, Now we're in for it!

and at the outside of the scene BOBCHINSKI *and* DOBCHINSKI, *staring at each other open-mouthed. The others stay motionless as statues. The whole group retain the same positions for a minute or so, as if changed to stone, then the curtain falls*)

CURTAIN

KOROBOTCHKA

"You have a nice little village, ma'am. How many souls in it?"

"Close upon eighty, my good sir," said his hostess "But the times are bad, I am sorry to say. Last year, too, we had such a bad harvest as I never wish to see again."

"The peasants look sturdy enough, though, and their huts are solid. Allow me to ask your surname. I was so distracted...arriving in the night..."

"Korobotchka."

"Thank you very much, and your Christian name and father's name?"

"Nastasya Petrovna."

"Nastasya Petrovna? A good name, Nastasya Petrovna; I have an aunt, my mother's sister, called Nastasya Petrovna."

"And what is your name?" asked the lady. "You are a tax assessor, for sure?"

"No, ma'am," answered Tchitchikov, grinning, "not a tax assessor for sure, but just traveling on a little business of my own"

"Oh, then you are a dealer! What a pity, really, that I sold my honey to the merchants so cheap; very likely you would have bought it from me, sir."

"Your honey I shouldn't have bought."

"What else then? Hemp perhaps? But there, I have very little hemp now, not more than half a pud."

"No, ma'am, I buy a different sort of ware. Tell me, have any of your peasants died?"

"Oh, sir, eighteen of them," said the old lady, sighing, "and such a good lot died, all workmen. It's true that some have been born since, but what use are they? They are all such small fry. And the assessor came—you must pay the tax by the soul, said he. The peasants are dead, but I must pay as though they were alive. Last week my blacksmith was burned, such a clever blacksmith and he could do locksmith's work too."

"Did you have a fire, ma'am?"

"God preserve us from such a misfortune; a fire would be worse still: he caught fire of himself, my good sir. His inside somehow began burning, he had had a terrible lot to drink: all I can say is that a blue flame came out of him and he smoldered and smoldered away and turned black as a coal; and he was such a very clever blacksmith! And now I can't drive about, I have no one to shoe my horses."

"It is all God's will, ma'am," said Tchitchikov with a sigh. "It is no use murmuring against the wisdom of God....Let me have them, Nastasya Petrovna."

"Have whom, sir?"

"Why, all those who are dead."

"Why, how let you have them?"

"Oh, quite simply. Or if you like, sell them, I'll pay you for them."

"Why, how's that? I really don't take your meaning. Surely you don't want to dig them out of the ground, do you?"

Tchitchikov saw that the old lady was quite at sea, and that he absolutely must explain what he wanted. In a few words he explained to her that the transfer or purchase would take place only on paper and that the souls would be described as though alive.

"But what use will they be to you?" said the old lady, looking at him with round eyes.

"That's my business."

"But you know they are dead."

"Well, who says they are alive? That's just why they are a loss to you, that they are dead. you have to pay the tax on them, but now I will save you from all that trouble and expense. Do you understand? And I will not only do that, but give you fifteen roubles besides. Well, is it clear now?"

"I really don't know," the old lady brought out hesitatingly, "you see I've never sold the dead before."

"I should think not! It would be a wonder indeed if you could sell them to anyone. Or do you suppose that there is some profit to be made out of them, really?"

"No, I don't suppose that! What profit could there be in them? They are no use at all. The only thing that troubles me is that they are dead."

"Well, the woman's thick-headed, it seems," Tchitchikov thought to himself. "Listen, ma'am, just look at it fairly yourself· you are being ruined, paying for them as though they were living...."

"Oh, my good sir, don't speak about it," the old lady caught him up. "Only the week before last I paid more than a hundred and fifty roubles, beside presents to the assessor."

"There you see, ma'am! And now take into consideration the mere fact that you won't have to make presents to the assessor again, because now I shall have to pay for them—I and not you; I take all the taxes on myself, I will even pay all the legal expenses, do you understand?"

The old lady pondered. She saw that the transaction certainly seemed a profitable one, only it was too novel and unusual, and so she began to be extremely uneasy that the purchaser might be trying to cheat her. God knows where he had come from, and he arrived in the middle of the night, too

"Well, ma'am, how is it to be then, is it a bargain?" said Tchitchikov.

"Upon my word, sir, it has never yet happened to me to sell the dead. The year before last I did sell some living ones, two girls to Protopopov, two girls for a hundred roubles each, and very grateful he was for them too: they turned out capital girls to work, they even weave table napkins."

"Well, it is not a question of the living; God bless them! I am asking for the dead."

"Really, at first sight, I am afraid that it may be a loss to me. Perhaps you are deceiving me, sir, and they, er...are worth more, perhaps."

"Listen, my good woman...ech, what nonsense you talk! What can they be worth? Just consider: why, they are dust, you know. Do you understand, they are nothing but dust. Take the most worthless, humblest article, a simple rag for instance—and even the rag has a value: rags are bought for making into paper, anyway, but what I am speaking of is no use for anything. Come, tell me yourself, what is it of use for?"

"That is true, certainly. They are of no use for anything at all. The only thing that makes me hesitate is that, you see, they are dead."

"Ugh, she is as stupid as a post," said Tchitchikov to himself, beginning to lose patience. "However is one to come to terms with her! She makes me feel hot all over, the confounded old woman!" And, taking a handkerchief out of his pocket, he began mopping his perspiring brow. Tchitchikov need not have been moved to anger, however: many a highly respected man, many a statesman, indeed, is a regular Korobotchka in business Once he has taken a notion into his head there is no getting over it, anyhow: however many arguments as clear as daylight you put before him, they all rebound from him as an india-rubber ball bounces from a wall.

After mopping his brow Tchitchikov made up his mind to try whether he could not get round her from some other side.

"Either you don't want to understand what I say, ma'am, or you talk like that simply for the sake of saying something. I'll give you fifteen paper roubles—do you understand? That's money, you know. You won't pick it up in the road. Come, let me know what you sold your honey for?"

"Twelve roubles a pud."

"You are taking a little sin upon your soul, ma'am, you didn't sell it for twelve roubles"

"Upon my word, I did."

"Well, do you see? That was for something—it was honey. You had been collecting it perhaps for about a year with work and trouble and anxiety, you went and killed the bees, and fed the bees in the cellar all winter. But dead souls are not a thing of this world at all. In this case, you have taken no trouble whatever about them, it was God's will that they should leave this world to the loss of your estate. In the case of the honey, for your work, for your exertions you have received twelve roubles, but in this case you will get gratis, for nothing, not twelve but fifteen roubles, and not in silver but all in blue notes"

After these powerful arguments Tchitchikov had no doubt that the old lady would give way.

"Really," answered the old lady, "I am an inexperienced widow; I had better wait a little, maybe the dealers will be coming and I shall find out about prices."

"For shame, my good woman, it is simply shameful. Come, just think over what you are saying. Who is going to buy them? Why, what use could anyone put them to?"

"Well, perhaps they may be put to some use somehow. ." replied the old lady, but she broke off and gazed open-mouthed at him, almost with horror, waiting to see what he would say to it.

"Dead men be put to some use! Ugh, what next! To scare the sparrows at night in your kitchen garden or what?"

"God have mercy on us! What dreadful things you do say!" said the old lady, crossing herself.

"What else do you want to do with them? Besides, the bones and the graves, all that will be left to you; the transfer is only on paper Well, what do you say? How is it to be? Give me an answer, anyway."

The old lady pondered again.

"What are you thinking about, Nastasya Petrovna?"

"I really can't make up my mind what to do; I had really better sell you my hemp."

"Hemp! Upon my soul, I asked you about something quite different and you foist hemp upon me Hemp is hemp. Another time I'll come and take your hemp, too. So how is it to be, Nastasya Petrovna?"

"Oh, dear, it is such a strange, quite unheard-of thing to sell."

At this point Tchitchikov was completely driven out of all patience; he banged his chair upon the floor in his anger and consigned her to the devil.

The old lady was extremely frightened of the devil.

"Oh, don't speak of him, God bless him!" she cried, turning quite pale. "Only the night before last I was dreaming all night of the evil spirit. I took a fancy to try my fortune on the cards after saying my prayers that night and it seems the Lord sent him to punish me. He looked so horrid and his horns were longer than our bull's"

"I wonder you don't dream of them by dozens. From simple Christian humanity I wanted to help you I saw a poor woman struggling and in poverty ... But the plague take you and all your village!"

"Oh, what shocking words you are using!" said the old lady, looking at him with horror.

"Well, there is no knowing how to talk to you! Why, you are like some—not to use a bad word—dog in the manger that won't eat the hay itself and won't let others. I was meaning to buy all sorts of produce from you, for I take government contracts too...."

This was a lie, though quite a casual one, uttered with no ulterior design, but it was unexpectedly successful The government contract produced a strong effect on Nastasya Petrovna. Anyway she brought out, in a voice of supplication almost:

"But why are you in such a terrible rage? If I had known before that you were so hot-tempered I wouldn't have contradicted you."

"There's nothing to be angry about! The business is not worth a rotten egg, as though I should get in a rage about it!"

"Oh, very well then, I am ready to let you have them for fifteen paper roubles! Only, my good sir, about these contracts, mind, if you should be taking my rye or buckwheat flour or my grain or my carcasses, please don't cheat me."

"No, my good woman, I won't cheat you," he said, while he wiped away the perspiration that was streaming down his face He began inquiring whether she had any lawyer in the town or friend whom she could authorize to complete the purchase and do everything necessary.

"To be sure! The son of the chief priest, Father Kirill, is a clerk in the lawcourt," said the old lady. Tchitchikov asked her to write a letter of authorization to him, and, to save unnecessary trouble, undertook to compose it himself.

"It would be a good thing," the old lady was thinking to herself meanwhile, "if he would take my flour and cattle for the government. I must soften his heart: there is some dough left from yesterday evening, so I'll go and tell Fetinya to make some pancakes; it would be a good thing to make an egg turnover too. They make turnovers capitally and it doesn't take long to do."

The old woman departed to carry out her idea about the turnovers, and probably to complete it with other masterpieces of domestic baking and cookery; while Tchitchikov went into the drawing room in which he had spent the night, in order to get the necessary papers out of his case. The drawing room had been swept and dusted long before, the luxurious feather beds had been carried away, before the sofa stood a table laid for a meal. Putting his case upon it he paused for a little while, for he felt that he was wet with perspiration as though he were in a river: everything he had on, from his shirt to his stockings, was soaked.

"Ugh! how she has wearied me, the confounded old woman!" he said, resting for a little before he opened the case. The author is persuaded that there are readers so inquisitive as to be desirous of knowing the plan and internal arrangement of the case By all means, why not satisfy them? This was the internal arrangement: in the very middle was a box for soap; above the soapbox six or seven narrow divisions for razors; then square places for a sand box and an inkpot, with a little boat hollowed out between them for pens, sealing wax, and things that were rather longer; then various divisions with covers and without covers for things that were shorter, full of visiting cards, funeral cards, theater tickets, and other things kept as souvenirs All the upper tray with its little divisions lifted out, and under it there was a space filled with packets of sheets of paper; then followed a little secret drawer for money, which came out from the side of the case. It always came out so quickly and was moved back at the same minute by Tchitchikov, so that one could not tell for certain how much money there was in it He set to work at once and, mending a pen, began to write. At that moment the old lady came in.

"You have a nice box there," said she, sitting down beside him, "I'll be bound you bought it in Moscow?"

"Yes, in Moscow," said Tchitchikov, going on writing.

"I knew it; the work there is always good. The year before last my sister brought me little warm boots for the children from there· such good material, it has lasted till now. Oh, la! what a lot of stamped paper you have in it!" she went on, peeping into the case. And there certainly was a good deal of stamped paper in it. "You might make me a present of a sheet or two! I am so badly off for it; if I want to send in a petition to the court I have nothing to write it on."

Tchitchikov explained to her that the paper was not the right sort for that, that it was meant for drawing up deeds of purchase and not for petitions. To satisfy her, however, he gave her a sheet worth a rouble After writing the letter he gave it to her to sign and asked her for a little list of the peasants. It appeared that the old lady kept no lists or records, but knew them all by heart. He made her dictate their names to him. He was astonished at some of the peasants' surnames and still more at their nicknames, so much so that he paused on hearing them before beginning to write. He was particularly struck by one Pyotr Savelyev Ne-uvazhay-Koryto (Never mind the Trough), so that he could not help saying: "What a long name." Another had attached to his name Korovy-Kirpitch (Cow's Brick), another simply appeared as Ivan Koleso (Wheel). When he had finished writing he drew in the air through his nose and sniffed a seductive fragrance of something fried in butter

"Pray come and have lunch," said the old lady. Tchitchikov looked round and saw that the table was already spread with mushrooms, pies,

fritters, cheesecakes, doughnuts, pancakes, open tarts with all sorts of different fillings, some with onions, some with poppy seeds, some with curds, and some with fish, and there is no knowing what else.

"Some egg pie," said his hostess.

Tchitchikov drew up to the pie and, after consuming a little more than half of it on the spot, praised it. And the pie was indeed savory, and after all his worry with the old lady seemed still more so.

"Some pancakes?" said his hostess.

In reply to this Tchitchikov folded three pancakes together and, moistening them in melted butter, directed them toward his mouth and then wiped his lips and hands with a table napkin. After repeating this operation three times, he asked his hostess to order the chaise to be brought round. Nastasya Petrovna at once dispatched Fetinya, bidding her at the same time to bring in some more pancakes.

"Your pancakes are very nice, ma'am," said Tchitchikov, attacking the hot ones as they were brought in.

"Yes, they fry them very nicely," said the old lady, "but the worst of it is that the harvest is poor and the flour is so unprofitable.... But why are you in such a hurry?" she said, seeing that Tchitchikov was taking up his cap. "Why, the horses are not in yet."

"They soon will be, ma'am, my servants don't take long to get ready."

"Well, then, please don't forget about the government contracts."

"I won't forget, I won't forget," said Tchitchikov, going out into the passage.

"And won't you buy salt pork?" said the old lady, following him.

"Why not? I'll certainly buy it, only later."

"I shall have salt pork by Easter."

"We'll buy it, we'll buy everything, we'll buy salt pork too."

"Perhaps you'll be wanting feathers. I shall have feathers too, by St. Philip's fast."

"Very good, very good," said Tchitchikov.

[Translation by Constance Garnett]

Alexander Ostrovsky

A DOMESTIC PICTURE

(A Scene from Moscow Life)

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ANTIP ANTIPYCH POUZATOV, merchant, 35 years old
MATRYONA SAVISHNA, his wife, aged 25
MARYA ANTIPOVNA, POUZATOV's sister, a girl of 19
STEPANIDA TROFIMOVNA, POUZATOV's mother, aged 60
PARAMON FERAPONTYCH SCHIRYALOV, merchant, aged 60
DARYA, servant maid

(*A room in* POUZATOV's *house, furnished in glaringly bad taste. Portraits hanging above the sofa, birds of Paradise painted on the ceiling, bright-colored window curtains, bottles on the window sills.* MARYA ANTIPOVNA *sits by the window with an embroidery frame*)

MARYA (*singing softly as she works*):

"Black color, sad color,
Yet forever dear to me."

(*Breaks off, stops working, and meditates*)

There! The summer's nearly over; here we have September already, and you just sit cooped up within four walls, for all the world like a nun, and don't dare to look out of window. That's an interesting life for a young lady! (*A pause*) I daresay! It's all very well to shut us up and turn the key on us; but I know what we'll do! We'll ask leave to go to midnight Mass at the convent, and then we'll put on our best things and go off to the park or somewhere. There's nothing for it, one *has* to do things on the sly. (*Goes on embroidering; a pause*) I wonder how it is that Vasily Gavrilych hasn't passed by once today? (*Looks out of window*) Sister! sister! There's an officer riding past! Sister! Quick! With a white plume!

MATRYONA (*runs into the room*): Where, sister, where?

MARYA: There! Look! (*They look out*) Oh! he bowed to us! Oh! the wicked man! (*They hide behind the window curtains*)

MATRYONA: How handsome he is!

MARYA: Sister, let's sit here; perhaps he will pass again.

MATRYONA: Oh! Masha! how can you? You'll just encourage him, and he'll take to passing half a dozen times a day; and then we shall

never be able to get rid of him. I know what these military men are. Why, there was that hussar that Anna Markovna encouraged so; he used to ride past, and she'd look out of window and smile at him; and do you know what he did, my dear? He rode his horse right into the hall.

MARYA: Oh! how disgraceful!

MATRYONA: I should think so! Nothing happened, you know; but she was just the talk of Moscow. (*Looks out of window*) Masha! there comes Darya. Oh! what message will she bring?

MARYA: Oh! if mamma were to see her!

(*Enter* DARYA, *hurriedly*)

DARYA: Matryona Savishna, little mother! I as near as anything got caught! I was just running upstairs, and who must come running slap against me but Stepanida Trofimovna! Of course I said I'd been to shop for a skein of silk. You know, she's up to anything. Why, only yesterday, our Petrusha—

MARYA: Yes, yes! But what about *them?*

DARYA: Yes, miss; they sent their respects. I went in, ma'am, and there was Ivan Petrovich lying on the sofa, and Vasily Gavrilych on the bed.... Leastways, it was Vasily Gavrilych as was on the sofa, and they'd been a-smoking, ma'am, till you fair couldn't breathe.

MATRYONA: Yes; but what did they say?

DARYA: Well, they said, ma'am, if you please, that you was both of you to come this evening to Ostankino at vespertime And he said, "Darya," says he, "tell them to be sure and come, even if it rains."

MARYA· Of course we'll go, sister!

MATRYONA: All right. Run back again, Darya, and say we'll come.

DARYA: Yes'm Anything else, please'm?

MARYA: Yes, Dasha. Tell them to bring some books to read. Say the young ladies desired it.

DARYA: Yes, miss; is that all?... Oh! ma'am! I clean forgot! I was to tell you to bring some Madeira with you; that was Ivan Petrovich's orders. "It's so nice," says he, "in the open air."

MATRYONA: All right.

DARYA (*comes up to* MATRYONA *and speaks softly*): Matryona Savishna, Vasily Gavrilych was saying to Ivan Petrovich, "Of course," says he, "it's quite a different thing for you," says he. "Matryona Savishna's a married woman... and, of course... But Marya Antipovna," says he, "she's a young girl... and it isn't... like as if, you know... and somehow or other," says he, "'tis a bad business. Why," says he, "for all I know, they may go and marry her to some shopkeeper with a beard; and then what's the use of my putting myself out?" says he. "Of course that don't mean as I'm not"—there, you understand me, ma'am... "But I'm a poor man," says he... "I'd be glad enough to marry her," says he, "but," says he, "what's the use

of my going poking my nose in?" It was Vasily Gavrilych as said this to Ivan Petrovich, you know, ma'am. "It's quite a different thing for you," says he; "Matryona Savishna's a married woman... any sort of thing can happen with an official, you know... Wintertime," says he ..."Well, and a fine cloak of racoon fur.... Anyways—"

MATRYONA: Oh! you silly girl! Why, you should have said—

DARYA (*listening*): Little mother! it's the master himself come in! (*Goes to the window*) Yes, it is; he's going in at the door.

MATRYONA: Well, then, you take the message while we're at tea.

DARYA: Yes'm.

Voice in the anteroom: Wife! I say! wife! Matryona Savishna!

MATRYONA: What's the matter?

ANTIP (*enters*): Good evening, wife. Why, how you jump! Who did you think it was? (*Kisses her*) Give us another kiss. (*Caressing her playfully*)

MATRYONA (*shrinking away*): That'll do, Antip Antipych! Let me alone! Oh! what a nuisance you are!

ANTIP: But I want a kiss

MATRYONA: Oh! leave off, for goodness' sake!

ANTIP: I daresay! (*Kisses her*) What a jolly little wife it is! That's the sort of wife to have! (*Sits on the sofa*) Do you know what, Matryona Savishna?

MATRYONA: What now?

ANTIP: It would be jolly to have some tea now. (*Stares at the ceiling, and puffs*)

MATRYONA. Darya!

(*Enter* DARYA)

MATRYONA: Bring the samovar; and ask Stepanida Trofimovna for the keys. (*Exit* DARYA. *Silence.* MARYA *sits at her embroidery,* MATRYONA *beside her,* ANTIP *looks about the room, sighing*)

ANTIP (*sternly*): Wife! come here!

MATRYONA. What now?

ANTIP (*striking the table with his fist*): Come here, I tell you!

MATRYONA: Why, are you gone crazy?

ANTIP (*drumming on the table*): What do you expect me to do with you?

MATRYONA: Whatever can it be? (*Timidly*) Antip Antipych?

ANTIP: Eh? Frightened you? (*Bursts out laughing*) No, my lass! It was only my little joke. (*Sighs*) Can't we have tea?

MATROYNA: In a minute. Why, bless my heart, you won't die!

ANTIP: Well, it's so dull to sit and do nothing. (*Enter* STEPANIDA TROFIMOVNA; *then* DARYA *carrying the samovar*)

STEPANIDA: Lord, save us! You're in a mighty hurry, my girl! What are you rushing about like a wild thing for? Nothing is going to fall on our heads. And as for you, little father, you must be gone clean

daft! How many more times in a day do you want to drink tea? This is the third time at home; and I doubt you had some down in the town too? (*Pours out tea*)

ANTIP Well, dear heart! what does it matter? A fellow can't get tipsy on tea Yes; I had some tea with Brioukhov, and again with Savva Savvich What harm is there in drinking tea with a jolly good fellow? I say, mamma, I did Brioukhov out of a thousand roubles today. (*Takes teacup*)

STEPANIDA: What next, child! Why, you get fleeced yourself on all sides. You never keep an eye upon your shopmen, you never look after the business. Why, Antipoushka, what sort of businessman are you? All you do is to sit from morning till night in a tavern and drink tea. Ah! dear, dear! It's just a grief to look at you; there's not a bit of method in you; even I can't manage to keep order in this house The samovar stands on the table till eleven o'clock in the morning; first the men have their breakfast and go off to the shop; then you get up and dawdle over your breakfast till goodness knows when; and then your fine lady here comes down. And as for going to Mass before breakfast, why, you don't so much as cross yourselves, the Lord forgive you! Ah! Antipoushka! If you'd give up your new-fangled ways and live as all respectable people should! You ought to get up at four in the morning and see that everything's in order, and go out into the yard and look after everything there, and go to Mass. Yes, my dear, and rout your good lady here out of bed too, and tell her it's time to get up and look after the house; that's what you ought to do Yes, you needn't look at me like that, Matryona Savishna; I've said nothing but what's right and true.

MATRYONA: I suppose you are going to begin and preach now!

STEPANIDA: Ah! little mother! And what would become of the house if it wasn't for me? *You're* not much of a housekeeper; you're too young yet, little mother; you've a good deal to learn yet! Why, just look at you—you don't get up till after ten o'clock—it's a shame to say it, my girl, but it's the Lord's own truth—and here I have to sit by the samovar and wait till you please to come down; and I'm older than you are, madam You're too much of a fine lady, Matryona Savishna, too much by a long way! It's no use for you to give yourself airs, my lass; you're naught but a shopkeeper's wife, and you can't be a real lady, however hard you try. Why, my good man, what's the use of her dressing herself up, and hanging herself all over with gewgaws and furbelows like a heathen savage, and making a sight of herself, the Lord forgive us our sins! and rustling about with a long tail like a peacock— Why, it's a sin and a shame, so it is! You can flaunt about in your furbelows as much as you like, Matryona Savishna; but you're none the more of a lady for that.... You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

MATRYONA: Yes; you'd like me to go about with an old shawl over my head!

STEPANIDA: You've no call to be ashamed of your own class, my girl.

ANTIP Why, heart alive! Why shouldn't she dress herself up fine if the money's there? There's no harm in it. And as for being a lady, hang me if she isn't handsomer than any lady when she's dressed in her best things! By your leave, mother, I don't think all these fine ladies are worth the trouble of looking at. But just see what my little wife is like.. .That's to say, I mean, what a figure she's got!...And all that, you know.

MATRYONA· Really, Antip Antipych, what things you do say!

MARYA: I wonder you're not ashamed of yourself, brother! You always make one blush.

ANTIP: What's the matter now? I haven't said anything so dreadful. Another day a man may say worse things than that, and nobody cares. Why, the other day, before his Excellency the General, such a word slipped off my tongue, I was quite frightened myself, but what can a fellow do? A word isn't a sparrow, that you can put salt on its tail. And as for what you were saying, mother, I stick to my point. My wife shall dress as fine as she likes; I don't care if she isn't a lady, all the same....

STEPANIDA: Yes; I know, my boy, I know. When she goes out with you dressed up like that, with a train two yards long, what do you suppose she's thinking about? Well, I'll tell you, my son, she thinks—"Here have I got to put up with a great clumsy husband with a beard, instead of having a proper sort of beau that pomades his hair and puts scent on his handkerchief!"

ANTIP· Do you think she'd change me for anyone else? A handsome fellow like me! (*Strokes his mustache*) I say, wife, give us a kiss! (MATRYONA *kisses him with feigned tenderness*)

STEPANIDA: Ah! my child! the enemy of man is cunning. Look at the way my poor dear husband and I lived. We were a happier couple than you are; and all the same he kept me in fear and submission, as a man should, the Lord rest his soul! However much he loved and cherished me, he always kept a little whip hanging on a nail in the bedroom, just in case of anything.

MATRYONA: You're always making mischief between me and my husband! Why can't you let me alone?

STEPANIDA: You'd best hold your tongue, my good girl!

MATRYONA: I'm to hold my tongue! What next! Anybody would think I was the dirt under your feet. I'm a merchant's wife of the first guild!

STEPANIDA· You and your guild! You needn't talk like that to me, my girl! I've had to do with your betters in my time....

MATRYONA: Even so, you've no right to shut me up. I'm not going to hold my tongue for anybody.

STEPANIDA: And what do you suppose I care? There! go your own way, it's all one to me; but when you drive me to it I must speak out; it's my way. I'm not going to make myself over again for your pleasure. (*Silence. They all sit and sulk*) You've just spoiled my Masha between you.

ANTIP: I say, Masha, shall I find you a husband?

STEPANIDA: 'Twas time to think of that long ago. Seems to me you've clean forgotten that you have a sister; and she getting on, too.

MARYA: Really, mamma! Always "getting on," and "getting on"! I'm not so old as all that comes to.

STEPANIDA: Don't try your fine airs on me, miss! I was married at thirteen; and you—I'm downright ashamed to tell people of it—you're twenty.

ANTIP: Well, Masha, shall I ask Kossolapov?

MARYA: Well, really, brother! You know he smells of onions all the year round; and in Lent it's just dreadful!

ANTIP: Well, then, Perepyatkin, he'd be a fine lover. (*Laughs*)

MARYA: You just pick out all the frights on purpose

ANTIP: Well, they're all right. I think they're very fine lovers, Masha; first-rate lovers! (*Bursts out laughing*)

MARYA (*almost in tears*): You're just laughing at me!

STEPANIDA: Come, leave off your foolishness! I'm talking seriously, Antip Antipych! What do you mean by all this rubbish? As for you, my girl, don't be afraid; you shall have suitors enough to choose from. Bless my heart! You're not a gypsy beggar-wench; you're a marriageable girl with a position. Only you needn't think I'll let you marry a nobleman....I won't; so don't imagine it.

ANTIP: Why, mamma, anyone would think there are no decent folks among noblemen Dear me! there are plenty. (*Laughs*)

STEPANIDA: Of course there are, little father! there are decent people in every class; only everybody should keep to their own. Our grandfathers were no worse than we are, and they weren't always trying to get in among the nobles.

ANTIP· I don't see why you shouldn't marry her to a noble. There's no harm in it; why should you mind?

STEPANIDA: Eh! my lad! A real proper noble, that's worth having, wouldn't take her, he'd want at the very least a hundred thousand, or maybe two or three; and as for the others, they might as well not be there at all for me. All they know how to do is to turn up their noses and give themselves airs, as much as to say, "I'm a noble, and you're common people." And after all, they're nothing but a lot of dressed-up beggars! Goodness gracious! As if I didn't know. Look at Lopatikha,*

* Colloquial for "the wife of Lopatin"

she married her girl to a noble, without asking any respectable person's advice. I told her of it at the time. "Eh! Maximovna," * said I, "'Don't try to drive in strange sledges.' † You'll remember my words when it's too late." Well, of course she began and answered me that she wasn't going to stand in her own child's way, and all that. "I only want the best," says she; "after all," says she, "he's a gentleman, not a shopkeeper; and maybe he'll get on in the service and get a handle to his name." And now, you see what's come of it! Ah! it's a poor tale when a frog will be a bull! There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip! Half her dowry he's drunk away; and the rest he's gambled away, good man! (*Sighs*) Yes; I was at the wedding. "Where's the bridegroom?" said I. And what do you think, my lad? When I looked round, as it might be now, a nasty little slimy toad buttoned up into a tight jacket with the tails cut off, for all the world like a blind kitten that's been licked down. And there he was, wriggling and twisting about, like any heathen flibberty-gibbet—Lord forgive us for our sins!—as if he couldn't find a place to sit down Nobody'd ever have known him for a bridegroom, that they wouldn't. He might just as well have been all hung on wires. I thought to myself when I looked at him, "You've made a fine choice, my friends!" (*They all laugh*) But, dear heart! What am I talking about? Everybody knows that. And even if you do get one that isn't a drunkard—of course there are decent ones here and there—he'll only smoke you out of your own house with his tobacco; or else he'll bring deadly sin into your house eating meat on fast days. (*Spits*) Good Lord! it's just sickening to think of....No doubt there are good sensible people among them, that do their business properly; only all I say is, we and they don't belong together, and we're best apart. Now, a good, well-to-do shopkeeper, Masha—

ANTIP: Plump and fresh-colored you know, Masha, like me. That's the sort of fellow to love; not a dried-up scarecrow, eh, Masha?

MARYA: Really, brother, how should I know?...(*Casts down her eyes*)

ANTIP: How should you know? Well, anyway, Matryona knows; I say, Matryona, don't you think I'm right? Best have a shopkeeper, eh?

MATRYONA: It's always the same talk with you.

STEPANIDA: He's quite right, Masha, my girl. At least there's someone worth kissing.

MARYA: Mamma! How can you! I declare I shall go away! Come, sister! (*Runs out of the room.* MATRYONA *follows her*)

ANTIP: Oho! my lass; it's not much use to run away.

* The patronymic without the Christian name of the person addressed is a common colloquialism

† A Russian proverb

STEPANIDA: You made her bashful, Antipoushka; she's only a girl, you see.

ANTIP: Well, I don't mind if it's a merchant. Give her to a merchant, you may as well.

STEPANIDA (*moves nearer to him and speaks softly*). By the bye, Antipoushka, I heard from neighbor Terentyevna that Paramon Ferapontych thinks of marrying again, and is looking for a wife. That's a chance we oughtn't to miss, you know. Of course I know he's getting old, and a widower, and all that; but he has plenty of money, Antipoushka—heaps of money. And then, you know, he's respectable and religious, and a capital businessman.

ANTIP: Ye—es, mamma; only he's an awful cheat.

STEPANIDA: Dear heart alive! What do you mean by a cheat, I'd like to know? He goes to church on all the holidays; and he always comes before anyone else; he keeps all the fasts; and in Lent he doesn't even drink sugar in his tea, only honey or raisins. Yes, my dear, you might take example by him! And if he does play a trick sometimes, like any businessman, who's the worse for it? He's neither the first nor the last. Why, there'd be no trade without that, Antipoushka. It's a true saying—"No lies, no sale."

ANTIP· That's true enough! Why shouldn't one trick a chap if it comes easy? There's no harm in that. Only you see, mamma, a man must have a bit of conscience sometimes. (*Scratches his head*) After all, you know, one must think of one's latter end. (*Silence*) I know I can be as cunning as he is, when it comes in my way; but I always tell a chap honestly afterwards I always say: "Look here, friend, I fleeced you a little bit over such and such a business." Last year, for instance, I did Savva Savvich out of five hundred roubles when we were settling up accounts; but I told him about it afterwards. "Savva Savvich," said I, "you've let a nice little five hundred slip through your fingers; but it's too late now, friend," said I; "only another time keep your eyes open." He was a bit riled up about it; but we're the best of friends again. There's no harm in that!...Why, just lately I did that German, Karl Ivanych, out of three hundred roubles That was a good joke! Matryona had been buying a lot of furbelows and things in his shop, and he sent me a little bill for two thousand.

STEPANIDA: What! I never heard of such a thing!

ANTIP: There, that's no harm! Let her dress up if she likes! Well, so I thought to myself—"Surely I'm not going to give the German all that money. No, no," thought I, "he may wait till he gets it." So I gave him a little over three hundred roubles short. "The rest, mounseer, afterwards," says I. "All right, all right," says he, as polite as you please. So after that, of course he began nagging at me; every time I met him it was the same thing—"What about the money?" I got just sick of it; and one day, when I'd got my back up, that

German must needs come along. "What about the money?" says he. "What money?" says I; "I paid you long ago, man; let me alone, for the Lord's sake!" Eh! there was my German in a rage! "That's dishonest," says he; "that's underhand dealing," says he; "it's written down in my books," says he. And I said to him: "The deuce knows what you've got written down in your books, you'd have one always paying you." "Ah!" says he, "that's the Russian way of doing business; no German would do that. I'll go to law," says he. Well, what can you do with a man like that? It's for all the world like a sick man and his nurse! (*Both laugh*) "All right," says I; "much you'll get from lawyering!" Well, he went to law; and of course I simply denied it. I stuck to my point, that I'd paid and knew nothing more about it. Oh! what a laugh we had over that German! He was just wild. "It's dishonest," says he. So after it was all over, I said to him: "Karl Ivanych, I'd have given you that money, only I couldn't spare it" You should have seen how our shopkeepers shook their fat paunches with laughing. (*Both laugh*) For that matter, why should I pay up all his bill? That's too much of a good thing. They stick on any price they like; and people are silly enough to believe them. I'd do the same thing again if a man won't give credit That's my way, mamma, and I see no harm in it But Shiryalov—he's no better than a Jew; he'd cheat his own father! It's true, mamma; and he'll look you right in the face and tell you lies—and then pretends to be a saint! (*Enter* SHIRYALOV) Ah! Paramon Ferapontych, glad to see you; how do you do?

SHIRYALOV: How do you do, neighbors? (*Bows*) Antip Antipych! Good evening, friend. (*They kiss*) Little mother, Stepanida Trofimovna, good evening. (*They kiss*)

ANTIP: Sit down, Paramon Ferapontych.

STEPANIDA: Sit down, little father.

SHIRYALOV (*sits down*) Well, little mother, and how are you getting on?

STEPANIDA: Badly enough, little father; I'm getting old. And how goes the world with you?

SHIRYALOV: Ah! little mother! last week I was taken bad all on a sudden. Good Lord! how sharply it did catch me; I was downright frightened, I can tell you First of all, ma'am, I got a pain in my bones; I assure you, every little bone and joint ached of itself; just ached as if it would all go to pieces, ma'am. The Lord sends us these trials, little mother, as a chastisement for our sins. And then, ma'am, it went into the middle of my back.

STEPANIDA: You and I are getting old, little father.

SHIRYALOV: I turned this way and that, on one side and the other; no use, ma'am; it would just leave off a minute, and then catch me again. It seemed to go right to my heart.

STEPANIDA: Dear! dear!

ANTIP: I say, Paramon Ferapontych, haven't you been going it rather too much with your chums?

SHIRYALOV. No, indeed, sir, I haven't had a drop of liquor in my mouth; not for over a month, Stepanida Trofimovna! That is, I don't say that I've given it up for altogether; only for a little while. I won't say I'll never touch it again; the flesh is weak, as the Holy Scripture says.

STEPANIDA: Very true, little father!

SHIRYALOV: I'll tell you what I think, neighbors: I must have caught cold, somehow; maybe going out in the street without buttoning my coat, or standing out in the garden in my shirt after dark.

STEPANIDA Yes, yes; it's so easy to go wrong, little father! Let me give you some tea, Paramon Ferapontych.

SHIRYALOV (*bows*): Thank you, ma'am, thank you; I've just had tea.

STEPANIDA: Never mind, little father, have some more.

ANTIP With us, for company's sake.

SHIRYALOV: Just one cup, then. (STEPANIDA *pours out tea. He takes his cup and drinks*) So this is what I did, ma'am. I thought to myself —"All this doctor's stuff is just rubbish! It's nothing but stealing people's money." And I never have taken doctor's stuff, little mother; it's a sin that I've never taken on my soul. So I thought to myself— "I'll go to the bath; that's what I'll do." Well, I went to the bath, neighbor; and then I sent out for a bottle of wine, and two or three red peppers, ma'am; and I had them mixed in properly; then I drank one half; and when I got home I had some punch, and at night, ma'am, I came out all in a sweat; and that threw it off.

STEPANIDA: Yes, yes, little father! My Antipoushka always takes punch if he's not well.

ANTIP That's good stuff for every sort of illness, friend; you remember my words. (SHIRYALOV *puts down cup.*)

STEPANIDA: Take another cup

SHIRYALOV (*bows*): Thank you, no more Very grateful, Stepanida Trofimovna.

STEPANIDA: Without ceremony, little father. (*Pours out tea*) How's your business getting on?

SHIRYALOV (*takes cup*): Thanks be to God, Stepanida Trofimovna, fairly well. I've only one trouble: my Senka's gone to the bad altogether. I can't think what I'm to do about it; it's a real trial and affliction.

ANTIP: Wild oats, I suppose?

SHIRYALOV: Worse than that, Antip Antipych, worse than that! I wouldn't mind if he'd take to drinking; he couldn't throw away so

much on that; but he runs over head and ears into debt. Ah! little mother! What are young people coming to nowadays?

STEPANIDA: You've no one to blame but yourself, Paramon Ferapontych; you've regularly spoiled the boy; you should have broken him in when he was a child, it's too late now. He should have gone into town with your shopmen, and learned to keep his eyes open and bring in money.

SHIRYALOV Ah! little mother! you see, he's my only one. In these days a young man has to get into society. It was very different when we were young we whipped our tops until we were eighteen; and then our elders took and married us and started us in business Nowadays, a young man that's had no schooling gets called a fool; the world's grown so wise! And then you see, neighbor, God has blessed us; we've a tidy little fortune What would people say if I couldn't manage to give an only son learning, with all my capital? I don't want to be worse than my neighbors. One's always hearing that So-and-So's sent his boy to a simminry and another's sent his to the Commercial 'Cademy So I sent my Senka to a simminry, and paid my money down for a year in advance And if you'll believe it, ma'am, before three months was up, he cut an' run; so I thought I'd eddicate him at home; and I got a tutor, cheap. But I'd nothing but ill luck, ma'am; the tutor turned out wild, and Senka took to wheedling money out of his mother and going off on the spree with his tutor, now to the drink shops, now to the gypsy wenches . Well, of course I turned the tutor out o'doors; and now I'm left to get on with my Senka how I can. Dear Lord! dear Lord! how wicked the people are grown nowadays!

ANTIP He seems to have taken after his father!

SHIRYALOV: And indeed you wouldn't believe what he costs me: a hundred here, two hundred there; just lately I paid his tailor a thousand roubles; it's dreadful to think of; I don't wear out a thousand roubles' worth in ten years. I don't know how it is; he can't be content with a waistcoat that's just a waistcoat and a coat that's just a coat. Ah! it must be a judgment on me for my sins! (*Almost in a whisper*) Last winter he spent three hundred roubles on gloves alone—*three hun—dred* roubles!

STEPANIDA· Dear! dear! dear!

ANTIP: Wh—whew!

SHIRYALOV: The worst of it is that they give him credit everywhere; they know that I can pay. He owes four thousand now in some restaurant or other. No fortune in the world would stand that sort of thing. (*Drinks tea, silence*) By the bye, Antip Antipych, did I tell you the joke?

ANTIP: What joke?

SHIRYALOV About the Armenian.

ANTIP: No; what is it?

SHIRYALOV: Eh! It's as good as a play. (*Laughs, moves his chair nearer, and speaks in a whisper*) Last year, my good sir, this Armenian came to the town with silk to sell; and he got playing ducks and drakes with his money, just like my Senka. People began to talk about him in the town—you know how...and I'd got IOU's of his for fifteen thousand. It's a bad business, thinks I There was no getting rid of them in the town, everybody smelled a rat. Just about that time our manufacturer turned up; his factory's in a town some way off, you know. I went straight to him, before he'd heard about it; and what do you think, sir? Got rid of them all in a lump!

ANTIP· Well, and what was the end of it?

SHIRYALOV: Just twenty-five kopecks (*Laughs*)

ANTIP: No? Really? That's capital! (*Laughs*)

SHIRYALOV: But Senka's not like that; no, no, sir, not that sort at all. Verily the Almighty chastises me in my son! He keeps company with the Lord knows what sort of rag, tag, and bobtail (*puts down cup*), with people not fit to speak to....

STEPANIDA: Another cup?

SHIRYALOV: No more, little mother, no more.

STEPANIDA: Without ceremony—

SHIRYALOV: Can't, little mother, can't, indeed (*Bows*)

STEPANIDA: As you like; but there's plenty more

SHIRYALOV: Can't, really. (*Rises and bows*)

STEPANIDA: Darya, clear away the tea. (DARYA *enters, clears away tea, and goes out*) Good-by, little father

SHIRYALOV· Good-by, little mother (*They kiss*)

STEPANIDA: Don't forget to look in on us.

SHIRYALOV: Always a pleasure, ma'am; always a pleasure

ANTIP: I say, mamma, let's have some brandy in, and a bite of something, and a bottle of Madeira, or something of that kind. Let's have a drink, neighbor, eh?

SHIRYALOV: Eh! Antip Antipych, that would be too much trouble.

ANTIP· Not a bit of it; there's no trouble. (STEPANIDA *goes out*)

SHIRYALOV· Yes, neighbor; he keeps away from home, he never goes near the shop. What does he care how his father has to get the money? It's time I should have a little rest in my old age But I've no one to depend on The other day I went and served in the shop myself; I hadn't done it for fifteen years. "I'll just go and show my lazy louts how to do business," said I to myself. And would you believe it, sir— (*Draws his chair nearer. Wine is brought in*)

ANTIP· Have a drink, neighbor! (*They drink*)

SHIRYALOV: There was a piece of stuff that was left on hand. Two years ago the price of it was two roubles forty the *arshin*, but this year they'd marked it eighty kopecks. Well, sir, as I sat in the shop

there came in two ladies, and asked for some stuff for blouses to wear in the house. "Certainly, ma'am," says I. "Mitya, bring that last new material. Here's a fine stuff," said I. "And what's the price?" said the lady. "Two and a half roubles it cost me," says I; "and profit—what you please, ma'am." "I'll give one rouble eighty," says she. What do you think of that, Antip Antipych? One rouble eighty. "Oh! no, ma'am," says I; "I couldn't possibly let it go for that." Well, they haggled a bit, and said they'd give two roubles. Hear that? Two roubles (*Laughs*) "How much do you want?" says I. "Twenty-five *arshin*." "Can't do it, ma'am," says I; "if you'll take the whole piece, I don't mind letting it go at two roubles." You see, the thing was that I didn't dare touch the stuff. (*Laughs*) I was afraid to lay a finger on it. For anything I knew, it might be all rotten inside. Well, my ladies talked it over, and took the whole piece. You should just have seen how the shopmen stared. (*Laughs*)

ANTIP: Why, that's capital! That's first-rate! Have a drink, neighbor. (*They drink*)

SHIRYALOV: But Senka's not that sort; oh, no! Senka's not that sort at all (*Sighs*) My good sir, he goes to the theater every blessed day. He knows everybody there; he's made friends with them all; every sort of rabble comes dangling after him. What do you think! The other day I called in at Ostolopov's. "Just give me that money," says he. "What money?" says I. "For the shawl." "What shawl?" "Why, that your son bought." I thought to myself: "What in the world can he want with a shawl?" Of course, I knew I shouldn't get the truth out of him, so I began making inquiries; and would you believe it, sir, he's got one of these actress girls!

ANTIP: Well, I never did! ..

SHIRYALOV: What would you have me do with him? That's more than I can stand; I'm ashamed to acknowledge him.

ANTIP· The fact is, that it's time to marry him. You must find the boy a wife

SHIRYALOV: Wait a bit, Antip Antipych; that's not the worst of it; the worst is that there's no end; it's just like pouring water into a sieve. It's a shawl today, it'll be a sable cloak tomorrow; and for all I know a furnished house next day; and then a carriage and pair; and then heaven knows what; it's worse than the horseleech!

ANTIP: Very true.

SHIRYALOV: And you know, when a man gets entangled with *them,* he's like one blind. That sort of company is just *ruin,* Antip Antipych.

ANTIP· You're right there; a man loses his head altogether. There's only one thing to do, neighbor—to get him married quick.

SHIRYALOV: It's easy to say, "Get him married"; but how am I to do it?

ANTIP: How are you to do it? Well, of course, I don't mean that you should tie him hand and foot. Just hunt up a girl with a nice little dowry, you know; and I doubt he won't kick at it. Why should anyone mind marrying? It's nothing but a pleasure!

SHIRYALOV Why, who do you think would have him? No one but a mad woman would marry such a rake!

ANTIP: You think the girls care for that? Bless my soul, that's nothing! Why, man, young bachelors are always like that. Do you remember what I was like as a bachelor? I used to drink, and sow my wild oats, and be up to all sorts of larks My poor father just gave me up for good and all. You talk about theaters! We didn't go to theaters, we used to be off to the dancing saloons, or to the gypsies at Grouzina; and go on spree, drinking, for a fortnight at a time. Why, the factory hands at Preobrazhenskoye nearly murdered me. over a wench; all Moscow knew about it. None the less I got Matryona Savishna. All that's stuff and nonsense; that doesn't matter.

SHIRYALOV: Ah! It's all very well to say, "Marry him, and find a girl with a dowry." Why, my dear fellow, now that he hasn't got any money, he carries on like mad; but if once he were to get money into his hands, heaven knows what he'd do—he'd play Old Harry with everything.

ANTIP· He'd set the money in circulation. (*Laughs*)

SHIRYALOV: No, sir; the thing I think of doing is to put a notice in the newspapers. Like this, you know "I entrust no commissions to my son; and have no intention of paying his debts in future." Then I'll sign it: "Manufacturer-Counsellor-Merchant-Temporarily-of-the-First-Moscow-Guild, Paramon, son of Ferapont Shiryalov."

ANTIP: Yes; that's not a bad idea.

SHIRYALOV: And another thing I think of doing to punish him, is to get married myself and cut him out.

ANTIP: Yes, why not? Marriage is a good thing.

SHIRYALOV: It's just possible, you know, that the good Lord will hear my prayers and send me a son and heir to comfort my old age. I'll leave everything to him. The other is like a stranger to me; and my heart turns away from him. Only think of it: if I were to leave the fortune to him, what would he do? He'd just squander my money, the sweat of my brow, among his tailors and his actress wenches!

ANTIP: Well then, marry; there's no harm in that. Have you got any girl in particular in your eye?

SHIRYALOV: No, friend; that's just my trouble

ANTIP· Would you like me to find you one? Let's have a drink first of all. (*They drink*)

SHIRYALOV· Are you in earnest?

ANTIP: Quite Why shouldn't I find you one?

SHIRYALOV (*looks keenly at him*): You're fooling me!

ANTIP. What should I fool you for? I haven't got far to look, man; I've got a marriageable sister.

SHIRYALOV: What did you say? Eh-h-h!

ANTIP Didn't that occur to you? Well, you are a simple-minded fellow!

SHIRYALOV· My dear lad, of course I thought of it. (*Lowers his eyes*) But I doubt she wouldn't care to have me.

ANTIP: What next? Why shouldn't she? Never fear, she'll have you.

SHIRYALOV (*drops his eyes lower*). She'll say: "He's old"

ANTIP: Old? What does that matter? There's no harm in that. Never fear, she'll have you. And then, my mother's fond of you Why, what more can the girl want? A good respectable man: why shouldn't she have you?—quiet and peaceable in his cups. By the bye, you are quiet in drink, aren't you? You don't get fighting?

SHIRYALOV· As quiet as any innocent babe, Antip Antipych. Whenever I get a drop too much, it just sends me off to sleep; I never get rowdy and wild

ANTIP· You didn't used to come to blows with your first wife, did you?

SHIRYALOV: Never, so help me, God!

ANTIP. Very well then, why should she object to a decent fellow? Never fear, she'll have you. You can send the matchmaker. There now, let's drink health and happiness to you. (*They drink*)

SHIRYALOV: Antip Antipych, you're my benefactor, my— I'll tell you what: we've had a little drink here; come to me and we'll make a regular jolly night of it There's more room in my place, and there are no womenfolk, and we'll fetch in the factory hands to give us a song.

ANTIP: All right. You go on and get everything ready, and I'll come in a minute, I'll just get my cap. (SHIRYALOV *goes out*)

ANTIP (*alone, winks*): What a beast it is! And such a sly fox! To see the doleful ways he puts on. It's all poor Senka's fault. It's very well for you to talk, my man, you've just got a sweet tooth in your old age. Well, for my part, I don't care; it's all one to me. But I know one thing, Paramon Ferapontych: when it comes to the dowry, who'll get the best of who—that's quite another matter. Mamma and I are not quite so green as you think. (*Goes out*)

(MATRYONA *enters, showily dressed,* DARYA *follows her*)

MATRYONA. Has Antip Antipych gone out?

DARYA: Yes, ma'am.

MATRYONA: Off on the spree! What a nuisance it is. He'll disappear for two or three days now!

(MARYA *enters, in her best clothes*)

MARYA: Come along, sister! Do you know how I got leave?
MATRYONA: How?
MARYA: Said I wanted to go to vespers! (*They burst out laughing; and exeunt*)

[Translation by E. L. Voynich, in *The Humour of Russia,* 1914]

Ivan Goncharov

"Oblomov is more than a character, he is a symbol He was...the embodiment of a whole side of the Russian soul its sloth and ineffectiveness. ." The words are Mirsky's. It should be added that the word Oblomovism became a part of the language as a result of this great creation by Goncharov. It was a state of being and of mind which belonged particularly to the old gentry, but from which at the time the book was written not even the peasant was wholly free. The two short excerpts from Oblomov *which follow tell their own story. It is but needful to add that as a foil for Oblomov, the author created the character of Stolz—the methodical, systematic, enterprising, business-like German, but it is Oblomov whom the reader loves, and not Stolz.*

OBLOMOV

OBLOMOV'S ELDERS

Ilya Ilyitch was dreaming not of one such evening, but weeks, months, and years of evenings spent in this way Nothing disturbed the monotony of the life at Oblomovka, and its inhabitants did not resent it, for they could not imagine any other existence; and if they could, they would have turned away from it in horror. They did not desire any other life and they would have disliked it. They would have been sorry if circumstances had brought any changes into their manner of living. They would have been wretched if one day was not like another, if the morrows were not like the yesterdays. What did they want with variety, change, and adventure that other people seek? Let those others make the best of it, the folk at Oblomovka did not care for that sort of thing. Others could live as they liked. Adventures, even if they

brought luck, were disturbing; they involved trouble, care, running about, having no rest, buying and selling, or writing; in short, being on the go—and that was no joke! They went on for years yawning and drowsing, laughing good-humoredly at the country jokes or sitting around and telling their dreams to one another. If the dream had been terrible they all were seriously perturbed and afraid; if it was prophetic, they unfeignedly grieved or rejoiced according to the nature of the prophecy. If the dream required that some observance should be complied with, active measures were at once taken to do so. Or they played cards—simple nursery games on weekdays and Boston with visitors on holy days, played patience, told fortunes for a king of hearts or a queen of clubs and foretold marriage. Sometimes a Natalya Faddeyevna would come to stay for a week or a fortnight. The ladies began by talking over all the neighbors, their occupations and way of living; they penetrated not only into their family life and behind the scenes generally, but into their secret thoughts and intentions, into their very souls, disapproved, condemned the unworthy, especially the faithless husbands; then they discussed the various social occasions—namedays, christenings, and so on, recalling who had been invited and what fare had been offered Tired of this, they showed each other their new clothes, dresses, coats, even stockings and petticoats. The hostess boasted of her homemade linen, yarn, or lace. But this subject, too, would be exhausted Then they fell back upon coffee, tea, jam. Then they sank into silence They sat for hours looking at each other, sighing heavily at times Occasionally one of them began to cry. "What is it, my dear?" the other asked anxiously. "Oh, I feel sad, darling," the visitor replied; "we have angered the Lord God, wretched sinners that we are. No good will come of it." "Oh, don't frighten, don't alarm me, dear!" the hostess interrupted. "Yes, yes," the other went on, "the last days will come, nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom...the end of the world is coming!" Natalya Faddeyevna uttered at last, and both ladies wept bitterly Natalya Faddeyevna had no grounds for her conclusion, for no nations had risen up and there had not even been a comet that year; but old ladies have dark forebodings at times.

Occasionally their usual trend of life at Oblomovka was disturbed by some accident, such, for instance, as the whole household being overpowered by the fumes from the stoves. Other accidents were practically unheard of in the house or the village; sometimes, perhaps, a man would stumble against a post in the dark or fall from the hayloft or be hit by a plank dropping off the roof But this seldom happened, and there were homely, well-tried remedies against the effect of such accidents: the bruise was rubbed with water-weed or angelica, the patient was given holy water to drink or had a spell whispered over him—and he was perfectly well again. But headaches

from the stove fumes happened fairly often, then all took to their beds; there was moaning and groaning; some tied sliced cucumbers round their heads, some put cranberries in their ears and sniffed horseradish, some went out into the frost with nothing but a shirt on, others simply lay senseless on the floor. This happened regularly once or twice a month, because they did not like to waste warmth and shut the flues while bluish flames, like those in *Robert le Diable,* still flickered in the stove. One could not touch a single stove without blistering one's hand.

Only once the monotony of their life was disturbed by a truly unexpected event. When, having rested after an exacting dinner, they had all gathered for tea, an Oblomovka peasant, who had returned from town, came into the room suddenly, and with much difficulty pulled out from the breast of his coat a crumpled letter addressed to Ilya Ivanovitch Oblomov. Everyone was dumfounded; the lady of the house turned slightly pale; everyone craned toward the letter, their eyes fixed upon it.

"How extraordinary! From whom could it be?" Madame Oblomov said at last, coming to herself.

Her husband took the letter and turned it about in perplexity, not knowing what to do with it

"But where did you get it from?" he asked the peasant. "Who gave it you?"

"Well, it was like this," the peasant answered; "a man from the post office came twice to the inn where I had put up asking if there were any peasants from Oblomovka there, because there was a letter for the master."

"Well?..."

"Well, at first I hid myself and so the soldier went back with the letter. But the sexton from Verhlyovo had seen me and he gave me away. They came again, and the second time they came they swore at me and gave me the letter, and charged me five kopecks for it too. I asked what I was to do with it, and they said I was to give it to Your Honor."

"You shouldn't have taken it," Madame Oblomov remarked angrily.

"Well, I didn't want to take it. I said we had no use for it and wouldn't have it; we hadn't been told to bring letters and I didn't dare take it. 'Be off with your letter,' I said But the soldier swore dreadfully and said he would complain to his chief, so I took it."

"Idiot!" the lady said.

"From whom could it be?" Oblomov said thoughtfully, examining the address. "The writing seems familiar!"

The letter was passed round. Everyone conjectured what it could be about and from whom it could have come. All were completely puzzled Ilya Ivanovitch asked for his spectacles; a good hour and

a half were spent searching for them. At last he put them on and was about to open the letter.

"I shouldn't open it, Ilya Ivanitch," his wife stopped him anxiously; "who knows what sort of letter it is? It may be something dreadful and bring us trouble. You know what people are nowadays! You will have time to read it tomorrow or the day after—it won't run away from you."

The letter was locked up with the spectacles and they all sat down to tea. It might have lain in the drawer for years had not their minds been too deeply affected by so unusual an event At tea and all the next day they could talk of nothing but the letter. At last they could endure it no longer, and on the fourth day, gathering together, they opened the letter in trepidation. Oblomov glanced at the signature.

"Radishtchev," he read. "Why, that's from Filip Matveyitch"

"Oh, so it's from him!" was heard on all sides. "So he is still alive then! Just think of it, he isn't dead yet! Well, thank God! What does he say?"

Oblomov read the letter aloud It appeared that Filip Matveyitch was asking for a recipe of beer that was brewed particularly well at Oblomovka.

"Send it him! Send it him!" everyone said. "You must write to him"

A fortnight passed.

"I must write to him, I certainly must!" Ilya Ivanovitch kept repeating. "But where is the recipe?"

"Where can it be, now?" his wife answered. "I must try and find it; but there is no hurry. Now Christmas will soon be here, the fast will be over, and then, God willing, you can write to him; there will be plenty of time."

"Yes, indeed, I had better write during the holidays," Ilya Ivanovitch said.

At Christmas the subject came up again. Ilya Ivanovitch quite made up his mind to write. He withdrew to his study, sat down at the table, and put on his spectacles Profound stillness reigned in the house; the servants were told not to stamp or shout "The master is writing," everyone said, speaking in a timid and respectful voice as though there were a death in the house. He had just written· "Dear Sir" in a trembling and uneven hand, slowly and cautiously, as though engaged on some dangerous task, when his wife came into the room.

"I've looked for that recipe all over the place and I can't find it," she said. "I must have another look in the bedroom cupboard. But how are you going to send the letter?"

"By post," Ilya Ivanovitch answered.

"What will the postage be?"

Oblomov produced an old calendar.

"Forty kopecks," he said.

"What a waste!" she remarked. "We had better wait till someone from the town is going that way Tell the peasants to find out."

"Yes, it would certainly be better to send it by hand," Ilya Ivanovitch answered, and, drying his pen, he stuck it into the inkstand and took off his spectacles.

"It certainly will be better," he concluded. "There is no hurry, there's plenty of time to send it."

History does not say whether Filip Matveyitch ever received the recipe.

OBLOMOVISM

"You are telling me of how our fathers and grandfathers used to live."

"No, I am not," Oblomov answered, almost touchily, "it's quite different. My wife would not spend her time making jam and pickling mushrooms She wouldn't be measuring yarn and sorting out homespun linen; she would not box her maids' ears. Don't you hear what I said—music, piano, elegant furniture?"

"And you?"

"I should not be reading last year's papers and driving in a clumsy old chaise, and instead of eating vermicelli soup and roast goose I should have my chef trained at the English Club or at a foreign legation."

"Well, and then?"

"Then when the heat subsides we would send a cart with the samovar and dessert to the birch copse or the meadow, spread carpets on the newly mown grass, and enjoy ourselves there till it was time for cold soup and beefsteak. The peasants are returning from the fields with scythes on their shoulders; a load of hay crawls past so big that you can't see the cart or the driver, a peasant cap with flowers round it and a child's head peep out of the hay on the top; there comes a crowd of women, barefooted, carrying sickles and singing....They suddenly catch sight of us, grow quiet, and bow One of them, with bare elbows and a sunburned neck, her sly eyes timidly cast down, pretends to push away her master's arm, but is really pleased at his caress... Hush, my wife mustn't see it, heaven forbid!"

Both Oblomov and Stolz roared with laughter.

"It's damp in the meadow," Oblomov concluded; "it's dark· a sea of mist hangs low over the rye; the horses shiver and stamp on the ground; it's time to go home. There are lights in the house windows: five big knives are clattering in the kitchen; a frying pan full of mushrooms, minced-meat balls, strawberries ...Then there is music.

... *Casta diva* ... *Casta diva!*" Oblomov sang the beginning of the aria. "I cannot bear to recall *Casta diva,*" he said. "The way that woman cries her heart out! What sorrow there is in those sounds! ... No one around her knows anything.... She is alone.... Her secret is a burden to her; she tells it to the moon...."

"You are fond of that aria! I am so glad: Olga Ilyinsky sings it beautifully. I will introduce you—she has a wonderful voice; and how she sings! And she herself is such a charming child. Though perhaps I am partial, I have a weakness for her.... Don't lose the thread, though," Stolz added, "go on telling me!"

"Well," Oblomov went on, "what else is there? ... That's all. The visitors go to their rooms at the lodge or the pavilion, and the next day some of them go fishing or shooting, and some simply sit still...."

"Simply? With nothing in their hands?" Stolz asked.

"What would you like them to have? Well, a handkerchief, perhaps. Now, don't you want to live like that, eh?" Oblomov asked. "Isn't that the real thing?"

"All your life?" Stolz asked.

"Till old age, till death. That is life!"

"No, it isn't."

"It isn't? What's wrong with it? Just think, you wouldn't see a single pale, unhappy face, there wouldn't be any worries, any questions about the Senate, the stock exchange, shares, reports, the minister's reception, ranks, bonuses. Instead, there would be real heart-to-heart conversations. You would never have to change your lodgings—that alone is worth something! And you say it isn't life?"

"It isn't," Stolz repeated obstinately.

"It's"—Stolz broke off, trying to think of a word to describe this kind of existence—"it's a sort of... Oblomovism," he said at last.

"Ob-lo-movism!" Ilya Ilyitch pronounced slowly, marveling at the strange word and dividing it into syllables, "Ob-lo-movism!"

He looked at Stolz with a strange fixity.

"What, then, is the ideal life, you think? What is not Oblomovism?" he asked timidly and without enthusiasm. "Doesn't everyone strive for the very same things that I dream of? Why," he added more confidently, "isn't it the purpose of all your running about, your passions, wars, trade, politics—to secure rest, to attain this ideal of a lost paradise?"

"Your very Utopia is that of an Oblomov," Stolz retorted.

"Everyone seeks peace and rest," Oblomov defended himself.

"No, not everyone, and ten years ago you, too, sought something very different."

[Translation by Natalie Duddington]

Feodor Dostoevsky

DMITRY KARAMAZOV VISITS MADAME HOHLAKOV

He flew home, washed, combed his hair, brushed his clothes, dressed, and went to Madame Hohlakov's Alas! he had built his hopes on her. He had resolved to borrow three thousand from that lady. And what was more, he felt suddenly convinced that she would not refuse to lend it to him. It may be wondered why, if he felt so certain, he had not gone to her at first, one of his own sort, so to speak, instead of to Samsonov, a man he did not know, who was not of his own class, and to whom he hardly knew how to speak.

But the fact was that he had never known Madame Hohlakov well, and had seen nothing of her for the last month, and that he knew she could not endure him She had detested him from the first because he was engaged to Katerina Ivanovna, while she had, for some reason, suddenly conceived the desire that Katerina Ivanovna should throw him over and marry the "charming, chivalrously refined Ivan, who had such excellent manners." Mitya's manners she detested. Mitya positively laughed at her, and had once said about her that she was just as lively and at her ease as she was uncultivated. But that morning in the cart a brilliant idea had struck him: "If she is so anxious I should not marry Katerina Ivanovna" (and he knew she was positively hysterical upon the subject) "why should she refuse me now that three thousand, just to enable me to leave Katya and get away from her forever. These spoiled fine ladies, if they set their hearts on anything, will spare no expense to satisfy their caprice. Besides, she's so rich," Mitya argued.

As for his "plan," it was just the same as before; it consisted of the offer of his rights to Tchermashnya—but not with a commercial object, as it had been with Samsonov, not trying to allure the lady with the possibility of making a profit of six or seven thousand—but simply as a security for the debt. As he worked out this new idea, Mitya was enchanted with it, but so it always was with him in all his undertakings, in all his sudden decisions. He gave himself up to every new idea with passionate enthusiasm. Yet, when he mounted the steps of Madame Hohlakov's house he felt a shiver of fear run down his spine. At that moment he saw fully, as a mathematical certainty, that this was his last hope, that if this broke down, nothing else was left him in the world but to "rob and murder someone for the three thousand." It was half-past seven when he rang at the bell.

At first fortune seemed to smile upon him. As soon as he was an-

nounced he was received with extraordinary rapidity. "As though she were waiting for me," thought Mitya, and as soon as he had been led to the drawing room, the lady of the house herself ran in, and declared at once that she was expecting him.

"I was expecting you! I was expecting you! Though I'd no reason to suppose you would come to see me, as you will admit yourself. Yet, I did expect you. You may marvel at my instinct, Dmitry Fyodorovitch, but I was convinced all the morning that you would come."

"That is certainly wonderful, madame," observed Mitya, sitting down limply, "but I have come to you on a matter of great importance.... On a matter of supreme importance for me, that is, madame...for me alone...and I hasten—"

"I know you've come on most important business. Dmitry Fyodorovitch, it's not a case of presentiment, no reactionary harking back to the miraculous (have you heard about Father Zossima?). This is a case of mathematics· you couldn't help coming, after all that has passed with Katerina Ivanovna; you couldn't, you couldn't, that's a mathematical certainty"

"The realism of actual life, madame, that's what it is. But allow me to explain—"

"Realism indeed, Dmitry Fyodorovitch. I'm all for realism now. I've seen too much of miracles. You've heard that Father Zossima is dead?"

"No, madame, it's the first time I've heard of it." Mitya was a little surprised. The image of Alyosha rose to his mind.

"Last night, and only imagine—"

"Madame," said Mitya, "I can imagine nothing except that I'm in a desperate position, and that if you don't help me, everything will come to grief, and I first of all. Excuse me for the triviality of the expression, but I'm in a fever—"

"I know, I know that you're in a fever. You could hardly fail to be, and whatever you may say to me, I know beforehand. I have long been thinking over your destiny, Dmitry Fyodorovitch, I am watching over it and studying it....Oh, believe me, I'm an experienced doctor of the soul, Dmitry Fyodorovitch."

"Madame, if you are an experienced doctor, I'm certainly an experienced patient," said Mitya, with an effort to be polite, "and I feel that if you are watching over my destiny in this way, you will come to my help in my ruin, and so allow me at least to explain to you the plan with which I have ventured to come to you...and what I am hoping of you....I have come, madame—"

"Don't explain it. It's of secondary importance. But as for help, you're not the first I have helped, Dmitry Fyodorovitch. You have most likely heard of my cousin, Madame Belmesov. Her husband was ruined, 'had come to grief,' as you characteristically express it, Dmitry Fyodorovitch

I recommended him to take to horse-breeding, and now he's doing well. Have you any idea of horse-breeding, Dmitry Fyodorovitch?"

"Not the faintest, madame; ah, madame, not the faintest!" cried Mitya, in nervous impatience, positively starting from his seat. "I simply implore you, madame, to listen to me. Only give me two minutes of free speech, that I may just explain to you everything, the whole plan with which I have come. Besides, I am short of time. I'm in a fearful hurry," Mitya cried hysterically, feeling that she was just going to begin talking again, and hoping to cut her short. "I have come in despair... in the last gasp of despair, to beg you to lend me the sum of three thousand, a loan, but on safe, most safe security, madame, with the most trustworthy guarantees! Only let me explain—"

"You must tell me all that afterwards, afterwards!" Madame Hohlakov with a gesture demanded silence in her turn. "And whatever you may tell me, I know it all beforehand; I've told you so already. You ask for a certain sum, for three thousand, but I can give you more, immeasurably more, I will save you, Dmitry Fyodorovitch, but you must listen to me."

Mitya started from his seat again.

"Madame, will you really be so good!" he cried, with strong feeling. "Good God, you've saved me! You have saved a man from a violent death, from a bullet....My eternal gratitude—"

"I will give you more, infinitely more than three thousand!" cried Madame Hohlakov, looking with a radiant smile at Mitya's ecstasy.

"Infinitely? But I don't need so much. I only need that fatal three thousand, and on my part I can give security for that sum with infinite gratitude, and I propose a plan which—"

"Enough, Dmitry Fyodorovitch, it's said and done" Madame Hohlakov cut him short, with the modest triumph of beneficence: "I have promised to save you, and I will save you. I will save you as I did Belmesov. What do you think of the gold mines, Dmitry Fyodorovitch?"

"Of the gold mines, madame? I have never thought anything about them."

"But I have thought of them for you. Thought of them over and over again. I have been watching you for the last month. I've watched you a hundred times as you've walked past, saying to myself: That's a man of energy who ought to be at the gold mines. I've studied your gait and come to the conclusion: that's a man who would find gold."

"From my gait, madame?" said Mitya, smiling.

"Yes, from your gait. You surely don't deny that character can be told from the gait, Dmitry Fyodorovitch? Science supports the idea. I'm all for science and realism now. After all this business with Father Zossima, which has so upset me, from this very day I'm a realist and I want to devote myself to practical usefulness. I'm cured. 'Enough!' as Turgenev says."

"But, madame, the three thousand you so generously promised to lend me—"

"It is yours, Dmitry Fyodorovitch," Madame Hohlakov cut in at once. "The money is as good as in your pocket, not three thousand, but three million, Dmitry Fyodorovitch, in less than no time. I'll make you a present of the idea; you shall find gold mines, make millions, return and become a leading man, and wake us up and lead us to better things. Are we to leave it all to the Jews? You will found institutions and enterprises of all sorts. You will help the poor, and they will bless you. This is the age of railways, Dmitry Fyodorovitch. You'll become famous and indispensable to the Department of Finance, which is so badly off at present. The depreciation of the rouble keeps me awake at night, Dmitry Fyodorovitch; people don't know that side of me—"

"Madame, madame!" Dmitry interrupted with an uneasy presentiment. "I shall indeed, perhaps, follow your advice, your wise advice, madame....I shall perhaps set off...to the gold mines....I'll come and see you again about it...many times, indeed...but now, that three thousand you so generously...Oh, that would set me free, and if you could today...you see, I haven't a minute, a minute to lose today—"

"Enough, Dmitry Fyodorovitch, enough!" Madame Hohlakov interrupted emphatically. "The question is, will you go to the gold mines or not; have you quite made up your mind? Answer yes or no."

"I will go, madame, afterwards....I'll go where you like...but now—"

"Wait!" cried Madame Hohlakov. And jumping up and running to a handsome bureau with numerous little drawers, she began pulling out one drawer after another, looking for something with desperate haste.

"The three thousand," thought Mitya, his heart almost stopping, "and at the instant...without any papers or formalities...that's doing things in gentlemanly style! She's a splendid woman, if only she didn't talk so much!"

"Here!" cried Madame Hohlakov, running back joyfully to Mitya, "here is what I was looking for!"

It was a tiny silver ikon on a cord, such as is sometimes worn next the skin with a cross.

"This is from Kiev, Dmitry Fyodorovitch," she went on reverently, "from the relics of the Holy Martyr, Varvara. Let me put it on your neck myself, and with it dedicate you to a new life, to a new career."

And she actually put the cord round his neck, and began arranging it. In extreme embarrassment, Mitya bent down and helped her, and at last he got it under his necktie and collar through his shirt to his chest.

"Now you can set off," Madame Hohlakov pronounced, sitting down triumphantly in her place again.

"Madame, I am so touched. I don't know how to thank you, indeed ...for such kindness, but...if only you knew how precious time is to me....That sum of money, for which I shall be indebted to your generosity...Oh, madame, since you are so kind, so touchingly generous to me," Mitya exclaimed impulsively, "then let me reveal to you ...though, of course, you've known it a long time.. that I love somebody here....I have been false to Katya...Katerina Ivanovna, I should say....Oh, I've behaved inhumanly, dishonorably to her, but I fell in love here with another woman...a woman whom you, madame, perhaps despise, for you know everything already, but whom I cannot leave on any account, and therefore that three thousand now—"

"Leave everything, Dmitry Fyodorovitch," Madame Hohlakov interrupted in the most decisive tone. "Leave everything, especially women. Gold mines are your goal, and there's no place for women there. Afterwards, when you come back rich and famous, you will find the girl of your heart in the highest society. That will be a modern girl, a girl of education and advanced ideas. By that time the dawning woman question will have gained ground, and the new woman will have appeared."

"Madame, that's not the point, not at all...." Mitya clasped his hands in entreaty.

"Yes it is, Dmitry Fyodorovitch, just what you need; the very thing you're yearning for, though you don't realize it yourself I am not at all opposed to the present woman's movement, Dmitry Fyodorovitch. The development of woman, and even the political emancipation of woman in the near future—that's my ideal. I've a daughter myself, Dmitry Fyodorovitch, people don't know that side of me. I wrote a letter to the author, Shchedrin, on that subject. He has taught me so much, so much about the vocation of woman. So last year I sent him an anonymous letter of two lines: 'I kiss and embrace you, my teacher, for the modern woman. Persevere.' And I signed myself, 'A Mother.' I thought of signing myself 'A contemporary Mother,' and hesitated, but I stuck to the simple 'Mother'; there's more moral beauty in that, Dmitry Fyodorovitch. And the word 'contemporary' might have reminded him of *'The Contemporary'*—a painful recollection owing to the censorship...Good Heavens, what is the matter!"

"Madame!" cried Mitya, jumping up at last, clasping his hands before her in helpless entreaty. "You will make me weep if you delay what you have so generously—"

"Oh, do weep, Dmitry Fyodorovitch, do weep! That's a noble feeling...such a path lies open before you! Tears will ease your heart, and later on you will return rejoicing. You will hasten to me from Siberia on purpose to share your joy with me—"

"But allow me, too!" Mitya cried suddenly. "For the last time I entreat you, tell me, can I have the sum you promised me today; if not, when may I come for it?"

"What sum, Dmitry Fyodorovitch?"

"The three thousand you promised me... that you so generously—"

"Three thousand? Roubles? Oh, no, I haven't got three thousand," Madame Hohlakov announced with serene amazement. Mitya was stupefied.

"Why, you said just now... you said... you said it was as good as in my hands—"

"Oh, no, you misunderstood me, Dmitry Fyodorovitch. In that case you misunderstood me. I was talking of the gold mines. It's true I promised you more, infinitely more than three thousand, I remember it all now, but I was referring to the gold mines."

"But the money? The three thousand?" Mitya exclaimed awkwardly.

"Oh, if you meant money, I haven't any. I haven't a penny, Dmitry Fyodorovitch. I'm quarreling with my steward about it, and I've just borrowed five hundred roubles from Miusov, myself. No, no, I've no money. And, do you know, Dmitry Fyodorovitch, if I had, I wouldn't give it to you. In the first place, I never lend money. Lending money means losing friends. And I wouldn't give it to you particularly. I wouldn't give it you, because I like you and want to save you, for all you need is the gold mines, the gold mines, the gold mines!"

"Oh, the devil!" roared Mitya, and with all his might brought his fist down on the table.

"Aie! Aie!" cried Madame Hohlakov, alarmed, and she flew to the other end of the drawing room.

Mitya spat on the ground, and strode rapidly out of the room, out of the house, into the street, into the darkness!

[From *The Brothers Karamazov*]

Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin

HOW A MUZHIK FED TWO OFFICIALS

Once upon a time there were two Officials. They were both empty-headed, and so they found themselves one day suddenly transported to an uninhabited isle, as if on a magic carpet.

They had passed their whole life in a Government Department, where records were kept; had been born there, bred there, grown old there, and consequently hadn't the least understanding for anything outside of the Department, and the only words they knew were: "With assurances of the highest esteem, I am your humble servant."

But the Department was abolished, and as the services of the two Officials were no longer needed, they were given their freedom. So the retired Officials migrated to Podyacheskaya Street in St. Petersburg. Each had his own home, his own cook, and his pension.

Waking up on the uninhabited isle, they found themselves lying under the same cover. At first, of course, they couldn't understand what had happened to them, and they spoke as if nothing extraordinary had taken place.

"What a peculiar dream I had last night, Your Excellency," said the one Official "It seemed to me as if I were on an uninhabited isle."

Scarcely had he uttered the words, when he jumped to his feet. The other Official also jumped up.

"Good Lord, what does this mean? Where are we?" they cried out in astonishment.

They felt each other to make sure that they were no longer dreaming, and finally convinced themselves of the sad reality

Before them stretched the ocean, and behind them was a little spot of earth, beyond which the ocean stretched again. They began to cry —the first time since their Department had been shut down.

They looked at each other, and each noticed that the other was clad in nothing but his nightshirt with his order hanging about his neck.

"We really should be having our coffee now," observed the one Official. Then he bethought himself again of the strange situation he was in and a second time fell to weeping.

"What are we going to do now?" he sobbed. "Even supposing we were to draw up a report, what good would that do?"

"You know what, Your Excellency," replied the other Official, "you go to the east and I will go to the west. Toward evening we will come back here again, and, perhaps, we shall have found something."

They started to ascertain which was the east and which was the west. They recalled that the head of their Department had once said to them, "If you want to know where the east is, then turn your face to the north, and the east will be on your right." But when they tried to find out which was the north, they turned to the right and to the left and looked around on all sides. Having spent their whole life in the Department of Records, their efforts were all in vain.

"To my mind, Your Excellency, the best thing to do would be for you to go to the right and me to go to the left," said one Official, who had served not only in the Department of Records, but had also been teacher of handwriting in the School for Reserves, and so was a little bit cleverer.

So said, so done The one Official went to the right. He came upon trees bearing all sorts of fruits. Gladly would he have plucked an apple, but they all hung so high that he would have been obliged to climb up He tried to climb up in vain All he succeeded in doing was tearing his nightshirt Then he struck upon a brook. It was swarming with fish.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had all this fish in Podyacheskaya Street!" he thought, and his mouth watered. Then he entered woods and found partridges, grouse, and hares.

"Good Lord, what an abundance of food!" he cried. His hunger was going up tremendously

But he had to return to the appointed spot with empty hands. He found the other Official waiting for him.

"Well, Your Excellency, how went it? Did you find anything?"

"Nothing but an old number of the *Moscow Gazette,* not another thing."

The Officials lay down to sleep again, but their empty stomachs gave them no rest. They were partly robbed of their sleep by the thought of who was now enjoying their pension, and partly by the recollection of the fruit, fishes, partridges, grouse, and hares that they had seen during the day.

"The human pabulum in its original form flies, swims, and grows on trees. Who would have thought it, Your Excellency?" said the one Official

"To be sure," rejoined the other Official. "I, too, must admit that I had imagined that our breakfast rolls came into the world just as they appear on the table."

"From which it is to be deduced that if we want to eat a pheasant, we must catch it first, kill it, pull its feathers, and roast it. But how's that to be done?"

"Yes, how's that to be done?" repeated the other Official.

They turned silent and tried again to fall asleep, but their hunger scared sleep away. Before their eyes swarmed flocks of pheasants and

ducks, herds of porklings; and they were all so juicy, done so tenderly and garnished so deliciously with olives, capers, and pickles.

"I believe I could devour my own boots now," said the one Official.

"Gloves are not bad either, especially if they have been born quite mellow," said the other Official.

The two Officials stared at each other fixedly. In their glances gleamed an evil-boding fire, their teeth chattered, and a dull groaning issued from their breasts. Slowly they crept upon each other and suddenly they burst into a fearful frenzy. There was a yelling and groaning, the rags flew about, and the Official who had been teacher of handwriting bit off his colleague's order and swallowed it. However, the sight of blood brought them both back to their senses.

"God help us!" they cried at the same time. "We certainly don't mean to eat each other up. How could we have come to such a pass as this? What evil genius is making sport of us?"

"We must, by all means, entertain each other to pass the time away, otherwise there will be murder and death," said the one Official.

"You begin," said the other

"Can you explain why it is that the sun first rises and then sets? Why isn't it the reverse?"

"Aren't you a funny man, Your Excellency? You get up first, then you go to your office and work there, and at night you lie down to sleep"

"But why can't one assume the opposite, that is, that one goes to bed, sees all sorts of dream figures, and then gets up?"

"Well, yes, certainly. But when I was still an Official, I always thought this way: 'Now it is dawn, then it will be day, then will come supper, and finally will come the time to go to bed.'"

The word "supper" recalled that incident in the day's doings, and the thought of it made both Officials melancholy, so that the conversation came to a halt.

"A doctor once told me that human beings can sustain themselves for a long time on their own juices," the one Official began again.

"What does that mean?"

"It is quite simple You see, one's own juices generate other juices, and these in their turn still other juices, and so it goes on until finally all the juices are consumed."

"And then what happens?"

"Then food has to be taken into the system again."

"The devil!"

No matter what topic the Officials chose, the conversation invariably reverted to the subject of eating; which only increased their appetite more and more. So they decided to give up talking altogether, and, recollecting the *Moscow Gazette* that the one of them had found, they picked it up and began to read it eagerly.

Banquet Given by the Mayor

The table was set for one hundred persons. The magnificence of it exceeded all expectations. The remotest provinces were represented at this feast of the gods by the costliest gifts. The golden sturgeon from Sheksna and the silver pheasant from the Caucasian woods held a rendezvous with strawberries so seldom to be had in our latitude in winter. . . .

"The devil! For God's sake, stop reading, Your Excellency. Couldn't you find something else to read about?" cried the other Official in sheer desperation. He snatched the paper from his colleague's hands, and started to read something else.

Our correspondent in Tula informs us that yesterday a sturgeon was found in the Upa (an event which even the oldest inhabitants cannot recall, and all the more remarkable since they recognized the former police captain in this sturgeon). This was made the occasion for giving a banquet in the club The prime cause of the banquet was served in a large wooden platter garnished with vinegar pickles A bunch of parsley stuck out of its mouth. Doctor P——, who acted as toastmaster, saw to it that everybody present got a piece of the sturgeon The sauces to go with it were unusually varied and delicate—

"Permit me, Your Excellency, it seems to me you are not so careful either in the selection of reading matter," interrupted the first Official, who secured the *Gazette* again and started to read:

One of the oldest inhabitants of Viatka has discovered a new and highly original recipe for fish soup A live codfish (*lota vulgaris*) is taken and beaten with a rod until its liver swells up with anger . . .

The Officials' heads drooped. Whatever their eyes fell upon had something to do with eating. Even their own thoughts were fatal No matter how much they tried to keep their minds off beefsteak and the like, it was all in vain; their fancy returned invariably, with irresistible force, back to that for which they were so painfully yearning.

Suddenly an inspiration came to the Official who had once taught handwriting.

"I have it!" he cried delightedly. "What do you say to this, your Excellency? What do you say to our finding a muzhik?"

"A muzhik, Your Excellency? What sort of a muzhik?"

"Why a plain ordinary muzhik. A muzhik like all other muzhiks. He would get the breakfast rolls for us right away, and he could also catch partridges and fish for us."

"Hm, a muzhik. But where are we to fetch one from, if there is no muzhik here?"

"Why shouldn't there be a muzhik here? There are muzhiks every-

where. All one has to do is hunt for them. There certainly must be a muzhik hiding here somewhere so as to get out of working."

This thought so cheered the Officials that they instantly jumped up to go in search of a muzhik.

For a long while they wandered about on the island without the desired result, until finally a concentrated smell of black bread and old sheepskin assailed their nostrils and guided them in the right direction. There under a tree was a colossal muzhik lying fast asleep with his hands under his head. It was clear that to escape his duty to work he had impudently withdrawn to this island. The indignation of the Officials knew no bounds.

"What, lying asleep here, you lazy-bones you!" they raged at him. "It is nothing to you that there are two Officials here who are fairly perishing of hunger. Up, forward march, work."

The Muzhik rose and looked at the two severe gentlemen standing in front of him. His first thought was to make his escape, but the Officials held him fast.

He had to submit to his fate. He had to work.

First he climbed up on a tree and plucked several dozen of the finest apples for the Officials. He kept a rotten one for himself Then he turned up the earth and dug out some potatoes. Next he started a fire with two bits of wood that he rubbed against each other Out of his own hair he made a snare and caught partridges. Over the fire, by this time burning brightly, he cooked so many kinds of food that the question arose in the Officials' minds whether they shouldn't give some to this idler.

Beholding the efforts of the Muzhik, they rejoiced in their hearts. They had already forgotten how the day before they had nearly been perishing of hunger, and all they thought of now was. "What a good thing it is to be an Official. Nothing bad can ever happen to an Official."

"Are you satisfied, gentlemen?" the lazy Muzhik asked.

"Yes, we appreciate your industry," replied the Officials.

"Then you will permit me to rest a little?"

"Go take a little rest, but first make a good strong cord."

The Muzhik gathered wild hemp stalks, laid them in water, beat them and broke them, and toward evening a good stout cord was ready. The Officials took the cord and bound the Muzhik to a tree, so that he should not run away. Then they laid themselves to sleep.

Thus day after day passed, and the Muzhik became so skillful that he could actually cook soup for the Officials in his bare hands The Officials had become round and well-fed and happy. It rejoiced them that here they needn't spend any money and that in the meanwhile their pensions were accumulating in St. Petersburg.

"What is your opinion, Your Excellency," one said to the other after

breakfast one day, "is the story of the Tower of Babel true? Don't you think it is simply an allegory?"

"By no means, Your Excellency, I think it was something that really happened. What other explanation is there for the existence of so many different languages on earth?"

"Then the Flood must really have taken place, too?"

"Certainly, else how would you explain the existence of antediluvian animals? Besides, the *Moscow Gazette* says—"

They made search for the old number of the *Moscow Gazette,* seated themselves in the shade, and read the whole sheet from beginning to end They read of festivities in Moscow, Tula, Penza, and Riazan, and strangely enough felt no discomfort at the description of the delicacies served.

There is no saying how long this life might have lasted. Finally, however, it began to bore the Officials. They often thought of their cooks in St. Petersburg, and even shed a few tears in secret.

"I wonder how it looks in Podyacheskaya Street now, Your Excellency," one of them said to the other.

"Oh, don't remind me of it, Your Excellency. I am pining away with homesickness."

"It is very nice here. There is really no fault to be found with this place, but the lamb longs for its mother sheep. And it is a pity, too, for the beautiful uniforms."

"Yes, indeed, a uniform of the fourth class is no joke. The gold embroidery alone is enough to make one dizzy."

Now they began to importune the Muzhik to find some way of getting them back to Podyacheskaya Street, and strange to say, the Muzhik even knew where Podyacheskaya Street was. He had once drunk beer and mead there, and as the saying goes, everything had run down his beard, alas, but nothing into his mouth. The Officials rejoiced and said. "We are Officials from Podyacheskaya Street."

"And I am one of those men—do you remember—who sit on a scaffolding hung by ropes from the roofs and paint the outside walls. I am one of those who crawl about on the roofs like flies. That is what I am," replied the Muzhik.

The Muzhik now pondered long and heavily on how to give great pleasure to his Officials, who had been so gracious to him, the lazybones, and had not scorned his work. And he actually succeeded in constructing a ship. It was not really a ship, but still it was a vessel that would carry them across the ocean close to Podyacheskaya Street.

"Now, take care, you dog, that you don't drown us," said the Officials, when they saw the raft rising and falling on the waves.

"Don't be afraid. We muzhiks are used to this," said the Muzhik, making all the preparations for the journey. He gathered swan's-down

and made a couch for his two Officials, then he crossed himself and rowed off from shore.

How frightened the Officials were on the way, how seasick they were during the storms, how they scolded the coarse Muzhik for his idleness, can neither be told nor described. The Muzhik, however, just kept rowing on and fed his Officials on herring. At last, they caught sight of dear old Mother Neva. Soon they were in the glorious Catherine Canal, and then, oh joy! they struck the grand Podyacheskaya Street. When the cooks saw their Officials so well-fed, round, and so happy, they rejoiced immensely. The Officials drank coffee and rolls, then put on their uniforms and drove to the Pension Bureau. How much money they collected there is another thing that can neither be told nor described Nor was the Muzhik forgotten. The Officials sent a glass of whisky out to him and five kopeks.

Now, Muzhik, rejoice.

Count Leo Tolstoy

THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN

TAXES

ELDER
GRUSHKA, a girl of 7 years

(ELDER *enters a poor hut. No one is there except seven-year-old* GRUSHKA. *The* ELDER *looks around*)

ELDER: Is no one in?

GRUSHKA. Mamka has gone for the cow, and Fedka is in the master's yard.

ELDER. Well, tell your mother that the Elder has been. Say that this is the third time, and that if she doesn't bring the tax money without fail by Sunday I shall take the cow.

GRUSHKA: You'll take our cow? Are you a thief? We won't let you have it!

ELDER (*smiling*): What a clever little girl you are! What's your name?

GRUSHKA: Grushka.

ELDER. Well, Grushka, you're a bright little girl. But listen! Tell your mother that I'll take the cow—although I'm not a thief.

GRUSHKA. But why will you take the cow if you're not a thief?

ELDER: Because what the law requires must be paid. I shall take the cow for taxes.

GRUSHKA: What do you mean by taxes?

ELDER There's a clever little girl for you! What are taxes? Why, taxes are what the Czar orders people to pay.

GRUSHKA Who to?

ELDER: Why, to the Czar, of course! And then they'll decide where the money shall go

GRUSHKA· But is the Czar poor? We are poor and he is rich Why does he take taxes from us?

ELDER He doesn't take the money for himself, you little silly. He needs it for us, for our needs: for the officials, for the army, for education—for our own good.

GRUSHKA· What good does it do us if you take our cow? That doesn't do us any good.

ELDER· You'll understand when you grow up. Mind you tell your mother what I've said

GRUSHKA. I'm not going to tell her such rubbish. If you and the Czar need anything, do it for yourselves, and we'll do what we need for ourselves.

ELDER Ah, when she grows up this girl will be rank poison!

CONDEMNATION

MITYA, 10 years old
ILYUSHA, 9 years old
SONYA, 6 years old.

MITYA: I told Peter Semenovich that we could get used to going without clothes. He said we couldn't Then I told him that Mikhail Ivanovich says we've accustomed our faces to bearing the cold and could accustom our whole bodies to bearing it in the same way. "Your Mikhail Ivanovich is a fool!" says Peter (*Laughs*) And only yesterday Mikhail Ivanovich said to me: "Peter Semenovich tells a lot of lies, but what else can one expect from a fool?" (*Laughs*).

ILYUSHA: I should have said: "You speak badly of him and he speaks badly of you."

MITYA: But seriously, I don't know which of them is the fool.

SONYA: They're both fools. A man who says it of another, is a fool himself.

ILYUSHA: Well, you have just called them both fools, so you must be one yourself!

MITYA: I don't like their calling one another "fool" behind one another's backs When I grow up, I shan't do that, I shall just say what I think to people's faces.

ILYUSHA: I shall too!

SONYA And I shall be myself.

MITYA: What do you mean—"be myself"?

SONYA: I mean that I shall say what I think when I wish to, and if I don't wish to I shan't

ILYUSHA: Which just shows that you're a fool.

SONYA: You said just now that you weren't going to say nasty things about people.

ILYUSHA: Ah, but I didn't say it behind your back!

[Translation by Louise and Aylmer Maude]

Nikolay Lyeskov

An English critic has erroneously called Lyeskov "the Russian Trollope." It is true that he deals with Russian cathedral towns and cathedral folk and all that, and that he deals with them with exquisite humor; yet the scenes and the people are so essentially different that there is no opportunity for comparison But quiet humor, whether Trollope's or Lyeskov's, deals with intangibles. Anyhow, it's impossible to analyze humor, the ever-present danger is that a jest analyzed can easily cease to be a jest The two tales which follow come from successive chapters from the volume called Cathedral Folk.

THE DWARF, EX-SERF, TELLS TWO STORIES

I

Several days passed: Tuberozov became convinced that his fears that the ungovernable deeds of Deacon Akhilla would entail serious complications in the courts, were unfounded; everything was going on joyfully in the old way; people were diversifying the monotony of provincial life by quarreling in order to become reconciled, and becoming

reconciled in order to quarrel again. Nothing menaced the peace; on the contrary, even to Tuberozov there was sent down from above a very fine day, which he spent in the purest ecstasy. It was the name-day of the Police Commissioner's wife, which fell soon after the day on which Akhilla, in his zeal for the faith, had created a public scandal with Commissioner Danilka. When all the guests who were assembled to eat the Commissioner's wife's meat pie were busy satisfying their appetite, the host—happening to approach the window—suddenly shouted loudly to his wife· "My heavens! Just look here, wife, what guests are coming to you!"

"Who are they—who?" replied his wife.

"Just look for yourself."

The heroine of the feast, accompanied by everyone in the room rushed to the windows from which was visible a huge troika of big bay horses, cautiously descending the hill, like a three-headed serpent crawling on its belly. The shaft horse was holding back and planting his feet securely, like an old general on his way to give someone a blowing-up: first he would bite his lip on the right side, then on the left side, then shake his head, and again paw and paw with his hoofs; the side horses were now winding in and out, like cornets of Uhlans in search of their *vis-à-vis,* then again, drawing themselves up into balls, like entangled sheep: the little bell decorated in raspberry-crimson at the peak of the shaft arch would bang about noisily, like a small ring, along its edge, and again get caught fast and fall silent; only the sleigh bells on the harness tinkled dully, and without any jingle. But now the triole-headed serpent crawled down and spread itself out; the backs of the horses became visible, a side horse flourished his tail in the air; his mane floated in the breeze; the troika reached the level ground, and drove upon the bridge The gilded shaft arch, with its etched pattern, and a huge, antique troika-carriage of the guitar pattern, with bronze mountings, became visible In the carriage, side by side, as people sit in *tête-á-tête* chairs, sat two tiny persons· one a man, the other a woman; the man was dressed in a dark-green camelot cloak, and a large cap of long-napped beaver such as is used for hats, while the woman wore a dark, purplish-raspberry-hued coat with sleeves, of *gros de Naples,* with a lilac velvet collar, and a cap with cinnamon-brown ribbons.

"Heavens! 'tis the Plodomasovs' dwarfs!— It cannot be!— Look for yourself!— It is, it really is!— Certainly it is; there now, Nikolay Afanasitch has caught sight of us, you see, and is bowing; and there's Marya Afanasievna nodding also."

Such were the exclamations which rang out on all sides, at the sight of the dwarfs, and everyone was delighted, without appearing to know why: the host and hostess busied themselves with having fresh luncheon prepared for the new arrivals, and the guests already present gazed

attentively toward the door through which the little people must enter, and, at last, they made their appearance.

In front came the little old man, not much larger than a boy eight years of age; the little old woman, who was slightly larger, followed.

The old man was the personification of neatness and good sense: his countenance showed not the slightest trace of the yellow spots and wrinkles which usually disfigure the faces of dwarfs· his figure was very well proportioned, his little head was as round as a ball and covered with perfectly white, closely clipped hair, and his eyes were small, light-brown, and resembled those of a bear The woman dwarf had none of her brother's attractiveness· she was rather bloated, and had a stupid, sensual mouth and dull eyes.

In spite of the fact that it was the hot season of the year, the dwarf Nikolay Afanasievitch wore warm plush shoes, black trousers of shaggy frieze, a yellow flannel waistcoat, and a light-brown swallow-tailed coat with metal buttons. His linen was immaculately clean, and his little cheeks were firmly supported by a tall satin stock The woman was dressed in a green silk loose gown with a large lace cape. As Nikolay Afanasievitch entered the room, he placed his tiny hands on the seams of his trousers, then raised his right hand, which held his cap, to his heart, scraped one tiny foot against the other tiny foot and, wending his way, swaying as he walked, straight to the hostess, he said in a gentle and even, elderly voice:

"Our master, Nikita Alexyevitch Plodomasov and Mr. Parmen Semyonovitch Tuganov have deigned to command us, their servants, on their own behalf, and on that of their wives, to bring to you, madame, Olga Arsentievna, their congratulations Sister, repeat," he said, addressing his sister, who stood beside him, and when she had finished her congratulations, Nikolay Afanasievitch made a bow and a scrape to the Commissioner of Police and continued:

"And to you, sir, Voin Vasilievitch, and all the honorable company, along with the hostess. And next, sir, I have the honor to announce that, in sending my sister and myself to bring you their congratulations, my master and Parmen Semyonovitch beg to be excused for our serf-embassy; but they, themselves, are not free at this moment, and will present their excuses to you this evening."

"Parmen Semyonovitch is coming here?" exclaimed the Commissioner of Police.

"Yes, together with my master, Nikita Alexyevitch Plodomasov, on their way to St. Petersburg, and they beg that you will pardon them for calling in their traveling garb."

A little bustle arose among the company at this bit of news, and the dwarf, taking advantage of it, went to ask Tuberozov's blessing, and said softly:

"Parmen Semyonovitch requests that you will be here this evening."

"Tell him I will, my dear fellow," replied Tuberozov.

The dwarf also accepted Zakhariya's blessing. Deacon Akhilla took the hand of the little man, who made him a respectful reverence, saying, with a smile, as he did so:

"Only, please do me the favor, sir, not to test your epic-hero strength on me!"

"Why, Nikolay Afanasievitch, do you mean to say that he is pretty robust?" jested the host.

"He's very fond of exercising his strength, sir," replied the little old man. "And on whom will it be now? On a cripple."

"And how is your health, Nikolay Afanasievitch?" the ladies asked the dwarf, as they thronged around him and shook his tiny hands.

"My health, indeed, ladies! It is absurd to answer: I have become just like a little sucking pig. Here it is, almost St. Peter and St. Paul's Day and I am still fairly frozen."

"You are frozen?"

"Certainly, madame· here you can judge, for I'm all sewed up in a hareskin bag. And what is there to be surprised at, gentlemen? This useless man has already completed his eightieth year."

They vied with one another in showering Nikolay Afanasievitch with questions on various subjects, they made him sit down, and they offered him everything: he replied to all the questions cleverly and with ready wit, but refused all refreshments, saying that, for a long time past, he had been accustomed to eat very little, and then only some light vegetable.

"But my sister eats things," he said, turning toward her. "Sit down, sister, eat, eat! Why do you stand on ceremony? And if you will not eat without me, then permit me, madame, Olga Arsentievna, to have some of the chopped carrot from your meat-pasty, on a plate.... That's it, enough, madame, that is plenty!... Now, dear sister, eat, but I have had enough. It is not worth while to feed me any longer; I used to be able to knit thread stockings, but I can no longer do even that properly. I used to knit much better than my sister, and I even did English embroidery, but now, whenever I try to knit, I am continually dropping stitches."

"Yes, you did use to knit splendidly," replied Tuberozov, who had grown very animated and cheerful with the arrival of the dwarf.

"Ah, Father Savely! Time, sir, time!" the dwarf smiled, and added jestingly: "And, moreover, there's no one to be strict with me nowadays; I have grown spoiled since the death of my benefactress. What? Hospitality always ready, blood warm, and I always get lazy."

The archpriest gazed, with a happy smile, into the dwarf's eyes, and said:

"I see you, Nikolay, I see you before me like a sweet old fairytale, with which I should like to die."

"But, Father, the fairytale has died before us."

"But are you forgetting your mistress, Nikolasha? Do you forget your Boyarin Marfa Andreevna?" asked Deacon Akhilla, fidgeting about the dwarf, while Nikolay Afanasievitch seemed to be incessantly afraid of him, and ever on his guard against him.

"I'm too old to forget, sir, Father Deacon; I have long been making ready to go to her, my comforter, and serve her again in the next world," replied the dwarf very softly, and only turning very slightly in the direction of Akhilla.

"She was very comforting, was that old lady, they say," remarked the deacon, addressing himself impartially to the whole assembly.

"In what sense do you mean that?" inquired Tuberozov.

"She was amusing."

The archpriest smiled and waved his hand, but Nikolay Afanasievitch corrected Akhilla, saying firmly to him:

"She was comforting, sir, *comforting*, not amusing."

"Why do you attempt to instruct him, Nikolay? You'd much better tell us how she embittered you. How she made that document, that purchase," counseled the archpriest.

"Why, Father Archpriest, that's an old story, sir."

"It is very affecting when he narrates how obdurate he was," said Tuberozov to those present.

"And, Father, how well she, my mistress, knew how to embitter a man, and how to comfort him, and she embittered and comforted as only one of the angels of the Lord can comfort," replied the dwarf instantly. "She would penetrate into the very most secret place of a man's soul, and comfort him, and achieve the greatest bliss on earth with the beck of her hand."

"Now, really, you must tell us!"

"Very well, my dear sirs, whether you are laughing or not, or are really interested to hear about this, still, if all the company wishes to hear it, I dare not disobey, and I will tell you."

"Please do, Nikolay Afanasievitch!"

"I will," replied the dwarf, smiling, "I will, because this tale is even agreeable." And with these words the dwarf began:

2

"It was not more than a year after she bought me from my former masters I had passed that year in terrible sadness, because I had been torn away, you know, from my blood relatives, and from my family. Of course, I never let anyone see that I was sad, lest they should report it to the lady, or lest she should notice it herself; but all this precaution

was vain, for my late mistress divined it all. My name-day was approaching, and she deigned to say:

"'What gift shall I make you, Nikolay?'

"'Matushka,' said I, 'why should you make me any more gifts? As it is, I am content with everything, beyond measure content.'

"'No,' she replied, 'I am thinking of giving you at least a rouble.'

"Well, I did not dare refuse, and so I kissed her hand and said:

"'I am loaded down with your many beneficences,' said I, and I sat down again to knit stockings. I had good eyes in those days, and even knit stockings for my master Alexyei Nikititch, who served in the Guards. And as I knit away at my stockings, sir, I began to weep. God knows why I wept—it was just because I remembered something about my relatives, you know, in connection with the approaching day of my Angel, and so I fell to weeping. But Marfa Andreevna saw it, because I always sat on a foot-bench opposite her arm chair, to knit, and she asked:

"'Why are you weeping, Nikolay?' she condescended to say.

"'Because I can't help it, matushka,' I answered, 'the tears just came of themselves....' And I didn't know what to say to her about my crying. I rose, kissed her hand, and sat down again on my bench.

"'Please do not direct your glances at this weakness, madame,' I said. 'I just shed these tears because I am foolish'

"And again we sat and worked; I was knitting a stocking, and she deigned to knit a stocking also. But, all of a sudden, she knit off... and then she asked:

"'And what will you do, Nikolay, with the rouble I mean to give you tomorrow?'

"'I shall send it to my daddy when I have a safe opportunity, madame,' said I.

"'And what if I give you two roubles?' said she.

"'I shall send the other to my mammy,' I announced.

"'And if I give you three?'

"'I'll send the third to my brother, Ivan Afanasievitch,' said I.

"She shook her head and said:

"'You will need a great deal of money, my dear fellow, to give them all a share! You are such a little creature, that you will never earn it.'

"'It has pleased the Lord to make me so,' I said, and with these words I fell a-weeping once more; my heart contracted again, you know: and I was angry at my tears, but I went on weeping. And she, my late mistress, gazed at me, and silently beckoned me to her with one finger: I fell at her feet, and she laid my head on her knees, and I went on weeping, and she deigned to weep also. Then she rose, and said:

"'Do you never murmur against God, Nikolasha?'

"'How can one murmur against God, matushka,' said I. 'I never murmur.'

"'Well, and He will comfort you for that,' she said. And as she said that, she rose, bade me order them to send the estate-bailiff Dementiy to her in her lower dressing room, and went thither herself.

"'Don't cry, Nikolasha,' she said. 'The Lord will comfort you.'

"And, of a truth, He did comfort me."

Here Nikolay Afanasievitch blinked suddenly with his thin eyelids, and, springing quickly from his chair, he ran into a corner, where he wiped his eyes with a white handkerchief, after which, with a shamefaced smile, he returned to his place After he resumed his seat, he began again, in an entirely different, solemn voice, which had very little in common with his former tone:

"I rose early, gentlemen. I slipped out softly (for I slept on a rug, behind a screen, at Marfa Andreevna's feet), and went to the church to get Father Alexyei to celebrate a prayer service after Matins. I entered the church, sir, and went straight to the sanctuary, in order to receive Father Alexyei's blessing, and I saw that the expression on the late Father Alexyei's face was unusually joyful, for some reason, and he congratulated me, in a whisper, on my joy Of course, I interpreted this as applying to my name-day. But what followed, my dear sir! I went out with an altar bread on the left side of the chancel platform, because I was in the habit of singing along with chanter Evfimitch, in the left choir, with my thin little voice. Suddenly I espied my mammy in the congregation, and my daddy, and my big brother Ivan Afanasievitch. I could not see my father and mother very well among the people, but my big brother Ivan Afanasievitch was the sort of person who is a regular huge guardsman of a fellow, so that I saw him at once I thought it was a vision! For I had wanted very much to see them on that day. No, it was not a vision! I saw my mammy—she was a peasant—and she was overcome, and was crying. Surely, I thought, they must have got permission of their masters, and come this long distance to see their child. Of course, I did not disturb the decorum of church, I merely went to my relatives, and made them reverences to the girdle, and then went away again very quickly,* into the sanctuary, and I no longer sang.. .For I must say, positively—that I could not, sir!— Well, sir, and so Matins and the Mass ended, according to the rite, as was fitting, and then...I'm only afraid that these foolish tears will interfere again with my story," said Nikolay Afanasievitch, as he hastily mopped his eyes with his handkerchief. "I went out of the sanctuary after the Mass was over, sir, to have the priest celebrate the prayer service to my order, and there, I beheld Marfa Andreevna herself standing in front of the folding desk with the holy picture, for she

* It is not improper to move about, quietly, in Russian churches, if the congregation is not too densely packed to permit it All stand, and those who wish to place candles before any of the holy pictures (*ikoni*), walk forward and do so. Quiet greetings, bows, and handshakes are perfectly proper—Tr.

had come to the Mass; and directly behind her stood my sister, Marya Afanasievna, whom you see before you, and my parents, and my big brother. They began to sing, 'O holy Father Nikolay,' when suddenly Father Alexyei mentioned all my family in prayer. I was greatly touched by this, gentlemen; I had paid Father Alexyei what I could, according to my means, although he had not wished to take anything, but one cannot pray for nothing, and I went up to Marfa Andreevna, to congratulate her. But she pushed me away from her gently with her hand and said:

"'Go first and make your reverence to your parents!'

"I saluted my father and my mother, and my big brother, weeping all the while. My sister, Marya Afanasievna here" (Nikolay Afanasievitch pointed to his sister with an affectionate smile), "did not cry at all, because she has a better disposition, but I am weak, and I weep. Then, dear Father Priest, we went out on the steps, and my mistress, Marfa Andreevna, takes from her reticule a little jug-shaped purse, and I had even seen her knitting it, though I did not know, of course, for whom she intended it.

"'Make your gifts to your family, Nikolasha,' she said to me. I began to make my gifts. A silver rouble to my daddy, a rouble to my mammy, a rouble to my big brother Ivan Afanasievitch—and they were all new roubles; and still there remained four roubles in the purse.

"'And how do you command me to use these, matushka?' And behold, Dementiy the bailiff, leads up to me my sister-in-law with her three small children, all in half-fitting short overcoats I gave them all gifts, through her great kindness, and we all walked home from church together· my late mistress, and Father Alexyei, and I, and sister Marya Afanasievna, and my parents, and all my brother's children. Again sister Marya Afanasievna went along sensibly, not affected, but I, stupid creature, wept like a river, without myself being able to say why Nevertheless, my dear sir, although I continued to weep, I walked on but then, my dear sir, at the porch of the manor house, I suddenly looked, and behold—there stood three carts harnessed to Marfa Andreevna's own post horses, and with my brother's two horses hitched on behind, and in the carts I saw all the baggage of my parents and my brother. I was disconcerted at this, and knew not what to think. Marfa Andreevna, who had been walking with Father Alexyei up to that moment, had been discussing the mowing, and had appeared to be paying no attention to me, but then, of a sudden, as she felt her feet on the porch, she turned to me, and deigned to utter these words· 'Here, my servant, is a certificate of freedom for you; set your old folks, and your brother, and his children at liberty!' and she thrust the certificate of freedom into my waistcoat. Well, this was more than I could bear ..."

Nikolay Afanasievitch raised his hands on a level with his face, and went on: "'Tis thou,' I cried wildly...'so it is still thy doing, thou harsh one, who, apparently, wishest to crush me with thy goodness! And then my breast collapsed, my temples began to throb, and little shrine lamps seemed to be flitting all over the world, before my eyes, and I fell senseless beside my father's carts with the certificate of freedom."

"Akh, old man, you've very sensitive, aren't you?" exclaimed the deeply moved Akhilla, slapping Nikolay Afanasievitch on the shoulder.

"Yes, sir," pursued the dwarf, wiping his little mouth; "and I did not come to myself until nine days later, because a fever had seized hold on me: and when I looked about me, I saw my mistress sitting by my bedside, and she said· 'Okh, forgive me, Nikolasha, for Christ's sake I came near driving you mad!' And that's the sort of giantess Madame Plodomasov was!"

"Akh, what a dear of an old man you are!" exclaimed Deacon Akhilla again, seizing Nikolay Afanasievitch jestingly by a button of his coat, and seeming to be about to wrench it off.

The dwarf silently tested the button, and, having satisfied himself that it was intact and in its place, he said:

"Yes, sir, yes, I am an insignificant man, but she took thought for me, she trusted me; sometimes, even, she confided her troubles to me, especially when she was separated from Alexyei Nikititch, and was grieving. She would receive a letter, and would begin at once to run it through very fast to herself, and then she would read it all aloud. She would sit and read, and I would stand in front of her knitting a stocking and listening We would read it, and immediately enter into conversation 'He ought to be promoted to the grade of officer soon, now,' she would say And I would say: 'They certainly will promote him according to his ranking, matushka' Then she would deliberate, 'What think you, Nikolasha—I believe I ought to send him some more money.' 'Certainly, matushka,' I answer, 'you ought without fail to send him some more.' 'Exactly,' she said, 'you know money is next to useless to us here.' 'And what should we need it for, matushka?' said I But sister Marya Afanasievna, at that moment, suddenly got displeased, and said nothing, and immediately my late mistress got angry with her for that 'You're a blockhead! Not without cause did they throw you in gratis when I bought your brother.'"

Suddenly Nikolay Afanasievitch stopped short, flushed violently red, and, turning to his dull-witted sister, he said·

"Will you forgive me, dear sister, for telling that?"

"Talk away, it's all right, talk away," replied Marya Afanasievna, rolling her tongue round in her cheek.

"My sister used to begin to cry," went on Nikolay Afanasievitch,

restored to composure, "and I would quietly lure her out of Marfa Andreevna's sight into a corner, or onto the stairs, and exhort her: 'Calm yourself, sister. This is repaying kindness with unkindness.' And, in fact, my mistress's hot but overflowing heart would quickly quiet down. 'Marya!' she would call, a moment later. 'You've sulked long enough, my good woman. What makes you bristle your back up like a cat? Come, sit down here and work' Are you sure you are not angry, sister?"

"Go on with your story, what does it matter to me? Go on,' replied Marya Afanasievna.

"Yes, sir; and so that would be the end of the matter. My sister would take her stool, place it at our mistress's feet, and again begin to knit. Well, and as soon as tranquillity was restored I would approach Marfa Andreevna, and ask for her hand to kiss, and say, 'We thank you humbly, matushka!' And immediately she would be moved to tears. 'You are my tenderhearted Nikola,' she would say. 'Only, I cannot understand why we have such a wooden creature in her,' she would begin again, about my sister. And I," pursued Nikolay Afanasievitch, smiling, "would immediately lay this speech on the table—on the table, in secretary style. 'Sister,' I would whisper, 'dear sister, ask for her hand to kiss!' Marfa Andreevna would hear me, and immediately the affair was at an end. 'Sit still, my mother,' she would say to my sister, 'I don't want any of your kisses.' And we would make our knitting needles fly furiously, all three of us. And all that could be heard was the *tri-ti-ti-ti, tri-ti-ti* of the needles, and the *sh-shee, sh-shee* of a fly flitting past. And in this sort of stillness we lived our whole life."

"Well, but didn't she set you and your sister at liberty?" asked someone, as the dwarf was about to rise, having finished his tale.

"At liberty? No, sir, she did not. My sister, Marya Afanasievna, was included in my parents' certificate of freedom, but she did not set me free. She used to say: 'After my death, live where you like' (because she had provided me with a capital for a pension), 'but so long as I live, I will never give you your liberty' 'And there is no need for it,' I said, 'what is freedom to me, matushka? If I were free, the sparrows would peck me to death.'"

"Oh, what a little dear you are!" cried Akhilla, deeply touched.

"Why, what are you thinking of? Of course they would peck me to death, sir," affirmed Nikolay Afanasievitch "There's our butler, Glyeb Stepanovitch—what a man he was! simply a beauty—and she set him at liberty, and he opened a hotel, and occupied himself with liquor, and now he wanders about the hotel yard, and for two kopeks he exhibits himself to the merchants as 'the miserly knight.' That is not nice, is it?"

"He was her right-hand man in everything, was this Nikolay

Afanasievitch," remarked Tuberozov, who wished to exalt, by this praise, the services of the dwarf, and turn the conversation again to the desired topic.

"I served her, Father Archpriest, I served her to the best of my understanding. When the late lamented journeyed to Moscow or Petersburg, she never took her maids with her. She could not endure female servants on the road. She was wont to say, 'All those Militrisa Kirbantievnas cackle and roam about the corridors in the hotels, and pick up acquaintances, but Nikolasha,' she said, 'sits as quietly as a hare in the corner of my room.' You see, she never regarded me as a man at all, but always as a hare."

Nikolay Afanasievitch laughed, and added:

"Yes, and really, what sort of a man am I when, if you will excuse me, it is impossible to buy either boots, or any man's clothing ready made, because nothing fits me. So her words were really just—that I am a hare."

"Coward! coward! coward!" said Akhilla, laughing and stroking the dwarf's shoulders.

"But she didn't regard you as a hare when she wanted to marry you off?" remarked Police Commissioner Porokhontzev

"That happened, batiushka, Voin Vasilievitch. It happened, sir," he added, lowering his voice—"it really did"

"It didn't, not really, Nikolay Afanasievitch?" cried several voices at once.

"It is a sin to lie—it did."

Everyone present at once besought the dwarf "Dear little Nikolay Afanasievitch, do tell us about it!"

"Akh, gentlemen, what can I tell you about that!" evaded Nikolay Afanasievitch, laughing, reddening, and warding off all questions with his hands.

They insisted importunately; the ladies grasped his hands and kissed him on the brow: he caught the ladies' hands on the fly, as they touched him, and kissed them, but still refused the tale, for he considered it long and uninteresting. But suddenly something crashed down on the floor, and the hostess, who was standing, at the moment, in front of the dwarf's arm chair, stepped aside in alarm, and revealed to the eyes of Nikolay Afanasievitch Deacon Akhilla, on his knees, with hands uplifted.

"Dearest!" rattled off Akhilla, very fast, as he rolled his head about, "Do tell us how they tried to marry you!"

"I'll tell you, I'll tell you everything, only get up, Father Deacon."

Akhilla rose, and, brushing the dust from his cassock, proclaimed in a self-satisfied tone:

"Aha! Well, now, sir? He said he would not tell! Why wouldn't he tell? I said to myself, 'I'll beg him until he does—and I've done it!

Now, gentlemen, to your seats again, and see that you keep quiet; and do you, hostess, order a glass of water with red wine, such as is served in mansions, for Nikolasha, for what he is going to tell us."

All seated themselves. A glass of water was brought, for Nikolay Afanasievitch, who himself poured in a few drops of wine, and began a new tale about himself.

3

"It happened, gentlemen, soon after the French peace, when I conversed with the late Emperor, now asleep in the Lord"

"You conversed with the Emperor?" several voices instantly interrupted the narrator.

"What are you thinking?" replied the dwarf, with a quiet smile. "Yes, sir, I spoke with the Emperor Alexander Pavlovitch, and had sense enough to answer him"

"Ha, ha, ha! May God strike me dead if we haven't a regular rogue in this little Nikolavra!" suddenly roared Deacon Akhilla with delight, and slapping his hands on his hips, he added "Look at him!—he's little, but nevertheless he, that little flea of a man, has talked with the Czar!"

"Sit down, deacon, be quiet, deacon," ejaculated Tuberozov calmly and impressively Akhilla indicated with a gesture of his hands that he would say no more, and sat down.

The narrative began again.

"It seemed even to take its beginning in that conversation of mine with the Emperor," began Nikolay Afanasievitch quietly "My mistress, Marfa Andreevna, had a desire to be in Moscow when the Emperor was expected there, after his all-glorious victory over Napoleon Bonaparte. Of course I was with her during that journey, by her will. My late mistress was then very aged, and because of her ill-health had become irascible and quick to take offense. The young master found our house tiresome on that account, and my late mistress saw this, and was greatly vexed over it, but was most angry of all with Alexyei Nikititch because he considered that the proper order of things was not established in her house, so that everyone might be merry, and so, because of that, everyone forgot us. So Alexyei Nikititch got his mamma an invitation to the ball at which the Emperor was expected. Marfa Andreevna did not conceal from me that this afforded her great pleasure. She prepared a very costly toilet for the ball, and for me she ordered from a French tailor a blue coat of English cloth, with gold buttons, trousers—pardon me, ladies—a waistcoat, a cravat—all white· there were ruffles on my cuffs, and buckles on my shoes, for which she paid forty-two roubles. Alexyei Nikititch had asked permission for his mother to take me there, to give his mamma pleasure. The major-domo was ordered to conduct me to the conservatory at-

tached to the house, and place me among the flowers in some corner opposite the ballroom which the Emperor would enter. And thus, my dear sirs, all was done—but not quite. The major-domo placed me, you know, in a corner beside a large tree—a Chinese palm, they called it—and said that I was to stay there and look at what I could see thence But what could I see from there? Nothing. So, you know, like Zaccheus the Pharisee, I seized hold and climbed up the little artificial cliff and crawled along and stood under the palm. In the ballroom there was noise, glitter, and music; but although I stood on the cliff under the palm tree, still I could see nothing, except the crowns of the people's heads and their toupees. But suddenly, all those heads began to stir about wildly, moved aside, and the Emperor, with Prince Golitzyn, walked straight out of the heat into the conservatory. And, what is more, just fancy, he not only came into the conservatory, but even to that cool, distant corner where they had hidden me. I was fairly rooted to the spot, ladies. I was rooted to the cliff, and did not climb down."

"Were you frightened?" inquired Tuberozov.

"What shall I say? I was not exactly frightened, but I was disconcerted."

"But I would have run away," said the deacon, unable to contain himself.

"Why should I run away, sir? I can't say that I was not a drop frightened, but I did not run. And, meanwhile, His Majesty kept coming nearer, and nearer. I could hear his boots go, *squee, squee, squee;* and I could already see his face—such a tranquil, gracious face —and I was already thinking, you know, in my despair, yet I couldn't think why I should reveal myself to him, where he should see me. Only, all of a sudden, the Emperor turned his head, and I saw that he deigned to cast his eyes upon me, and fix them on me."

"Well!" exclaimed the deacon, turning pale.

"I took, and made him a bow."

The deacon sighed, and, pressing the dwarf's hand, he whispered: "Please tell us; be quick, don't stop!"

"He looked at me, and said to Prince Golitzyn in French· 'Aha, what a miniature copy! Whose is it?' I saw that Prince Golitzyn was in difficulty what answer to make: so, as I can understand the French tongue. I replied myself, 'Madame Plodomasov's, your Imperial Majesty!'—The Emperor turned to me and deigned to inquire:

"'Of what nation are you?'—'The subject of your Imperial Majesty.' —'A native of Russia?' he asked, and again I replied: 'A peasant, your Imperial Majesty's subject.'

"The Emperor burst out laughing. 'Bravo!' he was pleased to jest, 'bravo, *mon petit sujet fidèle,*' and he pressed my head against him with his hand."

Nikolay Afanasievitch dropped his voice and added in a whisper, athwart a quiet smile, as though it were a very grave political secret:

"And, you know, he took me, and embraced me with his arm, and he crushed my nose very painfully with a button on his cuff, which he did not notice."

"And you didn't—cry out?" asked the deacon.

"No, sir, what are you thinking of, batiushka? What are you thinking of? How could I cry out at the petting of the Emperor?—I kissed his hand, as soon as he released me," concluded Nikolay Afanasievitch, "because I was happy, and had been accorded the honor, and all that conversation with His Majesty. And afterwards, of course, when they took me down from under the palm tree, and carried me home in the carriage, I cried all the while."

"Why did you cry afterwards?' asked Akhilla.

"Why do you ask? Wasn't that enough to make me, sir? One weeps when one's feelings are touched."

"He's little, but how deep his feelings are!" exclaimed Akhilla in rapture.

"Well, permit me!" began the narrator again—"Now, just as soon as the accidental favor of the Emperor was reported about Moscow in several houses, the late Marfa Andreevna began to take me about and exhibit me; and I, to tell you the truth, for I do not like to lie, was then the smallest dwarf in all Moscow. But that did not last long—only one winter."

But at this point, the deacon, without the slightest cause, suddenly snorted, and, hanging his head over the back of his chair, half rose and said:

"No, never mind me! Please go on with your story, Nikclavra. I'm laughing at my own affairs.—About the way Count Klenykhin spoke to me, one day."

"No, sir: you'd better speak out, sir, or you'll be interrupting again," replied the dwarf.

"Why, it's nothing, nothing; it was the simplest sort of thing," returned Akhilla. "Count Klenykhim was inspecting our Seminary buildings. I made him a bow, and he said, 'Go away, you fool!' That was our entire conversation, and I was laughing at it."

"And it really was amusing," said Nikolay Afanasievitch, and then smilingly continued:

"The following winter, the wife of General Vikhiorov brought from Petersburg a little Finnish woman, Metta, a dwarf smaller by a finger than myself. The late Marfa Andreevna could not bear to hear of that. At first she said that the woman was not a natural dwarf but had been made to drink lead; but when she came and saw Metta Ivanovna, she got angry, because the woman was so white and perfect. She began to dream, whenever she was asleep, how we might buy

Metta Ivanovna for ourselves. But Madame Vikhiorov would not hear of selling her. Then Marfa Andreevna explained, 'My Nikolay,' said she, 'is clever, and knew how to answer the Emperor, but your girl,' says she, 'is only good to look at.' And so the two ladies wrangled over us Marfa Andreevna said to the other that she would not sell, and the other said that she must sell me Suddenly, Marfa Andreevna flared up, 'I'm not bargaining with you to get her from you for a plaything, you know,' says she 'I'm buying her for exportation as a bride, in order to marry Nikolay to her.'—Madame Vikhiorov says: 'Well, I'll marry him at my house,'—Marfa Andreevna says: 'I'll give you the children, if there should be any,' and the other also said that she would make a present of the children if there should be children. Marfa Andreevna waxed angry, and ordered me to say good-by to Metta Ivanovna. And then, since Marfa Andreevna could not restrain herself, we went there again, and as soon as the other entered she announced: 'Come, listen to me, Matushka Generaless, I'll give you a thousand roubles for your monster' And the other, just out of spite, did not put me to shame, but offered two thousand for me. Both went on raising, and raising, and raising their bids, and Marfa Andreevna, getting angry again, exclaimed 'I don't sell my people, matushka!' And Madame Vikhiorov replied that she, also, did not sell her people; and then Metta Ivanovna and I were again ordered to take leave of each other They bid up to ten thousand roubles, for us, my dear sirs, and still the affair made no progress, because when my mistress offered ten thousand for the woman, the other offered eleven thousand for me. The matter dragged on in this way until spring, sirs, and I must tell you that, although Marfa Andreevna was lofty and invincible of spirit, and had held her own with Pugatchov, and had danced with three Emperors, still Madame Vikhiorov broke down Marfa Andreevna's character dreadfully. She was bored! frightfully bored! And she began to be angry with me all the time. 'You're this-and-that sort of a lout,' she deigned to say, 'to such an extent that you cannot even inspire the maid with a fancy for you, so that she will herself demand to be married to you,'—'Matushka, Marfa Andreevna,' I said, 'my nourisher, how could I inspire a fancy in her? Please, matushka, give your hand to me, a fool, to kiss!' But she only waxed the more angry.—'The stupid!' said she, 'the stupid! He doesn't know anything, except how to kiss my hand!' And so I just held my peace altogether"

"The little man! The dear little man! Poor fellow, he couldn't do it!" the deacon sympathizingly explained to someone near him.

The dwarf glanced at him and continued:

"Well, sir, and so it went on until spring came, and it was time for us to prepare to go home to Plodomasovo from Moscow. Marfa Andreevna ordered me to dress myself up again, and to put on an

Espanish costume. We went to Madame Vikhiorov, and again the ladies failed to come to terms. Marfa Andreevna said to her 'Well, at any rate, do allow your dwarf to walk up and down a little in front of the house with Nikolasha.' The Generaless agreed to this, and Metta Ivanovna and I used to stroll along the sidewalk opposite the windows. The late Marfa Andreevna was delighted, and had all sorts of costumes made for us. We would arrive, and she would give the command, 'Let us dress up Nikolasha and Metta today in peasant costumes!' So we would both make our appearance in wooden shoes, I in a blouse and hat, and Metta Ivanovna in a tall cap, and we would walk in front of the house, and the public would stand and stare at us. Another time, she would order us to be dressed as a Turkish man and a Turkish woman, and again we would walk up and down; or as a sailor and his lass, and we would walk in that array. And we also had costumes as bears, made of light brown flannel, in the nature of furniture covers We would be thrust into them, as you would thrust a hand into a glove, or a foot into a stocking, so that only our eyes were visible, and on our little heads were woolen bands, which waggled like ears. But they did not send us into the street in these costumes, but ordered us dressed thus when the two ladies were sitting at table drinking coffee, and we were made to wrestle on the rug opposite the table. Metta Ivanovna was very strong, in spite of her being a woman, yet if I gave her a good trip under the leg, she always toppled over immediately. But I almost always yielded to Metta Ivanovna, because I was sorry for her on account of her sex, and the Generaless would immediately call the lap dog and set him on me to defend her, and it would fly at my calves, and Marfa Andreevna would get angry...well, I didn't mind being conquered! And the late lamented ordered us the very finest costumes—I have mine yet: they dressed me like a French grenadier, and Metta Ivanovna like a marquise. I had a bear's-fur shako, as tall and long as that of a uniform, and a gun with a bayonet, and a short saber, and Metta Ivanovna had a robe and a big fan. I used to stand at the door with my gun, and Metta Ivanovna would pass with her fan, and I would give her the military salute; and then Marfa Andreevna and the Generaless would set to bargaining for us again, with the object of marrying us. And I must inform you that my mistress had all these costumes and outfits for me and Metta Ivanovna made at her expense, because she already firmly hoped that we would buy Metta Ivanovna, and the more of these costumes she had made for us two, the more convinced did she become that we both belonged to her; but it turned out quite otherwise. As Madame Generaless Karolina Karlovna Vikhiorov was a German, she made no objection to these things for her benefit, and accepted them, but would not give in. Just before spring, Marfa Andreevna suddenly said to her, with decision: 'But what is this you

and I are doing, matushka? We are getting nowhere. We must make an end of it somehow,' she said, and they did make such an end that it pretty nearly resulted in both the ladies being carried to the Vagankovo cemetery. My late mistress began to pine away, she turned all yellow with bile, began to rage at everyone, and did not want to wait a single minute It was. Give her Metta Ivanovna, so that she might marry me to her!"

While other people were celebrating the Bright Resurrection of Christ, trouble reigned in our house. We were waiting for the final answer on the Tuesday of the following week, and did not know how to curb our impatience and exist until the day. And then Alexyei Nikititch—may God give him health—who was already greatly vexed over this affair, suddenly had an idea, or took counsel with some of the clever officers of his regiment, and announced to his mamma that Madame Vikhiorov's dwarf had disappeared. This made Marfa Andreevna feel much better, you know, for now no one possessed that woman, and she began to talk incessantly about it. 'And how did she disappear?' she would ask. Alexyei Nikititch replied that she had been stolen. 'How? Did some Jew do it?' she kept asking. We invented the first thing that popped into our heads; we said that everyone had seen a reddish-haired Jew with a beard just seize her and carry her off.

"'Well, then, why did she not stop him?' she deigned to inquire. 'Because,' they told her, 'he ran from street to street, from lane to lane, and so got off with her.'—'Yes,' she reasoned, 'and the girl was such a fool, that she did not even cry out while she was being abducted My Nikolay would not have surrendered on any terms'—'How could I surrender to a Jew, madame?' said I. She believed it all, as though she had been a child. But just then, Alexyei Nikititch suddenly made a little mistake, or, I may say, overdid his guilefulness. Of course, his object was to pack Marfa Andreevna and me off to the country as speedily as possible so that the affair might be forgotten, and he said to his mamma: 'Don't worry, mamma,' he said; 'they will find that dwarf, because they are searching for her, and the moment they do find her, I will write to you in the country.' But my late mistress caught at the word: 'No, indeed,' said she, 'if they are searching for her, I had better wait, for I chiefly want now to have a look at that Jew who carried her off.' So then, gentlemen, we arranged with a policeman to help us lie; and he used to come every day, and lie, and say: 'They're hunting for her but can't find her.' Every day she gave him a five-rouble note, and every day she sent me to church to have a prayer service celebrated to Iohann the Warrior, for the recovery of a fugitive slave—"

"To Iohann the Warrior? Did you say that you went to have a service to Iohann the Warrior?" interrupted the deacon.

"Yes, sir, to Iohann the Warrior."

"Well, then, I congratulate you, my friend, for you had the service celebrated to the wrong saint."

"Deacon, do me the favor to sit down," said Father Savely, with decision: "and do you, Nikolay, proceed with your story."

"But why should I proceed, Father, when almost all my tale is already told?—One day Marfa Andreevna and I were driving from the chapel of the Iberian Mother of God, when, bang! on Petrovka Street, straight to meet us, came Generaless Vikhiorov and Metta with her, driving along. Then Marfa Andreevna understood the whole thing, and you may believe me or not, gentlemen, as you like, but she fell to weeping bitterly in the carriage."

The dwarf paused.

"Well, Nikolay," prompted Archpriest Savely.

"Well, sir, and when we reached home, she said to Alexyei Nikititch: 'You are a fool, dear son, to dare to cheat your mother, and even bring in a policeman.'—And thereupon she ordered the carriages brought round, and we went away."

[From *Cathedral Folk;* translation by Isabel F. Hapgood]

Anton Chekhov

Leo Tolstoy said of this great story that when Chekhov came to write it, "he, like Balaam, intended to curse, but the god of poetry forbade him, and commanded him to bless." But that sometimes happens to comic characters, the outstanding example of which is Don Quixote, whom obviously Cervantes set out to make mock of, which indeed he did, yet at the same time transformed into the most lovable person imaginable. You may cry over it in spots, as Tolstoy did, yet, for all that, it remains a great comic story and rightfully belongs in this section.

THE DARLING

Olenka, the daughter of the retired collegiate assessor Plemyanikov, was sitting in a reverie on the rear porch of her house. It was hot, the flies were nagging and teasing. It was pleasant to think that it would

soon be evening. Dark rain clouds were gathering from the east, wafting every now and then a breath of moisture.

Kukin, who lodged in the wing of the house, was standing in the yard looking up at the sky. He was the manager of the Tivoli, an open-air theater.

"Again," he said despairingly. "Rain again. Rain, rain, rain! Every day rain! As though to spite me. I might as well hang myself and be done with it. It's ruining me. Terrible losses every day!" He wrung his hands, and continued, addressing Olenka: "What a life, Olga Semyonovna! It's enough to make a man weep. He works, he does his best, his very best, he tortures himself, he passes sleepless nights, he thinks and thinks and thinks how to do everything just right. And what does it come to? He gives the public the best operetta, the very best pantomime, fine artists. And do they want it? Have they the least appreciation of it? The public is rude. The public is a great boor. The public wants a circus, a lot of nonsense, slapstick stuff. And there's the weather Look! Rain almost every evening. It began to rain on the tenth of May, and it's kept it up through the whole of June. It's simply awful I can't get any audiences, and don't I have to pay rent? Don't I have to pay the actors?"

Toward evening the next day the clouds gathered again, and Kukin said with a hysterical laugh·

"Oh, I don't care. Let it do its worst. Let it drown the whole theater, and me, too All right, no luck for me in this world or the next Let the actors bring suit against me and drag me to court. What's the court? Why not Siberia at hard labor, or even the scaffold? Ha, ha, ha!"

On the third day it was the same.

Olenka listened to Kukin in grave silence. Sometimes tears came into her eyes. In the end Kukin's misfortune touched her. She fell in love with him. He was short, gaunt, with a yellow face and curly hair combed back from his forehead and a thin tenor voice. His features puckered all up when he spoke. Despair was ever inscribed on his face. And yet he awakened in Olenka a sincere, deep feeling.

She was always fond of someone, and could not go on without loving. She had loved her ailing father, who used to sit in his armchair in a darkened room, gasping for breath She had loved her aunt, who came from Brianska once or twice a year to visit them. And before that, at school she had loved her French teacher. She was a gentle, kind-hearted, compassionate girl, with a soft gentle way about her. And she was altogether healthy and wholesome Looking at her full, rosy cheeks, at her soft white neck with the black mole, and at the good ingenuous smile that always played on her face when something pleasant was said, the men would think, "No so bad," and would smile too; while the lady visitors, in the middle of the conversation,

would suddenly grasp her hand and exclaim, "You darling!" in a burst of delight.

The house, hers by inheritance, in which she had lived from birth, was situated on the outskirts of the city, not far from the Tivoli. From early evening till late at night she could hear the music in the theater and the bursting of the rockets; and it seemed to her that Kukin was battling with his fate and taking his chief enemy, the indifferent public, by storm. Her heart thawed, she felt no desire to sleep, and when Kukin returned home toward morning, she tapped on her window, and through the curtains he saw her face and one shoulder and the kind smile she gave him.

He proposed to her, and they were married. And when he had a better look of her neck and her full vigorous shoulders, he clapped his hands and said:

"You darling!"

He was happy. But it rained on their wedding day, and the expression of despair did not leave his face.

They got on very well together. She sat in the cashier's box, looked after things at the Tivoli, wrote down the expenses, and paid out the salaries. Her rosy cheeks, her kind, ingenuous smile, like a halo around her face, could be seen at the cashier's window, behind the scenes, and in the café. She began to tell her friends that the theater was the greatest, the most important, the most essential thing in the world, that it was the only place to obtain true enjoyment in and become cultivated and humane.

"But do you suppose the public appreciates it?" she asked. "What it wants is the circus. Yesterday Vanichka and I gave *Faust Burlesqued,* and almost all the boxes were empty. If we had given some silly nonsense, I assure you, the theater would have been packed. Tomorrow we'll put *Orpheus in Hades* on. Do come."

Whatever Kukin said about the theater and the actors, she repeated. She spoke, as he did, with contempt of the public, of its indifference to art, of its boorishness. She meddled in the rehearsals, corrected the actors, watched the conduct of the musicians; and when an unfavorable notice appeared in the local paper, she wept and went to the editor to have it out with him.

The actors were fond of her and called her "Vanichka and I" and "the darling." She was sorry for them and lent them small sums of money. When they deceived her, she did not complain to her husband, but shed a few tears in private.

In winter they got along well together, too. They leased a theater in the town for the whole winter and sublet it for short periods to a Little Russian company, or to a conjuror, or to the local amateur players.

Olenka grew stouter and was always beaming with contentment; while Kukin grew thinner and yellower and complained of his ter-

rible losses, though he had done fairly well the whole winter. At night he coughed, and she gave him raspberry syrup and lime water, rubbed him with eau de Cologne, and wrapped him up in soft coverings.

"You are my precious," she said with perfect sincerity, stroking his hair. "You are such a dear."

At Lent he went to Moscow to get a company together, and, in his absence, Olenka was unable to sleep. She sat at the window the whole time, gazing at the stars. She likened herself to the hens that are also uneasy in their coop and unable to sleep when their rooster is roving outside somewhere. Kukin was detained in Moscow. He wrote he would be back during Easter Week, and in his letters discussed arrangements at the Tivoli. But late one night, just before Easter, there was an ill-omened knocking at the wicket gate. It was like a knocking on a barrel—boom, boom, boom! The sleepy cook ran barefooted, plashing through the puddles, to open the gate.

"Open the gate, please," said someone in a hollow bass voice. "There's a telegram for you."

Olenka had received telegrams from her husband before; but this time, unaccountably, she was numbed with terror. She opened the telegram with trembling hands and read:

"Ivan Petrovich died suddenly to-day. Awaiting propt instructions for wuneral Tuesday."

That was the way the telegram was written—"wuneral"—and another quite unintelligible word—"propt." The telegram was signed by the manager of the opera company.

"My darling!" Olenka burst out sobbing. "Vanichka, my dearest, my precious! Why did I ever meet you? Why did I ever get to know you and love you? Why have you forsaken your poor Olenka, your poor, unhappy Olenka?"

Kukin was buried on Tuesday in the Vagankov Cemetery in Moscow. Olenka returned home on Wednesday; and as soon as she entered her house she threw herself on her bed and broke into sobbing so loud that it could be heard in the street and in the neighboring yards.

"The darling!" said the neighbors, crossing themselves. "How Olga Semyonovna, the poor darling, is grieving!"

Three months afterwards Olenka was returning home from Mass, downhearted and in deep mourning. Beside her walked a man also returning from church, Vasily Pustovalov, the manager of the merchant Babakayev's lumber yard. He was wearing a straw hat, a white vest with a gold chain, and looked more like a landowner than a business man

"Everything has its ordained course, Olga Semyonovna," he said soberly, with sympathy in his voice. "And if anyone near and dear

to us dies, then it means it was God's will and we should remember that and bear it with submission."

He took her to the wicket gate, said good-by, and went away. After that she heard his sober voice the whole day; and on closing her eyes she instantly had a vision of his dark beard. She took a great fancy to him. It was clear he had been impressed by her, too; for, not long after, an elderly woman, a distant acquaintance, came in to have a cup of coffee with her. As soon as the woman was seated at table she began to speak about Pustovalov—how good he was, what a steady man, and how any woman should be glad to get him as a husband. Three days later Pustovalov himself paid Olenka a visit. He stayed only about ten minutes, and spoke little, but Olenka fell in love with him, fell in love so desperately that she did not sleep the whole night and burned as with fever In the morning she sent for the elderly woman. Before long, Olenka and Pustovalov were engaged, and the wedding followed.

Pustovalov and Olenka were a happy couple. He usually stayed in the lumber yard until dinner, then went out on business. In his absence Olenka took his place in the office until evening, attending to the bookkeeping and dispatching the orders.

"Lumber rises twenty per cent every year nowadays," she told her customers and acquaintances. "Just think of it, we used to buy wood from our forests here. Now Vasichka has to go every year to the government of Mogilev to get wood. And what a tax!" she exclaimed, covering her cheeks with her hands in terror. "What a tax!"

She felt as if she had been dealing in lumber for ever so long, that the most important and essential thing in life was lumber. There was something touching and endearing in the way she pronounced the words, "beam," "joist," "plank," "stave," "lath," "gun-carriage," "clamp." At night she dreamed of whole mountains of boards and planks, long, endless rows of wagons conveying the wood somewhere, far, far from the city. She dreamed that a whole regiment of beams, 36 feet by 5 inches, were advancing in an upright position to do battle against the lumber yard; that the beams and joists and clamps were knocking against each other, giving forth the sharp crackling reports of dry wood, that they were all falling and then rising again, piling on top of each other. Olenka cried out in her sleep, and Pustovalov said to her gently:

"Olenka, my dear, what is the matter? Cross yourself."

Her husband's opinions were also hers. If he thought the room was too hot, she thought so too. If he thought business was dull, she thought business was dull. Pustovalov was not fond of amusements and stayed home on holidays, she did the same.

"You are always either at home or in the office," said her friends. "Why don't you go to the theater or to the circus, darling?"

"Vasichka and I never go to the theater," she answered sedately. "We have work to do, we have no time for nonsense. What does one get out of the theater?"

On Saturdays Pustovalov and she went to vespers, and on holidays to early Mass. On returning home they walked side by side with rapt faces. There was a fragrance about them both, and her silk dress rustled pleasantly. At home they drank tea with milk-bread and various jams, and then ate pie Every day at noontime there was an appetizing odor in the yard of cabbage soup, roast mutton, or duck; and, on fast days, of fish. You couldn't pass the gate without being seized by an acute hunger. The samovar was always boiling on the office table, and customers were treated to tea and biscuits. Once a week the married couple went to the baths and returned with red faces, walking side by side.

"We are getting along very well, thank God," said Olenka to her friends. "God grant that all should live as well as Vasichka and I."

When Pustovalov went to the government of Mogilev to buy wood, she was dreadfully homesick for him, did not sleep nights, and cried. Sometimes the veterinary surgeon of the regiment, Smirnov, a young man who lodged in the wing of her house, came to see her evenings He chatted with her, or played cards with her. This distracted her. The most diverting of his stories were those of his own life He was married and had a son; but he had separated from his wife because she had deceived him, and now he hated her and sent her forty roubles a month for his son's support. Olenka sighed, shook her head, and was sorry for him.

"Well, the Lord keep you," she said, as she saw him off to the door by candlelight. "Thank you for coming to kill time with me. May God give you health. Mother in Heaven!" She spoke very soberly, very judiciously, imitating her husband The veterinary surgeon had disappeared behind the door when she called out after him: "Do you know, Vladimir Platonych, you ought to make up with your wife. Forgive her, if only for the sake of your son. The child understands everything, you may be sure."

When Pustovalov returned, she told him in a low voice about the veterinary surgeon and his unhappy family life; and they sighed and shook their heads, and talked about the boy who must be yearning for his father. Then, by a strange association of ideas, they both stopped before the sacred images, made genuflections, and prayed to God to send them children."

Thus the Pustovalovs lived for full six years, quietly and peaceably, in love and harmony. But once in the winter Vasily Andreyich, after drinking some hot tea, went out into the lumber yard without a hat on his head, caught a cold and became ill. He was treated by the best

physicians, but the malady progressed, and he died after an illness of four months. Olenka was again left a widow.

"To whom have you left me, my darling?" she wailed after the funeral. "How shall I live now without you, wretched creature that I am Pity me, good people, pity me, fatherless and motherless, all alone in the world!"

She went about dressed in black and "weepers," and she gave up wearing hats and gloves for good. She hardly left the house except to go to church and to visit her husband's grave. She led the life of a nun.

Six months had passed before she took off the weepers and opened her shutters. She began to go out now and then in the morning to market with her cook. But how she lived and what went on at home, could only be surmised. To be sure, she was seen in her little garden drinking tea with the veterinarian while he read the paper out loud to her, so that an acquaintance on meeting her at the post office heard her say:

"There is no proper veterinary inspection in our town. That is why there is so much disease. You constantly hear of people getting sick from the milk and becoming infected by the horses and cows The health of domestic animals really ought to be looked after as much as that of human beings."

She repeated the veterinarian's words and held the same opinions as he about everything. It was plain that she could not exist a single year without an attachment, and she found her new happiness in the wing of her house. In anyone else this would have been condemned; but no one could think ill of Olenka Everything in her life was so transparent She and the veterinary surgeon never spoke about the change in their relations They tried, in fact, to conceal it, if unsuccessfully; for Olenka could have no secrets. When the surgeon's colleagues from the regiment came to see him, she poured tea, and served supper, and talked to them about the cattle plague, the foot and mouth disease, and the municipal slaughterhouses. The surgeon was dreadfully embarrassed, and after the visitors had left, he caught her hand and hissed angrily:

"Didn't I ask you not to talk about what you don't understand? When we doctors discuss things, please don't put your word in. It's getting to be unbearable."

She looked at him in astonishment and dismay, and asked:

"But Volodichka, what *am* I to talk about?"

And with tears in her eyes, she threw her arms round his neck, and begged him not to be angry. And they were both happy.

Their happiness was of short duration. The veterinary surgeon left with his regiment, to be gone for good, when it was transferred to some distant place almost as far as Siberia. Olenka was left alone.

Now she was completely alone. Her father had long been dead, and his armchair lay in the attic covered with dust and minus one leg. She got thin and lost her good looks, and the people who met her on the street neither looked at her as they had used to, nor smiled at her. It was clear that her best years were over, past and gone, and a new, dubious life was to begin which it were better not to think about.

In the evening Olenka sat on the steps and heard the music playing and the rockets bursting in the Tivoli; but this no longer aroused any response in her. She looked apathetically into the yard, thought of nothing, wanted nothing, and when night came on, she went to bed and dreamed of nothing but the empty yard. She ate and drank as if by compulsion.

And, worst of all, she no longer held any opinions. She saw and understood everything that went on around her, but she could form no opinion about it. She had nothing to talk about. And how dreadful not to have opinions! For instance, you see a bottle, or you see that it is raining, or you see a muzhik riding by in a wagon But what the bottle or the rain or the muzhik are for, or what the sense of them all is, you cannot tell—you cannot tell, not for a thousand roubles. In the days of Kukin and Pustovalov, and later of the veterinary surgeon, Olenka had had an explanation for everything, and would have given her opinion freely no matter about what. But now there was the same emptiness in her heart and brain as in her yard. It was as galling and bitter as the taste of wormwood.

Slowly the town developed all around. The Gypsy Road had become a street, and where the Tivoli and the lumber yard had been, there were now houses and a row of side streets How quickly time flies! Olenka's house became dingy, the roof rusty, the shed slanting. Dock and thistles overgrew the yard. Olenka herself had aged and grown plain. In the summer she sat on the steps, and her soul was empty and dreary and bitter. When she caught the breath of spring, or when the wind wafted the chime of the cathedral bells, a sudden flood of memories would overwhelm her, her heart would expand with a tender warmth, and the tears would stream down her cheeks. But that endured only a moment. Then would come desolation again, and the feeling, What is the use of living? The black kitten Bryska rubbed up against her and purred softly, but the little creature's caresses left Olenka untouched. It was not that she needed. She needed a love that would absorb her whole being, her reason, her whole soul, that would give her ideas, an object in life, that would warm her aging blood. And she shook the black kitten off her skirt angrily, saying:

"Go away! What do you want?"

And so day after day, year after year, not a single joy, not a single opinion. Whatever Marva, the cook, said was all right.

One hot day in July, toward evening, as the town cattle were being driven by, and the whole yard was filled with clouds of dust, there was suddenly a knocking at the gate. Olenka herself went to open it, and was dumfounded to behold the veterinarian Smirnov. He had turned gray and was attired as a civilian. All the old memories flooded into her soul, she could not restrain herself, she burst out crying, and laid her head on Smirnov's breast without saying a word. So overcome was she that she was wholly oblivious of how they walked into the house and seated themselves to drink tea.

"My darling!" she murmured, trembling with joy. "Vladimir Platonych, from where has God sent you?"

"I want to settle here for good," he told her. "I have resigned my position and have come here to try my fortune as a free man and lead a settled life. Besides, it's time to send my boy to the gymnasium He is grown up now. You know, my wife and I have become reconciled."

"Where is she?" asked Olenka.

"At the hotel with the boy. I am looking for lodgings."

"Good gracious, bless you, take my house Why won't my house do? Oh, dear! Why, I won't ask any rent from you," Olenka burst out in the greatest excitement, and began to cry again. "You live here, and the wing will be enough for me Oh, Heavens, what a joy!"

The very next day the roof was being painted and the walls whitewashed, and Olenka, arms akimbo, was going about the yard superintending. Her face brightened with her old smile. Her whole being revived and freshened, as if she had awakened from a long sleep. The veterinarian's wife and child arrived She was a thin, plain woman, with a crabbed expression The boy Sasha, small for his ten years, was a chubby child, with clear blue eyes and dimples in his cheeks. He made for the kitten the instant he entered the yard, and the place rang with his happy laughter.

"Is that your cat, auntie?" he asked Olenka. "When she has little kitties, please give me one. Mamma is awfully afraid of mice."

Olenka chatted with him, gave him tea, and there was a sudden warmth in her bosom and a soft gripping at her heart, as though the boy were her own.

In the evening, when he sat in the dining room studying his lessons, she looked at him tenderly and whispered to herself:

"My darling, my precious. You are such a clever child, so good to look at."

"An island is a tract of land entirely surrounded by water," he recited.

"An island is a tract of land," she repeated—the first opinion ex-

pressed with conviction after so many years of silence and mental dearth.

She now had her opinions, and at supper discussed with Sasha's parents how difficult the studies had become for the children at the gymnasium, but how, after all, a classical education was better than a commercial course, because when you graduated from the gymnasium then the road was open to you for any career at all. If you chose, you could become a doctor, or, if you desired, you could become an engineer.

Sasha began to go to the gymnasium. His mother left on a visit to her sister in Kharkov and never returned. The father was away every day inspecting cattle, and sometimes was gone three whole days at a time, so that Sasha, it seemed to Olenka, was utterly abandoned, was treated as if he were unwanted, and must be dying of hunger. So she transferred him into the wing she herself occupied and fixed up a little room for him there.

Every morning Olenka would come into his room and find him sound asleep with his hand tucked under his cheek, so quiet that he seemed not to be breathing. What a shame to have to wake him, she thought.

"Sashenka," she would say mournfully, "get up, darling. It's time to go to the gymnasium."

He got up, dressed, said his prayers, then sat down to drink tea. He drank three glasses of tea, ate two large cracknels and half a buttered roll. He was still sleepy, so he was a little cross.

"You don't know your fable as you should, Sashenka," said Olenka, looking at him as though he were departing on a long journey. "What a lot of trouble you are. You must try hard and learn, dear, and mind your teachers"

"Oh, let me alone, please," said Sasha.

Then he went down the street to the gymnasium, a little fellow wearing a large cap and carrying a satchel on his shoulder. Olenka followed him noiselessly.

"Sashenka," she called.

He looked round and she thrust a date or a caramel into his hand. When he reached the street of the gymnasium, he turned around and said, ashamed of being followed by a tall, stout woman:

"You had better go home, aunt. I can go the rest of the way myself."

She stopped and stared after him until he had disappeared into the school entrance.

Oh, how she loved him! Not one of her other ties had been so deep. Never before had she given herself so unstintingly, so disinterestedly, so gladly as now that her maternal instincts were all aroused. For this boy, who was not hers, for the dimples in his cheeks

and for his big cap, she would have given her life, given it with joy and with tears of rapture. Why? Ah, indeed, why?

When she had seen Sasha off to the gymnasium, she returned home quietly, content, serene, overflowing with love. Her face, which had grown younger in the last half year, smiled and beamed. People who met her were pleased as they looked at her.

"How are you, Olga Semyonovna, darling? How are you getting on, darling?"

"The gymnasium course is very hard nowadays," she would say at the market. "It's no joke. Yesterday the first class had a fable to learn by heart, a Latin translation, and a problem. How is a little chap to do all that?"

And she would talk about the teacher, the lessons, and the textbooks, repeating exactly what Sasha said about them.

At three o'clock they had dinner together. In the evening they prepared the lessons together, and Olenka wept with Sasha over the difficulties When she put him to bed, she lingered a long time making the sign of the cross over him and murmuring a prayer. And when she lay in bed, she dreamed of the remote dim future when Sasha would finish his studies and become a doctor or an engineer, have a large house of his own, with horses and a carriage, marry and have children She would fall asleep still thinking of the same things, and tears would roll down her cheeks from her closed eyes. And the black cat would lie at her side purring: *"Mrr, mrr, mrr."*

Suddenly there would come a loud knocking at the gate Olenka would wake up breathless with fear, her heart beating violently. Half a minute later would come another knock.

"A telegram from Kharkov," she would think, her whole body trembling. "His mother wants Sasha to come to her in Kharkov. Oh, great God!"

She was in despair. Her head, her feet, her hands turned cold. There was no unhappier creature in the world, she felt. But another minute passed, she heard voices. It was the veterinary coming home from the club.

"Thank God," she thought. And gradually the load would fall from her heart, she would be at ease again. And she would go back to bed, thinking of Sasha who lay fast asleep in the next room and sometimes cried out in his sleep:

"I'll give it to you! Get away! Stop it!"

Maxim Gorky

THINGS COMICAL

An ex-soldier once said to me:

"Funny things happen in war too, you know. For instance, off we went, five of us, to the nearest wood to fetch some branches, when suddenly one of those infernal German shells came down on us with a crash. I was thrown into a hole, buried underground, and covered up with stones.

"When I came to my senses I lay there and thought: 'It's all up with you, Semion, old boy.' But not a bit of it! I recovered all right, rubbed my eyes, and—could see not a sign of my friends. But above me were some trees, bare and leafless, and from some of the branches strings of entrails were hanging.

"At the sight I fairly burst out laughing! It was too funny to see what was left of my friends hanging on those branches.

"Of course a bit later on I began to feel rather sore about it. After all, they were my friends, men just like myself. And now, all of a sudden—nothing left of 'em any more, as though they'd never existed. But at first—I laughed."

. . . .

"We came to a village where there were not more than three huts. Beside one of them an old woman was sitting, and near by a cow was grazing. 'Hullo, granny,' we said to the old woman. 'Who does this beast belong to—is it yours?'

"She burst into tears and howled and went down on her knees and all that. 'My children!' she sobbed. 'They're hidden down in the cellar. If you take the cow they'll die.'

"'Don't yell about it,' we told her. 'We'll give you a receipt all right.'

"We had a man in our squadron, a boy from Kostrome, a thief among thieves. Well, he wrote her out the following receipt: 'This old woman has lived for ninety years and hopes to live for ninety more—but she won't.' And the rascal signed the document, 'God Almighty.'

"We gave her the receipt and took the cow away with us. We were laughing so much over our little joke that we could hardly move. Several times we had to stop and hold our sides and wipe the tears away."

[From *Fragments from My Diary*]

Feodor Sologub

LITTLE TALES

HE BECAME BETTER

There are all sorts of boys in this world, good and bad ones.

Once there were two boys, a good boy and a truant. A magician came to them—it was Uncle Better. He asked them:

"Would you like to be better?"

"I'd like to be better, uncle dear," replied the good boy. "A good man is well off everywhere."

"There is no need for me to be better," said the truant. "I am good enough as I am. Too much goodness might tear my mouth apart with yawning."

"Well, remain a truant," Uncle Better said to him. "As for you, my good boy, you will become so sweet that everyone will marvel at you."

Then he went away.

The good boy became so sweet that he began to ooze with treacle Hardly anyone was glad to see him. Wherever he went he made the place sticky with treacle. His mother was angry with him.

"On account of your sweetness," she said, "it is impossible to keep you supplied with clothes. I'd much rather see you a hooligan."

The good boy enjoyed gathering in the outpour of treacle. So he remained He grew up and gave pleasure to others he rolled pound horns out of paper, and poured treacle into them, and gave them to the poor.

THREE GOBS OF SPIT

A man went by, and spat three gobs of spit.

He walked away, the gobs remained.

Said one of the gobs:

"We are here, but the man is not here."

Said the second:

"He has gone."

Said the third:

"He came precisely for the purpose of planting us here. We are the goal of man's life. He has gone, but we have remained."

THE MAN WHO BECAME SMALLER

There was a man who bought some land and a house. The land was so small that if you took a single step, then another, you ran into the fence The house was so small that you had to bend down to enter it.

It made the man feel unhappy.

An old sparrow said to him:

"It would be a good thing if you became smaller."

The man replied in a very reasonable way:

"I should be indeed glad to do so, but unfortunately I was born such a giant."

"You had better go to the German apothecary," said the old sparrow, "whisper to him on the quiet, and stick a nice bit of money into his hand—he will give you some reducing drops from under his microscope, and you will become a very tiny fellow"

The man was overjoyed. He did everything as the old sparrow had told him to do, and he became as small as a tin soldier.

He arrived at his house, and on his land—and everything fitted him splendidly.

The house became large, ever so large—in every room you might dance a quadrille in seven thousand pairs. He divided up the house into apartments, and let them out to other little men in order to gain a large profit out of his small fortune.

The land became so large that when the little man went for a stroll and tried to walk around his property he got into a terrible perspiration from fatigue. The little man then divided up the land, and built on it little kennel-cottages, let them out, and made good money out of them. He made money and took it to the bank. The little man became fat and rich.

But a huge crow happened to fly by, caught the little man by his collar, and took him off to its nest to feed its tots with The little man repented having obeyed the old sparrow, but it was too late.

Perhaps the old sparrow had purposely prearranged the whole thing.

DOTARD AND DOTARDESS

There once lived an old dotard and old dotardess.

The dotard had lived five hundred years, the dotardess four hundred.

The dotard received a big pension, and gave it to the dotardess for expenses.

The dotard wore an underwaistcoat close to his body, the dotardess used to dye her hair.

The dotard took snuff and went to take steam baths—dotardess ate sweets and went to the Russian opera.

One day the dotard went to the bath, steamed himself, oversteamed himself, and died on the bench.

The dotardess went to the opera, called *Encore* to the singer, shouted and shouted, overshouted herself, and died in the gallery.

The old dotard and dotardess were buried

There is nothing to grieve about: there will always be dotards and dotardesses.

A MARRIAGE

A drop of rain fell through the air, a speck of dust lay on the ground.

The drop wished to unite itself with a hard substance; it was tired of its free, active existence.

It joined itself to the speck of dust—and lay on the ground, a blob of mud.

THE LILY AND THE CABBAGE

A lily reared her head in the garden. She was serenely white, and beautiful and proud.

Quietly she addressed herself to the passing wind:

"Have more care I am the queen lily, and King Solomon himself did not dress as beautifully as I."

Quite close by, in the vegetable garden, grew a she-cabbage.

She overheard the lily's words, whereupon she laughed and said:

"This old Solomon was, in my opinion, a mere sans-culotte! How did these ancients dress? They barely covered their nakedness with scant drapery, and imagined they were robed in the height of fashion. It was I who taught people how to dress I may safely take credit for the following plan: First there is the naked stump, upon that goes the first wrap, then a shirt, over that a jacket, over the jacket a petticoat, over the petticoat another petticoat, then another wrap, another shirt, another jacket, another petticoat, then a shawl above and a shawl below and a shawl on each side—until the stump becomes invisible. Now this is both warm and decent."

THE BENT-KNEED ONE

As I was crossing the Nikolayevsky Bridge, I met a man with deformed bent knees It was to be seen that he found it hard to walk, because his knees refused to bend, and he was forced to walk in a curious, almost squatting position.

He glanced at me. There was a reproach in his glance. And I understood...

I understood that it had not been a dream.

There had been days, accursed days, when I was also the same bent deformity.

It was difficult for me to walk, because my knees were bent constantly. Sometimes I made terrible exertions over myself—but all the rage of my will could not unbend my legs.

Sometimes when I lay in my bed at night I suddenly would feel an infusion of joy and hope. Strength returned to my legs, my will rent the entangling fetters of inertia, and I began to stretch myself out.

But suddenly a quiet groan sounded under my legs—it was as if a shroud had fallen from my eyes, and all my feelings, hitherto benumbed, now revealed themselves—in order to disclose to me the terrible truth as to the cause of my affliction.

Under my legs lay an infant, fettered to me by some invisible but indissoluble bonds. Always one and the same, he lay there every night, small and unhappy, under my legs, and his heart beat under my legs, and his thin, fragile, pitiful throat was under my legs.

And full of terror, I would hurriedly lift my knees, so as not to crush him, the little one.

But one night, full of agony and shame, after a dark, harrowing day, I stretched out my legs in a moment of rage and despair, and suffocated the infant

And I became upright, like other men.

FUEL

We were feasting. There were many of us. We felt in good spirits. The sun shone through the windows, the flowers on the table wafted their fragrance—exhaling their last breath for our pleasure; the wines were delicate, sweet, and aromatic. Our girl companions were young and laughed like children.

When the feast ended, the idea occurred to one of us to go and see how the magnificent viands, which had so gratified our fastidious appetites, were prepared.

"Show us the kitchen," said we, laughing, to our host. "We want to thank your cook."

The host seemed perturbed. He mumbled something incoherent. His face grew pale But we, laughing, dragged him along with us. He then smiled a strange smile, and said:

"If you like.... But it is very hot there."

And we went into the kitchen. The immense oven loomed large in the immense kitchen. The oven was still kept going The flame was cheerful and bright, and in front of the oven there was piled up on the floor an immense heap of immense logs which, for some reason or other, were wrapped in linen covers.

And when we asked the cook why this oven was kept going after we had already dined, he said to us

"This oven must not stop burning for a single instant."

And his face, lit up with the red glow of the oven flame, was sullen. We bent down over the logs because they gave out a stench which both shocked and frightened us. Then the cook's assistant took one of the logs and flung it into the oven And we saw that it was a human corpse done up in a shroud. They took it by the head and by the feet and flung it on the bright flame.

We were confused. We stood silently for a long time, and watched the flames consuming one corpse after another. And when a new load of wood was brought, a horrifying bundle, tied up with a rope on the back of a hardy porter, one of us asked the cook timidly.

"Where do you get this wood?"

The cook replied with a smile·

"There is plenty of it More than is needed. They walk past here. Our house porters chop them down"

LITTLE SONGS

He was quite a rake in appearance—he loafed about in the streets and in the roads, sat for hours in the taverns and looked at the jolly wenches; nothing was sacred to him, and because of that he received very little respect.

But sometimes he would walk out to the crossroads and begin to sing, he knew such words that everything answered him at that moment—the birds in the woods, and the wind in the fields, and the waves in the sea.

The little dog, Sillybark, said:

"It's bad, bad! It's all nonsense."

And the cunning fox said:

"Bad, bad! He sings only earthly songs, he has forgotten God."

What did it matter? Everything living answered him: the birds of the woods, the waves of the sea, and the roving winds.

EYES, EYELINGS, STARE-EYES

Once there were dark, beautiful Eyes. They would take a glance, and look enigmatically.

There were also gray, mischievous Eyelings. They would flash back and forth all the time and never look straight at anyone.

The Eyes asked:

"Why are are you running about? What are you seeking?"

The Eyelings began to run and to bustle about; they said:

"Oh, nothing in particular. Just a little, lightly—you can't help it—well, you know yourselves."

Then there were the dull, arrogant Stare-Eyes. They would always fix themselves on one and stare.

The Eyes asked·

"Why are you looking like that? What do you see?"

The Stare-Eyes grew angry, and shouted:

"How dare you? Who are you? And who are we? We will give it to you!"

The Eyes sought other eyes as beautiful as themselves, they did not find them, so they closed in despair

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THE UNBORN

No one knows what will be.

But there is a place where the future peers through the sky-blue vapors of desire. In this place the unborn still enjoy their peace. Here everything is serene, soothing, and felicitous Grief is absent, and instead of air there is an atmosphere of pure joyousness, in which the unborn breathe freely.

And no one need leave this land until he so desires.

There were four souls which in the same instant desired to be born upon our earth.

In the sky-blue vapors of desire there appeared before them our four elements.

One of the unborn said:

"I love the earth, the soft, the warm, the hard earth."

The second said:

"I love the water, the eternally falling, clear, refreshing water."

The third said:

"I love the fire, the merry, bright, purifying fire."

The fourth said:

"I love the air, striving in breadth and in height, the light air of life."

So it came to pass.

The first became a miner. One day the shaft fell, and the earth buried him.

The second shed tears, like water, and in the end drowned himself.

The third lost his life in a burning house.

The fourth was hanged.

Pure innocent elements... The folly of those who desire...

Oh, sweet place of nonexistence, why should the will lead us away from thee?!

FAIRY TALES IN THE GARDEN, AND FAIRY TALES AT COURT

There was a garden in which fairy tales grew in the beds along the paths.

All sorts of fairy tales grew there—white ones, red ones, blue ones, purple ones, and yellow ones. Some of the tales had an agreeable perfume, while others made up in beauty what they lacked in perfume.

The gardener's little son went every morning into the garden to delight in the fairy tales.

He learned them all, and often told them to his companions in the street; no common children were permitted into the garden, for it was the garden of a great queen.

The children told about these fairy tales to their mammas and papas, and these told them to their acquaintances, until their fame spread far and wide The queen also heard at last about the fairy tales which grew in her garden. She asked to see them.

And so one early morning the gardener cut down many of the fairy tales, gathered them into a beautiful, sumptuous bouquet, and sent them to court.

The gardener's young son cried because they were cutting down the fairy tales, but no one would listen to him.

As if there were not enough things one might choose to cry about!

The queen looked at the fairy tales, and asked in astonishment:

"What's interesting about them? Why do you call them fairy tales? They are the most common flowers."

They threw the poor fairy tales into the back yard and gave the gardener's little son a birching so that he should not speak such nonsense again.

CAPTIVE DEATH

A long time ago there lived a brave and invincible Knight.

One day he happened to capture Death herself.

He brought her to his strong castle, and put her in a cell.

Death sat there—and people ceased to die.

The Knight was overjoyed. He thought:

"Now it is well, but it is rather a bother to keep a watch over her. Perhaps it would be best to destroy her altogether."

But the Knight was a just man—he could not kill her without a judgment.

He went to the cell and, pausing before the small window, he said:

"Death, I want to cut your head off—you've done a lot of harm upon the earth."

But Death was silent.

The Knight continued:

"I'll give you a chance—defend yourself, if you can. What have you to say for yourself?"

And Death answered:

"I'll say nothing just yet; let Life put in a word for me."

And the Knight suddenly saw Life standing beside him; she was a robust and red-cheeked but expressionless woman.

And she began to say such brazen and ungodly things that the brave, invincible Knight trembled, and made haste to open the cell.

Death went out—and men began to die once more The Knight himself died when his time came—and he told no one upon the earth what that expressionless, brazen hussy, Life, had said to him.

[Translation by John Cournos]

Efim Zozulya

A TALE ABOUT AK AND HUMANITY

I. THE PLACARD

The houses and the streets had an ordinary appearance. And, above them, the unchanging sky was azure. And the gray masks of the pavement stone were, as always, impenetrable and indifferent, while maddened men, from whose faces tears dropped into pails of paste, were adorning the walls with placards.

Their text was simple, pitiless, and irrevocable.

Here it is:

"To all without exclusion.

"An examination of the inhabitants of the town with regard to their right to live is being carried out by districts by special commissions consisting of three members of the Courts of the Higher Decisions. Inhabitants, acknowledged to be superfluous (unnecessary), are obliged to depart from life within twenty-four hours. The right of appeal is allowed within that time. The appeal must be made in writing and will be delivered to the Central Court of the Higher Decisions. A reply will be given within three hours. Superfluous human beings, unable either from weakness of will or from love of living to depart from life,

will be dealt with by the Courts of the Higher Decisions, who will call on friends, neighbors, or special armed companies to execute the sentence.

"*Remarks.* 1. The inhabitants of the town, with complete obedience, are obliged to submit to the acts and regulations of the members of the Courts of the Higher Decisions. Truthful answers must be given to all questions. An official report will be given of the characteristics of every person judged to be superfluous

2. This decree will be carried out with irrevocable severity. Human rubbish, hindering the reconstruction of life on the basis of justice and happiness, must be pitilessly destroyed. This decree concerns, without exclusion, all citizens—men and women, rich and poor.

3 The departure from town of any person whatsoever while the examination with regard to the right to live is in progress is absolutely forbidden."

2 THE FIRST WAVES OF PERTURBATION

"Have you read?"

"Have you read?"

"Have you read?!"

"Have you read?!! Have you read?!!"

"Have you seen?!! Have you heard?!!"

"Have you read?!!"

Crowds began to gather all over the town. Traffic became congested. From sudden weakness pedestrians leaned against house walls. Many wept. Some had fainting spells. Toward evening their number reached a tremendous figure.

"Have you read?!!"

"How terrible? Who's ever heard of such a thing!"

"Why, we ourselves elected the Courts of the Higher Decisions! We ourselves gave them full powers!"

"Yes, that's true."

"We ourselves are to blame for the monstrous situation."

"Yes, that's true. We are to blame. That's because we ourselves wanted to create a better life. But who could have thought that the Courts would approach the question in so simple and terrible a manner?!"

"But what names have been chosen for the composition of the Courts! Oh, what names!"

"How do you know? Have they published a list of the members?"

"I've heard from an acquaintance. Ak has been chosen Chairman."

"Oh, you don't say! Ak? That's a piece of good fortune!"

"Yes. Yes. It's a fact!"

"What good fortune! He's a magnificent personality."

"Of course! We must not be too anxious: he's sure to weed out the human rubbish. We need not fear injustice."

"Dear citizen, what do you think? Will I be left among the living? I am a decent sort of man. Do you know, once during the wreck of a ship twenty passengers saved themselves in a boat. But the boat could not stand such a huge load, and all were threatened with death. In order that fifteen might be saved, it was necessary that five should fling themselves into the sea. I was one of the five. I volunteered to do it. Don't look so incredulously. Now I'm old and feeble Haven't you really heard of this happening? The papers were full of it at the time. My four comrades perished. A chance saved me. What do you think? Will they spare me?"

"And me, citizens? And me? I gave away all my possessions to the poor. That was long ago. I have documents to prove it."

"I don't know, really. All depends on the point of view of the Courts of the Higher Decisions."

"Allow me to inform you, esteemed citizens, that primitive usefulness to neighbors by no means justifies the existence of human beings on earth Why, in that case, every stupid wet-nurse would have the right to live. That's an old notion. You're behind the times!"

"What, then, is the value of a human being?"

"Yes, what is his value?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, you don't know! Why do you poke your muzzle here with your opinions if you don't know?"

"I'm sorry. I only said what I thought."

"Citizens! Citizens! Look! Look! They're running! What a confusion! A panic!"

"Oh, Heavens! Heavens!...Ah!...Save yourselves! Save yourselves!"

"Stop! Don't run!"

"Don't make the panic worse!"

"Stop!"

3. THE FUGITIVES

The crowds ran in the streets Red-cheeked young men ran, with terror-stricken faces. Modest clerks serving in offices and establishments. Bridegrooms in clean cuffs. Choir singers from amateur societies. Dandies. Tellers of anecdotes. Billiard players Evening visitors to the moving pictures. Career-pursuers, evildoers, sharpers, with white foreheads and curly hair. Hypocritical rakes. Wicked drunkards. Jolly fellows, hooligans, Adonises, visionaries, lovers, cyclists. Broad-shouldered squabblers, squabbling from having nothing else to do, talkers, deceivers, long-haired hypocrites, petty grief-indulgers, with dark sad eyes, behind whose sadness, concealed by youth, lay cold emptiness.

Young churls with full, smiling lips, vainglorious adventurers, scandalmongers, good-hearted failures, clever profligates.

Corpulent, voracious, lazy women also ran. And lean shrews, nagging, boring women, tedious females, wives of fools and wise men, gossipers, betrayers, the envious and the greedy, now distorted with fear. Proud she-fools, the good-for-nothing good, those who from boredom dyed their hair, the colorless libertines, the lonely, the helpless, the brazen, the begging, the supplicating, who, from terror, had lost all outward decorum.

Stooped old men ran. And squat men, small men, tall men, and handsome and malformed men.

Men who managed houses, pawnbrokers, ironmongers, carpenters, artisans, gaolers, grocers, good-natured publicans, decorous gray-haired lackeys, respectable fathers of families, those who had battened on dupes of their baseness, venerable sharps, and fat scoundrels.

They ran in a dense, impetuous, ruthless mass. Loads of rags enveloped their bodies and extremities. Hot steam poured from their mouths Curses and wails resounded through the concealed indifference of the abandoned edifices.

Many ran carrying possessions. With twisted fingers they dragged pillows, boxes, drawers. They seized their precious gems, their children, their money. They shouted, then returned, lifting their arms in terror, and then ran again.

But they were all turned back. All. Such beings as themselves shot at them, ran in front of them, beat them with sticks, fists, stones; there was biting too, and terrible outcries; the crowds fell back, leaving behind their killed and wounded

Toward evening the town resumed its normal appearance. The trembling bodies of the inhabitants returned to their homes and flung themselves on their beds. A brief poignant hope desperately struggled in tight, feverish skulls.

4. A SIMPLE PROCEDURE

"Your name?"

"Boss."

"How old are you?"

"Thirty."

"Occupation?"

"I make cigarettes."

"Tell the truth!"

"I am telling the truth. I've worked honestly at my trade for fourteen years and supported my family."

"Where is your family?"

"Here they are. This is my wife. This is my son."

"Doctor, examine the Boss family."

"I have done so."

"Well, what can you tell us about them?"

"Citizen Boss is anemic. General condition, average. His wife suffers with headaches and rheumatism. The boy is healthy."

"Good. You may go, doctor. Citizen Boss, what are your pleasures? What do you love?"

"I love people and life generally."

"Be more precise, citizen Boss. To the point."

"I love.... Well, what do I love? ... I love my son.... He is so clever with the fiddle.... I love my meals, though to be sure, I'm not a glutton.... I am fond of women.... It is pleasant to look at handsome women and girls passing in the street. I love, when I'm tired in the evening, to rest ... I love making cigarettes.... I can make five hundred an hour.... I love life."

"Be calm, citizen Boss! Stop whimpering. What do you say, psychologist?"

"Clap-trap, colleague! Rubbish! The most ordinary creatures! A poor existence. Temperament semi-phlegmatic—semi-sanguine. Activity—feeble. Class—the last. Hope for betterment—none. Passivity—seventy-five per cent. Mrs. Boss—still lower. The boy is commonplace, but, perhaps ... How old is your son, citizen Boss? Stop whimpering!"

"Thirteen."

"Don't be alarmed. For the time being your son will remain among the living. As for you.. In any case, that is none of my affair. Render your decision, colleague!"

"In the name of the Courts of the Higher Decisions, with the object of cleansing life of superfluous human rubbish, of indifferent beings, I order you, citizen Boss, and your wife, to depart from this life within twenty-four hours. Be quiet! Don't bawl! Sanitary officer, calm the woman! Call the guard! It doesn't look as if they'll manage it without assistance."

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUPERFLUOUS PRESERVED IN THE GRAY CABINET

The Gray Cabinet was situated in the corridor in the department of the Courts of the Higher Decisions. This cabinet had the usual appearance it was a solid, pensively stupid affair, like most cabinets. It was neither in width nor in height more than seven feet, but it was the grave of several thousand human beings. It was marked with two brief inscriptions:

"Catalogue of the Superfluous"

The catalogue was divided into several sections, and among others

"The indiscriminately impressionable"
"Petty partisans"
"The passive"
"Without equilibrium"

and so forth.

The characteristics were stated briefly and objectively. In some instances, to be sure, there were sharp remarks, but these were, inevitably, red-penciled by Ak, who added his commentary to the effect that it was not necessary to abuse the superfluous.

Here are some specimen records of the characteristics of the superfluous:

"Superfluous Male No. 14,741

"Health average. He visits acquaintances, without being either useful or interesting to them He is free with advice. In the bloom of his strength he had seduced a girl, then cast her off. He regards the acquisition of furniture after marriage as the most important function in life. His brain is drowsy, lymphatic. He has no capacity for work. To the question what he considered to be the most interesting thing he had encountered in life, he told of his visit to the restaurant 'Quissisana' in Paris. A common creature. Category of the lower strata. Heart feeble. Within 24 hours."

"Superfluous Male No. 14,623

"A worker in a cooper's shop. Class—mediocre. Has no love for his work. His mind in everything works along lines of least resistance Physically, well; but spiritually, he suffers from a common disease: the fear of life. The fear of freedom When free, during holidays, he stupefies himself with alcohol. During the Revolution he exhibited some energy: he wore a red ribbon, and hoarded potatoes and everything else he could get hold of. He was afraid of falling short. He prided himself on his proletarian origin. He took no active share in the Revolution: he was afraid. He loves sour cream. He beats children. The tempo of his life is uniformly dispirited. Within 24 hours."

"Superfluous Male No. 15,201

"He knows eight languages, but says that it is tedious to listen even to one. He is fond of ingenious trifles. Very self-confident. His self-confidence is based on his knowledge of languages. Demands esteem. Indulges in gossip. Toward real animate life indifferent, like an ox. Afraid of beggars. Sweet-tempered in his relations out of fear. Is fond of killing flies and other insects. Rarely experiences joy. Within 24 hours."

"Superfluous Female No. 4,356

"Scolds her servants out of boredom. Secretly skims the cream from the milk and the fat top layer from the bouillon. Reads shilling-shockers For days on end lounges on the couch. Her greatest dream: to have a frock with yellow sleeves and slit sides. For twelve years she was loved by a gifted inventor. She did not know his occupation, and thought he was an electrician. She abandoned him and married a tradesman in leather. No children. Is often capricious and hysterical without cause. Wakes in the night to order a samovar and a snack. A wholly superfluous creature. Within 24 hours."

6. AT WORK

An army of specialists had gathered round Ak and the Courts of the Higher Decisions. It consisted of doctors, psychologists, observers, and writers. They all worked with extraordinary speed There were occasions when at a given hour the specialists speeded a good hundred persons on the way to the other world. And into the Gray Cabinet there flew a hundred records of characteristics, in which the lucidity of expression vied with the firm assurance of the authors.

From morning till night the work went on apace in the chief department House commissions came and went. Companies of executors of sentences came and went, while behind the desks, as in an immense editorial office, dozens of human being were sitting and writing, with quick, firm, unreflecting hands.

Ak looked at all this with narrow, strong, impenetrable eyes, and thought his own thoughts, from which his body grew more and more hunched, and his large, impetuous, stubborn head more and more gray.

Something rose up between him and his servants, something erected itself as it were between his tense, sleepless thought and the blind, unreflecting hands of the executors.

7. AK'S DOUBTS

One day the members of the Courts of the Higher Decisions came into the department with the intention of delivering their reports

They did not find Ak in his usual place. They sought and did not find him. They sent out messengers, called on the telephone without success.

Only after two hours they found him by chance in the Gray Cabinet.

Ak was sitting in the Cabinet on the death warrants of the superfluous, with an intense expression of thought in his eyes, unusual even for him.

"What are you doing here?" they asked Ak.

"As you see, I am thinking," answered Ak wearily.

"But why in the Cabinet?"

"It's the most fitting place. I am thinking of human beings, and to think of human beings profitably it is best to do it in the immediate proximity of the decrees of their destruction. Only sitting on the documents of the destruction of man is it possible to learn something of his extraordinary strange life."

Someone laughed shallowly and emptily.

"Don't you laugh!" said Ak warningly, waving someone's record of characteristics in his hand. "Don't you laugh! I think the Courts of the Higher Decisions are passing through a crisis. An examination of the records of those who have perished has led me to seek new paths toward progress. You have all learned, quickly and malignantly, to prove the superfluity of this or that existence. Even the least gifted among you is ready, in a few phrases, to demonstrate this with conviction. And here am I sitting and thinking, Is your way just?"

Once more Ak lapsed into thought, then sighed bitterly, and said quietly:

"What's to be done? Where's the issue? When one examines the lives of the living, one arrives at the conclusion that three-fourths of them should be rooted out of existence. But when one examines those who have perished, a doubt comes; wouldn't it have been better if one had loved them and pitied them? That's where, in my opinion, is the blind alley of the human question, the blind alley of human history"

Again Ak lapsed into a sad silence, and he dug into the mountain of records of the condemned dead, and unhealthily began to pore over their officially painful brevity

The members of the Courts departed. No one contradicted. In the first place, because it was useless to contradict Ak; in the second, because no one dared to contradict him. But they all felt that a new decision was ripening, and they nearly all felt dissatisfied: Here was a matter which had become a matter of custom, everything was clear and definite, and now it looked as if it all would have to be changed for something else. But for what?

What else has this man's brain contrived, this brain which had such a fabulous power over the town?

8. THE CRISIS

Ak vanished.

He always vanished when he fell into meditation. They sought him everywhere and did not find him. Someone said that Ak was sitting outside the town and weeping. Others said that Ak was running about his garden on all fours and gnawing the earth.

The activity of the Courts of the Higher Decisions weakened. Its work ceased to run smoothly with the disappearance of Ak. The in-

habitants simply put up iron bars across their doors and would not let the servants of the Courts in. In some districts the questions of the members of the Courts as regards the right to live were answered with laughter, and it even happened that the superfluous seized the members of the Courts of the Higher Decisions and examined them as to their right to live and wrote mock records of characteristics, which in no wise differed from those preserved in the Gray Cabinet.

Chaos possessed the town. Superfluous, good-for-nothing inhabitants who had not yet been executed became so brazen as to appear in the streets and to make good cheer with their neighbors, to give themselves up to all sorts of diversions, and even to enter into marriage.

Congratulations were exchanged in the streets:

"Ended! Ended! Hurrah!"

"The examinations of the right to live have come to an end!"

"Don't you think, citizen, life's become very pleasant? There's less human rubbish about. Why, one can breathe now!"

"Aren't you ashamed, citizen? You really think that those who've left this life hadn't a right to it? Oh, I know some who haven't the right to live even a single hour, but they're still alive and will go on living! On the other hand, how many really decent people have perished? If you only knew!"

"That's nothing Mistakes are unavoidable. Tell me, do you know what's become of Ak?"

"I don't know."

"Ak is sitting on a tree outside town and weeping."

"Ak is running about on all fours and gnawing the earth."

"Let him weep."

"Let him go on gnawing."

"You are rejoicing prematurely, citizens! Prematurely, I say. Ak is returning this evening, and the Courts of the Higher Decisions will resume their work."

"How do you know?"

"I know. There's still an awful lot of human rubbish left. It's necessary to clean up things thoroughly. Thoroughly!"

"You're very hard, citizen."

"Fiddlesticks!"

"Citizens! Citizens! Look! Look!"

"New placards are being put up."

"Look!"

"Citizens! What a joy! What good fortune!"

"Citizens, read!"

"Read!"

"Read! Read!"

"Read!"

9. THE NEW PLACARDS

Men were running breathlessly round the streets, with pails full of paste. Packets of huge rose-tinted placards were being unfurled and, with a joyous crackle, were being pasted onto walls of houses. Their text was precise, clear and simple:

"To all without exclusion.

"From the moment of the publication of this decree all inhabitants of the town are allowed to live. Live, multiply, and fill the earth. The Courts of the Higher Decisions have fulfilled their stern obligations and will hereafter be called the Courts of the Higher Delicacy. You are all excellent, citizens, and your rights to life are indisputable.

"The Courts of the Higher Delicacy will appoint special commissions consisting of three members whose duty it shall be to pay daily visits to homes and to congratulate their occupants on the fact of their existence and to note their observations in special 'Joyous Records.'

"The members of these commissions shall have the right to question citizens as to the manner of their life; and citizens, if they so desire, may answer in detail The latter is desirable. The joyous observations shall be preserved in the Rose-tinted Cabinet for posterity."

10. NORMAL LIFE RESUMED

The doors, the windows, the balconies were all opened. Loud human voices, laughter, singing, and music resounded from them Stout, incapable girls began to play on the piano. Gramophones dinned from morning till night. Fiddles, clarinets, and guitars also made themselves audible In the evening men took off their coats, sat themselves on the balconies, and, stretching out their legs, sighed with pleasure. The traffic in the streets grew animated. Young men, taking young women out with them, went driving in cabs and motorcars. The cafés and confectionery shops were full of customers enjoying pastries and cool drinks Trinket shops which sold mirrors did a bustling business. Men and women bought mirrors and enjoyed their reflections. Artists and photographers were overrun with orders for portraits. The portraits were put into frames and adorned the walls. In one instance they caused a murder, which the newspapers made much of. It happened like this A young man hired a furnished room and demanded that the portraits of the parents of his landlord and landlady be removed. The landlord and the landlady were offended and killed the young man, and threw him out of a fifth-story window on to the street.

Feelings of personal dignity and self-love developed tremendously. Collisions and quarrels became a common occurrence. Such colloquies as the following became the rule:

"It is evident that you're alive only because of some mistake. The Courts of the Higher Decisions did its work carelessly."

"Yes, very carelessly, when it left such as you alive."

Generally speaking, these quarrels went unnoticed in the normal course of life. Human beings improved their table, cooked all sorts of jams. Warm knit apparel became in demand, as everyone held his health in high regard

The members of the Courts of the Higher Delicacy regularly visited homes and asked their occupants how they managed.

Many replied that they managed very well, and even tried to convince their questioners of this.

"Just look!" they said, smiling with self-satisfaction and rubbing their hands "We're pickling some cucumbers, he-he! And we have some pickled herrings, too. Our larder is better than it was, thank heavens...."

Others complained of inconveniences and lamented the fact that the work of the Courts of the Higher Decisions had been cut prematurely short.

"Last evening I was in a tram, and just think of it! There wasn't a single unoccupied place....What a disgrace! Both my wife and I had to stand up. There're a good many superfluous people left. They nudge you everywhere—the devil take them! A pity they weren't removed when there was the chance!"

Still others were perturbed for different reasons.

"Just consider! Neither on Wednesday nor on Thursday did any congratulate me on my existence. Shameless, I say! And what will you say to that? Is it, then, necessary for me to come to you to be congratulated, eh?"

II. THE END OF THE TALE

In Ak's office, as before, the work went on apace: men were sitting there and writing. The Rose-tinted Cabinet was full of joyous records and observations. Carefully and in detail were described the birthdays, the marriages, the journeys, the dinners and the suppers, the love stories, indeed all manner of happenings, and some of the records bore the character and appearance of short stories and novels. The inhabitants requested the members of the Courts of the Higher Delicacy to publish them in the form of books, and they had plenty of reading.

Ak was silent.

He grew only more and more hunched and more and more gray.

Sometimes he got into the Rose-tinted Cabinet and remained sitting there a long time, just as he had done before in the Gray Cabinet.

Once he jumped out of the Rose-tinted Cabinet with the cry:

"It's necessary to kill them! To kill them! To kill them!"

But, on seeing the white fingers of his servants hurrying speedily

across the paper, describing the living with the same zeal with which they had formerly described the dead, Ak waved a hand, ran out of the office and disappeared.

He disappeared forever.

There were many legends concerning the disappearance of Ak, and and all sorts of rumors, but Ak was never again found.

And the human beings, of whom there were so many in town, whom at first Ak wanted to kill and afterwards pitied, and whom later he again wanted to kill, human beings among whom are many good people and not a little rubbish, continue to this day to live as if there had been no Ak at all, as if there had been no one to raise the question as regards one's right to live.

[Translation by John Cournos]

Ilya Ilf and Eugene Petrov

The most successful comic novel published under the Soviets is undoubtedly The Little Golden Calf, *the first two chapters of which are printed below with the permission of a kind publisher who wants others to share the joke. If they fail to whet your appetite for the rest, the joke is obviously on the said publisher and the anthologist responsible for the selection. It should be explained that there was a real Lieutenant Schmidt, to whose honor Soviet poets have paid tribute—but that is neither here nor there. The story, if I mistake not, is a brilliant satire, a picaresque adventure, which proves that even in Soviet Russia you may laugh, and heartily. "It kind o' makes me think they're human," someone said to me, on reading the whole. It is a verdict which may be allowed to stand.*

THE THIRTY SONS OF LIEUTENANT SCHMIDT

I

Pedestrians should be loved.

Pedestrians make up the greater part of humanity. More than that—its best part. Pedestrians have created the world. It was they who built cities, reared many-storied buildings, put through canalization

and the water system, paved the streets and lighted them with electric lamps. It was they who spread culture throughout the world, devised printing, invented gunpowder, flung bridges across rivers, deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphics, introduced the safety razor into common usage, destroyed the slave trade, and determined that one hundred palatable, nourishing dishes may be prepared out of soy beans.

And when everything was ready, when our native planet assumed a comparatively well-ordered appearance, motorists appeared.

It must be noted that automobiles were also invented by pedestrians. But it seems that the motorists immediately forgot about it. Gentle and wise pedestrians began to be pressed. The streets created by pedestrians passed into the power of the motorists Pavements became twice as wide, while sidewalks narrowed to the limits of an Internal Revenue stamp. Then frightened pedestrians began to edge against the walls of houses.

In a large city pedestrians lead a martyr's life. A certain transport ghetto has been introduced for their benefit. They are permitted to cross the street only at the crossing; that is, precisely in those places where traffic is thickest and where the hair on which usually hangs the life of a pedestrian may be most easily severed

In our spacious country an ordinary automobile intended, according to the pedestrian's idea, for the peaceful transportation of men and merchandise has assumed the threatening proportions of a fratricidal projectile It knocks out of formation entire ranks of trade union members and their families.

Should the pedestrian happen to succeed in fluttering out alive from under the silver nose of the machine, the militia * fines him for violating the rules of the traffic catechism.

And in general the authority of the pedestrian has been greatly shaken They who have given the world such remarkable people as Horace, Boyle-Mariotte, Lobachevsky and Gutenberg, Meyerhold and Anatole France, are now forced to grimace in a most disgusting fashion simply to remind people of their existence. Oh, God, oh, God (who dost not really exist), to what straits hast thou (who indeed dost not exist) brought the pedestrian?

Here he comes from Vladivostok to Moscow, along the Siberian highway, holding in one hand a banner with the inscription, "Let Us Reconstruct the Life of the Textile Workers," and holding on his shoulder a stick on the tip of which dangle reserve sandals of the "Uncle Vanya" brand and a tin teapot without a cover. This is a Soviet pedestrian-physical-culturist who in his youth departed from

* Although there is an outward resemblance between the functions performed by the militia of a proletarian state and our police, the two should not be confounded because of fundamental differences To the Soviet citizen the word "police" connotes oppression and persecution C M

Vladivostok, and who, in his declining years, at the very gates of Moscow, will be crushed by a heavy autocar, the number of which he will not have time to notice.

Or another, a European Mohican of pedestrian traffic He is walking on foot around the world, rolling a barrel before him. He would have gladly gone as he was, without a barrel, but then no one would notice that he was really a pedestrian out for a long-distance record and nothing would be written about him in the newspapers. So for the rest of his life he is obliged to push before him the damned keg on which, moreover (shame, shame!), a large yellow sign praises the incomparable virtues of an automobile oil entitled "The Chauffeur's Dream."

Thus has the pedestrian degenerated.

It is only in small Russian cities that the pedestrian is yet respected and loved There he is still the master of the street, wanders carefree over the pavement and crosses it in any direction in the most involved manner.

A citizen in a cap with a white top, the kind worn for the most part by managers of summer gardens and masters of ceremonies at vaudeville theaters, undoubtedly belonged to the greater and best part of humanity. He moved through the streets of the town of Arbatov on foot, looking around him with tolerant curiosity In one hand he held a small obstetrician's bag Apparently the town had in no way amazed the pedestrian in the artistic cap.

He saw about fifteen azure, mignonette-colored, and pale rose church bells. His eyes beheld the molting Caucasian gold of church cupolas. A strawberry flag snapped over the official building. At the white-towered gates of the provincial Kremlin two severe old ladies spoke French, complained about the Soviet government, and exchanged reminiscences about their favorite daughters. A wave of cold came from the church cellar—a sour wine odor belched forth. There, apparently, potatoes were stored.

"Potatoes have saved the temple," the pedestrian said quietly.

Passing under a veneered arch with a fresh lime slogan· "Greetings to the Fifth District Conference of Women and Girls," he found himself at the beginning of a long lane called the Boulevard of Youthful Talents.

"No," he said anxiously, "this is not Rio de Janeiro. This is much worse."

On nearly all the benches of the Boulevard of Youthful Talents sat lonely young women with open books in their hands. Ragged shadows fell on the pages of their books, on their bare elbows, on their pathetic bangs. When the new arrival entered the cool lane there was noticeable movement on the benches. The girls, hiding behind the books of Gladkov, Eliza Orrzeszko and Seyfullina, cast timid glances at the

visitor. He stalked officiously past the agitated readers and came to the building of the Executive Committee—the goal of his journey.

That very minute an izvozchik came around the corner. Beside him, clinging to the dusty crumbling edge of the carriage and waving a bulging portfolio with a stamped inscription "Musique," ran a man in a long *tolstofka* shirt. He was expostulating heatedly with the passenger, an elderly man with a nose that hung like a banana, who pressed a suitcase with his feet and from time to time thumbed a fig in the face of his opponent. In the heat of the argument his engineering cap, the band of which glistened with the green velvet of a divan, slid threateningly to the side. Both contending sides frequently and with special sonority pronounced the word "emolument."

Soon other words were heard.

"You'll take full responsibility for this, Comrade Talmudovsky!" *shouted the long-shirted one, brushing away from his face the engineer's* thumbing gesture.

"But I tell you that under such conditions not a single decent spe*cialist will come to you,*" *answered Talmudovsky, attempting to return* his thumbing gesture to its former place.

"If you mention emolument again, I shall have to charge you with graft!"

"To hell with emolument! I'll work for nothing!" shouted the engineer, in his agitation drafting all sorts of diagonals with his thumbing gesture. "If I want to, I'll retire altogether on a pension. Forget this serfdom. They themselves write everywhere 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' and yet they try to make me work in this rat hole!"

At this point Engineer Talmudovsky quickly opened the fist with which he had thumbed and began to count on his fingers.

"The apartment—a pig-sty No theater. The emolument...Izvozchik! Off to the station!"

"Whoa-a!" the long-shirted one screamed, fussily running in front of the horse and catching it by the bridle. "I, as secretary of the Section of Engineers and Technicians...Kondrat Ivanovich! But the factory will remain without specialists...Shame on you!...Our public opinion will not permit it, Engineer Talmudovsky....I have a complaint in my brief case...."

And the Secretary of the Section, planting his feet apart, quickly began to untie the ribbons of his "Musique."

This indiscretion decided the argument. Seeing that the road was clear, Talmudovsky rose to his feet and with all his might cried out:

"Off to the station!"

"Where? Where?" babbled the secretary, running after the carriage. "You are a deserter from the labor front!"

From the "musique" portfolio flew out sheets of tissue paper with "Resolutions" in purple ink.

The new arrival who had watched the incident with great interest stood for a minute on the deserted square and said with conviction.

"No. This is not Rio de Janeiro."

A moment later he was knocking at the door of the private office of the chairman of the Executive Committee.

"Whom do you want?" asked the secretary who was sitting at a table next to the door. "Why do you want the chairman? What's your business?"

Evidently the visitor had a subtle knowledge of how to deal with secretaries of governmental, economic and public organizations. He made no attempt to prove that he had arrived on pressing government business.

"Private," he said dryly, without looking at the secretary, and pushed his head into the doorway. "May I come in?"

And without waiting for an answer he approached the desk

"Hello, don't you recognize me?"

The chairman, a black-eyed, large-headed man in a blue coat and trousers to match stuffed into boots with high, wing-foot heels, looked at the visitor rather absentmindedly and declared that he did not recognize him.

"Is it possible that you don't recognize me? And yet many people think that I am remarkably like my father."

"I also resemble my father," the chairman answered impatiently. "What do you want, comrade?"

"The whole point is in the father," the visitor remarked sadly. "'I am the son of Lieutenant Schmidt."

The chairman became confused and rose. He quickly remembered the far-famed image and pale mustached face of the revolutionary lieutenant in his black cape buckled with bronze lions. While he was gathering his thoughts in order to ask the son of the Black Sea hero a question deserving of the occasion, the visitor regarded the furniture of the office with the look of a discriminating purchaser.

A long time ago, in the days of the Tsar, the furnishing of public places was standardized. A special pedigree of official furniture was bred: flat wooden benches with six-inch polished seats, tables on billiard legs, and oaken parapets that separated the officials from the restive outer world. In the course of the Revolution this breed of furniture became almost extinct, and the secret of its production was lost. People forgot how the quarters of official personages should be arranged, and there appeared in the offices of civil servants objects that until then had been the inseparable property of private apartments. Government offices now boasted the divans of lawyers, with springs and a mirrored shelf for seven porcelain elephants which presumably bring luck, cupboards for dishes, little cabinets, special leather chairs for rheumatics, and azure Japanese vases. To the private office of the

chairman of the Arbatov Executive Committee, in addition to the usual writing desk, two small pillows upholstered in pink silk had attached themselves, also a striped settee, a velvet screen with a Fujiama and a cherry tree in blossom, and a cheap, machine-made Slavic cupboard with a mirror.

"The cupboard is of the type 'Hey, you Slavs!' " thought the visitor. "There isn't much to get here. Nope, this is not Rio de Janeiro "

"Very glad you dropped in," the chairman said finally. "I suppose you're from Moscow."

"Yes, passing through," replied the visitor, examining the settee and becoming increasingly convinced that the financial affairs of the Executive Committee were in a bad way. He preferred Executive Committees furnished with the new Swedish furniture of the Leningrad Lumber Trust.

The chairman wanted to ask about the purpose of the lieutenant's son's visit to Arbatov, but, unexpectedly even for himself, he smiled weakly and said:

"Our churches are remarkable. People have come here from *Glavnauka*. They intend to restore them Tell me, and do you yourself remember the rebellion on the battleship *Ochakov?*"

"Dimly, dimly," the visitor replied. "In those heroic times I was extremely small. I was an infant."

"Excuse me, but what is your name?"

"Nicholas... Nicholas Schmidt."

"And... your patronymic?"

"Ach, that's bad," thought the visitor, who did not know the name of his father.

"Ye-es," he drawled, evading a direct reply. "Nowadays many people don't know the names of heroes. The pernicious NEP! The old enthusiasm is lacking. To tell the truth, I came to your city quite by accident, got into difficulties on the way, haven't a kopeck to my illustrious name."

The chairman was glad of the change in conversation. It seemed shameful to him that he had forgotten the name of the *Ochakov* hero.

"Really," he thought, looking lovingly at the inspired face of his guest. "We get lost in work. We forget the milestones of history."

"What did you say—not a kopeck? That's interesting."

"Of course, I could have approached any private person. Anyone would give it to me. But, you understand, it's not altogether convenient for political considerations. The son of a revolutionist, and suddenly he asks money from a private person—a Nepman...."

The lieutenant's son pronounced the last words tearfully The chairman listened with anxiety to the new intonations in the voice of his

visitor. "And suppose he's an epileptic," he thought. "There'll be no end of trouble with him."

"You did very well not to have gone to a private trader," said the chairman, finally involving himself completely.

Then the son of the Black Sea hero, softly and without pressure, turned to business. He asked for fifty roubles. The chairman, limited by the narrow frames of the local budget, could give him only eight roubles and three meal tickets to the co-operative restaurant "The Stomach's Erstwhile Friend."

The hero's son put the money and the tickets in the deep pocket of his worn-out gray dotted coat and was about to rise from the pink cushion, when stamping and the forbidding cry of the secretary were heard outside the door of the private office. The door was opened hurriedly and on the threshold appeared a new visitor.

"Who's in charge here?" he asked, breathing heavily, his knavish eyes scouring about

"Well, let's say I am," said the chairman.

"Greetings, Chairman," barked the new arrival, stretching forth a shovel-shaped palm. "Let's be acquainted. Lieutenant Schmidt's son."

"Who?" asked the city chief, his eyes bulging.

"Son of the great, unforgettable hero, Lieutenant Schmidt," repeated the new arrival.

"But the Comrade sitting there is the son of Comrade Schmidt—Nicholas Schmidt!"

And in utter confusion the chairman pointed to the first visitor whose face suddenly assumed a somnolent expression. In the lives of the two crooks dawned a ticklish situation. At any moment the unpleasant sword of Nemesis might suddenly gleam in the hands of the modest and gullible chairman of the Executive Committee. Fate granted only one second of time for concocting means of rescue. Horror appeared in the eyes of Lieutenant Schmidt's second son. He was clad in a Paraguay summer shirt, sailor trousers and bluish canvas slippers. His figure which a moment ago had been sharp and angular began to melt, lost its threatening contours and no longer inspired respect A wicked smile appeared on the face of the chairman.

And just when it seemed to the second son of Lieutenant Schmidt that all was lost and that the terrible anger of the chairman would roll in a moment on his red head, rescue came from the pink cushion.

"Vasya!" cried the first son of Lieutenant Schmidt, jumping up. "My own little brother! Don't you recognize your brother Nick?"

And the first son embraced the second son.

"Of course, I recognize you!" exclaimed Vasya, seeing the light. "Of course I recognize my brother Nick!"

The happy meeting was marked by such stormy caresses and such unusually strong embraces that the second son of the Black Sea revolutionist emerged with a face pale with pain. In his transports of joy Brother Nick had pummeled him pretty strongly.

While embracing, both brothers looked out of the corner of their eyes at the chairman on whose face remained a vinegary expression. In view of this the means of rescue had to be developed right there, augmented by intimate details and new materials about the uprising of the seamen in 1905 which had escaped the party historians. Holding each other's hands, the brothers sank onto the settee and, their flattering eyes constantly on the chairman, lost themselves in reminiscences.

"What a remarkable meeting!" exclaimed the first son sententiously, inviting the chairman with a glance to join the family celebration.

"Yes," said the chairman in a frozen voice "It happens, it happens."

Seeing that the chairman was still in the claws of doubt, the first son stroked his brother's locks, red as a setter's, and asked caressingly.

"When did you come from Mariupol? Where did you live there—at grandmother's?"

"Yes, that's where I lived," muttered the lieutenant's second son. "With her."

"Why did you write me so rarely? I was frightfully worried."

"I was busy," the redhead answered sulkily.

And fearing that his indefatigable brother would immediately become interested in what he had been busy with (and he had been busy principally with sitting in houses of correction of various autonomous republics and districts), the second son of Lieutenant Schmidt snatched the initiative and turned questioner.

"And why didn't *you* write?"

"What do you mean I didn't write?" the brother answered unexpectedly, feeling an unusual wave of gaiety. "I sent you registered letters. I have piles of receipts."

And he dived into his side pocket from which he actually pulled out a multitude of papers. But for some reason, he showed them not to his brother but to the chairman of the Executive Committee—and that from a distance.

However strange it may seem, a view of the papers somewhat quieted the chairman, and the recollections of the brothers took a livelier turn than ever. The redhead became thoroughly adjusted to his surroundings and fairly sensibly, albeit rather monotonously, he retold the contents of a popular edition of the pamphlet "The Uprising on the *Ochakov*." The brother embellished his dry exposition with such colorful details that the chairman, who had apparently begun to quiet down, again pricked up his ears.

However he let the brothers go in peace, and they ran out into the street feeling much easier.

Around the corner of the Executive Committee's building they stopped.

"By the way, speaking of childhood," said the first son. "When I was a child I used to kill guys like you right on the spot. With a sling."

"Why?" joyfully inquired the second son of the famous father.

"Such are the implacable laws of life. Or, to put it briefly, life dictates to us its implacable laws What made you come to the private office? Didn't you see that the chairman was not alone?"

"I thought..."

"Oh, so you thought! In other words, there are times when you think. Are you a thinker? What is your name, Thinker? Spinoza? Jean Jacques Rousseau? Marcus Aurelius?"

The redhead was silent, crushed by the just indictment.

"Well, I forgive you. You may live. And now let's get acquainted. Say what you like, we're brothers, and kinship has its obligations. My name is Ostap Bender. Permit me to learn your original surname."

"Balaganov," the redhead presented himself. "Shura Balaganov"

"I'm not asking about your profession," Bender said respectfully. "But I can guess I'm sure it must be something intellectual Have you been tried many times this year?"

"Twice," Balaganov answered freely.

"Now that's bad Why do you put your immortal soul in bondage? No man should come to trial. That's an ugly occupation I'm referring to theft. Setting aside even the fact that stealing is sinful—I'm sure that when you were a child your mother made you familiar with such a doctrine—it is moreover an aimless waste of strength and energy."

Ostap would have developed his views on life interminably if he had not been interrupted by Balaganov

"Look," he said, pointing into the green depths of the Boulevard of Youthful Talents. "Do you see that man in a straw hat?"

"I see," Ostap said haughtily. "What of it? Is he the governor of Borneo?"

"That is Panikovsky," Shura said. "A son of Lieutenant Schmidt."

Along the lane in the shadow of the august lime trees, slightly bent to one side, moved a citizen no longer young A hard straw hat with a scarred brim sat awry on his head. His trousers were so short that they revealed the ragged edges of his underwear. Under the mustache of this citizen, like the fire of a cigarette, glowed a golden tooth.

"What! Another son?" said Ostap. "This is getting funny."

Panikovsky came to the building of the Executive Committee,

thoughtfully described a figure eight at the entrance, lifted his hat by the brim with both hands and set it correctly on his head, pulled his coat all around, and, sighing lugubriously, moved toward the entrance.

"Lieutenant Schmidt had three sons," Bender remarked. "Two were wise, but the third was a fool. He must be warned."

"Don't bother," said Balaganov. "He'll know next time how to violate a pact."

"What pact are you talking about?"

"Never mind. I'll tell you later. He's entered, he's entered."

"I am an envious man," Bender confessed. "But there's nothing to envy here. Have you ever seen a bull fight? Come, let's watch."

The friendly children of Lieutenant Schmidt went around the corner and came to the window of the chairman's private office.

The chairman sat behind the foggy, unwashed glass He was writing rapidly. Like the faces of all who write, his face was mournful. The door was flung open and into the room entered Panikovsky Pressing his hat to his greasy coat, he stopped before the table and for a long time moved his thick lips. Then the chairman jumped up in his chair and opened his mouth wide. The friends heard a prolonged cry.

With the words "General retreat," Ostap pulled Balaganov after him. They ran to the boulevard and hid behind a tree

"Hats off!" said Ostap "Bare your head. Presently the body will be carried out."

He made no mistake No sooner did the rolls and reverberations of the chairman's voice become still when in the portals of the Executive Committee building appeared two hefty committeemen. They were carrying Panikovsky. One held him by the hands, the other by the feet.

"The body of the deceased," commented Ostap, "was carried out on the hands of kinsmen and friends."

The committeemen carried out the third and foolish son of Lieutenant Schmidt and began to swing him slowly. Panikovsky was silent, piously gazing at the azure sky.

"After a short civil ceremony..." began Ostap.

At that very moment, having given the inert body of Panikovsky sufficient swing, they threw him out into the street.

"...the body was interred," Bender finished.

Panikovsky slapped to the earth like a frog He rose quickly and, leaning to one side more than ever, he ran along the Boulevard of Youthful Talents with incredible swiftness

"Well now," Ostap pronounced. "Tell me how this viper violated the pact and what sort of a pact it was."

II

The busy morning came to an end. Ostap Bender wanted to eat.

"You, of course, are on the verge of financial disaster," he said to Balaganov.

"Are you speaking of money?" Shura inquired. "I haven't had any for a week"

"In that case, you'll end badly, young man," Ostap chided him. "Financial disaster is the most grievous of all that may befall you in life Well, never mind. Don't worry. I managed to carry away three meal tickets in my beak. It was a case of love at first sight with the chairman of the Executive Committee."

But the foster-brothers were not able to take advantage of the city chief's kindness. On the doors of the restaurant "The Stomach's Erstwhile Friend" hung a large lock covered with something that looked like a mixture of rust and buckwheat grits.

"Of course," Ostap said bitterly "While they're taking an inventory of schnitzels the restaurant is closed forever. We must offer our bodies to the lacerations of private traders."

"Private traders love cash money," Balaganov objected in a dull voice

"Well, well, I shan't torture you. The chairman showered me with a golden rain of eight roubles. But, bear in mind, most respected Shura, that I have no intention of feeding you gratis. For every vitamin you receive I shall demand of you a number of minor services"

However there were no private owners in town and the brothers dined in a co-operative summer garden where special placards announced to the citizens the latest Arbatov regulation in the field of popular dietetics:

BEER IS SOLD ONLY TO MEMBERS OF TRADE UNIONS

"Kvass will do," said Balaganov.

"Besides," added Bender, "the local kvass is manufactured by a co-operative of private owners who sympathize with the Soviet regime. And now let's hear how the depraved Panikovsky got in wrong. I delight in stories of petty cheating."

Having eaten his fill, Balaganov looked gratefully at his savior and began his story. The tale lasted for two hours and contained exceedingly interesting information.

In all the departments of human endeavor the supply and demand

of labor is managed by appropriate organizations. Everything is regulated, flows along smooth channels, and returns to its starting point in complete conformity with the law and under its protection.

And only the market of a special category of swindlers who called themselves the children of Lieutenant Schmidt remained in a chaotic condition. Anarchy rent the fraternity of the lieutenant's children and they could not derive from their profession its natural perquisites.

It is difficult to find a more convenient field of operations for all sorts of pretenders than our expansive country, filled either with exceedingly suspicious or exceedingly gullible administrators, managers and social workers.

Throughout the land, extorting and begging, move the spurious grandchildren of Karl Marx, the non-existent nephews of Friedrich Engels, the brothers of Lunacharsky, the cousins of Clara Zetkin, and, if the worst comes to the worst, the descendants of the famous anarchist Prince Kropotkin. Detachments of mythical kinsmen assiduously exploit the natural wealth of the land: goodheartedness, foolishness, servility, and cringing

From Minsk to the Bering Sea, and from Nakhichevan to Franz Josef Land, the kinsmen of great men enter executive committees, detrain at station platforms, and anxiously ride in cabs. They hurry. They have much to do.

At one time the supply of kinsmen exceeded the demand and a depression hit this unique market. A need for reforms was strongly felt Gradually the grandchildren of Karl Marx, the Kropotkinites, the Engelsites and their like ceased their activity, with the exception of the stormy fraternity of Lieutenant Schmidt's children, which, like the Polish Sejm, was constantly torn by anarchy. The children appeared to be coarse, greedy, refractory, and interfered with each other's golden harvest.

Shura Balaganov, who considered himself the lieutenant's first-born, was seriously worried about the new state of affairs. With increasing frequency he had to meet members of the fraternity who had completely ruined the fertile fields of the Ukraine and the salubrious heights of the Caucasus where he had been accustomed to work profitably.

"And so you feared the increasing difficulties?" Ostap inquired jeeringly

But Balaganov did not notice the irony. Sipping the lavender kvass, he continued his narrative.

There was only one way out of this strained situation and that was a convention. Balaganov had worked at it throughout the winter. He corresponded with the competitors of his acquaintance. To those he did not know he extended invitations through the courtesy of Marx's grandchildren he met on the way. And finally, in the early

spring of 1928, nearly all the known children of Lieutenant Schmidt gathered in a Moscow saloon near the Sukharev Tower. The quorum was rather large—it developed that Lieutenant Schmidt had thirty sons, ranging in age from eighteen to fifty-two years, and four daughters, rather silly, rather old, rather unprepossessing.

In a short introductory speech Balaganov expressed the hope that the brothers would reach an understanding and would finally work out a pact, the necessity of which was dictated by life itself.

According to Balaganov's project, the entire Union of the Republics should be divided into as many exploitational districts as there were delegates. Each district was to be granted in fee simple to each of the children for ninety-nine years. No member of the fraternity had the right to cross the borders and invade the territory unassigned to him for purposes of profit.

No one objected to the new principles with the possible exception of Panikovsky, who even then had announced that he could manage to live without a pact. However, during the division of the land most disgraceful scenes developed. The high contracting parties called each other names from the very first minute and addressed each other exclusively with insulting epithets.

The argument was caused by the distribution of districts.

No one wanted to take university centers; no one wanted to take the well-known prospects of Moscow, Leningrad and Kharkov. All of them were unanimous in refusing the German republic along the Volga.

"What's the matter? What's wrong with that republic?" Balaganov asked innocently. "It seems a very good place to me. The Germans, a cultured people, cannot fail to lend a helping hand."

"You don't say!" cried the excited children. "Try and get something out of the Germans!"

It seems that more than one member of the gathering had been imprisoned by the suspicious German colonists.

The distant Eastern districts, sunk in sands, enjoyed also a very bad reputation. They were accused of being ignorant, and of being unfamiliar with the fame of Lieutenant Schmidt.

"Do you take me for a fool!" Panikovsky screamed. "Let me have the central Russian plateau and I'll sign the pact!"

"How's that? All of the plateau?" Balaganov taunted. "And why not add Melitopol, or perhaps Bobruisk?"

At the mention of Bobruisk the entire convention moaned painfully. Everybody was ready to go to Bobruisk immediately. Bobruisk was considered a splendid, highly cultured place.

"Well, if not all of the plateau," insisted the greedy Panikovsky, "then half of it. After all, I am a family man; I have two families."

But he didn't get even half of it.

After prolonged cries it was decided to distribute the districts by lot. Thirty-four pieces of paper were cut and on each one a geographical name was inscribed. Fruitful Kursk and dubious Kherson, almost untouched Minusinsk and almost hopeless Ashkhabad, Kiev, Petrozavodsk and Chita—all the republics, all the districts lay in somebody's rabbit hat with ear muffs and waited for its master.

Joyous exclamations, dull groans and oaths accompanied the drawing of the lots.

Panikovsky's evil star exerted its influence on the course of affairs. He was rewarded with the fruitless and vengeful republic of the Volga Germans. Beside himself with anger, he nevertheless signed the pact.

"I'll go!" he cried "But I warn you that should the Germans treat me unkindly I'll violate the pact! I'll cross the border!"

Balaganov, who drew the golden Arbatov district close to the German republic, became disturbed and immediately announced that he would not tolerate any violation of exploitational norms.

"And you yourself, Bender, saw how this viper has violated the pact," Shura Balaganov finished his exposition. "He's been crawling about my district for some time, but I haven't been able to catch him until just now."

Contrary to the narrator's expectations, Panikovsky's wicked act evoked no censure from Ostap. Bender sprawled on his chair, looking idly before him. On the high rear wall of the restaurant garden trees were drawn, thick-leaved and regular like on pictures in textbooks There were no real trees in the garden, but the shadow of the wall yielded sufficient coolness to satisfy the citizens. All of these were evidently members of trade unions, because they drank only beer and ate not a thing.

To the gates of the garden, constantly groaning and spitting, drove up a green automobile on the door of which was written a white, arched sign· "Hey, let's ride!" Below it was the tariff· three roubles an hour; other terms by agreement. There were no passengers in the machine.

The beer-drinkers began to whisper anxiously. For about five minutes the chauffeur looked pleadingly through the garden wicket. Then, evidently losing all hope of securing a passenger, he cried out with the defiance of desperation:

"The taxi is free! Please take a seat!"

But none of the citizens expressed any desire to sit down in the automobile "Hey, let's ride!" As a matter of fact, the very invitation of the chauffeur affected them strangely. They sulked and attempted not to look in the direction of the automobile. The chauffeur shook his head and slowly drove away The doleful glances of the Arbatovites followed in his wake. Five minutes later the green automobile

sped madly past the garden in the opposite direction. The chauffeur jumped up and down in his seat and cried something unintelligible. The automobile was as empty as ever.

Ostap followed it with his glance and said:

"So then, Balaganov, you are a fop. Don't be offended. I merely want to indicate the place that you occupy under the sun."

"Go to the devil!" Balaganov said rudely.

"So you have taken offense after all. In other words, according to you the occupation of being a lieutenant's son is not foppery."

"But you yourself are a son of Lieutenant Schmidt!" Balaganov cried out.

"You are a fop," Ostap repeated. "And the son of a fop. And your children will be fops Don't be a child! What occurred this morning is not even an episode but just a mere incident, the caprice of an artist, a gentleman in search of a ten-spot. It's not in my character to resort to such puny tricks. And what sort of a profession is it, the Lord help us! A son of Lieutenant Schmidt! Very well, I'll grant you one year. All right, two! But then what? Then your auburn locks will begin to get thin and you'll simply be out of luck!"

"What am I to do then?" Balaganov worried. "How am I to find my daily bread?"

"You must think," Ostap replied severely "I, for example, am fed by ideas. I don't stretch my paw for the sour roubles of some Executive Committee My aim is higher. As for you, I see that you are in love with money for its own sake. Tell me, what sum would appeal to you?"

"Five thousand," Balaganov answered promptly.

"A month?"

"A year"

"In that case, our ways part right here. I need five hundred thousand, and, if possible, immediately and not in installments."

"Wouldn't you take it in installments?" asked Balaganov vindictively.

Ostap looked attentively at his interlocutor and replied in all seriousness:

"I shouldn't mind taking it in installments if I could afford to, but I need it all immediately."

Balaganov wanted to jest about the last remark, but raising his eyes to Ostap, he stopped short. Before him sat an athlete with the regular features of a face stamped on a coin. A slender white scar cut his tanned throat. His eyes glistened with austere joy.

Balaganov suddenly sensed an irresistible impulse to spring to attention. He even had the desire to clear his throat, as happens with people of middling responsibility when conversing with one of the

high-placed comrades. And actually clearing his throat, he asked in embarrassment:

"Why do you need so much money.... And right away?"

"As a matter of fact, I need more," said Ostap. "Five hundred thousand is my minimum. Five hundred thousand genuine roubles for orientation. I want to go away, Comrade Shura, very far away, to Rio de Janeiro."

"Have you relatives there?" Balaganov asked.

"Why? Do I look like a man who could have relatives?"

"No, but it seemed to me..."

"I have no kinsmen, Comrade Shura. I'm all alone in the world. I had a father once who was a Turkish subject, but even he passed on in horrible convulsions. But that's not the point. Ever since I was a child I have wanted to go to Rio de Janeiro. You, of course, are not aware that such a city exists."

Balaganov mournfully shook his head. Of the world homes of culture, in addition to Moscow, he knew only Kiev, Melitopol and Zhmerinka And anyway he was convinced that the earth was flat.

Ostap flung on the table a page torn out of a book.

"This is a clipping from the Little Soviet Encyclopedia. Listen to what it says here about Rio de Janeiro: 'Population one million three hundred and sixty thousand'... So... 'a considerable number of mulattoes... at the large bay in the Atlantic Ocean'... Here, here! ... 'in the wealth of stores and the grandeur of buildings its main streets rival those of the largest cities of the world.' Can you imagine that, Shura? Rival! Mulattoes, bay, export coffee! In other words, coffee dumping A charleston entitled 'My Girl Has A Little Thing,' and... But what's the use of talking? You can see for yourself what's going on One and a half million people, and all of them to a man in white trousers I want to go away from here. In the course of the last year grave differences have developed between the Soviet government and me. The government wants to build socialism, but I am not interested. The building of socialism bores me. What am I—a stone mason? A stone mason in a white apron?... Now do you understand why I need so much money?"

"But where will you get five hundred thousand?" Balaganov asked quietly.

"Wherever you like," Ostap answered. "Show me a rich man and I'll take his money away from him."

"What! Murder?" Balaganov asked in a quieter voice than ever and glancing at neighboring tables where the Arbatovites were drinking each other's health.

"Do you know," Ostap said, "you shouldn't have signed that so-called Sukharev pact That mental exercise, it seems to me, has exhausted you frightfully. You are becoming sillier before my very

eyes. Note this: Ostap Bender never killed anyone. He has been killed. That happened. But he himself is pure before the law. I admit that I'm no cherub, of course. I have no wings. But I respect the criminal code. This is my weakness."

"But how do you propose to take the money away?"

"How do I propose to take it away? The taking away or the expropriation of moneys varies according to circumstances. I personally have four hundred comparatively honest means of expropriation. But that's not the point. The point is that nowadays there are no rich people And herein lies the whole horror of my situation. Another man would, of course, attack some defenseless organization. But that is not within my rules. You are aware of my respect for the criminal code. And it doesn't pay to rob a collective. Give me a rich individual. But he's not to be had, that sort of an individual."

"Come on," Balaganov exclaimed. "There are very wealthy people."

"But do you know them?" Ostap said immediately. "Can you give me the name and exact address of one Soviet millionaire? And yet they exist! There must be some! As long as any type of coinage wanders over the country, then there must be people who have a lot of it But how can I find such a clever fellow?"

Ostap sighed. Apparently the dreams about a rich individual had been disturbing him for a long time.

"How pleasant it would be," he remarked thoughtfully, "to work with a legal millionaire in a well-organized bourgeois state with ancient capitalistic traditions! There a millionaire is a popular figure. His address is known to everybody He lives in a private house somewhere in Rio de Janeiro. You go to him to keep an appointment, and in the hall itself, after the very first greetings, you take some money away from him. And all of this, bear in mind, is done in a kindly way, politely: 'Hello, sir. Excuse me, I'll have to trouble you a bit. All right That's all.' And that *is* all! Culture What could be simpler? A gentleman in the society of other gentlemen transacts his little business. Only you must not fire at the chandeliers. That's not necessary. But with us...God, God, what a cold country we live in! With us everything is secret, everything is underground. Even the Commissariat of Finance with its all-powerful taxing apparatus cannot find a Soviet millionaire. And yet the millionaire may be sitting at this very moment in this so-called summer garden, at the adjoining table, and drinking a forty-kopeck bottle of Tip Top beer. That is what hurts!"

"In other words," Balaganov asked after a pause, "it is your opinion that if such a secret millionaire could be found, then..."

"Don't continue I know exactly what you want to say. No, not that. Nothing of the kind. I will not choke him with a pillow, or beat him over the head with a blackjack. And in general there will be no

foolishness. Oh, if I could only find such an individual! I'll arrange things so well that he'll bring his money to me himself, on a little saucer with a blue border."

"That's very good," Balaganov smiled incredulously. "Five hundred thousand on a little saucer with a blue border!"

He rose and began to walk around the table. He clicked his tongue mournfully, stopped, opened his mouth as if wanting to say something. Saying nothing, he sat down, but again rose to his feet. Ostap followed Balaganov's convolutions with perfect equanimity

"He'll bring it himself?" Balaganov asked suddenly in a screechy voice. "On a little saucer? But suppose he doesn't bring it? And where is that Rio de Janeiro? Is it far? It's impossible that all should wear white trousers! Don't try to tell me that, Bender! On five hundred thousand you can live well, even here."

"I don't doubt it, I don't doubt it," Ostap said gaily. "It's possible to live on it. But don't count your chickens before they're hatched. You haven't got the five hundred thousand."

A deep wrinkle marked the placid, unplowed brow of Balaganov. With uncertainty he glanced at Ostap and muttered·

"I know such a millionaire. Something may come of this"

In a flash Bender's face lost its liveliness. It hardened immediately and again assumed the contours of a coin.

"Go on, go on," he said. "I apply only on Saturdays. Don't waste my time."

"Word of honor, Monsieur Bender..."

"Listen, Shura, if you have definitely decided to use the French language, then don't call me *monsieur* but *citoyen,* which means 'citizen' By the way, what is your millionaire's address?"

"He lives in Chernomorsk."

"Why, of course, just as I thought. Chernomorsk! There, even in pre-war days they called a man with ten thousand a millionaire. While now...I can well imagine! No, that's nonsense!"

"But no, let me tell you. This is a genuine millionaire. You see, Bender, not long ago I had the occasion to spend some time in the local house of correction..."

Ten minutes later the foster brothers left the co-operative summer garden in which beer was served The great schemer felt like a surgeon on the eve of a very serious operation.

"That's just my luck," Bender said, his eyes shining. "I must begin an enterprise of millions with a painful lack of cash on hand. All of my capital for investment, operation and reserve is represented by five roubles....What did you say was the name of your underground millionaire?"

"Koreiko," Balaganov answered.

"Yes, yes. Koreiko. A splendid name. But are you certain that no one knows about his millions?"

"No one besides myself and Pruzhansky. But Pruzhansky, as I have already told you, will sit in jail for another three years. If you could only see how he worried and wept when I was getting released. He seemed to feel that I should not tell anyone about Koreiko"

"The fact that he disclosed the secret to *you* is nonsense. That isn't why he worried and wept. What he evidently sensed was that you would tell *me* about it. And that is really a direct loss for poor Pruzhansky. By the time Pruzhansky gets out of jail, Koreiko will be finding solace in the banal proverb: Poverty is no sin."

Ostap flung off his summer cap and swinging it in the air asked: "Have I any gray hair?"

Balaganov pulled in his stomach, moved his toes apart to the width of a rifle butt, and in the voice of the soldier on the right flank, replied:

"No, sir!"

"There will be! Great battles are ahead of us You, too, will become gray, Balaganov!"

Suddenly Balaganov giggled in a silly manner·

"How did you put it—he'll bring it to you himself on a little saucer with a blue border?"

"For *me* on a little saucer," Ostap said "For *you* on a little plate"

"But how about Rio de Janeiro? I want to have white pants too"

"Rio de Janeiro is the delicate dream of my childhood," the great schemer answered severely. "Don't you touch it with your dirty paws Now, to business! Send the troops of the line for my disposal. The military units must arrive in the city of Chernomorsk in the shortest possible time. Service uniforms. Bugle 'advance'! I will command the parade!"

[Translation by Charles Malamuth]

Victor Ardov

DRASTIC ACTION

When I first entered, it was about ten o'clock in the evening. The person I had come to see, Nina Antonovna Okunevskaya, a comely citizen of twenty years, was stamping with her feet loudly in the passage, growling at the same time:

"I am com-m-ming! Com-m-ming! O-ho-ho-ho! Com-m-ming!!!"

Nina Antonovna opened wide her mouth, stuck out her lips, and blared now like a distant railway engine, now like an elephant.

Involuntarily I shuddered, and cautiously turned to the exit

"Where are you off to?" in a quiet and perfectly normal voice said Nina Antonovna "Take your overcoat off.... He'll be asleep presently, and we shall have tea."

"Who'll be asleep?"

"Lesha. You see, he won't go to sleep until you've frightened him with the bogie-man O-ho-ho-ho! I'm com-m-ing, com-m-ing!" My hostess renewed her outcries

I understood Lesha was Nina Antonovna's three-year-old son, and, it was evident that I had come precisely at that moment when, for pedagogical reasons, this little scene was being enacted with the participation of the bogie-man.

Having removed my overcoat, I entered the room, which contained the capricious observer of this spectacle Red-cheeked and fair-haired Lesha was standing up, his hands tight on the protecting barrier of his tiny bed; his eyes fixed askance, with interest, on the door, he drawled:

"W-h-y?..."

Near him stood the volunteer nurse—a friend of the mother's—and with difficulty answered the child's questions.

"Why doesn't he come in? The bogie-man?"

"Yes Wh-y-y?"

"He doesn't come in, because he is very terrible. He can frighten little boys"

"W-h-y-y?"

"Why he is terrible?"

"Yes."

"He's made like that. Here he's got horns, here tusks, here a hump...."

The growl which suddenly again sounded from behind the door interrupted the description of the bogie-man's appearance.

"Now, do go to sleep quickly—or else he'll come in, put you in a sack, and carry you away."

Lesha reflected a little, then lay down and permitted himself to be covered with a blanket.

"Sh-h! At last! Ninochka, you may come in now."

Nina Antonovna entered and, now convinced that her artful game had had its effect, began to prepare tea.

"The wretched youngster," she said, "at first it used to be enough to mention the bogie-man, then it became necessary to knock ... And now, as you see, you have to stage quite a little game ..."

The wretched youngster now breathed peacefully, with closed eyes, and it was hard to believe that, in order to bring him into this blissful state, it was necessary to stamp with one's feet, to bellow, and to describe the terrible appearance of the bogie-man.

Then came my next meeting with Lesha and his mother. Lesha was seated on his own stool before his own table, whose proportions were commensurate with the stature of the youngster Lazily the steam rose from the bowl of porridge which stood on the table, while Lesha himself was engaged in striking the table with the spoon, smeared with porridge.

Nina Antonovna stood beside him, saying in a tired voice:

"Well, three little spoonfuls: for papa, for mamma, for granny."

"I don't want to"

"Well, two spoonfuls· for papa and for mamma"

"I don't want to"

"Well, then the bogie-man will come and take you away."

At this point Lesha's face grew noticeably animated He glanced in the direction of the door and asked:

"Where is he?"

"The bogie-man? He's there. In the passageway. He'll come at once and take you away."

"W-h-y-y?"

"Because you don't obey." At this moment Nina Antonovna turned to me and in a conspiratorial whisper said· "Please do go out into the corridor and growl a bit. It is also necessary to knock. If you see any likely object, fling it on the floor."

I walked into the corridor. I growled, I knocked, I stamped with my feet, I threw my attaché-case on the floor, then my rubbers, the telephone book, and a tray, all within ten minutes Then, having paused for a space, I listened. Nina Antonovna was saying, as it were, in a frightened voice:

"Do you hear? He is knocking."

"W-h-hy doesn't he knock louder?" asked Lesha.

With rage and malice I flung down all the objects I had named

at one and the same moment. It seemed to work, because presently I was asked to come in.

On entering, I saw that the porridge had ceased to emit steam, and that it had been scarcely touched.

"Thanks a lot!" said Nina Antonovna. "You see, it's become impossible for me to continue to impersonate the bogie-man; he simply recognizes me by my voice. Apart from that, beginning yesterday he has demanded that the bogie-man throw things on the floor...

The doses of this drastic educational narcosis were being constantly increased. In about a month I found Lesha wandering about the room in one shoe; at his side walked his mother, with the second shoe in her hand, while the father, an acquaintance of the father's, and the mother's woman friend looked on.

"Leshenka, darling, put on the other shoe, or you'll catch a cold!"

Lesha made no reply; he did not even increase his pace.

"Very well, then; the bogie-man will be here at once!"

"W-h-y-y?" came the habitual question. Actually, Lesha was suddenly alive with interest. He seated himself in his stool, and turned his face toward the door. He might have been a music-hall auditor waiting, with some excitement, for the entrance of the performer.

The parents began to argue as to who should impersonate the bogie-man.

"You, of course," said the mother.

"But I was the bogie-man this morning, when he refused to drink his milk."

"Nonsense! Haven't I played the bogie-man often enough when you weren't at home? Besides, he recognizes me now"

"Where is the bogie-man? W-h-y-y doesn't he come?" broke into the argument Lesha's capricious voice.

"Soon, Leshenka, soon Papa's going after him."

Papa, indeed, rapidly left the room.

Three minutes elapsed, minutes of tense expectation. Lesha took a more comfortable position. It was as though he were getting ready to look at the program or adjust up the opera-glasses.

Then walked in the bogie-man. The bogie-man wore a beard made out of towelling. On his head was the tea-caddy shaped like a rooster. In his hand was the kitchen chopper The bogie-man growled and moved to the rhythm of an exotic negro dancer.

Lesha's eyes sparkled. Mechanically he moved to the cadence created by the bogie-man. Then his attention was attracted by the chopper. He asked his mother about it.

"That," explained the mother, "is the chopper with which he kills disobedient little boys. There, give me your foot, and let me put on the shoe—or else he'll kill us...."

In a distraught way, Lesha stretched out the asked-for extremity. But on his face there appeared some doubt maybe it was more interesting to allow oneself be killed with the chopper than to be an obedient little boy.

The bogie-man, deeming his mission accomplished, turned back to the door. Lesha capriciously asked

"Why doesn't he crawl on his hands?"

"At once, Leshenka. Well, bogie-man, walk on your hands. Lesha wants you to."

With noticeable dissatisfaction, the bogie-man came back and got down on all fours. While doing this, he nearly broke the long mirror. The bogie-man's neck was red; with obvious difficulty he negotiated several steps. With a ringing sound three silver coins fell out of his pockets—and a lighter.

The observing Lesha noticed the lighter.

"Look," he cried, "it's papa's lighter. The bogie-man has it—papa's lighter! Wh-y-y?"

"Why, it's this way....Papa let him carry it He'll give it up. Go away, bogie-man....Go away, or he'll recognize you."

The bogie-man did not wait to be persuaded. Rising to his feet, he vanished. Lesha was torn by doubts·

"But wh-y-y did he have the lighter?"

"I hope he doesn't find out," whispered Nina Antonovna. "For what shall we do then?"

Several months after the scene here described, I met Nina Antonovna and the bogie-man in a fashionable street.

She was studying the signs over the shops.

"Do you know," she asked, turning to me, "where it's possible to get hold of a little dynamite or gun-powder?"

"But why?"

"When Lesha gets wicked," she explained, "we tell him that the bogie-man will blow the house up—unless he obeys Well, now the time has come to produce a few light explosions... We tried, let me tell you, firecrackers and all that. But he's no longer interested . . There's no doing anything without a little dynamite."

"Well, dynamite, to be sure," I agreed politely "By all means, if his education needs it, he must have it, the poor kid!"

[Translation by John Cournos]

Mikhail Zostchenko

THE CANVAS ATTACHÉ-CASE

I offer you my apologies, gentle reader, for buttonholing you for such a trifle, for so insignificant a matter, unworthy, perhaps, of your valuable attention, which should be directed to more weighty affairs. Yet I was witness to a diverting case in a Court of the Law

There was a husband who, just imagine it, extremely often spent his time on extracurricular labors. At least, it was thus that he explained matters to his wife. Actually, he had no extracurricular labors at all; to put it plainly, he used to visit a fellow-countrywoman from Rostov.

There had been at one time between them in the city of Rostov an ardent love affair, and now again they met, not without a certain interest in each other. They went together to the movies, to the theater, etc.

At home, to be sure, he said that he had extra work; for confirmation of this, he would take his attaché-case, which always accompanied him on his visits to his friend

It is certain, so to speak, he did not want to darken the domestic horizon with personal matters, and acted thus with the best of intentions. All the more as he had a wife and a little son of ten years' age.

One day, having returned home from his work and eaten his dinner, he said to his wife that that evening he must go to a special conference.

His wife began to complain. She said that he seemed to have too much work thrown on him, thanks to which he was never at home—a disgraceful state of affairs—and she threatened, if it should continue, to write about this to Comrade Mikoyan or some other important bureaucrat; her words put him out not a little.

Having scarcely finished this domestic conversation, our husband put on his overcoat, seized his attaché-case, and directed his footsteps to the exit.

Hardly had he time to put a foot on the stair, when suddenly there appeared the collector from the Electric Center.

Our husband, wishing to see how much electricity his flat had used, paused for a little in the vestibule. And, having learned the amount due, he pulled out his wallet and gave the money to his wife, asking her to settle the bill promptly. He himself hurried out in order to avoid any resumption of the unpleasant conversation.

At this point, it happened that, in his haste and perturbation due to

his fear of being late for his appointment, he snatched the attaché-case of the collector instead of his own, and thus he took his leave.

This was an ordinary attaché-case of coarse canvas. It contained all sorts of official forms, documents, cards, etc.

Our engineer, however, having his thoughts elsewhere, simply did not notice what he was carrying.

As luck would have it, his own attaché-case contained some bonbons which he intended to bring to his lady acquaintance, also, a woman's silken scarf and a good-looking writing pad.

That is to say, this ill-fated attaché-case containing gifts had been left behind on a chair in the vestibule, while the engineer himself arrived at his friend's flat with the canvas case rubbish under his arm

How late he was for his appointment I do not know; in any case, she could not receive him. That is, she came out to him in the vestibule and made an affectionate explanation, asserting that she had a visitor with her from the provinces, some sort of uncle or other on the maternal side, and that she, having decided the engineer was not coming, had agreed to go out somewhere with her uncle.

The engineer, deeply chagrined, did not leave at once, but fussed for a long time in the vestibule, protesting that he was but five minutes late and that it was a pity to have his evening spoiled. She then promised to meet him tomorrow.

And now, in a state of perturbation, our engineer began to say good-by to his friend. And he was about to leave when he suddenly noticed under his arm some sort of soiled canvas attaché-case, and certainly not his own.

In the vestibule, under a chair, he espied another attaché-case. And our engineer, finding it there, began to wonder a little as to when he could have managed to thrust his attaché-case under the chair.

As his countrywoman, however, began once more to hurry him, he stopped thinking of the unusual circumstance, and, without further ado, snatched the attaché-case from under the chair, at the same time deciding to offer his gifts tomorrow; then, kissing once more the hand of his friend, he walked out with the stranger's property. She had failed to notice it in his hands, or else was unaware that it was her uncle's. Moreover, the vestibule was dimly lighted.

And now, finding himself in the street, our engineer wended quietly homeward, swinging the attaché-case.

It is necessary to say that at home a great rumpus was in progress.

The collector, having received his money and not finding his attaché-case, raised a hullabaloo, and, thinking that the small boy in the house had put it somewhere else in the room, began to search everywhere, turning the flat upside down.

The engineer's wife actively assisted in the search of the governmental property and, finding her husband's attaché-case, was aston-

ished that it had been left behind. She could not resist her purely feminine curiosity to glance inside and see what was there. And, finding objects there decidedly curious for extracurricular occupations, grew agitated and went to her own room to reflect on the significance of it all.

The engineer's tiny ten-year-old son, on observing the contents of the attaché-case, pulled out the box of bon-bons and, as the saying goes, did justice to the art of the confectioner.

Having arrived at the conclusion that her husband was deceiving her as to extracurricular duties, the wife began to cry. At this moment, however, the telephone bell rang and a rude masculine voice said that if her husband had not yet come home she was to convey to him that where he had just been he had left his attaché-case containing some rubbishy papers and that instead of it he had taken with him, in error, an attaché-case belonging to someone else. Let him, once he came home, return promptly the article in question, as he and his niece were sitting down to sup and the attaché-case contained some sort of edibles.

Through tears, the wife promised to convey the message to her husband and, having hung up the receiver, burst into sobs. For she understood now where her husband visited.

Generally speaking, great confusion reigned, when on the domestic horizon once more appeared our ill-fated spouse.

The Collector of the Electric Center, who at this moment was turning the kitchen upside down, flung himself upon the entering engineer, demanding the prompt return of his attaché-case, which contained the electrical accounts of the entire district

Without understanding what it was all about, the husband heard the sobs of his wife and went to her room. And there, at once, a storm broke, so that the collector did not dare intrude, and, with the look of a holy martyr, sat on a chair in the corridor, waiting in great patience to see how it would end.

At this point, the engineer's young son, upon seeing a new attaché-case, became interested as to what papa had brought home. And though his granny had forbidden him to touch this attaché-case, the youngster none the less drew therefrom still another box of bon-bons, some pickled cucumbers, pressed caviar, and an ox's tongue done up in tomato sauce.

The boy, having lost his appetite for bon-bons, took what remained of them to the sideboard. While granny, not having any idea of what was happening, and laboring under the notion that the products were brought for home consumption, placed the pickles, the caviar, and the tongue on the window sill. Moreover, in tasting the caviar, the old woman made a substantial hole in it, so that only a small quantity was relegated to the window sill.

During these household proceedings and at a moment when the shouts in the bedroom sounded loudest, there was again the ringing of the telephone. The husband, in confusion, began to explain into the receiver that it had been all a simple mistake and that the attaché-case would be promptly delivered.

Having hung up, the engineer went instantly to the corridor, where he found the collector. Apologizing to him, he gave him the address and a rouble for a taxi, and begged him to take the attaché-case in the front room to the given address and there exchange it for his own, which had gotten there by accident.

The collector, now in a happier frame of mind because the attaché-case with the governmental papers was at last found, did not stop long to expatiate, and, after giving the distraught engineer a piece of his mind—lightly, to be sure—took his departure, taking with him for exchange the attaché-case considerably lightened by the operations of granny and her young grandson.

Scarcely had peace been restored in the flat and the fatigued spouses had after the storm lain down to rest, when once more the telephone rang and a rude male voice told his wife that, evidently, her husband was, in plain language, a thief, if he was capable of divesting someone else's attaché-case of its contents. He was willing to forego the ox's tongue in tomato sauce, but the caviar and pickles he must expeditiously return, or else— And even his woman friend begged to have it conveyed to him that he was a skunk.

The husband, aware that a scandalous conversation was in progress, tore the receiver from his wife's hand and began to shout that he had taken absolutely nothing from the attaché-case, that he had not even opened it, and that he and his friend could go to the devil. He added that he could not be responsible for the man he had sent, and if the latter had taken something from the attaché-case, then it was something they had best settle between them.

Then the rude male voice softened and said that the messenger was still there and that he would certainly jolt the innards out of him, but the caviar and pickles he would return.

At last everything grew peaceful again. Husband and wife, united in a common military front, even came to some measure of conciliation. And the wife extorted from him the solemn promise that such histories would not be repeated.

Within about an hour, however, the collector reappeared. Pale and disheveled, he raised a fearful row, demanding the return of some kind of products or other. But as neither husband nor wife knew anything about these products, and granny already slept the sleep of the just, the enraged engineer ordered the collector to leave the house at once. The collector said that such scoundrels he had not yet met with in his life and that on the morrow he would proceed against

him and the other, who had committed an assault upon him, in the Court of the Law. Not only had he lost a working day, but he had also into the bargain received a nervous and physical shock, besides being deprived of his attaché-case containing governmental documents which the other would not yield without a ransom.

Actually, the collector took the matter into the Courts. And here, in the court room, there was unraveled the whole chain of events.

With incredible gaiety the public enjoyed the spectacle of the witnesses explaining how it all happened. The laughter reached immeasurable proportions when granny began to tell how she ate up the caviar.

The judge, a woman, in summing up, observed that the bourgeois existence with its betrayals, its lies, and similar rubbish still prevailed in our life and that this led to deplorable results. Thus, for example, the collector, who suffered in the pursuance of his duty, was, in a manner of speaking, a victim of the affair.

In any event, the man charged with assault and battery turned out to be not the uncle of the engineer's friend, but a former fiancé, who arrived from Rostov. He offered his apologies to the collector, as did also, ardently, the engineer.

The Court pronounced public censure of the engineer, while the uncle from Rostov, because he had somewhat mauled up the collector, was sentenced to two months' disciplinary labors.

The public received the sentence with full gratification.

What is to happen further, we have no way of knowing, but it is possible that, in the absence of the uncle from the horizon for two months, some reconciliation may occur between the engineer and his woman friend. And then, as likely as not, there will arise again some sort of rubbishy affair on the domestic front.

[Translation by John Cournos]

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