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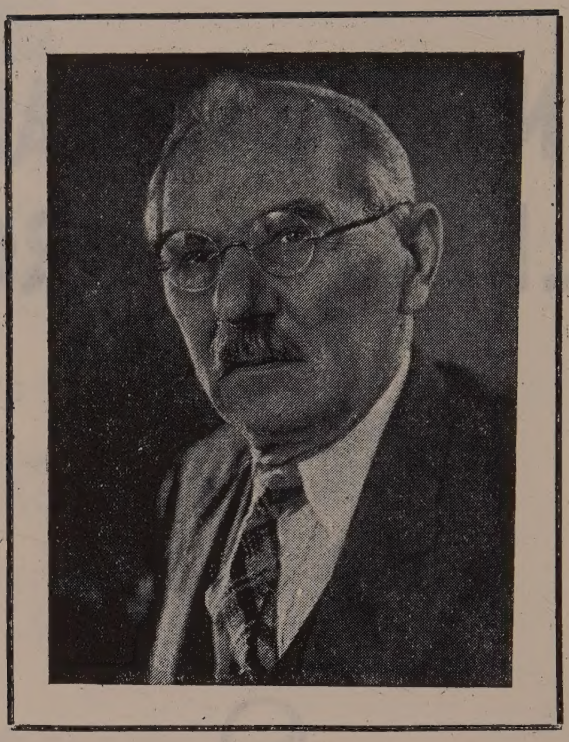

The well-known Russian writer Constantine Trenyov passed away recently at the age of sixty-six.

"He resembled the Russian teacher that we are accustomed to meet in the works of the revolutionary writers," Boris Livanov, an actor of the Moscow Art Theatre who was an intimate friend of the late writer, wrote in his obituary. Trenyov, in fact, was a schoolmaster and stuck to his profession for many years after he had become famous as a writer.

Trenyov's first works appeared at the end of the last century. For a number of years his stories were published by such progressive Russian magazines as "Russian Treasure" ("Russkoye Bogatstvo"), "Legacy" ("Zavety") and "Everybody's Magazine" ("Zhurnal dlya vsekh"). In 1914 these stories were published collectively.

Trenyov's gifts as a writer developed to their fullest extent during the years of Soviet power. It was in this period that he wrote his famous play "Lyubov Yarovaya" which deals with the time of the Civil War and says a new word in Soviet drama. Lyubov is a noble and courageous Soviet woman, now a classic figure, who performed great deeds that liberty and justice might triumph. The play was awarded a Stalin Prize and there can scarcely be a theatre in the U.S.S.R. that has not produced it during the past twenty years.

Following "Lyubov Yarovaya" Trenyov wrote a number of plays that were performed at the Moscow Art Theatre and the Maly Theatre—"Pugachovshchina," about the 18th century leader of the peasant revolt, Pugachov; "On the Banks of the Neva," about the October Revolution in Leningrad, "High School," about school life in pre-revolutionary Russia.

Trenyov followed the realistic tendency in Russian classical literature. Amongst those who may be regarded as his direct teachers are the great satirists Gogol and Saltykov-Shchedrin, and Chekhov with his depth of lyricism and his quiet humour. One of the finer sides of Trenyov's work was the humour which appears in everything he wrote. Gorky was his oldest comrade and a personal friend from the very beginning of Trenyov's career.

Like Gorky, Trenyov felt his responsibility to the people whom he served by his extensive public and civic work as well as in literature. He was a member of the Central Board of the Union of Soviet Writers, a Deputy to the Moscow City Soviet and for many years headed the Dramatic Section of the Union of Soviet Writers. He had a fine attitude towards young writers and was always ready to help them with literary advice.

Despite his already advanced age Trenyov continued working tirelessly during the war. He wrote two plays, one of which, "To the Meeting," is a modern drama. His interest in the historical which found expression in his earlier play, "Pugachovshchina," has again come to the fore in "A Great Captain" which we publish below. The play deals with the Napoleon War of 1812 (the Patriotic War) and is a fine picture of the talented Russian general, Kutuzov.

A man of boundless energy, Trenyov did not abandon his pen to the last days of his life: he died when he had almost completed another historical play, "The Youth of Peter."

CONSTANTINE TRENYOV

A GREAT CAPTAIN

(A Play in Four Acts, Eleven Scenes)

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

KUTUZOV
BAGRATION
BARCLAY DE TOLLY
YERMOLOV
DOKHTUROV
KONOVNITSYN
BENNIGSEN
PLATOV
DAVYDOV
RAYEVSKY
TOL
WOLZOGEN
WILSON
ILOVAISKY
BOLGOVSKY
KAISSAROV
ADJUTANTS FROM THE STAFFS OF KUTUZOV, BAGRATION AND OTHERS,
NAZAR, KUTUZOV'S SOLDIER SERVANT,
PETROV, KHROL, TRIFON, MATRYONA,
IVAN, MASHA, MIKITAY, KARPOVNA,
SIBILYOV; GENERALS, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, COSSACKS, PEASANTS.

NAPOLEON
MURAT
DAVOUT
DARU
BAUSSET
BESSIERES
BERTHIER
BROUSSIER
CAULAINCOURT THE OLDER
CAULAINCOURT THE YOUNGER
BELLIARD
LAURISTON
NEY
BERENGER
BONAMY
VISAPOUR
LESSEPS
RAPP
HUVENT, A DOCTOR
FRENCH GENERALS, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS.

ACT ONE

Scene 1

(Borodino Field, on the eve of the battle. Bagration and Davydov talking.)

BAGRATION: I have reported your suggestion to the prince. He has approved it, and given permission for you to organize partisan operations.

DAVYDOV *(joyfully)*: Thank you, Your Excellency! I consider that by means of partisan operations I can be of much greater service than even in Your Excellency's suite.

BAGRATION: Bravo, Davydov!

DAVYDOV: But in addition to his approval and permission, I shall need Cossacks and cavalry.

BAGRATION: His Serene Highness will give them to you.

DAVYDOV: How many?

BAGRATION: A hundred and fifty Cossacks.

DAVYDOV: Is that all?

BAGRATION: And fifty Hussars.

DAVYDOV: Your Excellency, this is a most important matter, and a big one. I must create disturbance and confusion in the rear of the French army, disrupt its communications. I shall launch a people's war.

BAGRATION: His Serene Highness considers that if you really launch a people's war, then undoubtedly men will flock to you, as many as you can use. What is your feeling about it?

DAVYDOV: I am confident that they will, Your Excellency. But I do not see here confidence in myself.

BAGRATION: The prince hopes that very soon you will earn it. I wish you every success. *(Presses Davydov's hand.)*

(Exit Davydov: Enter Kutuzov, accompanied by Barclay, Yermolov, Dokhturov and others.)

BAGRATION: Permit me to report, Your Serene Highness, that our positions on the left flank are extremely weak, and if Napoleon attacks just on that flank...

KUTUZOV: And why, Prince, do you assume that he will attack just on that left flank?

BAGRATION: I assume it, although his plans are not known to us.

KUTUZOV: His plans are not known to us, but his ways and methods are known to me.

BAGRATION: Which particular ones, Your Highness?

KUTUZOV (*leading Bagration aside and speaking softly*): His technique is to attack at once from the front, in order, should he fail to break through, to crush the centre; and having done so, to swing round the flank.

BAGRATION: Faith, that's true! That's just to his taste.

KUTUZOV: That means we must prepare something fitting to meet the taste of our guest.

(Enter Wolzogen, jauntily. Bagration glances at him in angry enquiry. Wolzogen effaces himself).

BAGRATION: Well, our centre is strong. Our reserves are here, too.

KUTUZOV: And from here we can send them wherever they are needed on the flanks.

BAGRATION: The right flank is protected by the high banks of the Koloch. But the left is weak.

KUTUZOV: And that is just what we must let Napoleon see. A bait. Here you place Tuchkov's corps in ambush, and behind them the Moscow People's Guard in reserve. Here, by Semyonovskoye, we shall need earthworks.

BAGRATION: And if he breaks through them and starts a flanking movement?

KUTUZOV: He cannot outflank us, because in case of necessity we can withdraw by the broad, straight new Smolensk road, of four cart-widths. And then we can wait at Mozhaisk until he comes up along the bad, roundabout old road.

BAGRATION: Well, we shall stand like a wall.

KUTUZOV: That is not enough. We must stand so that he will break his head on that wall. You say that the left flank is weak. And that is what Bonaparte thinks. But I will tell you a secret in your ear: a threatening, impregnable fortress will be standing there.

BAGRATION: What will that be, Your Highness?

KUTUZOV: Russian soldiers under the command of Bagration. *(Approaches the others.)* Of that Bonaparte is not informed.

BAGRATION: Tomorrow I shall inform him, Your Highness. I shall not retreat a step. Tomorrow will be my first real day at last.

BARCLAY: For many it will be the last day.

BAGRATION: I am speaking about myself.

BARCLAY: And I about myself, Prince.

DOKHTUROV: And I say this about myself: it does not please me, God knows, Mikhail Bogdanovich, that these last days you have been seeking your last day.

BARCLAY: But you undertook, I believe, to speak about yourself.

DOKHTUROV: And for myself, I always consider that the day which I have just lived was a good last day, but tomorrow I shall commence the first day, the very best of all.

BAGRATION: Bravo, bravo!

KUTUZOV: How is the fortification work proceeding?

BARCLAY: The spades and trenching tools are insufficient.

KUTUZOV: That means, Rostopchin has sent nothing.

BAGRATION: It was vain to expect it, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: But I did not expect it, my dear fellow. *(Exit with part of his staff.)*

WOLZOGEN: I consider, gentlemen, that it is a mistake to give battle at this moment. We would have done better to preserve the army, rather than territory, since at present Napoleon's army is larger and stronger than ours.

BAGRATION: I should be highly interested to learn, Adjutant Wolzogen, whence you have your information on the army's numbers.

WOLZOGEN: Your Excellency, I am discussing. . .

BAGRATION *(flaring up)*: Do not discuss! Learn your place as adjutant and keep it. Left about—turn! *(Exit Wolzogen, smiling scornfully.)* They know everything, instruct everybody, these mercenaries. Yesterday they were teaching the Prussians at home how to fight us, and today come here to teach us how to defend ourselves.

DOKHTUROV: Why offend them, dear Prince? They are also fighting for Russia.

BAGRATION: For thirty pieces of silver.

DOKHTUROV: That is not true, among them there are many honest servants.

BAGRATION: There is not much honesty in serving a foreign cause.

(Exit all. Enter Bennigsen accompanied by his suite.)

BENNIGSEN: Discipline among our soldiers, gentlemen, is more or less tolerable, but their bearing—impossible. But what is that unit deployed down there?

ADJUTANT: That is Tuchkov's corps.

BENNIGSEN: But why there? For the enemy to fall on it from above? Transfer it over here, to the village, in order that the enemy may be below, and we ourselves attack from above. That is the situation as it is.

(Soldiers pass, crossing themselves and whispering: "Merciful Virgin, save us, have pity on us!" Line up before Bennigsen.)

BENNIGSEN *(familiarly)*: Well, lads, have you had something to wet your whistles today?

FIRST SOLDIER: Yes, Your Honour, but many refused it.

BENNIGSEN: Refused! Why?

SECOND SOLDIER: The men are getting ready for a great occasion, they want to keep their wits sharpened, Your Honour.

BENNIGSEN: A-a-ah! *(Nods at the soldiers, who exit.)* A Russian refusing vodka! That I should see the day! *(Looks after them.)* But their bearing is bad. They march raggedly.

(An ikon is carried past the troops, the sound of a chant is audible.)

(Curtain)

Scene 2

The Battle of Borodino

Change 1

(Napoleon's headquarters. Dawn is breaking.)

NAPOLEON: The enemy has not withdrawn?

BERTHIER: No, Your Majesty, they are all in yesterday's positions.

NAPOLEON: Aha, at last I have caught them! Let us go and open the gates of Moscow. Davout, your corps will attack the enemy's left flank.

DAVOUT: Yes, of course, and swing around it.

NAPOLEON: No. If the enemy is occupying the positions which our reconnaissance reported yesterday, the flanking movement is cancelled. This weak flank must be pierced from the front. If Kutuzov has seen through me, I too have understood him. Compant! Your division is to have the high honour of first giving battle. You will attack the left flank. Beauharnais, you will attack the right flank at the village of Borodino in order to distract the enemy's attention from the left flank, where Murat will follow Davout's corps, and after him, Ney. Ponyatowsky will not be further needed here, since with this, everything will be finished. Go, gentlemen, and bring me victory.

(Exit marshals and generals. The sun rises.)

NAPOLEON *(inspired)*: See it, the sun of Austerlitz!

BAUSSET: What a prophetic word!

BERTHIER: The words he is going to speak now will be prophetic as were those he spoke in Egypt about the forty centuries looking down from the heights of the pyramids.

DARU: Prophetic words must not be abused.

NAPOLEON *(inspired)*: Soldiers, here is the battle for which you have been thirsting! Let your grandchildren and great-grandchildren remember with pride your exploits of today and say of each of you: he was at Moscow!

(A cannonade begins, increasing with every moment. Adjutants dash up to Napoleon one after the other.)

FIRST ADJUTANT: Your Majesty, Compant is seriously wounded.

(Pause.)

SECOND ADJUTANT: Your Majesty, Marshal Davout is seriously wounded. Four generals have been killed.

NAPOLEON: And the troops?

SECOND ADJUTANT: In retreat.

THIRD ADJUTANT: Your Majesty, Marshal Ney asks for reinforcements.

NAPOLEON: How many cannons are in action?

THIRD ADJUTANT: Fifty, Your Majesty.

NAPOLEON: Bring in another hundred. Now, General Kutuzov, the pieces are on the board, the play begins.

(Cannonade increases. Exit Napoleon in silence.)

(Lights out.)

Change 2

(Bagration's earthworks. The latest attack has just been repulsed. Soldiers are carrying the wounded off the field, and preparing to meet the next attack.)

BAGRATION *(surveying the battlefield)*: But where is Vorontsov's division?

ADJUTANT: It has been annihilated. Vorontsov is seriously wounded.

BAGRATION: Bring Tuchkov's corps out of ambush.

ADJUTANT: But they have not been in ambush, Your Excellency.

BAGRATION: How is that? His Serene Highness ordered them into ambush in my presence!

ADJUTANT: In obedience to Bennigsen's orders they are standing idle under fire.

BAGRATION: Is the German a fool or a knave? *(To the soldiers)*: Thanks, lads, you beat off that fifth attack gallantly. *(To a grenadier)*: Are you wounded, brother?

GRENADIER: Not at all.

BAGRATION: Not wounded? You are soaked with blood. Take him away to be attended to. *(Exit grenadier. Speaks to another soldier)*: Wounded too. Away with you!

SOLDIER: Permit me to remain, Your Honour.

BAGRATION: Take him away! *(Soldiers lead him off. Bagration turns to a foot soldier.)* Ah, a new recruit, not been in battle before, heh?

FOOT SOLDIER: Didn't come my way, Your Excellency.

BAGRATION: Frightening?

FOOT SOLDIER: Yes, Your Honour, but I shan't be, Your Excellency.

(Enter adjutant.)

ADJUTANT: General Barclay has sent two more regiments as reinforcements.

BAGRATION: Thanks. It seems that Barclay has more care for me than for himself.

ADJUTANT: He has no care for himself whatever. He is continually in advance of the soldiers, sword bared, in full uniform.

BAGRATION: Seeking his death!

ADJUTANT: But General Miloradovich was angered and said he would not permit Barclay to be before him. He went ahead and began to take his breakfast in the most dangerous place.

BAGRATION: Gallant fellow! Bravo! Inform Miloradovich that I shall come to take dinner with him as soon as I have driven off the French.

(The roar of an approaching attack. Shouts from the soldiers.)

VOICES: They're running! Running!—Swarms of them!—No end to them! . .—A general in front, lads, see the feathers! —That can't be anybody but Murat!

(Wounded soldier and grenadier return and take their places, trying to conceal themselves from Bagration.)

BAGRATION *(noticing them)*: Why have you come back?

GRENADIER: We lost our way, Your Excellency.

SOLDIER: Permit me to remain here, I am too weak to walk.

(Bagration waves his hand. An adjutant runs up to report.)

ADJUTANT: General Tuchkov is killed.

BAGRATION: Bring up Konovnitsyn's division! *(Surveys the advancing enemy.)*

How they move! How they move! Without a shot. Bravo, bravo! Give them grapeshot! (*Exit.*)

(A command—a salvo. Frenchmen appear on the earthworks pressing the Russians back. In front, General Bonamy.)

BONAMY: Soldiers, I congratulate you! You have covered yourselves with glory!

(With shouts of "hurrah" the Russians drive the French back. In the clash the foot soldier seizes Bonamy in his arms, taking him prisoner. After driving the French off, the soldiers take their former places. Enter Bagration.)

BAGRATION: Thank you, brothers. *(Approaches Bonamy.)* Who are you?

BONAMY *(terrified)*: I. . . am Marshal Murat.

BAGRATION: Ah. . . *(To foot soldier:)* See, lad, what a fine bird you've got.

FOOT SOLDIER: Thank you, Your Excellency.

SOLDIER: But that is not Murat. He was in feathers.

SECOND SOLDIER: That's right. How can it be Murat with no feathers on him? . .

THIRD SOLDIER: Mebbe he's been plucked.

BAGRATION *(to Bonamy)*: Who are you, then?

BONAMY: General Bonamy.

BAGRATION *(to foot soldier)*: It appears, lad, that it is not Murat you have captured.

FOOT SOLDIER: Beg pardon, Your Excellency.

(Hurricane fire. Bagration, shouting orders, jumps onto the earthworks and disappears. A minute later agitated voices are heard from there, an atmosphere of consternation is felt. Enter Konovnitsyn.)

KONOVNITSYN: Report to the Field Marshal at once — Bagration seriously wounded.

(Bagration is carried on.)

BAGRATION: Stop, I want to see. . . *(They support him.)* Good. . . Leave me here. . . How are things going?

KONOVNITSYN: We are standing fast.

BAGRATION: Thank God!

ADJUTANT: Barclay has sent more reinforcements.

BAGRATION: Inform Barclay that I have the deepest respect for him. Great hopes rest upon him at this time. But no man must find death in battle until the time when it finds him. For our country, friends. . .

(Loses consciousness. He is carried out.)

(Retreating soldiers appear on the earthworks.)

VOICES: Bagration is wounded. . .

PETROV: Oh God, oh God, oh God! . .

VOICES: What are you groaning about, Petrov? . . Got his fingers torn off. . . Kept going! Lost them then and groans about them now . . .

(Petrov groans.)

VOICES: Keep quiet. Maslov there's got his head torn off, but he's quiet enough.

PETROV: Ah, it's our head that they've taken off: now we are without Bagration.

VOICES: Dokhturov. . . Dokhturov's galloping over to take Bagration's place. — Dokhturov is not Bagration.—Not Bagration, but all the same, he's Dokhturov.—And what about Dokhturov?—We held Smolensk with him. Bullets round him, as many as grain at the threshing, and there he sits on his horse smoking.

(More soldiers approach.)

VOICES: Galloping, Dokhturov's galloping. Ridden here on four horses.—How's that —on four?—Why, got three killed on the way.

(Dokhturov's voice issuing orders coming nearer. He comes from the earthworks, greets the men.)

DOKHTUROV: Oho, it's warm hereabouts.

VOICES: We're not cold, Your Honour. . .

DOKHTUROV: We shan't retreat, lads?

VOICES: What for? God forbid. . .—We stick here till we die.

DOKHTUROV: Till you die—then we'll have to stop here a long time. . .*(Laughs.)* No, death is what we shall send the enemy. *(Laughter.)* But we, brothers, we are defending life, the life of our country.

VOICES: We'll hold it, Your Honour!

DOKHTUROV: Well then, you hold on, and I'll sit here with you. Not so young as I was. In my fifties. *(Takes a drum, carries it up to the breastwork, and sits down upon it.)*

VOICES: That's too hot up there, Your Honour.

DOKHTUROV: Just the thing for an old man. Like lying on the stove.[1]

VOICES: The bullets are flying all round you.

DOKHTUROV: Let them. Those aren't mine. My bullet's not yet been cast. Every bullet has the name of the man it's meant for written on it.

(Laughter. Hurricane gunfire.)

(Lights out.)

Change 3

(Napoleon's side, as before. Afternoon. Napoleon sitting on a drum, gloomily silent. Behind him, some little distance away, the staff, talking softly.)

BESSIERES: What's the matter with him?

BERTHIER: For twenty years I have fought by his side, but never yet have I seen him so at a loss, so distraught.

BROUSSIER: But never have we seen a battle such as this. For seven hours we have striven, and not a step forward. We cannot take that hill.

BAUSSET: But the Emperor has not yet breakfasted.

CAULAINCOURT *(approaching Napoleon)*: Your Majesty, send me with two corps. I swear to you that I shall be on the hill at once.

NAPOLEON: Take them.

CAULAINCOURT *(to his brother, as he leaves)*: Farewell, Armand. I shall take the hill, or return no more. *(Exit.)*

(An adjutant gallops up to Napoleon.)

ADJUTANT: Marshal Murat asks for reinforcements for a last crushing blow.

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[1] The old Russian stove was a massive construction of brick, with space on top for the whole family to sleep.

(Napoleon is silent. Belliard gallops up.)

NAPOLEON: Well?

BELLIARD: Victory is ours. All in front of the earthworks is ours.

NAPOLEON: But the earthworks?

BELLIARD: They will be ours on the instant. Ney can already see the Smolensk Road in the Russian rear. One division more is needed for the seventh and final attack.

NAPOLEON: My orders were to overthrow the enemy.

BELLIARD: Your orders are being carried out, Your Majesty. Three cavalry corps have hurled themselves on the enemy.

NAPOLEON: And the enemy?

BELLIARD: Is resisting, Your Majesty, and standing firm.

NAPOLEON: Then destroy him. How many guns have you there?

BERTHIER: Two hundred.

NAPOLEON: Give them another two hundred. Never has the world seen such a multitude of guns as I am giving you today.

(A cloud of smoke veils everything. An adjutant gallops up.)

ADJUTANT: Marshal Junot asks for reinforcements.

ANOTHER ADJUTANT: Count Ponyatowsky. . .

NAPOLEON: Is asking for reinforcements? Tell Ponyatowsky that it is only here he can receive the crown of Poland. *(To Berthier)*: What is amiss with them? Have they concocted a plot for today? Unable to take the weakest place—the left flank. It is necessary to break through the centre. I cannot manoeuvre while the army is held down in the centre.

(Bausset approaches.)

BAUSSET: Your Majesty, I hope that now I may congratulate you on victory.

(Napoleon is silent. An adjutant gallops up.)

ADJUTANT: Your Majesty, General Caulaincourt is on the hill. . .

NAPOLEON: Aha. . .

ADJUTANT: . . . dead.

(Caulaincourt sobs. Napoleon goes up to him.)

BERTHIER: That is the fortieth general today.

DARU: Yes. Here indeed is your prophetic word. For the dead generals already are looking down from that height, and the sun is yet high. . . This is not the sun of Austerlitz.

NAPOLEON *(to Caulaincourt)*: The enemy has killed your gifted brother. I mourn for him. They want to kill my talent. . .

(The marshals whisper among themselves. Then Daru comes up to Napoleon.)

DARU: Your Majesty, the army's movement is lamed because a sinister balance of forces has been established. In order to destroy it, it is necessary to send the Old Guard into action.

NAPOLEON: I cannot deprive myself of my Guard eight hundred miles from Paris.

BAUSSET *(smiling)*: But breakfast, Your Majesty, is not eight hundred miles away, but here, beside you. And no battle on earth may hinder you. . .

NAPOLEON *(fiercely)*: Go to the devil! *(To Berthier)*: If the battle is resumed tomorrow, we cannot resurrect the Guard. And we cannot replace it.

BERTHIER: But that is tomorrow, and we must win a battle today.

NAPOLEON: This is no battle, it is a bad dream.

ADJUTANT: Marane's division has been wiped out.

NAPOLEON: The whole division! . . What is happening?

BERTHIER: But the Russian dead are still more, tens of thousands.

NAPOLEON: And how many prisoners?

BERTHIER: Up to the present time. . three hundred prisoners. . .

ADJUTANT: Morthier is awaiting Your Majesty's orders.

NAPOLEON: Transmit to Morthier my orders that he should at least not fall back, but hold his positions. *(Speaking to himself)*: What is happening? What is it?

(Lights out.)

Change 4

On the hills

(Kutuzov sitting on a bench surrounded by his staff. Bending his he ad, he listens to the force and direction of the firing.)

YERMOLOV: A hellish cannonade!

KUTUZOV: It seems quieter, somehow, on Bagration's earthworks. *(He grunts with displeasure.)*

(An adjutant gallops up.)

ADJUTANT: Your Highness, the enemy has taken Semyonovskoye.

KUTUZOV *(to Yermolov)*: Go along, my dear fellow, find out what's happening and help them. *(Yermolov goes. Kutuzov continues listening tensely.)*

KAISSAROV: It would seem to be quieter.

KUTUZOV: Hand to hand fighting on the earthworks.

(An adjutant gallops up.)

ADJUTANT: Your Highness, Count Rostopchin has sent the sappers' instruments.

KUTUZOV *(raising his head)*: Convey the army's thanks to the count for his timely aid.

(An adjutant gallops up.)

ADJUTANT: Your Highness, General Dokhturov reports that the enemy has captured Bagration's earthworks. The general asks. . .

KUTUZOV: Reinforcements?

ADJUTANT: Not at all. He asks you to have no doubts: the enemy will be driven off.

KUTUZOV: Give Dokhturov my thanks. Let him hold fast. Help will come immediately. *(To Platov)*: Assist him, Matvei Ivanych, take Uvarov's corps with you and swiftly flank the enemy's left wing. A blow from beyond the Koloch stream.

PLATOV: From the small wood?

KUTUZOV: From the small wood.

PLATOV: Very good, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: A short, sharp blow. Do not bore in too far.

(Platov leaves. Enter Wolzogen.)

WOLZOGEN: Your Highness, General Barclay de Tolly reports that the enemy has captured the whole position. The troops are everywhere falling back in disorder. There is the possibility of a panic flight. The general proposes a retreat, otherwise he will not be responsible. . .

KUTUZOV *(angrily)*: He will not be responsible? I am responsible! Inform Barclay that he sees nothing. I can see better than he.

WOLZOGEN: Barclay is fighting in the very front, like the best soldier.

KUTUZOV: In the very front! But that doesn't mean he is the best general. And he knows his soldiers ill if he permits himself to speak about their flight. Barclay does not know that they have resolved not to retreat. Transmit to him my order—not to retreat, but to launch an immediate attack.

(Wolzogen leaves. Kutuzov bends his head and listens to the cannonade. Silence.)

KUTUZOV: That's the way, that's the way. . .

KAISSAROV: The batteries are again falling silent.

KUTUZOV: They are not falling silent, they are moving further away.

(An adjutant gallops up.)

ADJUTANT: Your Highness, General Yermolov has driven Broussier's division from the height. Murat is taken prisoner.

KUTUZOV: Eh, what's all that about Murat. . . Murats don't surrender. *(To Kaissarov:)* Announce all along the front that Marshal Murat has been taken prisoner.

(Wolzogen returns.)

WOLZOGEN: Your Highness, General Barclay de Tolly requests written confirmation of your order to attack.

KUTUZOV: Confirmation? Let him obtain it there, on the spot.

WOLZOGEN: From whom, Your Highness?

KUTUZOV: From any Russian soldier. Go, Gospodin[1] Wolzogen!

(Wolzogen leaves. Enter Yermolov.)

KUTUZOV: How is it going there?

YERMOLOV: For the time, the hillock is ours. The enemy unexpectedly weakened his attack. I could see from the height that some corps suddenly dashed to their own left flank.

KUTUZOV: Beyond the Koloch stream?

YERMOLOV: Exactly.

KUTUZOV: So, so. *(To himself):* We-e-ell, General Bonaparte, you dearly love to outflank wings. See how you like it done to you. *(To Yermolov):* You should take a bite, dear fellow.

YERMOLOV: There is plenty of time for that, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: Miloradovich—he has long ago had his breakfast among the bullets. And we sitting here where all is quiet find no time to dine. Lay the table, Nazar. Read grace.

NAZAR *(laying the table)*: "We raise our eyes to Thee. . ."

(A shell bursts nearby. Nazar stops.)

KUTUZOV: Go on reading, go on reading. . . or are you hurt?

NAZAR: Not at all. "We raise our eyes to Thee, Lord, Your Highness, and Thou givest us our food, Your Highness. . ."

(The Izmail Regiment passes on its way to battle, singing: "You sent to me Suvorov,—Suvorov, Prince Rymniksky. . .")

KUTUZOV: About Suvorov. . . *(To an adjutant, pointing to an old soldier):* Bring that Izmail man over to me.

(The adjutant brings the soldier.)

KUTUZOV: Did you ever see Suvorov, dear fellow?

IZMAIL SOLDIER: Yes, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: Where?

IZMAIL SOLDIER: At Izmail, when he kissed Your Highness in front of all us soldiers, I was there too, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: Ah, old neighbours. . . Your name?

IZMAIL SOLDIER: Yavtukh Makatrusenko.

KUTUZOV: Well, well, take something to wet your whistle, Makatrusenko.

IZMAIL SOLDIER: Please excuse me, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: Why not?

IZMAIL SOLDIER: I do not drink until the enemy is crushed.

KUTUZOV: Well, I shall owe you two drinks, then. Go with God, Yavtukh Makatrusenko.

(The Izmail soldier runs to overtake his regiment.)

(Enter Platov.)

KUTUZOV: Well, how does it go, Matvei Ivanovich? Returned safely?

PLATOV: It was unavoidable, Your Highness. They flung three corps upon us, and we were unsuccessful.

KUTUZOV *(kissing him)*: Your task was carried out. Thank you, dear fellow. Kaissarov, issue orders for tomorrow to attack the beaten enemy in order to defeat him utterly and drive him from the sacred soil of Russia.

(Cannonade increases. An adjutant gallops up with a report.)

(Curtain)

Scene 3

Fili

(A meeting of the War Council is just ending. As the curtain rises, Bennigsen is speaking with warmth.)

BENNIGSEN: For this reason, with all my Russian heart I am against leaving that place so sacred and endlessly dear to every Russian, one might say, the heart of Russia—Moscow. That is what I have to say.

KUTUZOV: You have already said it, Baron.

BENNIGSEN: I have not yet said all, Prince. I have not yet said that the loss of Moscow will be an enormous loss for the government and for private persons.

DOKHTUROV: A fig for that! But what an unendurable disgrace, to surrender Moscow without firing a shot!

[1] Mister.

RAYEVSKY: Suffice it that we relinquished Borodino after our victory there!

BENNIGSEN: What after that will be the spirit of the public, the common people, the mob? What impression will it give to the foreign courts?

YERMOLOV: After that, who will believe that we were not defeated at Borodino, when even now the French consider that they routed us?

BENNIGSEN: And finally, I do not see here the holder of Moscow, the noble Count Rostopchin, who for some reason it was not considered necessary to invite here, after assuring him that Moscow would not be surrendered. Neither count nor people will ever pardon us this!

(A gloomy pause.)

KUTUZOV: Gentlemen, I have heard your opinions. No two minds think alike, but it is only one head that bears the responsibility. For the broken eggs it is I who will pay.

(Pause.)

KUTUZOV: Upon my head be it. The loss of Moscow does not mean the loss of Russia. Whether the people will pardon us the loss of the capital, I know not. But the enemy they will never forgive us for the loss of Moscow. That I know and with that we will be victorious. Armed with the authority that has been entrusted to me, I order a retreat, the army is to be sent along the Ryazan road.

(The generals disperse in silence, without looking at Kutuzov. Only a few cast a glance at him—some disapproving, some inimical.)

TOL: So the baggage trains, Your Highness, must go along the Ryazan road, avoiding the Kaluga road?

KUTUZOV: Yes... yes... Wait a little, dear fellow, I will inform you later. *(To Platov)*: And you, Matvei Ivanovich, hold the French with your Cossacks.

PLATOV: But Miloradovich has the rearguard.

KUTUZOV: And you hold them too, to assist Miloradovich.

PLATOV: I shall hold them, Your Highness; not one inch will I give way.

KUTUZOV: Give way a little, draw them after you little by little.

PLATOV: But how?

KUTUZOV: By easy stages, without losing contact with the enemy.

PLATOV *(looks into Kutuzov's face for a moment)*: I shall not lose contact, Your Highness.

(Exit Platov. Kutuzov sits, head hanging, sighs. Tol approaches.)

TOL: What is to be done, Your Highness, with the baggage trains?

KUTUZOV: Eh?.. Yes... yes...

TOL: Shall they be transferred to the Ryazan road?

KUTUZOV: Later, later I shall give the orders. *(Goes into the neighbouring room.)*

BENNIGSEN: As God sees me, I did everything that was in my power to prevent this mad step, and my conscience is clear. To leave Moscow—it is impossible to reconcile oneself to that.

YERMOLOV: To reconcile oneself is impossible, but to understand it is possible. Yet to take the road to Ryazan, to leave open before the enemy not only Kaluga with its grain, Bryansk with its factories, but Tula with its arms—that is a thing impossible even to understand. Unless it be that he confused Ryazan with Kaluga.

BENNIGSEN: When a man has lived to his years it may be that he cannot understand everything, and becomes confused. The prince has forgotten, gentlemen, that it is now our sacred trust to hold our ancient capital and to raise the spirit of the Russian soldier.

YERMOLOV: That is true, Baron.

(Exit Bennigsen.)

YERMOLOV: It is not to defend Moscow and raise the spirit of the Russian soldier that is our sacred trust, gentlemen.

RAYEVSKY: What, then?

YERMOLOV: To defend and raise the reputation of the German.

RAYEVSKY: Which one?

YERMOLOV: Why, that one, who urges fighting from a bad position. If we beat the Frenchman, why, then, it is because we hearkened to the German. If we lose Moscow without a battle—then it is because we did not heed the German. Of all here, Bennigsen alone is right.

RAYEVSKY: And if they defeated us here?

YERMOLOV: Of all here, Kutuzov alone bears the blame.

RAYEVSKY: That is not right, Kutuzov is not alone. With him is the Russian people, all of Russia.

YERMOLOV: Eh, in all of Russia there is only one real Russian, and that is that same Bennigsen.

BARCLAY: But on the question of Moscow, General Yermolov, you took the side of Bennigsen against Kutuzov.

YERMOLOV: No, it was you, Mikhail Bogdanovich, and Kutuzov who were against all.

(Exit all except Rayevsky. Suddenly he sobs.)

(Enter Kutuzov, deep in thought.)

KUTUZOV *(raises his head, approaches Rayevsky and embraces him)*: Well, well—God grant it—these tears of ours will merge in the great stream of the people's tears. And drown the enemy.

RAYEVSKY: It is you, Your Highness, you only who can defeat Napoleon!

KUTUZOV: Defeat him—I know not. But I shall attempt to fool him. If only I am not hindered.

RAYEVSKY: We shall all assist. No heart can endure this black sorrow.

KUTUZOV: Heart... God grant us brains and will. Go, dear fellow.

(Exit Rayevsky.)

NAZAR *(handing Kutuzov tea)*: I have

it clear in my mind, Your Highness, that he will never conquer Moscow.

KUTUZOV: Yes?

NAZAR: The Russian earth will not permit it. It will burst into flames beneath his feet, it will crack and gape; then phwit!—it will swallow him with all his troops and ammunition.

KUTUZOV *(to himself)*: Oh, may the soil of Russia bear me up with my heavy load! . . *(Straightens himself, angrily, his eyes flashing.)* No, they shall eat the flesh of horses, and it may be, even their own. Many are the guests who have come to Moscow before these, and heavily have they paid for the hospitality!

(Curtain)

ACT TWO

Scene 1

(In Platov's tent. The sound of a Cossack song approaching. On the stage—Platov and Corporal Sibilyov.)

PLATOV: There they are! My Cherkassy regiment pouring in. I would know them among all others by their voices.

SIBILYOV: You are right. The first hundred have but just arrived.

(Enter an adjutant.)

ADJUTANT: Lieutenant-General Ilovaisky.

PLATOV: Ah. . . *(Goes to meet Ilovaisky as he enters.)* Welcome, General.

ILOVAISKY *(reporting)*: I have the honour to present myself with ten regiments of Don Cossacks.

PLATOV *(accepting the report)*: Excellent, Alexander Petrovich. *(They kiss.)* When did you leave the Don?

ILOVAISKY: Exactly six days ago.

PLATOV: Oho, our eagles fly well!

ILOVAISKY: The Cossacks are highly impatient to have at the Frenchmen. Yes, and perhaps to cast eyes upon Bonaparte himself. And then, there is another thing. All three generations arose, and each would be the first. The grandfathers cried: "Make way for us!" The fathers shouted: "We have no wish to be the tail!" But the grandsons gave a whoop, and see there—both grandfathers and fathers were at the tail.

PLATOV: Yes, but you were to have taken the road after Denisov.

ILOVAISKY And so we did. But on the road, as the Cossacks dragged along at the tail, one of them shouted: "We'll pass Denisov's!" Well, they went by Yelets, and we through Kozlov. The road is a little more roundabout, but we arrived first. How are things here, Matvei Ivanovich?

PLATOV: Oh, General Denisov and I are in the rearguard holding up Murat while the army makes a deep withdrawal along the Ryazan road.

ILOVAISKY: The Ryazan road? But we have come from Ryazan, there is no army that way.

PLATOV *(softly, with a significant wink)* Sh! . . *(Loudly)*: You did not look carefully, General. Evidently, things happened at night.

ILOVAISKY: That is true. The main thing is the forest. Here it is otherwise than with us—get on a Cherkassy hill encampment, and the whole steppe visible for a hundred versts around.

(Enter an adjutant.)

ADJUTANT: Murat, the King of Naples, has arrived at the outposts, and begs that Your Excellency receive him.

PLATOV: Oho, an illustrious guest asks admission! Let us go to meet him.

(Exit Platov and Ilovaisky. A Cossack stands in the doorway.)

COSSACK: The king 'talian, but the name sounds Tatar, Corporal. How does he come to be, Murat?

SIBILYOV: Not Murat, but Muryaty, in French. Understand me?

COSSACK: Of course.

SIBILYOV: And what has been captured today?

COSSACK: Well, Corporal, there were twenty-five baggage trains and eight "pardons." Two got away.

SIBILYOV: What did you take from the "pardons?"

COSSACK: Weapons.

SIBILYOV: And portable property?

COSSACK: Portable property all right.

SIBILYOV: All right?

COSSACK: Exactly. Cleaned them. A "pardon" stole a golden tobacco box from some of the Russian population, and a watch, well, it goes slow, and a silver ikon, with the Glorious Paraskoveya Pyatnitsa, although it is a bit like a Magdalene.

SIBILYOV *(taking the tobacco box and the watch, and returning the ikon)*: Hand in the property to the store. The Glorious Paraskoveya should be borne in the bosom, not in a frame. Are you no Christian, or what? Stand outside the door.

COSSACK: Very good, Corporal. *(Exit.)*

(Enter Platov and Murat, accompanied by their suites.)

PLATOV: Please to enter, Your Majesty.

MURAT *(throwing a glove down upon a bench)*: I say that you do not fight in a chivalrous fashion. Your Cossacks violate the accepted conditions. They take fodder from my soldiers, they have even taken prisoners.

PLATOV: Your Majesty, accept my apologies. The prisoners will be released, the forage returned, and the guilty punished.

MURAT: And finally, today the Cossack

treachery reached its peak: they fired upon me!

PLATOV: It cannot be, Your Majesty! *(To Sibilyov:)* Who has dared to fire upon His Majesty?

SIBILYOV: Nobody has dared, Your Honour.

PLATOV: Do not seek to cover it up!

SIBILYOV: No, Your Honour.

PLATOV: Well?

SIBILYOV: The shot was fired by the Cossack Gundorovsky, of Ovchinnikov's regiment.

PLATOV: But how did he dare? The king himself!

SIBILYOV: But he thought it was a lady.

PLATOV: A lady?

SIBILYOV *(respectfully indicating Murat)*: As His Majesty has long hair and a mantle, and his hat has feathers, that means, says he, it must be a real lady.

PLATOV: Oh, dolt!

SIBILYOV: I only want, says he, to make her jump, just for a joke, like.

PLATOV: But the scoundrel might have hit the king! One who has been anointed!

SIBILYOV: To tell the truth, at forty paces he'll not miss an ace, damn him!

PLATOV: Place him under arrest. Announce along the whole front that if this happens again, the man guilty will be shot!

SIBILYOV: Very good, Your Honour.

PLATOV *(to Murat)*: There, Your Majesty, he swears it—from today the Cossack will fire sooner at his own father than at Your Majesty. And with respect to the forage, let your mind be easy.

MURAT: They took it from the very village!

PLATOV: If Your Majesty is really in need of forage, then out of our deep respect to you we shall simply set apart a part of the village for forage. Use it as your own. Our people, Your Majesty, are noble and generous.

MURAT: But your misfortune is that you know not how to fight. That is the reason why all goes so badly for you, that is the reason why you gave up your capital to us.

PLATOV: True, Your Majesty, oh, how true!

MURAT: You are aware, of course—my Emperor did not wish war with your Emperor.

PLATOV: Just the same as my Cossacks. Exactly alike. They do not wish to fight with your Emperor, and that is the end of it!

MURAT: Yes?

PLATOV: Enquire of General Ilovaisky, who has just arrived from the Don.

ILOVAISKY: It was necessary to drag the Cossacks to the war by force.

PLATOV: The Don pulls, Your Majesty. Not for nothing are we withdrawing to Ryazan. It is comprehensible—the Cossack women are now treading the grapes on our quiet Don. And our wine, Your Majesty, is highly agreeable. *(Winking at Sibilyov):* Of course, it has not that French delicacy. But it also has its points. Here, for example, is what we call Tsimlyanskoye. If you will be so condescending. . .

(Sibilyov presents a tray with a bottle and three wine glasses.)

MURAT: Nay, you are too kind.

PLATOV *(pouring wine into a glass and presenting it)*: Do me the honour. To the health of the Emperor!

MURAT *(raising his glass)*: To the health of the Emperor! *(Drinks.)*

PLATOV: With all our hearts we long for the end of this war, that we may live at peace again.

MURAT: That makes vastly pleasant hearing.

(An adjutant enters, approaches Murat and hands him a packet.)

ADJUTANT: From Count Ponyatowsky.

(On reading it, Murat's face changes. He casts a glance of suspicion at Platov.)

MURAT: And so the road by which you are retreating is called the Ryazan road?

PLATOV: Exactly, Your Majesty, the Ryazan road.

MURAT: And how long has it been so named?

PLATOV: Well, not to deceive you, about six hundred years; it may be something more or less. I will not swear to it being exact.

MURAT: You will not swear to it?

PLATOV: At least, for six hundred years of our history we have heard it so called.

MURAT: Yes, and two weeks ago I also called it that in my report to the Emperor.

PLATOV: Then that means, we are exactly at one, Your Majesty. Quite correct.

MURAT: But would it not be more correct to give it another name?

PLATOV: Which?

MURAT: For example—the Tula road, the Kaluga road. . .

PLATOV: But, Your Majesty, where is Ryazan, where is Kaluga, where Tula. . . However, if it pleases you. . .

MURAT: Au revoir, General!

PLATOV: Will you not stay longer, Your Majesty?

MURAT: Your servant!

PLATOV *(taking up a beaker)*: It is the Russian custom to smooth the road.

MURAT *(venomously)*: Which road?

PLATOV: Whichever one pleases, Your Majesty. . .

MURAT: That we shall see, and examine on the spot. Your field marshal fights not in a chivalrous way, but after the fashion of the Scythians. He avoids open battle and conceals himself from the enemy. Convey to Prince Kutuzov that I have no high opinion of such methods of warfare. . .

PLATOV: The prince will be highly distressed by your opinion, Your Majesty.

MURAT: But I vow that I shall catch him. We shall march through your country as we have marched through all Europe! Your servant.

(Exit haughtily, leaving his glove. Platov and Ilovaisky exchange glances and follow him out. Sibilyov takes up the glove, makes a movement towards the door, then waves the glove and tries it on.)

COSSACK *(looks with respect from the door at this manipulation. Speaks with regret)*:

Eh, eh, a bit tight!
(Sound of a Cossack song):

Neighbour and neighbour they meet by the gate,
Ah, neighbour, my neighbour, my sweetheart I wait.

(Curtain)

Scene 2

Napoleon's office in the Kremlin Palace.

(Napoleon at work, surrounded by marshals, generals and adjutants.)

NAPOLEON: Are there any reports from Murat?

BERTHIER: Marshal Murat is pursuing the enemy, who is retreating by the Ryazan road.

NAPOLEON: He has not yet overtaken him?

BERTHIER: It would appear that the Russians' hasty retreat is almost a flight.

DAVOUT: I know not upon what such pursuit borders, which for ten days does not permit Murat to have a sight of the enemy.

NAPOLEON: I command Murat to deliver more detailed information on the enemy army. I shall engage it in the final battle and destroy it. *(Seals a packet and hands it to an adjutant.)* By courier to Paris. To report by word of mouth that our affairs stand excellently. Has today's mail from Paris not yet arrived?

BAUSSET: No. But I have vastly pleasant news from there. The people of France are highly delighted that Your Majesty is in the heart of Russia, and that this heart trembles with fear.

NAPOLEON: We in Moscow can perceive better how it trembles than those in Paris.

BAUSSET: The heart of Paris can hear the roar of Your Majesty's guns echoing within the bounds of Asia.

NAPOLEON: Asia may sleep in peace for the present. Of India just now I have no need. At this time I desire little—only Europe. But Europe must send me soldiers, and that immediately. From France I shall take a hundred and fifty thousand recruits, from Italy thirty, from Bavaria ten, and from the Emperor Francis I shall request the same. Poland must send reinforcements for Ponyatowsky's corps immediately. Write to Warsaw, Maret, that their words are many but their deeds few. The Rhine League, also, must comprehend that it is the rivers of Russia that bear its destiny, and not the waters of the Rhine. Order the allied courts, Maret, to report in all European newspapers the fresh troops that are dispatched. . . *(Softly to Maret):* doubling their numbers. *(Loudly):* Let Alexander read his fate. I fear that his counsellors will lead him into a sorry position. He may be too late with his peace proposals to me, and when I advance on St. Petersburg, then the time will be past. His people, indignant at his inactivity, will rise in revolt, and revolution will complete the misfortunes of Alexander. I sincerely grieve for my brother Alexander. How goes it with the peasant uprisings?

LESSEPS: They have assumed menacing proportions.

NAPOLEON: Excellent.

LESSEPS: But directed against us.

NAPOLEON: It must be given its former historic trend. Discover Pugachov's appeals, bring forward his descendants. Alexander shall yet experience the terror of his grandmother. He has forgotten that now I can do as I will. Postponing the campaign against India, I shall move on St. Petersburg.

NEY: I request that Your Majesty send me with my army of forty thousand directly against St. Petersburg. I vow that I shall be there within twenty days.

BAUSSET: Oh, there is a grandeur in that proposal. I can picture the terror of St. Petersburg.

DAVOUT: St. Petersburg will be in terror, and we in the swamps.

NEY: In which swamps?

DAVOUT: Those along the road to St. Petersburg, in which you will drown together with your army.

NAPOLEON: And you, Davout, have you a proposal?

DAVOUT: I have, Your Majesty.

NAPOLEON: And that is?

DAVOUT: To take Tula and Kaluga, give them to the flames, and through those towns march on the Ukraine. But to do this immediately, with our whole army.

BAUSSET: A brilliant plan!

NAPOLEON: You propose, then, that I leave Moscow? Caulaincourt, your opinion?

CAULAINCOURT: My opinion is known to Your Majesty.

NAPOLEON: But you, as a diplomat, should see a double advantage which I reap by remaining in Moscow—strategic and moral.

CAULAINCOURT: In Moscow, Your Majesty. I see a double error.

NAPOLEON: And that is?

CAULAINCOURT: Our first error lies in that we came to Moscow too swiftly; of that, Your Majesty was cautioned by Murat and Daru better than I can do it. Our second error lies in that we remain too long in Moscow. Of that Your Majesty is cautioned by. . . Kutuzov.

NAPOLEON *(condescendingly):* Caulaincourt has become a poor diplomat. It is Kutuzov himself who desires to drive me from Moscow. He is a good diplomat and understands that Moscow is the strongest political point. Europe watches with jealous eyes to see if I shall hold Moscow. It will see that I can sit on the Moscow throne with as much comfort as upon the Arabian saddle. Gentlemen, we shall winter in Moscow. in the warmth, with a sufficiency of

supplies. Let Kutuzov remain with his army in the open field, exposed to the fatal effects of his terrible climate. Winter will work for us, and spring will bring us a final victory. I shall hurl the Russians beyond the Urals, that is to say, of course, unless Alexander realizes his error and hastens to conclude peace with me. Mortier, convert the Kremlin into a fortress. And level that Vassili Mosque before the gates. The second fortress will be in the New Virgins Monastery. Count Lesseps, I beg you to undertake the ordering of Moscow, divide the capital into blocks, bring order in the streets, draw the population to the markets.

LESSEPS: Your Majesty, the markets are empty. In no way can the peasants be brought to Moscow.

NAPOLEON: The prices must be raised. I shall issue a proclamation which will cause rejoicing in Moscow.

LESSEPS: The district around Moscow is bare as the palm of my hand. It is encircled in a ring of enemy columns and armed peasants. They are burning their reserves as they burned Moscow. My foraging parties return with corpses instead of provisions. And there are sufficient corpses here already. No, not sufficient! They have not yet seen my wrath.

ADJUTANT: His Majesty the King of Naples.

(Enter Murat. Greetings.)

NAPOLEON: Well—and where is the enemy?

MURAT: He is being overtaken. Kutuzov, as ever, avoids open battle in craven fashion and conceals himself like a Scythian. But I have overreached his guile, and found the place where he has hidden his army.

NAPOLEON: Found the place—but lost time which Kutuzov has utilized. Are you informed of the numbers of his soldiers?

MURAT: The Romans, Your Majesty, did not ask the enemy's numbers, but only where he was to be found.

DAVOUT: I am no Roman, but I too should be vastly interested to learn at last where he is.

MURAT *(ignoring him)*: I can report to my Emperor that I have exact information. At Kolomna Kutuzov turned from the Ryazan road to Krasnaya Pakhra.

NAPOLEON: Towards Kaluga? Then he has led you by the nose!

MURAT: I swear to Your Majesty that in two marches I can overtake and rout his rearguard.

NAPOLEON *(sharply)*: Then overtake them, devil take it! You have lost both time and Kutuzov.

(Enter an adjutant who delivers the mail.)

ADJUTANT: Part of the latest Paris mail.

NAPOLEON: Why only part?

ADJUTANT: The couriers were robbed by the partisans.

NAPOLEON: Who are these partisans?

DAVOUT: Armed peasants.

NAPOLEON: A crazy country! Peasants fight, and the army hides itself! Where are your measures for guarding the mail, gentlemen? Strengthen the guard, and send all mail in duplicate. *(Absorbed in reading letters.)*

DAVOUT *(softly to his neighbour)*: Caesar came, saw and conquered, but Murat came, saw nothing and conquered. Or at least promised to.

MURAT *(at the door)*: I promise to convince you, Davout, that you permit yourself to go too far!

NAPOLEON: Gentlemen, you may go. Caulaincourt will remain.

(Exit all except Caulaincourt.)

NAPOLEON: Caulaincourt, the victor should be magnanimous. I wish to throw a life-line to Alexander—I shall offer him peace. The high honour of conveying my desire to Alexander I confer upon you, his friend. You will take my letters to Kutuzov and to St. Petersburg.

CAULAINCOURT: Your Majesty, such a journey will be fruitless.

NAPOLEON: Wherefore?

CAULAINCOURT: The Russians will not make peace.

NAPOLEON: Yes, possibly they will not be the first to offer it. But I am magnanimously prepared to take the first step, and precisely through you, who have always been the herald of peace at St. Petersburg.

CAULAINCOURT: Your Majesty, they will not even discuss it with me there at this time.

NAPOLEON: I am convinced that the Tsar will not desire to war with me further.

CAULAINCOURT: Your Majesty, it is not the Tsar who is warring with us here, but the people.

NAPOLEON: But I must warn Alexander that he will be answerable before his people's history.

CAULAINCOURT: The history of his people has given us a warning.

NAPOLEON: What is that?

CAULAINCOURT: Here, in the Kremlin, conquerors were sitting three hundred years since. And here they had to feed upon rotting animals and the corpses of their comrades.

NAPOLEON: A strange comparison! We have an abundance of everything.

CAULAINCOURT: Everything, except grain.

NAPOLEON: You have already forgotten that it is precisely in grain that Russia is rich. But that is not the main thing now. You have also forgotten that you are speaking with your Emperor. *(Walking up and down, he takes Caulaincourt's arm and continues confidentially.)* I have had a bad mail from Paris. The people are displaying weariness. The people, who used to bless my name exultantly for leading the army in defence of its country and freedom.

CAULAINCOURT: Now you have led it into another country, and for another end.

NAPOLEON: I love not your abstract philosophy. This is a much more realistic

matter. It would appear that a plot is in preparation in Paris. But that is of no matter. But here the King of Prussia has sent us ardent assurances of his devotion and unchanging loyalty to me. What does that portend?

CAULAINCOURT: It means that he intends to betray you.

NAPOLEON: Correct. But why?

CAULAINCOURT: He assumes that matters are not going so excellently with us.

NAPOLEON: And the Polish *panowie* write, stammering with enthusiasm at my victories, both past and future.

CAULAINCOURT: That means that they await a defeat.

NAPOLEON: You see! And nevertheless you refuse to speak to Alexander about peace.

CAULAINCOURT: Yes. Because that would mean confirming the assumptions of Prussia and Poland.

NAPOLEON *(sharply)*: In short, you refuse to go to St. Petersburg?

CAULAINCOURT: I beg Your Majesty to excuse me, since I place my faith not in my own diplomatic gifts, but in your military genius.

NAPOLEON: You have not yet lost faith in it?

CAULAINCOURT: Your Majesty. . .

NAPOLEON: But if I myself have lost faith?

CAULAINCOURT: The whole world would assure you of your greatness.

NAPOLEON: The whole world. . . But Russia wishes to disillusion the world... You notice that I am beginning such reassurance. . . So, instead of going to St. Petersburg yourself, you would send me there with the army.

CAULAINCOURT: I want Your Majesty and your army to leave Moscow with the greatest speed.

NAPOLEON: In order with the greatest speed to convince Europe of the correctness of its assumptions. . . Yes, Caulaincourt is not a talented diplomat. Send me Lauriston.

(Exit Caulaincourt.)

NAPOLEON *(alone)*: "The whole world would assure you of your greatness". . . To be able to do all, means, first, to understand all. In this country I understand nothing. . . Nothing of what has happened. *(The ringing of bells.)* That heavy ringing. . . *(Goes to an ikon hanging on the wall.)* These dark faces with their mysterious eyes. . . Or is this. . . the terrible face of an enigmatic people? . .

(Enter Lauriston.)

NAPOLEON: Lauriston, you are immediately to take letters from me to Kutuzov and Alexander and bring me peace. Peace, at any cost.

(Curtain)

Scene 3

(Kutuzov's headquarters at Krasnaya Pakhra. In the room—Wolzogen, Yermolov and others.)

WOLZOGEN *(looking out of the window)*: Baron Bennigsen is returning from examining the positions.

YERMOLOV: Let us hope that he will find some which are suitable.

WOLZOGEN: I am assured that even our old man will not be able to find a pretext to refuse them this time.

(Enter Bennigsen and Wilson.)

YERMOLOV: Well, what do you think, Baron, the inspection shows excellent positions, the Prince will no longer venture to insist that our positions are unsuitable?

BENNIGSEN: Oh, yes! Here they are excellent! Better than those at Borodino.

WILSON: And the Prince will not dare to make a pretext of unfavourable positions?

WOLZOGEN: He certainly is a wily old bird.

BENNIGSEN: Wily and cowardly. Tangled himself in confusion, looked for a road, first flung off along the Ryazan highway, and now to Kaluga. He not only hides from Napoleon, he hides from Murat. He has indeed exposed himself as a coward before the whole front.

DOKHTUROV: Before the whole front Suvorov himself kissed him for his bravery.

BENNIGSEN: It may be so. But what a pity that it was so long ago.

WOLZOGEN: Exactly so. Handed the sacred capital over to the enemy—was it from cowardice or from age?

BENNIGSEN: No, from contrariness and guile. He agrees with everybody in words in order to act contrary to all.

WILSON: A person of such a quality is hardly in place in command of the Russian army at such a historic moment.

BENNIGSEN: What can be done, if the Tsar has nobody to replace him.

WILSON: On your lips, Baron, that word "nobody" rings more strangely, I vow, than on any others.

(Bennigsen bows modestly. Animated discussion springs up among the generals.)

BENNIGSEN: I demand that we immediately give battle.

VOICES. We all demand it.

PLATOV: After all, I have twenty-six regiments newly arrived from the Don today.

YERMOLOV: More and more People's Guard regiments keep coming in.

PLATOV: It is necessary to strike the enemy while his main forces are yet in Moscow.

DOKHTUROV: To wipe off, even to a certain degree, the disgrace of leaving Moscow, and raise the spirits of the soldiers.

BENNIGSEN: It is no longer to be endured! Kaissarov, request the presence of the Prince. This must be ended.

WOLZOGEN: But the Prince has not yet finished reading Madame Genlis' novel.

(Enter Kutuzov.)

BENNIGSEN: Prince, I have found excellent positions for a decisive battle.

WILSON: Prince, you now have such an army as may safely give Napoleon another Borodino here.

KUTUZOV: But for my part, one can suffice.

YERMOLOV: Your Highness, the soldiers are dissatisfied. They feel it a disgrace to show the enemy their backs.

KUTUZOV: What, then, is to be done?

BENNIGSEN: Give the order to attack.

KUTUZOV: Most unfortunately I have already given the order to withdraw.

BENNIGSEN: But for what reason, if such excellent positions have already been found?

KUTUZOV: In order to find some still more excellent. You may go, gentlemen.

BENNIGSEN: But such a withdrawal is already equal to a flight!

(Exit all in dissatisfaction.)

YERMOLOV (*softly*): But what is this? All of us on the side of the German against Kutuzov! Either the old man has lost his senses, or else I. . .

(Enter Konovnitsyn:)

KONOVNITSYN: Count Fyodor Vassilyevich Rostopchin asks you to receive him.

KUTUZOV: Inform the count that I appreciate the honour, and shall receive him gladly as soon as I can find any free time.

KONOVNITSYN: He asks Your Highness to recall that he has already been awaiting Your Highness' leisure for two weeks.

KUTUZOV: Ah! Time, time, how it flies! . .

KONOVNITSYN: There are also some peasant partisans who desire to see Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: Ah! Admit them, admit them.

(Exit the generals. Enter peasants—Khrol, Trifon, Matryona.)

KUTUZOV: Good day, brothers. Glad I am to see you. How is everything with you?

KHROL: Eh, it's white like ash. And the ash is glowing hot. . . The people are afire, they've sent to Your Highness for orders.

KUTUZOV: And my orders are to join up with Davydov's and Dorokhov's columns. Say I sent you. They already know what to do.

TRIFON: But what's it all about, Your Highness? Can it be the death of Russia? But how could that be!

KUTUZOV: It won't be.

MATRYONA: But Moscow, Mother Moscow, we gave it up, Father! *(Cries.)*

KUTUZOV: God's will, my friend.

MATRYONA: But what'll we do without our Moscow?

KUTUZOV: We'll get it back, we'll get it back.

MATRYONA: There's nothing left to get back, they say. They burned it, our Mother!

KUTUZOV: Never mind. The hearts of the people are burning with a hotter flame.

MATRYONA: Eh, how they're burning!

KUTUZOV: There, you see. You, dear one, send your menfolk along to win Moscow back again.

MATRYONA: And not just the menfolks—here I am, come myself. I caught two of them, I did, and three in the barn I roasted like wild boars.

KUTUZOV: There, you see, you didn't grudge your barn!

MATRYONA: I wouldn't have, if it hadn't been new. I'd built it up again last summer. *(Wiping her eyes):* And if it had been empty, too.

KHROL: And if your head wasn't empty.

MATRYONA: What are you barking about?

KHROL: Why couldn't she run to me and say: "Here's what happened, Khrol Savich, the enemy's in the gulley." I'd have found some way of getting 'em out without any fire. But of course, Your Highness, she's a widow, there's no one to learn her any better.

MATRYONA: Eh, you go learn your own womenfolk.

KHROL: We'll learn 'em all right, slow and sure. But we've not the time to be bothering wi' 'em now, we've got to learn the Frenchies.

TRIFON: Now you just show us where to hit 'em, and we'll give it 'em all right. The people's all bristling like mastiffs. Every honest man'll be at 'em.

KHROL: The earth weeps and the forests groan, as they say, Your Highness, God's not found in might. . .

KUTUZOV: Exactly, not in might, but in right.

KHROL: Not might, but cleverness—it's just the same.

KUTUZOV: Ah!

KHROL: Hit out with Right—that's God's way. Well, and diddle a clever enemy—God grant that too.

KUTUZOV: So that's the way of it! And who might you be?

KHROL: Khrol the Bear-killer, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: Bear-killer? *(Examines his fragile form).*

KHROL: That's me. And that's Trifon, and Matryona Eremeyeva, a handy sort of female.

TRIFON: He's downed forty bears, Your Highness!

KUTUZOV: Forty! Is that the real number?

KHROL: Not quite. Forty-three.

KUTUZOV: But how did you do it, dear fellow?

KHROL: Well, you see, Your Highness, it's just the way of doing it, a professional secret.

KUTUZOV: How, then?

KHROL *(softly, confidingly)*: As soon as the rascal gets up on his hind legs and goes for you, don't waste your strength, just dive in under his belly and in with the fork.

(Enter Konovnitsyn.)

KONOVNITSYN: General Marquis Lauriston, ambassador from the Emperor Napoleon, has arrived at our positions. *(General movement.)*

KUTUZOV: Light bonfires throughout the camp, let the soldiers sing and dance, and get the bottles out. *(To Khrol):* So, dive in under, you said?

KHROL: Dive in, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: Well, then, brothers, so we shall beat the French?

PEASANTS: God will let us beat 'em and kill 'em.

KUTUZOV: And we shall make no peace with them?

KHROL: Now what 'ud we be doing that for!

KUTUZOV: They say: "A bad peace is better than a good quarrel."

KHROL: That's right enough, but first you've got to down t'other fellow and finish the quarrel.

TRIFON: Arms, just give us arms.

KHROL: What ye don't give us, of course, we'll take ourselves from the Frenchies, but the folks keep coming and coming, there's never enough for them.

KUTUZOV: You'll get them, there'll be arms given you. Thanks, brothers.

(Takes leave of the peasants. Embraces them. They leave. Enter Wilson.)

WILSON: I consider, Prince, that Lauriston should not be received by you.

KUTUZOV: Unfortunately, Sir, I consider otherwise.

WILSON: But at least, not by you in person.

KUTUZOV: If I receive him, I do it in person.

WILSON: I shall feel bound to inform your ruler and my government of it.

KUTUZOV: That is your personal affair. (*Exit Wilson.*) The ambassador of the French Emperor, Adjutant-General Lauriston, must be received by General Kutuzov in a fitting manner. *(Walks to the mirror.)* Dear, dear, epaulettes rather rubbed... *(To Konovnitsyn):* Give me a new pair, dear fellow. *(Konovnitsyn removes the epaulettes).* So that the enemy may not think anything of ours is shabby or frayed. *(As the epaulettes are changed, continues talking to himself.)* When I eat plain porridge, I do not permit any person to gaze into my mouth. You want a second Borodino? Then attend to it yourselves. *(To Konovnitsyn):* Request him to enter.

(Konovnitsyn ushers in Lauriston.)

LAURISTON: His Majesty, my Emperor, has entrusted me to convey to you his deep and long-standing respect and admiration.

KUTUZOV: I beg you, Marquis, to convey to His Majesty my gratitude for an honour so flattering and but little deserved, and my reciprocal admiration for a great military genius.

LAURISTON *(delivering a letter)*: His Majesty requests you to convey this letter to your Emperor.

KUTUZOV: It will be done.

LAURISTON: The other letter is addressed to you personally, with the request that you read it immediately, in my presence.

KUTUZOV: I am deeply sensible of the high honour.

LAURISTON: His Majesty, my Emperor, instructed me to convey to you his most profound regrets for the sufferings which war has brought to your country.

KUTUZOV: Did you have a pleasant journey, Marquis?

LAURISTON: I thank you. But His Majesty would draw your attention to your people's thoroughly barbarous method of waging war and their extreme ferocity.

KUTUZOV: It comes from lack of practice, Marquis. For two hundred years they have seen no enemy on their soil. And since the time of the Tatar hordes more than three hundred years have passed.

LAURISTON: I consider that they should know the difference between the forces of the Emperor of France and Tatar hordes.

KUTUZOV: The difference? No, Marquis, they do not see this difference.

LAURISTON: They fight without culture!

KUTUZOV: It would seem that they have not yet learned to beat the enemy who breaks into their house in cultured fashion. They beat him as they may.

LAURISTON: They evidently lay the burning of Moscow to our credit, although we know that for some reason completely incomprehensible to the French, Moscow was burned by the Russian people themselves.

KUTUZOV: The Russian people know who burned Moscow, and with what object.

LAURISTON: They set so little store by their sacred capital!

KUTUZOV: For our people, the whole soil of Russia is sacred, every town and every village upon it.

LAURISTON: His Majesty considers it a highly regrettable misunderstanding that war should have arisen between two noble monarchs and their great peoples. It grieves him much.

KUTUZOV: I share the grief of your Emperor.

LAURISTON: My Emperor was assured of your feelings, and for that reason prays you to read his letter to you without loss of time.

KUTUZOV: I will do so. Yes, the people also want peace, and my army is exhausted.

LAURISTON: It is of peace, or at least of an armistice, that my Emperor wishes to speak.

KUTUZOV: I regret extremely, that I am deprived of any possibility to conduct such discussions.

LAURISTON: But for what reason?

KUTUZOV: I am appointed by my Emperor and entrusted with powers only for waging war.

LAURISTON: But it is already time to finish the war!

KUTUZOV: Finish it? But we are only beginning.

LAURISTON: But you have just remarked that the Russian people at this time want peace.

KUTUZOV: The Russian people always want peace.

LAURISTON: Believe me, Prince, that the French people also wish it. Paris wilts and droops without her beloved Emperor and is awaiting him with impatience.

KUTUZOV: Ah, Paris! The most rose-filled days of my youth were once given to Paris. Only conceive, Marquis, while we here are drowning in rain and mud, Paris is drowning in flowers.

LAURISTON: Yes, yes, Prince, quite drowned in them. I would most earnestly request you to read this. (*He takes Napoleon's letter from the table and places it in Kutuzov's hand.)*

KUTUZOV: And the theatres! They will live in my heart until the day of my death. *(Sighing, tears open the envelope.)* But I have heard that a troupe of the best Paris actors are now playing in Moscow.

LAURISTON: Yes, Prince, and headed by André.

KUTUZOV *(swiftly scanning the letter):* André herself! Her exquisite voice still sounds in my ears. What notes... And not one false one!

LAURISTON: False notes? How can you, Prince!

KUTUZOV: But why does your government pay them in false money?.. Though for that matter, not them alone. Yes, we are tired, tired.

LAURISTON: Does not Your Highness consider that in order to expediate the conveyance of the letter to your Emperor, it were well that I myself took it to your capital, St. Petersburg?

KUTUZOV: Oh, why put yourself to so much trouble! The Russian people themselves know the road to their capital.

LAURISTON: Then the letter will be sent today?

KUTUZOV: Today? *(Looks out of the window.)* I fear it is late, night is already falling. *(Yawns, crosses his mouth.)* But tomorrow morning?

LAURISTON: His Majesty instructed me to emphasize once more that he is waging war without any inimical feelings.

KUTUZOV: But that, of course, is understood.

LAURISTON: And that he is prepared to go no further than Moscow.

KUTUZOV: Indeed? Otherwise we might withdraw another five hundred versts or so to the east. There is space enough and an even road for you.

LAURISTON *(smiling dryly)*: An uninteresting road, Prince. Accept my compliments.

KUTUZOV: I wish you a pleasant journey, Marquis, a pleasant journey. *(Bowing with the greatest ceremony, he accompanies Lauriston to the door.)*

LAURISTON *(halting)*: Enfin, what have I your permission, Prince, to convey to my Emperor?

KUTUZOV: My respects. My most humble respects, Marquis. *(Makes a courtly bow. At the door:)* Conduct Marquis Lauriston through the outposts. Let the soldiers sing gay songs so that the marquis should not find the way tedious.

(Lively talk outside the door. Enter Konovnitsyn.)

KUTUZOV: What is this?

KONOVNITSYN: Everybody is in great excitement, conjecturing the object of this visit.

KUTUZOV: They want peace. Report that all along the front.

KONOVNITSYN: Mr. Wilson requests that you receive him immediately.

KUTUZOV: Tomorrow, tomorrow, dear fellow, I am now weary.

KONOVNITSYN *(presenting a letter)*: A letter from Count Rostopchin.

KUTUZOV: Read it, please. *(Seats himself, covers his eyes with his hand.)*

KONOVNITSYN *(opens the letter and reads)*: "Prince. For the space of two weeks you have not found the time to receive me, although I am here not of my own wish, but in the execution of the duties laid upon me by the Tsar; and so soon as I shall have concluded the afore-mentioned duties, I shall depart for the residence of my ruler, leaving those unhappy localities where the fortune of the troops and of my country depend upon your signature."

KUTUZOV: Yes, yes, the count writes well.

KONOVNITSYN *(reading)*: "Not desiring to hear that you are occupied the entire day with sleeping, I intend to take my departure..."

KUTUZOV *(yawning)*: A pity, a pity.

KONOVNITSYN *(reading)*: "Thanking you for relieving me of the necessity of transferring to any person either the capital or the region."

KUTUZOV: Yes... Nobody else besides myself was needed for the transfer. *(Sighs heavily.)*

KONOVNITSYN *(reading)*: "And for finding me unworthy of the trust which you grant to the peasants, arming them indiscriminately and preparing, not so much defence, as a menace to the country and the nobility, as in the days of Pugachov."

(On hearing the concluding phrase, Kutuzov opens his eyes and rises, choking with wrath.)

KUTUZOV: Wait, wait... If that clown has not yet departed, request him kindly to go...

KONOVNITSYN: Where?

KUTUZOV: Where! Down the throat of the devil's grandmother!

KONOVNITSYN: Your Highness, will you not take some repose... It is known to me, if not to Rostopchin, that you work the nights through, sleepless.

KUTUZOV: No matter. What is of matter is that Napoleon in Moscow should sleep long and soundly. Sleep is the most healthy thing for Russia—it gives strength.

ADJUTANT: General Barclay de Tolly.

(Enter Barclay.)

BARCLAY: Before departing to hold myself at the disposal of His Majesty, I have the honour to assure you, Prince, of my humblest respects.

KUTUZOV: Pray be seated.

BARCLAY: I thank you. I am in haste.

KUTUZOV: Well, a pleasant journey, Mikhail Bogdanovich. I wish you good health.

BARCLAY: I thank you, Mikhail Illarionovich, and wish you the same. *(Moves towards the door.)*

KUTUZOV: How is your fever?

BARCLAY: It continues.

KUTUZOV: But with me it is but just beginning.

BARCLAY: Kalgan[1] in vodka is highly recommended.

KUTUZOV: Ah! It is easier?

BARCLAY: Death would be easier.

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[1] A kind of herb.

KUTUZOV: I know, you avidly sought that easement on Borodino Field.

BARCLAY: But found it not.

KUTUZOV: It would seem that God is preserving us for some purpose.

BARCLAY: It is not God, but men that I have not pleased.

KUTUZOV: Difficult to please them.

BARCLAY: Yes. God's justice and man's injustice are unendurable. I travelled through the town, and the crowd, when they recognized me, broke the glass in my carriage with stones. For what?

KUTUZOV: Evidently, you knew each other ill.

BARCLAY: I turned away and wept that they had not broken my head too and killed me.

KUTUZOV: They have thrown stones at my coach windows too. But after our deaths, they will put our portraits behind glass that not a grain of dust fall upon them. Unjust is the crowd, but just the people, Mikhail Bogdanovich.

BARCLAY: I followed the path shown me not by the crowd, not by the people, but by my brain, conscience and heart, and now I depart, branded. My heart is filled with immeasurable hurt and grief, and my mind clouded.

KUTUZOV: It matters nothing, your mind is clear, your heart and conscience clean.

BARCLAY: Not one man has said that I did right in retreating.

KUTUZOV: I cannot say it to you, for the reason that I myself am retreating.

BARCLAY: You are not retreating, you are attacking in the manner most dangerous for the enemy—in his flank, concealing the way from him.

(Kutuzov makes an agitated gesture, goes quickly to the door and closes it more firmly.)

BARCLAY: Your pillow knows nothing of it but mine knows. . .

KUTUZOV *(smiling)*: Well, well, I hope that your pillow is silent as the grave.

BARCLAY: Yes, but there is yet somebody else who will tell all.

KUTUZOV *(agitated)*: Who?

BARCLAY: History.

KUTUZOV: Oh well, that will be after the grave.

BARCLAY: History knows no example of such a brilliant flanking march, tying down the enemy. For at this time, whether he go forward or mark time on the spot, you come out in his rear.

KUTUZOV: Well, well. . . We shall see. And shall keep silence. Keep silence at this time.

BARCLAY: At this time the salvation of the country is only in your head, Mikhail Illarionovich. Not in the battle which they are demanding.

KUTUZOV: That they do from fear.

BARCLAY: And from lack of understanding, although they are all taking part in the great actions.

KUTUZOV: Actions are done by all, the thinking by one. There was a peasant here just now. He understands. When the time comes the people will strike them from the flank and strike them from the rear. They are in a trap.

BARCLAY: Well, farewell, Mikhail Illarionovich. I wish that all might understand you soon.

KUTUZOV: When they understand me, they will also understand you.

BARCLAY: After the grave into which they are driving me.

KUTUZOV: Yes. . . It is not the emperor who is in Moscow that I fear, but the one who is in St. Petersburg.

BARCLAY: Your fears are vain. They have removed me because there is one to take my place. They will not permit your dismissal, for to replace you is impossible.

KUTUZOV: They cannot replace me, but they can roast me. For giving up Moscow.

BARCLAY: Only you alone could give it up. Only you alone can regain it.

KUTUZOV: Can I? That is what I think upon both day and night. That is what I ask God. Farewell, dear fellow; it may be that we shall meet no more. *(Kisses Barclay, sobs.)*

(Exit Barclay. Kutuzov sunk in heavy thought. An adjutant brings in a packet.)

KONOVNITSYN *(taking the packet and glancing at it)*: Your Highness, a packet from His Majesty the Tsar.

KUTUZOV *(rising and taking the packet)*: Well, here it is written: "To the Commander-in-Chief." But it may be that he who reads is already no longer the Commander-in-Chief. *(Opens the packet, begins to read, then hands it to Konovnitsyn.)* Somehow my eyes are quite useless in the evenings. Read it, dear fellow, see, from here.

KONOVNITSYN *(begins to read. Kutuzov listens, standing to attention)*: "Do not forget, Prince, that you still must answer to me for the surrender of the capital without a fight. You must calm Russia by giving battle to the French in a manner consonant with our dignity. Accept my constant esteem and regard. Alexander."

KUTUZOV *(to himself)*: Calm Russia. . . Russia, Your Majesty, must be not calmed, but saved. . . *(To Konovnitsyn)*: It is necessary, dear fellow, to write. . .

KONOVNITSYN: To His Majesty?

KUTUZOV: To His Majesty Bennigsen will write. Let him. *(Thinks for a moment.)* It is about him that you must prepare a letter to the Tsar, about rewarding Bennigsen for his wisdom and great military services. Request a hundred thousand roubles for him and a gold sword decorated with laurel leaves.

(Enter an adjutant.)

ADJUTANT: Fresh regiments of the People's Guard have arrived.

KUTUZOV: From whence?

ADJUTANT: From Ryazan and Tambov. There are Tatars from Kazan and a Bashkir regiment from near Ufa.

KUTUZOV: Ah, the people themselves give the answer to everybody. They are all

brothers beneath their skins. See how we are swamped with people. And you, dear fellow, write.

KONOVNITSYN: What are Your Highness' orders?

KUTUZOV: Retreat throughout the night. Time will work for us, if. . . we work for it. It is wiser than all.

(Curtain)

ACT THREE

Scene 1

A square in the Kremlin, opposite the Palace.

(Preparations for a parade. Music. A sudden distant burst of cannon fire. Napoleon's marshals and suite have gathered on the square and are waiting for him to emerge.)

BAUSSET *(to a group of generals)*: Kutuzov as good as admitted to Lauriston that the Russian people have no wish to fight, and are demanding peace. The Field Marshal apologized most profusely for the Tatar rudeness of his people. It grieves him sorely. Conceive how trying it must be for a man of European culture to command barbarians. He spoke with animation about his youth in Paris.

DAVOUT *(gloomily)*: Yes. A new style of talk.

BAUSSET: He is in transports about Paris, about the Emperor, and the actress André. He said that he would wish to die beneath her song at the feet. . .

DAVOUT: What?

BAUSSET: That is, at the foot. . . of Montmartre.

DAVOUT: And all this you have heard?

BAUSSET: With my own ears.

DAVOUT: Such ears should be struck off!

BAUSSET *(gazing fixedly at the cupola)*: What exquisite weather! How delightfully the sun glitters upon these golden cupolas! And within half an hour it will glitter still more wonderfully upon the Orders which the Emperor, with his own hand, will pin upon the breasts of heroes.

DAVOUT: What do you mean by that?

BAUSSET: I mean: "The awe-inspiring greatness of His Majesty's people must blind the enemy and fill him with fear."

NEY *(approaching Davout)*: The Emperor is greatly agitated. Again there are no reports from Murat.

DAVOUT: That means that again he has lost the Russian army. Left behind, like a dog behind his master's cart.

BAUSSET: The King of Naples has the heart of a lion.

DAVOUT: And the head of a sheep, I would add, if there were not a similar head on. . . one of my companions here.

BAUSSET: Excuse me, I did not hear you.

(A woman carrying a basket of provisions runs across the square, pursued by a soldier. He overtakes her and snatches away her basket. The woman screams: "Guard! Help!" A huge grenadier dashes out from behind a corner. He knocks the soldier down, takes the basket and goes on, staggering. The woman clutches him, screaming, and he raises his sabre, threatening her. One of the suite rushes at them and the grenadier, cursing in German, brandishes his sabre. A shot is fired, and he falls dead.)

LESSEPS: See, gentlemen, your soldiers are plundering and killing peaceful citizens.

BERTHIER: It is always these Prussians and Westphalians.

LESSEPS: The Prussians and Westphalians are also your soldiers, Monsieur Berthier.

BROUSSIER: But you are the governor, Monsieur Lesseps.

LESSEPS: You would oblige me greatly by explaining to me, of what city I am governor: a city subdued by us, or one besieged by the enemy?

CAULAINCOURT: I can relieve you of your perplexities, Monsieur Lesseps. You are the governor of a city which can be neither besieged nor subdued.

LESSEPS: I thank you, Monsieur Caulaincourt. But where is the way out?

CAULAINCOURT: There is only one way out: along the way by which we came.

BAUSSET: What an exquisite pun! But in this barbarous town even such a one falls flat. I have just passed along Arbat. Delight and chagrin, Mr. Governor. The soldiers are sitting on gilded armchairs, on velvet divans. That is vastly pleasant. On the pavements lie carpets and furs—that is excellent. His Majesty's soldiers have earned these splendid spoils. But it is truly grievous that all this is trampled in straw and dung, and everywhere lie corpses and offal.

LESSEPS: By whom and by what means do you require that it be cleared? There are several streets along which it is already impossible to pass, so choked are they with the bodies of animals and soldiers dying of hunger and drink.

(Broussier approaches.)

BROUSSIER: Lesseps. . . my horses have died in such numbers that my cavalry will soon be upon their own feet.

BAUSSET: A witty phrase!

BROUSSIER: Within the month I have lost here thirty thousand soldiers. For that reason they prefer to shoot ravens and trap cats here in the city, rather than make forays.

LESSEPS: General, I have no provisions either for man or horse. What did not burn has been plundered and eaten.

(Bessières comes out of the door.)

BESSIERES: The Emperor is about to appear.

(The marshals prepare.)

BROUSSIER *(softly, to Lesseps)*: You would probably have difficulty in believing that I am hungry.

LESSEPS: You, General, would probably have difficulty in believing that I personally have almost nothing but the barest essentials. *(Confidentially)*: Yesterday some eggs and meat were sent me, and I am happy to have the opportunity of demonstrating my friendship. I shall send you...

BROUSSIER: Oh, I am deeply touched. But why...

LESSEPS: No, no, let these eggs and this meat be a token of my earnest desire always to be at your service.

(Enter Napoleon.)

NAPOLEON *(to Lesseps, in passing)*: Give the army double pay today—in Russian money.

LESSEPS: Your Majesty, the value of Russian money has dropped to a quarter, so that it will not be double pay, but only half.

NAPOLEON: If my command is double, then double it is.

VISAPOUR *(rushing up to Napoleon)*: Your Majesty!

NAPOLEON: Who are you?

VISAPOUR: Prince Visapour.

NAPOLEON *(joyfully)*: Ah! From the Emperor Alexander? At last!

VISAPOUR: Great man, truly great man! The most devoted of all your admirers at length has the happiness of beholding you.

NAPOLEON: Are you from the Emperor Alexander?

VISAPOUR: Oh, no, between the Emperor Alexander and myself all ties are broken. I wish to serve Your Majesty.

(Napoleon turns away with a wave of the hand. The captain of the guard leads a man and a woman up to Davout. Napoleon sees them.)

NAPOLEON: Who are these?

DAVOUT: They have been apprehended on the scene of their crime.

NAPOLEON: More incendiaries?

DAVOUT: Worse.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD: Permit me to report to Your Majesty: they were destroying their foodstuffs. We left them the half, and would have requisitioned the remainder, but they poured pitch over it and destroyed the whole!

NAPOLEON *(to the arrested couple)*: Why?

THE MAN: So that the enemy should starve.

NAPOLEON: But you will die of hunger first!

THE WOMAN: That we shall not.

THE MAN: You will not allow it.

NAPOLEON: Do you hope for my clemency?

THE WOMAN: No, you will shoot us.

NAPOLEON: And if not?

THE WOMAN: We shan't die.

THE MAN: The people will save us.

NAPOLEON: Hang them!

(Berthier approaches quickly, accompanied by Bérenger.)

BERTHIER: Your Majesty, here is Bérenger, adjutant to the King of Naples, who brings information of the utmost urgency.

NAPOLEON: Well, what is it? Why is Murat again silent for so long a period?

DAVOUT: It would appear that the Russian army is again far distant?

BERENGER: Oh, on the contrary. Permit me to report to Your Majesty that near Tarutino, the Russians unexpectedly attacked Marshal Murat's troops, encircling and routing Sebastiani's corps. Over three thousand Frenchmen have been killed, and the baggage train lost...

NAPOLEON *(astonished)*: Ah, is it so! They dare to fight in such a way! Gentlemen, the parade is cancelled. The army is to advance immediately. This treacherous breaker of the laws of warfare must be punished. They will remember me!

NEY *(consulting the map)*: Tarutino... But then, Kutuzov has come out onto our flank!

DAVOUT: Not in our rear, by any chance?

(General excitement.)

NAPOLEON: The whole army must leave Moscow before night.

BAUSSET *(crossing himself)*: Thank God, at last!

NAPOLEON: Marshal Mortier will remain in Moscow with the garrison until my return.

LESSEPS: Shall Moscow be divided into districts, Your Majesty?

NAPOLEON: Await my return. Announce in Moscow that I am leaving only in order to chastise Kutuzov and level the Tula factories to the ground. They had not time to burn Moscow. I shall do it better. Blow up the Kremlin, the palace and the cathedrals.

BAUSSET *(cheerfully)*: That is a token that we shall not return to this nightmare city.

NAPOLEON: Let them reap the fruits of their Asiatic barbarism and trickery. Yes, it is said they believe that while the cross stands on Ivan the Great, nobody can win Moscow. Remove the cross and take it to Paris. Let them know who the master is here.

BAUSSET *(depressed)*: But that is a token that we shall return.

NAPOLEON: Take the gold and gems from all the churches and ikons.

BAUSSET: That is a token for either way—the victor's spoils.

(Visapour runs up.)

VISAPOUR: Your Majesty, permit me to accompany you. There is nothing more to tie me to Russia.

NAPOLEON: Your ties do not interest me.

(Goes out.)

VISAPOUR *(running after him)*: But, Your Majesty, here the Russians will shoot me for my ties with you.

DAVOUT *(stopping before him threateningly)*: Away with you! Or else I shall shoot you myself.

NAPOLEON: Maret, inform Europe that I am leaving Moscow which is of no further military importance, and moving on Vitebsk, in order to begin a new campaign against Kiev and St. Petersburg from there. From Vitebsk we gain twenty marches in comparison with Mos-

cow. Berthier... *(Leads Berthier to one side and speaks softly)*: Send a letter to Kutuzov when we are on the way.

BERTHIER: About what?

NAPOLEON: The subject does not matter. Well, send a protest against the treacherous attack on Murat, or something after that style. The important thing is that Kutuzov should see it is sent not en route, but from Moscow. Mark it with the name Moscow and tomorrow's date. Ney, your corps will take the Smolensk road in order to attract the attention of Kutuzov. *(Loudly)*: Gentlemen, we shall advance immediately, covering our movement from the enemy by light advance guards.

(The sound of a distant cannonade. An adjutant approaches quickly.)

ADJUTANT: General Castellane reports the rout of two squadrons in the vicinity of Moscow by Dorokhov's column.

BAUSSET: Oh, what an appalling country! God grant that we do not return here!

CAULAINCOURT: God grant that we make our way out!

(The sound of a military march.)

Scene 2

At Letashevka

(Kutuzov working at a table. Yermolov standing to one side. Bennigsen speaking, standing before Kutuzov, sometimes walking up and down.)

BENNIGSEN: Pardon me, Your Highness, but I am a man who loves frankness. I like to speak out boldly, Russian fashion, the sacred truth. At Tarutino the situation was this: we had taken Murat by surprise. His scouts were bad, there was no guard, and if timely assistance had been sent I should not only have routed Sebastiani and taken him prisoner, I should have captured Murat to boot. But timely reinforcements I did not receive, no matter how I begged and pleaded for them.

KUTUZOV: There must surely have been some reason.

BENNIGSEN: Reasons there are of military failures—that depend upon the man who fears the success of his colleague more than that of the enemy.

KUTUZOV: We may assume, Baron, that your brilliant exploits have never aroused the jealousy of the most envious.

BENNIGSEN: Yes, and this time also it grieved me greatly that Your Highness was too far from the battlefield to observe our splendid action and success. *(Smiles venomously.)*

KUTUZOV: I am also grieved, Baron, that I have never had the opportunity of observing your successes, either close at hand or at a distance.

BENNIGSEN *(flaring up)*: Probably, Your Highness, that is because I am accustomed to giving battle where others prefer to retreat.

KUTUZOV: I am not disturbing you, Baron? *(To Yermolov)*: Read that report from Dorokhov, dear fellow.

BENNIGSEN: My adjutant I shall send you with the documents. I respectfully beg to inform Your Highness that at Tarutino I suffered concussion for the country and shall always know how to die for her like a Russian. *(Exit proudly.)*

YERMOLOV *(to himself)*: But for which country he knows how to die, he did not say.

KUTUZOV: Yes, brother, Alexei Petrovich, we don't know how to die in style like that.

YERMOLOV: How could we? In order to die like a Russian, one must first be born a German. I cannot do it.

KUTUZOV *(irritated)*: He knows how to die, the red-headed thief! What a marvellous achievement! You must know something very different—not let your soldiers die. How to keep your men alive. He doesn't care a rap for his men. All he can think about is the quickest way to start strutting like a conqueror. But that's not what I'm needing just now, it costs too much. Victory is ahead. First we must lure the beast from his lair. Will he crouch there long? Licking his wounds—that means they are not fatal.

YERMOLOV: It may be that they are.

KUTUZOV: That is the question... That is the question. *(Thinks.)* How are the winter uniforms?

YERMOLOV: They are arriving. The bad roads are delaying them somewhat. The mud is already thick.

KUTUZOV: Hardly thicker than in the letters which Wilson and Bennigsen are sending about me to the Tsar.

YERMOLOV *(rising)*: Permit me, Your Highness, to take my leave.

KUTUZOV: Good-bye, dear fellow. *(Shakes hands with him.)*

YERMOLOV: You are feverish. Go to bed at once.

KUTUZOV: Yes, it's shaking me, curse it. Well, now, dear fellow, you have read Dorokhov's report? What is your opinion?

YERMOLOV: Dorokhov reports the appearance of Broussier near Fomin's column and is preparing to give him a lesson.

KUTUZOV: I read that. He must be reinforced with two regiments. And let him keep his eyes open... It may be that this is the vanguard... I have a feeling... is not the beast beginning to stir in his lair?.. Here is another document... Marshal Berthier has honoured me with a letter.

YERMOLOV: About a breach in the laws of warfare?

KUTUZOV: Just so exactly. And how is it dated?

YERMOLOV: The ninth, Moscow. Today is the tenth. Uncommonly quick.

KUTUZOV: He's lying. He's lying, canaille! That letter was not sent on the ninth.

YERMOLOV: Earlier?..

KUTUZOV: Not from Moscow.

YERMOLOV: Nearer?..
KUTUZOV: Have we everything in order?
YERMOLOV: A large number of horses from the regiments and artillery were sent out last night on a foraging expedition.
KUTUZOV: Oh, dear!.. Far?
YERMOLOV: Twenty versts, about.
KUTUZOV: Get them back! Immediately. Issue the instructions. Quick! *(Yermolov goes.)* Oh, my God, Nazar!

(Enter Nazar with something to drink.)

NAZAR: Go to bed, Your Highness. Our mother Night makes all come right. So I think when you see red hair, 'tis time to beware.[1]
KUTUZOV *(sitting down, deep in thought)*: So. Not so. So.
NAZAR: That's just it, Your Highness.
KUTUZOV: What?
NAZAR: You are right. You can depend on them.
KUTUZOV: On whom?
NAZAR: On the people.
KUTUZOV: We can depend on the people, but can they depend on us?
NAZAR: Most certainly.

(Enter Konovnitsyn.)

KONOVNITSYN: Sir Robert Wilson requests you to receive him immediately. He has received a letter from the Emperor highly unpleasant for you.
KUTUZOV: Request him to postpone his news until tomorrow.

(Konovnitsyn leaves.)

KUTUZOV: God, my God, how heavy to bear!.. Thou seest... Strengthen thy humble, slothful servant! That the wily hireling should not lead your cause. *(Exit.)*
NAZAR: God, my God, it's your affair, but don't believe in his humbleness. You can hear he seethes and curses. And still more don't believe in his sloth; you can see, he doesn't sleep, he's grieving... Keep him in health, and may the enemy be brought to confusion.

(Kutuzov goes out into the study. Enter Konovnitsyn, Tol and Bolgovsky.)

KONOVNITSYN: Is your affair really so urgent? I do not wish to waken him, he has an attack just now.
BOLGOVSKY: The report is of the utmost importance. Napoleon has left Moscow.
TOL: The report has been checked?
BOLGOVSKY: Its accuracy has been definitely confirmed.

(Konovnitsyn goes out into Kutuzov's room. A moment later Kutuzov comes out. Bolgovsky greets him.)

KUTUZOV: What is it, what have you brought? What news?
BOLGOVSKY: A report from General Dokhturov. Napoleon has left Moscow.
KUTUZOV *(sternly)*: From whence are the news?
BOLGOVSKY: Scouts have discovered that the whole French army has emerged from Moscow. General Dokhturov considered it of the most vital importance to report it immediately from Aristov to Your Highness.
KUTUZOV: Is it reliable, dear fellow?
BOLGOVSKY: General Dokhturov is awaiting your orders.
KUTUZOV *(stands for a moment, head down. Then turns to the corner where the ikons are hanging)*: Lord, thou hast heard our prayers. Saved, Russia is saved! *(To the officer)*: Waken everyone immediately. Important business.
BOLGOVSKY: The scouts report that the army is followed by endless baggage trains with articles plundered from Moscow.
KUTUZOV: The people have carried Moscow in their hearts, but the enemy will not carry his plunder very far. See, Nazar, the earth is already scorching the feet of the enemy.
NAZAR: That means, it will crack and gape, and then—phwit!

(Enter Yermolov and others.)

KUTUZOV *(continuing)*: See, Alexei Petrovich, the beast has come out of its lair. They went in like lions, they will scuttle off like rats.
YERMOLOV: It is important to discover their direction immediately.
KUTUZOV: In what direction will a hungry rat run, if there is a barn before it? He is running to Kaluga, he now needs Kaluga more than Moscow.
YERMOLOV: But Seslavin reports Ney's corps on the Smolensk road.
KUTUZOV: That means he's trying to confuse the trail. Do not be misled.
BOLGOVSKY: Exactly, Your Highness. The enemy advance columns are already approaching Borovsk, and when the peasants learned that the enemy was coming, then they destroyed the dams by the mills along the whole Protva in order to hinder him, and flooded all the road.
KUTUZOV: That's right, that's right. In Moscow we warmed him up, now we'll give him a bath to cool him down. But he shall not have Kaluga. I let him into Moscow, but not into Kaluga. Urgent orders to Dokhturov to make a dash to Malo-Yaroslavets without a moment's loss of time, by forced marches, to cut across his road. Ataman Platov with all his Cossack regiments to hasten to the same place. The whole army to follow in the same direction. It must be on the Kaluga road in two marches! Every hour decides the fate of the country!

(Curtain)

Scene 3

The outskirts of a village.

(The corner of a half-built cottage is visible. Peasants pass, alarmed and excited.)

VOICES: Bonaparte's out of Moscow! Making for us!—No, not us. He's going

[1] Russian saying.

to Malo-Yaroslavets, making for Kaluga.—He'll get us too.

(Khrol passes with partisans.)

KHROL: He'll get here all right, if you wait for him and don't do nothing about it.

A VOICE: There they go, galloping about in all the villages, getting fodder.

KHROL: Don't give it 'em. Put a watch between the villages, yes, and sentries. *(As he goes off):* Have someone watching on the church towers.

(More peasants run on.)

1st PEASANT: Look, look everybody, look at the Protva there. Look what's happening to the Protva!

2nd PEASANT: It's over the banks! It's covered the meadows!

3rd PEASANT: Look at the bridge there, it's sticking up right in the middle!

OLD MAN: Eh, such a thing's never been seen in a hundred of years, autumn, too.

A WOMAN: It's judgement day. The Lord's angry and he's sent a judgement on us.

A YOUNG FELLOW: Mebbe it's the Lord, and mebbe it's the people that's angry with the Frenchies. Up there at Spasskoye village Bonaparte himself and all his soldiers came to the Protva. But the folks, they smashed up all the dams by the mills so as not to let them over, and the water came rushing down.

(General hum of approval. A bailiff approaches the peasants.)

BAILIFF: Heh, folks! To the threshing barn, to the barn wi' ye. Statute work for the squire, get the rye threshed at once.

VOICE: Bide a bit, Bonaparte's coming, he'll thresh it all and take it off wi' him too.

BAILIFF: Calm down, calm down, there's no Bonaparte's going to let you off your statute work. Enough loafing. Get on with you! Or you'll get a taste of the stick! *(Drives the peasants before him, waving his arms.)*

(Enter Karpovna with a basket. Stops. Sits down by a mud hut. A peasant woman comes past.)

PEASANT WOMAN: Going mushrooming, Karpovna?

KARPOVNA: Mushrooming, dearie, but me old legs don't carry me so well.

PEASANT WOMAN: You shouldn't try it.

KARPOVNA: But I do have such a wish for a few late mushrooms; who knows, it may be me last.

PEASANT WOMAN: Eh, is it dying ye're afeard of?

KARPOVNA: What should I be afeard of there? It's the pagans I'm afeard of. Death should 'a come long agone, I've had me time, but instead it's an enemy that's come. Seems like it's the end of the world, and not just mine. What kind o' peaceful death here?

PEASANT WOMAN: We'll all lie under the ground all the same, Karpovna.

KARPOVNA: Aye, but how can I lie under it when the pagan's on top of it. Enemies trampling it. Eh, Holy Mother, drive him out, the pest! Death, mother death, wait a bit till the earth's clean for us!

(Exit both.)

(Ivan comes out from behind the half-built cottage and beckons to somebody.)

IVAN: Come along, come along, there's nobody here.

(Enter Masha.)

MASHA: Dad's on the lookout. Yesterday he kept scolding and scolding at me. "And don't you be thinking of Vanya," says he. "You just set your mind on Mikitay. He's got a cottage with two rooms and a new roof on it, and Vanya," he says, "he's just a wastrel. No house."

IVAN: What does he mean, no house! See there, only another two logs and the walls'll be ready.

MASHA: "He thinks to make the skies his roof."

IVAN: Never ye fret. I'll have the roof on by Michael's day, and then we'll have time to get married before Lent.

MASHA: And he says, Dad does: "Make a match, when you've something over yer head." And Mikitay's sending the matchmakers tomorrow.

IVAN: Tell him not to send 'em.

MASHA: I told him. He says: "All the same I'm sending 'em." Looks like it's not to be, Vanya. *(Cries. Then smiles.)* I told him: "Wait a bit, Mikitay, till Michael's day; if you can't wait that long, I don't want ye at all." Well, he said he would. And you get that roof on quick, Vanya.

IVAN: I'll get it on all right, Masha. And well on. Mikitay's not going to get you.

(Wants to embrace her.)

MASHA: Let me go, ye crazy one! Look at the people over there.

(Enter men and women peasants. Separate voices.)

VOICES: General Dokhturov's troops are coming. They're at the river.—Got to the river and stopped there. Look, where the bridge is, over there—right bang in the middle o' the river. Eh, that's a pity, that is!—That's them Spasskoye folks wi' their clever tricks!—Commander's galloping over here. It's Dokhturov himself.

(Dokhturov rides up.)

DOKHTUROV: Good day, brothers. We need your help to get the army across the river. The bridge's carried away.

A VOICE: That's them Spasskoye folks!

DOKHTUROV: A bridge has got to be thrown over quickly.

A VOICE: But what's it to be made of, Lord above!

DOKHTUROV: Isn't there any hewn timber in the village?

VOICES: Not a chip, master. — But there's the forest over there, look, behind the village. We can cut some.

DOKHTUROV: No time, no time to cut it, brothers. The enemy won't wait. He's

making for Kaluga. I've got to cut him off. Every minute's precious.

A VOICE: Eh, dunderheads as we are, can't think of anything.

DOKHTUROV: Your heads are all right, brothers... But make them work a bit. (*Begins to smoke.*)

VOICES: If it hadn't been for them Spasskoye folks...

(Enter Khrol.)

KHROL: Hearken, folks! The Spasskoye lot did a grand job—stopped the enemy crossing, smashed all the bridge, but you've got to do something more—get our side across, make a bridge.

A VOICE: No hewn wood.

KHROL: No wood—should be a way out. That's the riddle.

A VOICE: What's the riddle?

KHROL: Why, this. The houses are made of wood, aren't they?

A VOICE: Of course, what else!

KHROL: Then, good folks, we can take that wood apart and drag it to the bank. Just got to get to work a bit, and the soldiers'll be over in a twinkling.

DOKHTUROV: There, you see, brothers, not such dunderheads after all!

UNCLE PETER: Give us some soldiers, Your Honour.

(Shouts of approval.)

UNCLE PETER: Take my cottage, it's third from the end!

KHROL *(pointing to Ivan's cottage)*: Start with that one, it's the end one, and it's not finished building, either.

MASHA: And who do ye think you are, I'd like to know! Giving your orders about somebody else's house! *(Blocks his way.)*

(The peasants want to take down Ivan's cottage.)

MASHA: What d'ye think you're doing, drat ye! Uncle Peter, he's going to be married, Vanya is!

UNCLE PETER: It's to help the country, girl.

MASHA: But to get married—that's helping the country too. Better take Mikitay's! There's more wood there, it's got two rooms!

VOICES: But Mikitay's is at the other end of the village.—Say, Vanya, are we to take it or not?

IVAN: Of course.

(The peasants take axes and chisels and swiftly dismantle the cottage. Ivan assists them. Masha dashes up to him in tears.)

MASHA: Good-bye to ye, Ivan, no chance for me now!

IVAN: Don't ye fret, Masha, trust in God.

KHROL: Try to find long beams, lads, the flood's wide.

VOICES: The longest beams are in squire's threshing barn.

KHROL: Pull down the barn, folks.

(The peasants rush for the squire's threshing barn. The bailiff appears.)

BAILIFF: Where are they off to now?

VOICES: Gone to squire's threshing barn.

BAILIFF: And high time too. Squire's work won't wait.

(Sappers pass, there is the sound of axes and more peasants appear.)

VOICES: From the captain of the People's Guard. Signing on all who want to join the Guard.

BAILIFF: Hey, there, stop! What are ye pulling the barn down for? *(Runs to some peasants carrying beams.)*

KHROL: It's all right, ol' chap.

BAILIFF: All right, indeed! I'll skin 'em for this!

KHROL: Bide a bit wi' yer skinning.

BAILIFF: Nothing to bide a bit for! I'm off to tell squire, Lieutenant in the Guards Skuntsov. He'll let ye know!..

(Khrol swiftly pushes him beneath the beam, which rests on the bailiff's shoulder.)

BAILIFF: Here, what d'ye think you're doing?

KHROL: First you carry that beam, then you can go and tell the squire: "I carried that myself."

BAILIFF: You wait a bit, I'll settle wi' you!

(Enter an officer.)

OFFICER. Brothers, to arms against the enemy! Defend your country. The enemy has seized Russian land. He wants to make slaves of all the Russian people. He could not beat us at Borodino, so he wants to do it Malo-Yaroslavets way. He wants to be master of the Russian state. Sign on in the People's Guard, all who hold your country dear.

UNCLE PETER: Our land's dear to us, Your Honour, and your words are better'n gold to us, and time — it's not to be wasted, sign us on quick's you can. *(A roar of approval.)* Sign me on.

(The officer rides beneath a willow, alights, and is immediately surrounded.)

IVAN: Write me, Your Honour, Ivan Pavlov. Well, good-bye, Masha. God willing, we'll meet again.

MASHA: Vanya, who're you leaving me to?

(Ivan kisses Masha. Disappears in the crowd. Masha walks along the street, weeping, meets Mikitay.)

MIKITAY: How do, Mashenka!

MASHA *(angrily)*: Don't you be getting above yerself. Ye don't get me anyway. *(Makes a long nose at him.)* That for you!

MIKITAY: Bonaparte'll come and grab ye all.

MASHA: I'd liefer ha' Bonaparte for a husband than you. Ye'll not go fight him anyway.

MIKITAY: But I'm going.

MASHA: Don't believe ye. It's Vanya's gone...

MIKITAY: And d'ye think I'm any worse than him?

MASHA: You... Ye're really going?

MIKITAY: No time for bragging, this.

MASHA *(joyfully)*: Then go along wi' ye to the captain and sign.

MIKITAY: Well, ye see I'm going.

MASHA: And quick, quick! You have to hurry. *(Pulls him along by the sleeve.*

Leads him to the officer.) Here, Master, Mikitay's wanting to fight Bonaparte too. *(To Mikitay):* Go on, go on, he won't bite ye!

MIKITAY: Well, write me down, then.

MASHA: Eh, quick, write him quick: Mikitay Churkin.

OFFICER: Grand girl! What is he, your sweetheart?

MASHA: Yes, my sweetheart. He's got a cottage ready.

OFFICER: Well, you'll have to wait a bit for the wedding, girl.

MASHA: Oh, I'm in no haste!

MIKITAY (*going*): Good-bye, Masha!

MASHA: Good-bye. Mikitay dear, good luck!

(Mikitay goes. People's Guard pass singing, Vanya among them. Masha rushes up to him.)

MASHA: Good-bye, Vanya dear! Come back to me, my dear. Come back quick!

OFFICER: And who's that? Your brother, eh?

MASHA: My brother. *(Weeps. Goes out following the People's Guard.)*

VOICES IN THE CROWD: Look, someone running along the street, waving her arms about!—Some old woman.—Old enough, but see how she's running!—But that's Karpovna running!—Karpovna! Her running days are past. Worked out she is... Karpovna can't crawl, hardly.—But it is—it's Karpovna!—Eh, she looks as if she'd fall to bits.

(Karpovna runs on, all rush to her.)

KARPOVNA: Eh, good folks... quick, quick!.. *(Sits down.)*

VOICES: Get yer breath, Karpovna... Get her some water, someone.

KARPOVNA: Frenchies other side o' the wood... taking the hayricks... I dropped me basket... an' ran... to tell ye all, Mother in Heaven... an' got here an' told ye.

(General excitement. Khrol approaches.

KHROL: Hey, good folks, get weapons, anything ye can find. Get after them: Some o' ye from the meadow, some from the fields, the rest from the forest.

(The peasants arm themselves and surround Khrol. Masha comes up with an oven-fork.)

MASHA: Uncle, will an oven-fork do?

KHROL: It'll do good enough... But for a girl like you we'll find a gun.

(All swiftly leave by roundabout ways.)

KARPOVNA (*calling after them*): My basket's on the Near Glade! Don't leave it for the heathen!

(Curtain)

ACT FOUR

Scene 1

Kutuzov's headquarters.

(In the forest, before a tent. The stage is lighted by the huge glow of a burning town. On the stage—generals, Wilson.)

KONOVNITSYN: Malo-Yaroslavets is burning down.

DOKHTUROV: Anything left of it?

YERMOLOV: What can be left of a town that has passed from hand to hand seven times in eighteen hours!

TOL: I rode through it just now; ruins, ash and corpses.

WILSON: The battle might have been inconceivably shorter and brought greater success had our troops come up in time.

YERMOLOV: Why, troops were coming up all day—both ours and the enemy's.

PLATOV: Burn up, burn up, don't die down! It's like the old game—who can run there faster.

DOKHTUROV: And hard enough it was to run! The roads deep in mud; and we crossed the river thanks to the peasants—they took us over on their own cottages. *(Laughs.)*

KONOVNITSYN: Yes, it was a hot battle today.

YERMOLOV: That was no battle yet.

KONOVNITSYN: What was it, then?

YERMOLOV: The eve of the battle which will be more sanguinary and decisive than Borodino. Because it is here that our country's fate is to be decided.

WILSON: You consider, General, that the Prince will retreat no further?

YERMOLOV: There is nowhere to retreat, Sir, and no reason for it. Our old man has been playing hide and seek from Fili to Malo-Yaroslavets.

WILSON: You think so?

PLATOV: No, Sir, we do not think. That is not for us!

DOKHTUROV *(laughing)*: But that is true, I vow, the old man put blinkers on all of us. Only his own eyes he left free. And saw for all of us. *(Laughs.)*

YERMOLOV: He set a trap in Moscow, and Napoleon thought it a throne.

DOKHTUROV: Yes, and went in with all four feet. Ha-ha-ha!

YERMOLOV: He came to Moscow for glory and found it not. He ran to Malo-Yaroslavets for salvation, and that also he found not. Now we are stronger than he.

(Enter Kaissarov followed by Rayevsky and other generals.)

KAISSAROV: His Highness will be here immediately. He has received a package from His Majesty the Tsar. The Prince orders the presence of the entire command.

DOKHTUROV: Bennigsen is not present?

KAISSAROV: He has been summoned.

(Kutuzov appears beyond some trees. The generals stand to attention. Wilson seats himself.)

KUTUZOV (*to Dokhturov*): Well, I thank you, Dmitri Sergueyevich. You have saved us all! *(Kisses him.)* Neither I nor our country will forget it. I am glad

to see you all here, gentlemen. *(Looking round, seeking somebody.)* Baron Bennigsen has not yet honoured us with his presence?

KAISSAROV: He will be here immediately.

KUTUZOV: We will await him. Well, gentlemen, that was a real battle today!

WILSON: Both armies were tardy on the field, fortunately.

KUTUZOV: Fortunately. . . The great Russian leader in arms, Alexander Vassilyevich[1], once said: "Today fortune, tomorrow fortune, God grant us a little brains. . ."

WILSON: I assume, Prince, that you, a worthy pupil and comrade-in-arms of Suvorov, consider that the moment has now come for a great and decisive battle.

KUTUZOV: You are right, Sir. The moment has come, the decisive battle will be given.

(Enter Bennigsen.)

BENNIGSEN: I am desolated if I have caused you to wait.

KUTUZOV: It matters nothing, we have learned. . .to value you highly. In particular I, of course, value your service and friendship.

BENNIGSEN: As you say in Russian, friendship is service, service is friendship.

KUTUZOV: You, Baron, and you, gentlemen, may see all that here and now from my report to the Emperor. As he has returned it to me, you have the possibility of hearing it. Read it, Kaissarov, at least, the conluding part.

KAISSAROV *(reads)*: "In consideration of all the great services rendered by Baron Bennigsen, a distinguished leader, laurel-crowned, I most dutifully request that Baron Bennigsen be awarded a gold sword with laurels and a hundred thousand roubles."

KUTUZOV: The Emperor was pleased to grant my request and sends this sword and this money to be handed to you, Baron.

(Hands Bennigsen the sword and money.)

I have the honour to present them to you with my congratulations.

(Wilson and the generals congratulate Bennigsen.)

BENNIGSEN: I thank you, gentlemen. I thank you, Prince, for such a very flattering recommendation, which I feel is entirely deserved.

KUTUZOV: I also, Baron, thank you for your recommendation in your letter to the Tsar. It is as warm, though less flattering. The Tsar has returned it too. *(To Kaissarov.)* Read it, dear fellow, at least from here.

KAISSAROV *(reads)*: "At Tarutino, in consequence of the Field Marshal being far from the battle, and according to his custom occupied in sleeping and idling, I found it necessary to assume the command and with God's help routed the enemy. . ."

YERMOLOV: Good God!

(Dokhturov snorts.)

KAISSAROV *(continuing)*: "...I also feel it incumbent upon me to report to Your Majesty that the Prince failed to send me reinforcements, be it from the forgetfulness of age, or from envy."

BENNIGSEN *(hotly)*: I only wrote the truth, straight out as I see it...

YERMOLOV: With a squint...

KUTUZOV: Gentlemen, let us finish with celebrations, and come to business.

YERMOLOV *(softly)*: Time for play and time for work.

KUTUZOV *(bending over the map)*: Let us look at our positions.

BENNIGSEN: Our positions are here, on the bank of the River Luzha, do you see, Prince?

KUTUZOV: I see, Baron.

BENNIGSEN: Here before us are the heights, further the river, to the left a gulley. We shall meet the French on the heights and throw them back.

KUTUZOV: And if they throw us back?

BENNIGSEN: That will not be. A guarantee of it is our splendid command which will be on that glorious spot.

KUTUZOV: But you, Baron, unfortunately, will not be on that glorious spot.

BENNIGSEN: Why do you say that, Prince?

KUTUZOV: Ah, yes, you are right. The forgetfulness of age. I forgot to inform you—the Emperor is extremely grieved that there should be continual disagreement between us, and expressed the wish that the campaign should be led by one of us.

BENNIGSEN: That is also my wish.

KUTUZOV: I was in no doubt that it would be so, and in order to meet your wish to withdraw from my headquarters, for reasons of health alone, I have already given the necessary orders.

BENNIGSEN: I consider the poor state of my health is yet better than that of your command, Prince. What remains to be said I shall send you in writing.

(Exit Bennigsen quickly.)

KUTUZOV: It would appear, gentlemen, that before us is the height, behind us the river, to our right a drop. Where would you order the cavalry to operate?

YERMOLOV: In such a position I give no orders.

KUTUZOV: The peculiarities of the position, the disposition and number of the forces are known to me. My orders are to retreat here, southwards, three versts from the town, to the village of Detchino, occupying the Kaluga road. I shall instruct each commander separately on the movements of the individual units at dawn. Kudashev, Seslavin and Figner to watch every movement of the enemy. The general assignment is clear? To block all the roads running south. Good night, gentlemen, morning brings wisdom. And the enemy will not be wiser than we.

WILSON: Prince, where is the decisive battle you promised?

[1] Suvorov.

KUTUZOV *(laughing)*: You know the Russian saying—promises wait three years.

WILSON: This battle is awaited not only by the Russians, but also by the English.

KUTUZOV: To wait is easier than to fight.

WILSON: But time is precious, Prince!

KUTUZOV: Men are still more precious, Sir. And I hold the Russian soldier the most precious of all. I would not take a hundred Frenchmen for one of them, Sir.

WILSON: When it is a case not of a single soldier, but of the fate of the whole country, then I would counsel it.

KUTUZOV: With regard to the fate of my country, I shall take council with my countrymen and with those who entrusted its fate to my hands.

WILSON *(sharply)*: Here it is a matter of the fate of the universe, Prince.

KUTUZOV: The fate of the universe nobody has entrusted to me, Sir. *(To Platov)*: Come with me, Matvei Ivanovich, and discuss your urgent assignment. *(Leads Platov out.)*

WILSON *(to Yermolov)*: We-ell, general, it seems we are to retreat, as before.

YERMOLOV: If the positions found are not suitable.

WILSON: I see that for the Prince, the whole of Russia is an unsuitable position.

RAYEVSKY: Sir, we Russians consider such words about the leader of our army as insulting. Have the courage to express these opinions to the Field Marshal in person.

WILSON: I have the courage, but have lost patience; to every request for an audience I receive the answer: "His Highness has gone to rest." I fear very much that this sleep may lead to a sad awakening. The hands of the clock are already at a fateful hour.

YERMOLOV: Evidently, Sir, you come to him not at the right hour.

(Exit all. Kutuzov returns with Platov.)

KUTUZOV: So that means that you, Matvei Ivanovich, will begin. From Medyn.

PLATOV: I shall begin, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: Base yourself on the Flax Mill on your left flank. The army's assignment is to allow the enemy to advance not one step further. Stand to the death. The fate of the war and of the country will be decided here. The battle will be not where Napoleon wants it, but where I want it, and he will retreat as I desire. We shall not pursue him.

PLATOV: Not pursue him?

KUTUZOV: I shall go side by side with him, and you shall overtake and pass him.

PLATOV: Very good, Your Highness.

(Exit Platov.)

KUTUZOV: Nazar! Bring the hay and bedding out here into the air.

(Some movement inside.)

KUTUZOV: What's that?

ADJUTANT: That is the leader of the partisan column, Davydov, clothed like a peasant and reading poems, and another of their leaders, a real peasant, who keeps bringing prisoners. He asks Your Highness to receive him, and says that you are old friends.

KUTUZOV: Who is he?

ADJUTANT: He calls himself Khrol the Bear-killer.

KUTUZOV: I remember, I remember—quite right, an old friend. Bring them in. Davydov first.

(Enter Davydov. He is wearing a black peasant cap and peasant's overcoat.)

DAVYDOV: I have the honour to present myself, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: Good day, Davydov, dear fellow.

DAVYDOV: Excuse me, Your Highness, for not being in uniform.

KUTUZOV: You are in your own uniform. Under the black cap is a clear head, and the coat covers a heart of gold.

DAVYDOV: Your Highness... I am overcome...

KUTUZOV: And I am ashamed before you. I thank you—you have compelled me to believe in myself, in my cause, in which I admit I had no faith. That is a great happiness—at first not to believe and then to gain the firmest faith.

DAVYDOV: It is a great happiness, Your Highness, from the very beginning to have a firm faith in a man, to entrust one's fate to his hands and finally to see one's faith justified. Field Marshal Kutuzov has given this happiness to the Russian people.

KUTUZOV: Well, well... Let me have the same happiness, dear fellow.

DAVYDOV: Which?

KUTUZOV: You have caused the enemy great losses during his advance. Bring him still more in the course of his retreat. Come upon him now not from the rear, but from the side and in front. Good-bye, dear fellow.

DAVYDOV: Very good, Your Highness.

(Exit.)

KUTUZOV *(to his adjutant)*: The Bear-killer.

(The adjutant brings in Khrol, accompanied by Masha, armed.)

KUTUZOV: Good day, dear fellow.

KHROL: I wish ye good health, Your Highness. We were working right close by, so I thought I'd just run in and see an old friend.

KUTUZOV: Thank you, brother. So it is you who keep bringing in prisoners?

KHROL: I've brought a few sometimes.

KUTUZOV: Where do you find them?

KHROL: Wherever God sends them. I get most of them with bait, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: What kind of bait?

KHROL: Well, it's this way, a professional secret. *(Confidentially)*: He's all thin and hungry, he runs about the fields growling and whining and whistling through his fingers. Well, that's when you can get him at night with bait. You fry some bait near an ambush, so that if he's anywhere near he can get the smell of it on the wind. He sniffs and smells meat and makes for it. And then, Your Highness, you wait for him, hidden like, and jump out on him and get him all alive-o, the empty-head!

KUTUZOV: But the enemy's clever.

KHROL: He's got brains enough to steal, but not enough to get away.

KUTUZOV: Very good. And who is this here with you? Not Yermolayevna?

KHROL: No, that's Masha, a girl. She fights well. Yermolayevna, I had a row with her, we've split cleaner than an axe could do it.

KUTUZOV: How was that?

KHROL: Female stupidity, Your Highness. She kept yelling that everyone should only fight in his own village and not go on any further. In your own home the walls help ye. Is that right? I came wanting to ask Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: What do you think yourself?

KHROL: What do I think? In your own home the walls help ye, that's true, only it's just that all Russia's my home. That's what I think, Your Highness. But I didn't punish Yermolayevna, didn't beat her even. And those who've taken the oath to fight wi' us, we're strict wi' 'em, we are. Here's Mashenka, she gave up her sweetheart and a cottage for the country. Sent him off to fight, she did, instead of to the altar. And then signed on herself. She keeps on looking for him, to see if he's still alive. She kept on pestering to come here, and ask you, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: And what can I tell you, Mashenka?

MASHA: They say ye know all yer soldiers, even their names too.

KUTUZOV: What! But how! . . I have thousands of handsome fellows.

MASHA *(dropping her eyes shyly, speaks softly)*: Mine's the handsomest of all. Vanya, they call him.

KUTUZOV: Ah! Well, your Vanya's alive.

MASHA: Oh—is that right?

KUTUZOV: Most certainly.

KHROL: There, ye see, what did I tell ye? I'd have liked to stop and talk a bit more wi' ye, Your Highness, but time's short. Eh, what weather we're having—hard frost and stars everywhere. Just the time to finish threshing the grain.

KUTUZOV: Got to finish threshing the French first.

KHROL: That's right, Your Highness. Thresh 'em and winnow 'em. Well, goodbye. What shall I tell the folks?

KUTUZOV: Give them a bow from me and a hearty Russian thank-you. And you, Mashenka, don't you be worrying about your sweetheart. You'll soon meet him. *(Masha sobs and seizes his hand to kiss it.)* Don't forget to invite me to the wedding.

(Kutuzov kisses her on the head. Khrol and Masha go. Enter an adjutant.)

ADJUTANT: Your Highness, a deputation from the citizens of Kaluga. The inhabitants are leaving the town in terror, in expectation of Kaluga sharing the fate of Moscow.

KUTUZOV: Tell them that they may sleep in peace. My head upon it, the enemy will never see Kaluga.

(Exit adjutant. Enter Nazar and arranges a pile of straw. Kutuzov wraps himself in a cloak and looks at the sky.)

KUTUZOV: Yes, a multitude of stars looking down at us. Do you know, Nazar, can they see us from up there?

NAZAR: Why shouldn't I know! Of course, they see us. Though maybe not all of us.

KUTUZOV: Whom do they see?

NAZAR: Orphans, of course, and generals.

KUTUZOV: Why?

NAZAR: Simple enough. They know by the way they shine—the orphans with their tears, the generals with their stars.

KUTUZOV: Yes, it was you said that the earth will burn under the enemy's feet and swallow him up like in the desert sands of Arabia.

NAZAR: That depends on the climate. In Arabia it burned, in Russia it freezes. But the end's the same—swallows him up.

KUTUZOV: Well, time to sleep, Nazar, a great day tomorrow.

NAZAR: Exactly, the greatest in the year.

KUTUZOV: Why in the year?

NAZAR: Tomorrow is the sixteenth of November—the martyr Nazar. My name-day, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: Ah! Well, many happy returns [1].

NAZAR: Thank you, and the same to you.

KUTUZOV *(speaking to himself)*: Yes. . . many happy returns, my people. Soon you will be celebrating the day of your lofty spirit. . .

NAZAR: There are all kinds of name-day celebrations, Your Highness. When it's those with the right kind of spirit, Lord give us their kind of name-day, but there's the weak, they've nothing but tribulation and grief.

KUTUZOV: The grief will go. The enemy will flee.

NAZAR: I wish you refreshing sleep, Your Highness.

KUTUZOV: I shall sleep well enough. But whether Napoleon will sleep I am not so sure.

(Enter adjutant.)

ADJUTANT: Baron Bennigsen's adjutant brought a letter and asks to be received immediately.

KUTUZOV: Tell that adjutant that if he appears here again I shall hang him.

(Exit the adjutant, meeting another one at the door.)

2nd ADJUTANT: Sir Robert Wilson requests you to receive him immediately, on a matter of exceptional importance. . . *(Kutuzov snores)* . . . and the utmost urgency. *(Kutuzov snores loudly.)*

NAZAR: Hush! His Highness has gone to bed.

(Curtain)

Scene 2

Napoleon's headquarters in a small town.

(On the stage—Marshals Caulaincourt, Bausset, and others.)

MURAT *(to Ney)*: Permit me to offer my felicitations, Archduke, on a brilliant victory.

NEY: And to you also, Your Majesty.

[1] Reference to Russian custom of celebrating the saint's day instead of the birthday.

BAUSSET: How rapturous this day of glorious victory!

MURAT *(to Ney)*: Today you have covered yourself with unfading glory.

NEY: Together with you, Your Majesty. But, mon Dieu, how I grieve for Delson! He died gallantly.

BAUSSET: His fame will resound throughout the centuries. . .

DAVOUT: And the disaster into which he led the army through tardiness. What, for example, would you consider the numbers of our losses, Archduke?

NEY: Yes, our losses are serious. About seven thousand and almost all our provisions.

MURAT: The sacrifice was great, but the town is ours. Kutuzov could hold out nowhere and retreated to new positions.

NEY: And they will not save him.

DAVOUT: These new positions are stronger than any which Kutuzov has as yet held.

MURAT: As for that, today will show the day of Kutuzov's final defeat.

BERTHIER: The Emperor is now completing his inspection of the battlefield and of our new positions.

(Enter Rapp. All present surround him. The conversation proceeds quietly, confidentially.)

MURAT: How is your leg, General?

RAPP: I thank you, but that is a trifle, I vow, in comparison with the happiness I was accorded in saving the life of my Emperor. I pray you, gentlemen, not to make it public.

NEY: But how did it take place?

RAPP: It occurred today, at dawn. The Emperor had slept ill and went out early to take a walk. Hardly had we come out on the field, escorted by three companies, when Cossacks appeared from the forest to our right and flew at us with savage cries. I was barely able to seize the bridle of the Emperor's horse and turn it back. My horse received a deep spear-wound and fell. But as good fortune would have it, they saw the baggage trains, rushed to plunder them, and we escaped.

(Enter Napoleon. The marshals greet him with: "Congratulations upon your brilliant victory! Felicitations on Kutuzov's fresh retreat!")

NAPOLEON *(to Ney)*: The honour of this day belongs entirely to you, Ney.

NEY: My honour and all my days belong entirely to you, Your Majesty!

BAUSSET: What a handsomely turned phrase!

NAPOLEON *(clapping Rapp affectionately on the shoulder)*: I thank you, Rapp! Gentlemen, I have inspected the field of battle.

MURAT: Which Kutuzov so ingloriously left.

NAPOLEON: But we have not as yet found glory on this field. Among the killed are an enormous number in bark sandals and drab-coats, and many carry stakes for arms.

BAUSSET: There's soldiers for you!

NAPOLEON *(looking at him coldly)*: We were unable to defeat these soldiers. The map!

(Sits down before the map, leaning over the table, his head supported on his hands, absorbed. Quiet conversation among the marshals.)

DARU *(softly)*: Working out the last move on the chess board.

MURAT: These peasants do not even know how to stand on parade.

DAVOUT: They only know how to fight.

MURAT: That indicates, however, that Kutuzov has no reserves of either men or arms.

CAULAINCOURT: But Kutuzov's men have reserves stronger than an army.

NEY: Yes. They stand like a wall.

BROUSSIER: As they stood at Borodino.

DAVOUT: Not so, I assure you. At Borodino they defended themselves with courage. At Malo-Yaroslavets they attacked with fury.

NEY: They advance or die.

MURAT: Our soldiers know how to die no worse.

DAVOUT: Nay, worse.

MURAT: What do you mean by that, Archduke?

DAVOUT: I mean that the Russians are dying only in battle, but the French both in battle and from starvation. For the second day my soldiers are feeding on horse carrion, cats and chocolate.

NAPOLEON: Broussier, where is our army placed at this moment and in what numbers?

BROUSSIER: Ney, with fifteen thousand, is between Fominsk and Borovsk, Ponyatowsky, with six thousand, at Vereya, and Mortier, with eight thousand, is going to join him there. Junot, with six thousand, is at Mozhaisk.

NAPOLEON: We are scattered along various concealed roads, and they have concentrated on one, which for us is the only one, and... closed it. Delson perished with doubtful honour. To lose an hour here means to lose all. Kutuzov's positions are inordinately strong!

DAVOUT: They are menacing.

(A heavy pause.)

MURAT: We must attack the enemy immediately! If his positions are menacing, then there is but one means of dealing with them—to drive the enemy from these positions.

BESSIERES: Do you possess the means?

MURAT: Yes! I shall drive Kutuzov from his positions and open the road to Kaluga.

NEY: That is the path of valour.

BESSIERES: And of rashness.

MURAT: Where only one outlet remains, valour becomes rashness and rashness—valour.

BAUSSET: A monstrously well-turned phrase!

BESSIERES: But we cannot permit the remains of our cavalry to perish for the sake of a well-turned phrase.

NEY: The remains?

BESSIERES: Yes, Archduke. Of the eighteen thousand that went out of Moscow, four thousand remain, and carts for the wounded are quite insufficient. That means that every wounded man will remain in the hands of an enraged enemy.

MURAT: Glory is higher than death. We shall gain it.

NAPOLEON: Gain glory and lose the army.

DAVOUT: Yes, Your Majesty. Glory grows, but the army melts.

MURAT: But the army cannot stand motionless! If it is to be saved, it must either advance or. . . retreat?

(Napoleon is silent. A heavy pause.)

DAVOUT: A word has been pronounced here, it seems, which I hear for the first time in the Grande Armée. And it has been pronounced by Murat, who is ever eager for the fray.

MURAT: I pronounced it in order to reject the very question of retreat.

NAPOLEON: That question will be decided by me. The battle at Malo-Yaroslavets has shown that to advance here is impossible. The Russian centre is here stronger than at Borodino, and the flanks—dangerous. It is necessary to withdraw to positions more favourable.

(General astonishment. Silence.)

DARU *(softly)*: Mate! . .

NAPOLEON: Caulaincourt, you greatly regretted that at my order we quitted the Smolensk positions.

CAULAINCOURT: Your Majesty, I regret that it is not by your order that we have to return to them.

NAPOLEON: That is not true! It is my order to go to Smolensk.

NEY: But to Smolensk there are three roads:

NAPOLEON: Three—that is bad. We must choose one that is good.

(The generals crowd around the map hanging on the wall.)

DAVOUT: Good roads there are none. Less horrible than the others is this *(indicating it on the map:)*—to Medyn and Yelnya.

BROUSSIER: Why that particular one?

DAVOUT: Because it is the shortest.

MURAT: If Davout has vowed to destroy the army in the shortest period along the shortest road.

DAVOUT *(threateningly)*: What?

MURAT: To lead an army along an unknown road, continually exposed to flank attacks from the enemy—that is to destroy it.

NAPOLEON: Your proposal?

MURAT: To Mozhaisk, through Borovsk and Vereya. *(Pointing to the map:)* There we can break away from the enemy immediately. There we shall have reserves which the enemy cannot take from us.

DAVOUT: He cannot take them from us because there is already nothing to take. Everything is laid waste, deluged with blood, sown with bones.

BAUSSET *(softly to Caulaincourt)*: But either way, that is not yet a retreat, is it?

NAPOLEON: Davout, your plan is correct, but you must realize the plan you made in Mos. . . *(His voice dies away.)*

DAVOUT: Yes, Your Majesty. *(Sees that Napoleon has lost consciousness)* Your Maj. . . His Majesty is feeling unwell!

BAUSSET: The doctor!

(General confusion. Enter a doctor.)

MURAT: What is the matter with him?

NEY: Such a staggering turn of events!

BROUSSIER: In the great general's life there has never yet been a retreat.

DAVOUT: There has never yet been a case of retreating before a retreating foe in the life of any general.

BAUSSET: Mon Dieu, what a terrible, enigmatic country!

DOCTOR: Open the window. I pray you, gentlemen, to leave the room.

(All go, except the doctor. Napoleon comes to himself.)

DOCTOR: I pray Your Majesty to lie down.

NAPOLEON: Why so? I feel splendid. You may go, Huvent.

DOCTOR: I shall just prepare some drops for you.

NAPOLEON: Nonsense. Or it may be, a small bottle. With a single doze of poison.

DOCTOR: Your Majesty. . . calm yourself.

NAPOLEON: Do not disturb yourself, Huvent. It is merely a precaution in case of some occurrence like that of today with the Cossacks. I love to gamble with Fate! The gamble is still ahead. Here Nature and Man are united against me. That is the game I love! Failure increases my strength tenfold. The world will yet see my strength and my power. And this I owe to the Russians, who have toughened it.

DOCTOR: Your Majesty, you need fresh air.

(He leads Napoleon out. Enter the marshals.)

NEY: But wherefore this strange loss of strength just here, in Russia?

BERTHIER: Where Kutuzov gains in strength with every day.

DARU: There is a legend of Antaeus and his mother, the earth.

CAULAINCOURT: I have lived in Russia. I know that they have their own legend of the strong man who wished to take from the ploughman his wooden plough, but sunk in the soil and perished.

MURAT: It is not a matter of a plough, but of the sword, which the Emperor exchanged for a sceptre in Moscow. The great general cannot halt, he must strike like lightning.

DAVOUT: Your phrases are too well turned, Murat. The Emperor himself knows how to strike. It is for us only to have faith in him.

CAULAINCOURT: But if he has ceased to have faith in himself?

DAVOUT: He would no longer be the Emperor. And if any one of us lost that faith, he would no longer be a soldier of the Emperor and should be shot on the spot.

(Enter Napoleon.)

NAPOLEON: Davout, why did you not hear me out? See, then your plan is to be put into execution. Everything along the road to be burned and destroyed. You must leave only a desert behind you.

DAVOUT: We already have it in front of us.

(Cannonade close by.)

NAPOLEON: What is that?

(Bessières enters swiftly.)

BESSIERES: Your Majesty, Platov's Cossacks are on our flank. At Medyn Ilovaisky attacked Ponyatowsky, taking arms and prisoners, headed by General Tyszkiewicz,

and to the north, at Borovsk, General Kuteinov has taken fourteen guns and a baggage train from us.

NAPOLEON: Throw the Cossacks back.

BESSIERES: But the whole enemy left flank has withdrawn there.

NAPOLEON: A fine withdrawal! See, Davout, the most brilliant plan, if the enemy penetrate it, becomes a devil's plaything. My orders are that the army take the old Mozhaisk road. Announce that the assignment is to reach Smolensk and take up winter quarters there, in preparation for a new, decisive offensive. Your task, Davout, is to hold Kutuzov and give the army the possibility of breaking away from the enemy. *(Exit.)*

MURAT *(vengefully)*: I am convinced that Davout will carry out with honour my plans for defending the rear of the Grande Armée and breaking away from a foreign army.

(Exit all, following the Emperor.)

BROUSSIER: The terrible thing is, that it is not so easy a matter to break away from a maddened foreign people.

CAULAINCOURT: The terrible thing is that we have broken away from our own disillusioned people.

(Bausset stops Caulaincourt.)

BAUSSET: I trust that this is not yet a retreat of the Grande Armée?

CAULAINCOURT: Oh, no, it is only the flight of the Grande Armée.

(Curtain)

EPILOGUE

(A raging blizzard. The whirling snowclouds sometimes give a glimpse of baggage carts abandoned among the drifts, guns, corpses of men and horses. Fantastically clothed remnants of the Grande Armée wander and fall.

A stir. Somebody shouts: "Attention! The Emperor!" A long "Hurrah," carried away by the wind. Napoleon passes, accompanied by his suite and the Guards.)

NAPOLEON: Throw away all that is unnecessary. Shoot the prisoners. Save the horses. One horse is worth ten men to me just now. Why does the army not warm itself at the burning villages?

CAULAINCOURT: They have been burned down a long time ago, Your Majesty.

NAPOLEON: An unworthy land. I discard it from my game. I wished to make it happy, give it statehood and culture, since more than any other it needs my patronage. But the Russians have shown themselves unfit for civilization, and like real savages, they rose in fury in defence of their barbarism. But my faith in myself, Caulaincourt, is greater than it ever was.

CAULAINCOURT: A great flame cannot be extinguished by the most furious north wind, Your Majesty.

NAPOLEON *(glancing at a campfire blown in the wind)*: How good it would be now to be sitting by one's own hearth. You cannot conceive, Caulaincourt, how I long for the Empress and my son. . .

CAULAINCOURT: I can very well conceive it, Your Majesty.

SHOUTS: Cossacks!

(Napoleon dissappears in the whirling snow-clouds. A merry Cossack song. Sibilyov and a Cossack appear in the glade by the bushes at the edge of the forest. They draw rein.)

SIBILYOV: Tighten the girths. *(They alight. The Cossack's head is bandaged.)* Well, how's the skull?

COSSACK: Not a thing, Corporal.

SIBILYOV: I'll bandage it again.

COSSACK: No need, I'm telling ye.

(Sibilyov bandages the Cossack's head).

SIBILYOV: Oho, got you fine, they did, with five sabres!

COSSACK: A fleabite! I took off three o' their heads alone. And five o' them couldn't get me. Only tapped me a bit—nothing to reckon wi'. *(Looks round him.)* Look ye, how many o' them lying about there. Dying like flies at Michaelmas. Got onto the river and the ice cracked. Down they go, men and baggage and all. Enough to break yer heart, it was!

SIBILYOV: Sorry for the enemy?

COSSACK: What for! Sorry for Russian goods. Those Hopyor and Veshensk Cossacks pulled them up to the bank—there was carpets and silver and gilettes. . .

SIBILYOV: What are those gilettes?

COSSACK: That's what they call them. And decolletés and manchettes, or whatever it is in their lingo. And we ran to the bank—picked clean, only bubble on the water.

SIBILYOV: So you haven't got a thing out of it?

COSSACK: God's truth—not a thing. Search me, Corporal. *(Sings)*: "Eh, don't ye blow, blow, blow from the hills, don't ye rage. . ." *(Sibilyov joins in.)* "Eh, stormy wind, don't ye blow, blow, blow whirling snow. . ."

(The Cossacks ride away. From behind the trees emerge Khrol, Masha and other partisans. Two weary soldiers are wandering about in the snowdrifts—a Frenchman and a Westphalian.)

FRENCH SOLDIER: Oh, I can't any more! *(Lies down. The Westphalian sinks down beside him.)* Yes, yes, warm me with your breath, brother. . .

(The Westphalian takes his clothing, puts it on or wraps it round himself. The French soldier, left almost naked, throws himself upon him.)

FRENCH SOLDIER: Villain!

(The Westphalian throws him down and goes on. Khrol comes to meet him.).

KHROL: Stop, ye scum! *(To the partisans)*: Shoot the marauder, the dog!

WESTPHALIAN SOLDIER *(raising his hands)*: Bitte, bitte. . .

KHROL: That's a German. Westphalians, they call them.

WESTPHALIAN SOLDIER: Bitte. . .

KHROL: They're beat all right, but not beat enough yet.

MASHA: Let me get at the snake...*(The French soldier groans and Masha rushes to him.)*

FRENCH SOLDIER: Coucher. . . coucher. . .

MASHA: Here, here, eat this. . .[1]

(The French soldier lies down.)

KHROL: Coucher means to lie down in their tongue.

FRENCH SOLDIER: Dormir. . . dormir. . .

(Closes his eyes.)

KHROL: To peace, lad, that's a long way. . .[2]

MASHA: Oh—he's dead. . .

KHROL *(bending down)*: That's your peace. . . Peace means the end for you. Lie there on our downy bed. And the wind will carry your soul away to your own place.

(The storm dies down. The glade becomes lighter. (Russian soldiers pass along it. Cries of "Kutuzov! Kutuzov! The Field Marshal's coming!" Masha looks eagerly at the faces of the soldiers.)

MASHA: Not there, not there. . .

(People gather in the glade, deputations come.)

KHROL: Let those bringing bread and salt come forward.

(One deputation pushes its way ahead of the other.)

VOICES: Look at them, Kurikhino lot in front there!

KHROL: Who are those?

VOICES: Them's the lot what brought Bonaparte bread and salt in summer.

KHROL *(shouting)*: Go to the devil! Shoot the judases!

(The Kurikhino peasants dissappear amid hoots. A regiment marches up with music, and turns to face front. Kutuzov rides onto the glade with his suite. All present greet him.)

REGIMENTAL COMMANDER *(reporting)*: Your Highness, the Izmail Regiment all present and correct.

KUTUZOV: Zdorovo,[3] Izmailovites! . . Thinned out a bit, brothers. *(Loudly)*: Yavtukh Makatrusenko!

MAKATRUSENKO: Here I am. . .

KUTUZOV: Ah! *(Approaching him)*: Still alive! Well, so we meet again.

MAKATRUSENKO: Yes, Your Highness. You got a debt to me.

KUTUZOV: What?

MAKATRUSENKO: Those two drinks, Your Highness. Ever since Borodino Field.

KUTUZOV: Ah! Well, you must have them. Pour it out, Nazar!

(Nazar pours out the drinks. Kutuzov offers him two glasses and a piece of bread. Makatrusenko drinks.)

KUTUZOV: They say prompt payment makes good friends. Take a bite.

MAKATRUSENKO: I've finished. Slid them down my throat. And Kutuzov's bread and salt I'll keep for my grandchildren.

(Enter the bailiff and hands a paper.)

KUTUZOV: What is this?

BAILIFF: Another small debt. An account from the squire Skuntsov. For the hay and oats the army took from the estate and the threshing barn likewise pulled down on the Protva river. There he is, the ringleader, Khrol. *(Points to Khrol.)*

(The bailiff is hustled away.)

KUTUZOV *(to Khrol)*: Well, old friend, how now? Shall we beat the French?

KHROL Most certainly, Your Highness. Well, it's no great secret how to finish a bear when he's down.

KUTUZOV: That's true. Time to make an end of it, and collect the ears[1].

KHROL: A bit early yet.

MASHA *(suddenly dashing to a soldier)*: Vanya! . . Vanyusha! . . It's you! And this is me! . .

IVAN: Mashenka!

(They embrace.)

KHROL: Found! Here, Your Highness, Masha's found her handsome boy.

KUTUZOV: Ah! The handsomest one of all.

KHROL: And he is that. Not such a snub-nose anywhere.

KUTUZOV: Come here, come here.

(Masha and Vanya approach.)

KUTUZOV: Well, I'm very glad. Only you'll have to wait a bit with the wedding. Your handsome lad's got to fight a bit more, and it's time for you to be home.

MASHA: But I'm going to fight together with him.

KUTUZOV: Indeed?Well, good fortune to you.

(Other detachments march on to music.)

KUTUZOV: Zdorovo, brothers!

SOLDIERS: Zdraviya zhelayem[2], Your Highness!

KUTUZOV: I thank you for your faithful service.

SOLDIERS: Happy to serve you, Your Highness!

KUTUZOV: I thank you for your courage and your great endurance! There is yet a little more to do. It is hard for you—that I know. But for them it is worse. See how they have sown our land with their dead. But who invited them onto it? What had they sown here when they came to reap? Now they are reaping that which they have sown. Thus it has been, thus it will ever be on our land; he who came to lay it under his boot left here both leg and head. We, brothers, are not to be subdued. Russian strength and truth are invincible. All have now seen our strength, and the whole world looks to us for salvation. And our truth the world will yet see and save itself with it. I thank you, eagles, dear sors! *(Drops his head and wipes away a tear. The horse begins to move.)*

(A resounding "Hurrah!" Music.)

(Curtain)

Translated by Eve Manning

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[1] The Russian word "kushat" means "to eat."

[2] "Do mira"—"to peace" in Russian.

[3] A military greeting.

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[1] For the ears a sum of money was paid—the ears being proof of the bear's death.

[2] Answer to the military greeting.

CONSTANTINE TRENYOV

AT HOME

They spread out endlessly, the springtime fields, which had but just doffed their mantle of snow. Some was even yet lying—in the copse beyond the ravine, for instance, where it gleamed blue among the undergrowth. But in the azure sky a lark was singing.

The road along which the tankist Alexei Skvortsov was striding had already dried up. Fresh green peeped out from among last year's yellowed grass in the ditches. Alexei climbed the slope. Here the remains of trenches were still to be seen and the skeletons of motor vehicles. Before him lay his own village.

Alexei stopped, he caught his breath and gazed for a long time with his one eye. He had already known that the village had been destroyed, and he had seen many such on the way, villages and towns as well. His own village was like all of them—blackened chimneys protruding from shattered cottages, side by side with gleaming new buildings, their thatched roofs golden in the sunshine. Alexei eagerly sought his own. . . And suddenly his heart bounded—there it was, beside the bare willow, not far from the square—the golden thatch and snow-white chimney. Alexei wiped the tears from his mutilated face with his sleeve. The enemy had destroyed the village, just like his own face. The village could be rebuilt, its ruins would be forgotten; the charred ruins, the defaced houses, would all be renewed. But his face would remain.

He was on his way home, straight from hospital. Just how he had arrived at the hospital, he had no idea. He could only remember being the first to force the river, hurling his tank against the horde of German panzers surrounding him like a swarm of hornets, then a blinding flame inside—and that was all. He had seen nothing of the end of the operation, and he had heard about it only when an operation of a different kind had been completed in the hospital. His scorched face, like raw meat, had been covered with skin, some of it taken from his own body and some from a stranger's; he had been sewn up, given a metal throat and an artifical eye. . . and then the Order of Lenin and the Gold Star had been brought to him in hospital. His voice was hoarse, unlike his own. His face was a strange one—he searched in the mirror, but not one familiar feature could he find.

He descended the slope to his village, entered the gulley and stepped onto a little bridge spanning the merry spring stream. Fresh grass was already showing along its banks, and although the willows still showed no sign of green they were covered with catkins and sang of spring as they rustled in the breeze. In the thickets, birds were whistling and chirping. Slowly he walked along the street. Here was a collective farm shed and women smearing it with a mixture of lime and dung; German helmets were being used to hold the liquid. Alexei looked at the women, but all were either too old or too young, and he could recognize nobody.

Now he had turned the corner of the huge shed and saw an old man in a little cap, with a huge beard, eagerly telling something to the group of collective farmers around him. Alexei approached and recognized old Khryashch.

"This is the way of it," said Khryashch. "When this cow was sold to us, they said that she would always calve Saint Alexei's Day. Well, I set no store by all that, but today she's calved, and it is Saint Alexei's Day, so now I reckon it's right!"

Alexei went up to Khryashch and his audience. Some of them turned and looked at his face with the already familiar expression of almost squeamish pity. . .

Alexei greeted them silently and went on.

As he was passing another group, he suddenly caught Nastya's name. His heart seemed to choke him, and involuntarily he halted. He listened and again the conversation turned to Nastya, the collective farm chairman. He went on further. There, just beyond the place where the road swung round to the stream, he would see his own cottage. His breathing became suddenly difficult, he took two more steps, and there it was, under the willow with the broken branch—his own home, clean and whitewashed, with a new thatch. . . How many times he had seen it, waking and sleeping, resting and in battle . . . Here was the same old gate. Alexei opened it and entered. In the corner of the shed stood the plough and the sledge. An old woman came forward to meet him from the back part of the yard. Alexei recognized his mother by her eyes—older she was, thinner, with strands of greying hair straying out from beneath her shawl. But the eyes. . . he remembered those eyes, their expression, following him in inexpressible sorrow at the moment of parting. But now they rested upon him in sad surprise.

"Good day," said Alexei hoarsely.

"Good day," replied his mother. "Is it Nastya you're seeking?"

"Both Nastya and you. I—I've brought you a greeting from your Alexei."

The mother's eyes sparkled with joy, then filled with a shimmer of tears.

"Eh, my boy, and where is he, then? Where did ye see him? In the hospital, or where?"

"Yes, both in the hospital, and. . . we fought together. Side by side . . . How is his family?"

"All right, thank God," said the old woman, and suddenly broke into sobs.

"There, there, don't you be getting all upset," said Alexei. "He's not so bad. . . a slight wound. He'll soon be discharged. And where's his wife. . .and children?"

"Nastya's the whole day at the Soviet and the collective farm. They're building, and then tomorrow or the day after they're going into the fields, sowing. And Styopa, that's

my grandson, he's with her all the time. But the little girl, Natasha, she's at home. But come along in, rest yourself a bit."

The mother opened the door, so familiar from his childhood, and let him into the dark entry. Eagerly he drank in its familiar smell. By the window, he could see a little girl sitting on the bench, playing with some pieces of cloth. He would never have known her—she was so much taller and thinner; only the eyes, her mother's eyes—he knew them at once. Forgetful of everything, he made a sudden movement towards her. The child shrank back into a corner, from whence she looked out at him, with wide, fear-filled eyes.

"Don't you be scared, little one," her grandmother reassured her. "This is a kind uncle who's come from your Daddy."

"And brought some presents," said Alexei, and taking off his knapsack, he burrowed in its depths and brought out the presents which had been given him in the hospital for his children. He held them out to the little girl, but she made no move to take them.

"Take them, my dear, they're from Daddy."

But she stood there motionless, her eyes cast down and her hands hanging by her sides.

"And what are you looking so glum about?" said the grandmother. "Just see how your Daddy thinks about you! And you're always thinking about him, too! And now, when they've been talking about him over the wireless, and put his picture in the papers," she added, turning to Alexei, "it's Daddy here and Daddy there with her all the time. She's barely out of her bed mornings—and she's wanting to look at Daddy's picture! And she'll never go to bed, she won't, without kissing it. And then when they put him up in the farm offices, well, there was no holding her, she was so proud of it! Like a little turkey cock she was!"

Alexei looked at his own portrait, which was decorated with ribbons and paper flowers.

"Does he look the same now, my son? The picture up there in the office, it's as like as life."

"And is the office in the old place?"

"No, the Germans burned the Soviet and the school and the reading-room as well. Well, we've begun building it all again. Nastya's at it day and night. And the office's in Batrak's cottage. His two lads are at the war, and they say they've been killed, the two of them, and he went off to join the partisans. Well, the Germans got wind of it, and they wanted to burn his cottage too, but our troops came in time."

Alexei rose.

"But where are you going so soon?"

"Why, I must go and see Nas. . . Nastassya Mikhailovna. . . I've a message for her."

"Well, you'll see her if you catch her. She's fyling around all the time like a chicken with its head cut off. She's in the fields and she's over the farm and in the Soviet—never a moment still, she isn't, and it's like that from dawn to dark, and sometimes she doesn't come home at night, even. Just takes a peep in to see how the children are."

2

Alexei soon found that his mother was right. He asked the people he met in the street how to find the chairman but although everybody most willingly pointed out every likely or unlikely place, nobody could tell him exactly where she was to be found. Again Khryashch met him, and in reply to his question, thought for some time, then said:

"I'm of a mind that she's at the forge, but maybe it's the barns. And what might you be wanting her for?"

"I've business with her," said Alexei evasively.

"And what business might that be?" asked Khryashch. "I'm of a mind that if it's business you've got with her, then you'll find her with it."

Alexei went on. Suddenly, as he passed a yard, he heard a woman's merry laughter from behind the fence, and stopped short. How often had he heard that laughter through roaring aircraft and bursting bombs and grenades. Alexei knew the yard well—it belonged to Pavel, one of his friends. He turned and quickly entered the gate. There she was, standing by the shed door, and beside her was Pavel, with the same youthful, merry smile, his left sleeve tucked into his belt. He was evidently telling her something amusing, and Nastya continued to laugh, without noticing Alexei. He went slowly up to her. Nastya glanced at him, and as he approached her smile changed to a serious expression, to that expression of pity already so familiar to him. God above, how can a man accustom himself to a look of pity upon the dearest face in the world! He went up to his wife. The arched brows over her brown eyes rose in surprise, as she waited. He must say something—but not a word would come.

"Nastassya Mikhailovna?" he asked.

"What is it?"

For several more seconds she looked fixedly at his face. Terrible seconds, seconds which would decide his whole life.

"I. . .I've brought you a greeting and a letter."

"From whom?"

"From Alexei, in hospital."

He saw how she paled.

"What is the matter with him?"

"He's all right, getting better. He's written you."

"Yes, he wrote."

"Well, and he's sent another letter with me. . ."

Alexei searched in his pocket and took out the letter which he had written at the station. Hastily, for some reason, he held it out to his wife. She read it quickly and put it in her pocket.

"In his last letter he said that he would be coming home on short leave," she said tersely. "And now he writes that he's returning to the front. Who are you, were you with him in hospital?"

"Yes, we were together. We fought side by side, and we lay side by side in the hospital."

"Fought side by side?"

"Yes, in the same. . . that is, in the same tank column. He had a slight wound."

"And you?"

"I was burned, as you see, but they put me right."

Some collective farmers came up to Nastya with a problem that had to be settled. She quickly gave the necessary instructions, then turned back to Alexei.

"Where are you going now, comrade?" she asked.

"Home, to. . . the Donbass. I only stopped at your station to bring you the letter and a greeting."

"You must excuse me, you know how times are, but we must have a talk. Won't you come to my home and rest a bit?"

"Thank you," said Alexei. "I'm just going to the station. I can get the evening train."

"Stop here with us till the next train. I'll take you right along. It's quite near."

"I've already been at your house."

"All the better. Then I'll go to the office. Maybe you'll walk along with me? We can talk as we go."

But they had little opportunity for conversation on the way, owing to the constant interruptions. Many of the people who approached he had known in the old days, and for the first time during the war he felt himself a lonely stranger among his own folk. He glanced at Nastya's face, again lively and vivid, her shining eyes, her sweet but determined smile, and a great wave of happiness swept the black grief from his heart.

At the office he saw his own portrait, a coloured one. It was a gay, youthful face that smiled down at him from the ribbon-decked gilt frame, with a bright colour in the cheeks and jaunty dark curls.

"Here," said Nastya to the collective farmers, "here's Alyosha's comrade, they fought together."

Everybody crowded round him to shake hands and ask questions. And most of them he knew well. . . Khryashçh was there again.

"Why is your face different in some places, comrade?" he asked. But almost before the words were out of the old man's mouth, the visitor was being showered with questions about the battle in which Alyosha had distinguished himself. He told what he knew, but that was little enough, and found that his hearers already knew a great deal more about it than he did himself, so that they were able not only to fill in the gaps, but even to correct him on some points. And when he tried to tell about how he had driven the enemy back and cleared the bank for the landing, it all became very meagre and confused. Where was the gulley his tank had dashed over? And the enemy tanks, as he told it, were not nearly enough—they knew well enough here how many there were. As he told of the hero's feat, it became something very ordinary and uninteresting. It was distinctly unsatisfactory for his hearers. But then Pavel took up the tale, his descriptions and explanations of the feat vivid and proud. The very scene seemed to spring to life before the eyes of his hearers. Alexei could see their eager attention, and Nastya's pale cheeks, her glowing eyes fixed on Pavel.

"Well, that's what it was like," he said, turning to Alexei with a note of offence and something like mistrust in his voice.

Alexei remembered the time, long ago, when both he and Pavel had been courting Nastya. She had married Alexei, but Pavel had never married. However, he never showed Alexei any sign of resentment over his lack of success. On the contrary, after the wedding they seemed to become still closer companions in their work on the farm.

"Well, evidently the looker-on sees most of the game," rasped Alexei, and all present felt uncomfortable as they saw his mutilated face twist into a grimace that was probably intended for an ironic smile.

"Please don't be offended with us, comrade," said Pavel gently. "We all honour your exploits and your wounds. It's plain to see that you've been in the thick of it. But Alexei is a famous hero, and we, who lived with him and knew him, and specially close friends like myself—well, of course we're all very proud of what he did. And we aren't going to have it made little of."

"But he didn't want to make little of it," Nastya interrupted. "He was telling us just what he could see from his tank. And maybe he's just modest—after all, he was in it all too."

"Modesty's all very well in its place, but we've got something to crow about," said Pavel, looking proudly at the ribbon-decked portrait.

But by this time the collective farmers had already surrounded Nastya with a thousand affairs.

3

Alexei left the office unobserved and walked along the street, blind and deaf to everything, a cold chill in his heart. Here it was at last, that meeting he had so longed for and feared! But what sort of meeting had he expected, how had he pictured it to himself? He had pictured his wife and mother recognizing him and in the first second recoiling with cries of horror. And then she, young, with such a sense of beauty, she would be left, tied for life to a hideous monster! . . Would she frankly tell him at once that she could not bear it, or would she try to compel herself? But of course, that he would never allow.

"I shall go away, I shall go of my own accord! But in that case, why am I going there at all?"

And Alexei had made up his mind not to go home. But on the instant his resolution came up against the unbearable longing, that seemed a part of his very life and soul, to see his home and family. He quickly began making preparations to leave the hospital and go home. And again there rose before his mind's eye the grief of his wife and mother, the fear and horror of his children. And again he said resolutely: "I shall not go!" But the next day he was already on the homeward-bound train.

Walking through the village that day, he had involuntarily slowed his steps, as though to postpone the terrible moment. He felt as though he had never gone into battle with such difficulty, such fear.

But in the end, what had happened was the last thing that he had expected; he had entered his own home and met his family incognito. Fate had sent him a bitterly easy way out, which would at least spare unnecessary suffering for all. No need to put her to the test! He need only accept the blow and depart, unknown. It would be easier for everybody that way. It would be hard for his mother, to await him to the day of her death, but still, the easier way. The children would grow up, his wife would meet somebody else—that would be best of all for her. . . perhaps even that same Pavel.

As he was passing the well, a boy shouted to him:

"Soldier, is it you who's come from Daddy?"

Styopa! . . So this was the six-year-old boy. . . But the wind-burned face was thinner, and there were fine lines about the lips, as though they still remained from the moment of parting, when he had flung his arms round his father, with tears running down his face, and sobbed:

"Daddy, Dad, come back soon from the war!"

They turned towards home, and Alexei asked:

"How did you know that I was from your Daddy?"

"Why, Granny said that it was someone with a dreadful face."

"And I am dreadful?"

"No, it's only the nazis that are dreadful. Was it them that did it to you?"

"Yes, the nazis."

"Did you see Daddy?"

"Of course I did."

"And the Order and the Star he's got?"

"Yes."

"You've got an Order too, haven't you? Will Daddy be coming home soon?"

"Yes. Are you lonesome for him?"

"Of course!"

"Do you remember seeing him off?"

"Well, what do you think! I cried, and he lifted me up, high up, and swung me. But I still kept on crying, because I didn't know he was going to be a hero. And everybody was crying. Only Natasha didn't cry, because she didn't understand what war is. She didn't understand anything when the Germans were here, either. You know, a German pointed his gun at her, because Mummie wouldn't tell them anything about the partisans. And there she stood, with her finger in her mouth. There's a little silly for you! If Mummie hadn't knocked the German's rifle to one side, he'd have taught her to suck her thumb!"

As they walked home, Styopa told all the details of how his mother had knocked the German's gun away, and then with Khryashch's help, had tied him up and gagged him with a shawl, dragged him into the cellar, and then taken Styopa and Natasha and fled into the forest; and how they had lived there with the partisans until the Red Army came.

Arrived home, Alexei gave Styopa the presents from his father, and then they both went into the garden. The soil had already dried up. Beyond the pond, where the buds were already bursting in the collective farm orchard, the children had dug small pits and were transplanting the cuttings. Beyond the orchard, the spacious fields stretched to the horizon. On one side lay the darker patch of a wood. In the distance the spring air seemed to shimmer and gleaming ploughs were moving to and fro. When he had taken leave of these fields two years previously, they had been covered with tossing waves of golden grain whose tassels had bowed a farewell to their best Stakhanovite as he set forth on his long and dangerous journey. And now he had finished the stretch, and the well-known paths led through the fields. They were waiting for him again, their worker and master. They stood there face to face, and recognized each other.

All the time Styopa made him tell over and over again about his father's exploits. He was not very expansive, but on glancing down at Styopa he saw the lad's flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes.

"I shall avenge him," said the boy, when Alexei stopped, and pressed his cheek against the man's side.

Oh, how hard it would be to force his legs to carry him away! Alexei picked up a spade and began digging pits for the young trees in his orchard. A scent of spring rose from the overturned sods, making him dizzy; and a sudden wave of joy filled his heart, as he thought that at least it was not for nothing that he had given his life-blood, his suffering had not been in vain. Here was his reward—to let the good land enfold him in its breast. Let nobody else recognize him, it would know him, it would never repulse him or betray him. He would live here unknown, as a stranger. Like a bee, just to breathe the air of his own place, to hear its sounds, to see the blossoming orchards! But he was a man; both land and people were awaiting his joyful labour.

His mother came up to him.

"I've been watching you from the door, sonny—and it was my Alyosha to the life. The look of your back, and your way of setting about it. And have you a wife and children?"

"Yes, and I have a mother too."

"It'll be a happy day for her, though it's tears she'll be shedding too."

"But I shan't go to her at all. Let her live out her days in peace."

"And what sort of peace might that be, when your heart's dried up with grief?"

"And maybe that's better—better to dry up than to break."

"And how should you be knowing what's best, my son? Eh, and it would be better if we never bore you to such a fate," she sighed.

"It was our country bore us, for its glory and salvation," said Alexei.

But the old woman wiped her tears away with her sleeve, and merely said:

"Come along, dear boy, and have dinner."

"And where's Nastassya Mikhailovna?"

"Eh, it's mostly evening when she comes, and times she goes without any dinner at all."

"Very well," said Alexei, "I'll plant you an apple tree here, just to remember me by, and then I'll come."

4

The mother went away, he finished the hole for the tree and began to trench the orchard. Towards evening he saw Nastya come into the yard, accompanied by Pavel. They sat down on the overturned sledge in the corner of the yard, and again engaged in a long conversation. He could hear her ringing laughter. Evidently they had not seen him. Then Pavel left the yard and Nastya went into the cottage. Soon afterwards, Styopa came running out to call him in to dinner. When Alexei entered, Nastya was already eating hastily. Alexei went to the window, and seeing bricks being carried down the street, turned to ask where they came from.

"Why, from our own brick works," Nastya replied. "We've restored it."

"So that's how you're getting on with it," said Alexei, turning to her, and caught her gaze fixed on him—dubious, perplexed.

Now she began to ask him for more details about Alexei, about his health and how he felt.

"But why do you write so little to him?"

"I write when I can," she replied curtly.

"You don't write much."

"You can see for yourself how little time we have, the day's never long enough."

Something bitter seemed to rise up in Alexei's throat and choke him. "But there's time to sit on the sledge!" he thought, and continued speaking even more hoarsely than usual:

"Well, thanks for your hospitality. Time for me to be getting to the station."

"What do you want to be going so late for?" said Nastya, gently now. "Look outside, it's evening. Stay the night with us."

Actually the sun was sinking over the steppe, and the green already sprinkling the pasture had a rosy shimmer. The rooks were beginning their evening discussions in the boughs. But Alexei nevertheless stood up and had begun fastening on his knapsack when Styopa seized it and began begging him to stay overnight and tell them more about Daddy.

"There, you see!" said Nastya. "And I want to talk about him some more, too. Please do stay," she added gently, nodding as she went through the door. "I'm not going to say good-bye."

When she had gone, Styopa snuggled close and waited for him to begin the desired story. Later they went out into the orchard. In the failing light, birds were singing in every note as though for a wager. Young crows were cawing at the end of the village. Down below, the stream rippled and chuckled under its bending willows. Far away the moon was rising over the fields. After standing there for some time, Alexei and Styopa decided that it was time for bed and went in. His mother had made up a bed for him behind the partition. He would have fallen asleep at once, but he had hardly lain down when he heard Nastya come in and go to bed. Then somebody knocked at the window. She opened it, and he heard Pavel's voice speaking in low tones. After they had whispered about something for a little while, Nastya closed the window again. But Alexei could not sleep. He lay there staring at the dark ceiling, while agonizing pain rent his heart once more. Such bitter suffering had awaited him at home—why had he returned at all? Why had he not been burned up together with his tank, back there at the front? So this was all that was left of the joy and happiness that had once been his! He had received it without a struggle, accepted it without doubts. Others had wanted Nastya, including this same Pavel, but for long she had already loved him, Alexei. Happiness had smiled upon them both... Oh, to flee, to flee at once! He rose from his bed and listened. But Nastya evidently was also wakeful, he could hear her tossing in her bed. A deep sigh, almost a groan seemed to make its way from her very heart. It was impossible to disappear unobserved. He could distinguish the breathing of his sleeping mother and children. What was awaiting them? It was not such a sharp pain that the thought of the children brought with it, but a dull, gnawing ache, that dragged on endlessly like the night itself. But at last the short spring night came to an end and dawn began to shed its grey light. The birds awoke and uttered their first few sleepy chirps; the light increased, and then suddenly the gold disc of the sun showed above the horizon, sending its rays through the window. Now it was late enough to rise.

The mother awakened first, followed by Nastya. Alexei came out from behind the partition and greeted her.

"But why are you up so early?" she asked. "You should have lain a bit."

"Easy to see that there's no sleep in a strange bed when your own's not far off," said the mother kindly, and sighed.

"We'll drive you to the station," said Nastya.

"This is no time to be giving people lifts," Alexei protested.

"But you could find time to come twelve miles just to see us?" she said. "For that matter, there's business with the station anyway. Pavel came here during the night," she added, turning to the mother, "and brought a message. He's got to get to the district centre, it's urgent. Have something to eat, he'll be here with the horse any time."

Nastya and Alexei sat down at the table and began breakfasting quickly, sparing no time for talking. His mother was busy fussing about her household affairs, and stuffing food into Alexei's knapsack.

Styopa woke up.

"Well, good-bye, Styopa," said Alexei. "Don't forget me, maybe we'll meet again someday."

"What are you going away for?" Styopa asked, disgustedly.

"Why, did you think he was going to stay here always?" laughed Nastya.

"Yes," Styopa answered doggedly. "At least till Daddy comes back."

"Well, you just go on growing till Daddy comes back," said Alexei.

"And grow into a hero like Daddy," added his grandmother.

"Well, good-bye, Nastassya Mikhailovna, thanks for your hospitality and...kindness."

"Thank you for your good news, and thank you for taking the trouble to come," said Nastya, her great blue eyes full upon him. Now they no longer held pity or reserve, but a wide, sad tenderness.

And again Alexei felt dizzy with a mixture of piercing joy and gnawing, aching grief. He turned and went up to the sleeping girl. He bent down to her little face and pressed a long kiss upon it, then holding back the hoarse sob choking him, he turned to Styopa.

"Well, good-bye, Styopa," he said as well as he could, and raising the boy high in the air, began to swing him, as he had done two years previously.

"Alyosha!" cried Nastya suddenly in a terrible voice.

Alexei gripped Styopa as though holding to him for support, and stood there, head hanging. But Nastya ran to him, tore open his tunic and shirt with the orders and medals, and pressed her face to his naked chest, choking with sobs and tears.

"Alyoshenka! You... you!.. my own darling!.. Oh!" she groaned, and covered his face, hands, chest with kisses.

Styopa had also burst into tears. Stumbling in her haste, the mother had rushed in on hearing the cry and now stood there in the doorway, horror-stricken, understanding nothing. Then suddenly she too gave a cry and collapsed on the ground by Alyosha and embraced his legs.

"My child, my boy, and the bitter suffering you've had!"

"It's all right, it's all right!" Nastya whispered. "But you... you didn't tell us... you wanted to go away! To leave us again!.."

"I didn't want you to know me," Alexei whispered with difficulty.

"And who else but their father could caress his children like that?" said Nastya softly and tenderly.

"The children can grow up without me. And you, still young—why should I, a hideous monster, darken your days?"

Nastya suddenly moved away from him, and after a moment's silence, looked him straight in the eye and said quietly but sternly:

"Well, thank you very much, Alyosha, for your opinion of me... So that's what you thought I was like?. You thought it was only for your good looks I loved you?"

"See, there's my good looks on the portrait..."

"And everybody comes to admire them. Though there's not any portrait to do them justice," said Nastya, snuggling close to him again. "There... I've torn your shirt," she smiled. "I'll sew it up at once."

"My boy, my boy!" said the mother softly. "What have they done to you, the devils!.. And yesterday I was looking at him from the back—Alyosha to the life, and his way of going about things, and yet it never entered my head..."

"And yesterday when we were having dinner," said Nastya. "And all night I couldn't close an eye till it was nearly morning,"—and her voice was vibrant with joy and tenderness.

"Daddy, Dad!" Styopa broke in impatiently. "How many tanks was it you smashed?"

The sun had already risen over the steppe. There was a knock at the window—Nastya was needed at work.

Translated by Eve Manning

SWEDISH JOURNALISTS LOOK AT BORNHOLM

F TRANSFORMATION SCENE

Drawing by Boris Yefimov

October 1942. "Aftontidningen" writes in a leader on the German occupation: "It may last a couple of centuries."

May 1945. "Dagsposten" writes in a leader: "The Swedish press is displaying serious anxiety for Bornholm."

THE CATACOMBS

Once upon a time the whole south of the Ukraine, what used to be called New Russia, was part of the sea-bottom.

Odessa is built of a material found on the spot and known as shellstone. It is a light, porous stone, pale-yellow in colour, formed from the sea-bottom deposits.

There are inexhaustible quantities of this stone around Odessa and under the city itself. Shellstone is extraordinarily easy to work. It can be cut without any trouble with an ordinary saw, or even a knife. As a rule it is hewn out into rather large rectangular blocks that look like apricot jelly.

For over two hundred years now, this building stone has been worked at a multitude of mines and quarries. In most cases it was done quite anarchically, in this way there developed around Odessa irregular quarry-lots that together are equal in area to the city with all its suburbs. These are the famous Odessa catacombs, which played such a tremendous part in the history of the city's revolutionary movement. They became the traditional home of the Odessa "underground."

Beginning with the memorable year 1941, the Odessa catacombs were fated once again to play an outstanding part—this time in the Soviet patriots' fight against a foreign invader.

It is impossible as yet to grasp and describe fully, with all the details and in accurate chronological sequence, the thing that has gone down in the history of this war as the Odessa catacombs.

But what I saw in those catacombs with my own eyes, and what I heard from those who took part in the underground fight and from living witnesses of that great struggle, seems to me worthy of being made known to the whole of the Soviet people.

II

The catacombs have thousands of ramifications, loops, alleyways and dead ends. A multitude of entrances, pits and wells connects the labyrinth with the surface. I realized that to take in the whole was for the time being out of the question, and decided, accordingly, to familiarize myself with the activities of some one group and examine the catacombs where that group had operated.

I was advised to take a look at the catacombs at Ussatov Farms, where the underground Party committee of the Prigorodny District and several partisan columns under its immediate direction had had their hiding place. This advice was particularly to my liking, as I knew Ussatov Farms very well. As a boy, I had stayed there several times in the summer with one of my school mates, and once in a while we youngsters had even clambered into the catacombs themselves. Needless to say, we could only make our way a few dozen yards in, for beyond that it was very narrow, very dark and very terrifying.

Now I decided to revisit these scenes. The only hitch was that the people who had done the underground work in these parts were very difficult to trace. I was lucky, however—I managed to find Semyon Fyodorovich Lazarev, the secretary of the Prigorodny underground committee, the very man who for two and a half years directed from his hiding place, deep under the surface, the resistance movement in one of Odessa's largest districts. It was a heroic, absolutely unequal yet victorious war, waged by a handful of Odessa Bolsheviks, unflinching Soviet patriots, against two thousands of the invader's regular troops, stationed specially in the area of the Ussatov Farms.

We were introduced.

I saw a man of short stature and middle age. With the best will in the world, you could not discover anything out of the ordinary in his figure, let alone anything heroic. Nor was there in his bearing the least vestige of affectation, of an assumed pose, be it the pose of "unassuming simple-heartedness." He was a real man of the masses, a Russian Bolshevik, a son of his people, to his very marrow, strong in his knowledge of right and in his indomitable spirit.

On hearing that I wanted to descend into "his" catacombs, Lazarev was delighted. The reason, I discovered, was that not once since the day he emerged from them to meet the Red Army in April 1944, had he found the time to visit these old haunts. He had meant to several times, but had never managed to bring it off. You can imagine that he was thrilled by the prospect of again seeing the underground maze where he had spent two and a half years without a break, risking his head every second. With the quick efficiency of an experienced underground worker, he made all the arrangements for the trip to the catacombs, which was quite an involved business, in two hours.

First of all he sought out two of his associates, members of his underground organization, whom I had vainly endeavoured to "track down" for several days. Their names were Ilyukhin and Gorbel, and both were of the same Party type as Lazarev—though rather younger.

Ilyukhin hails from the Orel province. He is a real Russian type, with high forehead and prominent cheekbones, big and strong in his black cowskin jacket with the fur on the outside.

Gorbel is the finished type of the gay, lively Black Sea sailor, with strong hands accustomed to the oars and a shrewd, mobile face.

After a brief and businesslike conference with Lazarev, they set off to get the things necessary for our expedition: pit lamps, a sort of outsize lighter expressly designed for the catacombs and capable of burning for several hours, paraffin for the lamps, petrol for the car, old overalls to protect our suits, short stumps to lean on as you stoop in the low and cramped underground passages to avoid knocking your head against the roof, and so on.

Soon all this was in evidence, and we set off.

III

We drove clean through the city, past the famous Peresyp district, burnt, blasted, disfigured by German and Rumanian hands, and proceeded to skirt the shellstone hill that stretches to the Hadjibey park, and on to Ussatov Farms. On the slopes of this hill, which looks rather like a big loaf of bread, several villages—Nerubaiskoye, Kuyalnik and a few others—lie sprawled. Their shellstone houses roofed with bullrushes or tiles were painted in different colours—pale green and dark blue, apricot and rose. In some places fissures were visible in the rocks. Those were the entrances to the catacombs. But most of them the Germans and Rumanians had blown up, blocked or even stopped with concrete.

"Yes. It was a hard fight, all right," Lazarev said.

Starting from here, we were on the ground where his underground committee had operated. Every fence here, every cellar, every cottage, tree and crack were as familiar to the partisans as the palms of their hands.

"See the yard around that little blue house under the tiles?" Ilyukhin asked. "I had quite a battle to fight against the Rumanians there. There were seven of us, and over a platoon of them. Still, we held out for nearly two hours, covering the entrance to the catacomb where a party of our people were due to arrive any moment—they'd been sent to town to contact the regional committee. And we didn't lose a single man in that fight."

"And over there," Gorbel broke in, "we knocked out a Rumanian provisions lorry."

He searched the countryside with his eyes for the exact spot.

"Well, I'll be damned if that isn't it!" he exclaimed with glee.

And sure enough, toppled over on one side some way from the road lay the miserable rusty wreckage of that Rumanian lorry.

"A nice bit of work," Lazarev said appreciatively.

"Yes. A clean job."

"We certainly made it hot for them that time, eh?"

Our car skirted the famous Hadjibey park and beyond it Ussatov Farms began. The road forked in three, and the driver pulled up.

"Which way now?"

"Wait a minute."

The three partisans considered the matter. To me they seemed to be talking in some mysterious secret language of their own.

"We'd better head for the Sunflowers."

"I'd make straight for the Duck."

"The Duck's bashed up."

"Oh, is it?"

"You surely haven't forgotten?"

"So it is. Well, then, what about the Melons?"

"It'll be a job getting the car up to the Melons."

"We'll make it the Sunflowers," Lazarev said with decision. And to the driver: "Go straight ahead."

Seeing my bewilderment, he explained:

"We gave each catacomb entrance a name. 'The Melons,' 'The Sunflowers,' 'The Duck, 'The String.' On what principle, I suppose you wonder? No principle at all. It just happened. 'The Sunflowers' for example, because we had a look-out there, and the guards used to chew sunflower seeds. Or 'The Duck'—there was a well cutting across the gallery just there, and one fine day a duck happened to tumble down that well. We'd been without food for nearly two days, so you can imagine how welcome it was. Then there's another entrance called 'The Snowdrops.'

"Whyever snowdrops?"

"I won't tell you now. It's a long story, and we're there already. You remind me later on."

"I certainly will."

The car crossed a meadow, dived down into a gulley, small but rocky, nosed its way up again and drove into the yard of a small rush-covered shanty. While the driver was putting it away behind an outhouse built of the inevitable shellstone, a peasant woman came out. A happy smile of greeting lit up her face as she caught sight of the visitors.

"Good afternoon, Comrade Lazarev. Good afternoon, Comrade Ilyukhin. Good afternoon, Comrade Gorbel."

"Greetings, my good woman. I see you haven't forgotten us?"

"I should think not! How could one ever forget people like you? Why, you were our saviours. If it hadn't been for you, those fiends would have done us in long ago. But you've as good as forgotten us, that I will say. You never come by this way at all."

"Too much to do. We're rebuilding the whole Odessa district. Just can't find the time. Your man home?"

"Yes, yes, he's home. Come in and be welcome."

But the master of the house was already at the door. In his eager haste to receive these welcome guests he had actually forgotten to don his sheepskin cap. His swarthy, South-Russian face with its characteristic aquiline nose, blazing black eyes, pepper-and-salt whiskers and firm chin, clean-shaven in soldier fashion, was lit by the same friendly, welcoming smile. He shook hands heartily with each of his guests. I have no doubt he would have kissed them all if the severe peasant etiquette had not forbidden it.

"Come in, I beg. Come into the house, dear friends. Come in, come in!"

"These people helped us much when we were cooped up down there," Lazarev said. "Brought us food, passed in notes, warned

us of danger. Thanks to them we knew everything that was happening outside. And mind you, they were risking their lives every time. Real stalwarts they were, true Soviet patriots."

"Well, who wouldn't help his own?" our host asked, and little dry wrinkles fanned out from his young black eyes. "We helped to save you—but then you saved us."

On hearing that we meant to descend into the catacombs, he brought out several home-made wick-lamps that he had kept ever since the underground days. A can of paraffin was found too—also a left-over from the underground stores. So that actually we could have spared ourselves the trouble of hunting up lamps and fuel.

"I told you they had everything," Gorbel grumbled. "We only wasted time with all these preparations."

IV

While we were changing into old mackintoshes and overalls, our host with a wave of his hand towards the humble furnishings of his home, explained to me, the stranger: "There was none of this under the Rumanians and the Germans. Nothing but the four bare walls."

"And where was all this?"

"Down in the catacombs. The last few months of their blasted regime, their New Europe—I hope it burns—we shifted all our belongings underground. The sheep too, and the cow. Everything up here was bare. It was a good job, too. It was the only thing that saved us from certain death or ruin."

"That's so," said one of my companions. "The last few months of the occupation, practically the entire population of Ussatov Farms took refuge with us in the catacombs."

"And how many were there of these—well, 'outsiders'?"

"Several thousand—as many as seven thousand, I should say. True, they didn't come very far in, but all the same, under our protection they were beyond the enemy's reach."

"Our saviours," our hostess said.

And suddenly there came home to me with full force the tremendous strength of this handful of Bolshevik patriots, who had not only fought a deadly dangerous fight for two years and a half, but had managed to save several thousand people from death or slavery.

"Well, boys, let's get going," Lazarev said when the wicks had been lit and the pit lamps adjusted.

We covered a few hundred yards cross-country, dropped into the gulley and approached a crack in the cliff.

"And that's our famous 'Sunflower' entrance," Lazarev explained. "Now look out for your head. Follow me."

He shoved his lamp into the crack, looked around and pushed slowly through the narrow aperture. We followed.

Stones rolled away from beneath my feet. Clutching with my hand the porous rock, I practically skidded down several yards. A minute later we found ourselves in a fairly large cubical cave of the quarry, with walls cut in corrugated ridges and a smooth ceiling just high enough for a man to stand straight. On the ceiling I saw a black cross done in candle-soot, and I recognized the cave at once. We formed in the regular order for moving about underground: single file, a man with a light in the lead, one or two without, then another light, one more man without, and finally a light to bring up the rear. Gorbel was in front with a pit lantern; our host, with a wick lamp, closed the procession. The rest of us took our places between them, some with lights, some without. I was last but one.

We advanced in single file into the interior of the quarry. The ceiling lowered, the walls came closer together. We were in an underground passage where you could no longer draw yourself up to full height. We had to stoop a good bit, and walking in this bent posture proved extremely difficult. Now I saw the point of the stumps and ramrods Ilyukhin had handed out to us. It was much easier if you leaned on a short stick. In the catacombs everybody had got about with sticks like these, a foot and half long. The lower we had to stoop, the faster my companions moved, I quickened my pace too; I all but ran. And I noticed that the faster you move in this bent position, the easier it is.

V

The air around grew more and more stagnant, musty, stale. The lamps and lanterns flickered fitfully, barely lighting the close-together walls and low-hanging ceiling. It got stuffy, even hot, though outside it was winter, with the wind blowing and the temperature ten below. Sometimes the ground rose under our feet and the ceiling dropped still lower. Only a small aperture remained, so that to squeeze through you had to crawl and in some places actually wriggle through on your belly. Sand and stone dust poured down the back of your neck. Unaccustomed as I was, I gasped and sweated. And we hadn't covered even half a mile. The tunnel twisted, now to the right, now to the left. In places it rose, in others, dropped abruptly. Every ten or fifteen paces, the way forked, sometimes into three and four. A stranger would have lost his way after the first minute. But Gorbel pushed ahead confidently, quite at home in these surroundings, never for a moment at a loss which way to follow. Only at the crossroads, he would make a particularly careful examination of the walls and floor by the light of his lantern.

"How do you know which way to go?" I asked during a brief halt we made, when we had squatted down on the stones in our narrow tunnel.

And here he initiated me into one of the many secrets of the catacombs. He threw the beam of his lantern on the wall, revealing that it was covered with all kinds of signs, scratched in the stone, written in chalk or charcoal, or simply drawn with the finger in the thick layer of dust. These were

the symbols of underground navigation, the indicators of the underground fairway. Needless to say, there is nothing even remotely approaching an accurate map of the catacombs in existence. It would be a colossal labour to make even the roughest chart of this tortuous maze, which, to cap everything, lies at several different levels. A compass is useless. The depth interferes with its accuracy, and in any case, without a map its value is nil. The voice hardly carries here. The only means remaining is signalization by symbols, hieroglyphs. Each member of the underground organization had his own "identification mark," and as he moved down the labyrinth, he would from time to time leave on the walls his "visiting card" and a coded message of where he was going, so that in case of an accident with his light, the others might be able to find him. I say "an accident with his light," for if his lamp or lantern went out, he was done for. Without a light, a man was doomed. In the darkness, he would be absolutely helpless, would lose his way after the first thirty paces among the multitude of turnings, and would be buried alive. Such cases did occur.

But to return to the system of "underground navigation."

Gorbel held up his lantern to the wall, and marked on it I saw a number of signs drawn in charcoal. One was like a topographical arrow, only with two vertical lines on the tail. Another consisted of the one letter "J." A third was a cross with an arrow added. There were also circles, and arrows pointing in different directions. There were figures too.

The arrow with two vertical strokes was, for example, Ilyukhin's "card;" the J—Jacob Vassin's. The figures indicated the date of passage, the arrows the direction. A five-pointed star stood for the underground committee in full force. Thus a careful examination of the walls could tell the initiated at any given moment where anybody was to be found.

"Look," said Lazarev, holding out his lamp to light up a multiple forking of the passage. "Which way would you say we have to take to reach camp No. 1?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

At that he showed me on the ground a straight line drawn with the finger in the dust across one of the passages before us. That meant that the way was closed, that this was not the right passage. It was the same with another of the passages, and a third. There remained the fourth, unbarred by any sign. That was the road to follow. Every stone and pebble set in some special way along the road meant something in the language of this underground telegraphy, which every member of the group commanded to perfection.

"You see what a troublesome existence we had," Lazarev remarked with a smile. "A regular *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*; or rather under the ground. Every bit as good as Jules Verne!"

"And he was our Captain Nemo of the district Party committee," Gorbel chimed in with a sly wink.

"Well, comrades, let's get going. It's still quite a way to Camp No. 1. We'd better not waste time."

VI

We moved on, bending low and leaning like so many greybeards on our short staffs. After another mile or so, we started coming across all kinds of property. The first thing we saw was a shovel stuck in a pile of shell-stone gravel. A crowbar was lying on the ground a few paces further on. On a stone nearby stood a square little eau-de-cologne bottle that had been fitted up as a wick lamp. It was covered with a solid layer of dust, but there was still a little paraffin inside. Ilyukhin put a match to it, and the wick started into flame. A pile of rusty cartridges gleamed dully behind the stone. And here as everywhere, the walls were covered with hieroglyphs, black and white. All of us clustered around the light and gazed as though spellbound on the little sooty tongue of flame. There was, indeed, something wonderful, all but magical and deeply symbolic in the fact that this primitive lamp made by partisan hands, which no one had touched for over eight months, lit up at once the moment a partisan set his match to it.

"You know, comrades," Lazarev said after a few moments of silence, "I can hardly believe that it was all such a long time ago. It seems as if it all happened yesterday, only just now... Look, and there's our leaflet too."

Lying on the floor behind the cartridge pile was a small pink sheet of paper, coated with dust and mildew. I picked it up. It was an appeal from the undergound committee to the railwaymen.

"Comrades on the railways!" it said. "Before our eyes, the Hitler marauders are carrying off to Germany the loot they have plundered in our country.

"These bloodsuckers are bleeding our people white.

". . . The sacred duty of every patriot of our country is to wage a relentless fight against the hated invader. . ."

Some parts of the leaflet were illegible, but my eye caught the lines:

"Put sand, not lubricant, in the axle-bearings, set fire to the trains and fuel tanks, jam traffic at the stations, do everything you can to disrupt the invader's transportation..."

Tens of thousands of leaflets like this were strewn over the district by the underground committee. And loyal Soviet men and women, intrepid patriots threw sand in the bearings, set the fuel tanks alight, sent enemy trains crashing down the embankment.

Indeed, all these are facts. By now they are already history.

We moved on again, lighting the walls with the quivering flames of our wicks. And all at once, under the impact of their memories, the partisans struck up, as though by pre-arrangement, their underground song, their partisan anthem. The sound of their voices under the low vault was muffled, yet impressive. The chain of lights flickered in the gloom. And the effect of the whole was

extraordinarily stirring, I would even say, majestic. They moved, leaning on their little staffs, and sang the same song as they had sung when the hob-nailed boots of the invaders were trampling the ground a few dozen feet above their heads. Those had been terrible days, months and years. Times of a great test by fire and blood. And these Bolshevik patriots had passed the test with flying colours. They had not failed.

I took down their song, from the first word to the last. Lazarev himself had made it up. Here is the first verse:

A hard thorny path we have chosen,
Our road long and bitter has proved.
Our hearts are for ever unquiet,
Our strength to the utmost is taxed.

And the refrain:

Forward march, to battle, friends,
Fascism to vanquish!
The flying standard of socialism
Leads us ever onward.

These lines written by an amateur poet, not very smooth and polished, perhaps, nevertheless made a tremendous impression upon me. Every word in them, every thought comes from the bottom of the heart, is charged with true and beautiful feeling. This is not poetry. It is life itself.

By the time we at last reached Camp No. 1 I was thoroughly exhausted. The rest felt fine. Such is the difference that habit makes.

VII

The camp consisted of a number of chambers cut in the rock. In one of them a section of the partisan column had been quartered. There were stone sleeping bunks, covered with half-decayed straw. Each man had his permanent place, just as in a regular barrack or dugout. There was also a stone table and bench. Arms were kept in meticulous order in a niche in the rockside. A fatigue-duty schedule hung on the wall. There was a water-pail, a home-made mug, a broom. Everything as it should be. Another room was occupied by the committee. All three secretaries slept on stone bunks. And here too Party affairs were settled, combat assignments issued, leaflets typed.

"Who did the typing?"

"I did," replied Ilyukhin, holding out with an apologetic smile his great workman's hands. He had been a dock-hand in the past. "With one finger. Kept on at it sometimes for thirty hours straight. Time was precious, and we had to have as many copies as we possibly could."

"And what was in the leaflets?"

"Well, in the first place, the war communiqués. We kept the population around here fully informed of what was happening, and nailed the German and Rumanian lies right away. This was particularly important when the Red Army started its great offensive at Stalingrad. The Germans and Rumanians pretended awfully hard, of course, that nothing very terrible had happened to them. But we exposed them regularly, day after day, and kept up people's faith in speedy victory. The people in our district always knew the truth about the battle-front situation. When the Soviet anthem came out, and was broadcast over the radio, we took it down, made a lot of copies and spread them right away all over the countryside. In general, spreading leaflets was one of our most important, most vital and most dangerous jobs."

"Who did it?"

"We did it ourselves. All our squads took a hand. The whole of our underground committee. . ."

Further down the passage there was a cubby, hole for garbage. This was very important as the poor ventilation, darkness and bad food kept the column in perpetual danger of epidemic disease. There was a lavatory and a kitchen and a store-room for food, with a big barrel for flour and a large box for other provisions. There was a mass of bottles for paraffin worth its weight in gold, for the lamps had to burn day and night. There was a chamber cut in the rock where chickens were kept and pigs fattened; also a stall for the cows. There were several "family rooms" for husbands and wives. And in the walls everywhere niches containing medical supplies and writing materials, needles and cotton, cobbler's tools and leather, and so on.

We sat on the stones, surrounded by lighted lamps and lanterns. I examined the various objects that lay around. About each of them a whole novel could be written. There were, for example, the fragments of a valve wireless set. What could be simpler, you would think, than sitting snug underground and listening in? But it wasn't simple at all. Listening was not merely superhumanly difficult, sometimes it amounted to real heroism. The fact is that radio waves do not spread underground, and so every time the set had to be taken outside or planted just inside the entrance, or else the aerial had to be taken out. But all entrances were closely watched by enemy eyes, and it involved finding new ones all the time. Before bringing up the receiver, the partisans had to send out reconnaissance, a complicated and dangerous business which often involved a serious combat operation. It meant demining the entrances and even engaging in some stiff skirmishes. And even that wasn't all. A temporary aerial had to be erected. This was done at night, at the time of the most important Moscow broadcasts—done under constant menace of death. Moreover, the occupation authorities had put up direction finders throughout this area to locate the partisan radio station. Each time the countryside had first to be cleared of these direction finders. And Lazarev's men did it, at the risk of their lives. In a corner I saw a pile of such direction finders; they had been dismantled on the surface and were the spoils of Lazarev's underground committee. I saw, too, an ingeniously contrived installation which supplied current to the transmitter. They used to turn it by hand, like Papanin and his party on their ice-floe.

In general, the partisans were always having to do hard physical work, quite apart from their continual sallies, trips to the city, wrecking jobs and skirmishes. Rifle cartridges and machine-belts, for example, were kept in a box on the stone table. They were always rusting with the damp and had to be cleaned all the time—scraped with pen-knives, polished. It was arduous work.

I caught sight of a large plywood box with a round hole in the side.

"What's that for?" I asked.

It was Gorbel who replied:

"That's my invention. A patented electric mousetrap."

"Why a mousetrap? What did you want with a mousetrap? "

"Oh, of course, you don't know. We were overrun by field-mice at one time. It was frightful. Thousands and tens of thousands of field-mice fell upon us. They made life impossible. They devoured, destroyed our supplies. They nibbled at everything, wouldn't let us sleep. . . Things became positively catastrophic. So I invented this electric mousetrap."

"Why electric?"

"Well, we used to plant it in a dark cave, and fix up an electric torch to throw a narrow oblique ray of light into it. And believe it or not, the mice would make for that ray in their tens and hundreds—and drop right into the box. The light drew them like a decoy."

I laughed.

"You may laugh, but it was no laughing matter for us. It's no exaggeration to say that the rodent invasion very nearly finished us."

The partisans did everything themselves. They cooked their food and baked their bread, mended their clothes and boots, overhauled their weapons and radio equipment, made the detonators for their mines and typed their leaflets. They were their own cooks and cobblers, tailors and mechanics, primus-stove makers and pyrotechnical experts, poets and stonemasons and medicos. There is hardly a trade, I would say, that they did not practise in their catacombs.

And what critical days they sometimes had to live through!

At first the enemy imagined the partisans would not be able to hold out underground for any length of time. However, nazi trains continued to crash, leaflets continued to be distributed by the thousands in Odessa, and every day the cold bodies of German and Rumanian officers and soldiers were picked up on the outskirts of the city; not a single enemy transport column, not a single lorry could venture on the roads about Ussatov Farms without the risk of being fired on or even blown up; unit headquarters and commandants' offices were sent sky-high one after another. The position of the occupation authorities became positively unbearable, and they made up their minds to get rid of Lazarev's group at any cost. A frontal attack, they knew, was impossible. True, the Rumanians did make attempts to break into the catacombs, but failure overtook them every time. That was the whole point about the catacombs: they could not be captured by force. The reason is simple: you cannot enter the underground passage without a lamp. And the moment an outsider with a lamp ventures in, snipers squatting in the dark fire with sure aim upon the lamp. A single sniper can dispose of a hundred intruders. As to entering without a light, that is out of the question. You would lose your way after the first thirty paces. So there's no getting in with a lamp nor without one. But there is for a friend, though not for a foe.

VIII

Seeing this, the enemy used every means he could think of to drive the partisans out of the catacombs. First he had recourse to brute terror. A party of prisoners, forty in all, were marched up to one of the entrances, and shot down two at a time. The partisans' hearts bled at the sight of the unfortunate victims' bodies. But far from intimidating them, from shaking their resolve, it made them grimmer than ever and their fury in the fight against the detested invader mounted still higher.

Then the Germans and Rumanians resorted to different tactics. They knew that the partisans were running short of provisions, that they were, in fact, starving. Accordingly, a field kitchen was trundled up to one of the catacomb entrances, and the whole population of Ussatov Farms were rounded up in the same spot and fed. A burly cook with a great beefy face and a white cap on his head ladled out strong steaming soup, fished pieces of fine fat meat out of the stew, handed out loaves of fresh golden bread. From time to time shaking his long spoon, he would turn to the cliff in which he knew the invisible partisans were concealed and bellow:

"Hey you, partisan! Quit it! Feeling peckish, eh? Here's food for you, come out of there!"

The partisans had been practically starving for well over a week. Their daily rations consisted of two and a half ounces of raw millet and a teaspoonful of ground coffee. They could barely stand. But even so they were unshaken.

Infuriated, the enemy summoned his artillery, and viciously, haphazardly, and, what's more, quite senselessly drove shell after shell into every crack in the rocks which struck him as suspicious. Next he sent the underground group an ultimatum. This is the way it was passed in: they caught a little boy and told him to take a letter to the partisans in the catacombs. The boy refused. They kicked and beat him, and finally sat him down on a sizzling hot stove. At night they dumped the unconscious lad, together with the letter, near one of the catacomb entrances. The partisans hauled him in.

Here is the text of this ultimatum:

"Comrades partisans!" (The scoundrels actually said: "Comrades.")

"The Red Army is reeling eastward. The Soviets and their Red Army are gone, never to return. The gallant and victorious German and Rumanian allies are advancing to the

east with lightning speed. Your fight is pointless. We know that you are enduring hardship, hunger and disease. You must realize that you will not be able to reverse the march of military history. Give yourselves up. We guarantee you your life in concentration camps and on the footing of prisoners of war. The term of this ultimatum is twenty four hours. Should you reject it, we have means at our command to destroy you instantly. Our officer will be waiting at the entrance to Pit No. 1. He will wear white gloves. You are to surrender to him unarmed, one at a time."

On receiving this insolent, overbearing missive, the partisans decided to reply with action. That very same night they made a brilliant sally, wiping out several dozen of the occupation soldiers and blowing up the commandant's office.

Thereupon the Hitlerites proceeded to a regular siege of the Ussatov Farms catacombs.

With cold fury and vicious method, they blocked, blasted and closed up with concrete everyone of the entrances to the catacomb though there were several dozen of them. They were resolved not to leave the partisans a single loophole, a single opening for air. At some points the shafts of wells intersected the catacombs; the enemy poisoned these wells with arsenic and other deadly stuff, contaminated them with oil and gas. Lazarev's group found itself trapped underground with next to no food and hardly any lamp-oil, without water, without any fresh air coming in, and without the least contact with the outside world. The end seemed inevitable. The last spoonful of millet would soon be consumed, the last gulp of water drunk, the last drop of paraffin would burn out. Eternal blackness would descend. Everything would be over.

IX

And yet these amazing people did not lose heart. They knew that only one thing could save them: a new exit from the catacombs. And they set vigorously about finding one, First one party was sent out; they took with them practically the whole stock of food and paraffin. One after another, they disappeared in the labyrinth. The rest put out their lights and waited. They waited for over twenty-four hours. The party did not return. The position was growing calamitous and it was decided to send a second party in search of the first. Lazarev and two rank-and-filers remained alone in the camp. If the second party failed to return it would be all up! They waited another twelve hours. At last the second party returned, but empty-handed. It had found neither a new exit, nor the first party. The supply of water was already gone. There was no air to breathe, and a mere drop of lamp-oil left.

And then, when the end was really coming, the real, unmistakable end, they saw a glimmer of light in the passage. The first party was returning, returning victorious. A new exit had been found. . . This was their story: two or three hours after they had set out, they noticed that their paraffin was fast running out. They put out all the lamps but one, but even that one consumed too much. They trimmed the wick all round to make it burn as little fuel as possible. They practically groped their way in the dark. The hieroglyphs on the walls were barely discernible. Which way to go? What direction to take? It was a problem that defied solution. They wandered at random from passage to passage, from cave to cave, caught in a maze that narrowed more and more. They realized that unless they found an exit within the next few hours, they would be done for, as their paraffin would not last for the return trip. And in the catacombs, I repeat, to be without light means sure death. What could save them, you might think? Nothing, surely.

But this was where somebody had a brainwave. They were looking for an escape? Very well. Now, what exactly was an escape? A way leading out into the open air. That being so, there must also be a motion of that air, a draught. Let it be the tiniest of draughts, the important thing was to catch it. So they removed the glass from their one lamp and watched the feeble tongue of flame with bated breath. For a long time it burned immobile. And then, suddenly, they noticed the flame blowing to one side. The deviation was barely perceptible, but it was enough. They determined the direction of the draught, and set out slowly, heading for the source of the "draught," guided by the oscillation of the lamp-flame. They covered a long, long way, many kilometres, until at last they reached a small crack beside which the flame fluttered considerably. And there they commenced to carve a way out.

They had dropped their spades and crowbars on the way, for they hadn't the strength to drag them along. So they tore at the wall with their bare hands. They broke their nails, hurt their fingers. . . Blood streamed down their hands. But they did make a hole big enough to squeeze through into the open. Fortunately it was night and there was no one near. They emerged from underground and found themselves in the open steppe, ten miles from Ussatov Farms, as the crow flies. They had won a great victory—victory over death, for the new exit stood for air and food and light and contact with the world—for all the things, in short, without which Lazarev's column was bound to perish.

I had listened with rapt attention to this tale, and now, by some association of ideas, I recalled the "Snowdrops."

"By the way," I said, "you promised to tell me why one of your entrances is called 'The Snowdrops'."

A shadow of distant recollection flitted over Lazarev's drawn face. His eyes glowed with a soft, golden light amid the lamps and lanterns.

"Yes, yes, so I did," he replied rapidly. "That also has to do with the search for a new escape. In general, I must tell you that a good part of our fight against the invader consisted in hunting for new loopholes. He would block some exits—we would find others. Well, one time we were all out together, the lot of us, having to look for a new way out. We roamed about for several days.

There was hardly any air, and it was poisoned with choke-damp. The lamps were going out all the time, we were fainting. Then suddenly we caught sight of a crack in the wall, and set to work to widen it. We used every ounce of energy we had left. At last the rock gave way and with one great effort, we forced a window. The intoxicating spring air, filled with the fragrance of the blooming steppe, this warm, magic Black Sea air assailed our nostrils, and we saw the steppe flooded with dazzling sunshine, and covered with large pale-mauve flowers, which some of us for some reason decided were snowdrops. Forgetting all caution, we flung out into the open and the sunlight and rolled among the 'snowdrops,' greedily drinking in that air, strong and heavy, like a new-vinted wine.

"Yes, there were certainly some happenings in our lives!"

X

Then we went to look at the well the group had dug during the blockade. It was very deep. A pebble dropped down it was some time reaching the water. And you must remember that this well was sunk in the stone with nothing more than plain spades and crowbars. We also saw a natural vaulted chamber which the partisans used for musketry practice. It was a regular, quite decently fitted shooting gallery, with targets cut out of the ubiquitous shellstone. Their fragments lay in the dust, with the holes that the bullets had bored in them. The normal military routine had been maintained day after day in these underground caverns.

"Well, comrades, time we got going. Out on top it must be night by now," said Ilyukhin, getting up with decision from his stone. "Come along!"

Passing a small niche in the wall, I noticed a number of books without bindings, worn with much thumbing and covered with mildew. And suddenly a wonderful, inexpressible ache came over me. I realized that the people and things around me were already the heritage of history, making one of the glorious and stirring pages that speak of the triumph, of the unexampled victory of the new Soviet man over all the dark and evil forces of the old world, merged in fascism.

Lazarev seemed to sense my unspoken thought.

"Do you know?" he asked. "Sometimes, when things were particularly tough, particularly hard to endure, what do you think we would talk about? We would say that after the war, it would be a good thing to fix up a little museum in our catacombs. Let our children see how our people fought, with the party of Lenin and Stalin to inspire them. We were absolutely certain that we would win, that that was how it would be."

"It will, too," I replied.

And we started out on the return road, one after another, leaning on our funny little staffs and lighting up with our lamps the hieroglyphs and symbols scrawled on the shellstone walls.

Soon we emerged on the surface, by way of the "Duck" entrance.

It was night already outside. From the sea, an icy wind was blowing. The stars were bright against the black sky. Dogs barked in the dark. And over the cottage where a simple peasant meal was waiting for us, there rose a spark-illumined wisp of smoke, giving off the pungent, familiar, homey smell of burning dung.

VALENTINE KATAYEV

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING IN THE SOVIET UNION

Nearly one hundred and sixty years have passed since Doctor Paccard and his guide, Jacob Balma reached the summit of Mont Blanc. The ascent marked the beginning of a new fascinating sport: scaling the steep snow-covered slopes of high peaks and seeking out snowy mountain passes.

In 1868 a group of English mountain climbers, headed by Douglas Freshfield, a well-known alpinist, reached the summit of Elbrus in the Caucasus. Twenty years later, the English alpinist, Cockin, scaled Uzhba in the Caucasian ranges. In the same year Cockin and Holder ascended to the top of Sabynan-bashi.

Russian travellers and alpinists likewise made valuable contribution to the development of this new sport, reaching the summits of high peaks in various mountainous regions of the world. There was Platon Chikhachov, for instance, who in 1842 twice reached the Pic d'Annetto in the Pyrenees, until then considered unscalable. He also made creditable ascents in the Alps and Andes.

Many explorations in mountainous districts were made by the Russian travellers Przhevalsky, Kozlov, Potanin and others.

The last century saw a number of ascents by Russian alpinists: in the Caucasus—Killar, a mountaineer born, reached Elbrus' peak in 1829, and in the same year Khachatur Aboven scaled Ararat; Kazmin ascended Kazbek in 1873, Pastukhov, with a party of Cossacks, climbed Elbrus in 1890, while Kavtaradze surveyed the world from the top of Uilpata-Tau in the following year.

At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century the first Alpine-tourist societies were formed in Russia—the Crimea-Caucasus Alpine Society in 1890, the Caucasian and the Russian Alpine Societies in 1901. In the opening years of the present century a number of ascents were made in the Caucasus. Among the alpinists was Serguei Kirov who scaled Kazbek and Elbrus.

All those ascents, however, were merely spontaneous outbreaks, were linked neither

by a single organization nor purpose. In pre-revolutionary Russia mountain climbing was not developed on a large scale and was confined to certain groups of the intelligentsia.

Mountain climbing began its new period of development only in 1923 when a party of Georgian climbers under Professor Nikoladze began tackling their native mountains. That was the start; in the following ten years it became a favourite pastime of the Soviet youth.

Those ten years also determined the character of Soviet mountain climbing. Unlike Western Europe, mountain climbing in the U.S.S.R. does not confine itself to narrow sporting aims. Its aims are much wider and deeper. In the first instance attention is being paid to making the pastime safe for the thousands taking part in it. In the Soviet country mountain climbing pursues the aims:

To aid in the universal physical development of the country's youth, to accomplish geographical researches, to aid industry in organizing the prospecting of minerals and to train the youth in mountain marches for use in the Red Army.

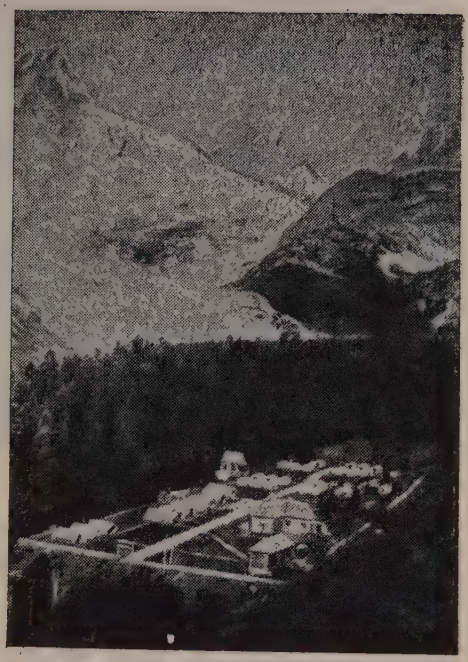
By 1934 mountain climbing had become highly popular. Year after year thousands of young men and women went off in parties for a holiday scaling the heights. In 1935, for instance, 2,016 people climbed to the summit of Elbrus alone. To put the seal as it were on the popularity of the sport came the institution in 1934 of the badge "Alpinist of the U.S.S.R." (first and second class) and also of the title "Master of Alpine sport" granted for outstanding achievements in this field of sport.

Large numbers of future mountain climbers received their training at alpine camps or in long-distance expeditions across mountain ranges.

Scores of alpine camps sprung up in the picturesque mountain gorges—each of them a little township of jolly young men and women who came to rest there and learn the art of mountain scaling.

Never before had the Caucasus, Tien-Shan and other ranges seen so many people in their valleys and gorges, and on their rocky, snow- or ice-covered slopes. Before that nothing but an infrequent party of local villagers or a rare traveller climbed through the passes while the craggy rocks and precipitous slopes had never before been trodden by the foot of man. The frowning peaks, protected by stern nature, were never disturbed. Writers and poets sang of that brooding quiet. The local folk elevated the grim mountain country and the inaccessibility of peaks to sacred heights, a fact indicated by the names of the highest summits. (The local mountaineers call Everest Chomonalunga, which means "The Mother of the Gods," Khan-Tengri means "The King of Spirits" and so on.)

Pushkin, who had visited the Caucasus, wrote that he saw no people there. "The Caucasus lie before me," he wrote. "I stand alone on the heights, on the snow-covered cliff of a precipice. . ."



A high camp on Mt. Alibek in the North Caucasus

But that was long ago. Today the mountains are scenes of great activity. Winding through the gorges and up the slopes move long lines of mountain climbers bound for the peaks and passes; while in the gorges, beside the huts of the peasants, rise the graceful buildings of the camps and resting places, giving brightness to the austere mountain scenery. Splendid roads are being laid through the ranges and along them speed cars and lorries carrying the climbers to their starting points and supplying the camps and resting places with the equipment and food they need.

One climber, with a turn for rhyme, parodied Pushkin's description of the Caucasus, in lines saying that he stood above the clouds on the edge of a precipice, looking at a chain of people winding up to the peak. "That you, oh my Pushkin," he concludes, "never dreamed of."

True enough, any day during the holiday season you can see chains of climbers going steadily and surely up the steep slopes, some bound for a comparatively easy summit, others for a peak that would test the skill and endurance of the crack mountaineer.

Let us in imagination join ourselves to one such party. They reach the peak and give a jubilant "hurrah." "We can tackle something stiffer than this," is the general comment. Then down they go in high fettle to the camp and a hearty meal. After that—games in the camp grounds, a swim in the ice-cold mountain stream or a quiet hour in the library.

Uzhba at the height of 4,700 m.

After the successful attacks upon the giant peaks of Khan-Tengri (1931), the Stalin Peak (20,461 ft.) in 1933 and the Lenin Peak (19,456 ft.) in 1934, a party of Georgian alpinists under the leadership of Alexander Djaparidze got the better of the Southern Uzhba (4,700 metres—12,831 ft.) in 1934. This fact was all the more interesting because among the group were a woman, Alexandra Djaparidze, and the fifty-s x-year-old poet and guide Jagor Kazalikaihvili.

The party began thes ascent from the Guli Glacier. Pushing up the icy and rocky slopes the climbers mounted to 3,900 metres the first day. Starting again in the morning they overcame a névé, dangerous because of ever threatening avalanches and landslides, to reach the toughest stage of the climb—the so-called "Red Corner," a 700-foot precipice, absolutely vertical. If anything looked insurmountable, that did.

But the climbers were undaunted. They stormed the cliff for two days, now winning a couple of dozen feet only to be baulked and descend in order to try another point. They spent the two nights perched on small projections or squeezed into narrow fissures, after roping themselves to the rock. It was an iron test, and they admitted they were assailed by doubts as to whether it were possible to scale the precipice at all. They fought down their doubts and toiled on. At last their persistence was rewarded—the first man reached the top of the wall and pulled his fellows after him. From there, after three and a half hours of comparatively easy going, they reached the summit.

The grand and awesome southern summit of Uzhba was conquered while a year later the northern peak fell to a party of Moscow climbers led by Aleinikov.

1937 and 1940 saw Uzhba figuratively conquered and trampled underfoot. In those years eight parties—a total of over forty persons traversed both Uzhba's peaks from north to south and from south to north. In five years Soviet climbers tackled and beat Mount Uzhba twenty-nine times.

In 1938 Soviet climbers put another feather in their cap by twice making the traverse of the Bezengi wall. That is the name given to a section of the main Caucasus range containing a number of beautiful but awesome peaks: Shkhara (5,184 metres), Djangi-Tau (5,053 metres), Katyn-Tau (4,968 metres) and a number of others.

The parties making the traverse were at a height of about 5,000 metres and over for eight days; they negotiated the most difficult ice slopes and rocks, and covered the great stretch of mountains from end to end.

That year another big climb, far beyond the ordinary run, was made by a party led by Merited Athlete of the U.S.S.R. Eugene Abalakov. Abalakov and his party overcame the spurs in the central parts of the principal Caucasus range, ascending such difficult peaks as Dykh-Tau (Eastern 5,150 m. and Western 5,198 m.), Mizhirgi (Eastern 4,918 m. and Western 4,926 m.), Krumkol (4,676 m.) and Koshtan-Tau (5,145 m.).

Abalakov's party was thirteen days covering that tortuous and dangerous traverse—up precipices, over sharp-toothed crests and steep ice and snow slopes, toiling along at an altitude of 5,000 metres, humping equipment and supplies for the whole trip. Then some real mixed mountain weather made things still tougher — altogether only the strongest, trained to the highest pitch both in endurance and the technique of the game, could have come through the test.

No less difficult was the traverse of the section of the main Caucasus range between Mount Tsurungala (4,222 m.) and mount Shkhart (5,184 m.) made by a party of Georgians under A. Djaparidze in 1940.

That year also saw alpine parties led by Nazarov and Gubanov cross the Shkheldy spur (4,320 m.) of the Caucasus mountains.

Although the Shkheldy peaks are not so high, the towering crags, with their vertical walls, make them among the toughest of propositions. In fact, before the final victory in 1940 many parties had tried the traverse

but had never succeeded in covering the whole route.

Other ascents worthy of mention are those made by parties under Sasorov on Mounts Mizhirgi and Ailamy, under Kazakova on Mount Dykh-Tau and under Popov on Mount Tekhtingen (4,614 m.).

Last in point of time but far from last in importance was the traverse of all five peaks of the Djuguturlyuchat group, the hardest and rockiest section of the western part of the main Caucasus range, made by a party under Eugene Abalakov in October last year. Many had attempted the traverse but none had hitherto succeeded.

It was a feat, indeed, and all the more remarkable since it was done in the cold bleak month of October, which greatly added to the difficulties.

Soviet alpinists have done a great deal of geographical exploration and industrial surveying in the wild and rugged mountain regions of the Soviet Union.

Ukrainian alpinists headed by Pogrebetsky, Merited Athlete of the U.S.S.R., carried out extensive geographical exploration work in the Tien-Shan mountains between 1927 and 1931. They explored a number of "white spots" around Mount Khan-Tengri (the highest peak in the range), and finished up by reaching its summit.

In 1939, a party led by Mukhin did valuable exploration work in the Fan mountains—the western part of the Pamirs and Altai. Here amid the involved interweaving of the Gissar and Zeravshan ranges, covering an area of 800 sq. kilometres, are about a dozen peaks topping 5,000 metres. Mukhin's party climbed four of them. Then an expedition under Professor Letavet recorded data concerning "white spots" in the Tien-Shan range and discovered a number of new high peaks including the Stalin Constitution, Nansen, Karpinsky and Amundsen peaks.

Soviet alpinists likewise took an active part in a number of prospecting expeditions, helping geologists to find deposits of tin, molybdenite, arsenic and other essential minerals in high mountain regions.

One of these discoveries was made by the alpinist Salanov. Once, while travelling in the mountains he found a piece of rock which he believed to be molybdenite. Experts confirmed the find and Salanov went back to the mountains for further prospecting. At the foot of a 1,000 metres wall of rock he found plenty more specimens of the same ore. A party of climbers were then brought in and after a long and persevering search under the most difficult conditions they found large deposits of molybdenite on the face of that immense precipice.

The strike proved rich and in a comparatively short time the precious ore was being mined and refined.

At the very beginning of the war the Soviet Union's hardy mountain climbers joined the Red Army and fought brilliantly on all fronts. Many were decorated with Orders and medals for distinguished action. They overcame extremely difficult mountainous terrain, surprised enemy ambuscades, blasted his fortifications and paved the way for the main Red Army forces. They rendered invaluable service in the Caucasus, the mountains of the Crimea, the Carpathians, the Tatra mountains and the Alps.

Camp in the mountains

Here are a few examples which strikingly illustrate the fighting prowess of the alpinists and the Red Army men trained by them.

When the Red Army forces were advancing on Sevastopol they found the outlet from a gorge into the valley blocked by a strongly fortified mountain. Any idea of taking the height by storm was excluded. German machine-guns arranged in several tiers on the slopes, and placed on the crest and in caves at the foot, kept all approaches under dense direct and oblique fire.

The German infantry holding the mountain were supported by seven artillery and four mortar batteries. At the foot, the approaches were covered by mine-fields and several rows of barbed wire.

The Red Army command formed a score of assault groups consisting of men with fighting experience in the mountains of the Caucasus. They started out at night and soon overpowered the enemy outposts. They clambered up the practically vertical slopes, pyramiding themselves up on each others' shoulders and then hauling up the men forming the pyramid afterwards.

Several hours of fighting and the lower tier was taken; a few hours later the survivors of the mountain strong-point laid down arms. The road to the valley was open . . .

Another good job was done by mountain troops at a range the men dubbed "The Turtle."

German and Hungarian forces, with armour support, were putting up stiff resistance. An assault group led by officer Selivyorstov set out to by-pass the enemy forces. They had to cover ground no man had ever covered before. In the lead went expert mountain climbers blazing the trail and picking the best places to descend or ascend by means of the rope. The group skirted gorges, probed alongside mountain torrents, clambered up precipices and descended into yawning gulfs. Twenty hours of this brought them behind the enemy positions. They struck, dispersed the hostile forces and cleared the way for the main Red Army units.

Mobile detachments composed of expert climbers and rank-and-file Red Army men they had trained were employed to carry out some exceptionally complicated operations in the mountains.

They swept down upon the enemy unexpectedly, captured mountain passes, crossroads, bridges and the bottle-necks of gorges. When one of our divisions had to force a turbulent mountain stream a mobile detachment under Major Zimin paved the way. The only bridge over the river was held by the enemy who had everything ready to blow it up at the slightest alarm.

Major Zimin's detachment, led by mountain climbers, made an intricate detour through the mountains, negotiated what was held to be an impassable gorge and attacked the enemy, taking him by surprise. The bridge was captured intact and the Soviet division swarmed across.

The Red Army together with the Allied forces compelled Germany to capitulate. The war in Europe is over! German fascism has been smashed once and for all.

A new period, a period of rehabilitation of the national economy which will ensure the return of normal living conditions and prosperity for our people, has begun.

Alpine sport as well as other forms of athletics in the Soviet Union which had reached a high level of development before the war, will be revived and developed on a still wider scale.

Despite the difficulties caused by the destruction of bases and equipment during German occupation, Soviet mountain climbers are already getting ready to tackle bigger exploits than they have ever done before.

PAUL ROTOTAYEV

MEN OF OUR TIME

MIKHAIL FRUNZE — A GREAT RED ARMY CAPTAIN

Amongst the many great captains that Russia has produced, Mikhail Frunze will be remembered as one of the finest of the new type. Frunze's path of development was not the usual one of a prominent military man. He never attended a military academy nor had he long years of experience as an army commander.

His first experience of fighting was gained amongst the armed workers who fought at the barricades against tsarist autocracy. His natural ability as a leader and his persistent efforts at self-education proved of the greatest importance to his subsequent career.

During the first world war, Frunze, an exile in Siberia, organized a class of revolutionaries to study the art of warfare. As participants in this circle have since affirmed, he astounded them all by his great erudition in questions concerning the theory of warfare and the profundity with which he analysed military operations. This circle was jokingly termed the "military academy."

"One might almost think that you were coaching for the General Staff Academy, Mikhail Vassilyevich," one of his comrades once said to him. At that time this could not have been regarded as anything more than a joke for how could a professional "underground" revolutionary, who had twice been sentenced to death by the tsarist authorities and had had his sentence commuted to ten years' penal servitude—how could he even dream of entering an academy?

Frunze thought differently, however. "The revolution will win," he answered, "and will require its own military specialists."

Frunze was right. In 1918, after the victory of the Revolution, the Soviet government, on Lenin's instructions, set up its own Academy of Red Army officers; Frunze himself was later destined to become the head of this academy. Extensive experience of the revolutionary struggle, extensive education, uncommon talents as a soldier—these were the qualities which brought Frunze to the fore as a leader of the Red Army.

Frunze took charge of the operations of the Red Army during the Civil War (1918—1920), a war that saw many varied and complicated forms and methods of fighting. The politics of the belligerents not only exercized a decisive influence over strategy but frequently over the operational and even the tactical situation. In order to achieve clarity in the intricacies that arose at various phases of the war and on sectors of the front far removed from each other, an army leader required experience of warfare and a complete mastery of a number of other branches of knowledge which would enable him to draw correct conclusions.

"Our army leaders," said Frunze, "must be well armed not only with military knowledge, but also with a knowledge of politics and economics, for today all these are interwoven in one single pattern; without knowledge of these points you cannot succeed as an army leader."

Frunze himself was a happy combination of a new type of soldier and statesman. He provided a brilliant solution to military problems when even old, experienced specialists found themselves at a deadlock.

Frunze began his army career in the struggle against one of the young Soviet republic's most dangerous enemies—the counter-revolutionary Admiral Kolchak—and at once demonstrated his unusual talent as an organizer and leader.

The military situation was particularly unfavourable for the still weak Soviet state. The enemy threatened from the north, south, east and west. The general strategical plan of the enemy was to squeeze the Soviet Republic in a ring of death. Kolchak was to make the main drive in the spring of 1919, for the main forces of the counter-revolution were then concentrated against the eastern front.

The Red Army had still no experience of warfare against the enemy's regular forces. Furthermore it was badly equipped and poorly armed, and had a number of organiza-

tional defects at these early stages when the Republic was building up the army. The transition from partisan detachments to a regular army with a uniform regime and centralized contact had still to be completed. The ruined war industry and transport system could not supply the troops at the front with all they needed. The enemy, on the contrary, had well-organized, well-trained and well-armed troops led by experienced generals and other regular officers. This made the Red Army's fight an extremely difficult one. The Soviet military leaders required all their boundless faith in the strength of the people to be able to overcome such difficulties.

Frunze realized that to strengthen the young army of the Soviet state, to improve its fighting potential for the decisive battles against a numerous and well-armed enemy, an iron, revolutionary discipline would have to be introduced. In a most decisive manner, those habits which were incompatible with good order in a vast, regular army must be eliminated.

The spirit of the partisan columns that had spontaneously arisen during the early period of the Civil War was still retained even by good, conscientious officers under Frunze's command.

Once, during this period, the following incident occurred. When Frunze arrived at Uralsk he ordered a review of the troops stationed there. One of the units turned up late for the review, others left the parade ground before time and without permission.

Mikhail Frunze gathered all the commanders together and with absolute frankness and severity spoke of their disorganized state and lack of discipline. Some of the officers were reprimanded.

Next morning Frunze received a "strictly confidential" note from Plyasunkov, a commander of one of the brigades, asking him to attend a meeting of officers that evening to give an explanation of the reprimands he had made. Frunze did not answer the letter. When, a few hours later, another letter arrived with a similar demand, Frunze decided to attend the meeting and left with his adjutant.

When Frunze appeared there was complete silence. None of the officers stood up. Mikhail Frunze greeted them and sat down on a bench.

"What's the matter, comrades?" he asked, turning to the officers sitting at the table who were apparently the initiators of the meeting and of the challenge to Frunze.

After some hesitation one of those present began in a raised voice to express dissatisfaction with the review that Frunze had ordered, the demands and the reprimands he had made.

The first speaker was followed by a second. Then the speeches began to get sharper and sharper in tone. The atmosphere became electric. The last speakers even went so far as to make direct threats to Frunze.

Frunze allowed everybody to speak. Then he stood up, walked over to the table and in a firm tone that brooked no objections said:

"In the first place I must tell you that I am not here as the army commander. The army commander cannot and should not attend such a meeting. I am here as a member of the Communist Party and in the name of that party which sent me to work in the army I again confirm all my remarks concerning the shortcomings which I noticed in the units which you command and for which you answer to the Republic.

"You have made personal threats to me. You do not scare me. The tsarist court twice sentenced me to death and did not persuade me to renounce my convictions. I am unarmed and am here only with my adjutant. I am in your hands. You can do what you like with me, but I tell you quite plainly that as far as your calling me here as the commander of the army is concerned any repetition of such acts will be severely punished, even with shooting. Breaches of discipline ruin the army. Soviet power will not permit that. . ."

He ended with the words: "Has anybody anything else to say?" Nobody spoke. Frunze walked slowly to the door which somebody opened for him.

His energy and authority enabled him to effect a speedy strengthening of discipline and to build up a strong officer corps in the 4th Army.

Frunze went into battle with the advanced regiments, carefully studied the fighting qualities of the troops that had been entrusted to him and listened attentively to the needs of the officers and men, taking instant measures to satisfy them. He proved himself an excellent pedagogue as well as a talented organizer for he was always able to find the way to the hearts of the soldiers and their commanders.

In the early days of Frunze's army activities, other qualities as a military leader made themselves apparent. He was a bitter enemy of passivity in operations. He always strove to solve any military task, even if it pursued only a limited defensive purpose, by offensive action. His object was not to dislodge the enemy and merely occupy territory but to destroy the enemy's man power.

Frunze subsequently expressed this "principle of activity" in the following words: "Only he will win who has the determination to attack; a belligerent who confines himself to defence is inevitably doomed to defeat. . . Attack and offensive, when the other factors are equal, are always more advantageous than defence."

Frunze's earliest orders of the day give clear expression to his operative methods. Hammer blows by storm groups cleverly directed at the enemy's most vulnerable positions were his method of attacking the enemy's main forces. The employment of extensive enveloping movements, the joint frontal attacks together with flanking movements and all their many combinations were constant features of his operative practice.

When Kolchak's main body broke through the centre of the Eastern front and approached the Volga, creating a serious threat to the whole front, Frunze was transferred to a new and responsible post. He was placed in com-

mand of the Southern group of the Eastern front which was composed of four armies. According to Lenin's plan, this group had to remove the threat hanging over the country.

Frunze studied the situation and developed the idea of the now famous counter-attack on the main body of Kolchak's troops that were advancing rapidly westward. Frunze's plan resulted in the formation of a powerful storm group from among the most efficient fighting units of the Southern group which was on the flanks of the advancing enemy and a destructive blow at his communications.

In planning and preparing the operation, Frunze displayed to the full extent his ability to determine the direction of his main drive, the accomplishment of which immediately brought a big strategic success.

The plan was carried out under extremely difficult conditions. Danger threatened from all sides. A critical situation existed behind the Southern group. It became necessary to remove the most efficient units from other sectors of the front and, without losing time, to regroup and establish numerical superiority.

The counter-offensive of the Southern group began on April 28th, 1919, and from the very beginning the initiative was held firmly by the Red Army. One of the biggest battles of the Civil War raged for twenty-two days. With great penetration Frunze saw through all the enemy's moves. He reacted swiftly to all changes in the situation and each time delivered his blow at the enemy's most vulnerable point. Although they changed the direction of their advance, Frunze's troops always retained the original idea of a blow on the flank, carrying this plan through with exceptional skill and perseverance.

The fighting that developed contained Kolchak's early successes. His troops suffered defeat, the front crumbled and they rolled back eastward.

Frunze followed hard on the heels of the retreating enemy and delivered his next blow at Ufa, an historical operation in the course of which he forced the Belaya River.

The operation of Ufa displayed Frunze's great courage as well as his talent as a leader. Two regiments of the 25th Chapayev Division, the task to cross to the west bank were subjected to a concentrated attack by superior enemy forces. It seemed only a few minutes before they would be hurled back into the river.

At this critical moment Frunze appeared. He dismounted from his horse, took a rifle and himself led the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Regiment to the counter-attack.

"Comrades! Not a step back! Follow me! Forward!" he ordered and ran ahead of the troops.

Vasili Chapayev, the famed Civil War hero who commanded the 25th Division, feared for Frunze's life and asked him to leave.

"Comrade Commander! Go away from here, this is no place for you!"

"Forward, follow me! I am taking over the regiment!" answered Frunze and continued to lead the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Regiment against the enemy. The news spread like wildfire that the Commander-in-Chief himself was leading the attack. Unwavering, the troops followed him and put the enemy to flight at the point of the bayonet.

A break had been made and the situation restored. In this battle Frunze suffered severe concussion from a bomb dropped by an enemy aircraft, but he remained at his post and continued to direct the offensive until its successful conclusion.

By August 1919 the defeat of Kolchak had already been mainly effected. From then on begins the second stage of Frunze's career as an army leader. He took charge of a new front—the Turkestan front.

The troops of the Turkestan front had a number of important tasks before them. They had to gain the Uralsk and Orenburg Regions in the shortest possible time, prepare an expedition into Turkestan to join up with the Soviet troops operating there and, after clearing the region of the enemy, link it up with Soviet Russia.

Of the many tasks they had to fulfil, the most important was that of crushing General Belov's Southern group which barred their way to Turkestan. Frunze decided to encircle General Belov's army by a combined operation in which his troops and those of Soviet Turkestan took part. It was for this purpose that the Orsk operation was planned and put into effect. Belov's army of 25 000 was driven into the desert steppes and forced to surrender with all its equipment.

In this operation, Frunze showed his ability to encircle an enemy group and destroy them piecemeal. This, however, was not the only thing that determined his success. In Turkestan the situation was quite different from what it had been on the Eastern front. Here there was an extremely intricate interweaving of political, national and social conditions. The war was being conducted by semi-partisan forces, the front was everywhere. Under these circumstances military activity had to be combined with very extensive political activity. It was essential to put into effect the national policy of Lenin and Stalin. Frunze managed this task quite successfully, proving himself not only a good soldier, but also a brilliant statesman. His year's work as Commander-in-Chief of the Turkestan forces resulted in the complete rout of the White Guard and interventionist forces on that sector of the front.

The name of Frunze is still one of the most popular amongst the peoples of Central Asia, and the capital of Kirghizia bears his name.

In the autumn of 1920, the last phase in Mikhail Frunze's military career began. Stalin, following a directive given by Lenin, elected Frunze as the commander of the Southern front, seeing in him the commander most able to bring about the speedy rout of Wrangel, the last of the counter-revolutionary leaders. With the railways behind the Red Army in a state of disrepair and in face of a strong and well-equipped enemy, Frunze defeated Wrangel.

The Perekop operation played a decisive role in the final defeat of the enemy. Perekop, behind which the remains of Wrangel's

forces had taken cover, was considered impregnable, not only by the counter-revolutionary command but also by foreign specialists. The White-Guards had artillery superiority: They prepared defensive positions consisting of several rows of reinforced concrete installations. In the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov the enemy's navy predominated. When Soviet troops attacked Perekop, they were inevitably subjected to artillery fire from the front and also to flank fire from the enemy's ships. Even under these difficult conditions Frunze found a way to victory. Frunze undertook a flanking movement across the Sivash Straits, a stretch of water which it was considered impossible to cross. Under cover of a November night, his storm group crossed the straits at low tide; this operation brought them in the rear and on the flank of the Perekop positions. Simultaneously, with the aim of preventing the enemy from regrouping and parrying our manoeuvre, a frontal attack was delivered against the Perekop position. The unexpected appearance of the Red units on the Litovsky Peninsula on the flank of the enemy's fortifications and the frontal attack that was launched simultaneously, forced the enemy to split his forces. This soon forced the conclusion: Frunze's troops entered the Crimea and in five days had completely liberated the whole peninsula from the White-Guards. With the defeat of Wrangel the Civil War was, in the main, at an end. The brilliant concluding phase of the war was directed by Frunze.

Frunze's operative style is distinguished by his effort to make full use of manoeuvre, his ability to select a form of operation most dangerous from the enemy's point of view and his ability to drive his blows home in the most vulnerable spot. Not one of the plans which Frunze developed and executed was simply "blundering on the enemy" from the front. All his operations included flank attacks, enveloping, encircling and destroying the enemy's main forces.

Operative foresight based on a masterly analysis of the situation, the ability to select the most important task from amongst a complex of possibilities and to concentrate his main attention on this, the correct selection of the main attack's direction, the formation of task forces from the units available on the front and skilful manoeuvring with them and, lastly, flexibility and concreteness in directing the troops during the course of the operation—these are fine examples of true military leadership.

Frunze's skill as an army leader and his creative effort in planning operations form an important contribution to the science of warfare. Many generals and officers of the Red Army, masters of modern warfare, still learn from them.

Colonel SERGUEI SHISHKIN

FOR CHILDREN ABOUT CHILDREN BY

CHILD HEROES

In these great days of ours, I want to say a few affectionate words about our country's smallest citizens—our children. Our Vanyas and Kolyas, Alyoshas and Sashas, Grishas and Valyas, Natashas, Mashenkas and Marinas helped the Army and our entire people to set the flag of victory flying over Berlin. The heart of a faithful and intrepid fighter beats in each of them, even in the tiniest tots. They collected wild-rose berries for the army hospitals or guarded the young crops from rooks as their contribution to victory. Yes, that's just how it was in Zyablikovo village, Moscow Region, and for that matter, in every village throughout our Soviet land where the youngsters helped the front. Some lent a hand with the weeding, others went out harrowing, some tended the collective herds. And then the littlest ones said: "We want to help the front too." "All right," they were told. "go and chase away the rooks." And off they went.

My wartime notebooks are chock full of entries on the courage of our children. Memories crowd into my head. The first troop trains leaving for the front, and on the platform, a child's passionate cry: "Daddy, take me with you!" The corridors of the district recruiting stations and the Youth League offices besieged by twelve- and ten-year-olds from the very first hour of war. They would come with diminutive knapsacks on their backs, pleading and demanding: "Sign me up with the volunteers." Told that children were not sent to fight, they would argue, scowl, burst into tears. Ordered to leave they would still hang around lurking about the corridors with billy-cans rattling with their every movement.

Later, they found plenty of ways to help which quieted the raging of their brave and fervent hearts. And they were really and truly useful to their country. But how they fretted at first! They even wrote complaints to Stalin and to soldiers at the front. I have kept the following charming little note:

"To the Defence Committee.

Complaint.

Dear beloved Comrade Stalin! We boys from our yard just can't go on like this any more. They won't let us join up anywhere. We've been to the recruiting station but they absolutely won't hear of our going to the front. The tenth grade have left for construction jobs, but we're just left out in the cold again, though this is only the labour front. The house-warden won't sign us on for the fire brigade, and the janitor only laughs and wet-blankets us. Everywhere they tell us to run along and say we're just kids. We feel very bad about it. Please take our side and do something quick."

Many ran away to the war. Whole swarms of youngsters were brought back to their mothers and teachers. Was this merely the play of their childish imagination, the pursuit of romantic adventure? No, the way things developed later, many boys and girls took part in the fight in grim earnest and consciously risked their brief lives for the common cause. One thinks of the child-scouts in the partisan columns; recalls how youngsters used to shelter wounded Red Army men and lead them by unknown paths to the Soviet positions; how Moscow kiddies extinguished nazi fire-bombs, how Leningrad youngsters built barricades, how Byelorussian children carried despatches through the lines.

Not a few Soviet youngsters have been honoured with military decorations.

A Kiev lad, Kostya Kravchuk, bears the Order of the Red Banner. To him Red Army men, blood streaming from their wounds, entrusted their regimental colours. And he guarded these precious banners at the risk of his life. He hid them in a pit beneath an ancient tree, later transferring them to a disused well. . . And when the Red Army liberated Kiev, the lad brought out the flags.

Thirteen-year-old Vanya Andrianov, a native of the village of Novo-Mikhailovskoye, has been decorated with the Order of the Red Star. This village was in German hands. The Soviet troops were approaching. The Germans laid an ambush. They mounted machine-guns in unexpected places and were planning a blast of unexpected fire. The Red Army men approaching from the river were unaware of the enemy ambush. But Vanya knew. He darted out of his house and down towards the river bank. The Germans spotted his small frame and opened fire. But, undeterred, the boy dropped to the ground, crawled under bullet fire all the way to the river, and rolled like a ball down the steep bank into the arms of the Red Army men. He picked out a way for them through the back-yards and pointed out the houses where the nazis had their machine-guns. General Yefremov shook hands with Vanya as with a soldier and a hero, and handed him the decoration in person.

And how many such cases there were, how many wonderful exploits by mere children, which will be incorporated in the history of this war. We recall Volodya and Vassya Gorshkov of Yefremov, who sheltered, fed and nursed wounded Red Army men. Or Alyosha Beryezin from a collective farm near Kalinin,

who caught a nazi pilot baling out and marched him to our lines. Or twelve young Pioneers in Pokrovskoye village, Stalino Region, who during the blackest days formed an underground Pioneer squad far behind the enemy lines undeterred by whatever punishment might result. For over a year these plucky youngsters pasted up anti-nazi leaflets in the night, cut the Germans' telephone wires, secreted in a cave girls who were to be sent to forced labour in Germany. When the Red Army freed the village, the twelve came out to meet the troops, wearing their red ties and carrying a red flag proudly before them.

Many children lost their lives in the fight. They died like soldiers, like heroes, like real fighters. One name that will be remembered is that of Sasha Chekalin, the schoolboy partisan and posthumous Hero of the Soviet Union. Twelve hulking nazis led him to the gallows. When the noose was already around his neck, he threw up his head defiantly and sang the "International." The nazis tried to turn another boy, Tolya Nilin, into a spy. They tempted him with all manner of good things but to no avail. They tortured him, beat him up, but overcoming the frightful pain, he cried: "I don't trade my country."

Nastya Makarova of Mishinki village, near Vyazma, met a martyr's death, rather than submit to the nazis and betray her older comrades. The Germans lashed her to a fence, drenched her in petrol, set her alight... Red Army men who arrived later laid her charred, blackened body on a gun-carriage and covered it with the regimental colours. Tankmen, gunners and infantrymen, filing past, removed their helmets and bowed low in tribute to this proud little Russian girl.

Lyuda Petrova of Cherkassy in the Ukraine did not reply to a single question the nazis asked her. They hanged her in a summer-house. . .

In Maikop, a Young Pioneer, Zhenya Popov had severed the telephone line attached to a German staff headquarters. As the Germans led him out to be shot, he shouted so loudly that all the cells might hear his triumphant, childish ringing voice: "Long live our Soviet homeland!"

Mussya Pinkinzon in the Ust-Labinsk district, Krasnodar Region, was a fifth-grade pupil, and he promised to be a fine violinist. When he was led out to be shot together with his father, an old surgeon, Mussya carried his fiddle in his hands. Before they faced the firing squad, he asked the German officer: "I'd like to play just once more:" The officer, consenting, replied: "Let everyone see how kind we Germans are: we allow a Jewish brat to have his fun before he pegs out. . ."

For the last time, Mussya swung his bow and struck up the Soviet anthem. The crowd, herded together to witness the killing, froze into immobility. The Germans burst into cries of rage. A shot rang out, and the little fiddler dropped, his body covered with blood.

Yes, they died like real soldiers.

And in the rear, our children toiled like true patriots. I cannot say exactly how much scrap iron they collected in these war years (who could possibly calculate the amount?), but I do know that there were whole mountains of it. We remember the hand-carts and wheelbarrows which boys and girls trundled through the streets of village and town painstakingly gathering disused metal articles.

Again, I don't know the amount of herbs and empty medicine bottles they brought in for the pharmacies and hospitals. But there were mountains of those too, mountains of camomile, wild-rose hips, dandelion roots, wormwood and lilies of-the-valley.

They helped to plough the land. They collected ashes and manure. They tended the crops and helped bring in the harvest. They guarded the wells and chopped wood for their schools; they sewed field flask covers and knitted mittens for the troops. They worked in repair shops. For four years the hands of our youngsters, in city and village, were scratched by ears of grain, injured by sickles and scythes, calloused by files. Those were honourable scars.

They helped in whatever way they could, actuated by the slogan: "Everything for the Front." Children living in the Don region bred millions of telenomuses, let them loose in the collective farm fields when the spring came around, and saved tens of thousands of precious acres from the ravages of the tortoise-beetle. Some youngsters in Gabdulin village, Saratov Region, sent the following letter to a newspaper: "We want to help the front. Lots of corn is needed. So we're destroying susliks. We trap them, flood their holes, in general exterminate them in every way possible. Forty of us have already destroyed 8,818 susliks." Cossack youngsters in Samarskoye village, Rostov Region, devoted all their powers to rearing cavalry mounts. The troopers received a letter from them, saying: "Yesterday was the last time we combed our beloved 'Ogonyok,' 'Smely' and 'Zvyozdochka.' We braided their manes with scarlet and saw them off to the war. Maybe one of you, dear soldiers, will ride a horse we have raised. . ."

Wounded soldiers could tell many a tale about the children of all nationalities who sat by their bedsides in the hospitals, warming their hearts with little signs of affection, with a smile or a song. They would bring to the hospitals early greens they had grown on special plots, would mend the hospital linen and tidy up the hospital yards.

Red Army men's old mothers, their wives and widows, disabled servicemen will have plenty to tell about the little acts of true kindness performed for them by children's hands. Thousands of children's teams became regular visitors to servicemen's homes. Day after day, all through these years, they helped chop wood, carried water, scrubbed floors and looked after the little ones.

On all our fronts, the post brought the soldiers millions of letters from unknown children, full of love and courage, letters that were like battle-standards. On all our fronts, soldiers received from youngsters tobacco pouches embroidered with the legend that so delighted the soldier's heart: "For you to smoke, and for Jerry to go up in smoke."

Children denied themselves humble pleas-

ures, saved the roubles meant for the cinema or for toys and sent in their savings to the Defence Fund. Lena Azarenkova, a little girl in the first grade in Moscow, wrote to Marshal Stalin: "I've been saving for a New Year's Tree and I've saved 110 roubles. Please take them for a stormovik plane." Stalin himself replied to her letter. Whole tank columns and aircraft squadrons were built with the children's kopeks.

All that the children did during these war days came from the bottom of their hearts and was performed with sincere feeling.

It was no easy time for them, but we heard no complaints. The children endured the hardships of wartime with heads erect and helped their mothers along. The most difficult thing of all, I should say, was for them to study all these years. And not only through lack of textbooks and exercise books, but because the schools were crowded and cold, because household cares interfered with homework.

The child's whole being was eager for battle. A whirlwind, a conflagration raged in his mind, his heart. How many terrible shocks they endured, how much mental anguish! But they continued to study, and what a fine showing they made! They attended school throughout the hard times of evacuation, they solved problems in half-demolished schoolhouses, wrote dictation exercises in bomb-shelters. And that, to my mind, is the biggest contribution Soviet children made to victory.

HELEN KONONENKO

AT THE ROUND TABLE UNDER THE CUCKOO CLOCK

The twentieth radio broadcast and the first one since the end of the war was held on June 3rd; once again "Our Guests" met at the Round Table. Naturally we wanted to make this meeting an important one and as varied as possible.

The first to speak was the guest of honour, Marshal Rotmistrov of the Red Army Armoured Corps, a leading Red Army commander who gained fame at Stalingrad. He very kindly accepted our invitation and speaking from his seat under the Cuckoo Clock congratulated the assembled guests and all listeners on the occasion of our victory. In a short talk the Marshal told his young audience about the history of the tank. He congratulated the school-children on their successes at the examinations and wished the young people further achievements in the future.

According to our custom the youngest present replied to the guest of honour. On this occasion our guests were the members of a joint orchestra from two Moscow music schools. The children agreed with the proposal of the chairman to relate how they had spent Victory Day—May 9th, 1945. On that very day there had been a contest between the Moscow children's orchestras, and the joint orchestra that sat under the Cuckoo Clock had gained first place. Vova Ashkinazi, a seven-year-old pupil of a music school, gave a light and faultless rendering of the third movement of a Haydn Pianoforte Concerto accompanied by the orchestra.

The next to speak was a young Soviet scientist, Alexander Gussev, an oceanographer by profession, who is also a splendid mountain-climber. He has been awarded the title of Merited Master of Sport and several Orders. One year he wintered in a little collapsible hut at a height of nearly thirteen thousand feet up Mount Elbrus. During the war he became an officer in the Red Army and headed a detachment of bold men who penetrated behind the Germans' lines in the Caucasus. When he climbed Mount Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe, for the eleventh time he hoisted a red flag on the peak as a symbol that the Germans had been driven from the Caucasus.

Boris Goldstein, a young violinist and one of the most popular Soviet musicians, treated us to a wonderful rendering of Townsend's *American Lullaby* and Gruenes' transcription of a march from Prokofyev's *Petya and the Wolf*.

Two famous men, well-known throughout our country, both of whom did much to help the Red Army's successes, met at our microphone. There was a lively talk between Lieutenant-General Lavochkin, one of the leading Soviet aircraft designers, and Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Guards Major Kozhedub, a fearless Soviet ace who shot down sixty-two German aircraft, flying "Lavochkin" fighters.

Elena Kruglikova, a singer who recently returned from a tour of Yugoslavia and Poland, told us how she spent Victory Day in Warsaw and then sang us two of Chaikovsky's romances.

Then the Soviet writer, Vera Inber, came to the microphone and told us how, on Victory Day, she had spoken by telephone to one of her young Leningrad friends with whom she had spent the worst period of the siege. Vera Inber read us her latest poem for children, *Homeward, Homeward!*.. The poem is about the birds who were frightened by the war and flew to a far-off spot and were now returning to their old nesting places.

In response to a request from the young guests the chairman related how he himself had spent the evening of Victory Day. That evening, at the time of the last salute in honour of victory, he had been broadcasting from the Red Square. We heard the record of these exciting minutes at the end of our broadcast; again the well-known Kremlin chimes rang out across the ether followed by the shouts of greeting from the jubilant crowd and the measured thunder of the salute of victory.

The children's orchestra played a dainty minuet and we said good-bye to our friends until our next month's meeting at the Round Table under the Cuckoo Clock.

LEV KASSIL,
Chairman of the Round Table

BOOKS AND WRITERS

GORKY AND RUSSIAN FOLK EPICS

Maxim Gorky, a great connoisseur of folklore, provided new explanations for many of the figures occurring in epic literature. In them he recognized the people's dreams of a life worthy of man, a noble striving to know the joys of creative effort which enrich both the individual and the nation.

In such creations of epic fancy as the magic carpet, living and dead water and a palace built in a single night there is a foretaste of the future material and spiritual victories of human genius.

Gorky said that it is in the nature of people to dream and, like Lenin, he stressed the fact that in these dreams there is nothing to draw man away from reality or paralyse his activity. In the naive imagery of popular fantasy there is the "prototype" of an ideal that is revolutionary in the sense that it turns people's attention to the future and does not allow them to submit to injustice and oppression. Gorky regards creative labour as the very essence of man, and the people as creators first and foremost, even in the past, when creative effort was held in check by an unjust social order.

In an article dealing with the publication of the *History of the Countryside* written just before his death, Gorky compared his image of the Russian peasantry with Platon Karatayev. It will be remembered that Leo Tolstoy drew his picture of Karatayev in *War and Peace* as the embodiment of submission, the under-dog, that the oppressors had made of the muzhik. In the same article Gorky speaks of the characters of the peasants in stories by Balzac, Zola and Maupassant. Naturally, the traits of Karatayev, like those of Maupassant's village small-holders, were present in certain sections of the Russian peasantry. It was not, however, these traits that determined the character of the people on their long path of development. To speak of Russian history—"the peasantry were builders and rebels." "The peasantry made history although, being illiterate, they did not realize it." The peasants and the workers as the builders of material culture are not to be found in the traditional histories. "Nevertheless it was they who built the invulnerable castles of the feudal lords, built the towns and the wonderful churches, cut roads, dried swamps, worked hemp, linen, leather, wool, wood and metals... And at the same time they composed stories of astonishing wisdom, beautiful songs, legends and satires against their enemies." In response to this, writes Gorky further, the hypocrites taught them "base meekness," patience, submission. The people gained and retained their dignity only in an age-long implacable struggle against oppression.

These ideas determined Gorky's approach to folklore. His ideas were seen most clearly in his understanding of the Russian "byliny" (the folk epics), and in his own attempt to revive one of their heroes.

Gorky always stressed the philosophical and historical significance of the byliny. The characters of Svyatogor, Mikula Selyaninovich, Vaska Buslayev and other "bogatyrs" (titans) of the Russian epics are regarded by him as monumental figures of the national and social story of the Russian people, as poetic embodiments of dreams about the future. Gorky sees the people as a creator who transforms the world, the conqueror of death and master of his land and his own fate, as the theme which is the main support of the byliny, the poems about the Russian bogatyrs.

Svyatogor is a character of superhuman strength. His strength stifles him because it cannot find worthy application. He dreams of finding a fulcrum in order to be able to move the earth in accordance with his will. While crossing a field Svyatogor finds a little bag. The bag is a magic one and the bogatyr is not strong enough to lift it, he strains at it and sinks into the earth up to his knees. As he stands there it is "blood and not tears" that flows down his cheeks. This is the tragic figure of the people straining, in captivity to the earth and unable to straighten up.

In the bogatyr Svyatogor it is usually this tragic feature that is stressed. Gorky sees in it first and foremost an assertion of the titanic strength of the people, a desire "to move the earth." In an article written in 1912 he spoke of this image as a symbol of the victory of the people, of their mastery of the earth. "We are getting nearer the time when it will be possible," he wrote, "to solve the great problem of Svyatogor the Bogatyr":

If there were but a ring in the heavens
And hanging there from a chain of iron strong,
I would draw down the heavens to the damp earth
And would mix the earthly with the heavenly.
If there were but a ring in the damp earth,
I would turn over our damp mother earth,
I would turn her over till edges were uppermost
And would mix the earthly with the heavenly.

Gorky brought out the theme of the struggle against the gods, the Prometheus theme, in this bylina.

The figure of Mikula the Ploughman is the embodiment of the joyous and vital dream of the peasantry of a rich and happy life in which the tormenting and exhausting work of the ploughman which makes "the blood flow down the face" becomes free and easy.

Handsome, young, spruce Mikula the strong man makes a joke of tilling his boundless field and just as if it were a joke tears out tree-stumps and shifts huge boulders. All the forces of Prince Volga cannot lift his "wooden plough" while Mikula pulls it out of the ground with one hand. The bylina makes fun of the Prince and his men who seem like dwarfs beside the giant Mikula. These are the indulgent smiles of those who know that despite everything they are the real masters of the soil and that the future is theirs. The figure of Mikula as understood by Gorky is close to the whole group of Russian fairy-tale characters that glorify light, speedy labour full of the joy of creation. The mastery of the earth has passed, the mastery of the ploughman has begun. The dream of Svyatogor has been fulfilled in Mikula.

Gorky did not leave behind him an elaborated character of Ilya Muromets, or Ilya of Murom, the most popular character in the byliny. By following Gorky's methods we find similar motifs in this story.

In Ilya Muromets there is a powerful depiction of the military history of the Russian people. Here we see the specific nature of the Russian conception of native land and military prowess, a conception in which the national ideal is blended with dreams of real liberty. In the well-known episodes in which Ilya the Bogatyr fights against the "pagan idol," historical motifs are summarized.

Ilya teaches the Russian peasant that he must play his part in the struggle, he must not be afraid to attack the enemy and to save Russia from the "pagans"—from the foreign invaders. Ilya does not defend the princes but the common people and their future mastery of their native land. Battles are not the chief reason for the existence of the bogatyr—the people. The vocation and the future of the people is creative labour on land that has become their own.

Ilya the Bogatyr, the defender of the nation, is thrown into a dungeon by the prince. It would be difficult to find a figure more faithfully depicting the fate of the Russian people during the centuries of their existence: the oppression of serfdom, of prison and the gallows; when Russian soil had to be defended against the enemy, however, the people took on their shoulders the struggle for national independence. They fought not for the "dog of a prince" but for "the widows, orphans and poor people."

Perhaps still more interesting is Gorky's treatment of one of the most fascinating characters of the bylina—Vaska Buslayev.

In the first episodes of the bylina, Vaska Buslayev, a young man from the free city of Novgorod, and his men perform some daring and often cruel deeds. This was the first picture of Vaska retained by the memory of the people. Later he became more democratic and acquired a new character — he drew nearer the common folk, and his adventures and fights took on the character of popular rebellion. This is the way, for example, that Martha Kryukova, a presentday story-teller, treats Buslayev. Gorky in general extends the idea of the bylina. From the first part he takes the psychological side, the daring character of Vaska, the boldness of a bogatyr whose strength "flows through his veins with his blood." He plays with his strength as long as he has no other, "real" task on hand. The events of the second part of the bylina are of great importance to Gorky. Vaska and his daring band ride into Jerusalem and despite the ban bathe naked in the River Jordan. Further, Vaska meets with a skull which prophesies his end. He mocks the prophecy and the death. Lastly comes his death on the accursed stone. He ridicules the curse written on the magic stone and jumps onto it because the curse forbids it; thus he plays with fate and throws out a challenge to death. And he dies. Gorky understands these episodes as a struggle against the gods (theomachy), a challenge to fate, a struggle against binding traditions. The figure of Buslayev which came into being when the free town of Novgorod was at the height of its prosperity is understood in a wider sense as an important side of the Russian character.

I, Vassenka, believe not in dreams and visions,
I, Vassenka, believe in my scarlet cudgel.

This is the leitmotif of the bylina. This is not only a bold defiance of fate but a comparison between himself, his own strength and fate.

Naturally Vaska's original actions were a challenge to religious traditions but in Gorky's treatment of the subject Vaska's theomachy is seen in a much broader sense. Man against fate, the struggle of man, of the people against the power of destiny, against all forces which hamper his free will—this is the content which Gorky finds in the legend and which is closely bound up with the theme of fate in his works.

There is a kind of double intonation in the Buslayev bylina. The memory of the people seems to hesitate, admiring Buslayev and at the same time paying due respect to the undefined power of fate and death. Vaska Buslayev dared bathe naked although he knew that the results would be fatal. He kicked the skull although he knew that he was throwing out a challenge to death—in other words, he would die. And naturally he did die. Buslayev's daring is a good thing but fate is something you cannot quarrel with.

At the same time it is possible to read the bylina with the opposite intonation. What if Vaska did die? He had placed his own will above all else. By his deeds and his daring he had raised himself above fate and had become stronger than death. To Gorky the Buslayev story could only be understood in this way, embodying the old, decisive feature of the Russian heroes—the courage to break completely with the oppression of old traditions, a feature bound up with the whole future of the Russian people.

Buslayev occurred to Gorky more than once as the possible hero of an important work. In the nineties it was the idea for a play. Later Gorky thought of making it the libretto of an opera in which Chaliapin would

play the leading role. These ideas were never materialized and only Buslayev's monologue has been left to us:

Oh, that greater strength were mine,
Warm would I breathe and melt the snow,
All the world's soil would I go out and plough,
A century would I travel, towns would I build.
The earth would I beautify like a maiden,
I would fold her in my arms like a lover,
I would raise the earth to my breast,
I would lift it and carry it to the Lord.
"Gaze, Lord, on the earth," I would say,
"See how Vaska has beautified it.
You cast it as a stone into the heavens,
And I have made of it a precious jewel.
See how it flashes like an emerald in the sun,
And I would give it to you as a gift,
But there is nothing I love dearer..."

The speaker of this monologue is actually a combination of the main traits of the Russian people's character embodied in the various byliny; motifs of strength and theomachy are here combined with another motif—creative effort. Gorky developed these motifs in a way possible to a people's poet of a much later period, when free creative labour was not longer a dream but something that science could clearly see as a matter of the immediate future. When we compare Gorky's heroes with those of the byliny they more clearly and definitely maintain their mastery of nature, reproaching God for having cast the earth "as a stone into the heavens" and proudly acclaiming that only man, only the people could make a precious emerald of it which flashes in the sun.

Gorky's Buslayev is really a Russian variant of Prometheus, a character of which Gorky was very fond. Not merely daring but creative labour is the price the people pay for their victory over fate and over death.

It was not an accident that Gorky's writings of Buslayev remained nothing but drafts. Vaska Buslayev could not carry that tremendous ideological and psychological "cargo" that Gorky tried to embody in his image. B. Byalik, a Soviet critic, speaking of Gorky's attitude to folklore, said that he did not simply quote popular works or attempt to imitate them. He laid bare the rich fantasy of the people as the forerunners of modern progressive art, and first and foremost of Soviet art. At the same time, in Gorky's own works folklore themes, motifs and images are closely woven into the fabric of the story and reproduced in the form of modern fiction.

The age-old subjects of folklore—man's struggle against fate, the people's struggle against death—are dealt with optimistically as the victory of life over death, of man over destiny; these run constantly through Gorky's books. In his story *The Girl and Death* love as the force creating life is victorious over death. The roots of the image of the mother go deep into the soil of folklore; she is constantly appearing in Gorky's works, in his best stories—in his *Birth of Man*, *The Hunchback*, in his Italian stories and lastly as the heroine of his world-famous novel *Mother*. Everywhere the mother is the symbol of life, love and the basic vital force.

The "titanic nature" of the Russian national character is recreated by Gorky in his books dealing with contemporary subjects. His novel *Three of Them* written before 1905 and his *Foma Gordeyev* show a tragic variant of the Russian whose strength aroused against the philistines perishes without finding useful application. The expansive prowess of Buslayev is relived in the early romantic figures of Gorky such as Chelkash; the daring strength of the Novgorod rebel appears in a different form in the merchants depicted by Gorky—the Artamonovs, Mayakins and Bulychovs. The real inheritors of Buslayev's boldness, which gained victory over fate and death, however, are Gorky's main characters, the Russian working people, the free masters of their land.

EUGENIA GALPERINA

DOLMATOVSKY'S WAR LYRICS

Eugene Dolmatovsky's first appearance as a poet was in the early thirties when he was still little more than a schoolboy. His first published works showed that he possessed talent as a lyricist—the lightness of his verse, his choice of subject and the extremely topical nature of his writings were his strongest points. Perhaps a full picture of the world had not been built up in his mind, perhaps it was a very narrow world to this Moscow youngster at a stage between high school and college, but his imagery was true and the details that went into his verses were a sign of the times.

By June 22nd, 1941, Dolmatovsky had matured, his character had formed and he had been through the school of war on the Karelian Peninsula in 1939—1940. At the beginning of the World War II he joined the Red Army as a member of the staff of one of the front line newspapers.

At first he was unfortunate. He was wounded, was stranded a long way back behind the enemy's lines and spent many days trying to get back to the army, his native land and freedom. All Dolmatovsky's comrades knew of him was that he was missing.

At the end of November 1941, when the frosts were most severe, in days filled with a hope that truth and life would triumph, a poem signed by Dolmatovsky appeared in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. Now, after three years, this seems to me to be one of the most serious and brilliant poetic documents of that time, so strong is its iron, indomitable faith in victory.

Dolmatovsky addresses the Ukraine and tells how he got away from the west and

In Berlin. Eugene Dolmatovsky speaking before the soldiers at the Brandenburg Gate

joined the headquarters of his regiment. He still feels the fragrance of the Ukraine with him. Our army, he said, would soon return. He could see the cavalry entering Vinnitsa, tanks on their way to Kiev, the Red Army pouring down on Poltava in attack. They were fighting for a just and sacred cause. He does not consider this a vision: "It will be so," says the last line of this poem.

This was written in Voronezh on November 9th, 1941; it was addressed to the future and proved to be justified in the future.

A book of poems, *Faith in Victory*, from the Soviet Writer Publishing House contains all Dolmatovsky's best wartime poems. It depicts the road travelled, the history and activity of the poet in the army; he was sociable, receptive of impressions and had great vitality. The term "army poet," incidentally, is but a very poor description of him. He was a typical Soviet intellectual who had become an officer of the Red Army. He carefully cherished the memories of his past, of his peacetime happiness. During the Stalingrad battle, when he was quartered in a half-ruined house, he realized that the fight was for his own home in some other city.

"It's true you and I did not have an apartment of our own," he begins, "we lived in a room in a students' hostel, meagerly furnished, a divan to sleep on, a map of the world on the wall and our baby girl sleeping in her pram in the corner."

The picture which he then conjures up is like a nightmare but follows the truth down to the last detail concerning the German tommy-gunner who fires out of the window of Dolmatovsky's house and "drinks water from Galya's mug." "Our duel may last an hour or a day," he continues, "and all the time the German is in my house. Perhaps we shall have to fight for a year and not just for a day, but I shall never surrender that house to him!"

The past brings back very fine memories to the soldier at the front, mixed memories of great things and small. Everything that appears in these reminiscences refers to yesterday and tomorrow: again and again students gather, somebody is shouting that "the punch is ready, the Riesling is on the weak side," that "crabs from the Far East are the food of the gods." The friends raise their glasses and drink to the Institute of Philosophy. As another poet wrote on the same theme—"they stretch out a hand from the students' hostel to immortality."

It is as though the writer has before him an old photograph taken with a magnesium flash—something has moved in that half-faded picture—time, history, the future have burst in upon that immobile group.

The greater the intensity of the present—and this intensity is of such a nature that it would seem to leave room for nothing but the matter immediately in hand—the greater this intensity, the dearer become dreams of the future. This is a trait in man that distinguishes him from all other living things on earth. This dream of the future permeates the whole of Dolmatovsky's book, which he has called *Faith in Victory*.

Every soldier at the front is anxious to raise his field-glasses to his eyes. Inevitably, the picture of his native town arises before him. One says: "I see Kiev." Another contradicts him: "You're mistaken, old chap, that's sad old Smolensk." The sailor of the Black Sea Fleet raises his voice in favour of Odessa. It is faith that hurries the soldiers

on and on, makes distances shorter, removes the boundaries between today and tomorrow. This is the force on which all popular movements are built up, including military offensive action.

The poet who is so closely bound up with the army and the people cannot stand or sit still in wartime. Impatience drives him on and on. In Dolmatovsky's verses the front looks like an inhabited house which is constantly moving forward with its inhabitants inside it. So many meetings, so many sudden partings, so much wind and so many river crossings—a full life indeed! This reality that is flashing before the eyes, however, passes swiftly through the mind and requires the keen vision and wakefulness of the artist to see it, for today will never be repeated tomorrow.

The soldier's world of Dolmatovsky's poems is convincing on account of thousands of typical points that he has picked up. Behind these verses there is not only keen observation but a desire to paint his pictures with greater brilliance and more colour, if only he can feel in his nostrils the glorious breath of life with its impossibility of repetition. He shows us lilac that smells "stronger than old gun powder": the front line runs along some gardens and this bunch of flowers has appeared in the dugout—useless, aimless, but dearer than all else.

The bouquet, he writes, stood in an empty shell case in the battalion dugout and burned with a cold flame, like burning spirit.

In a cold, deserted school building, soldiers whom chance has brought together for a few hours in premises that though comfortless looked lived-in, hold an evening concert.

The radiola plays with a hoarse voice, says the poet. There is snow lying without, the smell of powder is unpleasant and there is the muffled tread of felt-shod feet.

The poet sees a town burning after an air attack and gives an unexpectedly foreshortened picture which brings the reader directly into the midst of events: in an old barge the flames bite into the sides of the hull. The siren howls and rats come running out along a hawser. Along the narrow board on the side of the barge, a mother, bearing a child wrapped in a red napkin, picks her way through the puddles of oil.

Is it strange like a dream? When and where, under what circumstances did you see this? This is how life appears to us in moments of greatest stress.

The poems may be of any type, short or long, introspective or passionate, gay or sad, well-turned or ill-turned. Whatever else Dolmatovsky's poems may be, they always give a cross-section of real life, a living scrap of the fabric of time. This is what gives them strength, here Dolmatovsky is always true to himself. This is his world.

This is why his poem *Missing* was so successful. From the first lines the reader feels the truthfulness of what is being described. Of course, only a man who has been wounded in the head and is suffering from a concussion could see flames arising in such a way:

"It seemed as though to the left and the right cocks with their heads chopped off were running about."

Naturally only a man lying flat on the ground would stare so intently at the ant crawling over the cheek of a dead comrade. These are minor details picked up almost unconsciously but they have the inner fearlessness of vision behind them.

The story of the poem is told in the present tense and in the first person. This is a serious problem for the lyricist, especially if we consider the terrible events he describes: the danger of being shot, the shooting, salvation, escape, the difficult journey and finally the arrival amongst his own men. The poet could easily have drifted into the "grand Guignol" which marred the art of the World War I. The poem does not keep silent on any point, you may read of starving people tearing the blue sinews of stinking horse-flesh with their teeth or of the "yellowish-green patch of pus" that soaks through a bandage black with filth. The author is honest and does not colour anything. His purposeful lyricism, the righteous, strong impatience of a living being who lives on this earth but once and perhaps for that reason believes in his immortality, carries him through a horrible world, soberly seen. The poet must say all that he has to say and his feelings are uncommonly clear-cut. When the story suffers brief interruptions to bring out these feelings, the inner meaning of what he has experienced stands out in sharp relief:

"I was never a commissar nor a member of the Security Troops that the enemy fear. I simply grew up under the Soviet sky that is as clear and pure as the Russian heart. For this alone I am doomed not to see tomorrow's dawn. If this is so then let me be everything that the enemy hates so savagely, let this give me strength and be my last pride."

It is the task of the poet to show the formation of personality, its growth when faced with unparalleled personal and national calamities. In historical times, in the "fatal moments" of the world, this is the path that must be followed by art. This is the story of how a man of peace who grew up under Soviet skies became a soldier and a revenger.

Dolmatovsky's book is uneven. There are verses and stanzas that are inaccurate, poems of temporary significance, they will disappear from the world of poetry together with the events which gave rise to them. Is it worth while, however, to deplore this? The poet wrote them during a campaign and he was not the only one in this position. The writer at the front did not work in a room under a lamp with a green shade. There was not always a table handy on which he could rest his arm and support his head while he sought among the crowding thoughts for the "only exact thing"...

Eugene Dolmatovsky is first and foremost a lyrical poet. This means that his talent is by nature one that deals with the spiritual life of man. The greater the freshness with which he is able to do this, the more necessary to the people is the poet.

Here is a quotation from Dolmatovsky which may serve as an epigraph. A wounded soldier is speaking. During the first minutes after the blow has reached his brain his mind is filled with the most important thoughts:

"Standing beside my coffin, I would swear that our life has been a particle of the early warmth and not the fever of the night. We threw off the oncoming darkness with its calamity; we were not yet the sun but we were the Star of the Morning."

What wonderful, human truth! What modest pride! This is true of all Soviet people who lived through the unexampled horrors of the war years and did not bow down under the blow that was struck at the heart of man.

PAVEL ANTOKOLSKY

THE BIOGRAPHY OF SCIENCE

Maxim Gorky once expressed surprise at the fact that having learnt to fly man immediately ceased to be astonished by it.

He considered that those who write about the achievements of science should teach man to be astonished at himself. "He has never yet been amazed at himself, at the tremendous power of his creative energy, although in our world it is only the strength of his intellect, imagination and intuition and his tirelessness in toil that is really worthy of wonder..."

I recently read two books by the engineer and inventor Vladimir Orlov. One is called *Piercing Rays* and deals with searchlights (Children's Publishers, 1943) and the other is *The Underground Storm*, about mines (Children's Publishers, 1944). The children's magazine *Pioneer* in 1944 and 1945 published extracts from a third book by Orlov entitled *Stories of the Elusive.*

In Orlov's books everything gives rise to wonder—his subjects, his characters and his landscapes. We will begin with the landscape.

"Its rocky crater was white-hot," he says, describing a fire-breathing mountain. "Violet flames surrounded by a reddish halo leaped out of it. The heat was so intense that the rocks bubbled, boiled and steamed. Over the crater another white-hot crag hung from the black heavens, its peak gleaming with a blinding light."

Where did Orlov see this amazing landscape? On what planet?

He saw it on earth. He simply silhouetted a voltaic arc on the screen and put it to work. The arc drew a self-portrait on the screen and added its autobiography through the voice of the announcer.

How many times during the war did we read stories of sapper heroes, of gallant partisan demolition squads? Orlov gets right down to rock bottom in the mining business. We begin to understand what a mine and what a sapper is. We begin to understand the stern reality of the soldier's saying: "A sapper makes only one mistake in his life." With bated breath we follow the story of the scientist who made the mine detector, and of the sapper who works like a surgeon removing a deadly splinter from the track of a tank in the form of a mine detonator.

The work of the human intellect and human hands is the inexhaustible source from which Orlov draws his subject matter.

What is scientific endeavour other than the surmounting of the insurmountable?

"It can't be done but I'll do it"—this is the "mad daring" of the human mind which so astonished Gorky.

Orlov tells us how the searchlight men—"the snipers of the blue ray"—catch enemy aircraft. The crews of the sound detector help the searchlights. The searchlight and the sound detector work together like the eyes and the ears of man. The searchlight, however, is a noisy neighbour, it crackles and howls and prevents one from listening. To avoid the noise the sound detector has to be moved at least a kilometre away from the searchlight.

The eyes in one place, the ears in another. How to connect them, how to keep them together so that the sound detector can guide the searchlight? Impossible? Science, however, exists to make the impossible possible.

"Do you want to write with a pen that lies a hundred kilometres away from you?" asks Orlov.

Together with the reader he builds up an arm a hundred kilometres long, builds it up with the aid of the achievements of telemechanics.

An arm like this can be used to stretch from the sound detector to the searchlight. One obstacle has been overcome.

Still there are other difficulties. How can one catch the enemy aircraft? It does not stand still and wait. Corrections have to be made for the speed of the aircraft and the velocity of the wind which carries the sound. And while these calculations are being made the aircraft is still travelling. It seems that it is impossible then?

But no, human intellect can surmount even this barrier.

Our brains count too slowly, so we have to build another brain of steel that can count more quickly.

This is how "Prozhzvuk" came into being, the military alliance of "the Big Ears, Long Arm, Steel Brain and the Piercing Ray."

Orlov's book does not provide a ready answer. As a flying instructor he takes his reader with him. "Now you take over," he says. And the reader becomes the inventor.

The reader feels with pleasure that his mind is surmounting obstacles. He is fascinated by it and is astounded at his own strength. Man is astonished at himself. This is what Gorky wanted.

In this way future researchers, future inventors, future innovators, daring people who stride over barriers, are not only recruited but are trained.

Orlov says that "the voltaic arc is miniature lightning formed at the ends of the carbon rods."

This is an accurate definition and at the same time poetic imagery.

Orlov says that "the earth gets as dusty as a globe." This is perfectly true: every day a hundred tons of cosmic dust settle on the surface of the earth.

Science and poetry merge. Here there is "all truth and all beauty," as Pissarev says of real literary popularization.

It is sometimes said that the task of scientific romances is to "breathe the spirit of poetry in science and technology, to make science alive and interesting."

Science, however, is not dead. There is life and poetry in science. All that is required is the ability to see them.

In order to "give life to science" the "doctors" make use of all kinds of sweet mixtures, interesting and entertaining methods. They think up all kinds of popular fiction to carry the science. Science does not need mixtures and stretchers. Science can walk on its own feet without outside help.

It is the task of the writer to show how well science can walk, how she can climb the steepest mountains and leap across chasms; all this Orlov does well and in an interesting manner in his books.

MIKHAIL ILYIN

A DRAFT PLAN FOR "IMPERIAL MAJESTY" (PETER THE GREAT)

Sickness and death prevented Alexei Nikolayevich Tolstoy from completing the third and last part of *Imperial Majesty*. Unfortunately Alexei Nikolayevich never drew up general schemes or made notes of the novel he planned to write. He kept the plan, the idea of the work as a whole, in his head and wrote it chapter by chapter, finishing each and maintaining the correct sequence of ideas. His work expressed the chief traits in his character: he would never tolerate haste, unfinished work or procrastination and with the dogged determination of his great temperament he always strove to get the best, the very best, concrete and immediate fulfilment of any of his more serious ideas.

He kept his thoughts to himself when they concerned what he considered was dear and important to him. He hardly ever spoke about what he intended to write, as he believed that he would not be able to write anything that he had already told in detail. He maintained that once you have lived through that which you intend to write there is nothing left but "burnt stumps"—you cannot go through it a second time.

The last part of *Imperial Majesty* was an exception to the rule. Long before the end came Tolstoy had periods of suffering which interrupted his work. The novel had ripened to a stage where it filled his thoughts and it seemed as if the characters were living beside him, that they were right under his eyes and that all he required was time and strength to record all he saw; when he could not write he sometimes thought aloud about the books he would write in the future (but never *how* he would write them). In notebooks which contain a few rough chapters already written there is a list of names, words, proverbs and expressions and the following note: "Chapter Six: 1) Peter in Yuriev. 2) Capture of Narva. 3) Baroness Kozelska and Menshikov. Chapter Seven: Sanka in Paris. Chapter Eight: Christmas in Moscow. The ridiculous conclave. Golikov paints the portrait." (The last note is crossed out).

Alexei Tolstoy began writing Chapter Six towards the end of November and thought that the sub-headings would include, after the capture of Narva, the arrival of Baroness Kozelska and Catherine in Peter's camp. When he had finished the description of the capture of Narva, however, he decided to devote the Seventh Chapter to a description of how Baroness Kozelska, dressed as a man, arrived in Peter's camp as an ambassador from August in the hope of fascinating Peter and becoming his lover and how her plans were upset by Menshikov, who himself enjoyed her favours. Tolstoy included the arrival of Catherine in the same chapter.

Chapter Eight is "Sanka in Paris." The Ninth Chapter is Christmas in Moscow and the love-affair between Gabriel Brovkin and Tsarevna Natalia.

Tolstoy showed unusual tenderness in his depiction of Natalia, Peter's favourite sister. In mind and body she resembled Peter, and although little has remained in the records concerning her she was apparently an enlightened woman who knew foreign languages, translated and wrote much for the theatre. The author considered that she laid the foundations of the Russian theatre. Her affair with Brovkin is fiction: Alexei Nikolayevich wanted to give his heroine an opportunity of experiencing an ardent, pure, young love.

When he thought of Christmas in Moscow he experienced pleasure and impatience. He wanted to plunge into that full and expansive Russian life that was his element. "If you only knew what I intend to do here!" he said several times.

He thought of the chapter about "Sanka in Paris" as being a difficult one but you could feel that he was adapting himself to the task; he wanted to make the chapter surprising and dazzlingly brilliant. He planned chapters on the foundation of the Admiralty and was very interested in the Swedes' last attack on St. Petersburg when they were repulsed at Kronstadt by Tolbukhin. By this it was clear

that he regarded this episode as characteristic of the Russian, his boldness, daring and courage. When I asked him what he would include in this episode he said: "When I write it, you'll see..."

When Tolstoy visited Leningrad and Kronstadt last year he wanted to study the landscape at Tolbukhin Spit. He also wanted to include the Bulavin revolt in his novel.

He intended finishing the novel with the Battle of Poltava or the Pruth campaign.

In one of his last letters, written in November 1944, he said: "I want to go only as far as Poltava in the novel, perhaps as far as the Pruth campaign, but I don't know yet. I don't want the characters in it to grow old: what am I to do with old men?.."

These notes on the last work of Alexei Tolstoy were written by his widow, *Lyudmila Tolstaya* (Ed.)

NEW BOOKS

The "Young Guard" Publishing House has recently issued a novel by Nikolai Biryoukov, entitled *Chaika* ("The Sea Gull"). This is the nickname given to the heroine of the novel, Katya Volgina, a leader of the partisan movement in the Volga area during 1941—1942. As the prototype of Chaika the writer chose the image of the Heroine of the Soviet Union, Lisa Chaikina, who was tortured to death by the Gestapo in Kalinin Region.

In Biryoukov's novel the scene is laid partly in a small district centre, partly in a village. The main plot of the novel is based on authentic facts from Lisa Chaikina's biography as well as from the lives of her friends and companions. Young people play the leading part in the book though other representatives of the partisan movement of that district are also portrayed.

Biryoukov's book clearly shows that the partisan movement was a natural form of self-defence of the Soviet people against German fascism—the fascism which forced on the U.S.S.R. totalitarian war with its devastation, cruelty, violence and degradations inflicted by the nazis on the peaceful population.

The glorious tradition of Soviet youth originating from the Civil War years were forged during the period of the construction of the Soviet state. Quite naturally, in the terrible hour of war, our youth with grim determination rose in defence of their fatherland. In 1935, the heroine of Biryoukov's novel was a sixteen-year-old peasant girl, who worked in the village reading-room. Later she becomes an outstanding propagandist and organizer of advanced methods of agriculture.

The author convincingly portrays how the girl's activity, her striving to transform life, to make it rational and beautiful, was a physical necessity for Katya Volgina. The book is epigraphed with the words from Gorky's legend *Old Izerghil*, which tells how the hero Danko tore his burning heart out of his breast to light the road for mankind. The same love for mankind inspires Chaika. *The Burning Soul* is the title of the first part of the book. It shows the spiritual growth of the heroine during her struggle for culture and enlightenment.

It was in these times that Katya Volgina's character and her particular sensitiveness towards people which attracted everybody who came into contact with her were formed. At that time her great talents also became manifest.

The outbreak of war. Katya joins the partisans and becomes a propagandist. In the enemy rear Chaika acts with daring and courage. Under the very nose of the Germans she circulates pamphlets containing Stalin's speeches. In peril of her life, Chaika "lights the way" for the people, inspiring hundreds of Soviet men and women with courage and the will to fight. At last, hunted down by traitors and betrayed to the Gestapo, she dies the death of a hero. Yet salvation was so near: the partisans had already rushed into the town to liberate Chaika and the Red Army units had closed in upon the Germans. The murder of Chaika was the usual act of vengeance on the part of the Germans when they were compelled to leave Soviet soil.

The image of Chaika is very human and vivid. The author portrays a young girl who loves life, rejoices in her youth, experiences her first emotions of love. At the same time we see a noble, strong personality which consciously and unflinchingly prepares to die heroically. Closely linked up with the people and its destinies, she quite naturally sacrifices her life for this.

And by the life of Chaika the people's legend of a "girl herald" who walks along Russian villages and hamlets enslaved by the enemy, foretelling victory and dispelling the gloom of despair from the minds of people tortured by the Hitlerites, can be explained. The chapter in which Chaika comes across a peasant who relates to her this legend about herself is highly attractive.

The author successfully creates the images of Chaika's old mother and an old peasant, Mikhail, who voluntarily took upon himself the ignominious and heavy office of village chairman under the Germans to be able to help his neighbours and the partisans. Later on, Mikhail, like the famous Russian hero of the 17th century, Ivan Sussanin, leads an enemy detachment into a forest swamp and although perishing from their hands, he saves his own people.

Biryoukov gives a true representation of the Soviet village and of its inhabitants who, from children to old men, bravely fought the invaders.

The poet is fifty years old. In recalling bygone years how happy he is at being able to tell

about his own youth in youthful and fresh language. *A Journey into Youth*, a new work by the famous Ukrainian poet Maxim Rylsky, recently published in Russian translation by the Soviet Writer Publishing House, bears the hall-mark of a mature talent, enriched and enlightened by experience.

A Journey into Youth is a profoundly subjective lyrical poem and, maybe, because of this, gives a clear picture of the society in which the poet has grown up and developed.

In the seven parts of the poem, Rylsky depicts his boyhood years, amusements, friends, his older brothers, Ivan and Bogdan. With one stroke, in one brief line, Rylsky revives the characters of his heroes: "Ivan the silent, and Bogdan, now withdrawing into his shell, now exploding like gun powder." "Our fiery father" is how the poet refers to Faddei Rylsky, the well-known Ukrainian public figure, champion of freedom and the people's rights. When writing of his father he depicts also his surroundings and the progressive people of the Ukraine of that time. Link by link, the poet unravels the history of the Ukraine, shows her struggles, tears and songs and her great poet, Taras Shevchenko.

Rylsky paints the colourful landscape of the Ukrainian village, beautiful Kiev. He describes his school days, his teachers and comrades, his first love. . .

"My dear, old love (Alas, we both are old!),
Armed with your eye glasses you will perhaps
My writings read down to this very line. . ."

the poet says, addressing his first love.

"Who knows, but perhaps, amidst the smoke of battle,
My son, a loyal comrade and gallant soldier,
May of a sudden meet your daughter, as young
As you once were. . ."

Thus the poet builds a bridge from the past to the present, to the grim days of war.

The entire poem is formed by giving free vent to memories; chronologically separated, they are yet welded by inner unity. Ironical notes which in some places acquire a satirical force constantly intrude into the poet's lyricism, as for example the lines describing the February Revolution of 1917.

With passionate indignation Rylsky denounces the traitors of the people, all those hetmans Petluras, Denikins, the "hussies with crimson bows," who "sold out their country and trampled on their ideal."

With complete objectiveness and profoundity, Rylsky tells how he sought his path ("In the tangled paths I saw the field of life"), found it, and "overtaking youth," restored it to himself.

The poem is written in octave, in calm rhythm. Every detail of its pattern stands out in bold relief, accentuating every shade of the rich, colourful picture. It culminates in sonorous, optimistic verse. It is as if the poet were surveying the world from the mountain tops. This world is beautiful, but it must be still better: "I want life to be doubly warm. I want flowers to grow in countless numbers."

And one is led to believe that this will really come about as guaranteed by the word of the fifty-year-old poet who has preserved the vigour of youth and his poetic fervour.

A volume of selected stories by Nikolai Teleshov, the oldest Russian contemporary writer (born in 1867), was recently published by the Soviet Writer Publishing House. Teleshov's first effort was published in 1884.

Appearing in print before Gorky and almost at the same time with Chekhov, the writer continues his literary activities to this day. The sixtieth anniversary of his literary career last year was marked by the publication of his sixtieth book: *A Writer's Notes*.

The latest volume contains stories from the *Settlers* series which caused a sensation at one time. They are stories about the hard lot of peasant settlers in Siberia during the tsarist regime. Teleshov composed these stories after his trip to the Urals, acting on Chekhov's advice. A lively interest was also aroused by a series of stories dedicated to the Revolution of 1905. Several of these stories are also included in the recently published volume and illustrate the regime of oppression in tsarist Russia on the eve of 1905. Particularly interesting is the story about a priest who rebelled against the Black Hundreds (*Treason*) and the police officer driven to suicide by pangs of conscience (*The Noose*). The volume concludes with several legends and fairy tales presented by the author in original form.

Teleshov has always regarded the work of a writer as a service to society, as the sacred cause of his life. In his stories he is the fervent champion of the oppressed and suffering people. His writings are realistic, simply told, and profoundly faithful to life.

Teleshov has rendered great service to the literary world: not a single undertaking in the Writers' Association has been carried through without his active participation. .

In 1938 Teleshov received the title of Merited Art Worker. To this day he continues his manifold activities. ". . . To be a Russian writer is a great happiness," declares the author in his latest book.

Uncle Kostya is the title of a short play by Vsevolod Ivanov and issued by the Art Publishing House.

Action takes place at the Orsha Station in 1942. The principal hero is no fictitious character, but Hero of the Soviet Union, Constantine Zaslonov, the elusive commander of a partisan detachment. A capable railway engineer, he entered the employ of the German invaders. Appointed as superintendent of the Russian locomotive crews at the Orsha depot, he organized, through trusted comrades, a number of major acts of sabotage on the important Orsha-Smolensk railway behind the German lines at the time of the violent German drive on Moscow.

The main plot centres around the psychological combat between Zaslonov and the fascist colonel Krauts, who is specially dispatched to Orsha by the Gestapo to discover the organizers of the sabotage. Zaslonov's exceptional composure and his ironic calm in the face of mortal danger, lend the play a highly forceful tension. A secondary plot deals with the re-

lations between Zaslonov and Assya, the young girl interpreter of the station chief. Zaslonov is suspicious of her until the course of events discloses Assya's true heroism, when she puts Krauts out of the way. An interesting figure among the other personages is Stumpfe, the station chief and German businessman who defends his property with incomparably greater zeal than the property of Hitler Germany.

Ivanov's play, which reflects an important period in the Great Patriotic War, is almost completely devoid of anything spectacular. It is distinguished by its laconic style and concentrated action. Difficult because of this very terseness, it is nevertheless a tempting play for the actor.

At the time of the complete collapse of Hitler Germany, when her ringleaders are either dead or imprisoned by the Allied troops, and more than this, when voices are even raised here and there appealing for "mild treatment" of these criminals, the pamphlet *Death's Camp*, issued by the State Publishing House of Political Literature, is of special significance. For people with short memories we recommend a careful perusal of these frightful photograph records, to learn the shocking facts revealed by this seventy-five-page pamphlet. It contains material about the monstrous crimes perpetrated by the Hitlerite executioners during their rule in Byelorussia. There are photographs of a woman and two little children murdered by the fascists, of a seventy-five-year-old man shot by the guards when he lagged behind the column, of the mutilated body and face of a young girl found in one of the concentration camps, the corpses of children who perished from hunger in a camp near the town of Ozarichi.

The pamphlet contains documental facts exposing one of the methods of the builders of the fascist "new order." It deals with the death camps where, before their retreat, the Hitlerites murdered thousands of Byelorussian citizens. Through camps situated near their main line of resistance the Hitlerites tried to spread typhus in the ranks of the Red Army and in the Soviet rear. People suffering from typhus were placed together with healthy prisoners. Statements made by survivors of these camps saved by the Red Army represent frightful incriminating evidence against the Hitlerite barbarians.

The pamphlet is an incriminating document of great urgency. It is not only a reminder of horrible facts of the recent past, but also a warning to those inclined to forget them.

In the series *Front-Line Library* published by the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* a very interesting book, entitled *Letters from Patriots*, has just appeared in print.

In peace time, discussions took place on the pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* on questions of industry, private life and morals. The readers of the newspaper—the Soviet youth—took part in these discussions. During the war, when most of them were at the front, the ties between readers and their newspaper were not severed.

They write to the newspaper during a short halt, from the trenches, in a hospital train. Their letters often contain such post-scripts as the following:

"Can't go into details. Am writing in the trench, mines bursting around, bullets humming. Have just dug myself out. . ."

"Excuse my bad writing, it's dark and we are preparing for battle. Fierce fighting in progress on the left flank. Have no time to recopy this letter, even less for correcting it."

The majority of such letters are printed in the newspaper. And the editors receive replies to these. In this way the paper serves as a medium of intercourse between the front and rear. Battle episodes are reconstructed from various details. People, who have lost each other during the war, establish contact through the newspaper.

The book *Letters from Patriots* contains fourteen such "letters with a sequel."

Here is a letter to the paper sent by V. Livanov, the editor of a front-line "battle-sheet" who appeals to Soviet girls to write more often to the army and to establish individual correspondence with soldiers. In a short time about nine thousand replies were received by the newspaper office and direct by Livanov from all parts of the country.

A letter was sent from the German rear by a partisan named Ilya and addressed to his daughter whom he had left in Byelorussia in 1941. Reading the letter in the newspaper, Ilya's daughter visited the editorial office and her answering letter was also published.

The front-line soldier, Alfimov, asked the newspaper to help him find a seven-year-old girl, Vera, whom the soldiers of his unit had found wounded in a forest freed from German occupation. Retreating, the Germans had killed Vera's mother, sister and brother and had shot her through both legs.

Alfimov had decided to send money to the girl for her keep, but the money had been returned since Vera was no longer at the old address.

In answer to the newspaper appeal, he received a letter from a Siberian collective farm to which Vera had been transferred. Alfimov was informed that she was alive and well, in good circumstances and had quite recovered from her wounds.

Not a few letters published in the newspaper have helped to find men thought by their front-line pals to be missing or to have perished. These have been able to add more details of the war exploits performed by their particular unit.

Each letter in this book published by the newspaper is supplied with short elucidating commentaries.

Dmitri Pissarev is an outstanding Russian revolutionary democrat, who appeared on the political scene after Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov. He was destined to work under conditions of dark, political reaction. Appealing to all Russians of advanced views and above all to the young democratic intellectuals, he called them to irreconcilable struggle against tsarism, against all forces of reaction.

The government of the House of Romanovs took cruel revenge on Pissarev. During his short life (he perished when he was twenty-eight) Pissarev spent four years and a half in

the dungeons of the fortress of Peter and Paul. Years of imprisonment failed to break Pissarev's spirit; they only steeled his hatred towards the arbitrary regime and made his attitude still more uncompromising.

An outstanding place in the literary heritage of Pissarev belongs to his article *The Thinking Proletariat* which is devoted to the analysis of Chernyshevsky's novel *What Is to Be Done?* This essay, taken in conjunction with the article *Realists*, analysing Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*, is a brilliant example of revolutionary and enlightening journalism.

Pissarev gives a profound and subtle analysis of the famous novel, which in its time met with furious attacks from all the reactionary and liberal-bourgeois press. Pissarev demonstrated and proved that Chernyshevsky's work was not a "family novel"—that "the woman question" then in fashion, was far from being its main theme. Pissarev showed that Chernyshevsky's work dealt with the "new people," the new type of man, then appearing in Russia. In his analysis of the novel the critic advances profound ideas about the type of new man, his ethics and moral qualities.

In his article Pissarev tells of the great significance of labour in the life of the new man. The treatment of this theme forms the most striking pages of Pissarev's article. With inspired words he speaks of free, creative labour, the greatest joy of the new man.

Discussing the aspect of the new man, Pissarev indicates that one of its most characteristic features is complete harmony of thought and feeling—a harmony that "neither in mind or feeling is distorted by permanent hostility towards the rest of mankind." "In the new man's mind the notions of good and truth, honesty and knowledge, character and mind are identical: the more clever the new man, the more honest he is, for he makes less mistakes in his calculations. The new man has no reason for discord between mind and feelings, because his intellect directed towards his loved and useful work always gives only such advice consistent with his personal benefit, which coincides with the true interests of mankind and, therefore, with the demands of the most rigid justice and most scrupulous moral outlook."

Pissarev stresses that the whole of Chernyshevsky's work is directed towards the future.

Pissarev's article *The Thinking Proletariat* issued by the State Publishing House of Political literature, presents not only a historic and literary interest. It will captivate the reader with the profoundness and eternal freshness of its ideas, with its pathos of the fight for the victory of good and truth throughout the world, in all the vast domains of mankind.

UNDER THE BURNING SKIES OF ARGENTINE

The Argentine-Polish-Fascist Tango
Drawing by Boris Yefimov

ARTS

REMINISCENCES ABOUT VALENTINE SEROV

Olga Serova's reminiscences are dedicated to her father, Valentine Serov, the noted Russian painter (1865—1911).

Serov left a vast number of portraits which are preserved in the most important museums. He spent the greater part of his life in Moscow and only paid occasional visits to St. Petersburg, the capital at that time.

Korovin, Polenov, Ulyanov and Ostroukhov, who are mentioned in the reminiscences, are the names of well-known Russian artists. Tsarskoye Selo, also mentioned here, was the country residence of Nicholas II, and is not far from St. Petersburg.

We print excerpts from these reminiscences—*Editor.*

"I am painting portraits all the time," Serov wrote in 1910, "and I notice that the more I paint simultaneously, the easier it is. Otherwise I stick to the same thing, Hirschman's nose, for instance, and there I'm stuck. Another thing I've noticed is that I'm a better hand at women's portraits, though I should have thought it would be the other way about."

My father often painted several portraits at one and the same time. And if it was in some sense easier, as he said, still he worked at a great strain. If he had not painted so much and had not expended his strength so lavishly, he might have lived several years longer. But he had a large family to support, and his visits to St. Petersburg and abroad required large means.

"I think you know," he wrote in a letter to his fiancée about the portrait of his father, the composer Alexander Nikolayevich Serov, "that every portrait is like an illness for me." In another letter he said of his portrait of Zeitlin: "It all depends on how the nose, the eyes and everything else turn out and as always I am seeking and changing all the time."

"I am finishing a portrait and this is always very trying for me."

"Well, now I believe I have managed that portrait and I am more or less at ease; tomorrow I am leaving for Paris."

In a letter to the artist Ilya Ostroukhov, he wrote: "I am stranded here, in Sestroretsk, with a portrait (the solicitor Grusenberg with his wife.—*Ed.*), but the cursed thing won't come out. . ."

When he had finished the portrait, he wrote home: "The portrait is rather dirty but still I think I have succeeded in showing what I wanted to show—the countryside, the farm—you can feel it in her face and laugh. But of course I can't tell yet, it will be seen later."

In 1903 he painted the Yussupovs on their estate at Arkhangelskoye, a country place not far from Moscow. From there he wrote to his wife:

"I don't know what to do about coming home. I believe you sufficiently know my system of working on or rather completing portraits. It always happens that one of us (more often the sitter) has to go away and thus the work is broken off. The Yussupovs are remaining here until September 7th, and by that time I must do three and perhaps four portraits in oil and two pastels. Meanwhile there will

A portrait of N. Poznyakov by V. Serov

be two examinations and a meeting of the Council of the Tretyakov Gallery, and these will take up two days. I feel very well and am doing a fair amount of work. The Yussupovs seem to be satisfied with the work. I painted or rather 'took' the younger quite well. Yesterday I began the prince, at his own wish, on his horse (an excellent Arab, formerly the Sultan's). The prince is modest, he wants it to be a portrait of the horse rather than of himself. I can understand him perfectly. The elder son has not turned out a success with me and I shall simply start him all over again today. It seems I cannot paint official portraits at all —it is so dull. It was my own fault, of course, I should have taken my time and looked about me. This evening I shall try to sketch the princess in pastels and charcoal. I fancy I know how she ought to be treated. Of course, in painting one cannot anticipate the result; to know how to 'take' the sitter is the main thing."

On September 4th, he wrote home: "Well, now I seem to have finished my portraits, though of course I could do as much or half as much work again on them. My clients are pleased. I caught the princess' laughter a little. The best is perhaps the prince on his horse. Maybe is it because I didn't really try very hard. That happens sometimes."

Serov did not always spend months painting portraits, as is generally supposed. But he never spared himself or his sitter. He threw himself wholly into his work. A superficial observer might have missed the full strength of his creative tension. There was a kind of lightness and harmony in his movements as with brush or charcoal in his hand he came closer or stepped back from his easel, glanced at the model, the canvas or paper, put in a few touches, moved back again, or sometimes looked at the reflection of his work in the mirror. His movements were precise and quick. There was no deep furrow in the brow, the mouth was not strained, compressed or open, the whole face was calm and concentrated. But the eyes were so quick and took in his model at such a speed and with such tense eagerness to grasp everything he needed, that they made one think of lightning. And like lightning, he seemed to instantly illumine everything, down to the last smallest detail.

Nikolai Ulyanov told us that once when Serov was painting from life with his students in the art school, the model did not turn up for the last sitting. He was most upset and vexed, because he had to finish a hand. One of the students suggested that he should finish it without the model.

"I dare say you can do that, but I can't," Serov retorted.

Portraits made him terribly tired and yet he had to do many of them. It was a difficult and nervous business to ask him to paint one's portrait or a relative's portrait. One might be met with a refusal. If he refused, one felt offended; if he agreed, it was rather frightening. His sitters dreaded his all-seeing eye.

For example, when the Literary and Art Circle commissioned the portrait of Lensky and Yuzhin, the actors both were afraid he might caricature them, since both were stout and very pot-bellied.

Hirschman begged my father to take out the hand which in his portrait looked as though he was getting money out of his pocket. But the artist refused, saying that he had to have it this way or not at all. The picture was hung in one of the back rooms in the Hirschman's home.

I remember once N. S. Poznyakov came to see my father. I was sitting over my lessons in the adjoining room and I did not see who had come; I could not hear the conversation because the door was closed. From the few words that did reach my ears and the intonations, I gathered that the visitor was persuading father to do something, which father in his turn was endeavouring to convince him was out of the question. As it turned out, Poznyakov wanted to have his portrait painted. They had never met before, Poznyakov was only a young man at that time. My father was puzzled and kept asking him: "But why do you need a portrait of yourself?" and "What made you suddenly decide to have your portrait painted?"

Poznyakov, who was evidently too embarrassed to admit that he wanted his own portrait, said that he wanted to give it to his mother of whom he was extremely fond. In the end father agreed and though he was always faintly ironical about this commission, it engrossed him after a while and he made a splendid thing of it.

Poznyakov was a musician, a poet, a man of exquisite and cultivated taste. In his youth he was known as Dorian Grey, a Narcissus in love with himself.

This portrait and the picture of "The Abduction of Europa" were sent to the Russian artists' exhibition in Sweden in the summer of 1914 and when the war broke out were left there. They were placed in the Stockholm Museum where they remained for twenty-seven years, until, in 1941, they were restored to Russia a few days before the outbreak of the World War II.

In 1900 Serov painted his well-known portrait of Nicholas II. This portrait was commissioned by the Tsar himself as a present to Tsarina Alexandra. He sat for it in the palace at Tsarskoye Selo and my father had to travel out there from St. Petersburg. A carriage and pair were sent to meet the train; the horses were kept in the English style with clipped tails, the coachman and footman were in livery.

When the portrait was finished, the artist brought it to the place where the members of the "World of Art" met. The room was empty; father stood the portrait on a chair; at this level it looked as though Nicholas II's hands were resting on the table. The light was not very good, the face and figure looked alive. My father stepped back into the shadow and from there observed the effect on those who entered. Fright and complete bewilderment was apparent on every face; people stood stock still. In addition to its pictorial qualities the portrait was an exact likeness of the Tsar. Afterwards it hung in the bed-chamber of Alexandra Fyodorovna in the Winter Palace. In 1917 the sailors who attacked the Palace threw themselves with particular hatred on this portrait as though on a living man and not only slashed it in pieces but put out the

eyes. The pieces are preserved in the Russian Museum in Leningrad, but restoration is out of the question, for even if the pieces were put together, the eyes would still be missing, and only Serov could paint them.

It is interesting in this connection to read a letter sent by Serov to Alexander Mossolov, the head of the Chancellery of the Ministry of His Majesty's Court:

"Dear Sir, Alexander Alexandrovich,

"I must tell you that yesterday's conversation with you left a very bad impression on account of your remark that I was taking advantage of the fact that the price had not been previously agreed on, and naming too high a price.

"I do not know what right you have to fling such an accusation in my face.

"I have my own reasons for setting a price so high (in your opinion) and one of them is that until now they were (in my opinion) far too low, much lower than those of foreign artists like Becker and Flamming, who worked for the court.

"I am not charging the Ministry what the work costs me, as for instance the travelling from Moscow and the expenses of staying in St. Petersburg, the journey to Copenhagen, which I undertook when I was painting the late Alexander III. I am not charging for the watercolour copy of the portrait done instead of a sketch. This was a favour on my part and took me over a month to do.

"I would have preferred not to mention it at all, but your rebuke obliged me to do so. In any case no matter how much I asked, or how I was paid, I do not think you had any right to address the above-mentioned remarks to me and I must beg you to recall them.

"Academician Valentine Serov."

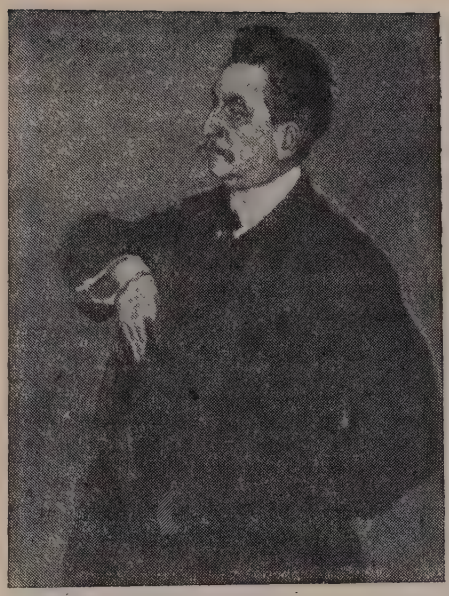
Serov had asked two thousand roubles for this portrait. It was a very modest price for those days, when Somov was asking twice as much. When they were painting almost simultaneously portraits of Henriette Hirschman, Serov asked five thousand, Somov—ten thousand.

To the end of his life, my father, though he had such a name as a painter, could not ask a high price and conversation on the subject was always painful to him.

Once in a conversation with Nikolai Ulyanov, he asked him half in jest, half in earnest what price one should ask for a masterpiece.

Those who knew Serov only slightly were astonished to find out later how gay and full of life he was.

Sometimes he used to stay with the Korovins in their country-home. The three old friends, Chaliapin, Serov and Korovin went out fishing together, and spent happy carefree days. In the evening Korovin's estate-agent, a dignified man, dropped in, bowed to everyone and hung up his hat—always on the same nail. Once my father pulled out the nail and made a drawing of it on the wall. When the man came that evening, he bade them all the time of day and attempted to hang up his hat in the old place. The hat fell down. He picked it up and calmly hung it again, but again it fell down. Astonished, the man made another attempt to hang it on the nail. But when it fell this time, he got frightened and crossed himself devoutly, to the delight of everyone.



Portrait of Hirschman by V. Serov

It was while they were all at the Korovin's country-house that my father decided to give Chaliapin a fright. So he hid under the staircase. Two hours passed and still Chaliapin did not put in an appearance. Just then a telegram came for father and a search was made for him. He came out of his hiding place just as Chaliapin was coming in. "What are you doing there?" he asked father in surprise. "I wanted to give you a fright." "Well, it's a good thing you didn't because I always have a revolver handy and I might easily fire if I got scared." Father was about forty at that time.

Once, coming home from the bath-house he told us that he had met Chaliapin and Leo Tolstoy there. All three were naked and in this unaccustomed state they hardly knew how to greet each other, how to behave and what to talk about. He showed us how each, trying to hide his nakedness, came forward to shake hands with a helpless, sheepish smile.

Korovin and Serov were close friends; my father was very deeply attached to this artist, especially in his youth, he loved and appreciated his exceptional gift and forgave him much that he would not have forgiven anyone else.

They saw a great deal of each other, but Korovin rarely visited us. They met often at the art school where they taught, at exhibitions, meetings, at Chaliapin's home and in restaurants. When he did visit us he always came to the backdoor for some reason. He lived quite close and always called father out on the stairs, where they discussed the Korovins' domestic troubles.

For weeks on end he would not turn up at the art school. Sometimes my father would send him a note by one of the boys: "Perhaps you'll drop in at the school today. They are paying."

Korovin had a gift for telling stories and improvizing. Fact and fantasy were interwoven in these brilliant colourful stories of his, but it was done with such artistry and wit and they were such fascinating tales that nobody cared about drawing distinctions between truth and fantasy.

Sometimes he said absurd things. For example, once during the Russo-Japanese war, when the talk turned on who would win, Korovin declared that the Japanese were likely to, because they had intestines about fourteen yards longer than the Russians. At this, my father pushed back his armchair, and with a glance at Korovin announced: "It must be time to go to bed."

From 1897 to February 1909 Serov taught at the School of Painting, Modelling and Architecture.

In 1908, Anna Golubkina, who was already well-known as a sculptor, made an application to the school to study drawing there. She was refused on account of political unreliability in the past. The trustee, who was incidentally the governor-general of Moscow, considered her application as undeserving of attention and did not forward it to the Tsar. On Serov's initiative it was discussed at a meeting of the school council.

"Anna Golubkina is one of our really good sculptors, and we have very few in Russia," father wrote. "Her application is deserving of consideration."

The refusal was too much for him, and despite the dissuasions of his students, fellow-teachers and Prince Lvov, who was one of the trustees, he resigned from the staff.

To the telegram signed by one hundred and forty students Serov replied: "Indeed I left the school, and as consolation can tell you that I shall not teach in any government schools or academies."

To this the students sent another telegram on February 11 th, 1909: "Dear Valentine Alexandrovich, while we are deeply grieved by the loss of our irreplaceable teacher, with whom our best impulses and hopes are bound up, we send warmest greetings to an artist who places free art higher than all else. We are deeply grateful for all that you have given us while you were with us in the school and we hope that we shall see you as a teacher—not in this government school—but in some free school. Signed: by the general meeting of the students of the School of Painting, Modelling and Architecture."

My father sent a telegram in reply to this: "I thank the students' meeting for the kindly feelings shown me. I shall keep your telegram as my dearest reward. Serov."

In 1905 Serov witnessed the shooting down of the crowd on January 9th in St. Petersburg. He was in the Academy of Arts at the time and from the window he could see the people, who were carrying icons and portraits. Then the guns opened fire, and he saw the people fall wounded and killed, and the sight of their blood gushing over the pavement made him sick and faint.

When he arrived home in Moscow, he looked like a man who had been through a bad illness.

The President of the Academy of Arts at that time was the Grand-Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich, uncle of Nicholas II. He was in command of the St. Petersburg troops, and it was he who issued the order to open fire on the demonstration.

Serov and Polenov wrote a letter and sent it to Count Ivan Ivanovich Tolstoy, Vice-President of the Academy, requesting that the contents of the letter should be made known at the meeting of the Academy.

Serov hoped that Repin and other painters who were members of the Academy would sign it, but they did not.

It was a challenge to the Academy, to Vladimir and, actually, to the Tsar himself.

The letter was not made public by Tolstoy at the general meeting and, as a demonstration, Serov resigned from membership of the Academy.

This is the letter:

"Dear Sir,

"We are sending you a declaration which we request you to make public at the meeting of the Academy."

"To the Meeting of the Imperial Academy of Arts.

"The terrible events of January 9th have cast a gloom over our hearts. Some of us were witnesses to the killing of defenceless people in the streets of St. Petersburg and this picture of bloody horror is impressed on our minds.

"We artists are deeply grieved that the person who was in command of those troops that shed our brothers' blood, is at the same time the head of the Academy of Arts, the purpose of which is to bring humane ideas and the highest ideals into life.

"V. Polenov, V. Serov."

Subsequently, when Dyaghilev suggested that Serov should paint Nicholas II, he wired to say: "I shall never work in that house again."

In 1905 Serov did a series of caricatures and sketches on revolutionary subjects and on the Tsar. Some of them were published in the magazines; others were not passed for publication by the censorship.

Thoughts of his country and pain for her never left him even while he was travelling in Greece and enjoying the sights—the Parthenon, the antique marbles and ancient relics.

When he learned from the newspapers that the Duma had been dissolved, he wrote from Corfu that the whole of this Russian nightmare oppressed him, that he felt paralyzed and there was nothing but a dull dead mist ahead.

Judging by the newspapers there was complete indifference to the news about the Duma.

"It seems as though all the so-called greatness of Russia lies in this indifference,"

my father wrote. "Not a law is passed without the Duma and yet all reforms are made outside of it. Splendid!"

When the political prisoners were released in 1905 he was with the crowd at the Taganka prison. He was at the university too when the barricades were put up and at the peasants' conference and the funeral of the revolutionary Bauman. He tried to help the prisoners. He contributed money and gave his drawings to the funds for aid to revolutionaries...

He belonged to no definite party but he was a citizen in the highest sense of the word and he thirsted for his country's freedom.

OLGA SEROVA

PATRIOTIC WAR CHRONICLED IN FILMS

The war in Europe has come to an end. Fascist Germany has capitulated. But for years to come contemporaries and distant descendants will read and study the records of the unprecedented struggle waged by freedom-loving mankind against the dark powers of bloody nazism. The extensive cinema-chronicle recorded from day to day on all fronts will remain a document of supreme importance. In these films is enshrined every event of importance of the last few years. Millions of yards of film have been taken and hundreds of documental films and pictures released depicting Red Army operations. On the screen are battles fought by every branch of the service; we see the devastating force of Soviet artillery; tanks effecting raids and breaches; bayonet charges and street-fighting; battles in the air, on the sea and under the water; numberless deeds of heroism performed by Red Army men; we see their staunchness and courage, their stubborn efforts in overcoming fortified sectors, water barriers, impassable fenlands and mine-fields.

Particularly stirring are the last culminating chapters of this cinema-chronicle, when the struggle reached the highest pitch of fierceness and obduracy. The nearer the denouement, the more desperate grew the resistance of the enemy who was bleeding white, the fiercer became the hurricane of fire and the dashing assault of the Red Army, the more perfect and inventive proved its skill, the more complex became the encirclements, the skirting movements and the sudden blows delivered from the flanks.

A lavish wealth of material was placed at the disposal of Jacob Poselsky, the producer, by the nineteen operators of the Second and Third Byelorussian Fronts for the film *In the Beast's Den*, a picture recording the triumphant march of the Red Army through Eastern Prussia. The film also contains stills shot by six reconnaissance sergeants who contrived to take photos of the enemy at close range in the thick of hand-to-hand fighting.

Unfolding on the screen are the fighting operations leading to the capture of Tilsit, Allenstein, Insterburg, Elbing and other important towns of Eastern Prussia. The flames of war are ablaze throughout this outpost of German militarism with its seven-hundred years of "Drang nach Osten" traditions.

It is here that we have the opportunity of seeing for the first time the civil population of German cities: sleek Bürgers and respectable-looking Fraus who had not had time to make their escape into the inland depths of their country together with their retreating armies. They are casting sullen glances at the men of the Red Army, evidently in expectation of retribution for the crimes committed by the nazi cut-throats. But however big the account to be presented by the Soviet people to the Hitler murderers for villainies uncountable perpetrated on the temporarily occupied lands of Byelorussia, Ukraine, Russia and the other republics of the U.S S.R., the Red Army does not and will not vent its righteous wrath on the civil population of the conquered country.

But are they all, indeed, as amicable and loyal as may appear at first sight? Are there none amongst them who, while now putting on the semblance of the simple-hearted man in the street, have had a hand in the nazi atrocities?

Look at this elderly Frau, mother of two S.S. men. One of her bright boys took part in the brutal killing of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, the Soviet partisan; the other was a prominent figure of the Majdanek Camp of Death. This thick-set German baited with dogs the white women slaves in his employ. He is identified by a Byelorussian girl. She will remember him as long as she lives!

Long processions of liberated slaves are moving eastwards, home: Ukrainians and Byelorussians, men and women of the Leningrad, Voronezh and Orel Regions. They are weeping for joy, embracing the Red Army men. Here are war-prisoners—Americans, Britons, French; they, too, have regained their freedom and are on their way back from the German convict hell. The Red Army has wrested them from behind the barbed-wire entanglements, rescuing them from moral and physical suffering.

Jacob Poselsky worked on the Byelorussian Front, his brother Joseph, also a producer, worked on the First Ukrainian Front, producing the documental film *In Upper Silesia*. Here we see the impregnable enemy defences breached by Marshal Konev's artillery on the Sandomir fighting ground, and the Red Army entering the land of Poland mauled and devastated by the fascists. The men and women of Częstochowa and other cities are seen joyfully greeting their liberators, the soldiers of the Red Army. The Polish tongue banned under the Germans is ringing forth untrammelled and free. The doors of enemy-desecrated Catholic churches and monas-

teries are opened—prayers of thanksgiving are heard on all sides.

...Horror comes wafted in gusts from the views of the nazi factory of death: the Oświęcim camp of death. Millions of men and women brought here from all parts of Europe were done to death within its grim precincts. The barracks are hedged in with wiring charged with a powerful electric current. Here are piles of clothing torn by the murderers from their victims; stark bodies of little children flung pell-mell among the corpses of adults killed or frozen to death in the barracks. We see the ghastly apparition of prisoners with numbers branded on their arms. By what miracle have they survived? They look like ghosts, like corpses come to life. Their eyes are lustreless, their movements uncertain. They cannot yet realize that the hour of deliverance has struck...

From the Vistula to the Oder, produced by Vassili Byelayev and the team-work of fourteen cameramen of the First Byelorussian Front depicts a further phase of the liberation of Poland.

It was here that Hitler's Mid-European rampart—a huge fortified area, fifteen thousand square kilometres, was breached. The whole territory was covered with iron concrete forts and casemates, with firing nests and bunkers, with mine-fields and anti-tank obstacles.

After having smashed the German defences Zhukov's troops emerged in the rear of the Warsaw contingent of the Germans and cut their communications. Simultaneously, the Vistula was being forced to the north of Warsaw. The advancing troops flanked the Polish capital from the west.

The offensive had been launched on January 14th and three days later the banner of victory was unfurled over liberated Warsaw. We see it raised by two men—a soldier of the Polish army and by a Red Army man. The fraternal ties binding their peoples are cemented by a good hug.

We see Warsaw converted by the Germans into debris. Not a street intact, not a house undamaged. Churches and cathedrals, the University, theatres, the royal palace—all are converted into piles of wreckage. Of the Copernicus monument only the pedestal remains. In ruins lie the house of Tadeusz Kościuszko and the home where Chopin wrote his immortal works. In this large, well-ordered city there lived two million and a half people. Now we see solitary figures wandering aimlessly through a dead and depopulated Warsaw.

... The joyful tidings of liberation are carried throughout the city. From every suburb and outskirt a living stream of Warsovians is flowing towards the central square of the capital to witness the parade of liberated Poland's troops.

Marshal Zhukov's troops are seen pursuing the retreating enemy. A terrific rout is in store for the Germans on the other side of the Vistula. The war has not yet witnessed such a mighty tide of offensive! Łodź has fallen! The German frontier is now near! Soviet units are fighting at the approaches to Posen! Ever more new parties of youths and girls saved from German captivity are shown on the screen. On their breasts they wear labels with the word "Ost." marked on them, signifying degrading slavery; on their documents are their finger-prints, identifying them as criminals.

Three faces are flashed on the screen. They are: Lechec, a Yugoslavian, Savich, a Serbian, and Esler, a Belgian. Only yesterday they had been under sentence of death. During the mass executions they feigned death. They survived but the horror they have gone through is mirrored in faces that look as if they were carved in stone.

On the eve of their flight the Germans ruthlessly shot down all the prisoners confined in the Sonnenburg gaol. The court-yard is piled high with dead bodies in horribly unnatural postures. The wall riddled with bullets and spattered with blood bears witness to the brutal extermination of four thousand people. We see a still of the chamber of death: the guillotine with a grove for the blood to flow down and, lying beside it, the ordinary stock-in-trade of the executioner: towel, white smock and gloves. Heads were cut off here; victims were put to death one by one. We see the bodies of three men who were hanged at the last moment only because they were Poles and because they were awaiting the coming of the Red Army.

The films *In Pomerania* and *Königsberg* are made up of shots provided by the cameramen of the First, Second and Third Byelorussian Fronts and directed by Vassili Byelayev and Fyodor Kisselyov.

A brilliant thrust culminated in the Red Army's emerging on the Baltic coast. Pushed to the sea, the remnants of the German divisions were compelled to lay down arms.

The capture of Königsberg, a remarkably fortified citadel of Prussian militarism, was the achievement of Marshal Vassilevsky who successfully effected the "star-shaped storming"—a simultaneous offensive from eight directions.

The grand finale of the Red Army offensive between the Tissa and the Danube which began in October 1944 and ended on February 13th, 1945, by Hungary—Hitler's last satellite—leaving the war, forms the subject of *Budapest*, a film produced by Vassili Byelayev.

Twenty cameramen of the Second and Third Ukrainian Fronts recorded the historical moment when the Soviet Command, with a view to preserving Budapest with its architectural monuments and famous relics, sent their envoys to the Hitlerites with the proposal to put an end to the senseless and hopeless resistance. We see the enemy's reply—barbarous, without a parallel in history. Lying prone on the ground is the breathless body of the Soviet envoy, Captain Ostapenko, and beside him the white flag fallen from his lifeless hand.

In austere silence Red Army men and officers follow the bier with their faithful comrade-in-arms who has laid down his life for his country. And immediately afterwards furious fire is opened against the enemy. All day and evening are thundering the farewell salvoes to the treacherously murdered Soviet envoy. Thousands of dazzlingly sparkling flares pierce the air: the "Katyusha" mine-

throwers are covering the enemy with fire. The storming of Budapest has begun.

In retreating the enemy sets fire to houses and buildings, to whole quarters of the Hungarian capital. The beautiful city is immolated to the frenzied death-lust of the Hitlerites.

But the Red Army's attitude towards Budapest is entirely different. Orders are issued prohibiting heavy bombers storming the fortifications of Buda. The Soviet command showed genuine concern for Hungary's cultural treasures.

Budapest is liberated.

We see the inhabitants returning to their homes, bringing with them in hand-carts and perambulators, on bicycles and on mule back such remnants of their belongings as have survived the general wreck.

The film dedicated to the liberation of the Austrian capital is *Vienna*, shot by eleven cameramen of the Third Ukrainian Front and produced by Jacob Poselsky.

Unfolding before our eyes is a panorama of Vienna—one of the oldest and loveliest cities in Europe—a city of music and architecture, of magnificent monuments of ancient styles. But nothing is sacred to the German fascists. They blow up houses and factories, keeping Vienna under a hail of incendiary shells.

Marshal of the U.S.S.R. Tolbukhin calls upon the population of Vienna to do their utmost to prevent the Germans from mining the town. And this call goes far towards preserving that wonderful city.

Street-fighting in Vienna. Block after block is being liberated by the Red Army men from the desperate resistance of the invaders. The sympathies of the inhabitants are all on the side of the Soviet troops. Some stirring moments are recorded when in the thick of the fighting, disregarding all danger, the men and women of Vienna are seen rendering first aid to wounded Red Army men.

The enemy is driven from the Austrian capital. Quiet reigns over Vienna. Scattered is the reek of battle and once again we see emerging in all their beauty the monuments of culture and art that have survived the storm: the soaring, lace-like Gothic of St. Stephen's Cathedral; the building of the Town Hall; the house where Mozart lived; the Belvedere, the Vienna Theatre of Drama and the Parliament, one of Vienna's finest buildings.

We see the room where seven years ago Hitler-the-Bloody vociferated in one of his customary hysterical lying speeches of Austria having voluntarily joined the "Third Reich." With what fury the Austrians are now pulling down the German eagle with the hated swastika! With what reverent awe they raise in its place their own flag banned for so long!

Old and young are seen embracing the Red Army men as they pass along the streets. Here comes a party of Yugoslavians, Frenchmen and Italians, jubilant, saved from the horrors of a concentration camp.

The Declaration issued by the Soviet Government finds hearty response among the population. In its liberating war the U.S.S.R. pursues no aims of conquest, nor harbours any designs of encroaching on the territory of Austria or on its political structure. Austria is granted independence and all the conditions requisite for the establishment of a democratic order. The first tangible reply to the Declaration is the labour enthusiasm that spread throughout the capital. The people come out in great numbers, clear the streets of piled stone debris and rubble, willingly helping the Red Army men to restore the smashed-up bridges. Life is gradually returning to the city. Schönbrunn park is again the favourite place for old and young: children are playing merrily amongst the trees, adults are basking in the spring sun. Marshal Tolbukhin is seen out for a stroll. This is his first rest after so many gallant deeds. He is seen breathing in the fresh spring air, the air of victory.

Strauss' entrancing melodies come wafted through the air. Here he is himself, the wizard with his magic violin: here is his monument and the house where he was born and where as a child of six he wrote his first waltz. With the sounds of the orchestra mingle the notes of an accordion. Several Red Army men are enjoying a stroll in the enchanting Vienna woods. One of them strikes up a Strauss waltz on the Russian accordion.

All around gardens are abloom, and in the warm air of the happy spring of liberation is waving the national flag of the Austrian republic. To the cheers of the people the Provisional Government headed by State Chancellor, grey-headed Dr. Karl Renner, is passing in traditional procession from the Town Hall to Parliament.

Vienna is rejoicing. Vienna is dancing in the public squares. Vienna bands are trumpeting forth exultantly. And accompanying the dances is a Russian orchestra of wind instruments.

Jacob Poselsky's film is permeated with a spirit of humanism. Every still and episode speaks of the lofty liberating aims in whose name the struggle against the fascists was waged and boundless sacrifices made.

In *The Banner of Victory Raised Over Berlin*, directed by Julius Raisman and Vassili Byelayev, we read the last page of the war in Europe as recorded by the cameramen of the First Byelorussian Front. We see the concluding episodes of the street-fighting in the German capital and the historical moment of the unconditional capitulation on May 8th, 1945.

The chronicle of the Patriotic War is completed. Freed from the nazi pestilence mankind is entering on a new phase of its development—an epoch of peaceful labour, happiness and well-being.

OLEG LEONIDOV

New Editions of Russian Musical Classics

During the last few years, despite wartime difficulties the State Music Publishing House has been busy preparing and publishing successive volumes of an academic edition of the complete works of Russian classic music. The texts were scrupulously studied and checked by reference to the respective authentic manuscripts, the work of editing being in the hands of commissions composed of expert musical authorities.

The academic edition of the complete works of Chaikovsky was undertaken in accordance with a government decision of 1940 in connection with the hundredth anniversary of the composer's birth. Figuring on the editorial board are Academician Boris Assafyev (President), Igor Boelza, Alexander Goldenweiser, Nikolai Miaskovsky, Mikhail Pekkelis, Ivan Shishkov, Maximilian Steinberg and Boleslav Yavorsky. Three volumes (Nos. 43, 44 and 45) containing all the composer's songs and vocal ensembles, were published before the war. The entire publication will consist of sixty-two volumes of various compositions of music and fifteen volumes dealing with literary materials and correspondence. In the first months of the war the manuscript treasures of Moscow and Leningrad libraries and museums, including authographs of the Russian composers, were evacuated far into the rear. This naturally hindered the regular publication of the scheduled volumes.

At the present moment, the work of the Music Publishing House and particularly that connected with Russian classic music has been once more resumed. Volume 51 containing Chaikovsky's pianoforte compositions belonging to the years 1863 to 1868, including *Theme and Variations*, an early sonata, *Reminiscence of Hapsal* and others, has recently appeared. The next on the schedule are Vol. 55, containing works for violin and piano, and Vol. 21—suites for orchestra.

The appearance of Vol. 8, now ready for the press, will create special interest—the score of the opera *The Enchantress*. The academic edition of this score, which runs into a thousand pages, will include in print for the first time a hundred pages omitted in the Jurgenson edition and now reinstated in conformity with the composer's MS. The next to appear in the academic edition will be the pianoforte arrangement of *Eugene Onegin* (Vol. 36). Further publications listed are Volumes 23 and 24 which contain orchestral music, including a *Serenade* never before published, composed in 1872 for the name-day of Nikolai Rubinstein, and the three editions of the overture-fantasia *Romeo and Juliet*.

Preparatory work has now been started on Vol. 12, a publication which promises to be an event for the whole musical world. It is the first edition of the score of the ballet *Sleeping Beauty* which has hitherto appeared only in the pianoforte arrangement. This volume is to be followed by the quartettes and the pianoforte arrangement of *The Queen of Spades*, and further volumes containing essays on musical criticism and the composer's letters and diaries. It is as yet difficult to say how many years will be required for the entire publication to be completed since this will depend on various circumstances, in particular on new discoveries in the field of materials. It has already become obvious, for example, that the volume of songs will have to be re-edited since it was not until the year 1944 that Boris Assafyev discovered some fragments in manuscript by the aid of which he reconstructed several hitherto totally unknown early songs of Chaikovsky which must also find a place in the academic edition.

An academic edition was also begun before the war of a complete collection of the works of Borodin. The only volume published, however, was that containing the first edition of the Quintette for piano.

The first volumes scheduled for publication are to contain the first editions of the composer's early works, viz a Trio for two violins and violoncello, composed in 1855 and based on the theme of a Russian song *What Have I Done to Grieve You?* and a Sextette for string instruments, belonging to the early sixties. The opinion was formerly held that the manuscript of this piece was irretrievably lost and the score of the Sextette had defied discovery until quite recently when Professor Paul Lamm, editor of a series of volumes of the academic edition of the works of Mussorgsky, was fortunate in discovering among the archives of the late Nikolai Findeisen the music for each of the six instruments written in the hand of Borodin. It was then possible, on the basis of these manuscripts, to re-write the score, but we cannot be positively sure that the composition is complete, since the reconstructed work consists of only two movements—a quick and a slow one, giving grounds for supposing that a Finale may have existed preceded perhaps by a Scherzo. It is possible, of course, that the Sextette had remained uncompleted, but in any case the publication of the Trio and the Sextette will enrich our knowledge of this remarkable composer.

The same may be said of a volume of songs where a number of hitherto unpublished compositions are to be printed for the first time, including several songs with piano and 'cello accompaniment: *The Maiden Who Loved No More*, and *Listen, My Friends, to My Song*, and others belonging to the composer's earlier and lesser known period.

The same edition will contain the first publications of the opera *Prince Igor* and the "Bogatyr" Symphony prepared for publication from the MS by Professor Lamm.

In 1944, a government decision was adopted to publish an academic edition of the complete works of Rimsky-Korsakov to mark the centenary of the composer's birth. The task was entrusted to an editorial board consisting of Boris Assafyev (President), Igor Boelza, Alexander Kartsev,

Nikolai Miaskovsky and Professor and musicologist Alexander Ossovsky. Other members of the board were Vladimir Rimsky-Korsakov, son of the composer, and Maximilian Steinberg, his disciple and son-in-law. After an examination of the printed and manuscript copies of Rimsky-Korsakov's works, a plan was drafted of the whole edition which will include fifty volumes of musical compositions (the fifty-first and supplementary volume to be devoted to uncompleted compositions) and twelve volumes of theoretical and critical writings (among them the *Chronicle of My Musical Life*) and the composer's correspondence.

The arrangement and editing of the material has been planned for the whole edition, which is to contain all the opera scores with pianoforte arrangements, symphonies, instrumental and chamber music, and choral works including several published for the first time. Among the latter is included a Trio for pianoforte, violin and 'cello, a String Quartette, a Mazurka for violin and orchestra and other works.

Mapped for immediate publication is Volume 45, containing the composer's entire output of songs. The editing of this book was done by Maximilian Steinberg who is at the present time engaged on the academic text of the scores of two operas: *Night in May* (Vol. 2) and *Boyarynya Vera Sheloga* (Vol. 8) which is to appear in print during the current year.

The score and pianoforte arrangement of *Kashchei the Immortal* is being edited by Igor Boelza, and Nikolai Miaskovsky is preparing for publication the academic text of the three editions of the famous symphony *Anthar*.

Chekhov's *Sea Gull* has been revived by the Mossoviet Theatre under the direction of Yuri Zavadsky. It is curious to note that forty-seven years ago, when the young Art Theatre was just embarking on its eventful life, the *Sea Gull* was shown for the first time in the very same building.

Another revival is *The Marriage of Bobelugin*, the classical comedy by Ostrovsky, on the stage of the Affiliated Maly Theatre.

Lev Gurych Sinichkin, an old Russian vaudeville, is shown by the Leningrad Theatre of Comedy now on tour in Moscow. The producer and artistic director of the theatre is Nikolai Akimov.

Other People's Business, a modern musical comedy by Vladimir Mass and Mikhail Chervinsky, is presented by the Moscow Theatre of Miniatures.

An Ordinary Man, the play by Leonid Leonov, has been produced by Fyodor Kaverin at the Moscow Dramatic Theatre which is under the direction of Nikolai Okhlopkov.

The action of *The Last Day*, a new play by Vassili Shkvarkin, at the Vakhtangov Theatre, is laid in a town occupied by the Germans on the eve of its liberation. The play is directed by Andrei Tutyshkin, a young Soviet producer.

Another première was that of *Great Hopes* at the Stanislavsky Operatic and Dramatic Studio by Benjamin Kaverin, the Leningrad playwright. The play treats of the struggle waged by the Leningrad youth against the German invaders.

Two of Verdi's operas have been revived at the Moscow opera houses: *Rigoletto* at the Affiliated Bolshoy Theatre, and *Traviata* at the Stanislavsky-Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre. At one time Nemirovich-Danchenko himself had staged *Traviata* according to a new libretto by Vera Inber, the Soviet poetess.

English plays, classical and modern, produced on the Soviet stage, invariably score success with large audiences.

Twelfth Night, staged at the Moscow Maly Theatre, is performed with great spirit and animation by an excellent cast of the oldest dramatic theatre of the Soviet capital. The part of Malvolio is played by Igor Ilyinsky, an artist well-known on stage and screen.

Twelfth Night was simultaneously performed at the Dramatic Theatre in Gorky.

Romeo and Juliet is having a successful run in Chelyabinsk, one of the largest towns in the Urals.

The Dueña, Richard Sheridan's lighthearted merry comedy, is scoring success on the stage of the Stanislavsky Operatic and Dramatic Studio in Moscow. Early in the year this play was performed at Riga by the Latvian Dramatic Theatre where the joint efforts of Ernest Feldman, the producer, and the excellent cast of actors, resulted in a delightful performance.

The State Theatre of Opera and Ballet at Novosibirsk has opened with Glinka's *Ivan Sussanin*.

This new theatre which was built in trying wartime conditions is one of the largest in the country, exceeding in size the Bolshoy Theatre in Moscow by sixty-five thousand cubic metres. The stage proper, exclusive of ancillary side-premises, measures one thousand forty-four square metres. The theatre, built in amphitheatre style, accommodates two thousand people. Over three hundred singers, musicians and dancers are included in the company.

During the German occupation of Kharkov, the town's Opera House presented a picture of utter desolation.

To restore the building was one of the first cares of the Ukrainian Government. Erected in 1858, the Opera House has now undergone capital repairs. The facade has been beautifully ornamented, halls and foyers elegantly decorated and dressing-rooms comfortably fitted up.

The Moscow Art Theatre has launched the publication of a *Year-Books* series.

The periodical will contain documents bearing on the history of the theatre, the theories and opinions voiced at different times by its directors and records and notes of the theatre's activities.

The first volume includes articles by Paul Markov and Nikolai Volkov on Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko, founders of the theatre. Of outstanding interest are Stanislav-

sky's reminiscences of Chekhov, and Nemirovich-Danchenko's notes on the productions of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* and *Three Sisters*. The material dealing with Gorky includes Gorky's letters to the founders of the theatre and Kachalov's reminiscences of Gorky. A special chapter is devoted to Ostrovsky on the stage of the Art Theatre. Excerpts from a correspondence of many years' duration between Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko, stenographic records of talks with actors, reminiscences of premières—all go to weave the intricate versatile creative pattern of the road traversed by the Art Theatre.

Considerable space is devoted to the theatre's tours in Europe and America in 1906, in 1922—1924 and in 1937. The work done in the years of the Patriotic War has been given exhaustive and detailed treatment.

The next volume will contain articles by Nemirovich-Danchenko on *Simplicity in the Actor*, and on *Ethics* by Stanislavsky; Nemirovich-Danchenko's producer's copy of *Julius Caesar*; Gordon Craig on *Hamlet* at the Art Theatre, and articles on some of the theatre's prominent actors.

A documental film, *May Day Parade in Moscow* is being shown on all screens of the Soviet Union. The fighting might of the Red Army as demonstrated on the Red Square and along the walls of the Kremlin is ably reproduced in this picture.

Marshal Stalin and his companions-in-arms are seen mounting the platform of the Mausoleum where is engraven the one great word—"Lenin." We hear the address delivered by Army-General Antonov, Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, who received the parade. We see the troops pass in imposing march—infantry, cavalry, mechanized units. We hear the tanks and artillery roll along the square. An impressive sight!

The concluding stills show the united military band playing the *Glory* chorus from the epilogue to *Ivan Sussanin*.

An event of great importance in the life and history of the Russian Orthodox Church—the election of the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia—has been ably recorded by Soviet cameramen.

The documental film, *Regional Russian Council of the Orthodox Church* depicts the successive stages of this ceremony.

On the screen is Sokolniki park, one of Moscow's most picturesque spots. Huge trees stand clothed in heavy snow. Against a background of a winter sky towers the majestic edifice of an ancient temple. It is here that the Council is being held. Cars roll up to the entrance. We see the higher clergy of the Russian Church, the guests of honour: Patriarchs, Metropolitans and Bishops from all ends of the earth, who have assembled for this occasion. The Council, as was rightly remarked by Patriarch Incumbent Alexis in his opening address, might well be, both in composition and importance, an ecumenical Council; its task, however, was the election of a Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. The impressive ceremony of the election proceeds. One after another the Metropolitans and Bishops rise from their seats and name the candidate in behalf of themselves, the clergy and their flocks: Patriarch Incumbent Alexis, Metropolitan of Leningrad.

The Patriarch is elected. This prominent figure of the Russian Church who never once throughout the years of the war left German-beleaguered Leningrad, is decorated with the "For the Defence of Leningrad" medal.

The solemn ceremony of the enthronement of the Patriarch is conducted in the Moscow Cathedral which is brilliantly aglow with icon-lamps and gold decorations. "Long life" to the newly elected Patriarch rings forth a voice of remarkable power; the choir, too, is magnificent.

The concluding pictures show the festive concert held for the members of the Regional Council and the guests of honour in the Large Hall of the Moscow Academy of Music. We see the State Symphonic Orchestra of the U.S.S.R. with Nikolai Golovanov conducting Chaikovsky's *1812*, a work mirroring the grandeur and might of the Russian people.

After an interval of nearly four years the State Tretyakov Gallery has once more opened its doors to the public.

Paul Tretyakov, founder of the Gallery who had devoted his life to collecting pictures, had made his first purchase in 1858. But already at the end of the seventies of last century his collection had become famous. Tretyakov gave his collection to the city of Moscow during his lifetime.

Under the Soviet regime the Tretyakov Gallery has become the central State Museum of Russian art and its collection of paintings has been steadily increasing.

During the first year of its existence the Gallery was visited by nine thousand people; in 1898, the year of Tretyakov's death, the number of visitors reached a hundred thousand. In 1939 and 1940 the yearly attendance exceeded one million.

In the autumn of 1941, when the Germans were bombing Moscow, the pictures were packed with scrupulous care and shipped far into the rear. It was a timely precaution: the German vandals had chosen the Gallery building as one of their targets.

The war is over and the art treasures of the Russian people are once more in their old places. The opening of the Tretyakov Gallery proved a real festival of Russian art.

NEWS AND VIEWS

The distinguished Russian poet Efim Pridvorov, widely known in this country under the pen name Demyan Byedny, died recently at the age of sixty-two. Having devoted more than thirty-five years of his life to literature, he rightfully occupied a prominent place in the field of letters.

The son of a peasant, Byedny was fully acquainted with the life of the people. He spoke their language, retaining all its simplicity and bucolic humour. Especially successful were his efforts in satire. His songs, poems and fables are highly popular among the people.

Most of the poet's writings were penned during the Civil War. During the Great Patriotic War, too, his poems scorning the Hitlerite invaders and glorifying the valour of the Soviet soldiers were frequent features in the press. In 1941, during the most difficult days of the war, when the Germans were knocking at the gates of Moscow, Demyan Byedny never lost faith in the final victory of the Soviet people:

We will repulse the foe—I believe in my people
With an unwavering faith a thousand years old,

wrote Byedny at that time.

Demyan Byedny composed verses for the *TASS Window* posters devoted to victory over Germany.

His last poem published in *Pravda* was an ode to Victory Day.

At the poet's funeral which took place on May 27th, Nikolai Tikhonov said:

"Not a man or woman in our country but knows the name of the outstanding Russian poet, Demyan Byedny... Coming from the people's midst, he brought into our literature the fervent love for the great Russian word."

Among the comrades who came to pay their last respects to the poet were writers, Red Army officers, men and women workers of Moscow factories whom Demyan Byedny's poems had inspired some twenty years ago during the Civil War and again during the war against Hitler Germany.

Between the years 1918 and 1945, eight hundred and twenty-one thousand titles of books and pamphlets amounting in all to a total of over ten billion copies were published in the Soviet Union.

During the years of the Patriotic War alone, our Publishing Houses issued sixty-seven thousand titles of books and pamphlets with a circulation exceeding one billion copies. In the war years, the prevailing literature was naturally that dealing with the various war efforts. Books on questions of industry, agriculture, fiction and text-books occupied places of due importance.

During the past twenty-seven years, twenty-seven million copies of the books of our classical writers have been issued. The works of Alexander Pushkin have been published in seventy-two languages with a circulation of thirty-one million six hundred and eighteen thousand copies. Sixty-five of the nationalities inhabiting our Union have been enabled to read in their own languages the works of Leo Tolstoy which were issued in a circulation of some twenty-four million copies. Maxim Gorky's works were printed in sixty-six languages totalling some forty-two million books.

Next on the list is Anton Chekhov, whose works have been published in fifty-seven languages, Mikhail Lermontov in fifty languages, Ivan Turgenev in thirty-nine, Nikolai Gogol in thirty-four and Taras Shevchenko in thirty-three languages.

Statistics showing the circulation of the works of our modern writers speak for themselves. Vladimir Mayakovsky's works have been issued in forty-four languages; Alexei Tolstoy's in thirty-eight and Mikhail Sholokhov's in fifty-one languages...

The circulation of *Russians*, the play by Constantine Simonov, is exceptionally high, running through eighteen editions in seven languages to a total of six hundred and seventeen thousand copies, while Alexander Korneichuk's *Front* published in five languages has a total circulation of four hundred and seventeen thousand copies.

Moscow, a city of age-old traditions, is intimately bound up with the life and labours of many of our eminent writers.

Itineraries of excursions to spots of interest for lovers of literature have been compiled by the State Literary Museum. These journeys aim at acquainting excursionists with the capital's literary monuments.

A favourite excursion is that through the Moscow of Pushkin, in which visits are made to places where the great poet, born in Moscow, passed his childhood years. Another such excursion is connected with his residence in the capital during the years 1826 to 1836.

"Moscow in the Forties" is the title of another excursion to places where Alexander Herzen, Ivan Turgenev, Nikolai Ogarev, Nikolai Stankevich and other prominent figures in the literary life of the period lived and worked.

No less interesting are the themes: "The Moscow of Gogol," "The Moscow of Maxim Gorky," "Chekhov in Moscow" and others attracting not only students attending schools of higher learning, but also many younger schoolchildren.

In connection with the fiftieth anniversary of the invention of the radio by the Russian physicist Alexander Popov, a monument to the great scientist has been set up at Kronstadt.

The bronze bust of the inventor stands in the garden of the School of Torpedo Officers where the first radio-set in the world was tried out and the first aerial put up fifty years ago.

Exactly fifty years ago, on May 7th, 1895, the Russian physicist, Alexander Popov, demonstrated an interesting experiment at a session of the Russian Physicists' Society in St. Petersburg University. A Morse apparatus installed in the room received signals from a chemical laboratory situated at a distance of 300 metres away. This is how the scientific world first witnessed the practical manifestation of wireless telegraph.

"I can express the hope," said Popov modestly at the conclusion of his brilliant experiment, "that with further perfection my apparatus may be used for transmitting signals over distance with the aid of rapid electrical vibrations."

These simple words contained the embryonic idea of radio which has now conquered the whole world to become a powerful cultural weapon.

Several years later, in the winter of 1900, Popov's wireless telegraph was employed during the rescue of the armoured cruiser "Admiral Apraksin," which had come to grief near the Island of Hogland, not far from the coast of Finland. This time Popov established communication by radio over a distance of forty kilometres.

During the Soviet period radio-broadcasting has attained an exceptionally wide range. In the U.S.S.R., radio is not the property of private concerns, but of the state. This has facilitated its countrywide penetration.

Lenin, the great founder of the Soviet state, held radio in high esteem. Writing about the prospects of radio at a time when it was only making its first steps, Lenin said: "It is a task of tremendous importance, a newspaper without paper and without wires. . . all of Russia will listen to the newspaper read in Moscow."

The fiftieth anniversary of the invention of radio by Alexander Popov was observed throughout the U.S.S.R. Special evenings and scientific sessions dedicated to the memory of the outstanding Russian physicist and father of radio, were held in Moscow, Leningrad and other Soviet cities. Special exhibitions arranged for the occasion traced the history of radio-broadcasting in Russia. One of the most interesting exhibitions has been opened in the Red Army Museum of Communications in Moscow. Newspapers and magazines published a number of articles on the life and work of Popov. A prominent part in the anniversary celebrations was taken by the venerable Russian physicist, Peter Rybkin, closest friend and assistant of the inventor, who fifty years ago transmitted the signals at the session of the Physicists' Society. More than eighty years old, he has lived to see the great significance of the invention demonstrated half a century ago.

ARGENTINE PLEDGE

The Argentine War Minister Peron gave an interview to the British correspondent Mac Nicoll. On being asked whether the Germans have money or property in the Argentine, Peron replied: "Not so far as I know."

A reliable pledge

Drawing by Boris Yefimov

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CONTENTS

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