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CONSTANTINE FEDIN

FIRST JOYS

The following excerpts are from Constantine Fedin's new novel *First Joys*, the first part of a trilogy planned by the author.

The trilogy, which covers a period of thirty years, is not a continuous chronicle but deals with three separate historical periods; in each of them the action is complete and concentrated. The second part of the trilogy begins in 1919 and deals with the Civil War on the Volga. The third part brings the trilogy up to the present day.

First Joys takes place in the big Volga town of Saratov in the summer of 1910, and introduces the heroes of the trilogy in their youth—the young revolutionary Kirill Izvekov and the future actress Liza Meshkova, the daughter of a Saratov small landowner and merchant.

In the excerpts which we print here, the reader finds episodes from Russian revolutionary underground life during the period of the savage political reaction which set in after the 1905 Revolution. The author tells about the engine-shop mechanic Peter Ragozin, his wife Xenia, the young technical-school student Kirill and the paths that led them to the Revolution.

There was a wide boulevard in the town with flowerbeds and a public garden in a square, with pavilions where people could eat ices with German-silver spoons and little kiosks serving kumiss and yugurt. There were avenues of lindens and lilacs, elms and poplars leading to a wooden stage built in the form of a shell. The regimental band used to play in the shell on Sundays, and the townspeople of all ages and classes would stroll there and seek amusement. Each age and each class had its own time for visiting the boulevard and each had its own place, considered fitting for the one and impossible for all others.

This boulevard, called "The Lindens," was part of the life of every citizen, young and old. From the new flower garden, open on all sides to the sun, would come the penetrating cries: "Burn clear, burn high, let the flame never die,"[1] or tireless little tongues rattling off: "The lady sent you a dressing table, a hundred roubles inside it. Buy, and buy all you wish. Black and white not to your taste, Lady, say neither yes or no, speak and say what is your wish?"[2] After sunset, the smell of fragrant tobacco would fill the square, where ladies would sit silently under their parasols and serious-looking gentlemen in shantung jackets would read the latest novels. In the mornings, those with weak lungs would visit the little kiosks to drink kumiss and yugurt, where the tables and the pale, long-fingered hands, motionless beside the half-filled glasses, would be stippled with flecks of sunshine glancing through the leafy roofs.

On holidays, shop assistants and artisans would crowd in front of the shell to listen to the band, applauding and shouting "encore" when the "Railway Train March" was played. Couples would stroll along the paths, passing and repassing, pressed close to one another, their feet dragging, watching the lemonade bottles being opened in the pavilions, the midges dancing under the lamps, and the powdery dust rising in clouds and hanging in the almost motionless air.

No, it was not here that Liza and Kirill met. The town had another boulevard—a small green oblong on a sidestreet, not far from the bank of the Volga. Here too there were clipped acacias pressed against the wooden fences, twining lilac stems looking like naked muscles, huge elms and ancient lindens. But there were no ices sold here, there were no pavilions, no band, no kumiss kiosks. Here there was nothing but a park-keeper's hut with a rubbish bin shaped like a piano against which the keeper leaned his broom and a couple of oars, and a few low green seats along the only path which cut the boulevard arrowlike from end to end. This place was known all over the town as the "Dogs' Lindens," and it was only chance passers-by who paused in the shade of its trees—to fan themselves with cap or handkerchief, wipe a bald head, rest and continue on their way.

The "Dogs' Lindens" became as important in Liza's and Kirill's story as the real "Lindens" in the history of most young folks in the town—one might almost say an unforgettable symbol of the most precious experiences on the threshold of youth. Here it was that Kirill gave Liza his first note, when neither of them had yet passed their sixteenth year. The note had been composed amongst the doves' nests in the schoolhouse garret, to the homely flapping of their wings, in the daylight that trickled through the skylight. This note was vibrant with his most secret feelings, but if it had been read by the literature teacher, yet one other secret would have come to light—he had just finished reading

[1] A children's game.

[2] Dandies. Another Russian children's game.

Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Times* before clambering up to the attic armed with paper, pen and ink, and his phrases were as tragic as Vera's farewell letter to Pechorin, although the spirit was one of sunny hope. He pressed the note into her hand when they parted and Liza asked in alarm:

"What's that?"

"A note," replied Kirill, not very audibly.

"Who for?"

"You."

"Why?"

"Read it at home," he barely managed to articulate, fearing that she would not take it.

But she blushed, slid the note under her apron bib and ran away, leaving him standing there, breathing as hard as though he had just come up after a long dive.

Some days passed before they met again, but the next time Liza returned his note saying angrily:

"How dare you... how dare you address me as 'thou'! Write it again and say 'you'!.." [1]

Now, after two years, they were sufficiently adult to laugh when they remembered the note, but at that time Liza's indignant demand had given him a new feeling of responsibility and he had fulfilled it conscientiously, rewriting the whole of his declaration, using the "you" form of address.

During the first summer when they used to meet, they had discovered their own special path in the "Dogs' Lindens"—a narrow little path between tall old lilacs and an acacia hedge hidden even from the vigilant eye of the park-keeper. Here it was that Kirill took Liza's hand for the first time; she did not remove it, and they began walking along their little path, thrilled by the bashful contact, rejoicing and happy. Here it was that at the end of the summer Liza spoke that word which had so roused her indignation when she had seen it written on a scrap of paper—"thou." Here it was that the next summer Kirill tore off a cluster of white lilac, held it against Liza's frock, next to her high-school tie, said that white looked very well on brown. And when Liza took the lilac she pressed his fingers to her slight bosom, and they stood breathless for a moment. Then she hid the cluster beneath her apron to escape a scolding from the keeper.

They had their favourite bench at the far end of the path, beyond the hut. There they discussed very controversial questions —is conscience an absolute conception, or are there various consciences, say, the conscience of a beggar, the conscience of a high-school or technical-school student, a man's conscience, a woman's conscience: and in general wasn't conscience all an invention. Kirill suddenly doubted. And Liza opposed him in a whisper:

"You're crazy! When a person blushes, that's shame."

"No, but I was talking from the philosophical point of view."

"And so am I. If your blood flies to your face, or you can't sleep for remorse, that means that there must be something, doesn't it? Well, that 'something' is conscience."

"Well, if remorse—is a function..." he said, thoughtfully, and the talk rambled on into a maze of side-issues, like a sail disappearing in a fog.

They often talked of how it would be when they'd be together. That was what they called it from year to year—"when we shall be together." Each of them interpreted the phrase according to his or her own wishes, but both were convinced that they understood one another perfectly. In general, they felt that they knew everything about each other and had lived for one another for a long, long time. Both of them concealed their meetings from their families, Kirill because his mother was not inquisitive about his doings, and Liza because she was afraid of her father.

But in the third summer or rather at the approach of the third spring they discussed that most important question—whether it was not time to disclose the secret? Liza had finished high school, Kirill had still a year to study, they already saw themselves as students in small rooms of their own, or perhaps—was it possible?—in one room somewhere in Moscow. They decided that Liza should approach her mother first. That would not be in the least frightening—first, because Valeria Ivanovna already suspected something, secondly, because she was so kind, and thirdly, she would pave the way with Liza's father. Kirill did not anticipate any difficulty in telling everything to his mother, Vera Nikandrovna.

"I shall simply inform her about it," he said, a trifle scornfully perhaps.

"It's all so easy for you," said Liza. "You found it easy to keep the secret. And I felt it a load on me all the time. After all, it's just the same as telling a lie."

"A tremendous difference," he contradicted her sturdily. "In the first case you simply say nothing, in the second you speak."

"It seems to me that it's all the same—to keep quiet about the truth or to tell a lie... Tell me, could you hide the truth from me?"

"We-e-ell.. If it was for the sake of something very important... I suppose I could."

"And tell a lie?"

"Why do you ask?"

"No, but tell me."

"Tell a lie? Have I ever told you a lie?"

"Never!" said Liza indignantly, but in the same instant asked insinuatingly: "And you never will?"

"Why do you ask?" he repeated, already offended.

"Oh, I just wondered," she replied, almost unwillingly. "By the way, do you know Peter Petrovich?" she continued after a moment's silence, as though wanting to change the subject.

Kirill's step faltered suddenly, he glanced swiftly at her, looked away and walked more slowly.

The conversation took place walking along the street, on the day which they had called Independence Day. Kirill had seen Liza returning home in the morning after Mass and come up to her; it had been so unexpected, so bold and gay, that they had suddenly

[1] Thou—the intimate form used in Russia between relatives, close friends, lovers and to children.

made up their minds to call this Independence Day and to walk quite openly along the street past the Meshkov's [1] house; and the next day, in honour of Independence, they decided to go on the roundabouts together. Liza's heart beat fast when they walked in step, with deliberate slowness, along the street where every flagstone, every fence-post was familiar, where her home stood. Every instant she expected to hear her father's voice, that stern, implacable voice, which could change all her fate; and she was sure that her mother's kindly eye, tear-filled, was looking sadly at her from the window. She was terrified and ashamed. But they walked right past the house and nothing had happened. And as they continued pacing along the street, they discussed whether they should tell their secret at home, then the talk turned to truth and untruth, and suddenly Kirill's step faltered.

"What Peter Petrovich?" he replied with apparent calm.

"Ragozin," said Liza.

"Yes," he replied indifferently. "I know him. Just as I know all my neighbours. Enough to say good morning."

"You don't visit him?"

"Why on earth should I?"

"There, you've lied!" Liza exclaimed shocked and triumphant.

"No," he said firmly, his step slowing down still more.

"I can see it in your face! You've gone pale! What are you hiding? I know that you've been at his place."

"Do you, indeed," he said obstinately. "And how might you know?"

"You came into our yard with a crowd of boys, didn't you? It was on Easter Monday, when the Bulgarian organ-grinder with the monkey was there and brought a whole crowd of idlers after him, remember?"

"Well, what if I did come? I looked at the monkey and then I went away again. I even went in, if you want to know, more to take a look at your window, maybe to get a glimpse of you, than to look at the monkey. What do I want with a monkey?"

"And that's not true, either. It's another lie. I was standing at the window watching the performance. I can tell you what the monkey did, everything in order. First it imitated a lady walking with a parasol, then an old woman going for water, then a drunk staggering along by the fence..."

"I can see that you paid plenty of attention to the monkey. Not very surprising that you lost sight of me," laughed Kirill.

"I could see you excellently, you were standing at the back of the crowd. And you never once looked up at the window. Not once. Otherwise you'd have seen me. I was called into the other room for a moment, I left the window, and when I came back you weren't there."

"Got tired of watching the organ-grinder and went."

"Where?"

"Out into the street, back home."

"I ran out at once into the street to look, and you weren't there. You'd disappeared without going out of the yard. Where had you gone? The only place was Ragozin's."

"Well, but, Liza, what does Ragozin matter?" smiled Kirill, brightening up, and the tenderness in his tone softened her.

Calmer, but with a shade of disappointment, she sighed:

"All the same, I can see that you could hide the truth from me."

"I said that there are truths which must not be told."

"How's that?" cried Liza again. "Can there be two truths? One which can be told and one which can't?"

She turned to him sharply, and as they had just entered the "Dogs' Lindens," she found herself looking down the street, lying open before her like the turned page of a book; an empty street, with one single person walking along it. She recognized him in an instant.

"Father!" she whispered, forgetting their whole conversation in an instant.

She entered the gate of the boulevard suddenly losing all her suppleness of movement, stiff and tense as a violin string in her brown uniform. But she immediately dashed into the lilacs which grew thickly along the path.

"Keep cool!" said Kirill sternly, trying not to run after her. "Keep cool, Liza! Remember—Independence Day!"

He twitched up his coat that was slipping down—he wore it thrown over his shoulders,—a fashion which distinguished grown-up boys of the technical school from high-school and commercial-school boys and slowly disappeared among the rustling leaves that still swayed from Liza's hasty passing.

In October of 1905, during a Jewish pogrom Peter Ragozin was arrested on the street together with a group of armed workers firing on the rioters. No weapons were found upon him but an officious witness stated that Ragozin had fired and wounded a drayman in the crowd. However, it was impossible to prove that the arrested man had belonged to the armed workers' detachment and after being held in prison for a year he was sent into exile for three years on a charge of participating in street rioting.

On the day he left with the chain gang for Siberia his two-year-old son died of scarlet fever, but it was a long time before he knew about it.

His wife, Xenia, was a small, very fair woman, whose raised eyebrows gave her a look of perpetual wonder. With her small nose, pointed elbows and slender hands, she looked more like Peter Petrovich's daughter when she stood beside him. He himself was tough and broad-shouldered. His long, slightly bandy legs supported a massive trunk, with such an accentuated stoop that at times he seemed about to fall forward.

At the time of his arrest he was thirty years old ; but his face, framed in a bushy red beard and curled moustache, and that silent, understanding smile, such as one sees on a man to whom age and rich experience have brought wisdom and a profound judgement, made

[1] Liza's parent.

people take him for ten years older. He towered over his Xenia, and would stoop over her in a fatherly, protective manner which she accepted quite simply, as the natural thing for a weak, fragile being.

The whole street liked to watch them, while the Ragozin's nickname flew from mouth to mouth—the Wheel of Babylon, or simply Babylon. The joke lost all its sting and even became a sign of affection when Xenia had a baby, and on Sundays and holidays, Peter Petrovich, stooping forward more than ever and walking on tiptoe, began to take walks carrying a bundle wrapped in a ragged quilt, the lace-edged corner of a sheet indicating the spot where the tiny face should be.

"Eh, Babylon giving his family a ride," the neighbours would joke.

They thought that the Ragozins were a very happy couple, a pair of lovebirds, in fact. And it was true, Xenia could only remember one time when her husband spoke roughly to her—and that was that same disastrous morning of the pogrom.

She was standing with her neighbours in the doorway holding an ikon, so that the rioters should not take their house for one where Jews lived. The black mob swept along the roads, brandishing nail-studded clubs, whistling and howling like wolves, while some of the keenest blood-hunters ran into the yards, sniffing around like bloodhounds for traces of Jews or homes from which they had fled. Then the mob would make a dash for its prey, smashing human limbs, window-frames, screaming children, cupboards and dishes and leaving behind them a creeping stench of fire. Suddenly several men ran out from behind a corner and formed a chain across the road. "Fire point blank," said a voice.

Xenia did not notice when Peter Petrovich, who had been standing beside her in the entrance, went into the house.

She saw him only when he suddenly appeared at the end of the chain, and moved away with the other men, never once looking back. She pushed the ikon into somebody's hands and dashed after him; she grasped his arm, but he continued to march on, without turning, without even removing his hand from his pocket, with his swaying, stooping gait. She clutched at his jacket. He still marched on. She hung onto him crying: "Peter! Petyenka! My dear!" He dragged her along with him, as though unconscious of her weight. "Think of the child at home, Peter!" she screamed. He turned, tore her fingers from his jacket, pushed her angrily onto the pavement and went on. As she lay on the ground, she could hear the sound of revolver shots, and covering her face with her hands, she burst into tears.

Peter Petrovich never returned home. This, of course, was unexpected for Xenia, but she took it as inevitable. She had been prepared for it by other shocks—by his leaving her without a word, by the inexplicable roughness with which he had pushed her away, by his having fired at people with a revolver, and by his never having breathed a word to her about the existence of this revolver.

For a whole year she visited the prison every Sunday and holiday; she would go to the iron-covered gate which was painted an unpleasant green, like the prison roof. She would timidly push a small parcel of food for "Peter Petrovich, under investigation," through the small window in the grating.

As time went on her elbows became sharper and her fingers thinner, but people were amazed at her endurance, and she herself said that she had as many lives as a cat. She went to work in a stocking factory, and removed to another apartment in the small wing of Meshkov's house which jutted out into the yard; and when she learned that her husband was to be exiled, it was as though her resolution to overcome her fate had hardened her.

On a leaden day of early autumn, the child died after an exhausting illness. It died during the night, and in the morning she went to see her husband off.

The prison train left from the goods station, so Peter Petrovich saw once more the smoky station and the shop where he had worked as mechanic up to the time of his arrest. A tall old workman from the shop came to take leave of him, and gave him some tobacco for the journey. There were two prison coaches hooked onto a goods train. One of them was for criminals on their way to penal servitude. They were in chains, and when they crossed the track, lifting their heavy feet over the rails, the ring of iron could be heard above all other station sounds, but did not drown them—the shunting engine continued to puff, buffers clanged, the couplers' horns sounded as though on a hunting party, and the engines let off steam with a tremendous hiss. It was like some fantastic argument: life is over, over—insisted the iron chains; life goes on, goes on—sang and shouted the iron of the station. The unending dispute seemed to tear Xenia to pieces, she could think of one thing only—to hold herself up, to stay on her feet, not to collapse and fall to the ground, as on that unhappy morning of the pogrom.

"I expect he can talk quite well now?" Peter Petrovich asked, referring to his son.

"Yes, he talks quite well," his wife replied.

"Does he ask about me?"

"Yes."

"Gets into mischief?"

"Yes, quite a bit."

"And does he sleep soundly?"

"Very soundly."

"Doesn't wake you up, as he used to do?"

"No, he doesn't wake me up now."

"Give him a kiss from me."

"Yes, I will."

"Has he got all his teeth? Give him a good, big kiss."

"Yes, I will."

And so they parted. The train with its prison coaches merged imperceptibly among all the other trains standing motionless or slowly moving. Peter's mate, the old workman looked into Xenia's eyes when he said goodbye before returning to the shop, and was struck dumb; she looked as if it was she who had spent a year in prison, and not Peter Ragozin. Then suddenly she turned to him with a startling request—to help her to bury the child.

"What child?"

"My dead son."

"What son? Wasn't it him you were talking about with Peter Ragozin just now, and promising to kiss him?"

"When I get home, I'll kiss him. He's lying on the table at home."

The old man's tongue seemed to dry up in his mouth.

Kind people helped her in her grief. But she seemed to have become another woman, and word of her spread from one person to another until at last it must have reached people with understanding.

During Xenia's third winter as a grass widow a visitor came to see her—that same tall old man who had seen Peter Petrovich off and then helped her to bury the child. After talking on all kinds of indifferent subjects, he came to the point, which was that he had a job for a reliable person.

"How do you mean, reliable?"

"Somebody able to hold their tongue."

"I can do that all right."

"I've seen it. I know. That's why I'm here."

Next day, two tubs wrapped in old quilts were brought to her on sleds, lowered into the cellar and placed upon birch logs, like food salted down for the winter. There they stood, wrapped in their quilts, and Xenia never thought about them except when she went down for pickled cabbage. The entrance to the cellar was from the porch, sheltered from observation.

One evening in early spring, as dusk was falling, a student from the technical school came up to her in the street and asked when it would be convenient to come to her—he had been entrusted to deliver her a package. What sort of package, he apparently did not know exactly—he had been asked to deliver it because he lived near. Xenia had time only to notice that his voice kept drying up and he coughed continually, as though trying to screw up his courage.

Late that evening he brought her something looking like a package that had come through the post. He unfastened his coat, removed his cap, wiped his wet forehead with a crushed handkerchief, and stood silent.

"It must be pretty heavy if it's tired you out like that?" smiled Xenia.

"I'll help you to put it away if it's too heavy for you," replied the visitor.

Xenia tried to lift the package, but found that it took all her strength to raise it from the ground.

"What in the world is it? It must weigh more than forty pounds!"

"I don't know," replied the visitor. "I was just told to say that you know where to put it."

He began to fasten his coat, with precise movements, every line of his face repelling questions of any kind. Xenia smiled again.

"Have you been at this for long?"

"At what?"

"Gymnastics," she said, nodding towards the package.

"I've been fond of gymnastics since I was a kid."

"And have you been carrying these mysterious parcels since you were a child, too?"

"What's there mysterious about it? I was asked to bring it, I know you, I brought it and gave it to you and that's all there is to it."

"Well, and suppose I don't want to take it? After all, how can I tell who it's from?"

Instead of replying, he held out his hand to take leave, as though he found jokes out of place in a serious matter. At the door, however, he paused, thought for a moment, then asked below his breath:

"Is it true that your husband'll be coming back next winter?"

"He should be. His time's up in the autumn."

That was the end of Xenia's first meeting with Kirill. He brought her another similar package, and then she saw him no more for several months. On his second visit, too, he avoided all confidential talk, and she began to think that he might really be ignorant of what he was bringing her. But she received the packages without worrying because she had been told to take them and store them together with the barrels in the cellar.

When Peter Petrovich returned, there came that strange period of mutual re-discovery usual for people who have lived close to one another and then been separated by circumstances for a long time. Traits of character, everyday habits and even physical features which once seemed important have become somehow insignificant during the time of parting, and others, previously disregarded, come to the fore. In divining the change, everything that met the eye and all the other senses had to be completed by the whole history of the past years, the most unexpected, trifling and, to an outsider, unnecessary details. Gradually it became clear why Xenia could no longer be taken for Ragozin's daughter, why she had lost her fragility and become supple, agile in fact, and why Peter Petrovich seemed to have stretched out to his full height. He stooped less and his step was firm, his old lumbering gait seemed to have almost disappeared.

They realized that their love was not gone, it had been enriched, and that of all their feelings during the years of separation the only false one was the fear that it might be dimmed.

They confessed with joy that in their parental grief they saw not only the son who was lost, but also the child which they both wished to have, and their sadness merged into a passion awaiting its complete fulfilment. And to that joy was added their mutual feeling that all that had taken place was something of special value for them both. Never once did Xenia tell her husband that if he had not belonged to the militant group, or had not gone out with them, or not fired, there would have been no prison, no exile, and perhaps no dead son; they would have been able to live in peace. And Peter Petrovich never once blamed his wife for concealing the child's death from him for so long. She was not in the least worried by the fact that her husband would henceforth be under police surveillance, and she took it as a matter of course that he had returned from exile a member of the Workers' Party. When he told her, she replied simply:

"Well, and quite right too."

She had no very clear conception what a party was, but she felt an implacable personal enmity for that green gate, and the window through which she had handed in parcels for her husband in prison. She thought with loathing of the chapel at that green gate where candles were placed before the ikon depicting Christ crowned with thorns, and an iron box hung, girdled by a clamp with a heavy lock as heavy as that on a door. Over the box in old Cyrillic characters, was written: "Alms for the prisoners."

One day when she was standing on the chapel's steps, waiting for them to open the window and begin taking in parcels, the thought suddenly struck Xenia that if there were no prisoners, then there would be no need to collect alms for them. But as she looked at the chapel, the dim light of the candles lighted up the hands of Christ bound with ropes, and on a sudden impulse she found a small coin in her bag and dropped it into the box. After that, however, she had a dull sense of resentful misery that remained with her all day; she wanted to weep, but no tears would come, neither that day nor yet all the years she lived alone.

In place of tears came the feeling, ever clearer and more definite, that her husband had wanted to do the right thing, he was an upright man—and he was being tormented for it. It became an axiom with her that it was her husband's nature to do right, and only right. She was worried whether she might not have harmed her husband by agreeing to store dangerous articles in his absence, but he approved of what she had done and their mutual agreement opened up a new life for them, a life that was really the old one and was exactly what they would have wished.

Xenia used all the trifles of everyday life, a life apparently like everybody's, to hide that second life which Peter Petrovich began to lead, in fits and starts, as occasion demanded.

Kirill Izvekov was soon integrated into that second life. The dreams and expectations which had led him in this direction now became reality, they turned into concrete tasks, the most important of which was the necessity of concealing this second life from the world. It may be that it was not even a second life, but a fourth or fifth. But it was something quite different, and Kirill came to feel that the rest of life was something quite apart from it, something which even gave way before it, as though fearing it. The most difficult thing of all was to keep it secret from Liza, for she herself was a secret, that had grown out of his dreams. Both these secrets seemed to have something in common, and at times Kirill felt that they were about to merge with one another. He was taken aback when Liza stumbled upon the track of his contact with Ragozin, but felt happier as he saw in this the first step towards the future, when everything connected with them would fuse into one whole and Liza would certainly come to the point which he had already reached.

The most difficult thing being to conceal it all from Liza and then—from his mother, it was obvious that what was actually hidden from these two must be hidden from all People so near to him knew him well, could read his very thoughts. But what outsider would waste his valuable time on a student in a technical school with his blue-bordered collar with its gilt buttons, and the simple little crossed hammer and spanner badge?

On the Krasnaya Gorka[1] holiday, people went picnicking in the country; whole families of them with their children, relatives, friends and neighbours would settle down in groves, gulleys and glades around samovars, pots and frying-pans. They boiled dumplings and fried mutton. The smoke of campfires curled up the slopes of the surrounding hills and the wind carried a mixed smell of smouldering twigs and leaves, damped-out ashes and burnt fat. There was plenty of state monopoly vodka drunk, and on these occasions songs would ring out to the strains of accordion and guitar.

The Ragozins set out in the early morning, Xenia carrying the samovar and Peter Petrovich with the basket of pans and dishes. On the way they were joined by other families, provision-laden. They climbed the hill by a straight road flanked by crawling wooden houses almost to the summit, decreasing in size the higher they were, as though the large ones had not had the strength to drag their bulk any further and had paused to rest, while the little ones scrambled on. Near the end of the road the houses became huts with a single window, then mere holes in the ground less than a man's height, covered with turf. With these mole-hills the road ended. Further on, the bare clay summit was girdled with terraces to retain the water and planted with rows of well-tended saplings. They had taken firm root and were shooting up, some with long boles, others in bushy masses. On the slope beyond the crest the plantations had grown up more luxuriantly; a man could lose himself in the rustling, leafy growth, while here and there taller trees soared upwards, giving promise of what the forest would be in the future. Here there were gulleys with the soil slipping down their steep sides and springs bubbling from their sandy bottoms.

This was the place Peter Petrovich chose for the picnic. He settled down above the steepest gulley, legs dangling over the edge. On all sides they could see the thicket of green saplings swaying in the breeze. They brought water, blew the samovar to a glow, then the whole company set to work peeling potatoes for soup.

The water in the pan was just boiling when Kirill arrived. He whistled from the bushes and Ragozin answered.

"Find us easily?" said he, as Kirill's face appeared among the leaves.

"By the samovar."

"Plenty of those about."

"Only yours whistles."

They both laughed.

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[1] The first Sunday in May, a favourite day for betrothals in old Russia.

"Will you join us for some soup, young sir?"

"With pleasure."

"Then there's a knife, lend a hand with the potatoes."

He spoke patronizingly but kindly, and Kirill imitated this manner of his, just as he imitated his heavy swaying walk. It was as though they were laughing at each other.

"What a way to peel them! You look as though you were sharpening a pencil. If you are ever sent away into exile, they'll all laugh at you."

"And why would I get there?"

"Why? To learn how to peel potatoes. Look at me: one strip—and the whole thing's clean. And the skin taken off thin—transparent. You can look through it at Xenia pouring out vodka—see?"

He taught Kirill how to crush the potatoes in the billycan and how to make thickening out of floury sunflower-seed oil, pepper, salt and spring onions. Everything tastes good in the open air, and there can be nothing better than soup boiled over a gypsy fire, perfumed with the smoke of dry branches. One's senses seem to become sharper as soon as one squats down before the campfire and smells the bubbling pan. The air becomes sweeter, the view lovelier, people kinder and life better. And all that is needed is a campfire and a billycan.

After they had eaten, Kirill flung himself on his back, and gazing up at the sky through the dancing leaves, began to speak reminiscently aloud:

"Each of us was given a bucket, a small spade and thick wooden dibber, sharp at one end, and blunt at the other. A bunch of tiny saplings was pushed into each bucket—just short little stumps. Then we went up the hill, the whole school. Everything had been marked out, and when we arrived, there were other schools standing there, no end to them. To plant the saplings was the simplest thing in the world. We struck the dibber into the ground, pushed the sapling into the hole and filled it up with the spade. Then we went for water and each of us watered the trees he'd planted. The saplings were only as high as my knee. They were all dry and withered-looking, nobody in town ever thought they'd take root. They just laughed at the idea that there'd ever be a forest. When we got back to the school they took our photographs, just as we were, with our buckets and dibbers and spades. I've still got the picture. I was sitting cross-legged at the drawing-master's feet, and underneath the photo's written: 'Arbour Day.' And to think—nine years have passed, and that these are the same seedlings swaying and rustling. I wonder what it'll be like in another nine years? What do you think, eh, Peter Petrovich? Do you know what there'll be in another nine years?"

"I know all right."

"Well, what?"

"I shall be forty-four."

"I know that all right. But tell me—will things be good?"

"They'll be good."

"But what'll be good?" asked Kirill, lowering his voice. "Will there be a revolution?"

"There's a sly fox," laughed Ragozin. "And what if I say there won't, you'll be off into the bushes, eh?"

For a long time Kirill made no reply, but lay chewing a twig. The jaw bones stood out sharply on his upturned face. His gaze was fixed, and the dancing green shadows of the leaves were reflected in his eyes. His knitted brows gradually relaxed, smoothing the creases from his forehead. Then he said very quietly:

"I have chosen my path and I shall never leave it. No matter how long I have to go—nine years or twenty-nine."

Ragozin raised himself on his elbow. The few tiny freckles sprinkling Kirill's nose and cheeks made him look younger than usual. Ragozin took his hand and pressed it in his hard, calloused fingers.

"Stop it," said Kirill, trying to pull his hand away.

Ragozin retained the hand.

"Let go. I know you're stronger."

Ragozin still tightened his grip on Kirill's fiercely resisting hand, smiling as he felt its firmness lessening.

"Here, that hurts. Drop it. What d'ye want?"

He pulled the hand away, shook it and straightened his crushed fingers.

"Time," said Ragozin, "time, my lad, that's a big thing. If something hurts for a day, that's one thing. If it hurts for a hundred days, that's quite another matter. The people are standing a lot. It's not all the same to them—nine or twenty-nine."

Without rising, he turned to the fire and said loudly:

"Why don't you take a walk, Xenia?"

Xenia gathered their friends and led them to the spring. For a long time their calls and laughter were audible as they descended the slippery clay banks of the gulley.

"Have you brought it?" Ragozin asked, when they were alone.

Kirill pulled a bundle of proclamations from his hip-pocket. He smoothed it out and laid it beside the packet which Ragozin had taken from the basket of dishes.

"Count them out in tens."

The thin pink leaflets were folded in four and put back in the basket, underneath the tea-cloth. The work went swiftly, silently, and soon the last packet, about half the size of one's palm, lay there in its place. Ragozin put the basket away under a bush and lay down again.

"We used to hold meetings on these May Days," he said. "But now you've got to live like a snail—carry your house on your back and everything in it. Drink tea, play the accordion, but as for getting together and talking—not on your life. Mess up the whole job."

"That way, of course, we certainly shall spend twenty-nine years with our samovars and accordions," said Kirill.

"But you liked my samovar and its whistle", smiled Ragozin, and repeated the exact whistle with which he had greeted Kirill.

They listened. No reply. The fragrant waves of branches and leaves rustled and

gleamed in the sunshine, and over their heads, a falcon soared, now and then piercing the air with a cry as sharp as a diamond cutting glass.

Suddenly there was the sound of a distant. whistle, and Ragozin nodded.

"There it is, my samovar."

He repeated the whistle, and a moment later, a tall old man with a pointed beard, wearing his holiday "blacks," a man whom Kirill did not know, appeared on the edge of the gulley and looked around him.

"Lost your way?" Ragozin shouted.

The old man approached unhurriedly, greeted them, and raised his worn black narrow-crowned hat.

"This is a good place you've found, Peter Petrovich, for your picnic."

"Won't you join us?"

"Thank you, I've already eaten."

"Tea's good in the fresh air. Sit down a bit."

"I've been sitting plenty."

"Well, stand then, as long as your legs hold you up."

"My legs are used to it. They've held me up in the shop for twenty years. And they've been tramping for sixty."

He looked about him again. The bushes were level with his hat.

"It gets greener here every year. The forest's growing up," he said approvingly.

"That's our young folks, they planted it and watered it," said Ragozin.

"Just so," said the old man, peering at Kirill. "Before, it was the old 'uns who planted for the young folks, now it's the other way round, it seems, eh?"

"There's young folks who don't only think of themselves," Kirill replied suddenly, looking straight at the old man out of screwed-up eyes.

"So, so. . . want to plant along with us?"

"Along with you," said Kirill.

"So, so," said the old man again, and turned his eyes to Ragozin. "And what shall we plant with them, these young folks, Peter Petrovich, what raspberry beds shall we set out?"

"Give me the basket," Ragozin asked Kirill.

He took a packet out from under the tea-cloth and handed it to the old man. The latter took it, turned it over in his hands as though judging the weight and strength of the paper, bent down, pulled one of his trouser legs up to the knee, slipped the leaflets tidily down into the shaft of his rough brown jack-boot and then tucked the trouser neatly back in place.

"Couldn't you do with some more?" asked Ragozin.

The old man was silent for a moment, then jerked his head sideways.

"Well, maybe I'll be limping on one leg."

"Well, take this, then, so they won't think you're drunk," said Ragozin, handing him another package.

The old man concealed it in the other boot.

"Thanks for your hospitality. God feeds me, nobody sees it," he said with a wink at Kirill, and suddenly laughed kindly. "Well, and now we know each other. And what you are to call me, Peter Petrovich'll tell you all about that. Right?"

"Right," Ragozin agreed. "Is there anything to talk about?"

"We'll find something to talk about, all right."

"Well, let's sit down then. And you, Kirill, you go off quietly somewhere. But keep your wits about you."

"I'll go to the Volga," said Kirill and held out his hand to the old man.

"Good-bye, young comrade," said the old man, the same kindly smile lighting his face again.

"Good-bye, comrade," Kirill jerked out, feeling a warmth flood up from his breast to burn his cheeks, ears, his whole head.

With long strides he flung himself into the thicket, parting the tangled branches as though swimming through a roaring green sea and hearing the word repeated to the wild waves over and again: comrade, comrade! It was he, Kirill Izvekov, who had been addressed by that title for the first time—comrade—and for the first time he himself had addressed somebody by that title—comrade—the old man, one of those people whose lives he would share in the future. He strode and strode, swam and swam, until the rustling green waves bore him to an island on the bare crest of a hill, from whence he could see, cradled by hills, the big town, its outskirts wooden, its centre stone, like a cake—cut across by the lines of streets dividing it into blocks. Below him lay that unbroken wooden cake with its stone centre, above him the cottony clouds, wind-driven, soaring through the sky, and right beneath his feet was the curving crest of hills, along which he was going to the Volga.

He ran down one slope and up another, to race down and clamber up the next. Again he was swimming, as he had been in the thick saplings, but the waves of hills were bigger and in place of leaves he was cutting through the bitter-sweet wormwood which covered the slopes. In this way he charged along to the steep cliff above the Volga itself and sat down on the edge, opening his shirt collar, throwing off his cap and belt.

His heart was beating as though it would leap from his body. He began to laugh, and just because he did not know why, he was unable to stop, but sat there, legs dangling over the edge, swaying and laughing—a laughter which seemed like speech and song, the songs they sing in the east—about all that he saw and heard.

He saw the endless valley and the heavy river flowing along it. He saw the green island, and the willows rising up it, half their stems submerged, submissively bowing their shining white heads to the breath of the wind. He saw an orange-coloured barge, almost motionless in the centre of the river, like a house of marsh-wood, and far, far in the distance two strings of barges, one following the other, as dainty as drawn thread work. Drifting cloud-shadows flecked the dancing foam crests, the swaying willows on the island and the huddled crowd of vessels by the town. Everything was moving, everywhere distant voices spoke of work

of travel, voices which the wind carried without in any wise disturbing the all-embracing quiet.

After sitting still for a while, Kirill drew up his legs, embraced his knees with his arms, and cradling his chin between them, began to put his thoughts into order. Sternly he put the questions to himself: What is it I want? What shall I be? What is the main thing in life? But as he tried to frame a concise answer to these question, the words seemed to slip away from the everyday world into a sort of dream, into a shimmering, shifting, pleasantly vivid kaleidoscope. He felt himself moving, transporting objects on a cosmic scale. His hands raised the river to flow to the heavens; the snowy cloud mass travelled along the bottomless chasm of the river-bed as along a corridor; black oak-trees lined the bank as though it were a boulevard, along which the barge was rolling thunderously, like a huge ball of thread, unwinding a smooth amber path, which undulated behind it.

Kirillwas standing in front of the blackboard and doing a calculation with a hand grown to tremendous girth, while the drawing teacher nodded approvingly and kept dropping the pince-nez from his fleshy nose—once, twice, three times, quicker and quicker, till a thousand pince-nez covered the far-distant water with their twinkling, glittering glass. "Good," said the teacher, "but to pass the examination, you must draw a cross section of the town in which you wish to live." Then Kirill's plan began to grow and grow, exceeding the limits of the blackboard, while the board itself extended; and on it there appeared single rooms, hundreds of them, with cloud-shadows floating over them, and in one of them Liza was standing. "I've past all my exams," said Liza, "turn your back." "Why?" asked Kirill. "Turn your back, I tell you." "But you're my wife," he said. "It doesn't matter, turn your back," she repeated, and herself turned away. Her dress was fastened at the back with endless tiny hooks; when she began to unfasten them, her arms raised over her head, her long plaits became entangled and he went up to her and began disentangling and re-plaiting them. Her hair smelled of wormwood, the heavy perfume became stronger and warmer every moment. Liza turned round slowly, slowly, and when she was face to face with him, Kirill saw his mother's sweet face with the pock-marks on the upper lip and forehead; she said: "Only give me your word that you will never go to the green island on a boat. Remember that your father died on a boat, Kirill!" Her voice changed strangely as she was speaking, and the last word—Kirill—came in a gruff masculine tone.

"Fallen asleep?" said the same gruff voice, not far away. "Fallen asleep, Kirill?"

He opened his eyes and without rising, his head still on his hands, he saw Ragozin standing about ten paces away on the edge of the cliff, facing the Volga.

"Don't get up, don't come to me," said Ragozin. "When you go home, don't drag a tail after you. There's a young fellow strolling about here on the hills with his trousers tucked into his boots. That's a mark. So look out."

Ragozin's eyes travelled lazily over the horizon, then he walked on, saying as he went:

"It's going to rain. Don't catch cold."

Only then Kirill noticed that it had become darker. He raised himself on his elbow. Gold and green still gleamed and shimmered at the foot of the hills and on the island, but nearer to the first shore the river was a cold blue, the foam crests a dull grey, and beside the shore itself was a dark lilac-coloured strip like Indian ink rising to the surface of the water. Heavy silver-edged clouds hung low over the river. Far below was the barge, now no longer orange-coloured, but dark grey, as though it had been smoked. The strings of barges were hastening towards the town, like a flock of frightened ducks. Then the first barely audible rumbling of a spring thunder-storm sounded, menacing and solemnly exultant.

Kirill looked about him. A young man was strolling indifferently towards the edge of the hill. He was wearing a red shirt and a well-pressed, short, checked jacket. His chestnut coloured trousers were tucked into, and hung down over the tops of his high-boots, which were well polished and had concertina creases at the ankles. His yellow hair was carefully arranged, and a pair of dark pince-nez attached by a cord sat on his fleshy, upturned nose. He looked like a shop assistant, or a student at some night school. At the edge he halted, and examined the view through his pince-nez.

"Aha, my dear sir," Kirill said to himself, feeling proud that he was followed, and that he knew all about it and could see right through that unpleasant fellow with his top-boots and pince-nez.

Kirill lay down again on his back, stretched himself to his full length, covered his face with his cap, saying complacently into the stuffy lining:

"To hell with you! I'm not worrying about any rain. But I think you will, you sleek fat-head..."

The night alarm in the Meshkov's house began with the cook, Glasha, coming in a flutter to inform the master that there was an "official" asking for him. Hastily throwing on some clothes, Meshkov went down to the kitchen, and in the flickering light of an oil lamp saw the buttons and silver epaulettes of a swarthy man. The visitor introduced himself as a captain of the gendarmerie, and announced that he had come to search the Ragozin apartment. He invited Meshkov as landlord to dress and come with him to the wing, and kindly to hurry.

To Meshkov the night seemed to have suddenly turned bitterly cold, although just a little while ago he had been complaining of the stuffy heat, and had slept under a single sheet. As for his wife, she lost her head completely—where in the world had Meshkov's overcoat got to; and while she was running aimlessly backwards and forwards between porch, wardrobe and cupboard, the captain twice shouted to them to hurry. And after

that Meshkov's hat had disappeared—it had fallen down in the confusion and rolled under the table. At last Valeria Ivanovna made the sign of the cross on her husband's back as he went down the stairs—sent a prayer after him, listened to hear whether her daughter had woken up and went out onto the balcony to see what was happening in the yard.

In the darkness, Meshkov could not immediately distinguish the figures of the gendarmes half hidden in the gloom. Their shadows flickered along the walls, but he could not guess their number, as they merged into threes, or twos, or drifted into groups. He could hear the thin ring of spurs, the creaking of leather, loud sniffs from running noses—and then silence. Suddenly Glasha's voice was heard:

"Your honour, I'm illiterate,"

"You don't need to read anything," the captain told her. "You just say what I told you, and that's all."

Somebody pushed her to the door, and she knocked.

Xenia came out onto the porch at once—she had evidently not yet gone to bed.

"Petya, is that you?" she asked.

"It's me," said Glasha.

"What's the matter?" Xenia asked her.

"Well, you see, it's... They brought it to us, but it's for you. I was told to bring it you."

"What?"

"Why, this..."

"A telegram..." the captain prompted her in a whisper.

"It's a telegram," Glasha repeated, with tears in her voice.

Nobody breathed, and Meshkov felt as though the stars were growing bigger and bigger, and the whole yard with its buildings was rising and silently mounting upwards. Then with a sudden loud noise it fell again and dived underground; it was only then that he realized that in the neighbour's henhouse a sleepy cock had flapped his wings and crowed. "Before the cock crows twice, thou wilt betray me," Meshkov recalled, and in the same instant Xenia said in quite a different voice, low and despairing:

"I'll just go and dress." Then she dashed back from the porch into the house.

"Now then, Pashchenko! Get on with it!" the captain ordered loudly in the same instant.

Two of the gendarmes crouched down and then swiftly straightened again, their shoulders striking the door and breaking the bolt. All immediately rushed into the porch and the room beyond, and there was the sound of striking matches. Meshkov could see the shadows of caps and bewhiskered profiles increasing and diminishing, moving and swaying on the tiled stove. He stood in the background, at the entrance, unable to cross the threshold, as though his legs had turned to lead.

"Where's Peter Ragozin?" asked the captain.

"He's at work," Xenia replied.

"Been gone long?"

"Since morning."

"Didn't say when he'd be home?"

"No."

"You his wife?"

"Yes."

Xenia's voice had changed, Meshkov could hear a note of enmity, even of defiance in it. That was not the way a guilty person should talk—and they wouldn't come at night to conduct a search in an innocent person's home. An innocent person, of course, would have pleaded: "Your honour! It's a mistake, gossip, slander!" Here was Meshkov himself, he had done nothing, but he was ready to howl, he would have liked to throw himself on his knees. Have mercy! After all, the disgrace would fall on his head. He would never be able to appear in the street tomorrow. A thieves' kitchen discovered in Meshkov's yard, a sink of evil and iniquity. Meshkov with crime under his roof, sheltering rebels. A night search at Meshkov's, looking for treason. Fall on your knees? That's nothing—spare no money, nothing, to turn away this misfortune.

Suddenly Xenia ceased answering questions of any kind. She just sat there, leaning on the kitchen table, her tilted brows frowning.

"Witness, come here," the captain called.

A moment later Xenia was no longer sitting at the table, she had shrunk back into a corner, burying her face in her hands. A board was lifted in the table top, and beneath it lay a flat box, of the same size as the table, divided into little squares barely larger than a match-box.

"A type fount," said the captain to Meshkov. "Here's the type—see?"

He took a leaden letter from the box and drew it across his finger, where it left a black track.

"Fresh ink," he remarked. "Been used not so long ago."

The shadows moved over to the cellar entrance, and began dancing over the cramped walls, as though in an access of merriment. Empty barrels were rolled from corner to corner. The activity became more intense, as though a tussle was coming to an end, bringing victory and defeat. The heavy trapdoor padded with mats was dragged back from the hole, torches disappeared underground and a waxy yellow light came up through the trap, playing over the rafters.

Once more Meshkov was summoned. The gendarmes drew aside to let him through to the illuminated square of the cellar entrance. In the middle, down below, stood a low machine, with a dirty patchwork quilt which had recently covered it lying on the ground beside it. The captain pressed the pedal with his foot, and the machine came to life, with a sound of well-oiled parts moving upon each other.

"Fine things happening in your yard," he said with grim playfulness. "Up above the compositors' room, down here the printing machines."

Again the cock crowed and flapped his wings triumphantly. The light was stronger. Two gendarmes led Xenia through the yard, a bundle in her hand.

When she came to the gate she turned, looked back at the deserted wing, and gave an almost imperceptible nod to Meshkov—

probably because there was nobody else of whom she could take leave.

It had long been light, but the lamp still burned with its feeble smoky flame. Vera Nikandrovna, Kirill's mother, sat on the tumbled bed, her hands lying on her knees, the open palms upwards. Sometimes she would glance round the room with a surprise that flickered up and then slowly faded again. All the furniture, everything in the room, was facing her from some unaccustomed angle or position, looking strange and unfamiliar. The pictures were askew, the blue drawing of a steamer hung from one nail. The mattress was ripped open, and the empty striped cover hung on the bed end. The floor was littered with shreds and splinters of wood, and bore the tracks of top-boots. Textbooks and exercise books lay in the corner, a tumbled heap. The green and black "Judith," torn from its nail, was leaning upside down against the jamb. In the centre of the room was an overturned chair.

Once upon a time all these things had belonged to Kirill. Once upon a time he had written in those exercise books. Once upon a time the textbooks had stood upon their shelves, the blue drawing had been neatly pinned to the wall, the mattress had been covered with a white quilt.Once upon a time... No, just a moment ago Kirill had been sitting on that chair lying in the middle of the room, he had only just overturned it as he stepped back from Vera Nikandrovna, when she raised her hands to his face in farewell, and he had frowned, aging years in that single instant. It was just now that she had pressed his head to her shoulder, and he had torn himself from her embrace, at the same time crushing her fingers painfully and then stroking them. The sound of the falling chair was still in her ears, but it was all gone, she had gone back fifteen years to the time when they came to tell her that the Volga had cast her husband up on the sand and she must go and identify his body. Then she had sat there the whole night through, as she was sitting now, her hands lying on her lap, fearing to stir. But at that time four-year-old Kirill had been there beside her, asleep under the white quilt, and although death had overthrown all her past life, she still had an island of refuge, where the bees hummed around the blossoming trees, larks darted to and fro in the heavens, and a spring bubbled in the cool thicket. The island blossomed, grew, it became the whole world, and now suddenly it had sunk, swallowed by a fathomless swamp. The white quilt was lying on the floor, the house was empty, and Vera Nikandrovna was alone.

And her dreams brought her the past, through all the obtrusive frozen present.

The gendarmes had only just begun their search when Kirill returned from the theatre. They themselves opened the door to him and immediately surrounded him. Vera Nikandrovna managed to look into his face, and saw how in an instant his brows, eyes, and temples darkened, then the mask of colour shaded his upper lip, as though he had suddenly grown a moustache. They turned out his pockets and felt him all over from head to foot. Every seam in his clothing they crumpled in their fingers. Then they made him sit down on the chair in the middle of the room, and began searching in his bed and in his linen. They rapped the drawers, the table legs and the door jamb with their knuckles. They dug the ashes from the stove and examined them. They examined all the books, and as they turned the pages of a well-thumbed "Mechanics," seven little pink notices, about the size of one's palm, fell out and slipped softly along the floor; an elderly gendarme with dashing whiskers leisurely picked them up and exclaimed "Aha!" with benign satisfaction.

Kirill sat erect, his hands in his pockets, his feet curled boyishly round the chair legs.

"And where do all these come from, young man?" said the gendarme pleasantly, showing him the leaflets.

"I found them," Kirill replied.

"You don't happen to remember just where?"

"On the street."

"And what street was that?"

"A long way away."

"A long way away from where?"

"Not far from the technical school."

"A long way away and not far away. I quite understand. And were they all lying together like this?"

"They were not lying, but tumbling about."

"All seven of them tumbling about in a package?"

"Yes, like that."

"And you picked them up?"

"Yes."

"Right off the ground?"

"Of course, from the ground."

"But they're quite fresh and clean, not a mark on them; they were lying on the ground like that, were they?"

Kirill did not answer.

"Eh, my young cockerel, why couldn't you think beforehand what you were going to say, eh?"

"I needn't answer you at all. I'm not bound to."

"Somebody's taught you that you needn't answer," the gendarme reproved him, and once more began turning the pages of the books. The whole time he had spoken with the malicious gentleness of a teacher who knows beforehand that the boy will try to lie.

Vera Nikandrovna wanted to cry out at him, to ask him how he dare use that tone, her son never lied. But the stubbornly calm note of Kirill's answers warned her to be silent. She almost felt as though he were directing her, that she must conduct herself as he wanted. It was as if he were silently asking her to join in a plan with him against thieves who were rummaging through his things. Pain and fear for him gave place to admiration. He knew how to behave in a moment of horrible and undeserved insult. Now she could plainly see the change that had taken place in him. Oh, yes, he had changed, but in such a way that she could be even prouder of him than before. Everything that was happening in their house

was a wretched mistake, of course, and one must endure it just as he was enduring it. He was teaching his mother to conduct herself with that dignity which she had dreamed of seeing in him, not rude, but firm, unbending, manly. God, how he had grown, what a man he had become! Why was it that Vera Nikandrovna only realized that now, in this cruel moment?

"How's this, young man," said the gendarme, taking the tacks from a portrait of Przhevalsky [1], "playing at revolution, and an officer's picture over your bed?"

"That officer's not of your sort, Mr. Gendarme," Kirill replied. "He brought glory to Russia."

The gendarme tore the picture down and threw it onto the floor.

"I advise you to think of your mother, even if you don't care about yourself," he said, making a very obvious effort to keep his voice even.

Kirill should have thought of his mother—they were cold words spoken by a stranger, but they burned into Vera Nikandrovna's heart. It was true,—Kirill had not thought about her! He was punishing her by his lack of feeling, he did not sense her pain! He had brought terrible unhappiness down upon her, he had ruined himself, the cruel, poor, beloved, beloved lad!

"Kirill," she called him timidly and helplessly. "Why don't you explain? Because all this is some terrible misunderstanding."

"Say good-bye," said the gendarme. "We're just going now."

"What! You want to take him away? You want to take him. . . from me? But. . ."

She rose and took a small step forward.

"I'm his mother. . . How can you do it? Without settling anything. . ."

"Do you want to say good-bye or not?"

Two gendarmes came up to Kirill. Then she gave a tiny cry and rushed to him with outstretched arms.

Translated by Eve Manning

[1] Nikolai Przhevalsky (1839—1888), famous Russian traveller, explorer of Central Asia, officer in the Russian army.

IVAN YEFREMOV

SIBERIAN DIAMONDS

With an impatient gesture the chief pushed the ashtray full of cigarette ends away from him and looked scornfully at the man across the table. His companion, small in stature, thin and grey-bearded, seemed lost in the depths of the big leather armchair in which he was huddled with his legs doubled up under the chair. The eyes that shone through his glasses showed immovable stubbornness.

"The Evenki expedition has been working three years without any results," snapped the chief.

"What do you mean, no results? What about the kimberlite?"

"Academician Chernyavsky reports unfavourably on your kimberlite. He is of the opinion that the rock is not kimberlite. Altogether, Serguei Yakovlevich, it's quite clear to me personally. It is a huge, almost unexplored country. The expedition costs money, especially since you added the pendulum party to it. Results are nil—not even the slightest indication of anything. I insist that you stop the work. Your Institute has many more urgent tasks in hand and the expenditure of huge sums on such exploration is bad practice. And that's that. . ."

The chief, frowning in dissatisfaction, threw down his cigarette. Professor Ivashentsev, director of the Institute, sat bolt upright in his chair.

"You are putting an end to something that will bring millions of roubles to the country, not only in economy but in direct profit from export."

"The business has brought nothing but disappointment so far. . . Incidentally I have already said that the whole matter is quite clear to me. My decision is final."

The chief stood up. Beside him the professor looked unusually small. He rose slowly from his chair, straightened his glasses, muttered something incomprehensible and held out a small rounded stone to the chief.

"I've already seen that," said the latter drily. "From the Moyero River. I've heard about it for three years on end! And you also showed me that greekwhite."

The professor bent over his briefcase fumbling with the obstinate lock.

The chief was sorry for the scientist.

"Serguei Yakovlevich," he said walking over to him, "you must admit that I am right. I don't understand your stubbornness."

"It is easy to take charge of work in which you are not personally interested. . . I cannot be disinterested. D'you understand, I firmly believe in this business from the bottom of my heart. Only a huge, unexplored and difficult territory lies between theoretical conclusions and actual proofs. . . Naturally you will say that this alone is enough to ruin the job! I know it's a question of government money, I know. . . still. . ."—the professor was growing angry. "D'you know the 'iron law'? If you want to make a million you must invest seven hundred thousand. And we expect to make tens of millions."

With that he turned towards the door. The chief watched him go, smiled faintly and shook his head.

The professor returned to his Institute and ordered his secretary to call the director of field work to his office immediately.

"What's the latest news from Churilin?" he asked when the director came to him.

"The last news we had came a month ago, Serguei Yakovlevich."

"I know that, is there nothing else?"

"Nothing else yet. . ."

"Where do you think they are at the moment?"

"Churilin reported that he had reached the trading station on Lake Churingda. They went down the Churingda as far as Khatanga and from there they were supposed to cross the Moyero Heights. They have probably finished that journey by now and have reached the Turinsk settlement as they planned. But you never know, the plan is one thing and the taiga another. . ."

"That I am well aware of, thank you! . ."

Left alone Professor Ivashentsev leaned back in his chair and gave himself up to his thoughts. In his mind's eye he saw a map of the huge region between the Yenissei and the Lena. Somewhere in the middle, in a chaos of small hills that were cut up by countless rivers and covered with swampy forests, was the expedition he had sent to look for a dream. The professor took out the stone that he had shown to the chief. It was a small piece of dark rock, very solid and heavy. Its roughly grained surface shone with numerous crystals of pyrope—red garnets—looking like tiny drops of blood, and the olivine in the stone shone with a fresh green colour. The crystals stood out against the bluish-green background of the mass of chromdiopside. Here and there were flashes of the deep blue fire of disthene. The stone attracted attention by its brilliant combination of pure colours. The professor turned the sample of stone over and read the inscription on white enamel on the other side: "River Moyero, southern slopes of the Anaon Mountains, Tolmachov expedition, 1915."

Ivashentsev sighed. "This is the typical greekwhite of South-Africa. . . We haven't been able to find any signs of similar rock anywhere in the Anaon Mountains or the Moyero Valley. Failure again this year. Churilin doesn't say a word. It is only a dream after all. . ."

Ivashentsev weighed the stone in his hand and then locked it away in the lower drawer of his desk. With a gesture of determination he took up the telephone receiver.

"Send the following telegram to Churilin: 'Expedition cancelled owing to lack of results. Return immediately.' Yes, I'll sign it myself, otherwise he will ignore it. Where to? To Turinsk settlement! Of course by radio, via Dickson. . ."

He slammed down the receiver and cut the conversation short at the same time putting an end to the possibility of his oldest dreams being fulfilled. He took off his glasses and covered his eyes with his hand.

Radio waves carried the message from Moscow north-eastwards across the tundra, across the cold expanses of the Arctic Ocean, until they reached the tall mast on the bare island in the continuous light of the Arctic day. . . Two hours later the message travelled southward over the Byrranga Range and the swamps, over the endless forests. The receiver at the Turinsk settlement clattered away and the short, laconic phrase was printed out on a blue form.

"Vassya, are there any of the Korvunchan Evenki here?"

"Why?"

"An urgent telegram for the Churilin expedition. They are on the top of the Korvunchan now."

"There is nobody from Korvunchan here but Innokenti is going home to Bugarikhta tomorrow. He's a good lad, he'll do an extra fifty kilometres, especially if you ask him to."

"Let's go and look for him. I'll give him the telegram right away. . ."

In the wide valley of the Niukourak, three hundred or so kilometres from the Turinsk settlement the shadows were beginning to lengthen. The long mountain slopes bristled with fir-trees black and dismal at their base. On the flat-topped hill that rose up to the north of the swamps around the upper springs it was still quite light. Four dark tents stood amongst the few larches and before them, on a flat open space covered with light grey deer moss, a fire was burning. The flames were almost hidden by the dense cloud of smoke, while an acrid smell of marsh rosemary spread through the still air. To the right of the open space stood a pile of pack-saddles, boxes, bales and bags. A cloud of midges and mosquitoes hung over the fire and behind the backs of the men. Those who sat around the fire did their best to keep on the very edge of the smoke cloud so that they could breath freely and at the same time defend themselves from the insects that persistently crawled into their ears, noses and eyes.

"Tea's ready!" announced a man, black with soot and thoroughly smoke-dried, as he took a bucket filled with a dark-brown liquid from the fire. Those around the fire each took up a big mug and a huge, heavy and solid "Tungus cake," a sort of concentrated loaf. The midges covered the surface of the hot tea in a grey cloud and had to be blown away from the edge of the mug before its owner could drink. The men sipped their tea with great satisfaction and exchanged short, abrupt phrases.

The occasional rattle of the wooden clappers on the horse's legs wandering down below was joined by a distant regular noise.

"Listen, comrades, that must be our crowd returning?"

The young people ran to the tents to get their guns. The meeting with a detachment of the expedition after it had been away a long time was always an event in the lives of the taiga explorers. The twilight had not yet deepened to darkness when there appeared on the glade of the northern slope of the divide a string of gaunt, tired horses, wearily picking their way upwards. The ragged packs held together by tattered ropes bore evidence to a long journey through thick undergrowth.

Shots rang out. The newcomers answered with a ragged volley. A gloomy-looking, solidly built man, the geophysicist, the leader of the pendulum party, rode over to the tents and slipped down from his saddle. His neck was roughly bound with a dirty bandage. He lifted a black net from his face and stepped

forward to meet Churilin, the leader of the expedition, a smart, clean-shaven man.

"Good evening, Comrade Churilin," said the geophysicist dully in reply to Churilin's hearty greeting.

"You've come just in time for tea. What news have you got?"

"We have something to tell you but we've had a hard time. I have been sick and we've lost three horses..."

"What happened to you?"

"Something pretty foul—the midges bit me all to pieces. I was inflamed all over..."

"So I suppose you scratched yourself?"

"I should say so," muttered the geophysicist angrily in response to Churilin's reproachful glance. "I haven't got such a well-tanned hide as you... I don't know how I shall manage the next trip..."

Churilin ordered each of them to be given a small draft from their valuable store of spirits. The newcomers took their places at the fire. Loud, jolly voices interrupted one another as they related their adventures.

At last the conversation around the fire died down and the newcomers settled for the night. The pillar of flame was crowned with a wreath of stars, the damp branches laid on the fire to produce smoke spluttered softly, the mosquitoes were an incessant nuisance. From the valley below the wood clappers on the horses could still be heard.

"Maxim Mikhailovich, is it possible that a geophysicist can easily solve a problem on which we have spent a long time?" asked a young geologist warily.

Churilin smiled unhappily.

"We are looking for diamond fields. Why are we looking for them here? Five years ago our director first noticed the extraordinary resemblance between the geology of this region and that of South-Africa. The Central-Siberian and the South-African Plateaux have very similar geological structures. In both places rock from great depths was brought to the surface by volcanic eruptions. Serguei Yakovlevich believes that these convulsions were simultaneous in Siberia and South-Africa, where they ended with huge explosions of the gases that had accumulated in the depths of the earth. These explosions bored a number of narrow shafts or chimneys through the earth's crust; these are the places where diamonds are to be found. Hundreds of these chimneys are known to exist on the huge territory stretching from the Cape of Good Hope to the Congo and there is no doubt that many more are covered by the sands of the Kalahari Desert. There must be enough diamonds for the whole world and you know how important they are in industry, especially in our own line, drilling into rock. The big companies have bought up all the diamond fields. Only five out of dozens of rich chimneys are being worked; the others are surrounded by fences charged with high-voltage electricity and are guarded by armed sentries. The reason for this is that if all the chimneys were worked there would be an immediate reduction in the price of diamonds. In the Soviet Union there is no big diamond field and if we are able to find any such chimneys you can see for yourself how important it is... Everything here is astonishingly like the South-African Plateau except for the diamonds—we have platinum, iron, nickel and chromium on the Central-Siberian Plateau, exactly the same mineral formation. The pendulum party gave us an indirect indication of the place in which we may find the diamond field. I say 'may find' because there is just as much chance that we shall not find it... Survey is easy in South-Africa where there are dry, high steppes, almost without vegetation. The first diamonds there were found in the rivers. Here we have an ocean of forests, swamps and eternal frost under the surface which prevents the rivers from washing away the soil. Everything is hidden. For three years work we have to show just what we started with—the mysterious piece of greekwhite that was found amongst the pebbles in the bed of the Moyero!... This stone is a mixture of garnet, olivine and diopside which is only found in small round pieces in the blue earth of the diamond chimneys... We have already explored the whole upper region of the Moyero and many of the springs and streams of the basin."

Silence fell around the dying fire. One after another the men left, but Churilin still sat on, deep in thought. The last bursts of flame threw a red glow over his gaunt, Indian face. His assistant Sultanov, a black-bearded man who looked like a Gypsy, stood bent over a saddle-bag, sucking at his pipe.

The stars of the Great Bear appeared in the black sky—night had finally set in. In the nearby grove the owls croaked mournfully with hollow voices.

"No more than a month left for field work," thought Churilin. "One more short trip and if we fail again they will put an end to our work. In these tremendous forests we need dozens of parties making trips in different directions and dozens of years to do it in. I'll have to keep the expedition going as long as I possibly can—break up into a number of small parties and send them out in all directions."

On the southern slopes of the hill a number of small stones fell clattering down. Churilin and his assistant pricked up their ears. An indefinite noise continued for some time, then the head of a dog with sharp-pointed ears appeared from out of the darkness into the circle of light cast by the fire. They heard the heavy breathing of a saddled reindeer. An Evenk, holding his wooden reindeer goad in his hand, rode up to the fire. Leaning on the goad he leapt lightly to the ground and his reindeer immediately lay down. The Evenk's round face was all smiles. He asked for the leader of the expedition and then handed Churilin an envelope with a huge wax seal on it.

"Vassili Ivanych say give you this. I ride from night to night."

Having said these few words the Evenk pulled out his long pipe. Churilin thanked him, invited him to eat and promised him two bricks of tea. Churilin opened the envelope, unfolded the blue paper and read it. His eyes narrowed and flashed with an angry light.

Sultanov watched him closely.

"Bad news, Maxim Mikhailovich?" he asked softly.

By way of answer Churilin handed him the telegram. Sultanov read it, coughed, choked on a breath too deeply drawn. Both of them stood silent. Then Sultanov looked out across the fire into the night.

"So that's the end," he said softly.

"We'll see!" answered Churilin. "Don't say anything, Arseni Pavlovich..."

Churilin took the telegram and threw it into the fire. Then he sat down again. Sultanov took a piece of paper and began making calculations on it. The wood that had been cut to last till morning was all burnt when Churilin and Sultanov left the dying fire.

At dawn the next day Churilin aroused everybody without waiting for daylight. Two parties set out in different directions. One of them with twenty-eight horses strung out in a long line between the firs in the Niukourak valley; they moved southward singing merrily for they were bound homeward. The remaining four men, Churilin, Sultanov, the camp worker Peter and the guide Nikolai, with five horses loaded to the extreme limit, fired two volleys in farewell, watched the departing caravan for a few minutes, and then made their way downhill in the opposite direction. There, behind the rows of similar rambling hills, the cedar groves lay in a black mass on the heights of Liuliuktakan...

The tiny caravan was moving through the taiga, through an unexplored region, a "white spot" on the map. Only careful organization and strict discipline could bring success to such an undertaking and ensure that nothing unusual would happen that had not been foreseen: day after day passed evenly and monotonously in heavy work that had been carefully timed beforehand. One day differed from another mostly by the number of obstacles overcome and the number of kilometres marched.

The hot days came. The sun spread its burning rays over the soft, mossy surface of the bogs. The light of the sun seemed hazy from the evaporation of the rotting moss. The sharp aroma of the marsh rosemary was like over-fermented, spiced wine. The heat did not deceive them. They knew that the short northern autumn was approaching: it had placed its almost imperceptible mark on everything—on the lightly rustling needles of the larches, on the sadly bowed branches of the birches and rowans, on the caps of the toadstools that had already lost their velvet freshness...

The mosquitoes had almost all disappeared but the midges, as though they felt the nearness of death, became more insistent, dashing back and forth in reddish-grey clouds.

Churilin's little caravan had already passed through the Khorpichekan swamp. There was a stifling immobility in the heart of the taiga. Wind which drove away the clouds of pestering midges was a rare and welcome guest. When you are moving the midges are not so bad, they hang about in a cloud behind the traveller's back. As soon as you stand still, however, to examine the rock, to write down some observation or help a stumbling horse, a huge cloud of midges immediately attacks you; they stick to your sweating face, crawl into your eyes, nose, ears and down your collar. The midges get under your clothes, they eat away the skin under your belt, in the bends of the knees and ankles and drive a nervous and impatient man to tears. The midge, therefore, is a sort of goad, it makes you work faster when you have occasion to halt and does not let you dally unnecessarily. It is only when a long halt is made and smoke fires have been built or tents pitched that there is an opportunity to look back and examine the route that has been covered.

With a clatter of horses' hoofs and a creaking of the straps and rings by which the packs were slung from the saddles, the expedition moved on. Ahead of them a huge swamp loomed through the greenish haze of evaporating moisture. The trunks of dead larches rose at an angle above the rare, sickly-looking firs. An occasional muttered curse addressed to one of the pack horses was all that broke the tense silence in which the caravan marched. During the summer months the horses had learned to know the taiga and they worked with a will; heads bent low, they followed in single file without anybody to lead them. Nikolai the Evenk, gun slung across his shoulders and a stick in his hand, plodded on in his soft mocassins, planting his legs that were bent at the knee in a peculiar way; nevertheless he set a swift pace as he led the caravan.

Sultanov brought up the rear of the column making notes in a book onto which fell drops of sweat; midges stuck to the pages leaving splotches of blood.

"Is it far to Khorpichekan?" was the question which Churilin asked the guide every evening. The cold nights made them cling closer round a fire built on a small patch of dry ground in a forest clearing.

"Don't know, our people no go there, answered the guide. "We think not too far. Maybe tomorrow, maybe another day get there..."

Churilin and Sultanov exchanged glances.

"Twenty days we've been wandering round the Amnunnachi," said Sultanov softly, "actually Khorpichekan is the last river."

"Yes," admitted Churilin, "there's nothing else we can take hold of. The Amnunnachi is one big swamp, a low flat plateau. If Khorpichekan doesn't produce anything we'll have to return empty-handed. We may lose our horses and get caught by the winter...

It took two more days for them to reach the mysterious Khorpichekan, an ordinary little stream whose dark waters flowed swiftly between winding banks. Coarse, matted grass hung down from undercut banks and almost reached the surface of the water. Despite its width of no more than three metres the river was very deep.

The guide had difficulty in finding a dry place suitable for camping.

The willow and bird-cherry cut as firewood burnt badly but gave off a terrific amount of smoke which drove away the midges. This uncomfortable camping ground was the decisive one. But what could they expect from this deep, swampy river in which there were

no visible outcrops of bedrock? On the muddy, winding bed of the river they could not even find the pebbles which would give them an indication of the nature of bedrock at the headwaters of the river.

There was no moon that night to light up the bleak swamps: the arrival at Khorpichekan coincided with a change in the weather. Here and there a star shone through the moving clouds and then disappeared. By midnight the silent swamp came to life, a wind sprang up and a sparse rain began to fall.

In the morning a cold mist rose rapidly, a sure sign of wet weather. Without any sun the dismal locality became even more gloomy, the reddish surface of the swamp turned grey, the waters of the Khorpichekan seemed black as ink.

"We'll have to dive in!" said Sultanov feeling the river bed with a long pole. He had found a shallow place where the pole sank through the mud of the bed and rested on solid rock. Churilin was the first to undress and dive into the icy water.

"Three stones!" he shouted as he crawled on to the bank. "I'll run to the tent and dress before the midges eat me up. Beat them off, Arseni Pavlovich."

"Bituminous shale and diabase," said Sultanov, looking into the tent a few minutes later, "always the same thing. . ."

"I'm not giving up now that I have started!" Churilin looked at Sultanov. "We'll go to the headwaters of the Khorpichekan in the middle of the Amnunnachi. I have a sort of feeling... there's something here... if not, all our work is just chasing shadows... Let's load up without wasting any more time."

"I'm fed up with this," laughed Sultanov binding the folded tent into a bundle. "Just think of it—several months already unroll everything at night, scatter it around just in order to gather it up and reload in the morning. Every day the same. . ."

The expedition moved on to the north-east through six days of constant, light rain. All traces of man, of the winter excursions of the Evenki, disappeared; the tiny party did not find as much as a single felled tree. The headwaters of the Khorpichekan were hidden in a dense thicket of young firs. Looking back before plunging into the dense undergrowth, Churilin could see almost the whole route they had travelled during the past two days. The air cleared for a few hours, a damp vapour hung overhead which made the whole area of the swamp seem almost transparent.

Churilin and his companions were on the alert: two huge elks were crossing the swamp. They were moving calmly, unaware of the presence of man. The animals' long legs moved unhurriedly but their long strides took them easily and rapidly over the thick masses of sodden moss. The leading elk tossed back his huge antlers, raised his head in apparent contempt for the expanses of swampland that submitted to his will. The animals disappeared behind an uneven ridge of dead larches. . .

"It makes me sick to look at them," muttered Sultanov. "On four long legs like that any swamp is easy to cross. You could do two hundred kilometres a day. . ." He looked bitterly at his own legs in their heavy jackboots. "We've only two legs and they're too short."

Churilin laughed and the guide's face spread into a smile even though he did not understand the conversation.

"Meat here," said the Evenk happily.

The feeling of alarm did not leave Churilin. There was actually no time left for work. They were advancing at the expense of the time that would be needed to return. Nevertheless the tiny caravan moved farther into the unpeopled swamps far from the big rivers...

The centre of the Amnunnachi was an absolutely treeless plain covered with hummocks of dry grass whose greyish-yellow surface was broken by expanses of moss. The plain sloped gradually downwards towards a scrubby forest of low trees scarcely visible on the horizon. Only away to the left was the horizon hidden by a level dark strip—apparently there was a steep downward slope on that side beyond which were the distant hills.

Within an hour the whole sky was covered with an even, lead-coloured sheet and the fine rain again set in. The huge expanse of impassable swamps in which the four men were lost oppressed them, gave them a feeling of the puny nature of man. However much a man may want to escape from this region, only weeks, months of monotonous marching and infinite patience could liberate him from his imprisonment. . . It was natural that Sultanov envied the elks. The strongest man, the most experienced legs, could not do more than three thousand paces a day over the soft moss, clinging mud, prickly grass and marsh plants. If half a million paces were necessary to get out of the swamp you could scream, die of loneliness, call on whom you please, but nothing would help. . . Half a million paces and not one of them must be a false step, otherwise you fall between the hummocks and roots into a crevasse between boulders and break your frail bones. Death awaiting you everywhere. . .

The caravan turned ninety degrees to the left towards the distant valley of the Moyero. Nothing could be seen through the sheet of rain and for days on end they marched by compass. Churilin and Sultanov hardly exchanged a word, the camp worker and the Evenk were equally silent. At night the horses' wooden clappers clattered plaintively as the hungry animals huddled together in the vicinity of the tents. Occasionally they heard the short, hoarse roar of the elk as the autumn fights between the bulls began. . .

At the head of a track that they had just made Churilin saw the caravan come to a halt. The horses huddled together in a bunch.

"Maxim Mikhailovich, hurry up!" cried Peter in dismay. "The Black has gone sick."

Churilin went over to the horses. The young Black had already been unloaded and was standing apart from the others. A great shudder run through him, his hind legs were bent under him.

"Both legs gave way at once and his belly hit a tree-stump," said Sultanov gloomily.

A stream of blood gushed from the Black's hind leg. He staggered and lay down.

"What shall we do, Arseni Pavlovich?" asked Churilin looking at the wound.

"What can we do?" Sultanov turned and walked away. "Only I can't. . ."

Pity for the animal stabbed painfully at Churilin. The caravan, however, was standing still; pale-faced he took up his rifle and snicked the bolt. Slowly he raised the muzzle of the rifle to the Black's ear. Peter, who had stood rooted to the spot, suddenly jumped forward and seized the barrel of the rifle. Tears were running down his cheeks.

"Maxim Mikhailovich, don't shoot! The Black will get better, he'll follow us by himself. . ."

All too willingly Churilin gave way to Peter. The load that the Black had carried was distributed amongst the other four animals, the packs on three of them, the saddle on the fourth. The Black raised its head as it lay and watched the departing caravan.

The tiny stream to their right was scarcely perceptible amidst the light-coloured mud as it rounded a mound covered with a cap of large fluffy firs.

"Stones, Maxim Mikhailovich," exclaimed Sultanov pointing to something sticking up in the centre of the stream. Big round stones with red flashes of iron in them showed through the water.

"I'll look at them," Churilin strode towards the stream. "You tell Nikolai that we will march till dark tonight."

Sultanov hurried after the guide. The Evenk heard the order and frowningly nodded his head and said that he knew they would have to hurry.

From the stream came Churilin's voice.

"Stop! Arseni Pavlovich!"

Sultanov's heart began to beat wildly. He hurried back. Churilin was waving a piece of rock and could not utter a word in his excitement. Silently he handed Sultanov the piece of broken rock and began to throw the slimy stones from the river on to the bank. Sultanov looked at the fresh fracture in the rock and trembled with joy. The blood-red crystals of pyrope stood out on the brightly-coloured surface amidst the mixture of olive and bluish-green grains of olivine and diopside.

"Greekwhite!" shouted Sultanov and both geologists began mercilessly smashing the stones Churilin had thrown out of the river.

The close-knit, solid stone broke under their hammers with difficulty. Every new fracture disclosed the same brightly-coloured, coarse-grained surface. Sultanov waded into the water after more stones. Only when the geologists found a piece of broken rock of another kind—dark, almost black in colour with green spots—did Churilin straighten his back and wipe the perspiration from his face.

"Phew!" exclaimed Sultanov with a sign. "Almost all greekwhite stones. And that—isn't that kimberlite?"

"I think it is," answered Churilin, "from the undamaged part of an intrusion."

Churilin's hands trembled as he rolled himself a cigarette.

"These aren't stones washed down by this stream, Arseni Pavlovich," he said quietly and triumphantly. "Such boulders are far too big for a tiny river. . ."

"Then there must have been a spate. . ." Sultanov hesitated in indecision.

". . . an alluvial deposit of greekwhite rock," concluded Churilin firmly. "You remember the greekwhite fragments are found in the African chimneys in the form of boulders that have been rounded by a volcanic eruption."

For the first time in many days Churilin laughed broadly and happily.

"S-o-o," said Sultanov, "then we'll have to go to the source of the stream, where the fir grove is. . . Turn back!" he shouted to Nikolai and Peter who were coming towards them. The Evenk, frowning, was closely studying the happy faces of his leaders and Peter slapped the horse Bulany on the rump:

"We'll go back to Blackie, you old fool!"

The fir tree fell with a crash, followed by another; the silence of the dark woods was broken by the blows of the axes.

The tired men sat down to smoke.

"Blackie is getting better, only he's still a bit lame," reported Peter who had been to look at the horses. "I said he would. The animals are getting skinnier every day though, they're just wasting away, the grass here is all dried up. . ."

The mist that began to spread at night had become a thick blanket of frost by morning. The swamp was glittering and sparkling. Under the fir trees it was still as dark as ever. In the twilight the trunks of the trees they had felled looked huge; they were all overgrown with toadstools. These fungi spread in waves and festoons over roots and stumps with every known shade of red, green and yellow; they gave off a smell of rot and at night shone with a faint phosphorescent gleam. The knoll was the home of countless owls. At twilight the beady-eyed, curious birds took up their places on branches of the trees nearest the camp and with their heads perched on one side watched the men with their bright yellow eyes. At night their cries rang out raucously across the swamp in answer to the roaring of the bull elks.

The men dug into the ground, scarcely pausing to sleep and eat, persistently driving their picks into the firm, hard clay. There were not enough tools. The eternally frozen soil was hard to work and only gave way when huge fires were lit in the pits they had dug. Then they came up against another enemy—water. Two of the survey wells they had dug had to be abandoned—they struck deposits of snow water which immediately filled the pits.

Churilin expected to strike bedrock at a depth of two or three metres from the surface but even this tiny depth was reached with great difficulty.

Another pit was started at the very summit of the mound. Smoke from the fire filled the whole of the fir grove, spread over the shaggy branches of the trees, tongues of it shot out into the swamp and mingled with the cold, damp darkness of the distance.

The guide brought another dry fir tree on his shoulder, threw it on to the fire and walked straight to Churilin.

"Boss," he said, "must talk. Horses die soon, then we die. Flour finish, butter finish, can't go hunting, too much work. Bad, very bad business, got to go so-o-on."

Churilin did not answer. The guide was merely expressing a thought that was haunting him.

"Maxim Mikhailovich," said Sultanov suddenly. "Let him and Peter take the horses and go on. We'll dig the pit ourselves. In any case there are only tools for two. We can follow down the river on a raft. . ."

Churilin walked swiftly to his assistant, looked attentively at his gaunt face with its thick growth of black beard, his sunken eyes, red from smoke and sleeplessness, then turned away. . .

"You will take your loads and go straight to Sottyr," he said calmly a few minutes later to the guide and to Peter whose looks were growing blacker. "You can turn the horses in at the settlement. I made all the necessary arrangements with the chief of the settlement when I was there in the spring. I will give you a letter so that he will supply you with food and will send Peter on to Jergalakh. There he can get a boat ready and wait for us. Perhaps we shall still be in time to go down the Khatanga River to the air-port. Nikolai, you will get food supplies in Sottyr and can go home. I will give you your wages right now. You can go as far as the Moyero River and there leave all the food that you can spare in a place easily seen. Blaze the trail on the trees and we will follow you. How far is it from here to Sottyr?"

"Don't known," said the Evenk, shaking his head. "Three hundred kilometres must be."

"And to the Moyero it must be about fifty?"

"No, from here no can go to Moyero, to many big rapids. Can go mountain way, there only little rapid."

"That'll be about a hundred kilometres?"

"Hundred, maybe hundred twenty."

"Well, go that way, there's no snow on the mountains yet, and if there is, it's still very light."

"I draw you map. Give paper."

It was quiet and very lonely on the fir-capped mound. The tent had been taken away and in its place they had built a shelter of fir branches. The fire that burnt before the shelter was smoking slightly in the rain.

During the night Sultanov awoke from the cold. His whole body was aching. The very idea of getting up tormented him, it seemed as though he could not even move a hand. Making a terrific effort Sultanov rose and woke Churilin. The latter got up quickly, drank a mug of hot water and began to fumble about the ground around the fire looking for the short pick that they used in the survey pit.

The fire leapt into flame when an armful of dry wood was thrown on it. Inside the pit which was already some two and a half metres deep, it was quite dark. Churilin swung his pick by sheer guesswork and used his hands to fill the bucket with lumps of clay; from time to time Sultanov pulled the bucket up with a rope. The geologists did not make any attempt to thaw out the frozen clay with a fire on account of the danger of flooding the pit; work on the frozen soil was harder but more certain. There was already water a quarter of the way up the pit and each blow of the pick splashed it about.

It seemed to Churilin that he had been working, bent double for years and years in that same pit, that all his life he had heard nothing but the dull thuds in the ground, the clanging of the bucket, that all his life he had been digging with lacerated, swollen fingers in the thin, icy mud.

"That's enough for you, you've dug out twenty-five buckets already. Now it's my turn," shouted Sultanov from above just at a moment when Churilin felt that he could not lift the pick again. He climbed out of the pit, resting his feet and arms against the sides of it and dropped down heavily on the wet clay above. Sultanov disappeared into the pit and from there Churilin heard his muffled voice:

"You've got some strength, Maxim Mikhailovich, you've managed another quarter of a metre, there are little pebbles, I can feel them with the pick. . . no, it's clay again already. . ."

At the same time Sultanov realized that the clay was different now: solid as before it was breaking off in big lumps, the unworkable, sticky mass had disappeared. . .

Bucket after bucket went to the top and the mound of clay they had dug out constantly increased. The long autumn night was coming to an end when Sultanov shouted hoarsely and weakly from the pit:

"I've come to stones. There's one big one. Pull it up. . ."

The last bucket seemed uncommonly heavy to Churilin. He tipped out the sticky, cold and heavy mass of rock, took it over to the fire and broke it with the hammer. The dark, dull rock seen in the flickering light of the fire did not in any way differ from the diabase that had so sickened them throughout their long journey.

"What is it?" asked Sultanov impatiently from the pit.

"I don't know, it's too dark," answered Churilin who did not want to disappoint his companion; he threw the rock on the heap of waste clay. "Come on out, we must get some sleep. It's six o'clock and it will be light soon. . ."

They wanted to sleep and sleep for ever, but time was short and by nine o'clock the two geologists were on their feet again and preparing their scanty breakfast.

"The harder the work gets the less there is to eat," said Churilin gloomily. "There's very little flour left in the bag."

Sultanov laughed but did not answer. Then raising his mug of tea he began to recite solemnly:

"Certain death ahead of us. . . and he who sent us forth to this awful task. . . he is without heart in his breast of iron. . ."

"The most awful thing is that nobody sent us and there is nobody to complain to. . ."

"That's the hell of it, what is keeping us here?" said Sultanov softly, drooping his head.

The two comrades plodded slowly towards the pit. Suddenly Sultanov grabbed Churilin by the arm, digging his fingers into the flesh.

"Maxim Mikhailovich, yellow earth!"

On top of the heap of earth they had thrown up lay lumps of a peculiar kind of coarse grained but solid clay of a reddish-yellow hue. Churilin took up the stone that he had broken the night before—it was heavy, had a greasy feel about it, a bluish-black rock. The outer surface of the stone was soft and of a lighter, bluish-brown colour.

"Water, Arseni Pavlovich, lots of water!" whispered Churilin. "Get it from the flooded pit. Pour it out like hell. We need another bucket. . . You wash the yellow earth, wash it out in the tray. I'll get to work on the pieces of stone."

"Surely not. . ." began Sultanov.

"Wait a bit," Churilin interrupted him sharply.

Unhurriedly, as though he were not the least bit excited, Churilin began washing out all the lumps of hard black rock they had dug out, removing the friable crust and the mud.

The geologists forgot everything else in the world, so intent were they on their work. Suddenly Churilin gave a half-choked exclamation and hastily pulled a folding magnifying glass out of his breast pocket. Sultanov dropped his tray and ran to him. Against the bluish-black background of a small piece of stone were three transparent crystals about the size of a pea almost side by side. The triangular surfaces were not quite smooth but nevertheless they glittered brightly. Each of the crystals consisted of two four-sided pyramids joined at their bases. The geologists could not take their eyes off the crystals. In the tense silence of the forest only the excited breath of the two men could be heard.

"Diamonds, diamonds!" Sultanov choked with a spasm in his throat.

"Typical octahedrons, like the South-African ones," said Churilin, "of pure water although they are not blue. According to their standards these are second grade of the highest class, what are known as First Cape. . . That's all, Arseni Pavlovich, our job's done. It was you..." Churilin did not finish the sentence but took Sultanov's clay-covered hand. The latter dropped down tiredly onto the clay-bespattered, crushed marsh plants.

"This reddish clay must be the 'yellow earth' of the South-African diamond mines," said Churilin, "the upper layer of the diamond chimney which is always rich in diamonds. . . A few metres lower down there is the 'blue earth' or kimberlite, lumps of which we found in the yellow earth. This has not been so badly destroyed and oxidized. Our hillock with the fir grove most likely marks the bounds of the chimney. Kopjes like this help the geologists in South-Africa when they are searching for diamond fields as they show the distended upper part of the chimney where it reaches the surface and is covered with soil. And remember, Arseni Pavlovich, the motto of the African diamond hunters is that where there is one chimney there are sure to be more. They never come singly. Our next job is to wash over all the yellow ground we have dug out and carefully select specimens. We shall have to abandon part of the food if we are to carry them. We'll put up a landmark and at dawn tomorrow we'll leave. Our lives are particularly valuable now."

Sultanov shook his tray for the last time and laid all that was left after washing a ton of yellow clay on to a sheet of clean paper. A number of tiny crystals spread over the paper—long round ones, prisms, polygons, red, brown, black, blue and green. These were samples of the hard minerals that are found together with diamonds—ilmenite, pyroxene, olivine and others. Amongst them, like little pieces of glass, but still quite different from glass, lay the little crystal diamonds. There were white stones of pure water, there were others covered with a brownish crust. Some of the stones had a rosy or a greenish hue.

"Look, there are both octahedrons and rhombo-dodecahedrons," Churilin moved a twenty-four-faced green crystal aside with a match. "This is a type of stone that is extraordinarily hard even for a diamond. In Africa such diamonds are found in the Voorsped field. . . And this is what we call 'bort'—a diamond suitable for drilling rock,"—he pointed with his match to a roundish black stone,—"an accumulation of the tiniest diamond crystals. I measured the diameter of our kopje," continued Churilin, "and found that it is a diamond chimney of fair size, no less than 250 metres across. It's true there are bigger ones in South-Africa; Dutoitspan, for example, is almost 700 metres across. That's not a chimney but the mouth of a volcano. . ."

Sultanov looked thoughtfully at the hillock. He was trying to imagine an enormous chimney going down almost straight for several kilometres and packed with the bluish-black diamond-bearing clay. To think that such a formation was to be found here, in a bleak, swampy plain, under the moss and mud, and protected only by a slight armour of permanently frozen soil!

Churilin was also silent. He felt so utterly tired that the significance of their work seemed flat and joyless. He dropped the diamonds mechanically into a bag, wrote labels for the samples of rock, wrapped them up carefully and began to draw a map of the district.

Sultanov lopped off the branches from a tall tree-stump to serve as a post, heated the end of the pick and burnt some letters and figures into the wood. The survey mark was also soon ready—a tall fir tree with cut branches and a cross-beam on top. . .

The journey straight across the mountains was one of great difficulty—they crossed countless landslides and marched over as many as fifteen ranges of hills in a day. The geologists marched mechanically without either speaking or thinking. The tiny amount of food they ate was insufficient for the tremendous exertions they were making. They began their march as soon as the first rays of daylight appeared and continued until long

after midnight. The light yellow needles of the larches showered down on them, the forest was wet from the constant rain which occasionally turned to snow. The water streamed off the branches, the geologists' quilted coats soon became soaked through and at night took a long time to dry before a big fire only to be soaked through during the first hour of the next day's march. The water spread over the swamp partially hiding the hummocks; the slightest false step sent the men floundering up to their waists in water. Thin ice crackled under their wet boots. No wild birds were met with—the hills seemed to have died, and the guns hung, a useless additional burden, across the men's shoulders...

On the morning of the fourth day Churilin and Sultanov reached a steep slope. As they crossed the ridge at the top the reddish-grey mist cleared away before them showing a long easy slope formed by a huge bed of sharp-pointed stones. In the distance they could see the dark-blue wall of the opposite slope of the river valley.

"The Moyero at last!" Churilin sat down on a boulder and turned out his pockets in search of the last shreds of tobacco.

"However did they get the horses across this?"

"Let's go straight across the stones down the river," suggested Sultanov. "We can first try downstream and then go up, we are bound to strike their trail somewhere..."

The Institute's director of field work came into Professor Ivashentsev's office and dropped silently into a chair.

"I'm really alarmed about Churilin," said the worried professor, "he's far too stubborn to be careful. Goryunov arrived a month ago, and Churilin and Sultanov were still in the taiga. We must send telegrams, everywhere we can—to Sottyr, Tura, Khatanga, the Chiringda Fur Factory—find out if they know anything..."

Again the high radio masts on Dickson Island sent their waves out across the taiga. They broke off and then started again sending out one and the same question: "Khatanga, Sottyr, Tura... Report any news of Engineer Churilin's expedition..."

The radio waves passed over the high bed of sharp stones, although the geologists knew nothing of the fact that the atmosphere was being so disturbed on account of them. Balancing carefully on the slippery, lichen-covered stones, jumping across the deep crevasses between the boulders, they stumbled forward over the sharp edges and ribs of rock.

The stony waste stretched for several kilometres, an indescribable chaos of broken stones, a grave-yard covered with the grey bones of the dead mountains. Forces within the earth's crust locked in a terrific struggle had uprooted and scattered the mountain tops, had thrown the skeletons down here, leaving naked their sharp ribs...

"Serguei Yakovlevich, Sottyr reports that yesterday a camp worker and Churilin's guide came with the horses... The geologists remained in the taiga. Here's the telegram..."

The professor hit the table angrily with his fist.

"I knew it! They'll kill themselves for nothing... Telegraph to Sottyr... But who will deliver the telegram?.. They'll have to fit out an expedition..."

Ivashentsev began to fumble with the papers on his desk in his excitement.

"The worst of it is that this stubbornness is so useless: if they didn't find anything in three years, what good will one month extra do them?.."

"Good lads! Look, Arseni Pavlovich, they have made a raft of fir logs for us, well done! The food is about enough for a week. That's not bad, the river is fast and we'll soon get there.. Get hold of it, one, two..."

The little raft rocked on the water, turned round and, directed by poles, floated swiftly down the centre of the stream. The Moyero was not deep in this part and the rocky bed swept past rapidly. The two geologists felt the pleasure of rest for the first time in many difficult days. The rucksacks no longer weighed down their shoulders, their feet, badly rubbed by their heavy boots, could at last enjoy rest as the river carried the raft at a rate of no less than six kilometres an hour. Perhaps this was the greatest pleasure of all—to sit there smoking the tobacco Nikolai had left behind for them, occasionally directing the raft with thrusts of the pole and at the same time to be able to realize that they were advancing, that every hour their endless journey was coming to an end...

They could even permit themselves the luxury of thought and remember that there was also another world. The splash of the water, its murmuring over the stone outcrops, the rapid movements of the tiny ripples—all betokened the teeming pleasure of life after the oppressive silence, the monotony and the motionless air of the gigantic swamps..

The Moyero was a tortuous river with sharp bends. They left the wide water-meadows behind them and now the forest came right to the edge of the water compressing the river between its high, dark walls. The raft floated along a corridor between the dense ranks of firs. The corridor seemed to grow narrower ahead of them, the tree tops leaned over the river and formed an arch above their heads, the water lost its brilliant sheen and flowed on dull and cold.

A huge fir that had recently fallen lay across the river, its still green branches almost touching the opposite bank. The geologists directed the raft to the shallows under the tree-top and, jumping into the water, dragged it across the stones. They ran into a number of such fallen trees which held up their progress for some time; all this however was as nothing to Churilin and Sultanov until they suddenly heard the loud roar and heavy lapping of water coming from around a sharp bend.

"Put into the bank, quickly, to the bank!" shouted Churilin. "There's a big fall round the bend!"

It was too late, however, the raft was moving

too fast. A pole thrust into the bed of the river snapped, and the raft dashed blindly forward towards a pile of tree trunks that barred the way.

To the right, where there were less trees to impede its progress, the water flowed gurgling under them. The branches and thin trunks vibrating under the pressure of the water, produced the splashing sound that is characteristic of huge rollers.

Churilin and Sultanov leaped to the stern of the raft, seized their valuable bags, the axe and the guns. That very moment the raft dived under the fallen trees, checked, reared and then dived deeper into the water. The sudden check threw the geologists forward, but they managed to scramble onto the barrier of trees. The water seethed angrily as it welled up against the raft which made a further barrier in that narrow waterway. Without wasting a moment Churilin and Sultanov took turns with their only axe and after two hours' hard work had managed to free the raft and drag it by the rope to the bank; there at the edge of the barrier the water reached their waists. Struggling against the icy stream that threatened to sweep their legs from under them, the two men exerted every ounce of their strength to lift the raft higher and drag it through the breach they had made in the dam and across the slippery logs that lay below the water. They had an open road before them—but only for a kilometre and a half... Again a fall of trees loomed before them, wider than the previous one, this time of already whitened tree trunks with gaunt branches and roots sticking up above the water and held fast by trees firmly embedded in the river.

A huge fire was burning on a spit of white sand. The raft had been pulled up on to the bank. Churilin and Sultanov sat facing the river, their wet backs turned to the fire. The bank rose steeply above the sandy spit, the dry grass shining golden beneath the brilliant sun.

Suddenly Sultanov stood up and walked away from the fire with unsteady steps. He felt sick, his stomach revolted against the food he had just eaten. In alarm Churilin followed his assistant. He felt bad himself. Exhausted with work beyond his strength, with long malnutrition and sleeplessness, his heart had weakened and beat first heavily and slowly, then speeded up and palpitated weakly, demanding rest and a long period of quiet.

Dull fear of the tightening jaws of the forest wilderness filled the explorers' heart. They still had to travel four hundred kilometres down the river. For two days they had been dragging the raft over tree falls and in that two days had travelled no more than seven kilometres. Seven kilometres! They had food left for four days if they confined themselves to the smallest ration. How much unbearable toil, up to their shoulders in icy water, still faced them: hacking through thick tree trunks, dragging the raft over them... They had no strength left. They could hardly hope to get through another such day. Who knew how many falls of timber still confronted them, one or hundreds?..

Sultanov returned to the fire and lay on the sand. Churilin placed a bag under his companion's head and knelt beside him.

"Lie still for a while, Arseni Pavlovich, I'm off for a bit." He pointed to the left where across the sandy shallows and the water sparkling in the sun lay a heap of intertwined, fallen grey tree trunks.

Sultanov sat up.

"Maxim Mikhailovich, listen to me..." He hesitated. "If I get really sick you go on alone... One of us must get through... I'm serious, this is no joke."

Sultanov grew angry as he saw the smile on Churilin's lips.

"Drop the nonsense, old chap. Rest a bit and you'll be all right. If we get out we go together," said Churilin loudly, feeling no great certainty in his words himself. "I'm off now."

He took up his gun and trudged slowly across the sand and gravel of the spit. He wanted to go down the river to examine the valley below the fall of trees.

The fear with which Churilin was overcome did not leave him no matter how much he struggled against it. He wanted very badly to return to his accustomed world of maps, books and research work, to give to his country the wealth he had found hidden beneath the moss and frozen soil of the Amnunnachi... Surely he would be able to get back to a place where there were no midges, no permanently wet clothes, no acrid smoke and the constant driving on and on.

Churilin moved along the bank.

He thought of Sultanov as he walked.

"What is it that makes people perform such deeds, unknown to anybody? If we get out of here, will anybody ever know of the stoic heroism of that man? Experiences are soon wiped away, forgotten; they seem like a bad dream—and who treats dreams seriously? If we don't get out nobody will even know. If they do hear of it they'll only say: they died because of their inexperience and carelessness."

He heard a noise on the opposite bank. The gravel crunched and the dry grass rustled lightly. Churilin awoke from his thoughts, looked round and his heart stopped beating.

Under the overhanging bank, standing in the water, was a huge bull elk. In the distance his huge body looked black. The wide antlers like the hand of a giant with outspread fingers were lighter in colour and between them, turned towards Churilin, the funnel-shaped ears stood up like a pitchfork. The elk was watching the motionless geologist. He lowered his head, spread his feet and barked out a hoarse "whop." Churilin did not move, as he gripped the sling of his rifle so tightly that it hurt his hand.

The elk turned and immediately looked different—gaunt, hump-back, on long thin legs. The behaviour of the animal betokened readiness to leap forward into a swift run — the hidden energy of a coiled spring. The huge humpy head was raised, the stiff black beard stuck out from its throat, the hump on the withers became more clearly defined. Then the elk spread his legs still wider, stuck his nose into the water and walked into the river. Churilin swung the gun from his shoulder.

The elk turned back in a flash. The safety catch snicked back and Churilin sent a bullet into the wide flank of the animal as it leapt ashore. The elk stumbled, fell and jumped to its feet again. The crack of a second shot rang out over the forest and the elk disappeared into the undergrowth.

Excitedly Churilin dashed into the water holding the rifle high above his head. The current swept against his legs but he was too strong for it and in an instant reached the opposite bank. A dozen yards from the water lay the dark-brown body. Churilin walked cautiously towards it and was soon convinced that the animal was dead. The elk lay with its head resting on its antlers, its forelegs doubled up under it. The magnificent power of the animal could be felt even in its motionless body.

Churilin was not a real hunter — he knelt on one knee and stroked the warm jowl of the animal as though he were sorry for what he had done...

For all that, about five hundred pounds of first-class meat changed the situation completely.

Churilin stood up leaning on his gun and looked down the river. A quarter of a kilometre away was another fall of timber across the water. Farther on the river was hidden by the trees; in one place, however, the trees became more sparse and he could see a rocky slope that came right down to the river.

"If the river enters a gorge there will be rapids but no more falls of trees," thought Churilin.

He rapidly ripped open the elk and took the lips, heart and a lump of the flesh. Marking the place with a long pole he crossed the river to the next fall of timber and examined it carefully.

A big meal of meat at first made the explorers even weaker than before but by next morning Churilin and Sultanov were noticeably better.

After the last fall of timber a wide tributary entered the Moyero from the right. The valley became narrower, spurs of mountains covered with dark yellow from the autumn needles of the larches reached down to the river, the current became swifter. The sad-looking leaden surface of the water seemed to be breathing as it rose and fell regularly. Walls of gravel rose up above the explorers like the ramparts of a fortress. Soon they left behind them the shallows, the trees and the water-meadows. The cliffs came nearer, the water seethed, the whole surface was covered with long, swift-running furrows and white-capped waves. The water flowed over the fast-moving raft. A few moments of alarm—and the raft was again in calm water that rose and fell regularly.

The rapid movement brought new life to the tired men. At last they began to taste the joy of victory won.

A short time would pass and thousands of people would come to the place where they had been imprisoned by woods and swamps. The might of human labour would cut a road through impassable places, would clear away the forests and dry out the swamps. The noise of machines and the brilliance of electric light would break the eternal silence of the taiga.

"Serguei Yakovlevich, a telegram from Khatanga. I expect it's from Churilin."

"What?.. Give it to me..." The professor hurriedly opened the envelope and read the telegram. It fell from his trembling hands.

"Never mind, I'll pick it up myself... You may go, they are safe and are coming home..."

Left alone, Ivashentsev re-read the short telegram:

"Found everything we were looking for. Returning by air safe and sound. Churilin. Sultanov."

Professor Ivashentsev stood up and saluted the telegram which he spread out carefully on the table.

Translated by George Hanna

ARKADI PERVENTSEV

VALKA

The bay lay cradled among the hills. In the port, behind the breakwater, there was such a throng of ships that it required no great flight of fancy to hear them scraping against one another. Cutters and small single-masted schooners were drawn up on shore, right out of the water beneath the palms, waiting to be tarred. Joiners' benches had been set up, resin bubbled in cauldrons, and planes sang against boards. Destroyers also came into the port for repairs after battle, submarines were overhauled, and tankers, their sides holed by torpedoes, were patched up. There was something reminiscent of a field hospital about the port—it was a place where wounded ships came for a hasty bandaging, to hurry back to the fray, afterwards.

The streets were full of sailors coming ashore in the evening. It was a white town—blindingly white under the southern sun, with eucalyptus and magnolias lining the streets and grouped in the gardens, with a constant coming and going of Georgians in light suits and Adjarians with their huge baskets of fruit and vegetables which they had brought down from the mountains. Sometimes the whole town would vibrate and tremble with gunfire, causing great excitement in the market place. But the sailors would continue to saunter along as unconcerned as ever— they knew that it was only a warship testing its guns after repairs, and that the shells were flying out to sea, where a target swayed in the blue smoke.

One day there were two new arrivals in the port—a motor torpedo-boat for slight repairs and a dirty, ragged lad in a miner's cap who jumped of the train from Tbilisi. The boy made his way straight to the port, the magnet which invariably drew every new arrival in the town. The sailors from the MTB had just made the hawser fast and stepped onto the granite slabs of the harbour wall. There were five of them, including the commander, Lieutenant Balashov, the mechanic and the bo'sun. The miner's cap the lad was wearing immediately struck the lieutenant's eye.

"From Kryndychovka?" he asked, giving his home town, Krasny Luch, its old name, as miners do.

"No," the boy shook his head.

"From Gorlovka?"

"No."

"Maybe you've got nothing to do with mines at all? Just picked up a cap somewhere?"

"No..."

"What d'ye mean, no?" Balashov came up to him and raised the boy's head. Two lively black eyes were looking up at him, looking as though the irises were etched into the shining whites.

"I'm from Artyomovsk way," said the lad, his gaze firm and unwavering. "My Dad worked in a machine and tractor station, at a state farm. I got the cap on the journey, at Kadievka."

The lieutenant dropped his hands.

"Somehow, I never see anyone from Kryndychovka here," he sighed. "Looks like they've killed them all off..."

"They killed my Dad," said the lad to the back of the departing lieutenant.

"Killed him?" Balashov turned round again. "So that's it, is it? That's a bad business... And how did you get here?"

"Oh, just came..."

"What d'ye mean, just came?"

"Well, I kept on going, kept on travelling, and then I got here..."

"Ah..."

Balashov began to fill his pipe. He kept pressing down the tobacco for a long time with his short, smoke-blackened finger, then sniffed the pipe and lighted it.

"I suppose you smoke, sprat?"

"D'ye mean me?"

"Who else? I don't see any other sprat here."

"I don't know what a sprat is..."

"Don't know?" The lieutenant smiled. "If you don't know that doesn't matter, you can always learn. But if you don't know and don't want to know, that's bad. A sprat's a little fish, a very tiny lively fish. See?"

"Now I understand," said the lad.

"What's your name, sprat?"

"Sprat," the boy replied, trying to hold back the smile curving his lips.

"Sprat?" said Balashov, surprised, and looked hard at the lad. "I like you, kid. You've got pluck and quick wits. But all the same, seriously, now, what is your name?"

"Valka," the boy answered, never taking his black eyes off the lieutenant.

"Missing your Dad, Valka?"

"Dad?" He frowned, but reading the sincere sympathy on the lieutenant's face, he continued softly: "Very much... My Dad was grand. He was a shock worker in the tractor station..."

"A shock worker?" The lieutenant laid his arm round the boy's shoulders and began walking along the shore with him.

The bo'sun Sviridov, a merry, red-headed fellow, looked after the commander, and then said regretfully:

"What does he want with the lad? He lost his own somewhere, and nowadays, whenever we come into port, he always gets hold of one. Maybe it's because of his own? It gets folks that way..."

The lieutenant did not walk along the shore for long. He soon turned back with his new friend. They had evidently chummed up by that time, and the boy was no longer looking at the lieutenant with that proud reserve which his glance had held a few moments previously.

"Made another pal, Comrade Commander?" asked the bo'sun.

"Yes, another, Sviridov," and he turned to the boy. "Let me introduce you. Valka, this is Senior Petty-Officer Sviridov, bo'sun of our ocean liner."

Valka held out his right hand, feeling ashamed because it was so dirty, while Sviridov's was clean, sunburned, covered with copper freckles burned in by the sun.

"Valka's lost his father," said the lieutenant, sitting down on a bollard. "At his age, and in these wretched times. When did you lose your father, Sviridov?"

"What d'ye mean, Comrade Commander? My father's alive and well, at least he was, last time I heard from him. I haven't lost him. He's in Omsk, Comrade Commander."

"And Valka's from Artyomovsk way, Sviridov. But now the Germans are there. Ever been in Artyomovsk?"

"No, never, Comrade Commander. But surely Artyomovsk is not better than Odessa?"

"It's not better, but Odessa's Odessa, and Artyomovsk's Artyomovsk. For Valka, here, it's better than Odessa. Isn't that right, Valka?"

"Yes, it's better," Valka replied unhesitatingly. "We always lived in Artyomovsk till Dad went to the state farm. There's a big memorial there."

The sailors came from the boat—the mechanic Polevoy, a young fellow who had been a tractor driver, and the AB's Sizov and Beloshapka, dockers from Kherson who had joined the navy in the fourth month of the war.

A destroyer slowly entered the port. The boom guarding the berth where the big ships anchored was raised. Seamen were standing on the upper deck, the gunners were at their stations. Men on other ships recognized them and waved their caps. Signallers replied to friendly greetings, flag-wagging untiringly.

"They're all glad to see it," said Valka. "Why's that?"

"What d'ye mean, why?" asked the lieutenant, who was also waving to a friend who had shouted to him from the side of the destroyer.

"Come back after a big job," the mechanic explained. "Might not have come back at all.

Everybody's been waiting for them. See?"

"I see..."

That was how the crew of MTB "093" first made the acquaintance of thirteen-year-old Valka, whom the evacuation wave had washed up into this lovely port. And at that time neither Lieutenant Balashov and his crew nor yet Valka could guess what an event this first meeting was, and how strangely the web of destiny is spun.

Valka paid no attention to the other ships, and never tried to make friends with other sailors. The first men he had met, from that little boat, had taken his fancy, and he thought there were no better sailors the world over. A real crew of fighters! Everyone of them had his orders or medals, and that was what captivated the lad most of all.

All day long the boy's black eyes followed the five of them. He was hungry, and there was nowhere for him to work and earn money. Valka made a kind of messtin from an old tin, found an aluminium spoon and came to the boat punctually at dinner time. It would most certainly have hurt his pride to get dinner at any other place, since he was not accustomed to begging, but here he came willingly. He felt almost as though he were one of the crew, the men treated him as an equal and never grudged him a piece of bread. He wanted to enter the naval school on a training ship, but he wasn't accepted. And Valka was even glad of the refusal. He wanted to spend all his time with "his" crew. But one day a sailor from the floating dock took upon himself to rebuke Valka:

"You come along here and eat the lads' rations. How much is there to spare from five men?"

Valka made up his mind to keep away from his friends. Three days later the bo'sun ran him to earth in the market place.

"Eh... you're a nice one, you are... Where did ye get to? Guess you're hungry, eh?"

"No... I'm not hungry," the boy replied proudly, although he had had practically nothing to eat for three days.

"I can see by your eyes that you could eat a whole dolphin. Come you along with me. You're under arrest by all the laws of war-time regulations and state of siege."

Sviridov held a "trial" of the runaway in the presence of the mechanic and motorman Sizov. They found out the reason of the lad's absence, and understood it very well. Each one of them could put himself in Valka's place, and they felt that the boy had been right.

"There it is, we've no right to feed you for nothing," said the mechanic, "just got no right to do it. But see here, now, if you help us, then it's another matter..."

"That's right," Sviridov cried gaily, guessing what was in the wind. "We've got to make use of the lad."

"Well, Valka," Polevoy continued, "you come along with me. I'll fit you into our work somehow..."

The "trial" was over. Valka followed the mechanic. A few moments later he was supplied with polish and rags and given some metal parts of the deck cabin to clean. The boy set about the work with a will. And now, when twelve o'clock sounded, he came for his dinner with a light heart.

This continued for several days, but then repairs were ended and it was time for the boat to leave for Khopi, where the flotilla was based at the time. Before leaving, the commander discussed with his crew what was to be done with the boy. Valka was sitting on the shore, in deep depression, his cheeks resting on his fists. The miner's cap had been replaced by a round naval one. The lad was stronger and sunburned; he had long ago washed off the dirt of his journey, and his wild hair had been cut. He was now close to them, to the sailors, and not to the shore, where the market place seethed and hummed. That was where the boy would have to go, and there he would just be pushed about; it was not by chance that the bo'sun had found him there.

"What can I do?" the lieutenant threw out his hands. "Where can we put him?"

"We'll find a place," said Beloshapka, the motorman. "We'll take him down below, with us."

"Not room for us to turn round ourselves. What d'ye think we are, a battleship?"

"We'll find room, Comrade Commander," Sizov pleaded. "It's a shame to leave him. See how he's looking at us. His father's been killed at the front, Comrade Commander."

"That's true, his father's been killed," the bo'sun repeated with a sigh. "Where can he go, an orphan like that?"

"We'll have to get permission from the command at Khopi," said the lieutenant, "see if they'll let us take him on as middy. After all, they've got middies on the 'Nezamozhnik'..."

But the lieutenant was talking more to convince himself than for any other reason. He knew well enough that there was no real comparison with the "Nezamozhnik"—a destroyer, after all. But he did not want to abandon the boy. He could not conceive drawing off from the dock and leaving the lad with his sad eyes standing there.

"We'll take him," said the lieutenant.

Sviridov leaped ashore, picked up the boy and deposited him on the deck.

"You're coming with us, snotty. You can thank the commander here."

Valka stood to attention in front of Balashov.

"Thank you, Comrade Commander."

"Oh... that's all right, sprat... However, I shall get it in the neck because of you, Valka!"

The boat roared like an aeroplane. One was deafened with the din. On leaving the bay, it swung round to the north and raced over the waves. Valka was clinging to the rail, all huddled up. He was shaken, thrown about, he very nearly struck his temple against one of those brass parts he had polished so assiduously. Towering walls of water charged past him. Sometimes it seemed as though the boat were going to bore right underneath and take to the depths like a submarine, sometimes he thought it would fly into the air. The lad was proud of being on his first sea trip, but he had never imagined it would be such a furious, hurtling, tossing charge through the waves. If you went on

flying along like that, then you'd be three times round the whole Black Sea in a day! But soon the waves lessened, the roar of the engines died down, then suddenly ceased entirely, and tossing a little, as though jumping from wave to wave, the MTB drew up to the landing stage of a small bay, cradled in hills, blue with spring mists and tropical trees, just like the one they had left.

The flotilla commander summoned the commander of MTB "093."

"With regard to Valka," said the lieutenant. "I reported to the squadron commander, but of course he couldn't decide anything himself... Well, Valka, I've made a start in the settling of your fate, you just pray that all will be well."

The flotilla commander and the head of the political department censured the lieutenant for his imprudence. Balashov argued eagerly that Valka was a fine lad and it was a shame to abandon him, he'd go to the bad in a port town and that the lad was fond of them and they of him. He talked about how Valka's father had been killed at the front, and added that he came from Artyomovsk, as though that made any difference.

The lieutenant's eager advocacy softened his superiors a little. Balashov was a good officer and a good fighter.

"There's no precedent for taking on a boy as middy on a MTB," said the flotilla commander. "A cruiser or a destroyer, now, that's another matter. But if we're going to start bringing middies onto these small boats..."

"Just as an exception, Comrade Commander."

"The boat's got just as much work on hand as you can manage anyway, and then a boy under your feet all the time... He'll be nothing but a stone round your necks. And then, what if he's wounded? A lad of thirteen!"

"We'll try and take care of him, Comrade Commander," said Balashov.

"And then there'll have to be rations issued for him, he'll need a uniform, he'll have to be entered as one of the crew. Look here, I'm talking to you as a friend, Balashov, because we've got to find a way out of this thing somehow. It's something quite out of the ordinary. A boy—on the cockle-shell! A walnut loaded with dynamite!"

"Well... On Balashov's boat it may be possible," said the head of the political department. "It's a good school—under Balashov!"

"Balashov—it's all very well to talk about Balashov! But the boy's only thirteen. Is he fit? Maybe he's just a runt?"

"As far as that goes, he's a real Black Sea sailor, Comrade Commander," the lieutenant said, proud of his fledgling. "He's strong as a horse and tough as steel. We'll see he's provided with everything ourselves. We'll fit him up with a uniform, and we'll manage to feed him somehow. Only permit us to keep him, Comrade Commander."

"Setting up a children's home on the Black Sea!" and the flotilla commander shook his head. "Well, have it your own way..."

On his return to the boat, Balashov had a very serious talk with Valka, who took it seriously also. The lad understood that he was to stay on the MTB, and that was the main thing for him. As for hiding if any of the chiefs came along—he could do that all right. He wouldn't let his commander down.

... Now difficult days began. The flotilla came up closer to the front and Valka accompanied the crew on every assignment. He soon learned how to work the machine-gun and began to study the complicated engines. He stood beside the commander at the wheel and watched how the boat submitted to the man's will, observed how the lieutenant's work was bound up with that of Beloshapka and Sizov. Sometimes, in the open sea, the commander with a glance would invite the lad to put his hands on the wheel, showed him just how to steer the boat, how to make it obey him, and gradually the childish hands became accustomed to the steering mechanism.

"We'll make something out of that lad," said Balashov. "There's the makings of a real Black Sea sailor in him."

On approaching the base, an unpleasant time would begin for Valka. He would have to crawl down into the cramped engine-room and there, huddled close to Sizov and Beloshapka, watch how the petrol ran along the various tubes and fixtures, and with noisy explosions turned into that terrifyingly impetuous strength that hurled the boat forward at the word of command.

At the base, of course, everybody knew that the boy was living on the "niner," and treated it with tolerant amusement. To burden oneself with an extra person on an MTB, where every inch of space counted, every ounce of weight — and a boy at that!.. "Leave the sprat ashore when you're away," people advised the crew of the "niner." "He can fish and peel potatoes." But Valka would have found it beneath his dignity to stay ashore fishing and peeling potatoes. He had too great a love for the sea, of which his swift and omnipresent boat was the master, to reconcile himself to a quiet life ashore.

The MTB was usually employed on night patrol work, guarding important communications. As dusk fell, German MTB's would lay an ambush here, and draw up in line under the lee of the shore. They always came in groups of four to twelve. It was no easy matter to distinguish the silhouettes of the boats against the dark, craggy cliffs. Keen sight was not sufficient, experience was needed to read the meaning of the manifold contours and colours of the shore. In this work Valka took his share, and he seemed to have an instinctive gift which helped him to spot the enemy before anybody else.

One day, when two boats had gone out on patrol, the "niner" in command, Valka noticed the silhouette of an enemy ship on the dark line of the horizon. The boats slipped past the ambush, and halted, engines running, about ten cable-lengths from the shore.

After testing the boy's discovery, the bo'sun reported to Balashov, who informed the base by radio, and then decided to attack. This was Valka's first sea battle. It seemed to him sheer insanity for the two boats to

attack twelve Germans, but Balashov rushed forward. Both MTB's opened heavy fire at close range. The incessant dull rattling of the machine-guns, the roar of the engines and the hissing of the water-columns rising on both sides of the boats confounded the lad. Nobody had any time or attention to spare for him. Now, indeed, he was a fifth wheel to the coach. Each man was busy with his own job. Often enough the boat's acrobatic manoeuvres made him think that the end had come, and with white lips he would whisper his farewells to the men who had come to be so dear to him. "Good-bye, Comrade Commander, good-bye, Comrade First Petty-Officer, good-bye, Beloshapka and Sizov!" Valka could see that they were being fired at, he saw the tall, slender columns of water rising and descending upon them, he could hear the whistle of shrapnel. Then the boat swung round to port and headed for the shore.

Almost beside them, six patrol boats were charging ahead, leaving a wake of foam, heeling over to one side like a motorcyclist taking a corner. They engaged the German vessels...

"Well, we didn't let them get at our communications," said the commander merrily, rubbing his white palms, as he jumped ashore. "The Jerries fire all over the place. I'd like to rub their noses in the mud."

Everybody knew that had it not been for Balashov's daring manoeuvres which confused the enemy, they would probably not have come so well out of the battle. But nobody argued with the commander. Valka had been only an observer of the battle, but as he pondered over the crew's actions, he realized that there might have been place for him too. But only if... somebody fell out. He pushed this hateful thought away from him, the very idea was like a stab in his heart, but it returned again and again. For instance, if the bo'sun went down, could he take over the machine-gun and fire like Sviridov? He'd have to try and see, but he thought he could. If the commander was out of action, could he continue the battle, could he issue orders and hurl the boat at the enemy with the same sharp twists and turns? Of course not. The commander must always be there. If he was killed, it was hardly likely that the mechanic or the bo'sun could take his place. The boy's faith in the commander was too great for him even to conceive of such an easy change-about.

After intensive work, the mechanic tested the engines, with the assistance of Beloshapka and Sizov. Valka's dexterous hands and his desire to make himself useful came in handy. The mechanic, probably more than anybody else, felt the need of this sixth member of the crew, who had become an integral part of the boat.

Valka already seemed to have broadened out, and had more flesh on him. He had lost his shyness, he no longer sought for some underlying offence in every word said to him. He felt himself an equal among the sailors, not only those of his own MTB, but of all the sailors at the base. What did it matter that he was wearing the bo'sun's cap or Sizov's trousers and Beloshapka's flannel blouse? He was in uniform, always clean and tidy, and took pleasure in greeting superior officers according to all naval rules. He liked to walk about ashore, meet an officer and salute smartly, stepping as though on parade, and bringing his hand down to his trouser seam with an air. Nobody worried any more about the "093" "illegitimate" child, people were used to seeing him about, and would probably have missed him if he had disappeared. Gradually Valka began to forget that he ought to hide from the chiefs, although the thought still gnawed in his consciousness.

One evening, however, he met the flotilla commander face to face, without a chance to turn aside, and saluted, his heart sinking into his boots. The commander stopped the boy, asked his name and then let him go. When he returned to the boat, Valka looked uneasily at the lieutenant, thinking that he already knew all about it. But Balashov was silent. It was only the next day, when they were at sea, that he said:

"Well, the chief saw you, then?"

"Yes, Comrade Commander," the boy admitted, almost in tears.

"Never mind, it's all right."

... All the time, in the depths of his heart, Valka was waiting for his chance, some oportunity to show his courage and ability. What was he doing there? Nothing at all, so far. The time would come when he would be discharged, and then where would he go? The uncertainty frightened him. If he was sent away from the boat, of course, he couldn't go on living. He would throw himself into the sea in front of the whiskered commander. First of all he would show that he could swim, as a sailor should, and then he would sink like a stone and disappear for ever. Then perhaps they would understand him.

Valka's first exploit came about quite unexpectedly. It caused a great deal of talk ashore, then people became used to it, for, after all, heroism was an everyday matter at that time.

A landing operation had been planned with the Black Sea Navy's usual daredevilitry. The "black cloud" [1], as the Germans called them, were racing for an enemy-occupied shore. MTB's were guarding the left flank of the landing to protect it from enemy ships based at Feodosia and Yalta.

But the enemy discovered them, and was engaged by Balashov's crew. Black with rage at the setback, the four German boats pushed at the two patrols, with Balashov's "niner" in the lead.

This time the fight took place under very unequal conditions. The danger was heightened by the fact that instead of light boats, such as they had fought on the previous occasion, they had to deal with heavy MTB's.

Balashov decided to withdraw under cover of his shore batteries. Sending out a radio call for assistance, and trusting in his superior speed, he broke away from the enemy. Not far off, beyond the raging autumn waves, was their own shore.

At that moment four more MTB's which

[1] Or "black devils," so called from their uniform and their fighting qualities.

had been hidden by the cliffs leaped out from behind the breakers. Balashov engaged them. Reinforcements should arrive at any moment.

"Now we've got a real job on hand!" he shouted to Valka. "Hang on—hands, feet, eyelids. Manoeuvre under fire!"

Those were almost the last words Valka heard from his commander on board the boat. The fight lasted only for a few moments. It was like a whirling air battle, where the urgency of the attack, and the tension of mechanisms, muscles and heart burn out everything, petrol, cartridges and human energy.

The Germans came on from two sides, roared past with all their guns and machine-guns blazing at the Soviet boats. Flame and metal flew over the heads of the crew, while the men fought with the dogged courage inherent in Russian sailors. Balashov decided to use the torpedoes. He attacked the Germans and yellow columns of fire soared into the air and disappeared. One of the heavy MTB's sank like a stone, a second burst into flames, a ragged smoky pillar flaring up for a moment. Six more of the enemy remained in the battle.

Again the scorching fire swept the boat, and when the deafened lad jumped to his feet, neither commander nor mechanic, nor yet the bo'sun were at their posts. They had fallen too, but were unable to rise. The boat, deprived of guidance, was tossing on the waves; the engine was working, but there was no control. Valka crawled to the commander; it looked as though Balashov's arm was detached from his body, and black, sticky blood was everywhere. The bo'sun was hanging over the machine-gun, swaying from side to side with the tossing of the boat.

"Comrade Commander," Valka leaned over the lieutenant. "Comrade Commander..."

"Valka, take over," Balashov rasped.

"How?" cried Valka.

"Take the wheel, Valka. Take the boat ashore at Blue Bay. Nowhere else, only to the shore, and only at the bay... There's shingle there. Long ago... during a storm we beached our feluccas there..."

"Very good, Comrade Commander..."

Valka clambered up to the blood-spattered wheel, and carried out all the instructions Balashov called to him as exactly as though it had been the commander himself standing there. He recalled all that had been explained to him during the past months, by commander, bo'sun and mechanic, and his clear young brain called up a vivid picture of everything Balashov and his comrades had taught him.

Down below, the engines throbbed with a stronger beat as the ship came under control again. That meant that Beloshapka and Sizov were alive, he was not alone on the wounded boat. Valka steered it along the course indicated by the commander. Before him he could see the steep cliff shaped like the sail of a boat rising sheer from the water. To the right of this cliff was Blue Bay, with a sloping, shingly beach. The boy almost lay over the wheel, to catch every word the commander spoke and tried to carry everything out exactly. His hearing seemed to have sharpened. When he swung the wheel over to the right and the boat lay over and nearly plunged under the water, Valka could hear the lieutenant cursing between his teeth. But the next instant Valka had brought the boat round again.

The shore came closer. He slowed down. The MTB plunged its nose into the water, but the engines sent it steadily forward. Sviridov crawled out, his hand pressed to his shattered side. The boy tried not to look at the bo'sun, he was vomiting and the boy felt a rising nausea. The bo'sun shouted, cursed, but Valka took no notice of him. He had attention for one man only—the commander. The bo'sun shouted because he had not guessed the manoeuvre. He could only see the boat rushing for the shore. That was bad. He crawled from the machine-gun to stop it, but as he came up level with the commander and heard the orders he was issuing, he understood, and said no more. The commander was shouting: "That's the way, keep straight on, Valka!"

Now it was Valka's turn to decide the best way to beach the boat. He had never done such a thing before, but he knew what was necessary. The boat must run ashore so as not to smash it, and that needed some calculation. The boy shut off the engine. Silence. Only the sound of the water, then a crack, a thud, and the boat with a leap scraped along the shingle and then lay over onto its side. Salt spray and foam spattered him, there was a smell of fish, and in the distance he could see armed men running towards them.

Assisted by Beloshapka and Sizov, Valka lifted the lieutenant, bo'sun and mechanic from the boat. When breathless men came running to them, and a first-aid boat chugged up to take off the wounded, a new sense of power and importance came over Valka. He felt as though he had grown. The first-aid boat was followed by a repair boat. A temporary patch was put on the side, where it had been holed, the water was pumped out with a hand pump, the engines started, the boat launched again and brought to the base.

MTB "093" entered the bay and drew up smartly alongside the pier where the command point was stationed.

"Where's the commander?" asked the amazed flotilla commander.

Valka came and stood in front of him, wet to the skin, black with blood.

"Comrade Squadron Commander! Volunteer Valentin Galin reports the return of the motor torpedo-boat from a battle assignment. Three wounded."

"Three wounded and three heroes," said the squadron commander, throwing an arm round the boy. "And reporting as slick as you please, devil take it, the real thing . . ."

Then Valka found himself hugged by the chief of the political section who was deeply moved.

"Well, what shall I do for you now?" asked the squadron commander. "What do you want?"

"Please permit me, Comrade Squadron Commander..." Valka began, drawing himself up to attention again.

"Well, what is it, Volunteer Valentin Galin?"

"Permit me to go to the hospital... to our men."

"Climb in, we'll go there together."

Valka sat down beside the squadron commander, and the car started. Shingle flew beneath the tires. Not far away, the sea roared and thundered, and the black shadows of ships appeared and disappeared in the mist like ghosts. The boy felt strangely tired, he found himself trembling all over. He wanted to press close to the commander, he even felt that it would take little to make him cry. After all, it was not so long since he had had somebody of his own, and with all these people he had had to restrain himself.

"Are you cold, Valka?" asked the squadron commander, sympathetically, bending down till his bushy whiskers, which the boy had feared more than anything else, were almost touching Valka's head.

"You're a piece of iron... And there was I thinking you might be a runt. I've got one of my own, same sort of madcap. I'll write to him tomorrow about you, Valka. Let them see in Moscow what kind of daredevils we've got here on the Black Sea..."

Valka followed the squadron commander into the hospital. Then a ward door opened, and somebody pushed the boy forward.

"Go on in."

"Valka!" The voice came from a man bandaged into the semblance of a cocoon.

The lad could see nobody but this bandaged figure. He halted by the bed.

"Valka! Come round to the other side, my arm here..."

"Go round to the other side," the doctor said.

Valka went round the bed, and looking at the lieutenant, understood. Something terrible, something hideously unjust had happened to this splendid man. Big heavy tears rolled out between the fingers of his rough, unchildlike hands.

"Valka, what's that for..." and Balashov embraced the boy with his good arm. "Saved our lives... and saved the boat."

"All right, all right, Balashov, we know all about it, calm down," said the squadron commander.

"He saved the boat!"

"Well, and...?"

"He deserves a decoration..."

"You lie quiet and get well... You aren't the only one to think of that. He's going to get an order, together with the rest of the crew. The Germans got a good packet from us afterwards. Only splinters left to go back to Yalta. Got caught against the coast. Their petrol and ammunition gave out, and we took them on both sides..."

"And what about signing him on?"

"Who? Valka?"

"Yes."

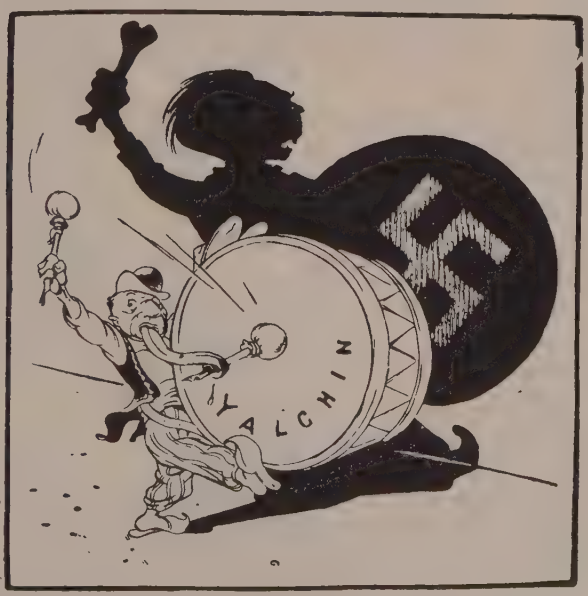
"He'll be signed on as an AB."

And that was the beginning of the naval career of Valentin Galin, maybe a future Russian admiral.

Translated by Eve Manning

THE TURKISH DRUM

The Turkish press is carrying on a strident campaign against the Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Rumania... One might say that the notorious Yalchin has subordinated all the newspapers to himself, were it not that he is directed by the batons of the corresponding conductors. (Newspaper report)



Drawing by V. Fomichov

BULGARIAN DIARY

Heroines of the People

Looking down at you from the photo is an earnest young face illumined by an indefinable inner light. The handsome, slightly almond-shaped eyes are serious and thoughtful. You might think she was listening attentively to someone talking. Her hair is cropped short, in the style popular with our Red Army girls. The thick eyebrows lend a certain austerity to her face. But it is easy to picture Lilyana Dimitrova laughing gaily. And she was that kind of girl: confident, daring, gay. And fearless in danger, like her grandfather, Dimitri Bradata, a chetnik who fought for Bulgaria's independence. His granddaughter followed in his footsteps. At the age when most middle-class Sofia girls are happily dreaming of a quiet, peaceful life, she went to her mother and said, as though it were the simplest thing in the world: "Mama, you must consider you have three children now, not four. I've thrown in my lot with the labour movement—it's almost certain I'll go under one day. But I can't do otherwise. And you'll have three other children left." She did not know then that her youngest brother, too, would be killed fighting.

A college student, then a petty clerk—a "chinovnichka," as they call them in Bulgaria—dismissed later as politically unreliable, she devoted everything to the fight for her country's freedom. Concentration camp followed concentration camp; arrest followed arrest; the trials became ever more severe, but nothing could extinguish her flaming spirit.

She was a familiar figure among the textile and tobacco workers, among the underground fighters. The Germans and their agents thought they had finished with her when they confined her in the Asenograd camp. But ten days later she escaped to return to the underground work in her native city. This girl of twenty-six knew no fatigue while a job was waiting to be done.

The police surrounded her in the Konyovitsa district. She knew stratagem would not help her, so she resolved on breath-taking audacity and fought her way out of the ambush, weapon in hand.

Her life was characteristic of the generation that would not bow to the piratical laws of fascism. Never before had the fresh young forces, locked in battle with the frightful barbarism that had sprung up in the heart of Europe, been so effective. German fascism also came to Bulgaria where, too, it found servants and henchmen. But from afar came the tidings of the great Red Army drawing ever nearer. Was it not worth while fighting on when the invader's black domination was beginning to totter before your very eyes? Could any joy surpass that of serving your people in this deadliest struggle of all? There were many like her in Europe, and more still in the Soviet Union—young girls who, arms in hand, battled against the Hitlerite brigands.

She could see the fair future ahead. It was so close! She only needed to march steadfastly along the difficult road where any false step might mean death. It was very unfair that she should have perished on the eve of victory.

Climb up, one morning, to the tops of the hills around Plovdiv. The town spreads before you with its motley sea of roofs, its green gardens and the steel-grey ribbon of the Maritsa, but your eyes will search in vain for the little house that was Lilyana's last fortress. I only know it was a bad house, for traitors inhabited it. They betrayed Lilyana.

There she performed the last heroic deed of her glorious life. Alone, she accepted battle against a hundred of the enemy. For twelve hours she fought them. An epic could be written about her fight. The gloomy evening gave way to a night lit up by the flash of rifle-shots and grenade-explosions; then came the dim, grey dawn, and when the sun rose over Plovdiv—Lilyana was still fighting. Grenade splinters struck her; she went on shooting. Of one thing she was certain—they could not vanquish her. And they did not. She never surrendered. Dead, she was still a source of terror to the foe.

One might think this was a tale of epic days, of battles long ago; but no, it happened only last year. She dreamed of seeing Moscow after the victory, Moscow blazing with the lights of glory.

She did not live to see that day. But her name, the name of our sister Lilyana, has reached Moscow, it has reached the Soviet people. On a tall hill above Sofia, a Red Army man reads her name; he has come to these distant Balkan lands from the walls of Stalingrad. And embodied in this meeting is the great truth for which Lilyana laid down her young life.

2

Her name was Vela Peyeva. Now they call her the Bulgarian Zoya. There is something in common between these two young lives: irresistible energy and daring. Vela perished at the age of twenty-two.

She was born and bred in the Rodop mountains. How often she had wandered along those high mountain paths as a child, little dreaming that one day she would be fighting

there. A short-sighted, bespectacled girl, shy and retiring, who used to pore over her books in the Marxian class, she became, when the Germans overran her country, an organizer and propagandist, an underground fighter and partisan.

Whom do the upright and industrious peasants of Kamenitsa village heed like one possessing all the experience in the world? It is her—this slip of a girl. Who is it that organizes the Chepin partisan column and leads it off to the mountains to fight? It is she, Penka, as the partisans have nicknamed her. And beside her marches her young sister, the schoolgirl, Gera.

Her family, all very religious and convinced of the "divine right" of the powers that be, who consider money to be the measure of happiness on earth, cannot understand where she has sprung from, this strange and unusual girl. In these terrible times little girls should be sitting at home and certainly not become involved in matters for which the secret police chop off heads in dark cells—and here she is, the commissar of a partisan unit!

Her name, spoken with wonder and pride by the people of the Rodop mountains, is whispered with terror by the traitors and German henchmen. For each partisan's head they receive fifty thousand lev according to the official rate. But the local fascist moneybags a-tremble for their safety—arrange a subscription and collect a million lev. A million lev on her small curly head!

The winter is hard in the Rodops. Mountains are mountains: there are no villages on their remote slopes. Nothing but snow-covered rocks, with the winter wind howling over them. Sombre gorges, wild and unpeopled. No food to be found there. All the exits in the hands of the punitive expeditions. Yet they have managed to struggle through the winter, and now March is drawing to a close. Fresh supplies are needed and Vela realizes that risks must be taken.

Accompanied by one of her trusty partisan friends, she climbs down the rocks and steep inclines. Here is a village. What bliss to squat by the fire, dry your shoes, have a rest and hear what has been happening—to stuff your knapsack with provisions and sleep in a warm room.

But the March nights are brief, and they must be up and climbing to where their comrades are waiting. The heavy knapsack chafes her shoulders. The snow is deep underfoot. She sees but dimly in the morning light; and when their figures appear on the cliff, a sentry gives the alarm.

An hour later ten lorries are racing along the mountain road.

When the sun rises and all the cliffs stand out in clear relief, the battle begins. The enemy does not spare his ammunition. Vela has to fire with discrimination. After the first half-hour her friend is laid low. The enemy soldiers come clambering up the side of the cliff. She hurls down stones and hand-grenades on their heads. The stones rattle louder than the grenades. The attackers are beaten back. The battle has been going on for two hours. There is a fresh assault. Vela throws her last grenade, then darts over to the other side of the cliff, the side with the steep downward slope. They see her throw up her arms when they fire their volley, and she topples over the edge. For a few moments they see her lifeless body rolling down the incline, then it disappears in the abyss. That's that. Who's going to climb down there? What would he find, anyway, amid the chaos of stones and undergrowth?

But Vela sits up among the stones and feels herself all over. She is alive. Her stratagem has succeeded. She is wounded in seven places, one wound, in the leg, is particularly painful. Too bad her glasses are smashed—it makes it harder than ever to see. But she still has the provisions. Her knapsack rolled down along with her.

Swaying, she makes her way along the mountain gorges, slowly, slowly... Her body burns, it hurts to move along, weariness makes her head swim. She does not know how many hours she has been going when at last she finds a pleasant clearing with an enormous gnarled tree. The trunk is hollow, and she climbs inside. It's like a fairy-tale chamber in there, warm and dark. Outside, a snowstorm is blowing—the snow covers everything around. Tattered and bleeding as she is, she will not be able to get anywhere. She must live in the treetrunk till the pain of her wounds subsides.

She ticks off the days in her notebook. They slip by quickly, one after the other. Sometimes she ventures out to reconnoitre. But to continue her journey is impossible. The cliffs are coated with ice, deep snow lies all around.

And she knows that her comrades, believing her dead, will not search for her here. But she is alive, and her wounds are healing. Her food, however, is running out. Can she really have been such a long time in this stony desert, sometimes conscious, sometimes searching for a road?

Her notebook tells her that she has lived in the tree for thirty days. For defence purposes she still has her revolver and a few rounds of ammunition.

One day, returning to the tree from one of her expeditions, she sees other footprints in the snow. Terror seizes her. They are like an apparition from some other world. Who can it be?

She sights a man coming towards her. It is the forester, an old inhabitant of these parts. Vela does not give her name, but tells him she is a partisan. He wants nothing more. Everything is clear, he will bring her food, let her wait quietly.

And so the forester begins to take food to her tree trunk. Of course, he is a good, kind soul. Thirty-five days have passed since she was fighting up there on the cliff-top.

The "kind soul" guesses at last that this is the famous Penka, the girl with a million on her head, hiding like a squirrel in a tree. He makes his way down to the valley, torn by inner conflict. He comes back, but no longer alone. Behind him comes a punitive squad led by Lieutenant-Colonel Stoyanov himself, accompanied by Lieutenant Todor Penkin, that black killer.

A company of troops ring in the clearing.

But they are afraid to approach the old tree where Vela dwells. They fire from machine-guns, from their tommy-guns. Vela lets them have her last rounds, and then, when the next grenade explodes, she flings herself into its flames.

Yes, all the lieutenant-colonel's plans have gone awry. He did not get Vela alive. He orders her head to be hacked off—the usual practice of the fascist beasts—and carries it down into the valley.

He is morose and ill-humoured. Since Vela is dead she can tell him nothing about the accursed partisans. But perhaps he can make some use of this small, bleeding head? It is up to him to think of something effective. He sees a sanatorium, a white house among the trees. He says: "That's where those consumptive teachers are—a lot of mischief-makers and Bolshies. They're always tickled to death when the partisans get in our way. Let them get good and scared. Give them a fright—take that head and show it to those communists."

The head is brought to the sanatorium. But the plan miscarries. The patients, sick and morose, look at it with blurred eyes, and mutter something under their breath. The devil only knows, perhaps they're shedding tears over her and whispering curses. Get out of here, and on to where we're expected.

The money-bags flock together from all sides. A banquet is arranged to celebrate this victory. To what animal depths can man descend! The tables gleam with silver and fine glass. Toasts are drunk to the victors. The head lies on a dish. The million lev are shared out among the butchers. The red wine flows like blood over their hands. But the women scream with terror. It is no sight for their nerves.

Thereupon Stoyanov says: "We've got some of those partisans and their pals down in the cellar. They won't own up to anything. Chuck the head in there—maybe it'll loosen their tongues if they see what's in store for them too."

Yes, indeed, there are prisoners in the cellar. For three days the head lies on the floor. They lift it reverently to some straw, and without any need of words, gaze at that head with eyes that the murderers would be terrified to see.

On the fourth day, the prisoners are tortured again. No amount of beating can make them say a word. They might have been turned to stone. No matter what is done to them, they remain silent. They have pledged their word to the dead girl Vela, to their beloved Penka. And like her, they go in silence to their death.

Time passes and one day the forester is seized by the arm as, with his eyes on the ground, he walks through the clearing containing the hollow tree. Strangers stand before him. And a girl—the dead Vela come to life. He wants to scream, but cannot. Terror freezes his breath. He is bound and led away—he follows stolidly like a bull. He understands everything, but one thing is incredible: didn't he see her head cut off? True, the girl is shorter and slighter, but still it is she.

They ask him about it all. He tells them. He knows that they will kill him for being a traitor—that this terrifying girl, come to life, will do it herself. He just manages to ask, with lips gone blue:

"Are you Vela?"

And the girl replies:

"Yes, only now my name is Gera."

And her lips are compressed, like those of that dead girl. She shot him. She lived to see September the 9th, the day when all Bulgaria rejoiced, the day when she mourned for her finest sons and daughters who had laid down their lives for her freedom.

Lilyana and Vela! It is a glorious country that has daughters such as these!

NIKOLAI TIKHONOV

UNDER THE ROOFS OF VIENNA

Lush green meadows carpeted the liberated Hungarian land. Birds at their spring rendezvous clamoured on the pools and creeks of Lake Balaton. Flocks of snipe, ducks and geese that had come from far-off warm seas, were skimming the surface of the lakes and rivers and the irrigation canals.

We entered the vicinity of the "Margarita Fortified Belt." Pulverized and blasted, the road crunched under the wheels of our car. The remains of burnt out tanks and self-propelled guns protruded from the swamps. There were no longer any corpses—they had already rotted and decomposed.

In these swampy low-lying lake-lands, between Lake Balaton and Székesfehérvár, Marshal Tolbukhin's troops had made short work of eleven SS tank divisions, the flower of the German Army.

The war had passed on and we were chasing after it to the south-west, to the frontier post marked: "Austria." Around us spread a peaceful spring landscape. The orchards in the villages straggling along the hillsides were gay with pink and white blossom. Cows were pasturing in the meadows. Austrian peasants were following the plow with heavy steps.

There would have been nothing to remind you of war had it not been for the "black man." I was speeding to Vienna and the nearer I approached the more often the familiar black man met me on the way. As always he was wearing a soft hat, his coat collar was turned up and he gripped a Browning in his hand.

We had met the mysterious black man many times during the war. I had seen his image in the towns and villages of Poland, Rumania,

Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Germany; now it had turned up in Austria as well, and, as everywhere, it bore the inscription: "Hist! We are overheard!"

The figure and the inscription were the invention of Goebbels. Every time the rumble of the Soviet artillery heralded the approach of the Red Army, Hitler propaganda merchants armed with paint-pots and plywood stencils, tumbled onto the streets of near-by town or village. They would hold their stencils against the house walls and fences and painstakingly daub in the silhouette of a black man—the symbol of their fear of coming retribution.

We crossed the bridge over the River Lisingbach and drove into the southern outskirts of the Austrian capital. In the distance the majestic spire of St. Stephen's Cathedral loomed against the backgrouhd of blue sky and above the tall buildings and factory chimneys. St. Stephen was the patron saint of the Viennese.

The Soviet regiments and divisions had broken up into hundreds of assault groups and like tiny rivulets were flowing along the streets of the Austrian capital. The streams mingled to form a mighty river surging into the centre of the city, to the Hofburg Imperial Palace, the Academy of Sciences, the Opera House, the Dramatic Theatre, the banks and the Exchange.

The German garrison was squirming in the clutches of the Red Army pincers between the Danube and the canal. Fierce bayonet skirmishes were fought in the thickly populated quarters of Leopoldstadt, the Augarten Park and the famous Prater, on Market Square, the Race Course and the stadiums.

The window-panes rattled from the cannonade. The roar of engines filled the air. The fighting was carried on in three tiers: on the asphalt of the streets and squares, on the various floors of the buildings and in the air.

German shells from the right bank of the Danube screamed toward the spire of St. Stephen's. The ashen walls of that amazing monument of 12th century architecture had seen in their time Friedrich Barbarossa and Suleiman the Magnificent.

Crowds of Vienna people stood by the buildings near the Cathedral gazing at its hallowed stones without uttering a word. Its walls were rocking under the shock of the Germans' barbarous fire, the dome was collapsing.

2

The general destined to be commandant of Vienna was appointed to this post long before our first man penetrated the city suburbs. Officers of various branches of the service were placed under his command. Until then they had been officers in the field, now these commandants of twenty-one Vienna districts were battling their way to the scene of their duties, fighting in the ranks of the assault groups.

It is impossible even to merely enumerate the problems the Soviet commandants in Vienna had to solve in those never to be forgotten hours. Guns roared beneath their windows, the smoke of fires draped the streets, glass shattered under the impact of explosion blasts. And through it all the commandants continued their work unceasingly.

The march of events made them responsible for vast amounts of property and for the lives of hundreds of thousands of citizens of Vienna. It would have been no easy job for them to cope with their multiplicity of duties had not Vienna patriots rallied to their aid and displayed confidence in them from the very first day.

During the years the fascists were in the saddle they published millions of books and newspapers in an effort to turn the Austrian people against the Soviet system, its people and the Red Army. Billions of words were spouted into the microphone—and all false! Nevertheless the Vienna patriots hailed the Red Army officers and men as friends and liberators.

The streets of Vienna presented an extraordinary scene during the days of the final assault. About a third of the city was still in the hands of the German garrison. Enemy shells were falling in many districts and yet thousands of people poured out into the streets. They extinguished the fires in the houses, pulled down the barricades, hauled away the huge chunks of concrete and the mountains of rubble so as to clear the way for our army. They escorted the lorry-borne infantry and pointed out the houses where Germans were in ambush.

A delegation of Vienna University professors visited the commandant to convey to him the wish of their colleagues to place a volunteer party of medical workers at the disposal of the Red Army. Representatives of the city engineers' association offered to see that the water system was put in order. The director general of bakeries Zegger expressed his readiness to see that bread was baked for the population.

At the hotel which served as headquarters for the Central Soviet Commandant, I met scientists, business-men, artists, workers, teachers, musicians, politicians, actors and engineers.

Although the fascists were still in possession of a part of the city, they were spoken of as one speaks of the dead—in the past tense.

"They were criminals," said Professor Legens, M.D. of Vienna University. "They massacred the patients in the Schneidorf City Hospital."

At that time Professor Legens knew nothing of Majdanek or Oświęcim, so that the slaughter of fifteen hundred mental patients at Schneidorf seemed to him the acme of horrors.

Professors Legens, Koldhaus, Weissenhorer, Kren, Petrak, the inspector of city museums Doctor Edliczka, managers of the Vienna Opera House Doctor Matthews Flich and Alfred Yerger, all very popular and highly respected by the Vienna population, were the first to publicly denounce the fascist crimes to the Soviet commandant.

That day another crime was added to the countless others.

"Do you know whose shells damaged St. Stephen's Cathedral?" Cardinal Innitzer

was asked by a representative of the Soviet command.

"Yes, I know well that they were German shells," replied Cardinal Innitzer, the Pope's representative in Austria.

3

I was in the famous Schönbrunn Palace on the day Vienna fell, a few hours before our men flung the Germans out of the town and across the Danube. The Palace caretaker, sixty-year-old Matthias Hosch, escorted me through the spacious halls and chambers of the ancient residence of the Austrian Emperors. Rattling a big bunch of keys, he said:

"They told me: 'Schnell, schnell, Herr Hosch! Round up your people...' This is the audience chamber... They told me: 'Gather your people together and get moving towards the north-west...' Napoleon occupied these chambers. He stayed here twice—in 1805 and 1809. 'Get moving,' they told me, 'otherwise the Bolsheviks will slit your throats, wring your necks like chickens...' Emperor Franz-Joseph was born in that bed. Was born in it and died in it... 'And what about the treasures?' I asked them. 'Oh, we'll take care of those ourselves,' they replied... This is the bedchamber of Empress Maria-Theresa... How could I do a thing like that, monsieur officer?.. The audience chamber. The throne stood here... I thought it over, then I said to myself: 'That's all moonshine. Nobody will touch you, Matthias Hosch. You've done twenty-nine years honest service. You started as a manservant. The Bolsheviks value honest labour...' The needlework room. Note the wall. . . I called the servants and said to them: 'Listen, I'm stopping at my post...'"

We went out into the park, examined the Roman ruins with their well preserved basreliefs, and turned into the walk on the left. Several women, mounted on high ladders, were pruning the trees. That peaceful scene was really staggering—why, the fighting was still going on in the city!

"I kept all the personal," Hosch pronounced with some pride as he pointed to the women. "All valuable objects are in the basement."

We passed through a succession of rooms and halls containing nothing except gilded chairs and enormous empty picture frames.

"Everything's safe," the engineer Karl Hally assured me. (Now director of the Palace-Museum, Hally had formerly been in charge of the water system of the Palace). "It's all in the basements. Your troops raced into Vienna too fast for the Germans to get anything away. It was so sudden. Nobody expected it, including myself... That is we both..."

"May I introduce myself, please," said a voice behind me. "Winkler."

An elderly man with a graceful upright figure made a slight bow and clicked his heels together making his tiny silver spurs clash. He had the features of a duellist from the pages of Alexander Dumas' novels.

It appears that Winkler had held the post of head of the Court Spanish riding school.

"Hally and I," he said, "went up to the first Russian officer and asked him to provide a guard. He was a tank officer, but you know, he simply worshipped horses. At his request I had the pleasure of explaining in detail the principles of Spanish riding."

The Franz-Joseph Palace was guarded by sentries detailed by a tank regiment. The commander had gone into battle with his tanks but had ordered the sentries to guard the property of the Austrian people and not to leave their posts until they were relieved by the commandant's men.

The treasures of the Palace were under the watchful eye of a tankist from Kazakhstan. Tommy-gunner Gregor Shtatchinsky from Kremenchug stood on guard at the Museum of Fine Arts. At the Parliament building, infantryman Gregor Gontar of Kryzhopol was on duty, while at the Vienna Opera House artilleryman Semyon Ivanov of Ryazan paced up and down.

Ivanov had taken up his post by order of the commander of a self-propelled gun battery five minutes after Opernring Square had been cleared of the Germans. Pointing to the Opera House, the commander had asked Ivanov:

"Have you heard of Chaikovsky? Do you know Glinka?"

"Of course," returned Ivanov

"They have both been here," said the battery commander. "Your post is of special state importance, so look out!"

"You can count on me," replied corporal Semyon Ivanov.

4

Vienna fell. The last German had been driven out, and the news flew round the city like lightning. Now that the last two Vienna districts, situated on an island, had been taken, the German guns were no longer shelling the city.

Now, not hundreds and thousands, but tens and hundreds of thousands of Viennese thronged the streets.

A crowd gathered at a five-storey building three blocks away from the commandant's headquarters. A small force of Red Army tommy-gunners had mustered and were getting ready to march off. They were to dislodge the Germans from Florisdorf on the other side of the river. Now they were taking leave of the people in the block of flats. Suddenly Red Army man Andreyev, in a pure, mellow voice sang an aria from Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The windows of the five-storey block of flats flew open, so did those of the three-storey house opposite, and all were filled with ardent music-loving Viennese.

"Well sung, Russian!" they shouted from the windows, and clapped with enthusiastic vigour.

"Bravo, bravo!" cried passers-by who had stopped to hear their favourite aria.

The old cemetery gate-keeper whom we asked to direct us to certain graves, doffed his hat and volunteered:

"I'll conduct you myself. I take all the Russian officers there."

In a quiet corner amid dense foliage were the tombstones of those whose genius had made

Vienna famous for all time. In silence we read the names carved in the imperishable marble:

Mozart.
Beethoven.
Franz Schubert.
Johann Strauss (father).
Johann Strauss (son).

The breeze rustled the flower petals, for huge bouquets and wreaths covered the graves of the great musicians who had been laid to rest in this small square, bordered by trees and bushes of blossoming lilacs. Pinned to the bouquets and wreaths were dozens of messages written on the leaves of note-books and despatch blanks in coloured pencils of all shades of the rainbow, or in green, blue and black ink:

"To great Beethoven, from the tankmen of the X. Brigade."

"To Mozart, from Stalin's Eagles."

"To Johann Strauss, King of the Waltz, from the signaller girls."

"To Schubert, as a tribute to his name, from a group of Soviet officers."

In the half hour we were there, two jeeps, an "Oppeln-Captain," two "Emkas" and a "Pickup" pulled in towards the graves. Out of them stepped officers and men of all branches of the service, they removed their caps and in reverent silence laid wreaths and bouquets on the marble pedestals of the beautiful tombstones.

The old gate-keeper stood clutching his soft hat in his left hand and nervously moving the fingers of his right hand, held stiffly at his side...

EL-REGHISTAN

JUST AN ORDINARY FELLOW

(*Soviet war-hero*)

On the night of October 17th, 1943, an army group under General Batov forced the Dnieper at the small Byelorussian town of Loyev. The Soviet crossing caught the Germans unawares and by the next morning three Red Army battalions had already gained the far bank.

But, as often happens in war, the comparatively easy success was followed by a sudden storm of terrific fighting; hours of mortal danger; minutes when it seemed that the enemy's force was on the point of crushing our battalions and that the Red Army men would leave their bones to bleach on the west bank of the Dnieper.

Towards evening on October 18th, the Germans threw in tanks and two infantry divisions. By that time over three hundred enemy guns and mortars were pounding both banks of the Dnieper. Black Junkers circled over the bridgehead and crossings day and night.

Soviet gunners and airmen went all out to make the enemy a fitting reply.

Old Father Dnieper can scarcely have heard or seen anything like it before. His waters foamed from bursting shell and bomb, his waves washed ashore the flotsam and jetsam of wrecked boats, pontoons and rafts... The earth shook, crumbled, shot upwards and sullied the water. The day darkened from the smoke and soot, while the night, illuminated by the fires, became brighter than day.

The west-bank bridgehead needed reinforcements, ammunition, food, and medical supplies. The east bank was doing its utmost to help the advanced battalions. Pontoons, ordinary fishing boats and rafts pushed off, loaded with men and ammunition. Not all of them reached the opposite bank...

That was a tough evening on October 18th, on the Dnieper, at the small Byelorussian town of Loyev, during the famous crossing of the First Byelorussian Front troops in 1943.

At six o'clock that evening the ammunition supply chief of a certain battalion summoned guardsman Private Nikolai Mushin, waggoner of No. 2 Company, to his blindage.

"Can you swim, Comrade Mushin?" asked the lieutenant.

"Of course," replied Mushin, "I'm from the river Irtysh, Comrade Lieutenant."

"Where are your waggons and horses?"

"There," Mushin jerked his head towards a hill, "under cover."

"You'll have to leave your horses behind," the lieutenant continued. "On the bank you'll find a raft. Load it with six cases of grenades and two of anti-tank cartridges... D'you think you can manage the raft and get the stuff to the other side?"

"Certainly," replied Mushin, "I worked with rafts on the Irtysh."

"Go to it, Mushin. You'll find the ammunition where you've left your horses."

Mushin left the blindage and found the ammunition dump. Men helped him haul the cases down to the raft.

After the loading, Mushin removed his tin cap, wiped the sweat off his brow with his sleeve, and waded into the water to unmoor the raft. His movements were unhurried, deliberate and natural. He pushed off the raft and seized the oar. At that moment the A.A. guns on the bank set up a furious barking. Mushin looked up to see five Junkers in the evening sky.

He felt very hot and again wiped his brow with his sleeve. Two other rafts and three boats on the same mission were close at hand.

"It's not only me they'll bomb, but all of us," Mushin thought aloud, and somehow this idea seemed to reassure him. He looked up again. The Junkers were tearing downwards. A bomb screamed. Mushin put down the oar and hugged the cases of grenades with both arms. The next moment he was stunned by an explosion and soused with water. For a time he was stone deaf, but still he fumbled

around for the oar and began to row, steering the raft to the far bank. Looking right and left Mushin saw that now there were only one raft and two boats afloat.

Soon Mushin's raft emerged from the enemy's zone of fire. The high bank now screened him from hostile eyes, but shells were still exploding all around while smoke rings from shrapnel shells hung thick in the air. When about three metres from the bank Mushin jumped into the water and dragged in the raft.

A sergeant took over the cases. Mushin had seen him a couple of times before and greeted him like an old friend.

"What's it like? Pretty hot where you are, eh, Sergeant?" asked Mushin.

"It's hot everywhere today," returned the sergeant. "I thought they'd bomb you out of the water. The second raft got it clean amidships..."

When the unloading was finished, the sergeant noticed that blood was dripping from Mushin's soaked breeches.

"Here, old man, you seem to be wounded... don't you feel anything?"

Mushin looked himself over and when he raised his left leg felt a twinge.

"Looks like it. Must have been a splinter. Have a look, Sergeant..."

Mushin slipped off his breeches and the sergeant bandaged his wound.

...Mushin set off on the return course. On the way back he was wounded in the neck. It hurt worse than his leg but Mushin took himself in hand, for he didn't want to go back to base.

By the time Mushin had finished his third trip he was looking very pale and the lieutenant who met him noticed that his hands were trembling.

"Can you keep going a bit longer?" asked the lieutenant.

Mushin realized that the lieutenant had no one to replace him and straightened up.

"I guess I can; still got something left..."

The raft was loaded for the fourth time. Mushin suddenly remembered his horses and asked:

"My horses haven't been forgotten, have they, Lieutenant? They'll be pretty thirsty by now."

The lieutenant assured him that the horses had been watered and Mushin felt easier.

By the time he was wounded a third time Mushin had made ten trips and had ferried over to the bridgehead thirty-two cases of grenades, sixteen cases of machine- and tommy-gun ammunition, two cases containing anti-tank rifles and a great deal of other material.

At two in the morning he lost consciousness and was sent to hospital.

He was delirious for a long time, rambled of Siberia, talked to his daughter Nina, gave somebody a dressing down on account of his horses and spoke about the Germans.

In November he learned that he had been made a Hero of the Soviet Union. The regiment commander sent him a letter telling him that he'd promoted him to sergeant and urged him to return to his unit on discharge from hospital.

Nikolai Mushin rejoined his unit in May 1944 and was appointed sergeant-major in No. 2 Company. He was presented with his Hero of the Soviet Union Gold Star and the Order of Lenin. Sometime later he received the "For Bravery" medal which had been awarded him way back in July of the previous year.

Mushin's new rank gave him a lot of extra cares and duties. Days, weeks, months passed. Mushin fed, clothed and shod his company, supplied it with ammunition, saw that the blindages and trenches were well built and kept in a decent state of repair, arranged the regular delivery of newspapers and mail and was occupied by a hundred and one other jobs.

Vanity was absolutely alien to Mushin's character. Take that day in October 1943, for instance. Then he had lain by his horses for hours, watching the troops cross the Dnieper. He'd seen many men die, had watched the air battles and stared at the wrathful, foaming Dnieper. His heart shrank at the thought that perhaps he, too, would be sent across the river. He had no wish to die, he loved life, the Irtysh, his family. He recalled his youth, his work on the collective farm... But when the lieutenant called him and told him that the ammunition must be ferried across, he felt it was only fair that his turn had come, although he was only a waggon driver. "Many have driven across already, it's not only me," Mushin had thought.

Later he had been scared. He was tired, faint from his wounds, but the Russian character didn't allow him to complain of fatigue and pain. "That chap driving with me is wounded too," thought Mushin, "and I'm no weaker than him... must do another trip."

When he was ferrying ammunition across the Dnieper, he had not thought, what he was risking himself for. He knew that the lieutenant would not send him on such a hard and dangerous job except for the good reason that things were no better for his comrades on the opposite bank. "I'm not the unlucky stepson who catches all the kicks," Mushin assured himself, "they don't all get killed, somebody gets through..."

When he became company sergeant-major, Mushin was still the same Mushin as before. Decorations and promotion had not changed him.

During a battle in Poland, No. 2 Company got cut off from the rest of the regiment. Some tanks went to their relief.

It was night. The tanks were plunging across country, when suddenly, at a hamlet, a waggon drove up to the commander's machine. Out of it jumped Mushin.

"I'm Company 2's sergeant-major," he reported to the senior lieutenant. "Our chaps haven't had a hot meal for two days. Please take these three thermos containers and me with you..."

"Lord, what are you thinking about, Sergeant!" said the lieutenant severely. "They'll be lucky to hang on to life until we arrive, and you're talking about hot meals! We've no time to be worrying about your containers..."

An officer must not be contradicted, so Mushin tried another tack.

"There's food in only two of the containers, Comrade Senior Lieutenant. There's vodka in the third..."

Still the senior lieutenant was not impressed but to save time he agreed to take the containers and the sergeant-major.

The Germans opened heavy fire at the tanks. One machine was set ablaze; the caterpillar of another was smashed. Nevertheless the tanks broke through to No. 2 Company. Mushin crawled from one slit-trench to another, handing the men vodka, soup and roast mutton. Nikolai Mushin realized better than anyone how the food would raise the men's spirits... The situation was still menacing. Mushin knew that the company was now under the command of Sergeant Kolesnikov. When he crawled up to him the sergeant asked him to take over the command. "They all know you, Nikolai," he said, "while I'm new to the company. Take over. They'll feel more confident under you..."

Mushin sent round word that he'd taken over the command, then went off to the senior lieutenant and advised him to dig his tanks into the ground during the night.

And both infantry and tankists worked all night, so that by morning they had a tough strong point able to fight round all 360 degrees of the compass. Through the tank radio-transmitter Mushin and the senior lieutenant told the command how the land lay and of their decision to hold the cross-roads until the main body arrived.

The battle raged all day long. We shall not describe it, but merely say that No. 2 Company and the tanks held the cross-roads until two the next morning when our units broke through to them.

Mushin was wounded but not badly. He did not go to hospital but received treatment at the battalion dressing station. The command decorated him with the Order of the Red Banner. He remained company sergeant-major and again plunged into the turmoil of food, boots, tunics, collars, soap, needles, cartridges and weapons.

He marched into Berlin as battalion quartermaster.

Last June he came to Moscow with the delegation from the First Byelorussian Front to take part in the Victory Parade. He marched through the Red Square as assistant standard bearer. He saw Stalin—afterwards he assured his friends that comrade Stalin had given him a smile.

Two days later Mushin raised his glass at a party with the workers of a Moscow factory, raised it to drink to Stalin's toast—in honour of the ordinary folk, "whose rank is low and station unenviable." Mushin said to the Muscovites:

"We, ordinary people, followed and are following Comrade Stalin. He led us to victory. Now we'll consolidate our victory under his leadership and life in our country will become even better and happier than it was before the war..."

Lieutenant-Colonel P. TROYANOVSKY

ON THE GOLDEN SUMMITS OF LENINGRAD

They were brought together by their common love of music, of nature, of sports. Many was the time when, climbing up some perilous mountain peak, they entrusted their lives to each other. That chained their hearts for ever.

Michael Shestakov and Olga Firsova developed a passion for mountain-climbing while they were students in the Leningrad Academy of Music. They visited the Caucasus six times; together they ascended Mount Kazbek, Mount Elbruz, Byelalakaya, Adaikhokh and other summits which only the bravest can reach. But they never thought their nerves would be put to the test on the tall spires of their native city.

The spires of the Admiralty, the Fortress of Peter and Paul and the Engineering Castle, slender, smooth and oscillating in the wind, or the domes and crosses of the cathedrals are certainly less suited to climbing than the mountain peaks. The range of oscillation of the Fortress spire, for example, is well over six feet. But a few fearless Leningraders, forced by the war, had to master this new art. The gleaming, sparkling golden "summits" of the city would have made a fine target for the enemy. They had to be camouflaged, and the champion mountaineers were asked to do the job. All through the war Michael Shestakov, the 'cellist, Olga Firsova, the conductor, and Tatiana Wiesel, the artist, worked high up, on Leningrad's domes and spires. They painted over the spires or sewed them up in cloth covers which, from time to time, had to be mended or changed.

The work had to be done under terrible difficulties. Sometimes the mountaineers were caught up there in the sky by a shelling or bombing raid. When they were working on the spire of the Fortress of Peter and Paul, one hundred and twenty metres above ground level, an air combat took place right over their heads.

The enemy, then at the city gates, on quite a few occasions tried to shoot them down. The Germans would spot the gallant climbers through their observation instruments and open up on them with shrapnel. They did not even need to hit the climber himself; if a fragment severed the supporting rope, that would be the end.

It was hard, too, because during the blockade the climbers starved, like the rest of Leningrad, and their strength ebbed. Olga Firsova became very ill. Then again, it was no easy job to combine this arduous physical work with music or drawing—yet they did not neglect their professions.

And lastly, there was another difficulty, the technique of mountain-climbing had to be adapted to very unusual conditions.

Each spire or dome had its own shape and structure, each required a different approach. And there was no previous experience to draw on—though it is true they had one predecessor.

More than a hundred years ago, a Russian serf peasant, Peter Telushkin by name and a roof-maker by trade, climbed the spire of the Fortress of Peter and Paul. He had volunteered to repair a broken wing on one of the angels on the spire. Up to a certain point he mounted inside the spire. Then he climbed out through a window cut through the facing, and covered the remaining stretch with only ropes to aid him.

As the structure of the spire made it possible to ascend on the inside, Shestakov took advantage of it. Climbing as high as the diameter of the spire permitted, he drilled a small hole in the surface, and through this he let out a rope. The next ascent would be made by purely mountaineering methods, by loops in the rope. On reaching the top, Shestakov fixed up a pulley and his friends could climb up with its aid. His wife, Olga Firsova, was his most frequent companion. As time went on, the three climbers rationalized their work, and while at first they had nearly thirty people to assist them, by the end they managed without any outside help at all.

The most awkward job was camouflaging the crosses of the Nikolo-Morskoy Cathedral, or the little ship on top of the Admiralty spire—the parts situated above the pulleys, that is to say, above the topmost portion of the spire still safe for climbing. The slender, pliant parts were anything but calculated to support the weight of a human being. The cross on the cathedral began to give way under Shestakov. Endurance and will-power were taxed to the utmost by such experiences.

Covering the city's summits was full of danger and surprise. When Olga was camouflaging the Admiralty dome some swallows attacked her; their wings beat frenziedly against her slender frame.

What was the matter? Olga reached under the sacking—to discover some swallows' nests containing fledglings. She spent two days going over her work in order to freed the nests she had inadvertently covered up.

Each time they ascended the spires the fearless three would let their eyes roam over their city. During the blockade it was deserted, silent, on the alert. Their hearts ached for Leningrad.

"But even in those dark times," says Olga, "we were already looking forward to the happy day when we would mount the Admiralty, the fortress and the castle to take down their disfiguring covers and reveal their beauty intact."

And now, that day had arrived. Dazzled by the blazing sun, with the fresh spring breeze playing about them, Michael Shestakov, Olga Firsova and Tatiana Wiesel climbed once more to the golden summits of Leningrad.

Covered in sacking, the Admiralty spire looked sombre and bleak. Only the weathercock at the top—the little gilded ship—gleamed in the light, for it had been uncovered the day before.

Olga climbed to the very top of the spire, and started ripping the cover with her sharp knife. Her dark figure descended lower and lower down the rope. The wind whipped the edges of the soiled sacking as she released it; if it billowed in the wind, Olga would be swept away. The crowd assembled below looked on, hardly daring to breathe. Michael and Tatiana battled stoutly with their anxiety. But now the danger was past. The covering was ripped from top to bottom, and slowly it slipped down. There was the spire, sparkling in the sun, and the massive Admiralty building at once appeared airy, golden, shining—the building now so familiar from its picture on the Leningrad Defence medal. It brightened the entire city.

"Still," Olga says of herself and her husband, "we don't intend to spend the whole of the sports season up on the spires. We're planning to get through with the de-camouflaging and then—off to the Caucasus."

"Those are our plans as far as sports are concerned," Shestakov chimes in. "As to music, I mean to take a post-graduate course at the Academy. The war's over, and we want to enjoy life again. It's time to give up this weird job as camouflage foreman and get down to my 'cello in real earnest."

N. SPIZHARSKAYA

FOR CHILDREN ABOUT CHILDREN BY CHILDREN

It was exactly a year ago that we introduced this section in our magazine. It has carried various stories and articles all unquestionably living up to its name.

"For children,"—there were fairy-tales, legends, stories and even a play which may be staged by any group of schoolchildren.

"About children,"—yes, precisely about children in the Land of the Soviets, about their life, study, their merits and faults, about their favourite books and authors is to be found in every issue of our magazine.

"By children,"—books written by children have been reviewed and sketches drawn by them printed.

In this issue you will read five short stories by V. Osseyeva, taken from her book, *The Magic Word*, which won a prize at the contest for the best children's book several months ago. *What Did the Hedgehog Think?* tells about the fate in store for those who forget that there can be no friendship without loyalty. *Blue Leaves* shows how disgusting greed is. *Something Good* will show you how easily you can do the right, good thing every day. Lastly, *Sons* and *A Wonderful Day* will show you that nothing elevates man like labour and that there is no greater joy than the joy of labour.

Another distinguishing feature of these stories is that they are easy to understand and interesting for five and six year olds as well. Read them to your little brothers and sisters and see how they like them.

In this issue you will also find Alexander Isbach's *One-Eyed Teddy*, a story about a little girl found by a Red Army soldier.

VALENTINA OSSEYEVA

WHAT DID THE HEDGEHOG THINK?

There was once a little boy who had no companions. For some reason he could make no friends. One day he went off into the woods to look for a friend. On and on he walked until he met a rabbit.

"Good morning, Bunny!" said the boy. "Would you like to be my friend?"

"Yes!" the rabbit agreed.

So they walked on together. When they reached the fringe of the forest they saw a hunter coming towards them. Trembling with fear the rabbit rushed to hide under a bush.

"Little boy, have you seen a rabbit around here?" asked the hunter.

"Yes," said the boy.

"Where?"

"Right there under that bush."

The hunter fired, but the rabbit was no longer there.

The boy was again alone in the forest. He walked on and on. The sun had set and a wind had begun to blow. Leaves whirled overhead. The boy sat down under a big tree and began to think how dull life was when you are all alone.

Suddenly a little squirrel crept out from a hollow in the tree.

"Little boy, what are you doing here?" the squirrel asked.

"I'm looking for a friend," said the boy.

"Do you want to be my friend?"

"I do," said the boy.

The squirrel was glad. She invited him into her nest, placed nuts before him and made him a soft bed out of moss.

"Eat and go to sleep," she said.

The boy ate and slept his fill. Next morning he woke up very early, got into the squirrel's storage, put all the nuts into his pocket and walked off.

He walked on and on through the forest until he met a bear.

"Where are you going, little boy?" Teddy asked.

"I am looking for a friend. Will you be my friend?"

"I will," roared Teddy.

So they walked on together. Suddenly a pack of vicious dogs came running from the thick of the forest.

"Please, don't leave me, friend!" pleaded the boy.

"Hurry up, climb onto my back," said Teddy. "We'll manage somehow to get away together."

Down raced Teddy through the woods with the dogs on his heels. Seated on his back the boy urged him on:

"Hurry, hurry, Teddy dear!"

Teddy was panting from fatigue, his tongue was hanging out of his mouth, his fur was drenched in sweat: it was hard for him to run with the boy on his back. When he finally got away from the dogs he collapsed under a fir tree and said to the boy:

"Now you watch while I get some sleep."

The boy sat down, produced his penknife and began to fashion a reed pipe.

A woman came walking down the forest path.

"Whose bear is it lying there?" asked the woman.

"Mine," said the boy.

"Sell me his skin, I'll pay you for it," said the woman.

"All right," the boy agreed, "give me the money!"

The woman began to count the money, but Teddy heard it. He rose and walked off into the forest.

The boy was again left alone.

Night came and dogs began to bark viciously in the forest.

Frightened, cold and hungry, the boy sat there crying bitterly, when he suddenly saw a hedgehog come out of his hole.

"Why are you crying, little boy?" the hedgehog asked.

"I feel hurt," the boy complained, "I had three friends, and they all left me..."

The hedgehog marvelled.

"There's something wrong here," he said, shaking his head.

The boy told him the story.

The hedgehog said nothing in reply. He merely curled up into a ball and rolled down into his burrow.

SONS

Two women were getting water at the well. A third woman came over, and then an old man sat down on a stone nearby.

"My son is so nimble and strong, no one can beat him," said one of the women.

"And you should hear mine sing," the second woman said, "just like a nightingale. I'll bet no one has a voice like his."

The third woman said nothing.

"What about your son, couldn't you tell us something about him?" the two women asked.

"There's nothing much to tell. He's just an ordinary boy," she replied.

The women filled their buckets with water and went off together. The old man pattered slowly after them. They stopped frequently for a rest, for their backs were weighed down by the load, their arms ached, and the water splashed out of the buckets.

Suddenly three boys came running in their direction.

One was turning somersaults and the women looked at him with admiring eyes.

The second boy sang so beautifully that he held them spellbound by his voice.

The third boy ran to his mother, took the buckets from her hands and went off.

"Well, what do you think of our sons, aren't they fine lads?" the women asked the old man.

"But where are they?" he asked. "I saw only one son!"

BLUE LEAVES

Katya had two green pencils, and Lena had none at all.

One day Lena asked Katya:

"Lend me one of your green pencils."

"I must ask mother's permission," Katya said.

When the two little girls came to school on the following day, Lena asked:

"Has your mother agreed?"

"Yes, mother's agreed," Katya said with a sigh, "but now I must ask my brother."

"Well, ask your brother too," Lena said.

Next morning Lena asked Katya:

"Well, has your brother agreed?"

"Yes, my brother has agreed, but I'm afraid you'll break the pencil."

"I'll be very, very careful," Lena said.

"All right," said Katya, "but be sure you don't press it too hard and don't chew it and, please, don't draw too much."

"No," said Lena, "all I need is to draw some leaves on the trees and a bit of grass."

"Oh, that's too much," Katya said frowning, and made a sour face.

Lena looked at her and walked away without taking the pencil. Katya ran after her.

"Well, what's the matter? Take it!"

"No, I don't want it," said Lena.

Later, the teacher asked:

"Lena, why did you make all your leaves blue?"

"Because I have no green pencil," Lena answered.

"Couldn't you borrow one from your friend?"

Lena said nothing, but Katya blushed and said:

"I gave her the pencil but she wouldn't take it."

The teacher looked from one to the other and said:

"It all depends how you give."

SOMETHING GOOD

Yura opened his eyes in the morning and looked through the window. The sun was shining. It was a fine day!

Yura felt like doing something good. After breakfast he sat on the couch considering in his own mind what to do:

"Suppose my sister was drowning and I saved her!" he thought, when in walked his little sister:

"Yura, please come for a walk with me!" she asked.

"Don't bother me, let me think," he shouted.

His sister pursed her lips and went off.

"Wouldn't it be fine," Yura went on thinking, "if nurse were attacked by wolves and I shot them!"

Just then his nurse walked in:

"Yura darling, please clear away the dishes..."

"Do it yourself, I have no time!" Yura snapped.

The nurse shook her head, and Yura continued his thinking.

"Wouldn't it be well if Ted fell into the well and I dragged him out!"

He no sooner thought of it when in came the dog wagging his tail:

"Please, Yura, give me a drink!"

"Get out!" cried Yura. "Let me think!"

So Ted pressed his lips together and crawled into the bushes.

Still thinking, Yura went over to his mother:

"Mother, can you think of something good I could do?"

"Of course," said his mother patting Yura's head, "take your sister for a walk. help nurse with the dishes, and give some water to Ted."

A WONDERFUL DAY

The grasshopper hopped onto a tuft of grass, exposed its green back to the sun, and rubbing its pads, began to creak:

"What a won-n-d-de-er-f-ful-l day!"

"Dis-s-g-gus-ting-g!" hissed the rain-worm burrowing deeper into the dry ground.

"What?" the grasshopper leaped in astonishment. "Not a cloud in the sky. The sun is so pleasantly warm. Anybody will tell you: this is a wonderful day!"

"Indeed not!" the worm objected. "Rain and warm muddy puddles, that's what I call a wonderful day!"

But the grasshopper did not agree.

"Let's ask someone else," they decided.

Just then an ant with a pine needle on its back stopped to catch its breath.

"Tell us, please," the two asked in chorus, "is it a wonderful or a disgusting day today?"

The ant wiped away the sweat from its face and said pensively:

"I can answer this question only after the sun sets."

The grasshopper and worm marvelled.

"Well, we'll wait!" they said.

After sunset they came to the big ant heap.

"Well, have you made up your mind, esteemed ant?" they asked.

The ant pointed to the deep tunnels burrowed in the heap, to the piles of pine needles gathered by it and said:

"Today was really a wonderful day! I've done good work and I now can rest in peace."

Translated by Lija Gavourina

ALEXANDER ISBACH

ONE-EYED TEDDY

The charred ruins of the village were still smouldering. Grey, muddy flakes, raised by the wind from the ruins, whirled in the air and settled on the greatcoats and faces of the soldiers. The horses' hooves clattered on the cobbles of the road and the cavalrymen were silent, looking gloomily from one side of the village street to the other. No one ran out to meet them; there was no one to weave flowers into the harness, no one to bring icy water from the well in worm-eaten wooden buckets... It was a strange village...

Captain Andreyev rode in front of the squadron. On the outskirts he suddenly reined in his horse: there, standing near the wrecked brick barn, was his little daughter, his own Luda! As if in a dream the captain leaped from his horse, ran towards the little girl and, lifting her up in his arms, looked eagerly at the child's face. The frightened child looked back at him through the tears frozen in her bright blue eyes... But his Luda's eyes were black, like two burning bits of coal. No, this was not his daughter. But all the rest, the flaxen hair, the little pug nose and the dimples in her cheeks—was just like his Luda. This tiny stranger had a remarkable resemblance to his daughter!

Andreyev had lost track of his family during the early days of the war. He did not know whether Barbara and the child remained in the occupied city, whether they were killed, deported for slave labour. or succeeded in escaping. He sent out hundreds of inquires, looked for them everywhere, but in vain... He covered thousands of kilometres along the roads of war, freed hundreds of woman and children, but his Barbara and Luda were nowhere to be found. And yet he refused to believe that they were dead; he continued to look for them...

The captain bent down and set the child on her feet. When he raised his head he saw that the whole squadron had gathered around him. The men's faces were tense, rising in their stirrups they waited... They knew about their captain's grief and were now eager to share in his unexpected joy. Andreyev shook his head sadly, and the cavalrymen gloomily pulled their reins. The captain walked off slowly towards his horse and had already put his foot into the stirrup, when he turned back to look again. Standing in the middle of the yard the little stranger was sobbing bitterly, smearing the tears over her face with her bruised dirty little fists.

"Boys!" cried Andreyev excitedly. "Shall we take this little daughter?"

II

In his old knapsack Peter Andreyev had a little Teddy bear with one single eye. It was a present from his Luda. On the day of her father's departure for the front, Luda had a long conference with all her dolls. Then she came over to her dad and climbing onto his knee, said with a businesslike air, holding up her favourite toy:

"Dad, won't you please take Teddy along with you? He will guard you on the way."

Captain Andreyev presented Teddy to Ira. As a matter of fact Teddy helped him to find his way to the child's heart. For some time the little girl looked at him with frightened eyes; her lips pressed tightly together, she never uttered a word. But when Teddy appeared, she seized him, pressed him to her breast and smiled through her tears for the first time.

She became the daughter of the squadron. The grim faces of the bewhiskered soldiers

would soften into a smile when they listened to their daughter chattering with her constant companion, brown Teddy.

Andreyev learned that the little girl was seven years old (just the same as his Luda), that her name was Ira, that she was brought there by the nazis together with her granny from the Ukraine, and granny died. At the mention of granny Ira burst into a fit of bitter sobbing, and it took Andreyev a long time to calm her. But not a word did Ira say about her parents.

One day the cavalry squadron pitched camp in a dense pine forest. The men were cleaning their arms, preparing for new battles. Captain Andreyev spent many hours in Ira's company. The little girl grew very fond of her adopted father, and at times it seemed to Andreyev that he had really found his Luda.

This happiness, however, was shortlived. The men had ahead of them a raid deep into the enemy rear. They had to part. Listening to the carefree laughter of the child, Andreyev grew thoughtful, knitting his brow, and the little girl tried to smooth out the wrinkles on his forehead. Then she played with Teddy in the corner of the dugout while the captain was writing. For several days in succession he had been trying to write a long letter, but every time he tore up the results of his labour and began all over again. He wrote about himself, about Barbara and Luda, and about Ira. All his sorrow, his thoughts about his little daughter and wife he poured out into this letter.

A day before the squadron was due to start on its raid, Captain Andreyev bundled the girl up in warm clothes, put a letter into her pocket, packed all the child's clothing collected by the squadron into a sack, and ordering the best horses to be harnessed, rode off together with Ira.

They stopped near a field aerodrome. At the sight of a plane the girl began to tremble violently and dropped to the ground with a cry.

"Mother!" she screamed, choking with tears. "Mother!"

For the first time since their meeting in the village the captain heard this word from her lips. He understood everything. This made the little girl dearer to him than ever before. He knew now that she had no one left in the world except him. And he too had no one but Ira. Yet it was necessary to part, to part in order to save this little daughter of his.

At the aerodrome Captain Andreyev looked up an old friend of his, the pilot Boreiko. Boreiko had visited the squadron and he knew Ira's story.

"Vanya," said Andreyev to his friend. "I have no time for long conversation. You frequently fly to the rear. Please, take my daughter along, take her to a big city. Find a good woman and ask her to keep this little girl for me until the end of the war."

Then the captain embraced the little girl, kissed her big tear-stained eyes, her wet cheeks, her little pug nose, and leaping into the carriage, whipped up the horses.

III

Boreiko took Ira to a big city. On the airfield, carried away by friendly feelings, he had agreed without any discussion to fulfil Andreyev's unusual request. But when he landed on an unfamiliar field and took Ira (aboard the plane she gradually calmed down, and curling up into a ball, fell asleep) out of the plane, the pilot realized what a hard task he had taken upon himself.

"What are we going to do now, little girl?" asked Boreiko, looking at the child and feeling completely at a loss.

Ira stood near him helpless and funny looking. She was all bundled up and only her pug nose and bright eyes were visible from under the huge shawl. Her mittened hands were tightened around the long suffering one-eyed Teddy.

Boreiko asked the navigator to look after the plane, and taking the girl by the hand walked off rapidly in the direction of the city, not knowing, wondering how he was to look for this unknown good woman and with whom he was to leave the girl. A heavy rain was falling... With a serious face Ira pattered behind the pilot along the muddy road. The tall man in a pilot's uniform and the little girl with the Teddy bear in her hands attracted attention.

People stopped and followed them with astonishment and sympathy. And Boreiko walked on reading the street signs. He was looking for a children's home or school. He stopped hesitatingly in front of a large sign "City Soviet." Boreiko was about to turn towards the door when he heard an excited voice:

"Mother! It's my Teddy!"

He turned round to face an attractive looking young woman in a white fur cap. By her side was a little girl. The black eyes of the girl looked angrily and questioningly at the frightened Ira who pressed Teddy to her breast.

Both the woman and girl looked faintly familiar. Yes... he remembered... the snapshot in his friend's wallet.

"Are you Andreyeva?" he said almost pleadingly.

IV

For the tenth time Barbara Andreyeva read and reread her husband's letter to the unknown good woman... to herself. Then her Peter... he was alive... She felt like dancing, singing, and kissing again and again her little Luda, and this unexpected daughter Ira, and the brown Teddy. He was alive!.. Boreiko had already gone off. In a few words he told her all he knew about his friend and took back a short note.

"Mother", asked Luda, "is this letter from Dad? Is he coming?"

"Yes, darling, it's from Dad, from him."

Three years have passed since Barbara received that letter from an army unit: "Your husband, Lieutenant Andreyev died a hero's death." She refused to believe it. Her heart told her so, and she breathed not a word of the news to her daughter. Now looking into the

intelligent black eyes of the child and almost breathless from happiness, she said:

"He'll come, dear, he will now, he's alive!"

Ira, who stood quietly in a corner, suddenly saw Peter Andreyev's picture on the table and rushed towards it without releasing Teddy from her hands.

"Daddy Peter!" she said timidly.

"This is my Daddy!" Luda cried, her eyes burning with jealousy. "And Teddy's mine too. Give me my Teddy!"

Luda could not understand what this new girl was doing there and how Teddy who left together with dad came to be in her hands. Ira said nothing. Teddy slipped from her hands and tears rolled slowly from her eyes.

"Luda," said her mother quietly, "Daddy's sent you a new sister, Ira, from the front. Teddy found us and brought Ira to us. They came together in the plane. In this letter Daddy asks us to be nice to Ira. We will love Ira, won't we?"

Luda grew pensive and wrinkled her little forehead. Her glance travelled from the new girl to her mother and then to her father's letter. It all seemed so complicated. But the girl was so little and so fair... She was even smaller than herself, and Luda began to like her.

"All right, mum, we will love Ira. You may play with my Teddy, little girl Please take him. He's mine, but you will play with him. All right?" And suddenly she felt very sorry for this little girl who came by plane from the front. She ran towards her, embraced and kissed her and pushed Teddy into her arms. "Don't cry, please. Perhaps... I will even give you Teddy for keeps... All right?.."

...The clock struck four. It was a dark night. Barbara was finishing a long letter to her husband. She wanted to tell him about her life, about the years of suffering, sorrow, hope and dreams. But would any amount of paper and ink suffice for it?

Finally she rose and walked over to the little bed. Their hands spread out, two little girls slept side by side, her two daughters—Luda and Ira. In their white nightgowns they seemed even more alike. "Sisters," the mother thought looking fondly at them.

And between them, slyly winking with his one ever wakeful eye, was little brown Teddy bear.

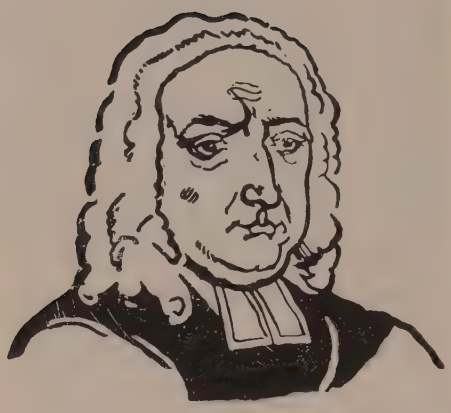
Translated by Lija Gavourina

WARRIOR BEETLES

At a meeting in Athens, members of fascist and monarchist organizations called for a campaign against Belgrade, Sofia and Moscow.

Drawing by Boris Yefimov

JONATHAN SWIFT



J. Swift. Drawing by Alyakrinsky

The approaching bi-centenary of the death of Jonathan Swift, the great English satirist, will recall to the minds of millions an author whose name has been familiar to them since childhood. Who of us did not make the acquaintance of *Gulliver's Travels*, at first in an abbreviated form and then in full?

We grew up without somehow "growing out" of this book, though many authors were left behind in the memory of our childhood. But Swift became increasingly imposing and full of meaning. As we grew up we discovered ever new and important things in him. His book appeared to be even more interesting than we had thought and we found that the author not only had a genius for mockery and fantasy, but was also a scientist and political fighter and one of the wisest men of his time, and perhaps not only of his own time?

Together with Shakespeare, Byron, Walter Scott and Dickens, Swift is undoubtedly no less popular in every Soviet home than many favourite Russian authors.

Swift stands out sharply against the colourful background of English literary life in the early part of the 18th century as its most distinguished figure; and while 18th century Russians eagerly read and translated Swift's contemporaries Pope, Addison, Steel, and Arbuthnot, Soviet readers find in Swift the most interesting and remarkable author of that epoch.

He has been with us for two centuries. In wig and under-vest the 18th century Russian booklover enthusiastically turned the pages of his works published by Hawkesworth or Sheridan. His satires were translated into Russian by the freedom-loving liberals of the middle of the last century, contemporaries of those Russians whom the English reader knew through Vojnich's *Olivia Latam*, and today his *Gulliver* is the companion of our schoolchildren.

Let us examine the development of Swift's popularity in Russia.

Swift was already known to educated Russians, mainly through the French translations, when Grigori Kozitsky—a Russian philologist of the 18th century who had studied in Western Europe and taught philosophy and literature at St. Petersburg—began to translate some of Swift's journalistic works for Russian satirical journals which played much the same role as the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, incidentally very popular in Russia.

Thus in 1758 a publication with the characteristic and somewhat eccentric title, *Works and Translations, Useful and Amusing*, printed Swift's *Bickerstaff* which amused readers by its mockery of charlatan soothsayers and those fools of the beau monde who believed them; the superstitions that exasperated Swift and his compatriots were widespread in Russian high society.

In 1759, G. Kozitsky published another article by Swift in the journal *Trudolyubivaya Pchela* (The Busy Bee). Although it exposed politicians who enriched themselves during the war for the Spanish Succession, it could be readily applied to Russia in connection with the Seven Years War. The Russian public knew perfectly well that contractors, purveyors and magnates at the head of the quartermastery grew rich from war-time speculations while Russian soldiers and officers were breaking the military might of Frederick the Second's Prussian armies in hard fought battles and campaigns.

Thus, even at that time progressive Russian thinkers made use of Swift's satire.

Let us open a volume in a spotted yellow leather binding with tarnished gold impress and large fine print, Swift's works published in London, printed for W. Johnston. in Ludgate Street, MDCCLXV, vol. XV of Dr. Hawkesworth's well-known edition.

In the list headed "Subscribers' names" appears "His Excellency Count Vorontsov, Ambassador Extraordinary from Her Impe-

rial Majesty of Russia." This was Alexander Romanovich Vorontsov (1741—1805), then still a young cosmopolitan dandy, and later one of the prominent Russian diplomats of the 18th century, one of the numerous Russians who were ardent collectors of books and art rarities.

In 1778 the first Russian translation of *Gulliver's Travels* appeared. The translation was made from the French by Yerofei Karzhavin (1745—1812), the uncle of Fyodor Karzhavin, a noted figure in Russian culture. Yerofei Karzhavin attempted to communicate the thoughts and images of the inspired satirist in artistic form.

But this could hardly be called a translation, it was a rendering, at times very far from the original. But Swift's work, even in this translation, was bound to produce a very strong impression; the Russian satirists of the 18th century, independent of Swift, ridiculed and exposed tyranny, apathy, ignorance and toddyism—so hateful to the great English author—in their own fables, comedies and lampoons.

The academic study of Swift began in Russia only in the later half of the 19th century. Vissarion Byelinsky, the great Russian critic and revolutionary democrat, who had a thorough knowledge of, and highly valued the works of Shakespeare, Walter Scott and Charles Dickens, bequeathed to Russian science his interest in Swift. He noted the significance of Swift's work in the development of 18th century European literature and pointed out that Swift's humorous stories, as also the works of other English innovators, represent "the true novel of the 18th century." Byelinsky considered that Swift's work was of world-wide historical significance.

But for a long time the Russian public had to be satisfied with general observations about Swift, and translations from French. In 1858 the journal *Biblioteka dlya Chtenya* (Library for Reading) published an essay on Swift by Geffrey. English scholars know this essay well. In 1870 the *Illustrirovannaya Gazeta* (Illustrated News) published an essay on Swift by Thackeray from his series *English Humorists*.

There appeared also Russian translations of H. Taine's works, excerpts from his *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise* and *Essais Critiques*, published in Russia in 1869.

In 1881 the Russian journalist Vladimir Chuiko, author of the first Russian monograph on Shakespeare, published a brochure entitled *Swift* in the series *European Writers and Thinkers*.

This is an in quarto, thin volume with a yellow cover; the paper and the print being very poor. The publisher was not very affluent and was publishing books for people with small means. Besides an article written in an easy style and not without interest, the book contained the fourth part of *Gulliver's Travels—A Voyage to the Honyhnhums*— in a new translation, and several lampoons by Swift, among them one of his sharpest and most terrible, namely *A Modest Proposal for Utilizing the Children of the Poor People*.

The date—1881, is significant. It was just then that the tsarist government was carrying out a policy of savage reaction. The bookshops in Russia were selling at that time a book which, although indirectly and in a disguised form, was really a protest against the dark forces of tsarism. The Russian reader of that period understood hints and omissions, knew how to read between the lines, for he had been trained by the progressive writers of tsarist Russia who were skilful evaders of all obstacles erected in their path by the Imperial censorship.

Even the brief introduction deserves attention. It states that Swift is a writer of exceptional and singular talent, "a satirical fighter with a force of irony, sarcasm and mordant mockery to be found in no other European literature."

The author, unfortunately, was strongly influenced by the usual treatment of Swift in English works of that period, which represented him as a misanthrope and a crank and used biased and vague information about his complex personal life.

Western Influence in Russian Literature by Alexei Vesselovsky, that wonderful scholar and essayist, appeared in 1882. This book noted the interest of 18th century Russian society in the great English satirist.

The nineties produced two more Russian works on Swift. In the biographical series *Life of Remarkable People* published by Pavlenkov, there appeared in 1891 a brochure: *Swift, His Life and Literary Activity* by Valentin Yakovenko, one of the new translators of *Gulliver's Travels*.

This book, however, was a compilation.

An article on Swift by A. Vesselovsky was published in 1894 in his book *Essays and Characteristics*. This was a genuine piece of research work and not merely a generalization of the labour of other authors.

Vesselovsky's article was both an "essay" and a "characteristic." A close analysis of the creative work of Swift was combined with the art of literary portraiture; the writer was placed against the background of contemporary English culture. This was a portrait of Swift full of vivacity and emotion.

He rejected the hasty condemnation of Stella and Vanessa, two women dear to Swift, and the light in which they were usually presented to Russian readers. Seeing this tragic situation in the author's life in its true proportions Vesselovsky spoke of him with the tact of a humanist and scientist.

He described Swift as an "inspired, ill-starred person" with a true appreciation of his talent and mastery. He characterized the author of *Gulliver's Travels* more completely and expressively than any of his Russian predecessors, concluding his article thus:

"... he does not belong to a single nation or to a single epoch. His mind became the property of humanity... it remembers him as a people's leader, a defender, a creator of public opinion in his own country; it sees him exposing and challenging all that is mean, vicious and unjust in social life."

Thus Vesselovsky formulated the conception of Swift in Russia at that period; it is easy to see that Swift's role in the social struggle of his epoch is given first place, although the Russian critic does not forget

for a moment that he is speaking about a great master of the word, an artist.

During the twenty-seven years of the Soviet regime Swift has been published and written about more than during the whole of the preceding two hundred years, and not only in Russian, but also in many other languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union. Swift is being read nowadays in Byelorussian, Ukrainian, in the languages of the Caucasus and Central Asia. While previous Russian editions of *Gulliver's Travels* for children reprinted illustrations by English artists, now Soviet artists, inspired by the rich fancy of this book, have created their own illustrations.

In his report at the Ist Congress of Soviet Writers, Maxim Gorky stated: "Jonathan Swift is unique in Europe." He called Swift "an irreproachably truthful and stern exposer of the vices of the ruling class."

When we ponder over these words of the founder of Soviet literature, we involuntarily recall the words of Swift himself addressed to us two centuries ago, in the preface to *Tale of a Tub*: "I profess to your highness on the integrity of my heart, that what I am going to say is literally true this minute I am writing."

This "irreproachable and stern truthfulness," that our reader appreciates so much in the classics of Russian literature, was the reason why Swift has become for us so beloved and popular an author.

During the Soviet regime a new translation of *Gulliver's Travels* has appeared which is nearer to the original. In 1930 the translation of *Tale of a Tub* was published for the first time. The work of an unknown translator was revised for this edition. The original had been confiscated by the tsarist censorship—the Yahoos in gendarmes' uniforms were frightened of the scathing whip of Swift's satire.

This edition of *Tale of a Tub* had an inspired preface by the late Anatoli Lunacharsky, a brilliant worker in the field of Soviet culture, a diplomat, political fighter, author and critic, who gave a marxist analysis to the most important works of Russian, English, French and German literature.

Swift was often accused of "lack of principle" and hypocritical indignation was aroused when he deserted the Whig camp and went over to the Tories in 1710. Lunacharsky gave an objective, social and political explanation of this. "Swift was, practically, neither a Whig nor a Tory. He was a most brilliant personality carried on the crest of the liberal bourgeois wave and far surpassed its horizons and tendencies."

We consider Swift a great writer and enlightener, and Lenin taught us that the writers of the period of bourgeois enlightenment (18th century) were sincerely selfless in their struggle against reaction, in their defence of the people's rights.

Lunacharsky revealed the historical roots of Swift's tragedy calling it "the enormous woe of an enormous wit."[1] He pointed out Swift's loneliness amongst the contemporary writers; the loneliness of a genius who has seen vistas inaccessible as yet to the eyes of others, perspectives of the further development of the system of exploitation of man by man which replaced the feudal system.

Lunacharsky explained Swift's yearning for the people, having in mind his public speeches during the militant twenties of the 18th century, when Swift defended the rights and the human dignity of the toilers of Ireland. For this reason the Soviet critic named Swift "the people's advocate."

On one hand Swift is, indeed, a merciless accuser and mocker, a satirist of titanic force and a thinker of the finest order, striking at reaction wherever he discovers it. Therein lies the active force of the "literary true" Swift, of the "irreproachable" and "stern" truthfulness of Swift, according to Gorky.

On the other hand, we see for whom Swift was fighting though he did not formulate his programme and even if he had wished, could not have done so. He was "the people's advocate." A satirist, he was at the same time a humanist, believing that his fight was not in vain for otherwise he could not have uttered from the bottom of his heart words of greeting and of courageous hope "to his Royal Highness Prince Prosperity" (Preface to *Tale of a Tub*).

In these words we sense something very familiar. We were similarly addressed by our own poets—Lomonosov, Pushkin and Mayakovsky, and with emotion we listen to the voice of this old English friend of ours.

The concepts of Gorky and Lunacharsky formed the foundation of the further study of Swift in our country. It is necessary to note here the work of the young scientist Mikhail Zabludovsky who joined the ranks of the Red Army as a volunteer and who has been missing since the autumn of 1941. He is the author of an essay about Swift in the symposium *Realism of the 18th Century in the West* (1936) and of the large chapter about Swift in the second issue of the first volume of the *History of English Literature* published by the Gorky Institute of World Literature, in the spring 1945.

The latter is practically a concise monograph on Swift, it contains a brief biography, using new material, an essay on the creative development of the writer, and a fine analysis of Swift the artist, an analysis of a specialist in letters, which was up till now lacking in our Swiftiana.

Swift also became a subject of fiction. Noteworthy is an important poem by our eminent poet Nikolai Tikhonov, *Gulliver Plays Cards*, which gives a singular revelation of the philosophical idea of *A Voyage to Lilliput*, and Eugene Lann's novel *Old England* (1944).

Lunacharsky is right when in his preface to *Tale of a Tub* he places Swift beside Griboyedov, Gogol and Saltykov-Shchedrin. The connection between Swift and Saltykov-Shchedrin is discussed in the book *The Style of Saltykov-Shchedrin* by Yakov Elsberg, published in 1940.

Swift firmly occupies his place on the Soviet readers' bookshelf. Even if he is not

[1] Paraphrasing the title of Griboyedov's famous comedy *Wit Works Woe*.

acquainted with Vesselovsky's and Lunacharsky's articles, even if he does not know what Byelinsky and Gorky wrote about Swift, he is a hearty Swift lover and laughs at the things that are as hateful to him, as to the author of *Gulliver's Travels*.

With Swift he despises the narrow nationalism of the Lilliputian government. We know well that rabid nationalistic propaganda and the incitement of one nation against another is an infamous prelude to wars begun by those who profit from human slaughter.

The Soviet reader appreciates the accusing force of Swift's words aimed against the policy of the privileged classes, so timely even now: "It was only a heap of conspiracies, rebellions, murders, massacres, revolutions, banishments, the very worst efforts that awoke—faction, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, cruelty, rage, madness, hatred, envy, lust, malice and ambition could produce" (*A Voyage to Brobdingnag*). Reading these terrible lines we recall not 18th century Europe but the nazi "new order," the inheritance of which has still to be unrooted in Europe liberated by the Great Powers.

While laughing at the Laputa scientific fools and projectors we condemn false science and bookishness—as we bear in mind that from them it is only one step to the most dangerous perversion of scientific thought, to the conversion of a scientist into a hireling of reaction.

What an ominous new meaning the scene from *Gulliver's Travels* acquires where a man with a clear head and forceful intellect awaits torture and death as he squirms powerlessly in the hairy paws of a gigantic ape! Those who perished by the million during the thirties and forties of our century at the hand of the German hangmen, who spared neither young nor old, come involuntarily to our mind.

Swift is dear to us because he says to his readers: there's a path leading from this world of monstrosities and violence—the path of struggle. Together with Swift the Soviet reader sympathizes from the bottom of his heart with the brave inhabitants of the fairy city Lipuslino who arose in arms against tyrany, who withstood a cruel siege and in unequal struggle won their liberty.

Does this exhaust the significance of Swift? Are we not carried away by his mighty flight of fantasy, are we not charmed by the organic fusion of pitiless intellect and mighty talent that breathes from every page?

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* gives the following characteristic of Swift: "An object of pity as well as of awe, Swift is one of the most tragic figures of English literature. His master passion was imperious pride—lust for despotic dominion..."

Our reader will hardly agree with such an opinion, he will now think of Swift with particular gratitude as an enemy of despotism and oppression, and the unmasker of liers and warmongers.

But our Swift reader will nevertheless smile as he recalls the wit of the author of *Gulliver's Travels* with which Swift not merely destroys the enemy but humiliates him, the wit which Swift used with such virtuosity. We believe that he very often laughed at the top of his voice, from the fullness of his heart, for he was a great man and not only a great satirist.

In any library of the U.S.S.R. you will meet his *Gulliver*. The children's film, *The New Gulliver*, after Swift's book, calls forth the enthusiasm of its audiences.

The radio broadcasts compilations from the chapters of this immortal work and those who cannot yet read listen with bated breath to the squeaks of the Lilliputian ministers and the deep bass of the King of Brobdingnag.

There is no place in our vast country where *Gulliver* is not known. The author of this article once lectured on Swift in a distant Siberian town. After the lecture a Hakassian student told the author that an old keeper of the legends and songs of Hakassia, a bard of Siberia, once saw his illustrated book of *Gulliver's Travels*. He compared the powerless Quinbus Flestrin, entangled in the Lilliputian nets, with the national Hakas hero, a knight who was likewise conquered by miserable but sly enemies.

The author recalls also a great children's celebration in one of the large cities of the Ukraine, now barbarously mutilated by the Germans. Suddenly, over the heads of a crowd of schoolchildren, arose an immense figure in a red vest and a cocked hat. That was Gulliver, and he was carried along with other amusing and touching figures of the heroes from favourite books.

Thus in one more episode of the constant "battle of books" Jonathan Swift appeared as one of the glorious warriors and victors.

"...To think of him is like thinking of the ruin of a great empire," said Thackeray about Swift. While thinking of Swift, we think of a glorious fighter for freedom, as he asked to be considered in an epitaph he wrote himself.

ROMAN SAMARIN

THE FATE OF TWO CAPTAINS

The first part of *Two Captains* by Benjamin Kaverin was finished a few months before the war, the second, in 1944. Thus the author and his heroes passed from peace to war together. Their characters as well as the conception and subject of the novel were put to a severe test. Has the author rightly determined the direction of the events at the inception of this work? Did he understand what traits are demanded of people selected by him as the main personages in times of great upheaval and how their characters will re-

veal themselves under war conditions? It must be said that the novel passed this test.

The author plunges us into the middle of the plot from the very first page of the story. The river flowing through a Russian town carries the body of a drowned postman to the yard of the house where the boy Sanya Grigoryev, the hero of the novel, lives. There are several letters in the pouch of the drowned man. One of them strikes the imagination of Sanya and he commits it to memory. This letter has been written by the participant of an Arctic expedition who miraculously escaped death. It tells of terrible calamities experienced in the Arctic ice-floes by the schooner "Svyataya Maria" ("Saint Mary") and of its brave captain, Ivan Lvovich. This letter was addressed to Maria Vassilyevna, the captain's wife.

At first this letter does not influence in anyway the fate of Sanya Grigoryev. A short time before the Revolution (the novel begins with the days of the first World War), the Tsarist police arrested his father and the latter died in prison. Then his mother also died. With his chum Petya, Sanya runs away from his native town, leaving his little sister with a friendly family. After many adventures he began to study in one of the Moscow schools. There he met the family of Ivan Tatarinov, the captain of "Svyataya Maria," his wife, his daughter Katya and the captain's cousin Nikolai Antonovich Tatarinov, the principal of his school. Thus the fate of Captain Tatarinov, an audacious explorer of the Arctic, who made a number of important discoveries in spite of the complete indifference of the Tsarist government, is bound to the fate of a Soviet schoolboy.

It fell to Sanya's lot to reveal those guilty of the loss of Tatarinov's expedition and to prove the real importance of the discoveries made by the crew of the schooner "Svyataya Maria." The concluding scene of the novel takes place in the same area of the Arctic where the audacious captain Tatarinov died nearly thirty years ago. Sanya Grigoryev, now a captain in the air force, discovers his remains after a hard but successful fight with a German raider who had penetrated this remote Arctic area. This proved that the direction chosen by captain Tatarinov at the very beginning of our century was correct, as he had rightly guessed the tremendous economic, military and strategical importance of the Northern Sea routes.

Kaverin's novel has two main heroes, two plots, although the senior hero dies at the very beginning of the novel. By following the fate of Sanya Grigoryev we gradually discover the ate of Ivan Tatarinov and the expedition he headed. A chain of coincidences brings Sanya into frequent and close contact with the Tatarinov family. He knows more than anyone else about the captain's last days. He exposes the captain's cousin Nikolai, a former businessman and now the principal of his school, accusing him of having equipped the expedition dishonestly and so being the direct cause of its failure. Grigoryev is supported by the captain's daughter Katya, who later becomes his wife. Thus the discovery of the secret of the schooner "Svyataya Maria" had a direct influence on the entire personal life of Sanya.

With his usual skill in plot weaving Kaverin closely connected two complicated and outwardly very different lives. Is there really much in common between the fates of the lonely, deceived captain Tatarinov and Sanya Grigoryev, a Soviet young man, sure of his future and on friendly terms with his time and his country?

However, the ties binding the two captains are not exhausted by the plot; they are based on something more profound.

When Sanya and his friend Petya were preparing to escape from their native town they exchanged an oath, a boy's "bloody oath of friendship," which ended with: "To fight and seek, to find and not surrender."

Many years later, when Grigoryev discovered the expedition's last camp and captain Tatarinov's body had been interred, this oath calling for struggle, firmness and perseverance was cut on a white stone placed on the grave.

The oath expresses the real ties connecting Ivan Tatarinov and Sanya. The difference of their fates sharply underlines the identity of the ethical principles, according to which they acted. The captain of "Svyataya Maria" forgotten among the icefloes, without any support from the Tsarist government, fought to the very end and did not surrender. The straight-forward, brave and persistent Soviet aviator fought on and achieved his object although it was hard at times. He was conducting a difficult and not always successful struggle against Tatarinov's cousin, who had ruined the expedition, and against his myrmidon Romashov who was trying to win Katya's love. They did not disdain any means to gain their ends, attempting to pit their egoistic ethics against the ethical standards of Soviet society. Nikolai Antonovich, exploiting the fame of captain Tatarinov whom he had ruined, posed as a scientist. Grigoryev nevertheless continued his struggle, striving to institute a search for the schooner "Svyataya Maria." He knew that some time or other victory would be his, that Soviet society favoured him, that the object of his life was not merely of personal importance but had a social meaning.

Grigoryev's sentiments are the product of complex and manifold influences. He was reared by the high school and Petya's family, by the aviators' school and the famous flier Ch. (we can guess that this was Chkalov), by the work in the North and a multitude of important and unimportant encounters and circumstances, by means of which society exercises its influence on man. That is why Kaverin's book cannot be regarded as an adventure or mystery story, in spite of the complex plot and the mystery pertaining to the loss of the expedition. *Two Captains* is an educational novel.

Kaverin's novel does not contain trivial didactics, dull moralizing or hackneyed truths. The author does not underline his ideas. The reader must observe for himself the hero, his thoughts and deeds, the gradual maturing of an attractive and noble personality.

Sanya is clever and energetic. He doesn't hesitate to fight everything that is inimical to him. Later on, during the war, the aviator Grigoryev attacked German planes and ships with the same resolution. This energy is one of the determining traits of the hero's character. With the passing of years the young captain learned to restrain himself, to be more tolerant, to argue, to be self-possessed. But even after he had grown up and was already a distinguished airman Grigoryev still retained some of his boyish characheristics—the spontaneity and directness of perception and reaction combined with clear reasoning, experience and observation give the hero particular charm.

It is quite natural and logical that captain Tatarinov's enemies became Sanya's also. The first collision of our hero with Nikolai Antonovich occurred in the early twenties. Sanya revealed the intrigues of his school-principal against the teacher Korablyov, a favourite of the pupils. Nikolai Antonovich's vilainy aroused Sanya's indignation. Thus began a struggle that lasted many years and ended only in 1944 when captain Grigoryev unmasked the quasi-scientist Tatarinov at a session of the Geographical Society by reading there the documents that were found at the "Svyataya Maria's" last camp.

In his first books published in the early twenties, Kaverin considered that the plot is the main component of a work in prose. However at that time Kaverin's plots were of an algebraic and eccentric nature. The characters, theme and the content of human relations were considered by Kaverin merely as material which he manipulated at will in order to "sharpen" the plot. The interest of these books did not go beyond the limits of literary experimentation.

Later on Kaverin wrote the novel *The Scandalist or Evenings at Vassilyevsky Ostrov* (a district of Leningrad). This book dealt with people and events which had a direct importance for the author. He wrote there about men of letters and scientists, about the upheavals that were taking place in those years among the intellectuals, about their direct rapprochement to the processes of the country's reconstruction. The problems dwelt upon by Kaverin stirred him deeply and touched upon his own fate. The author renounced the methods of "playing" with the plot. He turned to the free, natural flow of the narrative, discovering new principles of composition. Afterwards, in explaining his literary views in the press, he wrote the following, having in mind his work on the *Scandalist*:

"The significance of the plot loses its importance from page to page of this book (in working on it I studied the alphabet of realistic narration), and time, which shuffles the people at liberty without considering the intention of the novelist, becomes the main topic."

Special attention to the plot is felt again in the latest novels by Kaverin, *The Fulfilment of Desires* and *Two Captains*, but of different kind. As we observed, all the elements in the novel about Captains Tatarinov and Grigoryev are closely connected. The focal point of the work is the idea of the author personified in the image of the hero, the clash of the interests of the main characters and the free and amusing narrative. Kaverin succeeded in finding the proper tone—quiet, natural and humorous. This allows him to write in a lively and natural manner about the most diverse events—the Arctic snow-storm and an evening party of friends, school amateur theatricals and painful explanations between the heroes. The tone of the narrative reveals also the character of Grigoryev and his wife Katya, as the story is taken up by each of them in turn.

In the first book one can see the author's attempt to fall back upon literary reminiscences—it is not fortuitous. as he himself points out the similarity of Romashov with Uria Guip. At times, however, Kaverin lacks a sense of proportion and his humour, in general very pleasant, does not underline a tragic situation but hinders its perception.

In the second book we do not find this desire to "soften" at any price the "sharp angles." Human sorrow and joy are shown more directly and spontaneously and not through the prism of literary associations. For this reason we could forgive the introduction of many scenes and motives in general not issuing from the main plot: it was the war that introduced them into the novel. The story of Grigoryev and Katya is painted against a large background: Leningrad in blockade, the front, the Arctic, which became an area of hard battles. And the words of the youthful oath of the heroes: "To fight and seek, to find and not surrender," acquires a new meaning.

JOSEPH GRINBERG

NIKOLOZ BARATASHVILI

A hundred years ago, on the 21st of October, 1845, that remarkable Georgian poet Nikoloz Baratashvili died at the age of twenty-eight. Everything in his brief life seemed to go awry. He dreamed of a military career but injured his leg and found himself lame for life. His desire to enter one of the Russian universities was also frustrated owing to his ruined family's lack of means. Nikoloz Baratashvili had to accept a job wholly distasteful to him—that of an inferior law court official in the provinces where he dragged through a joyless and lonely existence. He was high-spirited, dreamed of serving his country and of intrepid deeds but was denied the chance of applying his boundless energies. Nobody was interested in his poems—not a line was published during his lifetime.

It was not until he had lain ten years in the grave that his poems were "discovered" and properly appreciated.

Baratashvili's literary heritage is not

large. Only thirty-six lyrics and the historical poem *Destiny of Georgia* are available. Nevertheless the importance of Baratashvili in the history of Georgian literature is immense. He occupies a foremost place among the Georgian classic poets of the 19th century and has had a marked influence on the entire subsequent development of Georgian poetry.

Ilya Chavchavadze (1837—1907), the great Georgian poet and citizen, called him the father of the new Georgian poetry. Nikoloz Baratashvili merited posthumous fame and universal recognition.

Nikoloz Baratashvili was a poet of the philosophical mood, a man of rare penetration. The works of this poet are replete with his zeal and inability to compromise. In him strength of feeling is combined with an amazing tenderness and sensitivity.

Baratashvili's works are exceptionally dynamic, and varied in rhythm; his verses are sonorous and musical which, unfortunately, does not facilitate translation.

Baratashvili could not bear poetic expansiveness. In none of his works do we find the slightest trace of that peculiar eastern refinement of form which was so typical of Besiki, the brilliant Georgian poet of the 18th century, and of Alexander Chavchavadze (1786—1846) with his affected style of lyric verse in imitation of Gafiz and Saadi. Baratashvili was not fond of the eastern floweriness and quite deliberately broke with the traditions of Persian poetry.

Baratashvili thought of replacing the traditional attenuated mellifluent poetry, having no connection with the life of the people and suitable only for the salon, by verse serving as the medium for profound thought and feeling. He was the first of the 19th century Georgian poets to begin to touch on the problems of the day, if still in a somewhat abstract manner. He very definitely did succeed, however, in expressing the progressive ideas and aspirations of the finest people of his day.

A romantic attraction for Georgia's past influenced Baratashvili's work. When still a mere youth he displayed an interest in his country's destiny. He realized that being on the side of Russia was the only correct path for Georgia. This idea is distinctly brought out in his poem *Destiny of Georgia*, which gives a gripping account of the fatal events of 1795—the death throes of Irakli II reign. Its every line is permeated with the realization of the impossibility of carrying on the armed struggle against such an overwhelming foe as Shah Aga-Mahomet-Khan of Iran, and the bitter consciousness that his tiny country was doomed. Baratashvili has sung the praises of the heroic resistance of a handful of Georgians who, led by their old and trusted king and captain Irakli II, fearlessly engaged the vast Iranian hordes. The battle scenes are among the best in the poem.

Baratashvili did not evade the acuteness and intricacy of the political situation. He knew just what Russian despotism was worth but never identified it with the Russian people. That is why he considers Irakli II policy of turning to Russia a wise one. In his poem *At the Grave of King Irakli* the poet addresses his "great shade" and tries to prove that, thanks to Irakli II, the Georgians were at last able to live in peace.

It has happened, the years have flown,
The seed thou planted is now full grown,
A tree arose and took firm root;
Thy children's children enjoy the fruit.

He was happy that the "wonderful wind of enlightenment was blowing to Georgia from a strange land," that is, from Russia. He cherished the idea of coming within the orbit of the best of Russia's progressive influences. He also thought that with the help of Russia, which had rid Georgia of the devastating invasions of the Iranians, Turks and Caucasian mountain tribes, his country would be able to re-establish contact with the culture of Western Europe.

Nikoloz Baratashvili undoubtedly belonged to the poets of the romantic school. He was often called "The Georgian Byron" or "The Georgian Lermontov." As a matter of fact he certainly was deeply interested in Lermontov and loved to quote his lines.

Nikoloz Baratashvili was swayed by complex thoughts and feelings. Now joy would blossom forth like a rainbow to raise the poet above "repulsive life," now he was cast down into the depths of sorrow "by the thought of former happiness now fled forever." In *The Mysterious Voice* we hear the sigh of poignant yearning and the sweet murmuring of hope. Something prompted the poet to a positive and active, not a passive and aloof attitude to life:

Youth, arise! No meekness. Fortune face!
From her in life wrench a golden place!

Even such a sad poem as *Twilight on Mount Mtatsminda* is not without its ray of comfort. The groping hope that the morning sun will dispel the surrounding gloom pervades the last verse:

Oh quiet eve, oh evening fair, oh saviour
mine beyond compare,
When weak I am from life's distress,
I call thee in my nakedness.
And save thou dost, thou bringest hope to
aching heart and wearied brain
That night will pass, that morn will come
and earth in glory enfold again.

Merani, one of Nikoloz Baratashvili's best-known poems, has left its impress on all subsequent Georgian literature.

The figure of the winged black horse (not to be identified with Pegasus of Greek mythology) has occupied a place in Georgian folklore from ancient times. In resurrecting this symbol in the 19th century Nikoloz Baratashvili imbued it with new import. He makes it not only a marvellous winged steed, but a symbol of eternal motion, of the daring urge to push ahead. "Pierce the whirlwind, gallant steed, cleave the waves," for the rider is impatient; "he is no captive of fate and as ever thirsts for battle."

Nikoloz Baratashvili was upborne by the

lofty thought that his descendants would follow the trail of the "self-denying" rider. With telling strength and foresight he says:

No, he who hath seen his doom must not falter,
Mid rocky crags, Merani, lies thy trail for ever,
My descendant shall faster speed than I and bolder
And seeing grim fate, will laugh and race to meet her charger.

Baratashvili turned his face to the future. He went farther than other Georgians of the romantic school, even farther than those who outlived him by many years. He stretched out a hand to future generations as their comrade and harbinger.

VICTOR GOLTSEV

NEW BOOKS

An extraordinary and enviable lot fell to the young music-hall actor Charlie Chaplin, who entered the cinema world with such hesitancy in 1913. He was not only destined to become a classic of an art still in its infancy, but also one of those who made it plain to everybody—both the connoisseurs and the millions of cinema-goers all over the world—that the toy invented by the brothers Lumière would indubitably become an instrument of genuine art.

A few years later we find the snobs and "experimenters," the scions of the ultra-modern literary schools, dedicating poems, plays, essays and treatises to Chaplin. The dadaists, expressionists and surrealists alike wanted to make him their figurehead.

He would probably have been horrified at a certain German expressionist who said that Chaplin, piercing with his stick the new-born chaos, pointed out to humanity the way beyond the bounds of the world; and at the "profound" speculations of Elie Faure who said of Chaplin: "He hops on one leg, then on the other—such melancholy and absurd legs—and thereby represents the two extremes of thought, the one knowledge, the other desire."

Chaplin had no hand in this myth-making business. As early as 1923—with the release of *A Woman of Paris*, a gem of realistic film art, and perhaps from 1922 with *The Pilgrim* or even from 1920 with *The Kid*, it became clear that the artist was taking the road of popular democratic art. The little man, with his comical down-at-heel boots, is marching to the same goal as the most prominent figures of the 20th century literature and art. Chaplin's work is remarkable for its wide grasp of reality, acuteness of social criticism and its affinity to the commoners. This was confirmed by Chaplin's subsequent pictures: *The Gold Rush, The Circus, City Lights, Modern Times* and his last, *The Great Dictator*. And now Chaplin, both as artist and citizen, is with the leading people of Western art and literature, among the warriors for the ideals of democracy. During the battle of Stalingrad Chaplin sent a message in which he said that the front line of democracy ran across the Russian front, that the Russians were not only fighting for their own concepts of life but for America's too.

To show how logical was Chaplin's evolution from his early comedies made in the Keystone Studios in 1913—1914 to his anti-fascist film *The Great Dictator*, what his place is in world cinema art, to bring out his main themes and methods of treatment and to explain the causes of his world-wide popularity is the aim the authors of *Charles Spencer Chaplin* set themselves—the book was recently brought out by the State Cinema Publishing House in Moscow. It is the second of a series entitled *Materials of the History of the World Cinema Art*; the first volume was about D. Griffith, the famous American producer.

The new book is in three parts. The first contains four articles on Chaplin by the cinema research-worker M. Bleiman and the producers G. Kozintsev, S. Yutkevich and S. Eisenstein. The second gives us what Chaplin says about himself and his work. The last part consists of Chaplin's filmography, the most complete that has ever appeared in print, with a list of forty-seven titles compiled by G. Avenarius.

In his article *The Image of a Little Man* M. Bleiman says that art knows nothing so incontestable and popular as the art of this clown who migrated to cinematography from the circus and music-hall, this man with his droll and absurd walk who specializes in doing absurd and comical things... Chaplin is possibly the most popular actor with the modern cinemagoer and undoubtedly the most beloved film artist in the world.

Dwelling on the reasons for Chaplin's boundless popularity—he is beloved alike by the street urchin and the professor of mathematics—M. Bleiman truly says: "American cinematography, in whose orbit Chaplin moves, cannot be understood when divided from a certain set of influences. American and world literature determines the development of its style with a powerful and imperative sway... With regard to Chaplin it must be said that the main ideas of modern times, the basic themes of the 20th century, are prismatically reflected in his art."

After tracing briefly in Western literature the evolution of the "little" man crushed by society, the state and history and illustrating it with examples from O'Henry, Sinclair-Lewis, Hemingway, Dos-Passos, Werfel, Phallada, Nathan Asch, Sherwood Andersen, Milburn and others, Bleiman writes:

"In his eccentric, crudish art, Chaplin deals with the lofty subject of human life, of the quest for happiness of the little man

crushed by history, a subject which has been treated throughout the 19th and 20th centuries by the greatest masters of art from Pushkin to Hemingway.

"... Chaplin's main subject is the same as that of the best of those bitter and protesting books of world literature, books born of post-war despair, of fear before history, which, whether he wants it or not, overtakes the modern man.

"Chaplin's subject puts him on the high-road of major modern art. He poses and solves problems common to almost all big artists of today, but he does it keenly, with originality and with, perhaps, an unrivalled power of imagery."

Chaplin's work is "something more than amusement for his art characterizes modern society, makes one think, arouses sympathy." "... If you were to view several of Chaplin's pictures one after the other, before you would pass the vast panorama of all possible human ills, an encyclopaedia of the adversities which beset the man of today."

The merit of Bleiman's comprehensive article is that it poses the question (and convincingly answers it) as to the ideological and literary trends that have influenced Chaplin in his career and his place in contemporary art.

The Popular Roots of Chaplin's Art is the title of the producer G. Kozintsev's article. It speaks of the forerunners of Chaplin's eccentric art, of the ancient traditions of the mimes, jesters and itinerant actors, whose audience was the people and theatre—the market place, of the comic masques of Punch, Hanswurst and Pierrot and of the great comedians of the 19th century: Grimaldi and Deburau, whose art so pleased Theophile Gautier, Jules Janin and Baudelaire, and has such a likeness to the art of Chaplin's. In establishing the ancient roots of Chaplin's virtuosity, Kozintsev recalls the high English "art of nonsense," of absurdities, gags, the skill of the eccentrics who paved the way for the comic guises and methods.

"If several hundred years ago the cudgel of the market clown fell on the merchant and the policeman, today Charlie Chaplin's cane is raised against injustice, against the exploitation of man by man, against the bloody dictatorship of fascism. And the cane proved to be a magic wand. It was charged with the terrific destructive force of laughter.

"...Among the scenes from life, amid bitterness, grief, hope, hunger, exploitation and war, flash the old memories of the beloved pantomime, momentarily switching us back to childhood, to the lofty art of the people retained by only one artist to our day, by the clown, dancer, roller-skater, juggler, tight-rope walker, the kindred spirit of Grimaldi and Deburau, the actor of Fred Carno's second pantomime company, the great popular film artist, Charlie Chaplin."

Sir John Falstaff and Mister Charles Chaplin is the intriguing title of the third article by S. Yutkevich. But the author has not picked on the immortal figure of Shakespeare's hero in order to establish a sensational and generally so unconvincing a kinship.

"It is not a matter of Chaplin imitating the ways of Shakespeare," says Yutkevich, "nor of transferring the methods of Elizabethan drama to present-day cinematography, but of the identical perceptions of the two artists in their creation of the tragi-comic character capable of crystalizing the spirit of History.

"... Humanism in the broadest sense of the term, faith in the kindness of the human heart —that is what relates the ponderous Falstaff to the diminutive Charlie.

"Man is good—is what Chaplin strives to shout to us in *The Gold Rush*: 'he is good in spite of everything,' the artist endeavours to assure us.

"And so the humanist Chaplin and the humanist Shakespeare clasp hands across the centuries to unite in the great struggle against apathy, egotism, and deliberate cruelty, in the struggle for the right of man to a life unembittered."

Charlie the Kid, the title of the last article by Eisenstein, calls to mind one of the most popular of Chaplin's pictures.

Investigating the laws of Chaplin's perception of reality, Eisenstein came to the conclusion that the secret of the actor lays in his ability "to see the most terrible, most wretched, most tragic phenomena with the eyes of a merry child. To be able to see the medium of those phenomena at first hand and in a flash—without bringing the yardstick of morals and aesthetics to bear, without evaluation, discussion or condemnation, but to see them as a child does in a burst of laughter—is what makes him different, inimitable and unique."

Eisenstein traces the development of the method through several of Chaplin's pictures right up to *The Great Dictator* in which the gift of making anything funny becomes the leading trait of the hero and the childish trait applied to the adult becomes monstrous when it is about nazi reality and devastatingly satirical when applied to *Hinkel*, the parody on Hitler.

In *The Great Dictator* Chaplin creates a magnificent and killing satire to the glory of the Human Spirit's victory over Inhumanity.

"Thereby Chaplin takes a firm and equal place in the ranks of the great masters in Satire's age old struggle with Darkness, he takes his place beside Aristophanes of Athens, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Frarçois Rabelais of Meudon, Jonathan Swift of Dublin, François-Arouet Voltaire of Ferney."

Chaplin is the inheritor of the great traditions of world literature and Chaplin is the descendant of the old jesters, travelling actors and eccentrics of modern times. Chaplin is a humanist stretching a hand to Shakespeare and Chaplin is a man who sees the world with the eyes of a merry child. These are the images of the great cinema artist as drawn by four investigators. Are they not contradictory, are they not too subjective?

No, the apparent diversity is the reflection of the true complexity, the many-faceted character of Chaplin's creative personality, the complexity which as truly belongs to Chaplin as to all really great artists.

The four articles about Chaplin in the book brought out by the State Cinema Publishing

House do not give an exhaustive study of his work, but they do reveal much that is true and profound. The book about Chaplin is not only an earnest analysis of the work of one of the world's greatest masters of the cinema, but also the response his art has called forth from Soviet cinema workers, their tribute to the personality and work of Charles Spencer Chaplin.

Less than thirty years ago Chinese authors began to introduce subjects from every-day life into Chinese fine literature and to use the living modern language. A hard and obstinate struggle had to be waged against the supporters of the literary feudal traditions before these innovations could be established. Among the victors in the fight, first place must be given to Lu Hsin, who died in 1936.

His parents were intellectuals, but when only thirteen, the boy had to be supported by relations, who kept him out of charity, and he had to make his own way in life.

On finishing school he entered a medical college in Japan but after two years left it because, as he writes in his own biography, he felt that "China, more than anything else, needs the development of a new literature and art, which could assist in the propagation of the idea of national selfconsciousness amongst the wide masses of the population." To realize these ideas was not easy. For a long time Lu Hsin taught in an elementary school and was unable to devote himself to literary work.

In 1919, Lu Hsin was one of the leaders of the "literary revolution," a movement supporting democratic literature. He headed a group of writers of the realistic school whose slogan was "art for life's sake."

From early youth and right up to the last days of his life Lu Hsin inceasingly considered the welfare of his people to whose sufferings and aspirations he dedicated his works.

Not long ago the State Literary Publishing House in Moscow issued a collection of translations of Lu Hsin's selected works under the editorship of Vladimir Rogov.

The collection contains stories from Lu Hsin's book *The Call* written during the period 1918—1922, and from *Wandering* published in 1925; it also includes prose poems first printed in 1924.

These works are sufficient to show the characteristics of the writer and acquaint the reader with Chinese life in Lu Hsin's day. They are written in a simple, precise yet picturesque language. Lu Hsin combined the traditions of old Chinese literature—its laconic style developed over a period of centuries—with the European modes of fine literature then new to China.

Lu Hsin's heroes are types quite usual in China but at the same time they are strictly individual. The real China is revealed before us, China depicted by one who describes his subject without mercy, who is not afraid to show the most ghastly side of life because, more than anything else in the world, he wishes it were non-existent, for his whole life has been devoted to the people's happiness. "I'm certain that literature can help to develop the selfconsciousness of the Chinese people and so I have decided to dedicate my life to literary work."

Lu Hsin's stories do not attract the reader by any original development of the theme. More than this, they are statical in essence and the writer sometimes seems to relate more than he shows.

Lu Hsin was the first to depict village life in Chinese literature. He was not afraid to make a down-trodden person who has lost all human dignity the hero of his story, *The Original Story of A-Q*. No one knows where A-Q was born, or what was his real name, which all seems to accentuate A-Q as a type. He works for all, and all beat him. The village is illiterate, it trembles before the foreman who demands his tribute, trembles before the "respectable" families, and even shows deference towards the despised A-Q simply because he has been to the town and seen an execution among many other things. When rumours of revolution get about, the "respectable" families' attitude towards A-Q becomes ingratiating.

To the immense satisfaction of the village, thieves break into the house of the "respectable" Chao. Of course suspicion falls upon A-Q and they shoot him.

"This was a bold step and did not go unheeded," writes Lu Hsin. "There were those who said that it was absolute madness. Afterwards it was described as pure jest while some found it satirical. Finally I heard that my story was just cold-blooded mockery..." However, it met with the approbation of Romain Rolland when it appeared in French. (It has also been translated into Russian, English and Japanese.)

In the story *The Morrow* the child of a poor widow, her sole joy in life, is dying. In the village, doctors are unheard-of and the mother buys a small fortune card and takes it to the village quack for medicine. Lu Hsin does not hesitate to give a true picture of the ignorance of village life but he also understands the responsive nature of simple people. The unhappy mother is helped by the drunkard Lan P'i and by her immediate neighbour.

Today the child has died. What will happen tomorrow? What will tomorrow bring? How is one to live in the future?

The story is called *The Morrow* but the author does not provide any answer to this question. "Only the dark night rushed through this silence so that tomorrow would come sooner, and somewhere in the darkness lonely dogs were howling." At that time "the morrow" as understood by Lu Hsin later on, was as yet not clear to him; he was still only unmasking his own day.

It is difficult to give the contents of Lu Hsin's stories because the plot plays only a secondary role; it is the rich and lively dialogue and superficially indifferent, sometimes slightly ironical reasonings of the author which takes pride of place.

The village theme is mingled with the tragedy of the intelligentsia of that time when old China was coming to an end and the new China was only just gaining her rights.

In *K'ung I-chi* we see the ridiculous K'ung I-chi whom nobody wants and who, although he sinks to the level of a common thief, care-

fully preserves his tattered long tunic which differentiates him from the farmers who wear short coats. He flaunts literary quotations and people make fun of him, he does not even excite pity when he crawls into the shop with his legs broken.

The unhappy, unsuccessful school-teacher Ch'en Shih-ch'eng in *Glitter* dreams of a career as a civil servant. Sixteen times he fails the exam in the district town. This is a typical case and we know of many such failures amongst the Chinese writers of different periods. Ch'en Shih-ch'eng adopts another idea: he tries to find the old family treasure. His search reveals some rusty money and the grinning teeth of a half-rotten jaw. He goes mad and throws himself into a pond.

All these people vary and all must disappear together with the old China. In *Summer Holiday* the teacher and civil servant, Fang Hsüan-ch'o, concocts a convenient philosophy. It justifies every thing in the world for it discloses that if people were changed from one occupation to another they would very soon get used to their new conditions and nothing would be changed at all! He adopts this way of thinking because it is convenient and to change one's way of looking at things demands much effort. He is not even capable of efficient egoism, for that he must exert his will. He needs money, so he asks his friend who refuses: but this is just as it should be; Fang Hsüan-ch'o now remembers how he likewise refused a friend of his. He has no other desire except the nagging hope of obtaining a lottery ticket, but he grudges the money to buy it with.

Life oppresses, expels former hopes, ruins a man who was once full of strength and energy. The author meets his old school friend Lü Wei-fu (*In the Pub*). He tells him the story of his pitiable life, of "unimportant things"—the death of his brother, the death of a girl to whom he brought flowers and whom he evidently loved though he does not actually say so. He speaks quietly, without grumbling. Good people, ruined by life.

What if the author does not invariably offer the reader the promise of a better future—these wonderful stories which so liberally depict the dismal dreariness of life, nevertheless are not without hope. And, as in one of Lu Hsin's stories, the red flower blazes forth from between the green leaves covered with snow, so the author's love and faith in his people glows between the lines describing the hard and bitter life which cripples man.

This book also contains fine examples of Lu Hsin's prose poetry, interesting both in form and content.

Besides the stories and prose poetry the collection contains a few articles by Lu Hsin, several letters, his autobiography, two articles about him, and an article by V.Rogov, *Lu Hsin's Literary Heritage*, which is exceedingly useful for the study of the writer's creative work.

The "Soviet Writer Publishing House" has just issued a book of short stories by N. Liashko, *Russian Nights*.

Nikolai Liashko is one of Russia's veteran authors. He belongs to that constellation of talented people's representatives among whom Gorky proved to be the shining star. Nikolai Liashko had to start work at the tender age of eleven. He was general run-about in the boiler-room, helper in a confectionery factory and later apprentice at an engineering plant. Before he became a fully skilled metal turner, the future author experienced all the vicissitudes of the worker's life in Tsarist Russia.

From his earliest years Nikolai Liashko possessed an insatiable desire for knowledge and despite the heavy manual labour that devoured his time and sapped his strength, he, quite unaided, plunged into Russian and Western philosophy and literature.

While still a youth he was arrested for activities in the workers' movement. The young revolutionary was hustled from prison to prison and finally exiled to the most remote outpost of Russia. It was during these years that this worker-revolutionary proved himself a talented writer.

Liashko's short stories, narratives and novels all deal with the life of the working people.

In describing the milieu and habits of workers, peasants and artisans, Liashko has always been successful in finding realistic vivid colours since he describes his own life, impressions and feelings. The writer has a rich and original style, abounding in picturesque folklore.

In many of his short stories, in his biographical narrative *With the Flock* and in his best-known novel *Sweet Slavery*, describing the heavy toil at the confectionery factory, Nikolai Liashko reveals himself a talented representative of the Gorky trend in Russian literature. His works breathe hatred for the Tsarist regime and are a call to revolutionary struggle. They are full of faith in the vast creative power of the people, in the splendour and might of the toiler.

Nikolai Liashko's latest book, not a large one, is charged with that same faith in the indomitable strength of his people.

Russian Nights is a collection of stories about the Great Patriotic War, most of them dealing with partisan activity in enemy-occupied territory. The word "partisan," by the way, possesses a very broad meaning, for all the population of Russian towns and villages are partisans in one way or another.

Old peasants, young collective farm girls, workers and teachers, even little children—all hated the Germans with an equal intensity, all resisted them with equal doggedness.

Take the lad known as "Eaglet" (in the story *The Song of the Wolf*)—you read how he breaks free from the German soldiers who are tormenting him, tricks them and gets away.

Then there is Fedya Golubkov, the schoolboy and partisan dispatch carrier (*The Tale About Ivan Ask-the-Wind*), who falls into the hands of the Germans. They torture him to get him to divulge the whereabouts of the partisan column. They fail and eventually kill him but the news of his heroic death flashes through the local villages and Fedya Golubkov's name becomes a battle standard in the partisan cause, and for the underground work of the schoolchildren.

The old peasant woman, Mavra (*Russian Nights*) prefers a martyr's death rather than submit to the enemy; and her young daughter kills the Germans who would outrage her and dies the death of a heroine.

Yet another example—old Foma, so old that he has a great-grandchild. He sets fire to his house when the Germans billeted on him are all inside, and they perish beneath the collapsing walls and timbers.

"...The cottage was only a year or two short of a hundred and it burnt," as Foma later declared, "because its old walls could not bear the horror and burning hatred."

The miniature stories collected in *Russian Nights* are filled with that intense hatred for the barbarity and violence that the Germans brought with them, they are permeated by an immense love for the people, for the Russian country-side, for the Russian tongue, for every hut built by the cunning fingers of the toiler.

Soviet literature describing the life of the country during the Great Patriotic War includes war stories, plays and several novels dealing with people working in the country's large defence enterprises and about the "victory smiths" of the Urals. But until recently practically nothing was written about life in the collective farm villages during these terrible days of universal and strenuous effort.

Hence the story *Nalivaiko's Family* by Fyodor Kravchenko, lately published in Leningrad by the "Young Guards" Publishing House, must not be overlooked. The subject is one that we have long wished to read about—the village of today.

War is a grim ordeal. "This war tries all, puts everyone to the test, disclosing the worth of each," says the heroine of the novel, Catherine Nalivaiko, who is the mother of five sons fighting against the enemy at the front. Many trials fall to her lot. The outbreak of war finds one of her sons a pilot in the regular army, three others join up during the first few days.

In the empty house weary evenings follow the departure of the sons. True, the youngest, Andrew, who has just finished school, is still with her. He is so short-sighted that he is unfit for military service; but he, too, eventually joins the partisans and his mother is left quite alone.

In the meantime war approaches the village. To the east stretch horses and carts with furniture; people begin to move out of homes long inhabited. There was much bitterness and sorrow in those days, but whatever the misfortune, no one found himself without help and support in Soviet society.

The collective farmers from the Ukraine are welcomed in the Saratov region on the Volga. But neither the sympathy of new friends nor hard work on the collective farm can deaden a mother's anxiety. In Kravchenko's story the strength of a mother's love and the yearning in her heart are truthfully expressed.

"Are they still alive? What did they eat today? What are they doing now?" Catherine was constantly thinking of her sons; in her thoughts she would see them go into battle imagining with terror and pain all the dangers surrounding them at the front. She would question people back from the front in every detail. What was it like there? Which troops had the worst time of it? Sometimes she would think it was easier for Roman in the artillery than for Peter, the tankist. Roman could crush the German fortifications with heavy guns from a distance of many kilometres. But then Peter sits behind a strong steel armour even if he does meet the enemy face to face...

The author has been most successful in his portrayal of the mother. She stands firm under all her sufferings, drawing strength from the very depths of her generous soul.

Ordeals follow one after the other. First she hears that Peter has been killed and later the poor mother is informed that Roman has died in hospital.

Through the suffering caused by these losses Catherine's character becomes more concentrated, sterner, stronger in will and spirit. The collective of the kolkhoz, strong in its unity, does not allow the lonely woman to despair but helps her to get a grip on herself and return to her active life. Catherine's associates in the kolkhoz sustain her under the heavy hand of fate, help her to realize herself, so that later on she becomes the president of the kolkhoz.

The author gives an interesting delineation of the president of the kolkhoz, Sidor Zakharovich, who eventually leaves for the front. This man has an inherent sense of his great responsibility towards the government for the task entrusted to him. He is among those who, during the difficult days of the evacuation, conducted a complicated organizational and constructive work.

Not all, however, were able to bear the trials of war with the same firmness. Claudia Nalivaiko, the wife of Maxim, Catherine's third son, breaks down and eventually finds herself in truly tragic circumstances. Learning that her husband is missing, and losing her only son, she gives way to despair and, after a time, marries again. Claudia was not a frivolous woman and her second husband shows himself to be deserving of her love. But the rumours of Maxim's death are unfounded and when he unexpectedly reappears Claudia's personal life is shattered.

The story embraces a wide circle of events: the Ukraine during the first days of the war; the life and struggle of the Ukrainian partisans; the work of the Ukrainian kolkhoz during the evacuation; the wanderings of the wounded Maxim through Kazakhstan in his search for his wife; the return of the kolkhoz to its liberated homeland. This is the book's chief merit.

Leili and Mejnun, the first from the renowned cycle of five poems (*Hamse*) by Alisher Nava'i, the great Uzbek poet of the 15th century, has just been printed in a Russian translation by the State Literary Publishing House.

The names Leili and Mejnun have become household words in the East. They conjure up the image of lovers who, like Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and Isolde, were parted only by death.

When Nava'i adopted this theme it had a tradition many centuries old in the East.

Its origin lay in the ancient Arab legend about the young man Kais known as the mad Mejnun because of his delirious love for Leili. A poem entitled *Leili and Mejnun* was composed by the immortal Azerbaijan poet Nizami (12th century); about a century later the Indo-Persian poet Emir Hosrof wrote a poem bearing the same title.

This repetition of subject, called "nazira," which means "answer," is a favourite mode in Eastern literature. It was particularly convenient to express the new and convey it to the reader with all the power of conviction in this form—starting with a subject tested by time and invested with the authority of tradition. This Nava'i did also.

"In depicting this eternal love my aim was not to relate a fairy-tale," wrote Nava'i. "My spirit was drawn to its inner content, the tale was only an excuse."

What does the tale relate and what is its true idea?

Kais, the son of an Arab chief, in his early youth sees Leili, the daughter of his schoolmaster, and falls in love with her irrevocably. Kais was a poet and his songs to his beloved are eloquent of his fiery, all-conquering passion.

"How can I tell thee how I love thee? What verses write to praise thee?"

And the girl answers, fully responsive:

"Two burning sighs have lit a beacon,
two stricken hearts have merged in one."

What could queer the path of such happy love?! But here prejudices of birth and caste come into play. Yet love overcomes every obstacle: the wrath of Leili's father, who refuses to allow her to marry a man of lower caste, the promise wrung from her to marry another and the war that breaks out between the tribes of Kais and Leili. The lovers' emotions are only strengthened by every new obstacle. But the passion of love, denied fulfilment, undermines their health and death draws near. In his mortal hour Kais goes to Leili and finds her dying: now they will be united for ever.

Two bodies in a shroud are wound,
In a single body two spirits bound.
Two facets of a diamond single,
Two hearts of one almond mingle.

Thus in original and haunting words does Nava'i depict the death of the lovers.

How did Nava'i unfold the essential content of this legend of great human love? First he denounces the medieval view of women as a being having no right to decide her own destiny. This is forcefully developed in Leili's letter to Mejnun, a poetic gem permeated with the plaint of woman the slave:

"Though thou art stricken by the passion of love,
Still thou art a man, and in thy passion must be free.
Climb thou the mountain, descend thou the valley,
Thy skirt shall not hinder thee.
But chains and fetters will not let me fly.
I cannot break them and be free."

Subsequently the image of Kais-Mejnun is presented in an absolutely original way. With Nava'i it is no mild ascetic resigned to his fate but a passionate rebel; not a repentant sinner but a wrathful accuser. Nava'i is wholly and actively on the side of Kais. That is why he so sympathetically draws the character of the warrior-leader Naufal who goes to war with Leili's father to win happiness for Kais.

The poem is a treasure of realism. As Semyon Lipkin, the Russian translator, says, "both the love-frenzied Kais and his weak father, the belligerent Naufal and the rich supercilious Ibn-Selliam, Zeid the beggar and Leili's father puffed up with aristocratic pride, her nurse and she herself, the pampered, proud, loving and unhappy Leili—all these characters are etched with a knowledge of the heart and mind peculiar to the authors of the 'psychological novel' of the 19th century."

Of all Nava'i's poems this is possibly the most lyrical. In it profound social motives are naturally and delicately interwoven with those of a sharply defined individual character. The traditional description of the beautiful girl and the feelings she inspires are expressed in original poetic form which conveys the entire profundity and individuality of Kais' emotions for Leili.

Every rendez-vous of the lovers is described with astonishing freshness, power and variety of emotion, which creates an impression of the eternal and indestructible nature of their emotions.

Nava'i has departed from "Eastern floweriness" when painting the landscape of

Nava'i. Engraving by N. Pikov

the Arabian desert and has achieved his effects with great skill in simple and austere tones.

The translator has been supremely successful in conveying to the Russian reader the distinguishing features of Nava'i's style and of unfolding the basic idea of the poem both poetic and humanistic.

Today and Tomorrow is the title of a book containing Russian translations of war poems by the Azerbaijan poet Samed Vurgun.

The name of this book is a very happy one, for all the poems were written during those dark and menacing days of 1941—1943. But whenever the poet speaks of the hardships of "today" he beholds the joys of "tomorrow"—the coming victory of the freedom-loving people of the world over fascism.

What is it that feeds the optimism of the poet? In the first place it is his love for his country, his faith in the inexhaustible strength of the Soviet people. Samed Vurgun's patriotism is broad and human. His love for sunny Azerbaijan is naturally exalted in his poetry to a love for the whole Soviet country and all her various peoples who, shoulder to shoulder, defend the freedom and independence of the Soviet Union.

Besides those poems which sing of the Azerbaijan people's military valour and their prowess as workers, a people who fought against the German fascist usurpers on all fronts, the book also contains numerous poems dedicated to the Ukrainian partisans and the Russian people, the first among equals.

One of the main themes of the book is friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union. *The Falcon-Rider* relates how the aeroplane of a marine pilot, an Azerbaijan ace, was damaged during a scrap with ten enemy fighters. The pilot had to spend the black Baltic night on a tiny rocky island amidst the stormy waves. Who will come to his aid? At dawn ships appear on the horizon. The Baltic sailors are coming to the Azerbaijan falcon's rescue.

The poem *Meeting Orel* relates the story of the hard, stubborn fight for the old Russian town, Orel.

"The saintly blood of Russia's sons will be blessed forever."

But in the hour of victory, through the ranks of the Russian warriors, we see a black-haired, dark-skinned, black-eyed young tankist of Azerbaijan, banner in hand.

Full of colour and poetical images is the poem *Azerbaijan* written before the war, in 1938. Clouds float over the mountain tops, over the silvery Caspian Sea; the deer leaps in the ravine, abundant are the grape vines of Lenkoran. The reader feels the living bond between the poet and all his fellow countrymen; the poet is the voice of his people. He speaks for the collective farmer Gyz-Khanum, he converses with the Azerbaijanian Babash, who is fighting as a partisan in the forests of Byelorussia.

The poet's love for his own country is a rich source from which flows his love for all the freedom-loving peoples of the world, for all those fighting against hitlerite domination.

Samed Vurgun

In the concluding poem, *The Poet's Word*, written in 1941, at the very beginning of the war, Samed Vurgun paints a large poetic canvas. He depicts Europe squashed under the heel of fascism; the glow of fires; rows of gallows; living corpses eating the weeds growing by the roadside from sheer hunger. A deathlike silence envelops the whole country. But this is the peace of a cemetery. It is only on the surface. Here a German sentry falls into the canal, smitten by the people's avengers. Here a Czech youth cries out for revenge. Here an old mother from Poland demands vengeance for three sons murdered by the Gestapo.

Unshakable faith in the ultimate triumph of freedom and justice rings in the refrain:

"Terrible and just will be the history's judgement, the words of the poet will be like a prophecy. I know that victory will rise in the East like the sun rises and the people will shake Stalin by the hand."

The Russian poets who translated Samed Vurgun's poems solved their problems with great care and love. The translators, B. Pasternak, A. Adalis, M. Petrovykh and others have attained a very high standard quality.

Test of the Time is the name of a collection of articles on poetry by Pavel Antokolsky, recently published by the "Soviet Writer Publishing House." A large part of the collection is taken up by literary portraits of poets. Alongside the great Russian poets of the 18th and 19th centuries—G. Derzhavin and M. Lermontov, is the name of Lessya Ukrainka, a distinguished Ukrainian writer who

lived at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, and those of our contemporaries: E. Bagritsky, N. Tikhonov, B. Pasternak, A. Surkov, and poets of the Soviet Ukraine M. Bazhan and L. Pervomaisky.

The collection opens with a political article *This Will Bring Victory* and concludes with another, *The Triumph of Moral Strength*, which serve as a frame to the literary portraits, some of which were written during the war and some to mark anniversaries. The article *Our Lermontov* was written in 1941 in honour of the centenary of the poet's death. In 1943 the bicentenary of Derzhavin's birth was similarly marked, as also in 1944 the tenth anniversary of the death of Bagritsky.

The choice of the author is not so much determined by his personal tastes and spiritual sympathy for the poet about whom he writes as by other considerations: "how the poet has stood the test of time" and his place in the life of "our own day." By "our own day" Antokolsky means the days of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against German fascism. For Antokolsky the journalist, just as for Antokolsky the poet, the criterion of an art's vitality is its bond with the epoch and people which create it. Only those poets can stand the test of time who do not feel themselves "isolated in spirit," who are not confined in themselves but take an active part in, and are sensitive to the "simply wonderful life" of their contemporaries. In such a life no allowance must be made, but it demands of poetry a courageous, overwhelming and sincere expression of truth. This truth Antokolsky finds in the poetry of all the three poets—Lermontov, Derzhavin and Bagritsky. The "feeling for history" which every true poet must possess, gives him the right to compare different epochs. In the poetry of Derzhavin, who was a contemporary of Robespierre and Suvorov, Antokolsky finds characteristics akin to the historical "present-day."

The banner under which the Soviet people fought and won was the banner of culture and humanism. This theme is widely developed in the first article of the collection.

Antokolsky speaks with sympathy and a subtle understanding of the representatives of his own generation—the poets of the twenties. But of the youngest, the generation to which belonged his son, a hero who died defending his Soviet country, the author writes with a special tenderness.

The concluding article is dedicated to the underground youth organization "The Young Guard" who were active in the Donbass during the German occupation. Antokolsky writes about each of these young people separately. He shows that the source of their moral strength was the humanistic education they received from their Soviet country.

Antokolsky characterizes the historical traditions of the culture of all the peoples inhabiting the U.S.S.R., taking his material from a wide field: *The Lay of Igor's March*, *The Bronze Rider* by Pushkin, the works of Leo Tolstoy and Alexey Tolstoy, poems by A. Block, folk songs and contemporary works.

In the portraits of his contemporaries Antokolsky is true to the same criterion: the poetry of contemporaries will reach the level of genuine art when the poet becomes a participant in historical events. "The poet can only develop from his contact with history," says Antokolsky. And this is true for all types of poets—for Nikolai Tikhonov and for the Ukrainian poet Mikola Bazhan, and even for such original, intimate lyricists as Boris Pasternak.

Most of these articles on Antokolsky's contemporaries show the whole creative development of a poet. These literary portraits are vital, plastic and strikingly individual.

Neither the philosophical depth with which the problems are presented nor the breadth of the material used suffered from the fact that Antokolsky does not play the part of an indifferent historian: he writes as an artist and active participant in the historical events of our great days.

ARTS

Right to left—C. Stanislavsky, M. Gorky, V. Kachalov, M. Alexandrov behind the scene after the performance of May 30th, 1928

HOW I FIRST MET MAXIM GORKY

Gorky's Plays on the Stage of the Moscow Art Theatre

The day I first met Maxim Gorky stands out in my memory as clearly as if it were a mere two or three years ago, yet it happened as far back as May 1900. I was walking along Bronnaya street in Moscow on my way to a morning rehearsal. We rented a building called the "Romanovka," now the Jewish State Theatre, for our rehearsals. Two men passed me, one a tall fellow, taking long strides, and the other much shorter, but easily keeping pace with the first. At the entrance to the "Romanovka" we almost collided. For some reason they had been refused admittance, and the shorter man addressed me as follows:

"You are an actor, I presume? My name is Sullerzhitsky (later to become chief regisseur of the Art Theatre), and this is Gorky, the writer Gorky. We have just arrived from Yalta. We were invited to go to the Art Theatre any time we felt like it, but now, for some reason, they won't let us in."

I rushed in to report to the proper person that Gorky was standing outside and had been refused admittance. Five minutes later both Gorky and Sullerzhitsky stood inside, surrounded by a crowd of young admirers.

We were rehearsing Ostrovsky's *Snow Maiden* daily, from morning till night, and from that day on our guests, Gorky and Sullerzhitsky, spent whole days at our rehearsals.

That autumn Gorky gave us his play *Smug Citizens*, but for some reason he soon took it back and returned it to us, somewhat modified, a year later, in the autumn of 1901. That year he also gave us his second play *The Lower Depths*, whose subject had been discussed a year before in the Crimea, when our theatre went to pay a visit to Chekhov. In April 1900 the company of the Art Theatre went to Sevastopol and Yalta with two plays: *Uncle Vania* and *The Sea-Gull* to show them to bed-ridden Chekhov. I had just been admitted to the Art Theatre company and did not take part in the trip.

In May, 1900, I heard: "Gorky... Gorky..." My new comrades had just returned to Moscow, and all I heard was: "Gorky said... Gorky read... " and even "Gorky sang..." "Isn't his story *Chelkash* wonderful!.. And what about *Malva*?.. And didn't he give it to that one... And wasn't he witty when he spoke to those... And how tender his affection for Chekhov..."

In those days Chekhov was well-known in our theatre; he was liked by everybody and considered one "of ours." And now here came that "stranger" —young, interesting, his appearance far from that of a writer and whose stories treated such unusual subjects. He created a true sensation in the life of the theatre.

Our youth was captivated by Gorky's charm and in the theatre you could hear the jubilant: "He has promised to write a new play for us." We waited for it with the utmost impatience.

In March, 1902, our company went on a tour, during which Gorky's *Smug Citizens* was presented in St. Petersburg for the first time. The theatrical censors met Gorky's name with disfavour, making themselves felt by deleting a number of passages which expressed dissatisfaction with the existing social order. Just then something happened which endangered the entire performance of the play.

A short time previously Gorky had been elected member of the Academy, notice of which had been duly given in the press. Suddenly the president of the Academy, Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovich (as established later, upon Nicholas II instructions given in person) had crossed out Gorky's name from the list of Academy members. This gave rise to a wave of indignation, especially among the students, and the police were afraid of the possibility of a demonstration during the performance of *Smug Citizens* by the Art Theatre.

Minister of the Interior, Sipyagin, prohibited the staging of the play and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko had to put up a hard fight to lift the ban.

Every important government official appeared at the dress rehearsal: grand dukes, ministers, high officials, the high-ranking military and police officers. Police posts were reinforced inside and outside the theatre.

Permission to play *Smug Citizens* in St. Petersburg was granted for five or six subscribers' performances only. Policemen were stationed at the entrance to see that only subscribers were admitted. Nemirovich-Danchenko took the matter up with Kleigels, Governor of the capital, and at the next performances men in evening dress and white gloves were checking up the tickets. These were the same policemen dressed in civilian clothes.

Both in Moscow and St. Petersburg, *Smug Citizens* was a smashing and noisy success both from the artistic and social-political viewpoint.

Now we were impatiently awaiting the second play, *The Lower Depths*. The new features in Gorky's stories, the new heroes—the romantic heroes—struck us as being a most attractive proposition for the stage, and the spirit of rebellion and protest with which the young but already well-known writer approached the very foundation of life as it was, then was akin to the spirit of rebellion which pervaded our young theatre.

Then came the day, of which not a single detail will ever leave my memory: Gorky was reading his *Lower Depths* to the assembled actors of the Art Theatre company. He read beautifully. The characters lived, impressed themselves on the mind indelibly. And although in the author's reading each character spoke in his weak muffled bass, used his broad "o" and shook his clenched fist in front of his face—the characters were nevertheless vivid, sculptured and at the same time not at all like one another. How true to life was the inner life of the characters, what variety and wealth of intonation in each of them!

Every smart turn of expression and humorous passage of the play was met by an outburst of spontaneous laughter. Gorky himself did not smile or stress any particular passage, nor did he play for a laugh. Our laughter sometimes would become so uproarious and catching that the author could not help smiling; then he'd wave his hand and modestly admit: "Well, really, it is funny, isn't it?" And when he read the scene in which Luka exhorts and consoles the dying Anna, we all held back our breath, so moving was this passage. Gorky's voice trembled and stopped short. He paused, fell silent, brushed away a tear with his finger, tried to continue, but had to stop again after two words and hastily, even angrily, drive his tears back with his handkerchief. Then he straightened himself, shook his head and said modestly: "Well, it really is well written, by God it is!" A thunder of applause greeted his words, and many had tears in their eyes.

This wonderful play opened a new world to us, a terrible world of the scum of society, mutilated and driven into the cellars, into the lower depths of life.

The theatrical and political censors did their utmost to prevent this play from being staged. Nemirovich-Danchenko had to go specially to St. Petersburg to fight for entire scenes and even single phrases. At last permission was granted for the Art Theatre to stage the play, but Nemirovich-Danchenko wrote: "It is my impression that permission had been granted solely because the authorities felt sure that the play would turn out a complete failure."

But this is where the tsarist censors were wrong. The play was a smashing success and the audience responded with enthusiasm. It was greeted as the stormy petrel heralding the coming storm, as a call to battle. There seemed to be no end to ovations and curtain-calls, addressed to the actors, the regisseurs—Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko—and especially to the author. Gorky came out on the stage slightly confused, a cigarette in his mouth; he did not bow to the audience, he merely glanced shyly, but at the same time challengingly at the audience. When the curtain was rung down for the last time, all the members of the cast crowded around the author embracing him and thanking him for the privilege of sharing with him such a tremendous success. We felt genuinely happy and in love with our roles.

Well do I remember that at first I was not much taken by my role of the "Baron." Gorky himself even admitted, after reading the play, that he was not quite satisfied with his "Baron," although Baron Buchholtz, an inveterate drunkard who finally found himself in the Nizhny-Novgorod night asylum for the homeless, served him as a living model.

Gorky even sent me the latter's photo taken with a group of tramps and a separate portrait. It helped me somewhat in the matter of make-up. I liked his wig, the shape of his head and the colour of his thin, short cut very fair

hair. I made some use of the naive and bewildered expression of his eyes, but the rest—his suit, pose, clean shaven face and manner of holding his hands—was not typical and did not appeal to my imagination. This baron evidently knew that he would be photographed and had taken a shave and put on somebody else's good suit for the occasion. His clean blouse girdled with a silk cord, modest posture and manner of thrusting his hands into the girdle, à la Tolstoy, all this in the photo was far from typical of a hopeless drunkard, hooligan and bully and did not help me in my search for the necessary image.

Here I was helped by living models, the true tramps whom I met in the streets of Moscow, hanging around saloons, churches and cemeteries. But most useful to me were the living models from among real "aristocrats," whose acquaintance I made intentionally for the purpose of creating the image of my "Baron" and whom I would mentally dress in rags. For instance, rolling the "r" I took from Count Tatishchev, the famous Moscow lawyer, and from chamberlain Nelidov (former manager of the Maly Theatre company). From the former I took the manner of frequently adjusting his tie and of pulling on and taking off his gloves; from the latter apart his manner of rolling the "r," "manicuring" his nails in public and meditatingly polishing them on the cuff of his coat. From Prince Baryatinsky, the husband of the actress Yavorskaya, I took his guardsman's gait and manner of picking his ear with the little finger. In this way thread by thread I was building up and moulding the "Baron's" outward image.

I succeeded in arriving at the required character portrayal by observation of people surrounding me, of living models. I applied this in other parts I took in Gorky's plays. I recollect that the living model for the young scientist Protassov (in *Children of the Sun*) was the physicist P. Lebedev, a young professor at the Moscow University, a highly-gifted scientist, who enjoyed the affection of the entire student body, a man of exceptional charm to his family and friends, his mind concentrated on his science and deaf to the noise of the "street" and to the distant roar of the coming 1905 revolution.

In general I have no clear recollection of my work on that role.

Children of the Sun had no luck. This play was staged a few times only. The general strike of 1905 stopped the performance in nearly all the theatres. At the première of *Children of the Sun* a tragi-comical incident took place, which reflected the stormy atmosphere of that period.

The first performance was given on October 24th, 1905. A few days prior to that a tsarist "gracious" manifesto announced the granting of the constitution. This manifesto was followed by a wave of pogroms staged in Kiev, Tver, Odessa and several other cities. The Moscow "Black Hundred" were in their turn diligently preparing a pogrom of the intellectuals. Seldom did a day pass by without killings and beatings-up. The atmosphere was extremely tense in Moscow, and a pogrom was expected any minute. Prior to the première of the play a rumour ran that the gangsters of the "Black Hundred" claiming that Gorky and the rest of us were "enemies of Tsar and Fatherland," were preparing to raid the Art Theatre.

During the performance the audience was extremely tense, expecting something to happen. And now, before the end of the last act, when a group of our actors impersonating the provocators and initiators of the famous "cholera rebellion" stormed the stage, climbing over the fence of the Protassov home, and when Germanova, who played the part of my wife Helen, fired a shot in the direction of the audience, at which I had to sink to the ground, something unexpected and indescribable took place: the audience took no pains to understand who, at whom and what all this shooting was about, it took the actors' crowd for members of the "Black Hundred" who had invaded the theatre to beat us up and decided that I was their first victim. Pandemonium broke loose, women became hysterical, part of the audience made a rush for the stage, evidently ready to defend us, while others made for the exit, flying for their lives. Some people rushed into the cloakroom to get a gun from their coat pockets. Someone else shouted: "Ring down the curtain!"

Here Nemirovich-Danchenko appeared in front of the curtain, requesting the audience to allow the play to be finished, and trying to calm it by stating that the end would be a happy one. When the curtain went up again the audience was still agog, and cries of "Kachalov, get up!" were heard. I had to get up and show that I was alive, and then lie down again.

Standing at the footlights, Serguei Yablonovsky of the staff of the *Russkoye Slovo* (one of the most influential newspapers of pre-revolutionary Russia) was shouting hysterically: "We have had enough horrors! Enough awful sights! We've seen enough of them in real life!" Part of the audience joined him, and the curtain was rung down once more. But the other part of the audience protested, and when it was finally established that the majority wanted to see the play to its end, the curtain was raised again, and the play was safely brought to a successful conclusion.

That evening Gorky was not in the theatre; I believe he had already left the country.

Continuing to recall my part in the performance of Gorky's plays, I'd like to add a few words about my last role in *Enemies*. In this role the "living models" helped me probably more than in any other. A large number, indeed, of typical representatives of this colourless, grey and virtually characterless variety of persons had passed before me. And not so long ago either. I clearly remember these people, I hear their voices and intonations—now self-assured, instructive and triumphant, now vicious or panicky. These living models, old acquaintances of mine, helped me a great deal in perfecting and somewhat sharpening the role, so excellently written by the author. I "sharpened" the role in the sense that I treated it more mercilessly than the author did. Recently, after having played the role many times, I happened to re-read the play, and it seemed to me that the author had been

much kindlier towards Zakhar Bardin than I; it seemed to me that the author was showing him in a vein of good-natured humour, and I—in a satirical vein.

Well do I recall young Gorky at the first performance of *Cherry Orchard*, given in honour of Anton Chekhov. It was St. Anthony's day, the day of the saint whose name Chekhov bore. I remember Nemirovich-Danchenko beginning his speech of welcome with the words: "This is your day, and according to the proverb St. Anthony's Day means the beginning of a longer day. Your appearance in our theatre at once 'lengthened the day' for us, added more light and warmth." I also remember how Chekhov was honoured during the interlude, after the third act; the boring speeches almost invariably began with "dear, most respected" or "profoundly respected..." As the first speaker began, addressing Chekhov with "dear, most respected" the latter whispered: "cupboard" to those of us who stood closest to him. We could hardly stop ourselves from exploding with laughter, for just a short while ago, during the first act, we had heard Gayev-Stanislavsky address the cupboard with the words: "dear, most respected cupboard."

I remember how terribly tired this ceremony made Chekhov. Pale as a ghost, now and then coughing in his handkerchief, he stood on his feet all the time, listening to the welcoming speeches with patience and even with a smile. When shouts of "Anton Pavlovich, please sit down..." came from the crowd, he waved his hand reassuringly and continued to stand. At last, when the curtain fell and I had gone to my dressing-room, I heard the footsteps of several people in the hallway and A. Vishnevsky's (an actor of the Art Theatre) loud voice: "Take Anton Pavlovich to Kachalov's dressing-room! Let him take a rest on the couch!" Into my dressing-room came Chekhov, supported on either side by Gorky and Mirolyubov. Behind them walked Leonid Andreyev and, I remember, Ivan Bunin (famous Russian writers).

Gorky was all indignation and excitement:

"The devil with this public, these celebrators! They've nearly celebrated him to death! It's an outrage! There is a limit to everything! Lie down at once, rest on the couch and stretch out your legs."[1]

"There's no need for me to lie down," Chekhov protested, "and it's too early to stretch my legs," he added jokingly, "but I'll be glad to sit down."

"No, no, you must lie down, and keep your legs higher," Gorky ordered. "Lie down for a while in silence, in Kachalov's company. He won't smoke. And you, smoker," he turned to Leonid Andreyev, "get out of here. And you, too, leave the room," he added, addressing Vishnevsky. "You always make so much noise. And you, sir," addressing Mirolyubov, "also get out of here, you are noisy too with your basso voice. And, by the way, I want to discuss an important matter with you!"

I remained alone with Chekhov.

"With your permission," he said, "I will lie down."

A minute later we heard Gorky's loud voice in the hallway. He was shouting at the editor of the *Journal for All*, Mirolyubov, for having passed some sort of a "God-seeking" article.

"You should become a priest or a monk rather than be the editor of a Marxist journal."

I remember Chekhov smiling and saying:

"Gorky is taking everything too much to heart. He ought not to become so excited over my health or over religious articles in the journal. Mirolyubov really is a decent fellow. As a priest's son he likes church-music and bells..."

He coughed and added:

"Of course, he still has certain weaknesses. He likes to yell at street-car conductors, waiters and, sometimes, policemen... But everybody has his weaknesses. At any rate, it's no use shouting at him for it. Although," Chekhov added after a minute's silence, "Mirolyubov deserves being shouted at. Of course, not for his God-seeking, but for his shouting at people."

Here we heard Gorky's rapid strides. He paused in the doorway, pulled a few times at his cigarette, threw it away, waved his hand to disperse the smoke and stepped into the dressing-room.

"Well, have they all gone away?" he addressed Chekhov.

"Aren't you a restless, agitated soul?" Chekhov smiled at him and rose from the couch. "I am quite all right now. Let's go and see the end of my *Cherry Orchard*, let's listen how they'll start chopping down the trees." And they went to see the last act of the *Cherry Orchard*.

Well do I remember Chekhov's funeral in the summer of 1904. An enormous crowd was moving across Moscow from the railway station to the Novo-Dyevichi Cemetery. At the Art Theatre the procession halted. Amidst the dead silence—the sound of sobbing here and there in the crowd, the strains of Chopin's funeral march, played by our orchestra at the theatre entrance; through the open doors of the dress-circle our theatrical employees were carrying an enormous wreath of wild flowers, collected by them. That minute two faces engraved themselves upon my memory: that of Chekhov's mother and of Gorky, standing side by side at the hearse. Both faces seemed to express helpless childish woe, to which, I thought, was added physically-unbearable pain, the sense of a grave wrong.

At the Novo-Dyevichi Cemetery, when the grave had been filled and the people were leaving, I, Luzhsky (an actor of the Art Theatre) and a few more of our crowd, walked over to Gorky, who was sitting alone on the edge of somebody's grave.

"Cried enough, Alexei Maximovich?" someone asked him—I believe it was Bunin.

"Don't you see, I'm crying from sheer fury," Gorky replied. "I even didn't suspect I could cry from fury. But really, everything around makes me furious! Everything rouses my indignation, beginning with this special

[1] In Russian "stretch one's legs" is the equivalent of "turn up one's toes."

waggon for oysters in which the body came and ending with this crowd and these conversations from which there is no escape."

Outside the theatre I met Gorky a few times only. I recall having met him in Berlin, in 1906. In January, 1906, the Art Theatre went on a European tour, we first played in Berlin (*Tsar Fyodor, The Lower Depths* and *Uncle Vanya*) and then made a tour of the largest German cities with this repertoire. We also played in Vienna and Prague, and in Warsaw on our way home. In Berlin we played a whole month.

Gorky happened to be in Berlin at the same time as the theatre. In those days he was extremely popular both in Europe and America. In the Berlin theatre his plays *The Lower Depths* and *Children of the Sun* were performed in German. In the show windows of the book stores his books were displayed, both in Russian and German, as well as large portraits and countless post cards. *The Lower Depths* was produced by Max Reinhardt, then a very young regisseur. I remember the latter's coming to me with an introductory letter from M. F. Andreyeva (Gorky's wife, an actress of the Art Theatre), asking me to appear at a literary soirée dedicated to Gorky's creative work. It was to take place in some large hall in Charlottenburg, then still the outskirts of Berlin, with its democratic public, students and workers, intelligentsia. I remember how crowded the hall was and the evening's programme. Gorky was reading his *Story of the Falcon* and Reinhardt was reading Luka's monologue from *The Lower Depths* in German. The actor Schildkraut, who then enjoyed great popularity in Germany, read Gorky's *Spring Melody* also in German, and I read the *Storm-Petrel* and *The Country-fair at Goltva*. I remember how warmly and noisily the audience greeted Gorky, rising at his appearance. A thunder of applause and shouts of "Hoch." There were many Russian emigrees in that audience. Of course, the overwhelming majority of the German audience did not know Russian and could not appreciate the text and Gorky's reading. All these people crowded the theatre just to see Gorky and to express their affection for Gorky the writer and political fighter.

I also remember how Karl Liebknecht, then a youngster, walked over to me on the stage and whispered to me in German:

"Would you like to see a corner of the Zoo, some animals in a cage, right here in the theatre?"

He showed me a place in the wings, from where one could behold Kaiser Wilhelm's sons headed by the Crown-Prince, sitting in the extreme box facing the stage. Covering himself with the curtain, so as not to be seen by the audience, the Crown-Prince, his mouth stupidly and viciously open, was staring at Gorky, who was reading his *Story of the Falcon*. Next to him sat the officers of his suite with glittering monocles, also glaring at Gorky.

I recall a conversation behind the scenes, during the intermission, to the effect that the evening before, at the Art Theatre's performance of *Tsar Fyodor*, Kaiser Wilhelm appeared wearing the dress uniform of the Russian cavalry regiment. He was the patron of a certain Russian Dragoon regiment... Of course the audience stood up and greeted him too with shouts of "Hoch." Speaking about the German social-democrats Gorky once said laughingly that all of them were glad to shout "Hoch" to the Kaiser, and that it seemed that Kautsky was shouting louder than the rest.

I remember meeting Gorky in Soviet Moscow, after the October Revolution in the spring of 1918. In the Hall of Columns of the Unions' House a grand affair was being arranged by the "cooperators"—an organization with which Gorky was very much in sympathy. About two weeks previously, he had asked me to take part in it and to get some of my comrades, especially Moskvin and Gribunin (actors of the Art Theatre), to participate.

"It's too funny, the way they play *Surgery*! There'll be a nice crowd... Lenin will be there. And then there'll be a fine treat, the cooperators know how to do things. There'll be a banquet."

I remember the evening was a tremendous success. In the actors' room Gorky was talking to Lenin; he was all agog and in a merry mood. Turning to the performers he said:

"Now, tell me, don't you feel the enormous difference in the audience? A different story altogether? It's a pleasure to appear before this new audience, isn't it?"

As the performance was coming to an end, Gorky told me:

"Do you know, our cooperators have no luck. At least today, as far as I know, there will be no banquet. Something went wrong with the lights."

It turned out that in the restaurant on the Petrovsky Lines, where the banquet was to have taken place, and at which Lenin, Gorky and the actors were to be present, the electric light had failed. In those days there was a great deal of trouble with the electricity in Moscow, and we had managed to get some light for the Hall of Columns only. It was said that even the Kremlin was without light that evening.

The unhappy cooperators sent for some church candles at a store near the Iversky Gates, but there were not enough candles even there, and we were promised that the banquet would be held a few days later.

Leaving the concert hall Gorky said jokingly:

"So far things are not so good either with our electrification or cooperation, but let's not give up hope. Lenin has invited me to visit him; he claims to own an unusually stout candle,"—and here Gorky used both hands to show its thickness. "So we'll sit by the light of this candle and dream about electrification."

I remember Gorky visiting our plays: *Armoured Train* in 1929 and *Resurrection* in 1933. On both occasions Gorky was in an excellent mood, cheerful and in good health. He was highly pleased with the two performances, pleasantly excited, and addressing us, mainly the "old-timers," he said:

"You certainly have discovered the secret of eternal youth. This is because you know how to bring up the young. You have brought up such a strong young generation that it rejuvenates the entire theatre. Evidently, it does not let you, "oldsters," rest and get older. That is why your art is so young and lively. In your theatre there is harmony between reason and emotions." And after a minute's silence he added: "This is a mighty theatre. Yes, yes, you can do everything, this is a powerful theatre."

I give Gorky's words exactly, not from memory but from my diary.

VASSILI KACHALOV

THE SADOVSKY FAMILY

The Russian theatre boasts of a number of families who have been on the stage for generations. Among these one of the leading places belongs to the Sadovsky family three generations of which have been represented by some of the finest actors known on the Russian stage. Beginning with 1839 down to our days the Sadovskys have been playing at the Maly—the oldest Russian theatre, which exercized great influence on the development of Russian stage craft.

This theatrical dynasty, nine members of which have spent a total of over two hundred and thirty years on the stage of the Maly, started with Prov Sadovsky (1818—1872); the second generation was represented by his son Mikhail (1847—1910), and the latter's wife, Olga Sadovskaya (1850—1919), and the third by his grand-daughter Elizabeth (1872—1938) and his grandson Prov (born in 1874), the present art manager of the Maly Theatre.

In spite of individuality of talent and the variety of types they played, all the Sadovskys had one thing in common—they embodied the national features of the Russian stage. Directness and natural bearing are characteristic of their acting and the types created by them are always true to life. It was in Ostrovsky's plays that the Sadovskys found the most striking expression of their many-sided talent. Ostrovsky who wrote more than forty plays and translated for the stage from the Spanish, French, Italian and English (including Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*), enjoys to this day great popularity. In his dramas, melodramas, comedies, fairy-tales and historical chronicles, Ostrovsky showed the different classes of society in Russia—merchants and officials, citizens of the lower middle class and rich landowners, peasants and actors. He depicted the life of the rich merchants, of the landed nobility, of the aristocracy and of the poor, of the people of large and provincial towns, of clubs and inns—a veritable encyclopedia of 19th century Russia. Ostrovsky knew his country, he knew the different dialects and expressions among people of different culture, ages, professions and environments. Realist that he was, he created all kinds of characters true to life, showing people in all their complexity and many-sidedness. With like expressiveness and talent he portrayed the surroundings and conditions of life which form and determine man's character.

"Wolves and Sheep" by Ostrovsky. Anfusa—O. Sadovskaya, Mursavetsky—M. P. Sadovsky

Ostrovsky's first comedy, *It's a Family Affair—We'll Settle It Ourselves*, at once brought his name into the lime-light. The play, however, was banned from the stage because it disclosed a number of negative features in the life and customs of the merchant class. But Prov Sadovsky who appreciated the manner in which the young playwright depicted people and their surroundings, became Ostrovsky's ardent supporter and succeeded in having his first play included in the repertory of the Maly. Sadovsky, who always appeared in Ostrovsky's plays, created a number of truly remarkable roles.

Prov Sadovsky the elder, who had started his stage career at the age of fourteen, spent many years playing in provincial theatres. A man with a keen power of observation, he came across many people similar to those depicted by Ostrovsky. Like Ostrovsky he knew and appreciated every twist and turn of the Russian spoken language.

According to information that has come down to us it appears that in Prov Sadovsky's interpretation of characters the audience invariably recognized some person they knew.

In this connection it is worth-while to recall the following anecdotes: one day when Sadovsky, who had played the part of a drunken Russian merchant, was leaving the theatre, a crowd of drunken merchants who had attended the performance surrounded him and each of them thanked him for "having portrayed me so well." At another time while after a performance in which he played the part of an inn-keeper, Sadovsky went to have his supper at a nearby restaurant, the owner of which had seen the play, the following conversation took place between him and the waiter:

"What's my bill?" Sadovsky asked when he had finished his meal.

"No bill, Sir," said the waiter, adding: "The boss told me not to charge you anything..."

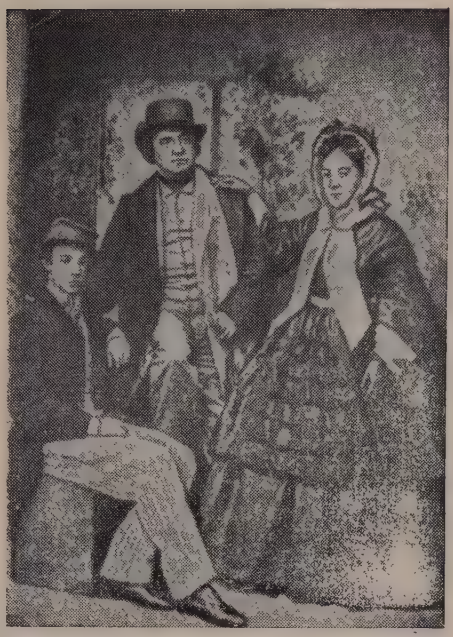
"But why?" the actor asked in surprise.

"Well," and here the waiter pointed to the owner, "he never charges his like for a meal..."

It was Sadovsky who inspired the realistic school of acting to create characters true to life. Here is another feature of old Sadovsky's acting, a feature which was inherited by the actors of the Ostrovsky-Sadovsky school: while interpreting and revealing the nature of the characters they portray, they always remain their ownselves. In accordance with the type played they change the modulation of the voice, the rhythm of pronounciation and the intonation of the spoken words, but always remain themselves in any role.

All this could be best observed in the acting of Olga Sadovskaya. Sadovskaya had the habit of folding her arms across her abdomen—a habit she used on the stage in almost every part she played. And what power of expression there was in this jesture! Now her folded arms would be those of a hard-boiled merchant woman, the head of a trading firm; now they would be folded in humble fashion, as behooves a meek and devout woman; or they would be those of a conceited wife of an official, of a busy housewife or the helplessly pressed arms of a mistreated, poor relative. For each type Sadovskaya had a different way of applying her natural habit.

It would be wrong to believe that the Sadovskys, and Sadovsky the elder, in particular, were great only in Ostrovsky's plays. Old Prov Sadovsky appeared in Molière's plays; he played the part of King Lear and of the Fool, of Malvoglio and of the sexton in *Hamlet*. His Shakespearean characters were profoundly comical and imbued with the spirit of "merry old England." It was he, too, who created unsurpassed roles in such Russian plays as Gogol's *Wedding* and *Inspector General*, in Sukhovo-Kobylin's *Krechinsky's Marriage*, in Turgenev's plays and in Pissemsky's *A Bitter Fate*. Sadovsky's dramatic talent was particularly manifested in this last play, where, in the role of the peasant who murders his wife out of jealousy, he never failed to bring tears to the eyes of his audience. Sadovsky was exceptionally good in plays where human drama could be disclosed under the shell of outer humour; he knew how to make people laugh away their tears and how to bring tears through laughter.



The Sadovsky family

His son, Mikhail, continued in his father's footsteps. Mikhail Sadovsky knew a number of languages; several plays translated by him from the French and Italian were staged in Russia. He was a fine portrait painter; he wrote stories about the life of "insignificant people," wrote fables and was known for his clever impromptu stories and biting humour. Like his father, he was an ardent admirer and advocate of Ostrovsky and appeared in forty-five of his roles, sometimes playing two and even three roles in one play. He was an advocate of Russian plays on principle and refused to appear in translated plays for the reason that he could never "impersonate a duke or a lord."

But there was one part, that of Atolycus in *The Winter Tale*, that he asked to be allowed to play. He was extremely fond of this play, read it in the original, compared all existing translations and knew it by heart. He who always played leading roles wanted to play this minor one; to him there was no secondary role in Shakespeare's plays and he always maintained that each and every Shakespearean character was important in his place.

Like his father, Mikhail Sadovsky played a variety of roles, but he was best in portraying luckless people, people ill-treated by fate. He maintained that not only the eyes but even the shoulders reflected Man's soul, and he acted accordingly. The stooping shoulders of a student bent over his books showed the audience that the boy was afflicted with tuberculosis; the raised shoulders of a retired

officer bespoke his old habit and fondness for epaulets, and the broad shoulders of a merchant at once betrayed his intoxication with his wealth and power. There was a remarkable genuineness in whatever Mikhail Sadovsky did on the stage: thus, when he brought an empty glass to his lips, the audience felt sure that he was drinking the "real stuff;" when he called a dog through the open window and talked to it, people in the audience would venture their opinions about the kind of dog it was, although in reality there was no dog at all. Once he played a canary fancier, and gazing at an empty cage he taught a canary to sing, "chirping" with a knife on a plate with such reality that the people afterwards asked the manager whether there were real canaries in the cage.

A prominent stage critic once wrote the following about Prov Sadovsky whom he compared to the world-famous Tomaso Salvini: "In studying their parts they would conceive the characters in a direct concrete way, with the result that the images created by them were striking and simple at the same time." Both of them, as well as Mikhail Sadovsky, "never allowed any unnecessary details to interfere with the general picture of the character."

There was no other actor of his period who was such a reader of monologues as Mikhail Sadovsky.

Olga Sadovskaya who had been a fine concert pianist in her youth, a singer and composer of folk songs, had a splendid ear for every intonation of speech. From the beginning of her stage career she acted the part of old women and for each of them she found new shades, modulations and intonations of speech. Among the types depicted by her were plain peasant women and aristocratic ladies, modest middle-class women and rich merchants' wives, wives of officials, cooks, match-makers, wives of rich estate-owners, nurse-maids—all of whom she portrayed with exceptional realism. She was equally good in portraying all types of women—domineering, vicious, grouchy women and women devoid of will-power; kind and resigned women, tender, loving mothers, scandal-mongers, old women downtrodden by life, noble souls and vicious intrigants. Knowing the truly-national features of Russian women, she succeeded in depicting their emotions with great profundity. It was precisely this that Ostrovsky valued in her so highly. In his opinion she could not be surpassed in some of the roles of his plays.

Olga Sadovskaya knew how to make the audience weep over the sufferings of a peasant woman who was rocking her orphaned grandchild to sleep; she held the audience spellbound in the part of an old serf who cared for a prisoner of war in 1812. She never gave the impression that she was acting: she hardly moved about the stage (she would walk up to the footlights, face the audience and just talk), hardly used make-up, never wore a wig and rarely changed her coiffure—and yet she always created a different impression, whether comical, dramatic or tragic, owing to her skill in making use of the wealth of the Russian language, of its richness, expressiveness and beauty.

The children of Olga and Mikhail Sadovsky, Elizabeth and Prov, are not as "national" in their acting as their parents had been. Elizabeth Sadovskaya, a romantic actress, who excelled in roles of Russian women, created a poetic image of Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Her brother, Prov, who is with the Maly Theatre now, has played the part of Joseph Surface in Sheridan's *School for Scandal*, of the romantic and passionate Guido Ferrangi in Oscar Wilde's *Duchess of Padua*, of the striking Hakoon in Ibsen's *The Struggle for the Throne*, of Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, of Florizel in *The Winter Tale*, of Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* and of a number of heroes in Schiller's plays. His is an international repertory; he appears as a romantic lover in his youth, a "hero" in his age of transition and a moralist in his old age. But like his illustrous ancestors, he too achieves his success mainly by the use of a variety and expressiveness of the spoken word. This explains his success on the radio. Sadovsky has always endeavoured to preserve the richness of the Russian language, thus revealing to the audience all the national peculiarities of our Russian people.

In the course of his life Prov Sadovsky Jr. appeared in a great many plays. He has been most successful in Russian fairy-tales and in historical plays (he has an inimitable manner of wearing the old-time kaftan, boyar's clothes and military attire). In the past ten years he has shown himself to be a producer and stage manager of no mean talent. He is no innovator, no modernist or adherent of a certain style: he is just an artist who knows how to utilize the finest realistic traditions of the Russian theatre and apply them to the demands made by the audience of today. His excellent taste and profound knowledge of the theatre are carried into his productions, which eloquently show the ties binding the modern theatre with the classic inheritance of the past—a characteristic feature of the Soviet theatre.

Despite his advanced age—he is now seventy-one—Prov Sadovsky Jr. still manages to kindle the fire of enthusiasm in his fellow actors. He helps them to perfect themselves on the stage and to develop a love for Russian and world classics, for Russia's past. No wonder that he was unanimously elected art manager and leader of the Maly Theatre.

This year, 1945, Sadovsky celebrated his fiftieth anniversary on the stage of the Maly Theatre. His jubillee was kept throughout the Soviet Theatre world and Sadovsky was presented with the Order of Lenin.

The glorious theatrical dynasty of the Sadovskys is being continued. Mikhail Sadovsky, Prov Sadovsky Jr.'s nephew, is today appearing on the stage of the Maly Theatre, and young Prov Sadovsky, the latter's son, is being trained at the Maly's theatrical school. Thus, the Sadovsky family will have its representatives in the fourth generation as well.

VLADIMIR PHILIPPOV

"IT HAPPENED IN THE DONBASS"

The Donets Coal Basin or Donbass is frequently the scene of films produced by Leonid Loukov. *I Love*, his first picture based on Avdeyenko's novel of the same name, is a story of the old pre-revolutionary Donbass and the hard life and wearing toil of its miners in those days. *A Great Life* produced in 1940—the scenario is by a young writer Pavel Nilin—brought Loukov fame and a Stalin Prize. In this film we see the modern mechanized Donbass and the new man reared by the new life. The Stakhanov movement, born in the Donbass, the fight for new labour methods against old bigoted views and sabotage is shown through fictitious characters. Leonid Loukov speaks from personal experience: he lived in the mines, he knows and loves the miners and what he calls their "human profession." The greater part of his life, he says, the miner spends in darkness and the cold underground to give people light and warmth.

The struggle for the liberation of the Donbass during the Civil War of 1918 to 1921 forms the theme of Loukov's historical film, *Alexander Parkhomenko*, centering round the man who was one of the Red Army's first leaders and the comrade-in-arms of Joseph Stalin, Klim Voroshilov and Semyon Budionny.

During the Great Patriotic War of 1941 to 1945 Loukov abandoned the Donbass theme for the first time in *Two Buddies*, the story of a touching friendship between two machine-gunners, fighting like lions at the approaches to Leningrad.

It Happened in the Donbass, as the title tells us, takes us back again to the old places the author knows and loves so well. We see events and men in two epochs separated from one another by a quarter of a century but closely bound by common ideas and traditions handed down from father to son, from generation to generation.

The story begins in 1942, when the Donbass was groaning under the heel of the German fascist invaders. In the boundless steppe we see a group of girls emerging from a cloud of black coal-dust raised by violent gusts of wind. They are plainly dressed and on their feet are heavy military boots. In the serious expression of the young faces we read a firm resolution to overcome obstacles more formidable than a hurricane or a tiring march across the steppes.

We see the girls at the command post of Red Army Colonel Stepan Ryabinin where they have come to be transferred across the line into a German-occupied area for the fulfilment of an important assignment.

This was no unusual thing in those days: thousands of Soviet youths and girls volunteered their services for missions of extreme danger and the greatest responsibility.

The colonel's searching glance rested on each of the girls' faces in turn as if he were probing her very soul. Would she flinch at the critical moment? Or would she hold out in the trials awaiting her? His eye rests on a young eager face.

"Natasha!" he cries with emotion.

The girl looks at him in astonishment and shakes her head in denial. Like one fascinated the colonel seems unable to take his eyes off her face. He pronounces another name:

"Helen... Helen Loghinova?"

There is a short pause.

"Uncle Stepan!" a joyous young voice responds and with an impulsive movement she comes towards him.

What does this mean? Why does the colonel first call her Natasha and then Helen?

Here the film carries us many years back into the past.

It is late autumn of the year 1918. The same Donbass, the same Stepan Ryabinin, only twenty-four years younger and not a colonel, but a Red Army private, lying badly injured among strangers in a strange house.

Standing at the head of his bed is a young girl, almost a child, dressed in the school uniform of those days—the living image of the Helen we have just seen. She is gently smoothing the wounded man's pillow and entreating the doctor to make haste and operate. We learn that Stepan has been taken off a train and rushed to hospital. When the town was taken by the Germans, the Red Army man had to hide himself. He had found refuge in the house of a physician—the country doctor Loghinov. The schoolgirl was Natasha, the doctor's daughter, and it was her name the colonel called out when he caught sight of Helen.

The doctor was frankly displeased with the burden that has been imposed upon him. What is he to expect if the Germans discover a wounded Red Army man under his roof? Interrogation, arrest, prison... But his daughter's pleading and the age-old tradition of medical ethics turned the scale in Stepan's favour. Dr. Loghinov rendered the necessary aid. He obeyed the dictates of duty, while barely concealing his dislike of the patient.

Without giving himself time to recover completely from his injuries, Stepan left the doctor's house and found his way back to his unit.

When the Red Army had driven off the Germans, Stepan and Natasha meet again—this time in the building of the local school. This is a colourful scene which brings out the violent contradictions existing amongst the young people of that time. At a meeting of upperform schoolboys Stepan tried to speak on behalf of the Russian Young Communist League (the Komsomol), but the boys would not listen. His words are drowned in a din of voices, loud hissing and the sounds of a hilarious chorus. Natasha alone had the courage to support the speaker and railed at companions who had so unexpectedly taken up a position of neutrality now that the Red Army had come.

Episodes from the life of the Komsomol in the early days of the Revolution succeed one another on the screen. A company of young people—children of workers and peasants—set up a commune. These are young fighters for new ways of life on principles of equality and justice. They are poor, badly dressed, their sole property—their books.

And it is into this circle of enthusiasts that Natasha comes—a dainty, elegant apparition, so utterly unlike all these simple girls and boys that they flatly refuse to accept her. "We want no fine ladies here; we, Komsomols, are a league of desperate people!" These outcries, hostile, naive and resolute, meet girl on all sides. From their curt responses we learn something of the biographies of the youthful members of the commune: the father of one has been shot; another has escaped from a German prison; even Yefimchik, a boy of fifteen, has his record of services rendered to the cause of the Revolution. Can these young people have faith in Natasha who has lived a sheltered life in a well-to-do family of the intelligentsia? Natasha is terribly grieved, she is on the verge of tears, until Stepan raises his voice in her defence: "Wasn't it she, Natasha," he says, "who had held her own against all the others at the meeting of the school youth? How can they find it in their hearts to refuse to admit a girl like her into the Komsomol?"

How romantic sounds the oath required of anyone wishing to join the League! Natasha had to swear to face death, should the Revolution demand the supreme sacrifice.

Very moving are the conversations of the young people about the future and their daydreams to which they give expression. Some picture the future as a struggle. "Only a struggle?" ask the others. "And where does happiness come in?" "We shall find our happiness in struggle," comes the answer. The life of the future seems to their imagination a thing of beauty and glamour. Beautiful will be the earth with the new radiantly-bright cities, gardens, parks, and magnificent factories. The black coal-mines shall be white. White drifts and white coal. The youths and the girls will be beautiful to look at. All beautiful, like Natasha!

In the new surroundings of the Komsomol Natasha learns the joys of first love, wifehood and motherhood. To her friend, Dasha, she speaks of her love for the little white warm morsel of humanity—her newborn daughter, Helen.

It is winter. There is a snowstorm. A snowbound wayside station in the steppe. The girlfriends are listening intently—listening for the return of their comrades from the scouting expedition... They have come back, but not all of them. Anton, Natasha's husband, is killed... With eyes frozen in grief, Natasha presses her cheek to the lifeless face of her beloved.

Out there, in the remote steppe, they lower into the grave the body of their companion-in-arms. A rifle volley is fired in honour of a faithful son of his country.

The young people have to hide underground in a German-occupied town. To reach them Natasha crosses the front line carrying an important order from the command. In a short meeting Stepan speaks to her of his loneliness. It is but little he asks of her. "When the war is over," he says, "may I hope for a little place in your house?" In these sparing words, modest and unobtrusive, she hears a shy confession. But Stepan is not fated to taste of the cup of happiness.

The Germans have shadowed Natasha. She is caught and thrown into prison. She finds herself in the same cell as Dasha. And before her execution, the young mother begs her friend to learn by heart her last letter to Stepan and her little daughter. Her last will and testament.

"I depart this life," she says, "with the consciousness of duty fulfilled. I have accomplished little for I have not lived long on earth. Had I ten lives I should have given them all to my Country. May my little daughter do all that I have not had time to accomplish."

Calm and proud, Natasha goes to her death. Swinging in the air is the noose, portent of her doom.

The picture of Natasha standing on the scaffold fades out, merging into a picture of Helen, weeping at Colonel Ryabinin's command post.

The story of the past is finished. We are back again in 1942.

Addressing his eager young listeners, Stepan Ryabinin tells them of the people of his generation. The Komsomols of 1918 have become generals or People's Commissars. And the new generation they have reared, their children—the Komsomols of the epoch of the Great Patriotic War of 1941—1945 are continuing the struggle, fighting shoulder to shoulder with their fathers.

The first part of the film is taken from a play by a young writer, Boris Gorbatov, *Youth of the Fathers*, now having a successful run at the Lenin Komsomol Theatre in Moscow and adopted for the screen.

The second part is based partly on episodes from *Unbowed*, a popular story by the same author, and partly on facts relating to the heroic deeds of "The Young Guard"—an underground organization of Komsomols in the town of Krasnodon who fought against the fascists in an enemy-occupied town.

To the beating of drums and the shrill strident tones of a brass-band, a German detachment marches along the outskirts of a small town on the Don. Hardly have they disappeared round the bend of the road when Helen, looking warily about her, appears on the scene. She has been given the assignment to find one of her comrades, Misha Ossipenko, and through him to establish contact with the youth. Vainly she knocks at the door of his little house. There is no answer. She has another address with her, that of a girl, Marussya Shevkoplyass. But the latter's windows are shuttered and boarded up—the doors locked tight. Fearfully, Marussya comes out to meet her one-time friend. During an occupation nobody trusts anybody else, in mortal fear of betrayal. Marussya lives cloistered from the outside world. The one thought uppermost in her mind is to evade the lynx-eyed vigilance of the Germans—to keep aloof, to bide her time, to let this nightmare of tortures and executions pass, blow over. Misha Ossipenko and a number of the others have been tortured to death in Gestapo hells... Many others had been driven off to slavery in Germany. Marussya is scared at every knock at the door, at the slightest sound from the street. Frightened, she crouches in a corner on hearing the tread of the Germans' goose-step and their shadows, breaking through the chinks

in the shutters flit through the room in sinister patterns.

The horror of the German occupation lay not only in the bloody terror they instigated, but in the corruption the Germans brought to the minds of the young. Sowing their lying propaganda in newspapers and over the air, they deprived people of hope, they did all they could to convince the Russians that all was over, that the Germans had come to stay, that the Red Army was irretrievably smashed.

From Marussya's house Helen goes straight to Aunt Dasha's, the same Dasha who received her dying mother's message and conveyed it to her dead friend's daughter. Dasha had remained faithful to Natasha's bequests all through and had brought up Helen in the same spirit. But in this house, too, there is a new disappointment—another tragedy in store for the girl. The authors of the film look reality straight in the face: there are shameful facts which cannot be overlooked. Lisa, Dasha's daughter and Helen's former schoolfriend, liked to dress well, to dance and feel herself secure; she accepted the attentions and gifts of a German officer, for she too had become convinced that the Germans would remain in the Donbass for ever, and that, consequently, struggle was vain and senseless. Another blow was struck at Helen's heart when she learned that Pavel Bazhanov, a young poet who was in love with her, had fallen victim to a ruse and had been put in a shameful position by the Germans. He had been called to their publishing office and ordered to write some verses on a fascist-dictated theme. He refused. They published their own, signed in full with his name "Pavel Bazhanov."

Helen is falling into despair. Who is she going to entrust with the assignment, with whom can she work? But Aunt Dasha is there at her side, to give her hope and confidence. "The people are there," she said. "You've only got to get them together. You will do that." She had correctly summed-up the task before Helen: to struggle for every human soul not to let a single one fall into the clutches of the enemy.

Laconically and expressively Loukov gives us the setting in an occupied town—the round-ups,—the scenes of Germans hunting down their victims with the help of dogs.

Helen is hiding in the entrance of a strange house. Pavel, the young poet, fleeing from his pursuers, seeks the same refuge. It is in this strange way that the two friends, separated by the war, meet for a few heart-stirring moments.

One of the following episodes in the film shows Pavel and Helen walking together against the background of a once delightful public garden that has been spoiled by the Germans and its trees barbarously felled. Memories of past meetings revive. On one of the trees Pavel had carved their initials—a "P" and an "H," inside the outlines of a heart. A German axe had cut deep into the heart. An outsider, seeing them walking together, might have thought it was a lovers' meeting. Actually it is the boy's fate that is being decided. He has got to make his final choice—to remain the hunted, terrorized prey of the Germans, or join in the grim struggle against the oppressor?

The first secret meeting of the young people called by Helen takes place in Aunt Dasha's house. History repeats itself. Twenty-four years ago it was Natasha who was all aflame to join the Komsomol, now it is her daughter Helen before whom her young companions take their oath: to fight to the last, not to flinch in the face of torture or death.

Another picture: the whole town has flocked into the streets. In the crowd we see Helen and the young people she has wrenched from the fascist influence.

In one of the most stirring episodes of the film we are shown sailors of the Red Navy going to meet their death at the hands of the invader.

They are handcuffed, surrounded by an armed guard and dogs. But nothing can break the spirit of the patriots. The sailors are driven behind the barbed wire of a concentration camp. And here, straight into the brutal faces of the hangmen thunder forth the strains of the old Russian song: *Wide Stretch the Waves of the Sea.* The townspeople throng round the wire unable to take their eyes off the singing sailors.

"Fire!" comes the frenzied German command. A volley of tommy-gun fire thins the ranks of the Red sailors. But the song is not hushed. Another volley, then another and yet another... Prone on the ground lie the dying sailors... Only four men continue to sing... Now it is three... then two voices. The words break off with the last breath of the last man...

The Germans have called young and old to the Labour Exchange. They have got to reconstruct the destroyed mines. They offer bread, work, money. And now these Soviet men and women show a courage no less heroic than that of the sailors. All of them, miners almost to a man, pretend to be common labourers, among them the young technician Fyodor Kulyghin and Marussya Shevkoplyass who, we know, is a mechanic.

"Where are your colliers? Where are the hewers? the machinists?" cries the infuriated German commandant who sees that he is being deceived.

"You have... excuse me... you've killed them..." one of the miners answers with a scarcely perceptible twinkle.

For this Fyodor is beaten up by the Germans. He has his teeth knocked out one by one, a tooth a day. They brutally flog his father too, an old miner, and the mother they are about to send to work in Germany.

The old man can hold out no longer under the torture. He begs his son to submit. The Germans have promised they will set his wife free if he and Fyodor agree to work for them in the mines. They have even sent bread for the starving children. To atone for his father's guilt Fyodor decides, on an assignment of the Youth organization, to flood the mines. He is noticed by the sentry. They open fire. Fyodor dies in the arms of Marussya. "Don't take my father for a blackguard. He is only a weak man..." are his last words.

But the old man gathers courage and overcomes his weakness. He leads the Germans down into the mine, presumably to help them

draft a plan of reconstruction, and blows it up, burying himself and the invaders under the debris.

The fascist terror rages on: among the men and women called to the Labour Exchange is Helen.

She is saved from slavery by Lisa, Dasha's daughter who now sees the error of her ways. Taking the summons addressed to Helen, she goes to the Labour Exchange, gives her name as Helen Loghinova and is included in the list of unfortunates to be shipped to Germany.

A party of young people headed by Helen find their way into the office of the German Labour Exchange manager. They kill him and set fire to the Exchange. The rolls containing the names of men and women intended for transfer to Germany are consumed in the flames. The gates of the Exchange are flung open, the captives set free and the red flag waves from the roof of the building. This triumph is coincident with the advance of the Red Army and the liberation of the Donets Basin from the yoke of the occupation.

In Loukov's film the story of Soviet young people is revealed with deep insight and genuine mastery of execution.

The leading roles of Natasha and Helen are played by Tatyana Okunevskaya: with the same actress in the two roles we see in Helen the personality of Natasha continued and consummated. The images created by Okunevskaya are instinct with purity and charm, and innate nobleness and faithfulness to the ideas of their time. She is amazingly simple and spontaneous. Cinema-lovers have followed her through a number of films and have admired her as the schoolgirl in Julius Raizman's *The Last Night*. But never before has her talent shown itself to greater advantage than now in *It Happened in the Donbass*.

Personated by Helen Tyapkina, who captivated the public in Mark Donskoy's *Rainbow*, Aunt Dasha is a living, breathing woman, not easily forgotten.

Lisa, nervous and highly strung, is well done by a young actress E. Izmailova, who with equal art conveys first the impression of a mind lost, imprisoned by the fascists, and later of the girl's awakening and resolve to expiate her guilt before the people.

The role of Stepan Ryabinin has been entrusted to Ivan Pereversev and the spectator who has watched his development from Young Communist to colonel, senses to the full the great and fruitful path followed by Soviet youth through a quarter of a century.

The lyrical image of Pavel is delineated with a gentle touch by Vladimir Balashov. Typical figures of the new and old generations of miners are presented by Ivan Peltsef and Vladimir Kolchin as Kulyghin, father and son respectively.

Realistically repulsive as the fascist hangman is G. Greif.

The film has been excellently done by Alexander Ginsburg.

The music by Nikita Bogoslovsky is appropriately dramatic.

Speaking of the shortcomings of *It Happened in the Donbass*, we must say that Boris Gorbatov, the writer, and Michael Bleiman and Serguei Antonov, the authors of the script, have allowed the multitude of episodes to detract somewhat from the treatment of the main theme and characters, which lose in depth in inverse ratio to the abundance of material. They have fallen into the narrative genre in presentation, and the film seems to skim over the surface of events, making the biographies of the characters fragmentary and disconnected. And it is greatly to the credit of the producer that he has succeeded, by purely cinema devices, in uniting the multiplicity of episodes into a poignantly interesting, smoothly-flowing story. The whole is subordinated to the single aim of depicting the personality and the mentality of the characters. Loukov came out victorious in a duel with a somewhat loose and patchy scenario and produced a film that is of great interest.

OLEG LEONIDOV

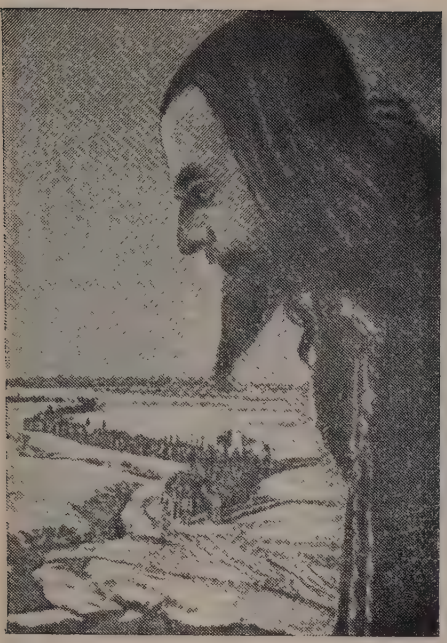
ART NEWS

The epoch of Ivan the Dread, the great Russian Tsar and statesman, has always held a peculiar appeal for Soviet theatres and playwrights. Following closely on the production of Alexey Tolstoy's *Ivan the Dread* (noted in No. 9 of our magazine) came the première of Vladimir Solovyov's play in the Leningrad Pushkin Theatre.

Solovyov's play *The Great Ruler* is a romantic historical drama in verse. Tsar Ivan is depicted as a man of unusual strength of character and willpower—essentially tragic, a man who sacrificed personal happiness on the altar of his country's good. The performance, produced by Leonid Vivien, is colourful, romantic and expressive.

The part of Tsar Ivan has been entrusted to Nikolai Cherkassov, a prominent actor of the Soviet theatre and cinema. He has created the image of a man torn between the historical mission he has undertaken and his personal desires and inclinations. In this psychological turmoil Cherkassov finds an inexhaustible fount for drama. Outwardly the actor is faultlessly plastic—the Tsar's movements, at once angular and rhythmical, are endued with great inner power. He flings down his staff—and the staff stands swaying, dug into the floor. He bends a man to the ground and you sense the frenzy that possesses him. Not a detail, not the slightest nuance has been lost in the actor's presentation.

We have seen Cherkassov in the same role in Serguei Eisenstein's film. There was the danger that the artist might involuntarily repeat himself. That did not happen, however. The versatility of Cherkassov's dramatic power enabled him to create an image original and fresh, something distinct from his recent work for the screen.



N. Cherkassov in the title role of the film "Ivan the Dread"

It is Cherkassov's dramatic art that determines the success of a performance which brings to life a vivid page of Russian history.

The friendship binding the numerous nationalities of the Soviet Union is vividly mirrored in the life of the Soviet theatre. In the Russian Federative Republic alone we have eighty-four theatres playing in twenty-four native languages. The recent review of the national theatres has shown some interesting results.

Critics, producers and experts on questions of art who visited the various localities were convinced that in many of the national theatres considerable success had beenachieved. Particular mention was made of excellent work done in the North-Ossetian theatre, the Opera House and Dramatic Theatre of Tataria, the Buriato-Mongolian Theatre, the Oirotian Theatre, the Operatic Theatre of Bashkiria, and the Kumyk Theatre of Daghestan.

Prominent in the repertories of these theatres are folklore fairy-tale plays and plays based on historical legends—at the theatrical review sixty-nine performances were provided by fifteen national republics and regions of the Russian Federation. Sixteen of the number, among them one opera *Farida* (Tataria), two musical comedies *The Wish of the Pasha* (Ossetia) and *Norov-Ava* (Mordovia) and a number of dramatic works, written for the greater part by native authors, deal with the days of the Patriotic War.

The performances staged by the graduates of the Vakhtangov Theatrical School went off with youthful enthusiasm and great verve.

The students chose Carlo Gozzi's fairy-tale play entitled *The Happy Beggar*. It is now twenty-three years since the Vakhtangov Studio first came upon Gozzi's works. The production of *Princess Turandot* went a long way towards determining the style of the young theatre and revealing the novelty and daring of its theatrical conceptions.

True to the traditions of their theatre, the performers introduced fresh touches into their rendering of the story. It's true that their efforts contained much already executed in the *Turandot* production both in the outward design of the characters and in some elements of style. But if in *Turandot* the ironical treatment of the personages of fairy-tale is stressed, the subject and images of the *Happy Beggar* are taken in all seriousness. The Eastern Tsar Uzbek, who abandons his throne for long years in order to learn the whole truth from his

Scene from "Arshin Mal-Alan," staged by the State Kumyk Theatre

people, and who returns to power eager to vindicate justice, is intensely indignant at the villainy of the cruel vizier. The performance was directed with talent and resource by Samuel Margolin and Cecilia Mansurova who invariably plays the title role in *Princess Turandot* at the Vakhtangov Theatre. Under their able guidance the future artists interpreted Gozzi's entrancing fairy-tale with all the grace and lightness so inherently its own.

Another play chosen by the students, *The Misanthrope*, an amusing vaudeville by Labiche, the music and verses of which are the contribution of Eugene Simonov, the youthful son of the prominent actor and producer Reuben Simonov, was performed with spontaneous merriment and the real vaudeville dash.

At the examination some extracts were also given from the works of Ostrovsky, Turgenev, Chekhov, Dumas and Hemingway, this variety of material enabling the young performers to display their versatility in different styles.

In the post-war months the guests of honour at the Moscow theatres have been the fighters returning from the front. Their presence lends an unusual animation to the auditorium, an ordinary performance is spontaneously converted into a première.

Unexpected meetings take place during the entr'actes. At performance of *Prince Igor* at the Bolshoy Theatre a grey-moustached general meets a young lieutenant. Theirs was a front line friendship. On the breast of each, the variegated ribbons of orders and the Gold Star of Hero of the Soviet Union. The younger man is smiling: "Here we are at the Bolshoy Theatre! Do you remember out there, listening to a selection from *Carmen* over the radio? Never heard it to the end... had to go into action! I thought to myself: the time will come when we shall find ourselves at the Bolshoy Theatre once more. And now it's happened!"

Servicemen witness at the Maly Theatre the best productions such as Ostrovsky's classical comedies and Vsevolod Rokk's *Engineer Sergeyev* showing the heroism of people in the Soviet rear. One evening, the venerable actress, Alexandra Yablochkina (she is more than eighty years old now) came forward with a greeting:

"In the bitter days," she said, "we, art workers, together with the whole Soviet people put our trust in you. We believed in you. We knew you would win! And now victory has come. Our thanks to you, brave defenders of our great country!"

In the old Izmailovo Park, situated in one of Moscow's suburbs, is a Home for veterans of the stage. A delightful house standing in its own grounds. In the shady garden, sitting about in wicker-work armchairs are grey-haired men and women, some with books in their hands, some busy with needle or knitting work.

Living here are thirty-seven of the oldest actors of the Russian stage, among them the venerable Ilya Garsky, a former dramatic actor, now ninety-three years old. Only a year younger is Matthew Shuvalov. He acted in drama and operetta, and was also an excellent accompanist. Years ago it fell to his lot to accompany a young student, Leonid Sobinov, who later became Russia's most famous tenor.

Not one of the inhabitants but has behind him a record of forty to fifty years on the stage. In adjoining rooms we see the eminent dramatic actress, Lappo-Danilevskaya, and the actor, Fedotov. Forty-five years ago they were acting in the same plays; now life has brought them together again. Here is Maria Roksanova—the first "Sea-Gull" of the Moscow Art Theatre. On the evening of the opening of the theatre Roksanova made her appearance as the Princess Mstislavskaya in *Tsar Fyodor Ioannovich*, and that was in 1898.

Here they are living in peace and quiet, surrounded by the solicitude of their country under the patronage of the All-Russian Theatrical Society. Many of them are writing their memoirs. Their quiet rooms are filled not only with memories of days past. Newspapers, letters from friends and broadcasts—all these keep the aged actors in touch with the present life of their country.

On the programmes of numerous concerts held at Tallin, capital of Soviet Esthonia, are a number of new works by Esthonian composers. "Home Once More" by Karindi; "With New Eyes" by Kapp; "Spring in the Old Country" by Piatts; "Cold Nights" by Ernessans; "The Land by the Sea" by Lepnurm—are songs conveying the joyful feelings of a liberated people.

The Tallin Opera House is engaged on a new opera by Eugen Kapp, *The Fires of Vengeance*. Against the background of a people's uprising against the Teuton enslavers on Yuriev Night in 1343, pass vivid pictures of national life.

In the German-destroyed building of the Tallin Conservatoire a few cases of musical files, by nothing short of a miracle, have survived the ravages of occupation. In special registers are recorded the words and melodies of some six thousand Esthonian songs with detailed notes on where, when and by whom they were recorded—evidence of Esthonia's great interest in folk music.

The musical-comedy actor must carry on his stage dialogue with gusto, deliver his song with brilliance and verve and display operatic mastery in a lyrical aria.

It is the Alexander Glazounov State School of Theatrical-Musical Art where musical comedy actors are trained. This school was founded twenty-five years ago, one of its instructors being the well-known Russian composer Alexander Grechaninov, who wrote his children's opera *Teremok* especially for his students.

Some five hundred artists have passed through this school during the quarter of a century of its existence. One of its latest graduates, Inglan Gribova, made a successful debut at the Bolshoy Theatre as Olga in Chaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin*. The school's alumnas are figuring on the stages of the opera houses of Moscow, Leningrad and other towns throughout the country, but the majority find their places in musical-comedy theatres. At the concerts which have marked the theatre's jubilee, scenes were performed from *The*

Victory Parade in Moscow, June 24th, 1945. Red Army men throw captured Hitlerite standards at the foot of the Lenin Mausoleum

Road to Happiness, a modern operetta by Isaak Dounayevsky, and extracts from classical works of the same genre by Offenbach, Strauss and Kalmann.

Victory Parade, held in Moscow to celebrate the triumphant termination of the Great Patriotic War, has been duly recorded by the cinema.

The spirit of joy pervades the Red Square and the hoary walls of the Kremlin. The tribunes are filled with people, a mighty ovation greets Generalissimo Stalin as he ascends the Lenin Mausoleum accompanied by his comrades-in-arms. The episodes of the parade succeed one another on the screen. Mounted on a white steed, Marshal Zhukov, the conqueror of Berlin, receives the report from Marshal Rokossovsky who is in command of the parade and together they ride along the stately lines of the troops. "Hurrah" thunders forth in answer to his salutation. Then comes Zhukov's speech from the tribune of the mausoleum. There before us on the screen are the faces of those to whom his words are addressed: workers, employees, scientists, engineers and artists, soldiers hardened in battle, all attentively listen to the words of the army leader... An artillery salvo. A military orchestra, one thousand four hundred strong, strikes up a march. The troops march past with measured tread.

Eleven fronts have sent to the parade their composite regiments, the "Finest of the Fine," led by illustrious marshals and generals. Marching through the Red Square come the heroes of Stalingrad, the defenders of Sevastopol, the liberators of the Ukraine, the conquerors of Königsberg, the participants of the storming of Berlin.

Against the background of the majestic picture of the parade, separate stills of the film show the main power behind the victorious army—its men. Here carrying the fighting banner of the First Ukrainian front is Alexander Pokryshkin, three times Hero of the Soviet Union; here, naked sabre in hand, at the head of his columns, marches Marshal Govorov, the hero of the defence of Leningrad; here are the sturdy ranks of our future officers—the boys from the Suvorov schools.

The sounds of the orchestra cease. A tatoo of drums is heard. Two hundred German banners, captured in victorious battle, are thrown to the foot of the Mausoleum. Here are the personal standard of Adolf Hitler and the banners of the notorious "select" S.S. divisions.

Next come the armoured units. Enormous tanks roll thunderously across the square; baby tanks dash by; then the mightly artillery passes with ponderous tread.

The *Victory Parade* film is a picture laconic and simple in composition. The final scenes show the rejoicings of the people in streets and squares and in the parks and gardens of a Moscow brilliantly illumined with festive lights.

"Achtung! Achtung! Pokryshkin's in the air!" comes the warning German cry as the plane piloted by the famed Soviet airman Alexander Pokryshkin rises into the sky.

The documental film bearing his name reveals the image of this manly Soviet warrior. A group of cameramen who spent several months day in day out with Pokryshkin's detachment have created a powerful and thrilling film. Nothing is staged. It is life itself caught by the practised eye of the photographer that is indelibly stamped on the film.

It is not often that shots of fighting in the air are such a success. It was left to Bykov, an

able cameraman who fell at his fighting post, to record the lightning speed of air skirmishes showing the art of Pokryshkin's tactics—the great airman's temperamental impulsive dash and original methods. Pokryshkin's mastery was the result of stubborn work. In the intervals of fighting we see him patiently bending over his writing table or at his daily shooting practice. The film shows him not only in the fighting at the front but in peaceful home surroundings.

A festival in honour of the popular scientific film has been held at Moscow. In the course of this month more than one hundred thousand spectators attended three hundred and six performances showing a hundred and four films. The programme of the festival was interesting and varied. It contained pictures devoted to outstanding figures in Russian life—great warriors, scientists, inventors, composers. Films were demonstrated bearing on medicine, astronomy, natural history, biology. Among the pictures arousing the greatest interest was a film called *Experiments on Revival of the Organism* showing achievements in experimental physiology and therapeutics and innovations in medicine such as the treatment of traumatic shock and one of the rarest of operations, the removal of shell splinters from the heart.

The performances were preceded by lectures and papers read by scientific authorities. Popular scientific exhibitions were on show in the foyers of the cinemas.

At the All-Russian Exhibition of Artistic Laquer Work now being held in Moscow, numerous samples are on view of this interesting branch of Russian national art.

The exquisite workmanship of the artists of the village of Palekh has its roots in the art of old Russia. The masters of ikon painting, disciples of Byzantian and Italian Renaissance art, created a style of their own, intrinsically Russian, following the traditions of the ancient art of Vladimir-Souzdal's painting.

On view are a number of exhibits of the Palekh school. Righteous war forms the main topic of the pictures most prominence being given to subjects in the genre of historical legends, such as episodes from the Battle of Kulikovo (1380); the hand-to-hand fight o the Russian knight with the Tartar warrior; the legendary Russian hero Ruslan immortalized by Pushkin. Other themes used are those taken from Russian and world literature. A locker, painted by Kaourtsev, is covered with scenes from Wanda Wasilewska's *Rainbow*. Of exceeding delicacy is Pashkov's *Don Quixote*, depicting the knight's skirmish with the windmills, while hovering above is a vision of a fantastic fight with a giant and the fair Dulcinea smiling at the victor. A box ornamented by Butorin is devoted to Rimsky-Korsakov. The great Russian composer is sitting at the piano listening intently. And like dreams enveloping him, are the images from his operas: the mysterious city of Kitezh; Sadko deep down at the bottom of the sea; the Golden Cockerel and the irate Tsar Saltan. But the artists of Palekh seek for inspiration not only in epics and the realms of fancy. There are also character studies, instinct with humour and sparkling merriment.

About a hundred and fifty years ago in the

"Lay of Igor's March." Palekh work by I. Vokurov

village of Fedoskino near Moscow the peasants began to manufacture articles from papier-mâché. The beautifully painted little "Loukoutin" boxes and snuff-boxes rapidly became famous. They are distinguished by a variety of theme and a high-class technique. The Fedoskino people are wonderful at copying; they reproduce laquer pictures copied from Repin, Venetsianov, Fedotov, stressing in each its decorative effect. In contemporary events they discover new topics. For instance, "Moscow Salvo" decorates a colourful and festive locker, the work of Semyonov. Tochenov makes a miniature copy of Denisovsky's picture "Stalin at the Front," a masterpiece of virtuosity.

Some eight kilometres from Fedoskino, near the Moscow-Volga Canal lies the village of Zhestovo, famous for its painted trays. As long ago as the middle of the 19th century the artists of Zhestovo had gained popularity by their decorative work on tin; in their hands ordinary tin trays covered with designs of landscapes, fruit, or flowers were converted into works of art possessing a beauty all their own. Together with jugs and dishes painted by the masters of the village of Khokhloma, the Zhestov trays form a gay setting to the exhibition.

In 1929 an artel of Russian artistic laquer work was founded in the village of Mstery. The articles are distinguished by the daintiness and delicacy of their workmanship. Their lockers are covered with the finest filigree work, the gilding is brilliant, the colouring has a transparent sheen. Conspicuous is the work of Morozov, who finds room on a tiny box, five centimetres by five, for battles, duels, lyrical scenes of a complicated mass composition from *The Lay of Igor's March*. In the autumn of 1944, there died at Mstery at the advanced age of eighty-three another remarkable folk-artist, Nikolai Klykov. His works on subjects from Russian fairy-tales are on show at this exhibition.

The brillant constellation of Russian villages Palekh, Mstery, Fedoskino, Kholuy, Zhestovo, Khokhloma appear at the exhibition in a vivid glow of colour, fanciful design, delicate execution bearing yet further evidence of the Russian people's inexhaustible well of creative talent.

An exhibition of sketches of theatrical scenery and costumes from the brush of Academician Alexander Golovin has been opened in Moscow.

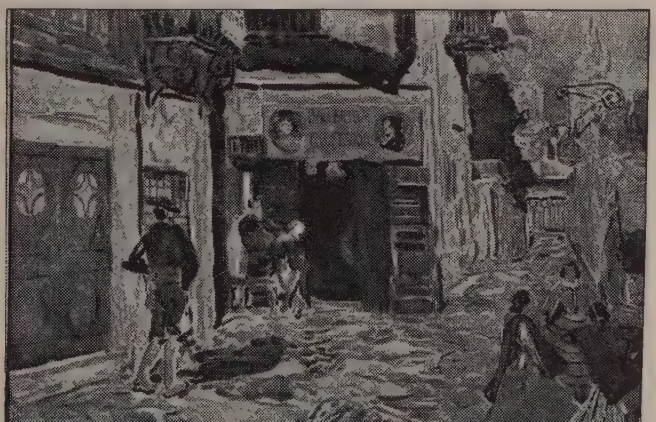
Visitors are immediately attracted by the scenery for *Boris Godounov* (produced in 1906), *Orpheus and Eurydice* (1911), *The Marriage of Figaro* (1917), *Othello* (1930). An unfailing sense of the true essence of a play, of its epoch and style, combined with a knowledge of the stage and proficiency in colour effect make Golovin a master of scenic decoration. He has written a new chapter in the history of the Russian theatre, giving the scenery its rightful place. Not without reason has Golovin gained for himself the title of "father of the art of modern theatrical scenery," but he might also be considered the poet of the theatrical curtain. His curtains deserve a study all to themselves, so lavishly and with such unending variety has the artist's talent displayed itself in the mastery of them.

This exhibition has created a lively interest among the theatrical world of Moscow.

One of the oldest of Soviet composers, Serguei Vassilenko, has completed his *Slavonian Rhapsody* for symphonic orchestra. Besides Russian melodies the author has drawn upon the rich musical folklore of the Southern Slavs: Serbians, Czechs, Slovaks and Bulgarians.

Four new dramatic theatres are being formed in the largest worker districts of Moscow. They are to be directed by some of the best Soviet producers: Alexei Diky, Boris Babochkin, Mayorov and Plotnikov.

The State Jewish Theatre in Moscow is staging *Marriage*, a story by Peretz, adapted for the stage by the writer Dobrushin. The production marked the thirtieth anniversary of



Part of a model for the setting of "Carmen," by A. Golovin

the death of I. L. Peretz, a classic author of Jewish literature.

The Mossoviet Theatre directed by Yuri Zavadsky is producing *Oleko Dundich*, a play about a valiant Serbian officer, hero of the Civil War who fought in the ranks of the Red Army.

Nikolai Strelnikov's *Kholopka* (The Slave) has been revived at the Moscow Theatre of Operetta. The story is based on the episodes from 18th century Russia. The musical comedy first saw the footlights at Moscow in 1931.

A new play just produced at the Moscow Theatre for Children is called *A Fortress on the Frontier*; it shows Soviet frontier guards in action during the Patriotic War.

DOG'S EARS

In court, Pétain does not answer questions, pleading deafness

Drawing by V. Fomichov

NEWS AND VIEWS

As is generally known, the Institute of Orientology under the Academy of Sciences of U.S.S.R. is in Leningrad. However, in Moscow, under the guidance of N. I. Conrad, the eminent authority on Japan, the Moscow group of the Institute's scientific staff is working on oriental problems. Recently a large scientific meeting was held in Moscow, which opened with an exhaustive report on the development of orientology in Poland by the Secretary of the Cracow Academy of Sciences, Professor Tadeusz Kowalski, an expert in Turkish dialectology and Arabian literature who had been invited here by the Soviet government,

Polish orientology dates back to the 13th century, the epoch of the Mongolian invasion, evidence of which are the chronicles recorded by Polish annalists.

A more systematic study of the East begins with the Turkish expansion. Diplomatic relations with Turkey and the practical advantages to be gained by mastering the Turkish tongue tend to enhance still further scientific interest in the East. Frequent journeys to Palestine and Egypt have also left traces in the science of orientology. According to the findings advanced by Mańkowski in his *Oriental Art in Poland*, the interest in things eastern had, by the 17th century, attained the nature of a vogue, oriental dress, arms and certain customs becoming widespread throughout the country.

The Turkish language forms the subject of scientific research. Maniński, a native of Alsace, published his *Turkish Grammar* and a three volume dictionary of the Turkish language. Both were widely used in Europe right up to the beginning of the 19th century.

The Jesuit missions to the Orient acquire considerable importance. Under Stanisław-Augustus, the last Polish king, a School of Orientology was founded at Constantinople for training diplomats and officials for the Far East.

Professor Kowalski gave a detailed account of the part played by Russia in the development of orientology in Poland. Polish orientologists received a special training in St.Petersburg and many have left their trace in Russian science. Professor Kowalski mentioned a number of prominent Russian scholars of the 19th century who were of Polish origin—viz. Joseph Kowalewski, Dean of the Philological Faculty of the Kazan University, author of *Mongolian Dictionary*, *Mongolian Grammar*, and the initiator of mongolology; Joseph Seńkowski, Professor of Arabian in St. Petersburg, known in fiction as Baron Brambeus; Augustus Zaba, the famous expert in Kurdish; Mukliński, Dean of the Eastern Faculty of the St. Petersburg University and author of a large work on *Eastern Elements in the Polish Language*.

Władisław Kotwic,[1] the greatest authority on Mongolia, was already active in the second half of the 19th century; he died in his native Vilnius in 1944. Famous also is Edward Piekarski, the author of a large academic dictionary of the Yakut language.

A great many men of learning were exiled to the Far East in tsarist times for their political activities. While there, they had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the tongues of the peoples inhabiting those parts and made valuable contributions to the science of orientology. Among these scholars should be mentioned Bolesław Piłsudski, a specialist in the language of the Ainus, and the writer Seroszewski, who has left us his *Materials on the Study of the Peoples and Languages of the Far East*.

The literature also includes a number of orientological periodicals that appeared in Poland, viz. fourteen volumes of the *Orientological Annual*, to which several Russian orientalists also contributed, in particular I. J. Krachkovsky. Shortly before the war a bibliographical journal was started, only one volume of which appeared, the second being burnt at the seizure of Warsaw by the Germans.

Concluding his paper, Professor Kowalski noted that the Germans had done their utmost to demolish Polish culture. Of the hundred and twenty members of the Polish Academy of Sciences a bare seventy have survived. More than half of the Polish orientologists have perished, and the library of the Oriental Institute at Warsaw is destroyed.

Professor Kowalski said he was confident that Polish orientology would completely revive in collaboration with Russian science.

Academician Krachkovsky who acted as interpreter, speaking on behalf of his Soviet colleagues, promised every assistance in developing Polish orientology.

A paper was read by Academician V. M. Alexeyev on *Masterpieces of Chinese Literary Prose*.

After a few introductory remarks indispensable to an understanding of the subject, Alexeyev read Russian translations of specimens of Chinese literature of different periods, from the 4th to the 11th century. The translation of these works, abounding as they do in historical and literary allusions, makes great demands on the powers of the investigator, while it requires an artist to do justice to their literary merits. Academician Alexeyev is

a scholar who bases his investigations on his own translations; he is known widely by his translations of Liao Chai, which are far and away better than any existing in European languages.

The readings opened with the prose poem of Li Po (8th century), the famous poet of the Great Tang epoch (618—907 AD), *A Spring Night and Feast in an Orchard*. This poetry is so popular that no Chinese anthology is considered complete without it. Chinese critics of all times never weary of admiring its integrity of style and the joy of life emanating from its lines. The poet calls for the enjoyment of every moment of existence.

The same passionate exhilaration permeates a poem by Wang Hsi-chih, poet and calligrapher of the 4th century, entitled *We Are in a Bower of Orchids*.

Singing the praises of life, the author calls on men to live worthily among their fellows, polemizing with the Taoists who advocate the life of the recluse far from the haunts of men. This poem evoked a wave of imitations. Prominent among them is a prose poem extremely difficult to comprehend and translate, by Lo Pin-wang (7th century) on *How in the Rain I Looked for a Chrysanthemum*.

The next item read by Academician Alexeyev was one of the best, a poem by T'ao Yuan-ming (365—427), *Going to My Home*. It speaks of the bliss of returning to nature after the dull life of an official. T'ao Yuan-ming is a poet who has broken away from the old literary tradition and shaken himself free of the excessive parallelism pervading the poetry of the Chinese. His role in his native literature is one of considerable importance, the poets of succeeding ages following the paths he so boldly laid down.

Of exceptional interest were two poems by Ouyang Hsiu, historian and poet (11th century). One—*The Voice of Autumn*, a lyric; the second, a brilliant satire on calumniators: *How I Hate Flies!* Both these works, so utterly different in genre, are each perfect in stylistic technique.

Academician Alexeyev concluded his paper with a charming poem entitled *I Love the Lotus Flower* by Chou Tun-i, of the 10th century. Here the poet draws comparisons between the lotus, the chrysanthemum and the peony beloved of the poet T'ao Yuan-ming, adducing every argument in favour of the lotus—the symbol of purity.

The translations of Academician Alexeyev are in themselves scholarly investigations—exact and irreproachable, so scrupulously and delicately does his Russian convey the old Chinese texts of different periods intricate in language and composition and studded with quotations and allusions.

These are first and foremost works of art, picked specimens of a grand poetry, and in the Alexeyev translations, the persistent labours of the scholar combine with a lofty poetic art.

A paper entitled *The Arabs and Arabian Literature in the Works of Gorky* was read by Academician I. J. Krachkovsky. This is an unpublished chapter from his work on Maxim Gorky.

In Arabian literary circles the legend is popular that Gorky learnt to read from a Russian translation of *The Arabian Nights*. The Arabs like to think the great writer is bound to them not only by his humanism but also by more concrete ties. And it is a fact that from the age of twelve *The Arabian Nights* was always a favourite with Gorky and that it was he who subsequently wrote the preface to the first complete translation from the original Arabian.

The data bearing on Gorky's connection with Arabian literature are scanty, a circumstance which lends an enhanced interest to the observations made by Krachkovsky on the Arabian sayings and proverbs used by Gorky in his stories, feuilletons and letters written by the author at different periods of his life. In one letter Gorky speaks of an Arabian translation of his *Confessions*. In 1919, he wrote a summary of *The History of Culture Adopted for the Stage and Cinema* in which he mentions Arabs.

In the preface to *The Legend of Ahasuerus* published in Berlin in the year 1919, Gorky gives a short outline of the history of the Near East. In the same year he started a serial edition of *World Literature*, where he displays the keenest interest in the literature of the East. He insists on new translations being made of the Koran and *The Arabian Nights*, and it is only thanks to Gorky's efforts that the translation of the latter work was effected. The first volume of the translation from the Arabian original appeared in 1929 and was introduced by a foreword on fairy-tales by Gorky. Gorky's forceful talent threw light on this monumental work, and Arabian literature, said I. J. Krachkovsky, will be indebted to him for this service.

A paper read by Academician A. P. Barannikov was devoted to the *Ramayana*, a poem composed by the medieval Hindu poet, Tulsi Dass, describing the valourous feats of Rama, the hero of the poem, a work belonging to the 7th century B.C.

This poem, while preserving all the fragrance of the ancient Rama legend, yet provides a new image of the hero. It is written in the Eastern Hindu, alternating with the Hindu of the West. The whole legend and each book separately are adorned with verses written in Sanscrit.

Academician Barannikov read several chapters from his complete translation of the *Ramayana*.

The meeting terminated with an exhaustive paper read by A. A. Freiman on *The Ancient Persian Names of the Months in the Light of Recent Discoveries*.

The death is reported of the talented Lithuanian poetess, Salomeya Neriss, after a painful illness. She was born of a peasant family in 1905, and after graduating from Kaunas University worked for several years as a school-teacher. Salomeya Neriss' poetic gifts displayed themselves at an early age, her first efforts appearing in the Lithuanian press when she was only seventeen. In 1927 the first collection of her verses, entitled *In the Early Morning*, was published.

A faithful daughter of her people, Salo-

meya Neriss greeted Lithuania's entrance into the family of Soviet Republics with verses emanating an ardent patriotism. This event marked a new outburst of effervescence in her art. Salomeya Neriss' *Poem About Stalin* won popularity amongst all sorts of readers; new books and songs from her pen continuously followed one after the other.

In the years of the Great Patriotic War the poetess made frequent journeys to the front where she addressed the soldiers of Lithuanian units. For her patriotic services she was awarded the Order of the Patriotic War, Ist class.

Not long before her death a book of her verses appeared in Lithuania. It bore the title *The Nightingale Cannot But Sing.*

The poetry of Salomeya Neriss, fraught with love of life, her country and people, will remain a valuable contribution to literature.

One hundred and fifty years have now passed since the day when the manuscript of *The Lay of Prince Igor's March*, that most famous of Russian epics, was discovered.

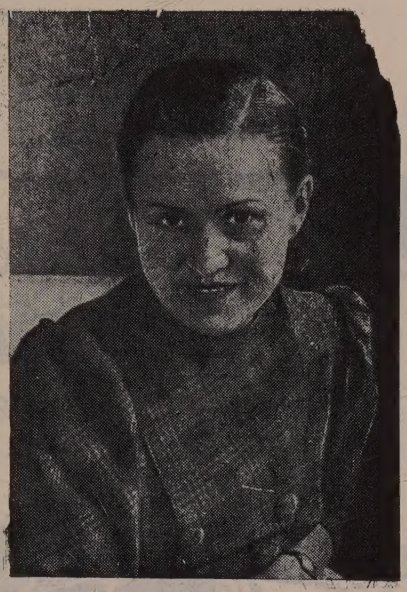
In 1795, A. I. Mussin-Pushkin, a collector of Russian antiquities, found in the book-depository of the Spasso-Yaroslavl Monastery a volume containing many specimens of ancient Russian writings, among them the priceless manuscript of the *Lay*.

To decipher the text it took five years of laborious study on the part of experts in Russian philology, archeology and history. What made the work particularly difficult was the text's being written in continuous line (as it is in all ancient Russian manuscripts) without any division into sentences or words and without any punctuation whatsoever.

The epic first appeared in print in the year 1800. During the fire of Moscow in 1812, Mussin-Pushkin's house together with his precious collection of antiquities including the MSS of the *Lay* perished in the flames. In the same fire almost the entire edition of the printed book was destroyed. Only a few copies remained which have been preserved in the most important libraries of the U.S.S.R.

It was established through long scientific research that *The Lay of Prince Igor's March* was the work of an unknown Russian poet written between the years of 1185 and 1187, that is, immediately after the historical events which formed the background of the action, viz. the war waged by Prince Igor against the people of Polovtsy.

Of the numerous translations in verse of the *Lay* from the ancient Slavonic the best is Vassili Zhukovsky's, a contemporary and friend of Pushkin.



Salomeya Neriss

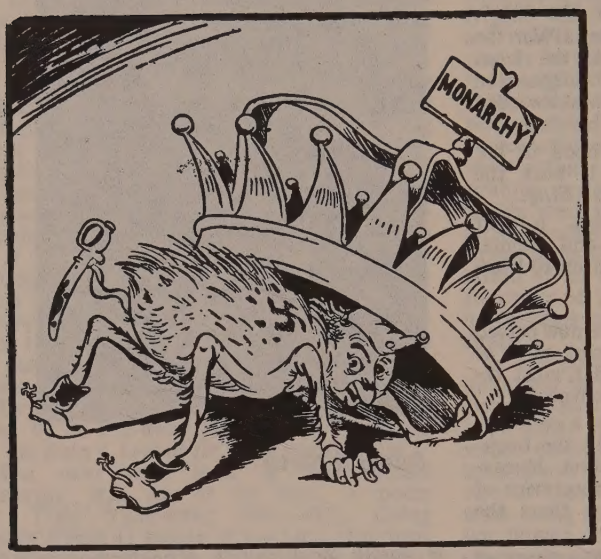
The 14th Chess Championship of the U.S.S.R. terminated in a victory for Mikhail Botvinnik, who has repeatedly been the chess champion of the U.S.S.R.

Botvinnik, without losing a single game, won fifteen out of seventeen. He was three points ahead of his strongest opponent, I. Boleslavsky, who at the same tournament was awarded the honorary title of "Grossmeister."

Botvinnik's talents on this occasion appeared in their full brilliance. He is working unremittingly to perfect his play. A new device which he used in several games attracted much attention: Botvinnik sacrificed a pawn, not for the sake of immediate material or positional advantage, but in the interest of possessing himself of the adversary's communications. Several of the games will undoubtedly be studied by chess-players throughout the world.

"In the person of Botvinnik," the Chief Umpire, Nikolai Zoubaryov said, "we have a chess player who is at the zenith of his powers, and is ripe for contesting the world championship."

UNDER THE CROWN



The phalanx takes cover

Drawing by V. Fomichov

PLAYING FOR THE POOLS

Drawing by V. Fomichov

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