Workers of the world, unite

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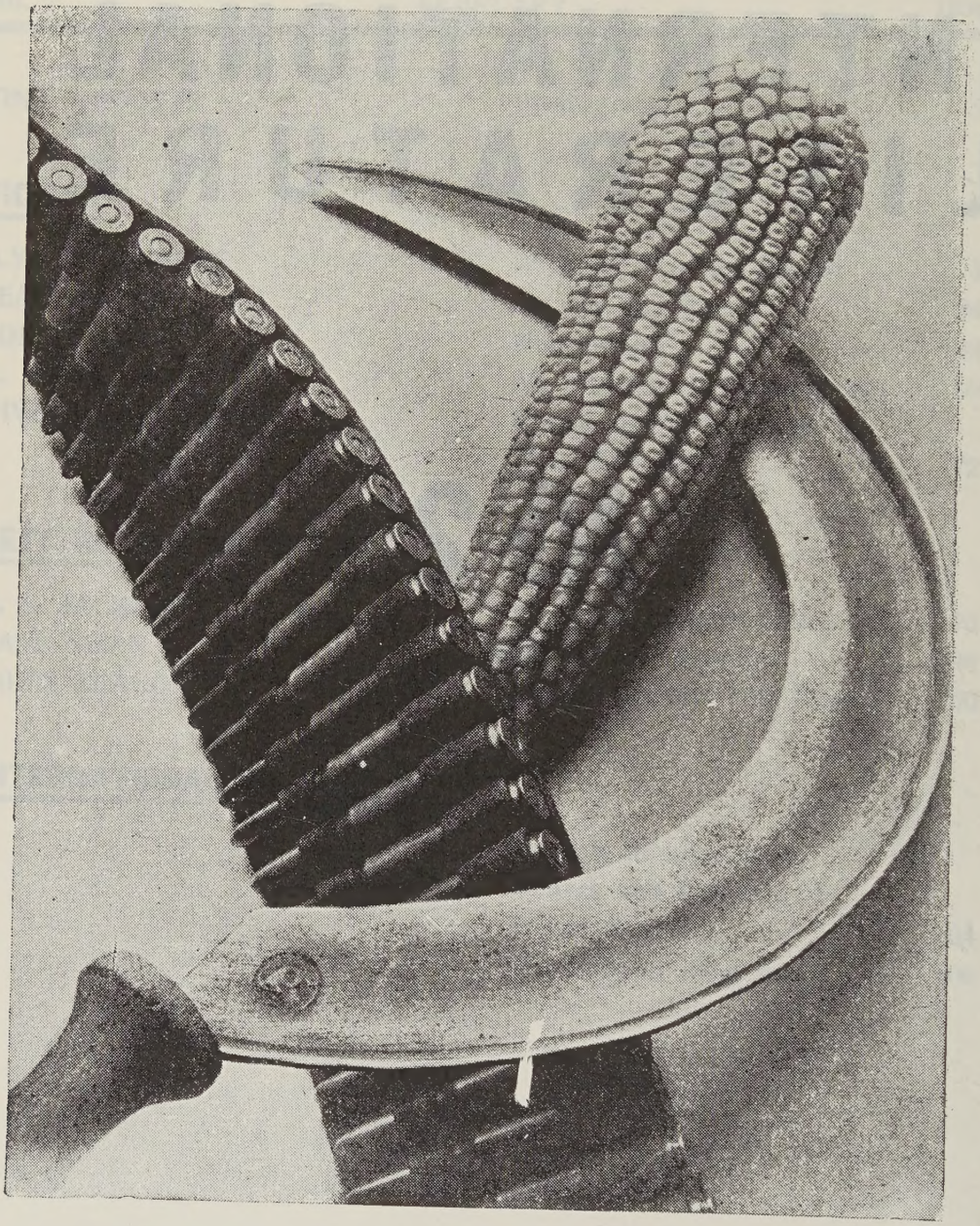

Photograph *Tina Modotti*

Ilya Ehrenburg

Without Drawing Breath

"Our life is extraordinary," Lydia Nikolayevna had told Strom. They had been sitting together, then, among the dust and debris of the public gardens. Strom had not understood what Lydia Nikolayevna had been talking about. nor would he have been able to understand, for Lydia Nikolayevna's life had been a very ordinary one. It had been made up of things like casual love affairs, abortions, an unsuccessful marriage, touring with the theatre in the provinces, acting on an icy-cold stage, a producer who squeezed the actresses as he passed them, murmuring "the wrong forms," a skin inflamed from bad grease paint, and the same little anxieties day after day: shoes must be sent to be mended, fifteen rubles must be set aside for sugar, Popov must be asked to put her name down on the list for stockings . . . But Lydia Nikolayevna had eyes and a heart. A fortnight after the nocturnal conversation with Strom, she found herself in the public garden once more. She did not recognize it. Here were blue flowers, flowers that smelt of the south. By the railings she noticed an apple tree. She had loved apple trees from childhood. Apple blossoms in spring time resembled the silly dreams of a gawky girl, and the hollow, ominous thud of apples falling in autumn quickened the heart beats of Lydia Nikolayevna, who was still called Lida in those days. Would these apple trees be able to stand the local winter? Lydia Nikolayevna smiled: what about the botanist? Had he not promised to transform the tundra into Gursuf—the Crimean health resort?

Lydia Nikolayevna was an insignificant provincial actress.

When an oblique ray of sunlight penetrates a room for a moment, it gilds the dust motes that dance in it.

Everything was extraordinary in this humdrum, out-and-out ordinary life. Golubyev sat turning over the leaves of a book and grumbling. "Rabbits are extremely subject to colds in the head, the rabbit hutch should be kept at a temperature of ...." He read on, grumbling and cursing, then, unable to contain himself any longer, called out to Masha:

"See what I'm doing? Reading up about diseases of rabbits. Now what do you say to that? I studied the Sorokin lathes. I studied the Spitsin lathes. I studied saw-fitting. I know all about the injuries workers get in feeding wood to the machine. I have drawn up detailed plans for courses for recruiting agents for the lumber camp. I can tell you what timber is used for props. I even knew once about diseases of the heart. It's all nonsense! Could it be compared with disease of the pith or the tree trunk. That's science, Masha!" Here he rolled off a whole string of diseases of timber. "Phew! In one year I've turned from an oil expert into a forester. And this is where the rabbits have to come on the scene. Today Yegorka came running in with. 'The rabbits have got diarrhoea!' So I sat down to study the question, else, who knows, they may take in into their heads to die on me." Masha sighed, then said:

"Somebody's asking for you. I didn't let them in. I thought you were asleep."

It was Chijov, and Golubyev, forgetting all about the rabbits, began to kick up a row.

"What sort of soup basins are those of yours? Are they for ballerinas or

timber floaters? I told Fadeyev: 'You've got to serve out a litre and a quarter of soup a head and not a drop less, understand?' "

Dashkova, a sleepy telephone girl, was sitting in the post office, screaming into the receiver:

"Hello! Oh, it's Manka, is it? Take down a telegram, please. Address: Alexeiev, the Soviet farm, Kholmogory. Have you got that? The cow udarnitsa by name Nemka died of rheumatism stop. What are you laughing at, you idiot? After stop comes: Question of selling Chilly or Darling should be considered stop. Also send prize bull by name Fighter stop. Signed Shuyev. Read it over, please. I say, Manka, listen. Take down another telegram. Address: Konchakov, Timber Export Trust, Kotlass. Maximum loss of timber in floating props five percent stop. If loss exceeds this figure come at once explain stop Shurygin. Here's a third, Manka. Borissov, Pechora Experimental Station, Ust-Tsylma. Wire urgently growth Shenkur's provender peas stop signed Liass. L for love—yes. Do you mean to say you don't know the botanist? The one who barks....."

Dashkova finished dictating. Smiling all over her broad face, with its prominent cheekbones, she screamed:

"Hello! Is that you, Manka? I say—our folks got up to the stratosphere! I swear it's true—the newspapers have just come in this minute. Yes, they got higher than anyone. It's here in print: the capitalists couldn't get there and we have. It's awfully interesting! I've been congratulating Nikitin already!"

Dashkova burst out laughing and her sleepiness vanished. She sat there delighted. Manka didn't realize it—where our aviators had got to! It wasn't so very far from the stars.....

Zabelsky, drunk as usual, boomed: "Devil knows what all this is! I can't under—s-s-stand a thing! I sent my Gordon setter to my brother in Leningrad. To my brother, see? You remember that setter of mine—won a prize. Dogs are given a special food ration there and here he nearly died of starvation. There you have the thesis. Now here's the antithesis. In the first place a real live academician came here on a visit. Tomatoes and the like are to be grown at the Pole, and it can only be done under the supervision of master minds. Why did I send my setter to Leningrad? Next thing: the Moscow opera arrived on tour. Coloratura and all that. And now to cap it all—look at this, if you please? Read it. 'Exhibition of Pedigree—dogs.' You understand? And mine's in Leningrad. Now let me ask you—what do you think of the synthesis?"

"The synthesis?" Balkin replied. "Popular brand vodka fifty six degrees instead of forty."

After a dose of Popular Brand Belkin decided to go down to the river for a bathe. He swam out fifty yards or so from the shore, began to shout something unintelligible, then dived under. He was not seen again.

In the Health Resort Department the plan for organizing three resorts of regional importance—Krassnoborsk, Solychegodsk and Totma—was being discussed. Mesentsev's friend, Senka Shatov, was sent to Totma because he had contracted acute rheumatism and neurasthenia. They were housed in a barrack. After the medicinal baths prescribed them the patients went to the club in a dark, damp church. A huge figure of the Virgin Mary with a nose like a bird's beak, could still be distinguished under the ceiling, framed by the legend: "A healthy body is indispensible for the successful execution of the Five-Year Plan." The patients either played draughts or listened to the croaking of a hoarse gramophone. The church was surrounded by a

cemetery. It was decided to turn this into an orchard. Goldberg, a neurasthenic from the finance department, yelled out:

"I can't bear the sight of it! Look here, this corpse is absolutely untouched!"

Goldberg was prescribed salt baths. Senka Shatov wrote the following letter to Mesentsev:

"How do, Petka! I'm playing volley ball these days and in general feel perfectly fit. How are the lads? Of course, it's devilish dull here. No books, either. I've read all Panferov and something technical someone left behind—'Fighting the Malaria Mosquito.' In case my fortunes should ever take me to Central Asia, it may come in useful there. Coming on the 2nd, if there's a boat.

"Regards,

"Shatov."

Belkin's corpse was dragged out of the river. It lay on the river bank a long time. The flies got at it. Then Zachar went to Fein and said:

"We've got to get rid of this corpse. It smells."

At the school meeting Vasska the social worker was saying:

"We'll plant our Soviet flag right at the Pole, and we'll develop the Arctic like anything, because there must be heaps of useful minerals here."

A train of carts with grain arrived from the "Red North" collective farm. The growers celebrated the occasion in "Collective Farm House." They were treated to tea, acid drops and buns sprinkled with cummin. They drank their tea slowly, sweating and smirking. Shvagin made a speech.

"I tell you plain and straight—this is a great thing, this collective farm, if I, for instance, got sixty working days for a natural calamity. In the old days I'd have had to go begging afterwards if the wife and me had been down with spotted typhus for two months. And now I'm as well off, you might say, as the others because the board of the collective farm has said that spotted typhus is a sort of natural calamity and allowed me sixty working days over and above. And now we've got the upper hand of this natural calamity business it means we can drink our tea in peace and be proud of our 'Red North' being the first to deliver the grain and not 'The Great Tractor' nor even the 'Rosa.' "

Bruskov, the secretary of the District Party Committee, rose to reply to Shvagin. He spoke of the part played by the political departments, and afterwards remarked with a little laugh:

"You were right about the natural calamities. We're fighting them on every front. We'll be baking white rolls soon out of the local flour. Frosts are natural calamities, too, but we aren't one bit afraid of them. If we say wheat's going to grow here, it's going to."

Shvagin set down his saucer on the table, leaned back in his chair and guffawed long and painstakingly. It was a very complicated laugh, his—passing from trills to bass, and interspersed by sounds resembling the growling of a dog. Still laughing, he said:

"Now you're going a bit too far! White rolls, indeed!"

Shvagin thought that Bruskov had simply intended to amuse him, so, completely satisfied with life, he laughed his fill.

Not far from the "Collective Farm House" which was situated on the outskirts of the town, a two storied wooden house resounded at that moment to the growling of dogs. There were two growlers: a hairy, tousled animal known as Ursus, and a man. The most astonishing thing about it was that the man was on all fours like the dog. There they stood, growling at each

other, while six year old Mishka, the son of Ksiushka the gardener, observed the scene. At last Mishka, inquired admiringly:

"What are you saying to him?"

"I'm telling him," the man replied, "that's my bone, don't you dare to touch it."

"And what's he saying?"

"He says: I want it."

After this the man turned towards the dog again and emitted strange and piercing sounds. The dog barked sharply. Thereupon Mishka demanded anxiously:

"What is it you're saying now?"

"Oh, now we're having a very serious talk. I'm telling him: There's a cat round here somewhere. And the silly thing doesn't like cats. Once last spring he went up to a cat—in quite a friendly, well-meaning way, you know. Only he doesn't know the ways of cats you see. Well, and he started to sniff at her. So the cat, as you may expect, slapped his face. And scratched him. From that day to this he can't bear the sight of cats. And I'm just saying to him now: There's a cat hereabouts."

"And what does he say?"

"He's bragging: I'm not afraid of cats. I'm not afraid of anybody. I'll eat that cat! That's what he says, but he's terrified really. That is, he's afraid and—he isn't. He's not silly, after all. He understands very well that I'm only pretending. But still he feels nervous. What if there *should* be a cat hidden inside my coat after all? he thinks."

This conversation went on for quite a long time. In addition to Ursus, Mushka, Baibak and Props took part in it. Ivan Nikitovitch owned four dogs and each of them were remarkable in some respect.

Ursus was young but cunning. Whenever Ksiushka made cabbage soup with meat in it, Ursus would walk round and round her, gazing into her eyes and moaning pleadingly. Such love looked out of his eyes at times like these that it melted Ksiushka's heart and she always poured him out a basin of soup. "He's only a dog," she would say, but he's got feelings." She was firmly convinced that Ursus understood her soul. He wasn't like people were! Niketka, for instance, who was ready enough to paw her, never fear! but would he ever sit with her a while? Would he ever think of asking about things that lay nearest her heart? Beasts knew by scent what sort of a heart a body had. So Ksiushka thought. But what about Ursus? It was useless for Ksiushka to call him when her cabbage soup was meatless: at times like those Ursus lost all interest in human feelings. He was unusually intelligent and the first to run and fetch anything. Ivan Nikitovitch used to say: "He'll go a long way, that fellow. Only the rascal is as greedy as the devil."

Props had been brought up by Yevdokimov, a timber floater who got drowned last spring. After that happened Props had wandered inconsolably up and down the river bank, whining. The workers had called him to them in the barrack, but he had not gone and had refused to eat. When Yevdokimov's body had been dragged out, Props had first rushed up to it with a cheerful bark, and then, after sniffing it, slunk away with his tail between his legs. Something in his dog's soul had snapped at that moment. Formerly he had been a gay fellow, fond of frightening sparrows and rolling in the grass to the accompaniment of squeaks of enjoyment. Yevdokimov had taught him to sit up and beg: he had often amused all the timber floaters by sitting up on his hind legs and proping himself on his tail. But after Yevdokimov's disappearance he grew suddenly old and dull. Nowadays, no

matter whether you showed him a bone or not, he would not sit up and beg. He lived with Ivan Nikitovitch but often disappeared for three or four days at a time. Then he would return and scratch at the door. No one knew where he went. Once Ksiushka said: "He ought to be whipped; that would teach him not to go gadding about." But Ivan Nikitovitch said sternly: "Props is a very serious dog. If he goes out somewhere, it means he's got business of his own to attend to. He's not to be beaten—he'd never stand an insult like that."

Lazybones did not look in the least like a lazybones. He was an old dog, and moulted in patches. It seemed most likely that one of his ancestors had been a setter. He had earned the name of Lazybones for his sleepiness: he would sleep the clock round. He never went out hunting, and he was in no sense a watch dog. It was hard to understand why Ivan Nikitovitch had become attached to this dull, heavy creature. But Ivan Nikitovitch said: "You'll never find a cleverer dog than him. Only the others are technicians, and he's a poet. You should hear how he whines in his sleep, and see how he fiddles with his paws, and cries and shows his teeth out of sheer satisfaction. I look at him and think: What dreams he must have!"

As for Mushka, she acted as Ivan Nikitovitch's personal secretary. She and Ivan Nikitovitch were inseparable. He took her with him on all his expeditions. Whenever he went to the "Scientists Club" to read a report, Mushka sat by the entrance guarding his torn galoshes. She was a small animal brown with black spots. Her paws were stubby. Once, when they happened to be coming out of the club together, Bruskov asked Ivan Nikitovitch:

"What breed is this Mushka of yours?"

"The same breed as Lazybones, comes of a long line of backyard curs," Ivan Nikitovitch replied.

Formerly the more serious minded people thought that Ivan Nikitovitch's dogs must be a special kind. After all, he was very clever and learned people from Moscow came to see him, and he had written a book on "Rye and Wheat Hybrids." He must have some scientific purpose in keeping these dogs. But Bruskov informed everyone: "He just laughs and says they're common yard curs."

So now, whenever people met the botanist with his Mushka or Props, they would smile as much as to say: "Queer chap, isn't he?" But he was readily forgiven his queerness; it was the pride of the town.

The children asserted that Ivan Nikitovitch could talk to dogs in their own language. Vasska the social worker frequently asked Ivan Nikitovitch to compile a dictionary of dog-and-human language. Ivan Nikitovitch never laughed in reply. He said: "Well, I've got a great deal of work on hand just now. But as soon as ever I get a bit of spare time I'll do it for certain."

Not only the children, but Lydia Nikolayevna as well, believed in Ivan Nikitovitch's power of conversing with dogs. She became a little girl again whenever she visited the botanist. These were the happiest hours of her life. Popov used to tease her about it. "You've gone nutty over this botanist." She would blush and hasten to answer: "Nothing of the kind. You're just cheap, that's all. I think of Liass as a great scholar." She could not account for this passion of hers for science. Liass was busy with his own work, which seemed dull enough. But Bruskov was making no idle boast when he told the collective farm members: "We'll soon be baking white rolls out of flours grown here." Ivan Nikitovitch had firmly resolved to transplant wheat to the north. It was talked about at the meetings of the planning committee,

it was closely connected with names and figures. What could Lydia Nikolayevna have found so interesting in all this?

Ivan Nikitovitch said: "Look at barley, for instance. We've grown a new variety called 'Promoted Worker'—specially adapted to the northern climate. The result is twenty-five hundredweights to the hectare." Lydia Nikolayevna should, by right, have yawned at this point, but on the contrary she listened to the story of the barley with glowing eyes. For her Ivan Nikitovitch was a story teller, a wizard; he would knit his brows, call his Mushka to him, and tell him how many frosty days, such-and-such a growth, hundredweights, hectares, and in the swamps that surrounded the town large red roses bloomed.

"Promote me to Mushka's place though, if you like. He's only six, but he's the right sort."

Lydia Nikolayevna was not offended: like Mishka, she regarded Liass with a species of enthusiasm. The wizard performed another miracle. He said: "Why should an oak have to grow fifty years before acorns? We'll make a five-year-old oak yield acorns." He could make, all at once, out of a small sapling a fine tree; he could make out of a weary woman of thirty, who believed in nothing whatever, a sister for Mishka, a little girl with two thin plaits and lips parted in wonder.

Ivan Nikitovitch's eyes were grey and tired: he was forty-three and had seen a great deal. When he spoke seriously, even sternly, his eyes held a faint a great elusive smile. But when he laughed his eyes were sad. He must have been a regular grumbler and growler himself, else how could he have lived with his dogs? No one took his growling seriously, however, neither Bruskov, nor the people who worked in the Experimental Station, nor Mushka. It was another thing if he got angry: then everyone would grow silent and Ivan Nikitovitch's deep bass would thunder louder than usual. That was how it was when, on his return from Solvychegodsk, he began to scold Pavlov.

"Why have you taken the firemen and the nurses off the list of those who receive food supplies? Do you think they shouldn't eat, or what? What the devil's all this? And supposing they turn round and say: 'Goodbye, we're going'—eh? Then sick people must be left without attention? The town must be left to burn, must it?"

Pavlov attempted a protest. "It's from the first of August, Ivan Nikitovitch—we've run short of provisions. We didn't calculate things in time, and now we have to draw in a bit."

At this point Ivan Nikitovitch flew into a rage.

"What do you mean by saying you didn't calculate? What else have you to do except calculate? Do you think it's a game you're playing? Do you know there's a sort of squirrel that goes to sleep in winter? Till spring comes. Without eating anything. Still, he hoards provisions up in the autumn. Why? For this reason: winters are sometimes very severe and the frost penetrates to his burrow. Then the squirrel wakes up, and the nuts he's stored up keep him alive. Mind you, winters like these are rare, once in twenty or even thirty years. Maybe the squirrel never has to fall back on his store in his whole life. But still he hoards. So it turns out even a squirrel is cleverer than you are. You ought to be ashamed to look the animal in the face whan you see one."

His words were always either gay or rough, and his eyes shamed his hearer kindly. He seldom shaved, his cheeks were covered with grizzled bristles that made him look like his own Props. There was a great deal

written about his work in Moscow and abroad. More than once journalists begged him for "Just a few words .... A short autobiography!" But Ivan Nikitovitch only made a gesture of dismissal.

"What for?" he demanded. "Born 1891. The rest isn't interesting. I've just lived and lived like anyone else."

Ivan Nikitovitch's biography, however, was no ordinary one. His childhood had been spent in the stuffy, over-heated home of an excise official. His father had suffered from asthma and cowardice. He was afraid of draughts, of his neighbors. When Ivan (or Vanya, as he was called then) brought a stray pup home once, his father had a heart attack. Holding his hand to his heart, he babbled: "Supposing it should—be —mad! And they breed worms .... And fleas—they carry infection."

There were paper roses between the double window frames. In the evenings his father sat by the table, either adding up his expenditures or else turning over the leaves of an old set of a weekly *"Niva"* or simply yawning At ten o'clock prompt he put out the lamp and the house was enveloped in darkness, a profound darkness broken by weird groans, wheezing and a nasal whistling. His mother knew only two holy things in life: the icons which she used to rub so long with oil, and her shelf of medicines. She worshipped the medicines no less than the icon. Their names awed her with their grandeur: Doctor Inozemensev's drops, the King of Denmark's drops, ether and laudanum drops. The little boy felt stifled among the balsams, naphthaline, dried pears and lamps that smoked eternally. He had a playmate called Syoma Valuyev. Together they made snow figures; together they hollowed out a canoe and swept down the river like savage Red Indians; together they made plans for going out to the Transvaal to defend the oppressed Boers. Syoma was the son of a small employee on the railway. After he had gone through four classes, his father took him away from the high school and set him to earn his living. The two friends were parted. On graduating from the high school, Liass quarrelled with his parents and left Omsk. He spent that winter with Savchenko, the hunter. They killed otters, sables and squirrels. Then Liass got a job on a big estate. He had to keep the books. All spare time he spent in the stables. The manager of the stables introduced him to a merchant named Chalov, who was collecting people for an expedition to the Lena gold fields. Liass became a gold digger. He learned to smoke a pipe and swear. He was only twenty-two then but he thought of himself as the old wiseacre of whom he had read years ago in a child's storybook. His face was coarsened by wind and weather, but at heart he was still a naive young stripling. When the other fellows talked about women before him, he pulled furiously at his pipe, emitting clouds of smoke to hide his rising colour. Once a conversation he had long ago with Syoma recurred to him. They had been dreaming of what they would become some day. Liass had wanted to be a musician, and instead he had become a hunter, a gold digger, a clerk, a forester. Syoma had had dreams of becoming an astronomer and looking through a telescope at all the stars. It would be interesting to know what Syoma had become.

Once Liass quarrelled with Levchenko the foreman and the man struck him across the face. Liass staggered, then recovered his balance. Forgetting himself in his fury, he knocked Levchenko down. The workers' shout of "Murder!" brought Liass to his senses. Pushing someone aside, he ran for his life. He was sure that he was a murderer and that life was over for him. He spent the next fortnight in the taiga. Then he learned that Levchenko was still alive. He was tired of that kind of work however. He made his way

to Vladivostok and there boarded an English ship. He learned English very quickly. The ship's doctor made him his assistant. He began to read a great deal, and study chemistry and biology. The war found him abroad, doing research work on species of trees in Canada. He had a good deal of ability and made up for his lack of a good educational foundation by reading. People called him "professor." He earned good money. When he was asked if he did not want to go and fight the Germans, he merely replied that he was not at all interested in politics.

He went to New York and took his degree in agronomy. He was offered a post in Kansas; now he was about to become a real professor. But again the weariness and yearning came over him. He wanted to change his place of abode and his profession. He was ready to start for Chili to study saltpetre when the first rumors of the Russian Revolution reached him. He made up his mind at once to go home. He could not picture his birthplace full of singing and shouting and flags. Although it was true that never, up to that time, had he been interested in politics, he now understood that something unusual was happening to his countrymen. So he said to Martinez, who had invited him to Chile:

"A new life's beginning for me. And it's not here, but over there."

On the steamer the alarming thought struck him: "But I've nobody there! Except Syomka?" But where was Syomka to be found now? Perhaps he was dead....

In spite of the flags and the songs, his native town seemed to him quiet, serene and sleepy. He went to a meeting. The speaker was talking of something quite incomprehensible to him. He asked his neighbor: "What's all this about General Kornilov's mutiny?"

His neighbor made no reply. Liass realized that revolution was a strange and unknown trade to him. He was out of humor for about a month, and then went back to his favorite work. Now he had a plan to alter the face of the Russian North. He even tried to talk about it at one of the public meetings, but a fellow in a faded student's cap began to yell at him:

"The fate of Russia is hanging in the balance! The Bolsheviks have come to terms with the Germans! What are you thinking about? You're a madman or an agent provocateur!"

Liass called the student a damned fool and cleared out. Soon afterwards he went off alone on an expedition. He had resolved to do the preparatory work on his own.

He pitched a tent in the forest and there he kept his books, drawings, plans, and instruments. He seldom met anyone. He knew that about a hundred versts from his tent there was a skirmish going on between the British and the Reds. But that was politics, and Liass was a botanist.

One evening he noticed a man in a Russian soldier's overcoat, hiding among the bushes. It was dark and Liass did not peer at him very closely. Then the man said:

"Who are you?"

"A botanist."

"Can you hide me? The British are coming."

Liass knew this part of the woods well. He led the fugitive to a pit. They had to cross a little lawn first. Liass looked attentively at the man and felt embarrassed: the face seemed familiar to him. But Syoma Valuyev recognized him. They had time neither to talk to each other nor express their delight at the meeting.

"Lie down here," said Liass. "They won't find you here."

He remained close by so as to engage the British in conversation. Very soon an English non-commissioned officer and two soldiers appeared. One of them asked in broken Russian:

"Has a Bolshevik been this way?"

Liass replied in English. At first they were pleased, and then began to exchange glances. They suspected Liass of being a spy. He was taken away to Archangel and handed over to the White Guards. The colonel shouted at him:

"How much are you paid by the Communist International, you blackguard?"

Liass was kept in prison for two months. At first he was with a consumptive youth named Silberg. Then Silberg was shot. Liass had a great deal of time on his hands now and for the first time in his life he thought not of animals, stones, and plants, but of people. When he was let out of prison, he went to search for the Bolsheviks. He made the acquaintance of a docker named Kholodkov and said to him:

"Give me some work to do. I speak English very well. I'll go and agitate among their soldiers."

"Wait," Kholodkov said. "We'll discuss it tomorrow."

Next day he ran up to Liass and said: "Go ahead! Write out a proclamation, saying that the soldiers are not our enemies, and that we're only fighting against the capitalists and that George . . . ."

A month later the British hurriedly boarded their ships and Liass was free to resume his study of the peculiarities of various soils. He prepared copious notes on the advance of wheat to the north. The notes were lost among others. After having travelled over half the world and gone through all manner of danger, Ivan Nikitovitch failed when faced by red tape. He felt his loneliness and isolation once more. Kholodkov died of spotted typhus. Syoma Valuyev had vanished. For two years Liass worked in an agronomical institute. Then he wintered on Kolguev Island. He returned full of new ideas and plans. But these were met with the extreme of caution. Some said: "Very romantic, sounds almost like delirium:" others declared Liass was a wrecker. So he was treated as something between a criminal and an idiot for another year. At last, weary of it all, he went away to a Soviet farm to work as an ordinary laborer. There, carefully concealing his past from the manager, he bred pigs. There he met Valuyev again. Now at last they had an opportunity of talking their fill. First of all, Liass told Valuyev all his adventures, recalling:

"I dreamed of being a musician, do you remember? And I've been everything else but a musician. I've no ear—can't tell the *International* from *Toreador*. I've been an American professor, though. And now I'm a midwife for pigs. Funny, eh? But what about you? You were going to be an astronomer?"

Valuyev laughed.

"Was I? Fancy you remembering! I'd forgotten. My life ran on simpler lines. I worked on building of all sorts. Laying a railway. Joined the Party. Went to prison for two years. Then to fight the Germans. After that I was elected to the Military Revolutionary Committee in the 12th Revolutionary Army. Fought the Whiteguards. All as it should be. Then I was appointed head of railway construction—as what is called a specialist. I worked four years and simply howled with exasperation. I didn't know enough, see. The engineer would smile contemptuously when he spoke to me. Well, I went to the Party committee and said: 'Let me off this work, I want to go and learn

something.' That was in 1927. 'You're too old for that,' they said. 'It's hard to begin at your age.' My wife tried to talk me out of it, too. 'For shame,' she said. 'Will you go to school alongside Gene?' I've got a grown-up son. I got married when I was nineteen. Still I started a Technical School along with my son. At first I thought my head would split. I had to try and catch up of a night. Especially with mathematics. I went about as if I was crazy. My wife would ask me something and I'd answer her out of the book. But then what a satisfaction it was to me. When I got up to higher engineering it made me quite dizzy. I'm a different person now. It's as if I'd had a cataract removed from my eyes. I've been sent here because we're going to build a railway to Syktykvar, and now I'm able to see for myself what's what. Damn it all, Vanya, when you think what we'll do here, eh! In ten years' time we'll be surprised at it ourselves and think 'What a country!' One thing I don't understand is: how after such a career as yours, do you come to be on a little Soviet farm like this?" Ivan Nikitovitch related all his misadventures. The other listened and swore. "The blasted bureaucrats!" Then he said: "I've to go to Moscow on the sixth, we'll go together."

When Liass brought his plans to the man of whom formerly he had only seen pictures, he felt as shy as a schoolboy. He began to mutter about the northern region being deserving of attention, that the natural poverty was purely relative, that daring projects should not be treated with so much mistrust. He thought: "Now he'll stop me and say 'Delirious.' " But instead of that he heard a voice say: "Come to the point, comrade; how do you suggest this idea of the northern advance of wheat should be worked out?" Then Liass brightened up. He forgot the man sitting in front of him. He only asked: "How much time can you spare me?" "Well, until the meeting starts in an hour's time."

Liass talked for two hours however. He described all his experiments. A hundred-and-eighty days of frost. Ripening impossible. Wheat would have to be forced; an essentially winter crop would have to be turned into a summer one and made to mature in the short northern summer; the seed made to sprout before it was planted. Then there was the question of moisture and temperature. The forcing period would last from thirty-five to fifty days. All this was very simple. After wheat, other things could be cultured. In the Archangel district it would be easy enough to cultivate watermelons. But weren't there peat bogs in that part? Oh, yes, but it was a simple enough matter to drain them. It would not even be necessary to drag soil or sand there. A mixture of lime and mineral fertilizer would do. The North would be transformed into the Black Soil Region. When all was said and done at 65 degrees north latitude you could grow positively anything: apple trees, even mulberry bushes. He finished speaking. The eyes of the botanist who had been a gold-digger and a trapper met those of the man who had to know about everything: the growth of wheat, the percentage of silicium in pig iron, the road gradients, the number of cars produced, the curriculum of the schools, the construction of creches, the measures taken against the locust pest, the draining of bogs, the irrigation of deserts, the strength of good steel and the weakness of the ordinary human heart. Liass gazed avidly into those eyes, and smiled, for he understood that today his dreams had come true—wheat was moving northwards.

Liass toiled day and night. Now his plans were half realized. Last autumn the ripening of the wheat had reached completion before September 4th. Liass continued his experiments with different varieties of wheat suitable for forcing. By crossing he created a new variety and called it "conquest."

He knew now that in the region of ever frozen subsoil, tomatoes, melons and raspberries could be grown.

Whenever he had an hour to spare, he read a novel. He read novels in his own particular way, as if they were other people's diaries, and he had just been listening to the story of someone else's life. He firmly believed in the existence of all these heroes, and when, one day, Lydia Nikolayevna said: "But there never was such a person as Davydov, Sholokhov simply invented him," he turned on her with: "Oh nonsense! Things like that can't be invented. And then why should people invent, if actually every man reads like a novel." But after this conversation he began to be wary of Lydia Nikolayevna. Once he went to the theatre. She did some shooting, and then she was killed. Afterwards he asked her: "Did you fight against the Whiteguards during the Revolution?" She laughed. "Why, I was only a little girl at the time." Liass grew thoughtful. How could she know, he wondered, what a woman like that commissar had felt? Lydia Nikolayevna now seemed to him untruthful, and he could not bear untruthfullness. That must be why she suspected Sholokhov .... But, catching the look in Lydia Nikolayevna's eyes while she listened to his opinions on the forcing of wheat, he calmed down. She was only a little girl after all. He had been right in promoting her to Mishka's place. Probably that was the reason why Ivan Nikitovitch could never think of Lydia Nikolayevna as a woman to him. She was always either a child or actress. Once Ksiushka said with a sigh: "You ought to marry Lydia Nikolayevna. There's no sense in living by yourself." He laughed heartly at her. "What an idea! How can anyone marry her? She's not just a woman? She's an actress. They have their own tricks. They're just acting all the time, that's all." All the same, he managed to become very attached to Lydia Nikolayevna, and every time she came, greeted her with a shout of delight that set all the dogs, including even sleepy Lazybones, barking admiringly in unison.

So it had been the previous evening. Lydia Nikolayevna had run in for a minute, on business she said. Ivan Nikitovitch laughed: "What sort of business could you have with me? Want to show wheat on the stage or what?" Lydia Nikolayevna explained. There was a foreigner here, a German, who was very interested in Liass' work, and would like to see him. Liass refused point blank. "Certainly not! He's a journalist, very likely. Kick him out!" Lydia Nikolayevna begged him to see the man. She was not doing this for Strom's sake, by any means: if anything, she found him very unpleasant. She had had no conversation with him since their first meeting. Three days ago, however, he had approached her with a reminder that she had promised to introduce him to Liass. Well, she could say: "Liass doesn't want to see you," and nothing more. She was insisting on the meeting for quite another reason. She wanted Liass to do it because she had asked him. Why shouldn't he waste ten minutes? Then she would feel that he had yielded, received the man for her sake. She assumed a pleading expression, held up her hands and said: "Look, I'm begging, like Ursus." Liass pretended to be angry, but gave way at last and said with a laugh: "Well damn him, let him come then. Only remember, I'm only making this one exception, for your sake. As a rule I don't let anyone in here."

At present Strom did not resemble in the least the spectre of the white night when he had first spoken to Lydia Nikolayevna. He was a very ordinary looking German with pale blue eyes and a shaven neck that looked as if it had been sliced off. He was dressed in a loose fitting travelling suit. In his breast pocket gleamed the gold top of a fountain pen. Everything

about him spoke of cleanliness, modesty and comfort. He greeted Liass politely, in a rather sugary manner like a commercial traveller who understands perfectly that he has to win the heart of an extremely freakish customer. He smiled, not only at Liass but at the dogs as well, and even at a stuffed animal of some species or other, dozing peacefully on the cupboard. Liass did not ask him to sit down, but only shouted to Ursus: "Be quiet! As if there weren't enough without you!" Then turning to Strom, he said:

"If it's an interview you want, there's no use asking me."

Before replying, Strom sat down, crossed his legs carefully and gave his trousers a twitch.

"I am not a journalist. As if I would venture to trouble you for the sake of an article in the paper! No. I have a very serious proposition to make to you. A few days ago I read your report on the work of the Experimental Station."

Here Liass interrupted him in amazement:

"How did you contrive to read that? It never came out in print. It's what you might call an inside document."

Strom continued to smile pleasantly.

"It was shown to me because I'm a specialist. I know now under what conditions you have to work. A scientist with a name like yours cannot get the means to equip a new laboratory. I find this quite natural, by the way. Please listen to what I have to say before you protest. In the Soviet Union the forcing of wheat is a luxury. Or simply an advertisement. You must admit yourself that while half the land in the Ukraine and the North Caucasus is not sown at all, because the government is at loggerheads with the peasants, it's ridiculous to think of making the North a producing region. It's a different matter abroad." Liass was now eyeing Strom with curiosity, and suddenly interrupted him although what he wanted to say had no bearing on the forcing of wheat.

"Very interesting! It's sixteen years now since I was abroad. What an expressive nape of the neck you have. Is it in connection with Hitler you shaved it? Or simply on an individual impulse? And so that's a fountain pen you've got? I see! Very nice. And you don't believe in the collective farm? Well, and why have you come to me?"

Strom's face did not alter. He listened to Liass' remarks with the same polite smile on his face. When Liass had finished, he went on with his speech as if there had never been any mention of the back of his neck or his pen.

"The position is different abroad. In spite of the world crisis in wheat, there are countries extremely interested in your work. There is Sweden, in particular. Yes, and in Germany, too, your experiments with mulberry bushes are being talked about a great deal. The point is that the principle of self sufficient economy is triumphant everywhere. In this question we have to learn from you. The Swedes do not want to buy Manitoba wheat. As regards yourself, we would like to have everything on the spot, particularly in case of an armed conflict. With us you can develop your scientific genius. The firm of Krause in particular requests that you should deliver them the seeds of your new varieties and the data about their forcing. You yourself must fix the sum to be paid to you, and in this respect I can guarantee you absolute secrecy. The money will be paid into your name at one of the Stockholm banks. I know the mood of the scientists here. There's no need for you to be indignant. I'm not a Chekist, or an agent provocateur. I have letters of recommendation from your col-

leagues abroad. The director of the firm of Krause has spoken to the minister. If you should choose Sweden, you are offered a chair at the University of Upsala and the directorship of the Experimental Station. You must get the people here to send you abroad and then . . . ."

Strom continued speaking, although Ivan Nikitovitch was no longer listening to him. At first Liass merely laughed, then he commenced to stride up and down, whispering to himself. At last he went close up to Strom and shouted in his ear: "That'll do! Enough's as good as a feast!" But Strom only ceased when Ivan Nikitovitch shouted furiously:

"Go for him, Props, get him!"

Props only pretended that he was going to bite Stern. Props was always very reserved with people: he often growled, but never actually attacked anyone. Strom, however, took offence.

"I didn't expect this . . . . Evidently, it's a question of breeding."

He left the room to the accompaniment of the barking of four dogs and the purposely loud guffawing of Ivan Nikitovitch. When Strom had gone, Ivan Nikitovitch sank down weakly on a stool, and sat there, swaying awkwardly. What had happened? Perhaps he had dreamed it? Or had some fool decided to play a practical joke on him? But no—the foreigner had mentioned a chair in a university. In Upsala! How despicable! Why were such people allowed into Russia? Passing through as a tourist, very likely. Or else with someone else's passport. The scoundrel! and how well he had spoken Russian! Perhaps one ought to ring up the G. P. U. A downright blackguard! He had poisoned the whole room. It was hateful to have to sleep in it.

Ivan Nikitovitch could not calm down for a long time. When at last he lay down on the couch, a timid knock came at the window pane. It was Lydia Nikolayevna. On her way home from the theatre she had seen the light in the window and thought she would like to say goodnight to Ivan Nikitovitch. She knew herself that it was silly to bother him, that he might be annoyed but her wish proved strongest.

When Ivan Nikitovitch saw who was standing under the window, he shouted:

"Aha, that's you, is it? Very good! I don't know if you're in partnership with him, but you know what—clear out! Maybe it's the proper thing to tell lies in the theatre, but I don't care for that sort of thing. You told me a lie, so go away. Quick about it, too."

He neither heard her babble something nor her cry of "You've no right to say such things!" Nor how she burst into tears. He slammed the window shut and flung himself down on the couch again.

A few minutes later he came to himself and thought: I shouldn't have offended her. She was only a simple little girl really! How could she have known anything about the machinations with the seed? It was simply that she had liked the German, and she had agreed. He shouldn't have flared up like that. Ivan Nikitovitch ran over to the window, and, leaning far out, called:

"Lydia Nikolayevna! Lydia Nikolayevna!"

But no one replied; she was far away already, running towards the hotel, striving to keep down the tears that kept rising and rising. She could not collect herself sufficiently to wonder why Liass had driven her away. She simply felt that she had lost her last joy in life. She would never be able to come again to see the botanist, and play with Ursus and listen to stories about barley. All that was ended. Yes, and it was bound to come to an end, for

Lydia Nikolayevna was not meant to be happy. If she forgot herself even for a moment, people were sure to remind her to "remember your place, my dear." That was how it had been with Lemberg. That was how it always was. Her lot was unhappiness. But why had Liass done this? Then she suddenly remembered Strom. How could she have committed such folly? The German must have offended him. The German was a frightening fellow. He did not want to live himself and he talked of death to others. He was a dead thing. And so was she. She could not live any longer. What? only to grimace foolishly on the stage before a bored audience. While she had been speaking about high endeavour, the people in the theatre had been whispering and yawning. She was not an actress, she was eternal understudy. Other people did real acting, while she only understudied. Like a parrot. She ought to be living with this German. They were just about fit for one another. The botanist was right. . . . How he had shouted at her! Mushka had been startled. Now Liass was probably getting his breath back and telling the dogs how he had been insulted. Yes, it was not Lydia Nikolayevna who had been wronged, but Liass. He was very, very good . . . .

So thought Lydia Nikolayevna as she lay in her bed. She saw the face of the wronged man and Mushka licking his hand. The tears flowed and flowed, but now they eased her heart and she fell asleep with a caressing word on her lips for an angry man with bristles on his cheeks and mournful grey eyes.

Strom almost bumped into Lydia Nikolayevna at the door of the hotel. He noticed her in time and slipped behind the corner, waiting for her to pass. He guessed the cause of her tears. He was not interested in the tears themselves. It would be difficult to describe what had gone on in his head since leaving Liass. The business-like representative of the firm of Krause had disappeared and his place was occupied by a maniac, a suicide, the wearisome spectre who had once frightened the good Swedish captain. The spectre felt cramped in his loose travelling suit. He unbuttoned his waistcoat. He panted. The thought of Liass roused his hatred: this Russian was simple and strong like a tree. Strom understood the quivering of leaves: leaves soon withered and fell. But he hated the furrows of the roots, he hated vitality.

On reaching the hotel, Strom did not touch his notebook: he was too near the heart of the matter to analyze and consider it calmly. He inquired at the office when the next train left for Moscow. He had stayed too long in this town. Then he packed his things and stared drearily out of the window: this never-ending white night. And in winter it was dark at midday here—that wasn't a cheerful prospect either! He yawned aloud, stretched himself and got a flask of whiskey out of his portmanteau. Pouring the whiskey into a big enamel mug, he drank it off at a gulp, grimaced painfully and lay down on the bed. Four hours remained yet till train time. In a half doze he thought: If I were a poet, I'd write the most beautiful poem now. But would Krause ever understand such a thing? Still, it was all for the best. Only he ought to be on the move. The most terrible thing of all was—waiting. He was already in a doze, but a slight convulsion unexpectedly made him start: his feet, it seemed, moved of themselves.

Liass spent a troubled night, too; he tried to sleep but nothing came of it. Then he got up and sat down to work. Towards morning he remembered Lydia Nikolayevna and felt ashamed and depressed. He decided to go and make it up with her in the hotel. But at eight o'clock he was summoned to the station. It appeared that Makayev had got into a muddle with the peas. Everything had to be tested all over again. About seven he ran home for a

breathing space before the evening; he had to read a report in the Komsomol club. He had thought it was nine o'clock, but it turned out to be at seven. So there was no chance to rest. As he was going out, he said to Ksiushka:

"If Lydia Nikolayevna should drop in, tell her I'm not angry with her. Oh, wait, I'd better leave her a note."

Ivan Nikitovitch searched his pockets. But, not finding any paper, he fished out an empty cigarette packet and wrote on it:

"Lydia Nikolayevna! You know what—let's make it up! Your German was a bounder, but I shouldn't have flared up at you. So I'm going to promote you to Mishka's rank."

Ksiushka was not aware of what had taken place the night before. She was delighted: if he was writing a letter he must be going to get married soon.

Liass read his report on the forcing of wheat. He showed photographs, drew the borders of various zones on the blackboard and even pulled some seed out of his pocket to show his audience. He concluded in an unexpected way.

"What do you think? That the Bolsheviks are just a party? In America, for instance, there are two parties: the Democrats and the Republicans, and the devil knows what the difference between them is. No, boys, the Bolsheviks are a tribe. There used to be a desert in Central Asia. Now there's no desert, but gardens. Well, I've told you how we drained the bogs here. There won't be any of this eternal frost. Whatever we sow, will grow. We take the life of a person and continue it. And we'll shorten the life of plants. When mankind was in swaddling clothes, it thought that the Lord God created everything. Then they talked about Nature. Well now, we Bolsheviks are changing even Nature. We create for ourselves, like the Lord God. If the rivers flow in the wrong direction, for us, we change their course and say—"Flow this way!" Formerly there was nothing but ice in the Far North. Now we have an air-line from Archangel to Vladivostok, with stops in between. You must understand. we're only just beginning. Yes. But we'll be flying from Batoum to Murmansk in one day soon. And what about Murmansk itself? I was there last summer—it's a fairy tale. You come out and look around you and, where yesterday there was nothing but hummocks and Lapps, today you see a sanatorium in the newest style of architecture. What did people think formerly? "Man is eternal." I remember my father used to say: "Well, they've invented the steam-engine, and the English have their constitution, but a man is always the same: pinched ten rubles, had a drink or two, with a salt pilchard for a snack, and then he's ready to lie down and die." Now we, boys, we'll not only bring wheat to the Pole, we'll transform man so that he won't know himself. He'll read of how we live nowadays and wonder what sort of savages were we. Just as we do about primitive people. Only, formerly it took ten thousand years to do this, while we'll manage it in a hundred. I take myself for an example: what have I not been in my life? I roamed about the world—blown hither and thither. An outsider might think it exciting, but actually—it's sheer emptiness. I travelled about a bit, yet inside I was as cold as if I were at the Pole. When I saw the Bolsheviks I understood—those are the real people, damn it all! There was a young boy in the cell with me in prison. They threatened him with revolvers while they interrogated him—'Where's the printing works?' And he would shout something about Lenin in reply: how great Lenin was! Yes, that's a bit different to reading a report in a club. Or—what about an old playmate of mine—Syomka, he's Comrade Valuyev now. He was thirty-eight when he went in for higher education. And when I saw this, I changed

completely myself. As if they grafted something good on a wild plant. Now I'm another man and I see people differently. I know now what this is all about. I want to live so much. We shall have everything new: new stones, new plants, new animals and above all—new people. Yesterday an awful scoundrel came to see me. A foreigner. Told me how they had their eye on our seed. Tried to tempt me with foreign currency. So if any of them try to push their way in here, boys, although I'm an old fellow now, a botanist sitting here with my seeds, I'll throw it all up and go out to shoot. Because we've got to defend our own for all we're worth. We've only just begun yet. But wait and see what the future will bring,—oh, what will it not bring!"

Ivan Nikitovitch's voice broke, he made a desperate little gesture and descended awkwardly from the platform. Around him were Mesentsev's comrades—boys and girls from the Komsomol— noisily cheerful.

Strom lay on the upper berth of a railway carriage. Below sat a timber expert, who was never still for a moment. First he opened his dispatch case and, surrounding himself with piles of papers muttered—"So planing lathe and no nonsense," Then he read Pravda, guffawing ponderously over the feuilleton, then he had tea. The latter operation was performed in a major key: he gulped, made clicking sounds with his tongue and purred. Every now and then the conductor of the train would look into the compartment and inquire:

"Fill it up for you?"

And every time the expert would answer with an air of triumph:

"Sure as your life!"

Strom hated him with the steady, persistent hatred he felt towards the whole world nowadays: towards the country women on the station platform, the never-ending forest and the patch of milky blue sky. He could neither sleep nor think. He pulled out his notebook. Before his eyes were even lines of writing that looked as if they had been printed, for the more agitated Strom was, the more painstakingly he formed the letters, the exclamation marks, the rich flourishes of the capital letters. He turned over a score or so of leaves.

"180 rubles. Letter to Hamburg. Should I fall in love with the actress? No, it wouldn't work out. Everything's too well known beforehand. Formerly there were moments when I lost my head. After that row in Bremen that's done with. All that remains is the tedious mechanics of the business. Better put it off until I get to Europe, where at least one has the right background.

"Spoke to G. He wants 800 in currency. Personally I do not regard the sum as exorbitant, but K. is stingy, and above all—stupid. He may refuse. Or else say: 'Let's go halves.' It's one of two things, either I'm a partner or an ordinary employee. I'm sick of it all!

"Have just remembered for some reason or other, a funny incident: I rang up Schultz to say: 'I can't come to dinner today: I have a visitor—a beauty. The wife of a Berlin lawyer. She's lying on the couch, surrounded by roses and I'm reading poetry to her. Do you envy me?' Half an hour later I rang up again: 'Listen, I made it all up. There isn't any lady here. But I'm not coming to dinner in any case. I've got the stomach ache.' I can imagine what a rage he was in.

"There are two collars missing again and my blue shirt has been torn in the wash. They must put some vile stuff in the water. The sheets stink of

fish. One can't sleep for the smell. Probably the soap's made of seal oil. I dreamed last night that I was drowned. I've had a ringing in my ears all day.

"I've noticed that my perceptions depend on the state of my stomach. Perhaps this is Marxism? Conversation with Sch. about ideology. 'Read Marx before you give an opinion.' I told him politely that I would read Marx, but, of course, I don't intend to: too much of a bore. That's the most terrible thing about it. The clock ticks on, and even smells of a corpse. Sch. gave me a long explanation. It appears that Marxism is something like fatalism: you can't do anything about it. For instance, if Strom is a swine, that's quite natural: he's the product of a class that's dying out, etc., etc. Very convenient! Though I personally prefer a revolver.

"K thinks that there are people with whom one can do business. How idiotic! They don't even understand what money is. We write marks 1,000,000 pf. 00, whereas here they simply write 1 m. Isn't that clear?

"Yesterday I had to satisfy my natural cravings. The person spoke a little German. Nothing remarkable. Asked me what kind of dances we dance. Behaved very well. Did not allow everything. Even wanted to go. 'I'm not a cocotte,' she said. I gave her a pound and threw in a bottle of eau-de-cologne.

"Supplementary to the foregoing note on Totma. V's story of 1931. The dispossessed peasants brought there. Locked in the church. Angels fluttering about the ceiling. Difficult to imagine anything richer. Peasant woman bawling, sitting on their bundles, children wetting the floor, kettles lying about. It would be interesting to know if any of them prayed. The angels were, naturally contemptuous of the whole thing. I saw them pictured with musical instruments.

"Secured an interview with Liass at length. I'm sick to death of everything. An individual here was sentenced to ten years for misappropriation of funds. S. showed me verses he made up while in prison. I wrote them out:

My plea for reconsideration
I ended with a poem.
Must all the products of the pen
Be broken with the axe again?

Ten years for me?
It cannot be!
Oh Supreme Court, Supreme Court,
These ways are simply not my sort!

the second one is particularly good:

Why, oh why, do I see the sky?
Why do I breathe the fresh air?
When I look on life with loathing
And think it a vile affair?

Life, why did you nurture me
To cast me off here at my grave's edge?
Now you have buried the dreams that are dead,
Nothing remains but the court, and my spite, and a cold in the head.

"The above had been justified: he pocketed the money. 'I do what I've dreamed of' that's something to be envied.

"As last I shall have my interview with Liass. So—in three or four days' time I'll be in Berlin. Inexpressibly bored with everything. A permanent imitation of a storm. Well, now I've got to go, and see this gardener fellow.

Strom read his notes languidly. He was neither surprised by his own thoughts nor pleased with them. They belonged to some one else, and perhaps they were amusing. Now he was interested neither in Marxism nor poetry. He thought only of one thing: how to die—simply and without making undue fuss. Many a time had he wanted as badly as this to fall asleep. His hand slipped round mechanically to the hip-pocket where he kept his revolver. But it never entered his head to take it out and cool his brow with the metal. The revolver lay in one pocket, the notebook in the other: below him the timber expert gulped his tea and blew his nose. Life drifted on and Strom drifted with it, echoing the rattle of the wheels that seemed to say: "We're going on, we're going on." He moved his numb feet: one must move, one must move, one must keep moving. The sight of wooden houses, trees and telegraph poles gliding past the window quitened him a little. He could not think what would happen tomorrow. He did not even ask himself where and why he was travelling. The timber expert roared out in his deep bass:

"Perhaps you'd have some tea? My wife has baked some cookies for me." Strom laughed.

"Cookies? Tea? Yes, I might have tea. And then again I might not."

The expert gathered up in alarm the flimsy sheets of paper covered with blurred figures and retired into silence. Now only the wheels babbled for him and for Strom.

Then came Moscow. The consulate smelt of cigars. Strom said with a chuckle:

"Well, at any rate, I pulled off one job."

The train left in the evening and Strom, not knowing how to kill time, went to a restaurant. Here he tossed off several glasses of vodka quickly. The caviare was slimy and smelt of fish. Strom remembered the sheets in the hotel. The waiter squinted. It seemed to Strom that the waiter understood everything. Strom's hand wandered to his hip pocket. He felt the revolver and then went to the lavatory. Everything was mixed up in his head. Marxism, the poet in the reformatory, the actress, his stomach worked badly, this was the unavoidable prose of life. Krause would be angry, but who was Krause, anyway? The squinting waiter, the timber expert with his fidgetiness. . .

He was hurrying through the long stretch of boulevard now. Children were playing at ball. A young fellow gave his girl a loud smacking kiss, saying "Niutochka, ah, Niutochka." The grass was grey and Strom did not know where to get a breath of air. He dropped down on a bench. Alongside him sat an old woman with a little shawl over her head. She looked at Strom kindly:

"Worn out? They're all the same way now running about like wildfire. My daughter, now, she's . . ."

Strom did not stay to listen. He was on the run again. Neither the first lamps that gleamed uncertainly through the dusk, nor the dusk itself—that sensation of darkness half forgotten by Strom, but graciously covering all that was happening nor the modicum of freshness borne on the light breeze to Strom, nothing helped. Suddenly he halted at the corner of two streets. He recalled the eyes of the old woman. Why had she pitied him? Her daughter? So her daughter rushed about, too? In the Timber Export Trust. Or somewhere else. "I'm terribly unhappy," the actress had said. He had

behaved like a cad to the actress. She was probably being interrogated now as to why she had introduced him to Liass. It would be nice to be a scoundrel in the abstract, to blow up that house, for instance. Or shoot an unknown person—it would have to be someone entirely unknown to you, It was almost Marxism: historic inevitability. But he had played the actress a dirty trick. Of course, it made no difference, anyhow. But he washed his hands. Even if one had to die in an hour's time, one must wash one's hands.

In the railway carriage, before the train started, he wrote Lydia Nikolayevna a letter. "I feel guilty in every way with regards to you. You are an actress. I am a commercial traveller. How could you guess the reason why I wanted to see Liass? The latter, by the way, is very ill bred and has too much vitality. You are innocent in all this. You are like Duse, and if you ought to be destroyed, it is only in so far as people are forbidden to torture each other with intonations of the voice. And I? I am going far away now, for no purpose. This, by the way, is of no interest to anyone.

"With profound respect,

"Johann Strom."

He laid the letter on the table; the conductor, who was making his bed at the time, asked:

"Shall I post it for you?"

Strom did not reply. When he was alone, for some reason or other, he ungummed the flap of the envelop and tore the letter into tiny bits. These he threw out of the window. Before his eyes swam the same endless forest. He pulled down the blinds and went to sleep.

As the train approached Warsaw he grew suddenly nervous: Krause's physiognomy shone good naturedly before his mental vision. Strom's head was in a whirl. He did not want to go to Berlin. He counted his money; seven hundred dollars. He got out at Warsaw. That evening he drank a great deal. Then he found himself in company with a woman. She was saying to him in German:

"Give me a dollar!"

He gave her two, saying:

"Only don't undress yourself."

She called him a darling. He yawned and sank into a stupor. Then morning came. He took a ticket for Vienna. Someone demanded persistently "What station in this?" Towards evening rain set in and the station refecting the lamplight flitted by depressingly. Glimpses of people in various uniforms: Poles, Czechs and Austrians. Customs officials rooted about in people's luggage. Strom winced: they had dirty hands. And each time he looked at his things with surprise: at the neatly folded shirts, the books, the portfolio with numbered papers. He could not imagine that all this was his life. Why had he tried so hard to live, then? Surely it could not be in order to run away God knew where, now?

The wheels continued their endless tale. Their haste contained the haste of people. A lady was hastening to Salzburg, where her daughter was lying at the point of death. When she opened her handbag to get her handkerchief, the alarming telegram peeped out. She knew where she was hurrying, she was searching for one thing: feeble panting breath, the last gleam of life in eyes over which a veil had already descended. The wheels drummed out: "I'll be in time, I won't be." To others they repeated different things, promised successful transactions, work, gay holidays, krones, zloti, shillings, kisses.

But to Strom they said only one thing: "We're going on, we're going on, we're going on."

He resolved to go to Paris from Vienna. This happened quite suddenly—as a result of a glimpse of the name of the town and a vague memory. Strom had been in Paris many years before. He remembered a fair in a big square, where a merciless white light had made the eyes ache, where there was sticky nougat on a stall, and an immense merry-go-round whirled dizzyingly. He said to the porter:

"I'm going to Paris."

Again the stations dotted his vision. The dining room smelt of sausages and malt. A newsboy was yelling at the top of his voice. A woman was crumpling a kerchief and calling out: "Do write." Opposite Strom sat a man in a loud patterned cap. He kept making painful grimaces and clutching his cheek with his hand; his eyes were black with unhappiness. Perhaps he had toothache? Or was thinking of his past? He got out at Zurich, and Strom called after him in an irritated tone: "Have you forgotten anything?"

The rain proved insistent. The train ran away from it, but the rain caught up. More customs officials. More lamps. More stations. At night a fat man got into the compartment and began to doze at once. Sleep bent him left and right, alternately. He tried to resist, from time to time jumped up and shook himself, but sleep, solid and clinging, weighed him down again. He slept with his mouth a little open; and a delicate whistling sound issued from it. Strom went out into the corridor, but from the neighboring compartment came the sound of snoring. At night people flung off all that was human; they snuffled, resembled mere lumps of flesh. Someone was grinding his teeth in his sleep. Strom remembered the night's journey from Warsaw to Vienna and called out: "What station is this?" No one answered him. The night wore on and the wheels went on asserting: "We're going on, we're going on, we're going on."

It was evening when he arrived in Paris. He looked around him in surprise: there was neither fair nor merry-go-round to be seen. The porter, grunting and swearing, carried his things to a little hotel near the station. The room smelt of face powder and mice. Strom opened the window. Immediately, the hoarse tenor of a gramophone floated up from the street. It was a song of undivided love. Strom remembered the torn bits of the letter: now they were whitening among the birches of Polessia in Poland. He washed himself. Black spots showed on the towel: he had not washed off the soot of the railway journey. He thought he ought to ring for a clean towel and suddenly, for the first time in many days, burst out laughing. He laughed easily and with assurance: he would never need a clean towel again!

Then he sat down in an armchair. He made a great effort to think: why had he come here? This lasted a long time—an hour passed, maybe two—and still Strom thought. He could not understand those four nights in the train, the assertions made by the wheels, and his own terror. He looked to see if his revolver was in place. Yes. But he had had the revolver with him in Archangel and in Moscow. Then he had gone into the laboratory .... Why had he come here? What was it terrified him so? Historical inevitability? Yes, he was terrified. This journey had been necessary. He had not been hurrying anywhere. He had not really been making for any destination. He had simply run away. Paris eased him in one respect: it was very far from here, who could say how far—to those last birches!

Arrived at this point, Strom became all at once the business like, serious

representative of a reputable firm, an ordinary person. He put his papers in order, drew up a bill of his traveling expenses and, last of all, wrote Krause a letter. He did not abuse Krause for his soullessness: he did not ask his pardon for any possible trouble he might cause. He wrote briefly and drily. For one minute his pen was motionless: he wanted to write farewell at the end, but he controlled the impulse, and wrote painstakingly: "Thanking you in anticipation for your favourable reply, I remain, Yours respectfully, etc." After that he rang the bell. The floor waiter came in looking sleepy. Strom handed him the letter and twenty francs.

"Send this letter by registered mail tomorrow. Now you can go."

Then he added softly, almost feelingly:

"And I hope you won't be angry with me for waking you up. Good night."

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Jean Giono

Let My Joy Remain

Extracts from the novel Let My Joy Remain

The boy Carle put the clarion to his mouth and began once again to play, as he had played at dawn, as he had been playing just now, always his seven to eight notes which were peaceable, smooth, but sorrowful, and which seemed to lift the horizons in order to make their echoes ring and to discover roads which went away into the world beyond.

The stag stopped its clamoring and looked at Bobi.

"Yes, you see," said Bobi. "Perhaps. There is still hope. I'll speak to them right away."

And he patted the flat of its shoulders.

"Listen," Bobi said to it, "listen to what he's saying on the clarion. As soon as they stop using words, you'd think they understand. It's at the bottom of their hearts. There is still hope. They've already felt the need of a bit of music. That's a good sign."

The stag rubbed its muzzle against Bobi's shoulders.

"Yes," said Bobi, "it looks as if they were going to respond. What they say isn't bad, you know."

And he began to smile.

"Ah," said Jourdan, uncovering his ears. "That's better. What seized the beast?"

"Nothing," said Bobi, "he wanted to tell you something about Zulma, about all of us in general."

"Does he often do that sort of thing?" said Jacquou.

"Whenever it's necessary."

The stag was now making its way towards the forage.

"Animals have strong voices," said Bobi.

"The reason for that," said Randolet, "is because they get you here."

He put his hand on his chest.

"That's because," said Bobi, "they haven't lost the habit of speaking as one ought to speak."

"Why?" said Jacquou.

"Because they haven't lost the habit of doing what one ought to do."

"The reason . . ." said Carle.

"Not such beasts as you'd think," said Bobi. "I'll speak to you about it when we've eaten."

"We'll remind you," said Jacquou.

Jourdan said no more. He had felt in himself exactly the same joy as on that winter night when Bobi had spoken for the first time of Orion-Carrot-Flower. He felt in himself wellbeing and remedy. It was a little bit sorrowful.

"And the food?" said Bobi.

Luckily, Jacquou had remembered to draw back the spit. It was still turning away all on its own, however, under its spring. Everything was cooked.

The big table was spread.

"If only the women were ready," said Randoulet.

The door opened and Joséphine called.

"Well, you men?"

"We're ready," they said.

"So are we," said she.

She left the door open.

Le Noir came up to Bobi and took him by the waistcoat.

"Listen," he said in a low voice. "It's true."

He pointed his finger into the air. .

". . .I understand," said Le Noir. "And I want to tell everything. It's all true."

"Leave her alone," said Joséphine. "She's warming herself. She's getting on all right. Now you'll just see how quickly the table will be laid."

Marthe came with a woolen cloth. This was to serve as a tablecloth. Barbe brought the plates, Honorine the basket of forks.

"A big dish," Jacquou demanded.

He took the kid off the spit.

It was noon, the crickets were singing. The odor of the damp earth was strong. The wind had fallen. The sun seemed to be taking a rest for a moment. You could feel it heavy and abandoned.

The kid had kept whole, despite the gravy slits that Jourdan had made all over its skin. It slid off the end of the spit onto the big dish. Its own weight installed it there, with its roasted bones and its golden skin. The gravy began to trickle from it and to well up little by little all round it.

Honoré was thinking of his hare. He was waiting for his father-in-law to finish taking the kid off the spit. He wanted to put his hare on the spit, but Jacquou was very slow in scraping the spit with the fork.

"A bit more, and you'll be making us eat iron."

"Go on, you, you're from the country of thick-heads all right," said Jacquou. "You're always making a noise about something. Don't you know that this is the best bit? Here, where the beast was lying on the spit is the best. Yes, but of course it's true, in your country they eat nothing but beetroots. Well, there you are, there's your spit."

"If you think this is such a good spit, we'll keep it to use on you. Now don't get angry, I'm going to show you that even if it is a beetroot, this hare, don't you know, so to speak, isn't so bad. Heavens, it's hot!"

He eased the hare along the spit with little blows of the fork. There began to rise a sweet smell of mountain herbs, cooked up with chopped liver, blood, and marble-like bacon.

"How are we going to sit?" asked Joséphine.

"Just you wait," said Bobi. "You'll see . . ."

"Where will you be?" she asked in a low voice, as she leaned towards him.

"In front of you."

"Beside me," said she.

"In front you can see," said he.

"Beside me you can touch," said she.

Madame Hélène arrived. After her kitchen work she had freshened up her makeup. She had washed her lovely arms. She had asked Marthe for powder. She had powdered her hands, wrists and arms and her cheeks and her throat. She had a white silk blouse with short sleeves and a very open neck, which was caught in a little with wine-blue smocking. One could see the upper parts of her beautiful breasts, which were firm and ample and a little fat. She was very desirable. Her eyes were a little bruised by her widowhood.

"It's a pity," said Carle.

"You wonder," said Jourdan, "why he killed himself."

He was thinking that that business had scarcely been understood until now.

"We didn't see what was right in front of us," he added.

"Yes," said Carle. "I don't know where it's all leading to, but I have an idea that soon we'll see."

"That's a good smell," said Madame Hélène.

"Honoré made the stuffing," said Jourdan.

"Did he make it in the style of his country?" she asked.

"Oh," said Carle, "his country, that's the country of thickheads."

"Yes," said Honoré, kneeling close to the dish, where he was carefully carving the animal. "But thick pots are big ones, and hold more than thin ones."

All the smell of the stuffing began to steam out of the animal's belly. Carle leaned over the dish.

"My word," he said, "that's not so bad."

Madame Hélène licked her lips. She looked at Jourdan.

"You also have a good smell, Jourdan my dear. You smell of wet velvet."

"I smell of old hair," said Jourdan.

"Why old?" said she. "It's a smell I like."

"Sit down," cried Marthe. "I'll bring the fricassee."

"Come on," said Bobi. And he took Aurore's hand. Every time it was as if he were going to take her right away to the end of the world.

"You will sit beside me," he said.

"What's Zulma doing?" asked Randoulet.

"They've dressed her in Marthe's best things," said Honoré."

"She's not a bit upset; she's humming. I'll go and fetch her."

She went off towards the farm.

The others sat down on benches and chairs. There had been brought out also a big peasant armchair covered with old flowered satin, but no one dared to take it and use it. It remained all alone on the grass. Aurore saw that Joséphine was sitting on the other side, but right in front of the chair that Bobi was going to take.

"This is a good place," said Joséphine. "I'll see him."

She smoothed her hair and then, without thinking much about it, she passed her tongue over her lips and her lips became shiny and swollen, and they were in her face like a great flower which has unfolded. She was ashamed of them.

"How are things, miss?" she said to Aurore.

But she was thinking that really, Joséphine would be able to look at Bobi all the time, and that Bobi would see her all the time, and Aurore was very unhappy that she would simply be at his side.

Honorine found Zulma in front of the fire. She was by now quite dry. They had given her a change of linen and a dress. They had dressed her in clothes belonging to Marthe when she was a little girl: supple things with lace, and then a quilted petticoat with little rococo roses, and a short violet gown.

"What are you doing?"

Zulma looked at herself. She did not lift her eyelids at all but she looked at the pretty things she was wearing. She was very moved, for her long lashes flickered very quickly.

"Come," said Honorine, "we're going to eat."

She took her arm to lift her up. It was a soft and lonely arm. When you touched it, you thought of water in streams and ponds.

"Now tell me," said Honorine, kneeling down beside her, "why did you go away last night? You know that every time I kill myself with worry."

The long lashes had ceased to flicker quickly; they trembled distantly, like an immobile bird listening to the wind.

"And what did you mean by sleeping in a furrow next to the stag's stable? And why? With all the things that there are around you, my child, on the plateau at night! You're such a heedless child. And this morning, why did you go away with that animal? It might have hurt you. You heard us talking and laughing all right."

Through the lashes one could now see the shining of the eye; it was green and profoundly bright.

The fricassee had been served, and people had been asking:

"Where is Honorine?"

When they saw her coming with Zulma:

"Zulma will sit beside me," said Bobi. "I've purposely kept a chair for her, you see."

"I'll have to feed her," said Honorine. "And I'll have to cut her bread. It would be better if she sat down here beside me."

"I'll feed her," said Bobi, don't you worry."

He put her on the chair.

Most of the fricassee had been served. There was not much left, but hidden in the sauce there was a nice bit of liver.

"If I'd seen that . . ." said Randoulet.

But Bobi gave it to Zulma. He cut bread for her. "Eat," he said to her. He had bent his head. He tried to see her eyes, but the lids were obstinately lowered. You could see nothing but the long lashes.

"You eat too," he said to Aurore.

(He has a gentle voice in speaking to me. His hand went out towards mine. Then he drew it back.)

"Let me think," said Bobi to himself, looking at Josephine, "She is so nice."

He saw once more Aurore running among the narcissuses, but he could not have his world without the breasts, the thighs, the great moist laugh of Joséphine and Zulma's hair like a sheaf of wheat. Something must come out of these three women. He thought of the dawn, coming from three mountains.

"You'd think he was dreaming!"

"Speaking to me?" he asked.

"Yes, to you."

"Yes, I'm dreaming a little."

"Dreaming at the table?"

"He's like that," said Jourdan.

"Oh, this fricassee!" said Bobi, who began to eat.

It was good. Jacquou wiped his plate with big lumps of bread, then opened his mouth—you couldn't imagine a bigger mouth—you saw a hole without teeth. He shoved the bread in there, and closed his mouth. Then he looked at everybody, with his little rat-like eyes. You felt that he wanted to speak, but could not with his mouth full. He said: "Hou-hou," and pointed at the dish, his plate, his mouth, his belly.

"Oh, you," said Barbe, "you're all right as long as you've something to eat."

But she was eating too, and only when there were little bones she emptied

her mouthful back into her hand, drew out the bones and put the rest back in her mouth. But she could speak while eating and speak quite clearly.

"How do you do it?" Carle asked her.

"What?"

"Eat and talk at the same time?"

"I don't know."

Carle was nibbling the carcass of a chicken. He stuck his tongue right in as far as it would go to lick the backs of the bones.

"You won't be able to taste anything."

"I taste everything," she said.

They all made a great deal of noise with their elbows, with their knives and forks, with their feet under the table, with their mouths, as they ate. They called to each other also.

"Oh, Carle!"

"Oh, Randoulet!"

And Randoulet tapped his stomach with the ends of his fingers to say: "I'm eating." And he ate.

Marthe had brought the fricassee and then had remained standing beside her place. She had looked at them all to catch their first movement after the first mouthful. That had been to dash at the plate and then at the dish. So it was good. Jourdan sucked his fingers.

"You see, women," she said.

Joséphine made a sign with her hand in reply: Yes, I see they like it. We did our work well.

"I knew what I was saying," said Marthe, "when I said that chicken fricassee is good in the springtime."

She sat down. She began to eat.

"Marthe," cried Madame Hélène from the other end of the table. "You're like an inn cook."

"Not enough sauce," replied Marthe.

"No," said Honorine who was opposite. "It's just right." Then she leaned towards her neighbor, who was Honoré.

"What did you say?" she asked.

"I said," said Honoré, "that your name is Honorine and mine Honoré, and they've put us side by side. It's funny."

"That's true," she said. "Give your children something to eat."

He had his two little children beside him at the end of the table. They had been a bit forgotten.

"Wine!" cried the boy Carle.

Then Jourdan got up and went to get the big jar.

"We'll start with mine," he said.

"You're not going to drink all that, are you?" said the women.

They knew that they were. And they were afraid. And suddenly in the depths of themselves, they were happy with an enormous happiness, as if from far away in the woods and forests there had come the rumble of the monotonous beating of a dance drum to the sounds of which they would soon have to turn and dance.

Jourdan went round, pouring out. He went from place to place. He tilted the jar over the glass. It was so heavy that he had to tilt himself at the same time. And when he righted the neck of the bottle, he righted himself too. He seemed to be pouring himself into the glass. His wrists were red from effort and they trembled.

The wine seemed to be full of little leaves of gold and flowers of light as it poured out. But when it was in the glass, it suddenly became heavy as lead, and it stood waiting.

Jacquou lifted his glass and drank. At the other end of the table, Jourdan, who was going to serve Honoré, stopped. He looked at Jacquou.

"Yes," said Jacquou.

"Pour it out," said Honoré.

The men drank the whole glass at once. The women took little sips.

Jourdan served Marthe.

"There you are, my dear," he said gently.

She looked at him from the corner of her eye and breathed more quickly. And she drank. And she heard the rumbling of the dance drum which stole more strongly from the woods, from the forests, from the trees, from the flowers, and, you would have said, from the earth itself. You seemed to hear its blows beating in the earth, there under your feet, there under the table, like the violent pulsing of blood in the veins of inflamed men.

Jourdan made the round of the table again to pour out the drinks. The jar was getting lighter.

Honoré put his arm round Honorine.

"Don't be upset," he said, smiling under his moustache. "It's not for you."

It was to touch the shoulder of the boy Carle.

"Come and help me."

The boy Carle got up. They went to the fireplace, where the roasts were cooking slowly.

Honorine still felt Honoré's warm arm about her.

"Watch out," said the boy Carle. "The dishes are burning hot."

"You take the hare," said Honoré, "and I'll take the kid."

"The wine's good," said the boy Carle.

"Yes,"said Honoré. "And just look at the sky."

The sky was completely dotted with little round clouds which had violet hearts and rolled gently over a blue as fine and smooth as the basin of clear fountains.

They brought the dishes.

"Let's drink!" cried Jacquou.

"Forcing us to drink," said Madame Hélène.

She felt that Jourdan was coming towards her. He was there again with his jar. He poured her a drink.

"Well, if you insist," she said.

"It's nothing," he said. "Drink it up."

"No," said Jacquou, "It's nothing. You must drink."

It couldn't be said that that wine was nothing. She felt the fire rekindling in the depths of her flesh, in a place where she had thought that all had been stifled since the death of her husband. And there she was, feeling the crackling and the sorrowful caress of the flame. She too was hearing the burden and the beats and the cadence and the savage rhythm of the dance drum.

"My blood is beating," she said to herself. "It's my blood that's beating. It's the sound of my blood."

The ends of her breasts hardened just by rubbing against the silk of her corsage.

"Jourdan, my dear," she said to herself in a low voice.

And she saw that the sound of his name in her low voice had form and odor and movement and weight. And her body was glad of this.

The roasts were heady and juicy and they crumbled at the first blow of the knife. The sauce was like bronze, with golden glitterings, and every time you put your spoon into it, you brought out little bits of bacon or the greenish juice of the stuffing, or flakes of still rosy tender bacon. The flesh of the kid cracked open and showed itself milky within and smoking with clear juices. Its tortoise shell surface crackled, and at first it was dry in the mouth, but as you got it well into the mouth all the tender flesh broke open and an oil which was animal, salty, creamy, streamed out, an oil which you could not swallow at one go, so much joy did it give you, and which trickled out a little at the corners of your mouth. You wiped your mouth.

"My turn," cried Jacquou.

He got up and walked towards the bottles lined up on the grass.

"My wine," said he, lifting a big bottle up into the sunlight.

"Now we are going to drink ourselves silly," said Barbe.

But Carle was beside her, between her and Jacquou, and his blood was hot, and he had got red and his neck had swollen. For a long time he had been hearing the toong and the toong of that wild drum. He had drunk three big glasses of Jourdan's wine, each time the thunder had grown louder and the cadence had become more rapid. He felt that his feet were unglu-ing themselves from the earth, that his body was ungluing itself from the earth, that his head was ungluing itself from the earth. He thought of the way his stallion would gallop if he let it free in the fields. The drum of his blood beat with the heavy beats of this gallop he had never heard.

"Nothing silly," he said.

He did not exactly know any longer either what he wanted to say or what he was saying. He was always like that, and very quickly after wine. He wanted to say that a stallion with an iris-leaf chanfrin should gallop through the world and make men dance with the drumming of his gallop.

"Yes, but . . ." said Barbe.

"You are too old," said he.

He seemed to be winking, but as a matter of fact he was trying to open his eyes and only one was obeying.

"With all respect," he said, "I want to say"—he raised his finger in the air—"give me something to drink."

And he handed his big glass to Jacquou.

Jacquou's wine was on the same scale as its owner: hard and strong. And it was imperious.

They left it a bit in their glasses. The kid was fresh and supple and it rejoiced their mouths. They still had the honest taste of Jourdan's wine.

In an earthen dish the great hare was waiting. It was a spring hare, fat and strong. They could see it clearly now as they watched it while com-fortably eating the kid. It must have weighed six kilograms without the stuffing made in the manner of his country: a style of cooking with a bit of magic in it, done with fresh kitchen garden herbs and with mountain herbs that Honoré had brought mysteriously in the pocket of his waistcoat. When he had shown them you would have said they were cloves, or bits of old iron. They were red and hard and dry. Touching them told you nothing. And smelling them told you little, just a little smell, but, it is true, very

mountainish. Honoré, however, had soaked them in vinegar, and you might have seen them unfold and move like living things. And then you recognized terebinth buds, solognette flowers, cardamin husks, and then the leaves of plants of which the names were not known even to Honoré. At least so he said. But when he had chopped them up himself, and kneaded them and mixed them with spinach, sorrel, fresh shoots of chard, with a quarter of a clove of garlic, a handful of pepper, a handful of rock salt, three spoonfuls of oil, and a whole tablespoonful of field saffron made from the pollen of wild iris, then! oh, yes! then! And all the smells stole out then from between the fingers which were mixing, though it was still crude he said. But when he had chopped them up himself, and kneaded them and he had not added bacon, he grasped it all quickly in his hands and shoved it into the hare's belly. He sewed up the skin and that's what had been turning on the spit. And the juices had mingled. The hare was black and shining like an earthenware dish.

"Well, now, this wine?" asked Jacquou.

"We haven't drunk it yet."

"Let's drink."

"Wait," said Jourdan, "let's finish my jar first. Yours," he said, "is as black as pitch. It's the color of the hare. It'll go with it. Look at mine." (He lifted the jar to arm's length.) "It's goat color, and it's a bit goaty, too."

He began to dance lightly, and he made a little leap to show how goaty his wine was. It was true, he was right. Jacquou's wine was the color of the hare.

"He's right."

"Look at him," said Marthe. "He's like a young fellow with his wine. Look at him."

"Yes," said Madame Hélène to herself. "He's young."

She also had within her a great youthfulness which was dancing and goaty and made her breathe quickly.

And the blood beat hollowly: boom, boom, boom, like the savage dance of all the earth. And the noise seemed to steal from the forests, from the hills, from the mountains and from the sky itself.

Jourdan made another round of the table, pouring out drinks.

They were going to take the dish with the kid away. There was nothing left but the bones.

"Wait," said Barbe. "I'm old. Your hare is very heating. I know it, Honoré. Give me some bones." She took four or five big ones and put them in her plate.

"Break them for me," she said to Jacquou.

Jacquou put the bones over his knee and brokes them like sticks.

Barbe began to suck the marrow.

"I like it," she said. "And it's good for the stomach."

"But we," said Carle, "we'd prefer something strong and solid. Hey, boys!"

They saw that his eyes were winking like those of a man who with the sun against his eyes watches the foaming gallop of a horse.

Honoré served the hare. He said:

"You must have a bit of this and a bit of that."

People said:

"We've got enough."

He said:

"No, if you haven't got this, you see, this little bit"—he lifted it with the

end of his fork and put it on the plate—"if you haven't got this little bit, the hare doesn't amount to anything."

And thus to one he added a terebinth bud, to another a cardomin leaf, and to Aurore he gave a whole cooked head of field parsley, thick and big as hemlock and dripping with sauce.

"There," he said, "that'll keep you busy, that'll stir up your inside."

He served Jourdan. He served Jacquou. He served Barbe, despite her bones.

"For your man's pleasure," he said, "eat something vigorous, not that marrow which will make a limp rag out of you."

"What a way to speak to your wife's mother!"

"Drink," said Jacquou.

And this time they drank because everything was in harmony: the smell of this fiery food, the black meat of the hare and the black wine which was waiting with its gleam of pitch.

Jacquou's black wine was a terrible master. It did not wait at all. It took command of everything right away.

And there was also the smell of solognette. This is a very special smell and bearable only when you have a tuft of it under a boundless sky on the windy summit of a mountain. It is a herb of blood, it is a herb of fire, it is a herb of big-muscled love.

"God," said Jourdan, and banged on the table.

His beard of iron was spread out all round his face. Usually people didn't notice his beard, because it was just the sort of a beard that a man should have. But now they looked at it. He looked beyond them all with ecstatic eyes. And he ate gravely, with big motions of his jaws.

There were love herbs. There was the black flesh of the hare. There was the strength of the fire. There was the black wine. And to all that there was added the air that one chewed along with the food—an air perfumed by narcissuses, for the breeze came from the field; the sky, the spring, the sunshine which warmed the supple corners of the body insistently—you would have thought it knew what it was doing—it warmed the tender spots of the armpits, the channels in front of the belly, these two furrows between the belly and the things which meet—just there! It warmed the neck sometimes as if it were biting you, as the big tomcats do, to stir the desire for love in cats (and then the cats scream, but when they are tired out they seek solitude). And it came to place that everything suddenly had smell and shape. The whole plateau gave out its smell which was the smell of a plateau. It was as if they were all settled upon a great ramskin.

Marthe looked at the forest. The blood beat strongly. Those who were beating the dance drums were no longer hidden under the trees. They had made a leap beyond the borders of the woods. They were beating their drums in the open air. The sky rang with the sound and so did all the echoes. Heads were full of this noise of blood. They wanted to dance. Not to dance face to face and upright with music, as one usually does, no. To dance as this incessant drumming of the blood demanded. They didn't know how, but to dance and to be free.

That was it, above everything, to be free. Madame Hélène could breathe no more. Her corsage was stifling her. She had just tapped her belly. It was hard, and all alive. She felt a life which rose from the earth all along her legs, through her belly, her chest, up to her head, where this life blew like a whirlwind as the wind does sometimes in empty barns.

"All broken down!" she said to herself.

She smiled. It was a phrase of her tenant's. He always said: "It's all broken down, madame."

Jourdan saw the smile. He replied to it with his characteristic laugh, which was silent but very illuminating, with his mouth wide open in his beard.

Madame Hélène, who was looking at him, nevertheless did not see him. She was listening to the whirlwind of the new life in her head and that took up all her strength, even the strength of her glance. But she felt, as it were, the passage of a gossamer thread over her naked arms, over her naked skin, and all her skin shivered down the whole length of her body, under her clothes unto the most secret place. Then she saw that Jourdan was laughing happily.

Marthe, at the other end of the table, said to herself:

"Jourdan is happy."

"Some more!" said Jacquou.

He got up. His knees were soft. He made the round of the table to pour out drinks. He leaned on people's shoulders.

"Give me your glass."

They gave him their glasses.

He poured out. And people began to feel that Jacquou was getting heavy.

They ate, they drank, they chewed without speaking, with only the noise of teeth, tongues, plates, forks, knives, and sometimes just a word:

"Bread."

Or:

"Attention!"

"The noise of sheep when they've got good grass," said Randoulet to himself.

There was hardly any noise. So little that one could hear the crickets singing in the fields and the movements of the wind which was arising.

But over everything there was the drum of the blood, the rumbling of the blood. It beat on a somber drum in the men and in the women. Each blow seemed to strike right into the breast. One felt one's self tied to this cadence. It was like the flail of threshers threshing wheat. It was like the flail which strikes the grain, rises, strikes the grain, rises. It was like the labour of a man treading the wine press. It was like the regular gallop of a horse, and if he gallops forever like that, regularly, with his great shoes, he will come to the end of the world and after the end of the world he will gallop into the sky and the vault of the sky will sound under his gallop as the earth sounds now. Always, always, without halts, because the blood does not cease to beat and to stamp and to gallop and to ask with its black drum that the dance should begin. And it calls and you do not dare. And it calls and you do not know if you should . . . And you have desires in all your body and you suffer. You don't know and you know. Yes, vaguely you realize that it would be good, that the earth would be fine, that it would be paradise, happiness for all, and joy. To let yourself go at the call of the blood, to let it beat, stamp, to let yourself be carried away by the gallop of your own blood right into the infinite plain of the sand-smooth sky. And you would hear the gallop, gallop, beat, beat, trample, trample and the sounding of the drum under the great black fist of the blood which strikes it. But this would be the dance, the true dance, you would obey with a true obedience. You would do what the body desires. All these calls of the blood would be calls of joy. And yet, you do not know, you do not know if you should. You know that you ought,

but you do not move. you are fixed. And in the depths of the breast also, it is fixed, this dance music and the blood calls and you are, as it were, torn apart. Because the poor body no longer knows. Because you see that you are on the wrong road because you cannot follow the road on which you are.

How much you wish that you could speak, one says: yes, no, bread, push yourself, attention. The wind in the grass is like a cat. You must sing. Nothing but that. A great song of sorrow . . . Or better, gestures. After all, one has had enough! The blood is right when all is said and done.

Joséphine unbuttoned the top button of her corsage; then the second, then the third, then the fourth. She looked at Bobi. He was smooth and red. He had a face which was smooth like stones rolled by water, and which was reddened by sun, wine, blood. He had blue eyes. You could see them now, very clear blue, very very clear, scarcely blue at all.

She unbuttoned the fifth button. It was the last. She opened her corsage. Underneath she had only a summer chemise. She had but to lift her shoulder and her breasts which were hard, would leap out of the chemise and come forth. They remained there, under the shadow of the corsage, but they could be seen. He must be able to see them with his eyes which were scarcely blue. She felt the wind on her breasts.

"That's good," she said.

But nobody paid any attention to her, save perhaps Bobi. But she couldn't be sure of that. You couldn't see where he was looking. Except perhaps the girl there: Aurore. She had lowered her head and blushed, and fingered her corsage to unbutton it also. But her corsage had no buttons, it laced, and even unlaced there would have been nothing to see. It would not have opened wide, and then there was scarcely anything underneath. She was a maiden, Joséphine was a woman. A woman profits from all that she has done with men.

"He is looking at me with his eyes which are almost blue."

Bobi looked straight in front of him. He was thinking of all the grimaces and fooleries of Joséphine during the meal. He was thinking that she was supple in the thighs, from the thighs to the shoulders. He would be glad to grasp the torso of her with his two hands. To feel the warmth and subtleness. It would be like a fruit and like heat, like something animal and full of juice; to feel the weight and the warmth of the breasts under the edge of one's hand, along the length of the forefinger, then to seize them and caress them.

He lowered his eyes. He saw beside him the gentle white hands of Aurore. They came and went, fine as bread. The sensitive fingers, the light wrist, the round arm, muscled under its fresh skin, skin which was a little rosy and had blue veins and yellow down.

"No," said Bobi. "It won't come out of women. Nothing comes of women save the desire for women. Everything will come out of me."

From his place looking beyond Jourdan, the boy Carle, Honorine and Honoré, and beyond those who sat in front of him at the other side of the table, he saw Jourdan's farm, and on either side of the farm the plateau which went away with its level fields.

He said to himself:

"Here I am"—he thought of all the countries through which he had traveled. He thought of those four or five places on the earth where he had lived for some time, "I don't know," he said to himself, "if it's seeing all the

flatness of this earth . . ." He made an unconscious gesture with his arm to depict to himself in the secrecy of his body the great base of the plateau—he touched Aurore's chest.

"Sorry, miss," he said.

"It's all right," said she.

She had no idea of what she said. She knew only that he had touched her gently for the first time, there, at the very place where she was most sensitive, in the shade of her hard little breasts.

"The flatness of this country," he continued, speaking to himself, "makes me believe that this time it's for a long while, forever." And he repeated to himself: "forever."

And he looked beyond Joséphine at the beautiful plateau which stretched away around them all.

"It's a good business," said Bobi. He thought of that night last winter, with its extraordinary stars.

"To come," he said to himself, "from down there, from the plain with not much hope, and suddenly to find a road just at the edge of the wood. And then the road rises. I arrive. I go across the fields. I hear the sound of the horse's collar. I find a man working. I say to him: 'Give me tobacco.' He says to me: 'Have you nursed lepers?' "

"Sir," said Aurore gently.

"Don't call me sir," said he.

He waited. She did not add anything.

"What did you want to say?"

"I don't know now," she said.

Her face was redder. She was certainly very warm. He saw that this face of hers was without evil, and that all its lines were pure. It was a face which gave gravity and purity to everything.

This time he saw also the naked breasts of Joséphine.

"Sir," he said to himself, "that's the first time I've been called that." He looked at the lovely face, so pure and so young, so confident, so well-disposed to him that he trembled beneath her glance, as does a flower in the wind. "Yes," he cried to Jourdan, who was making signs at him, "that's all right, don't worry. What do you say?"

Jourdan tried to make him understand something . . Everybody was speaking.

"What do you want?"

"He wants to say 'Orion-Carrot-Flower'," said Marthe.

Jourdan now was leaning over Jacquou and he must have been explaining that business to him, for he was showing him the sky and then he made a sign with his hands: a circle, made by touching his thumb with his forefinger.

Jacquou listened gravely, without looking at the hand. He looked at Bobi, but with a glance which was lost beyond doubt.

"Not to be vexed any more by the desire for gain," said Bobi to himself. He thought of this constellation of Orion, so large, so shining that winter evening when he had had on his lips together all at once the two words: Orion-Carrot-Flower. "He was sensitive," he said to himself, "and when I said that he stopped his horse and said 'pardon'. To go into life adventurously, said Bobi to himself.

He drank his glass full of black wine.

"For," he said to himself, wiping his mouth—and he noticed that he was

perhaps thinking aloud—He pressed his lips together.—"For I know more than all of them. I know better. They do not know and that is why they are sad."—He remembered Uncle Silve. That voice in the night when they were returning from their walk on the plateau, Jourdan and he, the weight of the man leaning against the calash. And then he hanged himself.

"As for me," he said to himself, "with all that I have passed through! For after all, if there were reasons for unhappiness, I should have been unhappy. Prudence? Never prudence. Economy, where one thinks about this and that in the future? Never. The passion for the useless," he said to himself. "Passion! Useless? Useless for their world, but as soon as one knows that our work in this world is to make other people rich—isn't that just exactly what is useless, and if one argues, for I do argue, I argue with myself, and so if one argues, isn't it exactly for the useful that I have always been passionate?"

"It's funny," said Bobi aloud, "but there are really men who are dead upon the earth."

It was perhaps his reflection, but he had said it aloud. As a moment ago he ceased eating and become quite still, he had the appearance of wanting to speak to everybody. They all stopped talking and eating. They looked at him in silence.

Honoré said:

"Be quiet, boys!"

There was nothing but the noise of the wind.

"I didn't leave enough time between 'dead' and 'upon the earth'," said Bobi to himself.

He repeated:

"Men who are dead. Upon the earth."

And he made gestures:

"Dead!"

And he opened his hands, spread out his fingers to say:

"Nothing more. They have nothing more. Nothing, nothing. Everything has trickled away from them.

"And upon the earth!"

He lifted his arm to imitate the great horizon, and at the same time with his long caressing hands he caressed the forms of imaginary hills and trees.

And just at that moment they heard horses whinnying and then in the silence a little step. And they saw the stag coming.

The farmhouse was two hundred meters from the manor, in the middle of the fields. It was a long, almost blind building, with small windows and a low door. From the threshold you could look out over the neighboring lands which at this time consisted of a stubble-field, the fallow of a potato field, an aftermath meadow, and seven rows of vines from which the grapes had already been gathered.

The door was open.

"May I come in?" asked Bobi.

"Yes."

"Good-day. You don't know where the women are?"

"Good-day. I don't know."

The man was seated squarely in front of a table. He toyed with an open knife, but he was engaged in reading a book.

They looked at each other for a moment.

"You are from Jourdan's place?" said the man.

"Yes. I was told that the stags were on Silve's land, and I came to see."

"I knew," said the man, "that we would meet some day."

He closed his book.

"I haven't been looking for you," he said. "Sit down."

He was a man whose youth was over, blonde, thin and shriveled. His muscles were long, he had no fat, his hair was discolored by the sun, his hands were delicate but tawny, his wrists thin but strong, his shoulder big but pitted by a blue gap under the ridge of bone; this spoke of his courage and his enthusiasm for work.

"So," said the man, "you're the one that brings happiness."

"I don't do it much more than anybody else," said Bobi. "I try to be reasonable."

"I've looked at everything and listened to everything," said the man. "I know what you do. I saw your beasts going past the day before yesterday. The other hind is dead, I buried it. It felt bad on the meadows."

"Dead? From what?"

"From death, as far as one can say."

"You're a peasant?"

"A funny question," said the man. "If I weren't, the others would soon notice it. There are the fields, look at them."

"You read?"

"I read."

"You live alone?"

"Yes."

"When I arrived," said Bobi, "they were at the end of their strength. Have you been here long?"

"Three years, but time makes no difference."

"It tires you."

"It helps also. What I want to say is that it's not a question of time or country. It's a social question."

"I'm speaking of sadness."

"I'm speaking of that too. I'm a buyer of hope, like everybody."

"I try to give them joy."

"I try, too."

"Well, explain it to me."

"No," said the man. "You've begun the business, I haven't yet You should speak."

"I've seen many unhappy men."

"That's an easy thing in this world."

"Since I've been on the road, in the villages and the country districts, I've seen lots."

"What are you?"

"An acrobat."

"I suspected that."

"How?"

"I didn't exactly say acrobat in speaking with Miss Aurore, I said poet. A poet. It comes to much the same thing, after all."

"I compared myself. I said to myself: you are happy; I said to myself: yes. I asked myself: why? I could neither answer nor know properly."

"If you called yourself happy, you were not so any longer. People don't know when they're happy."

"I wasn't any longer, that's right," said Bobi. "The unhappiness of others hindered me."

"That's a pity," said the man. And after a silence: "A pity that men like you make mistakes."

"And yet, at times, in the evening, alone at the edge of the road, sitting beside my little sack watching the night come, watching the little wind amid the dust, smelling the grass, listening to the noise of the forest, I sometimes had time enough almost to see my happiness. It was like a flea's jump: it's there, it's gone, but I was happy and free."

"Liberty does not exist."

"Free to go where I wanted."

"Not free, not to smell the grass, or not to listen to the noise of the forest."

"I like that."

"But that entered into your body, you understand, into your head. You were no longer you, but you plus the forest, plus the grass, plus everything else. Therefore not free. Even a stone isn't free. Ironstone isn't free. It is hard, however. You won't find anything more impermeable than that. That isn't the point. Go on, but don't speak of liberty."

"The world is a food."

"That's possible. What is certain is that it's a place where one works."

"I think differently."

"Just as you like, but the truth is the truth. It's as plain as the nose on your face. Have you time to spare? Then tell me what you think."

"Listen to what happened to me once," said Bobi.

"I don't like stories," said the man. "If one wants to find a solution you must work with as few words as possible."

"This story is short and will save time. In the mountains one day I arrived at a place near the house where I was born, and went to see one of my friends. He was old, paralyzed, in his bed, fed with milk, unable to move. Nursed by his daughter alone. I went in, I looked at him, paused for a minute and said to myself: 'He would be better dead.' "

"Yes."

"A wish, or would you have killed him?"

"Just a wish," the man acknowledged.

"He would have been better dead. His daughter was there. He looked at us. He tried to do something. He managed to move his eye. A sign. Then I saw. She went to get his pipe. She filled it with tobacco. She lit it, put it in her mouth and drew. When it was well lit, she gave it to him. He began to puff contentedly. He closed his eyes. His daughter said to me: 'Come, let's go. He loves that.' "

"The end of the world!"

"Just one joy, and the world is worthwhile."

"You do not answer."

"You trouble me."

"Only one joy, and we have patience."

"You have touched me in a place which lies deep in me, and which I forbid people to touch."

"The joys of the world are our only food. The last little drop keeps us still alive."

"Be quiet. I think I'll wake up with a terrible hunger."

The man remained a moment motionlessly looking in front of him.

"I have always thought," he said as if speaking to himself, "that we need poets."

"A man like you could awaken a great appetite in everybody. You have touched me in a place which I cover every day with earth. And I have felt it all alive down there, upon your call, like water at the wand of a sorcerer.

"You know that I have need of joys. You know that no one can live without joy. Life is joy.

"What's really serious is that you're right.

"But what is really serious is that your joy is not solid."

"It is based on simplicity, on purity, on the everyday things of the world!"

"It is animal."

"Yes, tragic animals. We make tools."

"Let us become once more . . ."

"Becoming is ahead, never behind . . ."

"Is that why the water yelps in all the valleys, why the wind balances the forests, why the grass is supple and why, without ever stopping, the white clouds cross the sky like ships?"

"I am for the power of men."

"The night wind has passed over the vervain hills. This morning your horse, your dog, your goat and the little silly serpent drink this perfumed air and profit from it. You, will you remain forever shut in upon yourself, with your poor, sharp, torturing tools, your files, your saws, your planes and your spades, your jaws of iron, your teeth of iron, your clearance grounds with which you can no longer stop the forest fires; like him who thought he was carrying a lamp and then set on fire his beard, moustaches, eyebrows, hair, and ends up drunk and blind in the midst of joy and has no other desire than to tend the hands which the flame licked?"

"Stop taking advantage of your position as a poet. Don't cover me with images any more. Don't throw at me all these images which lick me with their tongues. Don't speak any longer from up there where your voice makes an echo with the stars. I told you that few words were needed. Don't use so many. Use proper ones."

"You yourself . . ."

"Yes, I let myself be taken, you see. But then I have disciplined myself to this idea. In discussion I like as few words as possible. But poesy is a force with which to begin, and a great force; dynamite which lifts and tears away the rocks. Afterwards, you have to come with little mauls and hammer away at the same place. That's the way to get building stone."

"You're explaining great things to me."

"We are explaining ourselves to each other."

"You are a learned man."

"No, I am a lover."

"Of what?"

"What I haven't got."

"What?"

"What one has sometimes but which doesn't remain."

"What?"

"What you're looking for. Joy. Don't ask questions all the the time. When I don't answer, it's because I don't want to. Is there any need to speak? Everybody is looking for joy."

"The important thing is to keep it."

"To find it."

"I've found it."

"Where?"

"Around us, as inexhaustibly as the air. The important thing is to become once more the dusty-yellow vagabonds of the world. I am against the power of men."

"Now we've got to the point where you're going to start talking."

"Ah, old man, we think ourselves the angels of the universe and we're scarcely its grubs. I believe that if instead of struggling we just let ourselves go everything would be all right?"

"Let ourselves go? Us, men? You're joking!"

"Yes, I'm joking at you. You call: Joy, joy! She comes. And then you say to her: Don't you imagine, madame, that I'm going to let myself go!"

"Let us talk like men who know the value of sorrow."

"Not the value but the reason of sorrow. We are doing nothing human."

"I see the thing on the social plane," said the man. "I said that we need poets but I say also that from time to time we'll be obliged to kick them hard on the buttocks."

"I arrived here in the middle of the night. I saw a fellow who was working. I thought to myself: 'Well, that won't be any better.' The fellow gave me tobacco, we smoked, I began talking. I talked at random, I just wanted to help him. In the end, he asked me: 'Have you ever cured lepers?'"

"That's exactly what we want, that there shouldn't be any more of these lepers."

"I can tell you it means a lot when a man confides in you so that you should comfort him. They've received me here as if I were god."

"Are you going to cut down the size of their fields?"

"Yes, and they will work only at their ease and for their pleasure."

"I know. That's just what I think. Work has become a stinking dirtyness. It's as if work had been starved first of all so that we should have to starve afterwards to fatten it up. Nevertheless, labour's the handsome scamp of the world, all right, a scamp with a cow-tail ruft of hair. What you're doing isn't bad. One can't make use of work any longer, it's gone rotten. It isn't even an ideal any longer, you understand? I mean it no longer forms part of the good things. And you're going to draw people far away from that. That's not bad."

"To think that work's been so befouled that you have to throw it away and start over again!"

"I'm one of that hundred million of beggars who walk between the sheaves of wheat."

"If it were not for suffering, you'd be right. It's going to be a case of death to the feeble and suffering exists."

"We're not saints."

"Yes we are; saints of timber, of labor and the force. The saints of the power of men."

"You use poet's words."

"Because I want to convince you. You want to live on the old earth. I want to live on the new earth."

"The earth is as it is and as it has made you."

"I'll put it to my own use."

"That's saying a lot."

"The earth has made everything except hybrids. I was thinking of that in

my vineyard. Without hybrids you'd have to drink water. You drink wine. Who made hybrids? Man."

"So man is the miracle worker!"

"Yes, and see how joy increases. Soon there will no longer be weak people."

"You've found the secret of the blood?"

"No, but I've found what you're looking for, I've found the secret of joy."

"All is silence, speak quickly, we're listening."

"I see immense fields which with one sweep from one end to the other appease the plains and the hills as oil upon water calms the waves. Furrows running side by side as if I had folded the earth in my corduroy waistcoat. People will no longer say: my fields, my trees, my wheat, my horse, my oats, my house. People will say 'ours!' The earth will be made over to man and no longer to Jean, Pierre, Jacques or Paul. No more barriers, no more hedges, no more mounds of division. The man who sets his plough to the furrow in the morning will go on straight in front of him through dawns and evenings before coming to the end of the furrow. This furrow will be nothing more than the beginning of another: beside Pierre, Pierre beside Jacques, Jacques beside Paul, Paul beside Jean. All together. Horses, carts, legs, arms, shoulders, forward, all together, for all. Work? Joy? The generosity which is joy? The generosity which zigzags through all the sluttishness of morality? That's how things will be on the earth!

"Listen, don't speak, no, don't speak, no, I won't let you open your mouth. Listen, a little thing among great ones. A little thing which is like the sow of great ones. A sow with ten sugar-loaf dugs. Listen. There now! The flower. You see the flower. You see the flowers of trees. Fruit trees. You see? Do you see how light and fresh it is, how sensitive and weak, how it is killed by frost or hail? You see? Because of this weakness, the earth, our world, the world in which we live, has great stretches of desert: sand, snow, ice, storms, anything that people like you call the course of the earth and that I call ignorance about the earth and about plants, stretches of stones, flint and alabaster dust. All that under the sun. You still see? Good.

"I speak, yes, I speak. I must speak. I must speak to you, speak as you say with the words of a poet. I speak to you because I esteem you. We shall not always talk. One day we shall speak about all this with fist blows, we against the others, we against those who scrape the joy off our skins and pay us with cardboard sous. And you will be with us.

"Listen. The flower. The fruit flower. You know what happens? It makes love to itself. It dwindles, diminishes, gets feeble, like everything, like the world, like the law of the world, like a stone that you throw, it rises high and then falls. Now, the flower is desert on the earth. Hence among men great deserts of men who have never eaten peaches, pears, melons, watermelons, plums, apples. Understand, I don't know if what I'm going to say to you is true. I'm thinking of hybrids. You come to this flower—you intervene. Understand that word well. You said to become again. I say to become—to intervene. You don't let this flower make love all on its own any more. To a savage mother flower you bring the male seed of one of those fruit flowers which are feeble but give good fruit. I'm making this up but it's the sort of thing that will happen. Just think of it. I've made hybrids. I think of making more. If not this way, then another. We'll search. We'll make flowers that will resist everything. We will give the flower our obstinacy and our desire. Do you see it, the new earth all covered with orchards from north to south? Where the dust of alabaster lay, orchards. The mount-

ains will flow with wells, orchards. Trees acclimatised everywhere, directed, made to our desire, orchards, orchards over all the earth, orchards for all."

He got up.

"The main thing" he said "is to know that we are opposed. We will draw together or else"—he made a gesture to signify something being upset—"you'll crash like a fallen star. It's a simple matter. One must think of the great mass of toilers. Think of it. It's enough to make one mad when you think that we are millions and millions. And with arms of terror. A power!" (He whistled between his lips).

Surely he saw before him the world of his dream for he remained standing motionless, with his monk-like face and his muscle-bound body.

Bobi got up.

The man gave him his hand.

"Glad to have met you."

He accompanied Bobi to the door.

Outside, it was already night.

Translated from the French by H. O. Whyte

Jorge Icaza

Huasipungo[1]

Along a pack trail in the eastern cordilleras, used to haul goods to Quito, the Pereira family, mounted on three mules, advanced toward the interior. Several Indians bent under the weight of the luggage, trailed behind.

On arriving at a crossroad, Don Alfonso stopped the procession and, in a voice shaking with cold, announced to the two women behind him:

"This is the beginning of the *paramo*[2]."

"Let's keep on as far as the mules will go."

"You don't want to dismount?"

"No," answered the mother of the family, her face expressing the bad temper that seems to rise up from the buttocks on mule trips . . .

"And you?"

"I'm all right, papa."

The man started his mule and continued the journey which from then on became slow, difficult, insufferable. Mud. The mud of the plains where beasts bog up and happiness seems sunk in the mire.

Without warning, they had to stop. The lead mule sniffed at the swampy ground, stuck up his ears and refused to obey the spurs that dug into his sides; shivers ran over his hide as if the group had been caressed by fear.

"The brute is balking! Jose, Juan, Andres!"

"Yes, master," the Indians who were coming behind in case of emergency, replied in chorus, without waiting for him to finish.

"You, Jose, are the strongest. Carry ña Blanquita." Ña Blanquita was a ham weighing 170 pounds.

"Andres and Juan for me and Lolita; the rest take the baggage."

The three Indians, after wiping the mist of the plains off their faces with the inside of their sleeves, made ready to let their masters mount on their backs. They took off their ponchos, their woolen hats, folded their ponchos double, like an apache handkerchief, letting the cold bite through the holes in their greasy shirts, and presented their backs for the family to change from mule to Indian.

From boredom, Don Alfonso fell into an interminable monologue. "People who die from cold have a grin frozen on their faces. The Gringos were certainly right in insisting on a road; this is hellish cold. They know more than we do. People accustomed to a better life. They've come to educate us, their hands full of progress. Instead of being cruel to the Indians and amusing himself by branding them like bulls with a red hot iron so they would not get lost, my father should have made the peons do all this work and thus saved me this little trip. In the old man's time, the only one who had any practical sense was Don Gabriel Garcia Moreno. He was a great man who knew how to make use of the energy of pain, forcing the Indians to work on the road to Riobamba with a horsewhip; the whip that cured the Chimborazo mountain sickness, the whip that opened the road around the edge of the cliffs; the horsewhip of progress in the hands of man immaculate, Oh!"

His emotion was so profound that it made him jump and Andres, on whom

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[1] *Huasipungo*, Communal village land alloted in strips to Indian families.

[2] *Paramo*, cold high plain.

he rode, lost his balance and plunged forward on his hands and knees in the mud.

"*Carajo!* Accursed impotent fool!" the master shouted at the Indian in despair as he drew up his knees and seized hold of the man's coarse hair much as a skillful horseman would clutch his horse's mane.

Andres got up, dripping mud; he was too cold to feel the damage the spurs had done to his ribs.

The paramo and the north wind are hungry for Indian flesh; that of the other travelers is well protected and it is difficult for the cold to get its teeth in.

"I can't stand any more. I am frozen," murmured the "ham," clutching Jose's shoulders.

Ña Blanquita was also thinking, thinking of the Virgin of Popeya who ought to help them in this critical time. If it weren't for her, how could they travel through this ocean of mud? It was clearly a miracle. Next month all her friends would celebrate the holidays in *Quito*. But she, Blanca Chanique de Pereira would not be there, would not be able to display her diamond rings, would not be able to wait on the threshold of the sacristy in convent like peace for the reverend father Uzcategue, her holy confessor.

"Are you all right, daughter?"

"Yes, mama," replied the girl who, settled on Juan's back, was contriving vengeance against the faithless Comba. She remembered him everywhere: at the dances, on the excursions, in the street, at church; everywhere except in the midst that enveloped everything, the cold that burrowed into the marrow and the mud in which the Indians were bogged up to their knees.

Fading into the fog, the members of this aristocratic family proceeded on the backs of the natives toward the interior to bury their little bourgeois tragedies in the remotest part of the sierra and seek respite from that nightmare of the landowner: where to get money to pay taxes and debts.

At the command of the priest and the owner, the Ruata brothers organized a patriotic gathering to work up enthusiasm for work on the road.

Meetings were held every night in the back room of the Jacinto store. They succeeded in stirring up considerable enthusiasm among the population, playing on strains of an exaggerated patriotism and old rivalries with the neighboring village.

The drinking parties that occurred from time to time made the gatherings popular. The natives came en masse with their savings. The gatherings required money. Almost always the drinking began with a bottle which the Ruata brothers and Jacinto bet on the cards. The rest came by itself. Shouts, *vivas*, discussions, plans, fist fights, flying bottles, ending at three or four o'clock in the morning.

The priest too, after each mass, preached to his parishioners, his lips still moist from eating the bits of the body of Christ.

"For every spadefull of earth lifted in this great work, there will be a hundred days of indulgence; the Divine Maker will smile with each meter that the road advances and will pour down his blessing on this village."

The listeners, for the most part Indians encrusted in filth, lice and rags, trembled to the marrow at the thought of little Father God's smile. They would do more than a meter. They would do kilometers so the good God would laugh out loud.

Usually the talk ended with a peremptory tone that fixed itself in the subconscious:

Work will begin a few days before the Festival of the Virgin. Don Isidor of the village will act as steward and start the work. It will be a solemn festival in which we will ask God and his Holy Mother for permission and the blessings needed to help us in this titanic work. Cabascango at the river will be steward at the great festival of thanks with which we will celebrate the completion of the road.

One morning the village awoke with the desire to do great things. From six to seven there was a 100 *sucre*[1] mass with the village band, women in cheap blouses bought in the market, *chagras*[2] with their dress ponchos flung over their shoulders, Indians in their best clothes, children arrayed as angels and fainting under the weight of their tin wings, proud of their long curls which their mothers struggled patiently almost all night to make. Much incense, the church packed with Indians, and a long sermon that made the air suffocating.

At eight all the streets leading to the square were filled with Indians bringing packs to the fair. The throng of buyers and sellers moved in an epileptic dance of color.

"Buy potatoes."

"Buy corn."

"Buy meat."

"See what fine potatoes."

"Have some garlic, friend."

"Try a little, madam."

"See, I give a little extra with each purchase."

The buyers circled round in a conglomeration of cries, offers, replies, displays, murmurs. The women seemed to interwine like serpentine streamers at a masked ball.

There was a sea of heads, a white wave of Indian sombreros.

The braying of donkeys and crying of children mingled with the other sounds of the multitude.

The engineer, Don Alfonso, the priest, the Ruata brothers, Jacinto and the chagra police formed the general staff, gazing at the sea of Indians, cries, colors, sun and merchandise.

"We must station ourselves at the four corners of the plaza to see that no one escapes. The Indians are already on the way. I have got about a thousand," the landowner explained with pride.

Twelve strokes of the gong crystallized the throng of buyers and sellers into a hoarse cry of enthusiasm.

"This way .... This way!" The Ruada brothers shouted inchorus, opening a passage through the multitude.

No one refused to go. Refusal would have implied an unheard-of crime.

The head of the procession aroused commiseration, tenderness, fits of rapture and of consternation. They were the school children and those not in school, ragged, hungry, cadaverous faces trying to smile; they were more like beggars pleading for bread than conquerors of nature; they were seekers of some narcotic toy that would deaden the hunger that gnawed at their guts. The big fellows said that up on the *paramo* there were plenty of wild apples. mulberries, *chimbalos,* grass to eat. At least as long as the *minga*[3] lasted they

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[1] *Sucre:* Unit of currency in Ecuador.

[2] *Chagra:* Indians who owned their own land.

[3] *Minga:* Forced peon labor.

would not have to wait hours and hours for mama or papa to come home with grain to mix with a little cold water for porridge.

Like an emotional buttress for the over-sensitive head of the parade, came the old people carrying patriotic banners and wearing bright three colored bands on their straw hats.

The head had the effect foreseen by the priest. Women wrapped in their shawls, with the timidity of countrywomen, waited in the doors of their huts to see their little ones pass, badly dressed but with the martial air of child heroes. They felt a tremor that made them blow their noses; their cries broke out with a hysterical cough; they could resist no longer and weeping, followed the procession.

"Do you see how the lines are being reinforced?" exclaimed the priest proudly.

"Mother love," the engineer commented.

"Yes mother love that you have to know how to utilize. These sentimintalities must be exploited. They can be made to act as check against many of the disorders and revolutions loose in the world today.

Since the engineer did not address the priest with special courtesy, the latter continued somewhat resentfully:

"It is wonderful the way I can touch the heart strings."

"It's your business," Don Alfonso interjected jokingly.

The crowd could no longer circulate freely. The older Ruata brother, in a pause during the march, mounted a platform amidst cries of enthusiasm, and shouted with all his heart:

"We, the glorious village of Tomachi, will make our own road without asking favors of anybody. Our masters, the father priest and Don Alfonso, will later become great for having taught us how to do all these good things. They will be as great as Calderon or Bolivar." The crowd, with their picks raised to the heavens, sensed his mounting emotion.

An idea which had long ago suggested itself with epic fervor to the Ruatas now came from the mouth of the elder brother:

"Yes, like Bolivar, who sits at the right hand of God!"

The delirious throng could listen no further. The banners rose and fell as if they were making silent efforts to inject their enthusiasm into a sky that was becoming dark and treacherous. Ruata thought proudly: "When we go to Quito, we shall dazzle the intellectuals with that phrase." And at the same time another idea flashed into his mind: "We have gained Don Alfonso's confidence and maybe he will give us good jobs."

The branches along the path seemed to amuse themselves by beating the faces of the enthusiasts, tearing the banners. No longer of any use the flags were picked up by carts which came behind.

The slope opened out into the valley, resplendent in the southern sun.

"There go the Indians!" someone cried, pointing to an interminable cordon of peons who were opening a furrow in the ground.

"Bravo!" exclaimed a voice. It was the voice of hundreds of men, women and children. Each of them felt more important than the other.

They went on like a torrent of creaking carts, crackling bits and saddles, hysterical outcries, enveloped in clouds of dust, sweating in all their pores. They rushed at the Indians and seized their picks from their hands. They wanted to be the ones to do with their own calloused hands a work which would bring bread, life and progress to the region.

At first the majority of the workers returned to the village at night to sleep. The second week, however, work had advanced so far that they had to sleep in the open *pampa.*[1] When night came, the crowd congregated around the fires that were lighted to frighten away the savage cold of the mountain tops. The work was progressing amidst a half unconscious enthusiasm. If the cold of the morning and the nights did not bite into their bones, and if the midday sun did not raise blisters on their skins like the foam on *guarapo,*[2] it would have been easy; but under the noon sun only the Indians could keep on burying their picks in the shadows of their own bodies, thus taking vengeance on the pick of the sun that buried itself in their backs. The gang, tired now, hunted through their pockets for a little *coca* to help them pass the night. In the light of the camp fires, the children slept in their mother's laps; the men rested under their blankets; some picked their toes with thorns to get out the ticks that had been biting them desperately all day. The young people of the village headed by the Ruata brothers hunted, bottle in hand, for the unmarried women to invite them to have a drink and persuade them to enter the camp store, sole shelter in this desert of clouds and cold.

The fires went out one by one. Night came down in a deep black sleep. The young people dragged themselves, half drunk with alcohol and darkness, from the store.

Shadows disappeared rapidly among the carts.

A woman's voice cried out; heavy breathing in the bushes and gullies.

Huddled under a cliff, Melchor, shaking from an attack of his old malaria, heard these strange noises and shouted:

"*Carajo!* those bitches have only come for devilment . . .! where is my wife and my baby Doloritas?"

"Shut up and go to sleep," muttered a man curled up at his side.

"Doloritas! *Carajo!* Why don't you answer! Doloritas!"

"Don't you see they have gone to hunt wood for the fire? Who is going to bother them, stupid?"

"Doloritas!"

"He is determined to raise a row."

"Doloritas!"

The tired breathing and feminine protests put the men's nerves on edge.

"Doloritaaas!"

A hollow detonation rolled across from the sky. Waking with a start, the Indians crouched under their ponchos or ran hastily in search of shelter,—a thick clump of bushes or a fox hole. There was no shelter for so many and most of them had to be content with their blankets.

A second crash came from above.

"We are in for it. It's going to rain . . . ."

"And there's no place to go . . . ."

"Come on, look . . ."

"Get into this corner. It is muddy but what can you do. It will be worse if the deluge catches you."

"Mama Nati."

"Mama Lola."

"Mama Miche."

"Papaaa."

"Shut up, you brats . . . . It's bad enough as it is."

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[1] Pampa: Grass lands

[2] Guarapo: Native drink

Those with malaria shivered as if the rain had already come. The silence of the night returned, but the multitude waited for what they now believed would not come, because they did not want it to come.

Ta . . . Ta . . . Ta . . . The drops began to fall; at first big scattered drops. You could count them. The black silhouette of the mountains, visible against the lighter blankness of the night, had disappeared.

In the darkness came a flash of light, the sky rolled with thunder. Hundreds of drops beat on the plain, a black parchment stretching from mountain to mountain, like a troop of horses approaching precipitously, bringing the tempest on their backs, and stirring up a sour smell of damp earth, cow-dung and wet dogs.

The sky opened its mouth, belching out flames that lighted up its entrails. The thunder pounded like a machine gun and the tempest broke.

The rain fell with devastating fury; the trees beaten by the wind and the water sought to embrace one another.

As dead branches were torn off, the bushes wailed like a child. The water roared down the canals, clogging the roads and ditches with mud. Thunder, wind and water, seeped through the throat of the mountains, the cracks in the canyon, practiced the scale. Only man huddled silent, surprised by the tempest that was destroying all shelter. The Indians standing like scare-crows let themselves be buffeted by the rain, thinking: "It will stop." But the cloudburst increased, sowing terror.

From time to time the lightning guided the Indians to a place that seemed to offer refuge, but the water had taken possession of it first. A flash of forked light, perhaps the last—the tempest with its fury of water and wind will put out all light—gave them time to drag themselves to a mountain of mud which they took for a shelter; then, discouraged, lost in torment, soaked to their very bones with water and cold, they fell where they were, burying their faces under their blankets.

The sky amused itself by flagellating the earth, the earth which had lost its eyes in the darkness, the blind earth, stiff with cold. A thick mud submerged the shelters and turned everything into watery despair. The night roared like the Apocalypse, drowning out the lesser noises coming from the lips of those with malaria, the little cries of violated women, the little anxieties of betrayed husbands, and the snores of the drunk. The Indians, as if they were being assailed by death on all sides, did not dare to move from the place to which the storm had driven them, and wrapped themselves up in their blankets until the last icy blast paralyzed their blood. The only thing visible in the darkness was the water running underfoot, the water which had dissolved all possible hope. The storm continued devouring the people. So until dawn.

From the landscape stiff with cold, a white vapor, with the same painful languor as that which had assailed the workers, faded voluptuously into the early morning light.

A few Indians rose up from under the bushes as if from the dead, dripping mud. Hundreds stretched their worm-like bodies, shaking the mud out of their heads as if surprised at coming to life after a night of death. The storm had passed but the weight of its fury remained, as if they had kept the whole weight of the tempest. They passed their hands over their frozen faces, wiping off the little drops of water that had been caught in the nose and the eye lashes. It was a cold that left no words for comment.

"Achachai!"

"Achachai!"

All were hoping. They hoped someone would come to get them out of this cold that paralyzed their bodies .... And the sun .... The sun was slow in coming up to stop chattering teeth.

Standing on the outlines that their forms had left in the mud, they had not enough spirit left to hunt for a dry place where they could drop down like tired mules. If only they had a little of that burning sand that blisters their feet on the road.

"Achachai!"

"Achachai!"

The accursed sun came up later than usual; the wind that came down from the *paramo,* on the contrary, plastered the damp clothes to thin bodies like a cold poultice. The wind was a whirlwind beginning at the heels and rising up to the ears in a long whistle: fuiiii.

"Achachai, mama!"

"Achachai, papa!"

Their heads drooping, all felt pain and heaviness in the napes of their necks, an inertia that prevented them from moving their figures, and a desire to vomit. The wind howled more violently, heaping curses on its benumbed victims. Fuii .... Accursed sun that comes up later than usual.

"Achachai!"

"Achachai, carajooo!"

An Indian clung to a tree and vomited, then fell down, writhing with mountain sickness. Several others imitated him—maybe they were making fun of him. The people congregated; shivering and moaning uselessly. One-eyed Rodriguez made his way through the crowd and ordered them to take off their clothes and hang by the armpits from forks of trees.

"We'll see if we can't stop this mountain sickness."

Having got them hung up, he caught up his whip and spitting on his hands began curing the half dead workmen with lashes which left their backs in shreds.

Over there in a corner of a ravine, three Indians were found dead. Legs contracted and hands clapsed over their bellies, their faces screwed up in a grin that revealed their stained teeth, they had remained planted in the mud.

"Look at them," remarked the Indians. "They look like insects clinging to a stick after they are dead."

Andres, his wife Cunshi, and the baby had passed the night under a cliff, but they found themselves shut in by an enormous puddle that had formed at the entrance to the cave. The baby, crawling up to it, smashed to bits with her hand the mirror-like surface in which the sky was adjusting the first red streaks of her morning toilet.

The sun began to shed warmth by infinitesmal degrees.

Don Alfonso, the engineer and the priest, who had returned to the village to sleep, upon hearing of the occurrence, sought the best means of preventing the gang from breaking up.

"The Indians got the worst of it. If one of the *chagras* dies, we are sunk. After all, the Indians don't much matter," commented the priest.

"Yes, but the people are tired. They are losing their enthusiasm," asserted the engineer.

"We'll have to see what can be done," said the land owner.

"We are just ready to begin the hardest part—draining the swamp. There are more than two kilometers."

The landowner, feeling that the whole future was slipping through his

fingers, implored the spirit of his good uncle Julio to help him in this crisis. And thinking of the fantastic gold of the Gringos, exlaimed:

"Society . . . Our country . . . . History . . . . . Our Christian teachings."

He continued invoking a series of those words that have proved the support for the grandest farces. Suddenly, he got an idea, a little expensive, but one that would save them.

"All this can be cured with *aguardiente!*" he exclaimed radiantly.

"Of course!" said the cleric, already licking his lips at the thought of the coming drinking bouts.

They brought several barrels of drink from the village, at the same time ordering Juana to make ten or twenty *pondos* of *guarapo,* using every means of making it ferment as soon as possible.

"Our dear master Alfonso is generous," commented the half breeds.

"He has always been open handed," the women sang his praise.

Juana, making use of official secrets and to hasten the process of fermentation, which takes two or three days, threw into the cane juice buckets of urine, spoiled meat, Jacinto's old shoes—everything they told her the drink shops of the capital put into the brew to make fermentation easier.

At dawn, swamp with its cattails and watercress is shrouded in clouds which, as the hours advance, are devoured by the hungry flame of the sun which by midday has finished with the soft white flesh of the clouds, leaving only the fluttering skeleton of mosquitoes which float over the marsh. This live black skeleton is the terror of the men who, like children afraid of the bugbear, begin to tremble with miasmatic chills.

The telegraph operator, who in his wanderings had been in the East, demonstrated his great experience by exclaiming:

"You call that a swamp. Those in the East are worse; you can't go into them at all; they are deep and full of crawfish; when some poor beast or even a Christian falls into the swamp, in less than two minutes the crawfish have sliced all the flesh off his bones with their pincers . . . . This place is just a baby swamp."

"And millions of insects."

"Well, they don't hurt anything."

The tiny insects make endless concentric ripples in the stagnant water of the marsh, There are millions of them. Andres who is up to his kness in mud feels them in a perpetual bombardment that seems to be robbing him of his legs; he could not tell whether it was the cold or the constant blows of those little animals that had lopped off his legs below the knee.

For two days they tried all the wonders of alcohol. The barrels of *aguardiente* and the 12 *pondos* of *guarapo* did not go far: they had to bring more and they brought more. To drain the two kilometers of swamp it was necessary to graduate the dose until they arrived at an equilibrium between heroic power and half conscious drunkenness. It was necessary to combine the maximum brutalization of the masses with the maximum working efficiency; in this business, Juana and Jacinto were sharp as battle axes. Like skilful connoisseurs of all the stages of drunkenness, they undertook to keep the workers' thirst roused to the required pitch.

"No, *carajo!*" Jacinto exlaimed to some Indian who dared to approach the *pondos* reeling in such a way that it was obvious he had passed the equilibrium.

"You're drunk. Go out and sweat a little with the pick and you can have another ration of *guarapo,*" Juana concluded.

The Indian returned to the *pantano*[1] in search of the equilibrium demanded before they would feed his further brutalization.

Malaria began reaping its harvest of chills.

"We lose so much time," the land-owner lamented.

"If we have more than 150 cases in all, it will mean 20 or 30 a day."

One-eyed Rodriguez, exuding infallibility, made his way through the small group of Indians huddled to one side, trembling with the cold that gnawed at their companions, sunk in the marsh.

"Bring the sheep skins," he cried to a fellow who acted as his assistant in these treatments, and added:

"I have seen this recipe tried in Guallabamba. *Carajo.* There they have real chills. Even dangerous."

Rodrigues covered the backs of the sick with the skins which his assistant, acting as nurse, provided, taking care to put the parchment side out and fasten them with a cord at the neck and waist. He made the patients form a circle in the open space in front of the field store, placed himself in the center, adjusted his whip on his wrist, reviewed the trembling circle with his one eye, cracked his whip, which seemed a prolongation of his hand, and made the circle go round in an endless marathon. The chills and fever did not leave the group sufficient energy to advance at the rate the whip demanded and it fell on the parchments like drum beats; Rodriguez lost his temper.

"Come on, *Carajo!* Run . . . Run!"

With the fever comes inertia which makes the limbs heavy and will not let them run.

"*Carajo!* What is the matter?" demanded Rodriguez, seeing that the Indians were scarcely moving. He again spit on his hand and turned furiously on the fainting patients. After the fortieth round, the Indians began to fall, exhausted by pain and weariness. The feverish chills disappeared after the first few minutes, frightened by the fatigue produced by the whip, the whip that made them sweat more copiously than the sheep skins. But the doctor was not satisfied and moved his arm even more energetically, the lashes falling like red hot knives on the backs of the exhausted Indians. Their legs trembled and doubled up; their feet trembled in the mud; their hands trembled as they crawled away from the terrifying whip.

"Run, *carajo!* Run, you dogs!"

One, two, ten steps and then down. Rodriguez' whip fell on their backs, giving them courage to stand up and receive a dozen lashes. They could do no more; they are too tired even to cry out. Only their glassy dilated eyes with each blow of the whip threatened to jump out of their sockets as salvation that was escaping them. They ran until they toppled over in the mud; without outcry, foam on their lips, drenched in sweat, soaked with fever, wracked by fatigue. Then Rodriguez had them hurried to the field store where they were wrapped in blankets and made to drink a beverage made of *aguardiente,* urine, salt, lemon and ground manure.

"The work must be finished soon."

"That's easy to say. But in these swamps you have to be very careful at first, trying it out; you don't know what it may cost you," commented the engineer, making light of the landowner's haste.

[1] *Pantano:* Swamp

"But you have got it in your head that the ditches have to start from the mountain . . . . . A short parallel cut twenty or thirty meters from the road would save time and work and above all, we would finish this business in the shortest possible time. It is becoming a nightmare."

"You don't know. Nobody can go straight into the marsh without imminent danger of being buried in a hole."

"*Carajo!* What do you think I have bought the Indians for?"

"You don't know what you are talking about. Do you want to drain the swamp with corpses?"

"We would gain 50 per cent in time and work."

"Certainly, if you are resolved to lose a hundred peons, we can do as you wish."

"You will see that we won't lose a one. There is a way to take care of everything. I will have the boys with lariats come from the ranch and the moment they see anyone going down, they can throw him a rope."

"That won't help anything. If the marsh doesn't kill him, dragging him out with the lariat will."

"Oh, no. I will have the cowboys go well into the mud."

"In any case, the man will be lost. You will be lucky if they don't all die in the hole. To prove it, we can start today."

They began to open a ditch 20 meters from the road.

"Look how we are gaining time," exlaimed Don Alfonso, contemplating the interminable line of peons hauling out the mud.

A prophecy that is not fulfilled within the time fixed by the prophet loses its value. By midday the whole gang were going into the mud with great confidence.

"I ought to study engineering, while you . . ." Pereira joked.

A cry from the mist silenced all comments. In the distance they were scarcely able to distinguish the silhouette of an Indian who raised his hands as if seeking to seize hold of the air. The engineer looked around to find the tragedy and on seeing the Indian calling for help, exclaimed triumphantly:

"You see how they are beginning to go down. There's one Indian gone. He is the first, but he won't be the last."

"What are you talking about? You will see how the cowboys behave."

"Poor chap; he must have slipped into a hole."

"Caiza! Toapanta! Take your lassos and rescue that idiot of an Indian that got himself into that quagmire. Hurry up."

"All right, boss."

There was a crowd of curious onlookers. The timorous *chagras* hasten to leave the danger in which they had unconsciously got themselves.

"*Carajo!* we just did get out in time."

"That's a hell of a place."

"I won't go back."

"We can't go on with such a job."

The Indian continued yelling desperately, raising his arms if to catch hold of the mist. The cowboys waded through the mud until they felt the ground give more than ordinarily. The lassos whirled in pirouettes. The Indian continued sinking slowly; only his head was visible, a black spot in the midst of the treacherous quagmire. All the nooses of the lassos were aimed at that spot like a prayer for mercy for the unfortunate Indian addressed to his majesty the swamp. One of the ropes finally settled over his head just as it was disappearing. But as the rescuers had no firm ground from which to drag him out, they had to tie ropes together until they reached

solid earth. Meanwhile the Indian continued to flounder in the mud; after a few seconds nothing was visible in the dark belly of the marsh.

They began to pull but the mud opposed their efforts and the rope burned against their calloused hands. In this unequal struggle, the only one to lose was the man they were dragging. He was broken into bits like a sawdust doll, only it was blood, not sawdust, that poured out. Still showing faint signs of life, he came out, a bundle of flesh encased in mud. A piece of amorphous phlegm, spit up by the marsh, lay at the feet of the crowd. It was a sight to fill the gang with a sense of tragedy.

"It would have been better to have left him there," declared the engineer, making a grimace of disgust.

"No . . . You will see how we will fix this up. Give the half-breeds more to drink. I am going to send to the village for some five barrels more. But we must continue to work in this way as otherwise we are ruined. We won't carry out our cultural mission of converting this village into the image and likeness of our own civilization. You will see . . . ." asserted the landowner, rubbing his hands at the prospect; after a pause he continued:

"The white people who only haul material are safe. The Indians, since they are my own, can continue digging the ditches. If twenty or thirty are lost, it won't amount to much. Even fifty—I think that is the most we can expect to lose . . They are good for nothing but to eat and ask for advances. I may as well tell you in confidence, that I bought these cheap—no more than two or three *sucres* per Indian; on the other hand the road means my future. What do you think?"

"If you insist we can continue like this. It really is the quickest way. The whole thing is to keep up enthusiasm among the peons."

"That won't be my job."

"Who, then?"

"First of all, drink, and second, our dear friend the priest . . . You will see how as soon as he comes I will have him preach them a sermon offering them salvation and a few other little things."

The engineer was doubtful but so it happened. The priest on his word of honor offered to get them out of purgatory and even out of hell on the sole condition that they obey his word, which was the word of God. Just now this word was: "Finish the road at all costs because it will be for the good of. . . . For the good of the village, of course."

And Indian flesh began to arrive in the village by the sackful.

At nightfall after the gang had crossed the swamp and were starting work among the rocks, the *chagras* who for one reason or another had not been able to desert gathered around the camp fires to recall scenes which buried men, women and children at the most unexpected moment.

The comments of the villagers mingled with the crackling of the flames:

"I was standing on the hill when I saw the cliff fall."

"It's a good thing only Indians were working in the cave."

"I had been telling them it was all sand."

"No way to dig them out, of course. It would have been a waste of time to move so much earth."

"Half the hill came down."

"But maybe some of the poor Indians are still alive?"

"God help us!"

"God be merciful to us!"

"Forgive us, God, if we have sinned!"

"The senor engineer said; 'Let us see if we can save them,' but the boss objected saying we would lose time. I kept saying to Andres: 'Don't go into those damned caves or you'll die like the Indians and there will be nobody to get you out.' No use sticking your nose where it's not needed. Do you remember that other cave-in where Micha's son and Berta's pretty daughter died? They were flattened out like pancakes."

The little boys, too, tired out after a day of racing beetles, making lizards swim in the ponds, hunting wild apples and other fruits in the mountains, or punching sticks down spider holes, returned to their mothers and fathers around the campfires.

The fires burned low and the talk died out. Some of the gang, braving the charge of desertion, bundled themselves up and returned in the night to the village, leaving to the Indians and their more heroic companions heaven, patriotism and the indulgences.

In desperation after having exhausted all his strategy and all his allies—God represented by the priest, the Government in the form of the Political Deputy, science in the person of the Engineer, vice in the form of *guarapo*—the landowner played his last card by exploiting the villagers' love for cock fights. He announced that a lot of fine cocks had been brought for the entertainment of the workers.

As the sun indicated midday, the *chagras* began to arrive with their favorite roosters in boxes.

The crowing increased as the crowd increased. The schoolmaster had brought his little spotted rooster to see if Don Alfonso had a match for it among his cocks; he also brought a young black rooster for the priest.

The first fight took place in the middle of the road, in a circle of some two hundred deserters. A red cock owned by old Jose Santiana was pitted against one of the schoolmaster's.

The judge, squatting on his heels inside the circle, kept his eye on the birds who were ruffling their feathers in preparation for the fight.

"Well matched! Well matched!" exlaimed a *chagra* in a blue poncho after the first turn.

"You wait and see," cried the schoolmaster, adding proudly:

"You will see he won't last two kicks against my cock. He will break his neck."

All the onlookers were watching for some sign of superiority on the part of one fowl or the other in order to take out their money and make their bets.

"The red one is livelier."

"The young one is bigger."

The young cock got in a blow with his feet at the enemy; the crowd waited expectantly; the red one replied by burying his beak in the neck of his adversary and, without loosening his prisoner, raised both his legs in the air, trying to find something solid in which to stick his spurs; but fell back heavily to the ground amidst a confusion of feathers.

"He is going to die," shouted the schoolmaster.

"I will give two to one," replied old Santiana, who, squatting at the side of the judge, resented the rejoicing of the owner of the young cock.

"I'll take it."

"Two for one."

"Four for two."

"I'll double it."

"I'll pay it."

"Double."

"Here's the money."

Meanwhile, the cocks, trembling with fury, were going at each other with bills and spurs. The thud of their bodies sounded through agonized flapping of wings and strangled gasps.

The betting stopped as the spectators, their nerves on edge, followed the girations of the roosters. The red one charged determinedly but the young rooster seemed to seek protection under the craw of the enemy, as if he wished to wipe off on his adversary's feather the blood flowing over his eyes. neck and beak and transforming his head into a brush dropping with red paint or a scrap of raw meat from the butcher's counter. Like a good fighting cock, the red one lunged furiously at the enemy, but the latter had his head down and the spurs of the attacker struck at the air.

"*Carajo!* you would think his beak was nailed there!" shouted the old man squatting at the side of the judge. As if his pride had been hurt by the remark, the young rooster gave a sudden demonstration of spurs that sent the red cock to earth. The old man, who was leaning on the wire enclosing the ring, fell to the ground, as if he too had received a blow.

"Mnnnnn. The old man will die before the rooster."

"Keep your seat, you damn fool."

"I'll give ten to one."

The fight began to get tiresome, the exhausted fowls resting as much as a quarter of an hour between attacks.

"Shshsh . . Stay in there," the crowd spurred the combatants on to the finish.

Each owner was preparing his cock for the final round sticking a feather in his beak and spraying over his bloody head a mouthful of camphorated *aguardiente*. Finally, just as the native doctor sucked the infection out of Andres' foot, so the *chagras* put the whole head of their cocks in their mouths to extract the blood and matter.

The fight started again with a fury which in a few minutes settled down to superficial pecks, as if the cocks were resolved to pluck out their opponent's feathers one by one until the skull bone was bare and they could kill their adversary with a sudden well placed blow, or else prudently run away. The red cock won.

The fights raged furiously until night. Don Alfonso, between bets and drinks, was signing up the *chagras*. He promised to bring more cocks from his ranch next day, beauties with marvellous spurs and bills. His lips, his eyes, his hands, described their fine points until he made the *chagras'* mouths water. After that, they simply couldn't be torn away from the road until 22 kilometers of it had been built across the *paramos* and canyons.

Don Alfonso's greatest satisfactions as well as his greatest sorrows had been dealt him by the hand of publicity. He had never suspected that the sleepless nights he had spent in successfully completing the road would find definite echo in the concentric circle of glorious fame. The press brought him columns packed with praise. All the dailies of the Republic adorned their front pages with photographs of his heroic deed; and all of them gave a prominent place to the figures of the landowner, the priest, Jacinto, one-eyed Rodriguez and the Ruata brothers; also, in recognition of the working masses, they commended, in second place, the inhabitants of Tomachi. Probably the Indians were not presentable when they were taking the photographs; their hair was not combed nor their faces washed; they were not polished up for the platform

of fame. Not an Indian was visible anywhere—either in the photographs or in the articles entitled: "Pages for History."

Those who looked for the salvation of their country in the erudition of the libraries, exclaimed:

"The future of the nation, in so far as it depends on a sure method of developing the untouched riches of the eastern forests, has made a definite step toward Progress. As we know, colonizers have always sought, and rightly, areas suited to their purposes; areas that are accessible, with favourable climate, near centers of population, areas with sufficient good land for development, etc. etc. If we try to make the colonizers, simply because they are foreigners, penetrate at once into the middle of the forests, deprived of all human assistance, and perform miracles, we will persist in a grave error. Foreign capital must be given every facility that it requires by its economic colonies. That is what the accumulated capital of the ruling nations requires for further investment. In the present case, the civilizers will have a broad field of action—look at the opium trade in China." On reading the paragraph Don Alfonso made this commentary:

"This nitwit hit the nail on the head. Too bad; everything is already done now. I must send the clipping to Mr. Chappy."

Blasts of hunger swept through the cottages, shacks and *huasipungos* of the village and valley.

It was not the hunger of rebels who let themselves die in jails; it was the hunger of slaves who let themselves be murdered.

It was not the hunger of movie stars who are keeping down their weight; it is the hunger of Indians who are keeping up the fat of elite big landowners.

It was not the hunger of the unemployed; it was the hunger of Indians overworked and starving.

It was not the hunger of non-production; it was hunger that had gorged the barns of the sierra, and fed the pride of the aristocracy of the capital.

It was hunger that played the harp on the ribs of babies and dogs.

It was hunger that is cured with begging, prostitition and robbery.

Hunger, *carajo,* that bit into the guts of the Indians, uncomplaining and humble.—Humility is a virtue which should belong to the Gods; Indians are men.—

It was hunger too great for the houses; it overflowed, crawled into the streets, muddy streets where Indian beggars, paralytics, and cripples hopped like grasshoppers.

It was hunger that flourishes in the mouths of tender babes.

In a little street off the highway, seated in the door of a hut, an old Indian woman with dark violet lips, was nursing a baby, an aenemic, half-starved little thing that sucked at the empy breast between little whimpering pauses. The mother insisted on putting the nipple in his mouth but the child, tired of pulling at a flabby rag that no longer yielded even blood, sucked at the air. Three women coming up the path with pitchers, prescribed for the baby:

"Why don't you give him mash to eat?"

"I have none."

"Then goat's milk."

"None of that either."

"Then cow's milk."

"Worse."

"The baby is going to die, poor thing."

"Yes. Well, let him. His mother doesn't want him."

"They say Encarnacion's baby has already died."

"And a little nephew of mine too."

"It must be an epidemic."

The talkative old monkey, wrapped in her black shawl with her head sunk into her shoulders, did not resist the epidemic. One morning her neighbors, Teresa and Pancha, found her sitting on a bench with her head bent over her breast and a thread of saliva mixed with blood drooling out of her mouth. They knew she was dead because her look was grey, the light of life cut off, because she had taken on a greenish pallor, because her body stank, and because all had expected her to die.

The Indians, taking advantage of the darkness of night, ran through the houses of the village in search of something to appease the crying babies. Every morning, the exaggerated comments of the women were heard in the muddy street. Sometimes it was Rosario, or Jesusa, at other times Melchor or Juana.

"You didn't see my little pullet anywhere?"

"Neighbor . . You didn't happen to see anyone in my garden last night? They have taken all the onions."

"Did you hear? . . . . They have stolen my little black pig."

"Friend . . . . Say, did you see my speckled rooster anywhere?"

"Where can my chickens be?"

"That new *poncho* that Carlota left on the line last night, has disappeared this morning . . ."

"Anyone caught ought to be killed."

"Juan says he saw the Indians roaming around here the other night," commented a woman who had shaken out the bedding at the door of her house and was hunting for the fleas on all fours.

"But it's an outrage when they steal the tub of pigs' feet left in the corridor," cried Jacinto's wife, standing in the middle of the street.

"In this corridor?"

"No. In the hallway inside. Bitches. If I catch them I'll have Jacinto take a stick to them, all right."

"I'm not bothered. I have nothing for them to steal."

"Have you heard from Tomas?"

"Yes. The poor fellow says he is all right. As soon as he is able to limp about he is going to send me something, he says in the letter neighbor Ruata read me."

Policarpio arrived with a new request for the owner.

"When we made the roundup, we discovered something, boss."

"What?"

"That the spotted ox had died."

"The big one . .?"

"No."

"That little red one—the old one."

"How did it happen?"

"I don't know. We found him stretched out on the hill. He must have been dead several days because he already stinks."

"Well, what can we do about it?"

"Yes. I was late because . . I was having him dragged out of the ditch where he had fallen. Now the Indians want to know if you will give them the meat, since it is already half spoiled. I told them to wait until I could ask you."

"Give them the meat? I'm not crazy. Have a deep hole dug and bury the

ox at once. The peons must never touch a bite of meat. If we give it to them, they will learn to eat it and we will be ruined. They would make me lose a head of cattle a day; they would kill them on purpose; there would be no lack of pretexts. Beef for the Indians? What an idea! Not even the smell of it. They are like beasts—they get used to it and who can stop them then. We would have to kill them all to keep them from finishing off the cattle. Choose the lesser evil and have them bury the ox as deep as they can."

The majordomo who had let himself be carried slowly along by the reasoning of Don Alfonso, wiped the beads of perspiration off his pug nose with the back of his poncho and muttered:

"All right."

'Have they said nothing more to you about relief?"

"No, sir."

"Good. Then go ahead and have them bury the ox."

The dialog was accompanied by the lowing of cattle locked up in the corral.

"Listen. Haven't you left some bull up on the mountain?"

"Yes, that one that killed Lorenzo at the festival of the Virgin. The peons say they have seen him roaming about."

"How many head have we now?"

"There must be about six hundred, sir."

"I asked because we will have to take inventory soon."

That evening Policarpio arrived in search of news.

"Andres! Why didn't you come back, hey?"

As there was no answer, the majordomo opened the gate of the *huasipungo* fence and sniffed at the doorway of the hut; on learning what had happened, he asserted:

"It serves you right. You would eat that dead cow; The Indian Jose Rafael is also doubled up in his hut. Just because you wouldn't listen."

"But now that it has happened, maybe you will ask the boss to give a little for the wake."

"I will see," said Policarpio, interested in the prospect of getting drunk which the message involved.

The relatives and friends began to arrive at the *huasipungo* with a good supply of tears and comments.

Two Indian musicians, one to blow a reed instrument and the other to beat the drum, sat at the head of the corpse which was stretched on the floor between four tallow lamps burning in clay pots. They began playing an air from San Juan, monotonous, desperate, tiring, which would not cease until the corpse was buried.

The husband as the nearest of kin sat at the feet of the body and uttered a wail followed by a series of interminable lamentations. Between the flow of his tears and his sniffling, he could be heard:

"Ai, Cunshi."

"Ai, my beauty."

"Who will take care of the pigs?"

"Why did you go without taking the child?"

"Ai, Cunshi."

"Why did you leave me alone?"

"Who will sow the *huasipungo?*"

"Who will take care of the baby?"

"Ai . . . ai . . . ai."

"Who will bring wood from the forest."
"Who will see if the hen has laid an egg?"
"Ai, Cunshi."
"Ai, my beautiful Cunshi."
"Why did you leave me alone?"
"The baby is crying."
"How it cries."
"The corn out there is groaning."
"The mountain out there is dark, so dark."
"Now we will have nothing, no corn, no millet, nothing . . .because there is nobody to sow."
"When I am hungry, with whom can I weep?"
"Who will make me a new shirt?"
"Ai, Cunshi."
"Ai, my pretty Cunshi."
"Maybe a good year will come and we will have something to eat."
"This year, Father God is punishing us. You died of hunger, but silently, silently."
"Ai, Cunshi."
"Ai, my pretty Cunshi."

His lips dry, his eyes dry, his throat dry and his soul dry, the Indian continued to shout the excellencies of his wife, because in the silence of the hut facing his drunken and weeping companions, anything might be said. When they saw that he was exhausted and hoarse with weeping and wailing, they dragged him to a corner where he sat hiccoughing because he could not stop his tears; then another one of the near relatives took his place as mourner; after an hour or two lamentations, they dragged him off to a corner too, like a worn out coat. The monotonous music of the San Juan and the barrels of *guarapo* which Juana let them have on credit have gradually livened up the chorus of lamentations.

"It's my turn," murmured one of the old uncles of the deceased, getting up and going to the mourner whom he caught under the arms and lifted aside; then he lay prostrate, uttering hysterical cries.

Andres drank steadily as if he wanted to deaden a hate that had lost his rudder and was drifting about his inside. Hate that had searched so long for a target that it had to turn on itself. So it had been for three days.

The wake became a kind of duel in which the participants were consumed with stench—the putrid odor of the body already decomposing, accentuated by human sweat, the fetid breath of the drinkers and the excrement of the baby.

"Hachimaishai."
"Hachimaishai."
"Ari."
"Ari."

"Hachimaishai," all began to murmer as if they had noted the arrival of a strange guest. They hastened to put the body on a kind of legless table and, repeating old Quechuan prayers, they carried it in a procession to the river for the *hachimaishai,* or the last bath in muddy waters. Four women undressed the body, put it in the water and, with agave fibre, scrubbed the body until it was cleaner than it had ever been in life. On removing it from the bath, the committee vied with one another in hunting lice and lice eggs in her head.

Andres at the same time had gone to the curate to arrange with the priest for mass and burial.

"I was surprised that you had not come," intoned the good minister of God as soon he saw the Indian.

"I've come as you thought, father."

"Poor Cunshi; she was such a fine woman."

"God's will, father. I've come to see how much to pay you for the funeral."

"Come with me a moment so that you can see for yourself what suits you, what you like and what you are disposed to pay. In this you are quite free to decide for yourself," muttered the priest jovially, guiding him between the pillars that supported the tumble down church.

A field planted in crosses was flourishing at the back of the sanctuary—it was the *señor* curate's *huasipungo,*

"Look," ordered the good parson, letting his gaze rove over his field of crosses with as much cupidity as that with which the landlord observed the abundant crops on his well cultivated fields.

"Jesus!"

"Now those buried here in the first rows, since they are nearer the main altar, nearer the prayers and therefore nearer Our Lord Transubstantiated," —he took off his bonnet and made an obeisance with lowered eyes, giving his words an air of mystery—"go to Heaven first; they are the ones who are generally saved. From here to Heaven is just a little way. Look . . . . Look . . . ."

He showed the crosses surrounded with violets, geraniums and carnations. And leaning against the trunk of a cypress, continued to market his wares with a good load of the vegetable woman's cunning.

"Even the perfume is heavenly; the whole atmosphere is one of peace and bliss. Everything breathes virtue, a holy aroma. Don't you smell it? I'd like to see any heretic stand here and say that these flowers could have been grown in a human garden. From here, it is only a step to Heaven."

After this sermon, he took a few steps and resumed his sales talk before the crosses in the middle of the cemetery.

"Those crosses made of unpainted boards are all of poor Indians. As you can well understand, they are a little farther from the sanctuary; the prayers sometimes reach Heaven and sometimes not. God's mercy which is infinite," —another reverence and salute with his bonnet—"keeps these unfortunates in Purgatory. You already know about the tortures of Purgatory. They are worse than those of Hell."

Seeing that the Indian lowered his eyes as if he were ashamed to have the merchandise he was thinking of buying spoken of so badly, the good minister of God hastened to console him:

"But that does not keep them from being saved. Some day they will be. It is like the rose bushes you see here: a little neglected, choked out by weeds, it has cost them a great effort to free themselves from the brambles and thorns, but in the end, they have produced flowers and perfume."

Talking in this way, he advanced a few steps farther and becoming very serious, declared in an apocalyptic voice:

"And finally. Don't go any farther . . ." he cried, seeing that the Indian was advancing into the burial ground.

"Don't you perceive a strange odor? Something fetid . . . something sulphurous . ."

"No, father."

"Oh! That means that you are not in God's graces."

The Indian felt a somber weight sapping his strength and with a heavy

unsteady movement devoted himself to making his hat whirl round in his hands.

With the arrogant disdainful look of a tyrant, the priest pointed to the last corner of the cemetery where there were no longer any crosses or flowers; where the nettles, brambles and ox-tails grew in disorder; where the buzzing of bees and mosquitoes made the place more gloomy.

"There. . . . The distant. . . . The forgotten. . . . The reprobates!"

As if the word burned his mouth, as if he were getting rid of a sinister bolt of lightning, he added:

"Hell!"

The Indian on hearing such a declaration, hid his face before the holy figure of the priest.

"Peace, peace," intoned the good minister of God, recovering his meekness as an apostle of Christ, but nevertheless, he decided to drive home his words:

"Look at this place; smell this dank odor; listen to this clamor. The wails and putrefaction of condemned souls.

"Yes, father."

Rubbing his hands, the man in the cassock took up the purely economic aspect of the question.

"As you have always been respectful and obliging, I am going to make it cheap for you, something I don't do for anybody. Mass and burial in the first rows will only cost you twenty-five *sucres;* in the middle section, which I believe is what is suited to your means, it will cost you fifteen *sucres* . . . . And . . in the last section where only devils dwell, five *sucres.* This last I could not recommend, not if I were crazy. It would be better to leave her unburied, but since it is a work of charity to bury the dead, we would have to do it. Now you know . . .In the first, twenty-five, in the second fifteen and in the last . . . No . . . I won't even speak of it . ."

"Father . . ." the Indian wanted to object.

"Think, before you speak; it is natural that those in the second section get the benefits of all the prayers which those in the first section no longer need. Nothing reaches the third—they are beyond the aid of prayers. What are twenty-five *sucres* as compared to eternal life? Nothing! What are fifteen *sucres* to pay for the hope of salvation? Nothing!"

"All right, father. She must be buried in the first section."

"That is what I would like. I did not expect any other answer from you."

"But father . . . Be a little charitable."

"Lower the price? That's why we have the middle section. Poor Cunshi will suffer a little more but she will be saved. She will be saved all right."

"Well, if you won't come down, maybe you will trust me for the money, father."

"What?"

"Just trust me. I will work it out, anywhere you say, father. If you wish, I will come at four in the mornings to work it out sowing or plowing . ."

"Hmmmmmm"

"Go to Heaven on credit. . . . And if you don't pay, who will get her out?" thought the parson before daring to reply.

"Can't do it. How stupid to mix sordid earthly transactions with a thing of Heaven. Oh, my God, what do I hear!"

As the priest began to raise his arms to Heaven, the Indian begged him in great anxiety:

"No, father. Don't lift your arms."

"Then what do you say? Twenty-five, fifteen . . . or . . . ."

As the Indian stood with his mouth half open making inaudible efforts to understand the celestial accounting operations, the priest decided to relieve his anxiety by declaring:

"Up there, everything is on a cash basis."

"All right, then, father. I am going to look for money. I hope I find some."

"You'll have to get it somewhere. The salvation of the soul of a loved one.... Of Cunshi .... Of poor Cunshi ... She was so good, so respectful, so nice."

He uttered a sigh, his face full of compassion.

Tears rolled up into the Indian eyes.

The patio was crowded with Indians as a plaza during a fair. The presence of the landlord was received with a hostile silence. A hundred pairs of eyes fixed themselves on Andres who left the house between two *chagra* police followed by the child who walked proudly after his father.

In the center of the patio, where no peons had ventured to go, stood the post, a dead tree to which cattle were tied for branding, or wild cows that refused to be milked. It was from this tree that mad dogs were strung up in the time of ripe corn.

"Bring him here," ordered Jacinto who was standing by the post unrolling a horse whip.

Two policemen dragged the thief to the political lieutenant's feet; he was stripped and his two thumbs bound to the halter.

"See that the cords won't slip. We don't want him breaking loose and running away. Fasten the other end to the tree.

One of the police, in obedience to Jacinto, threw the rope up through the forks of the tree. The bare arms and back of the Indian were stretched out in an attitude of supplication like molasses candy being pulled by two *chagras* tugging at the rope from one end of the patio.

"When I say 'one,' " said one of the *chargas,* noting that the pulling was becoming heavy.

"One!"

The bones cracked.

"One!"

A cry.

"One!"

The Indian swung from a fair height. The cord cut into the thumbs like fire. At each movement of his legs, dangling in the air, the cord bit in more firmly and his cotton trousers—the only garment left him— began to slip down from the waist. An Indian, just learning to count, practised his learning in a low voice counting Andres' ribs.

That dangling figure was like the banner and symbol of the crowd, hoisted before their eyes. Its burnt copper background was embroidered with scales of dirt; on either side, the ribs shelter here and there a sleeping louse between the ridges. It was finished off with a head of bristly unkempt hair.—The flag waved with every blow of the lash; the Indians watched it in silence.

The political lieutenant took off his *poncho,* spit on his hands and at a nod from Don Alfonso, made his whip whistle through the air, a whistle which ended in a crack as the lash tore into the taut flesh of the Indian's bare back.

The crowd shuddered with a murmur of anguish and the human banner began to writhe in an epilepsy of pain.

Like an infuriated puppy, the baby sprang up from a corner and flung himself at the man who was beating his father, burying his teeth in the muscles of Jacinto's leg.

"Aiyaiyai, *carajo!* Let go you goddammed little bastard," cried Jacinto, trying to shake off the boy who was clinging to his prisoner with teeth and nails.

"Give him the whip, *carajo.* Let him learn humility young," shouted the landowner.

With the help of Policarpio and the police, the government appointee managed to escape from the mad little beast who had entangled himself in his feet, making him lose his balance and his judicial equanimity. He was in a fury.

"Goddamned Indian puppy!" he raged, flinging the youngster off with a kick in the stomach that left him gasping. Without losing a second, he fell on the little one and beat him with the whip until he writhed like a worm and then fainted, vanquished.

The shrieks and desperation of the child wracked the soul of the Indian crowd. Even the women felt like crying:

"Enough, *carajo* . . . Stop it!" But their protest was kept back by the walls of humility and resignation, by the bars with which they had been imprisoned since childhood by the priest, the landowner, the political appointee, all the white preachers of morality, all the elite of civilization who spend their lives looking for submissive shoulders over which the car of progress bearing them and their satellites can pass. A light rustle of contraband tears and sniffles was felt among the women.

Having punished the insolent child, the official turned back to his task. The lash once more began to cut through the air and leave little red trails down the livid back of the Indian. One, two, five, ten.

A pause for breath, to spit on his hands, and he began again. The whip silenced cries, convulsions, and entreaties, The shoulders of the delinquent were red with blood; his head had fallen forward. Only the lash could move the inert body. It was not worth while to waste strength beating an unconscious victim.

Defiiantly, Jacinto muttered to the dangling body:

"Why the hell couldn't you have stood a little more? Faints like a woman . ." In reply the Indian swung like a flag fluttering slightly after a storm.

Father and son arrived at their hut in the arms of the crowd. There their wounds were treated with a mixture of *aguardiente,* urine, tobacco and salt: then they drank *guarapo* until they were in a stupor.

Andres' son, who had gone down to the river for water, raced back to the *huasipungo* without stopping for breath and between pauses, gasped out to his father:

"They've torn down Cachiluma's shack. The political lieutenant said they were coming here next."

"Carajo! to take the *huasipungo?"*

"Yes, pa. I stood there listening. 'Where does lame Andres live?' they said."

"They said lame Andres?"

"Yes, pa."

"Well, they won't rob us so easily, *carajo!"* declared the Indian.

But for the moment, he could think of no means of defense; his eyes grew wide, his face pale. How could they tear him from the plot of earth to which he was rooted like a tree to the mountain? They would have to chop him down with an axe.

Meanwhile, the news flew from hut to hut, raising a wave of protest

throughout the some hundred shacks situated on the big hill. Down the valley, since seizures had not yet begun there, the scattered houses huddled quietly in the thickets as if trying to escape notice. Up on the hill, the men tucked up their *ponchos* in preparation for the spark that was to explode the pent-up anguish that was on the point of rushing out through their eyes, hands and teeth. They spat out *"carajo"* like lice they had cracked between their teeth. They scratched their heads and faces until they drew blood—the blood that they needed to wash their hate.

From whence came those voices that were calling? Where had they hidden? It seemed as if the impatience of the Indians were shrieking aloud, as they came and went restlessly through the huts and sniffed the crags of the mountains. They beat their breasts with their fists, threatening impassive nature as if to say: here we have strength; here the river is damned up and in its entrails is fertile clay with which to cover the fields. Where are those voices that are calling? Where have they hidden? Or is it that they are afraid of us? . . . Where is the hammer with which to shatter the dikes? We have had enough! In our entrails is the force of flood, the force of the hatred of slaves; we bear fertile soil in our entrails, watered with our blood.

Let the men from the city come, *carajo!* Where are the voices that call? Where?

The whole hill with its hundred *huasipungos* palpitated in the midst of the valley as if it had come to life in the hyperaesthesia of hope.

Mouths grew dry; eyes scrutinized the mountain until they burned.

At the voice of Andres' horn, sounded from the top of a mud wall, they came in a blind torrent, as if dragged by a thousand lassos.

It seemed as if the hill had waked up while the valley and the mountain with their thousand *huasipungos* slept on. A partial sporadic awakening that injected even more blind savage fury into the rebels. The sonorous summons of the horn did not reach all the huts. The hundred families of Indians came out unsupported. The earth felt the light tread of bare feet running; the *huasipungos* of the hill seemed no longer to squat down peacefully; they were now crouching menacingly, as if behind the barricades. The trees were wireless towers, with eyes at the tips. The cracks and crevices of the rocks became a belicose arsenal.

The hundred families rushed on, riding the stallion of their hate. They arrived at the *huasipungo* of Andres with fury blazing from their faces. Andres felt so deeply the desperate attitude of the crowd that gathered around him, bristling with picks, axes, crowbars and fists, that for a moment he was bewildered. Then he curled his hand around the horn and thinking that the Indians, hungry for battle, must not be cheated, invented the words that served them as a banner. He leaped down from the wall shouting:

"Fight for the *huasipungo!*"

"Fight for the *huasipungo!*" barked back the crowd, raising their weapons aloft as a dog ruffles the hair on his neck in preparation for battle. The cry resounded over the hill and piercing the mountain struck at the heart of the bourgeoisie.

"Fight for the *huasipungo!*"

In a raging torrent, filling the air with every kind of shout and cry, the crowd stormed downward. They threw themselves on the ground and rolled down the slope. They startled the silence of the landscape, the peace of the fields; they whistled with their fingers in their mouths, waved their hats and *ponchos* and above all, screamed out the battle cry: "Fight for the *huasipungo!*" A cry caught up by a thousand voices. They sweated like sugar cane

on fire, the fire of the sun sounding the alarm. In the midst of the mob, battered, dirty half-clad women, followed by hundreds of little brats with bare buttocks exposed to the air, uttered wails that swelled the roar of the men:

"Fight for the *huasipungo!*"

They clung to the cry like people possessed. The battalion of youngsters, imitating their parents, had armed themselves with rattan whips, sticks, branches of trees and nettles with which to spank the asses of the robbers —like mama spanks them when they wet the bed—and they also cried:

"Fight for the *huasipungo!*"

Without even knowing where that cry would lead them.

The first explosion of the maddened crowd was against the group of men led by Jacinto. Sensing the danger, they wanted to flee but it was too late; all roads to salvation had been cut off and they were left nailed to the spot in an anguish of terror, enveloped in cries that pierced worse than bullets. The fires had been lighted on all sides; they waited to be consumed in the circle of flames that came to meet them.

Andres, his lameness supported by the crutches of fury, hurled himself on Jacinto and canceled his scores against the political apointee with a blow of his heavy eucalyptus club on Jacinto's head. The *chagra* fell, clutching at the ground with his hands for balance.

"Carajo!" growled the Indian with the satisfaction of having caught a louse that had been sucking his blood since childhood.

Without being able to stand up, the *chagra* ran from the blows on all fours, maddening the Indian who was chasing him.

"Carajoooo!" Andres repeated on seeing that the prisoner was darting into the bushes like a loathsome tick hiding in the hair under one's arm.

Andres caught him by the ass and dragged him out, beating him until he saw him stretched out rigid, his agonized contortions stilled.

"Why don't you move a little? *Carajo!* Faints like a woman!"

Six bodies, among them those of Jacinto and one-eyed Rodriguez, were left stretched out on the road. The children hastened to crowd around this novelty of death; with mouths open and nettles and rattan branches lifted, as they had been taught to carry their candles in the processions at church festivals, they stood looking at the stiff figures of the *chagras*.

"They'll get up and bite you," joked the son of Andres Chiliquinga.

The little ones retreated apprehensively but when they saw that the older boy remained near the bodies, they returned eagerly to play with these men who wanted to fool them by pretending they were asleep. First they touched them with their feet, then poked sticks in their ears and up their nostrils and finally urinated on them, accompaning their deviltry with gleeful infantile comment.

The clamor reached the ranch house on the wings of alarming reports. Mr. Chappy, putting his hand on the landowner's shoulder, murmured:

"You see, friend, one never knows what will happen.

"We had better fly to Quito."

"Yes and bring back armed forces."

Three automobiles raced along the highway like dogs running away with their tails between their legs, trembling with fear and speed before the cry that roared through the valley until the earth shook:

"Fight for the *huasipungo!*"

"Fight for the *huasipungo!*"

The ranch house seemed to sleep; the Indians came in multiplying their cries and shaking the old doors with their carved knockers out of their inertia. The cries poured through the windows and dragged mothers, sisters and daughters out of the kitchens, storerooms and barns. The cellars were empty because they had already managed to get all the grain to Quito, but the storerooms contained enough to eat for everybody. But then they became satiated and suspicious of this house that seemed to have taken them prisoner. They decided to fortify themselves in their own *huasipungos*, not understanding that this decision would mean their undoing.

With the promptness characteristic of a good government, three hundred armed men were sent to put down the rebellion. In the governor's circulars, as always happens in such documents, it was described as an act of barbarism against civilization.

"Kill them."

"Finish them up."

"Wipe them out."

"To the defense of the pride of our nation: Alfonso Pereira. A man who built a road alone and unaided."

"To the great financier: Julio Pereira."

"To the civilizing and disinterested Yankee firm!"

When the troops arrived at the village, Don Alfonso gave orders to the officer in command:

"Try to take some of them alive to make an example of them."

"I am afraid it will be difficult; at the time of the famous Cunca uprising, my general Naranjo who was rather tender hearted, tried to frighten them by having the troops fire in the air, but it was useless; they are fools."

"Like savages."

"They had to kill all of them—more than two thousand. *Carajo,* and if you are not careful they can give you a nasty time," declared the officer, having a drink with the landowner served by Jacinto's wife who was beginning to worry because her husband did not come home:

"What can have happened to my Jacinto?"

"He must be hiding somewhere around and they won't let him pass . . . Meanwhile, until he comes and while the *senor* officer is finishing up his job here, send for the priest and we will have a card game."

"It will be a matter of two hours," declared the officer taking his leave.

"Have another drink. It puts spirit into you.

The middle of the afternoon, the uproar of the rebels was suddenly stopped by the rattle of three hundred machine guns.

The children listened in delight to what they imagined were firecrackers.

The firing scattered the Indian families like partridges over the hillside, Squads of soldiers surrounded the fugitives, hunting them down like rabbits.

"Look. There's a head poking out of those bushes." "*Carajo,* yes . . . He is hiding from the troops on the other side."

"Watch my sniping."

The report sounded and the Indian clasped his hands over his breast in the act of uttering a prayer to heaven, but a second shot ended prayer and Indian.

"Shhh, *carajo* . . . Do you see up in that tree?"

"I'll bring him down like a bird."

The Indian dropped, the flaps of his *poncho* catching in the branches and leaving the Indian dangling.

Some small children with their mothers had taken refuge under the bushes that overhung a huge tank of muddy water.

A blast of shot swept them over the edge and they plunged into the water with an explosion of splashes and ripples. Then it was still.

The bark of the guns drove the Indians from all their hiding places.

The hours passed and the sun was sinking into cotton drenched with the blood of the *charcos.*

Some 20 of the Indians had barricaded themselves into the *huasipungo* of Andres Chiliquinga which was situated on the ridge of the big canyon.

"We shall have to attack them from the front. The slope is steep and . . ."

The words of the officer were cut short by the assault of an enormous rock that came leaping down the slope with the fury of a bull. The soldiers sidestepped like *toreros.*

"*Carajo,* if I don't settle with them for this!"

"Goddamned sons of bitches!"

Hidden in a ditch in front of the shack, Andres' friends rolled down stones and fired a shotgun kept for hunting doves.

The glorious batallion worked their way up the slope under cover of the machine guns belching out a constant ratt-tat of bullets. In the trench, men, women and children began to drop motionless. Pain cried out from every mouth. The groans reechoed against the walls of the ditch; the mud was mixed with blood. Babies died in their mothers' laps; the women died in the lap of infant wails. Amidst clouds of smoke and pain, the few men and boys who remained defended themselves with stones. Suddenly, at the lower end of the ditch, bayonets broke through; the shelter was converted into a beast of prey devouring the defenseless Indians with its teeth of steel.

"This way, father," murmured Chiliquinga's son, pulling his father by the coat and leading him through a little outlet that led to the house. Four men who had heard the boy's invitation also hastened to follow them and crawling on all fours, reached the shack and barricaded the door with everything at hand. They occupied the moment of respite in wiping the bloody clay from their faces, spitting and cursing, scratching their heads, gazing with sly hatred at Andres, and withdrawing to a corner to wait in despair. Outside the bark of the machine guns was silencing the groans. Suddenly the straw roof of the shack trembled, struck by a blast of machine gun bullets. Andres' son, who until that moment had put courage into the rebels with his childish unconcern, began to shake as if he had a chill; all looked at the little one with compassion. A second blast and the boy threw himself trembling upon his father's breast, his arms twined around his neck.

Little and helpless, the child clung to Andres' rags and broke into an uncontrollable wail that brought lumps of anguish into their throats.

"Shut up, *carajo!*" ordered his father, drying his tears.

"Shut up, cry-baby."

The fire gnawed at the straw roof with little explosive protests.

"They are going to roast us like rabbits, *carajo!*"

The smoke was suffocating; despair, fear, the wailing of the child; the rebels lost heart. One coughed. All coughed, wracking coughs that tore at the throat. Death but with a little air. Pieces of the roof began to fall in.

"Open the door."

"Open the door, *carajo.*"

They shrieked writhing in suffocation, with the shriek of one asking to be shot.

Behind was the canyon, above the fire, in front the guns and, enveloping all, the smoke.

Lost in despair, Chiliquinga shouted a *"carajo"* caught the child by the arm, opened the door and cried:

"Go on out, you cowards."

And standing on the threshold af the door, closing his eyes, clutching the boy under his arm, shouted with a cry that pierced deeper than bullets:

"Carajooooo . . Fight for the *huasipungo!"*

He rushed down the side of the canyon with the desperation of one who wanted to bite into the bark of the machine guns; behind him came the others, echoing the cry:

"Fight for the *huasipungo!"*

Everything grew quiet; even the shack had finished burning. The sun was half suffocated in so much cotton drenched in the blood of the *charcos.*

All protest silenced, the flag of the glorious batallion fluttered in ripples of sarcastic laughter.

And later . . . .? The *senores gringos.*

Over the spoils of victory, among the destroyed shacks, from the mound of still warm flesh, rose a vast field of skinny uplifted hands, like young barley shoots that murmur, as they are bowed down by the icy winds of the *paramos* of America, a cry that bores into the bourgeoisie like a gimlet and makes their hair stand on end:

"Fight for the *huasipungo!"*

"Fight for the *huasipungo!"*

Translated from the Spanish by L. K.

L. Vasyutina

An Unusual Correspondence

Every day the postman brings Dusya Vinogradova an armful of letters. They come from different parts of the country. People write from the far north, from the south and the west and the east. I saw letters from Mongolia . . . Girls write and young fellows. Workers, collective farmers, airmen, engineers, men of the Red Fleet and the Red Army, teachers, actors, poets, scientists. There probably is not another girl who gets as many letters. The authors are not acquaintances but their letters overflow with love and friendship.

Late in the evening, before going to bed, Dusya opened the drawer of her writing table. It was crammed full with letters. She laid a pile of letters on the table and began reading them. Her face was at once both happy and perplexed. Too many letters, she would not be able to answer them all!

"Dusya, it's time to go to bed!" said her mother sternly from the threshold of the room. In the mother's eyes there was disquiet—for Dusya must rise early.

"Right away, mum" replied the girl happily. "I'll just answer one more letter."

I asked Dusya's permission to read the letters. Young men whom Dusya has never seen propose to her and express in black and white their dream of having just such a girl as she. In these letters there is much love and warmth for the girl they have seen in portraits only, in these letters there is a great deal of the splendid feeling of love for their country.

Here is a letter from the shores of the White Sea.

"How do you do, dear Comrade Dusya! Greetings. I firmly hope to be also in the ranks of the heroes of our country. I must tell you, Dusya, that today we are going on an expedition, a voyage. I write at work. Then straight to the hydroplane and off. Dusya! I've made up my mind at all costs to kill a white bear, the whitest possible bear, as a mark of friendship for you. I hope our friendship will now begin and go on for ever. I would fly to you right away but of course I cannot desert my job. The Soviet Power has given me the title of engineer and I have contracted to stay here until the construction job is finished. I am struggling to master technique, I am conquering nature. And when we finish, I'll fly to you. It is winter here now, night all the twenty-four hours, gales, cold. But we are studying and conquering the North, are struggling with nature.

"Dusya! Don't slacken your tempo. My pride over you will always be present in my soul and I've cut out your picture from the paper and will keep it. I remain your sincere friend and devoted comrade, Vanya."

Another letter:

"I see your face in the papers, read about your records and that gives me a great inspiration and enthusiasm for the mastery of military technique and the defense of our fatherland, the USSR, where people like you are living, Dusya!" writes the Leningrad Red Army man, Mikhail Korovkin.

The Trans-Baikal Red Army man Filimonov tells Dusya that he is staying in the Army for extra service and promises to have no bad marks on his record. This letter is full of a great gentleness. It seems as if he were writing to his sister or his best girl.

"I meet you every day in the papers, I am accustomed to see your face. I am accustomed to follow your achievements, accustomed to think about you."

"From the lofty Caucasian mountains we send Red Army greetings to the celebrated woman of our country—Dusya Vinogradova. We are not lagging behind you—we have finished our studies with excellent marks" write the military students Andreyev, Dushatkin, Shchukin, Chainov and Stepanov.

Comrade Belkin, working in Soyuzsagotshert, in Eastern Siberia, writes that he learned of Dusya's record from the newspaper *Buryat-Mongolski Pravda.*

"This has given me a tremendous inspiration. You have wakened the weavers from their age-old sleep. I promise to exert all my energy in fulfiling our plan 100 per cent, for we are lagging behind on the plan and I'm ashamed."

Comrade Tolkov, of the school of propagandists of the town of Shuya writes of the beauty and joy of Dusya's life which is possible only in the Soviet Union. He asks her not to put on airs, not to let her head turn. Comrade Martinov, airman-instructor at Koktebel, proposes:

"I want you to describe your training—political and general. I want to challenge you to socialist competition in study. Notwithstanding my heavy program of work (I am a flying instructor and secretary of the Young Communist League committee) I want to compete with you in independent study, in self-improvement. You know, I can't even conceive you can work so many looms. Your example is infectious!"

"I have written a poem to you, which I call 'Dream,' " writes a young man called K. and encloses his poem. Here are a few lines.

With all hearts, in every way,
We love our Soviet fatherland
And Dusya, dear, to you we say
We think that you are simply grand.
We love you for your heart so fine
And for your eyes of hazel brown
And just because you lead the line
Of weavers who have gained renown.

The frontier guard Nikolai Zhignov writes very warmly, though without any verses:

"How do you do, Dusya! It will doubtless seem strange to you that you should be getting a letter from a town you don't know. The fact is that in the papers I came across pictures of the best shock workers and you among them. I have read about you. I admire you greatly. And therefore, Dusya, I want to have the friendship of one of the young women of the Soviet Union, which I defend, and namely, you. We could give each other good advice. You can find our town on the map near Poland."

And how many marvellous letters Dusya gets from girls, from textile workers. They write to her with the affection of sisters. And that is what they are—sisters in labor, those girls living in widely separated parts of the country but engaged in the same great cause.

"You know, Dusya," writes the woman weaver, Nadya Cheryakova, of the "Krasnoye Ekho" plant, Pereyaslavl, "I think that you are just an ordinary person only you are very fond of your work and are trying to give the country more goods and best quality. Well, I also love my job. So why

shouldn't I work the way you do. I've decided, Dusya, to follow your example. I fulfilled my plan 115 per cent and no spoilage."

Dusya Poludnitskaya and Raya Khomenko, working women of the Stalin Textile Plant, Tashkent, write that they were inspired by Dusya's example to work on 24 looms, then on 36 and now on 100.

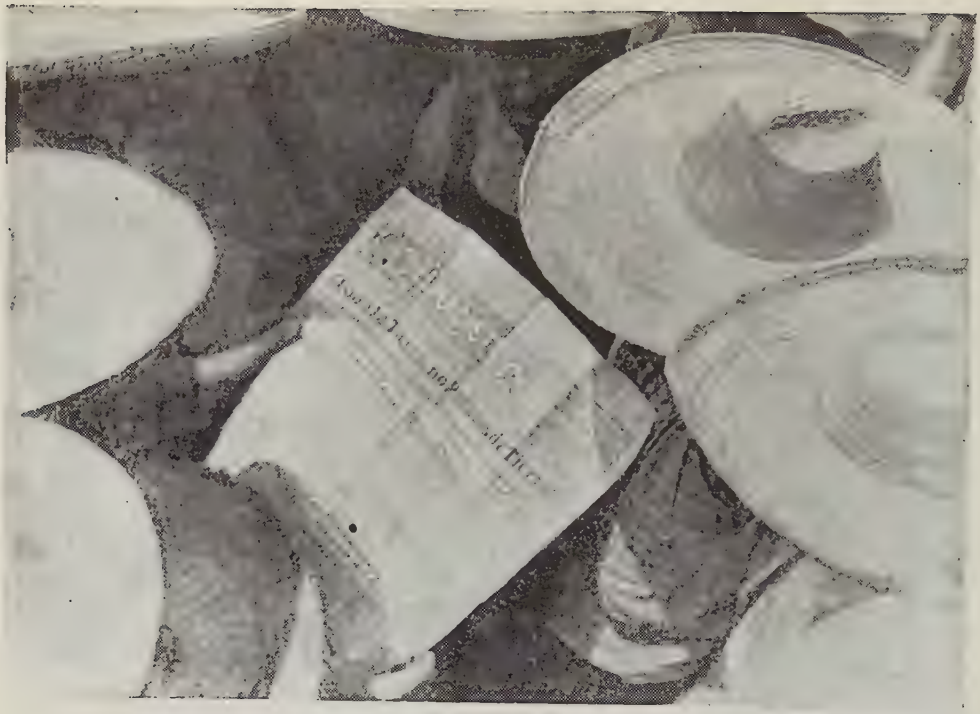
"You are a happy woman," writes Klava Anisimova, from the town of Kirov, (formerly Vyatka) "the whole USSR speaks of you as one of the best people of our country, as of a heroine, although you are not a flyer or an engineer and have done nothing heroic. I know that you have conquered technique and are setting up records not just for the sake of glory. You are a real daughter of our country. And now, you see, I want to be as useful to the country as you are."

It was already getting light when Dusya finished looking over her post. She finished a letter to a Kiev Young Communist, who took part in the march from Kiev to Moscow.

"Generally speaking, one wants now more than ever to live, work, study, go forward. I am finished, I am writing at three in the morning. Good night! I'm going to bed. And tomorrow at nine in the morning, for the first time I'm going to work on 216 looms."

Translated from the Russian by H. O. Whyte

FIVE PHOTOGRAPHS by TINA MODOTTI— ETUDES OF MEXICAN LIFE



LETTERS and DOCUMENTS

T. A. Jackson

Marx and Shakespeare

FOREWORD: The meeting in International Literature of the two essays—"Shakespeare in Karl Marx's Capital *by M. Nechkina and* Marx and Shakespeare *by T. A. Jackson, though not an amicable one, may be called fortunate. On the main question at issue the editors have expressed themselves in the footnote to the first essay* (International Literature No. 3, 1935), *now it is only a question of expanding upon that.*

Both essayists concentrate their attention mainly—and this is justified by the material they worked on—on the analysis of the social nature of Falstaff, so frequently referred to by Marx. Nechkina considers Falstaff one of the first examples of the newly-born bourgeoisie in England,—Jackson considers him the representative of the recently demised English feudalism. Both authors vacillate somewhat in their theses when it comes to details, but on the whole both remain "true to themselves."

It is our opinion that unlike Moliére's Monsieur Jourdin, who came half a century later, Sir Falstaff is a noble gone bourgeois rather than "a bourgeois among nobility." Jourdin is not aware that he is talking prose. Falstaff wants to learn the prose of the bourgeois, the language of notes and bills; bids and acceptance—and not from up on high . . . from the level of his "base comparisons" he looks with disdain upon feudal pompousness moving on the stilts of high-sounding verse and foolish sirdom not worth tuppence.

Sir John Falstaff is heart and soul with that new Elizabethan nobility who know how to put their scabbard away in the sheath and the gold florin in their purse. Falstaff wants to master the methods of accumulation brought into the world by the young bourgeoisie. Only his noble old pockets are full of noble old holes—and that's why they stay . . . empty.

It should be kept in mind, and firmly so, that Falstaff is a comic character. *Only this comic character tells us of some exceedingly serious historial processes not at all comical, then taking place in England. Falstaff* lags *behind the forward moving nobility of the new formation who have mastered bourgeois methods of accumulation. One could mention a number of characters picked, not from comedies but from the annals of history, who knew how to keep in step with the new economic movement which transformed the entire mass of humanity of the Britain of the time on a class basis. Jackson and Nechkina are at odds as to the time of origin of capitalism in England. Basing himself on corresponding passages in Marx, Jackson justly points out that there were capitalist tendencies in England long before Shakespeare. But it is necessary to be extremely careful in this respect as Shakespeare's historical plays are dual-timed. Falstaff belongs both to the times of Henry IV, i.e., almost a century and a half before Shakespeare's and to the times of the great author himself. In this complex problem one can only be guided by general schemes requiring numerous corrections. Our suggestion, also a schematic one therefore, would be: the events of the chronicles are taken from* there *(Hollinshed, Hall, etc.), while the characters, including Falstaff, from the*

author's here. *They are projected onto the screen of the fifteenth century from the beginning of the seventeenth as if through the lenses of a magic lantern. And just as the color, say, of the screen in a movie, or the paper upon which an artist draws a sketch, are part of the movie or sketch, so is history a part of the historical plays of our author.*

A very valuable element of Jackson's essay is the attempt at exact and detailed analysis of the quotations from Shakespeare in the Marxian texts. His interpretation, for instance, of Marx's cursory reference to Dame Quickly as to a character which facilitates the explanation of the (triple) conception of "value," is very clever. But one should not forget the dangers which lurk behind such an attempt to go into the details of a comparison. It would hardly be just to ask a writer who happened to use the current expression "to put one on the right track" whether it was a narrow gage or standard gage track. If Marx did not go into details it may be surmised he had his reasons for it, and not necessarily stylistic ones.

Both Nechkina and Jackson very correctly point out that Marx (and this can also be said of Engels) mostly referred to Shakespeare's comedies. Is it necessary to investigate why these buoyant works of the great English dramatist, so full of polemic vigor, proved particularly adaptable to Marx's literary uses? It seems to us there can be but one answer to this question. A master of polemics sans peer, Marx naturally adopted some of Shakespeare's "fencing methods." If we take three references in a row, Snug (Midsummer Night's Dream), *Dogberry* (Much Ado About Nothing) *and Dame Quickly, we can readily see that they are all variations of one and the same method of polemics. The opponent can be demolished in one of two ways: a) by the force of one's own logic and b) by showing the weakness of his logic. Marx, who usually made very good use of the first method does not disdain to use the other when it suits his purpose. Dogberry, who in simplicity of soul believed that "to be a well-favored man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature" (III, 3), is a fine example of "logical suicide." Substituting for Dogberry's words the apparently scientific but actually just as helpless saying of S. Bailey on the nature of value, Marx, so to say, compels his opponent to do away with his own theory himself. When Marx puts the figure of "little Napoleon" (III) in place of Snug asking the gentle public not to fear his lion's roar assuring them he is no lion but only dressed up in a lion's skin, he makes Napoleon III trying to play the First pronounce his own death sentence. The reference to Dame Quickly is similar in intent as for lack of wit she takes Falstaff's ironies seriously and literally.*

Both of our polemising authors limit the creative association of the great minds of Marx and Shakespeare to those cases when Marx mentions Shakespeare by name. In fact however, the great German philosopher and economist was so thoroughly familiar with the work of Shakespeare that the influence of the latter can be seen in many passages where the great dramatist's name is not mentioned at all.

As an instance of this we might mention the art of the so-called play on words which Marx undoubtedly adapted to his own use under the influence of Shakespeare and his followers (including Heine). Some of the titles used by Marx are based on a keen play on sound symbols. Occasionally some image, a seemingly casual word plays anything but a casual role in the further development of the text. Shakespeare even named characters so as to "play on them" later on either with respect to sound or meaning, as for instance "Ford" or "Silence," which subsequently enrich the text.

Marx does likewise. Take for instance the first chapter of the first book of Capital *which has been subjected to analysis by both our authors. At the very beginning of the chapter, among other concrete examples of commodities, we have the seemingly causal mentioned word "coat" (together with shoe-polish, a yard of silk, paper, diamonds, a bushel of wheat, etc.). Later however, the "coat" stands out more prominently—at first imperceptibly, but then more and more definitely, from among all the other examples. We are first informed of the simplest truths—that "two coats are more than one. Two coats can clothe two people." Alongside the example of the coat runs the one of "twenty yards of cloth." At first the two examples run side by side mutely: "As use-value cloth is something sensibly different from a coat; as value it is something like a 'coat' and consequently looks like a coat. It thus assumes a value-form different from its natural form. Its essence as value appears in its similarity to the coat as the sheepish nature of the Christian does in its similarity to the Lamb of God."*[1]

As we see the relations between the companion examples become somewhat more complex. It is time for them to enter into conversation. And "We see that everything which the analysis of commodity-value has told us before, the cloth tells us itself as soon as it comes into contact with the other commodity— the coat. Only it speaks the only language it knows—commodity language. In order to say that labor, as the abstract property of human labor, constitutes its own value, it says that the coat, in as much as it is equivalent to it, consists of the same labor as the cloth. In order to say that the sublime substance of its value differs from its stiff-cloth body, it says that the value looks like a coat and that consequently, as far as value is concerned, it and the coat are as much alike as two peas."[2] *The cloth and the coat thus proceed amicably from page to page. It is now the coat's turn to speak and it tells us a great many clever and curious things, poking fun now and then at itself and at the people that wear it: "the usefulness of tailoring does not consist in the making of the coat and hence of the man, but in creating a body which can be seen as value, consequently as congealed labor . . ."*[3] *And, the author remarks, "in spite of its buttoned-up form, the cloth recognizes in it its own beautiful kin-soul of value,"*[4] *adding that the economic property of the coat "shines through its texture however fine the weave."*[5]

We can only add that Shakespeare's remarkably picturesque manner of writing shines under the texture of the Marxian text "however fine its weave." It seems to us that when one is dealing with such a great master of imagery as Shakespeare and such an artistic genius of thought as Marx one should not rest content on a one-sided only logical or only artistic analysis.

In 1867 when Marx was completing his work on the first volume of Capital, *he wrote that he is entirely occupied with finishing the book "as an artistic whole."*

The work undertaken by comrades Nechkina and Jackson—that of gathering and analyzing all the quotations and references to Aeschylus, Goethe, Shakespeare and other writers, scattered on the broad field of Capital *is, of*

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[1] Marx—*Das Kapital,* Buch I, Bd. I, S-57, Volksausgabe Moskau.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., S-63.

[4] Ibid., S-57.

[5] This quotation is somewhat inexact. Marx says: (S-56) Nach dieser Seite hin ist der Rock 'Träger von Wert,' obgleich diese seine Eigenschaft selbst durch seine grösste Fadenscheinigkeit *nicht* durchblickt ("does *not* show through no matter how it is threadbare.

course, very valuable. But even more valuable, it seems to us, would be an attempt to make a structural, architectonic and stylistic analysis of this monumental structure of thought.—S.K.

M. Netchkina's article in *International Literature,* No. 3 1935, on "Shakespeare in Marx's *Capital*" raises an issue of profound importance, that of the relation of the scientific genius of Karl Marx, to imaginative art-creation generally.

Her basic thesis is that Marx, by the illustrations he draws from the works of the world's greatest imaginative artists, proves himself to have been an imaginative artist likewise and one of a very high order. This is, firstly, a thesis of considerable importance for the appreciation of Marx and his work. It is, secondly, one of no less importance for the elucidation of the relation between scientific imaginative generalisation, and creative imaginative art.

That these two forms of creative imagination-pratice are *opposite,* and at the same time *united,* is a truth which is easy to grasp intuitively, but not so easy to demonstrate in concrete cases. Since no better, or more significant, illustration of their unity in opposition could be found than the fact that both forms existed in conjunction in the genius of Karl Marx, it is a thousand pities that Netchkina, in the article in question, should have so mishandled her material as to obscure this basic issue, and so throw discredit upon the thesis she was seeking to maintain.

A fundamental weakness in Netchkina's approach is revealed in her failure to follow up a significant clue which she herself raises. She notes, quite correctly, that whereas Marx drew upon Goethe for illustrative "philosophical generalisations," he drew from Shakespeare "vivid imagery." But she does not follow up the hint; hence she fails to note the significant fact that while Goethe's work appealed most strongly to the tragic side of Marx's artistic consciousness, it was, on the countrary, its comic side which found a never failing stimulus in the works of Shakespeare.

This fact is of importance on a number of sides. It tells us much about Marx himself. It is, no less, an implied criticism, all the more impressive for being unconscious, of the significance of Shakespeare and Goethe respectively. Most of all, it points to the radical defeat in Netchkina's method, her failure to perceive, or at any rate to give full value to, the *satiric use* Marx makes of his questions from and allusions to the works of Shakespeare.

To fail to see the mordant wit with which Marx used Shakespeare is to fail to understand the whole point of Marx's critique. Thus Netchkina, attempting to explain Marx, actually succeeds only in misrepresenting him.

Netchkina goes very pains-takingly to work to explain every one of Marx's Shakespearean allusions; but her basic error vitiates the whole of her work. Most of her "explanations" are quite irrelevant: they "explain" everything except that which needs explanation. In addition, she falls completely into error in her estimate of the *historical* (as well as the dramatic) significance of the character of Falstaff; and in consequence of so doing, makes a completely false estimate of the political significance of Shakepeare's work at the time of its production. This false estimate in turn reacts upon her estimate of the significance of Shakespeare for Marx, and consequently of Marx's use of Shakespeare.

The fact that Netchkina's historical misestimate (of Falstaff, particularly) has excited the derision of British philistines is not what concerns us;

although it is a pity that Netchkina should have exposed herself to this derision. What matters is the significance of Marx himself on his artistic as well as on his scientific-philosophical side.

A good example of Netchkina's failure to understand Marx's *satiric* use of Shakespeare is found in her treatment of the two distinct uses Marx makes of an allusion to Snug the Joiner's impersonation of the lion.

Snug the Joiner is one of a party of rustics who (in the *Midsummer Night's Dream)* stage a dramatic performance for the entertainment of the Duke of Athens on the occasion of his wedding. In general the interlude is an example of a well-worn comedy theme—amateur acting, semi-literate authorship, and bucolic imbecility all combined for the diversion of sophisticated townsmen. It is Shakespearean only in its *quality;*—that is, in the genius of its farcicality, of which Snug the Joiner is one of Shakespeare's choicest examples. Cast for the part of the lion, the poor timorous soul at once reveals himself: "Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be so, give it me, for I am slow of study." They reassure him by telling him that it consists of nothing but roaring. Wheupon Billy Bottom, the "star" performer, offers to double the part and show how well he can roar. Which at once creates in the whole company a terror lest the lion, acted naturalistically, should terrify the court ladies and so get them all hanged for their pains. In the upshot Snug, as the "lion," explains (most needlessly) that he is neither a lion "nor a lion's dam." The audience agrees that he is "a very gentle beast," "a fox for his valour and a goose for his discretion."

The whole point about poor Snug is not that he impersonated the lion, but that he was by nature incapable of such an impersonation.

Netchkina cites two occasions on which Marx uses Snug the Joiner as an illustration—and on each occasion she misses Marx's whole point. When Marx in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* says that Louis Napoleon's Society of December 10th "impersonated the proletariat as Snug the Joiner impersonated the lion" the point is not as Netchkina supposes that there was deception; but that there was *none.* Nobody was deceived who did not want to be; or who was not critically at the level of Snug the Joiner himself. That *such* a crew as in fact composed the Society of December the 10th *could be* mistaken for the proletariat (as they were by all the bourgeois literati); —that Louis Napoleon should have had the cynically impudent cunning to know that he could work just this trick and "get away with it"—*this* constituted the comic side of the tragi-comedy of the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon.

Netchkina does not see this. She sees, it is true, that trickery and impersonation were involved, and that the case of the Society of December 10th was of a piece with the previous exploits wherein Louis Napoleon (at Boulogne and Strasburg) had staged an impersonation of his "uncle"—(Marx says, mordantly, and with a good deal of warrant, that Louis Napoleon was only the "nephew" of the great Napoleon "in view of the article in the legal code which forbade research into the paternity of a child!") But Netchkina sees no more than that there was impersonation. Marx's main concern begins when Netchkina's ends. For Marx what has to be explained is how such a swindle *succeeded.* And for Marx, and for us, the profound significance of this success lies in the fool, that, although the militant vanguard of the proletariat had been wiped out in the days of June 1848, they had struck such a wholesome terror into the hearts of the bourgeoisie that a

mere impersonation of a proletarian revival by a cynincal swindler was sufficient to frighten the bourgeoisie into submitting to the swindler's blackmail.

The other case in which Marx makes allusion to Snug the Joiner is in reference to Hegel's *Theory of the State.* Marx says (in effect), sardonically, that Hegel tries to persuade himself and us that the terrible, tyrannical-seeming State is not really terrible or tyrannical at all; but is, despite its lionlike appearance, as gentle-natured and as harmless as poor Snug the Joiner. So says Marx, "We have either the lion of contrast (i.e., between ruler and ruled) or the Snug of misrepresentation!" Here the absurdity lies in the fact that such a man as Hegel should have deluded himself so completely as to the true nature of the Royal Prussian State. The joke is "on" Hegel, *not,* as Netchkina supposes, "on" the *State.*

In the case of the phrases Marx quoted from Falstaff Netchkina has likewise completely confused Marx's application. Falstaff, in blustering his way out of a difficulty, says "if reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would not give you one on compulsion!" Marx (in an article in *Vorwaerts)* replying to Heinzen—who had alleged that "the princes are the chief authors of poverty and enslavement"—retorts that (a) this "explanation" is obviously invalidated where princedom has been abolished; and (b) it is refuted concretely by the *republican* U. S. A. in which the slavery-system ("upon which the ancient republics broke down") was, at that time flourishing! "The slavery system," says Marx, "might well exclaim (i.e. to Heinzen) with Jack Falstaff 'if reasons were as plentiful as blackberries' . . . !" Obviously, to anyone who knows the passage to which Marx alludes, the point lies in the words implied but not quoted. *"I would not give you one."* That Marx is here "guilty" of a pun and a double one since the words *"not even 'on compulsion'"* are further implied, has completely escaped Netchkina, who "explains" that "slavery . . . might agree with Falstaff *in wishing that* reasons were as plentiful" etc. Netchkina misunderstands Falstaff's words badly enough; but far more serious is the fact that her lack of understanding in this respect causes her to misrepresent Marx's witty use of them.

Again, in the allusive remark that the value *form* of commodities (as distinguished from their material substance) "differs in this respect from Dame Quickly in that we don't know where to have it"—Netchkina is completely at sea. She can, however, be forgiven to some extent in this case since the allusion is a subtly ironic one. Falstaff quarrelling with Dame Quickly calls her an otter":—

> *Prince Hal:* An otter, Sir John? Why an otter?
>
> *Fal:* Why, she's neither fish nor flesh; a man knows not where to have her!
>
> *Dame Quickly:* Thou art an unjust man in saying so; thou or any other man knows where to have me, thou knave thou.
>
> *Prince:* (enjoying the joke and helping it on) Thou say'st true hostess; and he slanders thee most grossly.

The point of Marx's jesting comparison is that while Dame Quickly could be "had" and that "by all men" in a most corporeal, not to say "carnal" sense—being therein like the material substance in which *value* is embodied—she was, none the less, from another aspect, as Falstaff more than hints, "all things to all men," whore, procuress and honest woman; shrewd, money-grasping inn-keeper and also deluded cull whom Falstaff could blarney out-

of her last shilling; and this all in a breath. In fact, despite her protests, it was true that "a man knows not where to have her." It was in this respect that she resembled the "substance" of value when approached from the standpoint of empiricism.

It is almost a crime to be forced thus to anatomise a jest; but, in the situation created by Netchkina's article such a post-mortem cannot be evaded.

Netchkina says: "Falstaff is a clear-cut type of the epoch of primitive accumulation. The fragments of feudal ideas are merely the building materials for his *new bourgeois morality* . . . Shakespeare *regretfully* watching the downfall of the feudal world, *showed his rejection of the coming bourgeois world* in the comic character of Falstaff."

That Falstaff is a comic character is true, that Shakespeare showed by his handling of Falstaff that he "rejected" the "world" which Falstaff stood for, is true likewise. But we deny, categorically, that Falstaff's morality was "bourgeois" or that he typified in any sense of the word the "coming bourgeois world." Consequently, we draw from the character of Falstaff, and Shakespeare's handling thereof, deductions exactly opposite to those of Netchkina.

To make the issue—a crucial one—clear, we must consider the character of Falstaff in relation to the drama in which he appears, and then its significance as a social-historical phenomenon.

Considered as a piece of dramatic machinery Falstaff is first of all a "clown." He is, that is to say, a large, fat man, gluttonous and debauched,—so huge, and so gross, that "men of all sorts take pride to gird at me: the brain of this foolish-compounded clay, Man, is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter, more than I invent or is invented on me: I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men." This type of character, the "clown," whose every entrance raised an anticipatory guffaw—and whose function on the stage was to supply a comic relief for both actors and auditors between spells of tragedy, or farcical relief from the more tense episodes in a comedy drama—was a well-established convention in Shakespeare's day. It can in fact be traced back in the evolution of the drama to the *Devil* in the mediaeval "mystery" dramas and the "*Vice*' in their successors, the "morality" plays or "interludes."

In the "Mysteries" the "Devil" was brought in at appropriate moments—or was present all the time with his attendant imps on the lowest deck of the three-decker stage (which represented Hell, Earth and Heaven respectively). Grotesquely hideous in get-up he appeared on "Earth" (to the accompaniment of hoots, missiles and general merriment) either to fail ignominously in an endeavour to corrupt the righteous or to carry off a convicted villain to his doom in "Hell."

The "Vice" evolved from the attendants upon the Devil in the religious "mystery" pageant dramas. These attendants were first specialised to represent one or other of the seven "deadly" sins, and were then elaborated into characters in which these "vices" were predominant. Along the latter line of development they finally broke away from their origin to become comedy or tragedy characters in the naturalistic drama, which the Elizabethan dramatists succeeded in evolving.

A specialised development from the "Vice" conventionalised to absurdity, is the "character" whose whole function is to be absurd. Originally there

were Seven Vices. These, for economy's sake, became one generalised "Vice," which, in turn, became both a substitute for the Devil (who by convention had always to be defeated and humiliated after a period of temporary triumph) as well as an embodiment of absurdity. (The ultimate oucome of this latter development survives in the "clown" of the circus or the pantomime.) Shakespeare, breaking away from the convention at an earlier stage, evolved out of the universal "butt" into which the Devil-Vice had degenerated, the whole series of his inimitable "clowns" of whom Falstaff is the chief.

It is important to remember this functional origin in estimating the significance of Falstaff as a *character*. In his role as a piece of dramatic machinery, Falstaff's descent from the mediaeval Devil is as apparent as is also, his descent from the devil's absurd duplicate, the "Vice." In the latter aspect Falstaff's huge girth and grotesque appearance (both, taken over by Shakespeare from the older dramatic work upon which his own was based—very few of "Shakespeare's" plays being *wholly* his own invention) are clear links with the past: In the former aspect the link is provided by the fact that alike in *Henry IV* and the *Merry Wives* of *Windsor* Falstaff is a *tempter* who is cheated, robbed of his ill-gotten gains, made a laughing-stock, and, finally, reduced to complete humiliation.

Sentimental bourgeois critics, Falstaff-"Fans", are all of them rather indignant with Shakespeare because in the *Merry Wives,* Falstaff is made a butt all through, and has not even a brief interval of triumph. They fail to realise that in *Henry IV* his ultimate humiliation is even more profound and follows closely the lines of the mediaeval flinging-down of the Devil into Hell. In the *Merry Wives* the blow is softened for Falstaff by his being taken off to a consolation supper by the man who has the biggest laugh at his expense. In *Henry IV* Falstaff is cast down in the moment of his highest expectation. His old bottle-companion, Prince Hal, having become King, instead of making his gesture orders his arrest and imprisonment in the Fleet prison along with all his company. And to make the humiliation complete, the arrest is carried out by Falstaff's (and Price Hal's) old enemy, the Lord Chief Justice. If in the *Merry Wives* Falstaff functions more obviously as a "Vice," in *Henry IV* he is more clearly a "Devil" the baffled tempter who suffers inevitable humiliation.

Connected closely with Falstaff's "Devil" function is the fact that he appears as the chief of a whole group of satellites (relics of the original vices attendant upon the Devil), Dame Quickly, Doll Tearsheet, Lieutenant Peto, Ancient (i. e. Ensign) Pistol, Corporals Bardolph and Nym, and the Page. But this fact that he is presented as the Knight-Commander of a company (of broken-down military men and their whole or part-time harlots, whose headquarters are at a quasi-tavern, quasi-bawdy house) also gives him his *representative* significance. This crew of satellites—into whose number are included, intermittently, Gadshill (a thieves' "bonnet"), Prince Hal and Poins (in their roystering, gentleman-highwayman stage) and Master Justice Shallow, with his satellite Silence, (burlesque memories of rowdy law students) —constitutes Falstaff's "tail." Their attendant relation to him gives him the standing of a petty king attended by his Court, a feudal lord surrounded by his household following, or (what was no uncommon sight in Shakespeare's London, and an unfailing source of mirth) a Scottish chief or an Irish "righ" followed by his tail of "ghillies" on "dhuine wassalls."

To grasp the full significance of the "rejection" implicit in Shakespeare's

presentation of Falstaff he must be seen not only in his aspect of "Devil" but also in his aspect of a *grotesque parody of feudal state and status.*

It must, of course, be remembered, that, such is Shakespeare's artistry that these mechanical and symbolical functions of Falstaff and his "tail," become apparent only after analysis. In their actual stage appearance, each and every one of them is a complete and unique character. Even Pistol, who is basically a parody of the abstract absurdity into which the conventionalised drama had converted the conquering tyrant, (such as Tamerlane) comes to life and becomes an excruciatingly comic living parody of the actors presenting this absurd convention. Falstaff's abounding wit and cunning dexterity blind the superficial critic to his functional characteristics; although it is from the side of his functions that he is best to be understood. Shakespeare's genius did not consist in making Falstaff out of *nothing;* it consisted in making him out of *less than nothing,* out of a mechanical abstraction,— the conventionalised "Devil"—"Vice" he was before Shakespeare gave him a human life and personality.

Originally, Falstaff's "Devil" function consisted in temping the young Prince of Wales into wild and dissolute courses. For that purpose he had to be a glutton and a wine-bibber, a haunter of taverns and bawdy-houses, a gamester, a brawler and a pimp. It is notable that in Shakespeare's version, although the gross bulk of Falstaff—(that "huge hill of flesh")—still remains as a vehicle for all the Seven deadly sins, they survive in Falstaff, except in respect of gluttony and sloth, only in their grotesquely degenerate forms. Falstaff is still "fat-witted with drinking of old sack and unbuttoning after supper, and sleeping upon benches at noon." As Prince Henry says:—

"Unless hours were cups of sack and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping-houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou should'st be so superflous as to demand the time of day."

But this pride has shrunk almost to vanishing point, his lust is now a thing to occasion jests on the marvel that "desire should so long outlive performance", his "anger"—(in the conventional sense of disposition towards murder)—is more than inhibited by his gluttony-begotten sloth his "covetousness" is now the money-hunger of the chronically impecunious—that of the sponger and the highway-robber. This degeneration of the qualities necesary for his "Vice" function is, however, an enhancement of the qualities necessary for his representative function, that of presenting an aspect of feudal society in the last stages of degeneration.

Falstaff, who be it remembered, is alike in his character as a knight, as the head of a "tail," and actually in the course of the play (*Henry IV),* a military commander—presented to Elizabethan audiences a type with which they were more than familiar. He and his crew were replicas, only more or less parodied, of a phenomenon that everyone in the audience had seen time and again. The very popularity of the Falstaff scenes proves how well and truly they, *as parodies,* had hit their mark.

Lest any reader not familiar with Shakespeare and the Elizabethan stage convention might be confused by this confounding of the chronology of *Henry IV* and that of Shakespeare's own day, it should be noted that *historical*

realism was no part of Shakespeare's purpose. Falstaff and the member of his circle appear quite cheerfully in a *contemporary* Elizabethan comedy (the *Merry Wives* just after appearing in a Chronical-History as characters of the end of the 14th century.[1] Whatever the scenes of one of Shakespeare's dramas, and whatever the nominal period, it is always the England of Shakespeare's own day which is presented. And to find the originals of which Falstaff and his crew were parodies, we do not need to seek further that in the historical chapters of Vol. I of Marx's *Capital,* XXVI, XXVII and XXVIII on "The Secret of Primitive Accumulation," "The Expropriation of the Agricultural Proletariat" and "Bloody Legislation against the Expropriated" respectively. The essence of the historical process, as such, is thus stated by Marx:—

"The starting-point of the development that gave rise to the wage-labourer as well as to the capitalist, was the servitude of the labourer. The advance consists in a change of form in this servitude, in the transformation of feudal exploitation into capitalist exploitation To understand its march we need not go very far back. Although we come across the first beginnings of capitalist production as early as the 14th or 15th century, sporadically, in certain towns of the Mediterranean, *the capitalistic era dates from the 16th century.* Wherever it appears, the abolition of serfdom has been long effected, and the highest development of the middle-ages, the existence of sovereign towns, has been long on the wane.

"In the history of primitive accumulation all revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capitalist class in course of formation: but, above all, those moments when masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence and hurled as free and unattached proletarians on the labour market. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant from the soil, is the basis of the whole process." Marx: *CAPITAL. Vol. XXVI.*

For the understanding of Shakespeare and his characters, this process, in its actual, concrete historical English form, is an indispensable prerequisite. From it we way see that it is completely wrong to regard Shakespeare's period as one of "feudalism," one in which the "bourgeois world" is only "coming." *It has already come,*—or, to be more precise, it has already completed its prologue, and is about to undergo the paroxysm of his leap forward to a more developed stage. The real *beginning* of the capitalist epoch (and the real close of the feudal epoch with which this beginning coincided) was made a century before Shakespeare's artistic lifetime. It can be dated with approximate precision at the close of the Wars of the Roses, or more precisely still, with the accession, after the Battle of Bosworth, in 1485, of Henry VII.

The Tudor monarchy he established was already *post*-feudal. It rested on the basis of an alliance between the town burghers—particularly the wealthy merchants of London—and the Crown. The absolutism of the Crown which was consolidated and extended all through the Tudor reigns until it became an intolerable grievance under the Stuarts, was in fact, the weapon with which,—to the complete satisfaction of the town burghers, and especially of the London merchants aforesaid—all the *local* sovereignties of the feudal baronage were destroyed.

In three outstanding ways this process of revolutionary transition involved the "sudden and forcible" divorce of "masses of men" from their means of subsistence:—(1) The breaking up and dispersal, as a deliberate policy, by Henry VII, of the huge "private armies" of the great feudal lords, and the

[1] Moreover in the *Merry Wives* Falstaff is supposed to be some twenty years *younger* than in *Henry IV!*

conversion of their castles into manor-houses, and of the feudal lords themselves into "landlords" in the modern bourgeois sense; (2) The consequence of this: the enclosure of common lands, the destruction of the commonage rights of the peasantry, and the forcible expropriation of the agricultural population; (3) The "Reformation" confiscation of the church lands, with the dissolution of the monasteries and monastic foundations. The first and third of these "sudden and forcible" acts cast adrift whole masses at once; the second proceeded more as a continuous *process* of the forcible expropriation of a whole class. All together had the effect on the one side of creating a (potential) proletariat, and on the other of converting the feudal barons into quasi-bourgeois "rent-eaters" and the substantial yeomanry into capitalist farmers ("kulaks") actual or potential.

In short: Shakespeare's period was the period of the revolutionary conversion of feudalism into capitalism; the period in which the dictatorship and forming "kulak-aristocracy." It was therefore also the epoch of the eve of the town-bourgeoisie was coming to rely more and more upon the newly formed and forming "kulak-aristocracy". It was there for also the epoch of the eve of the culmination of this transition in the *second* great uprising of the bourgeoisie; the Puritan Revolution.

Shakespeare's work vividly and faithfully reflects this period and all its contradictions. As we shall show, far from being a pro-feudalist, Shakespeare's artistic genius enabled him, not only to anticipate the triumph and envisage intuitively its subsequent cancellation. But first let us return to Falstaff..

When the bands of feudal retainers were dispersed, and again when the monasteries were blown-up, burned-down or converted into mansions for the new "kulak" aristocracy (Note how many of the "stately homes of England"—the homes of "our old (!) nobilty" are to this day entitled "abbeys") what became of these retainers, these monks, and nuns? The statute-book, as Marx shows in his chapter, "Bloody Legislation Against the Expropriated" tells us part of the story. The rest can be pieced together from contemporory records. Briefly summarised, we may cite two great "canals" into which these masses of "unemployed" were drained off—except, of course, in so far as, in time, they found employment as proletarians in industry, which, however, was a prolonged and slow process. The feudal retainers went in the main "to the wars," that is to say, they became professional soldiers, and, between spells of service, cut-purses, highway-robbers, tavern-bullies, whores' "protectors" and general spongers. The unfrocked clerics partly went the same road; chiefly they supplied England with its first form of literary-intelligentsia. The whole amazing literary upsurge which has Shakespeare as its supreme height had its roots in this class and in the circumstances consequent upon its coming into being. Out of the de-classed strata of feudal retainers arose such types as Falstaff and his tail. Out of the strata of unfrocked clergy arose the class of scriveners, school-masters, lawyers, and also the new literary odd-job class, and their creations, the Elizabethan drama, and ultimately the work of William Shakespeare. Only in this sense is it correct to identify Falstaff (and his creator) with the epoch of primitive accumulation.

How does Shakespeare show in the actual working out of the dramas in which they appear his "rejection" of Falstaff and his company? He does

this as we have seen by making them contemptible in life and abjectly miserable in their ends. In form Falstaff's company is a quasi-feudal military company headed by a knight. In substance and in fact they are a crew of degenerate thieves, parasites, and spongers, foot-pads, tavern bullies, souteneurs and tricksters. Their lives and their ends follow closely the line followed in actual fact by Francois Villon in Paris, a century before Shakespeare's birth, while as more or less amusing scoundrels they form one of the earliest examples of the *picaresque*—the line of Sancho Panza, Gil Blas, Sganarelle and the rest, which is, as Maxim Gorki has pointed out, the nearest to an *heroic* line, persisting all though bourgeois literature from its beginnings in Boccaccio (1313-1375), Villon (1431- ? 1463), Rabelais (1483-1553) and Cervantes (1547-1616) to the crime literature of today. Falstaff in his combination of fleshly enjoyment with wit has affinities with Panurge. In general he is a species of inverted Quixote, with touches of the scoundrel-philosophy of Sancho-Panza. But taken over all, along with his company, his affinities are closest with Villon and the *lumpen-proletariat* produced by the decadence of feudalism. Since there is no reason at all to suppose that Shakespeare ever met with a line of Villon's work, the conclusion is obvious, that Shakespeare drew from life the late sixteenth century London equivalent of the low-life of fifteenth century Paris.

What is, morally, of the greatest importance is the fact that while making them funnier than anything in Villon, Shakespeare makes Falstaff's crew equally despicable with Villon in life and even more contemptible in death. Falstaff, for all his military rank, is even at his best a sponger on the loose-tongued and looser moralled Dame Quickly. At his worst he sinks (in the *Merry Wives)* not actually into a pimp but into a confidence-trickster who pretends to be a pimp without intention of delivering the goods. His chief humiliation comes when he discovers that the Master Brook for whom he undertakes to procure carnal intercourse with Mistress Ford is in fact her husband. So that to Falstaff's chagrin Ford does in fact "lie tonight with Mistress Ford" but not in the least to Falstaff's profit. Falstaff, as the nearest of the whole crew to respect-worthiness, does, it is true, die in bed, his heart "all fracted and corroborate" by the failure of the hopes he had built upon the succession of Prince Hal to the crown. Shakespeare shows pity on the old reprobate by letting him die "babbling of green fields" with his once gorgeously bibulous nose "as sharp as a pen." But he dies dependent on charity while the rest end as miserably as they were bound to end.

Dame Quickly, married to Pistol, dies "i'th'spital" of the "malady of France"—in modern English: in the hospital, of the pox. So too, does Doll Tearsheet. Corporals Bardolph and Nym die each of them on the gallows, convicted of a petty, burgling theft. Pistol, every pretence at soldiering and valour cudgelled out of him, decides that

> "bawd I will turn,
> And something lean to cut-purse of quick hand.
> To England will I steal and there I'll steal:
> And patches will I get unto these cudgelled sears,
> And swear I got them in the Gallia wars."

So thorough and devastating is Shakespeare's disposal of Falstaff and his crew—(its only parallel in English literature is Dickens' disposal of Fagin and his crew in *Oliver Twist,* where however the end has been clearly foreseen from the beginning)—that sentimentalists have made it a charge against

Shakespeare that he cruelly sacrificed his puppets on the altar of conventional morality. The charge is baseless. At their most mirthprovoking, Falstaff's crew, contain within them the potentiality of no other end. Falstaff for all his wit was a self-indulgent parasite doomed to die as a parasite dies as soon as its source of nourishment is cut off. Sentimentalism was not for such an artist as William Shakespeare. He was artist enough to show in Falstaff, and in each one of his crew, traits of common humanity, such as would show that the gulf between them and the (presumably) normal respect-worthiness of the audience was not an absolute one. But he knew too, as an artist, that a drunken sponger to whom drunkenness and sponging had grown second-nature, could have no other end than that of a drunken-sponger worn out—however brisk his unfuddled wits, and however diverting he may have been in his cups. How else could Nell Quickly and Doll Tearsheet end but, sooner or later, penniless, of the disease special to their trade? How else could such as Nym and Bardolph end but on the gallows, convinced egregiously of some stupidly petty theft? What other end was possible to Pistol once he was cudgelled into facing actual reality but that of living (and dying) by the only job he was fit for—that of door-keeper and beer fetcher at a brothel, with a little pocket picking as a side line?

Sentimentalists are, after all, only bourgeois moralists looking through rose-coloured spectacles. Because poor, garrulous, ungrammatical, Nell Quickly is as good-hearted as she is high-spirited, and because Doll Tearsheet, when she is not fuddled with drink, or preoccupied with her profession, is a lively lass with no end of pluck, these sentimentalists think Shakespeare might have contrived some other end for them. Did they expect him to make them *reform?* Shakespeare being an artist as great as the sentimentalists are little, knew first of all that women of their profession usually are in fact plucky, generous, and good-hearted. At the same time, he was artist enough to know that (short of a reform which in their cases was artistically unthinkable) no other end for them could be envisaged realistically than the one he indicated.

In a word: Shakespeare in depicting Falstaff and his crew depicted from life, in vivid truth, the phenomena of *decadence,* the degeneration and decomposition of an absolute class—that of the dependants upon the feudal order. In showing their *rejection* by life, and by reality, Shakespeare showed his sense that the bourgeois order had come, and could not be *rejected* by any man except as pain of extinction.

Netchkina's assertion that "Falstaff for Marx was a kind of 'personified capital' of the epoch of the dawn of capitalism, which gave birth to the bourgeoisie of the epoch of primitive accumulation" is outrageously false at every point. It is, as we have seen, false as to the epoch indicated. It is grotesquely, and even cruelly false as to Falstaff as Shakespeare presents him. Does a "kind of 'personified capital' " speak his mind thus:—

> "I can get no remedy against this consumption of the purse. Borrowing only lingers, and lingers it out, but the disease is incurable."

There is not much "accumulation" there, whether primitive or otherwise; and it is a positive affront to Marx's intelligence to suggest that he could possibly have mistaken Falstaff for an "accumulation" of capital.

What is, on the contrary most astonishing about Marx's use of Shakespeare—(if it be borne in mind that English was not Marx's native language,

and that even to Englishmen, close students of Shakespeare, the archaic and imaginative diction of Shakespeare's plays present a whole tangle of difficulties)—is the unfailing aptness of the illustrations Marx draws. Marx shows a profundity of grasp of Shakespeare that exceeds, in many cases, that of "experts" who have made Shakespeare a life-long study. Marx was simply incapable of mistaking a typical example of the final degradation of the feudal-baronial status and social relationships for their opposite, those of nascent bourgeois accumulation. In Falstaff and his crew the feudal-order, more than moribund,—decadent to putrescence—still cumbers the world-stage and makes its final grotesquely tragi-comic gesture of defiance in the face of its own inevitable extermination.

The whole farce of the Falstaff scenes in *Henry IV* turns on this grotesque contrast between the feudal status as it was and that into which it has degenerated. The whole of the tragedy underlying the farce and giving it body and force, is the utter incompatibility between this status and relationship and the new bourgeois world which has come into being, throbbing with exuberant life, and finding fresh outlets for expansion every hour. If Shakespeare pities Falstaff and his crew—and his picture would not have been artistically complete if he had not done so—it is from this angle, from a sense of their hopelessly irredeemable helplessness; which turns from sheer excess into its opposite,—a recognition that to be *what* they are. they need no help. They are no more in need of sustenance than a ghost! For ghost of a departed order, lingering belated on the scene, is precisely what they are. In no other sense was it possible for Marx to envisage them; and in so far as he, too, pities them, it is in the same sense that at their worst they are, being as much victims as victimisers, not so different morally from their contemporaries as they seem to be.

Falstaff is, it is true, a liar. But *what* a liar! The very magnificence of his lying takes it out of the category of mean shifts employed for momentary personal advantage, and gives it rank as an artistic creation.

When Falstaff tells the tale of the episode on Gads-Hill; and as he tells it ("if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, and call me horse"), *four* men in buckram grow into *eleven* men and then add to their number "*three* misbegotten knaves in kendal green"—we all the time knowing that even the initial *four* was an exaggeration of 100 per cent—he soars far above mere "lying" in the petty or bourgeois sense of the word. He gives a virtuoso exhibition of the art to this day known generically as "telling the tale." Every tavern in London, every ale-house, even, at that date had its parasite who had no other means of living but his wits, and no readier stand-by than the tale of "what he did in the wars." Falstaff's "romantic" rendering of the Gads-Hill episode is all the funnier because it has a substratum of truth;—which the audience happens to know. It derives its superlative quality from being a perfect replica of such "tales of the wars" as every man in the audience must have heard,—and, having heard, must have guessed at what, if any, proportion of truth it had as its substratum.

The whole comedy of Falstaff, as well as the whole tragedy which is its converse, lies in the fact that he personifies greatness and magnificence, utterly decadent and grotesquely out of place. And as these are just the qualities the bourgeoisie does not exhibit particularly in its epoch of primitive accumulation such a comparison could not possibly have been made by Marx.

True Marx could say, and justly, that the *lies* of the defenders of the bourgeois order were like the lies of Falstaff "gross as mountain, open, palpable!" But that is something very different from treating Falstaff *qua* Falstaff as "typical" capitalist "of the epoch of primitive accumulation."

Netchkina is, perhaps, most of all mistaken in supposing that Falstaff's morals are bourgeois (under a *quasi-feudal* disguise).

Very much to the contrary: Falstaff is his morals presents a phenomenon which recurs at every crisis of social transition, the phenomenon of the man who has lost the old morality and not yet found a new one—the phenomenon of *a-moralist egoism.*

As the highest point reached by the philosophy (and morality) of class-divided society is that of "the single individual in civil society" (Marx: *Theses on Feuerbach)* so its lowest point is that of the single individual who repudiates all social claims and obligations. This is, *par excellence,* the standpoint of the parasite who is weakly inefficient enough, even as a parasite, to feel the need of disguising his parasitism to himself under a guise of romantic pretence. In that sense Falstaff is startlingly "up-to-date" in a way Shakespeare could not have foreseen. For instance: Falstaff leads the plunder raid upon the merchants on Gads-Hill, with this slogan:—

"Strike! Down with them! Cut the villains' throats! Ah! whores on catterpillars! bacon-fed knaves! *they hate us youth!* Down with them! fleece them!"

That Falstaff is in fact "some fifty years of age, or may be three-score" only makes this use of the term "youth" all the more startlingly "modern." Do we not know this "youth?" And also its *a-moralism*—its affectation of a super-Nietzschean "transvaluation" of Good and Evil?

Along with this Shakespeare's genius shines out in that by a whole series of touches, we are made to see in Falstaff the other side to the fact that he is—

"That trunk of humours, that bolting hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloak bag of guts, that roasted Manning tree ox with a pudding in his belly, that reverend Vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years."

All this is there: but there is also the memory of what he once was—a courtly page in the household of one of the highest nobles in the Kingdom, the Duke of Norfolk; a gallant soldier whose reputation as such is still so good that he is given a commission at once, as soon as a civil war breaks out; and so on. It is true that in the actual drama as presented we see him worsted in combat along with his companions by two men (the Prince and Poins), and we see him too, at Shrewsbury fight, feigning death to escape further punishment at the hands of the "doughty" Douglas. This, it is true, is anything but heroic. And true, too, that Falstaff makes a mock at heroism and honour and all such-like words—which are nothing but "*air*" in his philosophy. But this is no mere cowardice of the timorous "pigeon-livered" kind. If running-away from a fight is a final proof of cowardice, then Douglas, who runs away from the Prince at Shrewsbury, is no less a coward. Those who stress Falstaff's "cowardice" forget that in this very Shrewsbury fight he has already led his regiment of ragamuffiins "where they are peppered; there's no three of my hundred and fifty left alive, and they are for the town's end to beg during life." Also, they do not take seriously, (as well

as comically) as by rights they should, Falstaff's assertion that if Percy, i. e. Hotspur, comes his way "I'll pierce him." They overstress Falstaff's refusal to see anything sensible or heroic in going out of his way to run the risks attendant upon meeting Percy:—

"If he do come in my way, so; if he do not, if I come in his willingly, let him make a carbonado of me. I like not such grinning honour as Sir Walter, (who lies dead before him) hath; give me life, which if I can save, so; if not, honour comes unlooked for, and there's an end." *Henry IV,* Act 5, Scene 3.

Most of all do they forget that for Falstaff, with his girth, "eight yards of uneven ground is threescore and ten miles afoot with me, and the stony hearted villains know it well."

Falstaff's grossness of body, the product of a love of life with no moral scruple or sense of responsibility to keep it within bounds, or to harness it to a worthy cause, is, in fact, a tragedy of degeneration against which Falstaff, in melancholy moments, struggles fitfully, but in vain. His cowardice is not the mere cowardice of the flesh, of which in fact, when he is put to it, he is not really guilty. His is the cowardice of the innermost spirit—the canker consumption of a soul which has lost its bearings in a state of social transition, and has in consequence nothing but his own naked egoism to serve as his moral criterion and his object in life.

His is, in fact, the typical tragedy of a cynical degenerate egoism. He clings on to life: but has no use for his life when he has saved it at the cost of reputation, and everything else which would make it worth the saving. To cling on to life at any price is an even greater madness, a more irrational romanticism than to squander it at the demand of any and every conventional call of so-called "duty." And, thus, Falstaff's degenerate egoism comes to be prophetic of the new degeneracy of today.

If, now, the character of Falstaff and his circle has been made clear, whether taken in themselves or as a reflection, dramatically presented, of an objective social phenomenon, we can proceed to the consideration of Shakespeare's own political attitude—conscious or unconscious—to his time.

It was, as we have seen, fundamentally a time of transition, a period of unstable equilibrium between two great upheavals, the Reformation and the Puritan Revolution. The relative calm was, however, dramatically conditioned by a whole series of counter-tendencies. On the side of economics, trade and commerce were expanding enormously. The full consequences of the discovery of America, and of the new sea-route to the East via the Cape of Good Hope, were becoming apparent: England was rioting in its newly acquired hegemony of the seas. If did not yet "rule the waves," nor did it yet imagine that any such thing was possible to any State. But the power of Spain was broken, and the power of Portugal had sunk to nothing. Against the Atlantic States remaining, England, France, and Holland, to whom as was already clear, the future belonged, England, to its surprise, found itself well able to hold its own. In internal economics, and its social consequences, a complete shifting of the centre of gravity was in process. In London, particularly, the banker-moneylender was being clearly differentiated from the other. Lines of division were appearing between merchants' capital, money-lenders' capital, and a new category of capital altogether—that of *industrial* capital. This latter was, as yet, barely discernible as a distinct and separate formation; and its status in the social-economic

hierarchy was as yet low. The small-producing capitalist manufacturer was barely distinguished from, on the one side his own wage-working craftsmen, and on the other, from the merchant pure and simple whom he resembled when marketing his produce. Over the country as a whole the breat majority of the population were still "peasants"—yeomen in the old English terminology, "middle peasantry" in the more recent Leninist terminology. But the condition of this peasantry was undergoing a continual change owing to (a) the world revolution in prices consequent upon the influx of gold and silver from the Spanish conquests in America, and from the growing overseas trade with the Far East; (b) the conversion of the wealthier yeomanry into capitalist farmers ("kulaks") and the squirearchy and aristocracy into a rent-eating, money-lending, monopoly-hunting "kulak"-aristocracy; (c) the growth of manufacturing and its reactions, favourable and unfavourable, upon the domestic industries carried on concurrently with farming.

Politically the State was growing more and more consolidated and autocratic. As the class of burghers (upon whose support the Tudor monarchy had been founded) became more and more differentiated into a number of strata with divergent interests, so the more their narrowing upper-strata (the wealthy merchants, and merchant bankers) came to be the chief support of the Crown, and its Court apparatus—which apparatus in turn consisted increasingly of bourgeoisfied, concession-hunting, money-lending members of or offshoots from the "kulak" aristocracy.

There was, let it be noted, not yet a clearly defined, actually-functioning, proletariat. But there was a great mass of proletarians. That is the first fact to grasp: that Shakespeare could not have taken the standpoint of the *revolutionary* proletariat without an impossible exercise of prophetic vision. Neither could he take the standpoint of the *revolutionary* bourgeoisie—the industrial-commercial bourgeoisie and the upper and middle peasantry in alliance—for this, too, was a social phenomenon which had not then risen above the horizon.

The utmost that it was possible for any man to do, in Shakespeare's day, was to realise that things could not stay forever as they were. The optimists could pin their faith to the belief that the barriers to progress had been broken down and that, with reasonable precautions, progress could be continued indefinitely to infinity.

That, in substance, is the attitude indicated with due lawyer-like caution, in the works of Francis Bacon appointed Lord Chancellor two years after Shakespeare's death.

Or one could take the view that enough had been done in the way of breaking down barriers, and that the time had come to consolidate the gains which had been won by perfecting the machinery of Church and State and allocating to each class its due and proper place in the total scheme. This, the conservative view, was the attitude of the Stuart kings and their factotums: Carr, Buckingham, Strafford and Laud. It was the attitude and policy which precipitated, ultimately, the Puritan revolution; but it was already present as a tendency in Shakespeare's day.

Finally, as against the optimist and the conservative view of the situation, there was yet another outlook—one which saw that though barriers had been broken down, many remained, and many new ones not previously suspected had revealed themselves—or were coming into being. Progress was not in

the least inevitable; and, what is more, mere alteration was not necessarily progress. Anyway, progress had to be bought with a price; and it was a question whether it was, all things considered, worth its price. On the other hand, the past was gone and could not be recalled. The conservative endeavour to "stand pat," to say to Progress "thus far and no farther shalt thou go!" was as fatuous as the flattery of King Canute's courtiers that the monarch by his fiat could control the tides. In short, official optimism and official pessimism were alike futile. The only foundation for a faith in the future lay in a healthy, well-poised, sceptical, melioristic *humanism*. After all, at bed-rock bottom, the problem of problems was the problem of Man himself. Solve that—and all these "fribble-frabbles," these ready-made schemes of "reformation" in Church and State would be seen for the futilities they were.

It is this sceptical-humanist-meliorist attitude, the most profoundly far-sighted and philosophically penetrating attitude then possible which is the attitude of William Shakespeare. Before the coming of Marx and Marxism —and apart from Leninist-Marxism—it was, as it remains, the highest standpoint attainable by the artist-philosopher.

The proof that this was Shakespeare's standpoint is "writ large" over the whole of his work. A profound critical difficulty exists it is true in the problem how much of the work attributed to him is really Shakespeare's. Most of the plays which bear his name were rewritings, more or less complete, of older work. Even such a throughly Shakespearean masterpiece as *King Lear* bears distinct traces of an older play whose general form has conditioned that of Shakespeare's. In some of the histories (the first part of *Henry VI,* and the ground-strata of *Henry VIII* are examples) Shakespeare's contribution is small. If he wrote ten lines of *Titus Andronicus,* that was as much as he did,—and when he wrote them he was very raw, and possibly, very drunk. But taking the general flavour of the plays over all, a throughly consistent world-anschauung results; that, as we have said, of sceptical-humanist-meliorism. *Hamlet,* by common consent, contains a high measure of Shakespeare's most frankly conscious self-revelation. Whether this be so or not, we seem to touch the bedrock Shakespeare in such a passage as this, which in its deliberate self-contradiction, both sorts with Hamlet's assumed madness and indicates obliquely Shakespeare's own dialectic outlook:—

"Indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the Earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'er-hanging firmament, this majestical roof, fretted with golden fire why it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a Man! How noble in Reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me: no, nor woman neither—!" *Hamlet,* Act II, Scene II.

There is here revealed an outlook which at once links Shakespeare with his period (the period of Giordano Bruno, be it remembered) and distinguishes him as exceptional within it. Shakespeare was not openly accused of Atheism and Blasphemy as were his contemporaries and associates, Marlowe and Ben Jonson (and with these several of their patrons including Sir Walter Raleigh); but the affinity of his outlook to that of Rabelaisian *humanism* on the one side and that of 18th century Voltairean rationalism—(as for example in *Candide*)—on the other is too obvious to need labouring. To speak, therefore, of Shakespeare "regretfully watching the downfall of the feudal world,"

and showing "his rejection of the coming bourgeois world," when, in point of fact, his whole outlook is one which accepts the bourgeois world as inevitable even if only as a transitory phonomenon beyond which his "we know not what," is radically and seriously in error.

Indeed, why on earth *should* Shakespeare have seen anything to regret in the "downfall' of a feudal world he had never known?

That his Chronicle-Histories deal, nominally, with feudal times is true. But if they be examined as to their dramatic content it will be seen that never for a moment are they concerned with feudal issues. All of them turn upon themes then current upon the new anti-feudal sentiment of nationality (which Shakespeare voices); upon the perils on the one side of an unbridled tyranny, and on the other of an uncontrolled anarchy; above all, upon the danger to the State and all peace and harmony of a disturbed or usurped succession to the throne. This last, (with an application to the "popular" endorsement as well as the "legal" right of the Tudor dynasty and its *legitimate* successors) is the theme of the whole chronicle-history sequence which begins with *Richard II,* and with *Henry VIII*—nine plays in all. It is also directly and indirectly the theme too of *Hamlet, Macbeth, Julius Caesar,* and *King Lear* among the tragedies and *As You Like It* and the *Tempest* among the comedies. That is to say, it forms an ingredient, more or less primary, in fifteen out of the thirty odd plays of Shakespeare. And their net political moral may be summed up in the conclusion that of all political calamities, submission to the clash of aristocratic and clerical ambitions, unrestrained by a wisely directed, and humane but unflinching, central rule, is the calamity most to be feared and most to be guarded against.

No words could better sum up the general opinion of the more thoughtful, and more progressive bourgeois in Shakespeare's own day—faced first with the prospect of the imminent death of the childless Elizabeth, and secondly with succession to the throne of the unpopular and alien but legitimate heir James, King of Scots.

One thing no man wanted—outside the few cliques of court adventurers—and that was something all men feared: a reopening of the civil wars of the late feudal epoch by one or other of the gangs of the new "kulak" aristocracy. And this was all the more to be dreaded because already there were indications that the religious quarrels of the Reformation epoch might quite easily break out again in a new and more virulent form.

It is from this fact that Shakespeare's epoch was a period of comparitive calm in between two epochs of violent civil strife that Shakespeare derives his most modern flavour. We noted above that Shakespeare strikes strongly the note of *nationality* as against the feudalistic note of hierarchial sub-ordination. He is no less bourgeois (and that in a revolutionary sense) in that, in each of his undoubted plays, he strikes, more clearly than any man before him, the note of *individuality*. If the "persons in the drama" of his plays run largely, to Kings and Queens, lords and ladies, with "mechanical" "vulgar" common people, as often as not, providing a comic background, this concession to convention and to the conditions of patronage under which the drama existed, should not disguise from us the fact that the common people in Shakespeare, his "clowns" particularly, are more richly individual, more specifically "humoursome," and generally more human, than the lords and ladies who provide the decorative, as distinct from the comic, background to the plays. (In Hamlet, for instance, the gravedigger has far more

character than Horatio, or Rosencrantz and Guilderstern; while the most contemptible of the personages in the play is the courtly fop Osric.)

Shakespeare, in short, takes, in general, the attitude of the more enlightened of the *comfortable* bourgeois of his day. This is qualified dramatically by the fact that, in his supreme artistry he makes each character speak in terms of his class, as well as in terms of his individuality;—which makes it possible to quote from "Shakespeare" sentiments expressive of every social extreme. Only on the whole and from a critical-analytic standpoint is it possible to reach, tentatively, Shakespeare's own sentiments. But even if only tentatively, and, on the whole, the net effect of Shakespeare upon his readers and auditors seems clearly to *place* him as we had indicated—somewhat to the Left of the centre of advanced bourgeois opinion.

This, considering his date, was no small feat; and one evidencing an immense acuteness of artistic penetration. How much so can best be been by a comparative test.

The net upshot of the panorama presented by Shakespeare's plays—historic, comedies, and tragedies—all together, is very far indeed from exalting either monarchism, royalism, absolutism, or aristocracy, on the one side, or any sort of doctrinaire Utopianism on the other. It could fairly be summed up in the motto into which Voltaire, a century and a half later, condensed his critical-revolutionary bourgeois creed:—"One must cultivate one's garden!" Or, in its Johnsonian-English form:—

> How small of all that human hearts endure
> The part which laws or kings can cause or cure!

But although this was significantly, anticipated by Shakespeare, a century and half earlier, it is in Shakespeare already in process of being transcended by a deeper and a more poignantly human view. Compare, for instance, the celebrated soliloquy in which Hamlet sums up the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," the "heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to:"

> "For who would bear the whips and scors of time,
> The oppressors' wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes...
> ....Who would fardels bear,
> To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
> But that the dread of something...
> ...puzzles the will,
> And makes us rather bear those ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of?

Here the Voltairean Johnsonian scepticism as to the worth of Kings and laws as cures for human ills issues in something quite different from the philosophical resignation of the one and the pessimistic submission of the other. Shakespeare is only provisionally resigned,—only for the time being, and, with barely controlled impatience, submissive. His scepticism is profounder than Voltaire's and his pessimism is more profoundly human, and more rationally qualified than that of Johnson. In his more angry mood he can be furious indeed; as with Macbeth:—

> "Tomorrow, and to-morrow, and tomorrow
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;

> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing."

But in his more genial mood he gives us (as in the mouth of Prospero in the *Tempest*) what is substantially the same conception viewed from another angle:—

> "Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air:
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a wrack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on: and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep."

To sum up: Shakespeare in general "accepts" (to use Netchkina's phrase) the bourgeois order. At the same time however, he "rejects" it; not in favour of a return to feudalism (which he sees as clearly as any man could to be both impossible and undesirable) but as a final and ultimate solution of the problem of humanity. He does not, it is true, attempt any solution of this problem. But that he should have formulated the problem as a *human* problem at all was merit enough in any man, and worthy the front-rank genius that he was.

Netchkina seems to have been misled in two distinct ways. She grossly underestimates the closeness of Shakespeare's personal association with the bourgeoisie, and she follows uncritically the mistaken lead of those who, following the example of Tolstoy, suppose that Shakespeare is invariably contemptuous of the proletariat.

Shakespeare was by birth, upbringing, and by the social position to which he attained, a bourgeois. But he was, also, detached from the bourgeoisie to the extent that as an artist-intellectual he stood culturally above them, and also to the extent that, as "one of those harloty players," he was debased socially below them

As an actor he was alternately either the "servant" of whichever court nominee it was who had the "patent license" to form a company of players and present stage-plays; or when such "service" ended (by the cancellation of the license or otherwise) he was by law "a rogue and a vagabond"—potentially one in the "tail" of any Falstaff who might be available.

Born the son of a country-town burgher (a butcher of good standing but of small commercial aptitude, Shakespeare received the education customary in his day to the sons of men of fair average substance and standing. The dissolution of the monasteries had caused the foundation of a host of schools—to replace the monastic ones—and equipped them with schoolmasters rather over much given to Latinity and pedantry. Shakespeare, as a youth, too—partly, it would seem, as a consequence of an exuberant overestimate of his father's standing and financial resources—contracts an improvident marriage and falls foul of the local "kulak"-aristocrat.

He flies to London—then more than ever before or since the assembling place of the most advanced and revolutionary spirits of his day, side-by-side with the most reactionary, the most corrupt, and the most degenerate.

That his situation on arrival in London corresponded, broadly, to that of any penniless intellectual to this day:—that he was, if tradition is to be trusted, glad to earn sixpences by holding horses outside the Red Bull (a combination of inn and playhouse) in Clerkenwell—all this must be remembered as the background to Shakespeare's development. That he succeeded as an actor, and as an actor manager: that he was in the end able as a fairly well-to-do and successful bourgeois, to retire to his home town and there end his days, is of importance only so far as it is qualified by the fact that success came only after vicissitudes of adventuring in which his personal experiences and social contacts made him acquainted with every class in the country from the pre-proletariat at the bottom to the court-aristocracy (who patronised the play-actors) at the top.

It is this fact that Shakespeare himself had been one of the "down and outs" that gives such vivid feeling to his depiction of Falstaff and his crew. Bourgeois they most certainly were not: "Base is the slave that pays!" says Ancient Pistol, and in so saying expressed the innermost soul of "Bohemianism" from Francois Villon, jesting before the gallows, down to this day. The very absurdity of the romance they try to throw over the fact that theft is what they live by ("*Convey,* the wise it call!" to quote Pistol again) has its pathetic as well as its contemptible side. And Shakespeare's own personal experience and feeling, as well as his artistic genius, comes out in the fact that in his hands this fact is never lost sight of. At their most debased Falstaff and his crew remain even ludicrously (though on significant occasions) poignantly *human beings.*

Of all conceivable characters, for instance, Corporal Bardolph is the least heroic. Even the whipper-snapper of a Page finds it easy to score off Bardolph and his sack-inflamed countenance. Falstaff gives us his estimate early in our acquaintance:

"I bought him (i. e. hired him to service) in Paul's; and he'll buy me a horse in Smithfield! An' I could but get me a wife in the stews, I were manned, horsed and wived!"

Yet this same Bardolph who has been Falstaff's "man" for thirty years and whose fiery cheeks and nose have saved Falstaff hundreds of crowns in links to light his way in the dark street,—which is a left-handed economy—since the sack it has taken to make his face and nose glow like that would have enabled Falstaff to "buy candles as good cheap in any shop in Europe"—it is this inglorious Bardolph who gives us one of the most pathetic touches of the whole Falstaff cycle. When Falstaff is dead it is Bardolph who exclaims: "Would I were with him, either in heaven or hell!"

Shakespeare's experience—how knowledge of the "down-and-out" is shown in the composition of the regiment which Falstaff raised, and with which he refused, for very shame, to march through Coventry;—the regiment he describes grimly as "food for powder," and which is in fact wiped out, all but three who are maimed for life, at Shrewsbury fight. Falstaff, it must be remembered, has used his power of conscription cunningly. He has conscripted every man who was possessed of the means to buy himself off and has pocketed the proceeds. Then he has, as was his right, called upon the magistrates to make up his quota out of the parish "vagabonds":—The resulting collection consists of

"ancients (i.e.) ensigns, that is, in modern terms, sub-lieutenants) corporals, lieutenants, gentlemen of companies, slaves as ragged as Lazarus ..... and, such as were never soldiers,—discarded, unjust, serving-men; younger-sons to younger brothers; revolted tapsters and oslers, trade-fallen; the cankers of a calm world and a long peace".

That this crew of lumpen-proletarians is from one angle contemptible is obvious. But it is no less obvious—and Shakespeare takes care to make it so—that it has its grimly pathetic side. And when we remembered that it was if not from these, at any rate from such as these that the actual industrial proletariat—foredoomed to become the gravediggers of the bourgeoisie—was recquited we get an entirely new angle from which to regard Shakespeare's attitude towards the proletariat, and one much more significant than his jests at Jack Cade's rebellion, (which was not really protetarian) and from his alleged (but doubtful) typification of the labouring class in the character of Caliban. These things even if we concede (what is doubtful) that the Jack Cade scenes in *Henry VI* are genuinely Shakespeare, amount to no more than that Shakespeare had a contempt for demagogy. He might well do so and still believe quite genuinely that the working mass and majority of the population (only to a very small extent proletarianised in his day) were the true salt of the earth.

It is on this side—his keenly satirical but none the less kindly appreciation of the sterling humanity of the "vulgar" whom he always placed in sharply accentuated contrast to the shallowness and faithlessness of many of those of "high degree"—that we get our safest clue to the true political attitude of Shakespeare. In what is, on the surface, the nearest Shakespeare ever got to a *revolutionary* play, viz *Julius Caesar,* Brutus is a melancholy romanticist and Cassius a spiteful one. It is with the aid (somewhat demagogically excited) of the "mob" that Marc Anthony achieves their defeat. And if in *Coriolanus* Shakespeare deals with the same theme in reverse much the same moral emerges—that with all their limitations the "vulgar" not only shoud be, but *must* be taken into serious and respectful consideration.

To expect from Shakespeare (in between the years 1590—1612) the same appreciation of the revolutionary potentialities of the proletariat as was possible to the genius of Marx and Engels *in and after* 1844, would be to expect an anarchronistic miracle. But it is both pertinent and proper to perceive in Shakespeare's never failing persistence in emphasizing in all his clowns—even the most degenerate, the Falstaff group—their universal humanity despite all their absurdity, an artistic intuition of the fact that however much these particular specimens might be doomed to fade away into futility and extinction, the pit from which they were dug was the one from which the future would extract its richest and rarest ore

P. Nizan

Let My Joy Remain: by Jean Giono

Published by Grasset, Paris

When in the "Holy Family," Marx speaks of Fleur de Marie, he writes of this girl "deprived of joy."

"In the fullness of her nature, when the chains of bourgeois life fall and she can give free course to her nature, Fleur de Marie overflows with the joy of life and reveals to us a richness of emotion, a human joy before the beauty of nature which show that the bourgeois condition had simply touched the surface of her, was nothing but a simple misfortune."

These words will aid us to understand Giono's work. There exists a possible relation between man and nature, surrounding objects and his own self. This relation lies beyond work, beyond the useful, beyond shackles; it is the reconciliation of man with life. It is the unique thing for which it is necessary to seek. That is what Giono has not ceased to say from the beginning of his career; he says it now once again with a greater amplitude, with a more exact knowledge and with a social solicitude which command our friendship.

The abilities of Giono are considerable. He is the only French novelist whose resources and creative methods are derived not from historical forms of the novel but from poetry. Lyric poetry, rarely epic, more generally cosmic. This cosmic poetry is very evident in *Let My Joy Remain.* where all the action takes place under the sign of the stars, of the constellation of Orion. It is clear that such poetry in the novel brings about a certain alteration in the form of reality; this was more to be felt in *The Song of the World,* but it is still strong; this is not to be regretted. Among all the alterations of the forms of reality which every creative worker brings about in the material which he adopts, it is mythological alteration which Giono can be seen more and more to be adopting. His personages and his animals, his trees, his valleys, are greater than their size; in his book, there suddenly arrives the hero Bobi, disformed by the mist, enlarged to the stature of a giant of the night and the sky, with immense arms. This nocturnal mist envelops every object. There is no need to condemn mythological transpositions in the field of narrative and poetry, which have the aim of arousing emotion. The danger of myths begins in intellectual research.

There are peasants living on one of these plateaus which Giono loves, because from them you can look down upon the world from the heights; he has entitled one of his books *Manosque of the Plateau.* These men are sober, they work isolated in their farms, there reigns over their lives an inquietude, a sadness of which they do not know the names, and which are born of labor and solitude. A stranger arrives, an acrobat called Bobi, one of those men who is full of gadget-ideas and secrets. He undertakes to reveal joy to these solitary people, and joy turns out to be the disinterested love of the world, the taste for useless works, a kind of large scale luxury of the heart. Here art the two "myths" of joy: Bobi persuades the peasants to carry out works which do not yield profit: to rear stags, plant fields of flowers for pleasure's sake. It this a myth? At Khojent, in Soviet Tajikistan I have seen collective farmers thus planting a garden, an orchard "for their pleasure." Bobi also teaches these peasants friendship, and in one of the best passages of the book (given in the selection in this issue) these men and women, in the course of a great holiday feast, discover also the joy of the community of men. This stranger also persuades them even to join their lands and their labor in common. And there comes a day when these farmers, these property-holders, learn the word which is a revolutionary word, they speak of their "commune." Here then is a peasant writer, the greatest of the peasant writers of today, who has arrived at the point where he can see no other way for his book than the criticism of private property and of solitude (which is the emotional misfortune born of property) and the song of the community, I was going to say, of the collectivization of the land, of communism. But it is still no more than a stage: Giono finishes his book with a catastrophe. Bobi doubts himself, Bobi goes away, and on the road in a storm he is killed by lightning. Joy departs, it does not remain. Not yet.

This attempt at "political" communism fails. It fails like all Utopias. It is here that Giono's position is evident: this commune of the plateau is turned much more towards primitive communism than towards modern communism. It has for its base the restriction of cultivation of the soil. It does not like machines. It does not like exchange with the rest of the world, and one day these men construct a weaving shop. A

primitive domestic industry is created alongside the fields held in common. This construction of the shop of cedarwood, with its sculptures, would have rejoiced John Ruskin, William Morris. Here is esthetic communism; it does not go much further than the poets. And this time Giono knows it. This solution may be valuable for some lives lost on the plateaus of the lower Alps, but it has no value for the world; Giono describes labor in the big capitalist farms of the valley, in these grain factories full of machines, foremen and masters. He knows today that it is necessary also to find joy for all the men who live on the earth: for the farmers and peasants of the high plateaus, and also for the agricultural laborers of the plains. He knows that it will be necessary to solve the whole question together, and that it is not enough to create little islands worthy of man in the heights near the sky.

The whole sense of the book is expressed in a dialogue between Bobi and a farmer, who explains to him that work which is needed to change the world and create joy. For the first time in Giono's work there is thus heard the voice of the revolution. This dialogue forms the second part of the selections given in this issue.

Poetic Utopias and the efforts of solitary people which Giono loved are by him dismissed. He ceases to see in the world simply a few lyrical peasants lost on the plateaus, and thinks of the millions of men who are hungry among the fields of wheat. All these men must be saved. And it is necessary to accept factories and love machines. It is necessary to love "the power of men." And all this bears a name in a country which from henceforth is hailed by Giono; it is called the collectivization of the countryside. And joy shall remain.

Translated from the French by H. O. Whyte

Louis Aragon

André Gide and Our Times

Published by Gallimard, Paris

This little book which was published at the beginning of the summer of 1935 and which is a shorthand report of the session on January 23, 1935 of the Union for Truth, in which there took part Ramon Fernandez, André Gide, René Gillouin, Jean Guéhenno, Daniel Halévy, Gabriel Marcel, Jacques Maritain, Henri Massis, Thierry-Maulnier, François Mauriac and Georges Guy-Grand, will one day be a subject for astonishment. This composite assemblage, in which side by side there were men in the advance guard of culture, like Gide and Guehenno, declared fascists like Thierry-Maulnier, and the most obscure figures that the Catholic religion is able today to oppose to men like Gide, this assemblage proposed quite simply to judge André Gide, his evolution, his thought. A strange undertaking; it is not possible to know Gide without understanding how and why he yielded so simply to it.

In the history of contemporary thought André Gide is for the bourgeoisie a running sore, a breaking point. The immense scope of his work, the reverberation caused by the least of his pages, the immediate mobilization provoked by the announcement of his appearance here or there, all makes it necessary, and every day makes it a little more necessary, to finish up with a man whom the pure and simple insults of a Henri Béraud or the jesuitries of this same Massis, who took part in the January conference, have been unable to destroy or discredit.

(I hasten to say that neither this nor what follows implies a belief on my part that the organizers of the debate had thoughts of this kind; no, they are people who believe in the unconditional search for Truth in itself, even with the aid of the champions of Falsehood.)

It is not so easy to get rid of the Gide case, and as it is impossible to deny it, as for instance they deny a demonstration of 500,000 people, perhaps a better strategy would be to lead André Gide himself, a man whose very enemies know his honesty and his scrupulousness, to doubt the tenability of the foundation which has led him to such a disastrous evolution.

Hence the tone, pleasant in many ways, which several of André Gide's interlocutors take in speaking to a man whom they detest, and against whom tomorrow they will doubtless use more willingly the axe than the litotes. I do not propose here to bother to recount any of this high-faluting language, to follow its different phases, it will suffice for me to indicate to the eventual reader of the book the tragic background upon which there rises the profile of the bloody reality, the dead of Berlin and Belleville, and the immense hope which burns from the Bolshevik sun. Am I going to amuse myself by giving an echo to the conception of Monsieur Massis, for whom the communism of André Gide is nothing but a moral camouflage (but in polite terms...)? No more than I will follow him in his distinctions between the I of Barres and the I of Gide. Over all this figure which is living, touching, and upon which it is impossible to look without emotion: André Gide, the writer and the man, this very Gide whom we saw at Villejuif, him, the master of a whole sphere of contemporary thought, unable from emotion to find more than three words in the street to speak to the crowd of workers, the strong gay crowd in face of which gentlemen like Thierry-Maulnier dream of rifles.

Gide says: "You, you think that man has given all that he could give. I do not think so. I do not believe that man has nothing more to say... It has constantly seemed to me that in man there are forces which are considered evil and which nonetheless can in their turn become elements of power and progress... I readily and almost systematically make myself the advocate of all those things which people usually try to smother into silence (oppressed races of peoples, instincts of man), of all that which has not yet been able, or known how, to speak, of all that which no one yet has wished, or known how, to hear..."

And Jacques Maritain is compelled to declare that Gide's adherence to communism has seemed to him to be "a moving thing, and worthy of respect." Let us be careful to note that this Catholic does not mean by this that communism is worthy of respect, and that this orator's precaution is but apparently a paradox on the lips of our good Maritain. He is now going to set out on a search for the gospel in the vaults in order to show to Gide that he has mistaken his road, and that in reality what he loves in Lenin is the Christ. Even when he finds in Massis, who a minute before was explaining Gide's communism as camouflage, an ally of an innocence which surprises when he interrupts him to compare

Gide with St. Augustin. Perhaps, however, our astute Massis has ideas about St. Augustin and his Catholicism which he does not express and which make of this authority of the church a pure and simple camouflager.

What is really rather amusing is that Maritain affirms that what is good in communism has been taken from Christianity. The passage that pleases me is that in which Maritain states; "Communism has failed in a matter in which, in the social and temporal order itself, Christianity alone could succeed." André Gide underlines the conditional: "could"? Maritain at once corrects himself: "can." And begins to discourse upon the fine Christian affair which medieval society was (the past tense), and to attempt to explain his use of the future tense: "We are awaiting a completely new Christianity, a refraction, an effective realization of the evangelical values in the social and temporal order. For a future which is not near?... We have time before us. Two thousand years is not much for a healthy philosophy of human history." Let us give him his due, M. Maritain is not afraid: he has eternity in front of him. M. François Mauriac is of the same opinion; at this point he carries fooling to the extreme: "In truth," he cries, "we are the first Christians." That is promising. And it does not in the least prevent M. Maritain seventeen years after the October Revolution from speaking skeptically of what "communism has shown itself capable of bringing about."

André Gide makes a perfect reply: "Our impatience is understandable enough after two thousand years. Clearly this is very little, compared with eternity, but for us it is a lot. I consider that the belief in another life, that the hope of finding in a future life a sort of recompense, of compensation for the evils of this life greatly weakens the power of retribution of the oppressed class, and therefore plays the game of the oppressing class which in this way finds much to its advantage to declare and proclaim itself Christian..."

There are certainly in this little book some Socratic dialogues, but Plato would never have dared to put in the mouths of his hero's interlocutors. Example:

M. J. Maritain—The commodity of oppressing classes has nothing in common with the metaphysical essences.

A statement worthy of Piére Ubu and Trissotin. And which cannot hide the damage inflicted by André Gide on all the efforts to reduce his thought to a masked Christianity when he repeats that phrase of his "Journal" which in its time we hailed: "Atheism alone can pacify the world."

Let us pass by the fooling (Daniel Halevy: "For Mohammedans Jesus is a prophet, that's clear!"). Where these Christians show their nature is when they find war necessary to demonstrate the profundity of the religious emotion (Henry Massis) or when M. René Gillouin frankly declares: "War is the natural course of humanity, and apart even from the military conflicts which proceed directly from greed or simply from the bellicose instinct[1] there is no universalist idea, however generous, which does not stand before us in history all dripping with blood. If you are not a Christian, you may deplore the fact... If you are a Christian, you will of course associate yourself with every serious effort against war and for peace, but you will find yourself placed on a plane from the height of which war loses its importance."

Let us pass by ignorance also; how these gentlemen hope to create for André Gide a tragic conflict in offering him a choice between Lenin and Montaigne. But is it ignorance on the part of Thierry-Maulnier when he does wish to admit that Gide is a humanist, and he speaks of the anti-civilization tendencies of Gide and of communism? Or the language of René Gillouin, "speaking of the naive faith in the messianic calling of the proletariat considered as the chosen class, infallible and impeccable because exempt from the original sin[2] of exploitation?"

But we must quote the admirable, the high words of André Gide, (pages 60 to 64, 64 to 65): "What made me come to communism, and come with all my heart was that the situation which had been given to me in the world, this situation of the fortunate, seemed to me intolerable. In *The Counterfeiters* I made allusion to a direct conversation which I had with a man wrecked with the Bourgogne. This man told me that he found himself in a boat to which there had been admitted a certain number of people who, in it, could consider themselves saved. If more had been admitted, the boat would have foundered; thus at both sides of the boat individuals armed with knives and axes cut the wrists of those who tried to get into the boat. Now the feeling of being in the boat, of being in safety when others around us are perishing, this feeling, you understand, can become intolerable. You are going to offer to me a number of arguments. I am not strong enough to answer them, that is clear. I hold myself absolutely to this: I cannot allow a boat in which only some find safety. And if I were even able to think that these few were at least the best! What angers me most is that there are people who say to me: 'What are you complain-

[1] And that's why your brain-child is dumb, Monsieur Gillouin. (L. A.)

[2] You foolishly lend your qualities to others, Monsieur Gillouin. (L. A.)

ing about? You must admit that it would be very comfortable in the boat.' But indeed that is just the same idea as the people have who are not in the boat...."

And all this passage on the USSR: "It seems to me that today the social question must come first, and that it must first be decided in order to permit man to give all that he is worthy of giving. The great mistake is to come to the USSR and say 'It is monstrous. You take heed of none but material questions!' No, material questions are not exactly the most important, but they are the *first*, the most important *in time;* that is to say, they are determining. Until they are decided, we will be able to do nothing decent, or at least those alone will be able to do anything decent who are the few privileged ones, and among whom precisely I am disgusted to be."

It is a pity to cite here only a few sentences, but I would like to draw the attention of the reader who will peruse this book to two points which I consider essential.

1) First of all, there is to be found in the appendix to the conversation, among other things, a letter which in some points is pertinent, but if we remember that it is addressed to Gide, is after all impertinent, despite its polite tone, and which emanates from a "communist" who finds that "what is professed today in Russia is... the most narrow conception of communism which has hiterto been known." from a Marxist who would like to guide Gide in his reading and in order to open his horizons proposes that he should read ("It is perhaps dangerous advice") Hentri De-Man's *"The Socialist Idea."*

This correspondent greatly reproaches Gide for not having in the course of the discussion made a formal repudiation of the conception by his interlocutors of communism as a religion. That these gentlemen are in the wrong is evident. But where this correspondent fails to understand Gide is where the letter accepts not a fact, but a *vocabulary*. Gide, and he often does it in his works, speaks with Maritain and the like in a language which is their own. He puts himself on their ground. It is his right to do so, he does not claim to be a Marxist. And what is valuable to us is that at the same time he affirms the foundations of Marxism. That explains to us *why* Gide consented to this debate, it is only outwardly that he speaks here to Massis, Gillouin, etc. Over their heads he addresses himself to Catholics who are not specialists interested in the casuistics of these doctors of darkness, to the mass of the manual and intellectual laborers who are Catholics and whose place is in the People's Front. And it is for them that he speaks this language for which our "non-Stalinist communist" reproaches him with that remarkable political sense which is characteristic of his like, and which truly qualifies him to give lessons to Gide and to frighten him with the reproaches that some day may be made to him by a Red professor (sic).

But the effort of this correspondent has a significance which cannot be escaped: it is an invitation to André Gide to link himself up with "non-official," "non-Stalinist" communism. With one blow he is told that he will thus gain a certain liberty, and the power to become a real revolutionary writer (this has a relationship with the following paragraph). This maneuver prettily completes the various Maritain and Massiste methods of reducing Gide's thoughts to camouflage, or to the gospel. And it cannot be by mere chance that this letter is preceded by the following appreciation by Gabriel Marcel of the Union for Truth: "It seems to me that the attitude of the heterodox communist should tempt you." In default of the gospel, heterodoxy would suffice for some people to put André Gide back "in his place." The allegory of the boat has its bearing on all this.

2). The proceedings of January 1935 must lead, it would seem, to another debate in which other participants would be necessary. And this would be on a point, of great importance for all writers and artists, which was raised by a phrase of André Gide's at the beginning of the conversation, in reply to M. Georges Guy-Grand: "The thing to which I hold the most is my art. That the alliance of art and the communist doctrine is possible I want to believe. But I must admit that the point of meeting and fusion I have not yet been able to find—because of habits long since acquired. That is why I have produced nothing more for four years." This affirmation seems to be all that Gide's interrogators were able to gain over him. Seems, I say, because it would only require a book by André Gide to make the utilization of this phrase impossible. Meanwhile the literary Landerneau is making hay with this admission while the sun shines.[1] You know, there is nothing more arid than Marxism, and the very act of speaking to a communist from time to time leads to sterility and there are even men who push *honesty* to the point, so to speak, of suicide. Is it worthwhile to recall that the works of Gide for many years and long before any *communist* preoccupation made us foresee a crisis of which *The Counterfeiters,* for example, is an indisputable example, this book in which the au-

[1] Landerneau is a small provincial French town, the name of which is often used by journalists and music hall comedians to indicate a place where everybody gossips on the least provocation. *(Trans.)*

thor already conceived the impossibility of the novel at the moment when he is writing one? It is not a chance parallel which brought it about that in this stage of his evolution the author of *The Counterfeiters* was writing a journal of the counterfeiters, just as in the recent period André Gide has been writing the journal of André Gide. That there is a crisis is denied by nobody. But it is the significance of this crisis which must be explained.

We are familiar with the thesis several times announced by André Malraux, which defies a bourgeois writer to write a masterpiece on the life of President Doumergue. What, let us add, is the masterpiece which could be inspired in our days by Catholicism, to go no further than that, for if we were to speak of capitalism, we would be accused of playing a safe game? or fascism, since there is fascism? The crisis is not one of communist but of the bourgeoisie. I do not feel myself able to state here the terms of a conversation which I had recently with André Gide on this subject. Nevertheless it results from that conversation that André Gide, although he has not yet formulated this transitory position in possibilities of writing which has resulted for him from his adhesion to communism, has measured exactly its transitory character. And the abuse which is being made of these words will doubtless lead him to state the position in precise terms which will permit us to see whether it was wise to rejoice so quickly and so hypocritically. I would not wish in any way to anticipate the definition of a thought of which the general sense is clear enough to enable one to say that its development will lead to the discomfiture of the Tartufes. Nevertheless, to my mind it is foolish to hasten to say because Gide does not publish a novel that he is *silent* at a moment of his life when he is speaking loudly and clearly.

The "Pages of a Journal," the debate at the Union for Truth and a curious farce published in No. 2 of the review *"Mesures"*, (The Thirteenth Tree) I see no reason to vilify to the level of substiutes; they are witnesses to the extraordinary vitality of a mind which has recently learned to know a whole world which people tried to hide from him and which has the honesty to take heed of this world and to wish to know it truly before expressing it. These pages place André Gide very high, alongside the encyclopedists of the eighteenth century, and particularly Diderot, whose *"Rameau's Nephew"* for instance, we would find it astonishing today to be considered as a mark of impotence due to the approach of the French Revolution.

Translated from the French by
H. O. Whyte

CHRONICLE

SPAIN

Spanish Revolutionary Writers and Radicals in Prison

During the last three months of rampant fascist terror in Spain, a number of Spanish revolutionary and radical writers have been imprisoned. It is characteristic that in some cases writers have been put on trial for insulting the leaders, *not of Spanish, but of world fascism.* Thus the writer Antonio Espina was imprisoned for insulting reference to Hitler; Isidoro Acevedo (general secretary of the Madrid A. E. A. R., member of the Communist Party of Spain) for a speech in front of one of the foreign embassies in protest against the Italian policy in Abyssinia; Diego Ruiz for an article against Mussolini and Italian expansion. Among the arrested was the well known novelist and playwright Cesar Falcon (also member of the Communist Party) on a suspicion of anti-government agitation. The imprisonment of these writers roused widespread protest in Spanish revolutionary and radical circles. All the writers mentioned belong to the Tensor (Bond) creative group, led by Ramon J. Sender.

The Tensor Creative Group and Its Work

Formed in the summer of 1925 in Madrid, the Tensor creative group is at present more active than ever. The group was founded and is led by Ramon J. Sender.

Among the writers there is a number of Latin Americans. In its present composition the Tensor is a very powerful group; includes the most talented and advanced young artists in Spain.

A sufficient conception of the aims and and problems of the group is contained in their declaration of July 1935, published in connection with the founding of the *Tensor* journal.

"We wish to give people interested in achieving a common ideology, particularly our young people, a printed sheet in which they may find, not a new path (that has already been marked out), but the landmarks pointing to it, so that they may walk forward with a step at once light and firm. We will not occupy ourselves with politics, at least in that form in which it is understood in certain electoral circles, but our very method of perceiving present reality—and in the present, according to our view, is contained the past in its essence and the future in its potentiality—will contain an interpretation of art, science, economics, moral factors, and all the aspects of individual and social life which, operating in actve union in one general direction, constitute a definite political phenomenon. In the sphere of art we will pay most attention to those of its aspects which exert on the masses the greatest educative force. We have in view the novel, the theatre, and the cinema. In the social and political sphere our attention is particularly attracted by factory and workshop, village and university."

This declaration was the basis of the *Tensor,* from the subheading of which we learn that it is "a journal of literary information and orientation." The journal is not distinguished by beauty of format, and in this respect is considerably lower than the *Octubre* of Rafael Alberti and Maria Theresa Leon. It has no graphic material, illustrations, caricatures, and so on. Up to January 1936 six issues had appeared.

Tensor was supposed to appear once a fortnight, but while the present extraordinary situation with the censorship of the journal continues, it will appear once a month. The price is one peseta per copy, with big reductions for subscriptions, a fact which shows that the publishers wish to distribute it as widely as possible, particularly among the poorer classes. The success of the journal, the first number of which was sold out in a week and had to be reprinted, shows that the large circles of Spanish readers have welcomed it and given it their moral support. This is also shown by the reluctant comments and even praise of the important Madrid papers.

The journal at present includes only articles, reviews, and summaries. Creative material is not printed. The Tensor group, however, has filled up this gap: in connection with the journal there is a publishing house of the same name, which proposes to publish from time to time works of all kinds—novels, plays, poems—which will supplement the critical panorama displayed on the pages of the journal. This publishing house began its work with a cheap edition of Ramon Sender's play, *The Secret.* It has published also other books by Sender, including *Moscow, A Letter from Moscow on Love,* novels by Cesar Arconada, books by Armando Bazan, works on Marxism and the Soviet Union, etc.

Another feature of the journal is its revolutionary internationalism which is rather amazing considering the exceedingly difficult circumstances, in which the journal is printed, the ruthless censorship in Spain, and the fact that Spanish revolutionary and radical writers are thrown into prison on the request of foreign consuls, who behave as if the country belonged to them.

Still another feature of the journal is its appeal to wide masses of readers. Take, for instance, the following statement under the heading "Discussion and Polemics" in the August issue:

"In this section *Tensor* will publish comments on literature and art, or articles on political themes, with but one condition—the demand for intellectual clarity which all of us put forward in the conditions of everyday life...Those of our readers who with their pens will assist the investigation of separate points and zones of rebellious youthful thought, or the general revolutionary process, in accordance with the direction chosen by us, and also those who condemn us or approach the opposite point of view, will see their opinions printed in our journal and will read our commentaries thereon."

The statement goes on to point that inasmuch as in present conditions free discussion of political questions is impossible, the section will be confined to criticism of arts and letters, and adds, "Not we alone will take part in this dialogue, but also hundreds and thousands of those readers whom we had in the country even before our first publication."

In the first numbers this section has already printed a number of interesting discussions, mainly, however, from professional literary circles.

Among the articles which have been printed in the first four issues, the outstanding ones are an essay by Paul Nizan on Andre Gide, an article by S. S. Dinamov on the literature of capitalism, one by Ramon Sender on "Spanish Culture Underground," and by Cesar Falcon on "The Creative Personality and Example of Barbusse."

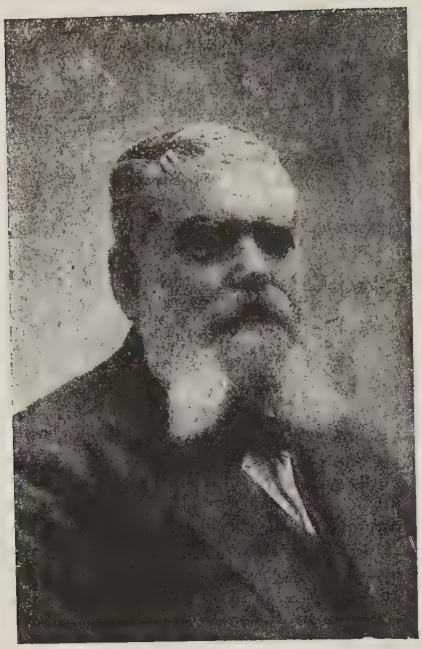
Sender's article on "Spanish Culture Underground" is the fulfillment of the journal's promise to give material arising from the Paris Congress in Defense of Culture. Despite a certain confusion of conceptions, unnecessary complexity of construction and floweriness of speech, the article is a big step forward in the mastery by Spanish revolutionary writers of "the cultural heritage." Sender's basic thought is that genuine Spanish culture is to be found among the people. This Spanish civilization, composed of Celtic, Roman, Arabian and Jewish elements, was crushed, suppressed and driven underground by the feudal and priestly upper class, which used for this purpose all the apparatus of the state and the church, the power of the throne and the inquisition. In this underground popular culture are to be found elements of spiritual rebellion which Sender traces from the Middle Ages to our own days.

Sender comes to the conclusion that Spain differs from France and England in that it has no genuine culture, but only the elements of culture, which live and develop among the people. These elements must be brought from underground without breaking their connection with the masses of the people. The Tensor group sets itself the aim of carrying out this task. Important from the strictly revolutionary literary point of view is the final section of the article, in which Sender sharply dissociates himself from the medieval mysticism of Unamuno and the "rotten liberalism" of Pio Baroja; he correctly estimates the revolutionary creative role of Valle Inclan and the poet Antonio Machado, whom he considers fore runners of revolutionary literature in Spain, and of whom he speaks with genuine admiration. Such a sharp dissociation from two of the so-called culture leaders of the generation of 1898 and the acknowledgement of the others as allies is a big step forward for Sender himself, and for the creative group he leads. This circumstance shows that the revolutionary events of Red October in Asturia, Leon, Catalonia and Madrid, has served as a splendid fighting school for Spanish radical writers, and has brought them to a clarification of their class position on the question of the cultural heritage and the question of allies and enemies.

In Cesar Falcon's article, "The Creative Personality and Example of Barbusse," we have a very warm and well-written defense of Soviet culture against the attacks of all sorts of calumniators, who hastened to utilize the great writer's death in Moscow for dirty, slanderous insinuations. Cesar Falcon concludes his article with the following words: "We can now establish with all clarity a full parallel in Barbusse between hatred for fascism and love for the Soviet Union, that is, the harmonic essence of every intellectual of which Barbusse was one of the most glorious examples. Here is the clear lesson which Barbusse left for the intelligentsia of the whole world. His example. Precisely by his example did Barbusse show the intellectuals of all countries that ideological honor and worth are not far to seek. That they should, like him, hate fascism and love the Soviet Union. The example of Barbusse teaches us also that this hatred and love must be brought into action, into struggle, into unceasing war-like passion against fascist barbarism, and for the defense of the glorious fatherland of the heroic ranks of the revolutionary armies which are struggling for liberty and human progress. In this army Barbusse was a standard bearer in the front ranks."

Rafael Alberti and Maria Theresa Leon in South America.

The recent six months tour of the Spanish writers Alberti and Maria Theresa Leon in the United States, Cuba and Mexico, where



Isidoro Acevedo

they carried out a widespread campaign of explanation of the revolutionary events in Spain and rallied the forces of public opinion to the defense of culture and the struggle against world fascism soon drew the attention of the reactionary cliques of Central America.

A warm invitation was sent to the Albertis by the intellectuals of Central America to include in their route Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Guatemala was excluded in view of the danger likely to arise in a country where people are shot as Communists if they are found in possession of even a few pages of the works of the well-known Bolshevik Leo Tolstoy.

Special Alberti committees in Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica were formed with the participation of intellectuals of all hues, including some very well-known people.

On the eve of their departure for San Salvador, Alberti was informed by the Salvador consulate that they would not be allowed to visit the country. Although according to the rules of Pan-America Airways they had the right of an eight-day stay in the capital of Salvador without a visa, Alberti was informed by the Pan-American Company three hours after the consular visit that on the insistence of the Salvador government he was deprived of the right to stop in the Salvador capital.

On arrival in San Salvador, the Albertis were met by a police force, which took them to prison. The writers who had come to welcome them had previously been dispersed by the police and were able only from afar to observe this attack upon two splendid representatives of art, who had been treated everywhere with respect, even in the "brutal" Cuba of Caffery-Mendieta. And matters did not finish there. Maria Theresa Leon was made the object of filthy mockeries by the jailers.

His excellency the police chief of San Salvador warned his colleagues in Nicaragua and Costa Rica that "dangerous Communists" traveling with "Moscow gold" were passing through his territory.

After a few days in Nicaragua, the Albertis boarded a plane to fly to Costa Rica. In the consulates of this republic in Mexico and Managua they had been told that Costa Rica was a democratic country, that it was open to all. Reality, however, proved the opposite. In Costa Rica the Albertis were greeted by writers, journalists, representatives of the Communist and Socialist parties, and also... a detachment of police, which compelled them to continue their journey to Panama, although their passports were visaed in Managua and they had been given permission to stop at San Jose.

The revolutionary public opinion of Mexico and of Central American countries in general protested against the rude coercion to which the Albertis were subjected (special meetings of protest were held, and so on). But the very hatred of the fascist and imperialist cliques of Central America for the Albertis shows how fruitful their work was there. This is also shown by the splendid poem "Panama," published by Rafael Alberti in the last number of *Commune* in a brilliant translation by Louis Aragon.

From Paris the Albertis intend to go back to Spain as soon as the political circumstances there allow.

F. V. Kelin

ENGLAND

The Work of the Writers and Artists in England

The year 1935 has been a decisive one both for the Revolutionary writers and artists in England. At the beginning of the year the writers were still poorly organised, their organ *Left Review* had no reliable financial basis; there was constant internal controvery on policy and ideology. Now there are many new members, well-known writers begin to approach and write frequently for the magazine, the *Left Review* is well-established on a firm financial basis, and the members of the organisation not merely work well with each other but have also managed to penetrate a considerable

At Work—Photograph *Tina Modotti*

number of the bourgeois magazines. The *Left Review* is a lively and readable paper and its brigade of cartoonists are already making the magazine both famous and popular.

Similarly the artists at the beginning of the year (though already better organized than the writers) had many mistakes of policy to undo; there had been too much "leftism" and not enough attention had been paid to the technical and artistic quality of their work. Here also there is great progress to report. The Artists International Association is to-day one of the best organisations in England. It is attracting into its ranks more and better-known artists all the time.

The year 1935 has demanded great efforts from the left artists and writers in England. It has been a year of grave social unrest and acute political tension. In South Wales, in Lancashire, in Sunderland, in Tyneside, the unemployed suffered continued hunger and misery. The Government has been vacillating and increasingly oppressive. Many books have been censored and no less than three different publishers have had to pay heavy fines for publishing novels of serious social comment.

The Government's two desperate trumpcards, *the Royal Jubilee* (a personal effort of invention on the part of Ramsay Macdonald (never before has twenty-five years counted as a celebration in English history) and the War-Scare Election demanded rapid and intelligent exposure. Both the writers and artists worked well in this work. *Left Review* published a series of trenchant articles and lampoons, and some of the best contemporary satiric drawings appeared in the pages of the same magazine, exactly at the right moment.

Several articles attacking the Government re-armament policy were published, and the election itself was closely followed by the writers. Thus no opportunity has been lost in bringing the writers and the artists into action on these concrete issues and they have acquitted themselves creditably.

The Paris Congress of Writers was attended by several members of the Writers Organisation, John Strachey, Ralph Fox, James Hanley, Amabel Williams-Ellis, Pearl Binder, besides the well-known bourgeoisie writers E. M. Forster, Aldoux Huxley, Herbert Read. Many useful contacts were made, among the European writers and the American writers. The speeches of André Gide, Michael Gold and Anna Seghers in particular, made a deep impression on the English

delegation. The obvious sincerity of E. M. Foster who made a moving speech at the beginning of the Congress, was very widely acclaimed and reported in the world press.

Before the election the Left Writers (in conjunction with the left artists, left architects, left theatre, and the League for the Defense of Civil Liberties) called a large meeting in protest against the Italian invasion of Abyssinia.

During 1935 several novels etc. have been published by members of the writers organisation . . . *Jew Boy* by Simon Blumenfeld, (a novel of proletarian Jewish life) . . . . . *Odd Jobs* by Pearl Binder. (réportage stories and drawings of working-class London) *Last Cage Down* by Harold Heslop, (a novel of the Durham coalfields and mining disaster), *Easter* by Montague Slater, a play about the Irish rebellion, won the *Left Review* play-writing competition . . . . . and *Rich Man, Poor Man* (a montage album of how the English people live compiled by James Fittor. Pearl Binder and Edith Tudor-Hart is nearing completion for publication shortly.

The Artists' International Association carried out a year of great activity. They were prominent in all demonstrations with a fine series of anti-jubilee posters, one of which was destroyed by the police in open street fights. They also did a series of posters for the elections on the concrete issues to fight for, as distinct from many of the ideologically misleading official Labour Party posters (an example is the Labour Party poster of a baby in a gas-mask, to show the horrors of War. This poster has quite the opposite effect to that desired; it induced many people to vote for the National Government and its policy of heavy re-armament).

The A. I. A. posters are still chiefly done in two-colour linoleum-cuts, sometimes silk-sereen, but a start has been made to use lithography as the medium for reproduction, as it is more subtle and capable of greater variety of treatment.

During the month of November the A. I. A. sponsered the publication of *Five On Art* a pamphlet written by five well-known English critics, giving their various opinions of what revolutionary art should be.

An important departure from the usual work of the A.I.A. was the painting of a mural for the library of Marx House, by Jack Hastings, the well-known portrait-painter and pupil of Diego Rivera. The subject of the mural is "The Historic Growth of the British Labour Movement." In design the mural is unusual and cleverly planned, the colouring being exceptionally vivid. The painting of the mural aroused great interest in the press and much controversy amongst the artists.

The culmination of the year's work was the *1935 Exhibition of Artists Against Fascism,* to which all the best artists from all over the world and of all schools were invited to send their work.

Hundreds of letters were received from every section of the public. The press gave a lot of publicity and a very large selection of work was sent in. Of this the best was chosen by a committee on which artists from the A. I. A. as well as well-known artists and critics were represented. Amongst the pictures finally shown were oils by the veteran painters Augustus John, Laura Knight, work from such diverse schools as Eric Gill and Henry Moore, abstract pictures by the leaders of that movement in England . . . . Paul Nash, Ben Nicholson, etc. Such famous foreign artists as Fernand Leger, Masereel, etc. also exhibitited. The members of the A. I. A. contributed work of a more specifically social and revolutionary nature. A very successful roomful of drawings from the *Left Review* were shown. The preface to the catalogue was written by Aldoux Huxley.

The work of the abstract painters was given point to by some excellent photographs of working-class life in England, hung in close proximity.

During the weeks of the exhibition more than 7,000 people visited it, a record for any English exhibition on the same scale. It proved to be the best by far of any current shows, both artistically and popularly, and was generally acknowleged as the best exhibition of the year.

The A. I. A. is now actively seeking to draw closer to itself the best-known English artists, and continues with its classes, lectures, and debates on artistic and political theory.

P. Binder

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

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