Workers of all countries, unite!

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Writers Speak of the Great Changes

It was but recently that Johannes Barbarus, one of the most popular poets of Estonia wrote:

"Who has placed over my house a sky that is always clouded, deprived of the sun? Who has settled under this sky a people, with no happiness of its own, always in the way of others? Who has placed a mourning flag over Eesti, over its swamps and marshes?"

How few the days since these lines have been penned, and how great the changes that have transpired since! Barbarus is in Moscow. Many thousands came to the railway station to greet him, to greet in his person the head of the government freely elected by the Estonian people, who came to the capital of the Soviet Union as the Chairman of the Authorized Commission of the State Assembly of Estonia. The railway stations of Moscow were the scene of unusual animation those days. The Soviet people accorded an enthusiastic welcome to representatives of Bessarabia, North Bukovina, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The sentiments of all these delegates sent by their peoples to the Red capital were aptly expressed by the Lithuanian poet Liudas Gira in his speech at a meeting held at the Byelorussian Railway Station: "We came to Moscow with a great mandate, a mandate under which the Lithuanian people enter the great invincible family of Soviet peoples. Moscow is bright and sunny today, but our hearts and souls are even brighter and sunnier, overwhelmed by great happiness."

Greeting the Soviet people in his article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Johannes Barbarus wrote: "The Estonian people has again learned how to smile, sing, be joyous. The songs of a free people resound in our streets. It is as though the entire country has wakened after a long winter slumber. The June events[1] and the present unforgettable days are pointing to a new road for our culture, which will be national in form and Socialist in content.

"In recent years our literature began to take interest in history and has gone into the past. This was quite natural. The writers were unable to speak openly about the hopeless drabness of the present. They strove to bring back lofty ideas to literature, if only in historical novels. True, historical novels were frequently written on orders of the powers that were . . . At present the Estonian people is writing in letters of fire its genuinely historical novel under the title: *The Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic.*"

The quotation from Barbarus which opened these notes reflected truly the hard lot of the entire Estonian people, including its intellectuals and, particularly, writers. The fate of the writer in bourgeois Estonia was described to the Seventh Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. by M. Jurna, member of the Authorized Com-

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[1] Reference to the overthrow of the reactionary ruling clique.

Andrejs Upits

mission of the State Assembly of the Estonian Republic. He said:

"The Estonian Academy of Sciences was engaged in petty affairs, handing out decorations to pseudo-scientists and other persons closely connected with the ruling circles. Those writers who sang praises to the regime in power, and fawned upon the reactionary circles, were given awards and supported in every way, were placed in well-paid posts; those who did not bow to the power of the reactionary regime, who fought for the rights of the people, were persecuted and everything was done to hinder the publication of their works, notwithstanding the fact that, as artists, they were incomparably superior to the patented literary hacks. The Estonian ruling clique did everything in its power to conceal the truth about the Soviet Union from the people... The circulation of Soviet books was a criminal offense. The works of Maxim Gorky and other Soviet authors were banned from public libraries."

The same situation prevailed in Lithuania and Latvia, not to speak of Bessarabia and North Bukovina which languished under the heel of the Rumanian *boyars*. Here is what the well-known Latvian writer Andrejs Upits related in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*:

"My life in the kingdom of Ulmanis presents a vivid example of the oppression of the Latvian working class writer. Despite my 35 years of literary activity and the thirty books I had written, I, together with others, was expelled from the Society of Writers and Journalists. All my books were removed from the libraries and my plays were banned, although they had been staged in literally all the theaters of Latvia . . . Insurmountable difficulties in publishing my writings compelled me to switch to translations . . ."

But even when engaging in this literary activity the progressive writer had to conceal his real name. "The name of Upits was not to appear in print," J. Lacis, Latvian writer, declared in his speech at the Session of the Supreme Soviet, "and he was forced to issue his translation of Alexei Tolstoy's novel *Peter I* under a penname, Kurmis, which in Latvian means mole, thus keeping in the dark his name famed among the Latvian people."

J. Lacis told the Deputies to the Supreme Soviet about the animal fear that the ruling clique felt at news about the victories of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.

"In general, it was well nigh impossible to write on social and political themes," Lacis added. "Moreover, one was not permitted even to mention the color red. It was forbidden to use certain words, such as ice-breaker, for an ice-breaker seemed to have some suspicious ring for Ulmanis. One could write

about love, but not about every kind of love. Love for freedom, for the Soviet Union, for Communism was considered the greatest crime, and the manifestations of such love in literature was ruthlessly persecuted by the Ulmanis censorship which ruled with a rod of iron. Books of progressive writers were either banned or confiscated. A Latvian writer myself, I am all too familiar with this because of the fate of my own writings, particularly my novel *Virgin Forest*, which was mutilated by the censorship.

"But notwithstanding the fact that the best writers were forced into hiding, Latvian literature continued to grow and develop, creating splendid works educating the people, preparing them for the struggle against the enemies of freedom, works which helped the working people to advance in this struggle step by step.

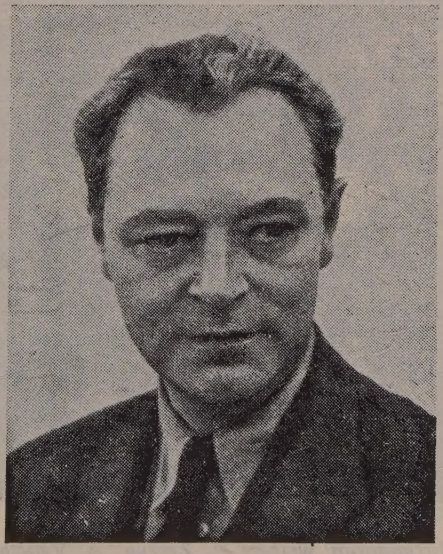
"Even before the Revolution of 1905," Lacis recalled, "the poet Pumpurs had written the majestic folk epic poem *Lancplesis* about the legendary folk hero who downed a bear in single combat. The greatest poet of Latvia, Rainis, presented the same theme in his play *Fire and Night* which, to this very day, is watched breathlessly by the people, for in Lancplesis they see their deliverer from the heel of the foreign and home oppressors."

The position of the Lithuanian writers can be briefly illustrated by one example. The novel by Petras Zvirka, published in this issue, had appeared in Russian translation with the following telling inscription: "Translated from Latvian manuscript."

The people in the Baltic countries have highly appreciated the noble activity of their progressive writers. That is why so many of them have been elected to the people's parliaments of these countries, that is why so many of them are members of the Authorized Commissions which came to Moscow to voice the will of the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, who voted for joining the Soviet Union.

"Today is a holiday," wrote WandaWasilewska, Polish authoress and Deputy to the Supreme Soviet, describing her impressions of the Session. "A holiday, mine and yours, our country's. The hall is filled. Today there are more of us than ever before. Seated here are people with the red badges of deputies, and some who have no badges as yet. Comrades from Bessarabia, North Bukovina, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. They are with us for the first time.

"We listen to Comrade Molotov's report. Yes! Our country is growing . . . But a short while ago . . . or was it a very long time ago?— I, with palpitating heart, breathless, entered this hall for the first time. I had lost my country to find it here. And now I feel at home in this hall. And when words about the foreign policy of



Julijs Lacis

the U.S.S.R. resound from the tribune I look at those people who for the first time are hearing Comrade Molotov speak. Listen to everything carefully, you who came from afar, listen how our country is growing. Learn to feel the pride which swells our hearts. Learn to feel that love which lives in our hearts. Feel at home, as we all do . . .

"'Who wants the floor to discuss Comrade Molotov's report?'

"But what more is there to be said? Everything that happened was desired so ardently. Only, it is still more joyous, more splendid. One can merely rise and applaud and shout, filled with the greatest of joy, overcome with pride. And approve. Approve with happiness and pride.

"The Kremlin Palace sparkles with lights. A new republic is being born, the Moldavian republic, while the borders of my republic, the Ukraine, are being extended. But the finest thing of it all, new comrades, is that you are becoming citizens of the Soviet Union.

"At this Session we are admitting four new republics.

"How magnificent, how wonderful it is that when the entire world is shaken to its very foundations, when powers perish and grandeur is trampled into dust, our country is growing, gaining in strength, marching forward, and is shining like a beacon of hope to the entire world. She is the only one! Our country, the fatherland of the toilers the world over!"

The tribune is mounted by a Deputy from Lwow, the Academician and writer K. I. Studinsky. His fervent words are addressed to the people of Bukovina whose lands in olden times were part of the Russian state.

"From the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth century, when the Galicia-Volhynia Principality was in its prime, Bessarabia and Bukovina were part of it. And, perhaps, be-

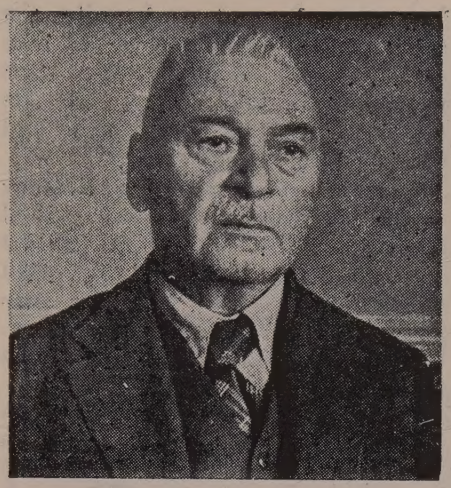
Lithuanian writers P. Zvirka, A. Venclova, L. Gira, S. Neries and K. Korsakas at the Seventh Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

cause of this circumstance, I, one who recently was a Galician citizen, but now proudly bears the name of a Soviet citizen, I take the floor to greet my brothers in blood.

"I bow my head in memory of those thirty thousand who were killed or tortured to death in Rumanian prisons for the sole crime of wishing to be citizens of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist republic. I bow my head and greet you also because Ukrainian culture flourished on Bessarabian soil, because the great writer Mikhail Kotsyubinsky lived, created and drew his inspiration from the life of the Moldavians. I greet you, my beloved, my green-land Bukovina, who had drained the full cup of sorrow, from whose midst have come the great writers Yuri Fedkovich and Olga Kobylyanskaya.

"It is said," Studinsky continued, "that there is much in common between great writers and great statesmen: the poets frequently foretell the future and call the peoples to struggle for the realization of ideals which inspire them. The statesmen do the same, but in addition examine the circumstances and carefully and steadfastly carry their aims into life. But how far ahead of the most gifted poets are the Soviet statesmen! Could any poet or scientist foresee a year ago the events which we are witnessing today? Western Ukraine, Western Byelorussia, Bessarabia, North Bukovina, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have become Soviet and adopted decisions on joining the U.S.S.R. The poets have not foreseen it, but it was accomplished by the wise policy of the Soviet Government headed by Comrade Molotov."

Studinsky dedicated the concluding words of his speech to the one on whom were focused the eyes of the entire Session, of the entire Soviet people, 193-million strong:



K. I. Studinsky

"I, as a Ukrainian, who from my early years dreamed about uniting all the Ukrainian lands in one state, bring my hearty gratitude to the great man, who made this dream come true, who, with the care of a good father, has united all the Ukrainian lands in a Soviet republic, under the banner of Socialism. This great man has built for himself an indestructible monument in our hearts, a monument which, neither the fury of enemies, nor winds, nor lightning nor storms can destroy!"

The name of this man is on the lips of all. To him, to Joseph Stalin, the poetess Salomeja Neries has dedicated her first poem written in free Lithuania. She read her poem from the tribune of the Session.

"One of the most gifted poets of young Lithuania, Salomeja Neries, has created the poem about Stalin in that outburst of joy which swept the country in the first days of freedom," Kostas Korsakas, Lithuanian author, wrote in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. "This long poem, featured by the entire press of liberated Lithuania, was written in one night. It was not a hurried piece of work, however, which fact goes to show

how strongly and profoundly the spirit of Stalin has penetrated into art . . . No doubt the poetess gave vent in one night to all the emotions and thoughts she had cherished for many years."

Korsakas describes the literary career of Neries, who first gained fame in 1931. After the poetess announced that she had broke with bourgeois literature, she was subjected to reprisals and persecution. But Neries did not deviate from the revolutionary path.

"The poetess has approached the personality of Stalin," Korsakas stated, "from the point of view of the future of the Lithuanian people . . . The revolutionary struggle of Stalin, his courage in exile have served the cause of emancipating the Lithuanian people too. This is the main idea of the poem. The Stalinist victory in building Socialism in the Soviet Union has subsequently brought liberation to the Lithuanian people—this is the concluding theme of the poem."

Salomeja Neries has expressed in poetry the brief slogan, which has so much meaning to the Soviet people, "Long live Stalin the Liberator," which resounded innumerable times in various languages in the halls of the ancient Kremlin.

Kostas Korsakas

"The sun has been shining bright all these days in the Kremlin," the Deputy V. Stavsky, Soviet writer and one of the editors of the magazine *Novy Mir*, wrote in his notebook. "Sun in our hearts. A calm confidence, strength and gayety shone in the eyes of all."

Stavsky took special note of one part in Molotov's report—"It was with deep penetration that Molotov stated that the ruling circles of France had no ties with the people, and, far from relying on their support, feared their people who are deservedly famed as liberty-loving people with glorious revolutionary traditions."

Every writer present at the session, hearing the report of Comrade Molotov, felt elated at the successes of his country, and at the same time carried away the words that were filled with that calm assurance: "We have not a few new successes, but we do not intend to rest content."

After the session of the Supreme Soviet, the U.S.S.R. became a mighty union of sixteen Soviet Socialist Republics. Four new republics have entered this Union, acquiring forever genuine freedom and independence. Representatives of the Baltic countries who spoke at the session recalled that the Russian working class and its greatest leaders have given much effort to the struggle for liberation in these countries.

The deputies recalled Lenin's participation in the struggle for liberation waged by the Baltic peoples, Lenin's collaboration in the Marxist press of Latvia (the magazine *Cinia*, etc.). Lenin's words on the fate of the Baltic countries have

assumed new force and meaning these days:

"Each of these small countries has already felt the clutch of the Entente. They know that when the French, American and British capitalists say: 'We guarantee you independence'—this in reality means: 'We are buying up all the sources of your wealth and are holding you in bondage. Besides, we treat you with the insolence of an army officer who came to an alien land to rule and speculate, and has no regard for anybody.' They know that more than often the British ambassador in such a country has more authority than the tsar or parliament of that country. And if until now the petty-bourgeois democrats did not comprehend these truths, reality is forcing this realization upon them. It turns out that to the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements in the small countries, who are being robbed by the imperialists, we represent, if not allies, then at least more reliable and valuable neighbors than the imperialists."

The importance of the U.S.S.R. has been enhanced immeasurably since these words were written. Herein is a source of pride for the Soviet writers, young and old, as well as for those writers who have just joined our family. It is a justified pride in one's own country which has become mighty, in the

A group of Estonian delegates to the Supreme Soviet by the statue of Stalin at the "Greater Volga" landing of the Moscow-Volga Canal. Second from right is the poet Johannes Vares (Barbarus)

fact that no important international problem can be settled without taking into account the views of the U.S.S.R.

The emotions of the new Soviet citizens were well expressed by the Lithuanian poet Liudas Gira who wrote: "Today, I, following Mayakovsky, can declare proudly: 'I am a citizen of the Soviet Union.'"

PETRAS ZVIRKA

Mother Earth

The name of the Lithuanian writer Petras Zvirka, author of the novel *Mother Earth,* is familiar to our readers. He is an old contributor to our magazine. His story *The Frontier* was carried in our issue No. 2, 1940. This story was included in a collection entitled *Every-Day Stories,* for which Zvirka was awarded a literary prize.

He was born in 1909 and his first work, a collection of anti-religious verse, *The First Communion,* was published in 1928. Two years later a collection of short stories, his first effort in prose, at once attracted attention. Since 1934 Zvirka has published the novels: *Frank Kruk, Journeyman and His Sons* and *Mother Earth.*

Petras Zvirka belongs to that group of Lithuanian writers whose books are imbued with a fervent love for the people, a striving to alleviate its hard lot, to wrest it from the clutches of capitalism. This is revealed with great force in *Mother Earth.*

Zvirka is an old friend of the U.S.S.R., which he has visited on a number of occasions.

The life of a writer was difficult under the regime of terror instituted in Lithuania by the nationalist Party (Tautinniks) and their leader Smetona, who was the virtual dictator in the country. It was only after the conclusion of the mutual assistance pact between Lithuania and the U.S.S.R. that Zvirka was given some opportunity for active public work. He was elected secretary of the Union of Lithuanian writers.

After the overthrow of the regime of Smetona, who insolently violated the mutual assistance pact with the U.S.S.R. and fled abroad to escape the wrath of the people, the people elected Petras Zvirka to the Lithuanian Seim. The writer was a member of the Authorized Commission which came to Moscow to appeal to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. that Lithuania be admitted into the Soviet Union.

The novel *Mother Earth* deals with the history of the Lithuanian village after the end of the so called "war for independence." The central character of the novel is the peasant Juras Tarutis, on whose fate the author traces the collapse of the "petty-ownership" illusions of the peasantry, and the evolution of the views of the progressive section of the Lithuanian peasantry.

Tarutis was one of those peasants who believed the demagogic Lithuanian bourgeoisie, and with arms in hand defended the independence of Lithuania. Juras fought at the front; he was imprisoned by the Poles. On return to his native village he became one of the active fighters for the fulfillment of the promises which the bourgeois circles at one time pledged to the peasantry.

The true worth of the peasant reform carried out in Lithuania is well revealed in the novel. Under these reforms, part of the land belonging to squires was transferred to certain peasants. In doing this, the ruling circles strove to build up for themselves support in the village among a strata of rich farmers. But the economic laws of bourgeois society upset this plan completely. Zvirka shows masterfully how Juras' farmstead, which he received as an ex-soldier, was declining steadily, though he received a plot of rather good land, and was doing all in his power to run it properly. A crop failure upset entirely the unstable household of the Tarutis family. There was but one way left for him, to go into bondage to the former manager of the count's estate, Jarmala, who had been given the best lands, manor and equipment. To keep the peasants pacified, the new estate was declared a "model farm" but as grandpa Fourchon in Balzac's *Peasants* had declared, the change of the signboard does not mean any change for the peasant.

Under the influence of events, Tarutis begins to realize what was really happening, that he had fought for an alien cause.

"And they say: you've won freedom, independence . . . from the Bolsheviks," bitterly said Juras to the villagers. "Why, if I'd known, it would have been with them and not against them that I'd have marched . . . Never mind, the time will yet come!"

And that day has come.

Today, when Lithuania has become Soviet and when the Lithuanian people is enjoying all the rights granted by the Stalinist Constitution, Zvirka's novel will be read with especial interest. It is a depiction of the increasing wrath of the people whose understanding of the truth propagated by the Bolsheviks, the truth of Lenin and Stalin, was growing from day to day. After reading the novel, it becomes clear why the people of the Baltic countries, after the downfall of the old regime, have given their votes so wholeheartedly and unanimously for those who fought for the cause of Socialism, for the friends of the U.S.S.R. and the irreconcilable enemies of the decayed bourgeois order.

In liberated Lithuania, the Jurases and their children have the opportunity to study. The doors of all theaters are widely open to them. No one will come to their homes to sell their few belongings at auction.

Zvirka is very sparing in his description of the military coup of December 1926, which placed the Tautinnik party in power, a party that had but three representatives in the Seim. This is natural, since it took great courage to write even what he did. The writer was well aware of the fact that the reactionary clique would not forgive him the truthful words he penned.

The novel *Mother Earth* ends in just as sparing terms, and gives a bare indication of the big peasant revolutionary movement that was coming to life. These are the peasant uprisings that took place in Lithuania in December 1935. The reactionaries succeeded in suppressing them. Zvirka closes his novel with a description of the mass foment among the peasantry. Juras was again in the front ranks of the fighters for a free Lithuania. The novel ends on a high optimistic note. Events have shown that there was every ground for this optimism.

The dull misty day rose slowly over the stillness of the slumbering villages, half-heartedly heralded by the roosters. For a long time no sound disturbed the lazy silence; only a sunbeam pierced the gloom, chasing over the moist fields where the grain was ripening. Beetles and worms awakened by the sunrise stretched lazily in the shadows.

All at once a shrill warning cry like the blare of a hunting horn resounded over the meadows. The leaves trembled and a bird, perched on the top of a tree, flapped its wings in fright. Over the crest of the hill, silhouetted against the ruddy morning sky, stood a bull. Like a bronze statue he stood there, digging into the turf with his shining horns, his powerful neck bent, sniffing the air greedily through his great nostrils. A magnificent symbol of health and strength.

The skin on his neck was drawn into folds. He raised his head and gazed into the distance with his bloodshot eyes and then, as though having made sure there was none to match him in swiftness and agility, he bellowed again and lunged forward into the valley, carrying a tuft of grass on his sharp horns like a crown of victory.

To the accompaniment of the shouts and whipcracking of herdmen, a large herd moved slowly over the meadow whose calm had been rudely broken by the bull's roar. People began to emerge from the red roofed buildings. The steel blades of scythes and teeth of rakes gleamed in the distance.

Another day of heavy toil had dawned. Horses, cows and calves cropped the clover on the fields. Children played among the heaps of moss and couch-grass at the far end of the field.

All morning the bleating of the sheep driven into the fold by the river could be heard above the whirr of the threshing machine. They

[1] Published in an abridged form.

huddled against the fence or ran around in circles, shivering with fright at the sight of the shears. Five or six girls, assisted by the cattle herdmen, ran among them, catching them by their wool and throwing them onto the ground to bind their feet, and shear the thick fleece. The lambs tried in vain to hide behind their mothers, reluctant to part with their warm coats.

"Come on, now! Catch that fat one over there! And he calls himself a man! Runs after the skirts all right, but can't handle a sheep!" the girls teased.

One herdman in a long, padded peasant coat, caught a ram by the horns, wrestled with the unwilling animal for a moment, then lost his balance and fell.

The girls shrieked with laughter and rushed after the errant sheep. According to an old custom, the first girl to catch a ram during the sheep-shearing was bound to get married that same autumn.

"Marce, shame on you! What's your hurry?"

"Hey, don't let him get away. Now then, steady, old man!"

"Aha, caught you, you old nuisance. Hey, there, hold him!"

"There you are, you've lost your husband now!" it was the herdman's turn to jeer. "Mrs. Marce Ram!"

Beside the well, at a slight distance from the noisy, laughing group, sat a young girl working. Like the sheep she was shearing, the girl had not uttered a sound throughout. Now and again she would raise her head, brush back her hair with the hand that held the scissors and sigh deeply. Having finished with her sheep, she unbound the animal's legs and rose heavily to her feet. A glance at her full bosom and bulging abdomen under her apron revealed the reason of her clumsiness. Each time she tried to catch the sheep, the herdman looked at her with such undisguised curiosity, that she grew more awkward and fumbling; she had grown increasingly conscious of her heavy body, of late. She felt that it was harmful for her to make jerky movements or strain herself. She was conscious, too, that the girls looked curiously at her protruding stomach, nudging one another and whispering.

The women had been quick to notice the change in her, although she had tried her best to be natural and gay. But it wasn't easy to fool women in such things. They guessed that her forced gaiety hid an aching heart. From the dark circles under the girl's eyes they knew she had tossed sleepless on her couch; the effort it cost her to bend down to find the grain, told its own story. She could no longer vie with her friends in work or in play. She was clearly conserving her strength. Her efforts to overcome the lassitude of mind and body grew more and more obvious. Before long the whole village began to whisper about the girl who had been deceived by her lover. The gossips had already figured out the month in which the girl had sinned and with whom. Incidentally, that was not so difficult to guess, for the girl had been courted for more than half a year by Tarutis, the farm hand. They had always walked home from the field arm in arm, and sat together at table. At parties she had never danced with anyone before asking Tarutis' permission.

"Tarutis is after that girl like a bee after honey," people said.

But when spring came the lad suddenly left the village along with the volunteers and had not been heard of since. He had told his close friends that he was gone to fight for freedom and brotherhood against the masters. The following spring he returned, armed with a long saber,

brass buttons on his tunic and puttees around his calves—a Lithuanian soldier. His green cap had been seen several times near the girl's window . . . Then he had disappeared once more. His saber was gleaming elsewhere.

The girl grew noticeably restless, and malicious tongues began to wag.

"The honey was sweet, but the bee's sting was painful . . ." they sneered.

Now, as she was trying to catch another sheep, one of the girls whispered:

"See how she looks out for the smallest. She daren't tackle a big one. That's what you get for trusting a fellow! They think nothing of throwing a girl over like a smoked cigarette. Now she's done for, poor thing."

"Nonsense!" remarked another maiden with spirit, tossing her head. "Neither of them is to blame. What's done can't be undone. I know what I'd do if it was me. I'd have my baby and be damned to all the nosy gossips, that's what!"

"Don't be silly! She's ruined all right, who'll want her now?"

"Never mind, she'll find someone quicker than you maybe. He's not the only pebble on the beach. What's the good of waiting until you are faded and old, so no one will look at you any more? No, I'd rather have a baby that way than die childless."

"Go ahead and have a baby if that's what you want. But no one will envy you, you may be sure."

"I don't care. I'll have a baby and bring him up, if I want to, and nothing will frighten me."

"Yes, you'll get yourself pregnant and then try to get rid of it, I bet . . ."

For centuries the law had frowned on children born out of wedlock. Any woman who dared to fly in the face of this law was branded as sinful and shameless by the Church and the community.

That is why the girl who had been the cause of the heated discussion among her friends had been led by fear of persecution to commit a heinous crime. Driven to desperation, abandoned by her lover, all feelings of motherhood blunted by her wretched plight, she resolved secretly to destroy the seed of life within her womb.

She sought the help of Vanagiene, an old woman notorious throughout the district for her shady dealings. Vanagiene recommended some vile brew that nearly killed the girl. When the muzhiks found her in the fields after two days in the rain and cold, she was half dead, but her young healthy body had withstood the poisonous potion and the seed thrived.

. . . The herdman pushed his cap back on his head and made some inaudible remark at which everyone laughed. But again Marce, the little fat girl, took up the cudgels on behalf of the unhappy girl.

"Shame on you for laughing at other folk's misfortune. See, the poor girl has to hide from us all like a frightened bird. Do you think you all fell from the skies or perhaps the stork brought you?"

"Aha, Marce caught the ram by the horns and now she's all set to have babies. Ha! Ha!"

"Come on, put out your tongue and I'll snip it right off," cried Marce, brandishing her shears.

She rose to her feet and walked over to the girl who was trying in vain to catch another sheep.

"Wait, Monika, I'll help you."

Marce caught the animal and bound its feet, paying no heed to Monika's feeble protests.

"Go and sit down for a while," she said. "We'll finish without you. Anyone can see it's hard for you. And why should you keep away from the others. You ought

not pay any attention to them . . . Evil tongues will always wag, but decent folk won't harm you."

Tears of gratitude filled Monika's eyes. Marce had always been so good to her. Perhaps it was because she had known sorrow herself. But for her, Monika would have killed herself long ago. Marce had consoled her many a time. "Wait till the little one comes, I'll nurse him for you and we'll both make clothes for him . . . I'll sew him a little cap."

Marce's kind words had lifted some of the weight from Monika's heart.

Listening to her friend's chatter, Monika allowed her thoughts to wander. Her eyes were fixed on the distance. Suddenly from over the hill, now bare of grass, the figure of a man appeared. His long cloak flapped in the wind. The sight of him caused Monika to start and then stand stock still, letting the shears fall from her hands. It seemed to her that someone in the distance had waved a greeting to her. Could it be he?

Now the man had disappeared from view in the valley. But the gait, the figure had been so painfully familiar to Monika, that, reluctant to lose sight of him, she rose to her feet and again she saw him clearly.

"What is it?" said Marce, turning to look in the same direction.

"Nothing . . ." Monika replied, trying to divert her friend's attention.

Marce at once guessed what had been in the poor girl's mind. She was waiting for him. Perhaps indeed it was he?

Both girls looked at the man who was walking toward the estate. The men, too, paused in their work to glance at the newcomer.

By now they could see that he wore a soldier's uniform. His green overcoat was flung over his shoulder, and he carried his cap in his hand. He stopped and waved to the men.

"What can he want?" the men asked one another.

"Look, he's waving again. Maybe it's a prisoner."

The soldier came toward them swiftly, almost at a run. He jumped lightly over a ditch and stopped a few yards away from the group.

"What's the matter with you all? Don't you recognize me? Baltrau, Jonai?" he cried.

"Why, it's Juras! Juras, you devil! Still alive?"

"Why, we had the bell tolled for you. We were sure you were *kaput*. How are you, old man?"

Tarutis shook them all by the hand. Some he embraced and kissed on both cheeks, as men do in these parts. There followed a pause for mutual inspection, a hearty slapping on backs, digging of ribs, and laughter.

"Well, Juras, what brings you here at these times? Going to be a commissar? What are you, a Bolshevik or a Lithuanian now?"

"Rotted in the trenches fighting for Lithuania."

"Maybe you hatched out a new king for us over there?"

"There won't be any more kings in Lithuania . . . We'll all be equal. There'll be equality and brotherhood!"

Juras' words evoked a flood of eager questions about the commune, about brotherhood and equality.

Juras explained everything. He said the people would elect their own representatives—cobblers, tailors, farm laborers, like themselves, who would protect their interests.

Juras had been a Polish prisoner of war. He had seen cities where people dwelt in luxury. God, how people lived there! Why, they had

gardens under glass roofs that bloomed in wintertime. And the grass around their houses was clipped and smoothed down like a neatly trimmed beard. You could see they had nothing to do.

"Listen, Juras," someone began excitedly, "they say they're going to give the land to the poor peasants. Does that mean us?"

At the word "land," the peasants crowded around the soldier as though the solution of this important question depended upon him.

"Didn't we fight for the land? We'll drive the masters off their estates and then there'll be enough land for everybody. That's how it'll be. Lithuania is already independent, with a Constitution."

"What's that? Constitution? Who's he?"

Juras explained the strange word to them in simple language. The working people, he said, had sent the kaisers and tsars packing. They had sucked the people's blood long enough. "Things will be different from now on. If you don't work, you don't eat. All men will be equal in Lithuania. What more do you want, brothers? It's up to us now. Land? We don't need to go very far," he said, gesturing towards the fields. "It won't be so simple. Our landlord won't give in without a fight. He's a tough customer."

The peasants looked at the landowner's land as though seeing it for the first time. There was laughter in their eyes. They were reluctant to let Tarutis go; he had spoken so boldly about such exciting questions as the workers' power, the Seim, about equality and brotherhood. They were uncertain whether to believe him or not. If at that moment someone had said to them: choose yourself a piece of land, cultivate it and build your home, the land is yours—you have earned it through the sufferings of your forebears—they would have been at a loss. All their life they'd had to pay—even for their grave pit; they had paid the village elder, the landowner, the tsar. And now, suddenly, the land was to be theirs for the asking.

"But damn it, why must I do all the talking? What's the news?" laughed Tarutis. "Anybody born, married or dead while I've been away? How's Jarmala? Still running his master's estate with an iron hand?"

"There isn't much to tell. Oh, yes, by the way, when you left for the army, Petras Gincha took the master's best horse and went off with the Bolsheviks. You didn't come across him by any chance, did you?"

At this point Baltramiejus Linkus came over to Tarutis and, taking him aside, whispered something in his ear. The soldier looked surprised:

"Go on! I never even suspected," and he glanced over to the pen where the sheeps were bleating wildly.

"Go over and cheer her up. People have been making her life miserable," Linkus urged. "Don't try to deny it, you know you got the girl into trouble . . ."

"I don't think of denying it, Baltrau. Of course, I'll go over. So they say it's me, do they? They must be saying fine things about me?"

"Listen, she tried to drown herself. You can't imagine how wretched she's been . . . You'll hear all about it. Go along and comfort her."

With a heavy heart Juras walked across the field, as though preparing to plunge into battle again. He could not understand the emotions that were filling his heart. Tried to drown herself . . . took poison . . . What a little fool! What was he to say to her? How could he begin? He had thought of

her all the time. Had it not been for her, he might never have come here. And now, hearing that she had doubted him, he felt ashamed for her. Catching sight of the women he thought to himself: "They'll be watching me and her . . . I'll go straight over to her just to show them."

He approached the group of women and looked around, but could not find Monika. He greeted them all and suddenly he felt lighthearted and gay. But his eyes continued to search for her, for her who was suffering for the sins of them both. At last, behind the well, some distance from the girls, he caught a glimpse of the familiar red kerchief. Red with blue spots. It was she. Seeing the girls exchange glances he spoke quickly so no one could mention her name before him.

"Where's Monika . . . my Monika? I must go to her. I wonder how she'll meet me?" and he felt his face flush as he said it.

One of the girls cast an angry glance in his direction. It was Marce. But Juras avoided her eye. As he moved away he heard someone remark:

"Serves him right. Men are like cuckoos who leave their eggs in other birds' nests and fly away . . ."

The words reached Monika, too. She stood with her back to the rest, her heart palpitating wildly. No, she would not tell him anything about her sufferings; she would pour out all her bitterness, all the gall that had risen within her. She would behave as Marce had coached. She would look him squarely in the eyes and say: you have deceived me, you have poisoned my life. What do you want now? I have suffered enough before you came and I can suffer it through to the end. I wrote to you but you did not answer . . . At this point no doubt he would try to find excuses for his behavior, and apologize to her, but she would be firm: go away from me, she would say, I hate you.

She heard him climb the fence, frightening the sheep who scampered past her. She felt her limbs grow weak and trembling. And in the eyes of the sheep lying before her, she saw his head reflected as in a mirror.

"Well, lass, don't you even want to say hello?" Confound it, he hadn't wanted to begin like that at all.

"No, I don't," Monika replied softly.

"But it's such a long time since we last met. Haven't you missed me a bit, eh?"

Monika made no answer. Tarutis leaned over, took the scissors gently from her hands and catching hold of her chin turned her face round toward him.

"Let's look at each other at least. A kiss maybe?" he glanced in the direction of the girls. "Come on, while no one is looking."

He lifted Monika's chin. She tried to free herself, but he pulled her to him and kissed her full on her tightly pursed lips.

"What's the matter? Sore at me, lass? Aw, give us a smile. Come along, let's get a peep at those white teeth of yours!"

Juras tried to force her lips open but Monika would not smile. She gazed at him calmly as though at a stranger. Anger, pity, joy filled her breast. At last she burst out, hoarsely.

"Let me go. Why have you come?"

"I come to see you . . . and you send me away . . ."

She looked at him again and covered her face with her hands. Her kerchief slipped down onto her shoulders, and Juras saw her short braids trembling like the lambs' tails. He embraced the girl and pressed her to him. Sobbing, she buried her face in his cloak. She was not weeping from pain—the pain had vanished the moment Juras

had approached her—these were tears of joy. Her heartache had been swept away as though by a cloud which drops its heavenly moisture on the parched earth and softens it. And the girl's eyes glistened like cornflowers in the sunshine after rain.

"Juras . . . I was so miserable . . . I . . . I . . ." she tried to suppress her tears, "I . . . I . . ."

"Never mind, my little foolish one," Juras said, stroking her head. "Don't cry."

"Look, your coat is torn. Let me mend it," Monika said in a calmer tone, examining his tunic. She found a needle and cotton in her blouse and began to sew up the rent.

This womanly touch moved Juras more than her tears. A pang of pleasure stirred him at the sight of her flaxen head bent gravely over his tunic, and her deft fingers plying the needle.

When the torn cloth had been sown tightly in place, Monika bent to bite off the thread with her teeth, and as she did so her head brushed against his chest, causing his heart to leap strangely. He caught her tightly in his arms and kissed her again.

"Oh, Juras," Monika murmured. "You've changed so. But I recognized you a mile away. I was so afraid you wouldn't come over to me . . ."

Juras caressed her gently, soothing her. He laid his hand lightly on her belly and whispered in her ear: "Who's in there?"

Monika flushed scarlet.

"Don't, Juras . . . You mustn't. It's our sin . . . everyone knows . . . they've been so cruel to me . . ."

"Have they?" Juras feigned surprise.

The tears started afresh to Monika's eyes, rolling down her cheeks.

"But aren't you glad?"

"Oh, Juras, you don't know how I've suffered! They all jeered at me as if I were a plain hussy . . . I tried to drown myself . . . I wanted to die . . . I thought . . . people said that you would never come back."

"Don't cry darling, I'm back now to stay."

"I nearly went crazy . . . I tried to get rid of it. Old Vanagiene helped me. I didn't want to bear a fatherless babe . . . he would only have to suffer . . . so I thought it best he should never be born. I was so ill, my body was on fire and there was no one to take care of me. It must have hurt him there, too. He jumped around terribly. But he survived it somehow. Then I felt sorry for him. And now when he doesn't move for a while I get scared. He hadn't moved for a whole week until just now when you came. He must have known his father had come . . . Now, I'm not afraid of nasty gossip. I only hope he'll be healthy."

The others had long since gone off for dinner, but Monika remained sitting with the bound, half-sheared sheep before her, pouring out her pent up misery to the soldier, stopping only to wipe away a tear. She told him how she had asked someone to write him a letter, but she hadn't said anything about her trouble. The girls had knitted mittens for the soldiers, and she had slipped a note into one of the mittens in the hopes that he would get it somehow. She had received no reply. Once she had seen the mitten in a dream. But it was on a hand that had been torn from the body.

Monika told Juras everything. She even told him how tenderly she had watched him as he was talking to the muzhiks and farm hands about the war, about independence, the land and the new life that was to be.

At last she mustered her courage

and asked the question that had been uppermost in her mind.

"You won't leave me, will you, Juras . . . If you don't want to marry me, we can just live together. I'll wash your linen and take care of you better than your own mother. I'll go with you to the end of the earth . . ."

But Juras would not let her go on. He called her a little silly. Were it not for her and the new life that was to begin soon, he would never have come back here!

Far from the village and farm buildings, down by the river on the edge of the field belonging to the Vishinskyne estate, stood a small, crooked hut built by the lord of the manor many years before as a sort of storehouse for fishing tackle. It had long since been abandoned but for the cattleherds who sometimes used it as a shelter from the rain.

Tarutis looked over the place and decided that it would suit his purpose, and set about feathering his little nest.

But all the money he possessed would scarcely buy a box of matches. So he went to Jarmala, the steward, who had fallen lawful heir to the estate after the count's flight to Warsaw, and signed a contract for the lease of a plot of land. The rest he did with his own hands. He covered the roof with rushes from the marsh; gathered moss and stuffed the cracks in the walls; evened out the earthen floor and built a stove. It was a makeshift affair at best but he argued that within a year or two the landowners' estates would be distributed among the peasants, and then he would build himself a decent house. But at least he would have a roof over his head.

Within two weeks most of the work had been completed. Gazing proudly at his handiwork he felt scarcely less happy than Robinson Crusoe when he first struck fire from stone. It had been hard work, almost as hard as in the trenches. He had neither slept, eaten, washed nor shaved until the job was finished. Now at last the time had come to bring his wife into their new abode.

On that happy day Juras rose early, awakened by the cocks crowing in the distant village. It was still dark. He undressed and washed himself thoroughly with cold rain water that had dripped from the roof into the barrel during the night. In the absence of soap he used sand to scrape the grime from his body. By the time he was finished his teeth were chattering with cold, so he sprinted around his hut several times to warm himself. His numb fingers fumbling with the buttons, he put on the shirt he had washed out the night before, and the wide trousers of his uniform. He shaved as best he could without soap or mirror. But all these inconveniences could not dampen his spirit. This was his wedding day and he felt elated in spite of the wretchedness of his surroundings. Never had he wielded a razor so awkwardly. His face suffered sadly in consequence and the hair still stuck stubbornly to his cheek and chin.

When the sun rose Tarutis closed the door and walked down the juniper grove to the estate, looking back now and again at his castle by the river. Here their conjugal life was to begin, his and Monika's; it would be a hard struggle, but they would face it together. It seemed to him that the little hut winked back at him, urging him to make haste and find a woman to bring warmth into the house.

They were married quietly in the servants' quarters on the estate. A grand wedding was out of the

question. In the first place, the bride was pregnant and, secondly, the bridegroom could ill afford it. At first Juras was opposed to any feasting at all, but his friends and acquaintances persuaded him.

"After all, why shouldn't we celebrate? You won't have to do anything, Juras. We'll supply the food and drink ourselves."

"Surely. If the wine won't flow out of one end of the barrel, we'll bore another hole. Why not dance and make merry?"

So it was decided to celebrate the wedding at the bride's home and Monika baked a cake and decked out the hut as festively as she could.

When the young people returned from the manor they were met according to the old custom; the girls and young men swept the path clean and hung colored pieces of cloth over the gates; they offered the couple bread and a glass of *kvas* before they crossed the threshold.

The wedding guests were given a good dinner—cabbage soup and roast pork.

Monika had no family and practically no relatives. But the moment Linkus, the musician, tuned up his clarinet, guests, invited and uninvited, began to fill the hut. Music warmed them as neither wine nor beer could. Conversation grew animated, the older people recalling their own weddings and other memorable occasions; they spoke of the old days, of the way they have to slave for the landlord now, and of the free Lithuania of the future.

The clarinet played and the dogs barked till midnight. Those who could not crowd into the tiny room, stood in groups at the windows to catch a glimpse of the young couple, particularly the bride, for knowing her condition everyone was curious to see how she behaved. It was a rare wedding for these parts when the bride had to hide behind the table and refuse invitations to dance.

"Oi, oi," people whispered to one another, shaking their heads, "how will they live . . . They haven't a thing between them. There'll be tears aplenty."

"Never mind," a woman said. "If they love one another they'll be all right. They'll have the earth for a bed and the sky for a coverlet. I married a widower and everyone said I'd be miserable. But I can't say I made a mistake."

"That's true. Neither Dominikas nor I had anything when we married. And what did everyone say then? They said I would have a block of wood for a pillow and that my husband would chase me out of the house on the third day. People are just envious. You'll see, Tarutis and Monika will get along fine; they're both young and hardworking. If Juras didn't leave her with one child, he won't leave her with five."

All of Monika's wedding trousseau fitted into a small chest which Juras bore with ease on his shoulder the next morning as they set off for their new home. No one saw them off. Behind the cart someone had loaned them for the occasion, trotted a goat presented by Jarmala. Someone had hung bits of rags over its back and a bell round its neck, tinkling at every step.

Juras, the proud husband, showed his wife the fruits of his labor; the stove, the bed, even the nails he had driven into the wall to hang their clothing. Monika went around touching everything with loving fingers, her heart bursting with joy.

"We will live here like Adam and Eve," said Juras.

Their new life had begun. They never forgot their first night in their new abode. Covered by Juras' coat, in lieu of a blanket, they had talked until the wee hours of the morning to the accompaniment of

the bleating of the goat tied to the door. Barely had they closed their eyes in sleep when a heavy rain began and the cold drops splashed through the flimsy roof right onto the bed.

"It has happened before," Juras said apologetically, "but not quite so badly. It's a new roof, you know, Monika . . ."

They rose and shifted the bed to the other wall, placing a basin under the leak. But before they had settled in their new quarters the roof sprang another leak. Again Adam and Eve were obliged to move. The rain seeped in through the thin roof as freely as through a sieve and the young couple spent the night shifting about, pursued by the relentless sky. They pushed the wooden bed around until it collapsed, for it had been none too sturdy to begin with. And so they spent the rest of the night by the stove.

Gradually, by dint of much plastering and carpentering, the couple settled themselves as comfortably as they could and prepared calmly for the arrival of the guest whose imminence was heralded by the troubled light in Monika's eyes.

From the west, where the blue black night arose like the bottom of a river covered with the silvery gleam of fish scales, a magician was coming. Invisible to the mortal eye, he worked—painting the leaves a yellow gold color, making the alder berries blood red, and shaking the ripe fruits off the boughs.

He came into the world unexpectedly one morning, striking panic into the hearts of his young and inexperienced parents. Both Monika and her husband had only the vaguest idea of how it would all come to pass. Juras paced up and down the room muttering something about a doctor and a midwife. But it was too late. Monika's anguished cries told him that he dare not leave her for long.

Unable to endure the sight of her sufferings Juras rushed outside. He completely lost his head. He seized the ax and began to chop wood, utterly unconscious of what he was doing. Then he threw down the ax and ran back into the room and caught hold of Monika, pressing her to him until the sweat stood out on his forehead.

He could not think of leaving her for a moment.

A doctor was out of the question. To begin with, he could not leave her alone while he ran to the village to get a horse and cart. And, what is more, there was no money to pay the doctor.

Toward the evening Monika grew calmer. She lay pale and exhausted, her hand in his, her eyes closed.

"Silly boy," she whispered. "You'll have to . . . by yourself . . ."

Juras trembled at the thought and held his breath, waiting for her to give a sign. He paced nervously up and down the room, then dropped down beside her and covered her tormented body, and wiped her perspiring brow with the edge of the sheet. But she grew steadily worse. He went outside and set off hurriedly in the direction of the manor, but soon turned back. She lay still on her back with her eyes wide open. Her hair was in matted strands sticking to her moist forehead and lips.

Her eyes grew more frightened every moment.

"Juras," she called faintly, "Juras, come here, don't leave me . . . I'll die here . . . alone."

She wanted to add something but suddenly she lifted her head and threw herself onto her side at the very edge of the bed.

"Like ice . . ." she whispered.

"Monika, Monika," he urged,

"What did you say? What is like ice?"

"Nothing . . ."

They looked at one another, waiting tensely for something to happen.

"Juras, Juras . . ." she drew him closer to her. "Say something. Comfort me. I'm afraid."

Juras started at her words. He bent down to her but could think of nothing to say. Monika was breathing heavily and clutching his hands with all her strength. After a while she flung them from her and threw off the blanket. She tried to lie on her side but Juras stopped her.

"Don't do that. It is bad for you."

"It's gone. There's an emptiness beneath my breast. Water, water please!"

But her request filled him with fear. He had heard somewhere that it was fatal to give water to a woman in labor. Or was it milk? He couldn't remember.

"Water, lass . . . Just a minute."

But no sooner had he left the room than a fearful cry smote his ears.

He rushed back to find her lying on her side, staring with wide anguished eyes. It seemed to Juras that she was staring at the dying flame of the oil-lamp. He was tortured with pity, and maddened by his helplessness. He stood looking down at her, clenching his fists in impotent rage at his inability to help her. Then he bent down and kissed her forehead.

The cold light of dawn streamed into the room and through the window he could see a large tree swaying in the wind.

"If you . . ." he began and stopped as his eyes met hers.

Juras' eyes were moist. The dark scar on his forehead burned and throbbed. She guessed what was in his mind and stretching out her pale hand she covered his mouth with her palm.

"Silly," she whispered. "I shan't die. Did you think I would?"

"No, lass. No. We'll see it through together."

Dark red spots appeared on Monika's face. The perspiration had dried on her forehead and the fine blue veins stood out on her temples.

"He's coming! Quick!" she gasped through clenched teeth.

Juras rushed to her. He saw that which he had always envisioned with repugnance and distaste. But now he felt only an all-consuming anxiety for the safety of the new life he was helping into the world. He did not know what to do but there was no time to think. The mother emitted one or two piercing shrieks and quieted down.

Soon the mother's moans were echoed by the shrill cries of the new being that had come to share their joys and sufferings.

The tearing pain in her back had gone and Monika lay still. The protuberance of her belly gradually diminished. The color returned to her cheeks. For a while an aura of real beauty enveloped her.

The new-born babe lay beside its mother, still joined to her by nature's cord. For one brief but terrible moment Juras thought that it was dead. He laid his huge palm on the infant almost covering the tiny body and he felt the echo of his heart in the babe's breast.

Following Monika's instructions he found a piece of tape, bound it tightly around the navel and severed the umbilical cord.

Juras could not indulge in the joys of fatherhood for very long; tidings brought from the town by soldiers and refugees from other regions stirred the muzhiks. It was rumored that the land they had watered for centuries with their sweat, and fertilized with their blood and bones, the land their

fathers and grandfathers had tilled for the masters, was to be given to its rightful owners, the toiling peasantry.

At last the time had come for the government to keep the promise it had given to the landowners' sons who, scared by the revolutionary conflagration in the East, had volunteered to protect their fathers' estates from the invasion of the men who were bringing equality to all. The government had been equally lavish with its promises to the soldiers and the farm laborers who, tempted by visions of the land and the division of the wealth, were among the first to answer the call to arms.

The last rumblings of the battles for independence had subsided, the bones of the dead had been buried with music by grateful compatriots and crosses with poetic inscriptions raised over their graves.

Victory had come. The tears shed over the heroes' graves turned to rejoicing on the part of the victors, the men of state and future members of parliament. Orators—the first swallows of independence—were met with wild cheers and bouquets of flowers.

Farm laborers, landless peasants and former serfs forgot their hunger and misery in their eager anticipation of the great day when they would receive their share of the wealth. Leaders of the various political parties came from the towns, promising happiness and equality for all. So long as one party representative spoke all went well but the moment another appeared the two were bound to start squabbling. Listening to them the people saw that one speaker was on the side of the atheists; another favored the catholics; one party promised the peasants so much land and liberty provided they voted for his particular group; another party promised twice as much. New party politicians and speakers came to Sarmantai every day, proclaiming their programs; one sounding more attractive than another.

During the spring sowing the managers of estates whose owners had fled abroad to escape the specter of war and revolution, could not compel the farm hands to work. The workers refused to be intimidated by threats. An air of tense expectation prevailed. Everyone was waiting for something to happen. Men gathered in groups to discuss the situation and poke fun at their masters of yesterday.

"You'd better be quiet, master. You've sat on our necks long enough. We have plenty of scores to settle with you."

In the hopes that the Vishinskyne estate would shortly be divided up, the hired laborers and farmhands ignored the threats and pleadings of the steward and refused to work. When Jarmala made an attempt to bring in workers from other villages, the Vishinskyne muzhiks retaliated by damaging the farm implements. When the muzhiks needed food products or wood for their stoves, they sent a deputation to the manager to convey the wishes of the community.

At night the young people sang and made merry under the windows of the landlord's house, walked freely about in the garden and fished in the mill ponds. Jarmala was alarmed to see the power slipping from his hands in this way. The young villagers were encouraged by the stories of revolution told by the soldiers home from the front. The general restlessness and discontent grew.

The farm laborers and muzhiks who owned strips of land so meager that a goat could scarcely find enough grass to graze on, also began to entertain hopes of receiving enough land to live on. They looked at the vast estate which could feed

so many mouths and clothe so many naked bodies. War invalids and villagers whose houses had burned down expected help from the government. Some needed money to repair their huts, others needed grain and cattle.

The party speakers from the towns kept coming to the village, vying with one another in eloquence of speech and alluring promises. They were like bridegrooms courting a maiden. But the village folk had no dowry and no one wanted to marry them.

Before long the people began to tire of all these fine words and, losing their patience, they began to throw bad eggs at the speakers instead of flowers. This, however, did not dampen the ardor of the politicians.

Having nothing to plough with and no soil to till, Tarutis, like the other poor muzhiks, listened to the speakers and waited anxiously for the great changes to come.

Standing at the edge of the crowd he saw the speaker stretch his neck like a snail peering out of its shell and heard the words flow easily like the waters of a brook.

"You have just heard the program of the Christian Democrats," he began. "You all know what a professional fisherman does: first he muddies the water and then he catches the fish. You will recognize the old saying: fishing in muddy waters. Well, that's what my honorable opponent has been doing. Like all those who deceive the people, this smart fellow from the Christian Democrats' party has said outrageous things. He has attacked the national democrats and blown the trumpet of the church for all he was worth. Citizens, do not fall for such bait! How long ago, I ask you, did the Lithuanian priests go hand in hand with the tsarist hangmen and rave from the pulpit that the power of that imbecile monarch had been appointed by god himself? Is it so long ago that the holy rollers branded those Lithuanian patriots Kudirk and Vishinskyne as fools, and Socialists and their fight for Lithuania's independence as a mad adventure?

"Only yesterday our priests openly handed these patriots over to the gendarmes. It is no secret that the homes of the church wardens were open to the police and their spies. The priests and the Black Hundreds went wild with joy after the 1905 Revolution. And yet the Lithuanian people had paid for freedom with their blood. And what is happening now? With their black robes the priests are trying to shadow the light of freedom and plunge Lithuania into darkness . . ."

Every Sunday Juras went to the village, knowing well what he would hear there.

The election campaign began in an atmosphere of tense excitement. The party politicians overflowed the market place, holding their heated debates inside the church and in the street.

The friction between the various parties sometimes evoked fire. From time to time, incited by the election speakers, the adherents of one party, armed with rotten potatoes and tarred sticks, attacked the soapboxers of their opponents, dragging down the orators. Many minor casualties in the shape of injured limbs and torn clothing resulted from these skirmishes.

Juras, too, gradually succumbed to the general excitement; he found himself tearing down posters pasted up by the Christian Democrats and distributing pamphlets to the villagers. Monika looked on in silent disapproval. One day Juras came home with a deep cut on his chin and told her he had slipped and fallen. But she knew he was lying.

"Juras, why do you do it? Think of me and the child! Why must you

get yourself mixed up in all that. They'll send you to jail. And we won't get any land, mark my words."

"Jail! Don't be a silly lass. You seem to think the tsar is still ruling us. Why, Monika, if all Lithuania argued the way you do, the masters would be still exchanging us for dogs. Let them try not to give us the land. We'll give them revolution!"

The Vishinskyne tenant farmers and villagers heard that the land surveyors and members of the land reform commision had arrived from the town to their district. They had begun with the biggest estate in Sarmantai district, the Pamituvis estate, and in a few days they had divided the land into plots, set up border marks and installed the peasants.

The news spread like wildfire over the region. Driven by curiosity the peasants traveled for long distances to see for themselves. At first the landowner refused to recognize the documents and plans, declined to admit the officials who came to negotiate with him and when the land surveyor came to ask for a drink he ordered the wells to be closed and the dogs loosed on him.

But the hubbub under the windows did not subside; the tenant farmers began to seize the best plots of land without consulting the land-surveyor and at last the landlord gave in and invited the commission into his house. He received them with the utmost deference, lavishing his Polish hospitality on them so generously that the surveyors were too sate with wine and good food to see straight through their binoculars. The land they had come to divide into allotments slipped away from under their feet. For three days they glutted themselves on roast turkey and then portioned out the land.

The people of Vishinskyne awaited the commission's arrival with impatience. Jarmala, who refused to believe that his master's estate was to be cut up, suddenly changed his tone with the muzhiks and became surprisingly gentle and polite. Just before the Pamituvis estate was divided he called the tenant farmers and landless muzhiks to an important conference. The muzhiks were dumbfounded with amazement at this unexpected honor.

Assembled in the landlord's yard, the tenant farmers and muzhiks grumbled, puffed at their pipes and speculated aloud as to the reason for the meeting. But not one dared to guess what they had been called for.

Jarmala came out with a manifesto. He spoke for nearly an hour, telling them how the count had loved the peasants, how well he had taken care of the farmhands. He said he had received a letter from the count who wished his greetings to be conveyed to the tenant farmers and neighboring peasants. The count realized, Jarmala said, that the times had changed; he understood the Lithuanian government and supported it wholeheartedly; he did not believe, however, that parceling out the estate would do the farmers much good. It might well come to pass that some foreign army, some foreign country would intervene when it saw the fine old order being broken up and instead of well-fed, satisfied farmers there would be impoverished peasants settled by the new government on barren strips of land. The count thought that if they obtained the land so easily, if they received it for nothing, the peasants were bound to lose it soon. And the count advised them as a friend to think twice before taking any step they might have cause to regret bitterly . . .

Jarmala's speech did not please

the muzhiks at all. Some laughed outright, others cursed the count, grumbled and argued themselves. But Jarmala had not finished. Dwelling again on the count's generosity, his Christian love for the muzhiks, the steward raised his voice and announced amid a tense silence that the count intended dividing the land himself. And he who received the land from the count's hands would never lose his hold on it for the master himself would affix his signature to the document. The land would be obtained by agreement and would be paid for by annual instalments. Only in this way could the muzhik hope to be able to plough and sow in peace.

The count's manifesto sowed confusion among the tenant farmers and landless peasants. Some were ready to sign contracts at once, others wavered, preferring to wait and see. Few peasants would have accepted land from the Lithuanian government that day. For most peasants distrusted the generosity of the authorities. The promises of liberty held out to them likewise aroused their suspicions. To most it was like the melody of a song whose words they did not understand. With the help of reliable people Jarmala added fuel to these doubts and waverings by spreading the rumor that the masters were coming from Warsaw to hang all those who dared to settle on the count's land.

Only a small handful of peasants stubbornly refused to believe the count. Tarutis, who had fought for the new order, was indignant and sore at the villagers' growing discontent with the government and its policy. He went with a delegation to the district center and on his return he gathered the tenant farmers and argued with them.

"Fools! Your count will give you graveyard reforms. He's serving in the Polish legions to fight Lithuania, I've been told. We spoke to the chairman of the administration himself and what did he say: not an inch of land for the count!"

This news caused many peasants to change their minds. To Jarmala it was like a stab in the back. His attitude to the peasants changed completely. Gone was his former hauteur and condescension. He dashed to the district center himself and returned pale and downcast, as though he had spent three days in a drunken brawl. He grew positively ingratiating and democratic with the peasants.

When the land surveyors and the commission came to Vishinskyne, Jarmala met them at the gates of the estate, over which he had taken the trouble to hoist the Lithuanian flag, although he had mixed the colors in his haste. He received the surveyors like a genial host greeting honored guests.

As soon as the first boundary stake had pierced the turf of the Vishinskyne fields, Jarmala felt his authority slip from his grasp, dispossessing him completely. But his natural cunning and astuteness did not desert him in this crisis. He at once cast about for ways and means of prolonging his power or at least his influence.

These were triumphant days for the tenant farmers, the landless peasants and the men who were carrying out the reforms. Not content with opening the doors of the manor to the officials, Jarmala even invited them into the reception rooms and the count's private chambers where the dust lay thick and the air was cold and clammy from having been uninhabited for so long. The land surveyors' boots rang loudly over the parquet floors. That evening the keys of the piano that had long been silent responded not to the delicate waxen fingers of the count's daughters but to the

hairy earthbegrimed hands of the men of the fields thumping some tune that dimly resembled a *klumpakons*.

At the sound of the music the tenant farmers pricked up their ears but as yet none dared to approach the manor house. They merely grumbled among themselves.

"That swine of a steward is making up to the officials, hoping to get the best piece of land."

"He'll get only enough for a grave! Didn't you hear the land is to go to the poor peasants and war veterans only."

"Eh, Juras, don't count your chickens before they're hatched. I'm not as naive as you. I don't trust them. You'll see, the count will get back at us."

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you remember what he said about doing something we might bitterly regret later on. Mark my words, the masters are all the same, Polish or Lithuanian. If it isn't the count, it'll be Jarmala's hand we'll have to kiss."

There were many who distrusted the promises of land and freedom. The simple peasant who had been deceived for centuries naturally distrusted promises held out by those in power. And there were those who regarded the land allotment as a trap set for them by the landowner.

The young people took a more sober view of things. True, they had not suffered the ordeals of the past but they grasped the significance of the present reforms. It was a merry crowd of farm laborers that gathered for the big event of land parceling; armed with spades they looked like the gravediggers of the old life—all of them descendents of serfs, the sturdy tenacious offspring of a generation that had been wiped out with knouts, whips and starvation.

An inexplicable ache filled Tarutis' heart when he heard the talk of his neighbors, when he looked at the rolling fields that had sprung to life, at the bright green meadows dotted with happy people busily knocking in stakes and fences. Never had the earth felt so sweet beneath his feet. The farmers bent down and scooped up handfuls of their newly acquired soil, fingering it tenderly and speculating as to its qualities for planting and ploughing.

Juras moved from one group of muzhiks to another. He did not know how to express the joy he felt, so he cursed good-humoredly.

"Ach, the devil take it! What a big village we'll have!"

In his arms he carried his eight-month-old son, displaying him proudly to his neighbors. He had brought his son, he said, to see the division of the land—the funeral of the master's power. When he grew up he could boast that he had witnessed this great event.

At last the first line had been ploughed, the first boundary line raised, separating the estate fields from the land belonging to the new village. Everyone who owned any kind of tools hastened to lend a hand to complete this exciting job and many used their bare hands to fill up the "count's grave." The boundary stake stood like a sentinel guarding the peasants' fields. The illusion was heightened by a ragged cap some jokester had set on top of the spike.

Step by step the peasants, following in the wake of the land surveyor, entrenched themselves in their new and as yet nameless village. No one stopped to wonder who was responsible for the new era that had set in but everyone felt Vishinskyne spring to life, like the waters of a rushing river in springtime. Now nothing could check its course.

Handing his spade to some villager who had come to borrow it, Tarutis said: "Don't lose it. I want to keep it as a museum piece. I helped dig the first boundary line with that spade."

Very soon other boundary lines were set up. But these lines now demarked the boundaries between the land of Jonas and Kazis, Tadas and Juras. The fields were divided into plots and distributed among the muzhiks. The swampy lands were included in the larger lots, the good dry land being divided into small lots. Juras as a war veteran was given preference. He received a respectable allotment with a small meadow, and a long narrow stream which dried up in the summertime. Besides Juras, an ex-sergeant-major received an allotment. The rest of the land went to Juras' friends Linkus, Ginkus, Dauba, Bepirshos and a few strangers from a distant village.

When the distribution of the land was completed, the commission called the farmers together and wished them success in their new life. At such a joyous moment few could refrain from giving vent to their emotions. Juras felt himself impelled as by some mysterious force. Before he knew it he was standing in the front and addressing the villagers.

"Those who say that we muzhiks are stupid and ignorant are wrong!" he began, trembling with excitement, his hands dangling awkwardly. "But look how we live. If we didn't have the chance to learn to read or write, that doesn't mean we are stupid. No, we are not stupid nor are we to blame for our ignorance. We have worked day after day to feed the parasites and only at night could we work for ourselves. Now that we have won freedom and independence our lives will be different. This land is ours. Respected commission, we invite you to come here in four or five years when our fields will be cultivated. We might not perhaps be able to treat you so lavishly as over there in the manor but we will welcome you with all our hearts."

"Hurrah!" cried the muzhiks. They had learned to cheer at meetings.

Everyone liked Juras' speech and Monika, his wife, nearly wept with joy.

Some of the new settlers sent a deputation to the manor, inviting the land surveyors to join in the celebrations.

Before moving over to their new plot, the Tarutises dismantled their cabin and waited for some conveyance to carry it across. They had to spend a few nights under the open sky.

The evening before they were to move they were sitting on a log chatting quietly about their prospects.

The air was pleasantly warm. The birch tree stretched its leafless branches in a supplicating gesture toward the darkening sky. Conversation flagged and the young couple looked out over the fields, envisioning the village that was to be, hearing the dogs bark, the gates creaking, seeing the twinkling lights.

Lulled by fatigue they sat there half dozing, their infant sleeping peacefully between them.

Suddenly they awoke with a start at the sound of a loud cry coming from over the fields.

"What was that?"

The cry was repeated, this time sounding closer. It came from the direction of their land. It was a cry for help. Now it sounded again very near to where the young couple sat listening tensely.

"H-e-e-e-lp!"

Juras sprang up, gazing into the gloom, his nerves and muscles taut.

Someone shouted and the cries stopped suddenly as though stifled.

"Juras, Juras, where are you going?"

Juras could not stand still, impelled to move forward. He seized a heavy stick. Monika scarcely managed to hold him back.

Down below in the valley the river roared along its way. From all sides came the echo of barking dogs.

"I don't know, what's the matter with me, Juras," Monika gasped. "But I can't help feeling that the count is coming back with his soldiers to murder us all. Perhaps he's here already? Listen, there it is again. Oh, God, I'm afraid!"

"It's nothing, lass. Don't worry. Someone must have fallen and hurt himself. You saw how the river has overflowed today. It has carried away the bridge."

Juras sought to calm Monika but he was far from calm himself. What could those cries of distress mean? It had sounded as though someone were being strangled.

They were not long in finding out. The next morning they learned that a man had been killed. Juras rushed off.

On his way he met an acquaintance: "Is it true someone was killed last night?" he asked.

"It happened round your way. Petras Ginkus. He's still lying there with a crowd around him. He's not a pleasant sight. A nasty murder. They're expecting the police."

"But why was he killed? Who did it?"

"They all say it's the Zilaitises. They're nowhere to be found. Hiding, most likely. They've been quarreling for a long while over nothing. The land surveyors didn't fix the boundary line properly down by the river and Ginkus had already started to build a stable and plough up the ground. The Zilaitises claimed it was their land. Ginkus said it was his. They decided they wouldn't let him go on with the ploughing. I went down today to have a look; he had overstepped the line by about a yard, no more. But they went to the elder, and the elder sent them to the surveyor. Yesterday the Zilaitises came back from the market dead drunk and invited Ginkus to come over and make peace. They drank up another bottle by the river. I met them coming over the fields shouting and yelling something about the boundary line. But I never suspected anything. Some people say they heard cries in the night.

"We heard them too."

"You see, Juras. Didn't I tell you some time ago that there would be plenty of blood spilt over this accursed clay?"

The murderers were caught and sentenced to life imprisonment, their land was confiscated. Before long the first log cabins were built in the new village that had been christened in blood. They called it Klangiai, after the river that flowed through it. The new cabins were not much taller than the boundary marks. As most of the farmers had expected, Jarmala stayed on to manage Vishinskyne, which he called a model farm.

When Juras and Monika worked in the fields they had to take little Kaziukas with them. To keep him out of harm's way they put him in a small bottomless barrel lined with blankets and diapers. He was quite comfortable in his little stork's nest and from a distance they could see his little head covered with a yellow fuzz peeping over the top of the barrel.

Kaziukas was a quiet little thing. He rarely cried and would lie for hours looking up at the passing

clouds or watching the blades of grass swaying in the breeze. Every new sound caused this miniature Diogenes to start. Catching sight of a bird winging past he would open his toothless mouth, throw back his head and wave his pudgy little hands in glee. He tried to catch hold of the fluffy white clouds as they sailed by in the blue sky and would look down at his little palms in surprise to find them empty. To Kaziukas it seemed that the whole world was within reach of his grasp. To express all he saw and heard he needed words. But speech was something he could not catch and hold fast, so he cooed and gurgled his joy and wonder, crying with disappointment when he could not tell his mother about the miracles he had witnessed. But his mother understood him and talked to him tenderly in his own language.

Sometimes the work took the parents so far down into the valley that their baby's nest disappeared from their line of vision. The Tarutises would pause in their work from time to time to listen and, hearing no sound, would resume their labors. And only when, as she bent down to bind a sheaf, Monika felt her breasts harden with the milk that flowed over onto her blouse and dripped onto the ground, did she stop working and run to suckle her babe.

Very often she found Kaziukas with eyes red and swollen from weeping. One day she found the barrel overturned and empty. There was a moment of horror and panic as Monica, like a bird who flies home to find her nest plundered, ran hither and thither in frenzy. What if the gypsies had stolen him, or an eagle carried him off in her beak. But at last Juras found the little wanderer scratched and begrimed; he had wriggled out of the barrel and crawled round the other side of the house.

"Ah my baby, my little tear-drop!" cried Monika, hugging him to her swollen breast.

Juras stood looking at the two of them, chafing at the constant delay in the work. Their neighbors had long since finished with the haymaking but they were always behind.

His words wounded Monika. "Is it my fault?" she said reproachfully. "It isn't so easy for me, either, to have to work in the field and nurse him too. It wears me out."

Juras suggested leaving the child at home in the cabin. He would cry perhaps but after a while he would stop. Monika would not hear of it.

"A fine father you are? You might as well lock him up in the pig-sty; the sows would take care of him then!" she said bitterly.

But Juras remembered that this was precisely how he himself had been brought up. Leaving for the fields, his parents would place him and his brother in a sack and stand it up against the wall, sticking a crust of barley bread in their little mouths. They could not get out of the sack, and so long as they could breathe and were safe from harm, that was all that mattered. Their tears made the bread soggy and gave it a salty flavor but they ate it and were comforted. And at the age of six Juras had tended the master's cattle; when his feet grew numb with the cold he warmed them in the steaming cattle dung. He was ten when he first tasted sugar. He was beaten cruelly for every trifle.

"Your parents were to blame!" said Monica. "But our little one, my little tear-drop won't have to suffer like that," she added fiercely, clasping the child to her breast.

Little "tear-drop" thrived, growing chubbier every day, every hour. Each morning at dawn, when they set out for the fields, the little barrel went with them.

Juras tried in vain to think of some excuse for not going to the estate. But he could not avoid it. When he built his cabin, he had borrowed from Jarmala and, instead of diminishing, his debt kept growing, as did the interest which Jarmala agreed to forego only on condition that Juras and his wife work for a number of days in his garden and hothouses. Often their own grain was heavy on the ear, their own hay rotting in the rain but they had to go to the estate just the same. They could not afford to incur the master's displeasure, for when spring came and they needed seed they would have to turn to him.

Every new obstacle, every setback caused the flame of their hopes for a better life to burn lower and lower. At such moments Tarutis would pace barefoot up and down the black ploughland, cursing his poverty. But when ill luck dogged his footsteps, he was forced to go only to Jarmala, for the same worm of poverty and privation sapped the energies of all the new villagers.

Fits of dark despair would seize Juras. Refusing to eat or sleep, he would sit dejectedly on a tree stump by the side of his field and stare into the distance, his arms hanging limply from his sides.

"What's the matter with you, Juras?" Monika would complain. "I can't bear to see you like this. If you would only tell me what's troubling you we could find peace together."

"A lot of good that would do," her husband would reply, sighing wearily. "That bastard up there was at me again today; I've got to go to the estate. Gave me a calling down into the bargain, for instigating the men to work no more than eight hours a day. 'So you're going in for politics,' says he. 'Didn't you get the land from us for nothing? You ought to be grateful.' I told him I hadn't instigated anyone. I had merely told the fellows how it was in other countries. . . . Over there the workers know what they want. And as for the land, I don't need to thank anybody, I paid for it with my blood. He didn't say a word about seed. Just pounced on me for not coming to the estate. Now I'll have to spend three days there digging holes in the garden."

Thus the time dragged by. Every man who tilled the soil consoled himself with the thought that, however bad things might be at the moment, they were bound to improve eventually.

Tarutis' fits of bad temper at home, however, would seize him only when his troubles would become too much for him. His child was actually a comfort, especially now that little Kaziukas was learning to walk. He started later than most children, perhaps because of the drastic measures Monika had taken to get rid of him before he was born.

The tears and laughter of the little creature relieved the monotony of their existence. The business of learning to walk was a great adventure for Kaziukas. He crowed with delight as he toddled unsteadily over the grass, clutching at his mother's skirt.

Monika loved the dimples in his chubby cheeks.

Monika had never seen a big city in her life. She had heard fascinating stories about paved streets, automobiles, tall houses, shops and bustling crowds and had longed to see it all for herself. Juras had promised to take her

one day. "Wait till fall," he had said. "We'll bake a cake, dress up and travel like lords."

But they did not wait till the fall. The pains Monika had been complaining of for many months became much worse by spring. They had to see a doctor without delay.

The couple rose early in the morning of their departure. Monika packed seven hard boiled eggs, a chunk of bread, a bottle of milk and salt in a wattle basket, and put on her best dress. It was a white muslin frock with a pattern of small blue flowers which sat off her pale, calm face. She had never worn it before and the softness of the fabric after the rough homespun garments she wore every day went to her head like wine. She stood before the mirror admiring herself, calling on Juras to help with an awkward fastener and craning her neck to see how it looked at the back. Juras told her she looked a regular lady.

She had to borrow shoes from a friend, promising not to wear them until she reached town. The shoes were too large and she had to stuff paper into the toes. Juras put on his army pants which had been dyed black, and his high boots, and trimmed the hair that had grown over onto his neck. In his holiday attire he looked young and handsome and Monika was ready to frown at any woman who dared to look twice at him.

Their neighbor Linkuviene offered to take care of little Kaziukas.

Waiting for the steamer that was to take them to Kaunas, Juras bought himself a package of cigarettes as a special treat. The trip by steamer was quite an experience for Monika. It was a fine warm day and Monika, watching the other passengers with their children and their baskets of food and flowers, felt quite happy, in spite of her aching back.

Suddenly the ship listed and there was shouting and a noise of tramping feet. Monica clutched at Juras' hand in fear, certain that the boat was going down. He laughed and calmed her fears. It was only the passengers coming aboard. But Monika would not let go of his hand and when the siren blasted forth with a terrific din she trembled all over and stopped her ears. She wished fervently that the journey were over and they found themselves safe and sound in Kaunas. After a while she forgot her terrors and settled down to enjoy the soothing movement of the ship, the rippling water and the new faces around her. But Juras teased her throughout the trip.

Presently church spires and red roofs became visible in the distance above the tops of the hills and squat wooden hovels were scattered along the shore like swallows' nests clinging to a stone wall. Monika tugged at Juras' sleeve: "Look!" she cried excitedly. "It's Kaunas."

"That's not Kaunas," said Juras. "Why, the swells wouldn't even look at such houses. Wait till you see the real city. Your eyes will pop out of your head."

At last Monika saw the dim outline of the town in the distance. The calm water reflected the church steeples, tall chimneys jutted out angularly from the skyline, red and white buildings were clustered together and steamboats chugged up and down the river.

Monika had never dreamed of such wonderful things, such crowds of people, such a maze of streets and shops. She drank in the newness and strangeness of it all until she was dizzy. She wanted to stop and examine everything at close quarter—to look and feel and hear.

"Look, look, Juras!" she cried out, pointing her finger at a passing car

in which sat a corpulent man dressed in a black suit and a high hat. "What's that he's got on his head!"

But Juras jerked her arm. "You mustn't point, Monika. They don't do that here. That must have been a cabinet Minister. I've seen them dressed like that."

Juras plucked up courage and went over to a policeman to ask what building that was on the other side of the street. The policeman touched his cap deferentially and explained that that was the Seim.

"Ah, the Seim?" repeated Juras incredulously. The policeman's respectful attitude to him, a plain man from the country, tickled Juras immensely.

Monika looked blank at the mention of the word, and Juras explained patiently that the Seim was the chamber of representatives; that there used to be a tsar but that now the people governed the country through their own representatives. It was they who had decreed that the land was to be given to the peasants. The people elect their own representatives and if they prove to be no good, out they go! It gave Juras a distinct pleasure to say "our Seim," "our policeman," "our banks," and to feel that these were his friends, that he was every man's equal. It made him happy to think that he could address anyone in Lithuanian, that no one would jostle him or insult him.

Having admired the Seim building the couple were about to move on when it struck Juras that here was a splendid opportunity to show Monika how the people's deputies drew up laws, how they governed the land. As they were approaching the gates of the Seim building a large car drove up. Someone excellently dressed alighted from the car and brushed by the rustic pair; a man in blue livery bowed low and flung open the door to admit him. While Juras stood crushing his hat in embarrassment, the man in blue came up to him and barred his passage through the main entrance.

"To the left, my friend. To the left," he said in a patronizing tone.

But all Juras' boldness had vanished. He walked away with Monika at his heels trying to keep pace with him.

Further on he showed her the residence of "our president," and pointed to a horse-drawn tram.

A company of soldiers marched by and Juras stopped to admire them, puffing contentedly at his cigarette.

"Why, they look like generals! We fought barefoot. Look at them, Monika, they're our soldiers!"

Monika could not see enough of the town. She was as excited and curious as a child.

"Juras," she begged, "take me to the park, show me the tower you told me about and that church you said was the biggest you'd ever seen. Look, Juras, what's that? What is that young man wearing on his shoulders? Why are the children yelling that way? Oh, Juras, I'd like to live here always, even if I starved. Look how lovely it is, all shining and pretty, no dirt or mud. . . ."

But Juras told her he would not like to live in town for good, although he wouldn't mind coming in occasionally to go to the theater. Monika was ready to leave everything—their land and home—and move to town. She would bring the baby here and he would grow up and go to school with the other town children.

After a while they grew hungry. They sat down on a bench in the park and Monika was about to unpack the basket of food when a policeman passed by and told them politely that it wasn't allowed.

"Well, if it isn't allowed it can't be helped, I suppose. Come along

Monika," said Juras cheerfully and they went to look for some place to eat.

They found a small, cheap place that was almost deserted. They sat down at a table in a quiet corner and asked for some tea. While they were waiting, the waitress passed their table carrying some buns, and Monika's eyes glistened.

"Want some?" asked Juras.

Monika nodded. "You have one too, Juras."

"Oh, I don't care for such fancy stuff. Give me plain bread any time. But you must have a bun, Monika. You'll like it," and he stroked her hand in a wave of tenderness at her childish delight in the wonders of the big city.

Monika was afraid they could not afford the luxury but Juras declared stoutly that if they couldn't give themselves a treat occasionally, life wasn't worth living.

Monika ate her bun slowly, taking tiny bites, savoring the unaccustomed flavor.

"Mmm, it's good. Why, it melts in your mouth. They know what's good, these townsfolk. There must be some chocolate in it, it's so sweet."

When no one was looking she made Juras take a bite too.

"Yes, it tastes all right I must say," Juras remarked. "But if we farmers ate such food we'd be dead in no time. That's stuff for pen pushers with rubberlined stomachs!"

Monika put away one bun in her basket to take home to the baby. But when the waitress brought the bill Monika was horrified.

Juras thought it must be a mistake but the girl assured him it was right. Monika felt the last few bites sticking in her throat.

"Three marks for that!" she gasped. "Why, you don't get more for a fat hen at home, and this is no more than a bit of dough and water . . . No, Juras, let's go away quickly or they'll make us pay for just sitting here." And she got up hurriedly and put away the food they had brought back into the basket. "Three marks!" she couldn't get over it. "They must think we countryfolk are fools."

"That's city life for you!" remarked Juras as they left the shop and continued their sightseeing tour.

Seeing the dejected look in his wife's eyes, Juras said soothingly:

"Forget about those three marks, Monika! Come, I want you to see our theater where they play operas."

Neither Juras nor his wife had ever heard an opera, but Monika's cousin who lived near the town had been once and had come home full of wonderful stories about skies and seas and stars and exquisite creatures dressed in silks and satin, singing like angels.

"Oh, if I could see one of those operas, I wouldn't wish for anything else," sighed Monika as they approached the large opera house, threading their way among the hurrying city crowds. The thought of opera revived pleasant memories in Monika. Just before the war, when she was still a young girl, she had been taken to Skersiai to attend a church holiday. It was one of the pleasantest memories of her life. It was the first time she had been treated as a grown-up. The young men had invited her to dance, treated her to lemonade and one had even kissed her. But she remembered it chiefly because of the performance that had been given in a huge barn.

Juras noticed a billboard and read that Rubinstein's opera *Demon* was playing that night. He figured out how much it would cost them for two tickets and told Monika.

"Oh, no, Juras. We can't afford

it." Monika said. "You wanted to buy a scythe and a lamp as well . . . I see operas aren't for poor people. Never mind, we'll see it some other time perhaps."

Knowing how much pleasure it would give her, Juras wanted to buy tickets in spite of the dent it would make in their funds. But Monika tugged at his coat and held him back.

"No, Juras, I shall be very angry. We can't throw money away like that when we need so many things. . . ."

It hurt Juras to think that in his native Lithuania, the country he had fought for, he and his kind could not permit themselves the luxury of listening to their own opera.

But he knew she was right, so he did not insist. Arm in arm they walked along the streets eagerly drinking in everything along their way. In one shop window they saw what they thought was a live rabbit throwing candy into the air; in another stood a man with a funny red nose who wiggled his ears and held an enormous pen. How little Kaziukas would have loved to see that! Further on in a bakery window display they saw a huge loaf of bread and wondered how big an oven must be required to bake it.

At dusk the lights were lit in the streets and in the stores. There was music and laughter in the air and the town looked even more thrilling by night than by day.

But now Monika was tired, her legs ached from walking. Hanging heavily on her husband's arm she moved along in a daze. Passersby looked with kindly amusement at this curious pair from the country who ambled along as though they were walking through a meadow scattered with flowers.

In the old section of the town they found an inn where they could spend the night for a reasonable price.

Dawn had scarcely broken the next morning when Juras was awakened by the clattering of horses' hooves on the cobblestone courtyard. He roused Monika and after a modest breakfast they went to find a doctor.

They came far too early and had to wait a long time before the door of the doctor's office finally opened and Monika was admitted.

When she emerged after a while, her face was pale and tears stood in her eyes.

"What is it?" Juras asked anxiously, rising to meet her. "Did he advise an operation?"

"Oh, Juras," said Monica, ignoring his question. "He took so much money from me and he didn't even examine me properly. I showed him where it hurt me but he didn't take any notice. He stuck a wooden pipe against my chest and told me to breathe . . . and when I wanted to tell him that wasn't where it hurt me, all he said was to keep quiet. When I told him what I had taken when I was pregnant he said women like me ought to be put in jail. I wasn't fit to be a mother, he said. I cried. I just couldn't help it. Here's the two marks he gave me back."

"But what else did he say?"

"He said I mustn't work hard, that my nerves are bad and that I should eat eggs, and cream and such things . . . Here, he wrote it all down. I don't believe he knows what's the matter with me. He's just a beardless young man."

Before they had dined, attended to their business and bought the scythe and the other things they needed it was quite late. Juras wanted to show more city sights to his wife, but she wouldn't hear of it.

"No, no. Let's get away from here quickly." Monika had already forgotten her desire to live in the city forever. "I don't want to stay here another hour. All they are after is your money. That doctor and all the rest of them are out to rob the poor people. It's better never to come here at all because it only makes you envious to see rich folk doing nothing and live like kings. No, Juras, all these shops and show windows are not for the likes of us. Let's go home!"

It did not take them long to prepare for the homeward journey. They decided to go on foot, for their funds were exhausted. It would take a bit longer, of course, but it couldn't be helped and maybe someone would give them a lift on the way.

They passed the main streets and got to the outskirts of the town where the streets ended in fields and country lanes. It did their hearts good to inhale the fresh air again, to feel the cool breeze fan their cheeks and to rest their eyes on the familiar blessed green of the meadows.

After a while they sat on the edge of the road and took off their shoes. Juras tied his together by the laces and carried them over his shoulders. The roofs and chimneys of the city were still visible in the distance, silhouetted against the blue horizon, but to the two travelers it was already dim and remote, and soon it disappeared altogether behind the hills and woods. Below, in the valley where the river wound its tranquil way, the cuckoos called and the couple felt at home again.

Weary and footsore, they lay down on the grass and drank the pure icy water of a stream. Juras waded across carrying Monika in his arms and rejoiced to see the color return to her cheeks.

"Oh, Juras, how good it is to see the green fields and the cows and the muzhiks," she sighed happily. "It was only one day but it seemed such a long time. . . ."

During the potato harvest Monika's second child was born. She had hoped for a daughter but Juras welcomed a second son. They called him Jonukas.

When Jonukas was nine months old Jarmala's wife came home from hospital with a baby daughter. But the mistress of the manor was ailing and the doctor was a frequent visitor at the house.

One day early in summer when Monika was busy nursing her little son, Juras returned from the manor looking downcast. Monika saw immediately something was weighing on his mind. And sure enough, after taking a few turns around the yard, he came into the house and sat down beside her.

"Monika, I have been wanting to tell you for some time. . . . Jarmala and his wife want you to go there. I don't know how to get out of it. Perhaps you will be able to manage? They promised not to collect what we owe them this year and to sew the children some clothes if you agree. I wondered what was up when Jarmala started being so sweet these few days, coming over and bidding me good morning every day, telling me not to hurry but take it easy and offering me a smoke."

"And what did he want?"

"Listen, Monika, I tried to refuse, I swear I did. I said you weren't well, that you couldn't do it. 'Never mind,' says he, 'we'll send for the doctor, he'll examine her and it won't cost you anything. You ask your wife and let me know.' I kept telling him we had our own kids and no one to leave them with, especially the little one. The first day he went away without saying anything. But today he was at me

again. 'Let her bring the children,' he said, 'they can live here, we have enough room for them. . . .'"

"But what do they want, Juras? Tell me, for goodness sake!"

"The mistress is sick and the doctor says she mustn't give the child her breast. They looked for someone in Kaunas but they didn't want to take a stranger. They want you to be the wet nurse. . . ."

"Oh, Juras, Juras, do we have to give our bodies and souls to that manor!" cried Monika. "Must I rob my own child to feed theirs? No, tell them I can't do it."

"All right, I'll go and tell them tomorrow. I'll say you've weaned the baby because you've no more milk. You're right. I hated the idea from the first!"

The following day Juras intended going to the manor with their decision but just as they were eating dinner a horse neighed outside the window and they saw Jarmala alighting from his cart. The couple looked at each other in dismay, and as Monika rose hurriedly to clear away the plates, wondering distractedly what she was to say to him, the guest appeared in the doorway.

Greeting them genially, Jarmala entered the room and, chatting easily about the weather and the much needed rain, he placed a jar of honey on the table, gave a biscuit to Kaziukas and took out a small paper package and laid it in the baby's cradle. A gift, he said, from the little missy. Then he asked Juras why he left so much land lying fallow and why he hadn't planted any vegetables. Juras hastened to explain that his wife was too busy with the children to plant more than a bed of cabbages.

"You know, Tarutis, on my way here I was thinking it would be a good thing for you to have a garden. That's a good spot for a tree right there," Jarmala said pointing to the space in front of the window. "You're not a bad gardener, I know."

"But you've got to have capital for such things, mister . . ." Juras wished Jarmala would remember that he had once promised to give him a few saplings. He had a whole grove of them.

As if divining his thoughts, Jarmala told him to prepare the holes in his garden and in the autumn he could come and take as many young trees as he wished.

Monika did not know how to thank the master for the gifts and promises. She would work it off somehow she said. But, no, Jarmala would not charge them for the trees; after all, he wasn't growing them for sale. . . .

When Jarmala finally mentioned the object of his visit and asked Monika outright if she would agree to nurse his baby daughter, she consented without hesitation. Jarmala's generosity, his cordial manner caused her to forget her resolve never to set foot in the manor. The same day Jarmala took her away with him.

Here on this land, in these meadows and in these wretched hovels now used for barns and stables, Monika had spent long years of bitter back-breaking toil. Here she had buried her father, here she had suffered under the lash of malicious tongues sneering at the first fruit of her love; here she had been tormented with thoughts of suicide. The sight of the place evoked a rush of bitter memories. Apart from her hatred of the place and unpleasant associations it had for her, Monika with the pride of the indigent rebelled inwardly against accepting anything that savored of charity. When they had first settled on their own land she had rejoiced in the thought that now they would be indepen-

dent; better to stint themselves and live meagerly but at least they would not be slaves to the manor. But gradually and almost imperceptibly, from the very beginning of their new life, they grew more and more dependent upon the estate. The initial debt continued to grow and in their efforts to pay it off they gave all their strength, all their labor to the estate, snatching only a few hours at night to work on their own lot.

Every day Monika rose with the dawn, fed the cattle, cooked breakfast and hurried to the manor, leaving Juras and the children asleep. The thought that she was robbing her own child of milk to feed another tormented her, but there was no way out. At dinner time she hurried home to cook and do a bit of washing and evening found her back in the manor again.

Gradually Monika began to give way under the strain; the blue veins stood out on her tired breasts and her eyes grew sunken. The steward's child seemed to be sapping all her strength and beauty.

"Looks like that baby was drinking my blood instead of my milk," she remarked bitterly one day. "The missus was at me again today. She is nagging the life out of me. Someone told her I've been feeding my own baby on the quiet. 'Yes, yes,' she yelled, 'I know what you've been doing. Didn't you promise us not to? Now listen here, young woman, if my Biruta catches some illness I'll know who's to blame.' I felt as if she had slapped my face. 'What illness?' says I. I could have scratched her nasty eyes out. 'Now, don't get nervous, calm down or you'll sour the milk,' she says. The swine. As if we were dogs. Oh, Juras, if only we could get along without them. . . ."

Days, weeks, months passed in this way, leaving behind pools of sweat and tears, each sunrise bringing fresh worries and hardships to the barren Klangiai fields.

When harvest time came, the crop was garnered to the last grain. Threshed and winnowed it found its way into the barns of the manor, the creditors, the usurers, priests, leaving little more than one chaff to the men who had grown it by the sweat of their brow.

This was a lean year for Klangiai and the neighboring villages. After a warm early spring, the weather changed and a period of hot winds and thunderstorms set in, bringing hail that ruined the winter crops in the entire district. Most of the farmers placed their hopes on the spring wheat and potatoes and trusted in god, but throughout the latter part of the summer, heavy clouds hung over the land, bursting into rainfalls that soaked the already damp soggy earth. The brief intervals of sunshine were too short to dry the watery fields and were followed by long periods of heavy rains, almost inundating the crops.

Here and there small stacks of mown hay floated amid the puddles; the farmers fished them out of the swamp and carried them to their barns to dry. The early frosts nipped the grain before it had time to ripen. For three days during harvest time the fields were covered with hoar frost in the mornings, a calamity that had not befallen them since the great famine.

The new settlers and poor farmers, their last reserves exhausted, began to sell their cattle, wool and yarn.

The frosts began early and, with the ruined unharvested grain that had rotted on the stalks and been trampled by cattle still standing, many farmers ploughed the

fields again, fearing that by spring their horses would be gone.

They dug up half-submerged potatoes and from the watery, half-rotten vegetables they cooked a sort of mush that swelled their bellies and made them miserably sick.

Only the richer peasants or the thrifty, who had some stocks left over from the previous year, had meat and flour.

Scarcely had the first snow fallen when the lack of fodder began to make itself felt. The poor farmers who suffered most from the cold gathered together all the straw they possessed, harnessed their horses and set for the distant highland villages to beg or borrow. But the bread shortage soon became universal.

Back in the autumn, the Klangiai farmers had stripped the straw from their roofs, chopped it up and made fodder for the cattle. By night the muzhiks prowled around in the forest, picking up anything they could find to prolong the lives of their cows and horses.

As if their troubles were not enough, forest wardens were appointed by the authorities to keep poachers and tresspassers out of the state woods, and woe to the poor farmer who fell into their hands.

When the hard winter frosts swooped down upon them with a cruel, sudden swiftness, the farmers, unable to buy wood to heat their dwellings, tore down fences and wells for firewood. There was about Klangiai in those days the gloomy, desolate air of a village that had been pillaged and abandoned.

There was trouble in the Tarutis home as well. First the baby took sick and scarcely had he recovered than Kaziukas was laid up. Monika and Juras grew pale and worn, wrestling with their misfortunes. Every morning throughout the long hard winter Juras rose at dawn and, his eyes still heavy with sleep, hurried to the manor to cart logs from the forest in payment for a measure of rye or wheat borrowed from Jarmala. By spring, labor had become so cheap that the neighboring peasants flocked to the estate offering to do any job for next to nothing. In return for seed and small sums of money, some of them promised to help Jarmala during the summer season; others offered to hire out their sons and daughters for work on the estate; the price of bread was rising and Jarmala paid well for a season's work—a pair of shoes, linen clothing and three measures of grain or potatoes. While the village administration was organizing a committee to help the new settlers by granting them seed at low prices, Jarmala was already distributing seed to the farmers. When his own reserves of grain seed fell short he bought up hundreds of centners in the market and distributed it in small quantites to those who promised to return a double amount in the fall.

"Why go to the committees when you can get all you want from me?" he would say to the farmers, posing as their benefactor.

But in his own intimate circle he spoke differently:

"They divided up the estate but they're no better off. As tenant farmers they would have had enough to live on but now I have the whip-hand over them."

And the farmers came to the manor, borrowed money and seed, and agreed to the ex-steward's usurious conditions without a murmur. But when autumn came and they had to hand over all of their none-too-abundant harvest, and sell their cattle to pay their debts into the bargain, they began to grumble.

"That Jarmala is no friend of ours. He's certainly got the noose round our necks, the bourgeois swine!"

The years that were lean for the farmers were the fattest for Jarmala and others like him. Had he wished it, he could have forced the young people to work for him for nothing, he could have compelled the farmers to pay their debts and filed court suits against the grumblers. But Jarmala was far too cunning for that. "Never mind," he would say, "when you have it, you'll pay me back. You and your wife can come over tomorrow and work off the day on the estate. We'll figure it out . . ."

The year following the bad harvest, Jarmala and the other rich farmers took a fifth or sixth of the crops from the farmers' fields. Jarmala planted three hectares of fruit trees and opened a dairy on the estate, which lapped up the warm sweet milk that should have gone to nourish the children and the calves of the villagers. Instead, it was churned into butter, pressed into round fat cheeses the rinds of which were dyed a bright red like Easter eggs.

"It's always the same, Jarmala gets the cream, but it's the skimmed milk for us," grumbled the farmers even though they were glad of the chance to earn a few more coins.

How long ago it seemed that the volunteers had flocked home from the front in their green uniforms, that songs of freedom rang through the air and men had come from the cities to proclaim: "Divide the land among the toilers! Down with the masters!" How far off were the days when they had all been inspired with new ideas, when the familiar land had seemed so spacious and inviting, when any self-respecting farmer would have been ashamed to lower his head before a landowner or official. Those were the days when the new word "citizen" was first heard. But the fight for freedom had not been fought to the finish and new masters arose before whom the peasants gradually began to bend their backs again. The new order evolved its own upper class, the new freedom being used by new men to enrich themselves by the labor of others.

Soon the new farmers and poor peasants, forgetting their brief taste of liberty, began to bow their heads to the new master, as they bent their backs over the land that they had fought for.

There came a time when the farmers began to emigrate to South America. They left everything—their land, their homes and their friends—packed their meager belongings and journeyed to the land across the ocean. Weary of the struggle, discouraged by the frequent crop failure, many Sarmantai families sold their few possesions and made ready to leave.

Strange, unfamiliar words like San Paulo, Rio de Janeiro began to crop up in the conversation of the Klangiai farmers . . . The name of distant lands and cities revived their hopes of a brighter and better existence. The older people who were loath to travel such long distance to begin life anew, tried to frighten their sons and daughters with stories of terrible snakes, suffocating heat and fearful insects. But nothing could hold them back. Once awakened, the yearning for happiness was not so easily quenched.

The new farmers and demobilized soldiers, disillusioned in the new life they had fought for, exhausted and disheartened by the hopeless poverty and debts, but tied to the lands by their obligations, handed over their farms to brothers and sisters, or found other

means of ridding themselves of the land which was now like a millstone round their necks.

"Let us go, too, Juras," Monika urged her husband, "you see what we have come to. We never even get enough to eat."

Tarutis heard these words repeated by the farmers on all sides. And they wounded him sorely. But he realized the hopelessness of his position and without saying anything to Monika or his neighbors he prepared to give the land over to Jarmala. He had all the documents ready when at the last moment he changed his mind. At once he felt relieved as though a burden had been lifted from his shoulders.

"Monika turned my head with all that talk about Argentine. I don't care if I croak but Jarmala will never get my land."

His wife and neighbors tried to break down his stubbornness but Juras was adamant. Moreover, the victory of the peasants in the elections to the third Seim strengthened his argument.

That fall, Sarmantai district sent off Divonyzas as its deputy to the third parliament. That no one be mistaken as to his calling, Divonyzas went to the city in his clogs and his work clothes. Over his arm he carried a basket with half a loaf of bread and a sheaf of complaints, petitions and requests from the farmers.

The Sarmantai farmers heaved a sigh of relief as he left; now they would have someone to protect their interests.

Just before Christmas came the alarming tidings that the government had been overthrown. The news came like a bolt from the blue. At first the rumors were contradictory. Some said that one Professor Valdemaras had dissolved the Seim and assassinated the President; others that the Germans had occupied Kaunas. Juras took his rifle and hurried to town and stayed for two days with the other ex-soldiers waiting for orders. But instead came the summary command from the new authorities that everyone was to return to his work and that any resistance would be ruthlessly suppressed.

Tarutis went about in a daze, unable to comprehend what had happened. The leaflets issued by the new government announced that the people had been saved from the Bolshevik chaos to which the former government had been leading them; that law and order had been restored throughout the land.

Before long Divonyzas Petronis returned to Klangiai with the report that democracy and liberty had been suppressed. Juras suffered as keenly as though something he loved dearly had been murdered before his eyes. Nevertheless he made an effort to be cheerful and tried to keep up the farmers' spirits by declaring that he would lead his company to fight for democracy. But his disappointment was as bitter as wormwood.

When the new spring came, Juras' barns were empty. With the help of relatives and neighbors he tried to stave off hunger. And only in moments of direst need did he go to the estate. There he could get what he wanted without delay but at double the price.

Whenever he met Juras, Jarmala invariably inquired politely about the family, professing an interest in Juras' affairs. It took Juras quite some time before he guessed at the reason for this solicitude. When spring came and he went to Jarmala to ask for seed, the ex-steward promised to grant his request provided Tarutis send his elder boy to tend the manor's calves and geese. After all, Jarmala pointed out, they were neigh-

bors and on Sundays and holidays the boy could go home. He would not have to get up very early. He would merely be helping the older herdman. In fact, Jarmala felt sure the boy would enjoy it.

Tarutis objected saying that Kaziukas was still too small to take care of a big herd of cattle. What's more, Juras had wanted him to start learning his letters from Dauba's son, the seminarist who had agreed to teach him.

But Jarmala continued to persuade him. There would be plenty of time for the boy to study, he insisted. Besides, what did he need book learning for? It would only make him proud and above his station. No, the boy had better get accustomed to work for his living. If everybody went in for learning who would work on the land?

Tarutis felt the anger rising within him at this talk.

"That's all very well, but you've sent *your* children to the gymnasium, I see. No one wants to be ignorant any more."

Jarmala saw that he had stung Tarutis.

"Oh, my children are terribly spoiled!" he said.

"You don't spoil children by educating them. Only not everyone can afford it. Our boy is very anxious to learn. Maybe something will come of him. He's a smart lad."

But Jarmala was not to be thwarted. He argued with Tarutis that it would only be to the parents' advantage to allow the boy to work a year or two in the manor. Hired workers were no good nowadays, he complained. They were all so spoiled; Bolsheviks, the lot of them. They wouldn't work more than eight hours and demanded free days into the bargain. Who ever heard of such nonsense! Didn't he feed and clothe them? What else did they want?

Tarutis listened and thought to himself: yes, my fine sir, I see what you mean, all right. You think you can do what you like with my kid.

As if guessing his thoughts Jarmala hastened to add: "With us, of course, it's different. We're neighbors. I can always talk to you. And if the kid doesn't like it, he'll just have to get used to it. As for learning, don't worry. I'll hire a tutor for my younger boy and he can teach yours at the same time."

Realizing that it was useless to object and knowing that he could not afford to make an enemy of Jarmala, Tarutis decided to let Kaziukas work in the estate.

The first days of October were warm and soft. The soil had not had time to absorb the last rainfall and there were large puddles here and there. The nights were as light as the nights in early spring; only the nightingales were missing to complete the illusion. A thick mist shrouded the fields in the early morning; by midday it hung in a dense white wall over the valley of the Niemen and toward evening was swept away by the warm wind.

Spiders basked under the warm autumn sun, spinning their fine silken webs which would soon be wafted away by the light breath of dying summer.

The air was soft and clear and the birds twittered in the sparse woods.

Suddenly the stillness was broken by the clatter of horses' hooves. Raising a cloud of dust a horse came galloping down the Klangiai village road, spurred on by its rider.

Linkus, who was working in his garden, looked up in alarm at the sound. Could it be the police? He broke out into a cold sweat at the

thought. For even when a peasant's conscience is clear, the mere sight of the police strikes terror into his heart.

But the rider did not wear any uniform and Linkus breathed with relief.

"It fair gave me a turn," he muttered.

The horseman rode past and turning toward Tarutis' farm slowed down to a trot. Moved by curiosity, Linkus stopped working and leaned over his fence to see what was happening.

He saw the rider enter Tarutis' yard, dismount and disappear inside the cottage. A moment later a woman came running out of the house—Monika no doubt—followed by a man. Linkus could make out three or four figures in the yard. Then he saw the rider mount his horse and gallop away in the direction of the town.

"What could have happened over there?" Linkus asked his wife as he saw Tarutis and his wife hurrying down the road with their smaller child toddling after them.

"Stasiuk," Linkus called to his eldest son who was coming down the road at a run. "D'ye know what's wrong over at Tarutis'? Why did they rush off to the estate?"

Stasiukas did not reply at once. But as he came nearer, his parents saw that he was laboring under some excitement. His breath came in short gasps and his light hair had fallen over into his eyes.

"Their Kaziukas has been killed."

"What!"

"He isn't quite dead yet. But they say he's awful bad. He's over at the estate . . ."

"Oh, the poor little thing!"

"How did it happen, who killed him. Speak up, lad! Let's hear!"

"A log fell on 'im. Smashed his head in . . ." explained Stasiukas breathlessly.

"God in heaven!" wailed his mother, wringing her hands. "What will Monika do? Poor woman! We've known the Tarutis so long, it's like losing a child of our own. Poor Monika, poor Juras!"

"Maybe it isn't as bad as they say, eh, Stasiukas? Did you see it happen yourself?"

"No. Me and Ulinskas were gathering nuts in the wood and that lodger of theirs who stole our chopper, he told us about it. We ran over to where it had happened and the ground was all bloody!"

"Why did they have to hire him out to Jarmala? That swine doesn't care what happens to anyone. Thank God we didn't let any of our kids go. Anything can happen. And Juras wanted to teach his boy to read and write, too."

Monika had been mending clothes when the messenger came from the estate with the awful tidings. And she had rushed out of the house just as she was, with the reel of cotton clutched tightly in her hand.

They had laid Kaziukas on the steps of the servants' quarters. His head was bound up in damp cloths, and there were clots of blood on his tangled hair. His eyes were barely visible in their sunken sockets. When his mother bent over him the boy seemed not to recognize her. The men who had witnessed the accident told Juras that when the log had fallen, Kaziukas uttered a loud shriek and then was quiet. Perhaps God would save him. If the broken bone had not touched the brain he would survive. He had lost a lot of blood, though...

"That's a good sign. It's good to let the bad blood out. I remember before the war . . ." one worker began consolingly, but Monika's cries cut him short.

"Kaziukas, my baby, don't you know me? Kaziukas, mother's here."

She fumbled with the coarse ban-

dage that had stuck to the boy's head.

"Don't touch him," said Juras, pulling her away. "You see he's half dead."

"They've murdered my boy! They've killed Kaziukas!" the woman repeated dully, her eyes glazed with grief.

The younger boy, who had been staring round-eyed with fear at his mother, his father, at the crowd of strange people bending over his brother who was lying terribly still on the steps, suddenly burst into a fit of weeping.

At that point the messenger returned from the village to tell the parents that the doctor was coming. The parents felt somewhat comforted. He alone, they all felt, could save their child from death. Every moment someone ran out to the gate and looked anxiously down the road. Juras sat limply beside the sick child, holding Kaziukas' small hand in his great fist and cursed the doctor's slowness.

Presently Jarmala came in. He had just risen from bed and there was an aroma of scented soap about him. An expensive gem sparkled from the ring on his finger, and as he came over to inquire about Kaziukas' condition, his face assumed an anxious look.

Jarmala began to reassure the parents by mentioning similar cases that had ended in the complete recovery of the patient. He even tried to make light of the whole thing.

When the doctor came much later the boy was tossing in a fever, trying to tear the bandages from his head. Juras had to hold him down. The doctor, a shortsighted old man, washed the wounds and bandaged the head. If the fever rose the boy should be taken to Kaunas, he advised.

For the village folk a doctor was a luxury beyond their reach. They were accustomed to bear children, suffer pain and die without outside help. From the cradle to the grave the shadow of the parish pastor dogged their footsteps, a reminder of the inexorable power above the sky who sent storms, bad harvests and famine.

Dusk had fallen but they did not light the lamps. The kettle was singing on the hearth, the fire was dying but from time to time they stirred up the embers.

Kaziukas tossed about in torment. He flung out his arms, then clutched at his aching head as though to ward off some invisible blows that were threatening to split it.

"Kaziukas, what is it, child?"

It was so quiet in the house that the anxious grief-stricken parents could hear the thumping of the sick boy's heart. The over-ripe crowns of the sunflowers beat against the window as though a wayfarer who had wandered from his path was begging admittance.

"Father, I'm afraid! I don't want to go to Jarmala! What's that huge spider doing over there. Father, kill it! Look, look it's burning!"

"What's burning, son?"

The boy seemed to have dropped off to sleep. But a minute later he began to speak rapidly without opening his eyes.

"Mama, Mama, take them, take them!"

"Take what, darling?"

"Look, I've brought you some berries and they are falling all over the floor."

"Kaziukas, darling, you're dreaming . . ."

His head jerked up as though moved by some unseen hand. Monika sat at the foot of the bed, motionless with grief. There was a heavy pause.

The boy opened his eyes and stared fixedly at the ceiling. Ter-

ror seized Monika, she had never seen such an expression on her boy's face before.

"Juras, come here quickly," she called. "I can't bear it . . ."

The child seemed lifeless. The parents bent over him, and their last hope vanished. His face was distorted, his eyes glassy.

Juras spoke to him but the boy uttered meaningless cries and Juras moved away from the bed into the darkness beyond.

There was a suffocating ache in his breast. He went outside. It was not yet dark but stars glimmered here and there, and a light wind was blowing; it ruffled the grasses, bent the young trees and frisked away into the fields. There was a stillness over everything, the heavy mysterious stillness of late autumn in the country after the birds have flown away.

Juras rushed over to his neighbor Lukoshius who had worked in a field hospital during the war. Lukoshius advised him to take the child to Kaunas. You never knew; the boy might get inflammation of the brain or a hemorrhage.

Tarutis ran from house to house waking his neighbors. Everyone was anxious to help but there was so little they could do. Linkuviene took ten lits out of her purse and gave them to him. She had sold some yarn. It was all she had but she insisted he take it. She promised some clothing for the boy as well. Dauba offered his horse and cart. They could take the boat but it wasn't safe to wait till the morning. Anything might happen during the night. There were some who reverted to the old tried consolation: "If it's God's will he'll die, but if he is to live he'll pull through if there's but one drop of blood in his body."

There was not enough money for the journey. No one else in the village had any money to spare. Juras had no other alternative than to go to the manor, although the thought of having to borrow money from Jarmala, the man who had ruined his child, galled him.

There was light in the windows of the manor house. Juras ran into the yard and bumped into someone in the darkness.

"Is the master home?"

Without waiting for an answer, he dashed up the steps, knocking over a flower pot which crashed to the ground, breaking into a thousand fragments. He knocked at the door. No one answered. Perhaps they had gone to bed already. Then he heard the sound of music issuing from the parlor.

Jarmala was tinkering with the radio as Tarutis entered the room.

"Ah, Tarutis!" he said, continuing to fiddle with the knobs, "And how's the patient coming along?" At that moment a flood of music burst into the room, an opera from Milan or Paris.

"Kaunas, you say? Yes, of course, the sooner the better. But I assure you it is not as dangerous as you think."

The music subsided and from under Jarmala's fingers came a warm stream of sound, a woman's voice singing to violin accompaniment.

"Money? Certainly, as much as you wish! But unfortunately my daughter left for the conservatory today and I gave her all I had. If you can come tomorrow I will try and raise some. Just a minute!" and Jarmala left the room.

Some minutes later Juras was running back down the road, crushing his cap in his hands and muttering fiercely under his breath:

"Flint-hearted swine!"

He cursed himself for not having had the guts to throw the three lits in Jarmala's face, for not having seized him by the throat.

Every inch of ploughland on which his bare feet now trod was

soaked in his sweat, planted, cultivated for a crust of bread, for a handful of grain. In his earliest childhood, before he had learned to walk properly, he had been bought body and soul by the estate. And now in his hour of need the master had thought fit to mouth fine words instead of lending a helping hand. Juras felt the smart as keenly as a whiplash.

As he hurried homeward with bitterness in his heart Juras resolved never to go to the manor again.

They set out early the next morning. Juras and Linkuviene's wife went with the dying boy. Monika had no strength to go.

"I know I'll never see him again," she sobbed.

But Juras tried to comfort her. "In the hospital he will be taken care of by people who know something about sickness."

Little did he know how helpless science can be.

In the afternoon the cart returned with its lifeless burden.

Little Kaziukas was stretched out on the straw, stiff and shrunken.

Monika could not stay at home. She ran to the Linkuses where the women had gathered to share the bereaved mother's grief. Amid sobs they recounted the story of the child's life from the cradle. All the women remembered their own dead, their husbands, brothers, and sons who had perished at the front, swallowed up in the insatiable maw of war.

Juras and Linkuviene's wife laid out the body, washed and dressed it. Juras had not shed a single tear. The neighbors could not understand it, for Tarutis had always been so gentle and kind. But now his face was expressionless, his movements mechanical. He carried his lifeless child over to the bed behind the stove where he had lain in anguish so recently. After a while Monika came over and joined her husband at the foot of the bed. She seemed calmer and more composed. Juras told her that Kaziukas had died on the road near Garvenai. Life had ebbed slowly. By the time they reached town he had passed away. On the way back they had bought a shroud with what was left of their money.

"He was never strong," sighed Monika. "If he hadn't been so weak he would have survived. Jarmala worked him hard, that's what everyone says. They advise us to sue him in court. But what's the use? Kaziukas won't come to life any more. Oh, why did we let him go to the estate . . ."

"I'll never forgive Jarmala for this! Never!" muttered Juras between clenched teeth.

It was several years since Juras had been seen last at the market or on the field behind the cemetery where shooting contests were held under the command of the Sarmantai garrison chief. As time passed, his fervent patriotism had disappeared.

Ever since his son's death Juras had lost interest also in his home and his farm. Prematurely aged by years of care and privation, Monika had lost her high spirits, even her love for the land had faded. All her strength had been given to her children and her worn, lined face and sunken eyes bore the imprint of lost hopes, bitter, fruitless toil. She had grown nervous and irritable, prone to frequent fits of weeping and she was eternally tired. Poverty had come to stay in the Tarutis household.

The death of Kaziukas had drawn the parents closer together. The irrevocable past, their dashed hopes rose in their memory like islands

of shining beauty that had faded into the distance never to return. Monika lived completely in the past; if only Kaziukas were here . . . if only they had not let him go to the estate . . . if only. . . .

Goaded by his wife's useless hankering after days gone by, Juras sought solace in work. Work had always been his cure for all heartache. For a while he seemed to recover his resolve to struggle and win against the odds of life. Never had he worked with such feverish desperation as now. Scarcely had the layer of ice melted on the ploughland than he plunged himself into the work, giving all his time to the land. Covered with mud, wet with perspiration, he toiled from morning till night engrossed in his labors. He dug broad deep trenches in the marshy sections of his plot, giving the moisture an outlet to the river; he rooted out the juniper bushes on the banks and cleared new stretches of land for cultivation. When the spring came, the land where last year the storks had roamed at will now lay lined with neat furrows like the rippling waves of the Niemen River.

He had ploughed his lot long before any of his neighbors had started the spring field work. His unwonted industry aroused the curiosity of the farmers. "What's he doing there, digging trenches? He must be crazy!" they observed, watching Tarutis in consternation.

But Juras had a definite plan before him. If the price of grain continued to drop, the farmer's workday would not buy him even a box of matches. So he must extend his land to the utmost, plant as much as he could, leaving not a single empty patch of ploughland. And he would do it even if he had to sell the last shirt off his back.

"For Christ's sake!" he fumed "Won't I ever be able to live decently? Will we forever have to tremble over every pound of salt, every liter of kerosene?"

And as he labored over his plot of land he reflected bitterly on his fate and the fate of so many others like himself—men who worked hard and lived honestly, men who did not drink and who never got a square meal. And he thought of Jarmala, piling up wealth accumulated by the labor of others.

One day as he was working on his plot turning over these thoughts in his mind a dog barked by the edge of the ditch and Tarutis guessed who had come. He did not raise his head but he saw the silhouette of Jarmala and his horse reflected on the water of the swamp and he raged inwardly. Tarutis' anger and resentment at Jarmala had not faded and he had not set foot on the estate since the death of his son.

As though unaware of his visitor's presence Tarutis continued to ply his spade, throwing the earth under the very hooves of the master's horse. Presently Jarmala spoke, asking him what he was doing.

Tarutis told him shortly. "It won't flood my fields, will it?" asked Jarmala anxiously.

"It may," Juras replied, continuing to avoid the master's eye. "Then we can go boating . . ."

But Jarmala had something else on his mind. He lit a cigarette, settled himself more comfortably on his saddle and his lips twisted in a sardonic smile.

"So I hear you're going to sue me . . . because of your boy?"

"Maybe I am."

"Think you'll win the case?"

"We'll see."

"I shouldn't advise you," remarked Jarmala, his cunning smile spreading, as he stroked his horse's mane with his gloved hand. "No, I shouldn't advise you. You won't gain anything."

"Thanks for the advice. Perhaps you'd like to be my lawyer."

Jarmala made believe he had not heard, but the remark angered him and he retaliated, using his sharpest weapon:

"What about the little debt you owe me, Mr. Tarutis? You've not forgotten, I hope?"

"I'm not likely to forget."

"Well, thank goodness I have the promissory notes all intact. I always did like to have things down in black on white. Well, Mr. Tarutis, when do you think you'll be able to settle?"

Jarmala's irritating tone and his emphasis on the word "Mister" enraged Juras and he could scarcely control himself. Angry words burned on his tongue but as was often in moments of anger, the passion within him suddenly died and he became hard and deadly calm.

"If that's the case, master . . . why, we might do a bit of reckoning right now. Didn't I work a whole week in your garden last year; didn't I repair your flax-scutcher, and knock together some beehives? And what about the work I did carting wood? Maybe you'll deduct from the interest for nursing your daughter?"

The landowner protested. Juras ought to be ashamed of himself for bringing up such trifles. How many times had he, Jarmala, saved Tarutis from trouble.

From one thing to another, reproach following reproach, the landowner soon began to threaten. But the more excited he grew, the calmer Juras was:

"Hold your horses, master! The time will come when we'll be quit. But remember, he who laughs last laughs best. And now get off my land or I'm liable to lose my temper, I am."

A flicker of light touched Juras' sleeping eyelids, waking him. With a quick movement he jerked off the blanket and sat up in bed. Still under the spell of a strange dream that had haunted him all night, he could not make out for a moment where he was and what was happening. Light poured in through the window, but it was not the light of dawn. Someone was knocking at the windowpane.

"Who is it?"

"Get up, Tarutis, come and have a look."

The strange light he had seen was the reflection of a fire. Ruddy patches of light, like fire birds, hovered over the walls. Two farmers were standing outside the window, talking. Then they turned and set off in the direction of the fire, their shadows strangely elongated as though they walked on stilts.

Juras jumped out of bed and walked over to the window in his nightshirt.

Monika woke up and joined Juras at the window and they both stared at the distant blaze, their faces reflecting the lurid glow.

"Oh, Juras, it looks like Jarmala's place! God, how awful! Juras, for Christ's sake, don't go over there!"

"Yes, it's Jarmala all right. But why shouldn't I go over?"

"It's dangerous for you to be seen there. You know Jarmala doesn't like you. He may easily turn nasty and try to pin something on you. God, look at that flame!"

Juras hesitated for a moment. His wife's warning gave him a strange presentiment. "If I go they may think I set fire to the place," he thought.

But he dismissed the notion as foolish and, his mind made up, he swiftly put on his clogs, threw his heavy coat over his nightshirt and, ignoring Monika's protests, went outside.

As he turned the corner of the road he saw a spurt of flame leap high into the heavens: for a moment

it looked like a giant golden steed tossing its fiery mane as it pranced madly. Then, as though someone had caught its hind legs, the horse seemed to drop and the next minute the fields were illumined by a fitful glare that lit up everything so clearly one could count the huts and the trees in the gardens. But now the flames assumed a new form; they were two scarlet beasts ferociously attacking one another so that torn bits of fur and bloodstained hide flew on all sides.

The fearful, warning clangor of the churchbells rang over the village. As he drew nearer, Juras heard shouts and cries, a crashing and thudding and barking of dogs. Red-hot splinters flew from the conflagration like arrows.

Fire fascinated Juras, as it does most men. There is a mysterious terrifying force in fire; it is strange and terrible, yet alive and almost humanly cunning. Villagers feared fire, and fire was unkind to them. In the autumn the candle flames peered out hungrily like wolves' eyes from the tiny windows into the black night; they crept from dark corners through unfastened doors as though anxious to escape. Sometimes, as if in revenge, all the flames would get together and clinging to one another would begin to dance a witches' dance on the roof of someone's house. Men would attack them fiercely, stamp them out, crush them with their bodies; others would look on in helpless fascination and weep or laugh, not daring to fight them.

But this fire was different. It was majestic, proud and not frightening. The closer Juras came to it, the more it seemed to beckon to him and he hurried toward it. He ran quickly and reaching the hill he stopped to catch his breath. From here he had a perfect view of the fire. The red insatiable tongues of flame licked the sky which was dimmed by a thick cloud of smoke. Crows frightened by the fire and the commotion flew crazily over the fields as though blinded. The acrid smell of burning wheat stung Juras' nostrils.

Villagers roused from their bed by the fire bell rushed past Juras, some carrying poles, others pails; but most of them empty handed, urged on by curiosity.

"Hurry up," they called to one another. "Get a move on or you'll miss everything."

By the time Juras arrived at the estate the fire had enveloped the barn and was threatening to spread to the other buildings. At first the tongues of flame ran lightly over the fences but the men had managed to tear them in time and like a live thinking being, the fire switched over to the lightning conductor, climbed to the top and bent it over. Wreathed in smoke the pole caught fire, burned like a gigantic candle, and finally crashed to the ground scattering a myriad of sparks. Someone must have been hurt by its fall, for there was a cry of pain and the crowd pressed back. Juras went nearer. In the fitful glare the faces of the crowd were distorted, some elongated beyond proportion, others squashed flat but all wearing the same expression. Their eyes reflected the flames. Few bothered to fight the fire. Most people waited and watched, muttering exclamations, or drifting like drunkards from one group to another, hauling logs, jumping over the burning timbers, getting in one another's way, defying the flames.

Opinions about the fire at the estate varied. Some suspected that Jarmala had done it himself, for only recently he had ordered his best agricultural equipment and machines to be moved from the

old barn into the new. He could take the risk, for the old building stood at a safe distance from the new barn, it was crumbling with age and was insured.

Others reported that on his return from Kaunas where he had been when the fire broke out Jarmala had said: "I know who did it. And I'll see that he rots in prison for it."

This was believed to be an allusion to the farmhands Jarmala had dismissed. But if so, how could he point to the culprit. There were plenty who had threatened him at one time or another.

"That's true," the farmers commented. "Our master has robbed many folk in his time. Why, when the Palesiai estate burned down last year, no one ever found who did it. The master had always been at odds with the workers. Every time he had to pay a farmhand his wages, he would hand him over to the police as political suspect."

Fires had been occurring frequently for the past two years in Sarmantai district. As soon as winter came, particularly after Christmas, the farmers watched every flicker of light, every glow in the sky rising from somewhere behind the forest. The old people predicted war and plague. But the reddish glare usually meant that some estate, some manor was on fire.

The third day after the fire in Vishinskyne, a group of squires meeting in the inn after market day settled the matter summarily.

"It's the work of the Reds."

"I think it must be some local troublemaker. Surely there aren't any Reds around here!"

"You're mistaken. Haven't you noticed that all the fires occur on the big farms, while the new farm settlers aren't touched. There's more to all this than meets the eye."

"Have you heard the news?" inquired a newcomer, throwing his hat onto the table. "They've just taken Tarutis from Klangiai. They say he's the one that. . . ."

"Tarutis set fire to Jarmala's barn? I'll be damned!"

One evening, some weeks later, a man entered the Tarutis cottage. His chin was covered with a growth of reddish hair. When he threw his stick into a corner and stretched out his arms to the child sitting before the fire, the boy hid from him in fear. And only when his mother returned from the stable and threw herself on the newcomer's neck did the boy recognize his father.

Monika wept to see the change in Juras. The few weeks in prison had added years to his age; his face was deathly pale and haggard. All evening Juras sat before the hearth with Jonukas' head on his knees and the stories he told filled wife and child with horror.

"They reminded me of what I had said to Jarmala: he who laughs last laughs best! Why should I deny it? Yes, that's what I said. 'And what did you have in your mind when you said that,' the judge asks. 'Revenge? Did you wish harm to come to Jarmala?' Yes, indeed, sir. I wished he'd break his neck. But to set fire to his property, to do anything violent like that, no, never. I am a quiet fellow, like all poor people. You can cut off our heads and we'll keep quiet. True, Jarmala's to blame for my son's death, Jarmala ruined our lives, but I'm not so stupid as to go about making fires. . . . Well, the next day there was another investigator. A nasty one. 'You'll rot in jail for the rest of your life if you don't admit.' Sir, I says, you can do what you like. I can't take my heart out and show it to

you, but I'm not guilty just the same. I stuck to my word all the time, no matter what they did to me. So they had to let me go. 'If you weren't a volunteer we would bash your face for being a lousy Bolshevik,' they said. But they let me go."

As he recounted his experience, a dangerous light glinted in his eyes.

Things had happened in the village during his absence. Linkus had been sentenced to two months in jail for cutting down a tree in the state forest. Someone had thrown leaflets saying that the peasants should refuse to pay taxes to the government, that they should unite and drive out the officials who skin the peasants. The farmers had read the leaflets and declared that that which was written in them was the God's truth. And the next morning the police had come and made the elder collect every leaflet he could find. Linkus' children had heard the policeman say: "I'll run those bloody Communists to earth. . . ." But the biggest piece of news was that Bogumilas Vishinskis, the count's nephew, had returned from Paris and had been permitted to clear several dozen hectares of forest in compensation for the estate that had been divided by the Lithuanian government among the farmers.

Bare of snow, the ground froze so hard that the ploughland crackled beneath the farmers' feet. The roads were as dusty as in summertime. Light flakes of snow flew about like the feathers of a plucked hen and melted before they reached the faded grass. The dogs barked loudly as they chased a fox through the village, to the vociferous delight of the urchins.

One afternoon Monika was looking out anxiously over the Niemen, wondering when Juras would return from town whither he had gone to ask for a loan from the bank. He had been away for three days now and she was getting worried. As she stood there, a cloud of dust rose on the road and a cart came rattling through the village.

Monika saw a group of muzhiks approach the cart and remove their caps. The cart pulled up and evidently its occupants were asking the way, for Monika saw the pedestrians point toward her house.

The horse set off again at a trot. As she watched its approach Monica began to tremble in every limb. "They're coming here!" she thought, pierced by terror. But before she had time to try to guess the reason for the visit, the cart swung round into the path leading to her farm.

"Jesus," thought Monika, "maybe Juras has got himself into trouble!" and she rushed inside the house, catching her skirt in the door in her haste and extricating it with shaking hands. In panic she called Jonukas and told him to climb up the attic. He complied grumblingly, unable to understand the reason for his mother's haste. Monika was about to follow him when the ladder slipped and they both fell to the floor.

At that moment the dog began to bark furiously and Monika heard the creak of the gate. She let go of the ladder and putting her dress to rights she was about to go outside to meet the newcomers when a voice just behind the door caused her to start back in fear.

"How do you get into this place?"

Grabbing Jonukas by the hand, Monika stepped forward. The door was flung open and she saw a man's thick neck, as red as a coxcomb. Two men strode into the room without knocking.

Monika's first impulse was to fly but she controlled herself with an effort. Her legs were shaking

and there was the same weak, hollow sensation beneath her breast that she had felt years ago just after Kaziukas had been born.

"Ah, there you are, madam. We were just about to look for you. Thought you'd be hiding in the straw!"

Monika stammered something incoherent in reply. With nervous gestures she now stroked the boy's head, now raised her hand to push back her hair.

Then observing that the policemen were looking around for a place to sit, she rushed over to the bench and began wiping the dust with the hem of her skirt.

"Don't bother, ma'am, we aren't such terribly welcome guests, are we?" said one whom Monika judged to be the officer since he was better dressed than the others. "Daresay you'd be glad to get rid of us quick enough, eh?" he added with a quick appraising glance at Monika's still youthful figure as she leaned over to dust the bench.

"But you're guests just the same, mister. Sit down, please," she said in a low voice, noticing with a tremor that the officer had not taken his eyes from her face.

"We came to ask," he began, lighting a cigarette and blowing out a cloud of smoke, "whether you had any daughters of marriagable age . . ." and again Monika felt his eyes on her. "But now that I have a better look at you I see you're not so bad yourself."

Monika flushed scarlet at this sally. "The Mister is making fun of me, an old toothless hag like me. Here's my son. There was another but he died."

The inspector toyed with the cigarette box. Then be beckoned to Jonukas, who was staring at him popeyed, and gave him the box.

"Well, Mikas, why aren't you out shooting grouse. Or isn't your name Mikas?"

"Tell the gentlemen your name, and say thank you," Monika said, nudging the boy.

Meantime the other policeman was looking around idly, obviously waiting for the inspector to get down to business. But the latter seemed to be in the mood for a chat.

"Pity you're not a widow with a pretty daughter," he remarked playfully.

Then he asked her where her husband was, whether she had any complaints against the neighbors, which of the rich farmers in the neighborhood were looking for sons-in-law, and when Monika replied that the farmers in Klangiai were so poor they had to sell their possessions he cut her short:

"Now that's not true, ma'am. Nobody's been selling anything. We've never been here before."

At that he rose and continuing to crack jokes he threw his cigarette butt into a corner.

"Well, ma'am," he said smiling, "you won't cry I hope if we ask you to let us have a look at your cattle? You don't have a daughter but it won't do any harm to look at the dowry, eh?"

"Why should I mind, mister? We're used to having everything taken away from us. My husband has gone to Kaunas to borrow some money from the bank. Maybe we'll be able to pay back then!" and as she spoke Monika felt the tears choking her.

"Those are high-spirited girls your neighbor Jokubauskas has. Why, just as soon as we mentioned the stables they flew at us with broomsticks. Some gals those!"

Monika moved aside to let the policemen pass. They went outside but she stayed behind in the hut for a moment to wipe her eyes with the corner of her kerchief before joining them in the yard.

"We have a little, thank God, a cow . . . a horse," Monika said

as she opened the stable door. "The horse is lame."

And at that moment the stable seemed to her so wretched, her whole life so miserable and squalid that she felt a rush of shame and bitterness as though she was actually showing her dowry to a matchmaker.

The cow was chewing solemnly as they entered and she looked with her sad, intelligent eyes at the men who had come to price her.

"I suppose you haven't got a colt hidden away? Is that the lot?"

"That's all," Monika replied in a hoarse voice. "All," she repeated.

"Don't worry, ma'am, we're decent folk. We'll only write it down. How old is the cow?" asked the inspector.

Monika told him, but she did not know the age of the horse.

The policemen forced open the animal's mouth and looked at his teeth.

"Make it six years," he said shortly, brushing the horse's hair from his coat.

When they had included the sheep and the sow with her young, the inventory was complete, and the policemen were ready to depart. The inspector asked for a drink of water before they left, and as Monika went into the house to fetch it he followed her.

"Don't bother, ma'am," he said as he saw Monika hurriedly washing a glass. "Dip some out of the barrel." Monika bent over to comply and suddenly everything went black before her eyes, and there was a bitter-sweet taste in her mouth. As she handed the glass to the policeman, it seemed to her that he was going to seize her hand with it. She felt faint and dizzy.

The inspector's voice, thanking her for the water, reached her as from a vast distance. He left the house and Monika leaned against the wall weakly.

Presently she heard a furious barking and, looking out of the doorway, she saw that Naras, the dog, had torn loose from his chain and was running like mad after the policemen's cart, throwing himself at the horse as if he wanted to tear its throat. Soon he was joined by several other village dogs and the tormented horse reared wildly, causing the cart to toss from side to side.

Watching anxiously, she saw the inspector's hand reach out holding some dark object. The next moment a shot rang out, followed by others. The horse plunged and the cart rattled off amid a cloud of dust.

There was a piercing howl and Monika saw Naras squirm in the dust, roll over and lie still.

"Swine! Cowardly swine!" cried Monika, but the pitiful yelps of the dying animal drowned her voice. She ran out to where he lay in a pool of blood. The dog crawled toward her, leaving a red trail in the dust. He gazed up at his mistress with soft eyes that were fast dimming. He seemed to be asking forgiveness.

Monika raised him and cradled him in her arms like a baby. For a moment the sufferings of the animal and the woman were mingled.

Although Juras was a sociable man he never spent much time in beer saloons. Monika had no complaints to make in this respect. For all the fifteen years of their life together he had not spent a lit on vodka.

Sometimes he took a glass or two at weddings or funerals but he was never considered a drinker. Misery and hardship had not weakened his will, had not had the same effect on him as on many of his neighbors who drowned their troubles in alcohol. Nevertheless in the past year he had come home under the weather several times.

One Sunday after Christmas, Ju-

ras had promised his wife to stay at home but after a while he felt so restless that he begged her to let him go to town for a while. He gave his word that he would be home at sunset.

Monika was disturbed at the thought that Juras was succumbing to the evil influence of drink, but he permitted her to search his pockets and his old shabby purse, and when she was convinced that he had no money on him she let him go.

Reaching Sarmantai, Juras headed straight for the office of the district administration where the peasants usually gathered to chew the rag.

As he was brushing the snow off his cap on the doorstep, someone caught him by the elbow. It was the elder.

"Hey, Tarutis, come here. There's a paper for you. Good thing you came. Here!"

"In accordance with article 130 of the District Civil Court," he read, "the chief of police of the Kovno district announces the auction of the movable property of Citizen Juras Tarutis of Klangiai village, consisting of a brown cow aged four and a horse aged six . . ."

Someone asked a question of Juras. His reply was long in coming and when it did it was scarcely to the point.

"This here's my last will and testament . . . A cow and two sheep," he whispered, continuing to read, "to meet the claims of citizen Jarmala Zigmas to the sum of 110 lit, as well as the claims of the manager of the credit bank Paulauskas . . . 100 lit . . . For further particulars apply to office of district police. . . ."

As Juras finished reading, his throat felt dry and a wave of weariness swept over him.

Juras was walking along the village road. From the distance came the doleful strains of a funeral dirge. The uneven voices hovered over the misty surface of the fields, now drowned out by the wind, now ringing so clear that Juras could hear the names of the saints invoked to save the soul of the deceased.

For a moment he caught sight of a long straggling line of people climbing the hill, as a shaft of sunlight pierced the gloom, shedding a fitful light on the procession and the coffin. Then the dark heavy clouds swallowed up the sun and only the melancholy chant was heard.

"They're dying like flies nowadays!" someone was saying as Juras entered his cottage.

"Yes, its a good crop for the priests. . . ."

A group of Juras' neighbors were sitting in the room. Even here the funeral chant was plainly audible. Some of the men were peering out of the window at the procession. The fog hung heavy; drops of moisture fell from the roof and streams of warm air penetrated through the flimsy jambs. Thick clouds of tobacco smoke hung over the room, getting into the throat of little Jonukas, who was tossing on his bed and coughing hoarsely.

"No clothes, no shoes and no food, that's the answer," someone remarked shortly.

Juras sat apart like a stranger in his own home. Then he rose and went to look for his wife to tell her she need not feed the cattle since it would be taken away the next morning. Returning to the room he went over to his son and pulled the blanket over his half-naked body.

"I see in the papers they're saying the peasants are the country's blood. Well, they're sucking the blood all right . . . Blood . . . Why, we can't afford to buy a box of

matches. The hell with the government!"

"That's right! What you raise isn't worth a lit but when you need to buy something you have to fork out plenty."

"All I say is the fellows who run this country must feel they haven't long to stay or else they wouldn't tighten the screw so much."

Juras took all this talk very much to heart. It was meant to be consoling but to him it sounded like a curse. Gradually growing excited, the muzhiks began to raise their voices, talking all together and gesticulating angrily.

"We'll have to go out with our axes and pitchforks, soon. We can't stand it much longer."

"Rubbish, Tamoshius, you'll never go. The peasant is used to anything, like a lazy horse to the whip. You'll live on water but you'll keep your mouth shut . . . we're all the same. We like to talk but we're cowards at heart!"

"Yes, but what are we going to do, Pranuk? Where are we to go? We can't go on like this."

Juras cut into the conversation without being aware of it himself. The wretchedness and hatred pent up within him burst forth in a torrent of words:

"Don't I remember how we marched for days and nights, tied to our horses to keep from dropping with hunger. . . . And they say: you are the masters here. You and your children won't be slaves any more . . . you've won freedom, independence . . . from the Bolsheviks. Why, if I'd known, it would have been with them and not against them that I'd have marched. . . . Never mind, the time will yet come!"

At that moment Monika burst into the room:

"I think they're coming!" she cried.

Juras went over to the window. The muzhiks rose to their feet in silence, looked out over Juras' shoulder and sat down again, shuffling their feet nervously.

"Jesus, I don't know what's happening to me. My legs are giving way under me," groaned Monika, dropping onto the bed.

But she got up again and went outside. She could not stay in the house. Restless and miserable, she longed to get away to the fields or the woods.

The men went outside one after another. The cart was turning into the village road, followed by a group of villagers talking loudly among themselves.

The hills and fields looked bare and desolate now that winter was on the wane. The mist had risen and the sky, having lifted its sleepy eyelids, looked down with clear blue gaze onto the earth beneath.

Juras was about to open the gates but he changed his mind. Why should he bother? Let them do it themselves.

He caught sight of Monika running toward the village and called her back. She turned round and said something he could not catch, and ran on again.

Juras greeted his neighbors as they came into the yard, their faces expressing worry and concern.

The police inspector jumped off the cart. He seemed in excellent humor. With him was Jarmala's brother-in-law, recently returned from America. He had come to buy an estate not far from his relatives. The peasants looked on, their faces sullen.

"Aha, the master of the house is at home at last!" said the police officer.

"There's no getting away from guests like you!"

"Find you in hell, you say? Ha, ha, that's a good one. Yes, I suppose we would. Er . . . are all

these people going to take part in the auction?" inquired the inspector, slapping his gloves against his overcoat as he cast his eyes over the group of farmers.

Then he turned to Juras and winking in the direction of Jarmala's relative, said in a conspirative undertone:

"That's an American. He'll give you more than you'd get from a Jew. You'll see!"

The yard was filled with farmers and their wives. Some stood leaning against the fence, others were sitting on a heap of stones. The inspector produced a sheet of paper from his portfolio to enter the names of all those who wished to take part in the auction. So far the American's name was the only one on the list.

"Well, there's plenty of time," remarked the inspector. "We'll have a smoke and maybe some others will turn up. If not, it will be Tarutis' good luck, eh?"

"It won't be anyone's luck, mister! You'll drive us out anyhow, if not today then tomorrow!" replied a hatchet-faced woman, looking the inspector straight in the eyes.

The policeman's smile broadened as he looked at the woman.

"Ah, Stasiuliene! I thought I recognized you. Why, we're old friends, aren't we?"

"Sure, even a wolf remembers the sheep he's eaten, mister," retorted the woman. There was laughter from the farmers at this sally.

The inspector ignored the remark but his face wore a sour look as he continued:

"I have a friend. Perhaps she will take my part if things begin to go bad with me!"

"Is it as bad as this everywhere, mister?"

"That's a pretty daughter you've got, Stasiuliene," remarked the inspector, trying hard to win the farmers over to his side.

"What about it!" returned the woman. "You can't sell her by auction!"

The smile vanished from the inspector's face. He turned pale, but made an attempt to smile as if to show that he was enjoying the woman's sarcasm.

The villagers were delighted at Stasiuliene's boldness. She wouldn't let a dozen inspectors get the better of *her*.

"Serves him right," the farmers remarked to one another. "What's the idea of coming here and acting like he was a lamb."

By this time a few prosperous farmers had arrived from neighboring villages to attend the sale. The inspector asked Tarutis to bring out his property.

Juras complied. He wanted to tie the cow to the fence but the placid animal had no intentions of running away. She looked around her with mild surprise at the strangers. The farmers crowded around the cow, the American stood looking on from a distance.

"Hey, you get out of here! That's not your cow!" someone in the crowd shouted to a man who had been sent by the sheriff.

The inspector set a price so low that there was a murmur of dissatisfaction from the villagers.

The buyers prodded and pinched the animal from all sides, talking loudly among themselves. A maze of faces, hats and kerchiefs swam before Juras's eyes.

"Forty. . . ."

The voice of the sheriff's man was heard again and again, but Juras seemed oblivious of everything. He cast a vacant look around and his eye fell on his little half-naked son standing with his fist in his mouth, looking from the cow to the calf and from the calf to his father.

"Jonukas," called Juras, "run

over to the Linkuses and call your mother." But no sooner were the words out of his mouth than he realized the futility of it.

"Forty two!" someone shouted and Juras saw the inspector wave his glove.

Much to everyone's surprise the cow was not bought by the American; it was knocked down to the priest's steward.

Now Juras had to exhibit the other animals in turn. He patted them as if saying goodbye for the last time.

The prices bid for the animals were ridiculously low.

"Huh! I was offered more than that for my Beishke's tail last week," someone said. "These fellows ought to be ashamed of themselves!"

"You can't expect shame from the likes of them."

Stinging under the caustic remarks of the peasants the inspector controlled his anger with an effort and said in a warning tone:

"No insults please! I'm only carrying out orders, you know." The peasants calmed down a bit at this; glancing over the assembly, the inspector turned to Juras with a show of good humor.

"Well, Tarutis, what would you like for the horse? Be frank, now."

Juras said nothing and a price was named by his neighbors. The inspector haggled goodnaturedly. The American made a bid, and for a long time no one took him up but even the inspector was ashamed to let the animal go so cheaply.

Suddenly there was a commotion at the back. The sheriff's man was arguing excitedly with the villagers.

"Throw him out, the son of a bitch!" someone shouted. "Shut his mouth!"

"He's no business here anyhow!"

At that moment Monika came running in wildly, the boy at her heels. She elbowed her way through the crowd and pushed the boy forward to where the inspector was standing.

"Beg, son, cry. Maybe he'll let us keep it. Kiss his hand," she urged frantically.

Juras was furious. "Get out, woman!" he cried in a terrible voice. "There'll be no hand kissing around here." Monika looked around her with wild eyes and rushed inside the house, hiding her face in her hands and sobbing bitterly.

A rope was thrown around the cow's neck, and the animal was let out of the yard. The calf ran out after its mother who began to buck wildly. The farmers felt sorry for Juras as he strove helplessly to separate the two animals. To the farmers it was not merely a cow being led from the stable; it was as though the live flesh were being torn from the body of one of their own.

As the buyers were leading away the animal, some of the farmers could not restrain their wrath.

"Might have left the man something to live on. Got a fat bargain that time, didn't you! Heartless swine!"

A number of villagers stood with their backs to the barred gate and refused to budge.

"Aw, go on, leave the animal be. . . ."

"Let him go!"

"Getting away with murder, aren't you! The priest'll give you the tail for a present, I bet!"

Juras saw everything, the farmers, the buyers, the cow as though he was looking through field-glasses. Now all was startlingly clear, now the scene seemed far away and dim. Suddenly he felt his throat tighten and the blood rush to his head. He dashed over to the cow, seized her by the horns and planting his feet firmly on the ground he shouted hoarsely:

"I won't let her go!"

He said no more. His head drooped and his shoulders trembled but he was not weeping. When he raised his eyes again there was a hard, determined light in them.

But his action had stirred the peasants. There was a movement among them as with ants when someone attempts to destroy their peaceful, diligent existence.

"Oh, Jesus, they'll start shooting now!" screamed a woman running toward the house.

The American started off at a run across the ploughland, behind him the priest's bidder. The police inspector whipped up his horse and as the cart moved away he fired a few shots into the air. The released animals scampered wildly over the fields.

It was a long while before the commotion in Tarutis' yard subsided.

"This is the end," sighed the women, wringing their hands. "We'll all be in jail soon!"

"Let them try!" growled the men. "We'll stick together, we've got to or we're done for!"

One day the news came to Klangiai that there were disturbances on the other side of the Niemen. The peasants had taken up arms to fight for their rights. All the roads leading to the district town and the markets were being guarded by rebel peasants.

Tarutis ran around his own and neighboring villages, sending out other Klangiai peasants in different directions and by evening of the same day a large crowd of peasants gathered in his yard. Pointing to the river, Juras told them that the men on the other side of the Niemen had taken their fate into their own hands; they had shown how the masters were to be dealt with. It was up to them to follow suit.

The peasants spoke briefly but with deep feeling. The Sarmantai district would extend its hand to the Sanemaniai peasants. Beginning the following morning not a grain of wheat, not a single egg, not a pound of meat would they carry to the markets.

Juras was among the first to volunteer to stand watch on the road leading to Kaunas.

Translated by Rose Prokofieva

ITSKHOK LEIBUSH PERETS

Bonche Silent

Here, on earth, Bonche Silent's death produced no impression whatever. Nobody could tell you who Bonche was, how he lived, what was the cause of his death: whether his heart failed, or his strength was sapped, or his spine snapped under a heavy load . . . Who knows—perhaps he starved to death . . .

If a tram horse were to fall in its traces, that would create much more of a stir. Papers would write about it, hundreds of people would come running to look at the carcass, to scrutinize even the place where the accident occured.

But that tram horse would not have received all that attention if horses were as many as people—thousands of millions of them!

Bonche lived quietly and quietly he died. Like a shadow he passed through our world.

At the ceremony of his circumcision there was no wine to drink, no glasses clinked. When he reached thirteen and maturity, nobody celebrated the event, and Bonche delivered no brilliant speech on the occasion . . . He was like a tiny grain of gray sand on the sea-shore. Thus he lived amid millions of similar grains of sand; and when the wind lifted him up in the air and carried him across the sea, nobody noticed it!

When he was alive, the wet mud retained no mark of his foot; when he was dead, the wind tore out the little board that marked his grave—the grave-digger's wife found it and used it to boil a potful of potatoes . . . Three days after Bonche's death the grave-digger could not tell where he had buried him.

If Bonche had a tombstone over his grave, it might perhaps be found by an archeologist some hundred years hence, and the name of "Bonche Silent" would perhaps once more reverberate through our air.

A shadow—he left no impression of himself in anyone's brain, or in anyone's heart. He left not a trace behind him.

"No kith, nor kin"; lonely he lived and lonely he died.

Perhaps, if it were not for the bustle of human life, somebody might have heard occasionally the cracking of the bones of his spinal column under the weight of his burden; if people had more time to spare, somebody might have

noticed occasionally that Bonche (also a human being!) had lackluster eyes and terribly sunken cheeks; that even when he carried no burden on his back, his head was bent low, as if he were searching for his grave. Were people as few as horses pulling tram-cars somebody might perhaps have asked now and then; "Why don't we see Bonche any more? What has happened to him?"

When Bonche was taken to the hospital, the corner he had in a basement did not remain unoccupied a minute—a dozen men like himself had been waiting for it, and now they drew lots for it. When his body was removed from the hospital and taken to the morgue, dozens of poor sick people claimed the bed on which he lay. And when he was removed from the morgue, twenty corpses, extricated from the ruins of a house that had collapsed, were brought there. And who knows how long he is going to lie peacefully in his grave? Who knows how many people are already waiting to claim the few square feet of ground?

He was born quietly, lived quietly, died quietly, and was buried still more quietly.

Not so in the other world. There, in heaven, Bonche's death created a great stir.

The big horn of the times of Messiah resounded through all the seven circles of heaven: "Bonche Silent has passed away!" The biggest angels, with the widest wings, flew around excitedly and spread the news: "Bonche Silent has been invited to the Domains of Heaven!" There was a great bustle and rejoicing in Paradise: "Why, it is Bonche Silent coming! Bonche Silent himself!!!"

Young little angels, with diamond eyes, golden wire-wrought wings and silver slippers, flew gaily to meet Bonche. The noise of the wings, the tapping of the slippers, and the gay laughter of the young, fresh, rose-lipped angels filled the heavens and reached the Throne of Glory, and God himself now knew that it was Bonche Silent coming.

Father Abraham came to the gate of heaven, stretched out his right hand to welcome the arrival, a sweet smile lighting up his old features.

Whence that clatter of wheels up in heaven?

It is two angels rolling a golden easy chair on wheels for Bonche to sit on in Paradise.

What is that scintillating thing some angels have just carried away?

It is a golden crown studded with precious stones—also for Bonche.

"Even before the Heavenly Court has passed judgment?" the saints ask astonished. There is a note of envy in their question.

"Why," the angels reply, "the trial will be a mere formality. Even the Angel Accuser will have nothing to say. It won't last more than five minutes. It's not just anybody—it is Bonche Silent!"

When the little angels lifted Bonche on their wings and sang in his praise; when Father Abraham shook his hand warmly as if he were an old friend; when he heard that a chair had been prepared for him in Paradise; that a crown would grace his head; that nothing would be said against him in the Heavenly Court—Bonche, just as had been his wont on earth, kept silent. His heart sank with fear. He was sure it was nothing but a dream or, perhaps, just a mistake.

Such things had happened to him down below, too. Many a time had he dreamt that he was gathering coins on the floor, piles of them . . . But he had always awakened a poorer man than ever

before. Many a time it had happened that someone would smile to him by mistake or say something pleasant—only to turn away immediately and swear in disgust.

"That's the kind of luck I have," he thought.

And he kept his eyes closed, afraid the dream might vanish, and he might wake up in some cave amid snakes and scorpions. He was afraid to utter a sound, move a limb, lest he be recognized and cast into a bottomless pit.

He trembled all over. He did not hear the compliments of the angels, did not see them dance in his honor. He made no reply to Father Abraham's hearty welcome, and when he was led to the Heavenly Court he failed to greet the judges or say "good morning."

He was overpowered by fear.

His misgivings became even worse when he noticed the floor of the heavenly court-room—pure alabaster, studded with diamonds. "My feet treading on such a floor!?" He was paralyzed with fear. "It must be some rich man, or *rabbi*, or a saint they are expecting," he thought. "He will come, and then it will all be over with me!"

The President announced distinctly: "The case of Bonche Silent!" and handed the documents to the Angel Defender, saying: "Read, but make it short!"

But Bonche did not hear the President's words. Everything swam before his eyes; his ears rang. But through this ringing he heard the sweet voice of the Angel Defender ever more distinctly. It sang like a violin:

"His name fitted him like an artistically tailored suit fits a graceful body."

"What can he mean?" Bonche asked himself. He heard a voice interrupt impatiently:

"No similes, please."

"In all his life," the Angel Defender continued, "he never complained—neither against God nor against men did he complain; his eyes never flashed hatred, he never raised them accusingly towards heaven."

Bonche still did not understand a word. The impatient voice interrupted again.

"Without rhetoric, please!"

"Job revolted, yet Bonche was unhappier than he"—

"Facts, just facts, please!" the President interrupted still more impatiently.

"When he was eight days old, he was circumcised . . ."

"Leave out the realistic details!"

"The *mohel* did a bad job, he failed to stop the blood."

"Go ahead!"

"He was always silent," the Angel Defender continued. "Even when his mother died and a step-mother took her place when he was thirteen. She was a poisonous snake, an evil-minded witch."

"Perhaps, after all, it is me he's talking about," thought Bonche.

"No insinuations against third persons, please," the President interrupted gruffly.

"She grudged him every crust, she gave him mildewed bread, and bast instead of meat . . . while she herself drank coffee with cream."

"Get to the point!" the President insisted.

"But she used her sharp nails freely, and the scratches and bruises showed through his torn rags . . . Winter, during the worst frosts, he was sent outside barefoot to chop wood for her. His hands were young and weak, the logs too thick, the axe too blunt . . . Often he sprained his arm, froze his feet. Yet he was silent; not even to his father—"

"That drunkard!" the Angel Accuser laughed derisively, and Bonche felt a chill pass through his frame.

"—did he complain!" the Angel Defender concluded the sentence. "And all the time he was lonely," he continued. "No pal, no school . . . always in rags, never a free minute . . ."

"Facts!" the President demanded again.

"He was silent even when his father seized him by the hair and threw him out of the house on a snowy winter night. Slowly he rose to his feet and ran for his life. . . .

"He was silent all the way . . . When the hunger was most unbearable, he begged for bread with his eyes alone . . .

"It was a wet and murky evening in the spring when he came to the big city at last. He entered it like a drop falls into the ocean. He was thrown into prison the very same night. But he was silent; he never asked why he was arrested. When he came out of prison he looked for work that was the hardest. But he kept silent . . .

"To find work was harder than the work itself—he kept silent.

"Bathed in cold sweat, bent under weight of heavy loads, his belly convulsed with pangs of hunger—he was silent.

"Bespattered with mud, spat on, pushed off the side-walk with a heavy load on his back, and forced to walk amid the rushing *droshkies*, carriages and tram-cars, with death staring him always in the face—he kept silent.

"He never figured how many *poods*[1] he carried for a penny; how many times he fell during an errand, how often he nearly dropped in a faint while waiting for his hard-earned pennies. He never drew comparisons between his fate and that of others. He just kept silent.

"He never asked loudly even for the money he had earned. Like a beggar he would stand in the doorway, and his eyes would reflect the look of a hungry dog. 'Come later!' and he would disappear like a shadow, to come later and beg for his earnings even more silently. He was silent even when cheated of part of his pay or given a counterfeit coin!

"He just kept silent . . ."

"So he does mean me, after all!" Bonche consoled himself.

The Angel Defender drank some water and continued:

"Once a change occured in his life . . . A coach on rubber wheels was rushing past, carried by runaway horses . . . The coachman had been thrown off his seat and lay with a broken head on the pavement. The frightened horses frothed, sparks flashed under their hoofs, their eyes burned like torches in a dark night—and inside the coach a man sat more dead than alive.

"And Bonche stopped the horses.

"The man he saved was a philanthropist, and he did not forget to repay Bonche for his service. He handed him the killed man's whip, and thus Bonche became a coachman. Nor did the philanthropist stop there: he provided Bonche with a wife. More—he provided him with a child, too.

"And Bonche still kept silent!"

"Sure, it's me he means!" Bonche was now almost convinced. Yet, he could not muster the courage to raise his eyes or cast a glance at the heavenly judges.

The Angel Defender went on:

"He kept silent even when his benefactor went bankrupt soon afterwards and failed to pay his wages. . . .

"He kept silent even when his wife deserted him and left an infant on his hands . . .

"He kept silent fifteen years later, when the infant, now grown big and strong, threw him out of the house . . ."

[1] A pood—forty Russian pounds.—*Ed.*

"Sure, that's me!" Bonche rejoiced inwardly.

"He kept silent," the Angel Defender resumed in a sad and tender voice, "even when that same benefactor settled with all his creditors, but did not pay Bonche a kopek of his defaulted wages; and even when (riding again in a coach on rubber wheels, drawn by a pair of thoroughbred horses), that same man ran over Bonche . . .

"He just kept silent! He did not even tell the police who was the man that had knocked him down . . .

"He kept silent even in the hospital where one is expected to cry out!

"He kept silent when the doctor refused to attend him unless he was paid a fee, and when the nurse refused to change his linen unless given a tip in advance!

"He kept silent during his agony, and silently he died . . .

"Not a word did he utter against God, not a word against men!

"I have finished!"

Bonche began to shiver all over again. He knew that the Angel Defender would be followed by the Angel Accuser. He wondered what *that* angel was going to say. Bonche himself remembered little of his life. Even when he was alive on the earth, the minutes that had passed were immediately forgotten . . . The Angel Defender had reminded him of many things in his speech . . . And he wondered what the Angel Accuser might bring up against him.

"My lords!" the Accuser began in a harsh and sarcastic tone, and stopped short.

"My lords," he began again, in a somewhat softer tone, but stopped short again.

Finally that same voice said almost softly:

"My lords! He kept silent—and so will I!"

A hush fell over the court. Then a new voice was heard—tender and tremulous, like a harp:

"Bonche, oh Bonche, my child! My dear and beloved child, Bonche!"

Bonche's heart seemed to melt. He was ready to open his eyes now, but they were filled with tears . . . He had never felt such a sweet sadness . . . "My child, my Bonche!"—since his mother's death he had never heard such a voice, nor such words . . .

"My child!" the President of the Court continued. "You suffered every kind of pain, and you kept silent. Your limbs are broken, your whole body is in wounds, and all the recesses of your soul are bleeding—and you have always kept silent . . .

"Down there they did not appreciate your silence! Perhaps you did not know yourself that you could cry, and that your cry would bring down the walls of Jericho! You were never aware of the great power that lay dormant in you . . .

"Below on earth, your silence was not rewarded; but the earth is the Kingdom of Falsehood. Here, in the Kingdom of Truth, you shall get your reward!

"The Heavenly Court will not try you, nor will it pronounce sentence on you. It will not specify what is to be your share in heaven—take whatever you desire, for everything here is yours!"

Now Bonche raised his eyes for the first time. He blinked, for the brilliant light almost blinded him. Everything was so bright, everything sparkled, everything sent off rays of light: the walls, the furniture, the angels, the judges.

He lowered his tired eyes:

"Do you really mean it?" He asked uncertainly and timidly.

"Of course," the President of the Court reassured him. "Of course.

I am telling you: everything is yours. Choose and take whatever you please. For you will be taking what is your own."

"You really mean it?" Bonche repeated his question, but somewhat more at ease.

"Of course, of course, of course!" they assured him on all sides.

"Well," Bonche smiled, "if that is the case, I want a hot roll with fresh butter on it every morning!"

Judges and angels hung their heads in shame and embarrassment. The Angel Accuser roared with laughter.

Mother

Two women walking in the fields outside the town. One is tall, stout, with angry eyes, and heavy step. The other is thin, pale, small and her head is bent.

"Where are you taking me, Hannah?" the small woman asks.

"Just a few more steps, Gruna. See the hill over there?"

"But what for?" Gruna asks with a timid, faltering voice, as if afraid of something.

"You'll find out. Come along . . ."

They have reached the hill.

"Sit down!" Hannah says. The other woman obeys, sits down. Hannah sits next to her. In the quiet of the warm summer day, far away from the noise of the town, the following conversation ensues:

"Do you know, Gruna, who your husband was, may he rest in peace?"

A shadow settles on Gruna's pale face.

"I know," she answers sullenly.

"He was a *scribe*, Gruna! a godly man! He copied the holy *Torah*."

"I know!" Gruna interrupts impatiently.

"He used to immerse himself in the *Mikvah*[1] before every letter he copied on the parchment . . ."

"That's a lie . . . He did go to the *mikvah* a couple of times a week. But that was all . . ."

"He was a godly Jew."

"That's true . . ."

"May he be our patron in heaven . . ."

Gruna keeps silent.

"Why don't you say something?" Hannah asks in surprise.

"It's all the same either way . . ."

"It's not all the same! May he really be our patron, may his piety stand us in good stead! Do you hear?"

"I do."

"Well, and what have you got to say?"

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[1] Bath for ritual purposes.—*Ed.*

"What shall I say? All I know is that his piety has *not* stood us in good stead . . ."

A pause. The two women understand each other: the pious scribe left a widow with three orphans on her hands—girls all. Gruna never married again, she did not want to give her children a stepfather. She worked to provide for herself and the children; but she could not keep the wolf from her door . . . "His piety has *not* stood her in good stead . . ."

"And do you know why?" Hannah broke the silence.

"Eh?"

"Because you're sinful . . ."

"I?" The pale Gruna jumps up as if stung. "I—sinful?"

"Listen, Gruna, every mortal is sinful, but you particularly."

"Particularly?"

"Listen, Gruna, I didn't invite you for a walk in the fields, to the river, just for the fun of it . . . We're not in need of fresh air, thank God . . . You see, Gruna, a mother, and all the more so, a widow of a holy scribe, must . . ."

"What must she?"

"She must be more pious than anybody else, and she must look after her daughter better than anybody else."

The pale Gruna grows still paler. Her eyes flash, her nostrils distend, and her blue, parched lips quiver.

"Hannah!" she exclaims.

"You know, Gruna, I wish you well; but I must tell you the truth. If I didn't, I would have to answer for it before God . . . I am not going to gossip; people will not wag their tongues about you on account of me. It will all remain between us, God alone in heaven will hear us. . ."

"Don't wring my heart, Hannah. What is it?"

"All right! I'll be brief . . . Last night—it was late in the evening—I was returning from the station, and saw—your girl on the hill . . ."

"Alone?"

"No . . ."

"Who was with her?"

"I don't know. A fellow in a hat... or a derby, I think . . . he was kissing her neck . . . She laughed and munched candy . . ."

"I know about it!" Gruna says in a sepulchral voice. "It isn't the first time . . ."

"So you have known about it?! Are they engaged?"

"No . . ."

"No? And you . . . you kept silent?"

"Yes!"

"Why, Gruna!"

But now Gruna is at ease.

"Now you listen to me. I'm going to tell you something," she said harshly, seizing Hannah by the sleeve to make her sit down again.

"Listen," she goes on, "I'll tell you all, and God alone in heaven will hear us!"

Hannah sits down again.

"When my husband died," Gruna starts.

"Is that the way to talk, Gruna?"

"What do you mean?"

"Without adding 'May his memory be blessed'? And then you should have said: 'Passed away.'"

"What difference does that make? Passed away or died—he was buried all the same . . ."

"He joined his fathers . . ."

"All right—he joined his fathers... only he left me with three orphans on my hands—daughters . . ."

"Poor man . . . left no *kadish*[1] . . ."

"Three daughters. The oldest . . ."

"Genendl—"

"She was fourteen years old at the time . . ."

"Might have been a bride already . . ."

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[1] A son to say the prayer of mourning in the synagogue.—*Ed.*

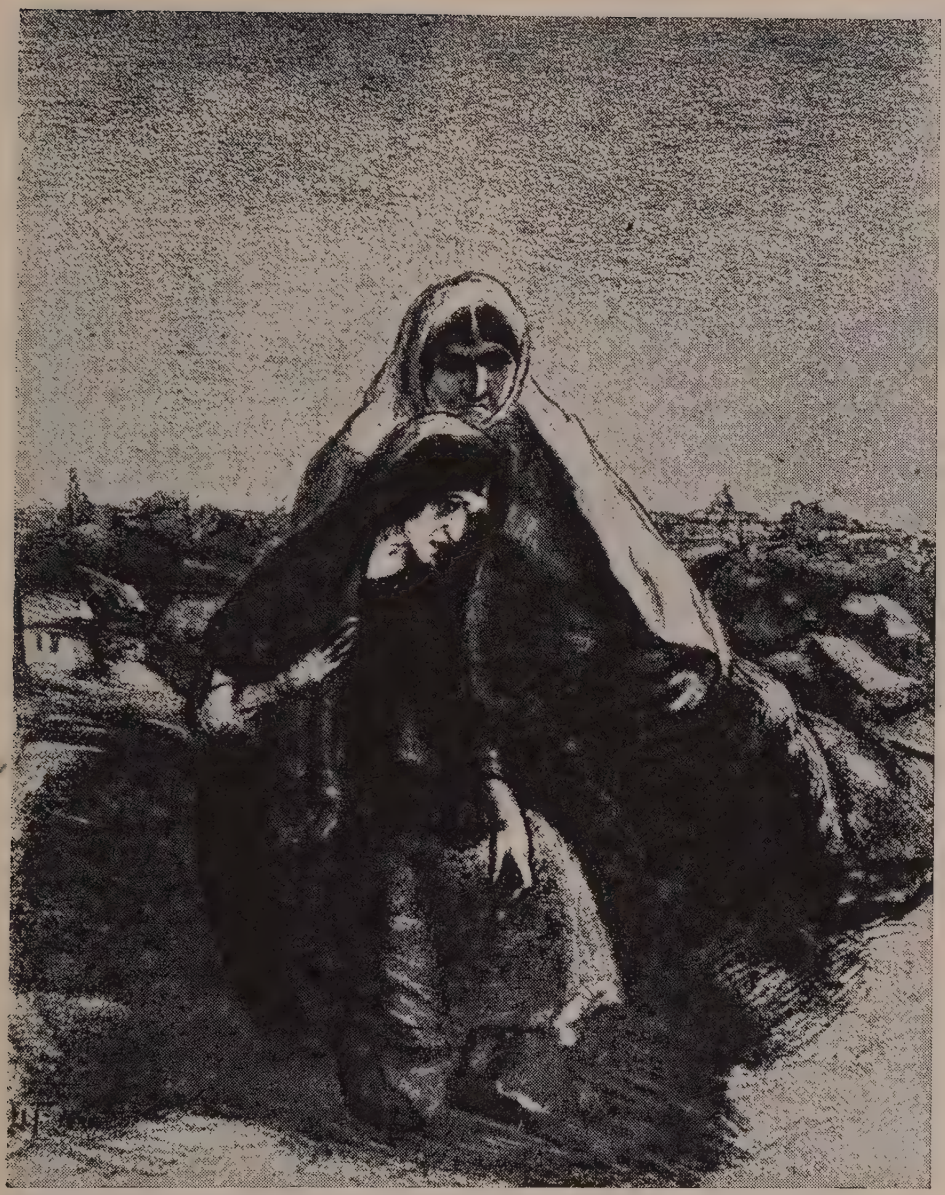

Illustration by M. Gorshman

"We had no bread! Let alone cake for an engagement party . . ."

"The way you talk today, Gruna . . ."

"It's my aching heart that talks . . . Genendl, as you know, was the prettiest girl in town."

"She still is—knock on wood!"

"Now she is a sour lemon—an old maid! But then she was as bright as the sun . . . But—I was the widow of a pious scribe! I kept watch over her . . . I knew, there are plenty of gallants after a pretty girl these days—all kinds of musicians, journeyman tailors, sports

and old bachelors . . . But what is a mother for? A girl, I knew, must be as pure as a mirror . . . And I had my way: there was not a speck on her, I took good care of that. I watched her every step, always had my eye on her. She never went out alone. And all the time I lectured her . . . Don't look this way, don't look that way, don't stand here, don't go there . . . Don't watch the birds flying . . ."

"Well, nothing wrong with that."

"Nothing, nothing at all!" Gruna says bitterly. "Only come over to my room, and see what she looks like now! Yes, she is a pure virgin, but thirty-six years old! Thin, the bones protruding, the skin in folds, like parchment, the eyes dimmed, the face sour, never a smile on her lips . . . Often her dimmed eyes are burning—but with a fire of hatred, of scorn, a fire of hell . . . And, do you know whom she hates so bitterly, whom she curses when she is silently moving her lips?"

"Whom?"

"Me! Her own mother!"

"What things you say! Why should she?"

"She may not know it herself, but I know! I stood between her and the world, between her and the sun. I—how shall I say it?—I did not let warmth and light touch her body . . . I thought of it through long, sleepless nights, until I saw it all! She must hate me . . . Every cell of her body hates me!"

"What things you say!"

"Yes, she does. And she hates her sisters, too. They are younger and prettier!"

Gruna breathes heavily. Hannah is bewildered . . . What she has heard is something terrible, something that is worse than illness, than death, something worse than dying 'under the canopy during the marriage ceremony'—the worst calamity that could befall a Jew—and still, God Almighty, that is how it *should* be!

"Leah, the younger one," Gruna continues, "I did not keep at home . . . She went to serve as a house-maid . . ."

"Yes," says Hannah, "I remember. I was scandalized and made a fuss about it at the time . . . The daughter of a scribe—and a house-maid!"

"I wanted at least *her* to marry. I wanted her to have some dowry . . . I could provide no dowry for her out of the onions which I am selling in the market . . . And I watched over her, too. It happened more than once that a master of hers looked sweet upon her, that a master's son tried to seduce her . . . But I am a mother! I have been a true mother to my children! Although I could hardly stand on my feet, I visited her ten times a day in her kitchen, I cried, had fits, fainted away, and lectured her . . . Oh! I used all the good and pious words I knew! . . . I would stay up nights reading the book of right living and other holy books about heaven and hell, and on the next day I would repeat it all to her . . . and even add some of my own! May God forgive me for it . . . Where the book spoke of three devils, I made it ten; where it spoke of one blow I turned it into running the gauntlet. I spared no fire and brimstone! And she was a weak child, a godfearing child. She let herself be guided by me! . . . She was the picture of her father—pale, not a drop of blood, and such good, moist eyes—only she was prettier . . ."

"God have mercy on us! Why, you talk of her as if she were dead!"

"You think she's alive? I am telling you she is not! She collected some money for her dowry, and I gave her a husband. She cried, she did not want him—he was too coarse, ignorant and rude. But a well-learned young man won't take a house-maid, particularly when

all the dowry she has is thirty rubles. I thanked God I found her a husband—even if he was only a tailor! Well, he lived with her a year, took away her money, deprived her of her health, of her last bit of strength, and disappeared . . . He left her on my hands stripped and without a penny. All she got is consumption—she spits blood! . . . She is nothing but the shadow of her former self . . . She nestles against me like a little child, like a timid lamb! . . . and she cries, she cries the night through. And, do you know who is the cause of her tears?"

"Her husband, a curse on his name!"

"No, Hannah, it is I! I am the cause of her unhappiness! Her tears keep falling like molten lead upon my heart, they spread like poison through my body . . ."

She stops short and gasps for breath.

"Well?" Hannah asks.

"Well? I said to myself then: Enough! Let my third daughter live! Let her live the way she pleases! She works in a factory. She works sixteen hours a day, and what she earns is hardly enough to buy bread with . . . She wants candy too—let her have candy! She wants to laugh, have fun, kiss—let her! Do you hear me, Hannah? Let her! I cannot give her any sweets, and surely I can't give her a husband. And I don't want her to turn into a sour lemon, I don't want her to get consumption. No! Let at least one of my daughters not hate me, not curse me . . ."

"But Gruna!" Hannah exclaims horror-stricken. "What will people say?"

"First let people pity poor orphans, let them not work them to death! Let people have human hearts and not squeeze the poor as they squeeze a lemon . . ."

"And God? What will God say?!" Gruna stands up and shouts, as if making sure that God in heaven will hear her:

"Why didn't God provide for the others, for the older daughters?"

Heavy silence. The two women breath heavily, facing each other, their eyes flashing scorn.

"Gruna!" Hannah cries out at last: "God will punish!"

"Not me, nor my daughters! God is just—he'll punish someone else! Someone else!"

Translated from the Yiddish by Leon Talmy

ALEXEI TOLSTOY

Poet of the Georgian People

Twenty-five years ago, when the first imperialist war was at its height, I happened to be present at the burial of Akaki Tsereteli. I saw how the orphaned people of Georgia parted with their beloved poet, lying in a crystal coffin, how they bewailed this remarkable man who had been known and loved in even the remotest villages. Seeing all this, I realized what Akaki Tsereteli meant to the people of Georgia.

A few years after his death the workers and peasants of Georgia, following in the wake of their Russian comrades, broke the chains of autocracy. The dreams of the finest minds of our country—the fatherland of many peoples—were realized. Our country found itself on the high road of life, power and creative activity. Thus were fulfilled the prophetic words spoken by Akaki Tsereteli as far back as 1881:

I see as from a lofty tower,
My native Georgia in flower,
With jasmine bushes perfume flinging.
I listen—nightingales are singing
And stars are whispering like lovers,
My native land whom glory covers
Has found her freedom, found hope and
Sees the gates of dawn are opened.

The creative powers of the Soviet people were chained, like Prometheus, for long, long years to grim rocks. The genius of the people was hampered by the strife artificially inflamed among them, and by mutual distrust and misunderstanding. But Prometheus today is unbound, free to bring back that which appeared to Attic poetry as the golden age lost for all time. In this Stalinist era the creative power of the peoples of our country is creating the golden age on earth.

We, the Russian writers and poets, and not only we, but the Russian people as a whole, are well aware of the vastness of the spiritual and material wealth, the scope of the spiritual and material possibilities of the brotherly Soviet peoples.

Especially do we love and prize wonderful Georgia and the great storehouse of Georgian culture, now opened up before us like ancient treasure troves.

How Akaki Tsereteli would rejoice today in the friendship of the Soviet peoples! In the days when tsarist officials set the peoples of the Transcaucasia against one another, Tsereteli read and translated the Azerbaijan author and playwright Mirza Fet-ali Akhundov[1]. He was the friend of the Armenian writers Ovanes Tumanyan and Vagan Teryan, and he dedicated to his best

[1] *The Stars Deceived* by Mirza Fet-ali Akhundov was published in *International Literature* No. 6, 1939. — *Ed.*

friend, the Armenian playwright Gabriel Sundukyan, the following lines:

Though you be Georgian, I, Armenian,
We are two brothers, you and I,
With but one fatherland, the Caucasus
Its ice-capped summits soaring high.

Remarkable was the meeting between the young Tsereteli and the great Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko. It took place about 1880. While an undergraduate in the Petersburg University, Tsereteli made the acquaintance of the Ukrainian poet in the house of a certain historian. Shevchenko, who had recently returned from exile to Siberia, was fascinated of the young, fiery, bright Georgian. Shevchenko kept asking Tsereteli about the history of Georgia and the life of the peasants in Georgia. Years later Tsereteli wrote about the meeting: "We parted friends, promising each other that we would often meet . . . I must say that his words made me realize for the first time how one should love one's country and one's people."

Tsereteli's poems and plays, brimming with a passionate, tender love for his country, live to this day and indeed will never die. This poet was a true son of beautiful Georgia. His poetry inspired his fellow countrymen with devotion to their fatherland. Chauvinism was foreign to his nature. The scope of his interests and his respect for the culture of other peoples opened before him the path to the riches of Russian literature. He loved and appreciated the work of such writers as Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Hertzen, Nekrasov and Lev Tolstoy, and he derived a great deal from their literary heritage. Tsereteli started his career as a poet with translations from Lermontov. He dedicated a series of poems to Gogol and penned a number of illuminating articles about Tolstoy.

It was during the 'sixties of the nineteenth century that Tsereteli developed as a political and social figure. He was receptive to the progressive conceptions of his magnificent contemporaries, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, and he followed with close interest the liberation movement in both Western Europe and Russia. He and his fellow writer, Ilya Chavchavadze, were the leaders of the young Georgian intelligentsia. About his own writings he has said the following stern and modest words: "To art I have paid no great attention, while literature I have regarded as simply a weapon in the fight for a just, a righteous cause; if anything of artistic value came from my pen it came involuntarily and accidentally."

Like Nekrasov, Tsereteli paid much attention to the ideological content of his writings; political themes and biting satire occupied a considerable place in his work.

Our young Soviet poets and writers may learn much from this talented, modest, untiring toiler. One of the best educated men of his time, he, like Pushkin, was not bookish or scholastic. He traveled much over his native land; he knew and loved the everyday life of the people, the popular speech, the voice of the crowd. For this reason he was able to fuse two elements in his work, two different languages: the language of the books found in Georgian poetry prior to Tsereteli, and the lively, apt speech of the Georgian village and the colorful city bazaars. Like Pushkin in Russia, he created a new Georgian literary language, simple yet rich, accessible to the masses, opening up a new epoch in Georgian literature, the epoch of realism.

Responsive to the thoughts and aspirations of his people, enriching


ЗАРЯ ВОСТОКА

АКАКИЙ ЦЕРЕТЕЛИ
1840–1940

РАДУШНАЯ ВСТРЕЧА СОВЕТСКИХ ВОЙСК В ЭСТОНИИ

Под знаменем великой дружбы народов

Tsereteli issue of the Russian daily in Tbilisi

Georgian poetry with the language of the people, Akaki Tsereteli unfolded before his people the wealth of their folklore. During his lifetime he became a poet of the people. All Georgia sang his verses. In 1905 Georgian workers, fighting on the barricades, sang Tsereteli's revolutionary songs. He made the first translation into Georgian of Eugène Pottier's *Internationale*. Many of his lyrics have been put to music and are sung not only in Georgia, but in all the republics of the Soviet Union. A case in point is that beautiful popular song *Suliko*.

The name of Akaki Tsereteli may be fitly placed alongside that of Shot'ha Rust'hveli, the great Georgian poet. Tsereteli resurrected, continued and deepened the heritage bequeathed by Rust'hveli. This remarkable man saw with his bright keen eyes both the distant past and the remote future. What deep significance lies for us in his lines addressed to the place where Stalin was born—to Gori, called by the poet "the heart of Karthelinia," whose voice was heard in antiquity as well as now.

Be thou brave, be lion-hearted
Tend thou not a suppliant knee.
For the coming generations
Hew a pathway broad and free.

When these verses were written Stalin was five years old. Less than fifty years have passed, and the pathway is already hewn.

Akaki Tsereteli

Akaki Tsereteli belongs to Georgia's great writers. The hundredth anniversary of his birth was celebrated with affection by the people of Georgia. It is also celebrated by all the other peoples of the Soviet Union.

"To understand a poet one must go to his country," said Goethe. And, true enough, to fully appreciate Tsereteli as an artist and social influence, one must have some idea of the era in which he lived and worked.

In the nineteenth century, Georgia bore a double yoke of social and national oppression. For decades the Georgian people fought valiantly against their oppressors, against feudalism and the autocratic regime. The history of Georgia in the nineteenth century is marked by a series of sanguinary peasant risings which the Russian government put down ferociously with the connivance of the Georgian nobility.

The 'sixties and 'seventies were the period of consolidation of the provinces of Georgia.

"The Georgians before the Reform[1] inhabited a common territory and spoke one language. Nevertheless, they did not, strictly speaking, constitute one nation, for, being split up into a number of disconnected principalities, they could not share a common economic life; for centuries they waged war against each other and pillaged each other by inciting the Persians and Turks against each other . . . Georgia came on to the scene as a nation only in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the fall of serfdom and the growth of the economic life of the country, the development of means of communication and the rise of capitalism, instituted a division of labor between the various districts of Georgia, completely shattered the economic self-sufficiency of the principalities and bound them together into a single whole."[2]

It was in this era of Georgia's evolution into a single national entity, her transition from feudalism to capitalism, that Akaki Tsereteli was active in the social and poetic field.

When he appeared on the social scene Georgian literature was going through an acute crisis. With the exception of the poetry left by N. Baratashvili, a man of great gifts who died in his prime, Georgian literature in the first half of the nineteenth century had been completely detached from the political life of the country.

But the 'sixties, when Ilya Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli entered the lists, brought social problems into such a prominence that they could not be ignored by the literature of the day. In Georgia the problem of social reorganization was intimately bound up with the harsh colonial policy of the tsarist government, which was bent on Russifying the local population, on sterilizing their native culture and preventing their national development.

Social and national problems became the dual foundation on which the new Georgian literature had to be built. They not only dictated the subject matter and ideological content of the poetry, but called for new forms of art expression. And so, armed with a new world-outlook and a new esthetic creed, Ilya Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli, two young poets, graduates of the University of St. Petersburg, entered Georgian literature in full array. They were the most vivid representatives of the young generation of the Georgian intelligentsia in the 'sixties, the so-called *Tergdaleuli*, literally "those who have drunk Terek water."

Ilya Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli were the creators of a new Georgian literature, the creators of a new literary language. They laid a strong foundation for critical realism in Georgian literature and themselves produced superb works characteristic of the new trend.

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[1] *I. e.*, the abolition of serfdom in 1861.—*Ed.*

[2] J. Stalin. *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*. Page 7.

2

Akaki Tsereteli was an extremely versatile poet. In addition to lyrics, he produced a large quantity of tales and dramas in verse. He was also the author of many pamphlets and satires, newspaper articles, historical chronicles and tales, long novels and reminiscences in a poetic vein, the finest example of which is *Story of My Life,* one of the master-works of Georgian nineteenth-century prose. Akaki Tsereteli also had a taste and masterly touch for juvenile literature and produced a large quantity of verse, stories and fairy-tales which have been part of children's education for generations and still hold their place.

In the verses of Tsereteli the poetic language of Georgia became remarkably fluent, vivid and musical. With the sole exception of Rust'hveli not one Georgian poet can rival his melodious verse or equal his freedom of phrasing and his ability to convey the subtlest ideas and feelings through the poetic medium. His language is full of charm and enchantment. His poetic images, metaphors and epithets are vivid and bold and novel. He polished his verse with infinite pain, following the best traditions of Georgian poetry. Akaki Tsereteli had a profound knowledge of folklore, the vital influences of which can be traced in his earliest work.

Assimilating all that was best in the literature of Russia and of the world, fertilizing his work with the advanced thought of his day, Akaki Tsereteli created superb models of poetry and, with Ilya Chavchavadze, raised Georgian literature of the nineteenth century to a high level.

Akaki Tsereteli enjoyed great popularity among his fellow-countrymen. His verses and poems were widely known in Georgia during his life-time. Children, as well as adults and even old people, knew them by heart. Many songs were made from them. Young people confessed their love through them, mothers sang their children to sleep with them. With these songs the young revolutionaries of Georgia marched to the barricades in the stormy days of 1905.

What is it that made Tsereteli so popular among the Georgian laboring-folk and intelligentsia?

The answer is that in all his work, whether lyrics or epic poems, fiction or dramas, Akaki Tsereteli embodies—most beautifully, most powerfully and most completely—the spirit of the Georgian people, the spirit of their age-long struggle for freedom and happiness.

Akaki Tsereteli was one of those poets who, while deliberately limiting their creative mission to the "narrow" confines of national themes, to the service of their fellow countrymen, to the struggle for the liberation of their country from oppression, do in the last analysis voice the thoughts and aspirations of all peoples fighting against subjection, for their freedom and emancipation.

At the very dawn of his career, as a schoolboy and as a student at the St. Petersburg University, Akaki Tsereteli made a deep study of Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov, Mickiewicz and Shevchenko. These were his first teachers, the men who shaped him as a poet.

His association with the radical students of the 'sixties, and his close contact with the revolutionary-democratic intellectuals grouped around the periodical *Sovremennik,* which was edited by Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, greatly influenced Akaki Tsereteli and helped him develop the esthetic principles which he followed steadfastly to the day of his death.

From Pushkin and Lermontov he learned not only how to write fine verse, but how to understand clearly and penetrate deeply into the spirit of the people. Mickiewicz and Shevchenko made of him an implacable fighter for the liberation of his oppressed country.

Even in Tsereteli's earliest works, written while he was at the university, the dominating theme is the emancipation of his country from the tsarist yoke, and protest against the oppression of the laboring classes.

"The historical significance of every great man of Russia," wrote Chernyshevsky, "is measured by his services to the country; his human worth—by the strength of his patriotism."

From this point of view—irrespective of the great poetic merit of his productions—Akaki Tsereteli, along with Ilya Chavchavadze, dominates the whole development of Georgian social thought in the last century.

3

As we have already noted, the philosophy of Akaki Tsereteli was greatly influenced by the revolutionary democratic movement of the 'sixties. However, he could not attain to the high level of the radical, political and social ideals of the plebeian intellectuals grouped around the *Sovremennik.* What he did get from Chernyshevsky and other revolutionary democrats was a sound grasp of their new esthetic principles.

Following Chernyshevsky's lead, Tsereteli made it his poetic purpose to portray reality, to fight against the social and political order of exploitation, to serve

society, the people, the country. "I have always considered literature a weapon for struggle and a means of serving the needs of the day," he wrote in one of his articles. In his remarkable poem *Motive* the poet wants his song to "dry the tears of thousands oppressed," that it should "smite the oppressors like a cloud of fiery arrows."

In his lyrics Tsereteli often personifies his country as a beloved woman. To her he dedicated a number of poems which are rightly considered gems of Georgian poetry. The sacred sense of patriotism, as Lenin said, "is one of the deepest feelings ingrained by centuries and thousands of years." Tsereteli poetized it with rare inspiration, expressiveness and vividness. One of his earliest poems, *Syrinx*, written in St. Petersburg, shows the poet absorbed in painful recollections of his home country far away, trodden into the dust, debased into an object, poverty-ridden, benighted colonial province. "Your sigh," says the poet to the syrinx, "is the sigh of Georgia, my country . . ."

There is a true elegiac note permeating many of this poet's verses. He was fully alive to his country's plight and he suffered greatly because he realized that her people were yet powerless to rise against the autocracy.

But not all his patriotic lyrics are pervaded with this gloom. The majority, in fact, are imbued with optimism, with an almost fanatical conviction that freedom would come, ushering in a happy and full life for his people. Many of his best poems are anticipations of this coming freedom.

In one of them, addressing the tsarist autocracy in the name of Georgia, he writes:

Though I'm lying, proud fortress, your prisoner,
Deep at heart hopeful whispers I hear—
That the fates are conspiring against you,
And your long-waited downfall is near.

Akaki Tsereteli devoted his long life, his great gifts and spiritual powers to one cherished dream—the emancipation of his country from national and social slavery. His pamphlets and devastating satires were aimed not only against the tsarist autocracy and its satraps, but also against the enemies of the people at home.

He assailed the landed nobility who were oppressing the people and selling their country for rank and honors, for the class privileges which were so lavishly bestowed on them by tsardom. He castigated the clergy who deceived the people, the bourgeoisie who bled them, the officials who grew fat on bribes and pilferings from the public purse. Another target constantly under his fire was the spineless, hypocritical, egoistic, narrow-minded and

Shot'ha Rust'hveli Hands Over His Pen to Akaki Tsereteli. Drawing by an unknown painter

inert section of the Georgian intelligentsia, who refused to have anything to do with social affairs and the fight for the political and cultural renascence of the country. On this plane of social protest and satire his work has a vehemence and sting that recall the songs of Beranger and the verses of Victor Hugo's *Retribution*. As the main driving force in the fight for national emancipation against tsarism Tsereteli looked to the people, the creative powers of the laboring masses, the intelligentsia who had sprung from the people and were prepared to sacrifice themselves in their interests.

In his poems Akaki Tsereteli portrayed some dramatic scenes from Georgian history, the heroism and self-abnegation of Georgia's noblest sons in their fight against foreign conquerors.

Tsereteli held up these historical figures as examples which his contemporaries should emulate in loving their country and defending the interests of her people. In his lyrics too Akaki Tsereteli sought to arouse the national self-consciousness. *Bagrat the Great*, *Tornikeh Eristavi*, *Natela*, *The Educator* are among his best epic poems. *Perfidious Thamar* and *Little Cahi* are outstanding models of his verse.

Tornikeh Eristavi is a poem depicting the dim era in Georgian history (in the 10th century) when the Georgian people began to muster their national forces and grow out of their political and cultural infancy. It is based on a historical fact, a military expedition which Georgia sent to assist her protector, the Byzantine Empire, when it was in danger of being destroyed by Barda Sklyarose, a military leader who took up arms against the state. The hero of the poem is Tornikeh, a hermit, who formerly led the armies of the Georgian Realm.

The dramatic climax of the poem comes when King David Kuropalat invites Tornikeh to become the commander-in-chief. After long and earnest exhortations from the king and the people, after much inner strife, Tornikeh finally decides to change the crucifix for the sword and do his duty to the country. This episode also contains the moral of the poem: for every man the interests of the country must come before all other obligations.

Tornikeh Eristavi, a product of Tsereteli's mature period, is a great piece of poetry. Many parts of it, such as the prologue and the song of Amiran (Prometheus) Bound are masterpieces of Georgian poetry, and are widely known and sung in Georgia.

In *The Educator* Akaki Tsereteli used a popular legend exalting friendship and brotherhood. The poet shows the ideals of education in olden times and then, as though in contrast, the moral decadence of the contemporary society. This poem can be placed with *Tornikeh Eristavi* as one of Tsereteli's masterpieces.

Although the author has a definite message to convey in his poetry, it is never high-pitched or importunately didactic. His works are pieces of real art with an innate beauty, perfect balance of ideas and emotion, sincerity of feeling, simplicity and, withal, subtlety.

4

Akaki Tsereteli was an implacable enemy of social injustice, of the exploitation of man by man in any form. From the very outset of his career he was one of the zealots who fought for the emancipation of the serfs.

While he was a student in St. Petersburg he wrote a number of poems on the plight of the serfs, as for example the *Song of Toil* (1861).

He also produced many intimate pictures of the common people, at work and in the domestic circle, showing their joy in labor, their aspirations and their sorrows. These verses are among the masterpieces of Georgian social poetry *(Cradle Song, Reaping Song, Workers' Song, To Workingmen, My Little Goat, Shepherd's Song, What the Poor Man Said to the Rich Man, Gurian Cradle Song,* etc.).

There was no event in the political life of the people to which Tsereteli did not react in masterly verse. On March 1, 1881, when he heard of the assassination of the Emperor Alexander II, he wrote his famous poem *Spring*. It eluded the censorship, was published in the Tiflis newspaper *Droyeba* and soon became known throughout the country. Only his position as the most popular Georgian poet saved him from exile to Siberia.

In 1905, during the stormy days of the first revolution, he produced a number of brilliant verses *(Desire, The Dagger, Away With the Dishonorable Government* and others) in which he voiced the people's anger against the tsarist autocracy, and glorified the heroism and self-sacrifice of the revolutionary working class marching to the barricades against tsarism. "Impatiently I waited this day," he wrote in a poem on the 1905 revolution, "and now I have lived to see it. Now I laugh—I weep no longer. Go forth, young men, into battle." This *motif* is most vividly expressed in another poem entitled *The Dagger*.

The verses which he wrote in these turbulent days blaze with hatred for the autocracy; they are a passionate call

to the people, revolutionary leaflets translated into verse.

Too long our land was plunged in sorrow,
Too long we bore the tyrant's sway,
No longer shall we be submissive,
Rousing ourselves we shout "way!"

This poet, who devoted his life to the cause of his country's emancipation, sincerely believed that the victory of the revolution would bring the national liberation of his people. Tsereteli was far from understanding the class aims of the proletariat, but he was unquestionably right in one thing: the national freedom of Georgia could really be brought about only by a proletariat victorious over the bourgeoisie, over the capitalist regime.

Akaki Tsereteli left a considerable legacy of prose. Among his numerous stories one worthy of special mention is the fine historical novel entitled *Bashi Achuk*, taken from Georgian life in the seventeenth century. Then there is his remarkable *Story of My Life* which gives a vivid picture of Georgia before the emancipation of the serfs.

This versatile writer was also a first-class journalist and contributed a great deal to the development of the Georgian political and literary press in the nineteenth century. His famous essays on topics of the day, written in verse and in prose, were a powerful weapon against the people's enemies. Many of the poems have retained their value to the present day.

Finally, we must mention the great services Akaki Tsereteli rendered in the development of the Georgian theater.

He was the author of many comedies, dramas, and sketches imbued with a lofty patriotism and the spirit of international solidarity of people.

Tsereteli enriched all spheres of the cultural and political life of Georgia in the nineteenth century. The part he played in the awakening of the Georgian people and developing their national-revolutionary self-consciousness cannot be exaggerated.

5

Tsereteli's poetry is ennobled with a constant note of fellow-feeling for other peoples and with sterling internationalist principles.

He considered the autocracy just as savage an enemy of the Russian people as it was of all the peoples within the tsarist empire.

He had equal respect for all the other peoples of Russia and their progressive representatives. When occasion arose he never omitted to express his warmest regard for the Ukrainian people and its illustrious son, Shevchenko.

He traveled often to the Ukraine where he associated with the progressive Ukrainian intelligentsia, who reciprocated his esteem. In Kharkov he was honored with a big public reception which developed into a grand demonstration of amity and fraternity between the Ukraine and Georgia.

Tsereteli wrote a great deal about the Armenians. He vigorously attacked publicists, both Armenian and Georgian, who tried to sow dissension between these two fraternal nations cemented by their common historical destiny. He respected the Armenian people and their culture. He was a lifelong friend of the celebrated Armenian dramatist Gabriel Sundukyan and dedicated to him many of his poems. The best Armenian poets knew Tsereteli personally and translated his poems into their native language. Among these were Ovanes Tumanyan, a staunch friend of the Georgian people, and Vagan Teryan, who has left some fine reminiscences of Tsereteli, written with great sincerity and feeling.

For the people of Azerbaijan, too, he had an earnest regard. He had a high opinion of the celebrated Azerbaijan writer Mirza Fet-ali Akhundov whose work he honored because "it reflected the life of the Azerbaijan people like a mirror." Tsereteli was the translator of Akhundov's famous play *The Vizier of Saraba* which has been produced many times on the Georgian stage.

In all his writings Tsereteli based his patriotic feeling on the principles of international fraternity. A poem dedicated to Gabriel Sundukyan begins with the following words: "To all who are real men and whose hearts burn with the fire of truth I wish well, whatever their nation. And for me there is no greater joy than to commune with them as friend and brother . . ."

The poetry of Akaki Tsereteli is a legacy particularly dear to the free people of Soviet Georgia. Nor is it less dear to the hearts of the rest of the fraternal peoples of the Soviet Union whose mutual amity was sung so often in the verses of Georgia's great poet.

Akaki Tsereteli died in 1915 at the ripe old age of seventy-five. The dream of his life was fulfilled soon after by the Great October Socialist Revolution in which the people of our country, led by the great Party of Lenin and Stalin, shattered their chains forever, destroying the capitalist system and laying a firm foundation for the freedom of all the oppressed peoples and their mutual amity.

LEVAN ASATIANI

Itskhok Leibush Perets

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH

Itskhok Leibush Perets is one of the classics of Jewish literature.

A man of striking personality, and a prominent writer and thinker, Perets strongly influenced the development of Jewish literature and Jewish culture as a whole during the period preceding the October Revolution.

Perets was born May 25, 1851, in the town of Zamoscie, in the province of Lublin. He was given a traditional Jewish religious education, but studied Russian, Polish and German as well. In addition to the Talmud and medieval Jewish philosophy, he studied Western European literature and modern philosophy. Among his most favorite authors were Heinrich Heine and Ludwig Berne. Heine's influence is strongly felt in Perets' poetry, and the influence of Berne—in his journalistic writings. At the same time, he was an avid reader of Russian and Polish progressive literature, and became imbued with revolutionary-democratic sentiments.

Perets began his literary career in the Hebrew language. He was then under the powerful influence of the *Haskalah*, or "Enlightenment," movement of the Jewish intellectuals who fought the survivals of medievalism in Jewish life. But at the same time he saw the shortcomings of that movement, and sharply criticized its representatives, who regarded minor reforms as a panacea for all the problems of the downtrodden and ignorant Jewish masses. He ridiculed the pretentiousness and florid style of the epigones of the "Enlightenment" movement. In his poem *Contemporary Themes* (written in Hebrew) he came forward as an ardent champion of Yiddish—the living Jewish language, the language of the people—parrying the attacks of the chauvinistic and assimilationist intelligentsia who regarded Yiddish as a "jargon" and looked down upon it as " a contemptible dialect of servants." Subsequently he ranked with Mendele Mokher Sforim and Sholom Aleikhem as one of the greatest Jewish writers and the creators of modern Jewish literature.

I. L. Perets

During the early years of his career, Perets practised law in his native town as "private counselor." At the same time he engaged in literary work and public activity. He delivered lectures on Jewish and world history and on natural sciences, and organized courses for illiterate workers. The local obscurantists denounced him to the police, and the courses for workers were banned by the authorities. Perets was now under suspicion of engaging in "seditious activity," and soon he was forbidden to practise law. It was during that period that Perets, according to the memoirs of a friend, said:

"There is nothing one can do with the Talmudists and the bourgeoisie—they are hopeless. The working masses—that is

the real field for activity. They are miserable, but capable folk . . . There is much idealism among them. We must enlighten the masses, speak to them in their own language, awaken their thought. There is an abundance of material here, but still raw. That is why I write Yiddish. I want to create a literature in Yiddish. I shall speak and write for the people in the language of the people."

In 1888, Perets' first long poem in Yiddish appeared in the literary almanac *Jewish Popular Library* published by Sholom Aleikhem. *Monish*—that was the title of the poem—soon attracted general attention, for it was something entirely new both in form and content. The poem deals with the story of the adventures of a Jewish youth who overcomes the orthodox-religious attitude to life. The real and the romantic are interwoven in this poem.

In 1889 Perets moved to Warsaw. Here he was soon given a chance to take part in a statistical expedition which studied the economic conditions of the Jewish population in the ruined and impoverished towns. As a result of this trip Perets wrote his remarkable *Journey Through the Provinces*, in which he revealed his genius for depicting everyday life.

2

Perets lived all his life in Poland, where capitalism was developing at a more rapid pace than in many other parts of the Russian Empire.

The Jewish world, Perets said, was not "a world in itself."

In an essay entitled *What We Want* Perets wrote:

"We want to hold on to the universal human banner. We want to sow neither the wild wormwood of chauvinism, nor the fanatical thorns of the philosophy of idle theologians. We want the Jew to feel himself a man, to take part in everything human, to live a human life, to have human aspirations, and, when insulted, to feel insulted, like a man."

Perets admired the great Russian critic Vissarion Belinsky. Like the latter, he was vehement in his fight against all philistinism, vulgarity, meanness and selfish indifference.

Using allegorical language in order to get round the censorship, Perets wrote in his essay *What Shall I Want?*:

"I dread peace and quiet. I have a mortal fear of stillness . . .

"Peace reigns among thieves when they are preparing for 'a job.' They are glad of the darkness of night, and refrain from lighting matches. They are glad of every cloud that hides the moon . . .

"Peace and quiet reign at the cemetery. Noiselessly the worms eat into the bodies of the dead. Quietly and unnoticed, the old tombstone grows over with moss, quietly it sinks into the ground.

"Stillness—that is night and death . . ."

Perets saw the disintegration of the old mode and forms of Jewish life: the militant obscurantism of the upper circles of society and the growing resistance of the lower classes. He also saw the close connection between the struggle for emancipation carried on by the Jewish masses and that carried on by the masses of other peoples.

Perets was constantly in quest of new artistic forms. His *genres* included the realistic short story, the journalistic essay and the lyrical poem; romantic *Hassidic*[1] tales, epic poems and impressionistic symbolistic plays.

3

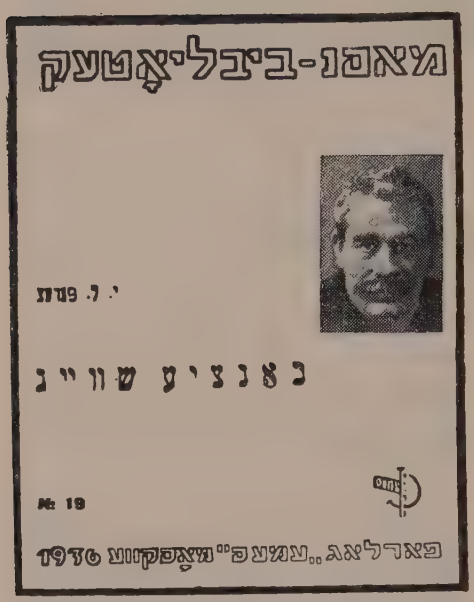
During the first period of his literary career Perets was close to the labor movement. He published almanacs under the general title of *Holiday Leaves*, which were devoted to revolutionary propaganda among the Jewish toiling masses.

Perets' works of that period were permeated with a strong revolutionary spirit.

His allegorical tale *The Pious Cat*—a caustic satire directed not only against the tsarist government but also against capitalist society as a whole—was widely read by Jewish workingmen. His poem *The Three Seamstresses* and excerpts from his longer poem *Sewing a Stranger's Wedning Gown* became popular songs of workers. The concluding part of the latter poem—the legend of the two brothers, the rich and the poor, which condemns in an allegorical form the cruelty of the exploitation of man by man in capitalist society—is still widely read by Jewish revolutionary workers in capitalist countries. It has also been set to music, in the form of an oratorio, by the late Jacob Schaeffer, the well-known Jewish-American Communist composer, and is frequently performed at large working-class concerts in America and other countries.

Perets' realistic tales, directed against social evils, include *Messenger*, *Morning in a Basement*, *Family Bliss*, *The Fast*, *Death of a Musician* and many others. In these tales Perets masterly depicted the life of people of "the lower

[1] *Hassidism*—a Jewish religious movement inaugurated in the eighteenth century, at first in the form of a revolt against the lifeless and "dry" ritual. The *Hassids* formed fanatic sects believing in the miracle-working powers of their chiefs—*Rabbis* or *Tsadiks*.



Cover-design for the popular edition in Yiddish of Perets' "Bonche Silent". Moscow, 1936

depths," their spiritual purity, their striving to shed the chains of poverty and ignorance, their rebel spirit.

Perets also wrote a great deal about the hard lot of Jewish women, and their slavish position in the patriarchal family. With subtle sarcasm, Perets branded in a number of his short stories *(A Woman's Anger, Mendl, Braine's Husband, Mother,*[1] *A Roll of Letters, Married,* etc.) the conservatism of the time-honored Jewish family relationships. He showed the feeling of human dignity awaken in the downtrodden Jewish woman rising in protest and rebellion against "God's" laws on earth.

His anti-clerical story *The Shtraiml*[2] aroused a storm of indignation among the Jewish reactionary bourgeoisie. The hero of the story, the capmaker Berl Kolbas, is an honest toiler, a man of the people, endowed with the wisdom, love of life, and innate optimism of the people. He is poor, but proud. He is sceptical about God and religion, and sees through the imposition, fraud and venality of the representatives of religion. His plain observations unfailingly hit the mark, and that was why the clericals were raging. The Jewish workers, however, hailed the story and its author with real enthusiasm.

Perets' anti-religious poem *The Night Watch,* reminiscent of Adelbert Chamisso's *Jesuits,* met with a similar reception.

Perets had a high regard and profound respect for working people. And that was why he aimed some of his sarcastic darts at those among them who were lacking in human dignity. He pitied them, but at the same time showed an attitude of profound irony to their slavish submissiveness, to the narrow limits of their desires and aspirations. Characteristic of this attitude is the story *Bonche Silent* (see p. 58). It is somewhat reminiscent of *Makar's Dream,* a story by the well known Russian writer Vladimir Korolenko.

Perets' realistic short stories and allegorical tales contributed a great deal to the revolutionization of the Jewish masses. In 1897 Perets published the story *The Love of a Weaver,* which served, in a way, as an artistic illustration to the fundamentals of Karl Marx' economic teachings as expounded in the popular pamphlet at that time: *What People Live On* by S. Dickstein. Because of the censorship, the story could not be printed in Russia, and Perets published it under a pen-name in the American Jewish Socialist press. Subsequently it was smuggled into Russia where it found an appreciative audience among the Jewish workers. Other agitational works of Perets reached the Jewish workers in Russia by similar devious routes. Some of the better known were his satires against the tsarist government, such as *The Kingdom of Heaven Like the Kingdom of Earth, Uncle Isav,* etc.

Perets served the Jewish revolutionary workers not only with his pen. He often read his works, and delivered lectures and speeches at illegal meetings. In 1899 he was arrested at a meeting of workers at which he read and commented on his *The Pious Cat* and *Bonche Silent.* He was imprisoned in the Warsaw citadel, in the notorious Tenth Pavilion, in which the most dangerous political prisoners sentenced to solitary confinement were locked. Perets left the fortress still more firm in his revolutionary convictions.

In the spring of 1901 Perets celebrated a double anniversary—his fiftieth birthday and twenty-five years of literary activity.

4

In the years of reaction following the defeat of the Revolution of 1905, Perets' journalistic work betrayed pessimism, depression. The anti-Jewish pogroms stirred nationalistic feelings in Perets. But in reply to questions of workers who asked him to explain the cause of his vacillating attitude to the revolution, as expressed in some of his journalistic essays, parti-

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[1] See p. 63 — *Ed.*

[2] *Shtraiml*—a round, fur-rimmed velvet cap worn by rabbis and also by rich religious Jews.—*Ed.*

cularly one entitled, *My Hopes and My Fears*, Perets said:

"These are transient moods, the result of an epidemic, the effect of the whining heard on every side; they are the ugly child of intellectual nervousness. Our kind are not strangers to such weakness. But you, my friends, mustn't pay any attention to this. It will all pass, as plagues do. Don't judge me by my chance articles written on the spur of the moment, but by my creative work. There you will find my real self, my real essence."

Perets was conscious of his nationalistic and pessimistic sentiments, and made every effort to overcome them. One of the powerful stimuli which helped him back to healthy optimism was Gorky's appeal to plunge into life and into the struggle.

Perets hailed Gorky's appearance in literature as one of the greatest events in the history of world literature. He felt greatly flattered when he was described in the Russian press as "the Jewish Gorky." Perets read Gorky's works to the young Jewish writers who used to visit him every Friday. "Here is a man from whom you must learn to write, to love life and to struggle," he said. At a secret meeting in Warsaw, arranged in a private girls' school, Perets read a paper in Polish on revolutionary currents in Russian literature, and wound up by a masterful rendition of Gorky's *The Stormy Petrel*. He also read this poem in his own translation at many secret meetings of Jewish workers in Warsaw. This translation, however, has never appeared in print and, apparently, has been lost. In 1906 Perets wrote an enthusiastic essay on Gorky's *The Lower Depths*, which was then produced for the first time in the Warsaw Jewish theater.

Perets was greatly interested in the problem of the individual in relation to the masses.

In some of his early psychological sketches, Perets, under the influence of Dostoyevsky and Maupassant, gave an artistic analysis of dual personalities. His *Hassidic* stories and folk-tales represent a further stage in his treatment of the problem of personality.

Perets strove to create the character of an integral and free personality, standing above the masses, but drawing its power from them, being one with them. It was with this aim in view that he turned to the historic past and to ancient folklore. Perets, however, did not hold up the past as an ideal. He used the past as a means of conveying his ideas of reality as it should be, and the future as it will be.

5

In the lyrical play *The Golden Chain*, based on *Hassidic* life, Perets depicts through symbolic characters the struggle between what actually exists and what is aspired to the "everyday life" and the "Sabbath." The tragedy of the family of the *Tsadik* Shloime is the tragedy of daring personalities, of individuals who aspire to the lofty and the beautiful. *Rabbi* Shloime wants to destroy the old "everyday" world, so as to build a new world on its ruins, a life of eternal holiday. This call of *Rabbi* Shloime, however, conflicts with the realities of life. Only Miriaml, the wife of Shloime's grandson, understands the old man. She, the representative of the young generation, also dreams ecstatically of the new, of freedom; but she is as helpless as a bird in a cage.

The story *Between Two Mounts* tells how the Brest *Rabbi*, who is a "dry Misnaged" (an orthodox Jew opposed to *Hassidism*), relents in his persecution of the *Tsadik* of Byala, when he sees that the *Tsadik's* power does not consist in performing miracles, but in his intimate link with the people. This is that great force which endows the personality with a sort of inner light, which inspires and elevates the personality.

In the story *Maybe Higher Still*, the *Tsadik* of Nemirov earns the respect of the Lithuanian "Misnaged" by the services he renders the common people. In order to avoid being recognized, the *Tsadik* wears plain peasant clothes and poses as a wood-chopper. By his work to help others, by his activity for the happiness of the people, the man of great personality attains to the heights of moral power, higher than the skies, to use Perets' expression.

Every renunciation of life on earth, on the other hand, leads to the degeneration of personality. This idea is brought out in the story *The Cabala Students*.

The old *Rabbi* Yekl and his pupil, the young *Lamakh*, are the victims both of extreme poverty and extreme fanaticism. They find no place for themselves in life, but are unable to see the cause of their misery. "Absence of food brought with it absence of sleep; and sleepless nights and hungry days wrought in them a passion for Cabala." They try to justify their senseless existence by renouncing the earthly for the spiritual, and indulge in mystic religious ravings. The sufferings of the Cabala students arouse pity; but their naive casuistry evokes but an ironic smile.

Perets, accordingly, was never an adherent of *Hassidism;* he only utilized its popular element as a background for his artistic ideas. Perets never changed

his hostile attitude to the existing *Hassidism*, which actually was a movement disseminating religious dope.

Perets' *Popular Lore Stories* represent, in a way, a continuation of his *Hassidic* tales. In these stories Perets uses the historical background and folklore to depict the greatness and noble wisdom of the people—the source from which the creative personality draws inspiration.

Downtrodden and backward, the common people are unable to realize clearly—but they feel instinctively—that the wealth of the few has been created by the toil of the millions. Hence, the attitude of hostility and often of hate, to the rich and the mighty of the world. Hence, also their preference to live a plain and honest life. They love their work, and are not tempted by easy gain *(Seven Fat Years)*.

Bending under the yoke of their hard life, these plain people, despite their humility, harbor in their souls a feeling of protest not only against the mighty of the world, but also against their good and merciful god who fails them at every turn. They go so far as to declare "strikes" against the "Almighty in Heaven" (*Bert the Tailor*), and carry the revolt down to the earth (*Not Condemned*).

The common people never lose heart. The poor toilers are ever ready to joke, to show good cheer and to laugh wholeheartedly. They crave joy and happiness. They cannot find this in real life. That is why many of them see in their dreams visions of a blissful "sinful" life on earth (*Not Good*), or dare, despite the religious bans and taboos, to elicit their aspiration to happiness on earth even in their waking hours, and to express openly dissatisfaction with their miserable existence (*Not Condemned*).

The tempestuous and ever searching Perets achieves in his *Hassidic* tales and *Popular Lore Stories* an epic serenity. In these works we see the writer's artistic means in full play: a terse, dynamic style, laconic phrases, well-balanced and profoundly conceived composition.

6

Perets was profoundly disgusted with the old mode of life which suppressed and depreciated human personality. He regarded that life as a "Marsh" teeming with worms, or a "Dead City" in which nobody dies because no one has ever lived there. But in these deathlike surroundings he discerned the people who were seeking new ways, people of daring ideas who were proudly conscious of the justice of their cause. Others do not understand them: they are often considered mad, and even kept in the wing for the insane. But they do not surrender.

In Perets' allegorical *Times of Messiah*, there is a seer who is considered a madman by all the people around him. He talks of Messiah's coming. The Messiah whom the seer heralds is portrayed as a symbol of the struggle for the emancipation of humanity. The seer speaks the language of a prophet:

"And he will wear wings. And all the people will get wings. This is how it will happen: suddenly a child will be born with wings, then another, then a third, and more and more still. At first the people will fear the winged children, but later they will get used to them, and there will arise a generation of winged people who will no longer wallow in dirt and squabble over the earth worm . . ."

His genius was in its prime when the first imperialist world war broke out. He was profoundly shaken by the horrors of the war and the inhuman persecutions of the Jews in tsarist Russia. His journalistic writings of that period ring with despair. But, true to himself, Peretz did not give up the fight. He exposed, as far as it was possible in tsarist Russia, the warmongers, was active in lending aid to the war victims, and organized schools for children of refugees who had been driven by the authorities from their homes.

In that period Perets began writing verses for children. With subtle penetration he saw into the soul of children, and spoke their own language about everything that interested and excited them. He infused in them a spirit of love for work and nature, inculcated in them the sense of human dignity, taught them to hate oppression and exploitation of man. Perets' verses for children remain among the best in Jewish classical poetry.

Perets died of heart failure at his desk on April 3, 1915. The news of his death evoked profound mourning among the Jewish masses the world over. His funeral was turned into a real demonstration. Despite the efforts of the police and of Polish rowdies, over 100,000 people marched in the procession.

Perets delved deep into the life of the people, and there he found his unshakable faith in the best ideals of mankind, which he embodied in his works, in the central characters of his plays and stories. That is why the Jewish masses cherish Perets' memory, and prize highly the rich heritage he left.

SHAKHNO EPSTEIN

A Great Chinese Writer

On October 19, 1936 occured the death of the famous Chinese writer, Lu Hsun. This has become one of the most significant dates in the history of China. Lu Hsun was not only an eminent master of the written word. He was virtually the creator of modern national Chinese literature, one of the outstanding champions of democratic culture in China.

His works have become a national heritage, the pabulum of the young generation. His name has become a symbol for the noblest hopes and aspirations of the Chinese people, an invocation to fight for the freedom and independence of the homeland, for the triumph of true culture and social justice.

Shaohsing, a small provincial town buried away in Central China, is now widely known for its associations with Chou Shu-jen who was born there in 1881 and rose to fame and literary eminence under the name of Lu Hsun. Here he spent his childhood and early youth. Here he tasted poverty, the bitterness of work for others, and repined in a drab, monotonous existence dominated by soulless philistines. But young and inexperienced as he was, Lu Hsun made up his mind to escape from this dreary world ruled by domineering ignoramuses, where might alone was right, where pride of office took the place of erudition, and living thought was choked under the accumulated scholastic dust of centuries. The dream of his young life was to get an education, to give his inquiring mind free reign to roam in the wide world of true knowledge. After the death of his father, his mother scraped together a paltry sum by some miracle of tenacity, and the boy was able to leave the village. Thus one of his dreams came true; he went to a school. He studied with a fanatical zeal which he retained all his life, applying it now to mining and railroad engineering, now to medicine, biology and chemistry.

The years of Lu Hsun's boyhood coincided with a dark period in the history of China. This great and ancient realm had lost its independence and had become a semi-colony. Britain, France, tsarist Russia and Japan were devouring its territory piece-meal, forcing upon China predatory, unequal treaties.

The Chinese markets were dominated by foreign merchants, bankers and speculators who monopolized the natural wealth of the country, enslaving the Chinese state with concessions and loans at exorbitant rates. Foreign business offices, shops, banks and consulates, many-stories high, shot up alongside the wretched hovels of the Chinese in all the country's chief ports. Those scouts for foreign capital, the protestant and catholic missionaries, made a "peaceful conquest" of China, littering the country with hypocritical philanthropic societies and Christian colleges.

In these years of national humiliation, the first fires of a patriotic, progressive movement were smoldering in the enlightened circles of Chinese society. Voices were raised, demanding reforms, the renovation of the decrepit feudal-bureaucratic system which was impotent to defend the Chinese state against its numerous and powerful enemies. This reformist movement, which reflected the views of the liberal landowners, the higher bourgeois circles and certain sections of the intelligentsia, was led by Kang Yu-wei, a prominent Chinese scholar and man of letters. Kang Yu-wei and his disciples made no attempt to overthrow the reactionary government, nor did they demand a constitutional form of government. Their only ambition was to secure minor reforms in popular education, to modernize the administrative system, to replace the old bureaucrat-mandarins with European-trained experts and to reorganize the army and navy. They naively believed that their aims could be achieved without conflict, through an amicable deal with the emperor's court. These hopes were quickly shattered. When they came to power in 1898, the Chinese reformers kept it for only a hundred days. Without the support of the people, whose interests they had ignored, they were soon overthrown by the reactionary clique of the mandarins.

But the movement had left its traces. The first Chinese university, founded by

Kang Yu-wei in Peking, survived the defeat and became the main center for progressive science and letters.

During the same period a new progressive movement developed in the south of China. It was quite different from the Kang Yu-wei's timid dreams of peaceful renovation, much stronger and broader. It was an association of young democratic intellectuals fired with the ideals of national emancipation. Their aim was not partial, superficial reforms, but a revolution; not an amicable agreement with the Manchu Court, but the overthrow of that alien, despotic dynasty and the establishment of a republic. Unlike Kang Yu-wei, these men did not hold aloof from the masses, but strove to unite themselves with the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the young working class. At the head of this democratic national-revolutionary movement stood Sun Yat-sen, the great son of China.

Year by year, Sun Yat-sen grew more and more popular, his revolutionary ideas won wider and wider support. Then, in 1905, when the era of "Asia awakening" opened under the influence of the Russian revolution, the followers of Sun Yat-sen formed their own party and its leader formulated his historic "three people's principles."

Lu Hsun was one of the young democratic intellectuals who followed the path of Sun Yat-sen, the path of revolutionary struggle for national independence, for the emancipation of the people.

Recalling this period in his autobiography, Lu Hsun wrote: "This was the time of the Russo-Japanese war. I felt the suppression of my country's rights keenly then, and thought how necessary it was to raise the cultural level, create a new literature to awaken my people."

In those days a large number of revolutionary Chinese students was studying abroad. It was in the great university centers of Germany, France, Britain, Belgium, Japan and USA that the first nuclei of the Union League, Sun Yat-sen's party organization, originated.

Lu Hsun lived among the Chinese students overseas for years. He was in Tokio for some time, then moved to Germany. We know little of his life abroad. Evidently it was not a bed of roses. Finally homesickness and anxiety for his mother, who was in very strained circumstances, drove him back to China. He arrived almost on the eve of the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and took up the modest post of a school-teacher. Then the revolution broke out. The despotic Manchu Empire fell under the onset of the revolutionary storm. China became a republic.

The revolution gave many talented democratic intellectuals a way out of obscurity to social and intellectual life. One of these was Lu Hsun. The republican minister of popular education offered him a post in the ministry. Lu Hsun took up his residence in Peking. Although the triumph of the revolution was short-lived, although, because of the treachery of the cowardly liberal bourgeoisie, the counter-revolutionary dictatorship of the traitor Yuan Shi-kai took refuge under the republican flag, the creative forces of democracy, which had been released, continued the struggle for the development of a new Chinese culture.

Lu Hsun became a man of letters rather late in life. During his stay abroad he had published a few stories and essays, but he lacked the opportunity to devote himself entirely to literature. On his return to China he had given himself up to pedagogical work. In those years he attached particular significance to this direct participation in the enlightenment of the masses. He was and remained to the end of his life a citizen who put public welfare above everything.

He spent half of his life gaining knowledge of the world, accumulating experience and assimilating the treasures of human thought. Many of his works had been conceived and had matured in his mind before he had become a professional writer.

Lu Hsun's first stories were published in 1918. This was the first appearance of the pseudonym Lu Hsun (that was his mother's name). Since then the name of Lu Hsun has been inscribed for all time in the annals of Chinese culture as one of the names most cherished and honored by the people.

It was not by chance that Lu Hsun made his literary debut in 1918. At this time a new wave of the national emancipation movement had risen under the influence of the Russian Revolution. One part of this nation-wide movement was the movement of the radical democratic intelligentsia, which went under the name of "literary revolution." At the head of the "literary revolution" were eminent representatives of Chinese culture including professor Hu Shi, Tsai Yuan-pei, at that time the rector of Peking University (subsequently president of the Academy of Sciences after its formation in Nanking) and professor Tsiang Suang-tung. One of the main slogans of the "literary revolution" was the abolition of *wen-li*, the old classical literary language which had been still in use. This ornate and affected language,

infinitely remote from everyday speech, was a serious obstacle blocking the spread of enlightenment. Thus literature, let alone scientific works, was the privilege of learned men, and it had remained for the masses under seven seals. Therefore, the development and propagation of *pai-hua*, the new literary language near enough to conversational speech to be understood by a wider circle of readers, involved deeper issues than problems of literature.

It actually involved a struggle of tremendous political significance—a struggle for democracy and democratic culture. This struggle became one with the political revolution and the fight for national liberation against imperialism and feudal reaction.

Lu Hsun's first works, written in *pai-hua*, were published in the *New Youth*, at that time the leading magazine of the literary movement. The name of Lu Hsun, till then little known, became popular. And it is easy to understand why. Lu Hsun was the one to speak the new word which everybody had been waiting for.

Lu Hsun used the form of the short-story which, in essence, was not new to Chinese prose. But his tales differ greatly from the tales of the old Chinese writers. There is no adventure story in them, and the fantastic element is omitted. Sometimes plot is absent completely or exists only in bare outline. On the other hand, even his shortest stories have a strong ideological message and show life as it really is, without any embellishment.

Lu Hsun wrote realistic prose, realistic in the best sense of the term. In classical Chinese literature, the central characters are warriors, princes, emperors, noblemen and scholars. Sometimes common people figure in the story. But the life of the people is not reflected. Lu Hsun was the first to show truthfully and with great mastery China as she really is, with her poverty-stricken villages, the misery of her poor, the mental stagnance of her provinces. He portrayed everyday life not with indifferent objectivity, but with anger and indignation, as an artist-citizen. Lu Hsun managed to avoid the abrupt, primitive didactic effect characteristic of the early realistic prose of Iran, Turkey and India. His accusatory tendencies are expressed not in the rhetorical outbursts of a publicist, but in artistic presentation of men.

Lu Hsun's most significant work is *The True Story of Ah Q*. This is the book that made his name in China and abroad. The book was translated into French,

Cover design for a volume of the complete works of Lu Hsun

English and Japanese. Many eminent writers and critics paid glowing tributes to the work. In the U.S.S.R. it has been translated twice. Romain Rolland praised it highly. And indeed, Lu Hsun makes a masterly dissection of social relations in the Chinese countryside, giving a true portrayal of its ethics and mode of life. Ah Q became the most popular character in Chinese literature, just as the characters of Dickens are the most popular in English or De Coster's in Flemish literature.

The scene was laid in a small village. The author had an excellent knowledge of life in such places, their misery and dreariness and their jungle law. Wasn't such the life in the village of Shaohsing where he spent his youth?

Everything was strictly ordered in Ah Q's patriarchal Chinese village, everything seemed unshakeable, immutable. The people lived in poverty and dirt in a joyless round of exhausting toil. They married, multiplied and died. Somewhere in the outer world wars and revolutions were raging, scientific discoveries were being made, social movements were springing up. But all these things left the population undisturbed. Their horizon ended with the boundary of their village. They knew their own worth, these villagers! They were sure that everything

was better in their village than anywhere else. They poked fun at city folk, their tastes, habits and accents. The yoke of patriarchal traditions weighed heavily upon the social life and human intellect. A merciless hierarchy demanded blind obedience. Who could dispute the authority of the "Venerable Mr. Chao," the local aristocrat and man of means? Who would dare argue with him or his son who had become a *Hsiu-t'sai* (a scholar qualifying for governmental examinations)? Here everybody knew his place. While cringing to those who stood higher on the social ladder, the philistine missed no opportunity to persecute those on the bottom. The poor peasant Ah Q was not in this hierarchy. He was the underdog. He hadn't even a corner to live in, spending his nights in the temple and making a living by odd jobs. The villagers could not do without Ah Q: they could ill-treat him with impunity. Anybody, however poor or weak, could derive consolation from looking at Ah Q: here was one man more lowly, friendless and defenseless than they were. Thus Lu Hsun's theme has points of similarity with the theme of the "injured and insulted," the theme of the little man—a major theme in the world's best works of art, including Chaplin's films.

One day, under the influence of drink, Ah Q had the misfortune to claim kinship with the local bigwig, the "Venerable Mr. Chao." Retribution followed immediately. Ah Q was summoned to the house of the aristocrat and given a beating in the presence of the village eldest.

"Those who learned of this maintained that Ah Q was entirely ignorant of the ways of the world—that he was thus actually inviting people to smack him. So it is probable that his surname might not have been Chao, and even if it had been, he should not have indulged in such chatter when the Venerable Mr. Chao was about".

Everybody took it out on Ah Q. He was thrashed for fun by the local wags, he was thrashed by his gambling companions. Even bewhiskered Wang-hu, whom everybody despised, even the weak and undersized farmhand Don came out victorious in their fights with Ah Q. He was a failure in everything. His only amorous adventure, when he plucked up the courage to flirt with the servant woman, the widow Amah Wu, ended in a fiasco and the usual shower of blows.

But Ah Q never grew downhearted. He was an incurable optimist. His reverses and humiliations did not upset his equanimity. He was sure of himself. Being beaten by young loafers he consoled himself by saying that he was beaten by a "little boy" and since by Chinese custom disrespect to one's elders is a heinous crime, his defeat was as good as a victory. When he won a pocketful of money gambling in the street he involved himself in a stupid brawl, got the worst of it and lost his money into the bargain.

"While he continued to feel miserable, he tasted, on this reversal of his fortunes, a portion of the bitter gall of defeat.

"But anon he turned his defeat into victory. He raised his right hand, and with great strength, slapped his mouth twice. Followed a stinging sensation and a bit of pain. After this slapping, his heart felt consoled and his temper assuaged, for it seemed as if he himself had done the slapping and that another himself had received the slapping, and so it was not long before he felt as if he were hitting some one else, despite the fact that his lips were still smarting. He lay down fully satisfied in heart that he had gained a victory.

"Presently he fell asleep."

And then the famous revolution of 1911 broke out. Vague rumors of the events reached the village. At first Ah Q heard the news with indifference. What did he know of revolution? "It is not quite clear whence he got the idea that the Revolutionary party was rebelling and that this rebellion had evil consequences for himself."

However, word went round that the "man of learning," that is to say, the lordly mandarin, was hiding in the town somewhere, and that the family of the "Venerable Mr. Chao" had their bags packed ready under their beds. How did Ah Q react to these events? If, he thought, the "man of learning" was running away from revolution, if the "Venerable Mr. Chao" was afraid of it, then revolution must be a good thing and his, Ah Q's, time had come.

And indeed everything was changed. The local people trembled before "the victor" Ah Q. Chao licked his boots, called him "Venerable Q" . . . Ah Q went about as in a dream. His head swam with visions. To him the revolution was a personal triumph. The little man began dreaming of meting it out to his enemies, revenging himself upon the local people, plundering the houses of the rich, being with beautiful women.

And again his dreams turned to dust. The fruits of the revolution fell into the hands of people such as the local intellectual with a European education who had been despised in these parts for his European airs and for not wearing

a pigtail, and had even been called a "False Foreigner." This "revolutionary" made friends with Chao, who had quickly attached himself to the revolution. And everything went on the same old way. "There was no great change in the tenor of things. The county prefect still remained the same official, the name of the office having merely been changed to 'such and such' an office. Moreover, Chu-jen Lao-yeh had become some sort of official. The Weichuangites were unfamiliar with these titles and names of office. The same old captain still led the soldiers."

And when the new authorities began to "restore order," to protect the sacred property of gentlemen like Chao, one of the victims was the self same Ah Q who was guilty of nothing at all.

The last pages of the novel are written with great dramatic power. Ah Q was taken to execution through noisy streets. One more indignity, the last.

"He still recognized the street and was filled with mild surprise: why didn't they proceed in the direction of the execution ground? He did not know whether he was on parade or being used as an example to warn the multitudes; but even had he known, matters would not have been altered, because he still believed that people, born between heaven and earth, had, as their destined portion, times when they could not avoid being put on parade or being set up as a warning to the multitudes." In these last minutes he gets a vague sense of great social injustice.

Ah Q is a type, a representative character. That is why he has become so popular in China. Ah Q is conceived as an ironic figure. He is ludicrous in his stupidity, his boastfulness, his self assurance and irresponsibility. But the irony of the author comes from a desire to cure the weaknesses, the ills among the Chinese masses contracted from poverty, ignorance and despotism. It is significant that going to his death Ah Q no longer resembled the gullible, boastful, ludicrous fellow of yore.

The bitter lot of the poor is a recurring theme in the work of Lu Hsun. In many of his stories he depicts life in the old countryside, the poverty of the toiling peasants, the cruelty of the rich. More than once he reverts to the subject of woman as a creature with no rights. In his exquisite *Prayer for Happiness* he tells the sad story of "Aunty Sian Ling," a typical Chinese woman. Twice a widow, she becomes an object of universal scorn for, according to the old Chinese belief, a woman who loses one husband, let alone two, incurs disgrace and is proved sinful. An accident deprives her of her beloved son. Alone, crushed by grief, she slaves all her life for an "honorable" village family. Old age comes, her strength, sapped by sorrow and exertion, gives out. Until recently strong and quite capable of working, she becomes a timid scatter-brained creature. Her masters turn her out of doors as unfit for their service, condemning her to beggary and vagrancy.

The tragic story of Aunty Sian Ling is shown against the background of a family holiday, *Prayer for Happiness*. Everything in this well-to-do home speaks of comfort and contentment. The whole family gathers, the house is decorated, the traditional dishes are served, there is a banging of firecrackers, while somewhere in the cold the old woman who had worked for these people for so many years is dying like an old unwanted beast of burden.

The lyrical digressions, the melancholy landscapes which are etched into the narrative here and there embellish the main theme, intensifying the reader's feeling of hopeless dejection.

Another favorite theme of Lu Hsun is the Chinese intelligentsia. The unsuccessful intellectual eking out his existence is a common character in his stories. The provincial schoolteacher Cheng Shichen *(White Lustre)* sits for a degree every year with unfathomable patience

Cover for the English edition

and fails every time. "And that's the end of all," he says to himself after his sixteenth failure. All his plans, hopes, dreams crumble into dust. He is left face to face with his solitude, an aimless, weed-like existence, misery. Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, he remembers a family legend heard in his childhood about a treasure hidden by one of his ancestors. A new dream obssesses Cheng Shi-chen. The buried treasure! A way out of the deadlock, a key to real life! But, alas, instead of a treasure he finds a moldy jaw-bone, part of a human skull. "And that's the end of all," says Cheng, once again. Half demented, he leaves the house and wanders into the mountains. Two days later his body is recovered from a lake, not far from the town. Thus passed away the believer in a lucky star, the visionary who clung to his final hopes till the dying breath. Here is another type of Chinese intellectual, Fan Suang-cho *(Spring Holiday)*. He is a "sober" fellow who has made his peace with reality. Nothing arouses his indignation. Fan Suang-cho had enthusiasm and ideals in his youth but he is done with them now. "For instance, when he saw old people terrorizing young people he used to feel distressed but now he has changed his ideas: in the future when these young people have children and grandchildren of their own, they will assert their dignity in exactly the same way; consequently there is nothing unfair in it. Or, again, when he saw a soldier beating a rickshaw-man he used to feel distressed about this, too; now he takes a different attitude: if this rickshaw-man became a soldier and if the soldier pulled the rickshaw, he would in all probability be beaten in the same way. Consequently, it was not worth thinking about."

Fan Suang-cho combines the functions of an official with pedagogical work. The results of his instruction matter little to him. He is only concerned with his personal existence, with which he is content.

Lu Hsun has left us a whole gallery of negative types but, significantly enough, he rests at exposing evil without indicating a way out of the morass. Lu Hsun created no positive heroes, he did. not show the creative forces whose mission it is to set China free. When these works were written, Lu Hsun was still an idealist intellectual searching for the true path in a wilderness. He admitted this frankly in a letter to *International Liter-*

Lu Hsun among a group of artists at a Shanghai art exhibition

ature in 1934. "Formerly I only felt that the old society was decaying and wanted to see a new society in its place, but I did not know what manner of new society would this be; neither was I sure that things would change for the good after it would come into being. Only after the October Revolution I learned that the creator of this new society was the proletariat . . . The seventeen years of existence and progress of the Soviet Union have firmly convinced me that a classless society will inevitably be built. This has not only dispelled my doubts but it has given me greater and greater zest for my work and belief in the future."

Thus Lu Hsun came gradually to see the great truth of Revolution. In the period between 1925 and 1927 Lu Hsun was often persecuted by the reactionary authorities in Peking, Shanghai and other cities for his participation in the revolutionary movement and his connections with the revolutionary students' organizations. Lu Hsun found his place in the ranks of the left democratic section of the Chinese intelligentsia, which upheld the principles of national revolution, sympathized with the proletariat and the peasantry in their fight for freedom under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party; they were inspired by the example of the peoples of the Soviet Union. In 1930, with Kuo Mo-jo, Yui Da-fu and other revolutionary Chinese writers, Lu Hsun formed a League of Left Writers and was elected its first president.

In 1931, after the Japanese invaded Manchuria, Lu Hsun became one of the most active figures in the movement to unite all the forces of the Chinese people for the defense of the national independence. With all the energy typical of him, Lu Hsun day after day propagated the message of national revolution and anti-imperialism, calling for a rapprochement between China and the Socialist State. When diplomatic relations between the two countries were reestablished in 1933, Lu Hsun acclaimed the event with joy and pride, for he and his fellow-patriots had contributed no small part to the establishment of closer relations between the U.S.S.R. and the Chinese Republic. To the end of his life, Lu Hsun was a staunch friend of the Soviet Union, an active popularizer of Soviet culture in China. Thanks to him translations of the Russian classics appeared in that country; also the works of Gorky, whom Lu Hsun highly appreciated and esteemed, books by Serafimovich and Fadeyev. He himself made a number of translations, others were edited by him.

Lu Hsun warmly sympathized with Socialist ideas, with the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. He was coming closer and closer to the Communist Party of China and actively supported it. In a message of condolence wired to Lu Hsun's family after his death, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party mourned him as a "fellow-fighter in the struggle for Communism."

His most valuable and fruitful efforts in China's cause were made in 1935 and 1936 when the formation of a national anti-imperialist front was begun. The anti-Japanese league, in which Lu Hsun played a leading part, was the prime mover in this struggle and contributed in no small degree to its success.

Lu Hsun left undone much that he had planned and dreamed of as an artist. In the last years of his life he worked principally as a publicist, editor and propagandist. He wrote fiery articles in defense of the united anti-Japanese front, pamphlets attacking the reactionaries, the traitors of the Chinese people; he translated some of the best literary works by Russian and West-European writers; he took an active part in the development of a new literary language and the Latinization of the Chinese alphabet which Lu Hsun along with all the leading scholars and writers of China considered indispensable for the enlightenment of the masses. He wrote a number of essays on the history of Western culture from antiquity to modern times. For China, where until recent years foreign culture was the privilege of intellectuals, this was of the highest importance.

A warm admirer and propagandist of Soviet culture and of progressive culture of the West, Lu Hsun never forgot his native Chinese culture, the treasures which the Chinese nation has created in the course of its long history. He was an enthusiastic collector of ancient Chinese poetry and folklore. He rewrote many popular legends and ancient poems and used them in his stories. Some of them were published in a separate volume under the title *Old Legends Told Anew*. Lu Hsun was the author of a number of scholarly works on the history of Chinese culture. He carefully selected every work of genuine literary value, establishing the connection of present day Chinese people's literature with the best literary productions of past centuries.

Lu Hsun was a true son of his people, a sincere and fearless artist who laid the foundations of the popular Chinese literature of today, linked it with the best literary traditions of bygone ages.

EVGUENY STEINBERG

Chernyshevsky on Bret Harte

Few people outside Russia, no doubt, know that Nikolai Chernyshevsky, famous Russian writer and revolutionary of the nineteenth century, during his exile in Siberia translated one of Bret Harte's stories, *Miggles*, into the Russian and left behind some highly interesting comments on its author.

The manuscript of the translation and the accompanying letters of Chernyshevsky to his wife, as well as several others of his letters and papers, were confiscated by the governor of Yakutia [1] on the ground that they tried to violate the tsar's ban on Chernyshevsky's literary activity. It was only many years later, after the Great Socialist Revolution, that they were published.

These letters date back to the spring of 1878, when Chernyshevsky had already been completely cut off from his social and literary interests and from his family and friends for fourteen years. Although throughout this period he was deprived of cultured environment and was under constant police supervision, he did not stop reading and working as much as possible. Among the books his relatives used to send him (frequently they were chosen at random) were the selected works of Bret Harte in the Tauchnitz edition. They gave him great pleasure.

"Among the happy selections are two small volumes of Bret Harte's stories and other small pieces in the English original," Chernyshevsky wrote in a letter to his wife. "They contain much that is but trifling. Still, a great deal of the prose is so fine that I have read it over ten times and shall read it many times more; and I have read about a dozen of the poems so many times that I have learned them by heart and recite them when walking."

The poems that Chernyshevsky recited during his solitary promenades were, undoubtedly, the famous "mining camp ballads," *Dickens in Camp, Chiquita, Jim* and others.

"His stories have been published in Russian translation either by *Otechestveniye Zapiski* (Homeland Notes—*Ed.*), or the *Vestnik Evropy* (European Herald—*Ed.*), I do not remember which," wrote Chernyshevsky in the same letter. "Have you read this translation? What I consider the most charming of his stories is missing, however. Most likely the translator thought it inane. That happens sometimes. The most charming is being slipped by. This charming story is *Miggles*.[1] So I have translated this tiny piece for you and for *our children*."

Chernyshevsky's next letter contained a translation of the story and comments on it. The translation was very exact and excellently conveyed the spirit of the original; Chernyshevsky had a fine command of the English language and had been following events in America for a long time. He furnished his translation with many footnotes on names and situations that would have been incomprehensible to the Russian reader, and with explanations for the liberties that he had taken with the original in several instances.

Chernyshevsky's main comments on Bret Harte's story are of a much more general nature, however, and are what might be called a discourse on social morals and the status of woman in society. He wrote the following lines to his wife as a foreword to *Miggles:*

"My dear friend Olenka,

"Here is some material for a course in morals that you should teach our children.

"These lectures of yours will be of greater benefit to them than the wise things they are taught at school."

To understand why Chernyshevsky considered that *Miggles* should serve as the basis for a "course in morals," we must turn to the story itself. The heroine of

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[1] Yakutia is a province in Siberia.

[1] This is not true. Pleshcheyev, the poet, who was the first Russian translator of Bret Harte, did not slip by *Miggles*. The story was printed in *Otechestveniye Zapiski* in 1873 and was included in a collection of Bret Harte's tales that appeared in 1874. No wonder that Chernyshevsky had no knowledge of this.

the tale, which is one of Bret Harte's best early works, is Miggles, a young woman who lives in a log cabin with a paralytic imbecile. A group of city people traveling in a stage coach are caught in a storm and drive up to her cabin, which is in the heart of a forest, in search for a place to spend the night. Miggles, it turns out, is a former mining camp prostitute, and Jim, to whom she is so devoted, is neither her father, brother, nor husband, but one of her former clients who has spent all his money on her and whom she takes under her wing when he becomes stricken with his incurable illness. The travelers, the women especially, are greatly shocked at this contact with the "world of vice."

In a manner that undoubtedly required courage in the United States of the sixties and seventies of last century Bret Harte glorified Miggles and pictured her as a noble and frank character whose charm made an impression even on the hardened moralists among the travelers.

The problem of equal rights for women occupied an important place in the social doctrines of Chernyshevsky and the whole Russian revolutionary-democratic intelligentsia of the sixties. Chernyshevsky maintained that the way to strike against the traditional attitude toward women in family life and in society, as persons to be exploited and held as some private property, was to give them complete freedom in their personal affairs, freedom that would be similar to, and even greater than, that which society confers upon men. "When a stick has been bent in one direction for a long time," he declared, "it *has to be bent over backwards in the other direction* before it can be straightened out."

It is clear, therefore, why Chernyshevsky was so enthusiastic about Bret Harte's brave characterization of Miggles. Nevertheless, he did not agree with the apologetic reservations with regard to Miggles' "sinfulness" that the author had not dared to omit. In a footnote on one of these apologies—the association of Miggles with the image of the repentant Mary of Magdalene—Chernyshevsky declared: "This is . . . in my opinion, an utterly superfluous justification of Miggles' sins." Then he himself gives a very accurate characterization of Miggles, a characterization that develops into the "course in morals," into an exposition of the social reasons for the hypocritical attitude towards women in bourgeois society.

"Nothing in Miggles' life needs an apology," Chernyshevsky stated. "When she was amusing she did nothing wrong. It is a pity, of course, that she was not born rich, that she was an orphan and had to run a saloon for a living instead of going to parties with her mother. And that is exactly wherein her 'sin' consists, namely, in that she could not fly from ball to ball."

Then again:

"Those parts in which Harte tries to excuse Miggles are futile. Miggles has no need of justification whatsoever. She is lively, petulant. But, strictly speaking, this was even good: it is good to be petulant while young. Bret Harte has two superfluous apologies for Miggles. I have already mentioned one. The other comes earlier in the story: the superfluous explanation that Miggles, by stepping back into the dark, covers her sins with the assistance which she renders to the motionless figure of Jim. This is pure nonsense: Miggles moves into the dark purely because of shamefacedness. She is, at heart, very bashful. The fact that she had been brazen may be laid simply to her liveliness, alertness, courage. At heart she is a bashful young woman."

Having thus defended the graceful personality of Miggles from Bret Harte's somewhat tactless apologies, Chernyshevsky gives a clear exposition of his own views.

"It is a pity," he declared, "that when social customs are coarse the petulance of youth assumes a coarse character. But it is not the youth that established these coarse customs. The youth only suffer from them, the youth are a powerless section of society.

"That is why wise people take a tolerant attitude toward the revelries of young men, and particularly of adolescents. And when adolescents are petulant with girls, there is no cause for censure if this mischief has in it nothing vile: if there is no deception, intrigue or cruelty, for example.

"Yes. Youths remain unimpeachable, pure, as long as they remain honest people, good people.

"'Yes, that is so,' say all sane people.

"And I say: a girl or a young woman is just the same as a young man. And it is not becoming for sane people to make exceptions with regard to young women.

"Miggles is no less pure than the purest society woman."

Chernyshevsky had good reason for speaking here of a "society woman," for later, dwelling on marriages between persons of different social position and upbringing, he laid bare the mainsprings of bourgeois morals. "Could Miggles become a society woman?" he asked, and answered that "it would not be a simple matter." This seemingly odd question could be phrased thus: what separates

this "fallen woman" from her moralizing judges? Chernyshevsky answered: the fact that she belonged to the common people. "Chastity of body or heart have nothing to do with this matter," Chernyshevsky said, summarizing his views. It is primarily a matter of "social position," of "customary desires and accepted ideas."

Such is the "moral" that Chernyshevsky derives from the story. Chernyshevsky, of course, had incomparably higher social ideals than Bret Harte, who went no further than a rather hazy criticism of the morals of his time, and had no desire ever to go any farther. However, Bret Harte created a realistic and fascinating character that suggests to the reader in a striking way the hypocrisy and "immorality" of the bourgeois code of morals. "*Miggles* is a story that is fascinating through its humanity," Chernyshevsky wrote.

Chernyshevsky clearly saw Bret Harte's weaknesses as a writer. I have already mentioned that he considered Harte's appeal to his readers' sentimental feelings, in defence of Miggles, to be "nonsense." Chernyshevsky also pointed to the limited range of Harte's topics, which he explained by the poverty of his powers of observation, the unevenness of his talent, and other shortcomings. Nevertheless, his estimate of Harte is perhaps even higher than that of certain American critics who consider it good literary taste to look down on Bret Harte.

"Bret Harte's power," Chernyshevsky wrote, "lies in the fact that, in spite of all his flaws, he is a man of great natural intelligence, a man with an extraordinarily noble soul, who, as far as the insufficiency of his store of impressions and ideas allows him to understand things, worked out for himself a very noble-minded view of life."

I believe that this estimate of Bret Harte given by the great Russian critic deserves to go down in literary history side by side with Dickens' well-known words in praise of Harte as recorded in John Forster's *Life of Dickens*.

ABEL STARTSEV

The Chaucer and Hardy Commemorations in the U.S.S.R.

The present imperialist war has cast a shadow over two important dates in Great Britain, the 600th anniversary of the birth of Geoffrey Chaucer, "the Father of English Poetry," and the centenary of the birth of Thomas Hardy, the last of the great English writers of the nineteenth century. British literary circles never paid particular attention to Hardy, but there was every indication that the Chaucer jubilee would be marked on a grand scale.

But the war has wrought havoc also in British cultural life. The literary columns of the newspapers have been curtailed; one after another, a number of old-established and reputable literary magazines have closed down; literary meetings and discussions have practically ceased; the publication of books has greatly declined. On account of the war, the Chaucer celebrations had to be sacrificed, too; they were conducted on an extremely modest scale. A few lectures and reports, and a couple of articles in the press could scarcely satisfy those who had been looking forward to the Chaucer celebrations.

Typical of the articles were those published in the Chaucer issue, if it could be called so, of *The Times Literary Supplement* (April 20, 1940). We could find in it only two articles on the poet: a short editorial and an ordinary newspaper article by Prof. R. W. Chambers.

The first of these articles contains one curious paragraph. The paper cannot conceal its surprise that the anniversary is also being celebrated in the Soviet Union, stating that "it is surprising to learn that the State Central Library of Foreign Literature in Moscow has arranged an exhibition in honor of the event. That is not all. A complete Russian translation of the *Canterbury Tales* is being issued by the State Publishers of Literature in Moscow."

But "that is not all," to echo the paper's words, for the jubilee is being observed in the Soviet Union as befits the memory of a great artist who belongs to the whole world. It is not merely a matter of organizing a Chaucer exhibition and of translating the *Canterbury Tales* into Russian, though this by itself represents quite a literary event. (Hitherto there was no complete Russian translation of the *Canterbury Tales*. Excerpts only had appeared in N. V. Gerbel's *The English Poets: Lives and Excerpts*, published in 1875, and in R. C. Shor's anthology *Literature of the Middle Ages*, published in 1936. Thus, the new translation by Ivan Kashkin and O. B. Rumer is the first complete rendition of this great English classic into Russian.)

Prior to the Great October Socialist Revolution, Russian critics paid but little attention to Chaucer. His name was mentioned only in university lectures on the history of West European literature and in encyclopedias. Only after the Revolution did Russian scholars begin in earnest the study of Chaucer.

Last spring, in connection with Chaucer's anniversary, a whole series of lectures and papers were read under the auspices of scientific and literary organizations. A special commemoration session of the Gorky Institute of World Literature was held in the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., which was opened with a paper on Chaucer's life and work by Prof. A. K. Jivelegov. Another paper, "The Basic Problems of Chaucer's Writings and the Fate of His Literary Heritage," was read by A. A. Anikst. In conclusion, I. Kashkin read a number of excerpts from the *Canterbury Tales* and spoke of Maxim Gorky's helpful interest in the translation of the poet's works. As far back as 1908, Gorky in his manuscript history of Russian literature referred to Chaucer as "the father of the English language and the founder of realism."

In March, the Moscow Central Library of Foreign Literature arranged a Chaucer exhibition and an evening at which a paper on the poet was read by Kashkin. In April, he and O. B. Rumer read their translation in the Moscow Writers' Club. In the middle of May, there were two broadcasts on Chaucer, one being a talk

by Kashkin on the poet, and the second, a reading of *Chantecleer and Pertelote* in his translation.

The Chaucer anniversary was also marked by various periodicals, including the *Literaturnaya Gazeta, Krasnaya Nov* and the Russian edition of *International Literature*.

In the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of March 30, 1940, in an article bearing the ironic title "The Case of a Classic," I. Kashkin exposes the tendency of a certain section of Chaucerian scholars, such as J. Manly and Margaret Galway, to reduce the characters drawn by the poets to mere photographic counterparts of actual persons and, on the basis of Chaucer's writings, to prove a number of quite untenable propositions. Thus, between the lines of an article by Margaret Galway one can read an attempt to prove that the heroes (sic!) of Limoges 1370, Sluys 1340, Espagnols-sur-mer 1350, Drogheda 1649, Badajos 1812, Lucknow 1858, Dublin 1916, Amritsar 1919, were. . . . incapable of mistreating prisoners of war or of making them "walk the plank," and that for this very reason Chaucer's shipman, who treated his prisoners in this way could not be an Englishman, but a Basque in the employ of a British company.

While giving Margaret Galway full credit for her erudition, ingenuity and literary polish, Kashkin points out that these positive qualities are vitiated by the defective underlying tendency of the article.

Kashkin further states that a number of British critics attempt to underestimate Chaucer both as man and writer. They extolled him as a smug, optimistic "poet of the daisy," observing silence about his significance as a realist and satirist.

The April issue of *Krasnaya Nov* published the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* in Kashkin's translation.

Specially noteworthy was the Chaucer material published in No. 5-6 of the Russian edition of *International Literature*. Besides a long monographic article on Chaucer by Kashkin and his condensed translation of *The Nun Priest's Tale*, the issue contains translation by O. B. Rumer of one of the tragedies of the Monk *Ugolino*. In his article Kashkin characterizes Chaucer as a writer who anticipated the realism of the English renaissance. The article gives a detailed analysis of the basic elements of Chaucer's creative work, with its social significance, the character of his realism, the distinctive features of his narrative poems, his rhythmics, humor and parody.

The article explains the sources of Chaucer's humor, bringing out the influence on Chaucer of realistic folk material. It also brings out the "mastery with which Chaucer handled outworn traditional literary material, using it as a contrasting background for his rich, complicated narrative."

The article is chiefly devoted to an analysis of Chaucer's humor; recalling the satirical portraits in the *General Prologue*, one must agree with Kashkin that the frequently referred to "mild humor of Chaucer," is a relative conception. English critics have never tired of stressing Chaucer's goodnaturedness, just as Russian critics in the nineties of the last century spoke incessantly of the mild humor of Chekhov ("A Malefactor," "Ward No. 6"). "The *General Prologue* shows, however, that Chaucer can employ the crushing weapon of laughter, especially in depicting the clergy.

"Chaucer wrote of people and events far removed from our own times," Kashkin

Illustration to "Ugolino" by L. Brodati

concludes. "Without a good knowledge of the period and without detailed commentaries, it is often difficult to understand his writings. The *Canterbury Tales* are rich in content, almost every line lending itself to lengthy commentaries. The books written about Chaucer could fill a library, but he is one of those writers whose charm can be felt better than analyzed, and the best way to feel and love Chaucer is to read or reread his work."

The magazine gives the readers the possibility of enjoying Chaucer, publishing a long excerpt which brings out Chaucer's skill in narrative.

The centenary of the birth of Thomas Hardy received no less attention in the U.S.S.R. Hardy's name is well known to the Soviet reader. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure*, and *Far From the Madding Crowd*, his best novels, have all been translated anew into Russian during the last few years. Maxim Gorky once said that Hardy is one of those great representatives of bourgeois realism "who very rarely arouse the readers' doubts as to the authenticity of the described events, characters, or of the logic of emotions and thoughts." Hardy's prose and poetry are studied by students and postgraduates in literary institutes; young historians of literature select Hardy's works as themes for dissertations; libraries report that his books are in great demand.

Of the critical works devoted to Hardy, one should mention in the first place the article by the late A. V. Lunacharsky, which was published by way of preface to a new translation of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, published in 1937. Lunacharsky calls Hardy a "great English novelist and poet," "an exceptionally keen and honest observer of the disintegration of rural life in the English provinces," a writer "who looked squarely in the eyes of the society and the age he lived in."

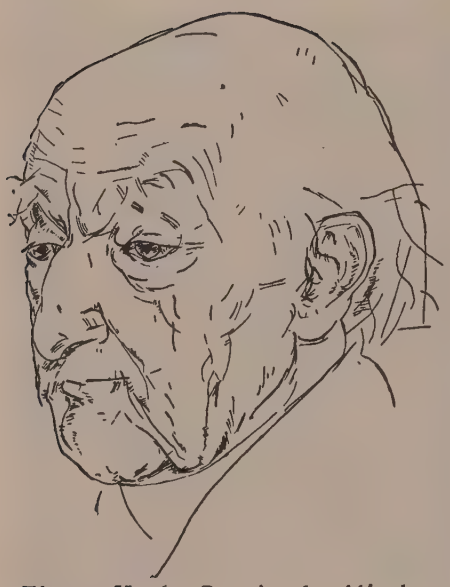
"Such was Hardy, in his best novels and poetry. What endears him to his readers is, first and foremost, his honesty. Not for nothing did his forefathers bear the name of Hardy, which implies boldness and daring, and the novelist himself was indeed bold in his investigation of society. Seeing the hand of fate raised against people dear to him, he refused to beg for mercy. On the contrary, he drew deductions of a far-reaching nature. On the basis of the material lying close at hand, he drew conclusions relating to events of wide significance, to the fate of humanity. Hardy's philosophy has much in common with that of Flaubert. The particular social vantage-point in space and time from which they made their observations led them to the idea of disintegration, the idea of the imminent approach of some kind of chaos, and of man's helplessness in face of the disasters hanging over his head; it led them, in other words, to fatalism."

"Does Hardy mean anything to us?" asked Lunacharsky in conclusion. "Yes, he does, and, in the first place, because he is a remarkable chronicler of the break up of the strong propertied milieu, which is to be observed on a growing scale in a number of countries. In other words, Hardy is an artist depicting widespread phenomena of historical significance.

"In the second place, he is important for us as an extremely original realist whose methods deserve our study, especially the remarkable balance he maintains between portrayal of man's behavior as conditioned by environment, on the one hand, and on the other, the depictment of man's inner world, which he reduces to a minimum. Hardy is an exceptionally honest dissenter. It is his very hopelessness, his hostility to any petty, saccharine formalism, to any attempt to paint in rosy colors the life he knew, that endears him to us. This brave, sorrowful writer is part and parcel of the declining bourgeois world."

In connection with the centenary, articles on Hardy were published by the French and Russian editions of *International Literature*, the Leningrad magazine *Zvezda* and other periodicals. The article for *International Literature* was contributed by the well-known Soviet critic A. I. Startsev, who characterizes Hardy as the "last great English writer of the nineteenth century." "He died in our own days, and his later works have sometimes quite a modern ring about them. However, if we take his basic motifs, Hardy stands on the border line between the classics of the last century and the modern writers.

"Hardy's work," Startsev writes further, "is rooted in crises of provincial rural England, whose scenery and whose people Hardy depicted with superb skill and depth. At the end of the nineteenth century the English countryside, as a form of pre-capitalist civilization, came to an end. The more significant of Hardy's writings give expression to the protest of the patriarchal, rural mind against the deadening influence of the bourgeois system on all spheres of personal and public life, against the transformation of the 'green England' of Shakespeare into the 'black England' of Dickens. Hardy's position is analogous to that of Lev Tolstoy in Russia, with the important distinction that Tolstoy's protest had a



Thomas Hardy. Drawing by Alfred Wolmark

considerably more powerful social basis, comprehensible in view of the differences in the historical development of bourgeois society in Russia and Britain."

Startsev says that pessimism is the basic tendency of the writer "who, in his attitude towards life, was inclined to despair. It would be wrong, however, to think of Hardy as a misanthrope. He was a great lover of life, though he came to despair of it. His heroes are passionately attached to life. They fight with valor to the last ditch."

Startsev's article explains the campaign of calumny to which the writer was subjected by bourgeois society in the 'nineties. "Hardy's pessimism," he writes, "proved no less of an affront to the British ruling classes than his attempts to expose the system of social oppression by means of which the bourgeois and landowners dominate England. It constituted a challenge to the social optimism which was cultivated in Britain during the 'peaceful' decades following the Charter years. 'God's in his heaven; all's right with the world'—these words by Browning might well have been chosen as a motto by the bourgeois philistine civilization of victorian England, so full of confidence that it would never pass away. Hardy found no God in his heaven; nor did he find that all was right with the world. In a letter Hardy quoted the following lines from one of his critics: 'Truly this pessimism is insupportable. . . . One marvels that Hardy is not in a madhouse.'

"The campaign waged against Hardy during the 'nineties, following the appearance of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, is one of the most contemptible and stupid episodes in the history of British bourgeois culture. Hardy lacked the temperament of a fighter. The insults flung at him by press, pulpit and anonymous correspondents wounded him to the quick. In the past he had made compromises, but now an all-important issue was at stake; he was called upon to repudiate what he believed to be true. For Hardy it was impossible to write optimistic novels, with 'God's in his heaven; all's right with the world.' He decided to give up writing novels altogether. The work of one of England's most outstanding novelists came to an end."

"But Hardy," we read further on, "did not surrender altogether. He decided to write verse, a field in which he would be less open to attack by the reactionaries . . . Thus originated the poetry of the later Hardy, intransigent, philosophical, rebellious. It has constituted an important chapter in the history of English poetry, and has given the world a number of lyrical masterpieces."

Hardy's poetry is not as well known in the Soviet Union as his prose. Only a small selection of his poems were included in the *Anthology of Modern English Poetry*, published in 1937. Of special interest, therefore, is the fact that the Russian edition of *International Literature* contains a number of Hardy's poems never before translated into Russian. They will serve to give a fuller picture of the author of *Jude the Obscure* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* who is highly esteemed by the Soviet reader.

The Georgian Theater in Kutaisi

. . . How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

SHAKESPEARE

1

The Kutaisi Theater recently celebrated its sixtieth anniversary. This theater came into being by a mere stroke of good fortune. Vorontsov-Dashkov, who at that time was the tsarist viceroy in the Caucasus, tried to win the support of the Georgian intelligentsia. He believed that he could gain their good-will by permitting the Georgian language on the stage. However, the Georgian intelligentsia were not taken in by the tsarist viceroy, and quickly saw through his designs. Therefore, Vorontsov-Dashkov very soon gave up his plans of seeking their support; however, it would have been rather inconvenient for him, and, indeed, a risky venture, to forbid the Georgian language on the stage, for this could only result in making the Georgian intelligentsia more bitter in their struggle against tsardom.

It was under such conditions that the Kutaisi Theater was born. The building itself was the property of a private theatrical manager to whom this was just another profitable business. But even this calculation was misplaced, because in those days it was impossible to stage plays which the Georgian people really wanted to see. The tsarist censors banned all plays which depicted the hopeless life of the Georgian people under the yoke of tsardom, as well as all those plays which told of the age-long struggle of Georgia for her national independence. At that time, light comedies comprised the greater part of the repertory of the Georgian theater in Kutaisi and its best performances were plays translated from other languages, mainly Russian. In spite of all this, however, the theater was constantly molested by the authorities. This state of affairs continued right up to the establishment of Soviet power in Georgia, because even under the Georgian Mensheviks, the country was only formally an independent state. As far back as July 1918, Lenin pointed out that "this independence of Georgia has become nothing but sheer deceit." The Georgian Mensheviks did absolutely nothing for the development of Georgian art.

The Georgian theater has made great strides during the twenty years that have elapsed since Georgia became Soviet. It is sufficient to say that, prior to the October Revolution, Georgia possessed only two theaters performing in the Georgian language. Today, there are forty eight of them.

The Kutaisi Theater is among the foremost Georgian theaters. Its development under the Soviet power is typical of the development of the art of all the nationalities of the Soviet Union. The theater scored its greatest successes in 1928-1930, when it was directed by K. A. Marjanishvili, one of the most outstanding producers in the Soviet Union. Several of his productions of that period, such as *Uriel Akosta* by the German playwright Gutzkow, are still performed on the Georgian stage. In 1930, most of the company of the Kutaisi Theater, together with Marjanishvili, moved to Tbilisi, the Georgian capital. The present company of the Kutaisi Theater is made up of comparatively young actors and actresses—it was organized only three years ago. It is directed by one of Marjanishvili's pupils—Dodo Antadze, Honored Artist of the Georgian Republic.

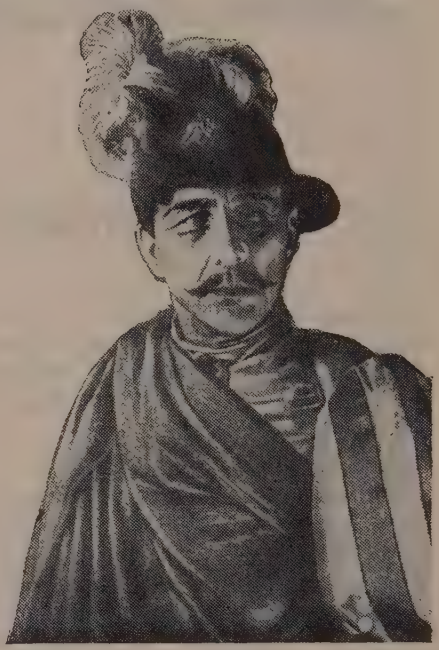
In the past few years, the Kutaisi Theater has produced mainly plays on modern themes dealing with the life of the Georgian people, such as Dadiani's comedy *Days Gone By*, which portrays the customs and habits of the Georgian countryside prior to the revolution; Kabaskiriya's drama, *Their Cause*, showing the path by which a section of the Georgian intelligentsia came to realize that its place is with the people and that the Soviet cause is its own; Kokobadze's comedy, *A Collective Farm Wedding*, depicting life on a contemporary Georgian collective farm.

The repertory of this theater also includes historical and classical plays and some of the best Soviet plays. Of the latter, we will only mention the drama *Pavel Grekov*, with which our readers are familiar. In connection with the centenary of Akaki Tsereteli, the Kutaisi Theater staged *Potara Kakhi*, one of the best plays of that great Georgian writer. Nakhorishvili's play, *Lado Ketzkhoveli*, deals with the struggle of the Georgian people against tsarism. The hero of the play, Lado Ketzkhoveli, was a prominent leader of the Georgian proletariat and one of Comrade Stalin's closest associates in the revolutionary struggle in Transcaucasia. The historical chronicle *Georgi Saakadze* deals with a remarkable Georgian statesman of the seventeenth century. Another comedy, *The Count's Widow*, by Klodioshvili, deals with the recent liberation of Western Ukraine from the yoke of the Polish landlords.

2

The young company of the Kutaisi Theater in its efforts to attain real mastery of theatrical art has followed the only proper path, that of working on the classics. It staged Shakespeare's *Othello*

People's Artist of Georgia Alexander Imidashvili as Othello



People's Artist of Georgia Yuza Zardalishvili as Iago

with the well-known Georgian tragedian, People's Artist of the Georgian Republic Alex Imidashvili, in the title role. Imidashvili's interpretation of the character of the Moor of Venice is worth noting. His Othello is not a suspicious person and jealous husband, but an honest, noble man, who is trustful by nature. Imidashvili shows us, as it were, two Othellos—one, a brave and valient warrior who has lived a glorious life and who wins Desdemona's love by his thrilling tales; and the other Othello—a man who has been driven mad by Iago's diabolic intrigues. The mental agonies suffered by Othello as a result of Iago's cunning intrigues are thrillingly portrayed by Imidashvili, though personally I do not quite agree with Imidashvili's interpretation of Othello. I think that the actor makes Othello rather older than he really is, exaggerates his temper and presents him as a man who is not quite confident of himself. For instance, during the famous scene of the clash of arms in Cyprus, Imidashvili in the role of Othello dashes out of his bedroom with his bared sword, which is not quite in keeping with the character of Shakespeare's Othello. The latter, be it remembered, does not bare his sword, but, on the contrary, displays exceptional presence of mind when Desdemona's father tries to arrest him with

the aid of a troop of soldiers; he understands that it would be greatly beneath the dignity of a celebrated Venetian general to unsheath his sword in haste.

The scene of Desdemona's murder in Imidashvili's rendering is rather peculiar too. His Othello at first strangles and than stabs Desdemona with a dagger. Perhaps this, as indeed Othello's proneness to sword play in Imidashvili's interpretation, is in keeping with the temperament of the Georgian audience. It seems to me, however, that it is a grave error on the part of the theater when it panders to the tastes of the spectators.

At the present time, the theater is rehearsing *King Lear*, which will be produced soon. The fact that these two Shakespearean tragedies were produced in Moscow with great success—Othello, in the Maly Theater, with Ostuzhev in the title role, and *King Lear*, in the Jewish Theater, with Mikhoels—places the Georgian theater in a somewhat difficult position. All the more honor to the Kutaisi Theater for daring to stage these two classical tragedies with its modest forces. The staging of a Shakespearean play is always an event for every Soviet theater. The communion with the great dramatist is a difficult and exacting, but highly thankful test, which every Soviet theater and every Soviet actor welcomes.

3

Among the historical figures of Georgia, Georgi Saakadze occupies a unique position. His activities date back to the first half of the seventeenth century, when Georgia was still a disunited country divided into numerous feudal principalities waging war among themselves. The grievious position of the people at that time was aggravated still more by frequent incursions of foreign invaders. Iran and Turkey often invaded the fertile lands of Georgia. Saakadze is remembered by the people as a great Mauravi (*i. e.*, a sort of prime minister) who devoted his entire life to the struggle for the independence of his country and to improving the lot of its peasantry. His colorful figure has a strong appeal for modern Georgian playwrights and actors. Two plays dealing with Georgi Saakadze have been staged recently in Georgia. One of these plays, produced by the Marjanishvili Theater in Tbilisi, was written by Ushangi Chkheidze, People's Artist of the Georgian republic. It deals with the episode when Saakadze, placed in command of the Persian expeditionary forces in Georgia by Shah Shakobas, organizes a popular rebellion and puts the invading troops to rout.

The version staged by the Kutaisi Theater was written by Sandro Shanshiavili. This play represents the life of the great Mauravi on a far broader scale. Shanshiavili's historical chronicle shows the effect of various influences. Some of the situations have been adapted from other plays rather mechanically. For instance the scene when Boris Godunov's envoys appear in Georgia is strongly reminiscent of a similar scene in *Bogdan Khmelnitsky*, written by Korneichuk, the Ukrainian playwright. But it must be admitted that, with all its shortcomings, the play of this young Georgian playwright is an important contribution to the Georgian historical drama which is now in the making. *Georgi Saakadze* is the best performance so far staged by the Kutaisi Theater; it allows each actor fully to display his individual talents. The actors are well acquainted both with the epoch and with the characters they are portraying, and it stands to reason that they feel more at home in this play than in plays dealing with remote countries and a life with which they are unfamiliar.

The way the audiences welcome the performance shows that it strikes a responsive chord in the hearts of the Georgian playgoers. Each mention of the struggle for Georgia's national independence is greeted by thunderous applause. The scene which evokes the greatest enthusiasm is the one in which Saakadze bids farewell to his son, who is kept by the Shah of Persia as a hostage. When Saakadze sets out with the troops which the Shah has placed under his command, his son knows full well the fate that awaits him, but he is prepared to meet it: "What is my life worth," exclaims the youth. "Let me, an unknown Georgian youth, die, that my country may live and prosper, that she may be independent!" The patriotic idea is the keynote of the entire performance, and to a great extent explains its success.

4

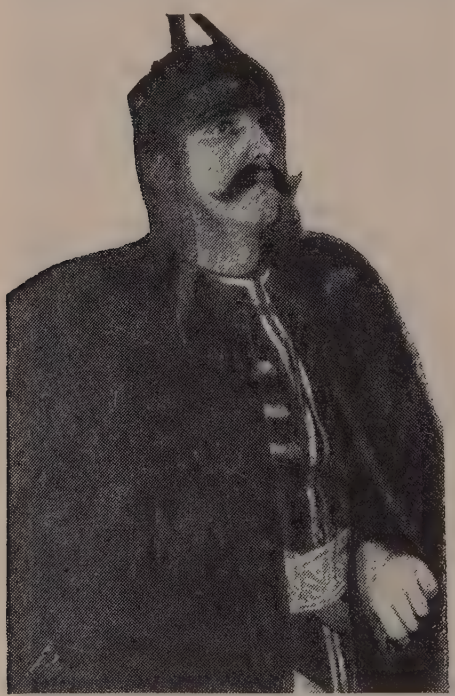
The gloomy days of foreign rule, when the British Army of occupation lorded it over the country while posing as "liberators," are still vivid in the memory of the Georgian people. It is for this reason that Georgian writers are attracted by the theme of the recent liberation of the people of Western Ukraine. This theme is dealt with in Sergo Kladiashvili's comedy *The Count's Widow*, staged by the Kutaisi Theater. The main character of this comedy, Stanislaw Pryska, is a Polish landlord who brutally exploits the

peasants living around his estate. In the course of action, a British general and a French colonel appear on the scene. *Pan* Pryska is still blinded by the halo of glory surrounding the victors of the first imperialist war. On their hasty flight from the advancing German armies, they find temporary shelter in *Pan* Pryska's house. He asks them, "Where is the assistance you promised Poland?" "We promised Poland moral assistance," replies the British general, "and we are rendering Poland all the moral assistance in our power."

As a matter of fact, it would have been more apt to call this play "Moral Assistance," for it is this very question which is the ideological keynote of the play. *Pan* Pryska is at a loss to understand what the general means by "moral assistance," and at first thinks that, since he is but a country gentleman, the meaning of international political language is beyond him. He begins to realize, however, what real "moral assistance" means, when the strains of a Red Army march inform him that the Soviet troops have entered the village, bringing real aid to the toiling people.

It is not surprising, of course, that the Georgian playwright aims the shafts of his satire at the British imperialists since once his own people also experienced the "assistance." The author has succeeded in drawing a lifelike portrait of the Polish landlord with his typical conceit, arrogance and cowardice. During the collapse of the Polish state, *Pan* Pryska is only concerned with his own property. He dreams of marrying his daughter to a count, or to anybody with a title, in the naive hope that a title will get him out of any situation. The author wittily ridicules the ambitions of *Pan* Pryska, and in the last act it turns out that the fiance *Pan* Pryska has chosen for his daughter, and who he thinks is a blue-blooded count, is the quite untitled step-son of a cafe dancer.

Maria Gelashvili as Tektla Saakadze



Vakhtang Megrelishvili as Georgi Saakadze

One of the most serious shortcomings of the play is that the peasants are depicted as a mass without any individual characters.

5

The Kutaisi Theater is but one of numerous district theaters in our country and it is more or less typical. Its achievements are a characteristic example of the development of the Soviet theatrical art, particularly in the national republics, and of the tremendous advance in the standard of the millions of Soviet playgoers.

TIMOFEI ROKOTOV

Kutaisi. July, 1940.

The Decay of French Culture

UNMASKED . . .

Defeat has divested bourgeois France of that attractive mask and elegant costume she sported to the outside world. Now French society is seen in all its repulsive ugliness. Since it pretended to be carefree and light-minded, it was considered still young. Alas! *La Belle France* was merely an aging woman pretending to be young, who was having the last fling of her youth. "After me, the deluge," such was her motto, when, under the spell of diseased passions, she wanted to "feel that mighty and vitalizing excitement of war." This expression, incidentally, was coined by Madame Cécile Sorel, that ancient relique of the *Theatre Français*, who readily posed as the symbol of *La Belle France*. Today, speaking in the name of her country, and, particularly, on behalf of her class, she may justly repeat her own words: "It seems, I have slipped . . ."—to the lowest rung of the ladder, we might add.

FRENCH "CULTURE"

In France the big bourgeoisie regarded the intellectuals as their servants. The intelligentsia was charged with the task of finding moral and ideological justification for the privileges of the bourgeoisie, embellishing bourgeois society, praising its beauties and charms, singing paeans to the power of its rulers, and besides, entertaining it by fawning upon it, in a word, the intelligentsia was to enable bourgeois society to play the comedy of enlightment and sentimentality. Only those who served faithfully were awarded: before their death they were elected to the Academy. They reveled in their ephemeral immortality before dissapearing in oblivion.

Those who did not wish to adapt themselves were boycotted by the influential publishing houses, such as Hachette. This biggest book agency played a paramount part in selecting the "spiritual food" for the French people. It always fostered the distribution of works which preached adaptation, serving to strengthen the existing order, aiming to keep the mind of the people at a level of lulling mediocrity.

Thus, the French press and literature of the last decade reflected mostly thoughts and emotions of the bourgeoisie, in a word, bourgeois ideology. And what were the things that occupied the mind of the bourgeoisie? Perhaps it wanted to advance the culture and moral standards of France? Not in the least. It did everything to lower them.

THE ROLE OF THE PRESS

In our times, it is the newspaper, and not the book, that is of decisive importance in molding public opinion. That is why to judge the mental standards of a nation, one must know her press. In France all bourgeois papers and magazines are a tool in the hand of several financial magnates and big industrialists, who utilize the press not for educational aims, but for deceit, and, to call a spade a spade, for duping public opinion. This duping, in a way, is the best guarantee

of the preservation of their abominable privileges. The big newspapers (*Paris-Soir* is the best example) aim only to entertain by sensational stories. They devote most of their space to society scandals, crimes, or more or less lewd adventures of some cinema or theatrical star. Important political events are also presented as mere entertainment. The newspapers skilfully reduce the reader to the position of an obedient clapper. From time to time he is given the signal to applaud to this or that minister, or to the statesman who is the favorite at the moment. In addition, newspapers feed their reader with sentimental or romantic stories about "the good old times."

These newspapers also publish "timely" stories which most frequently consist merely of describing a man who, thanks to his ability or a streak of luck, acquired a fortune —this ultimate aim and supreme achievement in capitalist society. The hope is kindled in the little man's heart that some day he, too, might get rich, or who knows, pick a winning ticket in the national lottery. Then he is told: "Suppose you become rich tomorrow, would you like the Communists to take everything away from you." That is the reason why tens of thousands of Frenchmen bore with patience all the social injustices and misrule, in the vain hope of climbing up to the privileged caste.

That the big French newspapers were stagnating in a moral swamp was clearly brought out by recent events, when on the eve of the downfall of Paris the newspapers, already morally repulsive, became also stupid and ridiculous. The catholic press, for example, proclaimed that St. Geneviève, like in days of old, will listen to the prayers of the Parisians and will save the city by miracle. One newspaper of professed radical views wrote an editorial in honor of Eifel tower, this "immovable monument of the world's capital."

The big French newspapers supported ignorance, stifling reason with class prejudices and religious superstitions, fed the imagination of the reader with mediocre dreams, cultivated rabid egoism, and kindled petty ambitions.

The Pétain government is searching for the persons responsible for the catastrophe? Let it look among its friends, the financial magnates and captains of industry. They are the ones who are guilty of defeat. They had had no other thought but of consolidating their power, of subjugating the masses, of endlessly extending their class privileges, to the detriment of the supreme interests of the people. They tried to ravage the mind and soul of the people with the aid of their press, to root out the feelings of human solidarity without which the existence of any society is inconceivable. They wanted to kill in the Frenchman the social being, leaving an individual severed from the world around him, and, consequently, one who can easier be subjected to the influence of the bourgeoisie. Only the Communists and a small number of Socialists and Radicals fought against the disintegration of French society.

It was not so much the arms of the enemy as her own vices that brought defeat to France. Only class-conscious French workers and peasants can regenerate France. This regeneration can be accomplished only by Socialism, which will return to the Frenchmen their social consciousness, a sense of the community of human interests, and will insure them not only material well-being, but also spiritual emancipation.

PIERRE NICOLE

August, 1940.

What Price Victory?

A recent issue of *Nouvelle Revue Française*, which appeared shortly before the fall of Paris, carried an article by Georges Bernanos entitled "Nous retournons dans la guerre" (We Return to War).

Georges Bernanos is one of those French intellectuals who accepted post-Versailles France, although rather reluctantly. For many years he held aloof from important political events. The war in Spain roused Bernanos. Under its influence he wrote his book *Great Cemeteries in the Moonlight*.[1] Disgusted with his former friends, the French "friends of law and order" who betrayed Spain, Bernanos left France and Europe soon after the Spanish events. It was a tragic gesture by a man who severed all his old ties but could not find his place in the ranks of the true champions of the French people. The second imperialist war found Bernanos in Brazil. Here he wrote the article which reads today both like a confession and like an indictment of those responsible for the Versailles Peace, the peace that was pregnant with new wars.

The Greeks depicted victory as a beautiful woman. Bernanos tears the wreath of glory from the Versailles Victory and shows that wings are not becoming to her.

"I have never felt the slightest pride in what we call Victory. It does one scant honor to appear in public arm in arm with a beautiful woman who bears your name but refuses to sleep with you. Victory refused to love us and we repaid her with our contempt. At the time of the Marne, when our rank was still low, we might have made her happy . . . But in 1918, I swear, she looked older than we did. What a behind, what a belly, what breasts!"

Versailles Victory proved to be corrupt. She lavished her favors upon "Important Citizens" only, those who sent the French people to the slaughter in 1914.

"Sometimes, when we met the Important Citizens on the street . . . we felt like asking them 'Well, and how is Victory? Are you sure of her? Aren't you deceiving us?' But they would have laughed in our faces . . . The old *roués* knew very well that she kept herself for them and was at their disposal every Tuesday and Friday from five to seven."

That was victory. Peace was pretty much the same.

Recalling the armistice signed in 1918 in the Compiègne woods near Rethondes, Bernanos writes:

"When one reflects on the curious fate of the chicken which, like a refugee's child, first saw the light of day in a railway car at Rethonde, and when one thinks of what happened to this chicken, hatched with a rope around its neck and with bound feet under the eagle eye of Marshal Foch, it is clear that if the new Germany has not yet realized her ambition to cover the whole world with her bombs, she has at least succeeded in covering us with ridicule—us, her old acquaintances in the army of occupation. . . .

"The war of attrition exhausted the peace in advance. It was a lean Peace that emerged from the exhausting war . . .

"The disgrace of the last peace, from which it is now choking . . . will poison the peace which is to come . . .

"The Peace signed in 1918 was full of fear, the Versailles victors' fear of retribution.

"Peace in a cold perspiration from fear . . . It has been trembling with fright all these twenty years, fear oozed out of its every

[1] Several chapters of the book were printed in *International Literature* № 12, 1938.

paragraph. Indeed, it is surprising the sealing wax did not melt. . . . My country recovered after the war like a feeble asthma patient after his first attack . . . She did not ask herself how she was going to live, but rather how she was to save herself from death, how to drag out a little while longer, with what sacrifices, what hardships, what regime she must pay for her infirm victory."

For more than 20 years the French people wrestled with a regime that doomed them to hardship and privation in the interests of the "Important Citizens". . . .

Then came the second imperialist war.

"The war not only destroyed our victory, it wiped us out along with it . . . Our victory had not been a victory nor had we ever been victors,"

writes Bernanos, alluding to the old generation who endeavored to think of Versailles as the victory of France and not as the victory of the 200 families alone.

Bernanos knows his French ruling class, he knows that during the decades following Versailles preparations were afoot to establish in France an open dictatorship of the landowners, bankers and militarists. That is why, even before he knew how events would develop, or who were going to be the rulers, who would be determining the fate of the French people, Bernanos warned the youth of France:

"We do not advise the French youth to take our victory and its representatives as a criterion for the great duties awaiting them after the last volley is fired."

The youth must remember that the "Important Citizens" are staking their hopes on the short memory of the people, trusting that they will forget the crimes of their oppressors.

In 1918,

"20 days after demobilization we stood in line under the inspector's window wearing our scarves again."

This transformation of soldiers into meek and humble citizens must not be repeated . . .

In exile, far from his native land, Bernanos urges his countrymen never to lose faith in their country, in the power of the people. He expresses his contempt for those who allow themselves too easily to be torn away from their native soil, only to lapse into aimless "nostalgia."

"I have not lost my country. . . . I could not lose her unless she ceased to be necessary to me, unless I had no longer any need to feel myself a Frenchman . . . The so-called nostalgia felt by people who have been torn up by their roots inspires me with disgust rather than with pity. They bewail lost habits, they whimper over the bleeding stumps of these habits, the thought of France hurts them like the finger of an amputated hand hurts the cripple. Nothing can tear me up by my roots. I could not live uprooted for five minutes, I can only be uprooted from life itself. So long as I am alive my country will be as precious to me as my childhood, and when the sap ceases to rise the leaves will all fall at one blow . . . Why should I wax melancholy about the muddy water in the ditches, or about the fence shaking in the storm if I myself am the fence and the muddy water."

Georges Bernanos believes that the day will come when he will see his country happy again.

"Much water will flow by before I shall be drinking red wine with you again. But some day, my friends, we will be drinking together. Only I am unable to say when."

Bernanos speaks of his wrath and his hopes in a thunderous "apocalyptical" tone which, of course, is not always in keeping with the scope of his thinking, or with the significance his ideas have for an understanding of life. But Bernanos' power lies in his deep sincerity, his indignation at what he calls the "moratorium on conscience."

His article is symptomatic. His revaluation of the values of post-Versailles France is essentially the revaluation of the mainstays upon which capitalism endeavored to entrench itself with the help of the Versailles system. Bernanos was one of those who once believed in the stability of these mainstays. It makes his confession all the more significant.

"A Triumphant Tour"

Up to the very last days before the defeat of the French army the French press deceived the people in the most outrageous and shameless fashion. Articles about the aims of the war, about the situation at the front, the sentiment of the army, and the preparedness of the rear were permeated through and through with lies. Jacques Boulanger, a reactionary journalist and one of the apologists for French imperialism, decided to collect his "letters from the front," which were printed in the *Temps* between October 1939 and January 1940, and publish them in book form. This book, entitled *Somewhere at the Front . . . Glimpses of Modern Warfare*, was an embodiment of the lies, complacency, bragging, frivolity and official optimism which blossomed out on the pages of the French bourgeois newspapers.

The *leitmotif* of Boulanger's dispatches from the front was that everything was going splendidly and would continue to do so. He assures his readers that there can be no doubt of victory with such "excellent army leaders," and, what is most important, with "the absolutely impregnable frontiers," including the frontier stretching from the North Sea to Luxemburg. Any attack on any frontier of France, declared Boulanger, would be "sheer suicide."

Asked by one of his readers whether "we are protected beyond the Maginot Line," Boulanger replied:

"I wished to be convinced of this myself and toured the entire frontier between France and Luxemburg, and between France and Belgium. Thanks to the courtesy of army headquarters, I visited the most important points along this line of defense. Hence I could reply to my correspondent without hesitation: 'The Maginot Line continues.' It does not always continue in the same form as in Alsace and Lorraine: here the system is somewhat different, being closer to that which the Germans chose for their Siegfried Line. However, wherever it was thought necessary it has been strengthened on the model of the Maginot Line."

Whereupon Boulanger manifests remarkable dexterity: he describes the truly powerful fortifications of the Maginot Line, speaking vaguely about the "Maginot Line and its continuation," thereby giving the reader the impression that there are similar impregnable fortifications on the northern frontier of France as well. Little did Boulanger and his masters imagine that within a mere two or three months events would reveal this monstrous fraud to which the French people fell victim.

This lackey of Daladier who, as he writes himself, made a "triumphant tour of the Maginot Line" was received with open arms in the staffs and headquarters of the army by the reactionary military clique which brought the war, started with such a flourish and fanfare, to such an ignominious finish. Boulanger was wined and dined excellently, and he sings the praises of the cuisine of one of the headquarters which was served by the ex-chef of one of the best Parisian restaurants.

"What a pity I was not warned of your arrival. I should have ordered such a roast suckling as you have never tasted in your life!"

was the welcome accorded him by the commander of one of the Maginot forts. Shades of Jules Romaine's General Durour.

Boulanger obsequiously repeats everything his drinking companions from headquarters told him.

"From the very first the spirit of the army was splendid. And so it has remained. Everything is going fine."

Although it is common knowledge that the ruling circles of France were profoundly disturbed by the "spirit of the army," so disturbed in fact that, instead of utilizing the winter lull at the front to strengthen its borders and build up the army, they concentrated their attention on diverting the soldiers from "dangerous thoughts." Even in the days when the northern French army had retreated after its defeat, and the terrible disaster was already apparent, the press kept up the farce.

"Our Moors must be kept busy all the time," one commander told Boulanger, "otherwise they are apt to do something rash." And having completed his pleasant *partie de plaisir* over the front, Boulanger, sitting at home in Paris on Christmas Eve, addresses his readers—chiefly the female contingent—urging them to become the patronesses of "our poor little soldier boys."

He quotes from the letter sent by one soldier to the wife of his boss, who is a banker or a "big man" in some other business:

"Madam, permit me to draw your attention to my request. I have worked for your husband for three years. Now I am at the front. But I am all alone in the world and no one ever writes to me. I should be much obliged if you would be so kind as to write to me, if only once, so that the non-com. could bring me a letter!"

Such humility, such meekness, Boulanger hints, surely deserves a Christmas package from the lady patronesses of the 200 families. In order to show the reliability of the soldier, Boulanger, a past master at the art of falsification, uses the fawning, cringing letter of a subordinate seeking to curry favor with his masters.

No wonder Boulanger's dispatches evoked such a flood of indignant letters from his readers. Boulanger cites some of the letters—incidentally, only those written by officers—in order to use them for a slanderous "polemic" to direct the attention of the "higher-ups" to the "internal enemy."

"Monsieur, I read your disgusting articles in the *Temps*. You mock at the grief of our mothers and the sufferings of our children. You lie foully when you say that they want to fight. Everybody is demanding one thing—peace, immediate peace.

"Please accept assurances of my deepest contempt."

There were many such letters, Boulanger admits. But he has one stock explanation for any sign of dissatisfaction in the country—"enemy propaganda." On this basis he waves aside the comments of his indignant correspondents. A letter from a heavy-artillery lieutenant ends with the following words:

"We want to know how long you will go on depicting us in the light of jolly participants in some country ramble which is extremely pleasant and amusing in spite of the bad weather. What's more, everything is made to seem as though our celebrated ingenuity and initiative helps us to endure calmly the shortage of vital necessities."

No less irritation was caused by this playful hackwriter's call for charity toward "our poor little soldier boys."

"We don't want to be pitied! We don't like it!" an infantry lieutenant wrote to Boulanger. With a sour smile Boulanger remarks that he could not possibly take offense at such a correspondent—such nervousness was perfectly justifiable at the front!

The subsequent events that followed in May-June 1940 laid bare—with a speed that was totally unexpected for Boulanger and those he served—the criminal lies that the Boulangers of all shades and descriptions were feeding to the French public and for which it paid such a heavy price.

This catastrophe, which has no equal in modern history, will no doubt cause the scales to drop from the eyes of the French people. And the day is nigh when the French people will call to account those who for the sake of their narrow class interests did not hesitate to send France to her ruin and are now taking advantage of the situation to bind the French proletariat hand and foot. The dark forces of French reaction are triumphing today; but their triumph, their victory over the French people will be short lived.

NEWS AND VIEWS

U.S.S.R.

IN LIBERATED BESSARABIA AND NORTHERN BUKOVINA

The Red Army brought peace and land, freedom and work to the peoples of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. And fast on the heels of the Red Army units came the bearers of Soviet culture who brought books and plays in Moldavian and Ukrainian, Russian and Jewish to a population that was forbidden by the Rumanian oppressors to use or study their native language.

"We awaited this joyous day for many years," Olga Kobylyanskaya, 76-year-old Ukrainian authoress living in Chernovitsi, told Soviet journalists. "Under Rumanian rule, Ukrainian culture was persecuted. The Ukrainian literary language was locked behind many doors . . . We knew and remembered Shevchenko, Franko, Kotsyubinsky, but the works of Soviet authors were unknown to us, and their reading was forbidden."

The Pushkin monument in Kishenev

Indeed, the Rumanian authorities had done their utmost to hamper the spread of education, and to stamp out the manifestations of real science and art during the 22 years of their rule.

The notorious Order No. 25, which was in force in Bessarabia, read in part as follows:

". . . To forbid the use of the Russian and the Jewish languages in all state and commercial institutions and also on the streets.

". . . Those guilty of violating this order are to be handed over to the police for trial by court as criminals who offended against the nation.

"Every Rumanian who hears Russian or Jewish spoken must report it to the police . . . "

The overwhelming majority of the Bessarabian people are illiterate. About 85 out of every hundred persons are unable to read or write. This is a direct result not only of the poverty of the population, but primarily of the policy of forcible Rumanization, pursued by the erstwhile rulers.

Here is just one example: the town of Beltsy had about 20 primary schools, attended by 4,000 children. According to conservative estimates, about 5,000 children did not receive any schooling. The existing schools were not sufficient to accommodate them. The primary schools had no buildings of their own, and were housed in private apartments, in which two or three rooms were rented for the purpose. Thirty to forty pupils were crowded into each room, and studies were conducted in two shifts. A similar state of affairs prevailed in all other cities and villages of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.

In a report by an *Izvestia* correspondent we find the following story, which illustrates the situation in Bessarabia prior to its liberation by the Red Army.

"We made the acquaintance of a local physician, one K. He has been studying the problem of old age for many years. Several years ago he formed an 'International Institute for Combating Senility' in his three-room apartment, in Kishinev, and began to publish a magazine, *Problems of Old Age*, in the Russian, German, French, English and Italian languages. He enrolled a number

A Ukrainian newspaper, "Soviet Bukovina," was recently launched in the liberated city of Chernovitsi

of scientists from different countries as contributors.

"'The Rumanian authorities, the censorship, in an official letter, forbade me to issue the magazine in the Russian language,' the doctor related. 'I have preserved this shameful document. They also forbade me to enter the names of Russian scientists on the list of honorary contributors.

"'In spite of the risk incurred I included Professor Nemilov. I wanted to establish contact with Professor Milman too, but there were two obstacles; firstly, he was a Soviet scientist, and, secondly, he was a Jew.

"'The most disgraceful act characterizing the persecution of the Russian language and Russian culture in Bessarabia was the savage and scandalous outrage perpetrated on Pushkin's monument in Kishinev,' the doctor continued.

"'In March 1937, when the Soviet people marked the centenary of the poet's death, my father, an old professor, a psychiatrist, delivered a lecture on Pushkin and his work at the Kishinev Conservatory. This was the only Pushkin lecture the authorities permitted. The hall of the Conservatory was packed by intellectuals and workers. The lecture assumed the nature of a demonstration in honor of Soviet culture. My father, being advanced in years, and suffering from a heart ailment, was so overcome by the excitement of the evening that he took sick, and due to his illness he was saved from persecution. But the reprisals soon assumed a different form.

"'Three or four days later, Russian newspapers in Kishinev were closed, though in content they differed in no way from the Rumanian newspapers. A vicious campaign against the Russian language was instituted on orders of General Chuperko.

"'The General demanded of the municipal Council that the Russian inscription and Russian verses on the Pushkin monument be erased. The Municipal Council appointed a commission and soon the decision was announced: "To erase."

"'One fine morning gendarmes surrounded the monument and chiseled off the Russian words and the verses of the immortal poet. . . . The population seethed with indignation.'"

The liberation of Bessarabia gave the intelligentsia a new lease on life. New sentiments, new problems were voiced at the numerous meetings of teachers, actors and artists held throughout Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.

"The time has come at last," one primary schoolteacher declared at a meeting, "when we no longer have to be hypocrites

and deceive the children in our charge. Every day we were compelled to lie to the children. I can recall the row that was raised when in the presence of an inspector, at one of my lessons, in answering the question as to what people who do nothing and receive money are called, a boy answered: 'Kings.' I was threatened with dismissal, and only bribery (graft was the only language Rumanian officials understood) saved me from unemployment."

Soviet newspapers, magazines and books have appeared for sale in the liberated cities. Booksellers put on display a large number of Russian books: formerly the Rumanian authorities meted out severe punishment for the sale of these books.

Unemployment is steadily decreasing. The first of the professionals to receive work were physicians, many of whom had held occasional jobs as waiters, or sold matches in the streets. All unemployed engineers and technicians have been registered.

Several months will be required to provide work for all these people; many of them had suffered so much that they had sunk into a state of despair.

For six years the Russian actor Sergei Bykov had worked as a waiter in a saloon. "The Rumanians," he told an *Izvestia* correspondent, "shut down the Russian theater. Where was one to go? Just think of it, 22 years of my life wasted. At one time people prophesied a brilliant career for me as an actor. But, what could I do? I was born and lived in Bessarabia. Do you think I was the only one? There is the actress Snovskaya. To keep from starving, she was forced to go to work as a cook, keeping it a secret, of course, from her masters, that she was an actress. . . ."

Ukrainian musicians gave a concert for commanders of the Red Army. Professor Flohr, a well-known violinist, appeared at the concert. At one time he was an instructor at the Chernovitsi Conservatory, but he was dismissed three years ago because he was a Jew.

A musical society functioned in Chernovitsi for several years. It was founded by a group of music lovers and musicians. Notwithstanding the fact that an agent of the police was present at every rehearsal, the society's orchestra at times succeeded in rendering Russian, and even Soviet, music.

In 1938 a suite for violin and orchestra, the work of the Soviet composer Veprik, was performed at a public concert. The next morning the musicians were summoned to the offices of the *siguranza*, the Rumanian secret police.

"Where did you get the music?"

"Why did you pick on this particular piece?"

"How do you explain your interest in Soviet music?"

Only greasing the palm saved the musicians from the third-degree questioning of the gendarmes who set themselves up as authorities on music.

With the coming of the Red Army to Northern Bukovina everything that was stifled, oppressed and hidden under-

Hutzul Folk art on display at the Writers' Club in Kiev

ground, emerged into the light of day, and is rapidly blossoming forth.

In Chernovitsi, Storozhintse, Gerts and other cities of Bukovina and Bessarabia the city Soviets have begun to set up Ukrainian schools and theaters. Villages are also preparing to open schools.

In Chernovitsi a Ukrainian dramatic and musical theater is to be organized; it will be housed in the building of the former Royal Theater. A Jewish theater, a philharmonic society and musical school are also contemplated. A large group of unemployed actors, regisseurs, artists and musicians have been enlisted to take part in this work. The population rejoices at the revival of their national culture, news of which is fast traveling throughout the liberated regions.

DEVELOPMENT OF BYELORUSSIAN ART

One of the central events of the theatrical season in Moscow was the Byelorussian Art Festival, which vividly demonstrated the rapid development of the Socialist culture of the Byelorussian Republic.

Art festivals of the different nationalities inhabiting the U.S.S.R. have become a traditional feature and they play a big part in the fostering of Soviet culture.

The festivals of Azerbaijan, Kirghiz and Armenian art held recently were a display of the wealth and brilliance of color typical of the art of these peoples. The art of Byelorussia is less spectacular, but it reflects the charming Byelorussian landscape and the fine gifts of the people which has now been reunited.

The history of Byelorussian culture reflects the history of this people, which bore the yoke of oppression and brutal despotism of conquerors and colonizers.

For many centuries the Polish gentry were stifling the culture of the Byelorussians, attempting to destroy their language and custom, to root out their sense of national dignity. Russian tsarism was no less ingenious in oppressing the Byelorussian people, depriving it of all rights and dooming it to poverty, ignorance and extinction.

The courageous Byelorussian people fought against their enslavers not only with axes and pitchforks. They marched into battle with songs resounding with vigor and determination, with hope and faith in the justice of their cause. The people composed songs and tales about their courageous sons who fought against

The Poles Flee From Minsk *By M. Kaplan, a Byelorussian artist*

their enslavers. All the Byelorussian tales, songs and legends are imbued with ideas of liberation, the indomitable will of the people and their hatred for the oppressors.

The Byelorussian art festival was a review of the achievements of the young forces of musicians and actors, painters and sculptors of the Republic, all of whom have developed in Soviet times. In their cultural progress the Byelorussian people followed the best models of Russian culture, old and new. The brilliant music of Glinka, Mussorgsky and Chaikovsky was a fine school for the Byelorussian composers, who also caught the intimate spirit of the Byelorussian folk song. The classical school of Russian drama has given the Byelorussian playwrights and actors the sense of truth in art and great penetration into life.

Byelorussian art has blossomed forth exuberantly in recent years. A fine Opera was built up and the Byelorussian drama made great strides. A number of symphonies, several operas, the first ballet and many pieces of chamber and vocal music—such is the record of Byelorussian music in the last few years. The theater for young spectators, the Jewish theater and a number of Russian theaters have also shown big progress.

The first State Art Gallery in Byelorussia was opened in 1939. It represents a rich collection of art treasures and has become the center for the artistic education of the people in the republic.

An entire chain of institutions which train artistic forces has been established in Byelorussia, such as the Byelorussian State Conservatory, theatrical and music schools and a choreographic school. The theaters are also in the nature of laboratories where gifted actors are being developed.

A number of works of great artistic merit were written in recent years by Byelorussian authors and poets.

The finest representatives of the older generation of Byelorussian writers, Yanka Kupala and Yakub Kolas, who bear the honorary title of People's Poets of the Republic, have come forth as the bards of the reunited Byelorussian people.

Summarizing the results of the art festival, A. Solodovnikov, assistant chairman of the Committee on Arts, wrote in *Pravda*:

"The Byelorussian Opera and Ballet Theater presented four productions: three operas—*Mikhas Podgorny, The Flower of Happiness* and *In the Forests of Polesie*—and the ballet *Nightingale*. After seeing these presentations we have a full right to say: a Byelorussian opera and a national Byelorussian ballet have been created. The first Byelorussian State Drama Theater enjoyed great success with the Moscow art world and general public."

Scene from "Nightingale"

Solodovnikov points out that the theater has twenty years of experience, and its company includes many distinguished actors. A high level of art, a well-knit ensemble, a single style of presentation, profound psychological portrayal and acting that is convincing and true to life—such are the main merits of the theater.

Solodovnikov also notes the high rating given the works of Byelorussian artists and painters at the exhibition of Byelorussian pictorial art. He mentioned numerous young artists and sculptors (Pashkevich, Zaitsev, Dokalskaya, Tikhonovich, Davidovich, and others) who hold out great promise for the development of Byelorussian painting and sculpture. The works of the Byelorussian artists show that they are at one with their people, reflecting their joys and aspirations.

"The concluding concert demonstrated all the wealth and color of Byelorussian music and dance," Solodovnikov added. "The folk songs adapted by the Byelorussian composers Lyuban, Shcheglov,

Turenkov and others, as well as the symphonic works by Churkin, Samokhin and Ivanov were noted for their melodiousness, popular appeal and deep emotionality."

Alongside the professional ensembles, great success was enjoyed by groups of amateur artists. "This fact," Solodovnikov says, "speaks volumes for the high cultural development of the Byelorussian people."

ACTORS, WRITERS STUDY GORKY'S WORKS

Maxim Gorky's lesser known plays such as *Cranks*, *A Counterfeit Coin* and *Old Man* were discussed at a special conference of the All-Russian Theatrical Society.

Staged in 1910, *Cranks* had but a short run, since it was not understood either by the theatér or the public. Mestakov, the main character of the play, is the personification of the thirst for life, of strength and love for one's country. Gorky counterposed these traits to the pessimism and decadence of the other characters.

A Counterfeit Coin was written by Gorky in 1913. In 1927 Gorky reworked it, but it has not been staged to this day. This play has much in common with *The Lower Depths*.

Old Man was written by Gorky in 1915. Gorky at that time thought of writing a novel which would describe a Russian Jean Valjan. The play is based on the same idea, Gorky wanted to oppose the figure of the old man, courageous and monolithic, to the heroes of Dostoyevsky who always seek salvation in pity and compassion.

Open scientific sessions during which reports on the latest studies of Gorky's literary heritage are delivered, have become a regular annual feature in Moscow. These sessions are sponsored by the Gorky Institute of World Literature. This season the session was held at the Writers' Club and attracted a large audience of authors and literary scholars. The program included reports on the early works of the writer, his unfinished plays, verse, etc.

Historic and heroic themes in the works of Gorky were discussed by A. Balukhaty.

Of considerable interest was A. Volkov's report on the help and guidance Gorky gave proletarian writers in the years 1907—1914. "Gorky and the Imperialist War" was the subject of a report made by M. Yunovich.

OBSERVE CENTENARY OF GEORGIAN POET

The centenary of the birth of Akaki Tsereteli, great Georgian poet, was observed by literary circles throughout the Soviet Union.

Delegations of writers from Moscow and the various Union republics arrived at Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, for the commemorative session which was held at the State Opera and Ballet Theater. Present at the session were also representatives of scientific and art circles.

A plenary session of the Union of Soviet writers of Georgia together with writers from Moscow and other cities was held in Tbilisi. A report on Tsereteli and his world outlook was delivered by Shalva Dadiani. He pointed out that the poet held progressive views and was close to the people. Tsereteli succeeded in portraying life in Georgia in all its complexity; he brought a new understanding of the tasks of art, championing realism and popular art.

The love of the Georgian poet for the Armenian people was described by Professor Meliksed-bek, who pointed out that this affection was manifested in the lyric verses of Tsereteli. The Abkhazian writer D. Gulia spoke of the great literary mastery of the Georgian poet.

An interesting appraisal of Tsereteli and of Georgian culture in general was given by V. Kirpotin, prominent Soviet critic.

"Little Georgia has manifested such creative energy that one cannot conceive a history of the development of world culture without her. The poetry of Tsereteli is national, but it is not nationalistic poetry; it reflects the soul of the poet's own people, but it is also open to everything that is good and progressive in the works which other peoples contributed to world history. The work of the great Georgian poet adds much to the culture of Socialism and Communism which we are now building.

"Tsereteli was a lyrical as well as satirical poet, a singer of intimate emotions and a tribune, a master of comprehensive works and short poems. He wrote a great deal about the friendship of the Georgian and Russian peoples," Kirpotin pointed out further, mentioning the fact that the best Russian and Georgian writers have always expressed their mutual regard and the ties of friendship between the two peoples, and dwelling on the close contact that existed between Griboyedov, Pushkin and Lermontov with the Georgian intelligentsia and Tserete-

li's connections with Russian culture and the Russian emancipation movement.

A meeting was also held at the grave of the poet. Tsereteli is interned on Mount David, which may justly be called the Pantheon of Georgian writers. Next to Tsereteli's grave are those of Ilya Chavchavadze, Kipiani and Eristov. Here also is the grave of the Russian writer Alexander Griboyedov.

Next the participants of the plenary session visited the birth place of Tsereteli, the settlement of Skhvitori. The house where the poet lived and wrote his best works, a two-story brick building, is well preserved.

Of this house Tsereteli wrote in his *Story of My Life*: "A two-story brick house on a hill overlooking the Chikhuri River. It is a rather unproportional building: its height is like that of a small tower, its length that of a good-sized palace, its walls like those of a fortress. And yet it resembles none of these."

The room in which Tsereteli spent his last days is also well preserved. All the objects are in their place, just as they were at the poet's death. The books on the bookshelves show the wide range of the poet's interests, for alongside with Russian and European classics they include books on the history of Georgia, the Art Galleries of Europe, astronomy, political literature, etc.

HERMITAGE CELEBRATES 175th ANNIVERSARY

This summer the Leningrad Hermitage, the Soviet Union's finest museum and art gallery, marked the 175th anniversary of its foundation. The former private collection of the tsars now represents a vast treasure house with 1,600,000 objects on display, a million of which have been added in Soviet times.

Prior to the Great Socialist Revolution the Hermitage was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Imperial Court, which did its utmost to keep the people from visiting the museum. The last director under the tsars, Count D. I. Tolstoy, held the opinion that "the sources of esthetic pleasure should not be made available to the masses" and that it was "absolutely useless to explain to uneducated and accidental visitors of the museum the significance of the art works kept there."

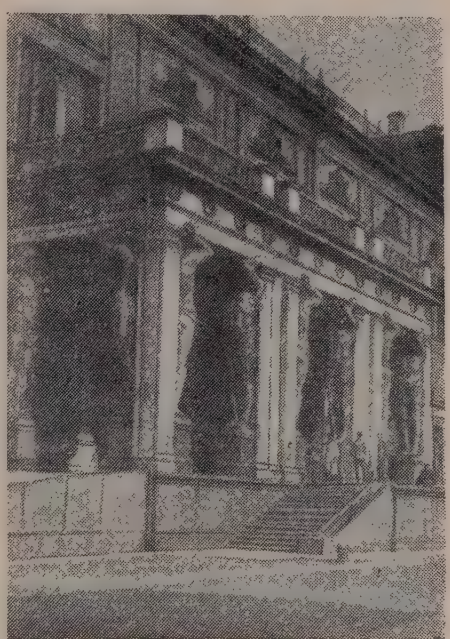
In our days the Hermitage is always crowded with excursions and individual visitors. The premises of the museum have been extended and are now five times as large as in the past. A visitor desiring to inspect the endless number of halls only once would have to walk about twenty-two kilometers.

The Hermitage is now divided into four main sections: primitive society, the history of culture and art in the ancient world, the history of art and culture in the East, and West-European art. The Hermitage has also sections on music, numismatico and medals, and a collection of West-European black-and-white drawings which includes about 500,000 drawings, etchings, wood-cuts and miniatures.

The Eastern section is one of the most comprehensive in the world. Occupying more than 80 halls, the various displays present a vast picture of the scope and the development of the culture of the Eastern peoples.

The Hermitage possesses a wealth of material on the culture and art of Mesopotamia and Egypt: tablets with cuneiform writings including some of the oldest known, papyruses, sarcophagus, statues of gods and various implements, ornaments and dishes. The collection of Egyptian fabrics of the IV-VII centuries is one of the finest in the world.

A special hall is dedicated to the ancient Caucasian state of Urarti; it con-



Entrance to the Hermitage

Portrait by Rubens recently discovered at the Hermitage

sists of objects excavated in Vale (Turkey) and on the territory of Soviet Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Caucasus, which is the seat of the most ancient culture in the Soviet Union, occupies a special place in the Eastern section. Many objects carved in stone or wood, ceramic and metal wares trace the history of the Caucasus during the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages.

Rich collections of silver and bronze articles, stone carvings, coins, and ceramics enable the visitors to gain a full picture of the culture of Iran. Byzantium, that "bridge between the West and the East" is also represented in the eastern section.

A huge hall affords a view of the culture and art of Chinese Turkestan. As many as 29 halls are dedicated to the Far East; represented here are China from ancient times to the XX century, and Mongolia.

The territory included in the Eastern section extends from the Pacific Ocean to Gibraltar and from the upper reaches of the Nile River to the steppes of Mongolia. In time it covers nearly 6,000 years, from the VI millenium before our era to the XX century.

The Hermitage, with its priceless collections of canvasses by Titian, Rembrandt, Velasquez and other great masters, and the collections of drawings, and the originals of ancient sculpture, served as a school for the great Russian painters and sculptors, and thus left an imprint upon the history of Russian art.

Among the exhibits specially displayed for the jubilee was a portrait of a young lady by Rubens, recently discovered at the Hermitage. The history of this discovery was related by Professor M. I. Shcherbacheva at the special scientific session of the Hermitage.

The picture was received in the Hermitage in 1799 from the collection of Lord Walpole. In 1868 an unsuccessful attempt to restore it was made. For many years the canvas lay in the store-room without attracting any attention. Recently the later additions to the canvas were carefully removed and the original painting was thus discovered. Professor Shcherbacheva expressed the view that it belongs to the brush of Rubens. An X-ray photograph and an analysis of the style fully confirmed this view. The portrait has the fresh and deep colors typical of Rubens. Fine details of the face and clothing are executed in the style characteristic of the great master.

ANDERSEN NEXÖ CORRESPONDS WITH URAL SCHOOLCHILDREN

Schoolchildren of the Urals who have undertaken to write a collective book on their region addressed a letter to Martin Andersen Nexö asking his advice. "We wish to write such a book that anyone who would read it would come to love our native Urals, as we love them," the children stated.

This book is one of a series conceived by Gorky (two books have already been written—*The Base of the Snub-Nosed* and *We From Igarka).*

The writer A. Klimov, who guides the literary venture of the children, recently received a letter from the famous Danish author.

"I deem it an unusually great honor to have pioneers and schoolchildren of the Urals seek my advice on the contemplated book. I have never been there and, consequently, am little acquainted with the region, but the idea is wonderful and worthy of the youth of a free nation."

At the same time Nexö sent a letter addressed to the children:

"Dear Friends, Pioneers and Schoolchildren," he wrote.

"I wish you success in your bold and splendid venture—to write a book about your native region. I do not know the Urals from personal experience, for I have never been there, but I have read enough about it to know that it is a big and wonderful region which

boldly set out on the path of development and directs all its efforts toward rebuilding the world on a broader, humane basis.

"I can very well understand your eagerness to describe your native region, where the very old and the very new in human culture meet. I am as happy for you as though I myself were about to undertake this work.

"Write a colorful book, filled not with flowers of rhetoric but with simple, straightforward facts. Let it not be a showpiece, but a book about the wonderful everyday life, which, for the first time in history, you in the Soviet Union have won for all.

"I thank you again for your kind greetings and hope to have the opportunity of paying you a visit soon, this summer perhaps.

"With heartiest greetings, I remain

"Your devoted friend.

"*Martin Andersen Nexö*

"Stenlesse, Denmark, June 1, 1940."

NEW HISTORICAL FILMS

The shooting of a new film, *Suvorov*, portraying the great Russian general of the eighteenth century, has been started at the Moscow Film Studios, under the direction of Pudovkin, Deller and Sanov. The action of the film takes place in 1795-1799. It is the story of the great Field Marshal whose leadership brought unfading glory to Russia, and whose troops never knew defeat. Suvorov, however, was hated by the mad tyrant tsar Paul I, who forced him to retire.

One of the central scenes in the film is the leave-taking of the old Field Marshal from his troops.

"With you I am great," Suvorov fervently tells his old veterans. "Without you I am small." Removing his decorations, he tosses them on the regimental drum. "I won them together with you, and with you I leave them. . . ."

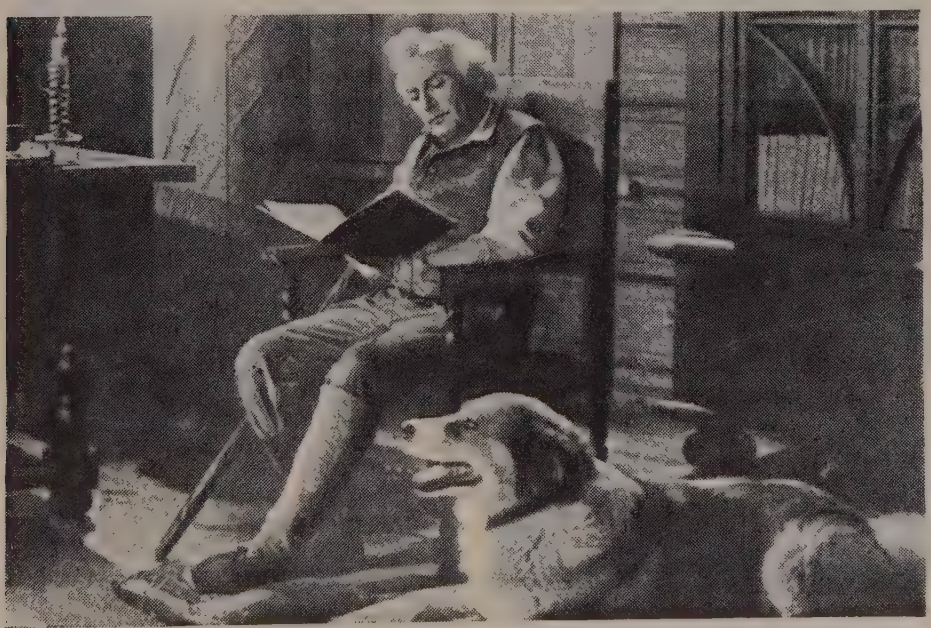
The next scenes portray the retirement of Suvorov in a village, where he worked on his famous book *The Science of Victory*.

In the hour of trial the country again called on its faithful soldier. In the final scenes of the film the seventy-year-old Suvorov is shown heading the Russian troops. The screen brings to life the campaign in the Alps and the heroic crossing of Devil's Bridge.

The actor Nikolai Cherkasov, known for his impersonation of Professor Polezhayev in *Baltic Deputy* plays the part of Suvorov.

Preparations are now in progress on the shooting of a grand historic film, *Bogdan Khmelnitsky*, dealing with the heroic struggle of the Ukrainian people for its independence.

Based on the scenario written by the Soviet playwright, A. Korneichuk, the



N. Cherkasov in the title role in the film "Suvorov"

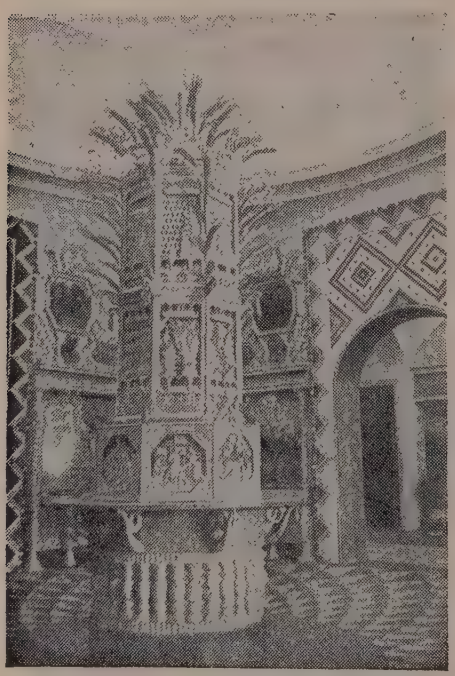
film is to be of tremendous scope. As many as 16,000 Cossack, Polish Hussar, and Russian musketeer costumes are being prepared. About 3,000 people are expected to take part in battle scenes near the Potocki Palace.

LERMONTOV'S WORKS IN THE OPERA

Several operas on themes of Lermontov's works are being written by Soviet composers in preparation for the forthcoming centenary of the great Russian poet's death. *Princess Mary* is the theme of two operas, one written by A. Melik-Pashayev, and the other by V. A. Degtyarev. The composer S. Aksyuk wrote an opera on the subject of *Vadim* and also a musical dramatic work to the text of the poem *A Song About Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich, His Young Bodyguard, and the Valiant Merchant Kalashnikov* (published in our magazine, No. 11, 1939).

Soviet composers are also attracted by the early Lermontov drama, *Spaniards,* which has not been produced as an opera as yet.

Music and literary circles of Moscow heard excerpts from the opera *Princess Mary*, written by Degtyarev to a libretto by G. Christie. This opera is the first venture of the composer in this genre. Many parts of the music are distinguished for their freshness and originality. The author of the libretto succeeded in building up a harmonious dramatic plot, carefully retaining at the same time the main outlines of the novel and Lermontov's text. The Stanislavsky Opera Studio has included this opera in its repertory.



The Bashkir Pavilion at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition

EXHIBIT WORKS OF LATE WOOD CARVER

A posthumous exhibition of the works of the renowned wood carver V. Vornoskov was arranged by the Museum of the Artistic Wares' Institute. Coming from the village of Kudrino in the Moscow Region, which is known for its woodcarved articles, Vasili Vornoskov was one of the best craftsmen. His work was distinguished by intricacy of design and finesse.

His caskets in the shape of woodpeckers found a ready market in England.

Visitors of the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition admired Vornoskov's decorations which adorn the stands in the Bashkir Pavilion. The splendid wood carving on themes of the life of plenty that the Revolution brought the Bashkir people was executed by Vornoskov and his sons.

The master craftsman died at the age of 64.

MOSCOW PAST AND PRESENT

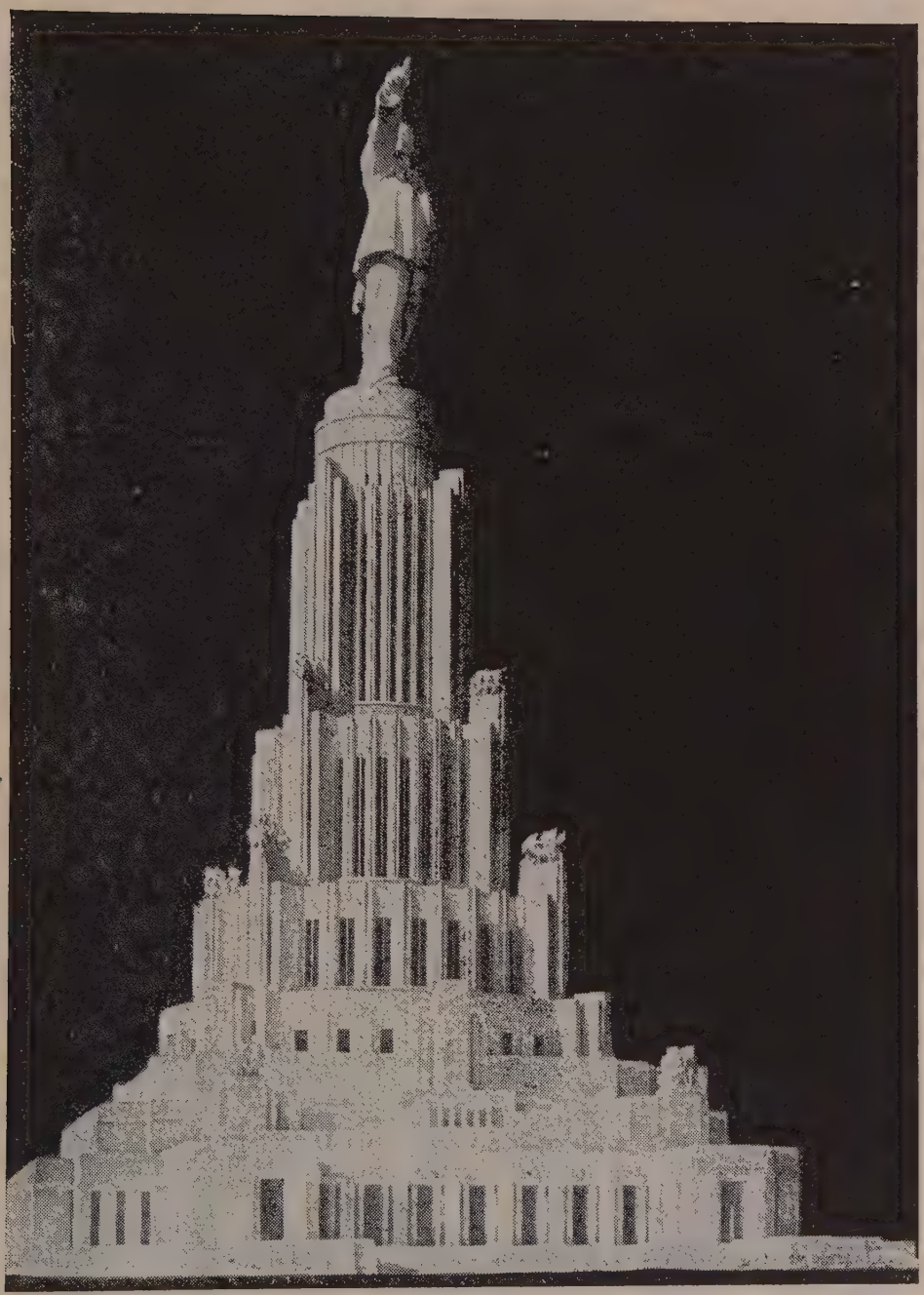
The past and present of Moscow, which is now rounding out its eighth century (Moscow was founded in 1147), is vividly presented at the new Museum devoted to the history of Moscow and its reconstruction.

Old chronicles, paintings and rare photographs tell the history of the city, from its humble beginnings to the present state as capital of the great Socialist state.

The exhibits show the part Moscow played in the struggle of the Russian people for their independence, and Moscow as the center of revolutionary struggle. The exhibits are so arranged as to bring out in bold relief the contrast between the old Moscow of merchants and landlords and the present capital of the Soviet Union.

BRIEFS

The first Volume of the Work of the Drifting North Pole Station has been issued by the Northern Sea Route Administration Publishing House. It represents an account of the four members of the famed expedition—I. Papanin, E. Krenkel, P. Shirshov and E. Fyodorov.



Model of the Palace of Soviets. Project by B. Iofan, collaborators V. Shchuko and V. Gelfreich

"Armenia in the Works of Russian and West European Artists" is the theme of an exhibition arranged at the Museum of Pictorial Arts in Yerevan, capital of Armenia.

Construction of a new children's theater has been completed in Rostov. For its architecture and equipment it is one of the finest children's theater buildings in the country.

CHINA

SOCIETY OF MARXIST PHILOSOPHERS FORMED

The Scientific Society of China, an organization uniting Marxist philosophers, has been set up in Chunking. Elected to the Presidium of the society are the well-known lawyer Cheng Tsiung-hu, member of the National Political Council; Pang Tchzi-niang, literary critic and editor of the newspaper Sinhuajipao; the literary scholar and Marxist Hu Shen and others.

The Society publishes a quarterly theoretical magazine, *Theory and Practice*, dealing with problems of dialectical materialism, state and law, political economy, the Socialist economy of the U.S.S.R., natural sciences, history and literature.

In addition to issuing the quarterly, the Society has also launched the publication of a Marxist News Series Library. Among the first books in the series are Marx's *The Critique of Political Economy, Poverty of Philosophy*, a new translation of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, and other Marxist-Leninist classical works.

JUBILEE OF CHINESE WRITERS

Chinese literary circles joined in paying tribute to Shen Duan-siang, known in literature by the pen name of Sa Yan, on the occasion of his fortieth anniversary. Sa Yan is renowned as writer, playwright and translator of Maxim Gorky's works.

Sa Yan started his literary career over twenty years ago. In 1919 he translated Gorky's *Mother*. The translation was published in several editions, and is considered to this day the best Chinese rendition of this work.

Shen Duan-siang published several volumes of short stories dealing with the life of workers, the best known of which are the stories *Woman Slave*, and the dramas *Women's Barracks, Under a Shanghai Roof* and others. He penned a dozen cinema scenarios, and also wrote a biography of Gorky, the most comprehensive of those available in the Chinese language.

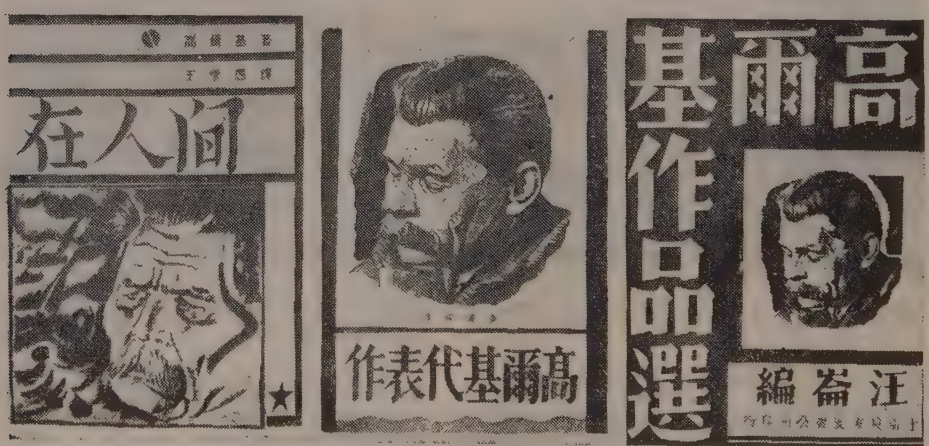
The writer was an active member of the League of Left Writers of China led by Lu Hsun. Since the very first days of the war of the Chinese people against Japanese imperialism, Shen Duan-siang has been editing the newspaper *Tsuvan Jipao*, which is published in Kuling.

Shen Duan-siang was one of the founders of the Association of Chinese Writers, and, at the first conference of the Association in Hankow, was elected a member of the board. During the war he published several short stories collected in one volume under the title *Stories Written With Blood*, and his renowned drama *In One Year*, which portrays the life of a Chinese family during the war.

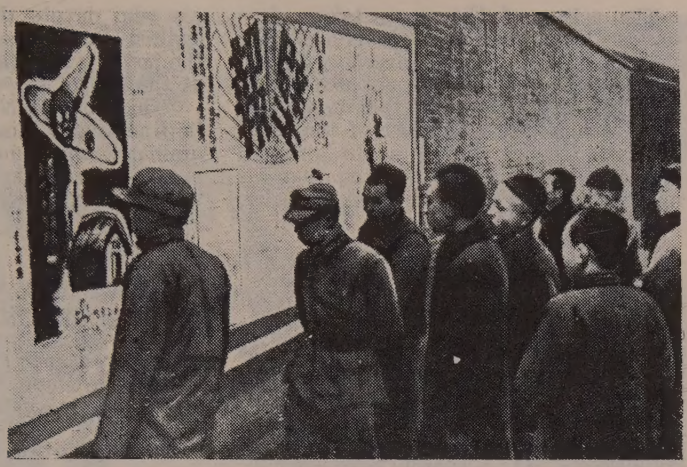
EXHIBITION OF CHINESE PRESS

An exhibition of the Chinese press was opened recently in Chunking. Represented at the display are the principal newspapers of the country, as well as those issued at the front, and hand-written wall newspapers. Many of them bear traces of enemy bullets.

A central place at the exhibition is taken up by a set of the provincial edition



Cover designs for Chinese editions of Gorky's works



A wall-newspaper on the streets of Chungking

of *Sinhuajipao*, organ of the Communist Party of China, which is published illegally behind the enemy lines in the southern part of Shansi. It is issued every other day. It is but about half the size of the *London Times*, but printed in small type it contains as many as 22,500 Chinese characters in a single issue.

Soldiers at the front lines, partisans, workers and peasants are the newspaper's contributors. The paper is published in 20,000 copies. Since all political newspapers in China are read to audiences, it actually reaches at least 20 times as many readers.

The illegal edition of the newspaper has its own correspondents at all war fronts, as well as in all the towns in the provinces.

GERMANY

BRIEF NOTES

A book entitled *Pyotr Chaikovsky* by Nikolaus van der Pals has been issued in an academic edition by the Atheneum Publishers in Potsdam. According to the reviewer of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the author displays great erudition in analyzing the composer's works.

The Berlin State Opera has included Chaikovsky's Opera *The Enchantress* in its repertory for the 1940-41 season, according to the *Neue Wiener Tagblatt*.

A new film, *The Station Master*, based on Pushkin's story of the same title, is enjoying great success in Germany.

"FRANKFURTER ZEITUNG" ON ALL-UNION AGRICULTURAL EXHIBITION

"A Mass University" is the title of an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition. It describes the fair, calling attention to the modern machinery on display, such as huge 15-bottom plows, large drills which cover 21 meters, etc.

The newspaper points out that visitors come to the exhibition from every section of the country. With notebooks in hand, and accompanied by experts, they study every pavilion, taking down everything that may apply to their particular locality. Represented in the numerous pavilions is the diversity of agriculture in all regions of the Soviet Union, the newspaper emphasizes.

YUGOSLAVIA

CENTENARY OF CROATIAN THEATER

The centenary of the Croatian Theater in Zagreb is being marked this year. Founded in 1840 on funds supplied by a rich patron, the theater was the first to stage plays and operas in the Croatian language, which until then were presented exclusively in German. Until 1860 the theater had no permanent company. Subsequently, it has been regularly subsidized by the government. The theater organized dramatic and operatic troupes, and the latter played a big part in the development of the national Croat opera.

NEW SERBIAN OPERA

The premiere of a new Serbian opera, *Djurad Brankevich*, by the Serbian composer Svyatomir Nastasievich, was presented at the National Opera in Belgrade. The libretto for the opera was written by the composer's brother, Monchalo Nastasievich, who died recently.

The action of the opera takes place in the XV century and deals with the struggle of the Serbian governor, Djurad Brankevich, for the independence of the Serbian state, which was then conquered by the Turks. The reviewer of the *Echo de Belgrade* comments on the original talent of the composer, noting that his music shows the influence of Mussorgsky.

BRAZIL

NEW BOOKS

Outstanding among the new books of the current year is the novel *Pedra Benita* by the well-known Brazilian novelist Jose Lins do Rego, according to the literary critic of the magazine *Nosotros*. Since 1932 Lins do Rego has published seven novels which have gained him wide fame. According to the author, five of these novels comprise one cycle dedicated to labor on the sugar plantations.

The cycle of novels portrays a social and economic process which was of prime importance for Brazil, the struggle for existence which the feudal estate conducted and its perishing as a result of the development of industry and its onslaught on the feudal forms of landownership. "The feudal slave owner clashed with the slave who began to raise his head and wished to become an equal of his master."

Rego's latest novel is a continuation of the cycle and it depicts the conflict between city and village. "Hypocrites, bandits and the police—these are the ones who hold the lives of our workers and peasants in their power," the author writes. In his novel he depicts the social and economic conflicts between the peasants, cowed and terrified into submission, and the greedy and brutal landed proprietors.

The novel is written in the impressionistic style.

South, a novel by Gillermo Cesar, describes the life of miners in the Brazilian gold mines in Geraes. The author is familiar with the life and working conditions of the miners and, as noted by the reviewer of *Nosotros*, "the gold fields of Geraes, which already figure in the recent book of such a great writer as Siro dos Anjos, is now the subject of another book penned by the calm and confident hand of a master, a book which speaks well for the talent of its author."

A new historic novel, *Conspiracy*, has been written by Joaquin Laranjeira. The heroes of the book are two Brazilian patriots who devote their life to a struggle against Portuguese rule. The action of the novel is laid in the port city of Bahia at the end of the eighteenth century.

"This novel," *Nosotros* notes, "written in fine lively language, reconstructs the dramatic and romantic episode of that epoch. *Conspiracy* carries on the best traditions of the historic novel."

CUBA

FEATURE ARTICLE ON ALL-UNION EXHIBITION

The newspaper *Hoy* featured an article on the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition by its special correspondent Jose Luis Salado.

"The exhibition demonstrates the great successes of agriculture in the U.S.S.R.," the correspondent writes, "and this at a time when millions of peasants in Europe are compelled to change the plow for a rifle and take part in the second imperialist war" . . .

Salado describes the Kazakh, Karelian-Finnish, Ukrainian and Byelorussian pavilions.

"A monumental statue of Stalin, the great leader of the land of Socialism, towers in the center of the exhibition grounds," Salado writes. "It is not merely a symbol; it is a living example of Socialism triumphant."

ISSUE BOOK BY SOVIET AUTHOR

Mountains and People, a book by the Soviet author M. Ilyin, has been issued in a Spanish translation by Estrella, publishers of children's literature. It is illustrated by the artist Jose Chaves Morado.

The reviewer of the newspaper *Hoy* describes the book as a collection of "brilliant stories on the transformation of nature by men."

Emma Perez, authoress of the review, cites excerpts from the introduction on how man in the U.S.S.R. is changing the face of earth, transforming at the same time his own life. "M. Ilyin has created a splendid poem about labor in the Soviet Union," she writes. "His small book—clever, stirring and enchanting—gives one more knowledge than a library of scientific volumes. Tamed rivers, subjugated deserts, forests, new species of flora and fauna—these are the themes of this splendid book."

MEXICO

LITERARY MAGAZINE FOUNDED

A new literary journal, *Revista Literaria*, has been founded in Mexico. Its

Potters *By the Bolivian painter Jil Coimbra*

editorial board and contributors include prominent Mexican writers, poets and critics.

The first issue carries an article by Lorenzo Turrent Rozas dedicated to Agustin Santacruz, the young writer who died recently in the United States.

"His heritage is not great," Turrent Rozas notes. "Santacruz worked primarily in the provincial press. His sole book, *On the Coast*, is a collection of stories."

Most of them deal with the revolutionary minded workers on the Pacific Coast of Mexico and with people who perish because of poverty and drink.

"In this small collection he showed us a picture of life in the most remote corners of our country," Turrent Rozas adds. He ends his article by voicing profound regret at the untimely death of the young writer, who "could have contributed so much to Mexican literature."

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Georgian critic, chiefly concerned with the literature of his native country.

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A well-known Soviet Orientalist.

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PIERRE NICOLE

Young Swiss journalist, former contributor to the progressive newspaper *Travail* in Geneva, recently closed by the Swiss authorities.

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