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THE STRENGTH OF RUSSIA

The German summer offensive was anxiously awaited by soldier and civilian alike, by those at the front and those in the rear. We had made our preparations, but still, the practical test always means a lot.

I think the Germans themselves were awaiting their offensive with some excitement. The higher officers, of course, said: "one more push and the Red Army will be defeated," and so forth, as is found fitting on such occasions. Every German, at any rate, realized that this was the last big move in the game—to be or not to be. . .

It must not be thought that the German army was so very weak at the start of its third summer offensive. No, it was not very much weaker than before. The seriousness of the situation served to make the Germans more ferocious. They had become more cautious and had grown accustomed to Russian conditions. They had a few new things up their sleeve, various "Ferdinands," "Tigers," modernized fighter aircraft and other vile machines, their divisions were brought up to strength, true with "total" soldiers. . .

Then came the practical test. The savage assault of a German offensive that was to decide the outcome of the whole war was like the blow of a fist against a brick wall. Nemesis, or in plain language fate, held a pear formed of three fingers under the very nose of Hitler: take a bite! It turned out that the Russians were cleverer and stronger than the Germans, and the German July offensive failed not because the German army was weak, but because the Red Army was strong. The Germans were prepared to deal with all manner of surprises in the summer of 1943 except this relation of forces.

From the 5th to the 17th of July the unconquerable might and stubbornness of the Russian army in defence made itself apparent and since the 17th of July the superlative skill of the Russian army on the offensive has been making itself apparent. The Germans were forced to take to the defensive and then, without a breathing space, to retreat; and then, gritting their teeth, they experienced the loss of Orel, the most important of their positions aimed like a dagger at the heart of Russia; they experienced the loss of Belgorod, the Kharkov bridge-head, and finally amidst streams of blood, at the cost of millions of officers and men killed, wounded and taken prisoner, under the unbelievable roar of Russian artillery and aircraft, counter-attacking, counter-attacking, counter-attacking, they lost Kharkov. The devil take them!

In a struggle of unparalleled intricacy the Red Army confidently demonstrated to the Germans the great art of mobile warfare. The Red Army was already precipitating events of world importance. The sun of that great month of August will from now on shine on the Red Army's banners—to the Red Army everything is possible, the impossible does not exist. Tens of thousands of burnt, lacerated, shot-riddled accursed German invaders still lie about the fields and roads, huge fires are still smoking, countless enemy fighting vehicles have not yet been towed back to the base, but the battle for Kharkov has already become a classic example of mobile operations in a zone of superfortifications echeloned in depth.

There was a time, long, long ago, when the Russians were invincible in siege operations: the siege of Pskov by Stephen Bàthori ended in the confusion of the besiegers; the siege of the Troitse-Sergiev Monastery during the Time of the Troubles again ended in the confusion of the enemy. Now the Germans want to sit tight and be besieged but we won't let them cling to our land alive. (Dead, if you like, you may stay put.) Our artillery is more powerful than the Germans', and is as mobile and manoeuvrable as the tanks. Our air forces are the terror of the Germans. German engineers still have not thought out the type of forti-

fications that will stand up to the blows of our artillery. The barrages of our artillery are rolling heavily westwards. Our troops are filtering through the enemy lines coming out behind him, encircling him, attacking from all sides, cutting up his front into pieces, beating the Germans in quickness of movement and speed of thought. At the bottom of all this, first and foremost, lies Russian talent, Russian courage and the awakening of Russian fury. Proud and brave is the Russian. Glory to him! Glory to the liberator of Kharkov!

ALEXEI TOLSTOY

UKRAINE

Kharkov is more than a city to us. Kharkov is the Ukraine! For two years sorrow has lain a dead weight on our hearts. Today we breathe more freely, day is breaking over the Ukraine.

We know everything. They crucified the Ukraine and the executioners were busy counting up the dividends. Executioner Rosenberg gives a self-satisfied smirk: "The Ukraine is our granary." Executioner Erich Koch boasts: "The Ukraine provides us with everything—from confectionery to labourers." The villain could have said: from confectionery to human blood. They formed twelve limited companies the prospectuses of which stated: "The purpose of the Company is the seizure of produce from the Ukrainian people." They herded hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian girls off to Germany. They got rich on tears and said: "This is ours forever." They presented one another with estates, houses and official posts. Today we sleep in peace: tonight they will not sleep. The merchants from Schweinfurt and Swinemünde who traded in human flesh in Kharkov are now hurrying westward. The commandant of Poltava is shivering. The director of the "Ukrainische Gesellschaft" has packed his bags; Romny is no longer a comfortable spot for him. Pale Erich Koch stands under a waning moon and counts. . . not profits but battered German divisions.

We have forgotten nothing. We have not forgotten how Friedrich Schmidt tortured the girls in Budyonnovka. We have not forgotten that the Germans erected a two-storeyed gallows in Byelopolye. We have not forgotten that in Kassel the Germans hunted down fifteen-year-old Galya Mikhalchenko with police dogs. We have not forgotten the ashes of Chernigov. We have not forgotten the ruins of Kiev. We have not forgotten and we shall not forget. The hangmen have not much time left to do their hanging: it is time they were hanged.

To the brave, working city of Kharkov we say: "The country will heal your deep wounds. You will arise out of the ashes. Your torturers will not live: in their death agony they will gnaw at the stones, they will weep, but their tears will never wash away their crimes."

To eternal Kiev, trebly dear to us, we say: "Take courage! Divisions are now marching to the west which will soon bear the name of 'Kiev Divisions.'"

The Red Army is travelling a thorny but glorious path, bringing life to the Ukraine and to the world. As a writer I appreciate words. In warfare, however, there is something more important than words. And in this moment of triumph one can but say to the world: "Russia does not talk, Russia fights!"

ILYA EHRENBURG

OUR FESTIVAL

High is the green tree of our victory! On high waves the red banner of the Land of Soviets! Today I learnt that Kharkov is again ours. Kharkov—the second capital of the Ukraine, the city in which Soviet Ukrainian culture flourished, the city in which Soviet economy flourished. What right had the Germans to command there? It was said prophetically that there would be a festival in our land, and this festival has come with the victories of the Red Army.

This is our festival—an avenging, irresistible festival! Our day is filled with sound, filled with thunder, like a salute fired by a thousand guns. Our step grows firmer, our strength grows greater—the strength of the Red Army and all the peoples of the Soviet Union including the Ukrainian people.

In the Red Army's series of victories over the German fascists, the capture of Kharkov proves irrefutably that the living spirit of a living people can never be crushed by the dead, decaying power of the Germans. Kharkov can now be seen

by the whole world like the tall, green tree of victory, like a mighty unconquerable banner unfurled to the breeze.

PAVLO TYCHINA,
poet, Member of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences

KHARKOV IS OURS

Our gallant Red Army has liberated Kharkov. The Red Army not only stemmed the "decisive" July offensive of the Germans and drove them back whence they came, but also struck them a series of new and mighty blows, gaining important victories.

I was at the front a short time ago and saw our units, saw how powerful they were with their wealth of technical equipment. My heart swelled with pride. I wanted to do everything in my power to help the Red Army in its great mission of liberation. As a chemist I want to find further means by which our wounded soldiers can be cured and returned to active service.

Soviet scientific workers have nothing but the deepest gratitude for our officers and men who are bringing life and liberty to our brothers and sisters suffering in fascist slavery.

A. PALLADIN,
Vice-President of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences

ALL HONOUR TO YOU, KHARKOV!

All our creative efforts are devoted to the task of depicting the heroic greatness of the sons and daughters of the Ukrainian people, their heroic past and their selfless struggle against bestial fascism. The fascist hangmen have not succeeded in breaking the fighting spirit of our people, have not succeeded in destroying their ancient culture.

The Ukrainian people still live and will continue to live! Never before has the Ukrainian language had so proud and stimulating a sound as it has at the present time in all the republics of our Union. Never before have the Ukrainian theatre and Ukrainian songs enjoyed such true popularity and respect amongst all the peoples of our country as they do now.

Although thousands of kilometres away, we Ukrainian actors have always been with our native Ukraine. Our theatre bears the name of Taras Shevchenko, bears it honourably and has proved worthy of it by its indefatigable work. The memorial the working people raised to him was always the pride of Kharkov. Great kobzar [1]! Your shade has been the witness of the ghastly atrocities of the fascist bandits, atrocities such as history has never before known. We bow low before you. We promise to fulfil your behest: "and not an enemy shall remain in the land!"

M. KRUSHELNITSKY,
Director of the Shevchenko Theatre of Drama in Kharkov

THE COUNTRY WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAMES

Taganrog has been liberated by the valiant troops of the Southern front. We have never forgotten what the bandits did in that quiet industrious little town on the shores of the Azov Sea. Retribution has overtaken the invaders and they have been reduced to flight. They have been routed and our new divisions and brigades, now Taganrog formations, are following fast on their heels, mopping them up and driving them farther and farther to the west.

We remember the dismal autumn of 1941 when the bandit hordes, thirsty for gain, stretched across the steppes, attacked Taganrog in order to pounce on Rostov and thus reach the gates of the Caucasus. Today it is we who stand at the gates of the Caucasus, and in Taganrog the remains of fascist tanks and guns lie smoking.

Other times have come. The fascist cutthroats are either in flight, littering the road behind them with abandoned equipment or clambering out of gullies and rising from the grass in the steppes they raise their hands and cry hoarsely: "Hitler kaput!"

The Germans had dug themselves in well, had laid mines by the truck-load, surrounded themselves with wire entanglements and thought they would sit tight until better days arrived. These days will never come! There is nowhere for you to sit, for you and your war machines have been overturned.

In honour of the victors, Leningrad

[1] Kobzar—Ukrainian bard.

will destroy still more pillboxes and blockhouses, wipe out hundreds of the brown tramps "total" and non-total.

From the shores of the Baltic we send hearty greetings to our soldiers on the shores of the Azov Sea.

NICHOLAS TIKHONOV
Leningrad author

THE TOWN OF CHEKHOV

Taganrog was the home of Anton Pavlovich Chekhov. The town, bathed in the warm southern sun, was dear to the Russian heart. I have been there many times, the last time with the company from the Art Theatre on the seventy-fifth anniversary of Chekhov's birth.

Taganrog was proud of her writer and held his memory sacred.

There was a Chekhov museum, and a library, a school and streets which bore his name. These things all existed and will exist again.

Chekhov loved Russia and the Russian people with a great and profound love, and his country reciprocates that love. Today I shed tears of joy when I learned that Taganrog is ours again. I have long awaited this moment. I cannot hope that the fascists have had any mercy on flourishing Taganrog. That would not be like them. But I believe and know that Taganrog will again be what it was formerly, will be as it was when the great Russian writer Anton Chekhov knew and loved it.

OLGA KNIPPER-CHEKHOVA,
People's Artist of the U.S.S.R., Stalin Prize winner

MAY OUR BLOWS GROW MIGHTIER

The Land of Soviets is living through exciting days. The Red Army has routed the Germans on the shores of the Azov Sea and driven the enemy out of Taganrog. The gun barrels had not had time to cool after firing the salute in honour of the Yelnya divisions before the air over Moscow was again rent by more volleys in honour of the gallant troops of the Central front who had entered the Northern Ukraine.

August 1918 was a fateful month for the German army during the first World War, when it suffered a fearful defeat after several desperate attempts at an offensive. August 1943 has proved to be a month of still more fearful battles and losses for the fascist army.

On the Northern Donets and the Mius Rivers, in the steppes of the Ukraine, in the woods of Smolensk, victorious Soviet troops guided by the strategical genius of Stalin are liberating Soviet towns and hundreds of villages and are mercilessly routing the fascist hordes. The successes of the Red Army during the last few days of August brought a month of victories to a brilliant close. All honour to the Red Army soldiers who know no fear in the struggle for the liberty of their country! May their blows struck at the enemy increase with every new day, blows from which the enemy can never recover!

IVAN YAKUSHKIN,
Academician, Stalin Prize winner

OUR DONBAS

The Donets Basin, or Donbas, is more than the centre of Ukrainian industry: one of the finest chapters in the history of the Civil War is connected with this name.

The Donbas is associated with the most perfect expression of another idea—that of the Ukrainian worker. Alexei Stakhanov comes from the Donbas; the Donbas saw he beginning of the Stakhanov movement, new forms of human labour. A part of the Ukraine as much unlike the rest of it as, say, Normandy is unlike Provence, the Donbas is a place where friendships were forged between workers of many nationalities.

The beautiful banks of the Dnieper; ever young Kiev high above the blue waves of the river; charmingly meditating, green Poltava; the fairy-tale lines of the ancient buildings of Kamenets-Podolsk; grey old Lvov telling us of the great deeds of the past; the unforgettable majestic beauty of our Carpathians. . . But the Donbas also has its own inimitable charm, which has been put into words in some fine poems by Vladimir Sossyura. . . Donbas, a quarter of a century ago the field of the exploitation of man by man, has become a flourishing district under Soviet power, one of the corner-stones of socialist construction.

It was a bitter day for the men of the

Red Army when they had to leave this precious stone of our republic to the enemy.

The days passed, our strength grew, and the time came when we, after hearing the news of the liberation of a number of Ukrainian districts, of the liberation of Kharkov, heard the words which sounded like a jubilant fanfare: the Donbas had been liberated! Stalino, the centre of the Donbas, is ours! The enemy has been driven out and the Donbas will arise again for a happy and tense life. . .

MAXIM RYLSKY,
Ukrainian poet

TO THE SOVIET WRITERS

A few evenings ago Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony was played for South America for the first time; listening to it our hearts were moved with the thought of you.

We, Spanish writers, who have had to emigrate to Argentine, have not stopped thinking of you for a single instant. We are moved profoundly each time we see your heroism, which we connect with the memory of the heroic defence of Madrid. We are proud of the advances of the Red Army, and when that extraordinary Stalingrad operation broke the ring of the common enemy and threw him back, we celebrated this operation as if it were our own victory.

We are deeply stirred by your activity as writers, your perseverance in your work, by those who fell in battle, by the faith which you maintain in the future and in victory, as well as by the heroic leaders of the Russian people.

We hold out a fraternal hand to you and we are sure that the future has reserved for Europe and Spain that resurrection which its present pain merits.

This future of peace and culture will come thanks to the military and civil courage of your people, a people whose leaders succeeded in making the Soviet man the wonder of the world.

RAFAEL ALBERTI—EDUARDO BLANCO AMOR—ARTURO SERRANO PLAJA—MARIA TERESA LEON—GORI MUNOZ OTERO ESPASANDIN—LORENZO VARELA—RAFAEL DIESTRE—ARTURO CUADRADO—LUIS SEOANE—JUAN PAREDES

THE WORD OF A LATVIAN SNIPER

The Latvian people have their own particular account to settle with the Germans. For seven centuries the Letts fought against the German enslavers—the "dog-knights" of the Livonian Order.

I have my personal account to settle with them. In 1905 the "black hundreds" of the German Baltic barons let loose a cruel terror against the people in revolt. A baron-hangman tortured my father and murdered my mother.

I was three years old at the time. I grew up an orphan. I lived in misery amongst strangers. My youth was spent in a hard struggle for the means of existence and I worked as an agricultural labourer, then a printer. I was twice arrested for anti-fascist activities, was beaten up, spent four years imprisoned in a fortress where I did convict labour in the stone-quarries of Kalnciems and the peat bogs of Sigulda, then later I spent eighteen months in a fascist prison.

It was only under Soviet government that I experienced the joy which true freedom brings with it. The Soviet regime gave real life to my people and my Latvia. How could I now feel anything but fierce hatred for the despicable invaders, the bloody hangmen of the Latvian people?

As soon as war broke out I joined the Red Army as a volunteer. Together with the Latvian units of the Red Army I have travelled the long road of war.

When, as a sniper at the front, I took aim at a nazi, my bullet always found its billet either in the enemy's forehead or in his black heart. Every time I scored a hit I was glad because I was squaring accounts with the age-old enemies of my people. I was taking vengeance for my country and for myself.

A sniper's reconnoissance expedition is a painstaking business. Information must be collected and observation carefully continued for many days, all the

results being summarized and an accurate plan of action worked out. It is these strict methods which ensure success. I remember the time when I first began working as sniper, how I spent every free moment of the long evenings in a brushwood tent entering up in my notebook, by the light of an oil lamp, all the details I had gathered, studying them, drawing sketch maps and calculating. Our infantry unit at the time was on the defensive. Using my own information, I discovered gaps in the enemy lines. Every day I visited the enemy lines, finding my way about as though I were in my own home.

I checked up outposts, the times when they changed their sentries, the position of their machine-gun nests, sought and observed the paths by which the Germans brought up rations and ammunition. Everything I learnt in this way came in handy. I could say exactly which was the best place for our people to fire on, and this not only for snipers' fire. Every day I sent information to headquarters, especially to the gunners. Sometimes, when I came home, I was told that headquarters had already phoned and asked whether the "indefatigable" had returned.

To be indefatigable and persistent in achieving your object, to seek and punish the German everywhere, is the golden rule of a Soviet sniper.

I often allowed the enemy to approach within a few paces. You might think that I then threw myself on them. No, I didn't—one must use restraint. I killed them coolly and calmly, keeping count of the rounds I fired and the number of nazis I killed.

A whole platoon of nazis once passed within six or seven metres of me. I did not immediately open fire but allowed them to continue on their way until they were some forty metres from me, when I shot seven and the remainder fled.

Another time, at point X., I lay a whole day in ambush. Towards evening two nazis appeared carrying a log. I fired at the first so that the second would stumble with the log and would not have time to run away. That is exactly what happened; the first fell dead, the second stumbled. He was scrambling to his feet when I got my sights on him and he fell from my shot. A third nazi appeared, whom I also shot. Two more Germans ran up but panicked when they saw the dead bodies. Taking advantage of their confusion, I shot them one after another.

Once, while watching the enemy change guard, I got eight nazis by choosing the right moments to fire.

It was a particularly successful day, a red letter day, you might call it, when I killed forty-eight Germans by sniping and sixteen more with a machine-gun.

I have killed one hundred and ninety Germans with my rifle, have destroyed three machine-gun nests with hand-grenades, put a tankette out of action with a grenade, set fire to a tank with an incendiary bottle, led my unit out of encirclement. . .

I have been behind the enemy's lines on reconnoissance twenty-two times. With my own eyes I have seen the nightmare of nazi slavery. I have been in districts liberated from the hitlerite invaders. I have seen the bloody traces of the beast: the ashes of villages and towns, murdered and tortured Soviet people. In the village of S. we found cellars and a well where the bandits had thrown the bodies of their victims. In this village I saw a young lad whose two hands had been lopped off by the Germans. Out of the stove in one cottage we pulled a charred body with ears lopped off and eyes put out. It was the body of a Soviet commander who had fallen, wounded, into the Germans' clutches. I saw a fair-haired seven-year-old girl, still living, fastened to the wall with a big nail. . .

A year ago I trained from among my comrades in our unit a group of snipers. Each of them now has a good number of Germans to his credit. My friend Lontans, who died the death of a hero, killed about a hundred Germans.

Snipers are trained in our unit under my guidance.

Seven of the best snipers, in forty days, killed three hundred and ninety-two Germans. Our volunteer girl-snipers, all of whom have been awarded orders, are just as good.

While at the front during the winter I received a letter from a woman whom I did not know. She had lost her husband, two sons and two daughters in the war, and turned to me as to a son. Together

with the letter she sent me a present, a pair of fine, lined, woollen gloves, embroidered in the national style.

When I went out to an ambush in a furious late winter blizzard I put them on and they kept me warm. As a son promises his mother, I promised the old woman that I would seek vengeance for all she had suffered: I promised to kill as many Germans as there were red knots in the embroidery on the gloves. And that is not a number you can count the first time you try.

A year ago, when I went to the Kremlin to receive the Order of Lenin and the Gold Star of a Hero of the Soviet Union, I, as a son of my people, as a Latvian soldier, promised Stalin that I would go on exterminating the nazi invaders without mercy. Stalin shook me by the hand. That hand will not tremble!

JANIS VILHELMS,
Hero of the Soviet Union,
Guards Captain

MENDELYEEV ON THE FUTURE OF THE URALS

At the end of the nineties of the last century, when the great scientist, already at a venerable age and severely ill, was in the last years of his fruitful life, the Ministry of Finance asked him to inspect the industry of the Ural region. The Urals was then in the throes of a crisis. State-owned plants were working at a deficit while private industry did not develop and methods were very backward. It was necessary to establish the reason for this decline and find means for combating it.

It was not easy for the old scientist to undertake a journey so long and in those days so difficult. But Mendelyeev was a Siberian, and the idea of visiting his native parts appealed to him. Later he wrote about it as follows:

"It was not only business that induced me to go to Tobolsk. . . but also the associations of my boyhood. There I was born and went to school, there are some people still living who remember our family; and there under the walls of the glass factory managed by my mother I received my earliest impressions of nature, of men and industry. Almost fifty-one years ago my mother. . . took me, the youngest of the family, to Moscow, after I had graduated from the high school.

"I had for a long time been planning to revisit my native town, but no opportunity had arisen and so peculiar sensations stirred within me as I at last set off."

Once in Tobolsk he again listened to the boys' stories about "cedar cones and 'serka' (as they called the dry, hardened sap of larch-trees) which all the children chew in Sibria," and "the fragrant 'prince-berry,' the finest of berries, appeared on the table." All this brought back "vivid pictures of the distant past," to quote his own words.[1]

These were the emotions evoked in Mendelyeev at the close of his life by his visit to the Russian East.

What did the great scientist discover in the Urals? He describes the wealth of the region, without fear of being reproached with exaggeration, staking his great reputation on every word.

"Ural ores are by no means worse, but far, far better, generally speaking, than the ores of Western-European countries—I have in mind British, German, Belgian and French ores—as regards quality, iron content, cost of mining and vast layers easily accessible to mining. . ."

With the same directness and clarity as he describes the natural resources of the Urals, Mendelyeev raises the problem of the impossibility of their development in the social conditions (remnants of serfdom and rights of possession[2]) prevailing in the Urals at that time: ". . . in my opinion, it is necessary to take most energetic steps to put an end to all the remnants of landlordship still existing throughout the Urals. . ." With equal sharpness he also upbraids the technical backwardness of Ural factories. Things cannot be righted by half measures. It is no use giving the manufactur-

[1] All excerpts are taken from D.I. Mendelyeev's reports collected in the volume *Urals' Iron and Steel Industry in 1899.*

[2] The inherited right of private persons to exploit the serfs alloted to their factories and plants built on land belonging to the State.

ers subsidies and privileges, and trying to patch up the old methods. "We in the Urals must rebuild everything, or almost everything, it is no use repeating what everybody knows. Things must be done better from the start so that it will not be necessary to rebuild it all over again in about ten years time."

Mendelyeev did not confine himself to general forecasts and conclusions. His diary is filled with suggestions, some of which have not been realized to this day and may be studied to good advantage. There are remarkable chapters where, describing the Tavdino foresting administration, he enlarges upon the importance of cultured forestry and lumbering and State control and protection of the Ural forests; neither did the problem of transportation in the Urals escape his attention, where he stressed the importance of small waterways which are "waiting to be carefully regulated."

However, Mendelyeev has more to say about technique than anything else and it is here that he is most interesting. Blast furnaces in the Urals at that time were at an antediluvian level. Meantime Europe passed through its "honeymoon" of development in all branches of industry which used by-products of smelting as raw-materials. Mendelyeev pointed to the possibility of using exhaust blast furnace gases for engines, citing the Cockerill plant in Belgium as an example. He refers in his book to the "bon mot" of Martin, that in time to come "pig iron will become a by-product of blast furnace smelting," as if using this paradox uttered by the founder of the open hearth to arouse the enthusiasm among Russian engineers for the fascinating possibilities of using blast furnace waste.

It was Mendelyeev who uttered the remarkable words that in his time and in the old world in which he lived "inventors and inventions are forgotten." They are not merely "happy coincidence," "a gold nugget found on the ground." No, "in order to find it, it is necessary not only to search for it carefully, but to know much, so as to know where to look for it. . . one must also be able to seek, to foresee the invisible, to feel the future, as if it were the present, to try, never to lose heart when encountering failure and hardships, to persist and work much." As if foreseeing or planning the future work of Grumm-Grzhimailo to get generator gas from wood, as if calling to life the remarkable experiments in wood chemistry of the Ural scientist Kozlov to obtain lubricants from wood, he writes: "wood burned for coal (in the forest) loses almost half its heat-producing capacity in the present state of affairs while awaiting the advent of an inventor." Mendelyeev's indication of the possibility of utilizing the subterranean fires which frequently occur in coal seams in the Urals for the cheap production of gas for generators has not lost its value to this day.

There is one more field where Mendelyeev saw far into the future. Under tsarism the iron and steel industry was administered by the same authorities as the mining industry. Mendelyeev sharply criticized this and demanded the separation of the iron and steel industry into an independent branch, pointing out that whereas mining involved merely the extraction of the iron, the steel industry was a manufacturing branch, and to subordinate it to the mining administration was tantamount to "combining flax or cotton growing with spinning and weaving, animal husbandry with leather production." The great scientist dreamed not only of an independent "ministry of the iron and steel industry" (or of placing this industry under the finance ministry), but also of creating a special school of higher education in the Urals, "a metallurgical institute," to train metallurgists. Here too he proved right inasmuch as during our century metallurgy has become a tremendously complex field of production, which already has its own peculiarly Soviet tradition, its own great and outstanding scientists, who in many fields have developed entirely new theories. The Soviet regime brought to reality Mendelyeev's dream about the Urals. For several years the splendid Industrial Institute in Sverdlovsk has been graduating specialists in metallurgy without whom the building up of modern iron and steel industry in the Urals would have been impossible.

All that has been written by Mendelyeev about the Urals clearly corresponds with the basic statements of Lenin and Stalin on the role of the industrial base in the Soviet East, and is in many re-

spects a forerunner of the work of Soviet scientists. It is already a quarter of a century since the old land relations in the Urals were swept away, for a quartre of a century the builders have been learning the art of "rebuilding technology anew," and the new system has survived the test with fire and sword in the crucible of the Patriotic War; new unlimited prospects for exploration and productive work have been opened up before Soviet scientists in the Urals today. Many explorers, organizers, directors who moved to the Urals as a result of the war, could have joined with Mendelyeev in his prophetic words uttered towards the end of his life:

"The faith in the future of Russia, always alive in me, has become greater and stronger from close familiarity with the Urals, because the future is determined by economic conditions, and they in turn—by energy, knowledge, land, grain, fuel and iron, rather than by any classical factor."

MARIETTA SHAGINYAN

Kill the German beasts!
Poster by V. Klimashin and N. Zhukov

BELLES-LETTRES

URAL TALES BY PAVEL BAZHOV

Russian folklore has been enriched by a collection of tales about the Urals in the olden days. Pavel Bazhov who collected and re-told the tales, is sixty years of age, and well-known all over the country. *The Malachite Casket*, the volume for which he received a Stalin Prize, has gone through several editions. His most recent work, *The Key-Stone*, is another delightful volume, in which the author gives us, like rare jewels in a skilfully-wrought setting, more of those treasures of folklore in which the Ural Mountains are so rich.

The extraction of the Urals' wealth demands not only technical knowledge and skill, it demands a sympathetic, let us say, understanding of the typical Ural landscape, its forests and mountains; it calls for a knowledge of its copper and iron ores, of its precious stones, that is more than technical, in fact, an artist's knowledge of the subject. For in the course of centuries the work has developed into an art.

Still more is this the case in the Soviet epoch, when labour has become free, and when continued effort to attain greater skill in one's chosen profession has developed into what is called the "Stakhanov movement" and has become the common purpose of millions.

One field in which this intense effort is particularly marked is the cutting and polishing of gems, one of the most skilled and most respected professions in the Urals. It is not to be wondered at that in the profound and wise poetry of the Ural stones local people found an inexhaustible well for creating word-pictures and have evolved their own Ural folklore. These were handed down by word of mouth until Bazhov succeeded in collecting, cutting and faceting them, as Russian craftsmen have for generations cut and set stones of the Urals.

In Bazhov's collection of Ural folk tales two main themes are distinguishable: one, the people's realization that the riches which have lain untouched in Ural lands for centuries are inexhaustible; and the dream of a time when these riches should become of service to the people, to beautify a free life, a day when gems would be within their reach.

Bazhov has brought out these two themes with great skill in stories about local people's lives, joys and sorrows, loves and hatreds; these lives are seen through the prism of age-old toil. In the characters of his tales fantasy is blended with reality, but his pictures are always forcible, striking, as though hewn from the bed-rock itself.

One theme that has an interest extending beyond the bounds of folklore is that of the artist as he is understood in the Urals; this is a man in whom the inspiration of the artist and the will to conquer, to master nature are combined. The hero of the tale *The Flower of Stone*, which we give below, is an ordinary Russian malachite-worker, an artist whose whole life is spent in an effort to overcome the stubbornness of the stone, in an endeavour to bring to light the beauty of nature, and make it a source of joy to mankind.

The story of this artist is developed in the tale *The Mountain-Craftsman*. Here the whole foreground is occupied by the craftsman's sweetheart Katya, who, faithful to him in his absence, follows his trade and becomes a skilled craftsman too. Truly, the people of that day must have had great faith in their future in order to create the picture of a woman-artist who came of working folk, at a time when the path to creative work was closed to women. This character has a more forcefull appeal now, in Soviet times, when scores of women are famous not only for their work in art, but in science, construction-work and in warfare.

The Mistress of the Copper Mountain is a story full of charm. The protector of the Ural folk in their struggle with their oppressors, the owners and overseers, is presented as a young girl who appears to them at times in the form of a lizard, and helps them in their search for a higher and more beautiful aspect of their toil.

A similar type, a girl who refuses to bow before the rich, is another embodiment of the Mistress of the Copper Mountain idea, and this we give in *The Malachite Casket*, a vivid and poetic tale.

All Bazhov's tales are written in the original, expressive speech of the Ural people. Hence the peculiar character of Ural folklore. The toilsome, productive, creative labour is described with such painstaking care.

Very popular just now is Bazhov's collection of satirical sketches showing the German adventurers who came to the Urals for their own dubious purposes. There is rich humour in *Cockroach-Soap*, where Bazhov's people ridicule the pompous Germans who have come here with the idea of teaching the Ural workers. But the German who had thought he could buy the skill of Ural craftsmen returns home in disgrace.

Bazhov's tales are becoming still more widely-known by his own readings of them at military hospitals, workers' clubs and schools. This old writer is a welcome guest everywhere.

Throughout Bazhov's stories, old and new, runs the history of the Urals, "where stones have come running from the ends of the earth," the history of how Ural people's toil has released the riches of the mountains. His work, which is as it were the written embodiment of the creative effort of many nameless craftsmen of the world, is evidence that the Soviet Urals, having become a centre of industry, has not only lost nothing of its artistic wealth, but remains one of the richest veins of the people's golden talent.

THE MALACHITE CASKET

Now Stepan's widow, Nastasia, had a malachite casket left her and it was full of all manner of women's trinkets. There were rings in it and ear-rings and the like, for titivating women. It was the Mistress of the Copper Mountain herself bestowed it on Stepan when he was thinking of getting married.

Nastasia herself grew up an orphan, she wasn't used to grand things and wasn't the kind that's fond of decking herself out. The first few years after they got married she used to put on a few things now and again out of the casket. But you could see her heart wasn't in it. She'd put on a ring, say... The ring fitted her finger as if it was made for it, it wasn't too tight, it wasn't so loose that it would slip off, but would she go to church or go a-visiting, and she'd never have a minute's peace with it. Her finger would feel as though it was bound with iron and the nail would turn blue. If she put on ear-rings it was even worse. They'd pull down the lobes of her ears till they swelled. Yet, if you took them in your hand there wasn't a whit more weight to them than the ones Nastasia had been wearing every day. There was a necklace of beads, seven rows of them; this she only tried on once. They hung like ice around her neck and never warmed up a bit. She never let folks see her in this necklace, she was ashamed.

"Hmph," they'll say, "nothing will do but for her to make herself out a Tsaritsa—back here in Polevaya!"

Stepan never obliged his wife to wear the things out of the casket. And once he even said to her:

"Put it somewhere out of harm's way."

Nastasia took and put the casket in the bottom chest of all, the one where the stocks of linen and the like were kept.

When Stepan died, and the stones were found in his dead hand, Nastasia was obliged to show the casket to strangers. And a knowing fellow who had once told them the story of how Stepan came by these stones, said to Nastasia as soon as the folks had gone home:

"Now see you don't let this casket go for a song. It's worth many and many a thousand."

This was a man who had schooling, he was of the free men, too not a serf. Once he had been what they called a foreman and knew the workings of the mines. But they had to get rid of him because he was a sight too soft with the men. Another thing about him: he was fond of drinking. And though it oughtn't be held against him now he's dead and gone, he was a rare old hand at treating in a tavern.

But as for the rest, he was a right-minded man and was it a plea that needed writing or some gold wanted washing, or examine marks he'd do it properly, not like some that think of nothing but how to get a half-bottle out of you. There wasn't a soul but would be glad to offer him a glass when holiday-times came round. So he lived at our works till the day of his death and got his victuals at other folks' tables.

Nastasia had heard from her husband that this same foreman was a right-minded man and had a head on his shoulders, over-fond of drinking though he might be. And so she paid heed to what he had to say.

"Well," said she, "I'll keep it by me for a rainy day." And she put the casket in the old spot.

They buried Stepan, and had mass sung for him on the fortieth day and kept

that day as it should be kept. Nastasia being a woman in her prime and well-to-do into the bargain, there were plenty who were ready to make a match of it with her. But she was a clever one, Nastasia, and all she would say was:

"Be the second husband gold itself, he'd only be a step-father to my babies."

As time went on they left her in peace.

Stepan had left the family well provided for. A snug little house, a horse and cow, a proper household all complete. Nastasia was a hardworking woman, the children were heedful, obedient children, and they got on well enough, nothing to complain about. They lived that way for a year, then for another, then for a third. But in the end hard times came upon them. For how could one lone woman with young children manage a household? After all, you had to be able to turn a penny somewhere. Enough to buy salt with, at least. Then her kindred took and started dinning into Nastasia's ear:

"Sell the casket. What good is it to you? The things are lying idle. And when Tanyushka grows up, she won't wear them either. Look at the trinkets in it. They're only such as gentlefolks and rich traders can buy. You couldn't put on the like of these with your poor rags. But people would give you money for them. And you'd live in plenty."

Well, to cut a long story short, they talked her over, and the buyers swooped down like ravens on dead men's bones. They were all traders. And some offered a hundred roubles and some two hundred.

"And we're only giving out of pity for your poor children, you being a widow and all, one mustn't be too hard on you."

So they went on, thinking it easy to get round a woman, but she wasn't that kind of a woman.

Nastasia bore in mind too well that the old mines foreman had told her not to let it go for a song. And besides she felt sorry. When all's said and done, it was her bridegroom's gift, something to remember her husband by. And what was more the little girl, her youngest, cried her eyes out and begged and prayed her:

"Mammy! Don't sell it! Don't sell it! Better for me to go out to earn my bread, and let's keep the casket to remember Dad by!"

Stepan, you see, had left three children. Two were boys, ordinary lads enough, but this child took after neither father nor mother. She was only a little thing when Stepan was still in his health and strength, but even at that time folks used to admire the girl. And not only women folk but men used to say to Stepan:

"You must have got her when you weren't noticing. Who does she take after? So black and such a bonny little thing, and her eyes are green as green! She's not like any of our lasses in these parts."

Stepan would say, for a joke:

"And what wonder she's dark, when her father's been digging in dark mines since he was a young slip of a lad. And as for her eyes being green, 'tisn't surprising either. Look at all the malachite I've mined for the master Turchaninov! And this was left me as a keepsake, to keep the memory green."

And he took to calling the girl "keepsake": "Come over here to your Daddy, little keepsake!" And whenever he had to buy her anything, it would be sure to be pale-blue or green.

So the little girl grew up, getting a lot of notice from people. And it was as though some thread had fallen from a holiday belt, you could see her from a long way off. And though she didn't take kindly to strangers, everyone called her Tanyushka. Even the most envious of the wenches and women admired her. Well, how could they help it? Beauty is pleasant to everyone. Only the mother would shake her head and sigh:

"Beauty she has, maybe, but it's not the kind that belongs to our folks. Looks as if the girl was a changeling."

The little girl was forever pining for her father. She cried as though her heart would break, and her face went so thin she was all eyes after a bit. Once it came into her mother's head to give her the malachite casket to amuse herself with. For no matter how small she may be, a girl fancies herself from the time she can walk and likes to titivate herself out. Tanyushka went over the things one by one. And to her mother's great surprise, everything she tried on suited her down to the ground. The mother had never known what trinket matched another, but the girl seemed to know everything. And says she:

"Oh, mammy, what a fine gift this is that Daddy gave you! It warms you as

though you were sitting on the stove-bench and someone was stroking you with something soft all the time."

Nastasia had worn them herself, and she called to mind the time her fingers had swelled from the rings and her ears ached with the ear-rings and her neck got so chilled from the necklace, it seemed it would never get warm. So she thinks to herself:

"There's something uncanny about this. Aye, it's not natural!"

And she took away the casket from the child and stowed it in the trunk. But from that time on Tanuyshka would never let her be, she was always begging her:

"Mammy, let me play with Daddy's gift awhile, do!"

There were times Nastasia would be harsh with her, but everyone knows what a mother's heart is; she'd feel sorry afterwards for the little girl and get out the casket. Only she'd caution her:

"Mind you don't break anything!"

Time went on and as Tanyushka grew bigger, she would get out the casket herself. The mother would go off with the older lads to do the mowing, or maybe somewhere else, and Tanyushka would be left at home to mind the house. And first of all, she would do all the things her mother had told her to do: wash up the bowls and spoons, shake out the tablecloth, sweep up the room and passage with a broom, feed the hens and keep an eye on the stove. She would get everything done as quick as she could and then fetch out the casket. By this time there was only one trunk left atop of it, and that was light enough now. Tanyushka would shift it onto a stool, get out the casket, and take out the stones, admiring them, trying them on and all the rest of it.

Once a robber came. Whether he had been lying in hiding in the garden beforehand or whether he had crept in when nobody was noticing—who knows, but anyhow none of the neighbours had seen him going down the street. He was a stranger in these parts and yet it seemed someone must have told him the ins and outs of everything and brought him here.

As soon as Nastasia was well out of the house, Tanyushka did her bits of jobs about the place and then settled down to amuse herself with her father's jewels. First she put on the head-dress, and hung the ear-rings in her ears. Just as she was doing it, in comes the robber. Tanyushka looked around and there on the threshold was a man she had never set eyes on before, and he'd an axe in his hand. And it was their axe. It used to stand in the corner of the passage. Tanyushka remembered she had just shifted it while she was sweeping up. Well, Tanyushka got a fright and sat there, neither dead nor alive. The stranger shouted "Och!" all of a sudden, dropped the axe and clapped both hands to his eyes as if something had burned them. There he stood moaning and crying:

"Oh holy fathers, I'm blinded! Oh! struck blind I am, for sure!" and stood rubbing his eyes.

Seeing something was wrong with him, Tanyushka kept asking him:

"How did you get in here, old man, and what did you want with our axe?"

All the fellow could do was stand, rubbing his eyes. Tanyushka felt sorry for him, so she took a dipper full of water and went up to hand it to him, when—what do you think?—the man staggered backward to the door, calling out: "Keep away!" and stayed in the passage, blocking up the door so Tanyushka couldn't slip out.

But she found another way, she jumped out through the window and ran to call the neighbours. Well, they came and asked him who he was and where he had come from and what brought him here? The fellow shuffled a bit and explained that he was just passing by and wanted to ask for charity, and all of a sudden something had come over his eyes.

"Seems like a sunstroke. I thought I was struck blind for good and all. Must be the heat, I think."

Tanyushka said not a word to the neighbours about the axe and the jewels. They thought to themselves:

"It's no great wonder, after all. Maybe, the mother forgot to fasten the gate when she went out, and the man was passing by and dropped in and something came over him all of a sudden. You never know after all, what comes over folks."

But they didn't let the man go until Nastasia came. When she came home with her sons, the stranger told her the tale he had told the neighbours. Then, seeing that everything was safe and nothing had been touched, she didn't like to make a todo about it. So off went the man and the neighbours, too.

Then Tanyushka told her mother the whole story and how it had come about. Nastasia saw at once it was the casket the man was after, and that it wasn't so easy to steal. Thinks she to herself:

"I'd do better to put it further out of harm's way!"

Once when Tanyushka and the boys weren't about, she took and hid it in the cellar under the hearthstone.

Next time the whole family went away for the day and Tanyushka wanted to get out the casket, she could see neither sight nor light. Bitterly sorry she was till, all of a sudden she felt a breath of warmth. What could it be? Where did it come from? Looking down, she caught a gleam of light through a chink in the floor. She got a fright: was the cellar on fire? she wondered. She peeped in. There was light in one corner. Picking up a bucket of water, she was just going to throw some on the fire, when she noticed there was neither flame nor smell of smoke. Groping about awhile in that corner she came on the casket. She opened it, and there were the jewels, more beautiful than ever, it seemed, shot with different coloured fires and a glow like the sun coming from them. This time Tanyushka didn't take the casket into the room. She sat there in the cellar under the hearth and played with the jewels to her heart's content.

So from that time on this was the way of it: the mother thought she had hidden the things safely away, no one knew where. But the daughter would wait till her mother's back was turned and, as soon as she was left to mind the house, she would spare an hour or so to amuse herself with her father's bride-gift. As for selling it, Nastasia wouldn't hear a word of it from her relatives.

"When the time comes for me to go begging my bread, I'll sell it."

Though she found it hard to make ends meet at times, she stuck to what she had said. So for as many years again they made ends meet somehow, and after that things started picking up. The elder children began to earn a bit, and even Tanyushka didn't sit with idle hands. She had learned, mind you, to do needlework with beads and silk, learned it so well that the very best of the gentry's needlewomen would throw up their hands in astonishment, wondering where she got the patterns from, and where she got the silken threads.

Now that had turned out by chance too. It so happened that one day a woman dropped in. A little woman, and very dark, about Nastasia's own age, with a sharp eye and every sign of being a sly-boots; you'd have to mind what you were about with her! She had a sort of unbleached linen scrip on her back and a little cherrywood pail like a pilgrim's in her hand. She began to beg Nastasia:

"Couldn't I stay a day or two with you, mistress, to rest myself? My poor legs won't carry me any further, and I've a good step to go still."

At first Nastasia was doubtful, thinking maybe the woman had been sent after the casket by someone, but after a while she took her in.

"Isn't that I'd grudge a body a place to lay her head? You won't wear out the place you lie on, I'm thinking, nor take it away with you. But it's meagre fare we have to offer you, it's onions with kvass for breakfast and kvass with onions for supper—that's all the change you'll get. If you aren't afraid of getting thin, you're welcome here, stay as long as you like."

The wayfaring woman had set down her pail already, laid her scrip on the stove-bench and was taking off the wrappings round her feet. Nastasia didn't like the look of this at all, but she said nothing, only thought to herself:

"The idea of that slut! Before you've time to bid her welcome, she's stripping off her things and laying down her scrip already."

And sure enough, the woman unslung her bag from her shoulders and beckoned to Tanyushka:

"Come, little one, and look at my needlework. And if you take a fancy to it, I'll teach it to you, too. . . That ought to be a clever eye of yours for this kind of work!"

Tanyushka went up to her and the woman handed her a little towel with silk needlework at the ends. And there was such a glowing pattern, mind you, on that towel, that it seemed brighter and warmer in the house room, all because of it. Tanyushka stared as though she couldn't tear her eyes from it, and seeing this, the woman burst out laughing:

"So it took your eye, my pretty one,

this needlework of mine? Do you want me to teach you?"

"That I do!" said the girl.

This vexed Nastasia.

"Put such things out of your head at once, I tell you! We haven't the money to buy even salt and here you go wanting to learn needlework with silk. A stock of such thread would cost a pretty penny, I shouldn't wonder!"

"Don't worry your head over that, mistress," said the wayfarer. "If your daughter shows good understanding, the stock will be found. And in return for bed and board, I'll leave her enough to last her some time. And after that you'll see for yourself: there are those who are willing to pay money for our handiwork. We don't do it for nothing. We earn enough to pay for the bit we eat."

Here Nastasia could do no more than give way.

"Well, since you're going to leave her a little stock, why shouldn't she learn? Let her, if she shows any turn for it. I'll be only too thankful to you."

So the woman set to and taught the girl. Tanyushka soon had it all at her fingers' ends as though she had known something of it before. Another thing, too, though she had never been one to show much affection even for her own folk, much less strangers, she seemed to take to this woman, clung to her in fact. Nastasia looked none too pleased at this:

"She's found herself new kindred. She wouldn't come near her mother, but she'd take to a vagabond like this woman!"

And the strange woman seemed to be teasing her on purpose, calling Tanyushka her child and her little daughter, but never using her christian name once. Tanyushka saw that her mother was hurt, but she couldn't help herself. She trusted the woman so much that she had told her about the casket.

"We have one grand thing, the precious gift my Dad left—the malachite casket. Ah, you should see the stones in that! One could look at them for ever and ever!"

"You'll show them to me some day, won't you, child?" the strange woman said.

It never entered Tanyushka's head there was anything wrong in it.

"Yes," said she, "I'll show you them when none of our folks are at home."

When that time came, Tanyushka went and called the woman into the cellar under the hearth-stone. She got out the casket; the woman took a look at the things and said:

"Put them on, then I can see them better."

Well, Tanyushka, of course, only wanted the wind of the word, as the saying is. She decked herself out, and the woman kept praising her.

"Very nice, child, very nice! Only they need a touch here and there. . ."

She went closer, prodding the stones with her finger. Whichever she touched would blaze with another light altogether. This one Tanyushka could see and that one she couldn't. After this the woman bade her:

"Now stand up straight, little girl."

Tanyushka stood up and the woman began stroking her hair and her back very gently. She stroked her all over, and then cautioned her:

"When I make you turn round, have a care and see that you don't look back at me. Keep your eyes straight ahead of you, take heed what you see, and don't open your mouth. Now then, turn!"

Tanyushka turned at her bidding, and before her she saw a place the like of which she had never set eyes on in her whole life. It might have been a church, it might have been any mortal thing. It had the highest of ceilings on great pillars of malachite. The walls were faced with malachite to the height of a man, and along the top ran a cornice with a pattern in malachite. Straight before Tanyushka, as though in a looking-glass, stood a beauty, such as you only hear tell of in fairy-tales. Her hair was like the night, her eyes were green. All decked out she was, in precious stones, and the gown she wore was of shot green velvet. And the way that gown was made was like those you'd see on queens in pictures. How she kept it on her back was a wonder: our folks from the works would die of shame to let themselves be seen in a gown of such a fashion, but the green-eyed girl stood there in it as calm as though that was the way things should be. The place was full of people, dressed like the gentry and all decorated with gold and medals. There were some with

things hung before them, and some with things tacked on behind, and some with things all round them. You could see these were the people at the top of the tree. And their women the same. With their arms bare, their breasts bare, and hung with precious stones. But what were they compared to that green-eyed one! Not one of them was fit to hold a candle to her.

Beside the green-eyed girl stood a flaxen-haired fellow. He had a squint and his ears were like a hare's. But the clothes he wore would dazzle you! Gold wasn't enough for this one, he had to stick stones on his shoes, mind you! Stones that shone so brightly you'd only find the like once in ten years, maybe. You could see with half-an-eye, this was some rich works-owner. The hare kept jabbering to the green-eyed one, but she never so much as lifted an eyebrow—he might not have been there at all.

Tanyushka stood looking at this young lady, admiring her, and then cried out all of a sudden:

"Why, those are Dad's jewels she's wearing!"—and there was nothing more to be seen.

The strange woman laughed at her.

"You didn't look your fill, child! Don't fret, don't take it to heart, you'll look at it to your heart's content some day."

Tanyushka asked her naturally enough, where this place was.

"That's the Tsar's palace," the woman told her. "It's the hall that's decorated with malachite from these parts. Malachite that your father who's dead now used to work."

"And who's that wearing Dad's stones, and who was the man like a hare with her?"

"Now this I can't tell you, but you'll find it out for yourself all in good time."

That same day, when Nastasia came home, the strange woman made herself ready for the road. She bowed low before the mistress of the house, handed the girl a bundle of silks and beads, then drew out a tiny button; it might have been of glass, it might have been of ordinary thorn-apple wood, but anyway it was just a plain cut button. The woman gave it to Tanyushka and said:

"Take this to remember me by, daughter. If you should ever forget anything in your daily work, or if you find yourself in bad trouble any time, look into it, you'll find your answer."

Saying this, she went away. And there wasn't a sign of her to be seen.

It was from this time that Tanyushka became a great hand with her needle and now she was growing up and looked fit to be a bride. The lads from the works stared into Nastasia's windows till their eyes ached, but were afraid to go near Tanyushka. For she was never kind or jolly, and anyhow, what free-born girl would care to marry a serf? Does anyone care to put their neck into that noose?

In the big houses they knew Tanyushka through her needle craft and took to sending their people to her. They would dress up a footman, younger and better-looking than the rest, give him a watch and chain and send him on some business or other to her, thinking, of course, that perhaps the girl would take a fancy to a smart young fellow. Then it would be easy enough to get hold of her. But nothing came of their schemes. Tanyushka would say what was needful about the business they had come on, but as to the footmen's own conversation, she paid no heed to it at all. If he bothered her overmuch, she would say, making fun of him:

"Better be going, young man, time for you to be off. They'll be waiting for you, afraid, to be sure, the watch may stop altogether and the brass show through on the chain. Not being used to them you may spoil them with your great rough hands."

Well, as you may think, a thing like that was the same as a douse of boiling water to a dog. The fellow would be off as if he was scaled, mumbling to himself:

"Call that a girl! That's a stone statue, a green-eyed one. We can find better than her!"

But grumble though he might, he was caught. Whoever was sent to her could never forget Tanyushka's beauty. It drew them like a spell; they would come, even if it was but to pass her window and glance in. And of a Sunday or a holiday all the bachelors from the works would be found in that street. The path under the window would be trodden smooth but Tanyushka would never so much as look out.

The neighbours had taken to blaming Nastasia:

"What's your Tanyushka setting herself up for? She doesn't go with any of our lasses and she won't look at any of our lads. Maybe it's a roŷal king's son she's waiting for, or is she thinking of being a bride of Christ and going to a nunnery?"

When Nastasia heard them casting the blame on her, all she could do was sigh and say:

"Aye, it's beyond me, gossips! She was always a queer kind of girl, and that witch woman who came here spoiled her altogether. The minute you start talking to her, she takes out this magic button of hers and stares into it and says nothing. I'd throw the button away only that it comes in handy for her work; as soon as she wants another kind of silk, she looks into it. She did show me, too, the way to do it, but it must be that my sight's failing me, for I saw nothing in it. I would give her a whipping, but she's a hardworking girl. Her work is all we have to live on, when you come to think of it. Sometimes when I turn things over in my mind I burst out crying. And she'll say: 'Mammy, I know my fate doesn't lie here. And so I welcome no one and keep away from their merrymakings. Why should I drive anyone to pining? And as for my sitting by the window, it's only because of my work. What are you scolding me for, then? What harm have I done?' So what am I to say to her?"

Still, they were doing a lot better these days. Tanyushka's needlework was all the fashion. And it wasn't only round about the works or our town that folks heard of it, but in distant parts they heard of it too and sent orders and paid big money for it. It would take a good man all his time to earn as much.

Then trouble came upon them. The house went on fire. It happened at night. The paddock, the byre, the horse, the cow, and all manner of tackle were burnt. Nothing was left to them but what they stood up in when they ran out. Nastasia remembered the casket, though, and snatched it up as she was running out. Next day she said to them:

"Well, we've come to the end of our tether, the casket will have to be sold."

"Yes, better sell it, Mummy," the sons declared, both speaking at once. "Only don't let it go cheap."

Tanyushka took a glance at her button out of the corner of her eye and there the green-eyed one glimmered: "Let them sell it, sell it," she seemed to say. It was a bitter pill for Tanyushka to swallow, but what could she do? No matter what she did, her father's keepsake would go to the green-eyed one. She sighed and said:

"Well, I suppose if we have to sell it, we might as well do it first as last."

She didn't even bother to take a last farewell look at the stones; particularly since the family was sheltering under a neighbour's roof at the time, there was no place to lay out your jewels there.

As soon as they made up their minds to sell, the trader-folks got wind of it and were on the spot in no time. Who knows: maybe one of them had set the place afire himself, so as to lay hands on the casket. People are up to anything, you know. Seeing that the children were grown-up now, they offered more for it, some five hundred roubles, some seven and one even went up to a thousand. It was a lot of money to pay in those parts, you could set up for yourself very well.

So Nastasia asked for two thousand. People kept coming, bargaining with her. They'd add a bit to the price every time, and never let on to each other they couldn't come to any agreement. For it was a tempting morsel, and none of them wanted to yield to another. And while they were shilly-shallying and dilly-dallying, a new steward was sent to Polevaya.

Now there are times when these stewards keep their jobs a long while, but in those years there was a lot of chopping and changing. "Smelly Goat" who was there in Stepan's time, was sacked by the old master because he stank. Then came Fried Backside—they called him that because the workers sat him on a hot mould once. After him came Severyan Slaughter. That one again was sent to an empty mine by the Mistress of the Copper Mountain. Two or three more took their turns after that, and then came the one I am going to tell you about.

He'd been, they say, in foreign parts and could talk in all manner of tongues, better than he could in Russian. The only word you could make out clearly was „flog." He'd drag the word out in a high voice: "Fl-l-og!" If anything went wrong, no matter what it was, all he'd do was shout:

"F-l-og!" So he was nicknamed "Floggy."

When it came to the point, this Floggy wasn't the worst of them. He might shout, but he didn't drive folks too hard. The floggers thereabouts didn't have much to do. Folks found they could take it easier while Floggy was there.

The thing was this, you see. By that time the old master was a good bit the worse for wear, in fact, could hardly drag a leg afterhim. So he made up his mind to marry off his son to some countess or other there. Well, but as it turned out, the young master had a light-of-love he thought a terrible lot of. What was to be done? It was a bit awkward. What would the new kinsfolk say? So the old master started to talk this woman —the son's fancy-woman—into marrying a musician. This musician used to work for the old master, taught the children music and some foreign tongue, as befitting their station in life.

"Wouldn't it be better for you," says he to her, "instead of living the way you do in ill-fame, to marry someone? I'd give you a dowry and send your husband to live in Polevaya. Things are thriving there, all he has to do is keep a tight hand on the folks. He'll have enough sense for that, surely, musician though he is. And you'll have the best of good living. You'll be the first lady of the land there, as you might say. A highly respected couple. What fault can you find with that?"

She was easy enough to talk round—or maybe she had fallen out with the young master, or maybe she was a sly one. But anyhow she says:

"It's just what I've been dreaming of this long time, only I hadn't the face to say so."

The musician, of course, was dead set against it at first.

"I'll have nothing to do with her," he says. "She's got too bad a name. She's nought but a trollop, when all's said and done."

But that was a sly old fellow, the master. No wonder he owned a works. He got that musician into his hands while you'd be looking round you. Whether he frightened him or whether he flattered him somehow, or maybe made him drunk,—I couldn't rightly tell you, that was their business. But the wedding was fixed very soon and after that the young couple went off to Polevaya. That was how Floggy came to our works. He didn't stay long and he wasn't a bad sort—why should I say he was when he wasn't? Afterwards, when Phiz-and-a-half who was one of our works' folks came in his place, we were sorry we'd lost even Floggy.

It fell out that he and his wife went there just when the traders were coming bargaining with Nastasia over the casket. Floggy's wife was something to look at too, all red and white, just what you'd expect a fancy-girl to be, in short. Naturally, the young master wouldn't pick a bad-looking one. He had his pick of them, you may be sure. It came to Floggy's wife's ears that a casket was being sold and, as was only natural, she thought to herself: "I'll have a look at that myself, maybe it's something worth having." So she put on her things and off she went. The works' horses were always ready for the likes of them, so she drove to Nastasia's.

"Now, my dear," says she, "show me what manner of stones you're selling."

Nastasia got out the casket and showed them to her. And Floggy's wife opened her eyes. She had been reared in Saint Petersburg itself, and been in foreign parts with the young master, so she knew what was what in trinkets. "What's this?" she thinks to herself. "The Tsaritsa never had such jewels in her life and here in a godforsaken spot like Polevaya you'd find them in the hands of a woman who had her house burned down. Now if only this bargain doesn't fall through!"

"How much would you be wanting for them?" she asks.

"I'd take two thousand for them," says Nastasia.

"Well, put on your things, my dear, and bring this casket of yours along with you. You'll get your full price, never fear."

But Nastasia wasn't inclined for that.

"It's not the custom hereabouts," says she, "for bread to go seeking the belly. Fetch the money here and the casket's yours."

Then my lady sees the kind of woman she has to deal with; off she goes at once to get that money, only waiting to tell her:

"But see that you don't sell it, my dear, while I'm gone."

Says Nastasia:

"Oh, you can depend on that. I won't go back on my word. I'll wait for you till eventide, and after that it'll have to go my way."

When Floggy's wife had gone, the traders came running all at once. They'd been watching, you see.

"What are you thinking of doing?" they ask Nastasia.

"I've sold it," she tells them.

"For how much?"

"For two thousand—the price I asked."

"You don't say so!" they all shout. "Have you lost your wits or what? Fancy letting things slip into strangers' hands and denying them to your own folks!"

And with that they started to put up the price. But Nastasia wasn't to be caught with that bait.

"If you're in the habit of twisting and turning," says she, "I've never done the like. I've given my word to the woman and there's an end of it."

It wasn't long before Floggy's wife was back again. She brought the money, it passed from her hands to Nastasia, then she was off home with the casket. But as she was crossing the threshold to go home she met Tanyushka coming in. The girl had been out somewhere, and the bargain had been made without her. She saw the strange lady coming out with the casket in her hand. Tanyushka stared at her, thinking this wasn't the same one she'd seen that time. But Floggy's wife stood gaping at her:

"What deviltry's this? Who is she?" she asks.

"They call her my daughter," Nastasia tells her. "She's the heiress of this same casket you've just bought. And I wouldn't have sold it if we weren't at the end of our tether. She's been fond of playing with those ornaments since she was a little thing. They were her toys and she used to tell us how nice and happy and warm she felt with them. Ah, well, what's the use of talking: what's lost is gone for ever!"

"You shouldn't take it that way, my dear," says Floggy's wife. "I'll find the right place for these stones."

But she's thinking to herself:

"It's a mercy that green-eyed one doesn't know her own powers. If she so much as showed herself in Saint Petersburg, she could turn the Tsars around her little finger. I must take care my poor fool Turchaninov doesn't catch a sight of her."

And there they parted.

What must Floggy's wife do when she reaches home but boast of her bargain?

"And now, my fine lad, I don't need Turchaninov himself, much less you. Let me just hear a wrong word and I'll be off. I'll go to Saint Petersburg or better, maybe, abroad, and sell the casket, and buy myself two dozen such husbands as you if I want them."

Boasting and bragging like this, she had a fancy to show off her new purchases on herself. That's a woman all over! She ran to the looking-glass and the first thing she put on was the head-dress. Oh, oh! What was the matter? She couldn't abide it another minute, it got tangled in her hair and tore it. It was as much as she could do to take it off. But that didn't satisfy her—she must put on the ear-rings: they nearly tore her ear-lobes off. She thrust her finger into a ring, it stuck like a vice and could hardly be washed off with soap. Her husband laughed at her—these things are not for you to wear, it seems!

Thinks she to herself:

"What can be the reason of it? I ought to go to town and show them to a jeweller, let him make the things to fit me. Only I must watch he doesn't change the stones."

No sooner said than done. She drove off next morning. It's not very far, you know, when the works' horses are taking you. She found out who was the most reliable jeweller and went to him. He was an old, old man, this jeweller, but a match for anyone at his trade. He took a good look at the casket, asked where she bought it. She told him as much as she knew. Then he looked at the casket again, but didn't so much as look at the stones in it.

"I won't have anything to do with it," says he. "Not for any money you could offer would I do it ! This isn't the work of masters hereabouts. It wouldn't be convenient for us to compete with them."

My lady didn't understand, of course, what the trouble was; she just gave a sniff and ran off to other jewellers. And it was as if they were all in the know: they would look at the casket and admire it, but they wouldn't so much as glance at the stones, and none of them would

have anything to do with the job. Then the lady bethought herself of a trick she could play on them, and she said she'd brought them from Saint Petersburg, where the whole thing had been made. Well, the jeweller she told this yarn to, only laughed at her.

"I know only too well the place where this casket was made and I've heard a deal about the men who made it. It's beyond the likes of us to compete with them. Whoever the things were made to fit can wear them; they won't suit anyone else, do what you will."

Then she saw, although she didn't grasp properly what the matter was, that there was something wrong, and that the craftsmen were afraid of someone. She remembered what the woman had told her about her daughter being fond of wearing the things.

"Is it for that green-eyed creature, then, they were made? What a misfortune!"

But after turning things over in her mind, she said to herself:

"What's that to me! I'll sell the whole lot to some rich fool of a woman. Let her torment herself with them, and I'll have money in my pocket!" And with that she went home to Polevaya.

When she got there news had come that the old master was dead. The old fox had dealt very cunningly with Floggy and his son's fancy-woman, but death had out-foxed him. So he hadn't had time to see his son married, and now the son had everything. It wasn't long before Floggy's wife got a letter. It said "this, that and the other, my dear, and with the spring floods I'll come to visit my works and take you back with me, and we'll get rid of that musician of yours." This came to Floggy's ears, and he raised a row. Naturally, he was offended at being treated like this before people. Here he was, after all, in a big position, the steward, and yet the master thought nothing of taking his wife from him. It drove Floggy to drink. He used to drink—with the employees, of course. They were only too glad, for the sake of a free drink. Once when they were all on the spree, one of them started bragging:

"There's a rare beauty that's grown up here at the works. You'd hardly find her like anywhere."

"And who may that be? Whereabouts does she live?" Floggy asked.

Well, they told him, not forgetting to mention the casket, too—that it was from her family his wife had bought it.

"I wouldn't mind having a look at her," he said and his cronies found an excuse for going.

"Well, what's to prevent us going this very minute to see if they've put up the new house properly? Though they're free and not serfs, still they're living on the land belonging to the works. They could be made to feel the pinch if it came to that."

So two or three of them went along with Floggy. They fetched a chain and started measuring it all up to see whether Nastasia hadn't perhaps taken a bit of someone else's plot, and whether there wasn't an inch or so extra between the stakes. To cut a long story short, they were looking for something to find fault with. Then they went into the house and there was Tanyushka, alone. Floggy took one look, and was struck dumb. Never in any foreign country had he seen beauty like this before. There he stood stockstill like a fool while she sat as quiet as though it didn't concern her. Floggy got over his surprise after a while and asked:

"What are you doing?"

"I'm doing needlework, it's an order I got," she said, showing it to him.

"Then could I order something, too?" Floggy asked.

"Why not, if we come to an agreement about the price."

"Could you," Floggy asked, "make me a likeness of yourself in silk embroidery?"

Tanyuskha took a look at her button on the quiet, and saw the green-eyed one signing to her to take the order and pointing to herself. So Tanyushka said:

"I won't make my own likeness, but I have someone in mind. She's all dressed in precious stones and wears a gown like a queen's. I could do her for you. Only it'll cost a pretty sum."

"Have no doubts about that, I'd pay a hundred or even two if there's a likeness to you."

"There may be a likeness in the face, but the clothes will be other than mine."

So they agreed upon a hundred roubles. She told him it would take a month. Only Floggy would run in every now and again to ask her how his order was going on, though of course he wasn't thinking of that at all. He was fairly mazed with

her and she never so much as noticed him. She would say perhaps two or three words in all the time he was there and that was the whole conversation. Floggy's cronies started to make fun of him.

"You'll never get the better of that one. You're only wearing out good shoe-leather."

The time came when Tanyushka had the picture finished and ready. Floggy looked at it and saw—good gracious me! It was the living image of her, clothes and jewels and all. Well, of course, he handed her three notes each for a hundred, but Tanyushka gave two of them back.

"We aren't in the habit of taking presents. We earn our bread," she said.

Off runs Floggy home, admiring the portrait all the way. He kept it out of his wife's sight though. And after that he did less drinking and took more interest in the works.

In the spring-time the young master arrived. And he drove out to Polevaya. The people were all gathered together, and first prayers were offered up, then the feasting in the big house began. Two barrels of wine were rolled up for the people to remember the old master by and welcome the young one. They broached them.

All the Turchaninovs were good at such things. As soon as you'd capped the master's treat with ten of your own, God knows what sort of a holiday would come out of it. And when they came to look at things soberly, they found they'd wasted their last penny, and there was nothing to see for it. Next day the people had to go back to work, but there was feasting again in the master's house. That's how things went. They'd sleep it off and then back to their carousals again. Some would go out in boats, others go riding through the woods, and there'd be music and many an amusement like that. But Floggy was drunk the whole time. The master sent the most desperate fellows to him on purpose to pump it into him till he could take no more. Well, they did their best to please the new master.

Now Floggy, drunk though he was, knew well what was in the wind. He felt awkward before the guests, and he stood up and said at the table:

"It's no great matter to me that the master wants to take my wife away from me. Let him take her! I don't need the like of her. Here's the one I've got," and he whipped out of his pocket the portrait done in silks. They all gasped, it took their breath away; and his wife sat gaping, she couldn't shut her mouth. The master, too, sat dumbfounded as though he couldn't take his eyes off it. And he was curious about it.

"Who's that?" he said.

Floggy roared laughing at that and said:

"If you were to give me as much gold as would cover this table, I wouldn't tell you!"

Well, say what you like, but of course our works' people knew Tanyushka straight away. And they all started, one trying to get ahead of the other, telling the master who she was. Floggy's wife waved them away:

"What are you talking about! It's all a pack of nonsense! Where would a works' lass get a gown and jewels like these? As for the picture—my husband brought it from foreign parts. He showed it me before we were married, I remember. There's nothing he wouldn't say now, of course, drunk as he is. Soon he won't even remember himself. See, he's all bloated with drink!"

Floggy could see that his wife was none too pleased, so he teased her the more.

"It's a shame for you, a downright shame, to tell such a rigmarole, throwing dust in the master's eyes! What picture did I ever show you? It's needlework done for me here! By that same girl they're talking about! As for the gown, I can't say, and I'm not going to lie about it. You can put on what gown you like. But the stones they certainly had. You have them yourself now, locked up in the cupboard. You bought them for two thousand and couldn't wear them. It's plain to be seen that a Circassian saddle doesn't suit an ordinary cow, as the saying is. The whole works knows you bought them."

Now the master, when he heard stones mentioned, demanded:

"Show them to me."

He was a lean-witted fellow, and a spendthrift. A rich man's heir, to put it in two words. And he had a great fancy for jewels. He himself had nothing to boast about, neither height nor voice, but at least he had jewels. Wherever he heard a good stone was to be had, he would start bargaining for it straight away. And he knew what was what in

stones, too, notwithstanding he was none too bright.

Floggy's wife saw then that there was no help for it. She brought the casket to show him. After the first glance he said:

"How much do you want for it?"

She blurted out a price you never heard of. The master started bargaining. They came to an agreement on half the price she named and the master signed a paper promising to pay it. He hadn't the sum with him, you understand. He set the casket before him on the table and then he said:

"Send for that wench you were telling me about."

They ran to fetch Tanyushka. She made no to-do about it, but went along at once, thinking maybe it was a big order for some work. She came into the room. There were a lot of people and she saw that same hare she had seen before. He was sitting with the casket, her father's bride-gift, in front of him. Tanyushka recognized the master at once and asked him:

"Why did you send for me?"

The master couldn't open his mouth. He sat goggling at her. That was all he could do. Then after a while he found something to say:

"Are these your jewels?"

"They were once, but they're hers now," she said pointing to Floggy's wife.

"They're mine now," the master bragged.

"That's your own business."

"Would you like me to give you them back?"

"I've nothing to give in return."

"But you'll put them on, at least? I've a fancy to see how jewels like these look on someone."

"Well, I don't mind putting them on," said Tanyushka.

She took the casket, chose some ornaments, matched them (you could see she was used to it), and put them on quickly. The master could only gape and gasp. "Ah!" and "Oh!"—he couldn't find anything else to say. She stood there a few minutes decked out and then she asked him:

"You've looked your fill? Maybe

that'll do now? Because I've no time for standing idle, I've work to do."

Then and there, before all the gathering, the master said:

"Marry me! Do you consent?"

Tanyushka only laughed:

"It's not becoming in a gentleman to say such things," and she took off the trinkets and went home.

But the master wouldn't leave things like that. Next day he came a-wooing. He begged and prayed of Nastasia: "Wed your daughter to me." But Nastasia said:

"I won't force my will on her. Let her do as she thinks fit. Only it seems to me. she's not for the likes of you."

Tanyushka said nothing, only listened attentively. Then she said:

"I'll tell you what I'll do... I've heard tell that in the Tsar's palace there's a hall all done in the malachite my father mined. If you'll show me the Tsaritsa in that same hall, I'll marry you."

The master was ready, of course, to agree to anything. He prepared to go to St. Petersburg straight away, and take Tanyushka with him.

"I'll give you horses to take you there," he said. But Tanyushka said:

"'Tisn't the custom hereabouts for the bride to drive to her wedding behind the bridegroom's horses and then we're not bride and bridegroom yet. When you've kept your promise, we'll talk about it."

"Then when will you come to St. Petersburg yourself?"

"On the first of October," she said, "for the Feast of the Intercession. You need have no doubts about it, and now go on your way."

The master left. He didn't take Floggy's wife with him, or even as much as look at her. And as soon as he got home to Petersburg, he spread the news about the town that he had such-and-such a bride, and such-and-such jewels. And he showed off the casket to many a one. Well, there was great curiosity as to what the bride looked like. When it was getting on for autumn he got a home ready for Tanyushka, and gowns and shoes of every description. She sent word that she was there, living with some widow woman or other on the outskirts of the town. The master went off there at once, of course.

"What are you thinking about? To live in such a place? And you with a first-rate home all ready and waiting for you?"

Said Tanyuskha:

"I'm well enough here."

The talk of the jewels and Turchaninov's bride spread all over the town till it reached the ears of the Tsaritsa herself.

"Turchaninov must show me this bride of his—there's a terrible lot of talk about her."

The master went to Tanyushka again to tell her to prepare herself, to make a gown fit for the palace and put on the jewels out of the casket. But Tanyushka only said:

"It's not your place to worry about the gown I'll put on my back, but I'll take the stones for the time being. And don't think of sending your carriage and horses for me. I'll have my own. Only wait for me on the palace steps."

"Where would she get horses and a gown fit for the palace?" the master wondered, but he didn't dare to ask.

So they got ready for the palace. Carriages rolled up with people in silks and velvets. And there was the master Turchaninov, who had come in right good time, hanging about the steps, awaiting of his bride. Others were anxious for a sight of her too, and they also hung about. Tanyushka put on her jewels, tied her kerchief over her head just as they wore them in our works, threw her sheepskin cloak around her shoulders and went to the palace, taking her time. Well, the folks saw her, and wondering where such a one could hail from, followed her. She came to the palace, the footmen there wouldn't let her in; people from works aren't allowed, they said. Turchaninov caught sight of his bride as she was coming up to the palace and felt ashamed all of a sudden before his acquaintances—here was his bride coming afoot and in such a cloak. So he slunk away and hid. But Tanyushka flung open her cloak and the footmen in livery saw the gown she wore! The Tsaritsa herself hadn't anything to touch it! They let her in without any more ado. And when she had taken off her kerchief and cloak, they were all agog:

"Who's she? What country is she queen of?"

The master Turchaninov popped up at this moment and declared:

"This is my bride."

Tanyushka gave him a stern look and said:

"As to that—we'll see! What made you deceive me: you weren't waiting on the steps, as you said."

Here, twist and turn as the master might, he had put his foot in it. And he had to make his excuses and all the rest of it.

Then, in they went to the palace halls where people were allowed. But seeing this wasn't the right place, Tanyushka looked blacker than ever at Turchaninov.

"What roguery is this?" she demanded. "You were told to take me into the hall that was done in the malachite my father mined!"

And off she went through the palace, as though she was at home. And all the senators, generals and the rest of the grandfolk followed her, thinking to themselves:

"What's all this? It must be there we've been commanded to go."

A big crowd of people had gathered by now, and they couldn't take their eyes off Tanyushka. She stood with her back to the malachite wall, waiting. Turchaninov was hanging around her of course, babbling of this and that—it wasn't the proper thing, they'd been told to wait for the Tsaritsa in the other room. But Tanyushka stood there without a stir of her, the master might just as well not have been there at all.

The Tsaritsa came into the hall where she had commanded them to gather. She looked about her—there wasn't a soul. Her eavesdroppers ran and told her that Turchaninov's betrothed had led them all into the malachite hall. The Tsaritsa grumbled at that, you may be sure: who was thi sgirl to take so much upon herself! She stamped her foot and was rather put out. So she went into the malachite hall. They all curtsied and bowed to her, but Tanyushka stood there and never a stir out of her.

"Now show me this wilful girl, Turchaninov's betrothed!" the Tsaritsa cried.

When Tanyushka heard that up went her eyebrows, and she said to the young master:

"What's this new trick of yours? I told you to show the Tsaritsa to me in this hall and instead of that you've contrived to show me to her. More fraud! I want to see no more of you! Here, take back your jewels!"

With these words she leaned against the malachite wall and melted into it. And all that was left of her was the glittering stones sparkling in the wall where head, neck and arms had been.

It gave them all a terrible fright and the Tsaritsa fell down like dead on the floor. They were all kept busy bringing her round. Then, when all the commotion had died down, Turchaninov's friends said to him:

"You might at least collect those stones of yours, else they'll be stolen. You'll never set eyes on them again. Don't forget this is a palace; people know what things are worth!"

Turchaninov made to grab his jewels. But everyone he touched turned to a drop of water in his hand. Some drops were clear as a crystal tear, some were yellow and some were dark and thick like blood. So he had nothing. Then, glancing down, he caught sight of a button on the floor. Just a very ordinary button, made of plain-cut bottle-glass. Nothing to look at indeed. He picked it up without thinking, mazed as he was with his trouble. And just as he took it in his hand, he saw in it a green-eyed beauty in a malachite gown, all decked out with precious stones. And the green-eyed one was laughing heartily at him:

"Aye, you poor witless, squinting hare! That you should think you could have me! Are you a match for me?"

Well, after that the master lost what few wits he had left, but he didn't throw away the button. Time and again he'd look into it, always seeing the same thing, the green-eyed girl, laughing and saying insulting things. What he went through drove him to drinking and carousing, and he got into debt. It was in his time that our works all but came under the hammer.

Floggy, as soon as he had been sacked, took to the taverns. He drank the last stitch off his back, but he stuck to the portrait. Where it went afterwards, nobody knows.

Floggy's wife did none too well, either. Try to get your money on an IOU note when all the copper and iron in the place is mortgaged!

Neither sight nor light of Tanyushka was ever seen at the works from that day. It seemed as though she had never been.

Nastasia grieved for her, of course, though not overmuch. Tanyushka, you see, though she'd been a bread winner in the family, had always seemed a stranger to Nastasia.

And then to tell the truth, she had her hands full. Her sons had got married by that time and soon there were grandchildren to be looked after. You have to watch what you're about when there's a houseful; see to that one, feed the other one. No time for pining there.

As for the bachelors round about, they couldn't forget Tanyushka for a long while. They'd hang about under her window, waiting to see if maybe she'd look out. But they got tired of waiting at last.

They married, of course, but even after that they'd call her to mind:

"What a girl that used to live near our works! You wouldn't see another one the like of her in your whole life."

There was a queer thing noticed after that though. Folks did say the Mistress of the Copper Mountain had a double; so of course people saw two girls in malachite green gowns side by side.

THE FLOWER OF STONE

The marble workers weren't the only ones famed for this kind of carving. There were those in our works who, I've heard tell, had the same skill. The only difference was that they had to plod through more malachite, since there was plenty of it and no better kind to be found anywhere. Well, and out of this malachite they would make some rare things, such things, in fact, that you'd wonder in astonishment where the craftsman had got the knack.

In those days Prokopyich was the first and foremost of all master-craftsmen hereabouts. None better. But he was getting on in years.

So the master gave the steward orders to apprentice some youngsters to Prokopyich to be learning the trade meanwhile.

"Let them learn all they can from him down to the smallest details."

The only drawback was Prokopyich: whether it was that he hated to part with his trade secrets, or whether there was something else behind it—he taught them badly. Everything by fits and starts, with more cuffs over the ear than anything else. He'd raise lumps all over a young chap's head, nearly wring his ears off and then complain to the steward:

"This lad here ain't no good. . . He hasn't got the eye for it, and he ain't handy. Nothing'll come of him."

And the steward, who'd evidently been told to humour Prokopyich a bit, would say:

"Well, if he won't do, he won't do, and that's all about it. We'll just have to send you another. . ." and they'd fix him up with another lad.

Well, the lads hereabouts got wind of this trade and the manner of teaching it, and well beforehand they'd start howling and begging not to be sent to old Prokopyich. Naturally, their mothers and fathers weren't any too anxious either, to send their own youngsters into such torment and ill-treatment, so they used to try and shield them as best they could. Then, too, it was an unhealthy trade, this working in malachite. Downright poison it was, and folks tried to keep away from it.

Still, the steward bore the master's orders in mind—to apprentice some youngsters to Prokopyich. The old man would worry a lad out of his wits and then hand him back to the steward with:

"This one won't do."

At long last it put the steward out of all patience:

"How long is this going on? This one won't do and that one won't do! When will you find one that'll do? Teach this one!"

But Prokopyich stood out.

"What's it to me?" he says. "I may teach him ten years, but nothing'll ever come o' that lad . . ."

"So who else do you want?"

"You needn't send me anyone for all I care. . . I shan't be lonely for want of them, not likely."

A sight of lads passed through the steward's and Prokopyich's hands in their time, but it was always the same story; all the benefit the lad got out of it was lumps on his head, and all he had inside his head was wondering how to get away. Things came to a pass where they would spoil things so as to make Prokopyich drive them away.

That was how it came at long last to Danila the Starveling. He was an orphan—maybe twelve years old at that time, maybe more. He could hardly drag a leg after him, it seemed. He was so thin and puny, 'twas a wonder how he kept the life in him. But his face was nice and clean-looking, and he had curly hair and blue eyes. So he was taken into the master's house to do odd jobs—handling the snuff-box or the handkerchief or running here and there on errands. The only thing was, the orphan lad didn't seem to have any knack for this kind of thing. Other youngsters in his place would be off like the wind. They'd be standing at attention with a "what's your orders, sir," before the word was out of the master's mouth. But Daniluskho would get into a corner and fix his eyes on some picture or ornament and stand gaping. They'd be calling for him all over the place and he'd never so much as stir. At first, of course, they beat him, just to see if they could teach him, but after a while they washed their hands of him:

"He's daft, that's all! And slow! He'll never make a servant."

Still, they never sent him to the works or the mines: he wouldn't have lasted a week. The steward put him to being a herd-boy. And here he turned out to be no good at all: it seemed as though, no matter how he tried, things would go wrong with him. He was always thinking about something else; he'd be sitting staring at the grass or a weed while the cows were well away over yonder. The old herdman was the mildest and kindest of men and pitied the poor orphan boy, but there were times when even he would curse.

"What's to become of you, Danilko? You'll ruin yourself and bring my old bones to a flogging by your queer ways. Now what sort of behaviour's this? What is it your head runs on all the time?"

"I don't know myself, Grandad. 'Tain't running on nothing most times, maybe. I was only watching an insect of some kind creeping over a leaf; 'twas a kind of blue-grey and under its wings it was yellow and the leaf was broad as broad, saw-toothed round the edge and with a bit of a frill turned up to show the darker side, and the middle was green so bright you'd think it had just been painted fresh. And the little blue insect went creeping over the green."

"Well, and ain't you the big fool now, Danilko? I never heard the like! What's it to you which way an insect's made? Let her crawl, that's what she's there for, and your job is to watch the cows. You just look out, I'm telling you, and put all this rubbish out of your head, else I'll tell the steward on you!"

One thing, though, Danilko was good at. He learned to play the horn in a way the old fellow could never dream of. You'd think 'twas proper music. When evening was coming on and the cows would be driven in, the girls and women would beg him:

"Play us a song, Danilushko, do!"

He'd start to play. His were all songs the folks had never heard before. And now 'twas the whispering woods, now 'twas the purling stream and the birds a-calling; and very nice it all came out, too. The women got fond of Danilushko all because of those songs of his; one would mend his things for him, another would spare him a length of linen to wind around his feet and legs, another would make him a new shirt. . . As for bite and sup, he always had that, it went without saying, each one tried to give him plenty, the tastiest they had. These songs were after the old herdsman's heart, too. It was this that brought down misfortune on both of them. Danilushko would forget everything while he was

playing—as though there was never a cow to mind. And that same playing brought him misfortune.

He must have gone on playing a good while, and the old herdsman had a bit of a nap. Some of the cows strayed away from the herd. When they were calling the herd home that evening they looked and saw that this one and that one was missing. And went looking for them. But what sense was there in that? They'd been grazing the herd near Elnichnaya, a lonely out-of-the way spot if ever there was one, a place wolves used to haunt. So they found only one cow. Then they drove the herd homeward and told their tale, how it had happened. People came from the works, too, and went out in search for the cows, but they didn't find any.

What the punishment was in those days everyone knows. For every fault you had to bare your back. The worst of it was this time that one of the lost cows was from the steward's own farmyard. No need to look for mercy from him. First they stretched out the old fellow, then they came to Danilushko, thin and puny as he was. The master's flogger even tried to excuse the lad:

"He'll melt away at the first blow, and I shouldn't wonder if he gave up the ghost altogether."

Still he gave Danilushko a blow and didn't spare him. But never a cry did the boy let out. The man gave him another—he held his tongue, a third—still there wasn't a whimper out of him. This made the flogger mad, and he laid on with all his might, shouting:

"I'll thrash all that out of you, dumb as you are! You'll give tongue yet! You will, I warrant you!"

Danilushko was trembling from head to foot, tears were rolling down his face, but never a whimper came from him. He bit his lip and braced himself. So at last he went limp without anyone hearing a word from him. The steward—he was there all the time—of course, was astonished.

"There's a patient fellow we've found at last! Now I know what to do with him, if he pulls through this."

Danilushko was laid up awhile. It was Granny Vikhorikha who set him on his feet again. This was an old woman, they say, who had a great name in our works for being as good as a doctor. She knew what each herb was good for, which cured the toothache and which broken bones. Well, she knew everything there was to be known about it. She'd gather the herbs herself at the proper time of the year, when that particular herb was at its best. From some roots she'd make a brew and mix it with ointments.

Danilushko lived well at old Granny Vikhorikha's and no mistake. She was a kind-hearted, gabby old creature with a whole houseful of grasses, herbs, roots, dried flowers and the like hanging everywhere. Danilushko, being always curious about grasses, would ask what this one was called and where that one grew, what kind of a flower it had. And the old crone would tell him gladly.

Once Danilushko asked her:

"Do you know every flower in these parts, Granny?"

"Well, I wouldn't go for to brag and boast," says she, "but I fancy I know all that have been known so far."

"Why, are there some that aren't known yet?" he goes on.

"Yes," says she, "there are. You've heard of the fern that's supposed to bloom on St. John's day. That's a magic flower. It can be used for finding treasure. But it's unwholesome for folks. And on saxifrage you sometimes see a roving light. Catch it and all locks are open to you. It's a thieves' flower. And besides all these I've heard tell of a flower of stone. It's said to grow on the malachite hill and be at its best at Snakes' Holiday. Unlucky the one who ever sets eyes on the stone flower."

"Why, in what way is he unlucky, Granny?"

"As to that, I don't rightly know, child. Only that's what I've been told."

Danilushko might have been left in peace a while longer at Granny Vikhorikha only that the steward's spies were watching him. They saw he was able to get about a bit and they ran and told the steward straight away. So he sent for Danilushko and said:

"You can go to old Prokopyich now—to learn how to work malachite. It's the very kind of work for you."

There was no help for it. Danilushko started off; he was so weak still that the first breath of wind would blow him over. Prokopyich looked at him and said:

"As if the 'prentices weren't bad enough without this! If those great sound healthy louts couldn't stand the teaching here, what could I do with a fellow like that who can hardly stand on his feet?"

So Prokopyich went to the steward and said:

"This isn't the kind I want. You could easy kill a chap like that if you let fly at him, and then you'd have to answer for him."

But the steward wouldn't even listen to him.

"He's been given you—teach him, and don't let us have any more of your gab. He's a strong lad, I'm telling you. Never mind if he looks weedy."

"Well, that's your business, I suppose," says Prokopyich. "So long as I'm told. I'll teach him, only I'm wondering whether they won't call me to answer for it."

"There's no one to call you to answer for anything. He's alone in the world. Do as you like with him," the steward said.

Prokopyich came home and found Danilushko standing by the bench, turning a slab of malachite over in his hands. There was a cut made on one side where the edge had to be taken off. Danilushko was standing staring at this spot and shaking his head ruefully over it. Prokopyich wondered what this young greenhorn could be staring at. So he demanded very sternly, as his custom was:

"What are you doing there? Who asked you to finger a job? Eh? What are you looking at, anyway?"

Danilushko said then:

"It seems to me, Grandad, the edge shouldn't be taken off on that side. See, the pattern runs this way and it'll be cut into."

That made Prokopyich a bit mad and he started to shout, of course:

"What! Who are you, I'd like to know? A master-craftsman? You've never even been apprenticed yet and you take it on yourself to judge. What can you understand about it?"

"I understand enough to see this thing's spoilt," Danilushko said.

"Who spoiled it? Eh? The idea of you young greenhorn talking to me, the best master in the place, like this! I'll spoil you. . . there'll be nothing left of you!"

He went on like this, shouting and fussing, but of course, didn't lay a finger on Danilushko. The fact was, he'd been puzzling over that slab himself, wondering which side to take the edge off. And Danilushko had hit the nail on the head. So when Prokopyich had done shouting, he turned to the lad and said, in a good-natured way this time:

"Now then, new-found master, show us how you'd like to have it?"

Then Danilushko started to explain and to show him how he thought it should be done.

"This is how the pattern would go; or better still, narrow down the slab, take the edge off where the margin is plain, unpatterned, and just leave a little twist at the top."

Prokopyich, as usual, shouted:

"Well, well. . . What do you think of that? A lot you understand! I'm sure. See you don't spill to much of all you've got."

But he was thinking to himself at the same time:

"The lad's right. You could make something out of a lad like that. Only how would you teach him? First bit of a tap you'd give him, he'd start turning his toes up, very likely."

Thinking this over, he asked:

"Who do you belong to, you with all the learning?"

Danilushko told him about himself, that he was an orphan: "I don't remember my mother, and as for my father, I don't know who he was. They call me Danilushko the Starveling—I don't know what my father's name might be." He told how he'd been among servants and why they'd got rid of him; how he'd gone out with the cows last summer and got beaten.

Prokopyich felt sorry for him.

"I can see you haven't had much of a life of it, my lad, and now you've fallen into my hands. In this craft of ours you have to be very particular."

Then he made out he was angry again and growled:

"Now, that'll do, that'll do, I say! See what a chatter-box you are! Anybody can work with their tongues instead of their hands. Chitter-chatter all evening. Nice kind of apprentice you'll make! I'll see tomorrow what you're made of. Now sit down and have your supper and then it'll be time to go to bed."

Prokopyich was living alone. His wife

had died long since. An old neighbour woman Mitrofanovna used to do his housekeeping for him. In the morning she'd come in and cook something, and tidy up, and in the evening he looked after himself.

When they had finished their meal, he said:

"Lie down there on that bench."

Danilushko took off the rags round his legs, put his bast-satchel under his head and covered himself with his coat. He huddled up, shivering a bit, for it was cold in the house, being autumn, but he fell fast asleep pretty soon. Prokopyich lay down but couldn't get to sleep; he couldn't get that talk of the malachite pattern out of his head. He turned and tossed a while, then got up and lit a candle. Went up to his lathe, he started to measure the slab of malachite this way and that. He would cover one edge, then the other, add on a bit to the margin, take off a bit, turn it this way, then the other, and still it always turned out that the lad had understood the pattern better.

"There's a starveling orphan for you!" Prokopyich wondered to himself. "So far he's seen nothing and learned nothing, yet he could give a hint to an old craftsman. There's an eye for you! What an eye!"

Then he stole into the little lumber-room and dragged a pillow and a big sheepskin cloak out of it, slipped the pillow softly under Danilushko's head and covered him with the cloak.

"Sleep well, Sharp Eyes!"

The lad didn't wake, only turned over on the other side, stretched himself out under the cloak, feeling the warmth of it, and started to snore and whistle through his nose.

Prokopyich hadn't any youngsters of his own, and this Danilushko had gone straight to his heart. The old craftsman stood there, looking down at him, and Danilushko slept on without a care, whistling through his nose. Now Prokopyich felt anxious to see this young lad on his feet properly, so that he wouldn't be so thin and weakly.

"It's hardly the thing for a lad in his state of health to take up our trade, where there's dust and poison; it'll send him into a decline in no time. He ought to have a rest first and pick up and fill out a bit. Then I'll start teaching him his trade. Looks as though there'll be some sense in teaching him."

Next day he said to the boy:

"You can lend a hand about the place first. That's the way I always do with my apprentices. See? First thing you do today, go for some guelder-berries. Now's the time to pick them, when the hoar-frost's touched them—they'll be just right for pies. See you don't go too far, though. As many as you can gather nearby will be plenty. Take some bread with you—the woods make you feel like eating—and drop in at Mitrofanovna's. I told her to bake you a couple of eggs and pour some milk into the old birch-bark jug with the lid. Do you see?"

Next day he said:

"Catch me a goldfinch—a good singer—and a lively young linnet. See you fetch them here by evening. Understand?"

When Danilushko had caught the birds and brought them home, Prokopyich thought of something else.

"They'll do, but they're none too good; catch some more."

So it went on like that. Every day Prokopyich would find some job for Danilushko, and they were all things that would amuse a lad. As soon as the first snow fell, the old man told him to go with a neighbour for wood and lend a hand. And what had he to do? Just sit in the front of the sleigh and drive, and on the way back, follow the sleigh on foot. He'd get tired out, and eat and sleep better when he got home. Prokopyich had a fur coat made for him, a winter cap, gloves and felt winter boots, all made to order. Prokopyich, mind you, was well-to-do. Though a serf, he paid quitrent, and earned a bit hiring himself out. He got very fond of Danilushko. Treated him like his own son, and that's a fact. He never grudged him anything, and wouldn't let him go near the trade till the proper time.

Living a good life like this, Danilushko picked up in no time. And he became very fond of Prokopyich, too. Naturally! He understood the care Prokopyich was taking of him; he had never had such a good time in his life. The winter went by; Danilushko was free as a bird. Now the spring weather was coming in, he'd go down to the pond to fish or to the woods. Only he kept an eye on the trade as well. As soon as he ran home, they'd get talking straight away. He'd have plenty to

tell Prokopyich and ask him what was this for and how did you do that. Prokopyich would go into everything with him and show him how to do it. Danilushko took notice. And sometimes he'd want to do it himself. "Now let me have a try," he'd say. Prokopyich would look on, put him right when it was needed and show him a better way of doing it.

Once the steward happened to catch sight of Danilushko down at the pond, and asked his runners:

"Whose lad is that? I've seen him down here I don't know how many times now, larking about with his fishing-rod of a weekday, and he's no youngster either. Someone's hiding him, keeping him from work, that's plain."

Well, they brought the steward word that this was Prokopyich's apprentice, but he wouldn't believe a word of it.

"Fetch him here, I'll find out for myself."

They brought Danilushko to him.

"Whose lad are you? Where do you belong?"

Said Danilushko:

"I'm apprenticed to a master-craftsman in malachite."

The steward grabbed him by the ear.

"So this is the way you learn your trade, is it, you young rascal!" And he dragged him by the ear to Prokopyich.

The old man saw that things were looking bad, and he tried to shield poor Danilushko:

"I sent him myself to catch some perch. I've had a terrible wish for a few fresh perch these days. My health being very poor, I can't take anything else to eat. So I sent the youngster to the pond."

The steward wouldn't believe it. He noticed, too, that Danilushko was looking another person altogether: he had filled out, he had a good shirt on him, his breeches and boots, too, were good. So he thought to himself he would test the lad.

"Come now, show us what the master taught you."

Then Danilushko put on his working apron, went up to the lathe and started to tell him this thing and that thing and show him. There wasn't a thing the steward could ask him that he didn't have his answer pat. How to shape the stone, how to saw it, facet it, when to glue it, how to polish, how to set it, when in copper and when in wood. In short, it seemed there wasn't a thing he didn't know.

So after the steward had learned the ins and outs of everything from him he went and said to Prokopyich:

"It looks as if you've found a lad to suit you?"

"I'm not grumbling," Prokopyich said.

"It's a good thing you're not grumbling, for once, but you're spoiling the lad with a lot of nonsense. He was given you so you'd teach him something, and here I see him down at the pond with his fishing-rod. You watch out now, or you'll get some perch from me so fresh you'll remember them to your dying day, and the lad won't have such a gay time of it either."

After a threat or two like this he went, but Prokopyich stood there, wondering:

"When was it you came to learn all this, Danilushko? Seems to me I've never taught you a thing yet."

"You yourself told me and showed me everything I know, and I stood and took heed of what you said."

The tears rolled down old Prokopyich's face, it was all so much after his own heart.

"Sonny," he said, "Danilushko, dear lad! Whatever else I know, I'll tell you. . . all of it. I won't keep back a thing."

Only from that time on Danilushko didn't have the free and easy life he had been having. The steward sent for him next day, and started giving him jobs as lessons. At first, of course, they were the simplest things: the kind of buttons such as women wear, and caskets. Then things that needed a bit of turning: candlesticks and different kinds of ornaments. Then they came to carving. Leaves and petals, patterns and flowers. It is fiddling work that malachite workers have to do, and takes time. A thing may look simple enough, yet a man may have sat ages over it. And Danilushko grew better and better at this work.

Once when he turned out a snake-bracelet from a single piece, the steward had to admit this was a proper master-craftsman. And he wrote to the master about him.

After one thing and another in the letter, he began: "And we have a new malachite craftsman here. He is called Danilushko the Starveling. A good workman, only being young not so fast. What

are your orders: to leave him as an apprentice or put him on the same terms as Prokopyich?"

Now Danilushko wasn't a slow workman at all, he was most astonishingly quick and handy. It was Prokopyich that managed this. When Danilushko was given a job to do by the steward in five days, Prokopyich would come up and say:

"That's beyond him. You want a fortnight for a job like that. The young chap's only learning his trade yet. If I let him do things in a hurry, he'll go and spoil the stone and it'll be no use for anything."

The steward would argue, but after a bit he'd add on a day or two, you'd see. Danilushko took it fairly easy. He even learned, unbeknown to the steward, to read and write. Only a bit, of course, but still he knew something about book-learning. Prokopyich helped him with that, too. There were times when he himself would take and do the job the steward had set Danilushko. But this the boy wouldn't allow.

"The very idea! It isn't for you, Uncle, to sit stewing at the lathe for me. Look, your beard's all green with malachite dust, your health's not what it was, but there's nothing wrong with me."

By this time Danilushko was a right well-grown lad, although folks still called him by his old name—the Starveling,—you should have seen him! He was tall and ruddy, a curly-headed jolly young fellow, enough to send the girls into a decline for love. Prokopyich tried to talk to him about choosing himself a bride, but Danilushko only shook his head:

"We'll get one when we want one. Once I've made myself a real craftsman then it'll be time enough to talk about that."

The master wrote to the steward:

"Tell Prokopyich's apprentice Danilko to make me a vase on a foot for my house. Then I'll see whether I'll let him go or keep him. Only watch and see that Prokopyich gives him no help. If you do not keep a proper eye on him you will have to answer for it."

When the steward got this letter, he sent for Danilushko and said:

"You can work here at my place. They'll fix up a lathe for you and bring whatever stone you need."

Prokopyich when he heard of this, was very cast down. What did it mean, he wondered? What was the reason? He went off to the steward, but bless me, you couldn't get anything out of him. He only shouted:

"It's none of your business!"

Well, Danilushko went to work at a new place. Before he left Prokopyich cautioned him:

"Now, see that you don't hurry, Danilushko. Don't show them all you can do."

At first Danilushko paid heed to this and was cautious. He'd do a lot of measuring and reckoning, but he soon got sick of it. Whether you got through the work or not, it was all the same, you had to stay the day out, sitting at the steward's from morning till night. It was so dull and dreary—it drove Danilushko to working at full speed. And while his head was in it he turned out a vase. The steward looked at it; that was what was wanted, he thought, so he said:

"Do another like this."

Danilushko did another, then a third. When he had finished the third, the steward said:

"Now you can't get out of it. I've fairly caught you and your Prokopyich. The master set you a certain time, sufficient to do one vase, and you've done three in that time. I know what you're capable of now; you won't take me in any more! And as for that old hound, I'll teach him to hide what you can do!"

So he took and wrote to the master about Danilushko and sent him all three vases. But it so happened that the master, whether he had a bright idea that day, or whether he was vexed at the steward for something—did just the opposite of what the steward wanted.

He granted Danilushko a trifle of quitrent but ordered him not to be taken away from Prokopyich: maybe the two of them together would think of something new. There was a picture in the letter, a vase with all kinds of fancy things drawn on it. Round the rim there was a carved border, and round the waist of the vase a stone ribbon of pierced work, and some leaves at the foot. In short, it was a regular invention. And the master had written on the drawing:

"Even if it takes him five years to do it, it must be exactly like this one."

Here the steward had to go back on what he'd said to Danilushko. He told him what the master had written, and let him go home to Prokopyich and take the master's drawing with him.

Danilushko and Prokopyich cheered up then, and their work went a lot better. Very soon Danilushko started on the new vase. It had no end of cunning tricks in it—that vase. Give it a bad tap with your hammer and all your work went for nothing, you'd have to start over again. But Danilushko had a good straight eye, and a steady hand, plenty of strength too, so things went well. The only thing he didn't like about it was that though there were so many tricky points and it was hard to do, yet there seemed no beauty at all in it.

He told Prokopyich this, but the old man only wondered at Danilushko.

"What's that to you? They invented it, so it means they want it like that. If you'd seen the things I've turned and carved out in my time! And what they were for, I couldn't rightly tell you for the life of me."

Then the young fellow tried to talk to the steward, but what was the use of that? He only stamped his foot and waved his hands about.

"Are you clean daft?" he shouted. "That same drawing cost a deal of money. Maybe the artist who made it was the best in the capital, and you start arguing about it."

Then he must have remembered what the master had said—that perhaps the two of them would think out something new and he said:

"Listen here: you do this vase like the master's drawing shows you and after that if you think of something else, out of your own head, then that's your business. I won't hinder you and we have stone enough, God knows. I'll let you have whatever sort you want."

So Danilushko fell to thinking out ideas. As was said long before our time, it doesn't take much wisdom to run down other folks' work, but when it comes to inventing something of your own, you're likely to lie tossing and turning many a night. Now Danilushko would sit working on the vase he had to make according to the master's design, but his thoughts would be forever on something else. He'd turn things over in his mind, wondering what flower, what leaf suited malachite best. He grew very moody and thoughtful, and lost his brightness.

Prokopyich noticed this and used to ask:

"Maybe you ain't yourself, Danilushko? You ought to take it easier with that there vase. What's the hurry? You'd do well to lay off and have a bit of fun somewhere instead of sitting over it day in, day out."

"That's true," said Danilushko, "I might take a stroll out to the woods, now I come to think of it. Maybe I'll see what I'm wanting there."

So from then on he cleared off to the woods nearly every day. It was just about haymaking-time, berry-time. The grasses and wild flowers were all in bloom. Danilushko would keep stopping every now and again in the meadow or in a clearing in the woods, and stand staring. Or he'd come out again into the hayfield, looking hard at the grass as if he was searching for something. There were plenty of folks about at a time like that in the meadows and woods. They would ask Danilushko had he lost anything. And he'd just give a rueful sort of smile and say:

"It isn't so much I've lost something, as I can't find it."

Well, naturally, there were some who said behind his back:

"There's something up with the poor lad, that's plain!"

He would come home and sit down straight away at the lathe and stay there till morning. But at sunrise he'd be off to the woods and meadows again. He took to bringing leaves and flowers home with him, mostly the poisonous kind: bear-garlice and hemlock, thorne apple, trefoil and all kinds of cresses. His face grew peaked, his eyes were restless, his hands lost their sureness. Prokopyich was downright worried about him by this time, but Danilushko told him:

"It's the vase that gives me no peace. I want to do it so the stone would show its full strength."

Prokopyich tried talking him out of it:

"What have you got that into your head for? You've plenty to eat, haven't you? Let the gentlefolks amuse themselves as they think fit. As long as they don't hurt us. If they happen to think

of some new pattern we'll do it, but why should we meet them half-way? It's only taking an extra burden upon ourselves, that's all."

But Danilushko stuck to his own notion.

" 'Tis not for the master I'm trying," he said, "'tis because I can't get that vase out of my head. Look at the stone we have, and what do we make out of it? We grind it and carve it and put a polish on it all for nothing. Now, I've a fancy to do something so that the full power of the stone itself could be seen and shown to other folks."

Some time passed, he cooled down and started to work again on the vase the master had ordered. And working on it he'd make fun of the thing he was doing:

"A stone ribbon with holes in it, and a carved edge!"

And all of a sudden he'd throw down his work. And start something else, working at the lathe without a minute's rest.

"I've a mind to make my vase like the hemlock," he said.

Prokopyich took to talking him out of it.

At first Danilushko didn't want to listen, but after three or four days, when something went wrong, he told Prokopyich:

"Well, all right! First I'll finish the master's vase and after that my own. But you mustn't try to put me off it then. I can't get it out of my head."

"Well, I'm not going to hinder you," Prokopyich said, thinking to himself: "The lad's getting better, he'll forget it. But he ought to be married. That's it! That'll knock all the nonsense out of his head, when he has a family."

Danilushko set to work on his vase. There was a power of work in it, more than enough for a year. But he worked hard and didn't mention the hemlock-flower again. So Prokopyich started to work round to the question of his marrying.

"Look at Katya Letemina. What's wrong with her as a bride? She's a good girl. Not a word can be said against her."

Now Prokopyich had a reason for saying this; he had noticed long since that Danilushko had his eye on that same girl. And she wasn't unwilling, as far as he could see. That was why Prokopyich mentioned her, just by the way, as it might be. But Danilushko stood out for his own.

"Hold on! Let me get done with the vase first. I'm sick of it. One of these days I may give it a tap with the hammer, and you come with your talk about weddings. Katya and me have agreed about it: she's going to wait for me."

Well, Danilushko made the vase according to the master's drawing. They didn't tell the steward it was finished: they were thinking of having a bit of a party at home to celebrate. Katya, his bride, came with her folks. The rest were mostly malachite workers. Katya was all for admiring the vase.

"How on earth did you manage to carve a pattern like that and never a chip or a crack in the stone anywhere? Look at the smoothness and the cleanness of the work!"

The craftsmen said the same:

"It's the very image of the drawing. There isn't a thing you could find fault with, and so quick, too! If you go on working like that, it looks as though we'll have a job to keep up with you."

Danilushko listened awhile, and then he says:

"That's the whole trouble, there's nothing to find fault with. It's smooth and finished, the design's come out clean, the carving's correct by the drawing, but where's the beauty of it? Take that flower there, the commonest and worst there is, yet it'd do your heart good to look at it. And who would get any pleasure out of looking at this vase? What is it for? Whoever looks at it will admire it like Katya did and say what an eye the man has who made it, and what a hand and how did he have the patience not to break the stone anywhere. . ."

"And where he botched it, he glued a bit on and polished it so as you'd never find head or tail of it," the craftsmen put in laughing.

"That's it. But where, I'm asking, do you see the beauty of the stone itself? There was a nice bit of veining ran here and you had to bore holes in it and carve flowers on it. What are they for? Only spoiling the stone. And look what stone it is! First-rate, you see, first-rate!"

He was getting warmed up now. He'd had a drop to drink, of course. The craftsmen said what Prokopyich himself had often said:

"Stone's stone and that's all about it. What can you do with it? It's our job to cut and turn and carve it."

But there happened to be an old fellow there who had taught Prokopyich and the others their trade in his day. They all called him Grandad. He was very old and decrepit now, but he understood all this talk and he said to young Danilushko:

"Now you keep off that, I'm telling you, my dear lad. Put all these notions out of your head! Or you'll find yourself one of the mountain craftsmen working for the Mistress of the Copper Mountain."

"What manner of craftsmen are those, Grandad?"

"The craftsmen who live in the mountain, no one ever sees them. They do the Mistress' bidding. I once saw a piece of work that they did. That's craftsmanship! There's a sight of difference between that and what we do hereabouts."

Well, everyone wanted to know more about it. What thing had he seen? they asked him.

"It was a snake," he said at last, "the kind you make into bracelets."

"Well, and what about it? What did it look like?"

"Not a bit like these hereabouts," the old man said again. "Any master-craftsman who once set eyes on it would know straight away 'twasn't local work. The snakes we make, no matter how clean a job we do, are just stone snakes, but this one was like a living snake. The back was black, the eyes. . . aye, you'd think it was ready to jump out at you. Naturally, a bit of a thing like that's nothing for those workmen. . . They've seen the flower of stone, they know what real beauty is. . ."

Now Danilushko at the first word about the stone-flower started asking questions of the craftsman. But the old fellow answered honestly enough:

"I know nothing about it, sonny, only that I've heard tell there is such a flower. But it's not for the likes of us to look on. Whoever sets eyes upon it, loses all heart for living in this world."

"I'd like to have a look at it, all the same," says Danilushko.

At this, Katya, his bride, was all in a flutter.

"What are you thinking about, Danilushko? You don't mean you're sick of this world?"—and burst out crying.

Then Prokopyich and the others saw what was up and started ridiculing the old man.

"You're doting, Grandad, it's a shame for you telling a pack of fairy-tales and leading the poor lad astray."

That put the old man in a temper. He thumped the table and shouted:

"There is such a flower! The lad's right when he says we don't understand this stone. Its real beauty's shown in that stone-flower I'm telling about."

"You've had a drop too much, that's all, Grandad," the others said and laughed him out of it.

But he stuck to it:

"There is a stone-flower."

When the party broke up and the folks went home, Danilushko couldn't get this talk out of his head. He took to clearing off to the woods again and hanging over his hemlock-flower, and never said a word about the wedding. At last Prokopyich got at him again:

"What are you disgracing the girl for? How many years is she to go about unwed? They'll start making fun of her soon, you'll see. There's plenty of gossips round about, will let their tongues wag. . ."

But Danilushko would have nothing but his own idea:

"Wait a bit! When I've thought of something and picked the stone for it—then we'll see."

So then he took to hanging about the copper-mine, Gumyoshki. Sometimes he'd go down the shaft and through the drifts, sometimes he'd pick up a few stones at the top. Once, as he was turning over a stone and looking at it, he said:

"No, that's not it. . ."

No sooner were the words out of his mouth, when he heard someone say:

"Look in another spot. . . At Snake Hill."

He gave a start and glanced about, but there was no one to be seen. Who could it be? Somebody playing a joke on him, no doubt. Yet there didn't seem to be any spot to hide. He looked again and was turning homeward, when someone called after him:

"Do you hear, master Danilo? Go look at Snake Hill."

He looked round and saw what seemed to be a woman, dim as blue mountain mist, for a moment. Then there was nothing.

"What does this mean, I wonder? Could it be the Mistress herself? And what if I was to go now to Snake Hill?"

He knew this mountain well, it wasn't far from Gumyoshki. It isn't there any more now, they levelled it long ago, but in the old days they got the stone from the top.

The very next day Danilushko went there. Though it wasn't a very high hill, it was steep. And on one slope it looked for all the world as though it had been sliced off; a better break you wouldn't wish to see. All the layers were plain to the eye.

So up goes Danilushko to this break and finds a great lump of malachite, too heavy to carry, and shaped like a bush. Danilushko examined his find this way and that. It had everything he wanted: the colour deeper down below, the veins in the places they should be—everything just as he might wish. Danilushko was delighted. He ran for a horse and brought the stone home.

"Look!" he told Prokopyich. "What d'you think of this for a stone? It might have been made for my work. Now I'll get it done in no time. Then we'll have the wedding. You're right—I've kept Katya waiting too long. It's none too easy for me, either. Only this work kept me from it. Now the sooner I get it done! . ."

So he set to work on the stone. There was neither night nor day for him. Prokopyich said nothing, thinking to himself: "Maybe the lad will be satisfied now he's got his wish." The work went well. He finished working the bottom of the lump. And it looked for all the world like a clump of hemlock. With its broad leaves all clustered together, saw-toothed and veined in a lifelike way—you couldn't have wished it to turn out better. Prokopyich himself said 'twas like a growing flower, you'd reach out and touch it, fancying it was real.

Well, but as Danilushko was working up to the top, it didn't go so nicely, something hindered him. He chiselled out the stem and the leaves at the side were so thin, you'd wonder how they held together. The cup itself was meant for the hemlock flower, but—it wasn't. The flower looked no longer alive and it had lost all its beauty.

Danilushko, when it came to this

point, couldn't get a wink of sleep. He would sit working on his vase, wondering how to put it right and carve it better. Prokopyich and the other craftsmen who came in to have a look at it couldn't understand what more did the young fellow want? He had turned out a vase that looked like nothing anybody had ever done before, and still he wasn't satisfied with it. The fellow must be clean daft, he needed someone to cure him of it. When Katya heard the way folks were talking she began to cry, and that brought Danilushko to his senses.

"Well, never mind," he said, "I won't bother any more. It's plain that I'm not meant to rise any higher, to understand the power of the stone."

And he himself hurried things on for the wedding. But where was the need to hurry when the bride had everything ready long before? They named the day. Danilushko cheered up. He mentioned the vase to the steward and the latter hurried to Prokopyich to look. Well, that was something to look at, he thought and wanted to send it straight away to the master. But Danilushko said:

"Hold on awhile yet—there's a trifle to be done to it."

It was the autumn, and the wedding was to be on Snakes' Holiday, that falls about the middle of October.

Someone, as it happened, reminded him of it: "Soon all the snakes will be gathering in one spot," they said. Danilushko bore these words in mind. Then the talk about the malachite flower all came back to him. And something seemed to draw him on. Shouldn't he perhaps go out for the last time to Snake Hill? Mightn't he find out something there? He remembered the big lump of malachite and how it seemed to have been left there on purpose. And the voice at the old mine, telling him about Snake Hill.

So Danilushko set out. The ground was hard already and there was a touch of frost in the air and a fine powdering of snow. Danilushko went up to the steep slope he'd taken the stone from and all of a sudden he saw there was a big gap there, as though someone had been quarrying. Never thinking of who might have broken the stone, Danilushko stepped into the gap. "I'll sit me down awhile out of the wind for a rest, it'll be warmer here." He saw against one wall a grey stone like a seat. He sat down on it and fell to thinking, staring at the ground, and the thought of the stone-flower gave him no peace. "If I could have but a sight of it!" he kept saying. Then all of a sudden he felt it grow warm as though summer had come back. Danilushko looked up, and there right before him against the other wall sat the Mistress of the Copper Mountain.

He knew her at once by her beauty and her malachite gown. Only he thought to himself:

"Maybe it's all my fancy, and there isn't really anyone."

So he kept still, staring at the spot where the Mistress was sitting but making out he didn't notice anything in particular. She said nothing, either, for a while, but seemed to be thinking of something. At last she asked him:

"Well, Master Danilo, so your hemlock-cup didn't turn out well?"

"No, that it didn't," he agreed.

"No need for you to be cast down though! Try another. You'll be given whatever stone you need for your fancy."

"No," he said, "I can't try any more. I'm fair worn out with this one and it isn't what I hoped. Show me the stone-flower."

"That's easily done," said she, "only you'll rue it afterwards."

"You'll not let me leave the hill?"

"Why shouldn't I let you leave? The way's open to you, only. . . folks always come back to me."

"Show it to me! Do me a favour!"

She tried to talk him out of it:

"Maybe you'll try your hand again at making one for yourself!" She reminded him of Prokopyich, too: "He took pity on you, now it's your turn to take pity on him." She reminded him of his promised bride: "The girl thinks there's none like you, and your eyes are somewhere else."

"I know, I know all this myself!" Danilushko cried. "It's the stone-flower, there's no life for me without the flower. Show it to me!"

"So be it," said she. "Come, then, master Danilo, and I'll show you my garden."

As she said it she stood up. There was a noise like a landslide. Danilushko looked and saw that the walls were gone. There were the tallest trees you ever saw, not like those in our woods, but made of stones. Some were marble,

some of snake-stone. There were all manner of them; only they were living trees with boughs and leaves. And they stirred and swayed in the wind making a noise as though you were flinging handfuls of pebbles. Round the foot of the trees grew grass of stone, too. Sky-blue, crimson—grass of every hue. There was no sun to be seen, yet it was bright as it is just before sunset. Between the trees little golden snakes leapt as if they were dancing: it was from them that the glow of light came.

Now the maiden led Danilushko out to a big clearing. The soil looked like ordinary clay and the bushes growing here were black as velvet. And the flowers that grew on this bush were malachite bells, and in the heart of each hung an antimony star. Fiery tongues darted over and above the stone-flowers, and the stars rang with a thin, high note as though they were singing.

"Well, master Danilo, have you looked your fill?" the Mistress asked.

"You'd never find a stone to make that flower!" cried Danilushko.

"If you had thought of this flower yourself, I'd have given you a stone like that one, but now I can't."

And with that she gave a wave of her hand. There was a noise again, and then Danilushko found himself on the stone in the quarry with the wind whistling through it as it does in autumn.

Danilushko came home, and as it fell out his bride-to-be was giving an evening party for her friends. At first he was jolly and cheerful, sang songs, danced for them. Then he clouded over, as it were. The bride was greatly put out by this.

"What's amiss with you? You'd think it was a burying instead of a marrying."

"My head," says he, "is very bad, and there are spots before my eyes—black with green and red. I can't see plain daylight."

With that the party broke up.

According to old, old custom the bride's friends came out to see the bridegroom home. And, of course, with him living just a couple of houses away, what fun would that be? So Katya said:

"Come, let's go for a stroll all round the place, girls, we'll go to the end of our street and come back by Elanskaya." And she thought to herself: "The wind will blow on Danilushko, and maybe he will feel better."

The girls naturally, were only too glad.

"That's the proper way to see you off!" they cried. "He lives too near, we haven't sung him the parting-song properly."

It was a quiet night, with a light fall of snow. Just the time for jollity. So they set out. The bride and bridegroom went ahead, while the bride's friends and the bachelors who'd been at the party dropped behind a bit. Then the girls sent up the loud lament, it's more of a long drawn-out wail, you'd think it was for someone who was dead. Katya saw there wasn't any sense in this at all:

"Danilushko's downhearted enough as it is, and they're singing this weird lament into the bargain!"

She tried to rouse him, to make him think of something else. He got talking once, but soon grew downcast again. Meantime Katya's friends had finished the parting-song and started other, jollier ones. There was laughing and running hither and thither, but Danilushko walked on, with his head hanging. No matter how Katya tried, she couldn't cheer him up. That was the way they walked till they got to the door of her house. The girls and boys parted, going their ways, and Danilushko saw his bride home without any old rites and went off home himself.

Prokopyich had gone to bed long since. Lighting the lamp very softly, Danilushko carried his vases out to the middle of the room and looked them over. Just then Prokopyich had a fit of coughing. It shook him sorely. These years, you see, his health had been sadly broken down. This coughing of his went through Danilushko like a knife, and he remembered all that their life had been together. A great pity for the old man came over him. Prokopyich, when he had done coughing, asked:

"What are you doing with the vases?"

"Just having a look at them, thinking maybe it's time we were sending them off."

Prokopyich agreed:

"They should have been sent long since, they're only taking up room here. And anyhow you'll never do better."

Well, they talked a while longer, then Prokopyich dropped off again. And Danilushko lay down, but there was no sleep for him. He turned and tossed, got up again, lit the lamp. Then, after

another look at the vases, he went up to Prokopyich's bed and stood awhile looking down at the old man, and he sighed. . .

Then he picked up the hammer and gave the hemlock-flower such a crack that it crumbled. But the other, the one that was done according to the master's drawing, he didn't touch. Only spat in the middle of it and ran out of the house. And from that day to this Danilushko could never be found.

Some did say he's lost his wits and was roaming the woods, but others were sure the Mistress of the Copper Mountain herself had taken him on as mountain craftsman.

The truth turned out to be otherwise. But that's another story.

BELA BALAZS

A STRANGE MEETING

No writer could ever invent such a story—only life can be so improbable. So I would like to make it clear first of all that this incident really took place, and that the man who experienced it is at the present time in Alma-Ata, in the military hospital, No. 3 Jambul Street. He is Senior Lieutenant Issambayev of a certain Guards division, a Kazakh by nationality.

It was in Voronezh, in the winter of 1942, at the time when half the Hungarian army was wiped out. Issambayev was sent out on an important scouting assignment—not his first by a long way. A Hungarian Honved regiment had taken up their positions in a certain wood, and it was necessary to ascertain the positions of their machine-gun and mortar batteries before the Soviet attack.

The whole sector was unusually quiet, and the muffling silence of the thick snow made any sharp sound ring out with especial clarity. The patrol had to penetrate very close to the enemy positions, and in this snow stillness even a loud cough could betray them. In order to reduce the sound of their movement to a minimum, Issambayev made his men keep at a distance of three hundred paces from each other as they made their way forward into the woods. All were experienced men, tried and tested, each one had his own job to do, and each had his dagger loose in its sheath, for they knew that under no conditions could they fire.

Within a short time Senior Lieutenant Issambayev had investigated the sector he had chosen, and discovered only two machine-gun nests and one mortar. He was just about to return when misfortune befell him. Slipping on the hard frozen snow, one leg was caught and twisted in a hole, spraining his ankle—if not worse, for the pain was so intense that Issambayev was barely able to draw his foot out again.

Trained and in the pink of condition, the young Kazakh was able to stand pain, but though his swarthy face with the prominent cheekbones and narrow eyes was rigid with the effort, he knew that for the present there could be no question of walking.

What was to be done now? He knew that somewhere, three hundred paces away, his sergeant, Belchikov, was crawling through the wood, but he also knew that he could make no sign. The slightest sound would reach the Hungarian outposts sooner than Belchikov, so near were they. There was nothing to do but await some favourable chance. When his patrol returned without him a search of course would be made and he would be found.

The Kazakh senior lieutenant had barely had time to reason this out when he suddenly heard a sound, snow crunching and dry twigs snapping. Someone was approaching. This was no forest animal. Perhaps one of his comrades? That would be a stroke of luck.

There. . . behind the bush. . . a helmet under a hood. . . Issambayev recognized the shape at once: a Hungarian soldier, a Honved.

The Honved had not yet noticed him, and had it not been for that accursed foot, he could have hurled himself at the man and settled him with his dagger

before he had time to fire. But he was unable to stir a step.

Raising his tommy-gun, although he knew well that to shoot was out of the question, the lieutenant hissed:

"Hands up!"

It was only then that the Honved saw him. The Kazakh's hard, implacable face with the narrow eyes had an even stronger effect on the young fellow than the barrel pointing steadily at him. He immediately threw away his rifle and raised his arms as smartly as though he were in a gymnasium.

"I surrender voluntarily. I have come over voluntarily," he said, the Russian phrases he had previously prepared coming tumbling out in his haste. "I will no longer. . ."

"Silence!" Issambayev hissed, for the other had spoken too loudly.

The boy's words died away. He really was just a boy, barely twenty, with something childlike in his expression. Fear flickered in his brown eyes, but his pale lips wore a pleading smile, as though he were begging for friendly treatment. He did indeed look as if he had only been waiting for the chance to give himself up.

So far, so good. Senior Lieutenant Issambayev of the Guards had taken a prisoner, but what in the world was he to do with him? In the ordinary way, he would simply have delivered him over to headquarters, but now he had no idea how to get there himself. With this confounded leg he could not move from the spot. The main thing was, not to let the fellow see how helpless his conqueror was.

Meanwhile the Hungarian continued to stand there in front of Issambayev, with raised arms. It seemed almost as if he did it gladly, eagerly, looking at the Kazakh with a mixture of respect, curiosity and expectation. Issambayev had to do something with the fellow, he could hardly keep him standing there and do nothing himself. The Hungarian might find that suspicious.

"Come closer," he ordered in a whisper. "Give me your gun!"

The Honved seemed doubtful as to whether he might lower his arms to do so. He settled the problem by demonstratively holding his left arm high in the air, while he fumbled with his right for the rifle he had thrown away. Hastily, with alacrity, he handed it to the senior lieutenant, as much as to say: "There you are, sir. . . just tell me what to do!"

And then the young fellow once more stood with his arms in the air, awaiting further commands, for all the world like a conscientious schoolboy before his teacher. What was to be done with him? The lieutenant could think of no further orders. There was a short pause. Issambayev found his position laughable, although actually it was dangerous enough.

Meanwhile an artillery duel had begun. Heavy shells were screaming over their heads, sometimes carrying a treetop with them.

The prisoner's face, which had grown calmer in the certainty of having attained his objective, once more became uneasy. He stared with increasing fear at the inexorably hard, narrow-eyed face. Why was he not taken away and handed over to headquarters? Why didn't the Red commander make a move? What did he intend to do with him? Could it be true what the German officers had told him, that the Reds take no prisoners?

He had not wanted to believe it. He had wanted to give himself up, for he felt that he was at the end of his tether, he could bear no more. They were all doomed to death in these snowy wastes of Russia. He had known that ever since the retreat began. And what was it all for? Here at the front the Hungarian troops were driven into the most hellish fire to cover the retreat of the Germans. And then letters would come from home. The Germans were taking the last scrap of bread from the country. What was it all for?

He did not believe that the Russians killed all those who voluntarily surrendered. But this narrow-eyed, brown-faced man was no Russian, he was a Tartar or something of that kind. It was an unfortunate chance that it should be some half-wild Asiatic into whose hands he had fallen. Could he expect understanding from such a man? The Asiatic continued to point his gun at him and made no move. Beads of sweat sprang out on the young Honved's brow and his knees began to tremble with fear.

While these thoughts were surging through the young Hungarian's head, the "Asiatic" was considering how he could conceal his helplessness. For the prisoner must on no account see it.

Issambayev peered right and left, as

though awaiting the arrival of somebody, but this movement caused him such a sudden, agonizing pain in his injured leg that his face involuntarily contorted and a hiss escaped his lips.

The prisoner looked at the leg in surprise. Evidently some suspicion had dawned on him. His attention must be distracted, so as to gain time. And this was the reason for a strange conversation.

"How did you come to learn Russian?"

"Unfortunately I know only a little," the lad hastened to reply. It was a relief when this terrible Asiatic asked him a sensible question instead of firing. He also spoke in a whisper, like the Red senior lieutenant. He continued talking to demonstrate his good will.

"I come from North Hungary, where the Carpathian Russians live. I hoped to use the unfortunate Russian campaign to learn the language better."

"The language of the people whom you torture and kill?" Issambayev interrupted roughly.

"The Germans. . ." began the Honved, in fresh alarm.

"And not the Hungarians? Perhaps still worse, if anything!"

The young fellow paled.

"I. . . I didn't want. . ." he stuttered. "It was for that reason I came over. I am. . ."

"What are you?"

"A university student of Budapest."

"Which faculty?"

The Honved, who had been speaking with lowered head and eyes cast down, suddenly raised his head in surprise. Incredulously he stared at the Red commander. Had his ears heard aright? Was it "faculty" the man had said? A Bolshevik talking about faculties! A half-wild Asiatic with almond eyes and prominent cheekbones? Saying "faculty?" And using this learned word, part of university life, as freely, casually, as an old professor? Was it possible?

"The philological faculty," the student replied hesitatingly, hardly expecting that this Asiatic barbarian could know what that was.

"Have you studied Hungarian philology?"

The prisoner let both arms drop. Despite orders and the gun still trained on him. He was so taken aback, so astounded, that he forgot all about the gun. As though held by a magnet, his eyes were fixed on the metallically-hard Asiatic face. "Philology," the man had said. No doubt about it! And he said it in as casual a tone as if they were sitting in some university classroom instead of standing in this forest of death outside Voronezh.

"Yes," replied the prisoner, his amazement finding expression in a smile, feeling as though he were dreaming. "Hungarian philology is my main subject."

"Which course are you in?"

"The sixth."

"Have you attended Professor Nemeth's lectures?"

The student found it impossible to reply at first. It was incredible! He rubbed his forehead.

"Yes, yes!" he cried finally.

"Quiet!" The command was no longer hard and threatening, but almost friendly. This gave the student courage to put a question himself.

"How do you know about Professor Nemeth?" he asked.

A faint smile passed over the Asiatic's hard face. He saw the Hungarian lad's utter amazement and had understood its cause.

"I received my last letter from him two months before the war broke out."

"Letter?"

The Honved smiled as though in a dream and made a movement as if to embrace the Red officer.

"I am also a professor of philology at the Kazakh university in Alma-Ata, and am studying the relationship between the Kazakh and Hungarian languages."

"But then we must be. . ." the student stammered, "we must be of the same race, if our theory is correct."

And then a conversation began on the most ghastly battle-field in history, between the two firing lines, in a snow-filled wood over which hundreds of shells were screaming. And this strange incident took place because Senior Lieutenant Issambayev had sprained his foot and had to gain time for help to come.

"I have also studied the Central-Asian roots of the Hungarian language," the Honved said, beaming. But then his face darkened again. The Hungarian mortars were getting to work. Some shells whizzed through the trees not far away. There soon would be hell to pay here!

"Hadn't we better go, Herr Senior Lieutenant?" stammered the Honved. "The Hungarian patrols might find us here."

"That's none of your business."

A shell whizzed down somewhere quite near. Old pines splintered, crashed one on top of the other, raising clouds of snow and tearing their long roots from the frozen soil.

The Honved swiftly flattened himself, the senior lieutenant tried to do the same, but his injured leg hindered him. Again the prisoner's attention was drawn to the leg. Crouching on the ground, squinting sideways at the lieutenant's leg, he said:

"Professor Nemeth has returned to Vambery's theory that the Kazakhs and Hungarians are related," and as though this proved his standing as a friend, he added swiftly: "Herr professor, you have injured your leg. If you cannot walk, I will help you."

And that was what actually happened. It was no simple matter, and took time. The young Honved could not carry the Red senior lieutenant on his back all the time. The firing was increasing in intensity on both sides. The only way to cross open spaces was by crawling. A very slow business. Sometimes they had to lie motionless.

And while the projectiles of various types of modern war weapons continued to scream over their heads, while the Red Army's annihilating attack advanced and the catastrophic fate of the Hungarian forces approached, a Kazakh professor and a Hungarian student lay between the lines, and for lack of anything better to do, discussed the science in which they had a common interest.

Those who have never been at the front may wonder that men surrounded by deadly danger day in and day out love to speak in moments of lull about things that have nothing to do with wars—at least, on the surface. But it happens daily in the trenches.

"Strange!" The Honved shook his head. "I should never have believed it possible."

"What?"

"That out there in Asia, on the Chinese border, in Alma-Ata, there are Kazakhs living who. . ."

The student blushed and was silent. But the professor guessed what he meant. An ironical smile crossed his serious face.

"You thought that we Kazakhs still carried our meat under our saddles, like our common ancestors fifteen hundred years ago? That we were still nomads living in tents and driving our herds over the steppe?"

"We know so little about Asia," said the Hungarian student shamefacedly. "We've been wrongly informed."

"It is true that in tsarist times the Kazakh people were oppressed and backward. But since the October Revolution they have caught up with the centuries."

"Through Bolshevism?"

The professor had to smile again at the student's thunderstruck amazement.

"In Budapest, of course, you are taught that Bolshevism is the enemy of culture. Well, my father was illiterate and at the age of forty for the first time in his life sat at a table, on a chair, eating with a knife and fork. But my brothers and sisters, and I myself, studied in the Kazakh schools and colleges which the Soviet State has established."

It sounded like a fairy-tale, all that the "wild Asiatic" with the narrow eyes was telling, as he lay there in the snow beside his prisoner. In far-off Asia, as far as the Chinese-Mongolian frontier, as far as the Pacific, there were modern industrial towns. Alma-Ata was a beautiful garden city with not only a Kazakh university, but also a Kazakh Academy engaged in important scientific study, with scientific institutes equipped with all modern requirements. There were high schools, clinics, libraries, publishing houses, newspapers, magazines, many theatres, a large opera house, a philharmonic orchestra, daily concerts. And all this was alive, functioning even now, in war-time, at the foot of Ala-Tau, whose snow-covered peak soared fifteen thousand feet above the orchards. And the student heard about the Hungry Steppe which has been made rich and fruitful, and about Karaganda, where the greatest industrial works in the world were rising.

He listened to it all as to a fairy tale. In deep shame he gazed at the Asiatic relative lying beside him. Everyone of his gestures, every tone of his voice contained more culture than a whole regiment of the nazi barbarians, those

savage wolves who are raging through the world with their swastika, robbing and murdering.

And as they lay there in the snow, the Kazakh, Senior Lieutenant Issambayev, once again took his Hungarian prisoner captive, and this time for ever, by descriptions of his Asiatic home.

"If only my countrymen had any idea of the ignorance in which we are kept, even in our universities," sighed the Hungarian student. "We are allowed to study the past, but we have not the slightest idea of the new world. We know nothing of the tremendous scale of the new, rising Soviet culture."

"Have you never asked yourselves, then, where the strength of the Red Army comes from? Where our technique comes from, which is not one whit behind that of the Germans? Where the people have found the knowledge to master this technique and organize in modern style the largest army in the history of the world? Were your tank divisions destroyed by hordes of wild Asiatic horsemen?"

"It's strange," said the Hungarian student, impressed. "Formerly, when I studied the Central-Asiatic languages and thought about those regions from whence my Hungarian forefathers wandered out westwards, it always seemed to me that I was gazing into the far, dark past, which still brooded over my kindred who had remained there. It seemed to me that my Magyar ancestors had managed to escape from there and plunge into the free current of European development. And now I feel that it is just the contrary, that the stream of history has turned. It is with us in Europe that time has stood still, while with you, in far-off Asia, all the roads of development are open. You are now the new people, the ones who are advancing."

"And is that why you have attacked us, to destroy this great work of human development?"

The Honved's head sank, his eyes were moist.

"I feel that we European Hungarians, whom you have outpaced, are the poor relations who must come to you for help."

"If you really want it, you shall have it."

Evening was already falling when everyone came running up to divisional headquarters with much shouting and laughter to see a strange spectacle. A Hungarian prisoner was carrying on his back the Red officer who had captured him.

"Who's that bringing you along, Issambayev?" they asked laughing.

"A relative."

The Peoples of the U.S.S.R. United Against Nazism. Painting by N. Khristenko

PROLOGUE

We give below a few chapters from the reminiscences of a Red Army officer, a Kazakh by nationality, who commanded one of the units of General Panfilov's Guards Division. The Division and its commander, Panfilov, who died the death of a hero, became famous during the fighting near Moscow in 1941.

Reference is made to the autumn battles of 1941, and the notes are typical of that stage of the war when the Red Army, having bravely withstood the sudden and treacherous onslaught of Hitler's hordes, was persistently and swiftly preparing for great battles.

They are the more typical in that the unit concerned consisted entirely of reservists. It was formed by General Panfilov in Kazakhstan and went through a hard school of training both before and during battle. Panfilov's principles, activity, the offensive spirit, decisiveness, solidarity in action, are clearly seen in the work described in this extract.

These notes were taken down by the Soviet writer A. Bek, who, as a war correspondent, knew the men and the deeds of the Panfilov Division.

THE FIRST MARCH

I am not going to give you the details of how I trained the men and taught them to overcome all their difficulties, but I will describe just a few episodes for you.

I will begin with our first march some seven or eight days after I had taken over the battalion. Arms and equipment had been issued to us and we had already done some rifle drill, dug trenches, practised running, crawling and marching.

In the evening we had received an order to start at dawn on a fifty-kilometre route-march to a certain spot in the valley of the River Ily, bivouac there overnight, and by the next evening march the same fifty kilometres back to Talgar.[1] The other battalions had similarly hard programmes, for General Panfilov was getting his division ready for action.

The men made their preparations for the march in the evening, slept the night, and, at the break of dawn before the sun was over the horizon, the battalion paraded. A civilian would no doubt have thought he had a fearsome army unit drawn up before him. The ranks were well dressed, the new mat bayonets flashed in the morning light. The men were in full marching kit—rolled greatcoats across their shoulders, gasmasks, entrenching tools in greenish cover that had not yet faded and steel helmets hanging from their valises. Hand-grenades and small arms ammunition—120 rounds per man—hung from their belts, lightly weighing them down.

Lightly weighing them down. . . For some of them it was by no means light, this I could see at a glance. I saw greatcoats that hadn't been tightly rolled and were already swelling; valises not properly strapped in position, grenade carriers that hung flopping against the stomach. Other men, on the contrary, had all the smart appearance of a soldier, amongst them Kurbatov.

I called Kurbatov out of the ranks and said :

"Here, comrades, is an N.C.O. whose equipment is adjusted for a route march as a soldier's should be. It'll be easier for him to march than for some of you. Look how snugly everything fits, all the straps are pulled up tightly. I've shown you all this and explained it to you lots of times. Apparently my tongue's not sharp enough. I'm not going to say any more, I'll let your greatcoats, your valises and your shovels speak for themselves. Let them talk to you. Maybe you think they haven't got tongues? They have enough, and they're sharper than mine! Private Garkusha, fall out here!"

The ever-smiling, pug-nosed Garkusha came running up. His grenade carrier dangling and flopping about as he ran.

[1] Talgar is a village not far from Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan.

"Are you ready for the march?"

"Ready, Comrade Battalion Commander."

"Fall in beside Kurbatov. Private Golubtsov, fall out here!"

Golubtsov's greatcoat was so loosely rolled that it was well up over his cheek. His valise hung from his back.

"Are you ready for the march?"

"Ready, Comrade Battalion Commander."

"Fall in beside Garkusha."

I selected about a dozen men in this way and placed them at the head of the column.

"Battalion, atten-shun! Right—turn! Follow me, quick—march!"

We moved off.

I marched beside those I had called out, glancing at them out of the corner of my eye. For ten, fifteen minutes they marched easily. Garkusha's grenade carrier was all the time tapping lightly against his legs. At last his hand stretched out towards the bag in order to move it.

"Don't touch it," I said.

Golubtsov wanted to push his greatcoat away: the rough serge had begun to rub his cheek.

"Don't touch it," I said.

A third soldier's entrenching tool was banging against his back but I would not let him touch it.

In another ten minutes Garkusha began to lean back and push out his stomach so that the grenade carrier would not flop about. Understanding the meaning of my glances he mustered up strength enough to smile. Golubtsov, twisting his neck, tried to push the greatcoat away with his face. His valise had also begun to sink down lower on his back. Slipping his hand under the shoulder strap, Golubtsov tried to pull up his valise without my seeing him. I would not let him. Garkusha no longer stuck out his stomach, but staggered as he marched, reducing his pace.

"Garkusha, step out!" I ordered. "Take your step from Kurbatov."

In this way we marched six kilometres. I again showed Kurbatov to the men, then shouted:

"Garkusha, fall out here! Don't touch your valise!"

He ran towards me, bent double. The men in the ranks were smiling.

"Now then, Garkusha, report. Are you ready for the march?"

He maintained a gloomy silence.

"Have you had a talk with the grenade carrier?"

"Yes. . . "

"Well, tell the troops what it told you."

He did not speak.

"Come on, tell us, don't be shy. . ."

"What is there to tell them? A Russian doesn't believe words, he has to feel the thing for himself. . ."

"Well, did you feel it?"

"I didn't feel it, but it. . ."

And what Garkusha said then cannot be put on paper. The troops roared with laughter. Taking courage from this he laughed too.

I called Golubtsov, wet with sweat, his cheek rubbed red.

"Now look at this, comrades. . . Have you had a talk with your greatcoat? Have you had a talk with your valise? Tell us what they've taught you."

I also made Golubtsov speak out before the ranks. In this way, one after another, I demonstrated all those whose equipment had been tormenting them. Then I said:

"Who has a hard time of it marching when the greatcoat roll is too thick, when the grenade carrier is out of place or when the valise doesn't sit snugly? The private or the battalion commander? The private, of course, as I've told you often enough. You no doubt said to yourselves: 'All right, we'll do it for him and then he'll let us alone.' And you did it, after a fashion. Now it seems that it wasn't 'for him,' but for yourselves. The equipment itself has already impressed this on some of you. At this halt everybody can fix his equipment properly. If I see anybody else after this who hasn't understood me I'll call him out of the ranks. He can march beside me and talk with his equipment and he'll find out that it has a tongue that's sharper than mine."

After the halt I never had occasion to call anybody out of the ranks: nobody wanted to have a talk with his equipment.

2

The battalion again moved off and I mounted my horse.

Fifty kilometres in the July sun is no

easy distance, especially for men who had not been trained to march. The company commanders and political instructors marched ahead of their units. I was the only one mounted. I would allow the battalion to pass by me, then gallop to the head of the battalion and again allow them to pass me.

I saw that the companies were spacing out, people were beginning to straggle. Some of the officers themselves were tired.

I rode to the head of the battalion and shouted:

"Pass along the column: machine-gun company commander to report to the head of the column!"

In a quarter of an hour the long-legged Krayev came running, panting to me.

"Comrade Battalion Commander, reporting on your instructions."

"Why is your company losing distance? When are you going to keep the proper interval? I shall keep calling you to the head of the column until you keep in position. That's all. You may go!"

It was certainly not easy to run and overtake a battalion in column, which covers a distance of almost a kilometre.

In the same way I called Sevriukov, the commander of Number 2 company. Sevriukov, who was no longer young, had been head book-keeper in an Alma-Ata tobacco factory before the war. When he caught me up he could not get his breath at first.

He listened to what I had to say.

"The march is very hard on the men, Comrade Battalion Commander. Can't they put a part of their equipment on the wagons?"

I strongly objected.

"What is to be done with the stragglers, then, Comrade Commander? How can I force men to do what is impossible?"

"What is impossible? To obey orders?"

Sevriukov did not answer.

Every company commander came to me once.

At the end of Sevriukov's company, however, stragglers were still lagging behind.

I looked at him, a forty-year-old man, staggering wearily along at the head of his company. The perspiration was running in streams from his closely cropped, greying temples down his dust-covered face. Would I really have to make him run along the battalion a second time? It was so terribly hard for him! What else was there to do? He is sorry for his men, I am sorry for him, but then . . . What will happen to us later on, on the battle-field?

I sent my horse forward at a trot and when I reached the head of the column, shouted out:

"Number 2 company commander to the head of the column!"

This time it was effective.

As I let the battalion pass me again I noticed that Sevriukov was no longer marching at the head of his company but at the rear. He seemed to possess more energy, even his voice had changed: I heard him speaking to the men in the crisp tones of an officer.

The whole column closed up, the correct interval between companies was maintained and there were no stragglers.

And so we arrived at the appointed place after covering 50 kilometres without a single straggler.

The men, however, were tired. When the order "Dismiss!" was given they all fell flat on the ground. They expected dinner to be issued soon and then they would be able to sleep.

But they were wrong.

3

Several field kitchens accompanied us on the march as a matter of course. When we arrived at the place where we were to bivouac for the night, however, I gave an order that no firewood was to be cut for the kitchens, that the rations were not to be tipped into the boilers but issued to the men raw in accordance with the ration scale: so much meat, so much cereal, so much fat, etc.

The eyes of both officers and men stuck out of their heads. Everything raw—what could they do with it? Many of them had never cooked anything in their lives and hadn't even the faintest idea of how to set about making soup for themselves. I heard complaints:

"We have field kitchens with us!"

"Obey orders," I shouted. "Let every man cook his own supper!"

On the banks of the river in the wide, Kazakhstan steppes, hundreds of little fires flared up. Some were so tired, so worn out, that they did not start cooking, but hungry as they were, just flopped

down and slept. Some burnt their cereal, the soup boiled over, most of them spoiled more than they ate. This was their first lesson in the culinary art.

When I am telling the story of what I saw and did, what I experienced and what ran through my mind, I frequently have to repeat that little word "I." What could that "I" alone have done, however? My efforts were multiplied by numerous similar efforts. I received my instructions from above; many a time General Panfilov gave me strength and put me on the right course when he came to visit the battalion. I was led, I was carried forward as on a wave by a power immeasurable in size, which subjected me to the terrible trial of war—the power of my Party, of the State, of the people. As I thought about the battalion I recalled the speeches and articles of Stalin, and his powerful figure often appeared before my eyes, the figure of a stern father whose son (may I be permitted to call myself such!) I have the good fortune to be.

4

In the morning I once more ordered the cooks not to light the kitchen fires but to issue raw rations to the troops.

Then I fell the battalion in and spoke to the troops. What I said was approximately as follows:

"First of all: you are discontented, comrades, because the march is so long and so hard. It was intended to be. We are going to fight, we are going to march hundreds of kilometres and not just fifty. On active service, in order to mislead the enemy and deal him an unexpected blow, troops have to do longer and harder marches than this. These are only the buds, the fruit we shall gather later. This is how the famous Russian general Alexander Vassilyevich Suvorov trained and hardened his men. He left us a saying of his as a legacy: 'it's hard at school, easy in battle.' Do you want to fight as Suvorov's troops fought? Anybody who doesn't—two paces forward—march!"

Nobody left the ranks. I continued:

"Secondly: you are dissatisfied because we brought field kitchens with us but you were given raw meat, and tired as you were, made to cook it yourselves. This was also done intentionally. Do you think that in active service you'll always have a kitchen by your side? During a battle the kitchens will get cut off, will often lag behind. That's war, that's the life of a soldier defending his country. One day his belly's full to bursting, the next it's empty. You have to put up with this life and still maintain your honour as a soldier. Keep your heads up! Everybody should be able to cook. What sort of soldiers will you be if you can't cook your own food? I know that some of you have never cooked anything in your lives before. I know that many of you used to go into a restaurant in the evening and shout: 'Hi, waiter! A pot of beer and a hamburger steak!' And suddenly, instead of the hamburger, you get a fifty-kilometre route-march, with seventy pounds of equipment on your back and on top of it all have to cook your own grub in a mess tin. You hated me when you were doing that cooking, didn't you?"

Several voices answered: "That's true, Comrade Battalion Commander! That's true!" A wave of understanding spread between me and the men. I understood them and they understood their battalion commander.

We set off back again.

5

A splendid metalled road led to our camp at Talgar. Marching along such a road is easy work.

Easy? Then to hell with the road. Are there metalled roads leading to the battlefield?

I ordered the column to leave the road and march at a distance of 100 to 200 yards to one side. There were stones in the way—then march over them; gullies—then cross them; sandy patches—step out!

There was not a breath of wind and the sun glared down pitilessly. The air seemed to be flowing in streams; this often happens—transparent streams of air move upwards from the earth that is as hot as an oven. Our halts were not made by a river bank or in groves of trees but under the blazing sun.

I knew it was hard on the troops. . . But I knew something else—that it was necessary training for war, it was essential for victory.

General Panfilov, riding a tiny Urals

horse, met us near Talgar. He met all the returning battalions.

When they saw the general the men smartened up; the companies were given the order to march to attention; the tired soldiers, marching in step, held their heads up proudly. That's the sort we were.

Panfilov smiled. Tiny wrinkles ran from his eyes over tanned skin that looked just as if it had been roasted. Standing in his stirrups he shouted:

"You're marching well! Thank you, comrades, for your service!"

"We serve the Soviet Union!" came the answer in chorus.

The battalion shouted so lustily that the horse shied. Panfilov involuntarily grabbed his reins, shook his head and laughed.

This time I shouted the words together with the men. I was not only answering the general's greeting. To any soldier, any officer, to my own conscience, to anybody who asked me: "Why are you so severe?" I could proudly give the same answer: "I serve the Soviet Union!"

We arrived in camp on time.

I inspected the companies drawn up in a hollow square around me. They stood there, hollow-cheeked, dirty; in forage caps baked with sweat; in heavy dusty boots, their rifles at the ready. They were suffering, their feet ached, they wanted only one thing, to lie down, but they patiently awaited the word of command; they did not lean on their rifles like old men, but meeting the glances of their officers, pulled their shoulders back.

These were not the same people as the ones who fell in here a week ago wearing civilian caps, jackets and shirts. Nor were they those, who, in badly fitting new equipment, left on their first long route-march at dawn — now they were soldiers who had passed with honour their first army tests.

That was the end of the march.

FORWARD

I would like to tell you a lot more about how we trained ourselves for war, how General Panfilov visited the battalion, how he talked with the soldiers, how often he said to them and to me: "Victory is won before the battle."

However. . . we must pass over all that.

At last we achieved the thing for whose sake we had taken up arms, for whose sake we were learning the trade of soldier, for whose sake men in the army stand to attention before an officer, never contradict him, always obey him: we went into action.

We were sent to the Moscow district and took up positions near Volokolamsk; on October 13, 1941, the enemy was approaching this line, a motorized, well-drilled, bandit army which had broken through our line far away in the west, and had made a spurt towards Moscow which the Germans thought would be the last spurt of a lightning war.

On this day, on the 13th, when our scouts first reported that they had seen the Germans, General Panfilov came to the battalion.

He drank two glasses of strong hot tea, glanced at his watch and said:

"Thanks, Comrade Momysh-uly, that's enough. . . Let's visit the positions."

He put on a soft sheepskin jacket which smelt slightly but pleasantly of tar, a warm fur cap and his equipment and we went out.

A car was waiting for the general not far away, near the edge of the forest. The rear wheels were tightly bound with chains, their steel links packed with hard-pressed, blackened snow.

Everything was snowed under; we had had real sleigh weather for the past few days; there had been light frosts; the bright patch in the overcast sky through which the sun peeped at midday, had disappeared; the horizon had a kind of yellowish colour about it; nevertheless that snowy evening seemed quite light.

In five minutes we reached Number 2 company's positions. Jumping lightly into the trenches Panfilov passed along under the breastwork, glanced through the embrasures, checked up the fire zones, took a rifle and sighted it through an embrasure just as though he were firing, asked the troops the usual questions: "What's the food like? Do you get enough tobacco?" The men answered him with a look of anticipation in their eyes. The news brought in by the scouts had passed along the trenches: the Germans were in front of us. Panfilov chatted, joked with the men, but they had that look of anti-

cipation in their eyes—the troops were expecting something; the general would have something special to say to them, something that they ought to hear before going into battle, something that would make the enemy forces less fearsome.

Panfilov visited several trenches and then silently walked towards the banks of the dark not yet frozen Ruza. He was looking down as he always did when he was thinking.

Sevriukov, the company commander, came running up, straightening the cap which showed his closely cropped grey temples. At a distance of three or four paces behind him, neither dropping back nor overtaking him, ran several privates.

Panfilov listened to his report and then said:

"What is this suite of yours?"

"My orderlies, Comrade General."

"Do they run about everywhere after you?"

"And why not, Comrade General? If anything suddenly. . ."

"Good. Very good. . . Your trenches, Comrade Sevriukov, are well built. . ."

The elderly face of the former head book-keeper glowed with satisfaction.

"I thought this way, Comrade General," he began thoughtfully, "you might want to fall in the company and talk to them. That's why the orderlies are here. Those, Comrade General, are real runners. If you give the order, Comrade General, the company will be here in ten minutes."

Panfilov got out his watch, looked at it, and thought for a second.

"Here in ten minutes?"

"Yes, Comrade General."

"Good. . . very good. . . Then tell me, Comrade Sevriukov, how many do you need to fall the company in over there?"

Turning round quickly Panfilov pointed to the opposite bank of the Ruza.

"Over there?" asked Sevriukov.

"Yes."

Sevriukov looked at the general's index finger, then at the spot towards which a straight line led from that finger. It was still light enough to see clearly—the general's hand pointed to the forest on the opposite side of the river.

Still Sevriukov asked again:

"On the other side?"

"Yes, yes. . . on the other side, Comrade Sevriukov."

Sevriukov looked at the black, still not yet frozen river, then turned his head towards the bridge which stood about a kilometre and a half away, hidden by a turn in the river; he took out his handkerchief, blew his nose awkwardly and turned back to look at the river.

Panfilov waited in silence.

"I don't know. . . Ford the river, Comrade General? It's above the waist in the middle. The men will get wet, Comrade General."

"No, why should they get wet? it isn't summer. Let's do our fighting in dry clothes. Well, Comrade Sevriukov, how many minutes to get there?"

"I don't know. . . It wouldn't be a matter of minutes, Comrade General."

Panfilov turned to me.

"Bad, Comrade Momysh-uly," he said distinctly.

This was the first time General Panfilov has said the word "bad" to me. This had never happened before and it did not happen again during the fighting at Moscow.

"Bad," he repeated. "Why haven't storm bridges been made ready? Why are there no rafts or boats? You've dug in, dug in well, with a knowledge of the job. . . Now you're waiting till the Germans attack you. That's bad in itself. What if a counter-attack should be better? What if you yourselves have a chance to hit back? Are you ready for that? The enemy is already getting impatient and over-confident—that is something we must take advantage of. And you, Comrade Momysh-uly, haven't thought of it."

He spoke sternly, without his usual tenderness, doing nothing to soften the sharpness of his voice. Standing to attention with flushed face, I listened to the indictment.

2

The general turned again to Sevriukov.

"So you can't concentrate your men over there quickly, Comrade Sevriukov? That's bad. . . Think it over. And how long do you need to take up a flank position?"

"A flank position? On what line, Comrade General?"

Panfilov pointed to the edge of the wood where the battalion headquarters were hidden and from where ruts led

across the white field, ruts made by the car that had brought us here, but which were now invisible in the darkness.

"There's your line, Comrade Sevriukov, from the wood to the river bank. . . Your task is to cover the battalion's flank."

Sevriukov thought.

"Fifteen to twenty minutes, Comrade General."

Panfilov livened up.

"You're not imagining things, Comrade Sevriukov? All right, all right, give your orders. I'll check up your time."

Sevriukov saluted, turned about and walked unhurriedly towards the orderlies. For half a minute he studied the ground silently. My glance screamed at him: "What are you dallying for? Hurry, hurry!" Suddenly I heard a hoarse whisper: "Good man, he's thinking," Panfilov whispered to me with a smile. His face was no longer severe. He followed Sevriukov's movements with interest.

Sevriukov had already given his commands to the orderlies. We heard:

"The machine-gun platoon will cover the advance and then leave last. . . Muratov, at the double!"

Panfilov, unable to contain himself, nodded. The forty-year-old lieutenant, the former head book-keeper of a tobacco factory in Alma-Ata, pleased him.

Muratov, a Tartar, short in stature but strong, was already running along the bank throwing up clods of snow with his boots. After him a second orderly, and in another direction a third. Tall Belvitsky, who was a student in a teachers college before the war, ran to the woods. He was the marker on the line the general had pointed out. "Mistake!" I thought. "You can't stand up like that under fire!" But Sevriukov was already waving his hand madly at him telling him to bend down. Belvitsky did not understand. Sevriukov sat down himself and then he understood.

In the growing darkness the first lines at last appeared running towards the forest. I recognized the huge figure of Galliulin, bending as he ran under the weight of the machine-gun he was carrying, but even in that position he seemed taller than the others. The machine-gun platoon dropped to the ground.

Passing them, riflemen ran to the edge of the wood, their rifles held "on guard" barely discernible in the darkness. They were already dropping down into the snow—the black dot of the new line of defence appeared on the white field.

It seemed to me that the watch which Panfilov was holding and glancing at from time to time was beating out the seconds inside me. Every stroke said: "Good, good, good!" Do you understand me? This was my battalion, my creation into which I had put everything I had in me,—the battalion of which, according to regulations, I was allowed to say "I". Suddenly I thought again: "Will we be able to move like this under fire, when bullets are flying over the fields in the din and flames of bursting shells and bombs? What if somebody should cry out in a panic: 'We're surrounded!' and run for the woods? And what if others should be infected by him and run after him? No, no! Such a man would be killed on the spot by his officer, would be shot by the other soldiers!"

The men were already running past us. They lay down not far from us, immediately getting to work with their entrenching tools throwing up the snow around them. Sevriukov's runners returned to him.

The huge figure of Galliulin with a machine-gun on his broad back again towered over the field—the machine-gun platoon having covered the advance of the company was now taking up its own position. Some straggler ran up. Sevriukov followed him with his eyes. He waited till he had dropped down in the snow and then came to Panfilov:

"Comrade General! In accordance with your orders the company has taken up a flank-guard position! The line of defence you indicated has been occupied!"

Panfilov, screwing up his eyes, looked at his watch.

"Marvellous!" he exclaimed. "Eighteen and a half minutes. Excellent, Comrade Sevriukov! Excellent, Comrade Momysh-uly! Now I can't go away until I say 'thank you' to the troops. What good are we if we can't beat the Germans with such men as these?! These are the kind of soldiers we need! Fall the company in here, Comrade Sevriukov!"

Again the runners went out and the company fell in at the double in columns of platoons. It was already getting dark

and faces were indistinguishable but the outline of the ranks on parade was sharply defined. Sevriukov dressed his company, called them to attention, and reported to the general.

Panfilov did not like making speeches; usually he preferred chatting to the troops sitting around him, but this time he addressed the company, briefly it is true, speaking for no more than two or three minutes.

Unable to hide his pleasure he praised the men.

"I tell you as an old soldier, comrades," he said softly: "there's nothing to be afraid of with soldiers like you."

Without even seeing his face it was possible to tell by his voice that he was smiling. He was silent for a moment, then he asked, as though addressing himself:

"What is a soldier? A soldier obeys everybody, stands to attention in front of all his officers, obeys orders. His is the lowest rank, as we used to say in the old days. But what is an order without a soldier? It is an idea, a ghost, a dream. The very best and cleverest order remains a dream, a fantasy, if the soldier is badly trained. The training of an army, comrades, is first and foremost the individual training of the soldier.

"In war the soldier is the deciding factor.

"When a company operated as you have just done, when orders are carried out as well as that, then... then the Germans won't see Moscow! Thank you, comrades, for your excellent training! Thank you for your service!"

A roar rolled across the field:

"We serve the Soviet Union!"

Again silence fell.

"Thank you, Comrade Sevriukov," said the general, pressing the company commander's hand. "With such eagles I myself am an eagle!"

In the silence which prevailed everybody heard what he said. Once again you could tell from his voice that Panfilov was smiling.

The soldiers also smiled. It sometimes happens that you can feel a smile through the darkness and through the silence but it was my misfortune, my suffering that, this evening, after a reprimand which had hurt me so deeply, this wonderful feeling did not effect me as it did the soldiers; that feeling which was both a reward and a pleasure was not mine. I could not see their faces. Perhaps the men were smiling, but perhaps they were still gloomy, perhaps they were still unhappy, perhaps they still awaited some special words from the general, words which would help them in battle, not realizing that those words had already been spoken.

I could not hear the breathing of the men in the company or see their faces. This, together with the reprimand, was a punishment for the big mistake I had made. What was the mistake?

I thought over the general's sharp words. "I don't even see any idea of this nature," he had said, showing with an arrow an attack on the enemy. Idea! Yes, there was something I hadn't thought of, something I had left undone. It wasn't only the placing of the mine field, the providing for the river, crossing stores, it was something in the spirit of the men; but what, what? Victory—one victory in battle was what we wanted.

I accompanied the general to his car.

"Carry out your reconnoissance more intensely," he said, standing on the running board. "Keep on sending men out ahead. There's no need to keep them huddled up in their dugouts. Let them have a look at the Germans before the battle begins!"

He gave me his hand in parting, and holding mine in his continued:

"Do you know, Comrade Momysh-uly, what is lacking in the battalion? They need to give the Germans a blow, a good beating, just once."

I gave a jump. That was what I wanted more than anything else.

"Then, Comrade Momysh-uly, that won't be a battalion... No! .. That will be a Damascus blade! Do you know what a Damascus blade is? There is a design engraved on it that nobody in the world can rub out. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Axakal..."

I don't know myself how that word slipped out of my mouth. I called Panfilov by the name which we Kazakhs use in speaking to the elder of the clan.

I felt him press my hand.

"Don't wait but look for opportunities! And as you turn round—strike! Think first and then strike! Think this over, Comrade Momysh-uly!"

He bent forward in order to see me better in the semi-darkness and again asked:

"Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Comrade General."

Panfilov took my hand in both his own in the Kazakh manner. It was a token of affection.

The door of the car closed behind him. With headlights burning the car drove off across the snow-clad field. I stood for a long time looking in the direction in which the general had gone.

3

That night we drew up a time table. At dawn three sections, one from each of the rifle companies, would leave on reconnoisance in different directions. Then every two hours in accordance with our time table one section after another would cross the river and move towards the place from which the Germans were advancing. The troops were given reconnoissance tasks to perform, but the main thing was that they were to try to get a glimpse of a live German.

The soldiers crept carefully along the outskirts of the woods, crawled up to a village, and, calling softly to the collective farmers, discovered where the Germans were and how many of them there were. Having found out they crawled nearer so as to get a look at a German. At first it was a bit nerve-racking, but the men did it. They were going forward! From behind bushes, from behind fences, out of pits, from amongst the stubble of the fields and from vegetable gardens they watched: what sort of an enemy was this that was coming to kill us.

Section after section came back. The soldiers, one after another, told how the Germans walked about the villages, washed, ate, shot chickens, laughed, and chattered about something in German.

Rahimov interrogated the section commanders, asked them about the strength of the Germans, their equipment and their movements, and wrote everything down. I listened to these reports, watched the men's faces and felt the pulse of the battalion. Many came back much brighter, but some had a sad look in their eyes—these had not thrown off their fear.

One section, led by Kurbatov, came back particularly happy.

With a dashing salute and a click of the heels, Kurbatov looked at me with his laughing eyes and said:

"Permit me to report, Comrade Battalion Commander. Your order has not been fulfilled."

"How is that?"

"You ordered us not to shoot, but I couldn't hold myself back. I fired twice, and Private Garkusha as well. . ."

"And then?"

"We killed two of them, Comrade Battalion Commander. We were cut to the quick. . . The Germans had grabbed a pig from an old woman. She was hanging on to one of them, lying on the ground and screaming. With his boot he kicked her in the face. I couldn't stand it any longer, and pulled the trigger. So did Private Garkusha. That's how they got a smell of us too."

Garkusha, the soldier who had had so much trouble with the grenade bag on the first route-march, took up the story.

"I had a different reason, Comrade Battalion Commander."

"What reason?"

Garkusha looked at his comrades and winked.

"A Russian doesn't believe his eyes, he likes to feel."

"Did you feel? Do the bullets get them?"

"That's not enough, Comrade Battalion Commander. I want to feel them in another way."

Garkusha let out a mouthful such as cannot be put on paper. The men all laughed and I listened with satisfaction. That day laughter—a pleasant and capricious guest—never once complained of us. But he did not stay. He only came for a minute, then flew away and then came back as though he were wondering whether to settle with us or not.

The machine-gunners came to me, the serious Blokha, Galliulin and Murin.

"Comrade Battalion Commander, allow me to say something," began Blokha.

I gave my permission. Blokha gave Galliulin a poke with his elbow. Murin pushed him back. The gaunt Kazakh with the dark, shining face, said boldly:

"Comrade Battalion Commander. . ."

"What's the trouble?"

"Comrade Battalion Commander, are you angry with us?"

"I'm not angry with you."

"Then why, Comrade Battalion Com-

mander, does everybody go out to get a look at the Germans except the machine-gunners? Everybody else has seen them except us. Private Garkusha has shot a German, but we haven't."

"Where can I send you with machine-guns? The machine-guns are needed here."

"Just a little way, Comrade Battalion Commander, we won't go far und will come straight back."

Murin couldn't hold himself back:

"Comrade Battalion Commander, let us go one night. We will get a look at them by night. We'll set fire to something and they'll run out. And let us fire at least one slip of cartridges, Comrade Battalion Commander."

Yes, there was something new about the battalion today. Murin was an interesting man. I had noticed several times that he was the first to get tired when the battalion was worn out, but he was also the first to get his spirits back when the whole battalion was in a good mood, The spirit of the battalion was reflected first of all in him; it seemed, he was the stamp of the battalion which was sometimes blurred and at others sharply defined. I knew that this stamp was still not the design on a Damascus blade, a design which nobody in the world could rub out.

The more I thought of the instructions Panfilov had given us, the more closely I looked at the soldiers, listened to the reports of the reconnoissance parties, to their words and their intonation, the clearer one idea became to me. To the machine-gunners I said:

"All right, Galliulin, don't be hurt. There'll be work for you tomorrow."

TRY A FIGHT WITH US!

The idea was the following:

About twenty kilometres ahead of us lay the large village of Sereda, the village where a mounted patrol under Rahimov, the chief of staff, had first sighted the Germans on the 13th of October. Several roads leading to Volokolamsk, Kalinin and Mozhaisk radiated from this village.

By correlating the information brought in by our reconnoissance parties and interrogating civilians who had fled from the Germans, we discovered that the enemy had established a sort of supply base at Sereda where they had large food, ammunition and fuel dumps. German units that were advancing into our territory bivouacked there overnight and then moved on—northwards to Kalinin, southwards along the road to Mozhaisk—enveloping our defences on both flanks.

The idea was to strike a blow at that village ourselves without waiting for the Germans to attack. Why couldn't we make a night raid on Sereda?

Panfilov always said: "Think it over! Think it over first and then strike!"

I sent out an officers' patrol under Rahimov. This thirty-two-year-old Kazakh with a European cast of features, was a sportsman and a traveller by nature. I think I told you that in Kazakhstan he had already gained some fame as a mountaineer. He moved swiftly but unhurriedly. Apart from his coolness and the thorough way in which he carried out his orders he had one more quality which is invaluable in war-time—he had a sense of direction; he even seemed to be able to see in the dark.

I anxiously awaited Rahimov's return. He left on the evening of the 14th, was away all night and all the next morning.

At last, towards midday, he returned, confirming all the information we had gathered. Sereda was really a German supply base: stores were concentrated there, large army units bivouacked there overnight, continuing on their way the following morning. The guard was not a very large one. The Germans were apparently certain that we would not dare attack them.

I decided to attack that very night. In the evening I made up a detachment of a hundred men.

I defined the task of my small force as follows: in the dead of night we were to enter Sereda from three sides, bayonet and shoot up the garrison, set fire to the dumps, take prisoners and, if time permitted, mine the roads leading to and from Sereda. We were not to hold the village but to return to our own positions by morning.

The regimental commander sanctioned the operation but would not permit me to lead it. I placed Rahimov in command of the detachment with Boszhanov as his political instructor.

As it grew dark the hundred men fell in opposite the headquarters dugout at the edge of the woods. Galliulin's head towered above the line of caps and

alongside him I could make out the stocky figure of Blokha. I was keeping my promise, the machine-gunners were to take part in the night raid.

Again I could not distinguish their faces, but in the darkness an electric current ran through us. I was trembling nervously, and although I did not come into contact with any of the men I realized that they too were in a fever of excitement. It was trembling caused by zeal and not by fear, it was excitement before the battle. An ancient Kazakh saying that Boszhanov had recently reminded me of kept running through my head. I repeated it to the detachment:

"The enemy is only to be feared until you have tasted his blood. Go, comrades, and find out what the German is made of. Will his blood run from our bullets? Will he howl when your bayonets sink into him? Will he dig teeth into the ground in his agony? Let him bite at it. Feed him on our soil! Get the taste of his blood! General Panfilov called you eagles. Go, my eagles!"

Rahimov led the men off. I watched the column disappear into the semi-darkness. Krayev came up to me.

"Why didn't you let me go, Comrade Battalion Commander?" he muttered.

"I wasn't allowed to go myself, Krayev."

That evening we both envied the troops.

Thus began the night of the 15th of October, 1941, the night of our first battle.

2

I could not get to sleep that night. Nor could I sit in the dugout.

I went out along the edge of the wood, walked along the paths and off them, looked towards the west where our men had gone, and listened, as though I expected to hear shouts and firing over a distance of twenty kilometres.

During the day we had heard gunfire somewhere to the south. We still did not know that during the day of the 15th of October, German tank columns had moved towards Moscow, around the left flank of our division; we still did not know that there, at the Bulychovo State Farm—write that name down, some day it will be engraved in gold on a marble tablet in the future club of our division—the Panfilov Division gave them battle.

By night time everything was quiet there also.

On the well-trodden snow of the path that led to the headquarters dugout, stood a sentry. He was looking in the same direction as I. The whole battalion knew: the eagles had gone into battle; the whole battalion waited: what would it be like, this first battle with the Germans?

I kept pulling out my watch. The luminous hands showed me three o'clock, half past three, four. . . Still my eyes found only darkness all around me, my keen ear heard nothing but the deepest silence.

Suddenly something flashed in the sky. No, I was imagining things. . . Again a scarcely perceptible streak of dull light. . . What was it? Dawn? But who ever heard of the sun rising in the west? Then again the sky was dark. . . Again the light flashed and died out. . . again there appeared. . . Now it was flickering, contracting, but it did not go out. . . A rosy hue became visible. . .

I looked and looked as though under a spell. A livid, pulsating glow spread across the sky like the fiery breath of some monster.

The sentry sighed:

"That's our lads burning 'em out. They're giving them something!"

I would have liked to answer him but I could not. Happiness choked me, was pulsating within me as well as in the glow in the sky. I felt that my blood was not carrying little globulas of air from my lungs to every part of the body, but little globulas of joy.

3

The detachment returned in the morning. Soldiers ran from all the trenches, far and near, to greet them as they returned.

Happy at meeting their own comrades, they looked in astonishment at the pitiful figure of the German prisoner who had been brought back together with other trophies captured by the detachment. He sat on a cart in a greenish uniform and greenish forage cap, slowly turning his sinewy neck with its prominent Adam's apple.

"You can have a talk with him," said Boszhanov, "he knows some Russian. What's your name?"

The prisoner muttered something.

"Louder!" shouted Boszhanov.

I had never seen the mild Boszhanov look so menacing before.

The German held his hands at the seams of his trousers, and standing to attention before the Kazakh officer, he pronounced his name clearly. All the men looked intently at the live, speaking German.

"Are you married?"

"No. . . I am a cavalier..."

Boszhanov roared with laughter from the very bottom of his heart. His full, friendly face became even broader, his little eyes disappeared. Everybody else laughed with the political instructor. "Cavalier!" Here was a cavalier for you! The German looked round.

"Quiet!" somebody shouted. "Listen to what the political instructor has to say!"

Boszhanov held up his hand.

"The political instructor says—laugh!" he said.

Not even expecting it himself he pronounced an aphorism that has since been frequently repeated throughout the battalion:

"Laughter is the most serious business at the front!"

Boszhanov began questioning the German, trying to speak clearly and distinctly. He asked about the plans of the German command. The prisoner did not immediately understand him. Getting the sense of the question at last he answered, stumbling over the Russian names:

"Breakfast—Volokolamsk. Supper—Moskau."

He said that quite seriously, his hands held to his sides, believing, even now he was a prisoner, that this was what really would happen: "breakfast—Volokolamsk, supper—Moskau!"

Again the laughter broke out.

Twisting his neck, the German looked around him. He realized that he was in trouble with these Russians.

That is how our first battle was won.

4

Rahimov and Boszhanov gave me the details of the raid.

The fighting did not exactly follow the lines we had laid down.

One group which stumbled accidentally on a patrol began fighting before the village was entirely surrounded. The soldiers entered the houses, bayonetted and shot the Germans, but some paths of escape were left that we had not cut off and many of them succeeded in getting away. They recovered and assumed the defensive more quickly than we had anticipated. The detachment killed about two hundred Germans, mined the roads, set fire to many motor-vehicles and several dumps, including the petrol dump, but the Germans managed to save something in one corner of the village.

The main thing, however, had been achieved. The men had seen the Germans running from them; the soldiers had heard them shriek as they died; the soldiers had tried out their bayonets and bullets on them—they had tasted the enemy's blood.

I went along the positions with Rahimov and Boszhanov. The men who had taken part in the raid had already joined their sections and platoons. I had given orders for all work and drill to be stopped for two hours. Everywhere groups gathered around the heroes of the raid who had beaten up the Germans.

Here and there laughter was heard. I was met with the order: "Get up! Atten-shun!" In that shouted order alone I could frequently get a picture of the spirit of the soldiers. How jolly it sounded on that day!

I met Murin who as a machine-gunner had taken part in the raid. He had a bold look about him and a good ten metres from me started marching to attention. This was on the outer line of defences, where nothing but the ground called "no man's land" separated us from the Germans, and Murin strutted past the battalion commander in a real goose-step. I returned his salute and Murin looked at me and smiled. I answered with a smile. That was all. We did not stop, did not utter a word, but our hearts were again filled with gladness as they had been during the night. I loved him and felt that he loved me.

Those were wonderful minutes of happiness, the great happiness of the commander who feels himself one with the battalion. I realized that fearlessness had been born in the battalion that day.

It seemed that everything all around was the same as before. Beyond the dark, still unfrozen river, the landscape gleamed white. Clods of ploughed earth stuck

up through the early snow. The wedges of woodland made dark patches. As before I knew that soon everything would be in an uproar; tanks would come crawling over the snow, leaving black traces behind them; men would dash out of the woods, drop to the ground, jump up again, men with tommy-guns in greenish greatcoats, men coming to kill us; inside me the words sounded: "Come and try a fight with us."

In the glances, in the smiles, in the laughter that never left us there was also a sound of "Come and try a fight with us!"

That was what our battalion, our Damascus blade, sounded like that day. I felt that I would like to say something fine, like this: our battalion has been forged into a Damascus sword, a tempered, sharpened, damascened blade that will cut iron and whose design nothing in the world can rub off. But I will say something more modest: today we have graduated from the soldiers' middle school. The last class in the school has finished, in the language of a soldier, with a bayonet jab, and not at a dummy but at a live enemy. We have passed this class with comparative ease, in a daring night raid.

The heavy fighting, the greatest trials of our courage were still ahead of us. The great two months battle of Moscow had only just begun.

During those two months we, the 1st Battalion of the Talgar Regiment, fought thirty-five battles; we were at one time General Panfilov's reserve battalion; we entered battles, as becomes a reserve battalion, at desperately difficult moments; we fought at Volokolamsk, at Istra, at Kryukovo; we beat the Germans and drove them before us.

I will tell you about our thirty-five battles another time.

A. BEK

OLD FOLKS

The old man was conducted by a hidden forest trail to the colonel's dugout. The heavy fragrance of spring filled the woods, the more pungent as most of the trees, gashed and torn by trench-mortars, oozed slowly rolling tears of resin—that fresh, odiferous life's blood of living wood. The old man watched one of the soldiers attach little cups made of bark to the splinter-wounded silver birch which soon filled with the crystal-clear viscuous juice, and nodded silent approval of the man's commendable industriousness. Army service teaches one to be thrifty with the gifts of mother nature.

Two people—the colonel and his adjutant—sat in the dugout, which was dimly lit by a flickering oil-lamp. The colonel was poring over some papers and kept on reading and rereading the dispatch that lay before him. This message reported that two trucks carrying munitions had safely reached the unit which had breached the enemy's positions and wedged itself deeply into the German defence lines. Through the dry wording of this dispatch one could not but feel the joy evoked by the "safely arrived" trucks. And it was this joy that saddened the colonel.

The only road by which the unit was kept supplied was under German fire. Our units were trying to push the Germans back from the road, but this required time and meanwhile the nazis continued peppering every inch of the road with trench-mortar shells and—even worse—their "cuckoo" tommy-gun snipers ensconced in the tree-tops kept on potting our drivers. Trucks, of course, managed to get through. But the unit was running short of ammunition and the batteries had to cut down from battery and salvo fire to single gun-fire. The command was unable to detail sappers to lay another road as they were engaged at the forward edge. And where could another road possibly be laid, when all around was nothing but impenetrable swamp? One hope was left—and this was the inhabitants of a large village recently liberated from the Germans.

When from the other side of the tent-cloth that served as a door to the dugout was heard the deep drawling voice of the old man: "C'n I see you, chief?" the colonel quickly rose from the table and strode with outstretched hand to welcome the old man who was gingerly descending into the dugout.

"Hullo, chairman! How're things?"

The colonel had become very fond of

the clean-cut, thick-set folk inhabiting these northern spots. Taken unawares in their village by the Germans, they did not remain in their homes and hearths for a single day. Choking the German sentry to death, that same night they left with their womenfolk and children for the thick woods which engulfed their village in its dense growth.

"Well, chief," the old man began with deliberation. "we talked it over at our village meeting, and here's how we've decided: you'll have a road. We won't be needin' your sappers. They'll be handy for you elsewheres. This here's a simple sort of peasant's job, and we ain't used to workin' with other folks' help."

"Without sappers?" the colonel looked surprised. "Do you think you'll manage?"

"Like sappers? No, we won't," said the old man with a sigh, "but we'll make a job of it."

"No," retorted the colonel, "that won't do. Our sappers are experienced boys, this is a war zone here, and the enemy will start bombing. No, grandad, I'm sorry, nothing doing."

"You're a funny fellow you are, my word! What makes you think we're going to let the Germans get at us? We'll do it all on the quiet."

"What, build the road?"

"That's right."

"But how on earth will you do it?"

"Now, chief, have you ever known a craftsman tell you his trade secrets before he handles the job? When we finish the road, then you'll see."

"All right," said the colonel, raising his hand with its dark, leathery palm. "I'm going against my own judgement, but have it your own way! How much time will you need?"

"Just thirteen days."

"Let's say half a month."

"Thirteen days and not a day more," the old man firmly repeated. "Thirteen's our sacred number. We hammer the thirteenth nail into the head of the coffin."

. . . Next day the sentries let five old men clad in white shirts of homespun linen pass across the bridge. Having crossed the bridge the old men stopped and their eyes roved up and down the road that was being so ploughed up and depopulated by savage German fire.

Parallel with the front line, it began some three hundred yards from the bridge, running straight to the woods. At the moment the road was empty and silent, but the disabled trucks piled up by the roadside dispelled the illusion of this shortlived tranquillity. The road was very short and one could only stand amazed at the density and precision of fire that rendered it impassable for fast going vehicles.

To the left of the road could be seen a copse, where German "cuckoos" were hidden in the tree-tops; to the right lay the unhealthy emerald green of swamplands dotted here and there with bushes. The old men skirted the bog, hugging the bank of the river. After about half a kilometre or so two of them squatted down on their haunches and peered closely at the swamp grass. They informed old Kondratenkov—their senior in years and in experience—of the result of their examination.

Not far from the line of shrubbery that cut across the quagmire the old men found the place they were looking for.

"We'll put it down just here," was old Kondratenkov's conclusion. "Now, boys, three of you'll come with me and we'll notch the trees, and you, Mitrofanych, get the old village folk. Tell 'em to say good-bye to their old women and enlist under army regulations."

Three old men set out for the woods, heading straight across the vivid green bog. The soggy ground squelched under their feet. Had there been an onlooker he would have thought it amazing that the quagmire did not suck them down.

Reaching the forest the old men tightened their belts and began notching the straightest and best trees with small axes.

"Don't notch 'em too wide," old Kondratenkov cautioned, "the German fox mustn't see it from up above."

Towards noon several more old men turned up, and the work quickly speeded up. Having notched the required number of trees the old men spread their quilted coats on the ground and lay down for a nap until nightfall. At night, when the moon rose from behind a curved strip of cloud, bathing everything in a quivering, silvery, dream-like light, muffled taps could be heard all over the bog beyond the river, as though huge woodpeckers were pecking away at the trees with beaks of iron.

The trees were felled in three stages: the first blow, a slanting one, slashed off a long strip of bark as though initiating

the tree to pain and death; the second cut deep into its core; and the third blow, with the butt-end of the axe, sent it crashing, sundering it from the roots that had nourished it. The tree fell, rending the last few threads of fibre, its foliage mournfully rustling against the leaves of its neighbours.

Then the crowns of the prostrated trees were lopped and all the boughs hacked off, and the logs fastened together into rafts. . .

A week later the colonel arrived on the scene of work. Here he found nothing that corresponded to his idea of road building. From the dry edge of the river bank ran the swamps—virgin ground untouched by pick-axe and shovel. But then, of what use could a pick-axe and shovel be in such a soggy quagmire? Perhaps he was mistaken, and this was not the place? But he saw the sedate figure of Makar Savelyevich come out of the woods and move towards him across the bog. The colonel was about to call out to the old man to be careful, but the latter calmly negotiated the treacherous quagmire with a sure tread, as the water could be heard squelching under his footsteps.

"What makes you come before the time's up, chief?"

"I only wanted to see how things are getting on," the colonel replied, careful not to offend the old man.

"There's nothin' to see here, the road's bein' built in the woods. Look! There it is, being carried this very minute. . ."

Eight old men came out of the woods, carrying a big raft, which they placed on the ground. These were followed by another eight, who placed their raft flush with the first, after which two men started roping and nailing them together.

"Ekh, Makar Savelyevich, this paving will be sucked under for certain," the colonel exclaimed in a tone of chagrin. "Nothing can ever get through these swamps."

"You're right, it is swampland, but not where we're laying the road. Bend down and take a good look at the top of the grass, the very tips of the blades. See anythin'?"

"Grass, green grass, that's all. . ." said the colonel, peering closely at the bright green turf where the wind sent gentle waves rippling over the grass.

"Look closer. Is it all just green, or can you see yellowish spots?"

The colonel strained his eyes and he was not sure whether it was his imagination or certainty that on the rippling green grass he could make out a narrow strip faintly tipped with yellow.

"Yes, I see it," he said taking his overstrained eyes from the ground.

"Well, that's how we can tell a sham swamp—by the yellowish tips. The grass-blade tips are scorched by the sun, and that means they get less moisture. This never happens with real bog grass: no matter how the sun scorches, all its heat is swallowed up by the moisture because the root of the bog grass soaks in subsoil water all the time. But here the grass roots are in firm, dry ground, with less water. Lookin' at it you'd think it's the same bog grass and the same swampland. But it's only the rain that's soaked the top of the earth, and underneath it's all dry and firm. And that's why it'll support a good weight. Now let's go and have a look at our logwood pavin'. . ."

They proceeded to the woods and, notwithstanding the old man's detailed explanations, the colonel stepped very gingerly, the soil sagging and sucking underfoot.

Five or six finished rafts lay on the ground and the colonel saw that they were beginning to take the form of a bend, following the strip where the grass was faintly tipped with yellow.

The logs were rafted diagonally, as they always should be in road building. The rafts themselves were clamped down on thick cross beams, the actual paving thus being clear of the ground. The old man picked out a blade of dark-tipped grass hidden between two leaves of a puny flower the size of a pea, fingered its roots under the soil, and pulled it out. The root, like a long white worm, was dry and forked at the end. He placed the root against a cross beam, and the thickness of the latter exactly co-incided with the length of the root.

"Get the hang of it? The pavin' 'll be supported by the cross beams which 'll sink to firm soil."

"I see," said the colonel, casting a look of respect at the old man.

"I thought you would," the latter remarked with pride.

A whining, intermittent drone was heard in the woods, growing nearer with

terrific speed. It proved to be a "Henschel" biplane. It flew low above the trees and circling made for the swamp. Hardly had the German machine headed for the bog when the old men had already covered the rafts with a green net of grass.

The bomb fell about three hundred yards from where they stood, a green pillar of grass and water leaping into the air on the spot where the bomb landed. Like a poplar, the pillar stood for a moment and then fell apart in a spraying fountain of green.

"Restless devil!" the old man said. "Keeps on comin' every day. Bombed the whole bog. Smells somethin' fishy, but can't find out where and what. . ."

The German plane dropped another bomb and then disappeared behind the trees. In the woods it let loose a third bomb. Splintered by the missile, a tree crashed to the ground, followed by cries and oaths of commiseration. An old man dashed out to the edge of the woods with a birch-bark pail in his hands and ran to the river.

"What's happened, Danilych?"

"Old Kondratenkov's been knocked over by the explosion blast. . ."

Together with the collective farm chairman the colonel strode quickly into the forest. Near the blasted tree lay old Kondratenkov, all blackened and wretched looking. The old men were grouped around him, looking down on their prostrate comrade.

"Knocked all my innards out," old Kondratenkov mumbled with a leaden tongue. "I've gone all empty inside, light as air. . . It looks like I'm done for, boys. . ."

"Swallow some earth," Makar Savelyevich advised him, "maybe it'll make you heavier. . ."

Old Kondratenkov was turned face down and he pressed his mouth close to the wet black earth that had been torn up by the explosion.

"No, it's no use, boys," he said, turning his peaked, sweat-covered face to them. "Savelich, I haven't clamped down the fifth raft. . . see you don't forget it. . . Bear right of the brook when you get to the woods. . . the ground's good and firm there. . ."

"Don't worry about that, Kondratenkov," said Makar Savelyevich, "don't fret yourself. . . die in peace."

"How can anyone be in peace, Makarushka, with young folk all around, petted and spoilt," old Kondratenkov hoarsely whispered, abruptly seating himself. "No, I can't die with things in such disorder. Here, let's have a drink. . ."

He was handed some cold river water which he noisely gulped down with difficulty, after which he rose to his feet. He stood swaying as though in the wind, his body slightly bent forward and his crooked legs apart, bracing against the earth as though rooted to the soil.

"Here, let me have the clamping-iron, Danilych," Kondratenkov said with a sigh.

"Mm-yes," the colonel mused aloud as he bid the chairman good-bye, "you folks take a bit of understanding. . ."

"We're plain, simple folks," the chairman replied, "but not for the Germans, for them we're not so plain and not so simple."

On the thirteenth day, when the sun stood at its zenith, gilding the pillars of misty dust that hovered above the swamps, the collective farm chairman arrived at the colonel's dugout and, his chest puffed out in true military fashion, reported the completion of the swampland road. The colonel seated the old man in his car and they drove off to the village.

From every hut there rose wisps of smoke from stoves that had come to life again; the village houses stood patched up with all imaginable kinds of material tied down with wire removed from the entanglements. And the colonel could not help wondering at this stubborn businesslike vitality of the Russian people, so generous and so determined to live.

The old man had summoned the village to meet near his hut, and the colonel spoke a few words, expressing the gratitude of the Red Army. In reply old Kondratenkov took the floor.

"There's nothing to thank us for, because it's you who liberated us from slavery. And though we had to wait a pretty long time, it's we who'll always be your debtors. We'll never spare our strength if there's ever any need for us. And here's our last word: bash the Hun good and hard, and whatever happens, never let him come back again."

And next morning, when the first

column of trucks, fully loaded with ammunition under their tarpaulins, drove onto the wooden road the paving emitted a heavy gasp and sank down flush with the earth, water squirting round the edges, and it settled down firmly, for all time. . .

YURI NAGIBIN

THE MASTER

In his childhood Volodya Ivanov had always been a little different from other children of his own age: he did not fly pigeons, or like fighting or running races. Volodya was weak and sickly.

He remembers the fine sanatorium with its white columns, the light and airy rooms of the open air school in the woods, the pine-trees and the deep river. Here he became healthy and strong and read many books.

When Volodya had finished the seven-year term of this school he went to one of the trade schools. The boy did not take long to accustom himself to his new work as fitter and learnt to love it when his deft fingers turned out well-made parts of machinery.

But Volodya knew that this was not all. He tried with all his might to imitate his master Bolshakov. From day to day Volodya's output increased. While at the trade school he acquired all those qualities which had ormerly eluded him. His movements became precise and sure. The work developed his physique and as if to compensate for all that he had missed in his childhood he began to train at the sports stadium, running, playing volley-ball and fencing.

At sixteen the apprentice from No. 8 trade school came in second in a running race; the volley-ball team captained by him occupied one of the first places.

Vladimir Ivanov finished the school with honours.

He was standing at attention in front of the director of the teaching department of the trade school.

"Sit down, Vladimir Sergeyevich."

Nobody had ever given him his full name before.

In a few days the young workman was introduced to his group. The new apprentices stood listening to the humming from the workshop as they looked at their teacher with some curiosity. From the first day Vladimir Ivanov felt responsible for these youngsters and considered it his duty to give them not only good technique but also to look after their general education.

Here they all were fresh from school.

A very naive and childish face near him caught his eye.

"Where do you come from?" asked the teacher.

The boy hesitated and then answered shyly:

"We are from the Kalinin region."

"And where are your parents?"

"I had a mother, but she was carried off to Germany by the fascists."

Silence fell upon the group.

"Have you any friends?" continued the master.

The boy did not answer.

"Well, we're going to be friends," said Vladimir Sergeyevich, looking round the group. "Which of you likes a good ball game?"

Twenty-five pairs of eyes exchanged approving glances, the faces brightened up. One of the lads stood up.

"May I ask you a question: is it true that you are the captain of the volley-ball team?"

"Yes, quite true," replied Ivanov.

The pupils now regarded him with admiration. Only the face of the lad to the left resumed its former sadness as the fleeting smile that had quivered there for a moment vanished. Glancing at him the master noticed that he had the face of an old man, his head shook.

Soon Ivanov learned the sad history of these children evacuated from the Smolensk and Kalinin districts. Grief had made Babushev prematurely old. Zabyelin had forgotten how to laugh. And neither of them had reached his fourteenth year yet.

In the evening the master glanced into the hostel. In one hand he held a box of draughts and in the other the latest newspapers. The pupils immediately surrounded him.

"Anything fresh about the Smolensk partisans?" asked those from Smolensk.

"Anything about Kalinin partisans?" queried the Kalinin children.

The master unfolded the paper.

"Here there's something about partisans from Smolensk and Kalinin."

And this is how they first became acquainted.

But the most difficult of all still lay ahead of him. He had to make them understand drafts, inspire them with a love of work and teach them to feel a professional pride. This was his aim, but it was not so easy to put theory into practice.

. . . On his way through the workshop Victor E. managed to start a fight, to pull the kerchief from the head of a girl and to pour water over his comrade. Complaints rained upon him from all sides. The master was continually calling him up. The culprit at once threw all the blame on his friends. The master talked to him for a long time and finally asked him:

"Do you want people to respect you?"

Victor nodded his head in the affirmative.

"Then you must work as hard as ever you can."

Victor turned red.

"Give me your word of honour that you will try to do better."

The next day Victor tried with all his might to wipe out the past. During working hours he stuck to his lathe, only leaving it once, for a moment. The following picture might have been observed in the workshop.

Vassya Danilov was on his guard for he noticed that Victor's steps were directed towards him. Victor, as if in play, grabbed one of his instruments. Long-legged Danilov strode after little Victor. Victor was highly amused.

"Such a big fellow and can't manage me!" he jeered.

Danilov, thoroughly upset, told the master all about it. Ivanov went up to Victor's lathe. Bending over the joiner's bench the youngster pretended not to notice and continued to work on the part he was making. Ivanov lingered in involuntary admiration of his work. Then remembering Victor's misdemeanour he pulled himself together and said sternly:

"You must return Danilov's instrument and apologize to him."

Victor lost his head for a moment and trying to justify himself he said:

"Comrade master, I will return the instrument but I can't apologize."

"You must apologize," repeated the master and left him.

One of the boys who happened to be passing remarked:

"The teacher has to look after you as if you were a baby."

To be treated like a baby! What next! Maybe it would be better after all to apologize to Danilov. Glancing up at that moment Victor saw Danilov and suddenly making up his mind went up to him and touched his arm:

"Vassya! I say, Vassya! I'm sorry I played such a foolish trick on you. Forget it, will you?" Then went soberly back to his lathe.

It was after lessons. The apprentices were busy preparing fire wood. Danilov was striding along with an enormous log on his shoulder while Victor trotted along behind him. On his shoulder was an equally heavy log. "He's just like an ant," flashed through Ivanov's mind as he hurriedly called Victor by his surname and told him to drop the log at once.

"It's far too heavy for you, take a smaller one. A little chap like you taking a log like that!"

"But I'm not so little. I can carry it easily," Victor called out without stopping.

Though things had become much easier with Victor E., Vanya K. was becoming more difficult every day.

"The same old multiplication tables, percentages, divisions, drafts. I can't get them into my head and that's all there is to it," grumbled Vanya K. to his master.

"Then you don't want to be a fitter?"

"No, I don't," answered Vanya obstinately.

"Then what have we been teaching you for? Are you really so much worse than all the others?"

Worse than the others! Not on your life!

In the evening their master came into the hostel and opened the newspaper at an article about the Smolensk partisans. He read:

"The partisans derailed two enemy trains. . ."

"That's the way our fellows make it hot for the Germans!" cried Vanya exultantly.

"What does it say there?" asked Babushev. "Partisan L.?"

"No, here it says partisans K. and E."

"Perhaps that's my brother," said Victor in a small voice.

Yuri Kulikov of a Leningrad trade school, now a 190 per cent worker at a factory

"If it's your brother, then that means you have been making arms for him," the master answered simply.

"Why, yes, so I have. How splendidly it all works out!"

"Yes, it works out splendidly for some, but not for all." The master looked hard at Vanya as he continued:

"Four bad marks and he shows no inclination to master his profession. What would the partisans say to that?"

This led to a friendly discussion. That day Vanya turned over a new leaf. It was more difficult for him than for the others, but he caught them up all the same. Extra studies and attention from the teacher in the workshop and hostel helped him.

When he had caught up he confessed:

"I only had two years of schooling. When the war broke out I was eleven. Now I am learning to be a fitter. Maybe I won't be a good-for-nothing after all?"

"Nobody who's keen on his job can be good-for-nothing," said his instructor seriously.

And so the friendship between master and apprentice grew closer.

"These are for the front. All made by my pupils." The master pointed to a heap of shining parts.

There was pride and the confidence of experience in his words. On his breast shone a badge: "Distinguished Member of the Workers Reserve." As he accompanied us to the workshop, he continued:

"And this is the place where my pupils work."

He glanced at his watch—a new one presented to him by the Department of the Workers Reserve—and announced the end of the day's work.

And soon from somewhere not far off, the strains of a simple melody reached our ears. Somebody was playing stringed instruments. We listened.

"Those are my pupils playing. It's a string orchestra conducted by Honoured Artist of the Republic Alexeyev. The fingers of a fitter must be just as obedient as those of a musician!"

GALINA GOLTSEVA

A HOUSEKEEPER

There are great actors and great scientists. Alexandra Lukanina could be justly called a great housekeeper. She sometimes admits it herself:

"I'm a born housekeeper."

She has been "keeping house" in one form or another for nearly eighty years: for three score years she was an agronomist; she has travelled all over Russia; she worked in Perm, in Solikamsk, in Sarapul; in Moscow and St. Petersburg; in Lithuania and Latvia and Poland.

And wherever she happened to be working, crops were rich and vegetables plentiful. And all those who studied her system of work and heeded her advice, started farming on a new and more sensible basis.

When already on the wrong side of eighty Lukanina came to the suburban farm of the Ramenskoye hospital, near Moscow. Its live stock consisted of one cow and one pig and no means available for increasing the number. But the old lady contrived to do the seemingly impossible and in a year's time the farm had seventeen cows and one hundred and thirty pigs.

What is the secret of this old Russian woman's achievements? It would do many younger people a lot of good to learn a thing or two from her.

"Good housekeeping isn't simply knowing how to manage things in time of plenty, but even in hard times, making both ends meet and getting the most out of everything," says Lukanina. "Nothing has ever been wasted either in my own house or on the farms I was in charge of: I abhor waste."

To confirm her statement she opens a cupboard and produces all sorts of jars and jugs containing various foodstuffs: snow-white flour, coffee, groats.

And it turns out that the white flour, the basis of nice muffins and fritters and noodles, is made from wild plants. The origin of this coffee with its delicious aroma, is goutweed, the common trefoil: its stems dried, roasted and ground by simple means available in every kind of home, it rivals imported coffee. While its leaves, minced and seasoned with pepper, become an appetizing substitute for the more common vegetables.

As for cereals from which porridge and puddings can be made—well, these come of the oak-family: acorns are pounded in a mortar and sifted. Thus acorn flour which may be used for the baking of rolls is produced. By adding an egg to this flour, kneading, drying and grinding it again we get a cereal that makes nourishing and tasty porridge.

Many years ago Lukanina was first impressed by the appreciation that the country people have for plants, every little herb. She was surprised to see that old people knew how to put literally everything to some use or other. A thrifty housewife would pluck some aromatic herbs and flavour her borshch, or gather a bunch of leaves to add to the dinner.

Even in her youth Lukanina thought about ways of making wild plants as popular as garden stuff and cereals.

It was then that she began her studies as an agronomist, mastered the science of growing things and learned the characteristics of wild plants and grasses, their chemical and biological properties. She found them to resemble small but effective laboratories for producing nutriment—just as the more habitually used fruits, garden-stuff or cereals do.

One had only to find methods for utilizing them, taking for the starting point the numerous recipes that had been known among the country people for generations, handed down from mother to daughter.

It was this happy combination of science with popular practice that made of Lukanina a tireless innovator and inventor in dietetics.

She has worked out six thousand recipes using wild herbs, vegetables and fruits. There are recipes for scones and breads, salads and soups, 500 recipes for making candies, hot and cold dishes, sweets, biscuits and pickles—everything that has ever figured in the culinary encyclopaedia.

All her dishes are tasty. They enable the housewife to manage the rations better, introduce variety and valuable additions to the diet. They have been tested scores of times in laboratories and at public institutions, and approved by authorities on the subject. They are only awaiting to be made widely known, and then they will be practised in every home by every good housewife.

Lately Lukanina has become interested in acorns. They contain a great deal of nutriment, and already play an important part in her own cooking. There is acorn flour, acorn meal; Lukanina has them stored up. Then there are herbs: last winter Lukanina had about twenty poods. She boiled, fried, ground and pickled them, as she has done for many years. No season passes without this zealous housewife storing away a good stock of wild vegetables in casks and barrels, innumerable jars and bottles.

A. S. Lukanina is ninety—a venerable age. But she is as brisk and busy as ever.

She is a consultant at four scientific institutes that are in charge of public catering. She has just completed a work of considerable importance: *Reference Book for Cookery Utilizing Wild Herbs and Plants*. She is writing another book by the order of the People's

Commissariat of Food Industries. Every day new ideas and recipes are invented. All these must be tried and tested.

Just now she's keen on making vegetable flour. Methods for producing it have already been found.

She dreams of instructing as many of her countrymen as possible how to gather wild plants and transform them into tasty dishes according to her recipes. She eagerly awaits the publication of her books.

"We have plenty of foodstuffs just going begging," she says. "What a pity so few people know anything about them! By using wild plants in the right way every thrifty housewife is able to increase considerably her own family's diet."

A. KRYLOVA

URALS LITERARY CONFERENCE

An historic advance in the annals of Urals culture was effected by an eight-day inter-regional conference held in Molotov on past and present Urals literature.

It took place at a tense moment in the war, when the role of the Urals industry in Soviet defence and attack is an outstanding fact; the conference emphasized the cultural and historical importance of the Urals.

It was called through the initiative of the Molotov Pedagogical Institute, and was attended by writers and artists from all parts of the Urals as well as those from evacuated regions but now residing in the Urals. Its wide appeal was reflected in the motley audience which contained a generous sprinkling of Army uniforms besides workers, scholars, painters, professors of literature, students and teachers, journalists, housewives and farmers. The first business transacted by this conference was to send a telegram of greetings to Joseph Stalin.

A short address by the chairman of the Molotov regional executive committee S. A. Kochergin opened the conference. He warmly welcomed the audience and expressed confidence that the members would tackle the question of Urals literature in a business-like manner to show that the creative work of writers was worthy of the industrial efforts and achievements of the Ural workers.

"The Role of the Urals in the Development of the Russian State" was the report delivered by Professor V. Danilevsky, Stalin Prize winner.

In the past, he pointed out, the Urals were famed for their metals, so much needed in war-time, and Urals arms which have already showed their temper in the fire of battle, as at Poltava under Peter the Great, against the incursion of Charles of Sweden. Peter did much to stimulate the development of the Urals, for he realized their prime importance. In Russian history the Urals stood out as Russia's arsenal for over two hundred years, producing arms that have brought glory to their makers, a glory which has been repeated in our own day, the speaker declared, in the crushing of the Germans at Moscow, and the epic Battle of Stalingrad.

"As a theme in literature the Urals have been given an important place from the very beginning of their industrial development," stated A. S. Ladeishchikov, a critic from Sverdlovsk. "But this industrial development of the Urals was comparatively slow."

"Figures don't run the world," the critic went on, "but figures do show how the world is run. Between 1750 and 1850, Urals industry was not even doubled whereas today the output of metals is thirty-two times greater than it was before 1917!"

Since the war, the importance of the Urals has been heightened even more by the great evacuation of industry from the war zone to the east. Today as never before the Ural Mountains chain, geographically the backbone of the country, is also the mighty backbone of the Soviet Union's military strength.

A number of speakers pointed out that the specific gravity of Urals literature compared to the body of Russian literature has been considerable in the past as well as in the present.

Because the Urals, industrially, economically and politically, were a factor of considerable weight in Russian life before and after the October Revolution, this fact found its expression in the work of outstanding literary men. Representative of such writers was Mamin-Sibiryak, a Urals author of half a century ago, whose work and influence were described as being of considerable importance by Professor E. Bogolyubov in his report.

Among the writers who may be said to know the Urals was Pavel Bazhov [1], Stalin Prize winner for literature in 1943. This bearded man of 65, the creator of a new type of fairy-tale, was himself the subject of a report, "The Creative Work of P. P. Bazhov," by L. Skorino.

L. Skorino, a young critic and writer from Sverdlovsk, spoke of the entirely new and original writer who has appeared on the literary horizon of today in the person of Bazhov.

When Bazhov himself rose to speak, he began by disclaiming credit for his work.

"I only collect the stories," he said. "I simply separate the gold from the dross. I take what the workers have created and choose the best of that which has been produced by the people."

Bazhov spoke about the sources of his stories—the workers with their rich experience, their keen and profound understanding and optimism. He concluded by calling on writers to widen the field for collecting valuable Urals folklore, which is as rich as the Urals soil itself.

Professor S. G. Lavrov (from Molotov) spoke of the literature of a minor group, the Komi-Permyak people, the autonomous region in the northern part of the Molotov region. "*Kudim Osh*, the epos of these people," he said, "shows their talent and strength, as well as their love of independence."

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[1]) See page 11 of this issue for preface to two tales by Bazhov.

The speaker pointed out the false basis of the illusion of past grandeur under which the Finnish fascists of today are labouring. They base their fight against the Soviet Union on the "fact" that there once existed a great Finnish empire which extended to the Urals, and must necessarily have included the Komi-Permyak people.

This is a false idea, Professor Lavrov stated, created from above by fascist propagandists who sought to manufacture some basis for their aggressive aims. There is no allusion to it in the ancient literature of the Komi-Permyak people. If true, it would certainly have found some reflection in the chronicles of this ancient people.

An interesting paper was read by Professor N. L. Stepanov on the noted Urals poet V. V. Kamensky who, before he went in for writing, was for five and half years a pilot in the early days of flying. His interest in art in general and poetry in particular arose out of his friendship with V. Mayakovsky and D. Burlyuk before the October Revolution. Kamensky's importance as a poet became evident from his work *Stepan Razin*, a poem for which he was praised by Lenin. This was followed by *Ivan Bolotnikov*, and more recently *Emelyan Pugachov*, the latter a libretto for the opera composed by Marian Koval and first performed last November by the famous Leningrad opera and ballet theatre. All three works are named after the men who led the Russian people in their fight for freedom.

The speaker pointed out Kamensky's kinship with Mayakovsky and Walt Whitman.

Kamensky himself attended the conference and gave a short talk. He had just returned from a tour down the Kama and Volga rivers, during which he read his poems to gatherings of river workers.

"At present," he said, "I am engaged on two things (I always do two at once, I've never been able to work on one at a time). They are a long poem *Kama River*, and a dramatic poem about the heroic military leader of the Russian people Ermak Timofeyevich, the man who pushed the frontiers of Russia east beyond the Urals and Siberia, in the time of Ivan the Terrible, 300 years ago."

Kamensky concluded his talk by reciting the first part of *Kama River*, which was received with hearty applause.

Papers were read on the present activities of poets and writers in the Urals today.

"The Urals theme," said V. Kozakov, a Leningrad writer, "now is something old and at the same time new in politics, in military power, in the general Russian character. To write properly about the Urals we must know them well for they mean many things. They mean farewell to Asia and hail to Europe. They are a tremendous reserve of strength not only in guns, munitions, tanks, planes, but also art. When the weight of the Urals reserves was thrown into the balance of war, they were a great addition to Russian might, to Russian character. And not only because of their heroism taken as a whole, but also for their outstanding individual heroes."

The literary conference was calculated to promote a better understanding of the Urals' and Soviet Union's might and inspiration, and to bring home the reasons for the Soviet people's fight for freedom and their unshakable certainty of victory.

S. EARNEST

The Moscow House of Pioneers. Children making first-aid boxes for the front

A STORY OF THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

I would like to begin my review of Alexei Tolstoy's trilogy with a few words about the Russian people taken from a recent article of his:

"We have many failings, as we ourselves know, but we have also one great virtue: we recognize our own failings and do not consider them virtues. We want to outlive them and, perhaps, turn many of them, dialectically, into virtues. The Russian people want to grow up and progress. The Russian is a restless person. The self-satisfaction and calmness of being settled for centuries in one place, are qualities of the German bürger, but not of the Russian. When the weight of the tsarist Empire pressed so heavily on him that it was difficult to breathe, he either travelled to the ends of the earth or rose up in bloody rebellion. An expansive nature—this is no definition of the Russian. He is inexhaustible and fathomless, a man of unlimited possibilities. I am sure that we ourselves do not know much about the Russian. The war has exposed and developed the strength of the Russian which will grow."

Alexei Tolstoy, one of the most outstanding Russian writers of the past forty years, has undoubtedly done much to help us know ourselves better, and to help all those abroad who may chance to read his books to obtain a colourful portrait of the Russian. In his novel *Peter the Great*, Alexei Tolstoy gives a picture of the turning point in Russian history, the moment of Russia's appearance on the West-European arena—the end of the XVII and the beginning of the XVIII centuries. True to our splendid XIX century literary traditions he provided us with a whole gallery of quaint, antiquated noblemen who once nested in their comfortable farmlands but have now been scattered by the winds of history. Lastly he has produced three novels on the Revolution and the Civil War, in which the stories of a whole crowd of characters depict the fate of a great people at an historical moment of still greater significance than the period of Peter the Great. These form the trilogy *The Road to Calvary*.

Tolstoy is also the author of a number of excellent plays, comedies and dramas. He recently produced two new plays about Ivan the Terrible and proposes to write a third on the same subject, depicting the events of the XVI century when the far-sighted diplomatic and military mind of Ivan IV laid the foundations of the Russian State, the nucleus of what was to be the Empire of Peter. Tolstoy is the author of books for children which are read with equal interest by young and old alike. These books alone would be sufficient to make famous the name of an author who devoted himself purely to writing for children. Still I have not mentioned Tolstoy the journalist, who writes passionately and wholeheartedly on numerous subjects.

Tolstoy is a writer of exceptional fertility—the great number of his books has earned him the first place amongst modern Russian writers and his confidence of mastery in any genre you care to name gives him the right to be compared with the most versatile talent known to us.

In my opinion there is no doubt that Tolstoy makes a greater impression on his readers with his epic novels than with any other genre. He is first and foremost a raconteur, a romanticist; this is his element.

2

When *The Road to Calvary* was begun in 1919, its contents must have seemed of the most contemporary nature to Tolstoy. We had just lived through the world struggle against Germany, and the Revolution and the Civil War in Russia was developing. All that we had experienced was still painfully fresh. But even then, taking his first glance back at the day before, Tolstoy heard the majestic and heavy tread with which that day marched back into the past. Through the novel we feel, first softly, then clearly audible, then persistent and heavy, and finally overpowering, the footsteps of history. In 1927, when he began work on the second novel of the trilogy, Tolstoy opened all the doors and windows to the storm of history, which rages with disturbing, pulsating life through the book, tossing the petty, pleasant and despairing destinies of the characters about like grains of sand. In 1941 Tolstoy completed the third part of the trilogy, the finale of a great historical novel.

We not only feel everything we read in these three books in the same way as we feel the living present, but it sinks into our minds in the same way as our fathers' reminiscences of the past. During the twenty-two years the novel has been forming in the mind of the author, events have occured that equal in importance the discovery of a new continent. For those born in the last quarter of a century, tsarist Russia, the first world war, and the Civil War all seem distant and mysterious, like an old man's stories of his boyhood. A new world has already been created, the time of new trials is upon us, trials that involve the Russian people in their entirety so that even yesterday seems distant history to us.

Of course we do not regard Tolstoy's novel as historical merely on account of the period in which the action takes place. We recognize its historical character through the author's effort to propound and answer in this book the greatest of all questions for the thinking

Russian, the question of the fate of his country, of Russia in the days of the Revolution and the Civil War. This effort of Tolstoy's has nothing formal about it, it is not something that is made necessary by the genre in which he works—I am writing an historical novel and must therefore take an interest in the period—it is more of a radical, organic, an almost corporal demand to understand and feel Russia in the days when she soared to her highest point, and then to show feelingly the direction of flight into the future. In conceiving and estimating the novel in this way neither the author nor the reader is mistaken; twenty years ago the first part of the trilogy was accepted as the most modern book and the last part is accepted today as the finale of an historical novel. All three parts of the trilogy, however, are connected by significant contemporary events which never fade in our minds and which are again today mingled with our blood—they are connected with the destiny of our country.

3

In no other Russian novel has the name of Russia been so often mentioned as in *The Road to Calvary*. The author speaks of Russia, the hero discusses her. Almost every chapter of the novel speaks of the Russian people, every paragraph has something to say about that "ardent, talented, dreamy and devilishly practical" people as Telegin, one of the characters, says of them, and wherever the Russian is not spoken of you can feel his warmth as though you were lying under the same rug with him.

"Oh, Russian Soil!" The first book begins with these words from our ancient XII century poem. The epigraph to the second part is a saying of the people: "Dipped in three waters, bathed in three bloods, boiled in three lyes. We are the purest of the pure." *The Road to Calvary* reminds the reader of the terrible but poetical legend of the Virgin Mary's visit to the damned [1], a legend which holds one by the very daring of the popular phantasy and was therefore declared anti-ecclesiastical.

The Russian people move in circles of suffering, for themselves and for their country, and the characters of the novel are released from the birth pangs of one circle after another.

The first book of the first novel, *Sisters*, begins in pre-war St. Petersburg, with the philosophical and literary circles of the tsarist capital, with a funeral dirge in the form of a numbing and fatiguing tango. The war breaks out, there is the hub-bub of mobilization, actions, battles, the whole campaign is lost, the Tsar is thrown from his tottering throne. The book ends with the impression that "nothing has changed." Everything that was bad has remained. Nor has the good been wasted. "Great Russia has collapsed," says Telegin in astonishment, and then gives himself the confident answer: "If only one district is left to us, Russia will again grow and live eternally."

In the second novel, *1918*, events move to the south. Russia drops out of the war. The Kremlin is fighting for Soviet Power. The name Tsaritsyn [1] appears for the first time in the novel. Dramatic events are developing in the Caucasus, the Samara Legislative Assembly and the Kuban Cossack District appear. Germans in the Ukraine, the tsarist White General Denikin, Kornilov's army, the anarchist Makhno, Drozdov's troops—through the pages flash the unbearably heavy chronicles of our people. So many events and at the end of the book the same feeling is clearly expressed: "nothing has changed." The story of the characters in the novel is still profoundly tragic. The Civil War is still going on and a fresh mustering of forces is required to vindicate the victims which the Revolution has claimed. "Dark water in the dark, frowning clouds of autumn. . . frowning villages, where old-fashioned tapers are lit and in the evenings such terrible stories are told in the cottages that the children lying on the stoves cry out. . . What was to be expected? Perhaps Russia had already ceased to exist, had collapsed?"

The third novel of the trilogy is called *Frowning Morn*. Here the word frowning has a different meaning from what it had in "frowning clouds" and "frowning villages." Again the pages of the chronicles flash before our eyes: the December offensive against Tsaritsyn, again Denikin, again the anarchist Makhno, the White-Guard Generals Mamontov, Shkuro, the Green gangs, Petlyura's gang, Markov's, there is no end to them. The volunteer army falls to pieces, the Whites are crushed. The epic is drawing to a close: the final picture of the new capital, Moscow, is painted, illuminated by two names new to the history of Russia, Lenin and Stalin. The "frowning March morning" at the end of the novel is not frowning with hopelessness, but is frowning exactingly at people who have passed through the cycle of torments and are the "purest of the pure," people who have undertaken to build a new world.

The author did an excellent thing when he chose as the epigraph to his third novel an aphorism of Svyatoslav, Grand Duke of Kiev: "To live as conquerors or die in glory." The X century, whence came the Russian soil, appeals to the XX century, in which the Civil War called on Russia to re-establish justice and the glory of the people.

The last picture of the third book of the trilogy depicts a meeting of the government in the Bolshoy Theatre in Moscow, when Lenin's first plan for the electrification of Russia was accepted. The tapers of ancient

[1] The Russian title of the trilogy, *The Visit to the Damned (Khozhdeniye po mukam)*, is also the title of an ancient Slavonic apocryph. The subject of the legend is a description of the torment of sinners in purgatory. After offering up prayers, the Virgin Mary accompanied by the Archangel Gabriel visits the places of torment of the sinners. Moved by their sufferings the Virgin Mary asks the Lord to lighten their lot. The apocryph *The Visit to the Damned* has exerted considerable influence on folk poetry and conveys the same meaning to the Russian reader as *The Road to Calvary* does to a western reader.

[1] Tsaritsyn, a city on the Lower Volga, later Stalingrad. At Tsaritsyn Stalin defeated the White armies—the beginning of the rout of Denikin.—*C. F.*

Alexei Tolstoy

Painting by A. Korev

days were to be extinguished and in their place burned the first light lit by the Revolution. It was a light that shone far into the future.

When you examine the dozens of historical portraits in Tolstoy's huge novel, and find yourself introduced to so many of his characters, you get the impression that some of them are of secondary importance, that some of the characters could be changed, that more historical facts have been introduced than there is room for even in three such large books. When you weigh up your impression of the experiences related by the author you find that the colourful mass of portraits form a splendid picture which is of primary importance for an understanding of the Russia of those years, and that amongst the characters there are four human stories, so impressive and vivid that they attract the attention of the reader from the first pages and carry him with them to the very end.

4

Two sisters—Dasha and Katya; two men who love them, Telegin and Roshchin. The subject of the touching story is simple, simple as only an eternal subject can be. Love appears and grows, there are partings, the friends lose sight of each other for long periods, there are unexpected meetings and the sorrow of fresh separations rewarded by a general union at the end of the novel.

All's well that ends well. The reader thoughtfully closes the book and then discovers that his mind is filled with an endless stream of memories, some words left unsaid by the women, some petty, fascinating details of a meeting. Terrible torments and lives of great difficulty are conquered, have dropped back into the past, and past lives become attractive on account of the richness of feeling with which they are filled.

It is hard to say which of the four heroes of *The Road to Calvary* takes first place. Tolstoy's characters are interesting, even his bad characters, because they are so much alive. Their attraction lies not so much in the qualities of their characters as in the nature of their activity in general.

Dasha and Katya are fine women, warm and self-abnegating in love, stoical and patient in misfortune, always beautiful and clever. They have their predecessors, the Russian women and girls that we know as "Turgenev's women," noble, pure, and, whilst retaining their feminine charm, they never lose their self-possession. Tolstoy discovers them caught up in great events when they, like Katya and Roshchin in Rostov, set out with the people, a bundle and kettle on their shoulders, on the road of great torments, and these Turgenev women in modern form have acquired new qualities during the Revolution and the Civil War which make them the equals of men.

Telegin and Roshchin are different people but are related by one common feature of the Russian character, their national pride, which will tolerate no insults and is usually either deeply hidden or quite unconscious. The pain which the sufferings of their country bring them moves a man to unthought-of and unjustifiable deeds. Roshchin is driven by such an unbearable pain that before he comes over to the side of the Revolution he is with the Whites, with Makhno. The fire of war but serves to temper him. His pride, tested by this fire, found its place in a world where national characteristics are not suppressed but flourish.

Telegin's character is more clear-cut. He belongs to that section of the Russian intelligentsia who came over to the Revolution direct, openly admitting its historical justice as forming Russia's future.

He was an officer of the Russian army who came over to the side of the Revolution together with the soldiers and took part in those first campaigns of the Red Army which laid the foundation of its martial glory.

Telegin is a combination of two of the characteristics peculiar to the Russian people, he is dreamy and devilishly practical: even when he makes a mistake it seems that nothing will put him on the wrong path.

Tolstoy's fascination for the reader is due, in part, to his ability to convince. Without even thinking, we believe in Roshchin when he speaks about the anarchist Makhno, when he deceives General Shkuro, when he goes over to the Whites and returns to the Reds. However easy these changes on the part of the hero may seem, the writer's faith in them is even easier and, strangely enough, the reader believes in them as much as the writer does. You believe in Telegin when he becomes a Red officer and when he carries a china cat and dog that Dasha liked, in his saddle-bags.

What can be said about Roshchin's walk with Katya along the Kamenno-Ostrovsky Prospect in St. Petersburg, when Roshchin speaks about her imperishable heart (how fine that is—imperishable heart!)? What is there to be said about Dasha's Sunday walk along the avenue with Telegin, when from the tops of the pine trees the oriole cries, "whistles with a watery voice?" And here, involuntarily, one wants to write about Alexei Tolstoy as a writer would.

5

Accuracy and clarity of language is something to which the writer devotes his whole life. Artistic accuracy, however, is not always coincident with grammatical accuracy. The cry of the oriole resembles the gurgling of water poured out of a bottle. Watery voice—that is an inaccuracy. Art, however, depends on such inaccuracies.

Tolstoy has the gift of finding the most fascinating and brilliant inaccuracies. He is a master of overpowering detail, of minuteness. You believe in his people, believe in his language. He speaks the same as his characters, his heroes, speak. He speaks with infinite variety, accurately, eloquently, sonorously, simply and easily. They speak in all the conceivable languages of Alexei Tolstoy.

Here it would not be out of place to quote Alexei Tolstoy on the Russian language; the extract is taken from the article with which I began this review:

"The Russian language is the most magic of tongues because it is nearer than any other European language to the spoken language of the people. There have been tendencies in Russian literature when the literary language has departed from the language of the people and adopted some artificial form. Some writers brought into Russian some gallant, beautifully polished French literary phrases, and not for nothing did Leo Tolstoy fight against this, and in doing so, laid bare the truth and acquired that magical strength of the written word. The Russian language is first and foremost Pushkin, an inexhaustible fountain of the Russian language. It is Lermontov, Leo Tolstoy, Leskov, Chekhov, Gorky."

During the course of the last twenty years the novel *The Road to Calvary* has been frequently re-composed in the mind of the author. The novel, like everything, was a difficult one. It was extraordinarily difficult to blend two elements into one, so that while they held the interest of the reader, they told simultaneously of insatiable human tenderness and of the historic path taken by a great State.

Tolstoy has the gift of describing the little man in his hunger for personal happiness like a tiny drop in the ocean of national events. In this respect Tolstoy bears a great resemblance to Victor Hugo whose novels we imbibed in our youth.

Happy is the writer whose talent is beyond all question of doubt. As in music there is richness of melody and in painting the feeling for colour and light, so in literature the main thing is the art of telling a story. Tolstoy is a raconteur possessing great natural artistry. When you open a book of his it is like entering a brilliantly lit theatre. The lights die down, silence falls, the air is filled with music, the curtain rolls slowly back, and then it is impossible to draw oneself away: what is there behind that trembling scenery, what lives, whose love and death? Free, capricious, bold and whimsical, the story lures you on farther and farther.

In this way, abandoning yourself to his pictures as a playgoer does to the theatre you read through *The Road to Calvary*, a novel on the great subject of Russia lost and regained, a subject that is so near to us in the days of the Patriotic War against Hitler Germany, when we write the word Country with a capital letter.

CONSTANTINE FEDIN

BRUSSILOV'S THRUST

The present war against the Germans has given rise to works in Soviet literature in all genres—stories of war and its heroes and of life in the Soviet rear, and has aroused active interest in those periods of Russian history in which the character and ideals of the people are seen at their best. The historical tendency was evident in Soviet literature in the pre-war years when a number of books, plays and films appeared on Alexander Nevsky, Minin and Pozharsky, Suvorov, Kutuzov, and other military leaders and statesmen, on famous patriots, scientists and prominent public men and women, heroes and soldiers.

This national-patriotic tendency in literature was also a characteristic feature of the

social life of the entire country. And it was only natural that this tendency should have been sharpened by the war danger which year by year became more certain owing to the preparations of the nazi aggressors. The greater the activities of the Germans at their furnaces and benches, smelting steel for tanks, assembling planes, making instruments and polishing lenses for the needs of a war which was to bring them "world domination," the sterner and more collected the Soviet man became in preparing to counter the danger. His feeling of national pride and dignity became keener, he felt a greater need for a full understanding of the past history of his people. The need was met by Russian literature, whose traditions had prepared it for such a role.

That which we witness in the present war against Germany, was the subject of deep meditation and the constant theme of the writings of the majority of Russian authors of the XIX century—Turgenev, Herzen, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Saltykov-Shchedrin, and Gorky. These Russian writers repeatedly warned the people that in the heart of Europe the black seeds of misanthropy and national exclusiveness were developing and ripening in soil untouched by the victories of popular revolution, in soil which had never known the ennobling influence of a true democracy. British, French and progressive German literature also devoted considerable attention to this theme.

Let us recall for a moment that tremendous fund of literature which appeared between 1914 and 1918 in connection with the last war against Germany.

Thirty years later the world is faced with the task of ending the most predatory aggression, which threatens the national and cultural existence of many nations. Literature must assist the people to get a grasp of their true national task and produce the poetry of a free, enriched national existence to oppose all those who have tried and are trying to belittle and disparage the heroic and humane principles of the nations, on the basis that their "higher" race must be the dominant one.

Sergei Sergeyev-Tsensky is one of the oldest of our living Russian writers and he belongs to that group who have found their real place in literature in the solution of this problem. His three-volume novel *The Ordeal of Sevastopol* became very popular and was awarded the Stalin Prize for literature in 1940. This heroic historical novel is a picturesque panorama of Russian life in the middle of the last century—battle scenes, descriptions of court life and of life in diplomatic circles. The entire novel is inspired by the stirring poetry of the life of a people defending their honour and dignity.

Sergeyev-Tsensky's new novel *The Brussilov Thrust* deals with the Russian army in 1916 during the German war and with one of Russia's best military leaders, General Brussilov. The choice of subject and the historical nature of its treatment enable Tsensky to give a picture of the Russian army as it was at the time of the first world war.

So far only the first volume, eleven chapters in all, has been published. Two strata of the army are alternately shown—the field officers and the staff generals. Actual events form the basis for the plot, the preparation and realization of General Brussilov's famous breach of the Austro-German line on the south-western front in 1916. This brilliant military operation was carried out with a minimum of equipment yet the results were tremendous: over 400 thousand soldiers were taken prisoner; the Russian army pierced the Austro-German line to a depth of over 100 kilometres on a front of several hundred kilometres. The enemy suffered casualties of more than one and a half million men. The Brussilov thrust, and the subsequent offensive from May 22 until November, 1916, played havoc with the plans of the German command. 24 divisions were removed from the Western front and transferred to the area of the Brussilov thrust. The tense situation obtaining in France in the spring and summer of 1916 was eased, and the uninterrupted storm of the Verdun fortress where the Germans were grinding down the French divisions, died down. Thus for the second time a Russian offensive had turned the fortunes of war in favour of the Allies. The first time was when General Samsonov's Corps was thrown into East Prussia without the slightest preparation or even detailed reconnoissance and caused such panic among the Germans that at the most critical moments of the battle of the Marne, they removed divisions which were in action and transferred them to East Prussia. The majority of Samsonov's army, including the general himself, perished, due to lack of preparation for the operation and to their being left in the lurch by the incompetent and treacherous leadership of Army Headquarters. But the task had been accomplished, the Germans had been brought to a halt on the Marne.

The Brussilov offensive in 1916 came to the aid of the Allies for a second time and again at a critical moment. The total losses for both sides at Verdun amounted to 2 million men in June, 1916, of these 400,000 were killed. The artillery fire was so terrific that it was impossible to identify 300,000 of the dead. The entire ground around the forts was covered with a thick layer of iron and steel scrap. "When General Makensen," writes Sergeyev-Tsensky, "broke through to the Carpathians, to the front of the third Russian army in 1915, his artillery phalanx opened fire with such force that there were forty-three shells for every two metres of the front."

The Brussilov offensive however was developed under other political and economic conditions and a different system of supplying the front with ammunition and men. The greatness and drama of Brussilov's undertaking lies in the very fact that it was carried out with a surprisingly small number of guns and shells, almost without reserves, despite the opposition of the Tsar and particularly his German wife, and despite the passive sentiments of other generals at the front — Generals Evert, Kuropatkin and Ivanov who had preceded Brussilov in command of the south-western front.

What was it that urged Brussilov to risk the loss of tens and hundreds of thousands of men when he knew that in a moment of crisis he would receive no support from headquarters; what was it that spurred him on to come,

if not openly at least covertly, into conflict with the General Staff, to oppose the Tsar, the court and the generals?

Such is the content of Sergeyev-Tsensky's novel. Brussilov's spiritual struggle, his struggle against the obstacles which prevented him attaining his goal, determine the plot of this novel, and give a dramatic colouring to the entire book. In the opening chapter the reader is introduced to two reserve officers, two hastily trained subalterns on their way to the south-western front, to which they have been posted. One of them, Liventsev, possesses a calm courage, a fine sense of duty and an idea of the seriousness of what the future holds in store. The other, Obidin, is a coward, is nervous, and hopes for a smile of understanding from his companion. Two contrasting war-time types. In this scene in the railway carriage, in the various meetings and conversations, the reader comes to realize that the rank-and-file soldiers and officers do not intend to be mere pawns in the game. They cannot understand why the command is waiting for the Germans to launch an offensive, why the generals and higher officers carry on the business of the war so senselessly, why there are not enough shells and so on. A thousand and one whys are born of the war. And they all have one source—the rank-and-file's, the simple people's deep-rooted love of country, their injured sense of patriotic pride and national dignity.

Liventsev was one of those officers, frequently to be found in the old army, who were extremely sensitive to the mood of the soldiers, the masses of the people, who lived in their interests and therefore could view things from a much broader viewpoint. In 1916, when the prolongation of the war was evident, the Germans, through the medium of the Tsar's wife and the pro-German court circles with whom she was connected, circulated rumours of the possible conclusion of a separate peace. At the same time they threatened Russia with an offensive on a colossal scale. The characters in the novel avidly discuss these questions—Liventsev, Ensign Obidin and the soldiers.

"It is not a question," Liventsev says, "whether or not we have the right to conclude peace, but whether or not such a peace would be to our advantage. We may conclude peace, perhaps even receive an additional slice of territory under the treaty, but in doing so we give Wilhelm a free hand and he can throw all his forces against the West and crush her. . . And when this is done, what will prevent him, peace treaty or no, from sending his entire army from the West against us when we are already demobilized? In other words, a case of *divide et impera!*—divide and rule!"

"In your opinion then, we have no other choice but to continue the war?" Obidin asks in a troubled voice.

"No, there is no other choice, we must," Liventsev replies with conviction repeating Obidin's words.

Sergeyev-Tsensky's novel is written in the form of a chronicle. The plot is developed in such a way that chapters with fictitious characters such as Liventsev and others alternate with chapters in which real historical characters appear. The latter are the chapters in which we meet Brussilov and the other Russian generals and in which we find in logical sequence a characterization of Brussilov and the story of the "Military Career" (chapter 2), the description of staff headquarters where Brussilov is appointed commander of the south-western front, and actual battle scenes ("Storm" and other chapters). The dramatic side is maintained throughout by the unfolding of the Russian offensive which, prompted by the sentiments of the lower strata of the people, overcome the resistance of the "fifth column" which had the support of the tsarist bureaucracy and the direct assistance of the pro-German party at court (in his novel Sergeyev-Tsensky cites a number of authentic instances). The offensive, expressing the will of the army and the people, swept away all hindrances, and, due to the brilliance of Brussilov's plan, was victorious. Brussilov seemed to have rallied all the people's belief in their own powers, raised that confidence in themselves which has its roots in history; he showed them their greatness and their strength. The political and international, and more especially, the internal consequences of Brussilov's offensive were far more serious than the strategic results. Quite apart from the general's own political convictions, the Brussilov thrust was an inspiration to the creative powers of Russia.

In one chapter Sergeyev-Tsensky writes: "Through the arbitrariness of its government Russia was deprived of all civil liberties, but the Russian people were proud of their military prowess. This just pride, however, suffered a series of heavy blows over a period of almost two years.

"The country, like a mother, gave millions of her sons for her defence. Some of them were killed, some maimed, some led off to horrible captivity—and where was he who would avenge this bottomless well of suffering?

"Where was he who could give them at least a shadow of confidence that all was not yet lost, that all had not yet perished, that a change for the better was still possible, that the cup of shame could still be flung back into the teeth of the treacherous enemy?

"Was it possible that all these generals with their multicoloured ribbons and endless orders, with such long and fancy titles that it was impossible to pronounce them in one breath, men who had all the good things in life showered down on them—was it possible that everyone of them was so disgustingly ignorant of military affairs and so obviously untalented?

"And when in the south-west, on a thousand verst front General Brussilov's name, already known throughout the country, came to the people wreathed in the light of daring deeds and a great victory, they stretched out their hands to him."

What was Brussilov's "secret?" He was the expression of the will of the people, in that lay his strength. His patriotism was a great faith in the people, faith in the soldiers subordinated to him, faith in the lad in the trenches. Brussilov realized that he was not the "dull-witted beast of burden" the court ladies so disdainfully dubbed him. This was a great force, this was Russia, the might of a great and noble people.

In his novel Sergeyev-Tsensky stresses the fact that from top to bottom the tsarist army was split into two sections. One group comprised the great majority of the lower ranks and a few higher officers; this was the group filled with the patriotism of the people. The other group, comprising an insignificant number of lower ranks and an overwhelming majority of the higher officers, consisted of the lackeys of the Tsar and the tsarist bureaucracy, cowardly, mercenary and indifferent to the fate of their country.

Sergeyev-Tsensky draws a convincing portrait of such people with whom Brussilov had to deal—from the Tsar himself and his court minister Fredericks, down to Evert, Ivanov, Kuropatkin and others. At the same time, however, Sergeyev-Tsensky shows that Brussilov was by no means an exception in the army. In the old army there were generals (and not only young officers and men) who were of an entirely different type, people who were governed by other sentiments. Sergeyev-Tsensky draws an interesting character study of one such general, Divisional Commander Ilchevsky. In the same way as Ensign Liventsev, a reticent and courageous fighter of the Russian army, defended his right to use his weapons against the enemy in spite of the fears of Battalion Commander Kapitanov, so Brussilov defended Russian arms against all kinds of Everts who had sullied their honour. Sergeyev-Tsensky takes the reader from the trenches to the Tsar's Headquarters, from the cattle trucks to Divisional Headquarters, shows the front over its entire length and at the same time depicts life on one tiny sector of the front.

Some chapters of the novel are rather overloaded with descriptive matter (particularly the earlier chapters), but still it is interesting reading. There is drama in the kaleidoscope of events. The first volume is called *Storm Spring* and the central theme is the storming of the German positions, an action in which Brussilov employed a new strategy. Brussilov countered the strategy of a concentrated drive, the "buffalo strategy" of Ludendorff with his own successful plan for paralysing the enemy reserves, launching a large number of simultaneous sham attacks, under cover of which he struck a main blow at a point where the enemy least expected it.

Sergeyev-Tsensky's novel is extremely topical and is at the same time historical, telling the true story of the Russian army and one of its finest generals in the first world war.

KORNELI ZELINSKY

GLEB USPENSKY: HIS LIFE AND WORK

Gleb Ivanovich Uspensky was born in Tula on the 25th of October, 1843, into the family of Ivan Yakovlevich Uspensky, a Civil Service official.

Uspensky's father was a man of fairly good education. The family was very much under the influence of their grandfather on the mother's side. This was G. F. Sokolov, an important provincial civil servant. A despot by nature, he mercilessly frustrated his children's lives. Amongst these children there were gifted artists and musicians, but he forced them all to enter the Civil Service. Due to the support and patronage of their grandfather the Uspensky family were on the whole well-to-do, but the atmosphere of their home conduced to depress the children's spirits.

The superficial brilliance of the reign of Tsar Nicholas I ill-concealed the gradual ruin of an economically backward country and the abuses that prevailed under the serf-system. The people never became reconciled to slavery and retaliated with peasant uprisings. The intelligentsia came out boldly against Tsarism in these gloomy years of reaction.

Gleb, who was of an impressionable and highly-strung disposition, suffered in this atmosphere. He found no escape from it even at the Tula high-school where teachers who were primarily officials had the authority in their own hands. In his autobiography he wrote: "I remember that I used to cry without knowing why."

When Gleb was thirteen years old his father was transferred to Chernigov where the boy completed his high-school education.

It was while he was still at Tula that he first read Russian literature—Pushkin, Lermontov, Karamzin and others which he found in his father's modest library. At the Chernigov high-school Uspensky's circle of literary interests widened; and he began to read the revolutionary democrats, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov; he gathered a small literary circle around him of high-school pupils, boys and girls who read and sang and there is evidence that the circle even produced an unprinted magazine.

Uspensky continued his studies, first at St. Petersburg university and after the closing of this university on account of unrest among the students, he entered the Moscow university, where he failed, as he remarks in a joking way, "to get safely through his course." He was not in a position to continue his education for he had to earn his own living. While working as a proofreader he published in the Moscow magazine *Spectator* his first story *Idyll (Fathers and Children)*. In November of the same year 1862 his second story *Mikhalych* appeared in a well-known magazine called *Yasnaya Polyana*, which was brought out by Leo Tolstoy.

Soon the writer moved to St. Petersburg and began publishing his works in the magazines *Russian Word* (a story called *Night*) and *Reading Library (The Old Clothes-Man)*.

This period of Uspensky's life when he was friendless and had as yet no clearly-defined path in life was very difficult. In his autobiography written in the eighties he says:

"The circumstances in which my life was passed until I was about twenty doomed me to complete eclipse of intellect, total ruin, a profoundly primitive conception of things, backwardness; in general I was kept an immea-

Gleb Uspensky. A woodcut by M. Rikov

surable distance from what was going on in the world.

"Therefore, on reaching the year 1861 [1] I found that there was nothing, absolutely nothing of my past life that I could take with me along my future path; on the contrary, if I was to live at all every bit of this past had to be forgotten and the qualities it had inculcated had to be destroyed.

"Consequently, my life began only after my personal biography had been forgotten; only then did my true life and my literary life begin to grow within me simultaneously through the force of their own inherent life. Into a soul destitute of all personal biography I admitted only that which was contradictory in every sense to untruth."

The first years of Uspensky's literary activity were passed under conditions of the greatest poverty: he went from one magazine to another, subsisting on chance jobs with different publications.

In 1865, fortune seemed at last to have smiled upon him. Nekrassov published Uspensky's first big work *The Morals of Rasteryayeva Street* in his magazine *The Contemporary*. Its publication was begun, but after the third issue the magazine was closed down and Uspensky who was on the verge of starvation was compelled to split up the work and publish the parts in various magazines. One instalment appeared under the title of *Sketches of Provincial Morals* in a paper called the *Women's Messenger*. Subsequently, Uspensky wrote in a tone of rueful irony: "You may judge, therefore, what *The Morals of Rasteryayeva Street* with its drunkards, cobblers and artisans had suffered when it finally appeared in a magazine dedicated to feminine instruction and the feminine question! Despite my profound desire to make these drunkards behave with more decency in the society of ladies, an intolerable odour of vodka hung about them and quite overcame me. What was to be done? I washed them, changed their clothes, they became still worse, and there was much less truth in them."

In *The Morals of Rasteryayeva Street* Uspensky gives a vivid and truthful picture of poor people in the towns. Akin to this work in subject-matter is his long narrative *Ruin* which was published in a magazine of revolutionary-democratic trend *Notes on Our Own Country* edited by the celebrated Russian satirical writer M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin and the poet N. A. Nekrassov. The changes taking place in provincial life in the sixties of last century are pictured in *Ruin*. This period may be regarded as the turning-point in Uspensky's life and literary activities. In the society of Saltykov-Shchedrin and Nekrassov, for both of whom he had the deepest love and respect, Uspensky the artist found himself. He appeared in *Notes on Our Own Country* as a writer on the poor from the provinces; his characters were civil servants, workers, and artisans. His sense of humour at this period was very marked; as Goncharov expressed it: "Uspensky inherited several acres of humour from Gogol."

Uspensky's comfortless life ended when he married a teacher and translator from the French, A. V. Barayeva. Very unselfishly did this woman give up the prospect of an independent literary career in order to create the conditions necessary for her husband's work. In the years that followed, Uspensky was enabled to travel abroad. He spent most time in Paris, which had just passed through the Franco-Prussian war and the fall of the Commune. In Paris, Uspensky met Turgenev, and, what was of particular importance for his creative work, came into contact with representatives of the revolutionary organization "Narodnaya Volya" (The People's Freedom). His intercourse with these people raised his hopes for a successful struggle against autocracy.

Uspensky's interest in the peasant and his life which increased under the influence of his intercourse with the above-named revolutionary organization, continued on his return to Russia, where it found ready response among the editorial staff of *Notes on Our Own Country*. It was in this magazine that his *Observations of an Idler* appeared. These described the attempts made to effect close intercourse between the peasants and the oppositionally-minded intelligentsia. *A Cheque Book* gave a startling picture of the penetration of predatory business enterprise into the village.

In order to make a more thorough study of the questions in which he was interested Uspensky worked as book-keeper in a Lending and Saving Association in the Samara district with the result that the magazine *Notes on Our Own Country* started the publication of his *Sketches from a Country Diary*, a true

[1] The year of the liberation of the serfs.

and sad picture of the conditions prevailing in Russian villages in the seventies of last century.

The fruits of Uspensky's sojourn in the Novgorod district were his sketches *In the Home Field* which were subsequently called *The Peasants and Peasant Labour* in his collected works.

The breaking-up of the organization "Narodnaya Volya," the death and condemnation to Shlisselburg and penal servitude of so many of the members whom Uspensky loved and respected was a great blow to him. It did not, however, cause him to discontinue his work.

Shortly after this, one of Uspensky's major works *The Power of the Earth* and his sketches *Talks with Friends*, a sequel to *The Power of the Earth*, appeared.

Under the influence of the "Narodnaya Volya" circles, Uspensky idealized the "primitive" conditions of peasant life. According to the viewpoint of these circles, this mode of living could remain untouched by the march of capitalist development of the country. Uspensky, however, looking at the matter through the keen eyes of a truthful artist found that his observations contradicted this view.

G. V. Plekhanov, a prominent Russian Marxist, one of the first in Russia, wrote of Uspensky: "If you read *The Peasants and Peasant Labour* or *The Power of the Earth* attentively you will see that the artist actually rejects his own premises as soon as he ceases his journalistic discussions and begins the artistic portrayal of peasant life."

In many of his articles V. I. Lenin remarks upon the justice and depth of understanding with which Uspensky portrays the development of capitalist relations in the village.

It is a picture created by a genuine artist. Writing in the nineties on the increase of the influence of capital in the village he said: "These effects are expressed in figures but I shall turn figures and fractions into people."

It was precisely from this time on that such works as *Living Figures* began to appear; they were free of "Narodnaya Volya" illusions and full of revolutionary feeling. Still earlier, in a sketch called *The Bourgeoisie* Uspensky expressed his firm conviction that the downfall of the bourgeois system would come only when its adversaries united. As to the way this union was to be brought about and the role to be played in it by the working class, Uspensky, like all his contemporaries, was vague. Hence the moral sufferings which proved to be fatal for Uspensky. All his life long he had followed passionate dreams of harmonious life, of happiness for mankind; and so deeply was he wounded by the injustice and disorder of human relationships that he could no longer work calmly. He turned hither and thither in his search for some outlet, for new and restorative impressions. These years he visited the Caucasus, the Urals, Western Siberia, Bulgaria. Constantinople and the Danube. Everywhere, he encountered the machinations of those he called the "life pruners"; everywhere the appalling poverty of the unfortunate masses struck him. In the eighties Uspensky was attacked by a mental illness. The strain at which he worked and his emotional and moral sufferings told upon him. For three years more he fought the illness. Sometimes he recovered, only to be attacked again. In 1892 Uspensky was taken so ill that he remained in the hospital until his death which took place ten years later.

Uspensky never ceased to believe in "the immeasurable beauty of the human being" and "the infinitely bright Russian people." His sketch *The Straightener*, in which he records his thoughts while standing before the statue of the Venus of Milo, is very characteristic. The artist who created this Venus, writes Uspensky, "wanted to leave a lasting and indelible impression on the hearts and minds of the people of his own and of all time, of the immeasurable beauty of the human being, and to acquaint men, women, children, young and old, with the sensation of joy in being human; to show us all and gladden us with the visible opportunity of being beautiful. That was the lofty purpose that had possession of his soul and guided his hand."

Here we find a point of contact between Uspensky and the writer V. G. Korolenko, who says: "Man was born for joy as the bird for flight."

BORIS USPENSKY

WAR POEMS BY ALEXEI SURKOV

Among the new publications of 1943 issued by the State Literary Publishing House in Moscow, there are two volumes of verse by Alexei Surkov: *Poems of Hatred* and *Three Notebooks* (war lyrics).

These two small volumes give an idea not only of the last two or three years of work of the talented Soviet lyricist: they allow one to form certain conclusions about the nature of Soviet war poetry as a whole, about its peculiarities and its subject matter.

War is not new to Alexei Surkov's poetry—it permeates all his works. As far back as 1939, during the Finnish campaign, the poet made it the theme of many a sincere, deeply lyrical poem. Like many other Soviet poets, Surkov is familiar with war not as a casual observer, but as a direct participant. It is not the "exotic side of the war" that attracts him; he is familiar with its heroic everyday life:

A front tramp, a scout,
In every dugout I feel at home,

is how the poet refers to himself.

The collection of war lyrics opens with his *Northern Notebook*, which includes poems written during the Finnish campaign. These poems sing of the stern brotherhood-in-arms at the front, sealed with blood and sacrifices. A number of poems, as for example *The Death of Krakhmalev*, *ACommissar's Funeral*, are dedicated by Surkov to his comrades-in-arms who died a hero's death. The subjects of other poems

Alexei Surkov

in the *Northern Notebook* are various episodes in the fighting, of the early days of the war when many received their first baptism of fire. They learned to understand the language of the battle: "The eye became trained to locate the focus of explosions by the flash of fire, the ear became attuned to the whizz of shrapnel." Discarding their former ideas of war, the men fell into step with its "order," its "strictly measured tread."

A period of one and a half to two years separates the *Northern Notebook* from the two later *Western Notebooks*, which are dedicated to the events of the Great Patriotic War which the Soviet people are waging against the hitlerite invaders. Once again the poet put on uniform. He became one of the most popular poets at the front. His *Song of the Brave* has really become a song. The beautiful verse set to music may be heard in Moscow streets, as well as at the front:

Stalin is proud of brave men,
The people love men brave and gay,
The bayonet shrinks from the brave man,
The bullet keeps out of his way.

The *Western Notebooks* represent a lyrical diary which through the strength and profundity of the poet's feeling absorbs the tremendous picture of the war. There is true lyricism in Surkov's war poems. Particularly characteristic are such poems as *Friendship*, *A Letter*, *A Toast*. The poet recalls his parting at the station, and from the very inferno of the war addresses his beloved:

But as the alarm sends me gripping my gun
And into the night to the line of resistance,
Your name in my mind, with my lips, as I run,
I whisper as if it could charm my existence.

I'm not superstitious. But soldiers here tell—
A soldiers' belief as old as the war is—
Beloved are safe both from bullet and shell,
And I too believe in these old, silly stories. . .
("A Letter")

The poem *Friendship* glorifies the feeling of comradeship-in-arms which unites Soviet people in days of trial . . . "Our friendship born of great grief that summer brought us all together, and friendship like this is stringer than steel; ti comes to stay with us forever."

Toast is a song in honour of comrades, given in a dugout at the front an hour before the attack:

Defying the din of the battle,
Let's drain our glasses tonight,
And drink to the soldiers, their mettle,
To the triumph of freedom and light.

A profound impression is made by the poems dedicated to Soviet girls, the heroines of the war, to those who "go to their death, to torture with the tread of a soldier" (*Tanya*, *Lisa Chaykina*, *The Girl in Uniform*). *Tanya* is dedicated to the young Soviet girl partisan Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya whose favourite song was the song of Klärchen from Beethoven's *Egmont*. A growing number of Soviet girls share the daily hardships of the Red Army men; they serve as nurses, wireless operators, scouts. It is to them that the poem *The Girl in Uniform* is dedicated:

In you walked with confidence and ease—
As if born for a soldier's life—
In a mansize greatcoat, far too long for you,
Our dearest comrade in strife.

Besides the love and friendship in the *Front Notebooks* there is passionate hatred for the enemy who

Entered my home to destroy
And scatter to ashes and dust
All of my life and joy,
All that I cherished most.

The poet recalls the glorious landmarks of history when the people rose to battle against foreign hordes:

Landmarks of glory cover the vast native plains,
The banks of the Vistula, Volga, Morava, the Dnieper;
You lie, brazen foeman, that slow's the blood in Slav veins,
That in moments of stress the Slav lacks spirit and temper.

In several of his poems which continue the traditions of political poetry, Surkov excoriates the modern vandals.

How, before the peoples of the world wilt thou,
Murderous people, answer for thy crimes?

exclaims the poet addressing nazi Germany which violated the peace between peoples.

The poet envisages the great hour of judgement on the German murderers and violators:

Death will await them in forest, in vale, field and inn,
Each tree in the woods a bullet will fire at the beast,
Woe to you, wives in Munich, Cologne and Berlin,
No more will your husbands return to the homes from the East.

The struggle will be hard-fought and bloody, but such is the lot of those of whom the poet says: "We, contemporaries of a hard-lived age."

Consciousness of history, the sense of historical responsibility for the destiny of peoples, is characteristic of the true poet. We can feel this in many of Surkov's poems.

The reasoning and descriptive elements which abound in the *Northern Notebook*, are incomparably less evident in the *Western Notebooks* and *Poems of Hatred*. True, not all the poems in these volumes are equally good. Along with the beautiful lyrical poems, along with very successful novellas in verse *(Scout Pashkov)*, Surkov's volumes have many small fragments in the nature of "preliminary notes." These are entries in verse from the poet's notebook, apparently jotted down somewhere in camp, or amid the din and roar of battle.

Surkov's poems abound in many peculiarities characteristic of Soviet war poetry as a whole: they are not abstract thoughts about the inconstancy of fate, nor are they meaningless odes to the "rhythm" of the battle. This is poetry that is austere and realistic, sober and courageous. In these poems one feels the determination of the people to fight to the end for their homes, for their freedom, one feels the unshakable faith in the strength of the people:

Through gloom of night and twilight grey,
We bore with firm and steady hand
The torch of faith in victory's day,
In our people and native land.

Alexei Surkov's poems provide a clear indication of the development of Soviet war poetry.

V. NESTEROV

"Two Huns." An issue of the living newspaper" very popular in a Red Army unit

NEWS AND VIEWS

C. S. Stanislavsky, the outstanding Russian theatrical figure and founder of the Moscow State Art Theatre, bequeathed a rich literary heritage to his country: more than 12,000 different manuscripts, among them outlines of plays staged by him in the Moscow Art Theatre, articles, speeches, diaries, reports, notebooks, his correspondence with prominent men of the theatre in practically all countries of Europe, America and Asia.

All these manuscripts have now been compiled and part of them already prepared for the press. The first volume will contain material hitherto unpublished, including an article written for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which describes briefly his creative method of training the actor and producer. Another article entitled *Ethics* was written by Stanislavsky shortly before his death and is an independent fragment originally intended for inclusion in his book *The Actor and His Education*. In this article Stanislavsky makes a direct appeal to the actor to take an active part in public life without which, he says, the creative growth of the artist is impossible.

Of great interest in the literary heritage of Stanislavsky is the manuscript of his book *My Life in Art*, and the different versions of certain pages of this work. It has been translated into many languages, and the seventh edition had already been published in the U.S.S.R. in 1941.

A special scientific commission is engaged working on Stanislavsky's manuscripts.

Tens of thousands of young students are at present studying in the different institutions of the U.S.S.R. for music, art and the theatre. 200 young actors and actresses have already graduated various theatrical schools this year. For their final examinations they played roles in A. Pushkin's *The Stone Guest*, A. Ostrovsky's *Thunder Storm*, Calderon's *The Invisible Lady*, etc. Entire groups of graduates are being taken to form new theatrical casts. More than 700 persons have graduated 55 music schools as teachers, members of orchestras, accompanists and chorus conductors; more than 300 painters and drawing teachers have graduated the country's art schools, while the Moscow and Leningrad choreographic schools are giving the country new ballet dancers.

The various theatrical and music schools will be attended by 38,000 persons and the art schools by 8,000 in the coming school year.

The "concert-exhibitions" now being held in Moscow to popularize the latest, and for the most part as yet unpublished, works of Soviet composers are meeting with considerable success. The last of these concerts was devoted to the music of E. Golubev, Anatole Alexandrov and L. Knipper.

E. Golubev, the youngest of the three composers, conducted his third symphony, a work unhampered by external effects and expressive of the composer's profound thought.

In his opera *Bela*, written on the motif of Lermontov's famous story, Anatole Alexandrov has successfully treated Kabardino-Balkarian melodies. The composer reaches great depth in the closing lyrical monologue of Bela.

L. Knipper's symphonic suite *Maku* is based on folk songs written down by the composer during his trip to Iran in the winter of 1942.

The American film *Mission to Moscow* shown recently in the Soviet Union evoked exceptionally wide interest.

The newspapers contained long reviews of this film wich shows the solidarity of the democratic countries in their struggle against nazi aggression.

Pravda wrote: "The new American film *Mission to Moscow*, the Russian version of which is now being shown in our cinemas, is an unusual production. It is based on the book of the former United States Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. Mr. Joseph Davies. *Mission to Moscow* is an ingenious combination of the documentary and artistic film. . ."

"On the screen," writes *Izvestia*, "we see Mr. Davies as the hero of the film, and the audience is invited to take a trip with him across the continent and to countries where ominous events are brewing. Berlin is the source of universal perturbation; the capitals of Europe feel the war clouds gathering, but little is done to avert the war. What role will the Soviet Union play in the approaching events? Davies seeks the answer to this question by observing life in Moscow and other cities of the U.S.S.R., by visiting the country's plants and collective farms. He is convinced of the peace efforts of the Soviet Government and gets a real picture of the power of the Soviet Union. He guesses that united to this power U.S.A. and other democratic States can oppose hitlerite aggression. . ."

"Davies' book was filmed by Warner Brothers, one of the biggest studios in the United States," writes the *Vechernyaya Moskva*. ". . . Davies placed his diaries, notes and other material at the disposal of the producer Michael Curtis (cameraman Bert Glennon) all of which has made the film an interesting document reproducing on the screen momentous historic events."

In defining the paramount significance of the film, *Izvestia* writes: "The essential idea of the film is a call for closer relations between the great democracies, the U.S.S.R., U.S.A. and England. This undoubtedly is the light in which *Mission to Moscow* will be viewed by Soviet audiences which appreciate the endeavour of its authors and the skilful manner in

which they have been able to present the main political idea in such complex material."

The authoress Mariettà Shaginyan has already been working in the field of literature for forty years. By 1917 she was a mature artist, but she won true recognition among the wide reading public by her novel *The Transformation* which describes events on the Don during the Civil War of 1918—1920. Marietta Shaginyan excels in literary genre of the widest range: in journalism, in articles on industry and also in adventure stories.

The authoress spent four years in Armenia studying the life and industrialization of this Soviet national republic, on the basis of which she wrote her novel *Hydrocentral* which is known beyond the bounds of the U.S.S.R.

Shortly before the war Marietta Shaginyan wrote two works devoted to the poetic heritage of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. One is a research work on the great Ukrainian writer Taras Shevchenko, and the other a translation of five thousand lines of the poem *The Treasury of Secrets*, by Nizami, an Azerbaidjan classic of the XII century.

Since the outbreak of the war the Urals has become the subject of Marietta Shaginyan's creative work, and in the fortieth year of her literary career we find the authoress writing about the Urals, about its people and their unexampled work.

On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of her literary work Marietta Shaginyan was decorated with the "Badge of Honour." Many of the authoress' works have appeared in this magazine.

Soviet literary circles recently marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of Jan Kollar, one of the founders of Czech national poetry.

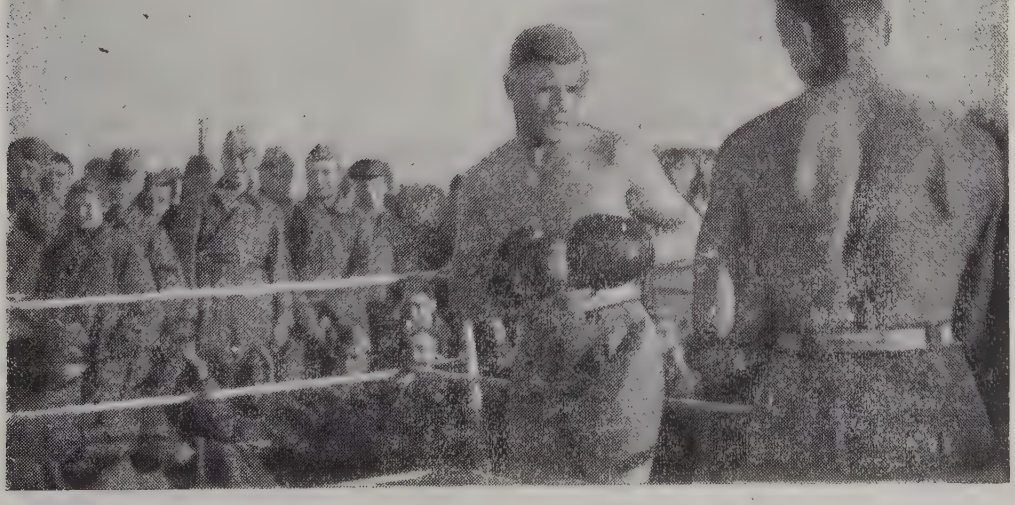
Zdenek Nejedly, Vice-President of the All-Slav Committee and professor of the Prague University, delivered a report on the creative work of Jan Kollar. He described Kollar as an ardent patriot and fighter for the independence of Czechoslovakia and unity of the Slav peoples.

The meeting was also addressed by the Soviet writer Alexander Fadeyev. In his article about Jan Kollar in *Literature and Art*, Alexander Fadeyev writes: "I remember a beautiful day in August, 1935, at the cemetery in Prague when we Russian writers placed wreaths on the graves of outstanding men of Jan Kollar's generation, his companions-in-arms, teachers of the Czech people. . . For more than four years now the lovely land of Czechoslovakia, its ancient cities built by the labour of generations of Czechs and Slovaks, has been under the jackboot of the German fascist enslavers. In these days the noble name of Jan Kollar is recalled with especially great pride not only by the Czechoslovak people but by the entire Slav world."

The meeting which closed with a grand concert was attended by Zdenek Firlinger, Ambassador of the Czechoslovakian Republic to the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakian parliamentary deputies, public figures, scientists, writers, composers and artists.

The first concerts in Moscow by the recently organized State Chorus of Russian Folk Songs, conducted by A. V. Sveshnikov, have been a great success. The new chorus is composed of about a hundred vocalists, and its repertory consists of folk songs not included until now in the programmes of song ensembles.

"The Russian song is Russian history," said Maxim Gorky. "Show me a people who have more songs," wrote Gogol more than a hundred years ago. "Our Ukraine resounds with songs. From its source down to the sea the Volga rip-



Boxing is one of the most popular forms of sport at the front. This photo is taken from a boxing match staged by the Red Army men of a unit at the front

Still from the film "The Disturber of the Peace"

ples with the songs of the Volga boatmen. The huts of Russia are built from pine logs to the melody of songs. Bricks are tossed from hand to hand to the melody of songs, and the cities grow like mushrooms."

The State Chorus has acquainted its audience with old soldiers' songs, with the songs of Russian weavers, favourite student songs, with epic and lyrical country tunes. The excellent combination, harmony and fusion of voices make the State Chorus of Russian Folk Songs a fine instrument in the hand of the conductor.

Like the recently organized Russian Chorus conducted by A. S. Stepanov, the State Chorus is an example of the success of chorus music in the U.S.S.R.

An interesting conference was recently held in Moscow at which composers, poets and critics discussed songs composed during the Patriotic War, new war songs inspired by the great battles. Many songs have been written, since 1941, songs known far and wide.

Considerable discussion at this conference centered around the national character of mass songs.

Songs composed by V. Zakharov, A. Novikov and V. Solovyov-Sedoy are favourites with the Soviet public. Each of the afore-mentioned composers has his own particular style, but all of them draw their inspiration from folk songs.

Among the heroic war songs are A. V. Alexandrov's *Sacred War* and V. Belyi's *The Five Sailors.*

Lyrics too are extremely popular among the people, especially V. Zakharov's *My Fog, O Thick Fog,* V. Solovyov-Sedoy's *Eventide at Anchor,* and M. Blanter's *Good-bye, Towns and Huts.*

The conference of composers was preceded by a number of concerts at which eighty of the latest songs were sung.

The Disturber of the Peace belongs to the pen of the young Soviet author, L. Solovyov, and is based on the rich material of Eastern folklore. Hoja Nasreddin, around whom the tale centres, is a people's hero, resourceful and witty, the friend of truth and of the poor.

Solovyov's book was filmed by the Tashkent studios as a comedy called *Nasreddin in Bukhara* in which the scenario writers show a number of episodes linked with Nasreddin's adventures to rescue his beloved, beautiful Guldjan, from the harem of the Emir of Bukhara. The courageous and resourceful Nasreddin deceives the courtiers and the guards, gains access to the palace, fools the Emir himself and, risking his life, saves his beloved.

L. Sverdlin in the role of Nasreddin gives a vivid portrayal of the hero. True, his exuberant spirits at times convey the impression of flippant unconcern, and his boldness good fortune.

The colourful scenes of old Bukhara, its bazaar thronged with noisy and merry crowds—these people from whom Nasreddin comes, and to whom he is devoted with all his heart—are excellent.

Orders were recently conferred by the Soviet Government on the Russian composers Nicholas Myaskovsky, Serge Prokofieff, Anatole Alexandrov, Serge Vassilenko, Yuri Shaporin and Vladimir Shcherbachov.

Nicholas Myaskovsky (born in 1881) is a leading contemporary composer and is justly considered the head of the Soviet school of symphony. Myaskovsky has composed twenty-four symphonies (the twenty-fourth has just been completed), many of which are performed not only in the U.S.S.R. but also in England and the United States. He is recognized not only as a composer but also as the teacher of a whole school of young composers, among them the talented composers and Stalin Prize winners Aram Khachaturyan, Maryan Koval, Vissarion Shebalin.

Serge Prokofieff (born in 1891) has enriched Russian music with many outstanding works which have won him world fame. From the very outset he has been known as a bold innovator in music. He is an intensive worker. During the past 6—7 years he has written a number of interesting scores, among them the opera *Semyon Kotko* (based on Valentin Katayev's *I, Son of the Working People*), the cantata *Alexander Nevsky*, the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, etc. Since the outbreak of the war Serge Prokofieff has written the symphonic suite *1941*, a quartet on Kabardino-Balkarian themes, the *Seventh Pianoforte Sonata* (for which the composer was awarded a Stalin Prize), and the score for the opera *War and Peace*, based on Leo Tolstoy's book of the same name, and which will be staged by the Bolshoy Theatre of the U.S.S.R.

Anatole Alexandrov (born in 1881) is mainly a composer of chamber music. His most outstanding works are his eight pianoforte sonatas, a number of songs. and three string quartets.

Serge Vassilenko (born in 1872) is one of the oldest of contemporary composers. He is widely known as the author of numerous symphonic, theatrical and vocal compositions and has contributed much to developing the music of the national republics of the U.S.S.R., particularly Uzbekistan, where he did much fruitful work with the Republic's young composers. Vassilenko's latest historical opera is devoted to the great Russian general Suvorov, and is successfully performed on the stages of many opera houses in the Soviet Union.

The works of Yuri Shaporin (born in 1889) centre on heroic themes taken from Russian history. His major musical composition is his symphony-cantata *On Kulikovo Field* which won him a Stalin Prize, music for the film *Minin and Pozharsky*, and the historical opera *Decembrists* on which the composer has been working for many years already. A master of monumental music Yuri Shaporin is excellent at lyrical miniatures. His music to the words of Alexander Pushkin's and Alexander Blok's poems can justly be regarded as among the finest examples of modern vocal lyrics.

Vladimir Shcherbachov (born in 1889) is known as the author of four symphonies of which the most outstanding are his second (based on the motifs of the poet Alexander Blok) and his fourth (dedicated to the Izhora works). The composer is also known for his suites based on the music from the films *The Thunder Storm* and *Peter I*, as well as his songs to the words of Alexander Blok and Vladimir Mayakovsky. Many talented young Leningrad composers have studied under Vladimir Shcherbachov.

In describing the work of the afore-mentioned composers, Dmitri Shostakovich writes: "In these stern times when our entire people are straining their efforts to strike the final blow at the bloody enemy, the composers who have been decorated by the Soviet Government are, by their tireless creative work, helping to forge victory. Surely this speaks of their ever youthful spirits."

A new title "People's Graphic Artist of the U.S.S.R." has been introduced by the Soviet Government, and will be conferred for outstanding services in the development of pictorial art and sculpture. The new title is similar to the honorary title of "People's Artist of the U.S.S.R." conferred on leading actors, conductors, producers and composers.

The title of "People's Graphic Artist of the U.S.S.R." has been conferred on four outstanding figures in Soviet pictorial art: the painters Alexander Gerassimov and Boris Iohanson, and the sculptors Sergei Merkulov and Vera Mukhina.

The magazine *Krokodil* received the following letter from the famous English cartoonist David Low:

"I have often expressed, in my lectures and writings, my admiration of the liveliness and force, both of conception and artistic expression, of your company of cartoonists. In many respects *Krokodil* is developing perhaps the most noteworthy school of satirical artists since Philipan founded the famous *La Caricature* of Paris a century ago with his school headed by the genius Daumier.

"I am honoured, therefore, that you have thought fit to publish some of my caricatures in *Krokodil*. I hope shortly to send another package of photographs of some of my recent works, which I hope may have equal interest for you."

Ten years ago an unskilled worker came to the head of the construction office of a furniture factory. His name was Nicholas Abramov, and he suggested decorating the cupboards etc., with simple inlaid-work. This was the initial step in the original art which he developed as time went on.

From the time he commenced work, this self-taught artist showed a surprising skill in combining the range of colours available in wood. The veneers he used as an artist uses the colours on his palette. His only instruments were a scalpel and a small mallet.

For ten years Abramov has been working in wood with the enthusiasm of an artist engrossed in his particular medium. He has made wonderful panels and friezes. Now he is beginning to do larger panels and pictures, "paintings" in wood. He has completed a portrait of the great Russian scientist Timiryazev, a panel "Stalin Among the Children," and pictures called "Elk" and "Kirov on a Wolf-Hunt." His work has been exhibited at New York, Paris, and at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow.

Let us take one of his latest pictures—"An Uzbek Girl with Grapes." The folds of the silk national costume gleam, the girl's face is brown and glowing in the hot sun. The clus-

ters of ripe grapes on the dish have the same vitality. The whole picture seems sunlit, joyous, alive and breathing; it conveys an impression of richest colouring. Yet when you look closer you see that the girl's hair is walnut, the silk dress a skilful mosaic of different woods: plane, date, plum, beach, pear and walnut. In the grapes over twenty sorts of woods have been employed. This has given the artist a marvellous range of colour and light-and-shade.

Nicholas Abramov's art requires careful preparation and meticulous craftsmanship. First a design must be made, then a detai leg drawing in pencil or colours. After this comes the collecting of material—no easy matter, for the artist may examine many a cubic foot of wood before he finds the exact shade he needs. Then the veneers must be cut and fitted together. Then comes the final process.

At present the artist is hard at work on pictures devoted to the Great Patriotic War. He is now carrying out a commission from the People's Commissariat of Defence for a large panel: "Great Military Leaders of the Russian People."

Editor-in-chief: HELEN STASSOVA

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