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ELEMER SALY and SANDOR GERGELY

THE MOBILE EXECUTION GROUND

The author of the novel from which we have taken the following excerpts is a Budapest accountant who twice won the amateur boxing championship of Hungary. When writing his reminiscences, he had no idea of publication. He wished simply to set down on paper what he had experienced and suffered far from his home.

These experiences are appalling. They encompass the life, or rather, the extermination of a so-called labour company in the Hungarian army.

In the spring of 1942 the Hungarian Honved army began bringing "labour companies" up to the Eastern front on a mass scale. Officially, these were to be unarmed troops doing military service for the "New Order in Europe." Actually, however, the men in these "labour companies" were physically annihilated.

These companies included Jews—officially between the ages of twenty and forty-one, but actually from eighteen to fifty-eight or even sixty. Their ranks were further filled by Communists, Social-democrats and Democrats from concentration camps and prisons; but any worker, peasant or intellectual of anti-fascist views, not yet arrested, would be enlisted in these companies if he were suspected by the police or denounced as an anti-fascist. The sectarians, as they were called, mainly peasants from the Hungarian plains who were opposed to bearing arms on religious grounds, were sent in their hundreds to the Eastern front in these companies. Skilled workers from the armaments industry who previously, even before the outbreak of war, had contributed to opposition newspapers, also found their way to these "mobile execution grounds."

The bestial Hungarian fascists annihilated at least a hundred thousand people in "labour companies." Physicians, elementary and secondary school teachers, scientists, engineers, lawyers, actors, writers, journalists and skilled workers were killed in thousands by the guards, who were allowed to leave the front for the regional reserve headquarters when the company entrusted to their "protection" was fully wiped out.

On June 1st, 1942, the company described mustered two hundred and forty. On December 7th, 1942, that is to say, on the day when the writer utilized a favourable combination of circumstances to escape to the Russian positions opposite, there were only ten men still alive.

The descriptions have been given literary form by Sandor Gergely and printed under the Hungarian title "Mozgo Vesztőhely."

After travelling for half an hour at a good speed, our train swung sharply round to the right. We stopped at the edge of a forest, three or four kilometres behind the firing line. Further forward, a furious battle was raging. The dressing stations were hidden in the forest. Wounded men were lying there on the ground in hundreds, and carts and stretcher-bearers continually brought more and more torn, bleeding bodies. Those with slight wounds walked back themselves.

It was a hideous sight. Shrieking, groaning, bleeding bundles of flesh, armless, legless, writhed and tossed on the ground. In front of me lay a Honved, unconscious, his intestines hanging out. Beside him, a man whose eyes had been seared was shrieking in agony... The air was filled with the smell of blood and powder.

The thunder of guns, the rattle of machine-guns and the roar of grenades was every now and then drowned by a strange hissing noise. And this sound, reminiscent of a flight of wild geese, caused the heart to shudder. It was like death itself swinging his scythe.

"That's a Katyusha," whispered one of the stretcher-bearers through chattering teeth.

"A Katyusha? What's that?"

"You'll know soon enough," replied the stretcher-bearer and flung himself down, writhing and sobbing, wrestling with hysterical weeping.

Several doctors from the Labour Service were working at the dressing station. Not a sign of an army doctor — they had no liking for the smell of powder.

Pista found an acquaintance among the doctors, a man who had studied at Bologna together with him. This doctor told him that there had been bitter fighting here ever since August 4th. The 18th regiment of the 12th light division, together with the division's artillery regiment, had been hastily brought up. They were to strengthen the defence line, breached at Korotoyak, while the 48th infantry regiment remained in reserve. When they had made the break-through, the Russians had com-

pletely wiped out the 10th regiment of the 36th infantry division. The counter-attack, by the 18th infantry regiment supported by a mixed Hungarian tank unit, was now in full swing. The division was suffering terrible casualties, men were fleeing in panic, to be forced back to the firing line by the officers' revolvers.

While the doctor was telling us all this, he kept looking at us searchingly. Abruptly he said:

"You... must certainly be hungry."

"You never said a truer word.. We've had nothing to eat for thirty hours," Pista replied.

The doctor took half a loaf from his bread-sack. Surrounded by the screaming, groaning wounded and the dead, we eagerly swallowed the precious gift without even waiting to seat ourselves.

Gradually the fine edge of our sensibility became completely dulled. The paralysing horror of the first minutes melted into absolute indifference. We became accustomed to the dead, to the screaming of mortar shells... just as we had to Corporal Janosi's brutal treatment. In addition, we knew that there was only one thing that could help us in our hard life—if it were possible to speak of help—and that was calm. Everything depended on our nerves. Some of us had frequent hysterical attacks. But Pista, Dr. Dendecz, Istvan Radnai, Weinberger, Baum and some of the others were real heroes—they carried out their superhuman toil calmly, uncomplainingly, always ready to give a helping hand.

Barely had we finished eating the bread that the doctor had given us, when we were sent further into the wood. Ammunition had to be unloaded with the utmost speed at the 12th division's dump. We emptied the lorries with their fifty-, sixty- and hundred-kilogram cases in an incredibly short time, so that they could return for further loads. We had not finished the job of unloading the waggons, when another consignment arrived.

Work went on till five o'clock in the afternoon. By that time we had unloaded thirty lorries. Thirty times three tons—that is to say, ten trucks of munitions in barely three hours. The company guarding the dump, sixty strong, had been permitted by their commander, an artillery ensign, to do no work.

"Look out, lads, that the Jews don't eat up the grenades," the ensign joked.

As soon as we had finished unloading, he sent us all back to our camp, about a hundred metres from where we had been working.

"Well, my children, now you can dig me some cover," he said in friendly tones.

He found a suitable place among four huge trees. There we had to make a trench three metres wide, two and a half long and two and a half deep. The whole thing had to be finished before we could go to bed. But not a word did the ensign say about our dinner or supper.

It was impossible for everybody to work at once in the narrow space, so we divided into parties. Two groups of eight relieved each other every quarter of an hour, while another eight went into the forest to cut wood for the roof of the dugout.

Suddenly our ears were assailed by a fiendish racket. Russian fighters had attacked the forest and were combing the whole place. The attack was so sudden that we had no time to look for cover behind the trees. We flung ourselves down onto the ground, while the bullets rattled around us like hailstones. These were dreadful moments—to us they seemed like hours. I said farewell to my wife, my father... The aircraft disappeared as suddenly as they had come... Then they came back and again combed the whole place with their machine-gun fire.

By some miracle nobody was wounded.

In the morning, another munitions column arrived before it was fully light. We unloaded it. Barely was that done, when seventy carts brought more munitions. We worked until midday without food or drink. Thanks to the doctor's kindness, Pista and I had eaten a loaf the previous day, but the others had been fasting for forty-eight hours. Weak with hunger and weariness, we lay on our blankets. Our sergeant-major sought out the artillery ensign to enquire about food; the latter replied that he had as yet received nothing for us, but hoped that within two days we would be on the list.

Some of us, including Pista and I, went "reconnoitering" into the forest. Not far away we stumbled on an old camp with dugouts and traces of camp-fires. Here we found half-rotten potatoes and potato-peelings, and after searching for a long time, managed to collect half a mess-tin of them. We lighted a fire and cooked the precious booty. Even the rotten parts were eatable when roasted.

Not far away we discovered a couple of lime-trees, the leaves of which were pleasant to the taste, quenching our thirst. In this way we eased our tormenting hunger somewhat. But it was really unendurable. Pista and I went in a second expedition. By this time nearly everybody was feverishly searching for something edible. Hunger gave us no peace. On the site of our previous day's find, we discovered a couple more potatoes, and our bill of fare was enriched by some acorns. The taste was reminiscent of roasted monkey nuts. We stilled our thirst with the leaves of limes—the water gave us diarrhoea.

We had no more strength to work. We were dizzy with hunger. For three days we had had practically nothing to eat. On leaving Rechiza, each one of us had received a tin of meat, which we were forbidden to touch without orders. It was our iron ration. Now our sergeant-major permitted us to open the tins. But the majority had thrown them away on the march, because of the weight.

Those who still had something shared with those who had not. I had nothing.

When the iron rations had been issued, I had been cook, and a cook had no need to worry about such things. Now I shared Pista's meat. We swallowed the fat chunks without bread.

In the afternoon, more munitions were brought up and fetched away. At night, too, we were wakened—carts had come for munitions.

In any case, sleep was impossible because of the continual air attacks. Bombers came over in endless waves. Sometimes they would drop their eggs incessantly from eleven at night until three in the morning.

Most of the boys had made themselves shelters. Schwarz, who trusted to God, considered such precautions unnecessary. One night, about the middle of August, there was a particularly heavy attack. The very lights made the wood as bright as day, and the shadows trod a fantastic dance like spectres... As though the trees themselves were pacing through the forest.

Schwarz screamed prayers without ceasing. Pista teased Dr. Fischer, who was sitting beside him shaking and quaking with terror.

"Well, Arpadchen, how many bombs will they drop on us before the twenty-third of September—the day when we are supposed to be demobilized?.."

"Drop it, Pista, leave the poor fellow alone," I interrupted.

Suddenly a deafening roaring and crashing began. The next moment, Schwarz came running on all fours into our shelter where there had hardly been room for the three of us. Fischer and Schwarz began praying.... Pista went on chaffing them about their earnest prayers.

The raid lasted till dawn. When I awakened, Schwarz and Fischer were still praying, and Pista remarked with satisfaction that I had marvellously strong nerves. I had fallen asleep before him and awakened later.

We crept out of our dugout, and only then did we see the devastation the Russian airmen had wrought in the near neighbourhood of the munitions dump.

It had certainly been our lucky night. Holes four to five metres in diameter showed the weight of the bombs, and everywhere trees were torn up by the roots. Two bombs had come down fifty metres from the dump. Fifty lorries of ammunition and ourselves with them, could have gone flying into the air, to hell—or where you will.

A huge branch from a tree standing over us had been broken off and had fallen on our shelter. We examined the break. It had been snapped off by a blow. It was Schwarz who solved the riddle. From the beginning he had insisted that he had heard a dull thud at the same time as the branch had broken; he would not leave the subject alone, and continued obstinately rooting around. After about an hour he stumbled over something not far off and raised a shout. Three paces from our dugout, a cigar-shaped Russian bomb of about sixty kilograms had landed in a bush. By some lucky chance it had not exploded.

"We were certainly born under a lucky star," I decided.

Pista thought differently. According to him, it would have been better if it had fallen three yards nearer and had exploded. He was thoroughly disgusted.

"You fix up your own death if you want, but leave me alone," said Fischer angrily.

Soon afterwards a German sapper officer and his men appeared and took away the bomb.

There was a certain improvement in the food. On the fourth day we received a half kilogram of bread. But the artillery ensign stole half of our rations. To make up for this, he allowed four of our comrades to go and dig up potatoes every day in the fields nearby.

The scoundrel! It was desperately dangerous to go anywhere near the potato fields. The Soviet artillery had this sector continually under fire. Attacks and counter-attacks followed one another in rapid succession. Nevertheless, we brought in the potatoes, taking our turn in groups of four to risk our lives. But three quarters of these potatoes too the ensign took from us. We were even glad if he left us a couple of kilograms.

Our sergeant-major, who had been in the Word War I, prayed continually. Not for us, of course, who were risking our lives to dig potatoes, but for himself. He was desperately afraid. He was scared at being so close to the munitions dump, where the Russians kept sending their shells with the utmost persistence.

This sergeant-major had a beautiful leather-bound prayerbook, and from this he prayed the whole time.

"My son," said he, "only prayers can help us, we are all in God's hand."

"Not we, Sergeant-major," I replied, "we are in the ensign's hand."

Once we were given permission to write home. Now I took Pista's advice... and said farewell to my wife. I wrote that this might be my last letter. There was very little hope that I would ever live to return home.

Pista approved of what I had done.

"One must always prepare them," he said. "Maybe our luck won't hold. But... you, my Salychen, you will most certainly get home."

It was an idée fixe of his.

Never as long as I live shall I forget August 15th. It was about six o'clock in the evening. Barely half an hour previously we had finished unloading fifteen lorries and were now resting.

"Fall in!" shouted our sergeant-major. Then he turned to an N.C.O. standing beside him, whom we had not seen before.

"Are twenty men enough?"

"I think so."

He selected twenty, including myself. We marched a half kilometre to the edge of the forest, and there fell in. Before us

we saw a large trough washed out by the rains.

At the bottom of the trough were standing, as I learned later, exactly sixty-eight Russians, including women and children of fourteen and sixteen. Opposite the trough a column of Honveds had fallen in and were standing with grounded rifles. Our artillery ensign was also there. Our sergeant-major and the strange N.C.O. stayed with us.

I cannot remember if there were other officers or N.C.O.'s there, for I could not tear my eyes away from the Russians. Never in my life had I seen such sorrow on human faces. The majority of them were over fifty years old.

"Fire!" commanded the artillery ensign.

Silently the crowd of unfortunates collapsed one on top of the other. Their blood mingled, their limbs intertwined like serpents on the pile. Not all of them were killed immediately, some tried to rise.

Then our God-fearing sergeant-major sprang at one of these victims still struggling for life and emptied his revolver into his head at the closest range. Now the murderer's blood-lust was roused, he reloaded and fired blindly into the mass of writhing, twitching bodies.

A lad of about fifteen raised himself unobserved, crept out of the trench streaming with blood, and crawled away on hands and knees, hoping to reach the cover of the forest. One of the Honveds noticed him, ran after him and smashed the child's head in with his rifle butt.

Silently the victims lay on top of each other. Here and there an arm or a leg still moved, or a body twitched in the final death struggle. There was a smell of powder ... and then suddenly, on the path by which we had come, there appeared a small peasant of about sixty in torn clothing. He was casting scared, horrified glances right and left, and hugging his torn sack as though it held some great treasure.

Four tall, strong field gendarmes were escorting him. They kicked him continually, beating with their sticks the broken old man who could hardly drag himself along. Then the peasant was made to mount the pile of steaming corpses. That poor, poor old man!

Stumbling, treading on the bodies of his countrymen, he mounted the pile. As he climbed, he would stoop and stroke one or another of the dead upon whom he had accidentally trampled roughly, as though begging forgiveness...

When he reached the top he stood there on the heap of bodies, looking into the faces of his executioners. The sack he kept clutched firmly to him. My lips were hurting. In my agitation I had bitten them till the blood was flowing. My heart was beating till it seemed to choke me. Despite the heat, cold shudders ran down my back. At home, if one even spoke about blood people felt ill.

There on the pile of bodies stood that helpless, unhappy old man, and stretched out his left arm in a strange, sorrowful gesture as though asking—what does it all mean? What is happening here? The reply came swiftly.

"Fire!" bawled the artillery ensign.

The ten men fired. The God-fearing, prayerful sergeant-major helped them with zest. The old Russian fell; dead, he still hugged the sack to him. Two Honveds, whose curiosity was roused, had difficulty in prying it loose from the stiff fingers. Greedily they opened it.

It was a cabbage and a torn coat that this poor old man had treasured. Home and family had already been wrested from him by these bandits who now kicked the body of the little old man in their anger and disappointment.

During the shooting, four Honveds had guarded us, rifles cocked. And the weapons with their bayonets were still trained on us as we mechanically dug the light soil and laid the still warm twitching bodies in the trench.

"Don't stroke him, the stinking dog... push him in," bawled the ensign.

"They ought all to be shot down," yelled the God-fearing sergeant-major, drunk with blood.

Never had we been so near to death. If the artillery ensign had not restrained the soldiers' blood-lust, it would have been all up with us, so drunk were they with slaughter.

"Leave them alone," the ensign told them. "They'll never get back home anyway, but for the present they'll bend their backs."

We returned to our camp almost beside ourselves. Pista hardly knew me. He said that I looked like an old man of sixty. My hair had turned quite grey...

It must have been about the middle of November when I suggested, one evening in the dugout, that those of us who remained alive should take a handful of earth from the graves of those comrades who had died, to bring to their relatives. My proposal was accepted unanimously, people even added their own ideas to it. It did us good to think about going home, and we forgot ourselves and everything about us as we pictured it. We mourned the dead and pitied them, but decided to our own satisfaction that we would not remain here. In our thoughts we were at home. The terrible path we had trodden was already a thing of the past, a horror long overcome which one had to speak about from time to time in order not to forget it completely.

Friend Baum, a stone-cutter, offered to make a monumental gravestone for our dead comrades and set it up in the Temple of Heroes in Budapest. Schwarz, for his part, undertook to pray daily for the souls of those who had gone. When Schwarz lamented, he felt himself already in the Temple, in the Rombachstrasse synagogue where he was assistant rabbi. His dreams were already taking him to his home, where he gave his paternal blessing to

six small children standing in a diminishing row like organ pipes .... He yearned for his wife's cooking, and as he murmured a thanks-giving after eating, prepared to lie down beside his spouse who was wan and exhausted with child bearing. He had quite forgotten the comrades about him and was no longer conscious of the penetrating stench coming from a nearby rusty bucket discovered on a dungheap which we dubbed a chamber-pot. Hoarsely, fanatically, he began singing psalms...

Poor old König!.. He was a great smoker. His money was ended, his tobacco likewise, and he would borrow from nobody; for this reason he undertook the job of carrying out the bucket. The poor lad could hardly sleep at nights.

It was the end of November. Some errand took Dr. Andor Szabo, about twenty-five years of age, who had married the day before we had left, to the Honveds' bunker during morning roll-call. Our line was just trotting off to the field kitchen to receive hot, black water, and the daily ration of a quarter kilogram of bread and a hundred grams of horsemeat. On the days when we had meat, no supper was issued.... Everybody hastily swallowed his black liquid, since in the 25° frost it was cold in an instant.

Our breakfast was interrupted by a wild bellow. Hardly had it ceased, when Dr. Szabo dashed desperately out of the Honveds' bunker, the gentry from within following hot on his heels. Szabo only got as far as the cart which served as a morgue. Weakened from hunger and agitation as he was, he fell on his knees holding his hands in front of his face, bleeding from a blow, and pleaded half-articulately for mercy.

The hangman's knaves bellowed; Dr. Szabo whimpered like a driven hound... in films about tropic lands, I have seen how savages ran amok, destroying any life that crossed their path... Within five minutes the unhappy Dr. Szabo, whimpering and whining, was butchered by similar savages. They killed him with spades like a rat. And this took place before our eyes... in the presence of the company commander, Senior Lieutenant Toronyi... and Cadet Fabian, who was on duty... Szabo's head was battered until it was completely unrecognizable. They trampled upon his body until the ribs cracked and broke. Now the bawling Honveds went into a real frenzy. Comrade Ganzfried was standing quite close to them. Without any cause whatsoever, the blood-drunken pack sprang at him and in five minutes had killed him with spades and crowbars. The unfortunate man, taken completely by surprise, had not even time to scream. With a dull groan he collapsed.

For our little group, already sorely shrunken, Ganzfried's death was a heavy loss. Ganzfried was passionately fond of argument and discussion, and would take on all the others almost alone. Only Schwarz used to take his part at times. He always insisted that the Jewish people were born for patience and would find their place only in the next world, but that there it would be on God's right hand. The poor man had also brought up the youth entrusted to his care in the same idea. Now he had attained the highest degree of endurance and renunciation—he had been torn to pieces by wild beasts.

We, it is true, were no pupils of Ganzfried, but we too felt like cattle given over to the slaughter... Huddled close to one another in a row, we now waited without a sound for the butchers to seize the next victim... But then Senior Lieutenant Toronyi decided to assert himself.

"Enough for today. We need a couple of them to dig snow in the front line after this, and some must be left for tomorrow too..." Then he winked at the Honveds and called out: "Szlifka, bring out the bottle of rum. You can finish it off, but only those who've been working here..." Then he walked off, giving the dead Szabo a kick with his elegant topboot in passing.

It was already late in the evening. None of the comrades were back from work. It was only late at night that they trickled in, one after the other. Some of them got off from work, bribing the guards with anything of value to allow them to go "home." Grünwald gave his wrist watch to the sapper on guard, thus lengthening his life by one day.

Those who returned told how the sappers and other gentry had discovered a new method of butchery. They made the men work till they collapsed from weariness. But whoever lay down never rose again. He froze to death. Three men from our group had frozen in this way.

At the morning roll-call we saw Comrade Bauer, whom we had missed and believed dead, staggering towards our group. His eyes were swollen with the cold, he could see practically nothing,—a case of snow-blindness. We wanted to take him down to the dugout, but the sergeant-major on duty would have none of it.

"You shall have a double breakfast portion, my son. Sit down here, my dear Bauer," said the sergeant-major, with a sly, roguish smile, like a child planning some grand piece of mischief.

He made Bauer sit down in the snow about five yards from the kitchen.

In the evening, when we marched in, Bauer was still sitting there... Frozen to a block of ice... like a snowman, his face rigid in death, glaring at us. For days he sat there. He was already covered with a thick layer of snow, but our sergeant-major did not allow us to bury him.

"He makes such a lovely snowman," he said with his child-like smile.

Our troop was melting terribly fast. Every day, four or five comrades went under. The winter became more severe. Anybody who sat down to rest at work never rose again. Our work in the firing line was finished, and we were building new positions two kilometres in front of the village.

Now there were only twenty-five of us

going to work. The thermometer fell to thirty degrees centigrade below zero and the hard-frozen soil could be loosened only with crowbars. We worked without intermission from seven in the morning till six in the evening, the sapper guards, naturally, being relieved regularly.

All these sappers were most considerate. If one of us was tired they would say: "Kindly take a seat, Sir!" When the man had rested a little and wanted to take up his shovel again, then with the insistance of a hospitable host pressing a guest to eat, he would be forced down again. And that was how things would end. This was how Jenö Fischer froze. He had been a watchmaker from Kiraly Street. When he entered the labour battalion, he weighed almost a hundred kilograms, but here he had lost fifty-five of them. Sobbing, snow-blind, he staggered and collapsed. The sapper came up to him.

"You're tired, old 'un. Wouldn't you like to rest?" he asked.

"Yes, please, Herr Sapper, if you will allow me."

"Certainly, certainly, my son, of course you can get your breath a bit," said the worthy man.

After resting for about fifteen minutes, Fischer wanted to return to work. He was cold. But in an instant the kindly sapper was standing by him and gently forcing him back onto the snow.

"You stop here a bit longer, old boy, you haven't rested enough yet."

Fischer obediently sat down again in the snow and soon fell asleep. While we were working, he slipped out of this world.

A frozen man is a horrible sight. His features are stony, terrible. His face changes beyond recognition. The bruises from beatings swell. The skin is hard as marble. It is hard to recognize a frozen man.

At about midday Goldberger had to rest, too. So there was to be a second victim today... But I was mistaken. There was to be a third—König. They were still alive when I took leave of them. Overcome by weariness, they were sinking into sleep. They began to sway from side to side, starting up every now and then stung by the will to live. Gradually they were still.

The day ended horribly. Dezsö Zador and Dr. Deszberg complained that they could no longer feel their fingers. So they, too, were coming to the end.

After work, the sappers made us fall in. We had three dead and three wounded. Twenty-five percent casualties.

Grosz and I were given orders to get the three dead men home. We went into the village to fetch sledges. There we found a small one which had belonged to some child... Once upon a time, merry, healthy, rosy-cheeked children had careered down the neighbouring hill on this sled; but how were we to take three dead men on it?

We took the belts from the bodies. Only König's eyes were closed. Fischer's and Goldberger's were bent upon us in mute accusation. Their ragged clothing was frozen to a steel-like hardness. Frightened lice ran about over the corpses.

We fastened the bodies together with the belts. Goldberger lay at the bottom. If you had been a better comrade, old fellow, I'd at least have put you in the middle. As it was, Fischer came in the middle and König on the very top. We fastened them firmly to the sled. One strap was round the legs, a second we wound around the necks and with the third we bound the hips of the corpses together.

One of us had to drag the sled, while the others pushed. Pushing was worse, because it meant holding König's shoulders. We drew lots, I won, and was able to pull the sled.

We had reached about the centre of the village when we stopped to rest, not for the first time. A ski detachment with an officer at the head came swooping down on us. The men stopped by the sled and gathered in a circle round us. The officer was a young man, about twenty-five, with a pleasant face. I could not make out his rank.

"Who are you?" he asked, and his horrified eyes took in our faces and clothing. "Why do you look like that, why are you in rags, what has happened to them?" and he pointed to the sled and its load.

We lost no time in telling him who we were and where we came from.

"Who is your company commander?" he asked in agitation. The sight of us with the three corpses had thoroughly shaken him.

"That's frightful! I can't stand by and see a thing like that! It's horrible... horrible! Since when have you been here? Doesn't the higher command know anything about these dreadful things?.. How you're dying here?"

We returned a bitter smile to the indignation of the officer, ashen-pale with excitement. But he did not wait for any reply. As though disputing with himself, he cried again and again:

"That's impossible!.. That can't go on! How can one do things like that to human beings?"

He choked, trying to find the words to express his feelings, then he looked round at his men. He saw only hanging heads, mournfully drooping, frozen moustaches. Everything was silent. Nobody said a word. The officer's face contorted. He clenched his teeth, as though swallowing all that he wished to say. He looked up at the sky, took a deep breath, sighed: "God... you, up there..." and let out a deep sigh. Its steam concealed his face.

For another second he stood motionless by the sled, staring at the three frozen men. Then he stood to attention, raised his hand to his fur cap and stood there motionless, as though giving a last salute to a man of high rank. He turned his eyes on us, and a deep, inexpressible sorrow lay in them. His hand was still to his cap in salute. Holding it there, he turned from us and beckoned to his men to follow him.

I was standing at the end of the row, waiting to get my food. In another second I would have received my portion. At that moment, Fodor, the corporal on duty, came up to me.

"Go to the office," he said. "Cadet Fabian wants you."

I said that I had not yet had dinner.

"And you are not to get it," Fodor replied. "The cadet has forbidden it."

Confound it! If I had stood a little further forward I would have had my dinner already.

Fabian was awaiting me in front of the office. He gave me a swift glance.

"So'ho—here's my fine bird!" he said. "Slunk off from work yesterday, eh? Well, you know what you've to expect for that. I should hope you do, too! You're a highly-educated man, you know what's awaiting you... A highly-educated man," he repeated with a grin. "Well, in a word, you'll just take a little rest. For a whole week you'll rest for two hours every day after getting back from work, to recover from the exertion of loafing around. Good? Seven times two hours. That's the time you'll dawdle. Just the number of hours you idled away here. But you'll be bound, so that you can't move, too much movement might tire you."

In a word, he didn't want to kill me all at once! But would I ever stand the first two hours? There was an icy wind blowing straight from the pole. The thermometer showed 25° C. of frost. If I was bound, the blood would freeze in my veins.

Corporal Fodor took me to the place of execution in front of the kitchen, near the cart where the three naked corpses frozen to a stony hardness, were still lying.

Fodor looked sadly at me. We had had business dealings. He had my IOU for over a hundred marks, a sum he had advanced me at the beginning of November.

"You'll hardly be able to stand that," he said sympathetically, just to comfort me.

"I'll stand it, Corporal," I calmed him. "And if I don't my widow'll settle the debt. That's as sure as that I'm still alive."

"I'm sorry for you," said Fodor sincerely. "I thought that you'd get home yet. It's a pity about you."

"And wasn't it a pity about the others?"

"I was very sorry for a great many of them, but there was nothing I could do."

Fodor was the only one of the guards who could not be charged with brutality. I cannot remember that he ever struck anybody.

Fodor called two Honveds to fetter me. At the sound of his voice Szlifka dashed out of the kitchen ahead of everybody else. A broad, cruel grin overspread his face.

"Well, so that one's going on ice too, at last," he said to his comrades, who had also hurried out at the call.

I shuddered at the thought of the torture awaiting me.

"Don't fasten him to the post, just make a buck of him," said Fodor.

"Only that?" said Szlifka, disappointed. "Well, never mind, the swine won't forget that either."

Szlifka and his companion seized my two arms and pressed me down onto the hard-frozen snow. The knees, jammed together, were forced under my chin, then I was bent forward to clasp my arms round my ankles. The long handle of a spade was pushed in between my arms and knees so that the feet could not slide out of the embrace. Both wrists were then crossed and fastened with a thin rope.

I could not make the slightest resistance. In silence, panting, Szlifka did the job with the skill lent by experience. I had been afraid that they would take off my gloves, made out of old stockings, but that they forgot. It was a stroke of luck—my hands would have frozen.

While I was being tied, I tensed every muscle, and took a deep breath, so that later on the pressure of my legs against my chest should not hinder my breathing.

Here my old experience with Egreskat came in useful. Ever since that time I had known that if I kept every muscle tensed when I was being bound, relaxing them later, then there would be room for the blood to circulate.

To miss the right second, to make one wrong movement, could mean death. One had to be on one's guard. I held my whole body tensed, but in such a way that nobody noticed it. If anybody pulled my arm, I let it go obediently. But when the cords were being tightened, I clenched my teeth and brought all my strength into play to swell my muscles as much as possible.

My tormenters tested the effectiveness of their work by raising me by both ends of the spade, swinging me to and fro once or twice and then letting me fall. I bumped onto the ground like a firmly-bound bundle of rags.

"Good," said Szlifka, "the parcel didn't burst, we can go."

I was left alone... But no. In front of me the three corpses on the cart stood out against the darkness.

When I relaxed my muscles, the pressure of my bonds was eased. It was like a patient taking the first deep breath after the operation. But the crisis comes later, the moment which decides for life or death.

In any case, the operation had been successful. Now there must be no complications.

When I was thrown down, I fell on my back. For a time I remained in this position, my face to the sky. When the cold of the snow penetrated through my clothes to my back, I would try to sit up.

The night sky was clear and cloudless. The stars sparkled like diamonds... Once upon a time I was sitting with my wife on a bench on the Margaretinsel. We looked up into the sky and sought out a star for ourselves. A lucky star. After a long time we at last found one which we could both see. We did not want the Great Bear, the Seven Sisters or the North Star, we chose ourselves a star which would be difficult for others to find, one which be-

longed only to us. My wife had just been dismissed from work—perhaps just because she had had no lucky star. But now, now everything would go the right way.

I looked for our star, but could not find it. How could that be? It always hung there a little to the right, south-east of the North Star... Perhaps at this moment my wife was also looking for it.

My back was cold. Time to sit up. No good letting my thoughts run away with me. The cold is very cunning! You can freeze before you know it. I wanted to rock my body, bound into the form of a wheel.

"Ready—go!" I gave myself the signal, but nothing came of it. "Now once more! Heave-ho! Done it!"

I had sat up. Fine! How much good this small movement did me.

When my seat got chilled through, then I would try to roll onto my left shoulder, and my right. It was like the old folk song: "From the right shoulder to the left she moves her curly head..." Whoever made up this song had certainly never imagined a case like this.

How much time had passed? Again hunger began to make itself felt: for a long time I had not even thought about food. But how quickly my seat began to freeze! I would have to look out for the most important thing of all! A chill in the intestines could lead to intestinal catarrh.

How strange to think that people take Epsom salts at home and all sorts of other aperients... Here, the less we went to the latrine the better we were pleased. So upside down was the world in which we were living. Or was it perhaps the world at home that was upside down?

It would be good to know how it looked, that world over there—half-right from me, about ten kilometres away... Saly... Saly, if you don't manage to get there, then it'll serve you right if you go under!..

I held my breath and tensed my muscles... in this way I wanted to preserve and quicken my circulation, otherwise I might sleep. I moved my fists from the wrists, moved every joint that could be moved. I was already freezing cold. Or perhaps it was not the cold, but all my limbs getting numb.

I rolled from side to side and threw myself about on the hard frozen snow as though in an epileptic fit. To get some movement in my face, I blew out my cheeks. The skin was completely numb.

How long had I still to wait? Had anybody at all made a note of the time? Fodor would certainly worry about me.... I had to stop my efforts and rest. I no longer felt the cold, but hands, feet, seat, ears, face and nose were completely numb.

Only the breath still lived in me. Nothing pained me any more. So this is how it is... when a man freezes. Thus, in the stiffened body, sleep glides painlessly over into death. Thus... I would end. I had lived for thirty-two years, and for a short time had known happiness... And if I had to die anyhow... then... let it come.

But then, what about Toronyi, and Senior Lieutenant Nemeti, Szlifka, Janosi? No, that should never be! I must not let them live on peacefully into the sixties. They'd go back home, grow a fine corporation, dandle their grandchildren on their knee and tell them... what would they tell them? That they had killed Jews by the thousand? No fear! These cowardly bastards, these... They would betray their best friends, slander them, to shake off the traces of their own crimes... Hahaha!.. I had to laugh... Let them blacken each other... Let them deny everything, thinking that none of the victims were left to testify against them... Hahaha!.. Here is Saly... Saly is here, he isn't dead... Well, my dear Senior Lieutenant Nemeti, did I make good dung? Senior Lieutenant Murai, my dear fellow, how was it with the mathematics of torture?

Now, now... I mustn't start letting my thoughts run away with me, or I may really dream myself over into the next world. Look, here you've sat yourself up without feeling anything of it. I had no sensation of sitting ... Strange ... how do I come to be in the Forum Cinema?.. Of course, of course ... there they have wonderfully soft upholstered seats ... Perhaps at this very moment a well-dressed gentleman with a monocle is arguing with the girl in the ticket office because she did not lay aside the ticket for which he telephoned, and now he cannot have his favourite place. What would you say to my place, dear sir... if... if... I go home, I shall have my office chair well upholstered... A pity that I never troubled about such things before.

The wind lashed my face with dry snow. I licked it off, I opened my mouth so that a little might blow into my parched throat. I was thirsty... hungry... How much longer must I sit here?.. Nowhere was there a ray of light to be seen ... Only snow, snow everywhere, and the stars, and these three dead men. A light winked to the left ... The surroundings here were not so unfriendly...

Weariness weighed my eyes with slumber. The stiffened limbs pained me, there was a fever in my nerves.

I rolled over onto my left side and thus achieved a little movement to prevent the circulation from stopping. I flung myself here and there on the ground as one shakes a watch that has stopped to set it going again.

The cold is horrible. This cold freezes everything in the world ... Can this terrible cold ever be thawed?.. Used it ever to be so cold? At home, when the fire crackled in the stove? And how is it there now ... or is there no more heat at home? In vain Lilly huddles by the stove... No wood, no coal ... Perhaps ... perhaps if now, just as I am ... I could jump into the room to her ... through the ceiling ... how I would frighten her, poor girl! No, she would not be frightened by my lice!

And I have got some again!.. Little Lilly would be sad because she couldn't even offer a cup of tea to her frozen husband, returned from his long journey ... Poor dear!..

My fingers and toes had become quite stiff. In a frenzy I tried to move them ... It was as though I were pressing the bones against a cushion. My nose was running ... And I hadn't a cold. I could not wipe my nose. And more and more often my wind-inflamed eyelids began to close.

I rubbed my face on my knees. Let it hurt, better that than to lose all feeling! The dead also feel nothing. Oh!.. I can't stand it any longer ... Sleep ... sleep ... No, God shall punish this world ... I will go on living in it ... no, no, I shan't sleep! I will not sleep. I must think ... But not doze, that's how one freezes. think, stay awake, keep on the alert, keep the blood vessels of the brain working! Then I shall not sleep!

I could feel the beating of my heart in my very ears, inside the eardrums. It sounded like a locomotive standing on a station, when the steam comes out in even lazy puffs ... For some minutes the howling of the wind would die down. In those moments the silence was oppressive like a weight. A cowardly person alone in the dead silence begins to whistle or to sing.

I gnashed my teeth and looked at the three dead men. The hand of one was clenched into a fist... They were so quiet... The second seemed to be laughing silently ... Perhaps I just imagined it? I could only see the half of his face, and that not clearly, because he lay in the shadow of the tiird ... The snow was frozen to their skins. Three naked snowmen! If ever I have children I shall never make them a snowman. Hahaha! Snow and ice-phobia! Sun-phobia I had already got. How many aspects of nature had become repulsive to me! And I had also a horror of people. Horror, horror, horror...

I pushed my lower jaw forward and blew up onto my nose. How pleasant the slight warmth was! Now I realized that the cold, slimy liquid which had so worried me before had trickled from my nose into my mouth. I immediately felt sick and spat out in disgust. Saly, Saly, there are some habits you still have not lost that are simply ridiculous in this terrible situation. Would you still object to drinking out of a glass somebody else had used? Perhaps I would ... You're not a normal lad. Yes, yes, you are not normal. Any more than life is, life today... but if I am like life, then I must be normal...

I tried to wriggle out of the bonds. I tore at them. I threw myself about on the white ground. The snow crunched under me. It crunched as though trying to drown the chattering of my teeth. I would like to flog Szlifka with an iron bar a hundred degrees below freezing point ... What next?.. Would these two hours never end? A hundred and twenty minutes?... Seven thousand two hundred seconds?..

Oh, I can't stand any more!.. Yes ... yes ... you must! You ... must—stick it! They won't get me down! The devil take that monocled toff in the Forum Cinema ... How insolent he is! Still railing at the girl in the ticket office because he's got a bad place ... Well, I'll put him ... in a real cool place like this one ... But for that matter ... this cold isn't so bad after all ... Here one isn't tormented by the mosquitoes as one is in summer. I couldn't stand that now!.. What's worse—ice or the glowing sun? Are they equally bad? Either can kill. Too much of anything always brings bad results. It seems to me that money's the only thing of which it's good to have a great deal ... Suppose I had had plenty of money, perhaps I might not be sitting here, but at home, with a real Christian certificate of baptism ... watching this world conflagration from its safe shelter.

My ear... my ear... I had quite forgotten my ear. It was as though I had none. After some time one ceased to feel hunger too. The stomach hurts only until it has shrunk like a burst football. Then the body feeds upon itself. The result is that the bowels move only once a week... Poor König, he would have been out of work now if he were still alive. Carrying out the bucket was no longer profitable... Now the whole dugout has become one bucket... Oh, how good it would be now to smell a little of that fine warm stench... When it stinks it is not so cold... My ear seems to be frozen... but the eardrum... it's as though some infernal machine were knocking away in my head. My heart ticks impatiently through the eardrum to my brain. Tick-tack, tick-tack. It may explode at any moment. Then at least it will all be over!..

I hear a roaring, rattling noise... what is that?.. Pah, can it be myself making such a horrible noise?.. Startled, I began moving my cheeks. It would be a pity for my young skin to freeze, that would mean that it would rot... It is a real miracle that up to now I have no scurvy. In general, a good many miracles have happened to me... miracle... miracle...

"Get up!" I suddenly shouted at myself. Then I laughed at the joke. Such miracles don't happen! That a man tied in a buck could get to his feet alone...

The two hours must certainly be past now. No, no. though. Fodor is not the man to forget me. He will be watching the clock.

Every now and then I started up like a sleepy listener at a boring lecture... but it did not help me. Again I would sink into a doze, perhaps I was already asleep, but it is possible that my head had just sunk in that moment, when a hand shook me awake.

"I thought that you were giving a silent salute too," I heard Corporal Fodor's voice beside me.

"Not yet," I said, "I had just... just nodded a little. What was it I wanted to say... Corporal, how much longer must I stay here?"

"Not much more, about ten minutes."

Ten minutes more! I must count to another six hundred. But... if one of my limbs is already dead?.. I don't know, I am chilled through and through like the ground. My face is swollen. The great swellings on the cheekbones almost touch my eyebrows. I can hardly see... My eyes are swollen too. What is that law of physics? Bodies expand in the warmth and shrink in the cold? Or have I got it wrong? But if I am right, why is it that frozen parts of the body swell and expand? Or is the human body outside the law of physics? Are they only relative, like everything in the world?

Perhaps the skin on my cheeks has contracted, and it only feels as though they were swollen. Well, anyway, the skin of my cheeks is thick enough now. If anybody strikes me I shall not even feel it.

Ridiculous, the silly things that come into one's head. Who would ever strike me? Who would soil his hands on me?

"Well, we'll begin getting the ropes off. By the time I finish, the two hours will be just up," said Fodor now.

He began fumbling about with my ropes, but could not make anything of them. Szlifka had knotted them together firmly, and the frost had made them as hard as fine steel.

Had I also turned to steel? The fine, powdery snow seeped down my neck under the opened collar of my windproof jacket, penetrated to the skin and froze there. That roused my lice from their peace. Well, let them freeze a bit too. Let them have their share of the war... They don't need to live like those at home, who sit in warm rooms, read the war reports, eat sausage and drink red wine... those... those lice.

Poor Fodor could not make anything of my ropes and at last lost his temper with them. He took out his knife and tackled the steel cord with it... He worked with desperate speed, as though cutting down a hanged man. In this way he thought to shorten my sufferings. But the seconds he wanted to give me were no use... I blinked at him gratefully.

Fodor was even careful not to cut me with the knife. Perhaps it would not have been such a bad thing. I could at least have found out if there was still life in my hand. I think it would hardly have hurt me. After all, the nail that one cuts off does not hurt.

I felt nothing when the ropes fell from my hands. He had already drawn out the spade. I had collapsed still further without even noticing it. My arms fell limply onto the snow, as though dead. My head sagged forward. My flattened nose struck my knees. Now large quantities of slime shot into my open mouth.

Fodor pulled me up from the ground. I collapsed again. I stretched myself out full length and crawled on my stomach like a whimpering dog. I bit into the hard-trampled snow, stuffed my mouth full with it. The cold did me good. My senses almost left me in rapture as the snow glided through my throat... into my stomach. It was wonderfully refreshing.

Slowly I came to myself. I began to throw myself about on the ground. Fodor was already thinking that I had gone mad. Tears were running down my face although I was not weeping. How much liquid the human body holds...

With Fodor's help I got to my feet. I leaned upon him, stood on one leg and beat the air with the other. True enough, Fodor gave me a couple of good blows. But they were not those kind of blows... These were different; the good fellow was beating the life back into me.

The morning concert with which the guards drove us from the dugout jerked me out of a heavy, dreamless sleep. I felt absolutely at the end of my tether. Dressing took little time, since I had taken off only my jacket and trousers the night before. My icy clothes had become a little warmer. When I stood up, on my frozen feet, a sharp, piercing pain shot through me, as though I had stepped upon a thousand needles. There were no blisters on my hands, but they were badly swollen.

Dressing always brought with it a goodly portion of blows, and on this day my back received its share. I flinched at the first, but the second was less painful. That's how things always are in life. It's just a matter of practice. There were only fifteen of us who fell in. The others—Almasi, Flachbein, Polgar, Engel (I cannot remember the rest, but there were ten of them) had remained in the dugout

During the past few days the company had been split up. Four men chopped wood, four others buried the dead, watered the horses and cleared snow. The remaining seven—Berkovicz, Barta, Berger, Friedmann, Grunwald, Spuller and myself were sent on outside work. We were issued coffee. It was the 6th of December. Surely St. Nicholas could at least have brought us a piece of sugar[1]. But he had evidently forgotten all about us. Our supper was given us together with breakfast—a hundred grams of boiled horsemeat and the usual bread ration of two hundred and fifty grams.

I packed the bread and meat away. They would not spoil, my pockets were cold enough, and they would come in very useful later on. I had made up my mind to a very big undertaking for that evening.

In the office, Fabian came up to us. With him was a lean sapper.

"These are the ones," Fabian said to his companion. "Seven of the cattle—there aren't any more. It doesn't matter about keeping an account of them."

Pista was standing beside the kitchen. There was a suspicious gleam in his warm

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[1] In Central-European countries on December 6th. St. Nicholas Day, presents are exchanged.

brown eyes, like those of a friendly dog, and he looked at me very sorrowfully. Tears came into my own eyes.

"Forward—march!" came the command in broken Hungarian from the German sapper.

We marched off without any tools. What did they intend to do with us? Before we disappeared behind the house, I turned and looked back. Pista was still standing motionless on the same spot, looking after me. How good it would have been if he could have come too! But he could not join us.

Being first in line, I was walking directly behind the sapper. On the village square I ventured a question:

"Where are we going, Herr Sapper?"

He turned and measured me with a disparaging glance, then replied:

"To the front line positions."

I could not believe my ears. To the front line? Spuller was following me.

"Did he really say: 'To the front line positions'?" I asked.

"Yes," replied Spuller, "that was what he said."

I trembled with joy. My heart beat faster, pumping warm red life into my organism, which was already working far from smoothly. A wave of fresh hope surged through me, my self-confidence returned. I was born under a lucky star sure enough, there could be no doubt about that! I took two or three dance steps.

"What's up, what's got into you? Are you getting bats in the belfry too?" asked Spuller in amazement.

The dazzling white, frost-bound landscape was like a storm-tossed sea of milk that had suddenly congealed. At the edge of the village I turned round once more to curse that hell that had swallowed my company. The little wooden houses, now buried deep in snow, looking like dog kennels, formed a rectangle. A tall double cross reared up in the centre of the village. It looked like a gallows hungry for prey. Opposite it lay the Heroes' Cemetery. Only the tops of the straight, military-looking crosses could be seen over the surface of the snow. The whole village was like one big grave, not yet completely filled in...

We reached the front line. It appeared suddenly behind the hummocks of snow. I looked around me. The other side of No Man's Land, somewhere... invisible in the snowy plain... lived the Russians. If I didn't get over to them that day, it would be the end of me... In the evening Szlifka would tie me up again.

In some places the trenches were filled with snow up to the top.

The listening posts were in front of the trenches, forty to fifty metres from each other. The sentries there had rifles, machine-guns or automatic pistols. They looked at us dully, wearily, as we trotted by them. It was these tired, inert, hungry men who were guarding the gallows-order of the "New Europe" against the Red Army.

We were taken to a machine-gun unit which had been assigned to the battalion. A platoon commander was in charge, and he distributed the work. Each of us was to clear the snow from a fifty metres stretch of trench.

"You can go when the work is finished," said the platoon commander, "and not before."

While shovelling snow, I kept stealing glances over towards the Soviet positions—as cautiously as possible, so that the sentries should not notice it. I must get over there. I would get over there. But at night—no good trying it now. Now I would have to work, slowly but continuously. I mustn't rest. Devil take it. I had not thought that this work would be so hard. The top layer of snow was light and easy to shovel away, but underneath, it was frozen, hard-trampled. To break through the hard icy crust crowbars were necessary, but we had none. With my spade I could break out only small wedges.

The snow also covered a minefield which stretched out drearily before the barbed wire. Through this field I would have to make my way. But I might be shot down before I ever got so far. When I had crawled over the barbed wire, I should have to jump down. Perhaps I would fall plump onto a mine! Then—then the murderers would escape their punishment. There would be no witness to their crime. That would be too bad.

A crouching soldier came in my direction. He was carrying a bucket which emitted an enticing smell of bean soup. My mouth watered, my head swam with hunger.

The front was dormant. There was just a single, deep rumble every half-hour—the Germans sending their packets over our heads from Greshchiki to the Red positions. Nothing but this rumble showed that here two worlds were engaged in a life-and-death struggle. That world over there, which the preservers of the old order kept hermetically closed against us, was shrouded in deepest silence. They did not even reply to the rumble. It did not trouble them in the least.

What was life like over there? What men were these who defended themselves so staunchly? Leningrad, ringed in by the savage hordes, was still fighting, in spite of everything, after a year and a half of it. And the way our glorious allies had been sent staggering back from Moscow!..

When my spade struck a particularly hard layer of ice, it bent. It was only of thin iron, there was very little steel to be had. In this war, material played a decisive part... Here I was, letting my thoughts run away with me again.

Work, nothing but work! I must switch off my thoughts like an electric light.

By dusk, I had cleared five metres at most. The sapper had been sitting the whole time in the platoon leader's dugout. If we ever paused for a moment, the sentries would shout:

"Get on with your work, you dog!"

One of them, more good-natured than the others, called to us:

"Try and look as though you were working, at least; the platoon commander's a tartar."

But the platoon commander never put in an appearance.

"He spends the whole day playing cards," remarked a Honved.

It was already getting dark when our sapper emerged from the dugout. He walked past me; I called after him:

"Herr Sapper, where are you going? Are you going to leave us behind here?"

"Hold your tongue! None of your bloody business where I'm going! Work till you croak!" And with that he went his way.

...A sentry standing near me suddenly bawled:

"Heh, you bastard, what d'ye keep peering over at the Russians for? Don't think you're going to bolt... Get over here with you, you can shovel snow here near me. And if you try a step over there..."—he jerked his head towards the Russian positions—"I'll shoot you down like a mad dog."

"But no, Herr Honved, I'm not thinking of bolting. I want to get home," I soothed the anxious patriot.

Spuller was shovelling to my right, but the zigzag twists of the trench concealed him and the other comrades. To my left there were only the sentries.

Suddenly Spuller appeared at the curve. He beckoned to me, but I pretended not to notice him, for my sentry never took his eye off me. I whistled softly pretending to the best of good humour, a carefree frame of mind like a man supremely contented with the world. Spuller understood that I dared not take notice of him, and gave his full attention to his work.

A sergeant-major led the relief to the trenches. The new sentries were wearing top-boots and leather coats, the whole topped by tarpaulin sheets over their heads.

It was a glorious, clear winter evening. I felt a deep, inexplicable calm. Was it true, as I had so often heard, that the winter nights on the Don are more beautiful than anywhere else? Was it true that nowhere in the world is the snow so white, nowhere have the stars such magic, as on the endless Russian winter landscape?

The new sentry had evidently been warned by the previous one, for he watched me even more sharply.

We wouldn't manage it! It was not the Russians they were watching, but us, to see that we didn't go over... that we didn't smuggle out any of their jealously treasured civilization...

For them, culture meant killing those indicated by their lords and masters. How the bastard watched me! As though his salvation depended upon my not fleeing...

It was already late in the evening when Spuller worked his way to me. He said that Berkovicz was working next to him... He paused, looked at me for a long time, then jerked out hastily:

"Saly, let's go over. Berkovicz wants to try it, too. Are you on?"

"I'm coming, of course I'm coming, but it's no good trying it now. We must pick our moment."

"Say... this evening... this evening, man. We'll never have such a chance again..."

Breathless, desperately, Spuller began to urge me, persuade me.

"Don't be afraid," he began again. "You'll see, they won't hurt a hair of our heads over there. If you don't find work at once, I'll keep you. I've got my profession. I'll work for you until you get fixed up."

"Thanks, old boy, but I'll be able to keep myself. But you must be careful until we get over. I'll look out for the right moment and tell you; it's no good trying it right now."

Spuller left me. I had finished my fifty metres and wanted to return to the place from which I had started, but the sentry shouted:

"Stop here! Work here! If you try any tricks, I'll riddle your stinking hide for you!"

I tried to dig myself into the snow as fast as possible. Angrily I thrust my spade into the hard crust. But it was as though I were striking it on hard-frozen ice. The sentry bawled at me:

"Don't make such a racket here. The Reds'll hear you."

I continued working more quietly. Now the Honved proceeded to commit a gross breach of regulations. He bent down and under cover of his tarpaulin lighted himself a cigarette.

The listening post! In the front line position... From beneath the tarpaulin the glowing spark waxed and waned. The smell of it came over to me, my lungs ached for it. The Honved drew in deep lungfuls, every now and then squinting over in my direction from under the tarpaulin.

Look at that! The cigarette-smoking Honved had been relieved without my eyes noticing it... I had dug myself so deep into the icy snow that I could no longer feel the wind whistling over my head. It dusted me with powdery snow which fell like a veil gradually covering the stretch which I had already cleared. I was very glad to see it. That meant that I could begin my work anew and need not leave this sheltered spot.

I felt no particular hunger or weariness, although I had been almost twenty-four hours on my feet. And the whole time in the open—in ice and snow, without a bite to eat!

The sentries had been changed at least six times. Engrossed in my work, I had forgotten to count them... I had already cleared a very long stretch. A shame—now I would have to leave this fine corner. And I was bitterly cold. My wind-proof jacket, stiff with ice, rattled as though made of lead. Even the sole of my left boot was coming off, and the new-fallen,

powdery snow was seeping in from all sides. I fastened it on with a piece of string.

But where were Spuller and the others? Had they found a sheltered spot too? For the present I worked on the trench walls, smoothing them out, so that the sentry would not drive me away. I looked for work like a shop assistant with no customers to serve.

What was that?.. Was it the dawn already?.. From time to time the sentry looked over in my direction, and I immediately began working on the snow wall... I made a great pretence of working... The deep organ-tone of the wind was swelling, waxing. I huddled in my corner. The trench made a right angle at that point.

"Hey, you!" called the sentry. "What d'ye think you're doing there? Come on nearer. Here, shovel the snow away from me round here."

I gnashed my teeth in helpless rage. I had had a sudden urge to go to Spuller... But now I myself had made the sentry mistrustful.

A couple of minutes later the relief came.

"Herr Honved, how late is it?" I asked, trying to establish a comfortable tone.

"What's that to do with you?" he replied gruffly, in a German accent, and looked at me with sleepy eyes.

Devil take it! Did they have nothing but Germans in this sector?

One again I cleared my stretch. The sentry was hardly troubling himself about me at all. Slowly, carefully, I made my way along the trench.

I had been on my feet for more than twenty-four hours. How much longer would I be able to hold out? Would I be able to stand it? I still felt fairly fresh. But it would be good to relax for a little. I closed my eyes. To sleep! Ah! How good that would be! Even standing, like this... How much longer would my strength hold out? Another twenty-four hours?.. Perhaps I could stand it for that period... At any rate, it was plain that there was no chance of escaping during the night. The sentries were too much on the alert. I would have to try it during the day.

So that meant—wait. Wait patiently like a hunter at his post. It was worth it. The prize was a high one—life!

I cleared the way in Spuller's direction. It was only now, when I was moving somewhat more quickly, that I noticed how stiff and numb my feet were with the cold. My clothes literally rattled upon me. How would I be able to flee? I would have to run like lightning, race as far as the barbed wire, or else... and then I would have to hurdle over those wonderful rolls of barbed wire that we had set up there in battle array.

The whole distance would be fifty-six to sixty metres. How long would that take?.. In my present condition?.. I should certainly need fifteen seconds, if not more. Usually an average runner would take nine at most and a first-class sprinter not more than six. In that time a machine-gun can fire fifty bullets. Fifty pieces of lead... For me that is a lot!.. Far too much!..

Where the devil had Spuller hidden himself?

I had already passed a second sentry. I had shouldered my spade as though on my way to my stretch... Nobody took any notice of me. They only watched to see that we did not flee. I was already passing the third sentry... He did not even ask me what I was doing here, although the trench was quite clear of snow.

Deep silence reigned. There was not even a rifle shot to be heard. Only the wind howled indefatigably. Beyond Berkovicz' section Spuller appeared at a curve, with Berkovicz staggering after him. They swayed like two scarecrows left on the field to the mercy of the winds. There was so much misery in their eyes, so much pain in their faces... The very sight staggered me. Their faces were quite paralysed, the facial nerves had ceased to work. Only their eyes still lived.

"What's the matter, lads?"

"Nothing," replied Spuller.

"What are you looking like that for, then?"

"What? And what do you think you look like? Do you think you're looking any different?"

A man may buy a suit, wear it every day and then suddenly discover that it has become quite shabby, that he cannot possibly wear it any more. But if anybody else had been wearing it, he would have seen long ago how worn it was. Was I like that?.. I passed my hand over my face. Bristles pricked it. The skin was icy-cold and lifeless.

Horrified, I began rubbing my face, making all kinds of grimaces.

"How about the others?" I asked Spuller.

Had the wind carried my words away, or had Spuller gone dumb? I had to repeat the question.

"They're well off now," said Spuller softly. "They're frozen, all of them."

"Yes? All of them?"

I was not surprised; I was not even surprised that we were still alive. If anybody could call it living... anybody whom the wind swept in here from Life. Suppose a photographer turned his lens upon us and then unrolled his film on the screen: would the audience take us for living men?.. For that matter, it would not be a bad thing, that kind of immortalization.

We stood there staring dully at each other.

This length of the trench had not been very well cleaned. Berger had been working here. His body was lying in front of the trench, already partly covered with snow. Spuller and Berkovicz had had a hard job with him. One of them had pushed from beneath while the other pulled from above, but Berger's corpse kept insistently slipping back again into the wind-sheltered spot.

Our other three comrades were also lying in front of the trench.

"Barta's spade was frozen into his hand, we had to break it out," Spuller told me.

Berkovicz breathed deeply and snorted.

Strange! Would the families never come to know what had happened to their sons, husbands, and fathers? They would receive a bare notice of death. That would be all! They would never learn how their men had died. That... that could be borne. But was Lieutenant Toronyi to be allowed to continue going to the cafés? Flirting with girls and eating delicate food? That was not to be endured!.. That... that could drive a man to a frenzy! And would Szlifka return merrily home after the war? And Janosi go on peacefully weighing sausages in his shop in the Nepszinhaz Street?...

No... No, by God, that must not be. No, that... that I, I... I would never allow. Even if a bullet got me, though I be blind or a cripple, still I would escape.

"Yes! Yes!" I shouted and seized Spuller by the coat.

My poor comrade never flinched. He thought I had gone mad. I was gnashing my teeth...

"Don't be angry," I began, "I was thinking what would be left of my revenge if I was shot while escaping... Do you know what revenge is? It is something dearer than the memory of mother... wife... father..."

"All right, all right, but first of all we've got to get away," growled Spuller grimly.

I pulled myself together, I began to examine the surroundings. Here the wind had drifted the cleared stretch up again, and it would not be at all difficult to jump out of the trench.

Deep silence reigned all around. Now... now was the time to make the attempt. Our sentries were quite unsuspicious. They could never imagine that we would venture out upon the white snow in broad daylight! For any figure on that surface would stand out like a black cat on a white tablecloth.

Each sentry guarded only one definite stretch for which he was responsible. In the interests of safety, these lines often crossed, and some sections were under double guard. The lines of sight of two pairs of eyes would cross each other. It never entered the sentries heads that we might flee.

At this moment the bowed figure of a soldier approached.

"Make a show of work, boys," I whispered.

After some time an N.C.O. in a leather coat passed us. We pressed ourselves respectfully to the trench walls so as to give him room to pass without touching us. He glanced at us indifferently and disappeared swiftly round the bend.

My heart was beating as though it would choke me. Suppose I had not noticed him, suppose we had just been climbing out in the instant when he came... he had a tommy-gun with him. Trrr... and that would have been the end of it!

Berkovicz thought we should wait until dinner was brought up to the trenches. After that things would quieten down again.

"Good," I agreed. "And until then I'll take a good look over the whole place, to see where the line of barbed wire comes closest to the trenches and where we can get out the easiest... Everything will depend on ten seconds... But until then we'll have to be doing something, we can't just stand around, we must keep moving or we shall go to sleep!"

I went to search out the best spot for our attempt, a place where we could get out of the trench easily. I tried the directions from which Spuller and Berkovicz had come. I did not know that stretch. The sentry had drawn a tarpaulin over his head. He was looking neither right nor left, but straight ahead.

Who had been working here? Barta? I searched for his corpse, but could not find it. Only in the late spring, perhaps in May, would it emerge, when the snow melted. But before that, another two-metre layer of snow would cover it. Then at any rate the wind could not touch it.

A forward curve of trench offered a splendid starting point for our flight. It was filled with snow almost up to the top. There would be no need to climb out, a good step would do it. The barbed wire, too, seemed to be closer, a couple of leaps would take one there. From here, we could run into life with one single breath.

But we had to wait till dinner time. The soldier is impatient when he is hungry, he is continuously looking for the relief who will call him to dinner, and for that reason he watches the region around.

The boys were staring over towards the Soviet positions. They did not even start when I appeared beside them.

"Come on, lads, show a bit of movement!"

Slowly, slowly, we shovelled snow, while I explained to them just why the place I had found was so good, and why we must wait until dinner time. Then we all three fell silent. But nobody could stand the quiet for long, and we began taking leave of each other. Each of us sent a greeting home through the others... home... we knew that our undertaking was the equivalent of suicide. But if it came off, it meant life. We were attempting suicide in order to save our lives.

A soldier passed us. He was carrying two buckets; steam was rising from them although they were tightly closed. He was headed in the direction from which we wanted to make our attempt. We waited until he had disappeared beyond a bend. Then we started. I went first, Spuller following me, and last of all Berkovicz. Beside the sentry we stooped and I asked:

"How late is it, Herr Honved?"

"Half past one," he replied without casting a glance at us, and not in the least

interested to know where we were going and why we wanted to know the time.

Everything went much more smoothly than we had expected. With spades shouldered, sinking into the snow to our middle, we moved forward.

We reached the place I had chosen.

"Wait here for me," I told them, "I'll be back in a moment."

I went on until I could see the next sentry, and noted the intervals at which he looked right and left. The man knew the regulations. The other sentry had not troubled himself in the least about observation rules and looked straight ahead. This one, however, looked right and left every half minute.

Bad, bad! But... we'd have to risk it.

I went back to the boys.

"Well, lads, I'll just take another look at the other sentry."

Swiftly, excited, I went forward, but always under cover. For a second the thought struck me that I might creep softly up behind the man and bring my spade down on his head with all my strength. But I rejected the idea at once, for the blow might not be effective and then... all would be lost.

At the curve I stopped and stood, watching. The sentry was still standing there, looking straight forward. He turned his eyes neither right nor left, but stared directly ahead. I hurried back. There were fifty metres between the two sentries and the lads were exactly in the middle... That was good... Very good... Well, then... off!

Every fibre of my body, even my voice, was trembling as I said:

"Well, lads, if you want... if you've made up your minds, then we can do it now, we've got to do it now and not a second later... set off..."

"We're ready," they said in one breath.

"Let's settle who goes first," I said. "But... we must consider it well, because the first one is the one they're most likely to fire at."

"You've been in the army," said Spuller. "You were an officer... so you're the one who should take the lead."

"Good, I'll take the lead."

And suddenly I felt a great calm, such as I did not remember for a long time.

"Then I'll give the word," I said curtly. "Ready... after me... hard as you can... go!"

A wave of heat enveloped my whole body, the blood streamed to my brain. As though shot up on a geyser, my wife's face appeared before my eyes, the picture of my aged father flickered past me... I sprang out of the trench. Hoarsely but softly I called back: "Quick! Quick!"

Now I heard and saw nothing more. I only ran. A wild strength such as I had never known drove me on. In front the barbed wire rose... Climb it? No, no! I hurled myself over it! My wife, my future, my life, all lent their force to that spring. Up!.. and I was flying through the air. The barbed wire was behind me.

I plumped down into the snow splayed out like a frog. In the moment of my fall I heard the rattle of a machine-gun. I pressed myself to the ground and swallowed snow to cool myself down. Automatic pistols joined the machine-gun. Over me, around me the bullets whistled, hitting the frozen crust of snow with a kind of ticking noise.

Was I wounded? My body was insensitive, dead to all feeling, but... I was still hot from the flight. Even if a bullet had struck me, I would not feel it. Later on... The wind whistled over me furiously, bullets hailed down. Man with his murderous weapons and the forces of nature were together undertaking the pursuit of the fugitive with his millions of lice and sickening stench of filth.

Tears ran down my face, I could not stop them.

Were they the tears of the flight? Or the tears of death? The first great danger was already behind me.

The machine-gun fell silent. Cautiously I turned my head, then raised it. A puff of wind caught up the snow and swirled it in a cloud towards the Hungarian positions. That was good, it made me invisible. I rose to my full height and looked back. Where were my comrades?.. I looked to the right—nobody! I looked to the left... and like a little child I began to sob, and then broke out crying. The poor fellows, those poor fellows! One of them was hanging head downwards from the barbed wire, almost up to the hips in snow... He was on the near side of the wire... The other lay on his face, along the top of it... His head was hanging down like a broken twig. His cap had rolled off somewhere. The wind had sprinkled his head with snow, he looked as though he had gone grey. The poor fellows! How much lead must have been pumped into them! My share, too. Evidently they had not had the strength to take the wire in a spring, and death had overtaken them when clambering over.

Alone, only I alone was left!

I was lying in a small trough, a little dead valley. Before me stretched the minefield. If I stumbled over a mine, I would be blown to a thousand pieces. I needed a stick to feel my way forward.

I attacked the snow, dug it out from under me like a hunting dog. I was looking for sunflower stalks. But my hand found only ice.

Feeling my way forward with outstretched arms I crawled carefully on through the snow. I knew that there were contact mines hereabouts. That's a dangerous thing, a revolting packet! Oh, if only none of them exploded! It would tear me to fragments and then... then I would simply have disappeared. Nobody at home would ever learn what had become of me. Little Lilly, think of me now with every fibre of your being, there in the warm room!

That is, if you still have a warm room. Drink a cup of hot, strong tea for me if you have any. Poor little Lillychen...

Slowly, endlessly slowly, I crawled forward... My hand struck something hard. I snatched it back. The frost burned my fingers. I blew upon them, then lay full length on my back and beat my elbows together. I raised myself a little, sat up and looked towards the Hungarian positions. My crawling had left a long trench. The snow would soon fill it up... The wind whipped it up, hiding the view. Every now and then there would be a few seconds' lull in the storm. Then the Hungarian positions would appear behind me... I had already left the barbed wire fifty paces behind, but right and left it bellied forward like two wings. It was as though some gigantic skeleton were stretching out its arms to seize me.

With both hands I dug into the snow, turned my face forwards and drew my prone body after me. In this way I pulled myself about half a metre forwards. I repeated this ten and twenty times.

I looked back. The wind was raging, and a thick snowfall covered and concealed me. And how long, how long the trench already was that my passage had left! Like a mole I burrowed further through the snow.

Over small hillocks and large, long ones and round ones I crawled. What did they conceal? Guns, arms abandoned in retreat? Corpses? That would be seen only in the spring. But mines?.. Strange... mines... There were none anywhere. Perhaps our brave German sappers had been afraid to lay the mines... and had simply reported that the minefield was ready... Or had I simply been lucky, was the minefield behind me?

Fear seized upon me again. Perhaps I had lost my way, had crawled along beside the minefield and was now making for the forward curve of the barbed wire in front of the Hungarian positions? Then that would be the end, utterly and finally... Then I would go under! But no... Then I would never take part in that one and only play for which it was worth enduring and suffering. Just this one, particular picture I wanted to see.

A semi-circular, gigantic amphitheatre... Just where... In Nagykata?.. in Budapest?.. On the Generalwiese in Buda?.. The surface is of sand. And up to the neck in sand are buried Szlifka, Senior Lieutenants Toronyi and Nemeti, and the whole Honved general staff... headed by the old seaman Horthy's government... And on the tribune, the families of my murdered comrades.

In my hand I hold a list of the company. One by one I read the names. So many names, so many kilograms of ants... Beautiful little poisonous red ants... A kilogram... Ants, that bite, pinch, sting... They eat everything clean, right to the bone... the flesh... the muscles. But not all at once! Hoho!.. We don't let them off so cheaply! When they have been gnawed a little while... a bucket of water over them... I... myself.. pour a bucketful over every head... just as the old song says! Every morning I poured hot water over her...

After the ants, lice. A handful of good, pure-blooded super-lice of highest race... I would get the lice out of the sack for them. They wouldn't hurt me. They have already sucked me dry... I carry them on me, I carry them in me. Multitudes of them. Increase and multiply, my friends. Spawn all you will... Now you can eat, glut yourselves, you shall stay alive as witnesses to that world which has made you... which I am now leaving.

In the tribune there will be telescopes in front of every father, mother and wife. Let them watch the banquet of the lice which come from their murdered relatives. Splendid! Glorious! I will have this scene filmed. I shall get a cinema projector and run it through every morning and evening. Slow motion. It will be my prayer, my morning and evening prayer. I shall invite my friends... to this Mass...

I looked back again. I had come at least a hundred metres. Now I was sure that I had not taken the wrong direction, for the track I had left ran at right angles to the line of barbed wire.

I had to rest for a little while. My eyes were burning. The wind blew the frozen snow-flakes into my face. They cut like fine quartz sand. I lay down on my stomach, put my face on my arms and breathed deeply.

Horrified, I jerked my head up... I was beginning to doze... Lashed by fear, I crawled swiftly on. I had no more fear of mines. They would not be so far forward. I was evidently either through them or past them, I do not know which, but by this time they were certainly no more there.

Darkness was beginning to fall. It had been half past one when I had made my dash for the barbed wire.... By this time it must be half past three. Now a new danger threatened me. In the dusk, the Russians might fire at me. They might take me for an enemy. And it was a friend coming to them, a friend seeking protection, one who hated those from whom he fled even more than they did. And the Russians hate them! They have done the same to the Russians as to me... That hill of corpses... That hill formed of the bodies of women and children on which they placed the little old man... How many thousand such piles of Russian corpses have been heaped up by these brutes, more brutal than the beasts that are born to rend and tear?... There they stand, the Russians demanding vengeance for their mothers, fathers, children, their outraged sweethearts and sisters... Hoho!.. Saly, you've come to the right place. You will meet men who share your hatred. From their hatred and their vengeance you will draw a new stream of life.

But how far am I from them? Oh, how far it still is, how far!.. No Man's Land is supposed to be three or four hundred metres broad here. But in that case, I should already be able to see their positions. Only snow, far and wide... Rising and falling, as though waves were breaking on a sea of snow.

Suddenly a shot rang out. My head shot up, taking the upper part of my body with it... A shudder shook me, and I strained my eyes, trying to pierce the darkness... But what is this? Surely I haven't come upon the semi-circular forward thrust of the Hungarian positions? Well, if so... then it's all up!

I sprang up, ran forward a couple of steps and then flung myself down again full length... Then again...up... staggering, trying to force my way forward. I hurled myself against the storm. Stumbling... I wrestled with it.

I began to shout. I screamed into the wind... Something... If only I knew some Russian...I should find some words and not just bawl... But what?.. I knew no Russian... Brothers! Do not reject me, I am coming to you and know nothing of your language... Yes... I know... one word... one single one...

"Stalin!" I called out.

My throat seemed about to burst.

"Stalin!"

There was another word I knew:

"Atyuska!"[1]

I made just as much effort shouting as I had done when I had leaped the barbed wire.

"Stalin ... Atyuska ... Atyuska ... Stalin... Stalin!"

I fell.

I screamed "Stalin!", jumped up again and ran forward. The wind caught me and flung me to the ground... Raging, I pushed against it. It was defending the Soviet positions... against me too... Against me!

Staggering, I fell headlong. The hard ground slid from under my feet, I sank to the neck in snow, then suddenly sank into the depths. Somewhere down below I found my feet again and swam through the snow, flinging out my arms left and right. Here the snow was not frozen hard... it was soft, deep... It reached to my throat.

"Help!" I yelled. "Atyuska! Stalin!"

Nobody answered. Only the wind howled dismally. The darkness surrounded me, only the snow glistened blue.

Again I felt hard ground under my feet. Almost suffocated I stamped on it and threw myself up as though in a deep bog, so as not to sink. I writhed and wriggled myself further and further up, shouting and screaming with all the strength in me.

The ground became firmer under my feet, and began to rise gently.

Aha, now I understood, I had fallen into a tank trap.

Suddenly a crimson rocket soared up and sprayed out in the direction from which I had come. In such cases the Russians were in the habit of sending up rockets... Were the Russians behind me, then? In that case, I was making... for the Hungarian positions...

The end. I could not go on. I had no more strength. My poor body refused further service. For a day and a half I had starved and frozen. How had I been able to keep on until now? How many could have stood so much?.. My throat... my throat... hold out now. It still had strength, it still had...

"Stalin!" came shrilly from my poor throat.

"F-a-th-e-r!.."

Mortars crashed in the wind. A couple of machine-guns and pistols flamed out in the darkness.

Sobs shook me.

"Mother," I groaned, "Mother, don't leave me, help me..."

Half crazy, driven forward only by the stubborn will to live, I staggered on, fell onto my knees, crawled further, pulled myself forward.

"Stalin... help... help... Stalin!"

Weeping, howling, bawling, the sounds burst from me.

Suddenly fragments of words struck my ear:

"Syu—da! Syu—da!.. Daaa!"[1]

I let out a shout. Screaming, I staggered towards the voice. Rockets flared up... Barely two paces from me, two men in white camouflage suits loomed up.

Bawling, weeping for joy, I fell into the arms of the two Red Army men.

On December 7th, 1942, I fell headlong into life.

From the German by Eve Manning

[1] The Hungarian word "Atyuska" sounds similar to the Russian "Batyushka" (father).

[1] "Syuda"—"This way."

BORIS LAVRENYOV

CELEBRATION NIGHT

"Queer!" said the senior lieutenant and lowered his binoculars in disgust. He had been trying to discern the horizon, but in vain. On all sides hung a motionless grey curtain. Even the bows of the launch itself were barely visible from the bridge.

The sea was strangely still, with a silence that seemed somehow unreal, alarming. If it had been July, the senior lieutenant would not have been so troubled. But on the Black Sea in December, a dead calm like this was so unusual that the commander felt disturbed and uneasy. The silence seemed to absorb every sound—even the

accustomed, even beat of the engines and the hiss and chuckle of water at the stern.

Serov tore his eyes from the water and looked at the dark, silent silhouettes of the steersman and lookout. As far as he could see, everything appeared to be in order. With barely visible movements, the steersman held the launch on its westward course. The lookout's attitude, slightly bent forward, showed that he was peering tensely into the darkness.

Looking behind him, Serov saw the cap, and then the head of the bo'sun Lyulko rising over the steps.

"Come to report, sir," said the bo'sun in a low voice. "Time—twenty-two hours. Log shows twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine. The men are all in the orlop as you ordered."

"Splendid, Lyulko!" said the senior lieutenant with exaggerated heartiness. "Take my place here on the bridge. Keep your eyes peeled."

He made way for the bos'un to come onto the platform, jumped down onto the deck. Tearing off his leather coat as he went, he hurried into the bows, carefully opened the hatch and went below. On the divan of his miniature cabin lay his carefully pressed parade jacket, its buttons winking in the rays of the lamp. Serov stripped off his fur waistcoat and sweater, put on the jacket, examined himself in the mirror on the wall, smoothed his hair and leaving the cabin, opened the door of the engine-room. An oily warmth enveloped him, and he was temporarily stunned by the blazing light of the two-hundred-candle power lamps, the glaring white walls, and the powerful, regular beat of the machines. For a moment he screwed up his eyes.

When he opened them, the engineers were standing to attention, looking at their commander. Their faces were calm, healthy, rosy from the heat; the engine-room was light, cheerful, but strangely enough, this calm, pleasant cheerful atmosphere did not quieten the commander. Involuntarily, without knowing why, Serov listened to the even beat of the engines. Then, passing through to the second compartment, he opened the door of the orlop.

Here, too, was a cheerful, holiday atmosphere. Signal flags had been hung from the ceiling, with garlands of evergreens gathered before leaving port. The little table had been lengthened by boards taken from the stores and covered with white sheets. The lamplight added a blueish tinge, and they looked coldly fresh, like newly fallen snow.

Serov raised his cuff and glanced at his wristwatch.

"Come in, comrades... Fighelsky, pour out."

The cook solemnly pulled a bottle of champagne from a pail. There was a pop and the cork flew up to the ceiling, all eyes following its flight and descent. Lips pursed. Fighelsky poured the champagne from the napkin-wrapped bottle into the waiting mugs. The sailors picked them up and turned to the commander. Serov stepped up to the table and took his mug. Silence fell.

"Comrades," said the senior lieutenant, his eyes travelling over the familiar faces. "Today's celebration is one which is possible only for us, sailors. We have gathered here at the moment when our log registers a fine figure—thirty thousand knots, made by our ship during the war. This is no small distance, and we have something to be proud of. Particularly when we remember that our course has been one of continual honour and victory. We need not be ashamed to meet the eyes of our people. We have not sailed this course without losses—that is inevitable. Every time one of our friends was killed, our eyes filled with tears, but our hearts burned with anger and vengeance. And we shall avenge in sailor fashion. We shall mourn those we have lost, and remember that there is still a long course ahead. Thirty thousand knots is only a fraction of that course.

"May the future find us equally good comrades and good fighters," Serov raised his mug and then suddenly staggered. A violent trembling shook the deck beneath his feet, the whole hull of the boat vibrated. Several sharp blows sounded from the stern. The next instant the healthy beat of the engines had stopped, and a heavy silence settled in the orlop. The men stood there, mugs still in their hands, but their eyes were alert, big with alarm. For a second all were frozen to the spot. Then Serov abruptly replaced his mug on the table, spilling some of the contents.

"Celebration postponed! Battle stations!" he cried, turned, and dived into the engine-room. He was met by Ladin, the chief engineer.

"What's the matter, Ladin?"

The petty officer stood to attention.

"Something fouled the port screw, Comrade Lieutenant. The shaft doesn't revolve, something's stuck fast to it. I've switched off the central and right screws until we discover what's wrong."

"Quite correct, petty officer," said Serov, with forced unconcern. "Everything's in order. We'll soon put it right."

He entered the cabin, caught up his coat, and came up on deck. Around the launch lay the same strange, disquieting silence. Now, when the beat of the engines and the chuckle of the water were stilled, it was still more noticeable, more crushing. As his eyes became more accustomed to the darkness, he discerned figures by the bomb racks and heard the sound of quiet talking. He went to the racks.

His old counsellor and faithful assistant, the bo'sun, was present. There was nothing sinister to be seen, the launch dozed on the dreamy sea like a chip on a lake, and there seemed no reason for any especial anxiety.

"What's happened?" asked the commander, approaching the bo'sun.

"Who can tell, Comrade Lieutenant? We held the course and speed given, and the sea's like a mirror, as you see. Suddenly I heard something, as though the port engine

had stopped. I thought the engineer had switched it off, to cool it down or something... And suddenly something seemed to rattle under the stern. Then there were three hard bangs, like a stone, and the engines stopped."

"What measures have you taken?" asked Serov.

"We've taken soundings to port. Everything's clear under the stern. And for that matter, the map shows ninety-five metres here. A battleship could clear it. Fouled something—that's clear. But what?"

The commander went to the side and holding the firm racks, leaned right over to the water's surface. But he saw nothing beyond the same motionless shimmer, like black marble, gloomy as a gravestone.

"I see nothing."

"What about turning the light out?" asked Lyulko.

"Careful, though," replied the senior lieutenant. "The shore's not so far off. There may be some German or other roaming about there."

Both men listened intently. But the sea was as silent as before. The bo'sun took a strong torch attached to an accumulator from one of the men.

"Look out where you train the light. Only on the water," said Serov, hanging over the surface again. The bright circle slid over the sea and halted. The black steely surface became emerald, translucent, deep. Tiny jewel-like bubbles came floating up, and a shoal of fish flashed by. The beam was too weak to penetrate the water to any great depth, but nevertheless it seemed to the senior lieutenant that he could discern the dim outline of something large and black in the green depths, something that seemed to have adhered to the body of the ship near the port screw. But he could not clearly distinguish the object, or even guess what it might be.

"Switch off!" he ordered. "There's some sort of filth fouled under the stern, but what it is I can't make out. We'll have to send a diver over."

One of the crew would have to go into the water—that icy, December water. There was no other way out. Serov pondered, mentally mustering his men. The most suitable was undoubtedly Belchenko, an excellent swimmer and diver, who had always been the one to contest the flotilla's honour at naval contests.

"Belchenko!" the lieutenant called loudly, but calmly. Stepping silently over the deck, the petty officer approached the commander.

"Belchenko here Sir."

The voice rang with its usual unhurried calm, and when he came close to the petty officer, the commander saw the attentive eyes of a man awaiting an order.

"Comrade Belchenko, afraid you'll have to take a cold bath. We've got to find out what's the matter down there."

"Very good, sir," replied Belchenko, and without waiting for anything further, began stripping off his blouse.

"Lyulko, bring a greatcoat here, felt boots and towels," said the senior lieutenant.

Belchenko laid his blouse neatly on the rack and continued to undress, swiftly, but without any nervous haste; this calm, business-like manner pleased Serov.

"Don't stay under too long at a time. Better come up pretty often. We'll have you rubbed down, you'll warm up, and then go under again."

"I shan't take any harm, Comrade Lieutenant," Belchenko answered gaily, and already naked, walked to the side. Lyulko fastened a rope around the petty officer's body, under the arms. Then Belchenko stepped over the rail and squatted at the edge.

"Shall I go, Comrade Lieutenant?"

"Carry on," said Serov, trying to convey an extra warmth in the words, and Belchenko silently slipped down into the water. His head disappeared; the black marble surface was troubled for a moment, then became motionless again.

It seemed to Serov that the petty officer had been under for an eternity. He had already opened his mouth to call out to the bo'sun: "Haul up!" when the water was disturbed again. A gleaming wet head appeared, followed by the shoulders. Hauling himself up the rope, the petty officer grasped the side, and with a heave the commander and the bo'sun jerked him onto the deck.

"A towel!" cried Serov, and seizing it, began vigorously rubbing Belchenko's back, but the latter suddenly put the towel aside.

"Wait a bit, Comrade Lieutenant," he said in such a strange tone that Serov involuntarily let his hands drop. "There's plenty of time for that. First permit me to report."

"At least get a coat on. Bring the greatcoat here!"

Serov threw the garment over Belchenko's shoulders and fastened it.

"Now you can report."

"Permit me to make my report to you alone," said Belchenko softly; he came up to the commander and pulled his sleeve in a manner certainly not provided for in the regulations. Involuntarily complying with this authoritative gesture, Serov followed him; on Belchenko's face there was an expression very different from that which it usually bore. It looked haggard, even old.

"A very bad business, Comrade Lieutenant," said Belchenko. "We've fouled a mooring cable of a mine. And there's a mine drawn up on it..."

"Stop, stop," Serov interrupted him. "I don't understand how we could foul that with the screw. It hangs perpendicularly, and down below..."

"The devil alone knows," said the petty officer in disgusted tones. "I guess Jerry's thought out some new trick. The mine evidently didn't hang deep, but floated. And the mooring cable of a mine was also on top."

"What kind is it, hempen?" asked Serov, in surprise.

"Not at all, it's steel, but thinner than usual, and at the free end there's a petrol can fastened. That's what kept it afloat. We fouled it with the left screw. The mooring cable tangled and drew the mine up. When I dived, I nearly sat on its horns, honest I did, Sir. It's pulled tight up under the screw, and the bottom of it's rubbing against the hull. It's hanging there with the horns down, not even swaying. Between one of the horns and the hull there's about so much..." And Belchenko spread his fingers. "I felt it. As long as everything's quiet it'll be all right, but as soon as there's a bit of a breeze to stir things up, the mooring cable will work slack from the shaft a bit, the mine'll get some play, butt us with the horn—well, no need to say any more. The mooring cable will have to be hacked through with a knife, can't get clear of it any other way. And that can't be done in the dark. If I can't see when it's through, I shan't be able to push the mine away at the right moment, and it'll be all up with us. Better not touch it till it's light."

"Very good," said Serov mechanically. "Thanks, petty officer. Go and warm up. Tell Fighelsky to give you a double frost ration... And say nothing. Silent as the grave," he added softly, pressing Belshenko's shoulder.

"I understand, Sir," said the latter, and ran to the engine hatchway, his bare feet slapping the deck.

Serov stood motionless, then suddenly shouted:

"Bo'sun!"

The reply sounded surprisingly near, and in an instant Lyulko was standing to attention in front of his commander.

"Here, Comrade Lieutenant!"

"You were listening?"

"Yes, excuse me..." admitted Lyulko, confused.

"Very well—then you know all about it .... Get a move on. All the crew on deck. Not a soul left below. Only one engineer in the engine-room. All in lifebelts and helmets. Get the men on the forecastle and let them stay there till further orders. Stop there yourself, too. Now go! And send me the first officer from the deck-cabin."

The bo'sun went without further questions. Serov remained standing exactly over the upturned mine. By the time the hasty steps of his first officer sounded, Serov had already regained his wonted calm.

"Zvyagintsev, you stay on the bridge all the time. Keep an eye on the men in the foc'sle. I've ordered them to gather there. See that nobody leaves without my orders."

Zvyagintsev left. Serov saw his lanky form clamber onto the bridge, and stand there motionless. The sound of quiet talk punctuated with muffled laughter came from the stern. Everything was as it should be. Now the only thing was to wait.

Serov sat down on the depth charges, folding his coat over his knees. For a moment the thought flashed through his head that he should really have had them thrown overboard, but he immediately realized the futility of such an action. With charges or without, one mine was sufficient to blow the fragile craft into a thousand flying splinters. And stationing the crew on the foc'sle could hardly save them either, for that matter. Nevertheless, the measure gave at any rate the illusory comfort of doing something to protect them from the explosion.

The senior lieutenant pulled his cap lower down over his ears, and leaning against the lever of the depth charge apparatus, began softly whistling tune after tune, as they came into his head. From time to time he would stop to listen. But the silence was as heavy, as absorbent as before. Beneath his feet, the mine concealed in the depths swayed gently, and in his mind's eye he imagined one of its deadly horns trembling on the thin boards of the hull. Serov dwelt venomously on this death-carrying globe which had fastened to his ship and was mocking his helplessness. The realization of the impotency of his live, human brain against this inert, brainless steel globe filled him with fury.

Sometimes when it seemed to him as though the launch was beginning to sway, he would nervously rise to his feet to test the sensation. Standing, it would be easier to feel any motion. But the deck was as steady as the floor of a well-built house, and the senior lieutenant would seat himself again. Actually, he could not have said just why he sat there, far from his men, right over the mine. There was nothing he could do, he could not render it harmless, could not prevent any sudden explosion. It was depressing to be alone, but he felt that in time of danger, the commander's place should be at the danger point.

He had a great desire to continue living. To live and still to see the ocean he so deeply loved, and to which he had devoted his life; to see the comrades who had been his companions along the road of war, and with whom he wanted to fight to the end; to live in the hope of meeting his wife and child, to live for the love and happiness in which he had had such faith. Life was very good, and he could not believe that it could disappear in the senseless fountain of fire and reddish, water-filled smoke which might burst out from under the stern at any moment.

He recalled far-off days, sun-filled streets foaming with the fragrant, white acacias, a house with a tiled roof, the sun's rays reflected in the shining windows and spilling in transparent coppery patches on the floor, his wife's eyes, soft and merry with youth and happiness, and the absurd tottering of his son's chubby little feet in their woollen boots, taking their first steps.

It may be that this vision of a past

life soothed him, for when he opened his eyes, it was no longer the damp darkness of night that met them, but a silvery mist lighted by the coming sun, and Zvyagintsev's concerned face hanging over him.

"Comrade Senior Lieutenant," whispered the first officer. "I can hear engines to starboard. Close in."

Serov jumped to his feet. Listened. Out of the silvery wavering clouds came a dull beating.

"The 'Sibel' coming along," he said confidently.

"Shall I send the men to the guns?" asked Zvyagintsev.

"Not on any account. Listen, she's making off."

The beat of engines was already fainter. The German, invisible in the mist, was drawing off to the west. Serov laughed.

"We'll have time to catch her, if..." Without finishing the phrase, he commanded:

"Send the bo'sun and Belchenko here."

This time the petty officer dived, armed with a knife. Lyulko and Serov stood at the side, never taking their eyes from the water. The form of Zvyagintsev loomed on the bridge, awaiting the commander's signal to send the order down to the engine-room as soon as the mine was cut free from the mooring cable and came to the surface. It would be necessary to move with the utmost care, two or three revolutions of the right screw and then stop so that the boat should not drag the floating death in its wake.

Belchenko was diving for the fifth time, having resolutely refused to come up on deck and warm up. At first his body had reddened with the cold like a boiled lobster, but after diving for the fourth time it had taken a pale blueish tinge. Through chattering teeth, battling to control the trembling of his lips, he hissed angrily:

"Only a scrap left now, Comrade Lieutenant. It's hanging by a thread, I shan't come up again till I've finished the job. If only it doesn't turn over and butt us with that horn before I've time to push it away. If it does, then it won't be me that's finished with the thing, but the thing that's finished us."

"Go easy, petty officer," said Serov, and there was appeal, affection and encouragement in the simple words.

Belchenko understood and smiled through pallid lips.

"Don't worry, Comrade Lieutenant. I, too, want to live."

He inhaled deeply and again disappeared beneath the water. A few bubbles floated up from the depths to burst with a popping noise on the surface. Serov bent down over the water, then suddenly started back. At the very moment when he least expected it a shining black globe, hung with trailing seaweed, floated with menacing slowness to the surface, troubling the heavy, misty sea. It rocked rhythmically, displaying its smooth, blunt horns. Biting his lips, Serov raised his arm.

On the bridge, Zvyagintsev made a spring to the telegraph. To starboard of the stern, a malachite wave rose, for a moment foam hissed, and immediately disappeared. The deck trembled, then the launch gathered way. The globe still swayed astern, pointing its horns menacingly after the boat, as though considering the expediency of pursuing the prey that had outwitted it, to finish it off.

Belchenko's face, purple from cold and strain, appeared over the side. Gasping, spitting out water, he crawled onto the deck and lay there, without the strength to raise himself. His blood-shot eyes sought the commander, and catching his glance, the petty officer waved his hand towards the stern.

"Bo'sun!" called Serov. "Get Belchenko below! Rub him down and wrap him up in blankets! Hot tea!.. Get a move on!"

He looked at the mine, ran to the machine-gun, turned it, and fixed the already disappearing globe in the sights. A sharp, ringing round sounded over the sea. The mine swayed, began to fill and disappeared. The senior lieutenant released his grasp of the lever, and only then realized that beneath his cap, his whole head was wet, and trickles of perspiration were running down into his eyes. He pulled off the cap and several times roughly rubbed his damp, numbed face.

"Send the men into the orlop. Only the lookout on deck," Serov told his first officer. The men moved astern, and one by one disappeared. Serov, as he had done the previous night, descended to his cabin, stripped off his coat, picked up the bottle of toilet water from the shelf and shaking it generously onto a towel, carefully wiped face and neck, as though rubbing off the very memory of the past night. Then he made his way to the orlop again. In the engine-room, both engines were throbbing in business-like fashion, as though glad to be at work again after their hours of enforced idleness. And the engineers looked at their commander with open, confident, unconcealed trust.

In the orlop, the men were standing at the table again, their orders and medals glittering on their fresh flannel blouses. And the traditional sucking pig, with clenched teeth, awaited its inevitable end. In the mugs the champagne, its merry bubbles already risen and gone, shook with the boat's movement.

Serov approached the table.

"We'll begin again, comrades. We had to postpone our celebration for unforeseen circumstances. Well, never mind, that means we can make it a double one. No bad thing. Let us raise our glasses to our ship and to him among our ranks who has given it the chance to traverse as many more knots of wartime service, and us the chance to live to a ripe old age, dandle our grandchildren and tell them stories of adventures at sea... Your health, Belchenko!"

Belchenko raised surprised eyes to his

commander and at once lowered them again; a warm glow suffused his face and his eyelids trembled. Serov took him by the shoulders in a hearty clasp.

"Why are you blushing like a schoolgirl? It's the truth I'm telling. If it hadn't been for you, we'd have had to postpone our celebration until ressurection day."

"It turned out a hard sort of celebration, Comrade Lieutenant," said Belchenko in a low voice, rubbing his belt with his fingers.

"Hard enough, that's right. But now the celebration's all the pleasanter."

The sailors took their places on the benches, and Fighelsky began to place the slices of rosy, juicy sucking pig on the plates.

The feast was at its height when the door opened, and Zvyagintsev appeared.

"Comrade Senior Lieutenant! A ship to starboard, on the horizon, course thirty," he said.

"And very nice too," remarked Serov, busy over a bone. "That'll be the very same 'Sibel' again, that came rollicking past us last night. Here's a good beginning for our next thirty thousand knots, comrades!"

Translated by Eve Manning

YURI SMOLICH

IMMORTALITY

On a clearing in the Tyvrov forest a partisan leader lay dying.

The Tyvrov partisans were famed for their gallant exploits far beyond the Podol area of the Ukraine. These men of the woods derailed German military trains, blew up bridges, set fire to fuel tanks. And everyone in the region, including the Germans, knew that the commander of the partisans, the mysterious "Comrade B" was none other than Christya, Christina Nikolayevna Bokalchuk, the telegraph operator from Komarovka.

There were never more than thirty partisans in Christina's detachment. Bigger detachments were apt to develop sooner or later into large fighting units with supply trains and auxiliary services. But a small detachment could easily hide in the woods and ravines or if necessary vanish completely among the population, only to reappear suddenly where least expected and where it could wreak more harm on the enemy than an army unit. That is why, although she knew where to look for reserves in the towns and villages of war-torn Podol when she needed them, Christina preferred to have a small group of fighters to operate with.

Christina and her detachment had carried out more than fifty operations in six months and had come through them all unscathed. But in the last engagement she had been mortally wounded. A mine fragment had crushed both feet, one bullet had smashed her knee, another had pierced her stomach and now the deadly gangrene had taken possession of her body. The detachment doctor Yasha Schleiman, student of the Vinnitsa dental school, had diagnosed gaseous gangrene and general sepsis, and had given her no more than two days to live.

Christina lay in the meadow. The sky was an azure tent above her head, the sun warmed her legs already touched by death, the breeze cooled her fevered brow and the gnarled hornbeams stood like sentinels in closed ranks at the edge of the forest. The thirty partisans gathered around their dying commander. Cap in hand, head bowed, they listened to her last words. Among them were vine-growers from Mogilyov, fishermen from the Dniester, railwaymen from Zhmerinka, labourers from the Bug, men from the Gnivan sugar factory, students from Vinnitsa, potters from Mezhirov and many a farmer from the valleys. Beside Christina, holding her hand, knelt Timofei Hopta, the chemist from the Shaigorod sugar refinery, her chief of staff and adjudant. Before the war they had been engaged to be married.

With his right hand Timofei Hopta stroked Christina's cold fingers tenderly, with his left he absently straightened the tent-cape spread over the cases of dynamite that served her for a bed.

The sugar refinery where Hopta had worked was named after the Third Five-Year Plan. Built only three years before the war, it was the largest in the whole area and one of the first industrial giants of the Third Stalin Five-Year Plan that was to have brought wealth and prosperity to the Ukrainian people. The Podol farmers, vine-growers, potters and fishers had built it with their own hands.

But now that the Germans had come the Tyvrov partisans had resolved to destroy their handiwork, to reduce their pride and joy to ashes. No less than fifteen of the thirty partisans worked at the refinery as diggers, electricians, joiners or fitters. And during the busy season they nearly all helped to haul beets and do other odd jobs for which labour was required.

Three times had Timofei Hopta drawn up plans for the seizure and destruction of the refinery. The original plan was a simple sabotage operation involving the dynamiting of the plant. The job was entrusted to a small group of partisans but the Germans got wind of the plot and hanged the dynamiters. The next time the workers themselves intended to smash the machinery and set fire to the workshops. But again the conspiracy was revealed, the ring-leaders were shot and the fire put out in time. After that the partisans decided to attack the plant openly, kill the guards and hurl grenades and bombs into the

machine shops. But the Germans brought out machine-guns and mortars and won the fight. The refinery was guarded by several hundred men and the partisans were outnumbered. That was the battle in which Christina had been wounded. The partisans barely had time to pick up their wounded commander and carry her away into the forest.

"Hear me, men," said the dying woman in a faint voice. "Hear me, all of you. You too, Timofei."

The partisans stirred and bent forward. Timofei raised his head and moved his ear closer to Christina's lips.

"I am dying," said Christina and a smile flitted across her face. "Farewell, my dear ones. We shall never meet again, for there is no other world, no paradise and no hell. Neither is there any eternity. That is sad. But live on, men, destroy the fascists and free the Ukraine and then you may die, but be sure you leave children behind you, for there must be someone left to build up our Soviet life again..."

It was hard for Christina to speak. Her breath came in short gasps.

"I am dying," she repeated. "but while my brain is still clear I have some business to attend to. Lean closer. My voice is failing me!"

The partisans knelt beside her and leaned forward to catch her words.

"The first thing," said Christina, "is to appoint a commander to take my place. I appoint Timofei Hopta. Do you hear, Timofei, dear heart? I appoint you commander for you know every tree in our forest, you have a good head on your shoulders and can command well. I know too that you will thirst to avenge my death, to avenge our blighted love and your burning hatred will make you the best avenger of our tortured, suffering people..."

Her ebbing strength was spent by the effort and she closed her eyes. Her breast rose and fell rapidly and her breath tore its way hoarsely through her clenched teeth... Her lips seemed to have shrunk for they barely covered her teeth. Dark hollows had appeared at the temples and the flesh had fallen away from her face, leaving her nose and cheekbones sharply defined.

The partisans knelt in silence, waiting. All nature seemed hushed, only the wind rustled the leaves of the gnarled hornbeams.

"I have decided," said Christina at length, "I have decided to give myself up to the Germans before I die... Let them bury me with their own dead..."

A murmur of surprise arose from the partisans grouped around the deathbed and the grass swished as they shifted their booted feet restlessly. They glanced sharply at Christina's face and a heavy sigh burst from thirty breasts.

"She is delirious..." someone whispered. Christina heard.

"I am not delirious," she replied softly. "My head is perfectly clear and I know what I am saying: I shall give myself up to the Germans and Timofei shall shoot anyone who dares to protest."

The partisans fell silent, but they breathed heavily and looked straight into the eyes of the dying Christina. For six months Christina, a member of the Communist Party since 1933, the best rider and shot in the Podol region, a deputy of the Soviet, a Stakhanovite, had been their leader.

Christina returned their gaze and laughed faintly. She asked the doctor for a drink and Yasha Schleiman handed a cup of crab-apple brew. She swallowed a few gulps and her voice grew stronger.

"Now, Timofei, choose a lad brave enough to go to his death alone and send him with a note to our sugar refinery. Address it to Oberleutnant von Milktaube, chief of the German garrison. Write..."

Timofei Hopta did not stir.

"Timofei!" Christina's voice was stern. "I am not yet dead and while I live I am your commander..."

Timofei's eyes darkened and his face grew pale. Yasha made a sign to him that all the partisans understood. Christina was delirious, the poor woman was dying, she must be humoured. Such are the manners of a doctor at the bedside of a dying patient. But Timofei Hopta did not move. He could not bring himself to be a party to treason even at the request of the woman he loved though that woman be dying. Let her die as honourably and stainlessly as she had lived.

"Fool!" scolded Christina gently. "This is not treason. It is only bluff. Write..." In a low halting voice she dictated:

"Leutnant von Milktaube, I, Ataman Christina, 'Comrade B,' address myself to you. In our last battle you wounded me severely and now my fighting days are over. No more shall my hand be raised against the Germans. And not only because I have no more strength to fight, but because I have renounced my partisan activities. My curses be upon the partisans who left me alone in the forest to die of my wounds now that I am of no more use to them. Only one loyal man has stayed with me and I am sending him to you with this message. I am bitterly angry with my former comrades and I wish to punish them for their inhumanity towards me, their former commander, I promise to reveal to you, Leutnant, all our paths, all our plans and hiding places if you will take me out of the woods and let me die among human beeings surrounded with kindness. My messenger will show you the way.

I write this on my deathbed.

Christina, 'Comrade B',
Tyvrov chief."

Again a whisper ran through the ranks of the partisans like a breeze through a field of corn. Someone sighed heavily, another laughed drily.

"He will not believe it!" chorussed several voices.

"He will not believe it," repeated the others and they all began to talk at once, for

the relief of tension loosened their tongues. "He won't believe it. He'll kill the messenger and that will be the end of it."

"Yes, he will kill the messenger," said Yasha; "but he'll come nevertheless. He'll bring his whole garrison with him because he'll guess it is a trap. Anyone could see that," Yasha stopped short, remembering that he was the doctor. "but it is for you to say, Christina Nikolayevna. The word of a commander is law."

"You are right," Christina smiled with pallid lips, "he will not believe it. He may kill the messenger too. It may be that he will not come. But he will send his men. He will send a whole garrison of them for he will suspect a trap. Anyone can see that..."

The partisans fell silent, glancing in perplexity from Christina to Timofei Hopta and from Timofei to the doctor.

Then someone spoke up:

"Christina's plan is good. Better to lure the Germans here and fight them in the woods than over there in the open at the sugar refinery."

"Good," more voices chimed in, "in the woods thirty can fight three hundred."

But Christina stopped them with a flutter of her eyelids.

"No, comrades, I have a different plan. The leutnant will send half or two-thirds of his garrison, which means that there will be half as many left at the plant as in the last battle (curse its memory!). He may leave half a hundred Fritzes at the refinery and without machine-guns, because he will take all his machine-guns with him to the woods. Maybe he will leave his mortars. There are two of them at the plant. Have you never fought half a hundred Fritzes and two mortars before? You will rush in, tackle the machine-guns on the flanks and then you will blow up our sugar refinery so that nothing is left of it but the memory."

"That's right," responded several voices.

"But what about yourself, Christina?" someone ventured timidly.

Christina sighed.

"I have but a few hours left to live. Am I then to die like a grand lady on a featherbed? Such a death does not befit a partisan leader! You yourself chose me to be your commander, and you shall see me die fighting!" Christina sighed once more and added more weakly: "They'll come... they'll look at my corpse... Perhaps they will chop up my dead bones... What of it?"

No one spoke. Timofei Hopta wept softly. With an effort Christina raised her hand and laid it on his head.

"Yes, but what if you do not die?" cried an anguished voice from the rear.

Christina had no more strength to speak. She was deathly ill.

"If I do not die," she said in a barely audible whisper, "they will take me alive. Do you doubt me? Are you afraid I shall not withstand their tortures?" she smiled with a great effort. "Am I weak in spirit? Am I a traitor? Act then, in the name of our freedom, our people. In the name of the Ukraine! Better to die in anguish than apart from the struggle. Timofei, choose a messenger, line up your men, hurry, while there is still breath in my body..."

Timofei Hopta leaned over and kissed Christina's hand, the once soft little hand with the pink tips now roughened and coarsened by partisan life.

"You can die happy, Christina," he said firmly. "We shall do as you say. Leutnant Milktaube will not be able to resist the temptation of catching a partisan commander like 'Comrade B.' He can expect a major's stripe, an iron cross and a trip "nach Vaterland" as a reward for such a prize. Whether he comes or not is unimportant. We shall burn down the factory this time. And its ashes will be a monument to your glorious life, Christina. Looking at the ruins, people will know that Christina Bokalchuk burned that factory and prevented the Germans from laying hands on the sugar. And when life returns to our land we shall build another refinery on its site and name it after you, Christina. It will be the biggest sugar refinery in the world and it shall be named after Christina Nikolayevna Bokalchuk. Give me that note, darling, I shall take it myself."

But Christina moved Timofei aside

"You are foolish, Timofei," she said. "Have you forgotten that you are in command of the detachment now? What if the Germans suspect something and kill the messenger? Who will lead the detachment then?"

"Timofei must not go!" cried the partisans.

"If the doctor will volunteer," said Christina, "it might be the best thing. It will look more natural if the doctor stays behind with his dying commander."

The partisans glanced at the doctor.

Yasha rose and buttoned up his shabby jacket.

"I shall go," he said.

"I thank you," whispered Christina.

Timofei Hopta handed Yasha the note folded neatly in four.

"Go."

Yasha took the note and put it into his bag of surgical instruments. The partisans silently made way for him.

Several hands were laid in rough caress on his shoulder. Several hearty handshakes and sincere wishes were uttered. Some of the partisans went down to the edge of the woods to see him off, to give a final word of advice, exchange a last embrace. Yasha Schleiman stepped across the hawthorn bushes, strode through the briar thickets and was lost to view finally behind the thick branches of the barberry bushes.

Presently Christina whispered again.

"Go and prepare your weapons. Leave me alone with Timofei for a while..."

"Timofei," she whispered when the meadow was deserted and the grass had ceased rustling beneath the partisans' boots and only the face of her beloved remained between her and the blue sky,

"stay with me for a while and do not speak."

Timofei Hopta gazed silently at Christina's withered features, at her dimmed eyes and her fever-parched lips and thought of the happy days before the war when he had kissed those eyelids, caressed that dear face. Now all was at an end. Farewell, beloved, on thy soldier's bier!

Christina too lay silent. Life was ebbing from her. But she still saw above her the vast fathomless sweep of her native sky and bending over her, like the sun in the heavens, the face of the man she loved.

Leutnant von Milktaube read Christina's note. Then he ordered his men to cut off Yasha Schleiman's hands, bandage them well and send him ahead to guide his detachment through the forest tracks to the meadow where "Comrade B" lay dying. Leaving behind some fifty men at the sugar refinery armed with two mortars and two machine-guns, Leutnant von Milktaube led the detachment himself.

Yasha was so weak from loss of blood that he could not walk. Two Germans carried him on a stretcher ahead of the detachment. They reached the meadow just before sunset. Christina was still alive. She lay alone on her hard bed of straw-covered cases. Beside her stood a jug of crab-apple brew. In her left hand she held a cigarette that had gone out.

Leutnant von Milktaube was a shrewd seasoned soldier. He sent out patrols in all four directions, stationed guards to secure his rear and encircled the meadow. The Germans rose suddenly from behind the barberry bushes on all sides. Then they narrowed the circle and closed in on Christina slowly and cautiously. Leutnant von Milktaube stepped out of the circle. Two Germans walked ahead of him carrying Yasha's stretcher.

Leutnant von Milktaube halted two feet away from Christina and studied a photograph in his hand. It was a photograph Christina had taken when she had worked as telegraph operator at Komarovka. She had been blooming, clear-eyed and radiant then. But Leutnant von Milktaube recognized her none the less. The woman who lay before him was Christina Nikolayevna Bokalchuk, of that there could be no doubt. He took out Christina's note and showed it to her.

"Your name?"

"Bokalchuk," whispered Christina, "come closer, I cannot speak loud."

"Christian name?" inquired Milktaube.

"Christina."

"Comrade B?"

"Yes."

"What is written in this letter?"

Christina repeated the contents of her note word for word.

Leutnant von Milktaube removed his helmet. He took out a handkerchief, wiped his forehead, took a deep breath and moved closer. The elusive partisan chief Christina lay before him vanquished, surrendering to the mercy of the victors. But there still remained Christina's detachment.

Leutnant von Milktaube stooped over Christina and got down to business at once.

"Tonight you will be in hospital. But before we return you may get worse. Therefore let us talk now. What have you to tell me?"

"I will tell you," said Christina, "but please light my cigarette for me first."

The Leutnant blew the ash off his cigar and handed it with a gallant gesture to Christina. Christina thrust her cigarette between her lips and puffed on it. A light swirl of smoke obscured her face for an instant. She was deathly pale but her eyes burned like smouldering coals. Leutnant von Milktaube stared with undisguised curiosity at the delicate, girlish features disfigured by mortal disease.

Suddenly a grimace of pain flickered across Christina's face and a faint groan escaped her. The Leutnant smiled. She was in pain! It was only natural under the circumstances. Gaseous gangrene, after all. It was a wonder she was still conscious. The wench had a strong constitution! It was fortunate he had come when he had ...

But the grimace on Christina's face was not caused by pain from her wounds. A fearful fire seared her weakened and sensitive body. It ran swiftly up through her fingers and palms along her arms up to her elbow. It was real fire—the burning of the fuse that connected the cigarette with the dynamite cases concealed by Christina's body...

The explosion was terrific. Flames and earth spouted upwards in a whirlwind that tore the aged hornbeams up by the roots. The thunder of the explosion reverberated over the forest and valley.

But dynamite smoke clears quickly. Barely had the torn earth settled than the smoke was gone. The meadow had gone too. It was no longer there. In its place yawned a shallow ditch. Not a trace was there on the plowed-up earth, the chunks of soil and black turf of Christina, Yasha Schleiman, Leutnant von Milktaube and a good third of his detachment. The rest of the Germans had fled into the thickets... But as they ran the echoes of another explosion reached their ears, the distant rumble of the explosion that had blown up the Third Five-Year Plan sugar refinery. Timofei Hopta had kept his word.

Translated by Rose Parker

IN GERMANY

Here we are in the Brandenburg Province. Ever wider and swifter flows our offensive...

We have entered Germany in no half-hearted way. We have entered with all our echelons, our rear-line services, repair shops, fuel stations and even the Army trading organization. Our Russian horse transport—waggons, two-wheelers, vans and forage carts—all have jogged along in the wake of the tanks, motorized infantry and artillery.

At a crossroads in Schwerin, a steaming mobile kitchen dashed up and halted. The delighted driver gazed at the tiled roofs and said: "So this is Germany! What county is it?" "Berlin County," replied the army girl on point duty. The by-standers laughed. "Aha!" purred the driver contentedly, cracked his whip and the kitchen rattled along the Berlin road.

It is hard to write at present. It's difficult to see and take, absorb everything, it is hard to draw a general picture and absolutely impossible to remain indifferent or unmoved. Everything here is in such ferment. All that for nearly four years has swollen, and seethed in our hearts—all this has risen now to our throats... Life is at high pressure these days.

"Fantastique!" said a Frenchman from Paris just liberated from German slavery by the Red Army offensive.

Indeed he's right, at times what is happening does seem very much like some fantastic fairy story.

All along the line of our advance—from the Vistula to the Oder the Germans abandoned everything, lock, stock and barrel. They had no time to remove their plunder. Throughout Brandenburg Province war bases had been set up. There were huge factories and mills, thousands of tons of sugar, underground storerooms for flour and shells, dozens of trainloads of flour, boots by tens of thousands, meat and steel, lorries and wine, cloth and leather. To all appearances, these were tucked away safely, far from the front, near Berlin, in towns like Schwerin and Landsberg, Sonnenberg and Reppen.

Now all this has fallen into our hands.

There were of course many Germans who got ready, as one of them put it, "for a trip to the devil knows where." They fitted out iron-sheeted vans, and knocked together special "evactrunks" (a term that has gained currency) in which to carry their stores of grain and bread. These, however, only served the needs of our supply columns. Thousands of sleek, unmilked cows wander through the villages bellowing so piteously that our rear service men have to bring order to this department also. Well-fed horses gallop in the fields. Whole German families wander along the roads—fugitives who were late in getting away. In the stations stand hundreds of trains: some are loaded with machines and armaments—the dead do not need them; others with medical supplies—the Germans they were intended for do not need them either—they never got out of Poland: another filled with photographic film—what have they to photograph now?—surely not their disgrace; others carrying wine, leather and padded great-coats—all this now too late! And there are even train-loads of perambulators, pillows and blankets which the Germans were still hauling out of Poland. Where to? What for?

2

In old text-books we had read that Germany was an idyllically peaceful country with neatly pruned landscapes. But we noticed nothing idyllic. We saw no inviting, well-ordered towns, or attractive villages common to any country blessed by nature. What we did see was the grim, truly German landscape we already knew so well: the barbed wire surrounding prisons and barracks (reminiscent of Majdanek), the slave camps, the watch-towers, the striped sentry-boxes, the frowning walls of brick and stone. Granite eagles with ruffled feathers gazed down at us from monuments. And "Verboten" adorned every crossroad and on all doors, walls and fences was the warning, menacing: "Hist!" "Be silent!"

Germany presents itself to us now as a vast, gloomy prison with the padlocks on its rusted gates broken at last. Such is this same Germany—a vast slave market—this we saw with our own eyes.

Our soldiers have flung wide the iron gates of this enormous prison. The Army of liberation has burst into the lair of the beast. The Army, inspired by its great mission of liberation, is striking off the German fetters, knocking out the bars of prisons and concentration camps. The Army of liberation is restoring freedom and life to the nations of German-enslaved Europe.

The events now taking place on the roads of Germany are soul-stirring even for the most imperturbable. It has happened! No more prison warders! no more prisons! Yesterday's captives, prisoners and slaves are now travelling all the roads to the east. Eastward Ho! For Americans and British war prisoners; for the Poles, Jugoslavs, Italians and Bulgarians from concentration camps; for girls from Volyn Re-

gion; for a Hindu from Bombay and another from Calcutta, both wearing British uniform; for Czechs and Hollanders; for Russian girls from Smolensk; for lads from the Donbas; for a Mulatto taken prisoner by Germans in French Morocco; for Frenchmen—soldiers of 1940 and others sent into slavery. This polyglot mass of harassed and exhausted humanity of various nationalities and tongues, is now travelling east.

The people are too impatient to wait for transport facilities to be arranged for them. Not a day longer can they remain in what were but yesterday prison camps on the accursed soil of Germany. Now that the prison gates are thrown wide their natural impulse is to dash away—to the east, to the country that freed them, and then on again to their respective lands, home to their families!

And so they are travelling on foot, on bicycles. They form transport columns, often many nationalities together, or ride along in waggons, in various types of horse-drawn vehicles in various stages of dilapidation, including marriage coaches of a by-gone age. We even saw two grinning French soldiers travelling in a hearse! I doubt if that conveyance had ever had such jolly passengers before.

Everything that can be set in motion and able to carry one's few belongings has been pressed into service. Anything suffices from a creaking four-wheeler to a perambulator if only it will help one to get to the east without delay.

Red Army men marching by scan the faces of the one-time captives:

"Hey, girls! Any Zaporozhie lassies among you?"

And often, in fact it's almost an everyday occurrence, soldiers meet relatives, acquaintances and fellow townsfolk. We saw how a young woman, Olga Nedosvitaya, was brought in triumph to the brigade of Twice Hero of the Soviet Union Boiko. Her brother Andrei, a tank driver, had met her on the road. The woman was a long time telling the tankmen just what German captivity had meant. I can well imagine how they will fight after hearing that plain and unbellished narrative!

When a long column of Russian children released from slavery passed through Schwerin, the pavements were lined by our men and officers—majors, colonels, even generals: they seemed rooted to the spot. They stood in silence, hour after hour. How they scrutinized the kiddies' pale, emaciated faces!

They were looking for their own...

And the children passed by in a never ending stream, homeward bound! To the east!

In Schwerin too we met a "local boy." He could hardly have been five. He was pedalling a tricycle around the big square fronting the Townhall, oblivious to everything going on around: gutted houses were smouldering, marching troops, tanks roaring by. But the boy went on pedalling his bike.

"Hey, you little Fritz!" a passing Red Army man called.

The boy glanced round.

"I'm no German," he said indignantly in Russian.

"Who are you, then?" the soldier asked, taken aback.

"I'm Russian."

"And where do you come from?"

"Mama says we are from Pskov," came the little fellow's proud reply.

As a matter of fact he's not quite five yet. He's been in Germany three and a half years and possibly it was here that he lisped his first word—a Russian word. Here he learned to speak—to speak Russian. He knows that he is a Russian, hails from Pskov and is proud of it. His name is Borya and he is already a favourite with the troops in Schwerin.

Now here he is with his small tricycle, a gift from the soldiers, pedalling along the streets of the town where yesterday he and his mother were slaves. They were not allowed to go unescorted through the streets, but were confined in a camp. German boys threw stones at him but he knew he wasn't allowed even to cry.

Now he is untroubled and carefree—after all he is not yet five and careers around on his tricycle amid blazing houses and roaring tanks. He is Russian—no longer a slave, but a victor.

3

Although not what one might expect, it's a fact that the Germans, with their misanthropic, racial practices aimed at exterminating all non-German peoples, did not crush but only fanned the national pride and dignity of even those people whom they confined in their camps and whose backs they branded with the marks of an "inferior race."

Even in captivity and slavery the "inferior race" had no desire to tag on to the "superior race." Poles annexed to the Reich proudly refused German citizenship, Russians incarcerated in camps dared to sing Soviet songs and organize underground resistance groups.

In the towns and villages and on the roads of Germany every man you meet is wearing his national emblem. The liberated people are proud to assert their nationality, desiring that in the New Babylon now arisen in Germany they will not be mistaken for Germans.

Huge national flags now float over the houses occupied by yesterday's slaves, every window carrying its own particular banner. Flags wave above columns on the roads. Small flags fly from bicycles, are stuck on cart shafts and even in the manes of horses. An American soldier has sewn a large star-spangled banner onto his greatcoat. A native from the Netherlands has donned an armband made in his national colours, and above it, to eliminate any possible doubt, has written in Russian with an indelible pencil: "Dutchman." Jews who have miraculously survived—and they are very few—wear the marks with which

the Germans branded them—the brand of martyrdom and bitter irony of fate—the Germans now envy them!

In Landsberg we entered a building flying the flags of practically every country in Europe. A board on the gates carried this notice written in Russian: "Here live Yugoslav, Swiss, Czech, French actors..."

The house was occupied by the performers of the local circus. An amusing and what a characteristic domicile! Even here in the "realm of art" all was arranged in the German way: Slavs lodged in the attic and slept in bunks (in three tiers) or made do in vans outside; Germans and the neutral Swiss occupied separate rooms. Incidentally the Germans have now transferred themselves to the vans of their own accord.

The Swiss met us as "neutrals" would: taking us for representatives of authority they immediately presented letters of safe conduct issued to them a year ago and written... in Russian! Those Swiss were certainly blessed with a provident consul!

The French did not show us passports. Red dry Bordeaux appeared on the table like magic and glasses clinked in enthusiastic toasts to free France and the Soviet Union. That house in Landsberg resembles something like Noah's Ark; it rides the flood now surging around, carrying its pairs of the clean and unclean, its caged African lions, its elephants from India, its hyenas and trained ponies and has the flags of almost every European country flying at the masts. There is only one nationality in vanquished Germany that does not raise its national flag—the Germans themselves. That they are "people of a superior race," nazis—all this they now wish to be forgotten and to be regarded simply as Germans. Instead they hang white rags and towels from their windows—the sign of surrender. They wear white arm-bands—the sign of submission, a plea for mercy. Nobody ordered them to do so—they did it themselves. From now on this is Germany's flag—the flag of capitulation!—and will continue to be so until the German people, cleansed of the nazi contamination, shall have earned the right to enter the family of nations.

At present the Germans, scared and uncomprehending are peering at the unleashed flood of liberated people surging along the highways and byways.

Yesterday's slaves are today's masters. Russian and Polish lads have already seized rifles and are standing guard at warehouses and shops. Slav, French, Italian and English speech is to be heard everywhere, spoken with the consciousness of freedom, loudly and proudly. There is a crowd of Dutchmen: a young fellow with luxurious moustaches and, for some reason or other, in a top hat; a group of elderly folk carrying portfolios and rucksacks and bearing along with them a Jewish family they have saved—husband, wife and child. British soldiers pass by; these lads are in high spirits, roaring out their soldier's songs with a cheerful disregard for melody. American paratroopers roll along on bikes. The stream of humanity carries in its wake Czechs, Italians, Belgians...

You long for a heart to heart talk with all these folk, probe all the details of their histories. In these turbulent years such people have no ordinary biographies. Each would provide material for a tragic novel. What a pity you have to communicate with them in a "makeshift" tongue!

An American undertook to speak to us in Russian: it was not Russian but a fantastic brand of Ukrainian. He managed to tell us that his batka (father) was from the Ukraine but he himself had been born in California, that he had a "divchinka" (sweetheart) in Los Angeles, that he was on the way to her and that his name was Mikhail Kogut.

Amerikanets Mikhail Kogut!

For a long time we stood laughing and slapping each other on the back. What strange destiny, what bitter calamities, what fantastic routes brought all these people of different nations and different tongues to this crossroads near Friedeberg? the Paris mathematician in horn-rimmed glasses and army puttees? the Sengalese of the Empire troops? the girl from peaceful, dreamy Volyn? the Dutchman in the top hat?

What a pity there is no time nor possibility to talk, man to man, with them all!

But there is one Russian word that they all know—Americans, Hindus, Sengalese alike. It is addressed to us on every hand—a good, old simple Russian word: "Spasibo!" (Thank you!).

"Spasibo!" yesterday's slaves, war prisoners and captives shout to our men. "Thanks for freedom!"

Will these people ever forget those responsible for all their troubles and suffering, will they forgive the Germans?

And will they ever forget who released them from captivity and slavery, who gave them back freedom and life, who put them on the road to their own homeland?

4

We visited an assembly station for Soviet citizens and spoke with hundreds of them.

Here is a group of young men. When the Germans carried them away from home they were fifteen or sixteen years old. Now they are eighteen or nineteen. They have unshaven cheeks and bitter, yearning eyes.

What do they want now? Quiet? Rest? To return home?

"We want to fight," they say with one accord. "We want to pay back the Germans!"

Here are war prisoners. They were captured in the grim fighting of 1941—1942. That young fellow with the scarred forehead and tattooed chest was taken wounded. When he regained consciousness he was behind the barbed wire. That middle-aged Armenian was taken at Kerch, that man at Barvenkovo, that one at Smolensk.

They had experienced fearful years of captivity, hunger, the whip, shame and death.

What do they want now? Quiet? Rest? To go home?

"We want to fight!" they shout with grim fury. "We want to pay back the Germans!"

They have forgotten nothing, they have not forgiven the Germans!

It is springtime in Germany now. A warm wind is blowing.

The wind of victory.

BORIS GORBATOV,
O. KURGANOV

Germany. February

WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED?

Never before had the telephone been so insistent as in these days. Never before had there been such a heap of letters and telegrams on the table. Never before, even during the most memorable holidays, had Anna Alexeyevna Yampolskaya been addressed in the street with congratulations. And now people come up to her and introducing themselves hastily as "Irene's mother," "Volodya's father," or "Tanya's grandmother" say: "I congratulate you with all my heart! I do, indeed!"

There are days in the life of every man when he reviews his past, calls to mind everything that has happened before and asks himself: "What are the results? What has actually been accomplished?" Those are the days when the writer looks over his books again and again, when the painter studies his pictures from a new angle. But what can a teacher do in such hours? The children whom he has taught and brought up have grown up and left school. Other boys and girls have taken their places but they too will pass on.

And the old school-mistress, after being informed of the high governmental award, sits alone at her desk, and by the quiet familiar light of a green lamp, turns over bundles of letters. Where are they now, her pupils?

Victor Skatershchikov had already passed to the third year of the philosophic faculty when the war broke out. He was rejected by a medical commission on account of bad sight. But a powerful impulse urged him to do something for the front at once, without any delay.

Victor started working at a factory. He became a founder and worked long and hard, sometimes staying in the factory several days and nights, without a break. But the desire to go to the front grew stronger in him every day. At last he succeeded. Even now he doesn't risk to tell the whole truth about the ways and means he used to achieve his purpose.

Victor was in the Ukraine, in Moldavia, in Rumania. He was wounded in both legs and in the arm at the Hungarian frontier. At present he is lying in one of Moscow's military hospitals preparing for a long and difficult cure.

Anna Alexeyevna is pensively fingering the letters. She recollects Misha Khoroshuk who was killed in the battle of Moscow, and Vitali Pozkhachov who had finished the 9th grade just before the war. He painted excellently and wrote to his school-mistress after he and his family had been evacuated in the rear: "I had thought of making a big detailed report about Levitan at a meeting of our nice friendly circle. What a pity it didn't materialize!" Later on he was called to the army and took part in the severest fighting at Kharkov, Stalingrad and Voronezh.

And here is another fragment of the past. A short time before the war the school-children of the 9th grade of which Anna Alexeyevna was in charge, took leave of her before going away for vacations. The day the war began not one of them was in Moscow. War changed everything; all the old addresses lost their meaning, the children were scattered all over the country and lost track of each other. But each of them wrote a letter to Anna Alexeyevna whose Moscow address was the only one that remained unchanged (and let her know of himself). Afterwards they learned from her each other's addresses and a lively correspondence began.

Last winter former pupils of the 9th grade called on Anna Alexeyevna in the school. They "took possession" of her for the whole evening, surrounded her with a living ring so that Anna Alexeyevna's new pupils could only dart jealous glances at the inseparable group. The "guests" presented Anna Alexeyevna with flowers and books one of which bore a facetious and affectionate inscription: "From your flock." All the members of "the flock" are now grown-up men and women. But when Youra Getz came to Moscow on a short visit from the front he called on Anna Alexeyevna first thing though he did not manage to see anybody else.

Every charm has its secrets, sometimes not easy to explain. But when you speak with Anna Alexeyevna's pupils you realize that they know quite well why they love her.

Before Anna Alexeyevna's time in the class the children did not feel any connection between lessons in literature and their favourite books, over which they laughed and wept. To prepare lessons in literature? What for? Why, one could always say something, there's such a lot of ordinary words and phrases in the world. They'll always help one out!

But soon it became clear that such reasoning would not work with Anna Alexeyevna. The very first compositions handed in by the pupils met with such scathing criticism that they can't forget it even now. The new teacher poked fun at their bureaucratic style and apish imitation of the text-book.

"All your heroes are alike," she told them, "and so are all your writers: they are all dull, tedious, they don't write, but only "reflect," their only aim is apparently to prove some commonplace moral. You make all literature look dull, you turn gold into ashes."

The children were thoroughly ashamed but nobody even thought to take offence. They felt that there was much respect for them in that bitter trenchant criticism, for a serious criticism can be aimed only at those who are able to understand and appreciate it.

From that time things went differently. Copying compositions had to be abandoned altogether because Anna Alexeyevna was especially sarcastic if she discovered her pupils trying to pass off other writers' ideas as their own.

She greatly valued every independent thought of her pupils, she impressed on them that they should defend their points of view, that they should not compromise, nor let themselves be easily persuaded.

When called to the blackboard, her pupils took books with them to strengthen their arguments with quotations. They got on those very intimate terms with books without which all works of art become merely a "product" of an epoch, style or school.

Anna Alexeyevna taught her pupils to appreciate the artistic texture of a literary work. A dismembered flower does not lose its fragrance and the children were able to see the main, whole, human essence through all the embellishments and superstructure of art. One of Anna Alexeyevna's pupils wrote to her from a town where she continued her studies at school after the evacuation: "Anna Alexeyevna, you can do with me what you like but I simply can't stand Ranevskaya[1] being called a product of the decomposition of a rotting nobility. I even had a quarrel with our teacher about it." That means that the girl had acquired something very important—a deep, discerning insight into literature, a whole and complete perception of art, where no place is left for heartless indifference, dry formalism or for sticking meaningless labels to the best creations of human genius.

The day the newspapers published a list of decorated teachers with Anna Alexeyevna's name in it, a girl ran into the school. "I am running to my Institute," said she, "and have not a minute to spare. Please hand this letter over to Anna Alexeyevna."

On several sheets of paper in a large, bold handwriting were written the following words: "Anna Alexeyevna, dear! I have just learned of your award. I want to hug you tightly, to congratulate you, to tell you of a big warm feeling that fills me when I think of you or speak of you to somebody. Both in the hardest and the happiest moments of my life I feel the need to share my thoughts and emotions with you."

Reading such a letter one feels that there is something in it that cannot be weighed or measured. The work of creating a thinking, independent personality has no price.

During those days we grew to know many of Anna Alexeyevna's pupils. They are all unlike each other but have something in common. They are all in love with life, not as passive onlookers but as its active builders and participants. They always speak of their work with animation, lovingly and poetically, be it medicine, chemistry or journalism. They have observant minds, an eager desire to learn, to think, to understand as many things as possible, to find out the meaning of all that is happening around them. In all these traits you recognize the woman, under whose influence and by whose labours the children's characters were modelled. In each of them there is something of Anna Alexeyevna, a fragment of her mind and heart.

Yes, in the hour when one looks back upon one's life, and sums up the results of a lifetime's work, a teacher can also take pride in saying: "This is my work!"

FRIEDA VIGDOROVA

THE BIG MEN OF SCIENCE

"The physicist observes phenomena in various circumstances and endeavours to derive the laws of their interrelation," is an old definition, which may convey something to the head but says very little to the heart. The physicists are the men who have revealed to us the myriad sounds beyond the scope of our ears, the myriad colours denied to our eyes. They are the men who saw in the child's plaything—a stick of amber rubbed with a piece of woollen cloth—the manifestation of the great power of electricity which has revolutionized our way of life. Physicists are the men who were able to recognize in worlds so far away as to baffle imagination, separate molecules vibrating in unison with molecules of earthly matter like tuning-forks of the same pitch.

Physicists are the people who learned of the speed at which a planet races through space and regarded it with what Maxwell calls a feeling of excited admiration. For these people "the moment," "energy," "mass" are not simply the abstract result of scientific research but words which "stir their souls like recollections of childhood." Finally physicists

[1] The heroine of one of Turgenev's novels.

are dreamers who justly regard their science as the "technique of tomorrow," One of those dreamers, who has most steadfastly developed this conception throughout his life, is Abram Yoffe, the prominent Soviet physicist.

In 1918, when the Soviet Power to Russia had made education available to the great mass of the people. Yoffe set up an engineering-physical faculty in the Petrograd Polytechnic. It was the only one of its kind and was intended for the most promising scientific workers. At the same time he founded the first Soviet Physico-technical Research Institute, the father of similar institutes in Kharkov, Dniepropetrovsk, Sverdlovsk (Urals) and in Siberia. "The technicology of the future," said Yoffe, "is first and foremost applied physics." Anyone who could suggest an interesting objective was found a place at the laboratory table. It was here Pyotr Kapitza, Nikolai Semyonov, Abram Alikhanov, Igor Kurchatov, Pavel Kobeko, Jacob Frenkel and many other prominent Soviet research workers began their scientific careers. They developed in laboratories where the law was unrestricted creative endeavour.

Achievements gained and mistakes made became matters of general discussion and were wound up by the weighty conclusions of the principal. One can say without exaggeration that there is not a physicist in the Soviet Union over forty years of age who did not pass through this renowned school.

Although Yoffe is now very busy as Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. and as head of his Institute, you cannot please him more than by telling him of a splendid new experiment. He will even get up from his table and walk up and down his room a little—tall, slightly bowed and well-groomed—rubbing his big strong hands with every sign of satisfaction.

Lately Yoffe's pupils and assistants have carried through a number of outstanding investigations and given him many occasions for pleasure.

Most of the research has been done in that branch of knowledge whose rapid development Yoffe foretold at his early lectures at the Polytechnic—which studies the electrical properties of different substances. We know how incompletely energy is used in nature: plants, for instance, absorb only 1% of solar energy, although there are instances where the percentage is considerably higher. Red seeweed growing on the ocean bed absorbs 20—25% of the little light energy reaching it. The artificial transformation of light energy, sunlight, into other forms of energy promises a much fuller utilization—up to 80%.

"It might seem," Yoffe said then, "that although there is a great deal of light energy it is so dispersed that only natural surroundings with their boundless forests and seas, can bring technically satisfactory results and that those surfaces with which we could collect solar energy by artificial means are much too inadequate. That is not true! Every square metre of surface placed perpendicular to the sun's rays receives about one kilowatt of energy. The roofs of a large town receive from 10 to 100 million kilowatts. If we could harness one or two-hundredth part of that energy we could obtain from 100,000 to 2,000,000 kilowatts of fuelless energy, enough for all electric power requirements." At the time that was still fantasy but it stimulated thought, gave rein to imagination.

As far back as 1889 Professor Alexander Stoletov of Moscow illuminated a zinc plate with a powerful electric arc and collected on a wire net placed nearby electrons torn from the zinc by the light rays (a stream of electrons is what we call electric current). Thanks to the genius of Einstein the photo-effect, the ability of some substances to turn light into electric current, began to be put to practical use. So far the photo-cell, the apparatus that effects the transformation, has not been turned into a power station. But it has begun to serve as an "electric eye" guiding ships out of the fog, directing planes to their targets, standing guard at rolling mills to signalize faults in the process; it has enabled us to replace the machine-minder by an automatic device. Every improvement of apparatus transforming light into electric current has widened the field of its technical application. We cannot say that we have reached the limit of improvement in the photo-cell although nobody knows how light energy turns into electricity, why the loss in the process is so great, or the reason for the enormous inefficiency of the photo-cell. Yoffe strikingly put the situation like this: "It is like pouring water onto a sieve: only a few drops stop on it."

It required the efforts of the world-wide army of research workers (and one of its leading detachments proved to be the school of Yoffe) to reveal the essence of many of the seemingly mysterious phenomena determining the electric properties of matter. This opened the approach to that most absorbing of problems — the "construction" of materials possessing definite, predetermined electrical properties. Here success awaited the seekers...

On the basis of theoretical conclusions arrived at by Yoffe and his assistants, his wife Anna amongst them, they were able, for example, to select new materials to more effectively change light energy into electrical energy.

After an interval of twenty years Yoffe returned to the problem of the efficiency of the photo-cell. He said: "The efficiency of the photo-cell is indicated by the portion of the light falling upon it which is transformed into electrical energy. At one time, when first endeavouring to formulate the problems of the new technology, I pointed to the prospect of turning solar energy into electrical energy. I then foresaw the possibility of increasing the efficiency of solid photo-cells. That to a certain extent has now been justified."

Some of the new types of photo-cells are employed for the "talkie" cinema. The apparatus of which they are a part is simple in design but has the advantage of clarity of sound. Another sphere in which the new photo-cells are utilized is in safety appliances in mining. A platinum wire is heated by passing electricity through it, and even small quantities of combustible gases burn on the surface of the wire and increase its temperature. The process is quite invisible to the eye, but a photo-cell catches the infra-red rays caused by the rise in temperature and the apparatus gives the alarm. The new photo-cells provide wide opportunities for signalling systems making many technical processes automatic.

Space does not permit me to dwell in detail on any particular work of Yoffe's research school; I can only record the broad scope of the problems they have tackled. Yoffe's colleagues and followers have created valuable new and easily manufactured materials: frost-resisting rubber, heat-resisting eskapon (a type of synthetic rubber), an excellent insulator in radio sets, and a number of others. They used an especially sensitive needle-shaped photo-cell to test the difference in temperature between a plant leaf and the surrounding atmosphere. When the difference in temperature reached 5 or 7 degrees centigrade through loss of heat by radiation, the leaf could perish although there was no frost: the leaf might cool too much and die even if the surrounding atmosphere was above 0° C. From this came the idea of producing conditions in which plant leaves could constantly draw warmth from the atmosphere. In this way a light wind stirring the air in northern areas was recognized as the friend of the potato crop. The new, rationally "aired" planting of potatoes is now employed in dozens of Soviet northern areas and has already repeatedly saved many thousands of tons of root-crops. And it was physicists of Yoffe's school who prompted the idea of binding the shifting sands of Turkmenia by using a bitumen emulsion and making irrigation canals in the desert waterproof.

Of the most important aspect of Yoffe's present activities I can only say that he has initiated a number of research works with a very practical bearing on the country's war-effort. Much could be said of members of the Physico-Technical Institute who tried out weapons they had devised during enemy torpedo attacks in the Black Sea, and of others who carried on research under fire in beleaguered Leningrad.

Though Yoffe is sixty-nine he's the model of health and vigour, and with the war in its fourth year, he is a very busy man indeed. He has to share his time between Moscow where many of his assistants are working, Kazan where he lives, and Leningrad where the restoration of his Institute is now well under way.

It looks as though Yoffe's fondest dream is near coming true; to get back to his laboratory at Lesnoy in Leningrad, and with Anna Yoffe, his trusty comrade in work and life, to plunge into his beloved kingdom of the unknown, to get down to the experiment table himself, to his all-absorbing work, which so happily combines the search for philosophic truth with the battle for the welfare of mankind.

The Soviet physicist Pyotr Kapitza, also a tireless seeker after knowledge on the untrodden paths of science, likes to recall an episode from the biography of Humphrey Davy, the founder of modern electrochemistry. When he first succeeded in reducing alkali lye to its elements, he ran up and down his laboratory shouting in his excitement.

Spattering ink and breaking quills he dashed down in the laboratory record book the stirring events of the day. He left the laboratory, stopped in his tracks, returned and wrote on the margin of the page just penned: "A magnificent experiment!"

The foundations of all science are facts and if the facts contradict theory then it's all the worse for theory. When Davy revelled contradiction between fact and theory, he knew that that meant a revision of the theory, its correction and improvement.

"The incomprehensible should brook enquiry," is Kapitza's steadfast rule. We must keep this in view if we want to understand the ideas behind many of his experiments.

The weak spot in a theory is rarely very plain—its contradictory factors are skilfully hidden. Before trying to bring them to a head and arrive at the synthesis — that is, carry out the experiment — the contradiction must be found. Discoveries of this sort do not come by chance. Kapitza once compared the research worker to a traveller in an unknown land. If our traveller is a geologist he may find valuable minerals and splendid ores, he may also return empty-handed. In any case he will not prospect just anywhere on the globe, will not trust entirely to luck. He is guided by the known laws governing the distribution of essential minerals in the earth crust just as the physicist is guided in his research by the fundamental laws which have become the pillars of our knowledge.

There was nothing fortuitous in Kapitza's interest in low temperatures. When the thermal motion of atoms and molecules slows down, the very finest shades, the most intimate properties of a substance are brought out unhindered. Kapitza spent a lot of effort in making the sphere of low temperatures accessible to experiment. To do it he had to design new refrigerating machines capable of liquefying in sufficient quantities the gas most difficult of all to liquefy—helium and thereby approach absolute zero.

In ordinary life temperature is generally measured as being above or below the freezing point of water — the zero of the centigrade thermometer. In physics

temperature is measured not from any arbitrarily chosen point but from the lowest temperature that there can possibly be from "absolute" cold. That temperature is called "absolute zero," and temperatures measured from it are "absolute temperatures." By this system, the freezing point of water is about 273 degrees. "Super-low" temperatures but a fraction of a degree above absolute zero are hundreds, indeed thousands of times colder than normal room temperature. At these temperatures a number of remarkable phenomena are to be observed which differ greatly from what takes place at usual temperatures. That is why the study of extremely low temperatures is so important for physics.

In this field Kapitza has made a big discovery. Investigating the properties of liquid helium he found that when the temperature was lowered to approximately two absolute degrees helium went into a condition never before observed. As everyone knows, all liquids are viscous. Honey, for example, is very viscous, water much less so. You can empty a vessel of water through a narrow tube much quicker than one of honey. At about two degrees absolute helium suddenly loses all its viscosity. If you take a tube a thousandth part of a millimetre in diameter and fill it with water the water will take some hours to flow out — helium will vanish from it instantaneously. Kapitza called this property "super-fluidity." It is one of the most remarkable and mysterious properties of matter. Kapitza's discovery of "super-fluidity" earned him a first-class Stalin Prize.

At present we can only say Kapitza's work has broadened our knowledge of matter, and permits us to probe more deeply into the secrets of nature. Research of this kind on the border of the known gives rise to new methods in which schools of resourceful and enterprising experimenters are being trained. It is still difficult to foresee, of course, when the discoveries made, as research in the sphere of super-low temperatures can be put to practical use.

But when, fifty years ago, physicists attained low temperatures much higher than those now achieved, it was difficult to foresee any practical application of the discovery. Long before liquid helium was first obtained, the air we breath could be turned into liquid at 184 degrees below zero centigrade. Nobody at the time could foretell the important consequences of the discovery. Experiments with liquid air showed that its component parts, nitrogen and oxygen, could be separated by means of evaporation. Liquid nitrogen evaporates at a lower temperature than liquid oxygen and so nitrogen could be distilled from oxygen as spirit is distilled from water. The idea was put to practical use and has gradually formed a branch of industry: the production of oxygen from the air.

Air is first liquified in refrigerating machines and then the nitrogen driven off by distilling. So far the oxygen obtained in this manner has been used chiefly for welding and cutting metals, for manufacturing explosives, for the breathing apparatus of airmen at high altitude and finally to support the respiration of the sick. All these uses for oxygen are based on the fact that it is the vital agent of life. It is also the basic factor in combustion. In the ocean of air around us oxygen constitutes one-fifth, the other four-fifths are inert nitrogen (the admixture of carbon dioxide and a few rare gases is negligible).

The question naturally arose as to whether it were not possible to accelerate all the main technological processes based on combustion by raising the oxygen content of the air used. Experiments showed that big changes in technological processes could indeed be made.

Academician Ivan Bardin, the well-known Soviet metallurgist, has calculated on the basis of experiments carried out in the Soviet Union before the war, that oxygen used in blast and open-hearth furnaces could substantially reduce the labour required, cheapen the metal and cut capital outlay. Oxygen could greatly accelerate the extraction of gold from ores. The problem of running industry and municipal services on gas instead of solid fuels and so abolishing the smoke scourge and relieving transport of fuel haulage, can only be solved by utilizing oxygen. Ending one of his papers on the prospects of oxygen in metallurgy, Academician Bardin said: "These are not castles in the air but fortress strongholds of nature's treasures, and we know that there are no fortresses which technology, armed by progressive science, cannot take."

To reduce those fortresses, release the treasures of nature and send technology a leap ahead, it is only oxygen that is required, but it is needed in huge quantities. A hundred thousand cubic metres of oxygen in gas form would be required, for instance, to supply one big blast furnace for a day.

The means so far employed to obtain oxygen from the air are unsuitable for production on such a large scale. Piston compressors are the main part of the equipment and all piston machines without exception are bulky. Where possible turbine machines are substituted as they are much more compact and efficient.

Kapitza applied his research methods to solving the technical problems of refrigerator turbine improvement. He was the first to employ for refrigerating machines a new turbine combining many of the advantages of both steam and water turbines. His new refrigerator turbine (called a turbine-detander) has functioned excellently in the scientist's refrigerating researches, which have also won him a first-class Stalin Prize.

The application of the turbine principle to the extraction of oxygen from air, and a number of other improvements suggested

by Kapitza, have improved the process to a considerable extent. Kapitza's work has made it possible to build powerful turbine oxygen machines capable of satisfying the unprecedented demands for gas made by the metallurgical, chemical and other industries.

The usual method of utilizing an invention like the new turbine oxygen machine is to introduce it first into one industry and then gradually spread its application to allied branches. The Soviet system of economy adopts a simpler and more direct way. Methods suggested by science naturally become a matter of state interest as soon as their practicability is proved. The state orders their introduction and the order is equally binding on all branches of industry as they have the same interests—those of the national economy. In the present case, to make the preliminary measures, ensure the correctness of instructions issued and later supervise their execution, a State Technical Council for the Utilization of Oxygen has been set up. It is headed by the inventor of the new turbine method of oxygen production—Pyotr Kapitza. The Council issues a magazine, "Oxygen." Judging by the papers of Council members published in the magazine it brings together metallurgists, who, as I have already said, are working out new methods of steel smelting by raising the oxygen content of the blast, chemists using oxygen to improve the production of sulphuric acid, power experts studying the prospects of gasifying low calory fuel by means of oxygen and so forth... "The intensification of production processes is one of the main problems of modern technology and in that lies its progress," said Kapitza. "The logical development of technology in the overwhelming majority of its branches," he went on to say, "calls for the intensification of the main technological processes by raising the concentration of oxygen employed in them." The idea of intensifying production processes by oxygen covers most branches of industry. In the U.S.S.R. its application is not hindered by any clashes of interests linked with competition and anarchy in production and distribution.

The organic ties of Kapitza's work with the country's creative aims ensures that they will be practically applied rapidly and with success.

Representatives of a still younger generation of Soviet physicists are to be found in two men engaged on the enthralling research into the processes taking place in the nucleus of the atom. They are Academicians Abram Alikhanov and Artemi Alikhanyan. They are brothers in the original sense of the word—born of the same parents. Do not be confused by the difference in their surnames—it has a simple explanation. Both work in the same branch of physics and both have the same initials so the Alikhanyans found it convenient for one of them to make a slight change in his surname to distinguish one brother from the other.

At present they are working together and lately they have tracked down new facts relating to cosmic rays.

Physicists have found out that the rays are composed chiefly of the tiniest particles—heavy and light electrons. Unlike "tame" domesticated electrons whose currents we control by changing, for instance, the volume of our loud-speaker with a turn of a rheostat, cosmic rays possess enormous power and move at terrific speeds. If we wanted to produce on the ground artificial cosmic rays we should have to build something on the nature of an X-ray apparatus but instead of tens of thousands of volts we should have to use thousands of millions or billions of volts. And there are physicists who foretell the advent of such apparatus in a few years' time. So far, however, the only laboratory for studying nuclear processes, giving rise to the collision of particles possessing enormous energy, is terrestrial atmosphere which catches cosmic rays. The earth's atmosphere is the biggest laboratory in the world for nuclear physics. Particles rushing in from the cosmos bombard atoms and molecules of gases in the atmosphere with terrific force and from the impact spring elementary particles of atoms, their fragments as it were.

It was from studying the cosmic rays that the list of known elementary particles of atoms was lengthened—it now contains protons, neutrons, positrons, neutroinoes (so far only assumed) and finally mesons—a new type of heavy electrons.

Cosmic rays pass freely through the atmosphere and scientists who have descended in diving suits and in submarines to the bottoms of wells and the sea bed have found these cosmic guests there. Physicists are drawing many valuable conclusions as to the compositions of cosmic rays by comparing the findings of apparatus registering the presence of this or that particle taken at different altitudes. It was precisely for this purpose that the expedition lead by the Alikhanov brothers ascended to the summit of Mount Alagöz (over 12,000 feet above sea level) in Armenia.

Manifestations of courage are many and various in wartime. Not only must the soldier display firmness and dogged persistence, so too must the scientist, when amid the road of the cannonade, he goes on with experiments whose results will benefit humanity only at some indefinite time in the future. While stemming the enemy onslaught the country supported its scientists carrying on under such conditions.

When the first ascent of Alagöz was to be made—in August 1942—the German hordes were driving on to the Caucasus. Would the enemy be held at the foothills? If not the scientists would have to winter on the peak as partisans until the foe should be driven from the valley. Not one of the expedition showed the white feath-

ner. For two months they lived with the shepherds among the mountain pastures, linked with the world by a portable radio set which brought good news from Stalingrad in the late autumn.

The first two expeditions brought out new facts as to the composition of cosmic rays. Until then it was thought that they were composed chiefly of mesons and electrons. The Alagöz expeditions discovered a third group of particles more powerful in their ionizing action on the air than mesons and electrons (it is by this action on the air that particles can be observed).

Last spring the third expedition set off with the purpose of eliciting the nature of the new particles, and discovered them to have properties similar to protons (the nucleus of hydrogen—the lightest element). What process gives rise to the particles —is still unclear. That is one of the questions in the endless chain of knowledge of nature which arise as the answer to older problems is found.

Speaking once on the tasks of institutes of the Academy of Sciences Kapitza said they must be the tasks of "greater science." He went on to explain: "Greater science is one that studies the fundamental phenomen essential to a deeper knowledge of nature. The job of greater science is to provide the necessary knowledge whereby nature can be transformed to serve man in his cultural development." Kapitza named three main trends in science which he thought were the most promising at present: research in the field of solids, low temperatures and the nucleus of the atom. Following his classification I have chosen for this brief review some of the works of leading Soviet physicists whose researches are directed along these three lines.

OLEG PISSARZHEVSKY

BOOKS AND MEN IN BESIEGED LENINGRAD

For nine hundred days the Germans beleaguered our fair city on the Neva, the city of great Lenin. They wanted to freeze and starve, bomb and shell the town until it surrendered "to the victor's mercy." The city resisted. Entrenched at its very walls, but powerless to enter, the Germans methodically, day after day, rained shells upon it, destroying its historical monuments, its cultural and scientific institutions, and killing the civilian inhabitants.

The German command had the city plotted into squares and the principal "objectives" mapped out so that each shelling operation should have a definite purpose.

Among the targets marked out for demolition was the noble creation of the master-architect Rossi, the white-columned building standing in the city's main thoroughfare. This edifice, known and revered by every Leningrader, houses the State Public Library named after Saltykov-Shchedrin.

Wartime conditions had turned the library into a military objective. No ammunition was made here, no planes were built, no army equipment manufactured, no recruits trained for the Red Army. Nevertheless the Germans regarded the building as a pernicious "target" and singled it out for destruction. Besides injuring the personnel, the buildings and books were damaged, the havoc being assessed at seventy-two million rubles.

The Germans aimed at the library because it was highly prized by the Russian people; because for 150 years everything coming off the press in Russia had been collected in its walls. The Germans fired on the library knowing it to be the repository of unique ancient Slavonic manuscripts, and of the works and correspondence of famous Russian men of science and letters, statesmen and public leaders, celebrated actors, artists and composers. The library is proud of such collections as the "Rossica" (foreign-language works about Russia), the library of Voltaire, The Free Russian Press collection (illegal publications printed abroad), proud of its collections of maps, musical scores, of Russian prints and portraits of great men.

Collected in the central library and in its various branches throughout the city were nine million items. The bookshelves, if placed end to end, would stretch for nearly ninety-five miles.

But the library was not merely a collection and repository of books: it was also a great research institution, a centre serving research workers in every field of science.

The activities of the library before the war were many and varied.

The store was rapidly increased: about a thousand new publications were received every day.

The reading-rooms were visited daily by about 3,000 people, to whom an average of about 9,000 books were handed out. Whole generations of Russian intellectual workers have availed themselves of the library's services. Mechnikov and Mendeleyev, Sechenov and Pavlov, Tolstoy and Korolenko, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, Plekhanov and Gorky had drawn on its material when writing the works that added to the renown of Russian science and letters. Lenin also used the library. Scholars and scientists travelled from other countries in search of the sources they needed. The library replied daily to over four hundred and fifty requests for information.

The post brought in hosts of letters from all corners of the country. And the staff would supply the desired information or forward the required book. The library was connected with sixteen hundred similar institutions situated in various parts of the Soviet Union. It also established firm contact with the leading libraries of the world, among them the British Museum and the Congress Library at Washington. With these great libraries it exchanged its printed catalogue cards for years.

The staff of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library numbered about a thousand. Its research workers compiled extensive bibliographical studies covering Russian books and periodicals. The library issued dozens of scientific publications and lists of recommended literature on particular subjects. It was a real centre of librarian and bibliographical research, and a school for the country's librarian personnel.

Then, on that memorable June Sunday, the war invaded the quiet of the reading-rooms when work at the library was in full swing. In the colleges examinations were in progress, and research workers were anxious to complete their activities before the summer holidays. The rooms were filled with readers, and the complex library machinery worked smoothly and efficiently.

But the war brought a change from the earliest days. The reading-rooms were deserted—many readers left for the front, others were evacuated. The staff also diminished: those who remained were faced with the tremendous job of preparing the library's treasures for evacuation and adapting the buildings for defence.

The noise of hammers disturbed the wonted silence of the book-chambers and reading-rooms. Volumes and manuscripts were packed in boxes to be sent into the interior of the country, or lowered into cellars for safety; black-out blinds were fixed to the windows; sand had to be hauled to the roof to protect the building against firebombs—the staff took up three and quarter thousand cubic metres of it. An A.R.P. squad was formed and trained from among the younger members of the staff. Bomb and gas shelters were hastily fitted out. The offices and reading rooms, catalogues and reference material were moved to the basement.

As the ring tightened around the blockaded city, life in the library changed. More and more frequently the only members of the staff remaining to attend to readers' needs were those too old or too delicate to handle a shovel on fortification work. More and more often, air alerts drove readers to the shelters. The duties of the A.R.P. squad grew increasingly strenuous: day and night, look-outs were posted on the roofs, in the attics and observation turret; while the combat unit organized by the staff took up its station right there, on the spot, ready to march, arms in hand, at the first call.

On January 26th 1942, the lights failed and the water supply and heating were also no longer functioning. The reading-rooms had to close down but work in the library did not cease. In the besieged city books were still needed: by the troops defending it, by the engineers in factory and laboratory, the teachers in the schools where classes were going on, the propagandists, the journalists, the theatrical and medical professions.

Requests for the most varied information were received from the municipal authorities and the munitions factories, from government offices, hospitals or newspapers.

When darkness descended on the city and candles and matches had to be manufactured from whatever means were available, the authorities concerned visited the library to read upon the subject.

When hunger came, and food was needed, the library sought out recipes for their preparation.

When Leningraders succumbed one after another to alimentary dystrophy and avitaminosis, the library's extensive medical literature was consulted for ways of combating these little-known ailments.

When it was decided to build the road over Lake Ladoga's ice—the "road of life" as it came to be called—engineers visited the library in search of the information they needed.

When the troops marching to defend the city were given information about Leningrad, about its buildings and streets, the library supplied the necessary illustrations.

When airmen or partisan commanders needed maps and photographs of the regional villages and towns, these too were provided by the library. By the rays of a dim oil lamp—and when oil gave out of a rushlight—with the icy wind lashing in through the paneless windows, librarians sought out, with hands swollen with cold and hunger, the necessary books and reference material and compiled bibliographical notes. With the temperature 40° below, they plodded on foot to the library from their homes, realizing that the city, the front, their country might need some books, this or that reference, some map or another.

It was not only for defence purposes that books were required: they were eagerly desired by the wounded in the hospitals, and for the front line troops in the intervals between the fighting. And in Leningrad's central library travelling libraries were compiled for the trenches and the wards.

Those were terrible days for the city. Bombs and fires wrought untold havoc; buildings were demolished that contained valuable libraries, both public and private. These treasures just had to be saved. And, conquering the feebleness from hunger and exhaustion, librarian enthusiasts would set out to save them. They made their way into shattered buildings and extricated books from among the debris. In children's sleds and prams, in sacks borne on the

back, and only later in motor-cars, the rescued books were brought to the library. A quarter of a million volumes were saved in this way, including some that are practically unique, precious manuscripts and autographs, a newspaper file of Civil War days, the French Consulate archives, including the letters of Poincaré and Paléologue, the "World's Cities" postcard collection comprising 80,000 cards, the autographs of Peter I and Catherine II, of Amundsen, Garibaldi, Dostoyevsky, Karamzin, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Glazounov, Liszt and many other celebrities. Two other valuable rescued items are the library of Lerner, the well-known authority on Pushkin, with its unique Pushkin collection, and records of Larionov, of Tsushima fame. And these form only a fraction of the whole.

Research activity in the library continued. Work was kept up on former subjects of research, and a number of new ones were embarked upon as, for example, the compilation of a "Bibliography of Slavonic Studies." A special group prepared a collection and bibliography dealing with wartime Leningrad. By the end of 1944, the collection numbered over 40,000 items, while in the bibliography, about 100,000 entries had been made. Incomplete as it still is, the collection already provides a rich source of material for the students of the Leningrad defence. Work was also started on an "Encyclopaedia of Libraries and Bibliography."

The city's librarians met regularly in the Saltykov-Shchedrin library to hear reports on wartime library work, on developments in their field abroad—in the United States, for example—on the microfilm, and so forth.

When the terrible blockade winter of 1941—1942 had been left behind, one small reading-room was re-opened. By their own efforts, the librarians fitted up the premises, laid in a supply of firewood, replaced the books in most common use and all the reference material. Readers were not slow in coming—wartime readers: military men, army surgeons, political officers, war-factory engineers, journalists. By November 1st, 1944, the library had catered in wartime to over 12,000 readers, supplying them with 613,000 books and 43,000 replies to requests for information on particular topics. Advice was sought on every manner of subject arising in front line Leningrad. Information was needed on the equipment and functioning of underground hospitals; on hygienic standards in besieged towns; on shrapnel wounds; the heroes of the war of 1812; on the processing of soya; the principles of just and unjust wars; the effect of hunger on the organism; restoration of railway bridges; and so on, ad lib. After the blockade had been broken and as Leningrad's contacts with the outside world were resumed, the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library also renewed its connections with research institutions elsewhere in the Soviet Union and abroad.

Letters arrived from all parts of the country. The University of Kazakhstan and the Sverdlovsk Archives Board, the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute and the Veterinary Institute at Alma-Ata, the Irkutsk University and the City Library of Chelyabinsk, research workers, soldiers back from the front, executives in every field of production, young people engaged in self-tuition —all applied to the library for books, material or information.

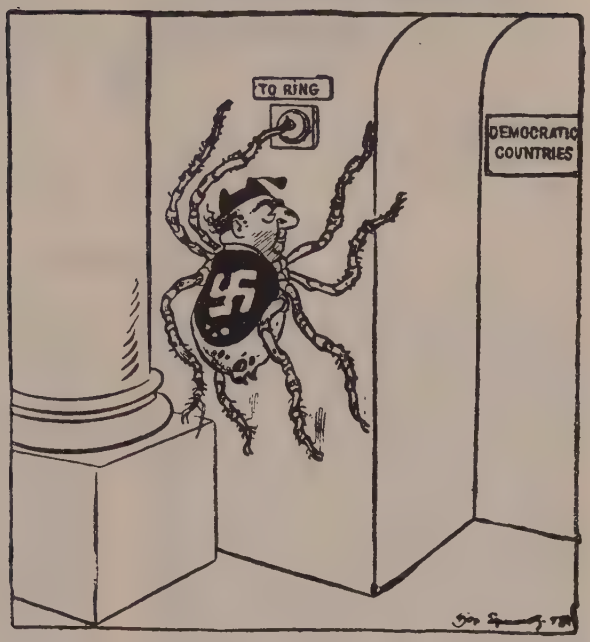
Every day the post brings to the library a whole packet of letters bearing the field mailstamp, letters from officers and men, political staff workers and army surgeons. These letters are remarkable documents of our age, bearing evidence of the tremendous attraction that culture, knowledge, the printed word has for the Soviet people.

And the library staff duly dispatch books out to the front, copy out extracts that the letters ask for, draw up bibliographical indexes, and reply in detail to the multitudenous questions put to them.

Such is the wartime work of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library.

LYLYA FRANKFURT

A TROUBLESOME INSECT



Drawing by Boris Yefimov

PATERNAL CARE

"These children should be forgiven, for they know not what they do!"

Drawing by Boris Yefimov

FOR CHILDREN ABOUT CHILDREN BY

MOWGLI

The white clouds of an Indian summer still drifted in the pale blue sky but lofty proud trees were already paying for the generosity of the summer sun with the pure gold of their foliage. In the small hours of the morning, autumn stole into the forest and touched the dry, brittle grass with white frost. Birds fell silent and only the blue cranes essayed their piercing cries with the first rays of the sun. Pine trees darkened, the juniper berries shrivelled and turned a smoky black; the wide bronze fronds of the bracken tinkled gently. Huge toadstools reflected all the hues of lingering summer. Badgers and foxes were busy deepening their holes and preparing for winter. Wolves became bolder and emerged from ravines; now and then hares rushed madly through the forest; wild goats cautiously made their way to the stubble and wild boars feverishly furrowed the ground.

For a long time we stood by a path overgrown with grass that led into an age-old private forest. The local peasants averred that for twenty years not a single person except the gamekeeper had entered this forest. Mushrooms ripened and decayed; gay wild strawberries shrivelled and fell off onto the grass; heavy overripe huckleberries swayed on their dry stalks and no hand plucked the tiny flaming bilberries. Such had been the will of the Polish landowner.

We stood admiring the mighty forest and felt sorry for its riches wasting away. The weather was superb and even the distant booming of guns failed to disturb the solemn silence of the wood.

We were on our way to Warsaw and never before had we seen such virginal woodland. The partisans' forests from which fighters like ourselves came to meet the Red Army were pitted by German bombs and the hoary pine-trees seemed as fragile as matches after the tempest of war had swept over them.

We stood and admired the silent, sleepy forest. Our hunter's souls were stirred and our hearts palpitating. And just during those silent thrilling minutes we observed a strange figure emerge from the trees and stop short on the road about a hundred yards away, poised as if meaning to disappear again. In a second we realized that it was a human being. He was barefoot and his legs, naked to the knees, were the colour of pine-tree bark. An animal's skin hung around his shoulders and his hair rose in a tangled mass.

"Hello," I cried, "come over here!"

"Hi, mister!" my companion repeated the call in Polish.

The creature made several steps towards us but again halted. His movements were so light and supple that he seemed to be ready any moment to spread his mantle and fly away.

Amazed we began to move slowly towards him. He was trembling all over but remained where he stood. His dark beautiful face turned grey. Fear and hope shone in his black eyes. As we drew nearer, his pale lips began to quiver:

"Pan—a Russian? Russian? He won't kill?"

We were so agitated, we couldn't utter a word and only smiled at him in reply.

The creature touched my shoulder, felt my straps and the star on my tunic and as though suddenly exhausted, fell to the ground and wept.

It appeared he was a youth of about fifteen years. All day we sat with him, listening to his astonishing and rambling narrative. The boy spoke a mixture of Polish and Ukrainian, mixing the words. Often he was unable to recall the names of the simplest things. A rare human fate was unfolded to us.

For five long years he had lived alone in this forest, his sole habitation being a deep pit. He described his life with wild beasts and birds. When he spoke of wolves the words came from his lips in a howl: "Woooo-ves." At the strange wailing sound cold shivers ran down my spine. "Mowgli!" both my comrade and I exclaimed instantly recalling Kipling's tale.

Our Mowgli was about ten years old when the Germans invaded Poland and killed both father and mother before the boy's very eyes. Dying his mother said something about Russia. Dodging rifle shots, the boy ran off into the woods and began waiting for a miracle to happen.

He was frightened to death during his first night in the forest but the thought of returning to men was still more terrible. He penetrated into the heart of the forest and for two days and nights lay in a deep pit without food. Wolves ("woooo-ves") passed overhead, snuffling around the pit-head. On the second night a huge boar

with tusks like an elephant's stopped directly above him, grunting angrily. A hare jumped into the hole to escape from a fox.

We listened breathlessly to this fantastic tale. As hunters, we were well acquainted with the mysteries of the forest life.

On the third day Mowgli clambered out of his hole and staggering from weakness went to gather mushrooms. He came across little black pigs; a wild boar sniffed him over and let him pass. The boy had evidently acquired new smells.

Mowgli had once read a small Polish edition of Robinson Crusoe and this helped him now. Still more useful proved a small steel horseshoe and a good flint which he had procured during his first attempts at smoking. He had to change the flint many times afterwards and found other stones from which sparks could be produced. His large woven wick burned down completely by the end of the first month, so he made others by tearing his shirt into strips.

Mowgli built a small fireplace in his pit and covered it with branches. He baked or roasted mushrooms on this, impaling them on sharp sticks. When he had finished eating he would rake out the ashes, strew them with dry leaves and sleep on the warm ground. Field mice visited him, seeking warmth, and badgers sometimes ransacked his bed unceremoniously.

In late autumn he met with a stroke of luck. He heard a shot and recognized the forester's rifle. Hiding behind the huge tree-trunks, Mowgli ran in the direction of the report. A big goat, wounded in the breast, bounded straight towards him and suddenly fell head downwards—the blood filling its lungs. The boy at once decided to make the spoil his own. He covered it with branches, climbed up a tree and waited. The forester passed by the dead animal without discovering it, and roamed around for more than an hour in search of his game but evidently came to the conclusion that the goat had got away with a slight wound. When Mowgli realized that the forester had abandoned the search, he dragged the goat to his hole. By this time he had provided himself with a rusty piece of iron hoop which he had sharpened on a stone. Using this knife, he skinned the goat and dried the hide which served as a coat for more than four years. His shirt and trousers had been torn to rags a long time before but the worn hide still protected the boy's shoulders.

The goat's flesh lasted Mowgli for half the winter. His supplies dwindling, he tried snaring hares with traps made of young twigs but the hares gnawed through them and ran off. Hungry days followed. The boy raked the snow, gathering acorns and pine-cones, the seeds of which he ate. Hunger drove him out onto the open road. One night he stole into the village across the soft February snow, having tied pieces of bark to his feet to guard against leaving footprints. His movements had already become supple and agile as a wild animal's. He tried the window of a veranda and it gave way. Inside, a forgotten piece of bread and a frozen cabbage-head were lying on a bench. Mowgli snatched them up and returned to his pit. Throughout the next day he feasted by his tiny fire enjoying the already forgotten taste of bread. The following day the boy managed to decoy a hare with the cabbage stump but as always, the animal slipped out of the simple noose. So once more he made his way to the village.

When the boy crawled up to the now familiar veranda, he found all the windows were tightly closed. He would have tried to gnaw through the window-frame had he not been afraid of people. But fortune once more smiled on him, for there on the upper side of the porch was a forgotten pot of porridge. "What a silly housewife!" was Mowgli's comment to us.

After a two-day's interval Mowgli crawled to the house again. All was locked up as before, but the negligent housewife ("such a woman can ruin a household," explained the boy) had left on the porch a whole loaf of bread and a piece of fat pork. On this he lived like a prince for two days and then on a clear starlit night wandered to the same house again. The housewife's stupid carelessness still caused him great amusement for this time she had overlooked a pair of wooden shoes and a loaf of bread, wrapped in an old coat! He didn't hesitate a second. Quickly—everything under the hide and away to the forest! Glancing over his shoulder, he fancied he saw one of the shutters half-open; he was not afraid, however, for his legs were already as fleet as a wolf's. On the way back he was fortunate enough to find a piece of wire, dropped by somebody on the road.

The half-opened shutter, however, had alarmed him and he did not leave the forest for two weeks. Now he was able to obtain food without having to steal for with the wire he made snares which securely trapped the hares. But these eventually ceased to appear and the boy had again to subsist on pine-cones, acorns and red bilberries. So once more he came out onto the road, making for the familiar house.

Its appearance struck him as unusual even from afar. The shutters were open and all the windows were lighted up. As Mowgli advanced cautiously, his ears caught the sounds of a gramophone. The music fascinated him and he stood motionless, listening to the tune. Suddenly the door opened. A fat German soldier emerged and began to urinate right from the same porch on which Mowgli had found bread only a few days before. The glaring light pierced the boy's very heart. He realized that the negligent housewife was no longer in the house. It was full of Germans and a machine-gun muzzle stuck out of an open window.

After that Mowgli never left the forest. When he sensed the approach of the forester he retired deep into the wood; just like the wild beasts. He became quite friendly with some of the animals. He fashioned himself a stout sling with which he killed squirrels. But berries and mushrooms ignored by the wild animals remained his chief source of sustenance.

He quenched his thirst together with the animals, going down with them to the water. Sometimes in his sleep he dreamed of his old home, of father and mother, but he was already beginning to discredit these vague memories.

Once, about a year before, Mowgli had heard sounds of a strange commotion on the forest road. He drew nearer and from a tree top saw a large crowd of men armed with rifles. They were hurrying somewhere and often glanced behind them. "Partisans perhaps?" we asked. The youth looked at us, puzzled, not understanding our question and continued his story. He gathered that the men were talking Ukrainian and Polish and his heart almost leapt out of his body for suddenly he recollected everything. Long after the men had passed he remained in the tree, petrified by his memories.

After that Mowgli lay in his pit for a whole week prostrated with longing for people and with a new fear of them.

The last year was the worst. An inexplicable anguish gripped the boy. Sometimes he forgot to set snares for the hares and fed only on what happened to be within reach. He still made desperate, vain efforts to recall his mother's dying words.

Then came the eventful Indian summer. He heard the drone of planes and fearful sounds of gunfire. The past rushed to his mind with new vigour. His brain was in a whirl—he wished to understand so many things at once! Mowgli now spent almost all his time close to the road. He saw rumbling carts loaded with peasant's belongings. Women and children sat in the carts and the word "russ" (Russians) often reached his tortured brain.

One day soldiers, wearing red stars on their caps, appeared on the road. One of them, a middle-aged man with a pock-marked face, halted, cast a look at the sun and at the forest and sighed, looking straight at Mowgli (at least so it seemed to the boy, hiding in the branches of a huge oak). "And in our Russia now..." said the soldier, adding a few more words. And the words spoken by Mowgli's mother came back to him.

All day long we sat with the boy, entranced by his amazing recital. It was already getting dark when we returned to our car. We made Mowgli part with the hide and put on an army greatcoat. He wrapped himself in it laughing and making odd grunts.

In the headquarters we met a colonel of our acquaintance who was flying to the rear the next day. Before an hour had passed he had learnt all about Mowgli. The colonel was a stern man who rarely smiled and was averse to any show of sentimentality. Mowgli was already sleeping on a comfortable thick mattress covered with many greatcoats and the colonel made no attempt to hide his tears which he wiped away several times during our narrative.

"You know what, boys," said he finally, "I have a fine son; he's fifteen years old. Let them be brothers."

In the morning Mowgli flew away in a Douglas. Now he is probably beginning his studies, getting used to the bustle of the great city and to its amenities. Maybe he is already forgetting his dreadful past. He knows now that he is a man among men, that there are such things in the world as tender care, kindness, love and happiness.

It is my strong desire to see Mowgli again and to discover his real name. Now I am trying to find the "absent-minded" Polish woman who left bread for Mowgli and maybe some day I will write about her.

IVAN MARTYNOV

TALES OF THE DUST

THE INVISIBLE COLLECTION

Dust and still more dust all over the place!

Every day you go around with the duster, probe into every cranny only to have to do it all over again the next day. Everything's just as it was...

But where does all this dust come from?

Ah, that's just it. You go on living without noticing how everything in the house is disintegrating: the floor-boards wear away and down floats the plaster from the ceiling.

This fine chalk drops like some unseen snow. Noiselessly fall the invisible flakes —scales of ancient, long-vanished creatures.

From the fields the wind wafts the seeds of plants—living dust ready to grow into flowers. From the sidewalks come harmful bacteria, threatening disease and death.

Thirty years ago, the volcano Katamai in Alaska belched forth a cloud of the finest ash which covered the sea all around. Ninety miles away the dust lay so thick that a man could plunge into it up to the knee. The cloud belched forth by Katamai rose to a fearful height, stretched across the Atlantic, reached Europe fifteen days later and soon shrouded the entire northern hemisphere, dimming the sunlight. Scientists aver that for two whole years, until the dust dispersed, the sun shone a third less brightly than usual.

Factory chimneys, like miniature volcanoes, emit soot incessantly. A thick gloomy dome has been clapped over industrial cities. If you gathered all the soot emitted by the chimney stacks of England and then wanted to cart it away you would have to despatch three thousand trains loaded to capacity. Dispersed in the icy inter-stellar spaces are the ashes of dead worlds. Shooting stars burn up in the air, scattering daily a hundred ton of dust onto the face of the earth.

Dust gathers on the earth's surface just as it does on the globe tucked away on top of the cupboard.

And so when we brush the dust from our table we are destroying a strange collection: the scales of vanished creatures, harmful bacteria, the seeds of plants, the ashes of the terrible volcano Katamai and fragments of dead planets.

DUST PARTICLES IN A SUN-BEAM

The air in the room is full of dust, invisible until a slanting sun-beam darts in through the window. Then it seems that a white-hot rod has thrust itself through the aperture—the motes are so dazzling in the sunray.

Before the advent of the sun-beam we could not see the dust for the same reason that we cannot see the stars by day. The brightly coloured walls dazzled our eyes as does the bright sky during daylight. When the sun-beam pierced through the aperture the particles of dust flashed in all their brilliance making the wall seem dull in comparison. The myriad motes swirled in the beam against the dark background of the wall like the Milky Way in the night sky.

For days on end, a scientist tried to examine objects too tiny for even the strongest of microscopes, grumbling that the microscopes were too weak. Eventually, opticians refused to make microscopes for him. Then it happened that in his old age, the scientist raised his tired eyes and saw a sun-beam containing a cloud of particles usually invisible. He was struck by the idea that if just such a slender bright ray were directed slantwise beneath the microscope, perhaps it would be possible to examine tiny objects generally incapable of being seen. This he eventually did.

Gazing into his new microscope, he was carried away by the same wonder and enthusiasm as that great astronomer who first raised a telescope to the sky and saw in the dark expanses between the constellations thousands of new stars never seen before.

Like the stars in the firmament so, in the dark field of the microscope, shone particles so infinitely small that the scientist had never dreamed of seeing them.

He had hit on the super-microscope, the ultra-microscope.

The myriad motes in the sun-beam had led to the scientist's brilliant invention.

THE BREATHING OF OBJECTS

The simoom or sand storm rages in the southern deserts.

This furious whirling tornado of burning sand penetrates everywhere, into the tiniest crevice: into your ears, nose and eyes, and grits between your teeth.

Sand storms do not rage in the quiet rooms themselves but nevertheless there is not a nook or cranny in the house which escapes the dust. It is as if dust was not made up of lifeless inanimate particles, but living, sprightly creatures which skip around on nimble legs until they crawl into some chink or other.

However narrow a bottle-neck may be you have only to put the bottle away in the closet and dust will collect inside it immediately. And strange as it may seem, the enclosed opaque glass shades around electric lamps get more dusty inside that out.

But take a more obvious example—a pocket watch. All is tightly closed. Even if there is an opening, it is the tiniest, most insignificant chink. But there comes a time when the watch stops. The watch mender turns up his nose in disgust.

"What a lot of dust," he says, "enough to grow potatoes. The works must be cleaned."

But, I ask, if the dust is really inanimate, how can it penetrate a tight joint, wriggle inside the most remote corners, jam the spindles, stick in the cogs and slow down the persistent works?

The secret is that things, including watches, breathe. Upon going to bed, you take your watch from your pocket and put it on the chair beside you. The air inside the watch cools down and contracts and draws in the outer air through the joints. It breathes in. In the morning you put your watch back again into your warm pocket. The air in the watch expands and gently passes out through the joints. It breathes out—thus taking a complete breath.

Bottles breath in the same way.

It is warmer by day than by night. During the day, the air expands through the neck—it has breathed out. At night the air contracts—the bottle breathes in.

The bottle takes one complete breath each day.

The closed-in glass electric lamp shades breathe deep and often. They take a complete breath every time the electric globe inside is lit and becomes hot and is then put out. Breathe in, breathe out: things breathe, every cranny breathes. Dust is inhaled together with the air, but only pure air is exhaled—the dust settles inside.

TASTY "DYNAMITE"

What would you say if that basin of sugar on the table suddenly took it into its head to explode into the air?

Yet something of the sort has happened in sugar refineries, especially in the department where it is cut up.

Sugar dust, like powdery snow, drifts

about in the air. If you were to wait until such a sugar snow-storm were to settle, and then swept it up as they do snow in the street, you would have quite a big heap.

They were not particulary strict in that department—you could eat as much sugar as you liked but the one thing you could not do was to smoke.

As luck would have it, a new worker entered the department, an inveterate smoker who could not get through one hour without his tobacco. But here not a whiff: work and bear it. He bore it an hour, he bore it two, then he could stand it no longer. He looked round—the floor was of concrete, the machines of steel, what could possibly burn here?

"Dash it," he thinks, "the manager's got a bee in his bonnet. He's torturing us for nothing! I'll risk a couple of whiffs!"

The cigarette is in his mouth... a match...

Bang! The windows shattered! The door gone!

It's just as if a bomb has exploded. At the refinery they are shouting: "Accident! The dust has gone off! The sugar dust has exploded!"

Perhaps it's dangerous to nibble sugar when drinking tea—what if a piece were to explode in your mouth?

Don't be afraid.

Even if you were to go out of your way to burn sugar nothing would happen. It would harmlessly melt and then burn with a small blue flame.

Sugar is made up of large crystals which press hard one against the other. The flame cannot penetrate inside and would die down for lack of air between the closely packed crystals.

Sugar burns on the surface, layer by layer.

But with sugar dust it's another matter. Fine particles float in the air and burn in a moment... even quicker than that—in a thirty-thousandth part of a moment. Thirty thousand times quicker than a man can wink. In one hundred thousandth part of a second the dust changes into tightly compressed whitehot gas.

The blast gases expand, rush outwards on all sides, and blow out the windows and the doors.

There is another dangerous dust—that of flour which now and again causes terrible explosions at the mills.

Cakes are baked from flour and we fearlessly eat them for tea. But don't imagine you are eating TNT. Bread and sugar do not explode—that is, not until they are turned into dust.

DUST AND FLAME

People of different callings regard the world differently and set themselves diverse problems. Chemists who consider the world composed of organic and non-organic parts try to discover how to make organic matter artificially.

The cooks regard the world from another angle. For them it is composed of two essentially different parts—the edible and the non-edible, and they do their best to reduce the non-edible content.

The furnace experts consider the world's composition in yet another way.

Does it burn or doesn't it, is their concern. They make it their job to increase the combustible content of the world. They have altered a lot to their purpose, made many different fuels—from the gas in our homes to camel dung—kiziak. Nevertheless there were low quality fuels still not workable; though capable of ignition, emitting plenty of heat, they nevertheless burned very badly. However much engineers tried to utilize them for the furnace, rebuilt the fire-boxes or blew in air—nothing helped.

Then somebody remembered the explosive dust and suggested this stratagem:

"Let us pulverize this low quality fuel and then blow it into the fire-box. It should certainly be entirely consumed."

The experiment succeeded.

They began grinding up fuel into dust and blowing it into the fire-box through jets like huge pulverizers. A fountain of flame spurted from the jet and it looked as if a flame-thrower had been inserted into the furnace.

The fuel really did burn right up—very little ash was left—and there was hardly any smoke at all. It was a splendid system of combustion and was introduced into many power-stations.

And so when we ride in the tram-car or press on the electric switch we should remember the blasts of flaming dust roaring in the furnaces providing people with both light and power.

VLADIMIR ORLOV

EXPLOIT OF PIONEER BORYA TOVBA

In 1943, when the Red Army liberated the Donbas, the German fascist invaders, anticipating a landing from the sea, fortified the Krivaya Kossa peninsula, a narrow spot jutting out into the Azov Sea. They built concrete forts on the outskirts of the fishing village of Strelka and thoroughly mined approaches to it.

Borya Tovba, an eleven-year-old pioneer, and the son of a fisherman who lived in Strelka village, closely watched the German sappers at work and learned how to make mines harmless. He secretly removed two hundred eighty German mines and buried them in the sand. A large number of mines were rendered harmless by Borya's schoolmates and fellow pioneers whom he taught to handle the German traps.

Thanks to the heroism of Borya and his friends, Red Army reconnaissance parties were able to land on Krivaya Kossa in the autumn of 1943 without suffering any losses.

BOOKS AND WRITERS

TOILERS OF THE WAR

A number of Soviet novels published recently deal with heroism on the home front. In rapid succession Soviet readers have had Perventsev's "The Test," Fyodor Gladkov's "The Soldier of the Rear" and Anna Karavayeva's "Lights."[1]

Fyodor Gladkov made his name with his novel "Cement" (1923), which has been translated into many languages and was one of the first novels to depict Soviet working people. They were the men of the twenties who fought in defence of their country and began the work of building up the Soviet state.

The heroes of "Cement" returned from the Civil War fronts to find that the factories which the country had inherited from tsarist Russia had been devastated. Their sons and grandsons, the heroes of the new novel "The Soldier of the Rear" grew up in a land of industrial giants and are now forging weapons for the Red Army in its struggle against fascism.

Gladkov knows and loves the history of the Russian working class. You feel this in "The Soldier of the Rear," although it is a story of today it shows the history of several generations of workers, and a proud history it is. Take the workers of the Urals, for instance—their skill was praised by Peter the Great and they provided the backbone of Stalin's victorious forces at Tsaritsyn (now Stalingrad) during the Civil War.

The strict sense of duty so typical of these workers arises from their clear conception of history and their place in it. But there is much that neither the heroes of the book, nor we, its readers, can fully grasp: how the "second" line of Soviet industry was built up in the Urals long before the war, how millions of people moved there in the autumn of 1941 with giant factories from the war-zone and settled down so rapidly that soon there was no difference between the old hands and the newcomers.

"The Soldier of the Rear" is written in the form of a diary, a classical literary form for depicting the hero and his actions. "The Notes of Milling-Machine Operator Nikolai Sharonov" is the subtitle of the book. Sharonov himself says that it is an "account rendered to his conscience" which he decided to keep when times were hard in 1941 and 1942. Nikolai Sharonov is a worker and the son of a worker; he received technical and to some extent classical education (in the Institute of Literature) and then returned to his machine. He is a worker-engineer and an inventor, one of a type that came to the fore during the Five-Year Plans when an army of workers and peasants became engineers, doctors and so on.

The book follows two main lines—first, the diary of an inventor's work, of a man who comes from the rank and file and gives his all to the war effort, and second, the story of how Sharonov decided conflicting questions of conduct raised by the war.

At the beginning of the war Sharonov was sent from Leningrad to the Urals with an evacuated factory. Sharonov's wife stayed behind in the beleaguered city; his brother, an airman, was at the front. The more terrible the news from Leningrad, the more sharply does Sharonov raise the question: "Am I doing right by stopping here in the Urals?" Even if he had been sent there, even if his work was of direct service to the army at the front?

"The plain ordinariness of work a thousand miles from the front, gets on your nerves."

When Sharonov gets a letter about the death of his brother and his posthumous decoration with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, he is ready to throw up everything and leave for Leningrad. "So as to be with your own people?" he is asked by Serov, his friend and one of the factory's leading workers. "Yes and no," answers Sharonov. It was everything combined—a desire to work side by side with his wife in heroic Leningrad, a desire to be nearer the fighting and to get away from "the soul-destroying calm" of the rear. Perhaps Sharonov would have taken what was really the easier way out if it had not been for his friends. He raised the question of leaving privately as a matter of his own conscience, but settled it together with his friends.

His decision, like his inventions, took form in seclusion but came to life at the bench, where he listened to what the old skilled workers and the youngsters had to say. Sharonov remained. This was all the more difficult for him because his wife refused to leave Leningrad. Was this the victory of community over individual interest? "Yes and no," one may answer in Sharonov's own words. Sharonov chose the path along which his country, his people and the war had sent him. The other and easier path would no doubt have done less to mould his character and personality in the right way. This feature of the society in which Sharonov lives—the coincidence of community and private interests

[1] See our magazine Nos. 6 and 8, 1944.

—makes itself particularly clear during the war. It is typical of the time that it is the soldier at the front, Sharonov's brother (he was saved by a miracle but very seriously injured) who does more than anybody else to persuade him to stick to his post in the rear.

We don't want Gladkov's novel to appear in these notes as being more "psychological" than it is. It is obvious to the attentive reader, however, that Sharonov's "account rendered to conscience" is not less important than the exciting story of how he won his victories on the production front, how he lead a group of workers who got the factory out of the rut when it was lagging behind and then became the life and soul of the output competition between the "front line" teams.

The Urals was the rendez-vous of old and new factories, of men and women of all ages—of workers from the Urals, from the Donets Basin and from Leningrad—and they were all united by the great patriotism of the Soviet people. Sharonov felt that he was virtually at the front both because his labour resulted in tanks and because there was the same esprit de corps among the home-front workers as among their comrades in the trenches. When Sharonov went to Serov to ask permission to return to Leningrad he saw a terribly tired but unwavering man and he remembered that Serov's family had been left behind in the besieged city. He was ready then to forget himself and do anything to lighten Serov's burden. There was the same tender but manly friendship between Sharonov and Peter; he knew how hard it had been for Peter when his wife lost her reason after their little daughter had been killed by a German bomb during evacuation.

The joy of others also helps Sharonov—the love of his assistant Shura for a wounded lieutenant, his jolly meetings with the youth of the factory and his unforgettable talks with old Urals workers, genuine heroes of labour.

Perhaps some of the characters in the novel are too flat, some events and people are simplified and not shown with the full complexity of real life. Throughout the book, however, there is a feeling that the author has lived through, seen and is deeply interested in what he is describing. Once more the reader realizes that the lives and efforts of these Soviet people are so significant that mere contact with them gives rise to a storm of thoughts and emotions. The truer to life the story told, the truer this is.

Karavayeva's novel, "Lights" is similar to Gladkov's in subject. The period is 1941 and the scene is set in an old Urals factory which has had joined to it an industrial giant from the South. The Urals workers are excited. Shortly before the war the reconstruction of their Lyssogorsk factory had begun but the outbreak of hostilities put a stop to its rejuvenation. At every step the Urals workers felt how difficult it was for their "old man" to keep pace with the "youngsters" arriving from the war zones. Then there were the men and women who came with them. They were their own Soviet people of course but still the Urals men thought that their guests had been spoiled by "novelty" and undervalued the Urals workers' traditional skill.

Permyakov, the manager of the Lyssogorsk factory, is at first rather cautious in his relations with his deputy Nazaryev who was formerly the manager of the evacuated plant. Nazaryev is a specialist in factory organization, a "mathematician," he calls himself, and it is only after a number of clashes that the old manager is convinced that the newcomer's "mathematics" are really transforming the old factory.

Some of the old Urals workers were afraid that their "pride" would suffer in competition with their new comrades. Life—and life in those days meant the army fighting at the front with its call for ever more effective weapons—brought these people closer together. Their earlier development and the whole history of their country had prepared them for mutual understanding. The ancient Urals which had become the second most important industrial region of the country during the period of the Five-Year Plans, had itself introduced much that was new, and was not to be astonished by the giants from the South. It is because of this that the great trek of men and machines turned out a success, that the Urals was materially and morally ready to receive its guests and, with them, to build up that great industry which is supplying the army.

It is true that Lyssogorsk is one of the oldest places in the Urals. A living chunk of history. Its workers treasure their labour traditions and their manners and customs, but they are not hidebound. Craftsmanship, tested and proved by years, however proud it may be of its own achievements, is able to appreciate the new, so long as it makes for improvement. It is like the arts: the consummate skill of the old masters is treasured but new methods are constantly being sought. Some of the workers and designers depicted by Karavayeva remind one strongly of artists. Kostromin, the designer of a new type of tank, is able to size up a machine as a doctor his patient. A captured German tank is brought to the factory. Kostromin sees that the mad ideas of the "Blitzkrieg," the myth of the invincibility of the Germans, has distorted the ideas of the tank's designer. The German has built his tank for a lightning excursion to the Urals; he did not bother about durability for he underestimated the strength of his opponent. The German tank came to the Urals—a mass of twisted rusty iron—women and children in the Urals settlement watched it go by with baleful eyes.

Much of Karavayeva's book is devoted to the Urals itself, to the landscape and to the ancient legends of the region. It

may even be said that Urals folklore permeates the book. "The blue blizzard" of the Urals which whirls around the lovers Serguei and Tanya on the eve of Serguei's departure for the front is like a fairy-tale. Like a fairy-tale, too, is the figure of the old craftsman Timofei against the background of the snowstorm. Timofei is the personification of the Urals. He is the bringer of happiness. We meet him at the home for evacuated children where Timofei makes a wonderful toy, "the house with the golden roof," for the smaller children. He meets Tanya again at the time when she believes Serguei to have been killed and he finds words that, like the golden roof, protect Tanya from despair and gloom. Timofei reminds Tanya that his people had never once lost faith in life or in struggle. Serguei did come back after having been saved from a burning tank. But this is not like a fairy-tale, for have not courage and faith conquered thousands of times during this war?

As we survey this huge family of toilers, from the old Urals craftsmen of the legends to the beardless youngsters who organize their brigades of "young avengers" (as they call their work team bent in raising output), we get a picture of the strength and immortality of the people. This applies to both books. There is something else which links them: the way labour is portrayed—as one of the great joys of life, an art inherited from Gorky. In these works the joy of labour is the "joy of battle" of which Pushkin speaks, the joy of a people defeating the enemy with a sword they themselves have forged.

There is no worship of machines in these books that describe so many machines but there is appreciation of the man who created them and who is their master; and that in our opinion is right and proper. It is appreciation of those who have clad themselves in steel for the last argument couched in the only language the fascists understand.

A. BORISSOV

"IN THE SOUTH"

In that tough winter of 1943 the Red Army troops of the Southern front took advantage of the enormous tie up of German forces at Stalingrad to strike out from the North-Caucasus. Anatoli Kalinin, then the "Komsomolskaya Pravda's" correspondent, travelled with a Cossack Corps in the advance all the way from the Terek to the Don. That is how "In the South" came into being—the young author's first novel.

The story was written hard on the heels of the fighting it describes. The author's immediate reaction to the stirring and significant events concerned gives strength to his characters and episodes and lends his story an inspired and swift-moving quality.

The writer traces the history of his Cossack Corps—its formation, its first offensive actions and finally its debouchment from the Caucasian foothills, from the Kuban to the Don, from the cramped mountain fastnesses to the wide open steppes. Freeing the Kuban Cossack villages as it goes, the Red Army surges forward with gathering momentum constantly increasing pressure. The retreating enemy clutches convulsively at defence lines—but in vain.

The relations of people to each other, the society, the individual and the family are placed in the foreground. Kalinin knows the Cossacks, their customs and psychology, and ably shows how their martial traditions interweave with the attitude and conceptions which determine the Red Army morale. Particularly interesting in this respect are the Chakans, father and son. The relations between the father, a veteran of the tsar's army, a rank-and-file cavalryman in the squadron of his son, a young Soviet officer, are drawn with a delicate and warm humour. Young Dmitri Chakan, a dashing head-strong Cossack, isn't at all averse to exerting his authority as an officer over his father, while old Chakan in his turn does not forget his paternal rights, especially in family matters. There's constant bickering between father and son over trifles, and a rivalry in skill and courage, but it is a rivalry charged with mutual respect. The son picks up tips from the veteran, and the older man, however much he tries to conceal it, is proud of his son. Little by little and quite imperceptibly the father acquires the same interests and sympathies as his son.

The central figure in the story is the young officer Lougovoy, the son of an engine-driver and a graduate of a military academy. He has been in the war from the start and is now in command of a regiment. The author invests him with many of his own thoughts and sentiments. He is a man who knows his job as an officer, a commander who learns from the war, who is able to make practical use of experience gained in war. He keenly seeks and finds new solutions to military problems and acquires the scope and daring of a master of his art. Colonel Lougovoy's character is not yet set in its final mould, but it is already a strong purposeful character, shown in all its complexity. We see how hard hit Lougovoy is by the news of the loss of his family in German captivity and admire his strength of spirit. Hardihood in the best sense of the word, a high and deep appreciation of nature, and his firm ties and sympathy with people around him help Lou-

govoy come through the test a stronger man than before. Lougovoy's strict moral code is brought out in his relations with the woman he loves. She is Doctor Marina, but she is the wife of another. Her husband, an army quartermaster, is a thorough cad and Lougovoy hates him wholeheartedly. But he is somewhat ashamed by that feeling and has a lurking fear that it is born purely of masculine jealousy. He wants to put the matter to the test—circumstances do it for him. When love of country overrides the inherent egoism of his rival's nature, Lougovoy, to his own surprise, finds his abhorrence giving way to another complicated feeling, —what exactly, he cannot yet make out. Lougovoy's world of thought and feeling is often contradictory, but it is a duality true to life, not artificial.

In Lougovoy the author has not yet given us a completely finished character, but he has caught many of the essential features not only of a Soviet officer but of a man of Soviet society in general. Anatoli Kalinin has succeeded in showing how personality is moulded in our society.

The characters of two other commanders, Rozhkov and Milovanov, are also well drawn. Corps commander Milovanov, who took part in the Civil War, and when peace came did good work in the diplomatic field, is a talented general. He ably frustrates and foretells the German command's plans, and in all his actions and in his sagacious dealings with the people around him we get a picture of a first-class Soviet general, a man of the Stalin school of war.

The book "In the South" also gives us representatives of the German command. As the battle unfolds the author makes wide use of German documents. He did not dig them out of archives but found them in German headquarters just after they had been captured.

The ill-starred commander of the 13th German Tank Division, Major-General Von de Chevelery and his subordinates are drawn without burlesque, but in full and rich colour. Kalinin rightly brings out the pedantic, wooden, truly-German attitude to the laws of warfare typical of the enemy command. This feature—the weak side of an adversary powerfully equipped, becomes apparent to the rank-and-file Red Army men.

"...They are slow in the uptake," says one of the Cossacks, "they've learned nothing as the war has gone on. They wanted to make donkeys of us at first and they are still trying to do it the same way now. Can't the noddles see we've got the measure of that already?"

Following the facts the author endeavours to show how the Red Army is backed in its fight by the whole people. To do it he has introduced an old collective farmer who makes his way across the front from the enemy rear to bring important news about the positions of the German units. Cases of heroism and devotion to the country on the part of ordinary collective farmers are numerous and it is more than likely that the writer is recounting an actual incident. However, he follows literary traditions in the present case rather than observations from life. In appearance and in conduct the peasant is a man of the Soviet type but the author gives him customs and habits of thought that belong to the museum, are obsolete, no longer typical of the old folk of our day.

The book is written in clear plain language. True, you can sense the influence of the great models of Russian literature both upon the language and in the description of scenery. This and the uneven flow of the story undoubtedly speak of the immaturity of the author who still has a lot to do for his improvement. But we may expect him to succeed in this as his first book is pleasing in its enthusiasm and sincerity. The main idea of the book, the homogeneity of the Red Army and the monolithic solidarity of the Soviet people in their love of country and hatred of the enemy, is expressed by the author with impressive strength through the medium of characters so true to life.

ALEXANDER MAKAROV

A LITERARY NEWSPAPER

Owing to wartime paper difficulties the three Soviet newspapers "Literary Newspaper" (Literaturnaya Gazeta), "Soviet Art" (Sovetskoye Iskusstvo) and "Cinema Newspaper" (Kino-Gazeta) were temporarily merged. They continued as a single publication under the name "Literature and Art" (Literatura i Iskusstvo) from the end of 1941 to November 1944 when it was found possible to publish them separately once more.

The "Literary Newspaper" in its present form, from its frontpage editorial to its last columns, handles topics covering all aspects of literature in wartime.

Amongst the regular contributions there is a small but interesting column headed "News of the Week;" this column carries information on all that is new in the Soviet literary world. Some of the items from a recent issue tell us that the Literary Section of the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) in Moscow held a public review and discussions of John Hearsey's latest novel "A Bell for Adano" in, which the author him-

self took part; that Samuel Marshak read his English songs and ballads in Russian translation at a meeting arranged by the same section; that Martin Andersen Nexö, the famous Danish author, had arrived in Leningrad; that the Union of Soviet Writers had held a plenary session in Uzbekistan; that the Moscow Children's Publishers arranged a public review of newly issued children's books; that an exhibition of Russian war books had been arranged at the Central Red Army Club; that the All-Russian Theatre Society had invited playwrights to meet the famous partisan" Ignatov who wrote "Notes of a Partisan" in which he described how he organized the first partisan column in the Kuban, and that The Museum of Fine Arts held a conference on the relations existing between the writer and publicist, Herzen, and artists.

A study of another regular feature, "In the Soviet Union," shows us how links are being built up and developed between the literatures of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. We see that literary life is full of variety and interest in Latvia, Lithuania and other republics that have been liberated from fascist aggression as well as in the republics far removed from the front such as Turkmenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. After a long interval the writers of the Donets Basin have held a conference; there is a literary contest being held in the Mari Soviet Republic, the home of a small nation that had no literature of its own before the revolution.

The "Literary Newspaper" carried an absorbing story of the blind bard of Turkmenia, Shahir-Ata Salikh. He lives thousands of miles from the front in a Turkmenian pleasant oasis near the ancient city of Merv, where the trees are dressed in their green leaves ten months of the year. Although he is so far from the front the bard immediately reacts to the exciting events of the war. The author of the story visited the blind bard and described him for the newspaper.

"When night falls over the oasis of Murghab and the deep silence is broken only by the rustling of the waterreeds and the occasional splash of fish leaping in a nearby pool, old Ata Salikh takes his seat on a rug by the doorway of his house. Before him stands a pot of strong green tea. He sits there the night through and by daybreak has composed a new lyric (ghazal). After a short nap he dictates the new verses to his brother, who acts as his secretary. The brother, Kaghak Salikh, then saddles his horse and rides to the post-office where he sends the verses off to Ashkhabad, the capital of the Turkmenian Republic. The verses will be printed in the newspapers of the republic or in the journal "Soviet Literature" (Soviet Adabiyati) and will eventually reach every town and village in Turkmenia."

"Literary Newspaper" has recently been printing new, unpublished works of leading Soviet writers and stories by young writers appearing in print for the first time. The newspaper printed the new chapters from the third volume of the late Alexei Tolstoy's "Peter the Great (Imperial Majesty)" and a chapter from Konstantin Fedin's new novel which will form part of a future trilogy. The scene of the trilogy is laid in a large Volga city; the first book deals with events in 1910, the second with the year 1919 and the Civil War and the third with the present war. Young contributors to the newspaper include Gueorgui Berezko; his story published depicted the heroic deeds of Corporal Shura Belyayeva, a young Russian girl.

Young writers, in fact, come in for a lot of attention. "Literary Newspaper" published an article by Leonid Timofeyev and Korneli Zelinsky of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Literature on the training of young writers. Ilya Ehrenburg, who watches every young poet in our country, recently analysed the work of Mikhail Lvov, who writes at the front, in the columns of the newspaper.

One issue of the paper devoted a whole page to "The Voice of Youth" — the work of six young soldier poets of considerable talent. The editor of "Literary Newspaper," Alexei Surkov, who is himself a poet who has spent some time at the front, wrote that the young poets "express all the stern reality of the soldiers' life in their verses as they would in a diary."

The war has made it difficult for Soviet writers to maintain contact with their colleagues abroad; this was especially true of the early years of the war; yet "Literary Newspaper" has managed to provide more or less regular news on what is happening in the literary world abroad. Articles appear dealing with leading foreign writers; there was an article by Eugenia Knipovich written in memory of Romain Rolland, a number of important facts in "Writers in the Struggle for France's Freedom" by Jean-Richard Bloch, Victor Maretsky's "Tragedy and Triumph" dealing with the terrible fate of Polish writers in German-occupied Warsaw and the joy at liberation from German oppression, and Mark Mendelsohn's analysis of two American novels, John Hearsey's "A Bell for Adano" and John Markland's "Time is Short." Russian critics continue to display interest in works on Soviet literature published abroad. Abel Startsev, an authority on Russian literature in the English-speaking countries, published an interesting article in "Literary Newspaper" on "Turgenev in England and the U.S.A." An article by Professor Mikhail Morozov on "Ostrovsky's Plays in England" tells the Soviet reader of the interest displayed by British literary and theatrical circles in the great Russian playwright.

Considerable space is devoted to the activities of the Union of Soviet Writers and its literary meetings, particularly the "reports" by writers newly arrived from the front.

"New Books" and "Briefs of Books" are columns reviewing new publications while "Coming Books" is written by authors who describe their future work. Ivan Novikov, who has already written several books on

Pushkin, is giving us another work to help recreate the figure of the great poet. Arkadi Perventsev will write on the Red Army's liberation of the Crimea and Marietta Shaginian is publishing some new sketches of life on the home front.

It is to be regretted that this feature is becoming rather monotonous. Instead of listing the finished or partly finished works of the authors concerned it would be better if space were given to the research undertaken by the author for the preparation of a given book; we should also like to know what prompted the author to work on a given subject, how he obtained his material and similar interesting details.

"Literary Newspaper" publishes critical essays on outstanding literary works; a good example is Mikhail Gelfand's essay on Alexei Tolstoy's new chapters to his "Peter the Great (Imperial Majesty)."

"Tolstoy," says the critic, "is unique in that he is apparently incapable of repetition. After the great changes, upheavals and historical lessons of the past ten years it would not be Tolstoy if he returned to his "Peter" merely for the purpose of adding a few more episodes in the previous strain. Naturally we still recognize the hand that penned the first two books of 'Peter,' the same broad vigorous action, subtle humour and, at times, a calm venom in depicting the characters; there is also that excellent flexible mode of expression which is peculiar to Tolstoy.

"In the third part of the book, however, there is something new which a careful perusal brings home to the reader—there is a sharp rise from one plane in history to another."

In these new chapters the figure of Peter the Great grows to its "real historical and human dimensions... a national hero who gathered unto himself and personified the finest qualities of his people.., A great nation develops, matures and conquers together with Peter."

"...It was obviously not mere chance that led to the publications of such novels as 'Peter the Great,' 'The Road to Calvary' and 'Ivan the Dread' during the Soviet people's years of trial and victory. These events which form the main theme of Alexei Tolstoy's novels cover the most heroic and critical periods in three and a half centuries of Russian history."

Another article in "Literary Newspaper" that is worthy of attention is Vladimir Yermilov's "Here the Letter Ends..." dealing with the young writer Yuri Krymov who was killed in action. Readers will remember Krymov as the author of "Tanker Derbent" and "Engineer," a number of short stories and a series of absorbing letters written from the front during the early months of the war before Krymov met his death. The publishing house "Soviet Writer" has issued a one-volume edition of his works.

"You open the new book with some trepidation," writes Yermilov, "wondering whether the stories will have stood the test of time. Will novels that tell of peacetime life not seem remote, pale and dimmed by the stern reality of the soldiers life in their page; however, you feel that all that is written here is pulsating with life, it is a book still full of the ardour of youth which shows how today the man of the Soviet people who in the past fought for the fulfilment of the Stalin Five-Year Plans and for the Stakhanov movement is fighting and defeating the fascists on the battlefield. This is the Soviet man who grew up amidst incessant and relentless struggles against all form of stagnation, backwardness and cowardice. The Soviet way of life produced a courageous, clear-headed and united people, "people good for a fight" to use Maxim Gorky's expression, people who are innovators in the fields of science, technology and labour—the patriots of the Soviet Union. Krymov's stories show us the unbroken ties between our life before and during the war, the unbroken continuity of the traditions and creeds of our young socialist society thanks to which we are now defeating nazi Germany. Krymov's prewar stories provide a much more profound explanation of what is happening today than do many works of a more topical nature."

Another point on which I would criticize "Literary Newspaper" is the following: although a number of reviews and critical articles on the work of individual writers have appeared, very little space is devoted to an examination of a cross-section of our present-day literature. Writers themselves often take up this subject in their discussions at the Union of Soviet Writers. "Literary Newspaper" reported a discussion on the figure of the Soviet officer as shown by wartime literature and a debate on problems of modern dramaturgy in which playwrights, critics and theatrical people took part.

There was also a lively discussion on wartime sea stories. This last discussion stressed the importance of the literary theme of the Soviet Union as a great sea power with glorious naval traditions. One of the most successful Soviet sea stories was Alexander Kron's play "Naval Officer" which gives a fine psychological picture of the modern Soviet seaman; the war is shown through the eyes of those who do the fighting but maintain strong ties with their people. Alexander Zonin's "Brotherhood of the Sea" was well received by the critics; the author shows a deep knowledge of his subject and gives a very forceful picture of naval operations. The discussion brought out the point that Soviet literature has produced very few novels on the history of the navy and hardly ever have the lives of great navigators and naval commanders served as the subjects of novels. Many writers have been to sea and have taken part in naval operations so that it is to be hoped that the future will produce works that reflect experiences thus gained. Unfortunately "Literary Newspaper" is mainly a mirror of these discussions in literary circles and is not the sponsor, although there are many problems in the literary field which

the Soviet writers' own newspaper should be the first to propound without waiting for the journals to take them up.

The Union of Soviet Writers recently asked the question through the columns of the paper: "What do you read in wartime:" Answers came from the people in all walks of life—Marshal Fyodor Tolbukhin, Major-General Fessin, Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Hero of Socialist Labour Yakovlev, the famous aircraft designer, Valeria Borts, a girl student of Moscow Aviation Institute and a member of the young people's underground partisan organization which was active in the Donets Basin during the German occupation, and a number of others. The answers showed a great variety of tastes. Engineers and designers are usually considered pedantic and interested in their own narrow speciality, yet Yakovlev favours such historical novels as Yan's "Khan Batu" and "Genghis Khan," Tolstoy's "Peter the Great" and Borodin's "Dmitri Donskoy;" he does not confine himself to this one category however and mentioned his liking for Chekhov, Maupassant, Mayne Reid and Jules Verne. Others prefer more modern writers. Hero of the Soviet Union Major-General Fyodorov wrote about impressions received on reading Leonid Sobolev's "Sailor Soul," Tvardovsky's "Vassili Tyorkin" and Gorbatov's "Unbowed." These, he said, are books that help you to fight.

Nearly everybody who answered the question mentioned Ilya Ehrenburg and Constantine Simonov. Great favourites are the books by Alexander Beck, a writer who has come to the fore quite recently with his novels about the famous Panfilov Division which distinguished itself in the fighting at Moscow in 1941 ("Panfilov's Men" and "Volokolamsk Highway"); a well-read book is Fadeyev's "The Nineteen," a classic of the Civil War in 1918—1920. These are indeed books that help you fight, for their authors have themselves seen action at the front.

Ilya Ehrenburg recently published his "Writer's Notes" in the newspaper; he wrote of the progressive writers of Europe who devoted their lives and their work to the fight against fascism—Kostas Palamas, the Greek writer, Nordahl Grieg, the Norwegian, Boy-Zelenski, the Polish writer, and many others. It was Ehrenburg's aim on the eve of victory to remind his readers that "men usually pictured seated in studies, surrounded by books, did not evade battle but went into the trenches or fought in the underground; they became airmen, infantrymen or partisans. They were not daunted by prison or the nazi firing squad and as favourite sons of their people remained in the hour of trial in the place that was equally open to the plaudits of the crowd and the bullets of the enemy."

One cannot help but agree with Ehrenburg's analysis of the wartime activities of Russian writers. "Russian writers shared the lot of their people," he says. "During enemy air-raids they wrote sketches, essays, articles and leaflets; in the difficult days of the retreat they wrote splendid songs; many of them have been working now for several years far from the armchair and writing desk. The pride they feel is not so much in their works as in the cause to which they have given themselves heart and soul, the cause to which they have devoted their most productive years and which I may call, without being ashamed of a bold assertion, 'the cause of justice'."

On the eve of victory there is even greater strength in the voices of Soviet writers recorded in the columns of "Literary Newspaper," voices that proclaim solidarity and untiring service to the common cause.

LYDIA BATH

PUSHKIN'S KIN AND RUSSIAN ARMS

Defence of the homeland against foreign invaders is the outstanding feature of Russia's long and turbulent history. In the 13th century the Tatar-Mongols, under the leadership of Khan Batu, grandson of the celebrated Genghis Khan, descended upon Russia like a hurricane; from the West and the North-west the German Cur Knights, the Swedes, the Poles, and Napoleon made long and desperate thrusts to conquer the land of the Russian people. Only the Tatar-Mongol hordes succeeded in temporarily subjugating and ruling the country for more than two centuries; but this yoke was finally thrown off during the reign of the Russian Tsar Ivan the Dread, and the Tatar-Mongols withdrew to the wide spaces of the East, never again to set conquering foot on Russian soil.

In the long and heroic annals of Russian arms raised in defence of the country, an honourable though little-known place belongs to kinsmen of the great Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin. The poet was always highly conscious and proud of the patriotic role played by his kin and more than once invoked his poetic Muse in praise of the military deeds of his family in the service and defence of Russia and her people. These martial services and feats of patriotic valour of Pushkin's kinsmen are little-known in their native Russia (except for Abram Hannibal) and almost wholly unknown in the outside world.

The progressive Russian Tsar, Peter the Great, having great difficulty in inculcating western education, ideas and progress upon his subjects, with his usual astuteness hit upon the idea of educating in France his beloved godchild, Abram Hannibal, who was Pushkin's ancestor. Hannibal did not betray the con-

fidence and hope placed in him by his Imperial patron and godfather; he returned to Russia from the famous Ecole d'Artillerie, where Peter had sent him in 1717, a man of education and a fullfledged army engineer.

Service in the War of the Spanish Succession during the period of his sojourn in France gave Abram Hannibal his first taste of warfare. But his military career lay ahead of him in Russia. Russia was at that time under the threat of aggression from the Swedes and the Poles in the West and the Turks in the South, and she was weaker in a military sense than her hostile neighbours. The Swedish army especially was considered the finest and strongest in Europe. Artillery was beginning to play a more and more decisive role in warfare, and Russia was comparatively weak in this respect; she did not have competent artillery engineers of her own, nor did she have many strong fortifications which could stand up well against artillery fire. Her cannon were of a relatively poor quality, for it is recorded in the annals of the period that an attempt was made to export Russian guns to Holland, but "when tested they all burst," and the "Tula plant supplied cannon much inferior to the German work." Furthermore, at the battle of Narva, Karl XII of Sweden captured all the Russian artillery there was.

Such was the situation, in general, when Abram Hannibal came home to Russia with the best knowledge of artillery and military engineering that France had to offer, with the rank of a French lieutenant, and with a sabre gash on his head as painful evidence that he had received his baptism of fire. This godchild of Peter the Great was one of Russia's first, and subsequently became one of her greatest, artillery and fortifications engineers. His skill in the mathematical sciences, a subject to which Peter the Great was at that time devoting great attention, soon won him the avocational position of teacher of mathematics to the heir to the Russian throne. An important and leading role was played by Abram Hannibal in the construction and arming of the great Kronstadt fortress, which stands to this day, grim and foreboding before Leningrad, at the head of the Gulf of Finland, and which played a decisive role in the defence of that heroic city during the long German siege from 1941 to 1944. Under the Empress Elizabeth, Abram Hannibal's engineering feats reached their zenith; he was considered and recognized as a leading and outstanding authority. Space does not permit us to relate his feats in detail; but suffice it to say that he was assigned engineering tasks even in distant Siberia, rose to the high rank of Engineer-General in the Russian army, ranked high in government affairs, and won the coveted Order of St. Alexander Nevsky.

With the death of Abram Hannibal in 1781, the military feats of the Hannibal line did not come to a close, for he left a son, Ivan Hannibal, whose military feats and skill equalled, if not surpassed, those of his illustrious father. This son, who was born in 1737, was educated in the Cadets Corps in St. Petersburg. The sea appealed to him and he entered the Russian fleet as an officer, later becoming Section Master of Naval Artillery. Most of his early naval service was spent around the Baltic Sea: but it was in the Mediterranean, not far from the coast of that Africa where his father was born, that he rose to the heights of glory in the service of Russian arms.

Turkey, then a great and aggressive power, was an inveterate enemy of Russia, and the wars were fought out in the Black Sea and its eastern and western shores. Russia sent a Baltic Sea squadron around Western Europe and through the Mediterranean Sea to attack the Turkish fleet from the west. An officer in this Russian squadron, which sailed for eight months through autumn and winter storms, was Ivan Hannibal, who was destined to occupy an important post in the Russian fleet at the decisive battle of Navarino, where the Turkish fleet was defeated.

The Russian ranking naval officer, Prince Dolgoruky, was under orders to lay siege to and capture the powerful Turkish fortress of Navarino, situated on the bay of the same name. But Prince Dolgoruky, after due consideration, decided that it was impossible to capture this Turkish "Gibraltar," and refused to assume responsibility for attempting this seemingly impossible task. The Russian High Commander, Spiridov, then turned the job over to Ivan Hannibal, who immediately set to work in earnest. After working out his plans in detail, Admiral Hannibal opened the great naval attack. The task was no easy one; the powerful Turkish fleet had to be contended with from the sea; the Turkish forts blazed away from the shore. For two weeks the great battle raged. Admiral Hannibal succeeded in landing heavy calibre cannon and several hundred Russian seamen on shore; batteries were set up to the east and the west of the fortress. On the fifteenth day of the battle, April 10th, 1770, Navarino fell. What was left of the Turkish fleet fled toward the Bay of Chesma. The poet Pushkin, in his work, "My Pedigree," celebrated this great victory of his kinsman thus:

"Hannibal, before whom, amidst the perilous abysses, the mass of ships blazed up and Navarino fell for the first time."

After having destroyed and captured the fortress, Admiral Hannibal was then commissioned by the Russian High Command to rebuild it, which he did with much skill. Following this campaign Ivan Hannibal was commissioned to build the great Kherson fortress near Odessa, in the Ukraine. This fortress was intended as another barrier against Turkish and Tatar thrusts against Russia. Ivan Hannibal's well-deserved honours were many. Before his death in 1801, three years after Pushkin's birth, he had been awarded the Order of St. Anne, the

Order of St. Alexander Nevsky, the Order of St. George, had become a member of the Imperial Russian Naval Ministry and had added another brilliant chapter to the fighting record of the Hannibal line in Russia.

Prince Mirsky in his biography of Pushkin writes that Ivan Hannibal's brother, Ossip Hannibal, "left no trace in history." The Prince seems to err: Ossip Hannibal served Russia as a major of artillery in the Russian Navy, having been appointed by Catherine the Great. Admittedly, the mere fact of having served one's country as a major of artillery does not entitle one to a place in history. But Ossip Hannibal's daughter, Nadezhda Ossipovna, was the mother of Alexander Pushkin!

Pushkin left no record of participation in military affairs (except for his acquaintance with the officers of the Hussars Regiment stationed at Tsarskoye Selo during his Lycée days). However, it may be worth mentioning that he once was involved in a real battle but more as an outsider than as a participant. Pushkin was present at the battle of Erzerum in the Caucasus and was so heedless of danger during the engagement that the Russian commander was compelled to order that Pushkin be kept away from the front lines.

The poet's brother, Lev Pushkin, however, continued the honoured military tradition. Lev Pushkin began his military career as corporal in the Nizhni-Novgorod Regiment. Incidentally, it may be interesting to note that all of the participants in the Decembrist uprising in 1825 against tsarist autocracy who were not hanged or exiled to Siberia were ordered to serve in this regiment. (Who knows but that Pushkin, who was an intimate friend of the Decembrists, might not also have been sent to obtain military experience in this same regiment had it been possible to prove his direct connections with the Decembrists and sympathy for their cause? Or had he not been absent from St. Petersburg on the date of the uprising?) The records show that Lev Pushkin was a courageous and able officer, for which he was awarded the Order of St. Anne, the Order of St. Vladimir and the Order of St. Stanislav.

We can only briefly mention some of the more important campaigns in which Lev Pushkin participated and earned the high awards mentioned above; he advanced to the rank of major. He served bravely in the Nizhni-Novgorod Regiment in the wars against Turkey and Persia and was cited for excellent soldiership; he was staff captain in the Finnish Dragoon Regiment in the Polish War and later commanded the Stavropol Cossack Regiment. Lev Pushkin participated in the storming and capture of that same Erzerum where his celebrated brother was so reckless. Apart from earning the reputation of being a brave and capable officer, Lev Pushkin is also known to have shown the same characteristics as his famous brother: full lips, nose somewhat spreading at the base, frizzly hair, etc. One can well imagine what a dashing officer Lev Pushkin must have been, especially in the bright-coloured, tight-fitting uniforms worn at that time!

Alexander Pushkin left a son, also Alexander, who continued the Hannibal military tradition, although with less brilliance than his ancestors. Perhaps the opportunities were not so great; wars were not so common and continuous. Alexander finished the most aristocratic military school in Russia and began service as an officer in the Imperial Life-Guards Cavalry Regiment. He served against Turkey as commander of the Narvsky Cavalry Regiment, and in 1877 was awarded a gold sabre for bravery. By 1908 he had won promotion to the rank of General of Cavalry. At the beginning of the World War of 1914—1918 he was again ready to serve Russia, but on the very day when war was declared he died over his morning cup of tea.

Two of Pushkin's descendants have served in the present Red Army, too. One of them, Grigori Pushkin, grandson of the poet, died on the eve of the treacherous attack of Hitler Germany on Soviet Russia. He served in the Red Army during the harsh period of Civil War and intervention. He had had military experience in the old tsarist army, was commander of the Pechersky Regiment fighting against the Austro-German alliance. An exploding shell caused him severe concussion. After the establishment of Soviet power and the formation of the Red Army, he served in the Signal Corps of that army for several years until he retired on pension.

His son, Grigori Pushkin, great-grandson of the poet, was a junior commander in the Red Army reserves when the Soviet-German war began in 1941. Being highly-conscious of the loyal traditions of patriotism and bravery of his Pushkin and Hannibal ancestors, he declared to this writer before leaving for the front that he is ever ready to defend Russia from outside aggression with an enthusiasm and patriotism not one whit less than that with which his long line of patriotic ancestors served the Russian land and people in bygone days when the Motherland was threatened by aggression.

We do not in this article claim to have exhausted the list of Pushkin's kinsmen, before and after the poet's time, who have patriotically upheld the honour and glory of Russian arms in defence of their country. We have only touched on some of the highlights. But this, it is hoped, will suffice to bring into the light of day some of the hitherto little-known facts pertaining to the patriotic and valued services which the kinsmen of Russia's greatest poet have rendered to their beloved Russian land for many generations.

HOMER SMITH

Vassili Katanyan, zealous and long-standing student of Mayakovsky, has published a book about this great Russian poet. The book bears the subtitle "Literary Chronicle" and its structure resembles that of an academic reference work. It contains a chronological synopsis of the main facts of Mayakovsky's life, registered day after day and month after month. We find here data relating to Mayakovsky's poetical biography as well as to his extensive social activities. Despite all the biographical publications issued during the fifteen years that have elapsed since the poet's death, there are still many gaps in our knowledge of his life and work. Katanyan made up for this lack of data by persistent search of unpublished materials among state and private collections and by painstaking study of the provincial daily press whose forgotten sheets contain unexpected evidence on past events.

Katanyan's book contains two thousand facts which provide ample information on Mayakovsky's literary plans, on his ways and methods of writing, the dates of publication of all his poems, the countless speeches made by the poet before mass audiences, his tours through the U.S.S.R. and abroad, his participation in press controversies, meetings with artists and writers, his connections in the theatre and cinema world, his manifold literary and political interests.

Katanyan's work is something more than a mere reference book, intended only for a narrow circle of specialists. The innate nature of Mayakovsky, the foremost poet of the Soviet epoch, violently revolted against academical pedantism. Perhaps it was that feeling of the genuine Mayakovsky that urged Katanyan to design his book not only for reference purposes but also for the ordinary reader, and to address it not only to scholars, but to all those by whom Mayakovsky's name is revered.

He rejected therefore the formal style usual in works of such kind, cut down and in some cases completely eliminated the cumbersome reference apparatus. The reader is undoubtedly fully compensated with many illustrative quotations from Mayakovsky's speeches, letters, newspaper articles and reminiscences which he finds at almost every short mention of an event from the poet's life.

Turning over the pages of "Literary Chronicle" the reader hears a chorus of various documents: here is the stinging irony of the always apt lines of the poet himself, there the enthusiastic eulogy of critics, including those of Prague, Paris and New York. Of special interest are the posters announcing Mayakovsky's literary recitals. Written in the form of theses and intriguing the reader with their paradoxical contents, they remind one of the firework display of witticisms and satirical improvization, unforgettable to all who have seen Mayakovsky on the platform.

As a result, a complete, realistic image of the poet arises from this gallery of documentary evidence. The most striking feature of that image is perhaps the astounding feat of labour into which all the writer's innate self spent itself. Day after day, without any respite, with the heavy powerful rhythm of a hammerman he forged the "terrible weapon" of his verse.

His was not the work of an artist who locks himself in his ivory tower shunning all contact with the outer world. Mayakovsky's creative work was an integral part of the toil of his people, of his country. He did not consider his task fully accomplished in just writing a poem: he felt it his duty to drive it home, to defend it from philistines and conservative folk who were afraid of the unprecedented originality and boldness of his literary ideas; he had to bring it to the notice of the mass reader, to the people, through newspapers or from the platform. To realize the scope of propagandist work carried out by Mayakovsky, one has only to think of the countless tours he made throughout many parts of the Soviet Union, delivering lectures and reciting his poems. We shall cite here one of the many pages of Katanyan's "Literary Chronicle" omitting the details and the commentary.

"November 21st—left for a lecturing tour to Voronezh, Rostov, Taganrog, Novocherkassk, Krasnodar.

November 22nd—lecture in the Bolshoi Theatre in Voronezh, "My Discovery of America."

November 24th — lecture in the Lunacharsky Theatre in Rostov.

November 25th—lecture in the Tanners' Club in Taganrog.

November 26th—second lecture in the Lunacharsky Theatre in Rostov; "I and My Things," "Reported Conversation of Fifteen Years," etc., etc., such kind of toil going on unceasingly till November 30th when Mayakovsky left Krasnodar for Kiev in connection with his work on a film scenario."

The above. schedule speaks for itself. The pages of the "Literary Chronicle" present an edifying illustration of unity and singleness of purpose in the creative life and work of the great poet-fighter-citizen.

The "Soviet Writer" has issued a new collection of Constantine Simonov's short stories and essays entitled "Yugoslav Notebook."[1]

The book relates the heroic fight of the

[1] Short stories from this book, "The Slavonic Friendship" and "Night over Belgrade" have been published in the February and April issues of this magazine.

Yugoslav peoples for their independence, of friendship between the Slav peoples, cemented by their common struggle against nazism.

"Yugoslav Notebook" opens with a long essay called "In Southern Serbia." Together with Lieutenant-General Kocha Popovich, commander of Serbian partisan troops, Simonov witnessed the battle for the liberation of Nish, when the Soviet, Yugoslav and Bulgarian units rushed into the town simultaneously from the east, north and north-west.

"The Slavs had risen up in arms against the Germans. They were marching forward together and everything on that uncommonly bright autumn day seemed to presage victory," wrote Simonov watching partisan detachments and the Bulgarian infantry march in high spirits along the same road.

The story is imbued with the feeling of a common cause that is being fought for in the high mountain passes and the rich valleys of bleeding, tortured but unconquerable Serbia.

Simonov gives the following description of Yugoslav mountain scenery: "There was gentle Russian charm in that peaceful but somewhat sad picture; only the mountains towering all around made one recall that though the country belonged to the great Slav family, it still was a distant land for him."

The heroes of the "Yugoslav Notebook" are the Slav brothers—the Russians, the Yugoslavs, the Bulgarians who fought and died for the liberation of Yugoslavia.

The story "Corporal Yereshchenko" describes the exploit of a Russian soldier during the storming of Belgrade. Corporal Yereshchenko broke into a house occupied by the Germans and for several hours engaged in hand-to-hand fighting with many enemy soldiers. When, after the battle, Yereshchenko walked along the streets of Belgrade, limping slightly, "people bared their heads before him, patted him on the shoulder, spoke to him in their language and shook his hand heartily for a long time."

The noble idea of the brotherhood of the Slav peoples pervades the excellent story "The Candle."

Red Army man Chekulayev perishes while fighting for a bridge over the river Sava. His body is lying in a tiny square in which not a single tree has been left whole. The square is under continuous fire from German mine-throwers. Suddenly an old woman, Maria Djokich emerges from a basement and walking erect, for she is unable to crawl, goes straight to the Russian's body. With her hands she scoops water from a shell crater, lays the dead soldier in it and throwing in the earth, also by handfuls, builds up a small grave-mound. Then she produces from under her kerchief a big wax candle—one of the two wedding candles she has treasured for forty-five years—plants the candle into the head of the mound and lights it. The night is absolutely calm and the flame of the candle rises straight and bright. But mines are bursting around and when an air blast extinguishes the small flame from time to time, the old lady takes out her matches and lights the candle anew.

When at day-break the battle for the crossing flares up again, visible on the grave-mound, in the blackened, seared earth, amid mutilated iron and dead wood, still stands the aged widow's last possession—her wedding candle, the candle placed by a Yugoslav mother on the grave of a Russian son.

"Yugoslav Notebook" helps us understand and feel what is going on in Yugoslavia, where the country's fate is being radically changed by the people's own hands.

Immediately after Nish had been liberated, a spontaneous mass meeting took place on the town square before Headquarters. "Speeches were made by the commander of the partisan corps, by a representative of the Russian mission, by Colonel Bolgarianov, and the whole square reverberated with cheers when they spoke of the victory, of the incipient brotherhood of the Yugoslav and the Bulgarian peoples, of Tito, of Russia, of Stalin."

The State Cinema Publishing House is issuing collections of material concerning the history of world cinema art. Among the authors of the series are the leading personalities of the Soviet cinema, Doctor of Fine Arts, Professor Serguei Eisenstein and Doctor of Fine Arts, Professor Serguei Yutkevich.

The first volume of this series which has just appeared in print is devoted to the work of one of the greatest contributors to the art of cinematography, David W. Griffith.

"Griffith found dramaturgy in an art formerly only illustrative; his film dramas were tense and complicated, though at times somewhat awkward. Griffith's films marked the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the cinema," write the authors of the book, adding: "One may say that the cinema was invented twice: the first time when the brothers Lumière invented the motion picture camera, and the second time when Griffith raised motion pictures from a paltry show-booth attraction to the heights of genuine art."

The volume is divided into two main parts.

The first part contains articles dealing with various aspects of Griffith's work and the theoretical problems arising from a study of that period in the history of world cinematography which can rightly be called "the Griffith Period." We find here the articles: "Griffith and the Drama," by Mikhail Bleiman, "Dickens, Griffith and Ourselves," by Serguei Eisenstein and "Griffith and His Actors," by Serguei Yutkevich.

The second part is devoted to documentary evidence comprising observations on cinema problems by Griffith himself, remin-

iscenes of his collaborators and extracts from critical essays on Griffith by foreign authors.

Among the material collected in the second part of the book are some curious remarks worthy of our attention by Griffith made in 1924, about the impossibility of ever realizing the talking pictures, for, as he argued, it would never be possible to attain synchronism between voice and picture.

Characteristic of Griffith's utopism are his views that the cinema is the most effective antidote against war and that it can bring about the elimination of all armed conflicts in the civilized world.

The book is supplied with an appendix containing biographical data on the outstanding personalities of the American movie world of Griffith's time and the filmography of pictures produced by Griffith.

A pamphlet by Alexander Romm, "The Leningrad Monument of Peter I" has come from the Arts Publishers. The work also serves as a brief monograph on the creator of the celebrated monument—the French sculptor Etienne-Maurice Falconet (1716—1796).

The book deals with many interesting episodes in the long story of the creation of the monument which took several years.

The author outlines Falconet's life and his creative development, describing his rise from a simple artisan to a first-rate sculptor and outstanding theorist of the fine arts.

The book gives many quotations from the works on art by the French master and extracts from his correspondence with Diderot, exemplifying the aesthetical views of the former.

In the author's opinion, Falconet's coming to St. Petersburg was the happiest event in the life of the French sculptor, for it was here, far from the refined satiety of Paris that he was able to create his finest masterpiece.

Comparing Falconet's monument of Peter I with the equestrian statues by the Renaissance masters, Romm justly claims the superiority of Falconet's bronze rider, that unique creation of world art.

The State Literary Publishing House in Moscow has issued a volume of Walt Whitman's "Selected Prose and Poetry," translated by the well-known Soviet author, critic, poet and translator, Kornei Chukovsky.

Chukovsky was among the first Russian admirers and connoisseurs of the great American poet. He started translating Whitman over thirty years ago. The new book is the tenth edition of Chukovsky's translations. In the preface, the author states that he has revised all his old translations and added several new ones. He briefly sets forth the literary principles which guided him in his work and advises the reader to seek a fuller treatment of this subject given in his book "High Art," which is devoted exclusively to the problem of literary translation.

The central place in the book is taken by Whitman's chief poetical work, his "Song of Myself," an almost full translation of which is given in the volume. Among other poems included in the book wholly or in fragments the reader finds "A Song of Songs" with which the volume opens, "Song of the Exposition" and "Songs of the Open Road." These are followed by numerous minor poems from the cycles "Inscriptions," "Children of Adam," "Calamus," "Sea-Drift," "By the Road Side," "Drum Taps" and various others. Here are included verses well-known to the Soviet reader such as "Pioneers! O Pioneers!", "Beat, Beat, Drums!" and "To a Foild European Revolutionary" (the latter given as first translated).

The translation of the poem on Lincoln's death, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," deserves special mention since it is published here in full for the first time. The translation of the famous poem "Song of the Banner at Daybreak," inspired by the events of the Civil War, also makes its first appearance in this book.

The collection is prefaced with an extensive essay entitled "Walt Whitman, His Life and Work." The appendix contains two articles: "Turgenev and Tolstoy on Whitman" and "Walt Whitman and Mayakovsky." As we learn from the text these form part of an unpublished work by Chukovsky entitled "Whitman in Russian Literature." The newly discovered translations from Whitman made by Turgenev during the decade 1870—1880 are the sub-

Illustration by Helen Rodionova to "Romeo and Juliet"

ject of the first article. The author's remarks on Tolstoy's estimate of the poetry of Whitman are based partly on a study of the copy of "Leaves of Grass," that had once been in Tolstoy's possession. Of much interest are Chukovsky's personal reminiscences concerning Mayakovsky's estimate of Whitman. The great Soviet poet welcomed every new translation of Whitman's poems, took great delight in listening to their recitation and often expressed his views on Whitman's personality and work.

The author has supplied some interesting literary records bearing on Whitman's biography, among them the letter from Emerson written on the occasion of the first appearance of the "Leaves of Grass."

The volume ends with an annotated bibliography comprising several modern works.

Within a short period of time, appeared the second illustrated edition of "Romeo and Juliet" in Russian translation.

The publishing of the preceding edition of this tragedy translated by the poet Boris Pasternak and adorned with excellent woodcuts by Fyodor Konstantinov, was recently mentioned in these pages. The second edition of the same translation, issued by the State Publishing House of Children's Literature, is illustrated with autolithographs by Helen Rodionova.

In accordance with the French proverb "Comparaison n'est pas raison" it serves no purpose to compare the first work of a young artist such as Rodionova, with a similar production by Konstantinov whose reputation as one of the most gifted Soviet masters of wood-engraving has been firmly established. Here, however, one has to acknowledge that Rodionova has made a splendid job of her by no means easy task and succeeded in creating a set of attractive images of the leading characters of the Veronese drama and in reconstructing the style and manners of the epoch. The new illustrated edition of the Russian translation of "Romeo and Juliet" can rightfully qualify as a worthy addition to the fast growing series of the small artistic volumes of Shakespeare's plays being issued by Soviet Publishing Houses.

It may be appropriate to mention here the appearance in Moscow of other graphic works connected with the creations of the greatest English dramatist.

Entering the recently opened Moscow exhibition devoted to the work of five leading Leningrad painters, the visitor's attention is attracted by a series of brilliantly executed water colours on Shakespearean subjects by Constantine Rudakov. Among the drawings made for the Leningrad staging of "Hamlet," Ophelias's image, endowed with an exquisite charm, seems to be the artist's happiest creation. Still more imposing is the set of water-colours devoted to the main personages of "Much Ado About Nothing." In creating the types and costumes, Rudakov was evidently inspired by the compositions of the great painters of the Renaissance; but the artist has transformed these borrowings—if such they may be called—with such remarkable skill and refined taste that his outstanding graphic abilities are fully displayed in this work.

Constantine Rudakov's Shakespearean water-colours hold prominent place in the artist's already fairly opulent stock of illustrative works.

The State Literary Publishing House has just issued an interesting book entitled "Russian Songs of the 19th Century."

Rich and varied the songs of Russia always were; and the book is aptly prefaced with the words of the poet Nekrasov: "The Russian people prefer singing to weeping."

To enumerate the songs familiar to every Russian would mean quoting all the titles in this collection. The three hundred songs comprising its contents include lively carols, love-lyrics, plaintive ditties, historical ballads, soldiers' patriotic songs and revolutionary songs.

The collection consists of five sections and includes an introduction. The latter, entitled "Songs About Songs" contains a number of compositions in which the whole genre itself is glorified. "What songs, what songs are sung in Mother Russia!" runs one of them which bears a characteristic refrain: "Our Russian songs are lively and youthful, rich and bold, quite unlike the German."

The first section is entitled "Russian Classic Folk-Songs." The words and tunes of these gay samples of folklore created in the hoary past were handed down from one generation to another. First published in the 19th century, these songs entered the treasured realm of Russian literature, starting life anew. They were the creation of the whole Russian people.

The genre of "the Russian song" represented in the second section owed their origin to individual authors and form a kind of imitation folk-song. In the words of Ivan Rosanov, the editor of the collection, "the Russian song is a hybrid genre, created by a cross-breeding of book poetry and oral poems in the vernacular." However, songs from this category differ from genuine folk-songs with their wealth of realistic, everyday details in that the authors of the former deal mainly with the emotions of the tender and melancholy variety. First place in this section belongs to the songs by the poet, Alexei Koltsov, who approached nearer than others not only to the external form of the folk-song but also caught its true mood and spirit. The wide popularity of many compositions of this kind is due not so much to their own merit as to the wonderful music written by such eminent composers as Chaikovsky, Mussorgsky, Varlamov, Glinka and others. Such, for instance, is the song of a little-known poet, Surikov: "Was I not a wild-rose in the field?" (music by Chaikovsky) or the "Wedding" by Timofeyev (music by Dargomyzhsky).

The third section of the book comprises "Songs and Ballads of Great Russian Wri-

ters." We find here the names of Derzhavin, Zhukovsky, Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov, Turgenev, Tyutchev, Fet. Their songs, though written in a simple, plain language, are devoid of the style peculiar to folk-songs and cover a great variety of subjects including those not connected with the life of the Russian people. Such are Pushkin's famous songs in which the poet reproduced the style and song themes of various peoples: "A Circassian Song," "A Tatar Song," a Moldavian song of "The Black Shawl," a Scottish song "Two Ravens," "A Spanish Ballad," etc.

Songs and ballads from this section differ from each other in the degree of approximation to the literary language and to the professional treatment of the subject.

"Well-Remembered Songs of Forgotten Authors" is the title of the fourth part of the collection. In fact hardly any of the names mentioned here would be familiar to the modern reader, while their songs enjoy wide popularity and are sung together with the most modern compositions. In its first lispings a Russian child attempts the words of the favourite cradle-songs; "Once there lived an old woman who had a little grey goat" and "Birdie, birdie, we've captured you at last!" Many a Russian, being in a happy mood, will strike up the famous song of the "Kamarinsky Mouzhik."

The last section of the book deals with "Songs from Poems." The peculiar process of transformation suffered by literary lyrics current among the people is vividly demonstrated here. The section comprises many revolutionary, patriotic and student's songs. How relevant to our days of victory and glory sound the words of a popular student's song of the last century which crowns the collection:

> Our country's health we drink,
> Drink with hope and joy...
> To the people we're drinking here.
> Then to our motto dear:
> "Forward" is the word!
> Forward! Forward!

The war against Hitlerism has introduced new themes and topics into the work of the world's most progressive poets. Placing their pen at the service of the anti-fascist front, they have enriched their art and their compositions have taken on a new quality, a new vigour.

The Soviet reader now has the opportunity to acquaint himself with new works by various anti-fascist poets through the State Literary Publishing House which has published a collection of "Foreign Anti-Fascist Poetry." This volume contains poetry of England, America, France, Spain, Poland, China, the Latin-American countries, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Holland and also of the German anti-fascist poets.

The works of English and American poets predominate in this volume. These include Sean O'Casey, John Curley, Alan White, Jack Lindsay (England) and Karl Sandburg, H.W.L. Dana, the late Stephen Vincent Bennet, Alfred Kreimborg and Langston Hughes (U.S.A.).

Russia, and Stalingrad in particular, are the themes most frequently found in this collection, occuring, for instance, in the poems of Bennet, Dana, Kreimborg, Hughes, Jean-Richard Bloch, the Spanish poets Aparicio and Arconada, the Chilean poet Cortes and others.

Aragon's fine poems record the gloom and horror of the terrible days of France's defeat in 1940. Fighting France is the subject of a poem, "Partisan Paris," which was printed during the German occupation of Paris in an illegal publication, the editor of which, Decourt, was murdered by the Hitlerites.

In the splendid poem by the veteran American poet, Karl Sandburg, "The Shadow of a Man with Broken Fingers" there rises before the reader the courageous figure of the fighter against fascism undaunted by tortures or sufferings.

One of the most significant works of recent years is Jack Lindsay's "Dieppe" of which extracts are given. The work bears witness to considerable artistic development on the part of this talented English poet.

Love and gratitude to the Soviet Union for its contribution to the defeat of fascism are feelings permeating the whole book and find especially ardent expression in "Ode to the Day of Victory" by the Chilean poet Pavlo Neruda who exclaims:

> O pure and radiant fatherland,
> Sister and mother of all peoples of the earth!

A number of Soviet poets worked on the translations for this volume. On the whole the result is to be commended. All the works by English and American poets were translated by Mikhail Zenkevich who has been doing successful work in this field over a number of years. The French poams were mostly translated by the poet Paul Antokolsky, and the Spanish by Fyodor Kelyin.

The State Literary Publishing House has published new translations of Honoré de Balzac's "Les Chouans," Romain Rolland's "Colas Breugnon," Guy de Maupassant's "Cher Ami." It has also published the collected works of Federico Garcia Lorca in one volume.

The same Publishing House has reprinted the collected tales and stories by Ivan Turgenev and issued a separate edition of his "A House of Gentlefolk," and a volume of the collected works of Fyodor Gladkov.

A small collection of articles entitled "Marx and Engels on Prussian Reaction" and prepared for the press by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute has recently been issued by the State Political Publishing House. This collected volume will help those, who, at the cost of toil and blood, are solving the task of the final routing of Hitlerite Germany, to gain a fuller grasp of the nature and essence of the German fasc-

ism which has sprung up on the well-fertilized soil of Prussian reaction. Like skilful surgeons Marx and Engels remove the outer layers of cuticle and adipose tissue and penetrate with the scalpels of their criticism deep into the inner tissues harbouring and spreading the deathly malignant tumour. It was Prussian reaction with its junkerdom, its serfdom, its Arthur Shopenhauer and Eduard Hartmann, its Hohenzollerns and its soldiers that formed the nucleus of the tumour now afflicting the whole of Germany.

In the light of countless facts and events that are now commonly known to be characteristic of modern Hitlerite Germany, the arguments voiced by Marx and Engels some hundred years since have acquired present day significance.

In the extract entitled "Germany's Foreign Policy" dated July 2nd, 1848, Marx and Engels list the ghastly crimes perpetrated by Germany's rulers, diplomats and soldiers in the field of foreign policy:

"Poland, robbed and dismembered with the help of German soldiery; Cracow treacherously strangled by this same soldiery; Lombardy and Venice enslaved and bled white with the help of German gold and blood; in Italy, all liberating movement suppressed through the direct or indirect agency of Germany by bayonets, scaffolds, prisons, generals... The indictment of Germany's crimes is a still longer one, better cut it short..."

"The blame for these abominations committed with Germany's help in other countries falls not only on the German government but also to a considerable extent on the German people itself. Were it not for their blindness, their spirit of slavishness, their readiness to play the role of landsknechts and 'benignant' hangmen and to serve as obedient tools in the hands of those who 'by the grace of God' became their masters, the word 'German' would not be pronounced abroad with such hatred, with such contempt and execration..."

Can anything be added today, in this year of 1945, to these reflections written in 1848?

All that is loathsome and despicable in German history, and unremittingly, passionately exposed by Marx and Engels, has at the present time found its uttermost expression in the brown monster of German fascism.

A German... With what boundless hatred, contempt and execration is the word pronounced wherever the shadow of the German order has defiled the land! In "New Year Congratulations" dealing with Friedrich Wilhelm IV's message to the Prussian army, Karl Marx wrote:

"It would now appear that the shooting of aged men and pregnant women and the thieving (in the vicinity of Ostrovo this was recorded in a protocol)—and the beating of peaceful inhabitants with rifle butts and swords, that the destruction of houses, the night assaults—with arms concealed beneath cloaks—on defenceless people and robbery on the highways—(we recall the Neuwied incident)—it would now appear that these and other similar manifestations of heroism are in the Christian-German tongue dubbed 'strict discipline' and 'honourable soldiery valour.' Long live soldierly valour and strict discipline! The victims of atrocities committed under this flag will never rise again."

Are not the descendants of the valiant Prussian warriors, today, even now that they have been hunted back into their own den, behaving themselves with similar "discipline and manliness?"

But it is something more than a mere diagnosing of the infected organism that the reader will find in the present pamphlet. With the penetration of genius Friedrich Engels in his "Remarks on Germany" predicted the end of its inglorious existence: "The Prussian state, and the Prussian army will finally crash and this will most probably occur in a war with Russia, a war which may last four years and which will bring Germany nothing but misfortunes and bullet-riddled bones."

In the series "Slavonic Library," the State Literary Publishing House has issued a volume of selected poems and stories by the well-known Czech poet, Jan Neruda.

Jan Neruda (1834—1891), one of the most influential Czech writers, is justly considered a classic of Czech literature. Born in Prague, Neruda was for many years a staff contributor to the periodical "Narodnyie Listy," the organ of progressive Czech intellectuals. In his articles, sketches and feuilletons on any subject Neruda pursued but one aim—the awakening and consolidation of the national consciousness of his oppressed people. And he served the same object in his poetical and prose art writings.

Neruda won particular renown as a poet through his book "Ballads and Romances," which tell of the heroic traditions, the freedom-loving aspirations and courage of the Czech people. Neruda's ballads and romances breathe burning hatred for the enslavers and the people's oppressors.

Kindred to, and supplementing his ballads, are Neruda's "Friday Tunes," published posthumously. In "Friday Tunes" the poet's grieving over the sufferings of the oppressed people and his thoughts on the destiny of his native land swell into a mighty hymn of its bright future, a hymn full of faith in the immortality and grandeur of the Czech people.

The book of Neruda's collected works, published in Russian, opens with the hymn "Dawn from the East," in which the poet proclaims that mankind's age-long dreams of freedom are nearing realization, that the night draws to a close, and the dawn glimmers in the East. Then follow his finest ballads and romances—"A Czech Ballad," "The Ballad of Charles IV," "The Ballad of the Polish Girl," etc., and the best verses from his "Friday Tunes"—"My Colours Are Red and White," "In the Lion's Footsteps," "Forward," "In a Railway Compartment," etc. Though few in number—some twenty poems in all—Jan Neruda is well presented as a poet-patriot and a

lyricist. This, in no small measure, is facilitated by the fine translations, the work of the poets Nikolai Asseyev, Mikhail Zenkevich, Serguei Obradovich and others.

The second half of the book is devoted to Neruda's prose works, and comprises the best of his "Little-Country Tales." These depict life and customs of the insignificant, down-trodden little man of that part of Prague where Neruda was born and bred, and known as "Little Country." The "Little-Country Tales" in this volume include "A Week in a Quiet House," "Mister Ryshchanek and Mister Shlegel," "They Brought the Beggar to Destitution" and "How Mister Vorel Lighted His Pipe."

Written with mellow humour, Neruda's tales ring not only with compassion for "the humiliated and insulted," but also as an indictment of the monstrous social relations which crippled the lives of the working people. Masterful portraiture, abundancy and fidelity to realistic details and their mellow humour have made Neruda's "Little-Country Tales" a classic work of Czech literature.

The book is prefaced with a brief but interesting article on the works of Jan Neruda, written by Professor Zdenek Nejedly.

The Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. has issued a book by Professor Veniamin Kagan, about Nikolai Lobachevsky.

Lobachevsky, the great Russian geometrist of the first half of the 19th century, lived and worked in Kazan. He was one of those world-wide geniuses whose efforts blazed new trails for the progress of science.

The present monograph is a fine example of a difficult genre in the biography of a scientist, written scientifically and withal in a language within grasp of the layman.

After a brief review of Lobachevsky's works, the author dwells in detail on the life of this great exponent of geometry and the pre-history of non-Euclidean geometry, revealing the essence of Lobachevsky's scientific ideas and of their fate following his death. The book ends with a chapter outlining the modern significance of Lobachevsky's works in the field of mathematics, mechanics, physics and cosmology.

"His creative life... permeated all branches of exact knowledge, introducing entirely new principles therein... Lobachevsky's ideas play a guiding role in the most vital fields of natural science. The history of science knows of few names and few geniuses of such broad and many-sided creative endeavour."

Kagan's book gives much historical-routine material characterizing the times in which Lobachevsky lived and the diversity of his activities as scientist, organizer and teacher. For nineteen years Lobachevsky was Principal of Kazan University, and it was by his efforts that this institution became a first-class educational establishment.

The book contains a bibliographical index of Lobachevsky's works and the more important writings about him and his non-Euclidean geometry. From this index we learn that as early as 1910 the total number of works written about non-Euclidean geometry had already reached two thousand four hundred. All these publications had been recorded in a special bibliographical work compiled in English by Duncan Somerville. About fifteen hundred works were published on non-Euclidean geometry and the theory of parallel lines after the appearance of Lobachevsky's book.

Alexander Fersman, Member of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., is the author of a number of popular-science books. Those bringing him particular fame in this field included his "Popular Mineralogy (which, between 1928 and 1937, numbered five editions), and "Recollections About Stones." To these are now added a small but valuable book issued by the Sverdlovsk Publishers—"The Wealth of the Urals," a popularly written essay about one of the most remarkable regions of the Soviet Union.

As Joseph Stalin once said—"the Urals represents a combination of wealth not to be found in any other single country." In his book, Academician Fersman gives striking illustration of this statement.

From the first explorations by old Russian "orefinders" and the days when "Russian Brazil" began winning worldwide fame for its fabulous riches, the author leads his readers to the modern Urals, transformed during the Five-Year Plans. A special chapter deals with "the Future Urals"—as yet still in the preliminary blueprint, but holding realistic prospects for its vast development.

The story of the Ural Mountain Ridge forms a thrilling chapter, in which the author relates, in a most absorbing narrative, the processes which, during the course of hundreds of millions of years, resulted in the natural riches of the Urals. These pages of the story are filled with the genuine poetry of science, striking the reader with the grandeur and vastness of their conception.

A number of chapters deal with the significance of the Urals to science. "The Urals is a visual aid for the study of geology and mineralogy. The Mendelyeev Table is practically mirrored in the Urals," writes Fersman.

The chapter "The Urals as a Base of Strategic Raw Materials" tells of the tremendous importance of the immeasurable deposits of useful minerals and rocks in the Urals for the entire anti-Hitler coalition in today's war.

Fired with the enthusiasm of a genuine explorer and investigator, and written in a lively style, Fersman's book is a good example of a popular-science essay about the country's natural resources and of how they are being utilized by man.

IN MEMORIUM

A GREAT FIGHTER FOR SLAVONIAN ENLIGHTENMENT

(On the occasion of the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the birth of P J. Shafarik—May 16th, 1945)

Glory to the light of Science,
The Slavonian-Czech. . . . .
. . . . . .
We sing thy glory, Shafarik,
To the ages, the ages to come,
Thou, who hast merged into one vast sea
The Slavonian rivers!

Taras Shevchenko

Paul Josef Shafarik, the great propagandist of Slavonic unity, entered the literary arena in the twenties of last century when a wide patriotic movement was launched by a whole galaxy of men of letters and scholars and which aimed at the spiritual revival of the Czech people. The leaders of this movement clearly realized that, standing alone, the inconsiderable numbers of their people would never be able to offer permanent resistance to the German pressure and that it was in urgent need of friends and support. Their eyes naturally turned to the kindred Slavonic peoples—pre-eminently to the mighty Slav country of Russia, and the idea of Slavonic unity became a potent force in the movement.

Shafarik began his research studies at Novi Sad in Serbia where he was headmaster of a Serbian high school. It was here he wrote his "History of Slavonic Languages and Literatures" (1826) which at that time was the first work in that field.

It was in Prague, however, where he applied himself to Slavonic archeology and ethnography, that his activities attained full scope. Shafarik's intensive efforts in these studies resulted in his monumental work, "Slavonic Antiquities" (1837), which earned him immortal fame. This investigation, based on a vast quantity of material handled with rare scientific conscientiousness, gives a picture of the past history of Slavism from ancient times to the end of the 10th century.

Another important work from his pen, complementing, as it were, his "Antiquities," is his "Slavonic Ethnography" (1842) which contains the first ethnographic map of Slavism showing the distribution of languages and giving brief data on geographical situations, statistics, languages and history of all the Slavonic peoples.

The works "Slavonic Antiquities" and "Slavonic Ethnography" helped to establish Shafarik as a European authority. He was elected member of numerous academies and several universities, including the University of Berlin, which invited him to occupy a chair. Mikhail Pogodin, a well-known Russian historian of that time, expressed his appreciation of "Slavonic Antiquities" in the following terms: "This book," he wrote, "has supplied a long-felt want in European literature; German writers who have made studies of all the languages in the world, living and dead, could never grasp the fact that there can be no general history without a history of Slavism. The book had produced a decisive reform in history and will provide a firm basis for special histories of the Slavonic tribes."

The importance of Shafarik's work can by no means be circumscribed by its scientific merits. This point is lucidly brought out by Alexander Pypin, an authority on the history of Russian literature who, fifty years after the publication of the "Antiquities," wrote the following:

"Shafarik's books have had a strong moral influence: they have enabled Slavism to ascertain its forces and have contributed to a mutual acquaintance among the tribes, reviving the age-long past with the great deeds of yore and holding out a promise for the future."

In this same aspect Shafarik himself regarded his work as a service to his country and Slavism. Speaking of him, his contemporaries stress the nobleness of his personality, his disinterestedness and moral purity.

Shafarik voiced the ideas inspiring his activities in his famous speech delivered at the Prague Slav Congress (1848)—his only political pronouncement.

His words, alluding to the age-old oppressors of Slavism, ring as true today as they did at the time they were uttered: "What verdict is it," he exclaims, "that is pronounced on us by other peoples,—our neighbours—Germans, Magyars, Italians? According to their verdict," he continues, "we are incapable of a higher political life simply because we are Slavs... Such a state of things can continue no longer. The die is cast, decisive days have set in. Either we shall succeed in being able to say proudly to all peoples: 'I am Slav,' or we shall cease to be Slavs... Moral death is the worst kind of death and moral life is the highest life. There is no way from slavery to freedom without struggle; either victory and a free nationality or an honourable death and posthumous glory!"

Shafarik has sometimes wrongly been called the ideologist of "panslavism." But Shafarik's so-called "panslavism," like that of the majority of other genuine representatives of the idea of the Slavonic unity, is a striving towards a unity of Slavonic peoples for the purpose of defence against the German oppressors and with a view to a cultural rapproachment of Slavonic nationalities of kindred tongues and destinies. These ideas stand in direct contrast to such "ideologies," as, for example, pangermanism, a distinguishing trait of which is a thirst for conquest and enslavement of other peoples—in a word, for world domination.

Deserving of particular attention, on the one hand, is Shafarik's attitude towards Russia, and on the other, the regard of Russian intellectuals for this great scholar. Shafarik loved the Russian people and, as a Slav, was proud of its great literature.

He regarded Russia as the mainstay of the minor Slavonic peoples in their struggle for their rights and a guarantee for the future. In Russia his works found the liveliest response. For his "Slavonic Antiquities" the Russian Academy of Sciences awarded him a gold medal and a prize of five thousand roubles. On different occasions Shafarik, who was hard pressed materially, was helped by his Russian friends with gifts of money. The Moscow and Petersburg universities invited him to occupy the chair of Slavonics, but after long hesitation and with a heavy heart he saw himself compelled to refuse this honour. He was afraid the Russians would regard him as a stranger owing to his poor knowledge of their language.

Among Shafarik's Russian friends mention should be made of Mikhail Pogodin, the historian; Ossip Bodiansky, Victor Grigorovich, Viacheslav Sreznevski, scholars of Slavism. Shafarik's extensive correspondence with Pogodin, Bodiansky and Grigorovich, which was published in Russia towards the end of the last century, contains a great deal of material helpful in acquainting the reader with Shafarik's views on science and politics. His works also exercized considerable influence on Serguei Solovyov, the great Russian historian.

"Shafarik is to me," Bodiansky wrote to Pogodin, "a whole Academy: to him I am most indebted." His popularity in Russia is eloquently attested by Karel Gavlichek Borovsky, the Czech writer, who says, in recounting his impressions of a visit to the Moscow University in 1843: "Moscow was the first city in the world where a Slavonic ethnographic map hung on the board and which the students, ex officio, studied, using the works of Shafarik. The latter is better known in Moscow than in Prague; he probably never thought that his books known to few in Prague would be used as a manual in a place hundreds of miles away from that city."

It is interesting to follow the destinies of Shafarik's ideas in the Ukraine. There his books were an inspiration to the members of the "Cyrillo-Methodius Brotherhood" in whose ranks we find Nikolai Kostomarov and Petro Kulish, the well-known Ukrainian historians, and Taras Shevchenko, the famous poet. The Brotherhood mapped out a political programme of Slavonic solidarity demanding the formation of a federation of Slavonian peoples possessing equal rights and headed by Russia.

Shafarik's works have up to the present day remained the pride of Slavonian scholarship and a milestone in its history. It is clear to one and all how vital are his ideas of the solidarity of Slavism in the struggle against the German oppressors. The faith in the power of Slavism and the role of Russia has borne fruit in the present struggle against Hitlerite Germany, and has helped to rally the Slavs in a united front which today is celebrating its triumph in liberated Belgrade, Warsaw and Sofia, in Shafarik's native Slovakia,—tomorrow in his beloved Prague.

The idea of Slavonian unity must on no account be relegated to the backwater of history. From a fighting unity it will be converted into a creative whole; a unity of endeavour towards a cultural and economic efflorescence of Slavism and a close-knit collaboration with the other freedom-loving peoples of Europe and the whole world. And there can be no doubt but the mighty cultural commonwealth of Slavonic peoples will always remember with profound gratitude the name of its great pioneer—Paul Josef Shafarik.

FRANTISHEK NECHASEK

THOMAS HOOD

It will be a hundred years this May since the death of the English poet Thomas Hood (born 1790) who wrote the famous "Song of the Shirt."

Much that he did in his quarter of a century of unflagging work is now forgotten, but his renown as a poet of democracy is undimmed—fitting tribute was paid to it by such a pillar of English literature as Dickens.

The sons of labour found in Thomas Hood an inspired bard, angry castigator of injustice and exploitation.

In Russia, where humanitarian and popular trends in art always struck responsive cords, Hood's work found many friends and admirers.

Let me give just a few facts indicating the Russian reader's interest in the English poet.

The great Russian writer Chernyshevsky, in his novel "What Is To Be Done?" gave a prophetic view of Russian society as he foresaw it after the revolution.

In this scene the "new people" celebrating the emancipation of their country, recall the verses of their favourite poets and among them are these lines of Hood's:

> Welcome, Life! The spirit strives!
> Strength returns, and hope revives;
> Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
> Fly like shadows at the morn,—
> O'er the earth there comes a bloom—
> Sunny light for sullen gloom,
> Warm perfume for vapour cold—
> I smell the Rose above the Mould!
> ("Stanzas")

These lines are given in a masterly translation, polished and sonorous. How could Chernyshevsky know them? Who was the translator?

To those questions we can give an exhaustive reply.

Hood's poem appeared in the magazine "Contemporary" ("Sovremennik"), 1862. No. 4, and was translated by Mikhail Larionovich Mikhailov, the talented Russian poet and revolutionary (1829—1865), and friend of Chernyshevsky.

Mikhailov acquainted the Russian reader with the works of many foreign poets and among them a big place was held by Englishmen (Christopher Marlowe, Robert Burns, Thomas Moore, George Byron, Felicia Hemans, Barry Cornwall, Charles Lamb, Ebenezer Elliott, Alfred Tennyson).

Mikhailov translated four poems by Hood: "The Song of the Shirt" and "Stanzas" appeared in the "Contemporary," and "The Exile" and "The Death Bed" in the magazine "Russian Word" ("Russkoye Slovo"). On closely reading the translations we cannot fail to observe how the poet has striven to render the distinguishing features of the English verse—Hood's intricate rhythm and rich melody.

But of course Hood attracted Mikhailov first and foremost by his grand intellect. In publishing "The Song of the Shirt" ("Contemporary," 1860, No. 9) Mikhailov gave an introduction in which he wrote of its "wide renown" and "passionate sweep," which indeed is the essence of the "Song."

Mikhailov ends his simple but feeling introduction with the promise to "give the readers of the 'Contemporary' an essay on Thomas Hood, the poet and the man."

He kept his promise: in the first number of the magazine for 1861 appeared quite a big article by Mikhailov entitled "Humour and Poetry in England." That was the article about Thomas Hood.

Obviously the author went to no small pains to gather the essential information about the English poet: he points out that even in England in 1861 there was nothing like a complete biography of Hood, whom Mikhailov calls "one of the noblest poets of present-day England."

Skilfully blending with the text of his absorbing article generous excerpts from Hood's own "Literary Reminiscences" and his poems, Mikhailov converts his essay into a spirited narrative of the works and successes of a brother poet who touched in him such deep chords of sympathy.

Mikhailov stresses Hood's kinship with the people, the social significance of his works; at the same time he turns the spotlight on the poet's versatility: "Besides great literary gifts Hood also had great ability as a cartoonist."

Interest in Hood's poetry was no mere matter of chance either for Mikhailov or for the "Contemporary": that magazine gave a great deal of attention to contemporary English literature and in those years published a number of articles on social life in England, among them a series of articles by Mikhailov's closest friends—"The Working Class in England and France" (1861) by Nikolai Shelgunov, the Russian publicist, and Mikhailov's own "London Notes" (1859, No. 6) written while the impressions of a visit to England were still fresh.

One of the "London Notes" has a direct bearing on Thomas Hood's poetry—speaking of the working class districts of London Mikhailov writes: "In these districts of the ragged, the bitter verses of the 'poet of poverty' come involuntarily to mind, and the literature of no other country has so many such poets as that of England." That passing observation shows how closely Mikhailov followed the appearance in English letters of ever new names brought to the fore by the social ferment of the years between 1830 and 1860. An eloquent detail: Mikhailov's translations appeared unsigned, marked by asterisks (***), and even ten years after the death of the poet, who fell into official disfavour, his name scared the tsarist censorship.

"The Song of the Shirt" became one of

the most popular poems of the sixties. Thomas Hood was also translated by Theodor Miller, who was connected with the "Contemporary," and Dimitri Mikhailovsky. We find his poems in an anthology of "Selected Poets of England and America" (St. Petersburg, 1864).

Let us open "English Poets, Biographies and Selections," compiled by Nicholas Gerbel and published in St. Petersburg in 1875. We find in it quite a big passage on Hood compiled undoubtedly from Mikhailov's article, and eight of Hood's poems. Besides the four poems translated by Mikhailov, mentioned previously, we must also note the good translations by Miller, "The Lady's Dream," and by Victor Burenin, "The Dream of Eugene Aram."

Gerbel, compiler of a number of similar anthologies, was a practical man; he favoured Hood not so much out of sympathy with him, as because of the lively interest in the author of "The Song of the Shirt" and his poetry, which remained undiminished among the Russian reading public.

There were other results, too, of this continued interest in Hood's work on the part of Russian readers and scientists.

In the first Russian course of "A Universal History of Literature," issued in the eighties of last century by Theodor Korsh and Alexander Kirpichnikov, we find two pages of close type on Hood's poetry (as much as was given to Keats). They appear in volume IV in the section headed "Essays on the History of Literature of the 19th century" and belong to Kirpichnikov who calls Hood the poet of "humanitarian realism."

At that time the "Encyclopedia" of Brockhaus and Efron was popular in Russia and in it we find an article on Hood by Zinaida Vengerova, a well-known Russian essayist (author of many articles on English poetry of the 19th century). She speaks of Hood with warmth and feeling and puts all the strength of a genuine love for his poetry into her brief essay.

Finally, Nikolai Storozhenko, father of Russian Shakespeareans and leading authority in Russia of the 19th century on English literature, dwelt in detail on Thomas Hood's work, in a lecture on "The English Poets of Poverty and Suffering." This he reworked into the form of an essay and included in a collection of his articles ("From the Sphere of Literature," Moscow, 1902). The Russian scientist pointed out that Hood "appealed to the hearts and conscience of his fellow citizens," that he wished by his poems "to stir the public conscience, to arouse humanitarian feeling in people who considered themselves Christians but who in practice little deserved the name."

"The public conscience has been aroused," said Storozhenko speaking of the effect of Hood's poetry on English society.

Soviet science and literature has given attention to Thomas Hood more than once. At the height of the Civil War (in 1919) was published "Proletarian Poetry" by Vladimir Friche, well-known literary historian and theoretician (to him also belongs an article on Hood in the "Encyclopedia" of Granat). "Thomas Hood," Friche points out, "was one of the first poets to give a sympathetic portrayal of working class people."

Since then the courses and articles on Western-European literature published in the U.S.S.R. and research on the revolutionary poetry of the 19th century have never omitted the author of "The Song of the Shirt." Alongside the old and popular translation of "The Song of the Shirt" has appeared a new and even more successful effort by that excellent Soviet poet, Edward Bagritsky.

In the latest volume (now ready for the press) of "The History of English Literature" being prepared by the Gorky Institute of World Literature affiliated to the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. Thomas Hood is given a special chapter.

ROMAN SAMARIN

ARTS

THE STARS OF THE JEWISH THEATRE

The winter of 1918-1919. The young Soviet Republic was waging a grim struggle for its existence. Enemy troops stood at the very approaches to Petrograd, there where the German hordes would be breaking through twenty-two years later. In the streets of the agitated front line city all is cold and gloom, but the life pulse of the new Soviet state throbs exultantly. One after another new theatres are springing up, new studios, new schools. To the thunder and roar of artillery, the Great Dramatic Theatre which is later to bear the name of Gorky, its founder, presents the première of Schiller's "Don Carlos" in a magnificent setting. And within a stone's throw, in the building which until 1917—o, irony of fate!—was the tsarist Ministry for Home Affairs, that ruthless instrument for the persecution of the Jews, students are being accepted into the First Jewish Theatre Studio. This studio was founded in close collaboration with Gorky and actively supported by Joseph Stalin, who was then Commissar for Affairs of Nationalities.

In reply to a telephone call a certain Solomon Mikhailovich Vovsi, last-year student of the Law Faculty of the University, presented himself at the Commissariat's newly-organized Studio for an interview before entering as a student. From childhood years he had dreamt of the stage, dreamt of it when attending the "kheder" at Dvinsk, his native town, and later in the classes of the Riga high school and within the walls of the Kiev Commercial Institute. The same dream has haunted him at the Petrograd University where he enthusiastically studied Latin, higher mathematics, history and philosophy, all of which are still his favourite studies. His first childish impressions of the theatre had been received from the "Purim Spieler" who enacted the religious rites of this festival, and a chance performance of Goldfaden's "Witch" presented by the Fischsohn troupe of wandering players. Up to the age of fifteen he had seen no other theatricals. He knew hundreds of Jewish folk songs, and could recite dozens of pages from Shakespeare, Sholom-Aleikhem, Pushkin and Bialik, but when in the course of a conversation with a certain experienced producer he ventured on the topic of his theatrical aspirations, the latter waxed indignant: "Impossible," he remarked. "Your manner of delivery and your personal appearance are all against you—your puny figure and face with its huge forehead, deformed nose and protruding lower jaw are entirely unsuitable for an actor—not for you to think of the stage. . . ."

People's Artist Michoels as King Lear

Thereupon Solomon Vovsi abandoned his dreams and returned to his law studies. But the founding of the Studio decided his fate. When filling in his appreciation form, the student of twenty-nine hesitated for a moment—then had a brain-wave, and crossing out his own name he wrote another that had just occurred to him: "Michoels."

The forecast of that experienced producer was ignominiously refuted by reality, for today Michoels is undoubtedly one of the most popular actors in Soviet Russia.

The theatrical life of Michoels as well as that of his superb stage companion, Benjamin Zuskin, and a number of other outstanding masters of the State Jewish Theatre, such as Merited Artists Michael Steiman, Sarah Rotbaum, Lia Romm, Joseph Shidlo, Ustin Minkov, Daniel Finkelkraut, together with their talented young colleagues of the second and even the third generation of the theatre—is indissolubly bound up with the theatre's history.

The old Jewish theatre originated with the wandering comedians who in the days of the traditional festival of Purim went from house to house with their simple performances of the aged old story of Esther and

People's Artist of the R.S.F.S.R. Veniamin Zuskin as Kaptsensohn and Sofia Bennik as Frieda in "Bride Who Was Difficult to Please"

Xerxes, which was the source of the Purim festival. The first professional Jewish theatre was created some seventy years ago at Jassy, on the Rumanian-Russian frontier, by Abraham Goldfaden, playwright and producer, the "grandfather" of the Jewish theatre. The Goldfaden company toured Russia too, as did also the wandering troupes of those talented actors, Fischsohn, Edelman, Kaminskaya, Clara Jung and others... As a matter of fact not one of these itinerant ensembles with their casual, archaic and ultra-philistine repertoires could aspire to the name of theatre in the modern acceptation of the word. The birth of the genuine Jewish theatre in Russia is inseparably bound up with the first years of Soviet power. The founding of the Petrograd Studio which soon moved to Moscow, where it was converted into the Jewish Chamber Theatre, opens a new and vivid page in the history of the Jewish stage.

From the first years of its existence the Jewish Studio-Theatre grouped around itself the progressive forces of their national art and encouraged their constructive searchings. Amongst its members we find the artists Mark Shagal, Nathan Altman, Robert Falk, Alexander Tischler, Isaak Rabinovich; the composers Joseph Akhron, Leo Pulver, the poets and writers Ezekiel Dobrushin, Samuel Galkin, David Bergelsohn, Daniel and Itskhok Peretz Markish.

The first period of the theatre's activities under the direction of Alexander Granovski was marked by a number of spectacular, poignant performances striking in their formal brilliance, where the works of classical Jewish literature—among them Sholom-Aleikhem's miniatures and "Two Hundred Thousand," "The Journey of Benjamin the Third" by Mendele Meikher-Sforim, Peretz's "Night in the Old Market Place" and Goldfaden's operettas "The Witch" and "The Tenth Commandment"—were presented to the spectator in the exaggerated form of the grotesque.

Using the method of scenic exaggeration the theatre brought all the force of its satire to bear on the wretched pre-revolutionary life and customs of the tiny settlements where Jews were permitted to live with their hapless "Luftmenschen," "people of the air," the name given to petty traders and craftsmen eking out a hand-to-mouth existence on chance earnings. In this unrestrained satire, however, can be detected an element of romantic admiration for the settlement and its exotic local colour. At times the young State Jewish Theatre would descend to parody as a theatrical device, and the stage would be filled with a motley crowd of hideous masks of the "lame ducks" of the settlement, ugly, bent figures—hopeless philistines, pitiful futile dreamers. "Night in the Old Market Place," the title of one of the theatre's early productions founded on a weird story by Peretz, was somehow symbolical of the type of images created by the early State Jewish Theatre. The past of the Jewish people, baited and humiliated by the tsarist authorities, rose before one's eyes as a dense, hopelessly dark "night in the old market place" making it seem that the history of the Jewish people could produce no images more vivid, powerful and heroic.

True, there were some unforgettable characters created by Michoels and Zuskin in these early performances. In contrast to the scholastic "Jewish national mark" beloved of Granovski, these artists exposed the fervent heart and emotional ideas of those who probed with a searching gaze into the inner life of their people.

This creative polemic ends in victory for the Jewish Theatre ensemble. In 1929, the artistic direction of the theatre was taken over by Michoels, the theatre's leading actor. The word "Chamber" is eliminated from the name of the theatre as being a contradiction to the aspirations of the young Soviet company to become a theatre truly representative of the people.

The repertoire is enriched with new plays written by Soviet playwrights who bring to the stage their living impressions of the participation of the Jews in the building of their country, of their part in the Civil War, of the men and women of the fields and of industry, of men of science who pushed far into the limbo of forgotten things the poor ugly figures of the "Luftmenschen."

Speaking in public one day Michoels said that "the Jewish people are usually spoken of as an ancient people. The October Revolution has endowed us with the right to be a young and growing people with a new culture. Soviet life has brought us close to nature, has made us sense its beauty and its forces and has taught us to subordinate the natural elements to our will. There are also Jewish songs among many of those ringing out in the collective farm fields which no longer contain the melancholy strains of the past, but new melodies aflame with the joy of creativeness and labour."

The work involved in staging Shakespeare's "King Lear" had vitalizing influence on the theatre's development.

The opening scene of this play is among the things that cling to one's memory.

The palace is filled with courtiers who, with stately bearing, are slowly descending the staircase leading into the hall. In rushes the Jester (Zuskin), a tragic jester, in a whirl of movement, of expressive hands: hands without number are embroidered all over his black tights; his face is contorted in a clownish smile—one half laughing, the other weeping; he is spasmodically twisting and turning in his hand a small wand; punning, making faces, clambering onto the throne. Quietly, slowly enters the King.

His entrance, his appearance are a shock to the spectator accustomed to the traditional image of Lear. The Michoels-Lear is an insignificant-looking, beardless, decrepit quiet old man of short stature with ironical lines about the mouth, an eye sceptical and blasé, with a characteristic short cough that is half a chuckle, and dressed in a black cloak spangled with golden stars. The first Lear in the history of the Shakespearean stage without a beard.

"I have brought Lear from old age to youth," says Michoels reminiscently. "I want to show his frozen immobility, and then the revulsion of feeling—youth, living strength, struggle, victory, hope—and then the crash,—this time final."

Michoels possesses gestures of exceptional force of imagery springing from within, born of poignant, stirring thought. In each role he undertakes there is a gesture—leitmotif, that runs through the whole development of the character. Speaking of the heart he does not merely lay his hand on his breast; a transverse gesture seems to dissect, to cut his heart to pieces.

Another leitmotif is the chuckle; an old man's chuckle—staccato, ironical, which only once, in the final scene turns into a short fit of weeping, dry and heart-breaking: gazing at the dead Cordelia and trembling with the intensity of his grief, Lear lies down quietly beside the body of his daughter, fixes his eyes on the beloved face and so dies.

Both in the theatre and during the discussions Michoels, with a fervour peculiarly his own, never tires of reminding his audience of the great role of imagery in art. And he stresses the fact that there can be no image apart from the idea; no art outside the idea. "What interests me first and foremost when I begin working on a role," he says, "is in what sense this role can become part of myself and my own world-outlook."

"It is those who strive throughout their lives to acquire knowledge of truth and of the world who most stir my imagination," Michoels stated when discussing his staging of "King Lear." "The world and man peering into it, reality and world-outlook with a growing knowledge of that reality—this is perhaps the theme which attracts me most as actor and producer."

This, too, is the theme that reconciles such diverse images as Michoels' delineation of King Lear and Tevye the milkman; of the philosopher Solomon Maimon, and Ovadis, the raftsman.

There seems no end to the trials and afflictions that beface the unfortunate Tevye the milkman, inhabitant of the same type of township as the "Luftmensch," Menachem Mendel, the favourite hero of the old State Jewish Theatre, dragged out his dismal existence.

Not too easily does Tevye gain a knowledge of the world; not all at once or quite simply does he reconcile himself to the breaking up of his home—to the departure of his children from the rut of family life. But once having avowed to an understanding of the essential right of the young people he becomes their wise ally even when outwardly condemning them. In a complex artistic pattern Michoels conveys this great-heartedness in the poverty-stricken Tevye, his tender and passionate love for his children, his contempt for the "strong ones of the world," his humour and irony.

In his day Delsarte used to tell his pupils: "Let your gestures be words to the deaf, and your words gestures to the blind." In depicting Tevye the milkman, as in Lear, a gesture of Michoels expresses even more than the imagery of Sholom-Aleikhem's colourful text. No less eloquent are his intonations or the movements of his eyebrows, now raised in wonder, now drooping gloomily, now frowning ironically, or the now sweet, now bitter smile of Tevye.

Tevye is not presented as an isolated figure but in all his complex interrelations with the surrounding world; therein lies Michoels' great merit who, together with his ensemble, has produced a sculpturally expressive and realistic gallery of images. The drama of the Tevye family develops against the background of the sunlit, joyous scenery of the Ukraine, vividly reproduced by the brush of Isaak Rabinovich and the music of Leo Pulver.

One cannot but agree with the opinion voiced by Benjamin Zuskin, that the theatre "seemed to have accumulated strength that it might more faithfully and fully embody this monumental work, depicting a staunch and wise man of the people whose spirit

was not broken by the hard life in a pre-revolutionary provincial town."

The old personages of the theatre have given place to new figures: the valiant Bar Cocheba, raising a rebellion against the Roman enslavers ("Bar Cocheba"); the vigorous-minded, intelligent Tevye; Polezhayev, the Soviet scientist (Rakhmanov's "A Troubled Old Age"), and the Soviet patriots heroically defending the borders of the homeland ("The Ovadis Family" by Peretz Markish).

"...I stood there, leaning over the balcony, stirred to the depths of my being, my eyes filled with tears. I heard the clanging of swords that reached my ears through the centuries. I witnessed the sword in the hands of my people. I wept with joy and pride... This is marvellously symbolic in that we, descendants of Jewish patriots, after two thousand years of struggle had become devoted patriots of our Soviet fatherland."

These words were written in a letter to the actors of the theatre by a student of the Moscow Aviation Institute under the lively impression of "Bar Cocheba," a scenic poem by Samuel Galkin produced by Merited Artist Isaac Kroll.

Five years later this young spectator who, on seeing "Bar Cocheba," had felt so poignantly the ties binding him to the heroic traditions of his people, translated his word into action. He was wounded in the Stalingrad battle and, decorated for bravery, returned to the ranks from hospital. Fighting for his new country he little suspected that fighting somewhere not far off, on another sector of the front and wearing the same khaki uniform as himself, was the man who had brought the images of their heroic ancestors to the stage of the Jewish theatre.

"The earth will belong to those who shed their blood for freedom," these words of Bar Cocheba coming from the lips of Mark Shekhter were not merely stage lines, but the dictate of his own heart. Such also were the tender words about his country pronounced by this artist as the leader of the pastoral Jewish tribe in the play "The Shulamite" (after Goldfaden).

When the German fascists attacked Russia, Shekhter, heading a large group of his theatre personnel, presented himself at the recruiting office and volunteered for the People's Guard, despite the exception granted to art workers in the U.S.S.R. And now, in the fourth year of war, Shekhter is still in the Red Army. And besides Shekhter, ten others from the same theatre are fighting at the front, while several of their comrades have fallen in battle.

In August 1941, at the All-Moscow meeting of the representatives of the Jewish people, held soon after the treacherous attack of the Germans on Soviet territory, the assembled audience listened to a stirring speech delivered by Solomon Michoels.

"The Soviet Union," he said, "has proved the beloved fatherland of all Soviet peoples. Our generation knows no fear. Shoulder to shoulder with all the other citizens of our great country the sons of our people are fighting, shedding their lifeblood in the Patriotic War waged by the whole Soviet people."

It is the people of this generation who form the present-day audience of the State Jewish Theatre.

During the entr'acte, several Soviet officers with decorations pinned to their tunics are carrying on an animated conversation with their visitors, American fliers. The language they are speaking is the same as that which they have just heard on the stage. More and more people join in the conversation until their group occupies the whole landing. Here is a woman army doctor, several students, a famous inventor, a Stalin Prize winner, the country's chess champion, a very old gentleman, and an ordinary mamma and daughter... People are coming up who do not know Yiddish, but they listen to the unfamiliar words with the same eagerness as they did during the action of the play, being infected with the general feeling of exaltation.

Just before the war the Jewish State Theatre staged Sholom-Aleikhem's "Wandering Stars," a delicious story about the actors of the old Jewish theatre, about a Jewish Romeo and Juliet the drama of whose love did not develop in sunlit Verona, but in the dusty kingdom behind the stage, dimly lighted by gasjets.

In Leo Pulver's incidental music we hear popular airs by Goldfaden and there comes to our ears the crystal-pure ancient and ever-young melody of that deathless hymn of love—"the Song of Songs."

Michoels has entrusted the leading role of Reisl, a talented young girl, to Ettel Kovenskaya, a pupil of the Jewish Theatrical Studio, a future star of the Jewish stage. The spectator is gripped by the fresh spontaneity of young love and the genuine lyrical talent of the débutante. She finds a partner worthy of herself in Zinovi Kaminsky, a young actor who plays Leib, Reisl's lover.

Benjamin Zuskin is Gotzmakh, the comic man, a wit and joker, a bit of a rogue but the best heart in the world, a man enamoured of the stage. He dies to the strains of the march from Goldfaden's "Witch." "Come, o come to me," softly chants Gotzmakh as he falls to the ground exhausted. And somewhere from the wings sounds a voice, fresh, strong and young. It is Leib. With quiet joy the old actor listens to his favourite pupil. Perhaps there is a better fate than his own in store for the youth.

In this performance the destinies of the heroes of the play and of the performers themselves, even their former roles and the fate of the Jewish Theatre itself, both the old and the new, are intertwined in a most extraordinary way.

Sitting next to me during the performance of "Wandering Stars" on an October evening of the year 1944, was a youth, or perhaps it would be more correct to call

him a boy, who, as it appeared from our conversation, had come to Moscow from a place which only a year since had been under the partisans. His own native town had been captured and ruined by the Germans. Together with his father and an elder brother he had gone out into the forest where his whole family had joined up with the partisans. The mother and a younger sister hid in pits dug in a remote place in the forest. For over a year they had lived in a well.

It had been a cherished dream of the boy's to become an actor and in the full sense of the word he had fought for his right to realize his dream. On arriving in Moscow he had done splendidly in the entrance examinations to the studio and now classes had begun. The boy, it appeared, was a younger brother of Ettel Kovenskaya, the heroine of "Wandering Stars" and "The Bride Who Was Difficult to Please" in the theatre's latest staging. Five years before, when Ettel was leaving her home in a little West-Ukrainian town, it would have been hard to believe that the course of her artistic career would run so smooth.

The boy, who, arms in hand, had fought for his heart's desire, who had looked death in the face and witnessed the horrors of German occupation, was now facing his future with a touching apprehensiveness. How would things shape? His sister's example gave him an encouraging reply.

The State Jewish Theatre School which has been in existence for over fifteen years has produced for the Jewish State Theatre some two hundred actors and actresses. There are graduate of the school in the troupes of the Byelorussian, Odessa, Kharkov and Kiev, Birobijan and Crimean Jewish Theatres. And in its turn the Jewish Theatre has gained recruits from amongst the people. Following a long-established tradition, it has journeyed out once a year on a lengthy tour through the country, visiting the South and the North, the West and the East, the Ukraine and Byelorussia, the coasts of the White and the Black Seas, Leningrad and Odessa. And as often as not they bring back to Moscow new "material" for their school. Take a few cases in point. On the return from a tour to Berdichev the theatre was accompanied by one Sarah Fabrikant, a worker from clothes factory; Baruch Kreichman, the future Duke of Cornwall in "King Lear," hails from Uman; Abram Pustylnik, who was later to shine as Edmund in the same play and who has won two army decorations, was discovered at Vinnitsa. After leaving the school many of the graduates have joined the Moscow theatre while others returned to their respective native towns.

The school has not ceased work in wartime, classes being held in all four courses, and two hundred Jewish girls and youths having shown up for the entrance examinations this year.

The theatre's latest production is Goldfaden's "Bride Who Was Difficult to Please." We have here a new reading of one of the oldest of Jewish operettas, resulting in one of the liveliest and most colourful performances of its genre of the Moscow season. The playwright is Ezekiel Dobrushin, the producer—Emmanuel Kaplan, scenic artist—Alexander Tischler and composer—Leo Pulver.

In the old staging the piece was not usually known by this name, but by the surnames of two of the other characters, "Kaptsensohn and Ungerman." Both of them, the low comedian and the hero, are go-getters, cynical and impudent, shamefully making game of the feelings of a foolish girl who had had her head turned by reading romances of chivalry.

The theatre has changed that libretto. Combined into one character are the hero Ungerman, and one Solomon, a young boy-cousin of the girl's, who is head over ears in love with her (in this the play has kept to the old version). The heroes used their dramatic talent as a means of curing the unfortunate girl of her obsession of a lover "out of a novel"; Kaptsensohn, gay and resourceful, persuades his friend who is in love with the girl to play the part of a romantic knight. A whole theatre is drawn into the conspiracy. The ensemble—a lively, jolly company, all join in a huge practical joke and their united efforts succeed in curing of her folly the "Bride Who Was Difficult to Please."

The actors show up the good sides in the characters and manners of their player-ancestors, talented men ground down by the wretched conditions of the life they were fated to lead. Kovenskaya creates a fresh and touching image in the title-role.

The play is one of many new productions staged in wartime.

Evacuated to Central Asia in the autumn of 1941, and playing at Tashkent, the capital of the Uzbek Soviet Republic, a town of golden sunshine where the black-out was unknown, separated from the front by a distance of some three thousand kilometres, the theatre continued to serve a people at war. It was in this living awareness of a great fight for vengeance on the barbarians that was born the production of "An Eye for an Eye" after the play by Peretz Markish.

The Germans are in Poland. We see the Jewish ghetto where thousands of women, children and aged men are driven to slaughter. It is the black night of the occupation. The scrolls of the torah are waving in the breeze that heralds the dawn, bringing with it wrath and contempt for the enemy doomed by history to disaster. A people whose spirit can pass unscathed through inhuman trials is deathless!

This play and Dobrushin's "A Wonderful Story," dealing with Jewish partisans, are the theatre's first attempts at recording the events of the present war.

Deserving mention is "Hamza," one of the plays staged during the Tashkent period of the theatre's history, in which

Uzbek and Jewish art are happily merged. Hakim-zade Hamza, a prominent figure in Uzbek culture, actor, playwright, composer and conductor, is also the mouthpiece of liberated Uzbekistan, a fighter for the emancipation of the Uzbek woman.

The production of "Hamza" (directed by Ephraim Loiter) and the continuous and active participation of the State Jewish Theatre producers and artists in the staging of new performances in the national Uzbek theatres were something more than a mere act of gratitude for hospitality received. One cannot fail to see in this friendly collaboration an expression of that fraternity of Soviet peoples which is bearing as abundant fruit in culture as it is producing in labour and war.

While from the stage of the Jewish Theatre come the hilarious sounds of the lively care-free music of Goldfaden's operetta, work is forging ahead behind the scenes, on a new première: "Reubeni, Prince of Judea," a tragedy by David Bergelsohn. Reubeni is a historical personage of the early 17th century, who tried to avert the expulsion of the Jews from Portugal.

The future repertoire of the theatre includes "Richard III" with Michoels in the title-role and "What the Violin Told" by Itskhok Peretz, one of the gems of classical Jewish literature. Solomon Galkin's new play is devoted to the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto. The poet Sutskever, who participated in the uprising in the Vilna ghetto, is the author of a play centering round the leader of the rebellion—Munya Vittenburg.

For its new productions the theatre naturally seeks images of heroic grandeur. That is the road to which it has been led not only through its twenty-years of search and labour, but by the epoch itself, an epoch of struggle and victory of the peoples over brutal fascism.

The Jewish people, which has in this struggle made sacrifices so great, cannot disappear off the face of the earth to satisfy the desires of the fascist fanatics. The lofty achievements of a culture and art of which progressive Jewry may justly be proud, are a pledge of the immortality of one of the most ancient of the freedom-loving peoples of the earth.

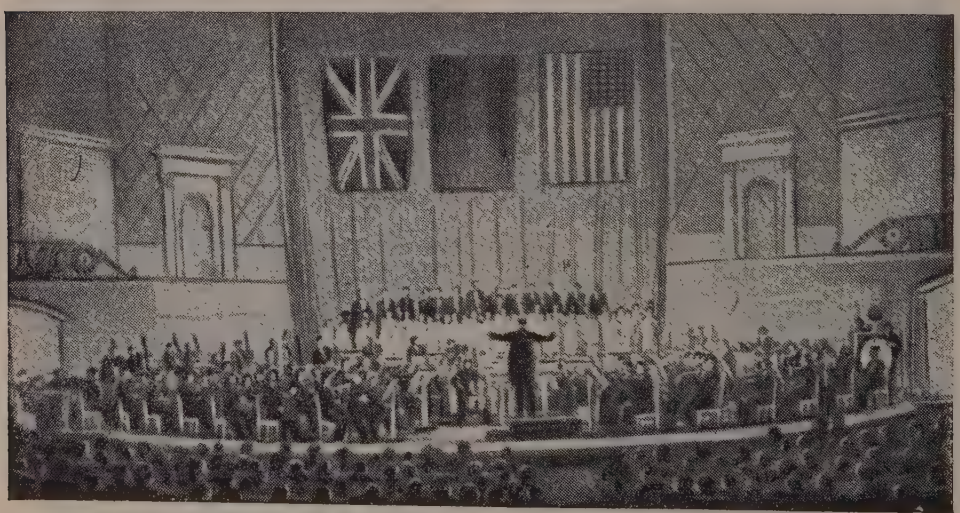
SIMON DREIDEN

BRITISH AND AMERICAN MUSIC IN THE U.S.S.R.

British classical music has always interested Russian connoisseurs of this art. John Dunstable, "king of music and father of counterpoint"; William Byrd, great contemporary of Shakespeare; Henry Purcell[1], the "British Orpheus" and founder of English music; Chopin's predecessor John Field, who spent a considerable part of his life in St. Petersburg and Moscow —all these composers are highly esteemed among us.

The visits of outstanding British musicians have enabled us to become acquainted with the latest achievements in British music. Suffice it to mention the name of Alan Bush, under whose baton interesting compositions, such as the famous "London Symphony," by Ralph Vaughan-Williams, were performed and recorded in Moscow. Subsequently, these works were frequently broadcast by the Soviet radio.

[1] During the 1943—44 concert season in Moscow, a performance was given of his "Voluntary" in the orchestral adaptation by Sir Henry Wood, whose death is grieved by all Soviet musicians.



A concert of English and American music at the Chaikovsky Hall, conducted by Serguei Prokofyev

During the present war we have got to know the works of the younger as well as the older British composers. Through "Voks" we systematically receive large numbers of music scores and books, musical periodicals, recording and other items, as well as letters from composers, musicians and performers, telling us about their work and musical activities in their country.

Of the classical legacy left by the late Sir Edward Elgar most frequently heard are his orchestral works belonging to the intermediate creative period of creative activity of this outstanding composer and founder of the new English music. These are his famous "Enigma" Variations, the "Cockaigne" Overture ("In London Town"), Introduction and Allegro for string quartette and orchestra.

Of Elgar's later productions, the ones performed here are his Concerto for violin and orchestra (first introduced to the U.S.S.R. by gramophone record, with Yehudi Menuhin as soloist and the composer as conductor), and his Concerto for violoncello and orchestra. Just recently his "Falstaff" Overture was performed for the first time over the Soviet radio. The "Pomp and Circumstance" marches are often heard.

Because of their romantic expressiveness and brilliant instrumentation, performances of Elgar's work are always successful.

The national features of Elgar's music are perceived in its connection with British folk songs and with images found in the national literature. By contrasting these compositions of Elgar's one sees clearly how great is his creative range—from heroic romance to the delicate, soulful lyric. It was Elgar who consolidated the national features of British music, overcoming the stagnation of that period when "Sullivan, nurtured in the Leipzig traditions which followed Mendelssohn's ascendancy, had taken London by storm in the early sixties."[1]

In speaking of British composers whose works are performed in the U.S.S.R., one should first mention Ralph Vaughan-Williams. Soviet people are aware that this composer spent the years 1914—1918 at the front and that during the present war, despite his advanced age (seventy-three) he organized the collection of scrap metal for war factories.

Of his orchestral compositions we in the Soviet Union have heard "The London Symphony," "Suite on English Themes," "Green Sleeves," a fantasia based on a folk song, and the charming overture, "The Wasps." This early production of the composer, written in 1909 for a Cambridge performance of Aristophanes, charms its audience with its expressive melodies and its classic precision of form. Splendidly instrumentated, this overture at the same time excells in neat musical types which delineate the characters in the play. This is probably how the great ancient comedy should appear on the stage of the ancient university town.

His "London Symphony" has already won lasting popularity in the U.S.S.R. Its orchestration too is very pleasing, particularly the light, ethereal tones of the third movement, which the composer has named a nocturne. On hearing it, one involuntarily associates it with that poetic fantasy—"A Midsummer Night's Dream."

John Ireland is another of the older British composers whose works are genuinely liked by Soviet audiences. We are familiar with his first orchestral piece—a short prelude "The Forgotten Rite" (1913) and his symphonic rhapsody "Mai-Dun." However, only his later compositions have been performed at public concerts—the Concerto for piano and orchestra, written in 1930, and the "London Overture" which he completed in 1937.

Of Sir Arnold Bax's music, Soviet audiences have the opportunity of listening to his Third Symphony and the First String Quartette. This latter, a skilful composition, possesses an affinity to Russian music, particularly that of Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov. But although this affinity displays the composer's creative sympathies, Sir Arnold Bax's appreciation of the Soviet people is disclosed to an even greater degree in his "Triumphal Ode to the Red Army." It was with profound satisfaction that the Soviet public heard of the performance in London of this work on February 23rd, 1944. However, due to the fact that we have received no copies of the score it has unfortunately not yet been heard in Moscow.

Arthur Bliss is well-known among us as an important composer and anti-fascist, who has an old score to settle with the Germans for the World War I, when he was gased and twice wounded. In music circles here a high rating is accorded Bliss's ballet, "Checkmate," as well as his "Colour Symphony," which won him world fame.

Performances at public concerts of Ireland's Piano Concerto (written at the request of the British Council for "British Week" at the New York Festival in 1939) are always highly successful. This concerto, in the opinion of authoritative Soviet musicians, is one of the most outstanding achievements of contemporary British music.

In the field of chamber music, we have heard the Sonata for 'cello and piano by Sir Granville Bantock, an outstanding composer and public figure. His suite, based on English sea shanties, is occasionally broadcast over our radio.

Soviet pianists often perform Cyril Scott's piano pieces: "Jungle Book Impressions," "Indian Suite," "Egypt Suite." These, as well as his "Lotus Land" have long been included in the repertoires of our music schools.

The works of the younger British

[1] Thomas F. Dunhill: "Sir Edward Elgar," "O. M." Series, London and Glasgow, 1938, p. 2.

composers are also known in the Soviet Union. In this connection first place goes to one whom we have already mentioned —Alan Bush, president of the Worker's Music Association. He is a brilliant pianist, conductor and composer of symphonic and vocal works, all as familiar to us as his activities to popularize our music. His song about the Red Army is appraised very highly.

Another song often heard is "Convoy," by the young English composer Aubrey Bowman, having as its theme the friendship of Soviet and British seamen. Recently Moscow received the manuscript score of the "Stalingrad" overture written by the young English composer Christian Darnton. This overture, which has already been performed at a symphony concert in Moscow, was written in the space of a few days in February, 1943, under the impress of news about the battle for Stalingrad.

In recent times, the works of William Walton have aroused particular interest among Soviet musicians. We are familiar with his Piano Quartette (an earlier production, belonging to the years 1918—1919) and his two orchestral suites, "Façade," which have several times been performed over the radio and which charm the listener with their clever instrumentation and dainty parodies of dance forms and modes. His later productions have not yet been performed here, although we have read of them with interest.

One could go on recounting the works of British composers which have been performed in the U.S.S.R., but I have no wish to turn this article into a catalogue; I want merely to mention several composers who are best-known in our country and note the growing interest in British music, an interest incidentally which is not confined to the work of British composers alone, but also extends to folk songs. Welsh, Scotch and Irish songs are often performed in the U.S.S.R. and published with Russian translations of the words. Many of them are extremely popular as, for example, the old English song "King Arthur's Servants," the dance "To the Maypole Haste Away," the 17th-century lyric, "Oh, the Oak and the Ash," the old Scottish ballad, "Lord Gregory," and the famous sea shanties, "Shenandoah" and "Rio Grande." English and Scotch songs, with adaptations and instrumentation by Serguei Prokofyev and Dmitri Shostakovich, have proved of great interest.

All these songs are very popular among Soviet audiences, who prize highly any manifestation of live human emotions in art, any display of popular aspirations and sentiments.

American folk songs and the composers of the U.S.A. are winning recognition in the Soviet Union. "When I hear that epic song, the calm, almost solemn and, at the same time, sad 'Mississipi' I am involuntarily reminded of the 'Volga Boatman,'" said the composer Vano Muradeli, speaking at one of the Moscow concerts of American music. And truly, who can understand better than the people which has sung of the Volga and the Don, the Dnieper and the Irtysh, the feelings which swell in the song "Ol' Man River," written by Jerome Kern for the musical comedy "Showboat" under the impression of the broad reaches of this American river?

The mood of the American folk song "The Lonesome Road" is very much akin to that of Russian lyrical songs. American folk songs are performed in the U.S.S.R. both in the original and in adaptations by composers of the Western Hemisphere. For example, Elie Siegmeister's adaptations of "Till We Meet Again," "Weeping Sad and Lonely" and others are very popular.

Soviet composers are also producing adaptations of American folk songs: to mention only one example—the cycle of twelve songs recently completed by Anatole Alexandrov. One may often hear at chamber concerts and over the radio the lovely songs of Stephen Foster, most popular of which are "Old Folks at Home," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Oh, Suzanna," etc.

During two decades Soviet audiences have become acquainted with the work of many American composers and their search for a national style.

Edward MacDowell is an old acquaintance on Soviet programmes. His piano pieces, particularly the effective "Witches' Dance" and the charming "Forest Idylls" are even today found in the repertoire of Soviet pianists.

I well remember how, for my final examination at the Academy of Music in 1925, I played the "Sonata Tragica" of this splendid composer. Sometime later I studied other compositions of his.

Those who know the work of modern American composers will agree that the majority of them are characterized by a healthy, realistic grasp of actuality. I think I make no mistake in saying that Soviet audiences are drawn to those works which most strikingly reflect the courageous will and virile optimism of the American people.

Performances have taken place in the Soviet Union of Roy Harris's Piano Sonata, his Fifth Symphony, dedicated to the Soviet peoples, as well as his symphonic overture "Johnny Comes Marching Home" (based on the theme of the popular American folk song of which Elie Siegmeister's adaptation is sung here).

These works disclose a profound understanding of the spirit of the American folk song, in which the composer himself finds a point of affinity with Russian folk songs:

"Rhythmic freedom, asymmetry is, no doubt, the greatest American contribution to folk song literature (in that respect it most resembles Russian folk song)..."[1]

I must say that when I hear or play

[1] "Modern Music," November-December, 1940.

the music of Roy Harris I always remember the virile poetry of Walt Whitman.

Muscovites heard with keen interest the Fourth Sonata for violin and piano by Charles Ives, a fine connoisseur of American folklore. Just a short while ago we in Moscow became familiar with the brilliant and original "Canon and Fugue for Strings" by Wallingford Riegger. Recently, in Moscow too, a first performance of the works of Walter Piston took place, —a composer with a leaning to the romantic. Included were his orchestral Suite from the ballet "The Incredible Flutist" and the "Concertino for piano and chamber orchestra." These, together with his "Trio for piano, violin and 'cello," disclose a superior technique: the orchestra in Piston's works is brilliant and abounds in clever, interesting discoveries.

The symphonic works of the young composer, Samuel Barber, are also excellently orchestrated—for example, his laconic "Essay" and his bright, cheery overture to Sheridan's "School for Scandal," which has been played in Moscow several times. This overture, together with the composer's interesting 'cello sonata, will in all probability retain a permanent place on concert programmes in the U.S.S.R.

Special mention should also be made of the great interest aroused in the Soviet Union by American jazz music, which is heard at concerts, in music-hall programmes and over the radio. George Gershwin, "the white hope of American music," and the initiator of symphonic jazz, is well-known here, where variations of his "Rhapsody in Blue" are often played.

Frequently broadcasts are given of excerpts from his only opera, "Porgy and Bess," which will this year be performed in full by the opera ensemble of the All-Russian Theatre Society. There are also occasional performances of a more important production of this talented composer who died an untimely death, namely his Piano Concerto.

Gershwin's lyrical, soulful songs are especially popular. Serguei Lemeshev, during one of his concerts, was not allowed to continue until he had given way to the insistent demands of the public for an encore of his highly successful interpretation of "Love Walked In."

For several years the musical comedy "Rose-Marie," by Friml and Stoggardt, has been playing to capacity houses in many Soviet theatres, and the songs from this operetta have become very popular. In the Soviet Union, during the present Patriotic War there has arisen a particularly keen interest in the patriotic productions of American composers. Best-known of their new war songs are Harry Warren's "Wings Over the Navy" (from the music to the film), the comic song "This Is the Army" from the war review by Irving Berlin, "Don't Sit under the Apple Tree," etc.

Viewing with genuine regard and respect the development of music in the Allied countries and the manifestation in this music of lofty human feelings, the Soviet public at the same time sees in the growing popularity of Soviet music in Britain and the U.S.A. a guarantee of the growing friendship of our peoples.

Professor IGOR BOELZA

ART NEWS

Soviet schoolchildren have been given a new play, a new pleasure: the Moscow Theatre for Young People has produced a new fairy play by Alexei Simukov, "Home Land," the action of which takes place in a legendary country, Zemlianskaya. The suitor for the hand of the heroine Lyubasha is Nikita, renowned for his bravery, but before he can be regarded as worthy of her he must perform some great exploit. He has to find and win the magic sword that has the power to destroy his enemies. He sets out in quest of it... One fine summer's day, when the peaceful country is keeping holiday, the warriors of Duke Iron-Heart descend upon it, ruthlessly destroying all living creatures that cross their path. But neither the proud Lyubasha, nor her grandfather nor her younger brother, the quick, resourceful Vassilyok will submit to the tyrannical invader. They are ready to die rather than

Dramatis personnel from "Home Land." Left to right—Councillor to the Duke Iron-Heart, Granddad, Nikita, Vassilyok, Lyubasha

"The Vow in the Forest." Scene from "Home" Land"

yield to the foe the people's treasure, the magic tablecloth which can provide food and drink for everyone. Iron-Heart's troops are waging war everywhere, death threatens the valiant. Then suddenly Nikita appears with the magic sword which he has won. The enemies scatter in terror, Duke Iron-Heart perishes... Trials and suffering come to an end, and are crowned with a wedding-feast.

The scene is laid in an imaginary land in a story-book period: but the juvenile members of the audience who follow with bated breath the course of events as they unfold, make a correct guess when they say that the country is their own, the time—the present. This brings the play all the closer to the audience and assures its success.

Andrei Krichko, who is responsible for the production, discloses this aspect of the piece with an unerring touch. The central figure is of course Lyubasha, typical of the brave daughters of her country. Maria Polovikova handles the part very successfully. There is an appealing directness and charm in Julia Yulskaya's interpretation of the fearless boy Vassilyok. The production is effective and interesting.

Here is another new production—for grown-ups this time. When the green glittering curtain rises, the noisy gaiety of an old-time country fair reaches us from the market-place, where young people are dancing to the strumming of a guitar. A Gipsy singer, Sergo by name, is in love with beautiful Gilori, the daughter of the proud elder of the Gipsies. His love is reciprocated but the stubborn father will not hear of their union: he has decided to give his daughter in marriage to one of the rich suitors who have long since asked for her hand. Old Gipsy customs are revived on the stage, the matchmakers with their huge loaves of bread on platters draped with embroidered towels—the symbols of hospitality and welcome—and the bridegrooms in their best clothes, the guests and the friends of the brides and bridegrooms, all the gay motley scene of a Gipsy wedding. Disguised as a wizard-fortuneteller, the singer Sergo comes to the wedding and by an adroit device, manages to abduct the bride at the last moment.

This is the plot of the play, "The Bride from the Gipsy-Camp" produced at the Moscow "Romany" Theatre—the only Gipsy theatre in the world. The new play is in the nature of a national musical show. The music was composed by Semyon Bugachevsky, who is noted for his profound knowledge of Gipsy folk songs. The love theme is interwoven with the carnival-comedy theme. The composer paints the

Olga Petrova as Gilori in the play "The Bride From the Gipsy-Camp" staged by the Moscow "Romany" Theatre

life of the Gipsy people with broad and telling touches. The production itself bears witness to the creative successes of the youngster generation of Gipsy players that has grown up in the war years. Particularly memorable is the performance of Olga Petrova, who has created a true, forceful and touching type of a Gipsy beauty.

Great interest has always been felt in Georgia for the work of the Russian dramatist Alexander Ostrovsky. His play "A Profitable Post" was first produced in Georgia in 1875 and fragments were staged on his visit to Tiflis in 1883. Young Georgian actors, V. Abashidze, K. Meskhi, K. Kipiani, N. Gabunia, who afterwards became notable on the Georgian stage, gave a splendid performance of the second act of the play, that evening long ago. The actress Gabunia described the meeting with the author in her diary:

"When the performance was over Ostrovsky came to the green room. He came forward to greet me and kissed my hand. In response I embraced him and kissed him. Tears came into his eyes and he said with emotion: 'When I was intending to visit the Caucasus, I could never have thought to see my play here, in the Georgian tongue, and such a splendid performance'."

Ostrovsky's "Vassilissa Melentyeva" was translated into Georgian by a noted actor, Lado Meskhishvili, who played the role of Ivan the Dread in this production. Other Ostrovsky plays: "Hard-Earned Bread," "Guilty Without Guilt" and "Balsaminov's Wedding," were produced on the Georgian stage and were a great success with Georgian theatre-goers.

In 1945 two leading theatres in Tbilisi produced almost simultaneously Ostrovsky's "The Wisest Are Simple Enough" and 'The Dowerless," both of which are entirely new to the Georgian stage. The foremost actors of the Georgian republic are to play in them.

Many Moscow theatres have studios in which young actors are trained. One of the most interesting of these schools or studios is that attached to the Vakhtangov Theatre. It is seven years older than the theatre itself. This is explained by the fact that Eugene Vakhtangov built up his theatre out of this school. In 1914 he took over the direction of a Moscow students' dramatic circle. Out of this emerged the future theatre. Its birthday is November 13th, 1921, the première of its production of Maeterlinck's "Miracle of St. Anthony." By that time the school had already seven years of work behind it. It continued its work, providing the theatre with fresh forces. Most of the actors of the Vakhtangov Theatre were trained in his school and now they guide the work of the young students. The best players, Boris Zakhava, Reuben Simonov, Cecilia Mansurova, Anna Orochko and others are helping to train future actors.

During the first months of the war all the men students volunteered for the front, and helped to dig the trenches at Smolensk. This is all over and done with now. The school is going in for some steady, serious work. The graduation play for 1945 is Carlo Gozzi's "Happy Beggar."

The Latvian Art Theatre, Riga, has produced a new play, "Spartacus," by Andrei Upits, the Latvian people's writer.

The Lenin Komsomol Theatre, Moscow, has produced "The Watch on the Rhine," by the American writer Lilian Hellman.

The Gnessin School of Music celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year. Founded in 1895 by three young pianists, the sisters Gnessin, who were graduates of the Moscow Academy of Music and friends of Rachmaninov and Scryabin in their youth, the new school soon won popularity in Moscow. An active part in its work was taken by the composers Reinhold Glière, Alexander Grechaninov and the founders' brother, Mikhail Gnessin. In the course of half a century the school has trained generations of gifted musicians. Leo Oborin was one of them. He was awarded the first prize at the Chopin International Competition for Pianists in Warsaw in 1927. Three outstanding Soviet composers: Aram Khachaturyan, Tikhon Khrennikov and Leo Knipper were also trained in this school.

Shortly before its fiftieth birthday the Gnessin School was reorganized as a college. The unpretentious preparatory school with its three teachers of the pianoforte and thirty pupils became an important music centre combining a higher institute, a musical technical school and a children's music school. Now there are more than 1,200 pupils—children and grown-ups—and about two hundred teachers. The musicians who receive their musical education here always retain the warmest affection for their school and its staff. On every anniversary the first pupil invariably revisits the school, and she is still called Verochka here as she was fifty years ago, when she first entered the modest little house which was the school in those days.

The fiftieth anniversary of the Gnessin School was kept as befits a great occasion, a holiday for Soviet musical culture. The director, Helen Gnessina, who is seventy years of age, received the country's highest award, the Order of Lenin. Honorary titles were conferred on several of the teachers.

The first Karelian opera, "Sampo," by the composer Leonid Vishkarev, was recently heard in Petrozavodsk, the capital of the Karelo-Finnish Republic. It is written around the "Kalevala," the Karelo-Finnish national epic which reflects the people's dreams of happiness. The libretto is based on the legend of Sampo, the wonderworking mill that grinds of itself. Folk-melodies and songs are widely employed throughout.

The filming has just been completed of a new Soviet motion picture of a popular scientific nature, "The Law of the Great Love," which is on the subject of the maternal instinct as demonstrated on animals. The utmost care has been expended on its preparation, which entailed several months of work in government preserves in the woods of the Moscow district.

It was decided not to photograph trained animals; only wild animals were filmed. The leading character was a fox-cub nicknamed "The Fop," and he was treated like a regular filmstar. He even had his own "stand-in" and was only filmed in the most important episodes.

One of the most interesting moments in the picture is when a bird of prey swoops down on the fox and flies away with it. For this part a trained golden eagle experienced in fox-hunting had to be brought from Kazakhtsan. His master, Suleiman Takimov, a Kazakh of seventy-two who had never before left his native village, brought the bird on a plane to Moscow.

Infinite pains had to be taken to film the life of a bird family. A species of watchtower with a camera on top of it was rigged up in three birches at a height of seventeen metres from the ground, close to a birds nest. But the operators who took turns at watching there had to possess themselves of patience before they secured what they wanted.

The exhibition of work by the Mitrofan Grekov studio, which was opened in Moscow for the twenty-seventh anniversary of the Red Army coincided with the tenth anniversary of the studio's existence. Grekov was a well-known Russian painter of battle-scenes, who took part in the Civil War during the first years of the Soviet Revolution.

An older Russian battle-painter, Vassili Vereshchagin (1842—1904) always held that the "war-artist" should participate in action. The artists trained in the Grekov studio have carried out this principle. They have all witnessed battles and participated in marches. Therefore their own personal impressions lie at the basis of their work: it is not invention or something taken from a book, it is the actual stuff of the annals of war, recorded with brush and pencil.

Portraits occupy an important place in the exhibition. What strikes one about them is the general effort made to produce something more than a "mere portrait" and paint a type that conveys something of the breath of this stern but glorious epoch. Outstanding among them is Constantine Kitaika's equestrian portrait of Major-General Tutarinov and Colonel Turchaninov, Cossacks from the Kuban River district. Very striking, too, is the "Stalingrad's Defender" by Ilya Lukomsky. This soldier with his grenades ready in his hand is in a sense the culmination of a series of portraits of Stalingrad men painted by this artist in 1943.

In their scope the battle-scenes painted in this studio attempt something far beyond the limits of the genre. A great deal of originality is shown in the treatment of the war landscape. It has a character of its own and is included in the range of war themes as a symbol of the Russian soldier's love for his native town, village, field, and all that remains at home.

Some artists go in for painting historic Russian towns: Leonid Golovanov has painted "Pskov," Victor Klimashin—"Novgorod," Roman Zhitkov—"Peterhof." There is also an impressive series on Stalingrad by Eugene Komarov. The Grekov Studio painters have followed the trail of war, scrutinizing closely the wounds inflicted on their native land and taking pains to depict them.

Then finally another stride in history is taken and we are across the Soviet frontier. The studies made in Poland, Rumania, Hungary and Prussia are many and they are all on a very high level.

One wall of the exhibition is assigned to the work of Nikolai Zhukov, the head of the studio. He has been very successful with his sketches of life on the Byelorussian front. His drawings of German prisoners

Odintsov: Political department in the front line area

Gaposhkin: Soviet tanks in the Yugoslav mountains

show a sure and exact touch, a telling satirical quality and keen observation of the painter of psychological portraits. The sketches for the portraits of the artist's little daughter have an appealing spiritual warmth.

There are some large compositions too. Ivan Yevstigneyev and Nikolai Obrynba give an insight into the circumstances of partisan warfare. There is much sincere feeling in Boris Nemensky's "Mother." The peasant-woman cannot sleep, but keeps looking at the soldiers, the "sons," who have found a night's lodging in her cottage and sleep soundly under their great-coats. Peter Krivonogov's "We Shall Never Forget or Forgive," a picture of soldiers and civilians looking down at the bodies of people done to death by the Germans, produces a strong impression. "Atrocities at Rechitsa" is a record of the Germans' efforts to cover their advancing lines with Russian women and children.

Then come the pictures of actual fighting; particularly memorable among them are Mark Domashenko's "Landing Party" and Victor Kisselyov's group of soldiers firing at a German plane. Five artists, headed by Anatole Gorpenko, worked on the large diorama "The Crossing of the Dnieper, 1943."

An exhibition summing up, as it were, the work of Nikolai Shestopalov for the last forty years, was recently opened in Moscow.

This artist, who was born in 1875, began his studies under the guidance of Ilya Repin. Predominent in his work are historical subjects drawn from Russia's past, revolutionary events and episodes from the lives of great Russian writers. The results of his travels about the country are represented by landscapes painted in the Crimea and the Caucasus, Central Asia and the ancient Russian cities. During the war he painted several canvases on war themes, for example, "The Fascist Troops' Retreat," "The Heroic Front and Rear," and others. Altogether the paintings number about two hundred at this exhibition.

The work of Nikolai Kholyavin, who is holding a one-man exhibition in Moscow at present, might be called "Pictures of the Artist's Native Landscapes." Most of them are the quiet landscapes of Central Russia, attractive in their simplicity and lyrical quality. Springtime is a favourite theme with this artist, who paints it in all its phases, from the March thaws and the breaking and movement of the ice on the rivers to the first diffident tender green of the pensive Russian birches. Very often he paints water, the tranquil woodland lake, the village pond, the expanses of the Rivers Oka and Dnieper.

Peter Shukhmin has devoted more than twenty years of his life as an artist to portraiture. His work includes portraits of military men and statesmen, scholars, artists and composers.

This spring he completed his portrait of Anton Chekhov, and he tells us: "I was more than ordinarily absorbed and moved by my work on the portrait of the great Russian writer."

Chekhov is painted at Melikhovo, his country home near Moscow. He stands under a birch in the foreground and his attitude suggests that he is listening to something. In the distance the village and the parish church are barely visible and the whole scene is flooded with sunlight.

The artist is at present engaged on a portrait of the poet Pushkin, who will be shown on the embankment against the background of the Admiralty, one of the most impressive and beautiful buildings in Leningrad.

The fiftieth birthday of Vassili Akimov, the sculptor, was kept recently in Kuibyshev. His latest piece of work is a bust of the poet, Vladimir Mayakovsky. It is a strong and expressive portrait. Sculptures by this artist may be seen in many clubs and in the Palaces of Culture in Kuibyshev. The statue of Maxim Gorky in the foyer of the Dramatic Theatre is his work.

NEWS AND VIEWS

MANUSCRIPTS OF INDIAN POETRY IN THE U.S.S.R.

The Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek Republic, centred in the Republican capital of Tashkent, includes an Institute of Oriental Manuscripts. This Institute's collection includes a large number of works by Indian scholars, poets and suns. The manuscripts include many of the principal writings of the Muslim historians of India, many works by famous sufis, a collection of letters written on behalf of Akbar the Great by his trusted friend and advisor Abu-'l-Fazl, Persian dictionaries compiled in India, a number of reference works—the "Who's Who" of the middle ages—and other documents of that period.

Although the works of fine literature contained in the Institute's libraries are very numerous they form but a small part of the huge collection of over 5,000 manuscripts. In addition to works in Turkish, Arabic and Uzbek there are the main works of all the classical poets who wrote in Persian. A mere list of these writings and their authors would take considerably more space than has been allotted to this article: we must limit ourselves to stating that the collection includes the works of all the classical writers, from the Transcaucasus to India, who wrote in the language of Firdaussi and Hafiz.

The whole of this wonderful collection has, in the main, been built up during the past twenty years. By a decree of the Uzbek Government the libraries of the feudal lords and notables of the Emirate of Bokhara and the Khanates of Khiva and Kokand were gathered together to form a basis for this Institute. The manuscripts were formerly only available to a very limited number of people but under Soviet power they became the property of the nation and were made available to orientalists. Professor Alexander Semyonov, a corresponding member of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences and an outstanding orientalist, is curator of the collection and author of a descriptive catalogue of a large number of these writings.

Many of the manuscripts are Central Asian copies of Indian originals while others were acquired by Central Asian bibliophiles between the 15th and 18th centuries in India, Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan. This shows that the aesthetic and philosophic interests of the book-lovers who lived in Bukhara, Samarkand and other Central Asian towns were as extensive as their well-established connections with the countries of the Near and Middle East.

The majority of the medieval Indian poets wrote in Persian, a language which played the same role from Anatolia to Hindustan as Latin did in medieval Europe.

Among the Persian poets who attended the courts of the sultans of Delhi and the Great Moghuls, first place belongs to the writer and scholar, Amir Khosru, who died in the year 725 of the Hegira (1325 A. D.). The Institute possesses twenty-four manuscripts of his works. Important among these are poems which Khosru wrote in the style of the Azerbaijan poet Nizami, a great master of Persian verse, who is well represented in the collection. This latter manuscript of Khosru's is not only valuable on account of its age (it was copied in the year 756 of the Hegira—1355 A. D.) but also because three of the poems were copied in their entirety by the hand of the great Iranian lyricist Hafiz. The following statement ends the last of these poems: "Copied by a beggar, one of the most indigent of Allah's creatures, Muhammed, son of Muhammed who is called Shami Ul-Hafiz of Shiraz, may Allah improve his worldly state! Monday, the 6th day of the Second Rabia in the year 756 of the Hegira (April 20th, 1355). Praise be unto Allah in the first and in the last, blessings be on Muhammed in secret and in public places, and may he grant peace unto us."

Thus in one manuscript are united the names of three poets who constitute the national pride of Azerbaijan, Iran and India.

The Institute also owns manuscripts of the works of another Indian poet who left his mark in Indo-Muslim literature. This was the court poet Faizi, famous at the time of Akbar the Great. Although his technique was not equal to that of Amir Khosru, he undoubtedly belongs to the most talented men of the Moghul period. His great versatility as a translator, scholar and politician is beyond all doubt and is proved by the subject matter of his poems. The Institute, for example, possesses a copy of his poem "Nala and Damayanti" dated 1023 of the Hegira (1614 A. D.), that is, nineteen years after his death. The poem is a Persian version of a story from the great Indian epic "Mahabharata;" in it are reflected the ideas of the emperor Akbar, the poet's patron, who strove to acquaint enlightened Indian Muslims with the philosophical views of their fellow-countrymen.

The third important poet is Adb-Ul-Qadir Bidil, represented in the collection by thirty-five manuscript copies of his works. Amir Khosru was the embodiment of Indian Muslim literature in the 14th century, Faizi in the 16th century, while Bidil was the most popular writer of India at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries.

His lyrics, containing the mysticism customary in Muslim poetry, exercized an influence on the work of writers far beyond the bounds of India and have been particularly well read for the past two centuries in Afghanistan and Central Asia. An interesting proof of this is found in another manuscript in the Institute's collection. It was written by a Central Asian Qazi at the end of the 19th century who says that as a student of the madrasa he spent his nights studying the poems of Abd-Ul-Qadir Bidil and felt a desire to imitate their author. He and his friends thereupon again read through Bidil's poems and each of them tried to write a verse in the same manner.

Among many other lesser known and almost forgotten Indian Muslim poets of the 18th century represented in the collection we may mention Syraj-Ud-Din Ali-Khan who wrote under the nom de plume of "Arzu;" he died in the year 1169 of the Hegira (1756 A. D.). Arzu is considered second only to Bidil.

The collection of his lyrics owned by the Institute (incidentally the copy was made during the poet's lifetime) does not by any means exhaust the extensive field covered by Arzu, who was also interested in rhetoric, prosody, grammar and lexicography.

The collection of Persian poems by Indian writers contained in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts is only a part, although an important part, of the Institute's collection of poetic works. Together with other writings of a literary or scientific character they are of great importance to philologists and students of history and literature who are studying the culture of the East in general and India in particular.

NIKOLAI GOLDBERG

The Patriotic War waged by the Soviet people has its own folklore: songs that originated in battles and on long marches, satirical tales, sayings, quips and jokes. Scholars of Soviet folklore collect and arrange all this rich material; it reflects the greatness and firmness of spirit of our struggling people.

Very widespread among the people of the Orel Region and the Ukraine are songs about the partisan Kovpak, who has had the title of Hero of the Soviet Union conferred upon him twice. The songs tell of the exploits performed by Kovpak and his comrades, of their daring expeditions into the enemy's rear, of their resourcefulness, cunning and fearlessness.

Disguising himself as a peddlar, Kovpak goes to the villages and towns occupied by the Germans. He sells boots or earthenware jars in the markets, meanwhile carrying on his secret partisan activities. He sees a fascist proclamation which offers a large reward for his capture, and underneath it signs his name: "Read by Kovpak himself."

The people who buy his pots find inside them leaflets saying:

"He who bought this pot saw Kovpak."

Other songs tell how he dressed his partisans in holiday costume and how they penetrated into an occupied village in a gay wedding procession and captured the startled Germans. The elusive Kovpak goes everywhere, throwing the enemy into terror and panic.

A scientific folklore expedition visited the scenes of Sidor Kovpak's recent exploits, and in Kiev met the hero himself. A quantity of material was collected which makes it possible to trace the process of the birth and development of the popular legend.

The actors of the Moscow Vakhtangov Theatre collected money for the construction of four army planes. The presentation took place at one of the aerodromes near Moscow.

"We are proud of the people who have built these planes and we express our sincere thanks to them," Reuben Simonov, the art director of the theatre, said, "and we regard the pilots who fly the planes as 'honorary Vakhtangovites'."

The passport for the first aeroplane was handed to Captain Chubukov, Hero of the Soviet Union, who has brought down thirty-five German planes.

The patriotic idea of building aeroplanes out of personal contributions is very widespread in the Soviet art world. Not long ago the staff of the Moscow movie theatre "Orion" bought a plane out of the box-office receipts for extra-plan seances. This gift was presented to Major Arkadi Makarov, Hero of the Soviet Union, who brought down twenty fascist planes.

The studio of Elocution of the Young Pioneers' House has existed for nine years. The director of it is Anna Bovshek. Children between the ages of ten and eighteen years study the art of elocution.

An excellent custom was established in the years before the war. Every year a reunion of comrades was arranged in the Pioneers' House. Young people in the Soviet Union keep up the tradition of the poet Pushkin's school-friends, who gathered at the Lycée for an annual reunion. Moscow children have arranged their reunion to coincide with the anniversary of the poet's death and devote it to his work. At the last meeting, which took place in 1945, the theme was "Pushkin at Mikhailovskoye."

The programme the young people gave at this interesting meeting is deserving of the name of a literary concert. A stage was improvized in one part of the hall: on this stood a piano and some choice pieces of old-fashioned furniture. At the back of the stage there was a bust of Pushkin by Misha Savin, who was a schoolboy not so very long ago and is now fighting in the Navy. All those who took part in the performance were in costumes of the Pushkin period.

The programme comprised fragments from

the poet's works and from Veressayev's book, "Pushkin in Life," a compilation of memoirs, letters and documents.

Before the war the Leningrad Pioneers' House had a studio of artistic movement where those of the Leningrad children who had a talent and inclination for dancing could study. But when the war broke out and Arkadi Obrant, the head of it, went to the front, the lessons ceased.

Early in the spring of 1942, Lieutenant Obrant returned to Leningrad. He had been sent by the command to seek out his former pupils and organize them into an army dance-ensemble. As he went through the windswept deserted streets of the city, he saw the wrecked houses and the hungry worn-out people. With great difficulty he found a few of his former pupils: they were pale, thin and exhausted. Two were so feeble that they could not even get out of bed.

The young Leningraders were treated with the most loving care by the Army men and gradually restored to health. They made such progress that in a few weeks' time the first little concert could be held at the front. It had a tremendous success and this was a surprise to the young people who took part. Soldiers have a great regard for art. "Before going into action the heart feels twice the longing for music," says a popular soldiers' song. This was the beginning of the young people's army life. The ensemble has given three thousand concerts in the course of the last three years.

Living among dangers brought the young people close together. This friendship proved a great support to Valya Suleikina, a member of the ensemble. At rehearsal she was badly hit by a shell splinter in the leg. An excellent dancer, this girl had to give up all thought of her beloved dancing for good. Only through the love and consideration she received from her comrades did she succeed in rising above her troubles.

The ensemble is working indefatigably, varying and extending its repertoire all the time. There is so much freshness, lightness and healthy gaiety in their dancing that they are unfailingly popular.

TÊTE-A-TÊTE WITH THE WARRIOR ABOUT WAR

In the flame about the head of death stands the word "War"

Drawing by V. Fomichev

Editor-in-chief: HELEN STASSOVA

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Address: "International Literature", P. O. Box 527, Moscow
Cable address: Interlit, Moscow