Workers of the world, unite!

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CONTENTS

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I, Son of the Working People...

"Soviet Ukraine is rising in war for the emancipation of the fatherland against the foreign yoke from the West, that is the meaning of the events developing in the Ukraine."

(J. STALIN, in "Izvestia," No. 47, March 14, 1918.)

CHAPTER I

The Bombardier

The soldier was on his way home from the front on foot. He had joined up as a young gunner and was returning as a bombardier on indefinite furlough. To hand he had a regulation army revolver with ten cartridges and an artillery bill-hook in a shagreen sheath mounted with a copper knob.

These service weapons were itemed in his demobilization papers over the blue stamp of his battery insignia with the squat crownless eagle of the Provisional Government, which had served its brief term.

Besides these, in case of need, our gunner had picked up a dragoon rifle and a couple of "lemon" hand grenades on the road. With his calfs-wool cap down to his eyes, his smart greatcoat bulging at the hips, the pack on his back bursting with all kinds of odds and ends, small and sprightly Semyon Fyodorovich Kotko strode over the steppe on a road hard with evening's frost.

He should have stopped for a breather long ago, changed his socks and rolled a cigarette of his coarse Rumanian tobacco. But every step brought him nearer home. And he had not been home for nearly four years.

As he drew near his home village, he quickened his pace. He began to recognize familiar landmarks.

The soldier ran rather than walked the last eight versts. The carrot-colored lanyard of his revolver rose and fell upon his chest. The soles of his feet were burning.

Erect in the sky was an icy moon with a sharp-pointed star nearby, which seemed to have shot sidelong from its perch and frozen into the blue before reaching the earth. The February wind brought by the night flew by with a dry rustle in the maize stalks.

In a little while he heard the barking of dogs. Cottages came into view. Semyon recognized the long-walled smithy. A bunch of horseshoes hung from a spike in the scaly wall which was blue in the moonlight. He went round the familiar frayed ropes of the tether chewed by the horses.

The familiar cart, with its shafts removed, stood in the familiar farmyard in the slanting shadow of the mudwalled *khata*.[1]

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[1] *Khata*—peasant's hut in the Ukraine, mostly mud-walled in pre-revolutionary times.

The soldier paused for breath. Then with childish grimaces he tiptoed to the dark window, knocked and recoiled instantly to one side with his pack pressed to the wall. He stood spreadeagled, with his head thrown back. Too excited to breathe he bit his unshaven lip and shut his eyes tight. An enigmatic smile settled on his round face. His heart thudded against his ribs.

For four years he had been anticipating the savor of this joke. For four years he had dreamed of this homecoming from the front, this tiptoed approach to the home cottage, this knock at the window. His mother comes out of the *khata* and asks: "Who is there, what do you want?" She looks angrily at the uniformed stranger while with the rough joviality of the campaigner he cries: "Good evening, ma'am! A night's lodging for a hero of the artillery, decorated with the cross of St. George! Take your dumplings out of the oven, or whatever's your ammunition. A bombardier wants something to eat." She looks at him wanly without recognizing him. Then he springs to attention, eyes front, raises his hand to his cap and reports himself distinctly: "Your honor's Excellence, in respect of today's arrival from the field army, Semyon Fyodorovich Kotko, your lawful son, on indefinite furlough, lay the table, serve the soup and there will be nothing else to report!" His mother would utter a cry, clutch at her bosom, fall on her son's neck—and then they would have a good laugh.

But no one came out of the *khata*. Around the village streaks of dry snow glittered like mica. Suddenly the latch rattled in the socket. The door opened. On the threshold stood a tall bony woman in a homespun skirt and a coarse blouse open at her sinewy throat.

Without a sign of fear or surprise she gazed at the soldier standing motionless in the shadow.

"Whom do you want?" she said in a hoarse voice.

At the sound of his mother's voice the soldier's heart leapt.

He stepped from the shadow, took off his cap with both hands and guiltily lowered his shaven head.

"Mamo," he said plaintively.

She stared at him and suddenly raised her hand to her throat.

"Mamo," he repeated, then rushed at her, embraced her bony shoulders and fell to crying like a babe with his nose pressed to her blouse which reeked of dry sheepskin.

CHAPTER II

Frossya

Semyon Fyodorovich had a good night's sleep. The morning was late when he opened his eyes. But what a strange experience for a soldier: to be awakened by the heat! The bright sunshine mingled with the pink gleams of the tiled stove which had been stoked with dry corn cobs. The windows felt the heat too, and were covered with perspiration.

With a creaking of the old firwood bed, Semyon Fyodorovich threw off the print counterpane, oversized, heavy and plump as a dumpling.

The poorly furnished *khata* was filled with fine military equipment. His uniform and arms took up the walls and window sills so that the household things—the sieves, the tin pendulum clock, the pictures, ikons and easter eggs were hidden from view.

"Just fancy what one soldier can bring home from the front," thought Semyon Fyodorovich, not without pride, as he collected his wits. A houseful of things! And a packful into the bargain!

In the meantime a girl about fourteen years old, affecting womanhood with a calico handkerchief from which her face peered out as from a paper bag, and clad in a man's homespun jacket and enormous *choboti* (boots), had been gazing in saucy curiosity for some time first at him, then at his scattered equipment, with her hand shading her eyes as though from the sun.

The soldier looked at the girl somewhat perplexed.

"Well!" he suddenly exclaimed in facetious astonishment. "And here I've been looking and wondering what this doll is. Where is she from? And who should it be but our Frosska! My, how you've grown! Well? Why don't you say something, sister? Have you bitten your tongue off? But are you Frosska or no Frosska at all? Answer my question in due order."

"Frosska," said the girl boldly, quite unabashed at conversation with a soldier.

"But where were you last night, that I didn't see you?"

"Why, I was on the stove. You didn't see me, but I saw you. Are you a cavalier?"

"Oh, be off with you! A cavalier!" Semyon guffawed. "Fancy a baby like you knowing what a cavalier is. What makes you ask?"

"You have a cross on your chest," said the girl and went up to the soldier's tunic lying on the table with its sleeves outstretched. She touched the little cross which was sewn on the breast pocket. "White, without a ribbon. That means the fourth grade. The Saint George. Isn't it? And what's this? A dragoon rifle!" Frossya went on talking without paying attention to her brother.

He looked at her with wide-open eyes, marveling how she had grown these four years. When he had joined up she was quite small, too small for notice, but just look at her now; tall, nothing shy, audacious eyes and, what's more, understands soldierly matters—marriagable too, for that matter!

"See," said the girl, moving from article to article. "What a fine outfit! Look at these boots, real Russia-leather, and the tops as good as new! And that crooked knife! An artilleryman's knife. Right? And what a pack! Heavy as lead. Two hands won't lift it. A whole suitcase. What's in it?"

"Don't touch the pack."

"I'm not touching it. I'll just have a look and put it back."

"Stop, Frosska, or you'll be sorry!"

"I don't think. Try to stop me."

"Just you wait. Where's my belt with the brass buckle! That'll stop you!"

"Your brass buckle belt's not here. I threw it on top of the stove!"

"Well, I'll be damned! Put that pack down. Do you want to blow up the house or something? Maybe there are hand grenades in that pack."

"Lemons or bottles?" Frossya asked with swift, lively curiosity without relinquishing the pack.

The soldier threw up his hands.

"Now what do you think of that!" he gasped. "Lemons or bottles! Where did you learn that? Suppose they are lemons, what then?"

"I know! If it's a lemon you must strike it first on one of those little friction plates and if you don't, it won't explode. Right?"

"This is where I strike you over the behind," muttered Semyon and made a sudden leap from the bed with an alacrity which could never have been expected from the expression on his face, still blissful and slightly swollen from long and dreamless slumber.

But Frosska was quicker and nimbler than her brother. With a screech she had darted into the passage—her kerchief fell off and hung on her sturdy

little shoulder—leaving Semyon with a glimpse of her long, tight pigtail, plaited with a cotton ribbon.

From the darkness of the passage a pair of sparkling eyes, round and mischievous, gazed on the soldier.

"You won't catch me!"

"A fat lot I care," said Semyon with affected indifference. He was dying to catch the hussy and spank her, teach her due respect for the military calling. But he knew that nothing would come of strong-man tactics. He would have to go by subtlety.

Not looking at Frossya he paced anxiously up and down the room as if in search of something. He even went as far as he could from the door and rummaged on the window sill to lull her suspicion.

"You won't catch me, anyway," came Frosska's voice behind him.

He squinted over his shoulder. The young hussy had one foot in the room but held on to the latch ready to slam the door on her brother's face the moment he stirred.

"A lot I care," he muttered, sorting things at his leisure, but with an irresistible longing to pounce on her.

"You can't catch me anyway."

"As if I wanted to, I will if I want, I'll just put on my boots and my breeches, get hold of my belt . . ."

"No, you won't."

"Then you'll see."

Semyon stretched idly for his breeches then suddenly gave a savage grin and leapt at Frosska. But she was gone like the wind through the passage. A yoke fell down, buckets clattered. The latch clashed home on the outside door. The soldier threw off restraint and jumped into the yard, just as he was, in his cotton drawers, and sprinted barefoot over the cold wet ground, gleaming in the strong February sun.

A handful of inquisitive maidens and young married women with pails had been loitering near the *khata* since early morning to have a look at the man who had come back from the war—Semyon of the Kotko family. They scattered with a scream, hiding their faces in mock fear in their kerchiefs and crying for the whole street to hear.

"The devil, what shameless men there are! Save us kind friends, help!"

Semyon shaded his eyes from the sun. It seemed to him that among the fugitives one girl in a short jacket and a flounced skirt looked round oftener, laughed louder, and hid her face more demurely than the rest behind a pink kerchief embroidered with green roses under which her black eyes glistened like cherries.

And suddenly a brown, soldierly blush suffused his broad, amiable small featured face to the roots of his hair. He clutched at his open collar, hoisted his drawers bashfully shook his fist at Frosska and trotted into the house.

"Well, did you catch me?" came Frosska's voice from the street.

CHAPTER III

A Man of his Word

"Was it Sonia?" Semyon wondered, looking at his week's growth in the looking glass. He lathered his cheeks with a home-made aluminum shaving brush, then became thoughtful: should he leave his mustache on or not? To tell the truth, it was not much of a mustache. A few ginger bristles

growing at the corners of his mouth, nothing much where it ought to be, under his nose. He might as well shave it off. But, on the other hand, his Cross of St. George and uniform were not complete without a mustache. For a bombardier a mustache was as indispensable as the two crossed stripes on the epaulette. And although Semyon had cut off his epaulettes long ago in the trenches he did not want to part with his mustache.

"Don't shave off your mustache, let it be," said Frossya reproachfully from the passage. "All our soldiers who came back from the front have mustaches."

"You there again?"

"Here again."

"What are you hiding for? Come in."

"Aren't you clever!"

"It's all right, come in."

"But you'll start fighting."

"No, I won't."

"Cross yourself."

"And what if I don't believe in god?"

"Go on. You do believe in god."

"How do you know?"

"Here's how I know. The ones from the artillery are all believers. But the ones from the infantry or the sailors from the Black Sea fleet are all non-believers."

"Look at her: she knows everything. Well, say it's from the cavalry or the engineers, what about them, do they believe or not?"

"I don't know about them. We haven't had any come back from the cavalry or engineers yet."

During this conversation with her brother, Frossya edged into the room, trustfully posted herself near to him and feasted her eyes on the fascinating spectacle of shaving.

The adroitly crotched razor gleamed in Semyon's hand, its reflected light flickering about the room. The edge cautiously scraped the soap from his chin. The clean red skin appeared under it.

The girl cocked her head and listened with bated breath.

"Listen . . . do you hear? Just like a cricket."

"What?"

"Why, the razor. Chirping. Faintly, faintly, like a cricket. Isn't it?"

"That must be your nose chirping."

Frossya snorted and looked sheepish.

She held her tongue for some time, shifting from one foot to the other. She had had something to tell her brother for some time. But this was so important and secret that their badinage had not given her a chance to put in the proper word. She was also hindered by her mother who was at the stove making a thick soup of sour cabbage, wheat and pork for her son.

Finally she went out to fetch the bacon.

Frossya went close to her brother, and tugged at her auburn pigtail. Her auburn eyebrows set in a stern frown. A pucker of wrinkles gathered at each corner of her pouting mouth, old-woman fashion.

"Listen, Semyon," she said quickly, with an oblique glance at the door. "A certain person sends you regards—you know yourself who the person is—and wants to know what you are thinking of doing? Will you send matchmakers or not? Or perhaps you have already forgotten about that person?"

The razor jumped in Semyon's hand.

"Oh, devil take you!" he said angrily. "Barking into my ear with your nonsense. I might have cut myself."

He frowned with a great effort and carefully wiped his razor with a scrap of paper.

"Tell that person from me," he said, looking aside, "that she might have forgotten about me but that I have not forgotten her at all and my word is as good as it was before."

Frossya nodded her head gravely. But, suddenly, in an instant, her face took on a cunning and avid look, like an old village gossip's. She hung on her brother's shoulder and breathed hotly down his ear on which the soap was drying with a faint effervescence.

"Come to the party tonight in Remenuk's *khata;* only not the Remenuks whose melon patch is near Ivasenko's, but the Remenuks who had two sons in the infantry killed at the front, whose *khata* is behind the pond now. Today it is Lubka Remenuk's turn. You can meet that person there. Have you any money to buy cakes for the girls?"

"I'll have the money."

"There's no need. I'm only joking. The girls take nothing from demobilized soldiers."

Here their mother came in, sinewy arms offering her son the best towel, richly embroidered with red and black cotton crosses.

CHAPTER IV

Master of the House

Not for a long time had Semyon eaten such thick, hot borshch seasoned with red pepper and garlic and thick with good potatoes. The grey, knotted bread of pure wheat was more appetizing that any white Rumanian loaf.

It was hard to have done with the bacon. This bacon had been kept specially for him since easter of the previous year, the last time they had killed a pig. Smothered in coarse salt and wrapped in a linen cloth, it had been buried deep in the ground, and so treated could have stayed for three years if necessary. Lying in the earth for so long only made it delicate as butter.

How enjoyable it was to divide its ingot thickness into thin marble slices, scraping off the soil and salt with a jackknife and stripping off the hard rind, yellow and semi-transparent!

When he had eaten his fill and washed it down with a mug of sweet tea—Semyon's pack had yielded a brew and an ample bag of granulated sugar—the soldier rose from the table, made a low bow to his mother—returned by her as to the master of the house—flung a quilted, sleeveless jacket over his shoulder, another item from the same pack, and went into the yard about his business.

Of course, he could have had the day off. But the convention was not to set foot outside the farmyard on the first day. This was the community's clue to the man of worth and character.

Until this day Semyon had never felt himself master completely. Although his father had died two years before the war his grandfather, still hale and hearty, had remained and with his daughter—Semyon's mother—had managed well enough in the smithy. And he was over seventy.

There was a man for you! Tall, lean—all his teeth intact—he could make light of carrying two sacks of corn, two poods each, on his back from

one end of the village to the other. And if at the beginning of the war he had not been kicked in the chest by a hussar's horse while he was shoeing it he would still be going strong. But the kick proved too much. The old man began to spit blood, took to his bed and never got up again. He was buried in the second year of the war and the smithy was locked up.

They had no land. They had no cattle. They had to struggle along as best they could. Only for the October Revolution in 1917 there is no telling what would have happened.

But now they had turned the corner. The land taken from the Klembovsky estate in the autumn had been divided equally among all the poor households; widow Kotko's share was a strip of some six dessyatines—two dessyatines perhead. From the same Klembovsky stocks the land department had helped them with seeds and when the livestock was being shared out gave them a horse, a cow and three sheep. So that now the two dessyatines had been sown with winter wheat and the other four were waiting for Semyon to decide whether to plant sunflowers, raise a melon patch or put them under oats and barley.

Semyon heard about it from his mother's leisurely talk at dinner and now he went out, on a tour of inspection.

First of all he set out for the shed where the new horse was stalled. He was impatient to see the mare which had been standing, not so long ago, in a squire's stable champing a squire's barley but was now standing in the small shed of a poor peasant, Bombardier Semyon Kotko, without the slightest idea what work she would be put to on the morrow: whether she would plough squire Klembovsky's old land under oats or be harnessed to a cart and driven to the river for a load of thatch. Semyon had already noticed that the thatch on the cottage was part rotten and a new one would do no harm.

Semyon was pleased with the new mare. She was much better than he expected. He touched her soft, velvety muzzle, stroked her under the belly and keenly regretted his oversight of a brush and curry-comb when he quit the battery.

The cow was so-so. More might have been expected of a squire's cow.

As for the sheep, two of them had just lambed. Semyon put his hands in the straw and lifted out one of the lambs, a curly, heavy little fellow, with bony little hoofs and a hard muzzle that might have been turned from wood, blew into its nostrils with a broad smile and cried in a businesslike manner:

"Eh, Mamo, these babies will have to sleep in the house or god forbid they'll freeze to death."

CHAPTER V

Neighbors

Semyon unlocked the smithy. Dark and cold within.

The anvil was covered with a summit of old, frozen snow which had blown in down the chimney.

Semyon pulled at the rusty bar of the bellows. The stiff leathers creaked painfully and sighed. The wind blew about the hearth and raised a cloud of ash. The bleak smell of cold iron and coal filled the smithy. Semyon had a sudden feeling of melancholy and tedium, and crossed himself mechanically and went out, carefully closing the wide door behind him.

Somewhere near the door there ought to be a millstone, familiar from his

childhood. And so there was. The stone lay in its place. And Semyon instantly remembered with what interest every summer he would heave at this stone and raise it from the grass, an inch or so, for a glimpse at the doings underneath. And under it there had always been a crawling world of colorless, transparent worms, maggots, creeping things and a pale growth of poor sunless rootlets as colorless as the worms.

Just now the stone was still frozen hard into the soil although spring had begun. He felt sad and depressed again. But this bright February day was so enchanting—all moulded as it were of pellucid ice—blue in the shade and fluid underneath and glittering in the sun—that Semyon passed a satisfied proprietory glance about his farmyard and noticing a frozen heap of manure in the middle of the yard, which was no place for it, set to work with a pitchfork.

Disused to real, useful work—to be sure, a man can't call it work to ride day in and day out behind a cannon on strange fields, dig blindages and, with an eye glued to the panoramic sight, search hastily for the target and at the command of the battery sergeant pull at the lanyard, and jump clear—Semyon took pleasure in lifting the light layers of dung on his fork and depositing them behind the shed.

Sometimes he paused and wiping his brow with his sleeve thought—see what a good farmer I am, as good as I was a gun layer! You could marry off your finest girl in the village to him without hesitation! This thought warmed him at his work.

The big eyes of the girl, black and lustrous as cherries, her little nose wrinkled with a smile, haunted him.

As the sun sank lower Semyon's thoughts became increasingly persistent. He was seized with the impatience and disquiet of love.

In the meantime neighbors drifted to the fence at intervals to see Semyon. This was another convention. They came, leisurely, legs bent at the knee, old men, one by one, inquisitive as women, in ample padded jackets, greasy, glossed with wear, and in ragged sheepskin caps low on their ragged eyebrows. Shifting their sticks, companions in old age, from the right hand to the left they offered Semyon their wedgy, horny fists through the wicker fence and said, nodding in sympathy: "To you, cavalier," or "God keep you."

Without dropping the pitchfork Semyon went to the fence where a serviceable harrow with clodded teeth lay on edge, and exchanged greetings with the folk, answering their questions and exclamations.

Answers had to be made smartly without fumbling for words, another clue to the man of independence, "one of us."

"To you, Gregory Ivanovich," Semyon replied to the oldsters, doffing his cap and bowing respectfully. "We meet again, thank god. The same to you, Kuzma Vasilevich."

Women came up, just as inquisitive as the old men. Their greetings were not so ceremonious and artless but well spiced with womanly wit. "How do you do, Semyon Fyodorovich. Very nice to see you. Thank god, you're back at last. We were thinking you had been chasing the German so much that you were running still. But people say he's doing the chasing. Well, thank god." "Welcome home. How is it that you won so few crosses at the front?" "Where are your epaulettes?"

"Not likely," he retorted in swift repartee. "Why should I waste service bullets on the Germans when I'm better off at home on the stove and can open fire blank range at the internal enemy—women? Out there at the front they gave me another cross, only a wooden one, and I didn't want it.

And I swapped my epaulettes for tobacco with a chap who didn't know any better."

His old village friends, men of the some age, most of whom had managed to get "demobilized" from the army long before, stood behind the fence and threw out their soldierly chests, adorned with medals. Service caps pushed back—some wore yellow shrapnel helmets of the French type—their first act was to offer pouches or tobacco-tins, and cigarette paper. Only when they had twisted a dog's leg cigarette with Semyon, taken a draw and spat, did they get down to questions and greetings.

"How do, *godok*? [1] How's things?" "What's new from the front? Have they made peace at last or are they still at it?" "What's your outfit, the 64th artillery brigade, isn't it? I'm from the 8th howitzers. In winter 1916 we stood alongside you at Wilejka near Smorgen. You were on the right side of the road and we were on the left, just at the bend past the village, Bjali." "Have you heard, is Lenin still in charge?" "Haven't they caught Kerensky yet?"

"Hello," Semyon replied to these equals in years. "Farm matters are more in my line now. But I'll tell you what I know. By order of the comrade Supreme Commander-in-Chief, from the twelfth of this month, there's been complete cessation of hostilities on all fronts and complete demobilization of the army in action.

"In 1916, the first battery of the 64th brigade stood near Smorgen on the right side of the road close to the birch wood. Lenin, I hear, is sitting in his old place, keeping everything going and doesn't dream of quitting. But they didn't catch that reptile Kerensky after all because the English wrote him a false document and with it he's riding all the railways disguised as a woman or a high school student."

Little boys crowded at the fence, nudging each other and addressing him with suppressed voices:

"Uncle Semyon, aren't you a Bolshevik?"

"Uncle Semyon, haven't you a cartridge or an old 'luminum flask to give away? Give us something!"

"I've got a good thick belt with a brass buckle on the end for scamps like you!" cried Semyon, pretending to be angry. "Get away from the fence and no mischief or I'll warm you where you sit down!"

The boys stampeded in all directions and disappeared, but not altogether, as could be seen by the peeping of red noses and sharp eyes around house corners.

At last, evening came.

CHAPTER VI

The Social Evening

February was on the wane and winter with it. A week, no more, remained until March, the first month of spring.

Hard toil on the steppes was approaching and the young people were anxious to have out their fling as long as they could. They gathered every evening, first in one house and then another.

Today it was Luba Remenuk's turn to keep open house.

She filled, trimmed and lit the pendant lamp with the large glass chimney, swept every speck from the camstoned floor, arranged the stools, cleared

[1] A person born in the same year

all superfluities out of the *khata* and sat modestly at her spinning wheel in a weekday skirt and blouse.

The wooden wheel started smoothly under her foot, the spokes began to whirl. Her nimble fingers plucked at the flax. The thrown thread ran under her fingers. And pendant on the end of this fine thread was the furiously revolving spindle which alternately descended to the floor and rose magically to her busy, seemingly magnetized fingers.

The girls gathered first. They took seats along the wall, threw off their shawls and without delay drew from their bosoms bits of needlework which they had begun late in the autumn and specially reserved for social evenings.

It was an old tradition that girls should not sit idle at social evenings. Here each had an opportunity to impress the lads with her artistry and look her best before the man of her choice.

The last girl had just arrived when the insinuating but nonchalent arpeggio of an accordion was heard outside the window. There was a light tap on the panes. Masculine faces glimmered outside. But the girls inside remained unmoved, as if this did not concern them at all.

Their eyes absorbed in their needlework, their brows wrinkled diligently, only the faintest flicker of a smile, shared by all, ran over their faces, from one little mouth to another.

Whispering and suppressed laughter was heard behind the window. The door opened a few cautious inches. First a shoulder harnessed with the broad strap of the accordion inserted itself, then a round shaven head appeared in a tilted sailor's cap, and a sailor sidled into the room.

The girls, engrossed in their work, did not bestow a single glance on him.

"Attention nil, a pound of ill will," the sailor remarked significantly, winking at the lads who were pressing behind him from the hallway.

The girls kept up their pretense of indifference. The sailor doffed his cap with two hands and bowed ingratiatingly.

"May we come in?"

"Come in if you like," replied the hostess in an icy tone without looking at the sailor and shrugged, adjusting at the same time the shawl which was slipping from her shoulder. "We never lock our doors on anybody."

She pursed her firm lips contemptuously and pressed so hard on the treadle that the wheel banged and rattled. Accompanying shadow spokes flitted one by one across the white clay wall.

"Delighted," said the sailor.

He winked at the lads again and was apparently ready to pay off the haughty maids with a suitable retort, but did not get the chance.

Those behind piled upon him, jolted him with their knees and the crowd of impatient swains trooped into the house where they stood in embarrassed silence.

But by the time Semyon arrived the party was in full swing. It is true that the proceedings still had a sedate tone but here and there, tired of propping the wall with his shoulder, a swain had perched, as if aimlessly, over his chosen, and what he was whispering could be guessed from the girl's pleased look. The girls were not watching their needles so attentively, in fact drops of blood hung on more than one pricked finger.

Even the most composed of the girls, the hostess, Luba Remenuk, forgot her spinning for a minute, pressed her shoulder to the sailor's peajacket and sat in that pose with a pale, entranced face, her fingers fluttering the St. George ribbons on the sailor's cap.

Semyon halted at the door and, trying not to show it, searched for the girl he had come for. But the first one he saw was—Frosska. This so startled him that at the first glance he wondered if he had not made a mistake. What! His sister Frosska!

Two white geese waddle along neck and neck and after them with a long birch twig in her hand, hardly able to keep up, comes a leggy little barefoot girl through the nettles. She has a smudge under her nose; her little braid is as thin as a mouse's tail. That was how Frosska had stayed in Semyon's imagination.

And hey presto! Now this same Frosska sits at a social evening among grown-up, marriagable girls, as large as life, without twitching an eyelid—Christ, how she had grown!

Frossya, in sooth, was sitting in a big print blouse, with a comb in her hair, and with the earnestness of a fourteen-year-old eligible was laboriously hemming a man's shirt with a large oldfashioned needle.

But that was not all. At her side, with his long arms folded awkwardly on his knees, was an unkempt young fellow of eighteen years in a white Ukrainian smock—he had just missed mobilization by the looks of it—and a face stiff with trepidation.

At this Semyon was so convulsed with mirth that he could only stamp his foot and exclaim: "Well, of all the—!" He was about to deliver some suitable remark at Frossya's expense when the words froze in his mouth.

All jokes flew out of his head. He had seen Sophia.

The girl watched him from the corner of her large eyes, half closed by her prominent eyelids. A tiny dimple quivered in one corner of her taut, bright lips which parted slightly over her white teeth, close set and even as grains of young maize.

The soldier had rehearsed this meeting for four yars. Now he stood in confusion, not knowing how to comport himself.

The lads coughed significantly as they noted his embarrassment. The girls stole meaning glances at Sophia. Frosska eyed her brother with affectionate but mischievous sympathy.

Sophia made a little gesture of vexation with her shoulder and a slow blush mantled to the roots of her hair. She covered her face with her thimble hand and pretended to smooth her hair from her forehead.

The luxurious towel of factory made lawn, which she was embroidering with silk, slipped from her knees.

Semyon was ready to sink through the floor. But at this juncture the sailor, who seemed to know all the songs under the sun, struck up an artillery song for the occasion:

"A gunner came to me one day
And this is what I heard him say:
'Hello, little dear.
Peace is near,
I'd like you to see
My artillery.' "

And with that the party continued as if nothing had happened.

But at last the hostess looked at the lamp and yawned.

The girls stowed their needlework in their bosoms and began to leave, one by one. The lads trailed after them, in a leisurely, dignified exit. This was

the long anticipated moment—to see the girls home and satisfy the longing to be together, alone.

A lad and a girl would meet in the dim hallway. There would be hurried whispering; two shadows would become one; and the enlarged shadow would glide along the dark street.

At last, after the rest, Sophia rose from her place too. She passed close to Semyon, taking small steps in her goatskin slippers and hanging her small, handsome head. Semyon looked at her, and her eyelids drooped momentarily. He waited the decorous minute, then followed her into the passage without haste. She was waiting for him.

Quick hands embraced his shoulders. Her kerchiefed head snuggled upon the soldier's chest.

"Oh, Semyon," whispered a voice full of tenderness. "Oh, Semyon, my dear, safe and sound, not killed."

The moon, in its wintry brilliance, was well past midnight. The village slept. Semyon escorted Sophia. Squeezing together inside his greatcoat, holding hands, they walked down the noiseless street, slowly, as if blind.

"How warm your hands are, how warm your hands are," the girl said again and again, putting Semyon's hands together, hugging them to her bosom and nursing them in a kind of trance.

He walked with bated breath, guiding her with fond care over the frozen ruts.

But he was not easy in his mind. The habitual doubts dashed his pride and joy. Would Tkachenko let him have his daughter? Might he not break his word? But to understand these misgivings it must be known who Tkachenko was and why Semyon feared a refusal.

CHAPTER VII

A Rich Bride

Tkachenko belonged to the type of peasant who, once conscripted, quickly got used to soldiering, found advantage in it and being in no hurry to return home, voluntarily stayed on for five, ten or even the full fifteen years after the service period. Long ago Tkachenko had been conscripted into the artillery, had finished his term as a bombardier and again as a battery corporal; he had served in the Russo-Japanese war, getting two crosses of St. George, and a third stripe, and by inconspicuous degrees became Mr. Sergeant, a martinet, the right hand of his officer and the terror of his battery, in short, a skunk.

Once or twice a year he came on a short furlough to the village to see his wife. He brought what he had saved up in the battery, eighty or ninety rubles each trip, big money by village standards, and invested it judiciously in his farm. His wife was a poor simple village woman whom he had married as an orphan. In the first years of his extra service everybody was sorry for her. But gradually, to her own surprise, she became one of the most substantial housewives in the village, envied and respected by people. But she, docile, ignorant and artless, could not get used to her new status and it is doubtful if she really understood it.

She still dressed simply, even poorly, worked from morning till night just as before and was more like a maid of all work in her husband's house than the mistress. She loved her husband and feared him as the supreme being. He tolerated her in a patronizing sort of way. When he received the news

of the birth of his daughter he sent a letter from his station ordering the girl to be christened Sophia in honor of the divisional commander's wife.

The little girl grew up, bred in simplicity and love by her mother. In her eyes too the father was the supreme being. On the eve of the war she had reached the age of sixteen. She had been eligible for two years and kept company with Semyon.

Although he was poor and she was rich, they foresaw no obstacle. Sophia's mother was only too willing to marry her daughter to a good, hard-working man.

Having obtained Sophia's consent and ascertained her mother's feelings from outside sources Semyon was about to send matchmakers. But at this juncture Tkachenko, who had just been promoted sergeant-major, arrived on furlough. Hearing about the forthcoming wedding he flew into a rage.

It never entered his plans to give his only daughter to a poor peasant. He had long dreamed of marriage ties with some one higher up in the world, of buying a good large farmstead through the bank, of finally getting his discharge from the army and climbing up among the gentry.

He ordered his wife and daughter to tell Semyon that he would break every bone in his body if he ever saw him near the house, called his wife an old broom and was on the point of beating his daughter with the scabbard of his sergeant-major's sword, had even brandished it over her shoulders, when he saw her beautiful black eyes glazed with terror; he held off, still purple with rage, and in a terrible voice he emitted the unintelligible but unmistakable invective: "*Khivrya.*"

On the next holiday, donning his dress uniform, with sword, crosses and orange-colored medal commemorating the three hundredth anniversary of the accession of the house of Romanov, the sergeant-major took his daughter to the market in Balta. On her drooping head the girl wore a cambric bonnet with a number embroidered in raspberry colored thread. This number indicated how many rubles would be given for her dowry. Such was the old village custom which Tkachenko did not care to forego.

The market folk gasped. Generally, local eligibles wore a modest thirty-five or fifty on their bonnets, seventy-five was a lot. A hundred was a figure that inspired respect. At one hundred and fifty people gathered round in curiosity and talked about it for a year after. Embroidered on Sophia's bonnet was the figure three hundred.

The people thronged round the new green cart with its painted rosettes and sprung undercarriage. Tears of embarrassment and resentment trickled down the girl's crimson cheeks, while her father stood in front of the cart as he would before his battery, looking at nobody, and with a sergeant-majorly stance of his tight, spurred boots, smoothed his dark whiskers with three fingers.

CHAPTER VIII

A Dog's Life

But his ambitious dreams did not materialize. General mobilization came like a thunderbolt. Tkachenko left for his unit, post haste.

The war began, Semyon was ordered to the front. He took secret leave of Sophia who wept on his shoulder.

And it so happened that he landed in the same brigade of artillery, the same battalion and even the same battery where Tkachenko was sergeant-major.

There, at the front, and what is more in the power of his enemy, Semyon soon found out how many troubles go into a soldier's kitbag.

From the very day when Tkachenko, his thumb in his belt, first walked up and down in front of the battery and with an evil smile looked sidelong at gunner Kotko, who was straining to attention with all his might, to 1917, there was not an hour when Semyon could feel free from the sergeant-major's crushing authority.

Tkachenko put him on the worst fatigue duties, digging and felling trees. He penalized him for the slightest neglect. Semyon had often to undergo pack drill in full marching order. More and more frequently he was detailed for an extra turn in the cook-house to peel potatoes, which was considered degrading, though easy, work.

Fortunately for himself Semyon did not get downhearted or let himself go. Otherwise it would have been all up with him. Dogged and astute by nature, he saw there was nothing else for him but to hold on. And that is what he did. In spite of everything he became one of the exemplary soldiers in the battery.

In the meantime Tkachenko was still climbing the ladder. For the battles in East Prussia he won the St. George cross, second degree, and at August Forests, the cross of the first degree.

At the end of 1915, after the retreat, the tsar held a review near Molodechno. The gunners were given new greatcoats. A little bearded colonel in full rig with a white cross on his chest watched the army corps march past. Shouting "hurrah" without hearing his own voice, Semyon looked over his horse's head and caught a glimpse of a yellow face with narrow imperious eyes set in stars of wrinkles. The face was the familiar one stamped on fifty kopek pieces.

After the review awards fell thick and fast. Ten crosses to a battery. The brigade commander, hurrying down the lines, stuck a St. George on Semyon's chest, clapped the bombardier on the sleeve and said: "Good man."

Semyon didn't know what it was all about but jerked up his chin and cried: "Glad to do my best, your excellency."

On the same day Tkachenko was promoted to warrant officer. He put an officer's knot on his soldier's saber, pinned an officer's badge to his cap and sewed wide gilt braid to his epaulettes.

This was the highest to which a rank-and-filer could aspire. And so, from Mr. Sergeant-Major, Tkachenko became Mr. Warrant Officer. His new rank quite separated him from the soldiers without bringing him an inch nearer to the officers. Tkachenko gave up his pipe with the tin cap and changed to cheap cigarettes. Instead of matches he began to use a petrol lighter made from a cartridge. He set up with his own understrapper, a batman of sorts selected from second line transports.

Once, in 1916, at Smorgen, as he was walking through the battery, Tkachenko caught sight of Semyon. Semyon was squatting at a low fire melting German aluminum time fuses in a shrapnel case. He was making aluminum spoons.

Tkachenko stopped unseen behind Semyon's back to examine every detail of this tiny foundry with its earthen moulds and the newly cast spoons, white and porous, cooling in sand. Nearby, stuck into the soft earth was his gun, masked in fir branches.

There was nobody around. Taking advantage of a lull in the fighting, the gunners were attending to their own business. Some were washing, some were

playing cards, one was writing a letter on a table improvised from a chessboard.

The rosy May evening beamed through the young greenery of the century old birches on the famous Smolensk highroad, on which Napoleon's army had once marched. At intervals a maybug flew by with a dull buzz and as in reply came the far-off drone of a German airplane returning from reconnaissance.

"Busy?" inquired Tkachenko.

Semyon started and leapt to attention before the warrant officer. Tkachenko narrowed his eyes, smoothed his whiskers with three fingers and paced slowly to and fro in front of Semyon as though on parade.

At last he stopped at one side and set his legs apart.

"Well, Kotko," he said, touching the peak of his cap with the edge of his hand and indulging in a wry, gloomy smile. "Have you got that out of your head yet or not?"

"I couldn't say, Mr. Warrant Officer," Semyon replied with downcast eyes.

"As you like, it's your affair. Remember."

Tkachenko strolled to Semyon's gun, opened the breech and glanced into the bore.

"So. Very nice. Two inches thick with dirt. Take four fatigues extra."

"Very good, Mr. Warrant Officer," bawled Semyon who had cleaned out the gun with kerosene not more than an hour before.

Soon the soldiers' furloughs began. The lower ranks departed in turn for twenty-one days. The whole battery had been home. But Semyon's turn did not come.

The summer of 1916 came to an end.

CHAPTER IX

Nineteen Seventeen

The war entered its third year.

The brigade was shifted from front to front. Battles thundered everywhere. The forests along the River Vileika were parched with poison gas for fifteen versts. They stood dry and yellow as in autumn.

Behind Baranovici, at Dvinsk and on to Riga the earth quaked for weeks on end. At night the jagged glow of hurricane bombardments hovered over the deserted, perishing fields.

Outstripping the horse transports, motor lorries raced through the baking streets of Czernovich, bringing up the reserves for Brussilov's offensive. Dorna-Vatra rocked with man-made thunder.

Fat plums hung in the gardens of Bukovina.

In August Rumania entered the war. A Russian army corps crossed the Danube and went right through the Dobrudja. From their observation posts the artillery men could see the minarets of the Bulgarian town of Bazarzhik beyond the maize fields and melon patches.

But Mackensen struck with his superior forces. There was chaos. German airplanes skimmed the open moorland roads, and machine-gunned the marching columns. The ancient, ox-drawn Rumanian cannon stuck in the mud. The Germans took them with their bare hands. The autumn moon shed its cold light on swollen corpses and scattered equipment rotting and rusting among the maize stalks.

Immobile shepherds in high skeepskin caps, with long crooks in their

hands, stood among their sheep near stone walls as round as mill stones. They looked impassively at the routed army scattering over the plain.

The watery sun shone weakly on the yellow leaves strewn under the beeches.

A dense autumn mist hung over the Danube. The crags of the Carpathians, reverberant with artillery, loomed faintly through the raw, fluvial mist. The war seemed as eternal.

"The soldiers can't stand this trench purgatory any longer," wrote Semyon to his mother that winter. At the end of April the workers rose in Petrograd. The tsar abdicated. The sun gleamed in the running brooks, threw green reflections in the brasses of the regimental bands.

Wherever did they get together so much red silk ribbon and scarlet bunting!

Accompanied by their secretaries, the commissars of the Provisional Government—sedate civilian gentlemen in good broadcloth overcoats and astrakhan caps, rode round the first line transports speechifying. The excited soldiers could not sleep at night and sat in their dugouts talking about land and peace. Semyon walked up and down, crazy with impatience. Everyone thought the war was over.

At first, Tkachenko was nonplussed. He could not make out whether all this was to be to his advantage or not. But he soon decided that the situation had advantages for him. Abolishing caste privileges, the revolution brought him the opportunity to become an officer.

He put a red ribbon on his chest, and got himself elected to the battery committee.

Spring passed in a delirium. Summer came. The soldiers were at their wits' end waiting for peace which was expected at any moment. Kerensky announced an offensive instead. Companies of infantry from the reserve units arrived at the front before streaming red banners.

Another visit by the commissars of the Provisional Government. This time they were dishevelled tubthumpers in pince-nez, with cutlasses instead of sabers, adorned with field glasses and haversacks. They were escorted by volunteers of the Death Battalion with the skull and crossbones on their sleeves.

They crept from trench to trench through the boyaux, ducking stray bullets, catching projections on their shoulders and raising a terrible dust.

That summer the battery was stationed in Rumania, beyond Jassy, near Hill 1001. Ammunition cars rumbled along the rails day and night. Pits were excavated in the mountain side and crammed with crates of French T.N.T. grenades and incendiary bombs. The sappers laid concrete platforms for the Vickers long-range guns. In the infantry trenches mine-throwers were emplaced by the hundred.

A heat wave charred the scarred earth.

The division had a visit from Kerensky in person, a round-shouldered civilian with a pendulous, bulbous nose, wearing an English tweed cap with the peak loose, his game hand in its suede glove pressed to the breast pocket of his tunic.

The commander-in-chief stood up in an H.Q. automobile, surrounded by curious soldiers. With his shaven mouth agape he harangued them in a hoarse voice, urging them in the name of freedom and the revolution to attack the enemy.

His yelling went on for half an hour at least. The soldiers listened in silence. Some grew tired of standing and sat down on the ground. Suddenly, during a pause, while Kerensky leaned with his sound hand on the red epaul-

ette of his chauffeur and scanned his audience with the slow gaze of the citizen and the leader, an embarrassed but rather pert voice with a Tula accent rang out.

"In our company, the men want to know if peace will come soon? If so, it's time we were going home."

Kerensky wheeled round and caught sight of a bantam infantryman with an oversize French shrapnel helmet propped on his ears which were black outside and inside, especially inside, with the Rumanian dust. He was sitting serenely in the front row, his legs crossed on the withered grass.

"It's time for threshing," he explained, turning around to his neighbors.

In the crowd someone tittered, then silence.

"There's nothing to laugh at," another one grumbled. "Everybody's thinking about it. The threshing'll have to be done."

In the meantime the grimy faced infantryman sat where he was as though nothing had happened and looked up innocently at the commander-in-chief with his eyes squinting in the sun.

"Comrade soldiers," cried Kerensky, pulling himself together. "Free citizens! Brethren! The revolution has given you wings! History has put a sword into your hands! You will be victorious! But there are traitors among you who think more of their own welfare than the great ideals of freedom. There is one of them!" The commandissimo waved his sound hand in an irritated gesture at the infantryman who could now have bitten off his tongue for involving him with the authorities. "Here is one of these traitors. Tell me yourselves what should be done with this man? Deliver him to the revolutionary court? Shoot him on the spot as a traitor?"

The soldiers felt awkward and said nothing.

Kerensky turned round and stared at the infantryman.

"Begone!" he yelled suddenly, making a tragic gesture.

"No, it's impossible," blurted the little soldier plaintively, getting up and cupping his hands on the seams of his trousers.

"I command you in the name of the revolution—begone. Get you home. I deprive you of your high calling as a soldier of the Russian army. You are free."

The infantryman stood like a cat on hot bricks, his head turning this way and that in bewilderment. But the commandissimo was already sweeping the assembly with his statesmanlike gaze.

"Perhaps there are more cowards here? If so let them go home. They are free. We turn our backs on them with contempt. The revolution does not need cowards. Away with you!"

And then something so unexpected happened that Semyon was knocked cold for hours after. Standing next to him was a middle-aged gunner from the same battery, a taciturn driver named Videnko, quite undistinguished, father of a large family and unlettered.

All through Kerensky's oratory his face had been wrinkled in pain like a sick man's. At the same time he drank in every word. Several times he seemed to be bursting to speak. But when Kerensky pronounced the last words: "The revolution does not need cowards. Away with you," and paused, Videnko suddenly groaned, showed his teeth in a queer grimace, spat out and said audibly: "—the war and everyone in it." With this remark, just as he was in his buttoned sweater and a halter in his hand, he turned his sweaty back and left the front on foot for his home in Kherson Province.

CHAPTER X

Samsonov

On the evening of July 8, the artillery preparation began.

Over a hundred batteries of light and heavy artillery worked incessantly for three days on a small sector of one division.

The soldiers were deafened. For three days the earth was blanketed with suffocating smoke as thick as wool.

Three nights the heavens were seamed with fire. The Germans' barbed wire was sheared away by the fire. At dawn on the eleventh there was a lull, and the infantry went over the top. In a last convulsion, in appalling silence, the Russian troops tore into the first line of Bavarian trenches. They captured the second line twenty minutes later. The Germans even abandoned their batteries. The field, ploughed up with shells, was covered with the big corpses of Bavarians wearing chain mail under their unbuttoned uniforms. They lay in every sort of posture, their faces dug into the mangled earth which reeked of burnt celluloid. Helmets in their covers and backswords were strewn right and left. The Russians broke through the third line and began to dig in. But at this moment sudden shrapnel fire struck them from the right flank. This was quite unexpected, and what is more, inexplicable.

At first there was even a general impression that the gunners had failed to follow up with their fire and were shelling their own side. A yell of dismay rose beneath the smoke of the bursting shells. Signal rockets shot up. But the bombardment did not stop; it became fiercer. The men, lying in an exposed position, were seized with consternation. The shells flew from unknown guns. They landed with appalling precision, annihilating whole squads at a time. The infantry took to their heels and mixed with the reserves; then with the batteries who were just changing their positions. The chaotic mass of men, horses, caissons, ordnance and ambulance carts, all churning in the black smoke, was terrible to behold.

Nobody understood anything, not the ensigns, who ran among the soldiers waving pistols.

The panic could not be quelled for some time. In the meanwhile the Germans brought up their reserves and counter-attacked. The carnage raged for five days without a pause. On July 16 it let up and the Russians and Germans stood exhausted face to face in their former positions.

Later it transpired that while the Russian infantry went into the attack, capturing three lines of German trenches, the adjacent Rumanian division fell behind exposing the right flank.

The enemy artillery saw their chance and blazed away. But the Russian supreme command had not foreseen this, lost their heads and did nothing. The soldiers paid for the generals' stupidity with fearful losses.

Not since the war began had there been so many killed and wounded in Semyon's battery. Two guns and four caissons were blown to pieces. Eight gunners lay prone—motionless as dolls—in their black breeches and stout boots, their waxen cheeks pressed to the hard Rumanian soil. Twelve others, hastily treated from their own first-aid kits, were taken away in ambulance carts. As for the infantry, in some battalions only a few men survived.

Reinforcements were needed. They were moved up in fits and starts. Companies of infantry chased up and down the road along the front. The process followed no plan. Those who were sent up were mostly the wounded just out of hospital and the raw youngsters of the last draft.

They came with the menacing demands of the rear. In the military units a

host of Bolsheviks made themselves known. There was an abrupt change in the personnel of the battery.

It was nothing like what it had been a month before. The officers were no longer trusted. They and everyone who wanted the war to continue were hated.

One day, unexpectedly, Samsonov, ex-student, and a favorite of the soldiers, who had been wounded in 1916, rejoined the battery straight from hospital. He returned with a shaven head, thin, leaning slightly on a stick, but manly.

His boyishly blue eyes twinkled impudently. He reported negligently to the sergeant-major and went straight off to the observers' tent where he was listed as junior artificer.

The big kerosene lamp, the one which the thrifty telephonists had picked up in the flooded trenches of the Second Household Corps at the end of 1915, burned in the tent all night. Laughter, talk and the strum of a balalaika were heard. There was not a man in the brigade to come near Samsonov on this instrument. Four or five times they set their famous dixie—another haul from the Household Corps trenches at Smorgen—boiling, and brewed tea. The whole battery dropped in to get Samsonov's news. And there was plenty to hear. Samsonov had been to no end of places: Moscow, Petrograd, Odessa.

Next day the whole battery could talk of nothing but the Bolsheviks and Lenin. When they mentioned Kerensky, it was with contemptuous epithets. The Party paper, *The Soldier,* was passed from hand to hand.

Tkachenko summoned Samsonov, stuck his thumb in his belt, and after a silence intended to awe Samsonov, and a long piercing glare, suddenly shouted:

"Who are you to be agitating in this battery?"

"And who are you?" said Samsonov, unperturbed.

Tkachenko, taken aback, stopped a moment, then answered:

"Chairman of the battery committee."

"I didn't elect you."

"Fifteen days."

"Me?"

Samsonov clenched his teeth and there was menace in the pallor that spread over his face.

"I have here a mandate from the Bolshevik military organization of this army."

He plucked a folded paper from an outside pocket of his tunic and thrust it at the warrant officer.

"Put your glasses on if you can't read."

The very word "glasses" in this personal application and the look of Samsonov's student eyes, put the warrant officer in a rage. But he suppressed it.

"So far, thank god, the Bolsheviks are not commanding in our battery," he said and winked at the soldiers crowding round as if to say: "Ever see a guy like that?" But nobody smiled.

Next day a new battery committee was elected, with Samsonov as chairman. A resolution, carried by a majority, declared;

"We, soldiers of the 2nd battery, meeting on September 4, declare that we stand: 1) for the immediate publication of the secret treaties; 2) for immediate peace negotiations; 3) for the immediate transfer of all lands to peasant committees; 4) for control over all industries; 5) for an immediate assembly of the Soviets. Although we artillerymen do not belong to the Bolshevik Party we will lay down our lives with them for all their demands and slogans."

Although Semyon, to tell the truth, did not care to lay down his life but wanted to live and go home more than anything in the world, still he gladly raised his hand, which the sun had tanned to the color of tobacco, and held it straight up until his arm ached. Tkachenko's look of hatred singled Semyon out. The commander of the brigade reported sick and left the front, followed by many of the officers.

CHAPTER XI

The Warrant Officer

The war entered its fourth autumn. Rotten leaves eddied in the forest. A black night full of wind and rain hung over the front. Deserters tramped the roads in sopping puttees. Lurking in the soughing bushes soldiers stole up to the officers' dugouts and eavesdropped at the windows.

Now and again a gun roared in the distance.

One night a regiment mutinied in Semyon's division. The soldiers did not want to return to the trenches from reserve. The corps commander ordered them to be surrounded and shot down with machine-guns. The machine-gun squad refused.

At three o'clock in the morning a captain came down in a hooded cape. He was the commander of the battery. He was followed by the gun position officer—a lieutenant.

The warrant officer guided them with an electric torch.

"Battery—stand by!" commanded the lieutenant.

The men scrambled out of the dugouts and ran shivering in the rain to their stations. The captain nosed over a map in a celluloid frame. The sergeant-major flashed his torch on it. The captain consulted his compass, took thought and ordered two guns of the second platoon to be rolled out of the emplacement and turned around. He clapped his eye to the panorama, selected the target himself and fixed the angle of elevation.

"Shrapnel," he said quietly, stepped back and had another look at the map. "Sight seventy-five, fuse seventy, number three and four, fire!"

Too sleepy to understand what was going on, Semyon adjusted the sight by force of habit, got level with the horizon, and was about to pull hard on the lanyard when he heard a terrible cry behind him.

"Stop! Don't fire!"

Semyon stopped dead with his hand clenched on the lanyard. Samsonov had slipped his coat over his shoulders and was running from the telephonists' trench waving a lamp over his head. He scattered the gun crew right and left—wherever had he got the strength?—went up to the commander and took him by the throat.

"Did you tell these soldier comrades who they were ordered to fire at? Did you tell them?"

At that instant Tkachenko swung his fist and Samsonov fell.

"Fire!" cried the captain. The gun layers hesitated. Then the captain strode up to Semyon. "Allow me," he said and jerked the lanyard from his numb fingers.

"Lieutenant, be good enough to lay number four. Fire!" yelled the captain and fell there and then with a bullet through his head. A second bullet flattened the lieutenant. The man who had fired the bullets remained unknown. By this time a deputation arrived from the insurgent regiment flying a red flag on a stick and trailing their rifles. The telephonists held Tkachenko by

the arms. Others snatched his revolver and saber. He was arrested on the spot. Samsonov got up shakily, spat blood and ordered Tkachenko to be taken in custody.

They took the warrant officer to an empty blindage and put a sentry outside intending to send Tkachenko to the insurgent headquarters next morning. And in those days soldiers were in no mood for joking.

Before dawn Semyon came to relieve the guard. With his naked billhook on his shoulder Semyon walked up and down the blindage a few times.

A light shone from the tiny funk-hole down below. Semyon bent down and peeped in. He wanted to see what Tkachenko was doing in the last few hours of his life.

Sophia's father sat unbelted, his head sunk in his arms on a small plank table embedded in the ground. His cap with the officer's badge lay at his side. The smoky kerosene lamp hanging on a stanchion lit up his greying head and red ears. His face was out of sight. All Semyon could see was the end of a black whisker flecked with grey. Semyon shook his head to himself and fell to walking again. After another thirty minutes or so he glanced in again. Tkachenko sat in the same posture. Semyon could have sworn that the warrant officer was sleeping. He felt sorry for him. Semyon withdrew from the window wondering whether to go in to the prisoner and give him a smoke.

It was getting light. A watery cloud showed faintly on the black sky.

Suddenly there was a knock at the window. In a muffled voice the warrant officer asked permission to go out to relieve himself. Semyon thought for a moment, then went down the steps cut in the earth and with a warning: "No monkey business," let the warrant officer out, but kept behind him.

The warrant officer recognized Semyon in the uncertain dawn light. Neither spoke. They walked aside a few paces, behind some bushes.

"Be quick about it."

Tkachenko stood still and hung his head. Semyon saw his face. It was the pitiable face of a man past his prime who had just been weeping. The tears still hung on his drooping mustache.

"Listen, Semyon," said Tkachenko, forcing the words out. "I know you and you know me well. And you and everybody else might think I've a lot to answer for, but you must blame the service, not me. I was under the drill sergeant while you were still at your mother's breast. Let me go. You won't lose anything by it, but I. . . ." He whimpered. "We're from the same village when all's said and done. That's one thing. And here's another. So help me god, I tell you: if you get home with a whole skin, send the matchmakers."

He took off his cap, and brushed the tears from his eyes with the full length of his coat sleeve.

Semyon's heart turned over. He looked left and right nervously. The battery slept. "Listen," he whispered, then waved his hand in decision. "Hop it. I didn't see you."

Tkachenko went cautiously into the bushes and was lost to view the next moment.

After daybreak when Tkachenko was called for from the regimental H.Q. Semyon just said:

"He's a missing link. He went for a quick one and hasn't come back yet."

"Let him then, and may the devil fly away with him," was the unexpected comment. The deputy of the regimental committee scraped a layer of mud from his puttees with a bit of wood and added: "We can't soil our hands on all the skunks. Half a mo', comrade gunners, has anyone got a smoke?"

Semyon eagerly produced his tobacco tin from his breeches pocket but did not let the regimental deputy put his hands on it because he knew the infantry's tricks only too well. He opened it himself and put exactly one pinch into the dirt-seamed palm.

With this he sighed and said: "From the same village. When all's said and done. You'll have to scrounge paper from somebody else."

CHAPTER XII

The End of the War

On October 25 the soldiers' trench purgatory came to an end. All power was transferred to the Soviets.

"The workers' and peasants' government created by the Revolution of November 6-7 (October 24-25) and backed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace."

These words, spoken by Lenin at the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets flashed along the fronts.

Now no one had any doubts about peace. Neither had Semyon.

However, another three months elapsed while peace negotiations with the Germans were under way. True, many soldiers went home with their rifles without waiting for orders. But Semyon's conscience would not let him leave his old gun without a master. It was not the thing for a bombardier, a soldier decorated with the cross of St. George, to leave the battery untended, and his ticket unsigned by the commander and unstamped with the regimental stamp.

At last, on February 12, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief signed the demobilization order.

The brigade was then stationed at Kamenets-Podolsk, in reserve, well behind the lines. The battery headquarters were housed in the empty stables of a gutted manor. The door stood open. Behind the crudely carpentered deal chest of the battery office, sitting on an officer's camp box trimmed with canvas, was the hollow-cheeked but clean-shaven Samsonov who had just been elected battery commander by the soldiers.

The battery clerk knelt near him and rummaged in some files. Spread out on the chest serving as a table were lists of names, completed discharge forms, stamps, and wads of Kerensky rubles in an open strong-box.

Samsonov in a fur cap without a badge, in a Swedish leather jacket, without shoulder knots but fully armed, sat with his game leg stretched out. Dry snowflakes blew in with the wind. They danced unmelted in the uncertain light of the stable.

One by one the gunners entered in marching order with kitbags and packs. A little awkwardly they halted near the chest and were given money and their papers.

"Well, Kotko, have you made up your mind?" asked Samsonov when Semyon's turn came.

Semyon floundered.

"Well? Look alive!"

"It's no use, comrade battery commander," said Semyon with a sigh. "I must go home. For the sowing."

"I see. Well. You won't sign on. That's a pity. A good gun-layer. Maybe you'll change your mind? See, here: Kovalev is staying, Popienko is staying, Androssov is staying. About twenty men are staying. Fifteen rubles a month

pay. When all's said and done it's the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, you know."

"To fight again?"

"That's possible."

"Who is there to fight when we've made peace with everybody?"

"Eh, friend, you've a lot to learn," said Samsonov with a sigh and fell into a reverie with his cheek propped on his fist. "Well, that's that. Let the free man be free. Sign the receipt and take your book if you want to sow."

Semyon was given his ticket and some cash—bounty, decoration money, ration allowance and his pay, in all over forty rubles, two yellow Kerensky notes and a few postage stamps, the current substitute for small change. He stuffed it all into an inside pocket specially stitched to his breeches, drew himself up, saluted the battery commander and turning left about, went out of the stable.

Six guns stood in the yard with limbers. Near them a strange sentry wearing a red ribbon across his cap paced up and down with a naked billhook. Semyon recognized his gun. He would have recognized it among thousands by the hundred and one marks as familiar to him as a baby's birth marks to its mother. Semyon's heart contracted.

"She was a good gun," he said, frowning seriously, to the strange sentry. "She fired three thousand eight hundred and nine live shells. All told."

And without waiting for a reply he swung out of the yard slinging the pack over his shoulder.

As he walked he sang a popular trench song to himself.

"August forest sighed in the flames;
February was the time
We marched from East Prussia
With the German at our heels."

CHAPTER XIII

At the Fence

The dogs had stopped barking long ago. The village cocks were crowing for the third time. But Semyon and Sophia could not tear themselves away from each other.

They had had their last kiss a good two hours before and Sophia had gone in behind the fence and latched the gate behind her. But there she stayed, near the fence, as though rooted to the spot.

"And what about your father?" whispered Semyon for the tenth time, again reaching over the fence to embrace the girl and cover her shoulder with the edge of his coat.

"Father came back from the front in the middle of October," she answered in a whisper for the tenth time.

"In a bad temper?"

"Worse than a dog."

"Did he mention me?"

"No."

"Maybe he did, only it slipped out of your mind?"

"Honest to god he didn't. Well, that's enough. So long. My feet are frozen. I'll run in."

"Wait a minute. Does the old man know I'm here?"

"He's not at home. He went to Balta market yesterday. Well, I'll be off. See, the chimneys are smoking."

"Wait, you've got plenty of time."

Semyon had a strong inclination to tell her everything that had happened at the front between him and her father; but thought perhaps it would be better not to. But he was consumed with impatience to find out Tkachenko's intentions.

He might be preparing to back out and break his soldier's word. Anything might be expected from a skunk like that.

Suddenly Sophia seized his hand and gripped it tight.

"What is it, sweetheart?" he asked tenderly, looking in her eyes.

"Sh. . . ." she whispered, scarcely louder than a breath, and listened. Sh . . . can't you hear something?"

Semyon turned his head. He heard cart wheels in the early morning hush. This sound had been audible for some time, a faraway, faint, monotonous jangle on the hard moorland road, barely noticeable before, now quite near. The ear could plainly distinguish the hoofbeats, the bouncing rattle of the wheels and the creaking of a bucket.

By now the cart was coming down the street towards the *khata*.

"It's father coming home from the market, the lord chastize me," said Sophia angrily. "That's what comes of your dawdling. The devil take you—I'm serious. Run along home." She flung her arms about his neck for the last time and rushed into the *khata*.

Semyon retired a few paces and hid at the fence. The cart pulled up. He heard a well-known voice, mocking and masterful:

"Eh, friends! Wife! Whoever's in, open the gate!"

Tkachenko, dressed in an officer's kalpak of grey fur and a cowled tarpaulin raincoat over his sheepskin, making him look too stout, towered above the cart, with a whip in his hands. Sitting near him on some sacks and muffled in a dilapidated leather coat was a thin, narrow-headed peasant, badly in need of a haircut. Semyon had never seen him before. As far as he could see in the poor light he was quite a young man.

"We're here," said Tkachenko, and touched his companion on the shoulder.

"I'm not asleep," said the other, without stirring.

The cart rattled through the gates which had been opened by a sleepy woman in an old skirt and bare feet.

"Who could it be?" ruminated Semyon as he walked home.

As he drew near to his own house he saw two figures, one inside, one outside the fence, and heard the quick, worldly-wise voice of Frosska:

"Well, that'll do. So long. My feet are frozen. I'll run in. It's time to light the stove."

"But wait a minute."

"The devil ran off with Anniut' all in a minute.[1] Good night and pleasant dreams."

"Hey, Frossichka!"

"Frossichka to some and Yefrossinya Fyodorovna to others. So long, once more. Or else our Semyon'll see us and get rough."

"Who with?"

"You."

"Me? Eh, the man's not born yet."

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[1] A popular Russian adage.

"Just you see. He'll just catch hold of you and swing his artillery belt with the brass buckle . . ."

"Don't try to frighten me with your soldier brother stuff. I could have gone to the front and thought nothing of it only my turn didn't come, that's all."

"Well, let's have a look at this fellow who's not afraid of soldiers," said Semyon in a formidable tenor as he popped up nearby.

The lanky figure started as though pricked from behind. The lad jumped back from the fence and hurtled down the street with his head down, waving his long arms to keep his balance.

Semyon tramped menacingly with his boots as if in pursuit. Frosska was helpless with laughter.

"Who's that?" asked Semyon sternly.

"Why, Mikola. One of the Ivasenkovs."

"The one that helped to mind Klembovsky's cows before the war?"

"That's him."

"Bah, why, wasn't he thirteen years of age then, for god's sake! I ask you! While we've been out there playing soldiers for four years all the young rips in the village have started courting. Have you been knocking about with him long, Frosska?"

"This is the first day," said the girl bashfully. "I'll go with him for another two or three years and then we'll see." She thought for a minute, then added: "Maybe I'll marry him."

"Who do you take after, Ginger?"

"I'm not ginger!"

"Then what are you?"

"My hair is chestnut."

"Oh, come off it! A fat lot of chestnuts you've seen in your life!"

"I've seen more than you. A sailor from Odessa's come to stay at Remenuks—he's the one who's hanging round Luba—he's off the dispatch boat *Adamant* and he brought some of those chestnuts for the girls, a pood, maybe one and a half, maybe two."

Semyon sat down on the step and rolled a cigarette.

"Listen, Frossya, sit down—let's sit here a bit. Old Tkachenko just came home from Balta market. And there was another fellow in the cart with him. Who is it, do you know?"

"In a leather coat all ragged?"

"Yes."

"That's the man he hired the other day."

"He's not from these parts by his looks."

"No, old Tkachenko picked him up on his way back from the front. I think he's from Poland or somewhere. A refugee you might say. He's a soldier too. The Germans occupied his province. He had nowhere to go after he had been demobilized."

"This war's upset things all right," sighed Semyon.

Brother and sister sat on a little longer, than yawned and went indoors. It was morning already. So there was no need to go to bed anyway.

"I'm thinking," said Semyon at dinner, working his cheek bones and wrinkling his brow in concentration. "I'm thinking of sending the matchmakers to Tkachenko about Sophia. What do you think, mamasha?"

His mother deliberately wiped her aluminum spoon on a piece of bread—since Semyon's return they had been eating dinner with aluminum spoons—and deliberately turned her long, bony face to her son.

"All I can say is, thank god and nothing more," she said quickly and crossed herself. "But will Tkachenko let our matchmakers in when they go?"

"We'll see about that," said her son significantly, arching his eyebrows. "Matchmakers have been let in before today."

And things began to move in the Kotko house.

CHAPTER XIV

The Matchmakers

On learning that Kotko was back from the front, whole and unscathed, Tkachenko said nothing, trying to appear unconcerned. But the veins in his strong face, as fine as fibers on blotting paper, stood out more plainly.

Of late Tkachenko had learned to keep his mouth shut. He worked on the farm all day; went down the cellar himself, watched, legs apart like a sergeant-major, how his laborer cleaned and watered the horses; fed them himself with the artillery ration of barley, measured timber for a new shed —in short, engrossed himself in the house as if to make up for the time lost in military service. All this he did without a word, with the unhurried application and precision of the trained long service man.

And he restrained himself till the evening, when his wife set a bowl of curd dumplings before him, an enamel mug of sour cream and a separate knife, fork and spoon (Tkachenko had put his house almost on an officer's footing) while she herself, as usual, took a humble seat near the door. Then he let himself go.

"Why it should be like that, I can't understand," he said with an exaggerated shrug. "Some people go to the front and get their heads knocked off with a shell right away. And others sit in their batteries all through the war, right to the last day and think it's just a big joke. There's something crazy about it." Tkachenko squinted at his wife. "What's the position now? Is Sophia through with him or has she still got that one on her mind?"

His wife wiped her eyes.

"Who knows what they are up to nowadays, Nikanor Vassilyevich! As things are now, all the girls are just running wild."

"Khivrya!" whooped Tkachenko at the top of his voice and swept the mug off the table with his fist.

At that very moment Semyon was looking for matchmakers, or elders as they were called. This was by no means a simple matter. One had to use brains. Really, it was no joke; you might invite elders without troubling who they were and the cantankerous warrant officer, for all you know, would have no truck with them and refuse to let them in. He must select respectable people, suitable for Tkachenko.

In general it was the proper thing for the elders to be drawn from the suitor's relatives or friends. But Semyon's kindred were nobodies.

True, he had a host of friends. But none of them—certainly not of those who had come back alive from the war—were any good for the job. As privates they had gone and as privates they had returned except one or two who had raised a laugh by bringing home lance-corporals' stripes.

And in his ticklish circumstances Semyon wanted elders who would leave Tkachenko no loopholes.

For two weeks, no less, Semyon racked his brains wondering whom to select. At last he made up his mind to pay his respects, in the first place, to that sailor fellow, Tsaryov, whom he had met at the sociable and since got

pally with, and, secondly, to the chairman of the village Soviet, the Bolshevik, Trofim Ivanovich Remenuk, but not by any chance the Remenuk whose melon patch was near Ivasenko's, and not the Remenuk who had had two sons killed in the infantry (as a matter of fact, half the village were Remenuks); but the Remenuk who had returned in 1917 from an indefinite term of hard labor for killing a village policeman.

Although sailor Tsaryov himself was a-wooing at this time and walked about like a man in a dream, to oblige a friend and also to miss no chance of having a nice time at a good wedding he agreed without hesitation.

Semyon related everything that had taken place between him and Tkachenko.

"Akh, the skunk! Well, what do you think of a skunk like that!" the sailor exclaimed almost in admiration. "It was the same with us in the Black Sea Fleet. We came up against sons of bitches like that, there was nothing for it but down with your rifle butt and overboard with 'em. I'm telling you. Well don't worry, matie. The girl's yours. We'll get you hitched up."

At first, Trofim Ivanovich Remenuk, the enormous fellow with two fingers missing from his right hand, and an old scar in place of an eye making his terrible face seem utterly blind, could not even understand properly what Semyon was after.

Towering over a tiny office table, surrounded by the leather jackets, greatcoats and Ukrainian smocks of visitors on business and without business, Trofim Ivanovich was officiating in the former premises of the village prefect, the clay floor scattered with documents of the old regime in sun-faded folders and scraps of Central Rada proclamations, a battered gilt frame that had formerly held a portrait of the tsar tucked behind the firwood cupboard.

Here, in these four walls, the will of the people was being briskly effected with the stern impartiality of the Revolution in the name of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.

The stamp of the village Soviet smoked over a candle; when affixed to a square of paper ruled aslant and covered with a crooked scribble, it endorsed, in soot, a truth which the village had dreamed of for centuries.

Trofim Remenuk stared at Semyon blankly. A thick wrinkle ran up his marred brow and rippled under the nakedness of his blue, shaven scalp.

Semyon repeated his request, Remenuk thought it over and consented, adding in the same breath: "Well, the soldier knows who to come to for his matchmakers. A fool—but a clever one."

CHAPTER XV

Uninvited Guests

On Saturday evening, a few days later, the headman and the sailor set out from Kotko's house at the other end of the village and made for Tkachenko's. They walked in the middle of the street and took their time. The women accompanied them with curious glances. The men nodded silently.

Tkachenko saw them while they were still a good way off. He realized immediately that these were the matchmakers. In their hands they had the batons sent by the suitor—an emblem of embassy—newly whittled sticks of white acacia. Furthermore, peering from the sailor's bosom was a bottle corked with a corn cob, while the headman carried a round, knotted wheatloaf of the finest ground flour under his arm.

Before Tkachenko could pull himself together properly the matchmakers were already outside the *khata,* tapping with their sticks, the sailor with a

peakless cap on the nape of his neck and the headman, a veritable cyclop in a tarpaulin coat with a flap and hood of enormous length and width.

"We are coming to see you, Nikanor Vassilyevich," said the headman, offering the ex-warrant officer his mutilated hand over the fence.

"You, Comrade Tkachenko, you—and nobody else—" the sailor began chattily, but the headman silenced him with a glance.

It must be noted that Remenuk had suddenly blossomed out as an expert on village customs. Once he had agreed to become a wedding elder he set about the job in a solid manner and omitted no niceties. He insisted that the suitor should hand him and the sailor a baton each, that Mother Kotko should bake a loaf, that the sailor should bring a bottle of the best home-distilled rum—everything due to the occasion, as the old custom required—without detriment to the dignity of the suitor while paying respect to the house of the maid.

Before setting out, Remenuk had read the impetuous sailor a long lecture on how he should behave and what he should say—likewise according to custom.

Kotko's mother could not contain her joy at such a capable matchmaker. It was no joke; here was a man who had spent all but twelve years in the horrors of hard labor under the tsar; he had lost the aspect of a peasant, yet remembered all the customs. You could realize how in the taiga, under the high Siberian stars, he must have dreamed of the home village, and its life.

Tkachenko thought for a moment and measured the guests with a sharp eye.

"At your service," he said.

With these words he removed the bar with his own hands and opened the gate. The headman and the sailor went through the gate although they could easily have gone in at the wicket. But such was the custom.

"Come into the room."

Tkachenko did not say "Come into the house." By this he gave the uninvited guests to understand that they were visiting a man accustomed to living in style, no Tom, Dick or Harry.

And quite right. Tkachenko's little house was not quite what you could call a *khata*; although it was built of clay and was camstoned and had little windows bordered with blue stuff like all other *khatas* in the village, still it lacked the artless simplicity which the Ukrainian *khata* gains from its thatched roof, and its earthern parapet hung with roses and a horse shoe nailed over the threshold for luck.

Tkachenko's house had a tin roof painted blue. A long bench stood in pla of the parapet and before the door was a porch, supported by six slender columns like the district post office.

All this gave the Tkachenko abode a somewhat official appearance.

The matchmakers exchanged glances. They nudged each other and followed the master into the house.

Here too everything was not as in other people's houses. Hanging over the camp bed which was covered with a new blanket was a long artillery great-coat and a service cap with a dark patch where the badge should have been. There was an office table. Around it were three birchwood chairs—the clumsy handiwork of the village carpenter—with high osier backs. Against the wall was a small, shop-made chest of drawers; on it stood a plaster vase in which were two plumes of dyed feather-grass, one a poisonous pink, and the other blue-green. On the wall, above the chest of drawers, visible in a narrow glassed-in frame was a glossy, lilac colored group photograph of a drill sec

tion on which if you looked closely you could see Tkachenko himself, as a young man, sitting before the commander on the ground in the front row, his legs crossed in new jack boots and spurs.

The windows were draped with tulle curtains, but there was not a single flower. It was a dull room.

"Excuse me," said Tkachenko. "Take a chair."

The host and the matchmakers sat down.

"Just like being in town," remarked the sailor looking cautiously askance at Remenuk.

This time however the headman seemed to approve of the sailor's diplomatic interjection. It was the custom to chat about various extraneous matters before getting down to business.

"Why is it, Nikanor Vassilyevich, that you never look in at the village Soviet?" inquired Remenuk, laying his loaf on the table and fondling it with his fingerless paw.

"Why not, I might drop in," replied Tkachenko, smoothing his whisker with his thumb and two fingers, pressed together as though for the sign of the cross. "Only I don't know what I can get for myself in the village Soviet. I'm not looking for other people's horses, I still have my own, thank god. And I can get along without other people's land in the same way."

"That's the land program of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Cadets," the sailor observed, shrugging his shoulders and turning to the headman. "He does not agree with our slogans: take back what was robbed from you. What do you say to that, Comrade Remenuk?"

"I say that among the local peasantry you still meet very ignorant people."

Tkachenko's dark eyes went yellow with rage. Every muscle stood out on his face. But that was all. There was nothing else to betray the warrant officer.

"And I say," he remarked casually, "maybe people have become too clever."

Here the conversation came to a full stop. The host and his guests said nothing for a long time. At last after he had kept quiet for as long as decency would permit, Tkachenko, taking his time, started talking about the new shed which he was going to put up.

But here the headman and the sailor suddenly strummed impatiently with their batons. Tkachenko feared this moment more than anything.

"A young prince sends you his respects," said the headman decisively.

"A man you know, Comrade Kotko, Semyon Fyodorovich," the sailor added hastily. "A man with everything in his favor, strong, and a bachelor, he could go now and take his pick of any of them. . . ."

"Oh, you!" said Remenuk in an ugly tone to the sailor. "Shut your trap for god's sake. Don't speak out of your turn!" then continued politely, turning to Tkachenko: "A young prince sends you his respects and wants us to find out from you, Nikanor Vasilyevich, if you will give him your daughter, Sophia Nikanorovna?"

"Why, that's the same thing," grumbled the sailor. "Isn't that what I'm saying?"

"Hold your horses . . . and we, his elders, add our respects and beg your consideration so that we won't have to go away empty handed back through the whole village and be a laughing stock."

Remenuk hit the nail on the head. It was not in the wily Tkachenko's power to say no to matchmakers like these. Tkachenko himself understood this. However, he hung fire, his chin propped on his fist.

"You've given me something to puzzle about," he drawled, frowning. "I wasn't expecting this."

If Sophia had been younger he could have put them off with that excuse. But the girl was nineteen, a critical age for a village girl; on the verge of spinsterhood.

"Give me time to think it over."

"What is there to think over?" grumbled the sailor, who hated all formality and red tape worse than the devil. "What more do you want? Is the girl willing? Yes. Is Semyon willing? Yes. And as far as papa is concerned, papa is willing too. Papa gave Semyon his word of honor on the Rumanian front. They had a talk there. Don't sit there saying nothing, papa, corroborate the facts now or deny them point blank."

"I don't go back on my word. What suits my daughter, suits me," said Tkachenko, without raising his eyes. "Let her speak for herself."

And with these words he left the room.

CHAPTER XVI

The Contract

Sophia was waiting tremulously for the fatal decision in the other half of the house. This was a spick and span chamber with a newly rubbed clay floor, with a brightly white-washed stove painted with potted flowers and crowned birds like peacocks. Hanging on nails around a shabby ikon in the Kiev style and about the walls were trusses and bags of strong smelling grasses and flowers: cornflowers, cummin and wormwood. On the stove was a little hill of poppy heads picked the previous years. Beside them were two wash basins ornamented with a wavy border; one of them heaped with blue poppy seeds, the other filled to the brim with dark honey, with bees' wings floating on the surface.

And this chamber was so unlike the room where the master of the house had his quarters, it was so charming and innocent, so nice, so coolly redolent of the Ukraine, that it was hard to believe that they were together in the same *khata* and under one roof.

Sophia sat with her mother on the floor near the hope chest which had been hurriedly opened. The matchmakers had barely set foot in the house when the women ran in here, crossing themselves and dropping their hairpins.

Sophia had managed to put on her new shoes, galoshes and a calico blouse. Her mother had no time to change.

Tkachenko came in and closed the door behind him.

"Well?" he said.

"Have pity on your daughter, Nikanor Vasilyevich."

"No one is talking to you," he whispered so that the people in the next room should hear no scandal, and gave the old woman a kick with his boot. "I'm asking you, Sonka! Well?"

Sophia leapt to her feet and leaned against the stove, upturning her face—all white and red. Her dry, cracked lips quivered.

"I'm willing," she cried in a broken voice and hid her face in her hands as though from a blow.

"Sh!" hissed her father. "You ninny. . . . Take your hands off your face. Don't blink. Sh. . . . I hear that you are willing but have you brains enough to understand what you're agreeing to? Who are you going to marry? What

sort of son-in-law are you providing me? Maybe you think that this carnival will go on in Russia for another ten years? Well, I'm telling you, put it out of your head. They've taken Klembovsky's land, shared out Klembovsky's cattle; Klembovsky's house is standing on the hill with the shutters up; and they are congratulating themselves, and singing songs. They think they can manage without a master, with convicts only. But I'm telling you maybe in a month or so everything will be as it was before, and what will you do with your lazy Semyon and the cows stolen from Klembovsky and the Klembovsky land? Do you want to land in court with the rest of them? Do you want a term of hard labor? Do you want to face a firing squad and disgrace me for the rest of my life?"

Sophia stood before her father with her large eyes fixed upon him.

He softened his tone, taking her silence for consent.

"Listen," he said, "don't believe anything he says. I understand things better than he. Thank god. Soon the Germans will be here and after them his majesty the emperor won't have long to wait. I heard it from trustworthy people, in Balta, and they know. Just wait," he pitched his voice still lower. "If god is good a real man will come along for you then."

Fear sparkled in her eyes.

"I'm not asking you for any other man," she flashed and suddenly cried out again with the daring of desperation: "Leave me alone, father, because whatever happens I will marry no one but Semyon."

He went close to her. She planted her palms in his chest and pushed him away with all her might.

"You are crazy!"

"You are crazy yourself! Don't touch me, go in, the matchmakers are there waiting for you."

He looked aghast at her frantic face. She had bitten her lips until they bled. But Sophia had forgotten her fears. She was fighting blindly for her happiness. He had never thought her capable of such will.

"Sh, the devil take you. Don't make a scandal in my house. Wash your mug and join us."

He returned to the elders, trying to show them by his whole bearing that nothing had happened worth mentioning.

"Women's tears," he said, nodding towards the door with an ironic smile.

"It's nothing uncommon," said the sailor. "Just salt water. Like we have in the Black Sea. Nothing more."

Sophia appeared with her mother. Dangling in the old woman's ears were large silver earrings which looked like slices of onion. Painfully new boots were squeaking on her feet. Sophia's face was expressionless.

The women curtsied to the guests.

"A young prince sends his respects," said the sailor in a slightly irritated tone, "a man you know by the name of Kotko, Semyon Fyodorovich What is your answer?" Here he looked at Remenuk. "Is that all right?"

"It'll do."

Tkachenko looked covertly at his daughter with eyes raging over his twisted smile. He still had hopes. She had only to sing:

"Do not come to me,
Don't plague me,
If you don't love me
Leave me alone."

This would have meant refusal.

Sophia angularly moved her shoulder, straightened her ill-fitting blouse and knelt before her father and mother.

"Give me your blessing for Semyon."

"The show's over," said the sailor and put his bottle on the table.

CHAPTER XVII

The Suitor

As soon as the matchmakers had left Semyon at home to await his fate and set out for Tkachenko, Frossya raised a frantic bustle. She had her hands full.

First of all she had to spy at the window of Tkachenko's house and watch how matters were shaping. Secondly every bit of news had to be broadcast through the village immediately. Her third and last job was to assemble as quickly as possible the friends of the maid so that they could make their appearance in Tkachenko's *khata* at the right moment.

Frossya dashed about the village like one demented. Her shawl slipped from her head. Her ginger plait flew behind her shoulders. Her vivid eyes were fixed in her desperate face which was so red that it might have been rubbed with a brick. A stranger would have thought she was the one being courted.

"Hey, Frosska, have you heard anything there?" cried the women behind their fences. "Have they made the contract yet?"

"Not yet!" she replied, getting her breath with difficulty. "They are only talking yet." And she rushed back to Tkachenko's *khata* for another turn at the window.

And after a minute she was running again, waving her long arms.

"They're making the contract! The contract! The contract, as I'm alive!"

Sophia had hardly tied the towels embroidered with red cotton to the sleeves of the matchmakers, and the mother taken Remenuk's loaf in her trembling hands, when her friends came in, in squeaking shoes, tremulous with embarrassment and curiosity. They surrounded the maid. Then some calves' foot jelly appeared on the table, some green leaved peppercorns and four glasses.

The sailor groaned and with a wink at the girl, his own girl, Lubke, filled up for the first round.

"Now, let us, comrades. . . ."

But the headman threw him a withering glance.

"Damn," murmured the sailor sadly.

The headman took the glass with his three surviving fingers, thought a moment and said: "Let them be happy. Here's to you to celebrate the contract. I humbly ask you not to refuse."

He carefully touched his glass to the others, quaffed, and ate a green peppercorn. His example was followed by the sailor, but he did not take a snack because he thought it was below his dignity. Tkachenko drank without looking at anybody. The mother merely touched the glass with her puckered, lilac colored lips, coughed because she was not used to spirits, swallowed the wrong way and burst into tears of happiness.

The sailor grabbed his glass.

"Wait a minute, you, for god's sake," said the headman. "Here is a man from the Black Sea fleet and doesn't know anything yet. Just like a child. Put the liquor down."

Here Sophia's friends burst into song.

"Why are you sitting there, matchmakers?
Why don't you go home?
So far Sonichka is ours, not yours,
Although engaged, she is not wed;
Ours she still is."

"Now you can fill up," said the headman. "Is that clear?"

"Why shouldn't it be clear? Of course it's clear." And the sailor filled up gloomily.

Everybody drank the second round.

Sophia's mother brought another loaf in exchange for the one which she had received from the headman and gave it to him. Then the matchmakers bowed themselves out and went to tell the suitor that his proposal had been accepted.

Semyon waiting at home with his mother went out again and again into the yard to see if the matchmakers were coming down the street.

By this time the whole village knew that the contract had been made. Only Semyon did not know. Custom forbade him to go out and ask.

At last the matchmakers came in sight. Semyon saw the headman and the sailor, with the towels on their sleeves, almost half a mile off. His gunner's eye stood him in good stead!

"You can be happy," said Remenuk, entering the yard and handing Tkachenko's loaf to Semyon. "We have made the contract for you. The old devil twisted and turned, but we got him against the wall in the end."

"You thank me, mate," the sailor interrupted. "I dropped the skunk such a hint that the ground was smoking under his feet."

Semyon and Semyon's mother bowed deeply and gravely to the matchmakers.

"Well," said the headman, "I've lost the whole day with these stupidities of yours. I have work waiting for me in the Soviet. I have still to draw up the lists of Klembovsky's farm machines. Or else folk wont' be able to sow in time. So we will get this business over. I have made the contract, and now I will arrange the betrothal to finish it off, and after that you must look after yourself. Only for god's sake don't drag me into church with you, I won't go."

The concluding part of *I, Son of the Working People* will appear in the next issue.

James Hanley

The Moneylender

When he knocked louder the door gave to his touch. It was a swing door and in his excitement he had not noticed it. He passed inside.

A bare room. But there was the window, set in the stout mahogany partition, covered with dust, a glass of extraordinary thickness. Beyond the window a black shadow, which when he pressed his face against the glass became a desk. He began rubbing the dust from the glass. He could see more clearly now. It was littered with papers, a battered-looking typewriter stood in the middle of them. There was a dirty cup and saucer, a greasy plate containing half a sausage, and a slice of stale, fly-blown bread. So this was the moneylender's town office, thought Peter Fury. This was where Mrs. Ragner saw her clients from the city.

The office was empty. No doubt of that at all, though for some reason or other he suddenly struck the window with his fist. Yes. She was out. Ragner and Co. had for the moment ceased to exist. He looked round and discovered behind the swing door a sort of desk, a single piece of wood attached to the wall, the dull grey wallpaper torn, and the plaster loose. Not a very business-like place. And on this rickety-looking shelf, a much perforated piece of blotting paper affixed with brass pins, that like the broken steel pen attached to a piece of string were corroded with rust. The piece of blotting paper completely absorbed him. It was covered with signatures. What a number of people must have stood in that bare room, that desolate-looking room with its stale smell. And no doubt one and all had stood at this queer desk and used the steel pen. He leaned against the wall and surveyed the ceiling. He could hear footsteps coming and going on the stairs. The room took on an added desolateness now, and he heard the continous tread of feet on the stairs. He wondered what time the woman could come in. He went to the stout glass window again and looked into the office. If he liked, yes, if he liked he could break that window and climb through. The paper-littered desk fascinated him. Ragner and Co.'s mirror. In spite of the summer's day there was something cold about the air of the place. Something more than mere coldness. It was like a place where no one has ever stood or breathed. Suddenly the door opened and a thin little woman came in. She looked tired, her expression which hitherto had been one of complete boredom suddenly changed. She shot a suspicious glance at the youth, then calmly examined him from head to foot. Peter looked at her. "Another client," he thought. He smiled at her, though he hardly knew why he did so. She did look comical, of course. Yes. Another faded, worn, bedraggled client. How pitiful it was. And there was something about her that made him feel ashamed of himself. He knew not

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Note: An excerpt from *The Wall*, third volume in the *Fury Family* trilogy. *The Wall* will be published in book form later this year.

This excerpt deals with a family in a crisis of poverty. It is a powerful study of contrasts, the torment of the son driven to crime, and the ordeal of the moneylender's collector who comes to attach goods he considers not worth the trouble.

why. The worn-looking client suddenly asked: "What do you want?" Her voice was wheezy, she seemed to squeak out her words. "Oh! I'm just me," Peter said, and lazily contemplated her as she stood holding the door. This only increased the little woman's suspicion. "What are you doing here?" she chirped at him. She now stood inside, her back to the door, the hem of her dirty-looking grey skirt trailing the floor. She wore a second-hand lady's hunting coat and a grey straw hat with imitation carnations done into a little bouquet at the side. Peter held her eye.

"I came to see Mrs. Ragner," he said. He stood, hands in his pocket, feet well apart, still surveying the new arrival. "She isn't in," the woman said. Then a fit of coughing seized her. "Can't you see she isn't in"—cough-cough-cough—"and she won't be in today. She has other business to attend to, today. So it's no use your standing there glaring at me, young man." She took a bunch of keys from the capacious pocket of her skirt and went to the door near the window. She inserted a key in the lock. The door opened without a sound. She went into the office. He heard her put the keys back, jingling, into her pocket. The door banged in his face. He went and looked at her through the window. Who was this person? He saw her pick up the half sausage and put it into her mouth. Then she began to tidy the desk. She was in profile now. She was evidently enjoying the sausage. She had her eye on him, too. Her hands were pressed flat upon the desk while she went on masticating the meat. Then she commenced to eat the bread. Her attitude as she stood there, her dress, her comical, yet pathetic looking face, her weird hat with its flaming carnations, all these things had but one effect on Peter. He laughed, and she heard him laugh. She never moved. He rapped on the window and called out impatiently: "Are you sure she won't be in today?" to which question the woman barked back: "Are you deaf?" Then she took off her second-hand hunting coat to reveal an even slighter body clad in a blue print blouse. She rolled up her sleeves. With one movement of her hands she swept the desk clear of its papers and flung them into the waste-paper basket. Then she went to a cupboard in the wall and took out a large duster. "Why, it's a cleaner," said Peter to himself. "And the airs she has. Poor creature."

He stood, face pressed against the glass. The woman turned round and looked at him with a surprised expression upon her face which seemed to say: "What! You still there!" She dropped the duster and came out. Completely ignoring Peter she went straight out into the corridor and called in her high squeaky voice, "Ted! Te—d!"

Almost at once and as though he had been waiting for this signal, a tall heavily built man wearing a serge jacket as used by sailors and a hard hat came running up the stairs. "Calling, Liz?" he shouted as he ran. The woman nodded her head. She passed into the room again, followed by Ted. "Aye," he said. The woman jerked her thumb at Peter. She said nothing. She went in and resumed her cleaning, Ted looked down at Peter. "Wodjer-want?" he said gruffly. "Nothing from you," replied Peter. He leaned against the wall, hands still in his pocket. The man looked at him for a moment or two—and then said: "Mrs. Ragner is not here today." He shouted loudly: "Did you tell this feller Lizzie wouldn't be here today?" and opened the door into the inner office.

"Yes, I told him, but his ears are plugged up."

The man looked at Peter again. "Aye! Well—that's how it is, d'you see. You can't see anybody today. Holiday, you see. My missus is the cleaner

here. So I expect you'd best clear. That's it, isn't it," and he grinned at Peter.

"Certain she won't be down?"

"As certain as my name's Ted Lively. Nice day?"

Without a word Peter went out. For some strange reason or other Mrs. Lively had begun to sing. He paused on the stairs to look back at Mrs. Ragner's office. Ted was standing watching him.

Peter Fury went down towards the river. He stood looking at the ferry-boats, at the continuous stream of people who passed up and down the bridges. Then he turned his steps north, slackening his pace. He was on the Dock Road. At the first gate he went in. He wandered about from one quay to another, passing lorries and drays, runners' traps and handcarts; seeing ships, tugs, dredgers, tankers. He was caught up in the life of the docks, he filled his lungs with the salt sea air. He sat down on a butt. If one could only fall asleep for a long, long time and then wake up and find it was all a dream? His mother and Mrs. Ragner, Mr. Corkran and his father, Anthony and his accordion, Sheila and the man in the black coat, Mr. Kilkey and his bald head. If one could wake up with one's mind swept clean of all the events, all the people, all the things that festered like sores upon the horizon of his mind. If one could forget beastliness, forget one's lies. What was home, family? Just a place where one ate and slept, and growled and listened. Home! Cramped—foggy. Everybody lying to outdo one another in sheer lying, parading their misery, hiding their real selves. And always moving about in an everlasting fog. He walked across bridges, through sheds, under hoists. He passed out of one gate and entered by another. His stride was hurried yet aimless. He didn't really know where he was going. Behind him Hatfields and in front of him the sea. He knew that he was walking further and further away from something, something black and deep and incomprehensible. "I must go home," he kept telling himself. "I must really go back now," and all the time his steps were carrying him further away from it. He could put all those things behind him, far behind, but their odor remained. Shame and humiliation and hatred kept stride with him. Dad was miles away, smoking his pipe, quite contented. Anthony didn't give a hang really. Only waiting his chance to get away again. Why hadn't he stayed away himself? Yes, why hadn't he? His one chance to turn his back upon it all simply thrown away. He had given in to his mother. She sat quite still, never moved. These thoughts hemmed him in, became maddening circles revolving round his brain. Yes. His mother remained rooted. Hatfields, the whole world had revolved about her, it had dizzied her, and now she was still. The world that was Banfield House was spinning round her, around number three Hatfields. He found himself on the Dock Road again. How far had he walked? He didn't know. Where was he, exactly, and what time was it? Suddenly he was standing in front of a small stone chapel. He stopped to read the board outside.

It was a Catholic chapel. He went inside and sat down. How quiet and peaceful it was here! Perhaps that was why he had so often discovered his mother sitting at the back of St. Sebastian's at home. So quiet and still. The air was heavy. Ten years ago, even less than that he had used to kneel at the altar in St. Sebastian's and serve the mass. Suddenly he found himself saying: *"Suscipio domine sacrificium de manibus tuis, ad laudem et gloriam nominis tui. Ad utilitatem quoque nostrae ecclesiae."* Why, he believed he could recite the whole mass. He was alone in the chapel. He began reciting aloud. As the words fell from his lips he seemed to be carried back those

ten old years, to be standing robed in white behind the priest clothed in the rich vestments of his office. He could smell the incense-laden air, the chapel seeming to vibrate to the sea of murmurous sounds as the congregation rose for the last gospel. In the midst of these reflections he exclaimed under his breath: "I wish I'd eaten those sandwiches. I'm as hungry as a lion. Let's see." He took out the money again. Two shillings and five pennies. "I'd better not stay here," he thought. And then he was on the road again.

Five times he had turned his steps towards Hatfields, but each time he had retreated. Even to think of Hatfields, of his utter inability to do anything, was paralyzing. He thought, too, in moments when his utter helplessness seemed to shriek at him, he thought of Sheila, of the man, of the shattered illusion, of the lies, of the way she had led him on, mocked his simple faith in her. Anger flamed again, and angry thoughts cooled, and there was nothing left but sheer wretchedness. Was there something so devilish about Hatfields that he was afraid to go home? No. But out here, walking the streets, he was free. Free of that everlasting fog that smothered the life of the house, the life of all Hatfields. Here walking free, he could ponder on everything, even his wretchedness. At home he could think of nothing but the same old thing. Money. Money. Money. Money struck at everything with terrific power. "Yes," he was thinking, "I could even hate her now." For his mother would think only of the disgrace. There was all. The disgrace. "No doubt she'll pray to Saint Anthony and everything will come all right," he said savagely. Would it? He burst out laughing. "How long have I been out?" he asked himself. Since half past five that morning. "I really don't want to go back. I hate the whole idea. And of course the whole bloody thing began through me." Yes, through him. "That's right. It's really my business."

He was now back in the Salter Road again. The air was heavy with the smell of rope and tobacco. Of course. There was the big customs warehouse just in front of him. He went on. The clock of the Gelton Town Hall suddenly came into view. He stopped for a moment to gaze up at it, then walked on. He stopped again at the end of the square. A policeman was standing behind him, hands clasped behind his back, raising himself up and down upon his toes. His action was so simple and natural that it seemed he was born for nothing else but to stand at the corner of the square and raise himself up and down, up and down upon his toes. Peter turned and looked at him. Somehow he felt the officer's eyes upon his back. All about him the same streets, the same crowds, the same senseless whirl. Peter walked away. Twice the officer looked after him, and then he was lost to sight in the moving crowd, had become one of the hectic circle. Something sharp jabbed him in the side. He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out the sheath-knife. "Blast the bloody thing," he growled, and as he passed the public gardens he flung it over the railings where it landed noiselessly in some flower-beds, the Corporation's proud array of tulips. He stood by the railings. Finally he sat on the coping stone. It seemed now that all thought had stopped. He simply couldn't think any longer. People passed to and fro but they were quite indifferent. They didn't even look at him. He stared at the many feet that passed him, there was something stupid about the way he looked at them, never raising his head, content to see only the feet, the many different kinds of feet of the people who hurried by.

It struck him immensely that everybody should be in such a terrific hurry, almost as though they were being hunted. And of a sudden he seemed to be standing outside himself, to be contemplating the seated figure against the railings, to be watching his wretched self sitting on the stone. Sometimes

the unconscious action of one's soul determines the body's movements. He raised himself slowly from the railings and with hunched shoulders walked their length, keeping close to them, his attitude furtive, his head bent low, and when somebody glanced at him as they passed he crept closer still to the railings. He reached the big iron gate and stood there looking about him. The gate was locked. Looking through he could see people seated on benches in the distance. This gate was never opened, it was a very old gate, a souvenir of the old park which Gelton Corporation had decided was not in keeping with the times. They had in fact moved the park further on. What Peter looked on was stony ground. He climbed the gate and walked right across to the other side. A swiftly moving tram was moving down the East Road. He ran after it, swung himself aboard and climbed to the top deck. The tram was going south. He didn't seem to know he had jumped on. It roared and rattled its way through the town. It was now half past three o'clock.

Daniel Corkran felt his cheek where the woman had struck him with her open hand. Then he calmly sat down on a chair near the window. He took from his pocket a large clean white handkerchief and slowly wiped his face, the whole of his face with a slow circular movement of his hand. He wiped that flush from the cheek, he wiped away in a quiet casual manner that sting of the woman's hand, and the memory of it, as he wiped away its meaning and its purpose. This temporary besmirchment of his person was not and could not be humiliating. Daniel Corkran had not expected it, yet at the same time it came as no surprise. Slowly, his eyes fixed upon a broken tile in the floor, he folded up the handkerchief and replaced it in his pocket. When he did look up he found he was alone. And this time Mr. Daniel Corkran was surprised. He was actually alone in the kitchen of No. 3 Hatfields. Then he heard voices talking in the back kitchen. The woman was speaking. "I'm simply not going to do a thing. I won't move. So there! I'll do *no* more."

And the son:

"Don't be acting the fool any longer. Haven't you gone on long enough? It's quite plain, isn't it? They intend to get what they want." The son's voice grew louder. Mr. Corkran lay back in his chair, sprawled his legs, pushed his shiny hard hat to the back of his head and began humming a tune between his teeth. His eyes took in everything. The mantlepiece with its gaily colored caddies at each end. "Tin. Cheap," he thought. "The paint's coming off." He saw the big fire that was burning in the grate. "Extravagant," he said under his breath. Then he went on with his humming. The voices in the back kitchen had suddenly ceased. He saw the great patch in the wallpaper against which the black chair of Anthony Mangan had stood for so long. He looked at the table. A long strong table, its surface scrubbed white. "Clean table, anyhow," he said to himself. His eyes wandered across its surface, noting the knot-holes, and at the various corners, the signatures cut into the wood. J. F. Friday. Jan. 1900. "Who was J. F.?" And much bolder in design D. F., as though the person had slashed his signature into the wood. "H'm!" he said. "D. F. H'm!" And M. F. A very old table. No doubt it could tell a good tale. A good stout table in fact. "None of your cheap wood there," Daniel Corkran was saying behind his teeth. "Prosperous days." He gave a little laugh. The voices in the back kitchen were audible once more. Oh! and there was a peculiar thing, a wooden thing shaped like a shamrock. A pipe rack. "H'm! Not worth much." He spat and scraped his foot. "Twopence." His eyes moved slowly round. He was looking at the curtains in the window. "Dirty." And the window sashes absolutely devoid of any paint. A

maroon spot here and there and that was all. The tiles were very red, their clean surface had a sort of shimmer about them, as though the cleaner had left her energy stamped upon them. But he thought the broken tile rather spoiled the whole effect. And there was a black horsehair sofa. H'm! Well, that really was ancient, and how dilapidated it was too. Very old-fashioned. One was paying it a compliment to sit on it at all. But he wouldn't do that. Mr. Corkran had no reason whatever for liking sofas, especially horsehair ones. They harbored fleas, and fleas he regarded with the greatest horror. He once noticed a flea lying on Mrs. Ragner's blouse and was so upset that he spilled the ink over the big black ledger. Well, honestly, there hardly seemed anything in the place at all. But he wished they would come in out of that "bloody back kitchen." "We'll lose on this, no doubt about it," he was saying to himself. "Still, there's the parlor suite, and the upstairs stuff. Maybe something worth picking up there. But I wish she'd come on here. Not that I mind personally. It's herself I'm thinking of, making it so difficult, and it all reacts on her in the end. Poor people are rather silly." It seemed so ridiculous, him sitting there alone. If only she came in and gave him the word. In any case he could wait. He was used to that sort of thing. But he did want to go into the parlor. If he remembered rightly they did have a new parlor suite. He thought it was a red plush affair. Then he seemed to see the suite quite clearly in his mind. "It's cheap stuff. Dear, dear! What taste the poor have. All they think of is color. Bright colors."

Suddenly, before he was aware of it, Mrs. Fury was standing in the kitchen. She stood with her back to the man, leaning over the fire. She stirred a stew in a big iron pan. Mr. Corkran's eyes followed the movement of her arm which was bare to the elbow, the other arm was raised, the fingers of the hand clutching the edge of the mantleshelf. Mr. Corkran glanced at his watch. A quarter to twelve. And a woman bent over a fire stirring a pot. An ordinary everyday affair. Not so for Danel Corkran. He realized that she must be thinking deeply upon something. He could tell that by the way she held her head. To him her attitude was that of a person suddenly struck from behind. He moved in the chair, the chair creaked. He was speaking all of a sudden. "Of course there isn't the slightest need, mam, not the slightest to interfere with the ordinary business. I can see that you want to get your dinner. Please don't mind me. Besides, I believe my employer will be here any minute now, and then I'll be able to go. I hate to inconvenience people, I mean—oh, but it really doesn't matter. I'll go into the parlor." He half rose from the chair, he had not the slightest intention of going into the parlor. Mr. Corkran liked kitchens, not parlors. Parlors were for one kind of people, kitchens for another. He always felt at home in a kitchen. Mrs. Fury lifted the pot from the fire and without even a glance in the man's direction went out into the back kitchen. Her action so surprised him that he at once got up and began pacing up and down the floor. He heard the noise of crockery. Through the half open door he glimpsed plates on a table near the sink. Then be saw a hand and that was all, for suddenly the door was slammed to with a kind of a vicious swing of a raised arm. "So that's how it is," he muttered and went and sat down in the chair again. Judging by the silence they were already eating in the back place. Mr. Corkran did not feel uncomfortable, only a little peeved. He deliberately walked off into the parlor and stood by the window.

He thought of nothing in particular, looking through the lace curtains into the dusty and noisy street. And every minute he hoped with an almost fervent hope to see Mr. Spencer's cab containing Mrs. Ragner roll up to the door.

"The trouble is there is nothing you can tell this woman. No, sir, no telling her anything. She believes nobody except herself. If only she knew what she was like, but she doesn't and that's the pity. Aye. A pity. Christ! They can drag airs out of their misery. Well, damn it all, it looks as though I'll have to postpone my own dinner after all, if she doesn't turn up pretty soon. Hang it all I half believe the thing's gone too far already. She was asking for it anyhow, serve her bloody well right, letting the thing go on and on. I wonder . . . I believe I know . . . No. Perhaps I'm wrong. One woman is rather difficult, but two are impossible. Now if only she had left this to me it would have been quite different, but she didn't, got pig-headed and she won't get all her money back either. Thought I was getting to know too much. Silly bitch."

While he sat there reflecting Anthony Fury came in. He, like his mother, never bothered to look at the man standing in the window. He completely ignored him. He went to a cupboard and took out a canvas holdall and went out again. So far as he was concerned Mr. Corkran didn't exist at all. A door banged again. Daniel Corkran jumped. If there was anything he hated, one of them was banging doors. He went back into the kitchen again. Where was she? Why the devil wasn't she here? God! If he weren't punctual she'd soon let him know about it. "But Elizabeth's so used to keeping people waiting. One has to allow for that." He took a blue form from the inside pocket of his coat, examined it critically, nodded his head and went back to the kitchen. The banging door still seemed to bang in his brain. It seemed as though an undercurrent of sheer violence were weaving itself about the place.

"Sheer bad temper," he said. Then he called out gruffly: "D'you mind if I look over the upper room?" and followed this up by going into the lobby and standing at the foot of the stairs. There was no reply. For the first time that morning Mr. Corkran felt infuriated. He placed his hand over his inside coat pocket and felt for the paper. He wouldn't bother to look at it again. It was there, that was the main thing. The seat of his power. Slowly he climbed the stairs. His hard hat still rested precariously on the back of his head. He looked far from business-like. Two buttons of his vest were undone, his tie spilled over the vest, his hands were clenching the lapels of his open and flapping coat.

Orthodox methods of procedure were not in Daniel Corkran's line. What he called his "technique" was the spice to his work. He had a technique for cautions and ultimatums, just as he had a technique for advice and threads. Method, yes, so far as Mrs. Ragner was concerned, method and order, but for his side of the business, his "technique." He stepped into the front room and looked around. "Cheap stuff again," he said, surveying the oilcloth covered floor. "H'm."

Then the altar erected on the shelf in the right hand corner attracted his attention. He walked up and looked at it—looked at it with a kind of hard squint. "H'm! Jesus," he said. There were faded flowers in the glass vases. The browned stalks hung dejectedly over the vase tops. The light was burning. "Flowers," he said. "H'm! And a lamp. What a waste of money." He laughed. "I suppose they get a kick out of it anyhow." The bed appalled him. A monster of a bed and it too was old. Castorless, the iron crews had sunk into the floor. Impossible to remove. One with the room, the building, the whole street. "Nothing there but history," he said, sucked his lips in a peculiar way and then went onto the landing. He went into another room. It was the room in which Peter slept. His quick eye noticed the badly stained wall,

the cheap iron bed, the pathetic looking dressing table with its plywood back, books scattered about the floor. He examined the table, opening and shutting the drawers, the while his eyes noted their contents with a sort of malevolent curiosity. He looked behind it, moved the table slightly and a shower of plaster dust sent clouds of dust in the air. It covered his hard hat, his black suit, it got in his eyes. "Oh! Christ what's this. A grain chute," and he hurried from the room. He went into the smaller room where Anthony Mangan had used to sleep. He gave it one look, shrugged his shoulders and went downstairs again, saying to himself: "Bugger it, she'll lose on this lot. She might well have let it go on. Luck isn't what you have, it's what's coming. That's it." He was in the kitchen again. "Damn and blast! What on earth was keeping this bloody woman!" Then he saw Mrs. Fury, the door was wide open.

She was sitting looking out into the back yard. "Almost like a stage setting," he told himself. He looked out at her and exclaimed: "Excuse me, mam, can I came in? Sorry to be such a worry, you know, but it isn't my fault really. I'm all for promptitude and business-like procedure, d'you see, but Mrs. Ragner's late. She must be delayed by something. My difficulty is that I'm getting hungry and I want to get her on the 'phone if it's at all possible. I can't very well leave, can I?" He gave another little laugh. "It is most trying, I can assure you, but I was just wondering whether your son," he stopped suddenly for something in her glance made him change his mind at once, "you see I'll have to ring her up at the office. That's how it is." He stepped across to the wringing-machine and leaned his back on it. He kept his hands in his pockets. "Very distressing," he said. "Very distressing. I was just looking at that there wall of yours, mam. You ought to see your landlord about that. Catch your death of cold. Is that the lad who fell off the mast?" He pointed a finger to where Anthony Fury was standing outside the yard door. He was looking up and down the entry as though expecting somebody.

The woman raised her head. She looked at Corkran with a wooden expressionless face. She said nothing. This being nothing exceptional to Daniel Corkran he went on in a sort of drone: "Not a bad-looking chap that either. You've reared some sons, haven't you, mam? Well . . . ?"

Feeling a sudden itch in the middle of his back he began rubbing it up and down against the wooden roller of the mangle, perhaps he had sat too near the horse-hair sofa after all, horror that it was. He went on: "Well, well . . . aye," and the rest became a mere mumble. His eyes now rested on the woman's feet. He laughed inwardly. "What feet," he thought, "almost like an elephant's. Oh! Christ damn the woman—damn and blast her—damn and blast them both—this wooden dummy—" and that irritating vacillating employer of his. Was this a bloody joke? He was hungry. Really hungry. Suddenly the lips of the dummy moved. She said in a voice that seemed to come from far away: "Can't you move?"

"Move, mam! I wish I could. But this is the most exacting of my many duties. How on earth can I until my employer comes? Orders are orders, mam," and he looked across at the stewpan on the stove.

So that's how it was. He had to sit here, sit and sit and wait and wait, until that woman came. Mrs. Fury picked up a ladle, filled it with stew, cut a slice of bread and took it to the kitchen table. She filled a glass with water and laid it beside the plate. Then she returned to the back kitchen. "Eat that," she said.

She opened the back kitchen door and went outside, and stood in the

middle of the yard. Mr. Corkran stood up, looked out at her and then sat down again. He began to eat the stew. Half-past one! Well, he had half a mind to go out now and to phone the office. She must have gone down to the office after all. All well and good, but what about Mr. Daniel Corkran in the matter! Didn't he count! "Confound her! Here I am, sitting like a trussed fowl, awaiting her pleasure." He threw down the knife and fork in disgust. Was she trying to make a fool of him! Then he shouted: "Stiffen the woman! She hasn't the slightest knowledge of how to be business-like. She ought to have come down here and seen the woman, and then I could have gone off and arranged for Truslip's men to bring the van along." It was simply disgusting. Did she think he had no feelings at all? He pushed away the plate, saying loudly: "She would do this, of course—give me dinner and make it a bloody sight more awkward."

He got up. The sight of this still figure standing in the yard, and whose raised head gave him the impression that she must be trying to see over the roof, so irritated him that he immediately went out into the yard. "Excuse me, mam—I really have to slip out and 'phone my employer. She must have forgotten me." Smiling into her face, he added in a sort of consolatory tone: "You can carry on in the ordinary way, mam, we don't want to interfere in your private affairs."

He fixed his hat on his head and went quickly down the yard. He left the door wide open. A sudden gust of wind blew it closed again. Daniel Corkran went into Mr. Doherty's shop and asked if he could use the 'phone. Mr. Doherty said: "Certainly," and Corkran immediately picked up the 'phone and asked for the town office of Elizabeth Ragner. He was angry. To have been sent to that place—that place of all places, and to have been told to wait—"Oh!"—"Hello. Hello.—Ragner! Yes." He shouted loudly into the 'phone. "Yes. Yes. Damn!—R - A - G - NER. RAG - NER. Yes. Yes." Pause. "What! No reply! Oh hell! Are you sure? Ragner. Yes. Ragner. No!—Blast! All right. Right-o. Give me Bank 62, please. Yes. Yes. Same name, Ragner. Bank 62." His anger increased. He wanted to hurl the 'phone against the wall. "Hello! Yes! What? No reply! Ring again, please. The name's Ragner. BANK!" He seemed to scream into the 'phone. "Bank—BANK—B-A-N-K, Yes. Yes. Of course—of course! I understand. Damn—I———"And he went on swearing under his breath. White-faced, hands trembling, he stood holding the receiver. Then he put it down with a sudden jolt. Damn, bugger and blast the business.

"Here!" Absent-mindedly he drew fourpence from his pocket and spread the coppers across the counter. "Thanks. Good day." Then he rushed out of the shop. Simply extraordinary! It had never happened before. He had distrained many a time—yes, many and many a time—but this! This sending him down and telling him to wait until she arrived—well, it took the biscuit. The sheer bloody biscuit. "All right," he said. "All right." If there was one thing he would *not* do, he would not go back to that house. No, sir! No bloody sir! Not to Hatfields. Offering him dinner! Christ! What was wretchedness coming to at all? Offering him Irish bloody stew! If it had been—Oh, what the hell was the use of thinking about it. "Well, I'll go straight back there. Yes, sir—and I'll have something to say to her! She's made me feel just like a piece of shite. That's what *she* was. Sitting in that mouldy, moth-eaten house, with its crazy altar and dead flowers, and stinks coming through all the bloody windows, and the damned wall falling to pieces, and the whole bloody lot—yes—the whole stinking bloody lot wouldn't

raise more than twenty-seven pounds—no—I'd say thirty roughly. Oh! I could choke her for her stupidity."

He hurried to the end of the King's Road. There he caught a tram to Banfield Road. He leaned almost drunkenly in his seat, head lolling to the jerky movements of the tram, looking out through the dirty window and seeing nothing in particular, except one stream of blur, which represented houses, shops, and scattered groups of people. The jerky rhythm of the tram seemed to attune to the jerkiness of his own thoughts and reflections. He had been sent to Hatfields, and his orders were to wait for Mrs. Ragner, who according to her own plans was going to come down about eleven in Mr. Spencer's cab. There she was going to inform Mrs. Fury that settlement-day had arrived, and Mr. Corkran, armed with his distress warrant, would assess, and having done this to the satisfaction of Mrs. Ragner, he would go off for the Truslip van. That was what Daniel Corkran called "ordinary business." The only thing directly concerned, so far as he could see, was principle. He agreed on that point. It was everything, the breath, the life, the flesh and blood of their business relations, but where lay the principle now? It didn't seem to lie anywhere except deep in the mud. Worse—yes, worse, the whole job was a bungle, a half-hearted attempt, a pathetic assertion, a complete failure. It riled him to think of it. But where the devil was she? That was the important thing now. The Fury world receded into the background. His concern grew. Two 'phone calls—"And Jesus Christ, what calls!" Hysterical voices on the 'phone—and every effort and nothing for it. No reply! A blank! A shattering silence—an indifference to the business—to him. As the tram drew nearer to Instone Road, Daniel Corkran sat up. He sat up with a jerk, with the startled surprise of a person who, long unbalanced, whirled off his feet, suddenly gains his equilibrium once more. Nearer to Banfield Bank. This was the world, his world, and he liked his world. Hope returned. Of course, anything might have happened. She might have been out for lunch. "But then, she deliberately told me she wasn't going to the office."

The tram pulled up with a low screeching sound, and Mr. Corkran got off. He stood for a moment or two on the tramlines, looking about him as though he were expecting somebody. The road seemed deserted, the tram went, the dull roar died down as it turned a corner. Mr. Corkran hurried across the road. "Confound it," he thought, and stopped suddenly, in the middle of the sidewalk. Supposing that by mere chance he should arrive back at the house and find her out. It was no remote possibility. She might even be at Hatfields—now—this very moment. Had he better ring again and make sure? If there was one thing Daniel Corkran did *not* wish to do—it was to step further out of the good graces of his employer. A half minute's walk would take him to Banfield House. Yet he did not move. An extraordinary feeling obsessed him. A guilty feeling. He hadn't waited long enough. "Yes, by Christ! I had better ring. Damn it, I'll ring both places and charge it to 'sundries.' "

He set off down the hill again at a sharp pace, the pace increased, he half walked, half ran. He went into the nearest post office and called up Hayes Road. After a minute that seemed like an eternity, a raucous voice called back. " 'Oo did yer say? Corkran! Never heard of yer. 'Oo? This is Ted speaking. Yes, that's right. The caretaker. What! Oh, aye! She was here about an hour ago—but didn't stop. Just collected mail and went away again." Pause. "Aye. Right." And Daniel Corkran heard the receiver jammed down at the other end of the line. "Then she must be there now," he thought. "She was late. That's it. I'll take the next tram." But he did not wait for it.

He was too impatient. As it was there would be a row. Him not being there on his job. He'd hate that—loathe it—who had always stuck by his principles. A tram rushed down the hill. He boarded it at a run and swung himself up the stairs. He gave the conductor his fare. "King's Road," he said, and snapped the ticket from the man's hand. "She's leading me a bloody dance, that's what she is. Is this her idea of a joke, making a bloody fool of me?"

"Well, I say! This is a surprise. Haven't seen sight of you for a week. Come in. Come in!" and George Postlethwaite, still in his workaday clothes, threw wide the door. His face was one broad smile. To the person on the step it was just something very disconcerting, even irritating. He stammered out: "Sorry! Can't come in now, George. Is your father in?" Anthony Fury moved uneasily on the step. He leaned on the wall.

"Anything wrong, lad?" asked George, still smiling. "No," said Anthony. "Nothing. Just wondered if your dad was in. It doesn't matter anyhow. But if he *was* in then I'd like to see him." The short figure of George Postlethwaite's mother appeared round the door.

"Why, hello Anthony, you are a stranger! Don't stand there, lad. Come right in." Then the whole of Mrs. Postlethwaite appeared to view. George politely receded into the background. Anthony forced a smile. Secretly he was thinking: "Oh, damn this business. That's the worst of it. Your affairs become everybody's common property. I wish I was back at sea." If he hadn't been such a damn fool as to fall off that mast in New York. What nosey-Parkers people were.

"Just wanted to see Mr. Postlethwaite. Nothing important. I'll slip along now." He turned away, but by this time the stout woman's curiosity was aroused. Now what could he want her Andrew for, she was asking herself, as she hoped desperately that the young man, forgetting his hurry, might still step into the kitchen. And if he did then she was bound to hear something.

Hearing something was one of Mrs. Postlethwaite's great pleasures in life. Perhaps he *might* be persuaded to come in after all. She whispered across to her son: "Bring him in, George. I can *tell* he wants to come in, though he doesn't say so. You can read it all over him. Poor chap. His feet are so bad now. What a shame. So young, and then to be crippled like that." Yes. She could read it on Anthony's face. And if she knew anything that young man with the bad feet was at this very moment simply bursting to say things, especially how his feet were paining and how much he wanted to sit down. Silly young man. One might think she was a stranger instead of being one of Mrs. Fury's oldest neighbors. But they were a peculiar lot, as her Andrew continued to inform her. "I saw that funny little chap going there this morning. Lord, these people must think we have no eyes. But what on earth can he want Andrew for?" she said to herself. She looked at Anthony, gave him an ingratiating smile, and remarked: "Tush! There's no hurry, young man. Come in and wait for him. He'll be here any minute now. He only went down to 'The Robber's Nest' for his usual."

Mrs. Postlethwaite had now completely hidden George from view. "At any moment," she thought to herself, "he'll let go." But Anthony Fury retreated. "Oh, I can't wait now, Mrs. Postlethwaite," he said, stammering again—and tried to glimpse George, but he was quite lost to view. He could hear him whistling in the kitchen. "It wasn't anything important, you know," he added, his tone slightly apologetic, as though he were apologizing for keeping the stout lady standing on the step. The next moment he was gone—

limping down Hatfields, cursing himself for his sheer awkwardness—cursing the Postlethwaites for their nasty kind of curiosity—cursing Mr. Postlethwaite for not being there.

Anthony was in a real cursing mood. He had sat in the house most of the day, doing nothing, watching his mother cleaning up, watching her going about the place. Then that "bloody little man" had come. And they had left him all to himself. They'd had dinner in the back kitchen. And his mother simply got on his nerves. "Oh, blast it! I told her all along it was only a frightener, a nasty joke all the same." Then things had gone all funny. They'd hardly spoken a word to each other all the afternoon. Whenever they had looked at each other, their expressions seemed to cry aloud, one to the other: "Peter! He hadn't come for his dinner, Peter! Peter! Not here for his dinner."

Suddenly he laughed to himself. They had changed seats. Then he had gone upstairs and sat in Peter's room, wondering what had happened—why he had not come home to dinner. And he had seen the mess of plaster and dust that "that bloody little sod of a man" had left behind him. "It wouldn't have seemed half so lousy if they hadn't dragged me into it." But what had he got to do with their goings on—their secret journeys up to the confounded woman? Yes. What had he to do with it? Nothing! He was only a bloody nuisance in the place—and he was getting tired of it, yes, tired of it, the whole sticky business. He wanted to go off to sea again. That's all *he* wanted. He worked, he turned up his money. What more could he do? "And god bless us, I don't ask them for much. One new suit in four years. And four bob pocket-money out of my bloody compo. Can't even buy a second-hand accordion." With these thoughts singing in his head, Anthony Fury limped into the King's Road. "I hope she doesn't think I'm being selfish, just because I want to get back to sea again. Damn it all—one has to bloody-well work—" and this being idle, this hanging about, it was simply hellish. He wished he was able to work by his ship, when she was in port. But he couldn't do that. No! He had to go easy for a long time yet. Consider himself lucky he was alive at all, and able to take the wheel. "It's no use growling—really—but sometimes you just can't help it. Mother makes me rage, at times. I suppose all mothers and fathers are the same." Ah! It was nice to be out of it, out of the bloody neighborhood, with its filth and smells, and dirty snotty-nosed children running after you, asking for pennies. Yes, it was—by god it was. It was nice to be away, far away, among your work-mates, on a clean deck—in clean air. No! He'd never leave the sea. And he could sympathize with dad. Good old horse. A sticker. Not afraid of work anyhow. Dear me! It had been a mess up. But fancy his mother whom he had always thought so clever, fancy her being taken in by a little shit of a man like Mr. Corkran. She only hit him because she was afraid. Aye! That had been a surprise. Watching her wilt before that swine. He pulled up suddenly. Here was "The Robber's Nest." And what a fuss she was making about Peter not being in. Nearly time she was used to his ways.

Should he go in and look for "old bald-head," or should he just not bother. "Devil take it, I'd better," and went inside. There were about a dozen men drinking in the public bar. In the corner an old woman sat stirring a glass with gin in it. He looked round. "Bald-head" wasn't there. Better try the snug. He passed through the bar and opened the first door he came to. He was in luck. Andrew Postlethwaite was sitting quite alone in the corner. He had a pint of Falstaff at his elbow, and he was wearing glasses—they hung perilously at the end of his nose. He was reading *The Jockey*. He never noticed the door open, he was too engrossed in *Pumpton Trial Gallops*. He

seemed quite at ease, very pleased with himself. Anthony Fury studied this other half of the Postlethwaite pair. Andrew Postlethwaite laid down the paper and reached for his glass. Only then did he notice Anthony.

"Hello," he said. "Hello! What are you doing here? Going to have one?"

"No, thanks. Never touch it. Was Peter at work today?" And Anthony Fury sat down opposite the man. Mr. Postlethwaite looked steadily at the newcomer, the while he neatly folded up *The Jockey*. "Was Peter at work today?" he said, affecting great surprise.

"Yes."

"Well, of course he was! At least this morning. But I never saw him after the dinner hour. Why? Anything wrong, Anthony?"

Oh, Lord, is that all they say. Anything wrong? Of course something was wrong. Everything was bloody-well wrong.

"He didn't go to work in the afternoon, then?" Anthony asked. He leaned closer.

"That's it," said Andrew Postlethwaite. "And that's all I know about your brother, lad. Hasn't he been home then?" He drank his beer.

"No, he hasn't," replied Anthony, and moved irritably in his chair.

"All right, laddie, don't get your shirt out about it. I haven't ate your brother. Don't get into a temper over a thing like that. Besides, what right have you to do so? Here I am enjoying a glass of beer, and you dash in, demanding to know what I've done with your brother. What have I got to do with him?"

"I'm not in a temper," replied Anthony, coloring up. "I'm not. I only asked you if you'd seen him."

"And I told you," snapped out Andrew Postlethwaite. "Now clear out and leave me alone. You are in a temper, Anthony Fury, and don't you deny it. You are, see. H'm! You think I'm curious. Forget it. That's what's wrong with all your family, my lad. They think people are curious about them. Forget it. Christ a'mighty, you might be the best in the land. Aw! Such bloody airs. Ridiculous, lad, ridiculous. Nobody's curious about you, at all. You're just like the rest of us, and that's all," he concluded in a slightly sarcastic tone of voice. "Mind you, I'm not a dull bugger, though people think I am—and as a matter of fact, Anthony, I'm not unfeeling either. I understand. But really you shouldn't say you're not angry when you are. Why lie about it? I can see, my lad. I don't blame you either. It's all the inconveniences, isn't it? All the inconveniences that people make for you. And you want to be left alone—you want to be happy and you can't—no, damn me, you can't, until you've got on board your ship again. Well, confound it, why should I quarrel with the one man who can't beat George at chess?" Smiling, he held out his hand and they shook.

Andrew Postlethwaite drained his glass, got up, and placing his hand on Anthony's shoulder, said: "Anthony, I have an idea, though it's only an idea—that something's happened to your brother. When he came to work this morning he seemed so queer, doing everything wrong, tripping over things, just like somebody walking about upside down. He tried to sell me a sheath-knife that belonged to your old man—but I didn't buy it because it wasn't worth what he asked me for it. Then he went off to dinner and I haven't set eyes on him since. And that's all I know, me lad! If I can help, say—I'll do anything except lend money because I haven't got any and that's that." He promptly sat down again, rang the bell and called out: "A mixer," and then he said to Anthony: "Backed a winner yesterday. Real good'un.

Came home hundred to eight." He spread out his arms, yawned, and sat up suddenly when the drink came.

"Winner! Hundred to eight. Oh, confound it," thought Anthony. He'd better go at once.

"Well, best of luck, my lad," said Andrew, raising his glass. "Maybe he's off somewhere with his Judy. He's a good one for the Judies, isn't he? Looks like a bloody poet. Well, so long." But Anthony Fury was already in the street. Well, to hell with it. He hadn't been to work. That put the finishing touch to the whole thing. Hadn't been to work! H'm! Queer carrying on all right. "Well and good, I'll give Joe Kilkey a call, he may have been there." He suddenly laughed loudly. "Wherever he is I'll bet he's bloody hungry, anyhow."

And if he wasn't there—then he probably was off with some Judy. Same one, no doubt. H'm! There'd be trouble over her yet. Aye! He could see it coming! What the devil had Desmond bothered coming back to Gelton for anyway? Bugger it! It was all plum pudding to him. He walked slowly along, and deliberately crossed the road rather than pass Mr. Quickley's shop, and he gave a short sigh for that accordion was all an empty dream. Here was Price Street anyhow. He wondered how Mr. Kilkey was getting on. Perhaps Maureen had come back. Perhaps. He stood flabbergasted outside No. 35. There were no curtains on the window. In fact, yes—he looked in through the parlor window. No doubt about it at all. The house was empty. Anthony Fury received such a shock that he stood there staring into the bare front room, all thoughts of Peter quite gone from his mind. He went to the next house and knocked. A woman, her grey hair hanging loose over her shoulders—to Anthony she looked as though she had just got out of bed—stood in the doorway. When had the Kilkeys moved house? he asked.

"Oh, Christ!" she said. "Are you another one?" and shut the door in his face.

"Blast everything!" Anthony said. "I'm going home. Now! This very minute. Blast Peter! I don't give a damn what's happened to him—if I never see him again—or anybody again. I'm just thoroughly fed up." It was now past seven o'clock. After being out an hour and a half, Anthony Fury, now wincing from the sudden stabs of pain in his heels, limped slowly back to Hatfields.

Peter Fury was still traveling his mad circles. He descended from one tram and jumped another. This ceaseless whirl was aimless, without purpose. Twice he had come into the city, twice he had taken a tram out again. It was now past nine o'clock. He had sevenpence in his pocket. He could make no decision. He wanted to go back home—and suddenly he hated the thought. He had been to Press Street. Desmond slammed the door on him. He was sunk in his own misery, a misery voiceless, meaningless. He was hungry. He looked as though he had been crying. Everybody stared at him. And he in turn stared back at the people who were moving past—hurrying past—rushing away to their homes—to their holes and corners. And he wanted to scream aloud, to thrust his face against their faces, and to scream out his misery. Half past nine. Darkness was covering everything. And here he was back where he started. Standing outside the same public gardens again. Even if he went back they'd only hate him more than ever. And then he would have to look—yes—open his eyes and look at her,—oh it was all so rotten, so utterly meaningless. He was a beast, a fool, a swine. He loathed himself. He stood against the iron railings. He looked up and down the road. Seeing nobody coming his way he quickly climbed the railings. Then he swung

himself clear and dropped. As soon as his feet touched the soil, he ran. He ran madly and flung himself down in some thick foliage. Nobody would see him—darkness held him completely, he would not be heard. He pressed his face against the cool leaves and sobbed. His whole body seemed to thrill to the deliverance, to this flood of feeling, to this emptying away of something sickly and suffocating, something dark and beastly that weighed him down. It had been like a clot of hot blood in his throat, and now with every sob it was emptying itself away. Black misery was caught at last, he'd drowned it out in his sobs, in the upwelling surge.

It began to rain. He pressed his face still further into the foliage. Suddenly and without at first realizing it, he was sick. He retched where he lay. Perhaps he shouldn't have drunk that beer. He had never tasted beer before. Then he turned over on his back. The rain drops cooled his burning face. "The world's lousy," he shouted. "Lousy! Lousy! Lousy!"

"Is it young feller me bloody lad?" Suddenly a light was shining on his face. "Is it, then don't you make it any lousier messin' up all my nice bloody flowers. See! You get to hell out of this 'ere place, d'you see. Understand! Quickly now, else I'll put my foot up your bloody behind. Making a mess of my nice bloody flowers. Who the bloody hell are you anyhow? Lying there on your arse as though you didn't give a bloody damn for anybody—and shouting about the world being lousy. I've seen your type before to-bloody-day. Just look at my nice bloody flowers! A holy bloody mess you've made of them. D'you see. And the Corporation pay me to clean your muck up? Hey! Christ! young feller me bloody lad I've cleaned Lord Toddy's muck up afore today, but you aint a bloody Lord, are yer? Now beat it, or I'll certainly take the skin off your backside. Go ahead! Get up and muck off. It'll be too late after I've counted three."

He stood holding his lamp over Peter's face.

The park-keeper was doing his usual rounds. Mr. Gully, for that was the gentleman's name, was a very zealous keeper and he loved his "bloody flowers," and he was suspicious of all young people whom he found in his "bloody park" after dark. And he would not countenance any "going on" amongst his "nice bloody flowers."

With a stout stick he carefully poked about amongst the surrounding bushes. "Haven't a little Judy there, have you?"

He bent down and grinned in Peter's face. Peter Fury got to his feet and walked slowly away. The park-keeper stood watching him go. Then he turned to where Peter had been lying. "My nice bloody flowers," he said. "The world's lousy! H'm! Well I like his bloody cheek." Then he walked off with his lamp, the bright light dimmed with the distance, then the darkness seemed to swallow it up. Mr. Gully had gone off to see if there were any regulars sleeping out in the bandstand. Peter Fury had reached the gate. He climbed it again. A policeman watched him land in the road. Peter ran off into the darkness. Could one never hide? Never be alone, even with one's misery, one's maddening thoughts—one's burning shame. No! Eyes everywhere! "Now I will go," he said. "Now I will go." He stood for a moment, straightened out the creases in his coat, smoothed back the wet hair from his eyes, placed his tie back again inside his vest. Finally he spat on his hands and rubbed the palms down the legs of his trousers. He went on. Something in him had changed. It was as though he had left that miserable self behind him. Half past nine. He would not be late.

At this precise moment Daniel Corkran was sitting in the kitchen of Ban-

field House. He sat slumped in a chair, head almost touching his knees, the chair's back legs clear of the floor. He still wore his hat on the back of his head, his vest was opened, the tie hung in air. He looked as if he had just come in, but he had been sitting there quite a time. A clock ticked monotonously above his head. Judging by the position of the chair, and the nearness of his own head to the grate, it seemed as if he, Mr. Daniel Corkran, was bent upon pitching himself headlong into the fire. There seemed something so definite about his attitude, his sort of studied indifference to everything around. There was only himself and that rickety chair and the fire.

Corkran was indeed thinking. True, he had never thought quite in this way before, and certainly, judging by his whole attitude, he was thinking deeply upon some important matter, long forgotten, now suddenly remembered. Once he glanced at the torn knuckle of his right hand. Rage! Yes. Rage had caused that. He had almost torn the bell out of the wall of Banfield House. Then he had to let himself in. It may have been the terrific clang of the bell, a thunderous sound out of the long silence or it may have been that powerful impulse that put a vicious strength into his right hand, but certainly, and for the first time in his life, he, Daniel Corkran was afraid. Of what he did not know! He didn't know why, but he was—and the knowledge of his fear was a shock to him. And on the top of that his "waiting like a bloody fool" down at Hatfields. And what had been the mystery! What had happened? He didn't know! All algebra to him. But what he did know—yes, what he did know—as he sat slumped in that chair, was that she had made a fool of him—worse, ignored him! H'm. Altered her plans. Gone off somewhere, leaving him to stew in her juice—aye, her damned juice. Still, that was over. Best forgotten about perhaps. Cockran reflected upon the happenings of the day. Ten o'clock struck! He heard the chimes clear and distinct. The house was quite still.

Then suddenly a noise. It startled Mr. Cockran but he did not move. Indeed he allowed his head to fall lower upon his breast. He seemed to be falling asleep. "H'm," he said. "H'm. Must have been a bloody rat." If he allowed his head to droop one inch more then it seemed inevitable that he should pitch onto the fire. He heard a key turning in the lock. "Oh! She's come back, has she? The damned bitch! To the devil with her. She's gone too far with me." He began humming through his teeth. "Yes, she's gone too far, too far—too far, too bloody far with me."

The chair seemed to move to and fro, a gentle rocking movement, attuning to the rythm of his humming. In spite of his nearness to the fire he felt suddenly cold, and shook himself like a dog. "Damn it all." He was falling asleep. Ten fifteen! The sounds of steps on the stairs. H'm. Gone to her bed, he supposed—her lonely bloody bed. Bitch! Perhaps he's better go to bed too. There wouldn't be time to finish *The Blood-Red Dagger* now. Half past ten. "God blast her, I say. I wouldn't move my backside one bloody inch now—no sir—not one bloody inch. To the devil with her and her 'principle.' She doesn't know what the word means."

He heard keys jingling. He grinned, the sound was familiar to him, the only kind of music he had ever heard. "Tomorrow if she asks me anything—oh Christ! take her, she can do her Hatfields job—do it all on her bloody own. Making a fool of me." He wouldn't be surprised if she wasn't messing about with that little sucker again. "I half believe she has. Damn! I'd like to choke her for her stupidity." He spat through his teeth and watched the spittle sizzle on the hot bars. "Idle thought," he mused. Suddenly a peculiar thing happened. Both Mr. Corkran and the chair toppled right back in the middle

of the kitchen floor, making a loud clattering noise, a noise that did not drown out the extraordinary noises going on above stairs. This uproar was so sudden, so rudely disturbed the silence of the house, that it had quite the wrong effect upon Daniel Corkran, he had not fallen into the grate, rather had chair and man seemed to fling themselves as far from the grate as possible. As he dashed up the stairs, he shouted: "Christ! Christ!"

Mrs. Fury was sitting at the table, hands folded upon it, and she was listening to Anthony. He had been to the Postlethwaites and to the pub where Possie usually drank—yes—*and* to the Kilkeys. And he couldn't find him. He didn't know where he was—and what was more he didn't care either—no, he simply *didn't* give a hang. "Oh! The pain—the bloody pain," he said, and stretched his feet out upon the mat in front of the fire. A silence then.

"Well," she began—but the son interrupted—"I don't know where he is. Damn him! He's caused more trouble in this house than anybody. I don't know—don't know—please leave me alone. My heels are simply burning." He turned over towards the fire, his head high upon the back of the chair. Then he said sharply: "Well, and did I tell you—a bloody joke—Mother! That's all! Don't worry! He'll be back. You needn't worry about that. He knows which side of *his* bread is buttered, all right. Don't worry, Mother. You've upset yourself today, but please forget it all. Just carry on as usual. That stinking little man's gone anyhow. Damn swine. I felt like choking him, god forgive me." He was looking into the fire, so that he did not see his mother suddenly straighten up in the chair, nor hear her mutter—"God, what is that!"

She was staring at the window. There was a face there—pressed against the glass, and upon this face a curious sort of smile. She could see it clearly against the light. She was looking at her son Peter, though she hardly seemed to realize it. To her it was just a face pressed against the window. She stood up, hands gripping the table. Anthony seemed to have fallen asleep. Then she sat down again. The face was moving about, as though the head were loose—as though it were lolling about on the end of a string. "Anthony!" she said quickly. "Anthony!"

"What!" He was half asleep. She made no reply. It was as though this face had robbed her of the power to speak. She could no longer keep her eyes off it. Suddenly it was gone. A terrific pounding upon the door. Then a kick. The woman did not move. She could not move. She was petrified. "ANT———"

Another kick at the door. This time Anthony woke up. He sat up in the chair. "Blast it! Is there somebody kicking at the door, or what?" He looked at his mother. "Oh, what's the matter with you at all?" he growled, and he struggled to his feet. "O god—this damned pain," he said and limped down the lobby. When he opened the door Peter Fury stepped in. He said nothing, pushed roughly past his brother and went into the kitchen. He stood under the gaslight. Anthony limped in after him.

"Where the bloody hell have you been, eh?" asked Anthony.

"Great god," the mother said. "Yes. Tell us that." They both stared at him. He had not uttered a word. His hands were jammed tightly at his coat pocket. His clothes were dirty, covered with slime. His face was dirty, streaked with sweat. It seemed not a face—only a mouth, a large open mouth, loosely hanging. The expression he wore was bovine, his eyes stared dully at his mother and brother.

"Where've you been—you bugger, you," Anthony shouted. He struck the table with his fist. And with its stroke he seemed to have struck at the very

core of Peter's extraordinary silence, his extraordinary expression, his strange attitude. He seemed like an animal, who has lost all control. This demeanor so frightened Anthony that he went back to his chair and sat down.

"Explain yourself, you devil," shouted the mother.

Anthony got up again, limped across the kitchen and threw himself on the sofa. "Yes, explain yourself. You're raving drunk."

Peter flung his arms in the air.—"I've got it," and he gave a curious high-pitched laugh. "I've got it! I've got it!" Mrs. Fury was standing on the mat by the fire.

"Look! God! Look!" He thrust his hands into his pockets and drew out money, notes, sovereigns, he flung them in the air. "Look! Money! MONEY!" He began throwing it up in the air, he screamed something quite incoherent. He drew more from his pockets, he gabbled like an idiot. His eyes seemed to dance in his head. Saliva dribbled down his chin. Then he made a rush towards his mother, yelling loudly: "Money! Money!"

His two fists were bunched with bank-notes. He thrust them in her face. He bore her back to the sofa. She tripped over Anthony's foot and fell upon the sofa.

"Look! Look at it! Money! Bloody money! Here! Christ! Here!" He flung the money in her face. He pitched a handful of sovereigns down his brother's open shirt.

"Here! Here! Eat it! Bite it! Suck it! Swallow it! Kiss it! Money! MONEY! Bloody money! MONEY! I say. Go on. Grab it. Eat it."

He began spitting on the notes.

He plastered them one after another upon the terrified woman's face.

"Go on! Christ! Go on! Eat it! Lovely money! You eat it, too. God! You eat it."

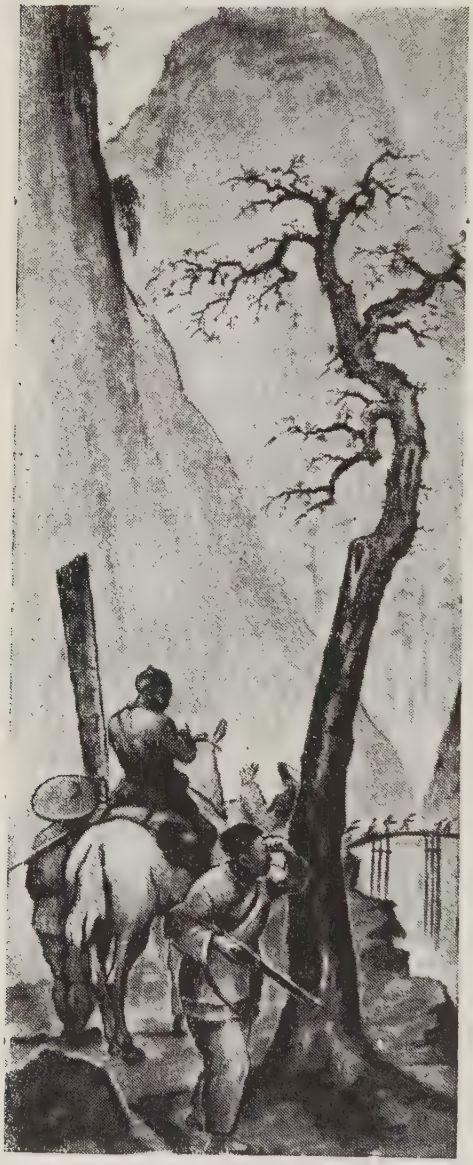
And he spat on a hundred pound note and pressed it upon his brother's face. "D'you hear me! Eat it! EAT IT! EAT IT!" He was screaming. Anthony could hear nothing, feel nothing—he could only see—and all he saw was a drop of blood upon Peter's hand.

Suddenly Peter began stamping his feet upon the floor. He pummeled the sofa with his fists. "Eat it!" he screamed, and went on emptying his pockets. A cloud of notes descended in the air. He flung his arms out, caught some, and crushed them upon the two figures on the sofa. "MONEY! MONEY!" Then a voice, which he seemed to recognize, was saying in his ear: "The police had better be sent for."

This was done.

Emî Siao

The Plan of Colonel Ido



Chinese Partisans
by Tsian Tao

The detachment slowly drew near the snow-covered town, in the sharpening frost, the frozen ground ringing under the hooves of the tired horses. Again and again Colonel Ido brought his gloved hand to his blue frostbitten face, which even in the bitter Manchurian frost expressed cheerful self-satisfaction.

Through his screwed-up lids, reddened by the wind, the colonel surveyed the country they were riding through with the air of an owner examining newly acquired property: the snow-covered fields, the dark stretch of forest on the horizon and the blue outlines of the distant hills reflected against the pale Manchurian sky.

The colonel had every reason to be satisfied. His plan for the setting of thirty thousand Japanese colonists in Manchuria had met with the approval of the emperor himself, and was already being carried out, although, it must be admitted, there had been a setback.

The first five hundred Japanese settlers, harassed by guerilla attacks, were now in the city as refugees. The colonel himself was now on his way to carry out his plan and he was confident of success.

The detachment approached the gates of the town, riding between files of Manchukuoan troops stationed as a guard of honor. The band struck up the Japanese anthem. The county magistrate hastened outside the gates to greet the colonel, wrapping himself in the wide skirts of his fur-lined gown.

and his flabby face covered with a fawning grin. A dry dapper Japanese "councillor" kept pace with the hurrying magistrate.

The moment he saw the colonel the magistrate bowed low and remained stock still in that position.

The Manchukuoan soldiers presented arms in a salute.

Colonel Ido graciously nodded to the magistrate, entered the gate and rode along the streets of the town. Short and fat, he was heavy in the saddle. The sword hanging from his short body looked disproportionately long.

Among themselves the soldiers called Colonel Ido "Colonel Soft-Belly" on account of his notorious appetite and voluptuousness.

A sharp wind was fluttering the flags of Japan and Manchukuo raised over the houses. The band kept up its blare. Adults were not to be seen on the streets; only files of school children lined up along the sidewalks, watching with seared and frost reddened eyes the solemn figure of the colonel and his retinue.

The county magistrate looked with satisfaction down the rows of these eight and nine year old citizens who did not dare to disobey the authorities.

The colonel stopped at the beflagged yamen[1] within which tables were laid for the ceremonial dinner given to distinguished travelers and named "the washing off of dust."

The dinner was marked by both the abundance and variety of dishes. The colonel did full justice to it.

The addresses of greeting had been delivered; wine glasses were being refilled, when the Japanese "councillor" to the magistrate bent toward the colonel and whispered something.

Heavy with food, the colonel lifted his corpulent body and began a short but significant speech in broken Chinese.

"New Year is approaching. All peasants are required to surrender before the New Year all the arms and ammunition in their possession and their deeds to the land they occupy."

The magistrate, who stood up while the colonel delivered his speech, nodded his head after every sentence and repeated: "Yes yes. . ."

The dinner was over and the magistrate bowed the colonel into the apartments prepared for him.

The room was literally filled with the blue waves of opium smoke.

A woman with her face almost lacquered with cosmetics and fingers encrusted with rings handed the magistrate a pipe.

He stretched out on the divan. He felt very fatigued after the ceremonial welcome and dinner. The preparations had cost him enough labor and pain; but everything had gone off well, although the absence of adults on the streets could not have escaped the observant eyes of the colonel.

At the very moment when the opium began to have its soothing effect, the door opened and the Japanese councillor entered the room. The magistrate rose hurriedly to greet the councillor and proffered him a pipe. The Japanese pushed aside his outstretched hand and said with a polite smile:

"Many thanks, honorable magistrate, this gift of our emperor is intended exclusively for your honorable person."

He smiled amiably at the woman and set the alarmed magistrate at rest.

He sat down and stated in a business-like way:

"You are of course well aware that the peasants are slow in surrendering

[1] Yamen—official residence of a Chinese dignitary.

their land deeds and giving up their arms. I therefore advised the colonel to visit the villages himself."

With a frightened look the magistrate exclaimed:

"For heaven's sake, what are you up to? This may cost the life of our honorable colonel."

The Japanese grinned and remarked drily:

"I beg your pardon, honorable magistrate, but I think the colonel will manage it. He knows what he is doing." He added: "By the way, the colonel is taking his detachment along."

"Yes, yes, of course," mumbled the magistrate, trying to offset his previous remark.

"And now," continued the Japanese councillor, "let's get to the point. The colonel needs foodstuffs and money. We are relying on you to supply him with all that is necessary."

"How much?" asked the magistrate anxiously.

"Ten thousand dollars."

The magistrate screwed up his swollen lids and shook his head.

"That's . . . very much . . ." he said in timid protest, but the Japanese sharply interrupted him:

"And the money must be ready by tomorrow morning."

The Chinese magistrate silently inclined his head in token of assent.

The councillor left the room. When his steps were no longer audible the magistrate returned to his divan. But before he could take up his soothing pipe he had first to begin carrying out his Japanese councillor's "advice." He sent for his secretary. The latter noiselessly entered the room and stood near the divan in a respectful pose.

"Summon all the storekeepers of the town at once and levy from them" the magistrate deliberated a moment—"twelve thousand dollars as an emergency tax for the suppression of bandits."

The secretary bowed and left the room. The woman lazily turned her head to the magistrate and asked with amazement:

"Twelve thousand?"

The magistrate grinned craftily and explained:

"Silly woman, do you imagine I'll rack my brains for nothing?" and he playfully slapped her plump shoulder tightly swathed in green silk.

The concubine smiled appreciatively and handed him the opum pipe—the gift of the Japanese emperors.

The lids of the magistrate began to droop and soon he was sunk in forgetful slumber.

According to plan, the following morning the colonel left for the next trading center at the head of thirty Japanese soldiers and a company of Manchukuoan soldiers.

This village faced an asphalted highway connecting three counties on one side and a navigable river on the other side, and was therefore one of the liveliest trading centers of the county. No sign of this was now noticeable. The streets were deserted. The colonel met only the occasional lone figure of a peasant hurrying to hide himself in his hut. From the pinnacle of the big temple in the center of the village, Japanese and Manchukuoan flags fluttered. The colonel entered the temple where he intended to spend the night with his retinue.

After a substantial dinner and a rest the colonel began an examination of the village.

"Europeans and Americans don't understand the first word of our Japanese politics! Here we are in China not only opening doors but roofs and walls as well and still they insist on the 'open door'!" *("Krokodil")*

The sun was setting. . . . A smell of burning was in the air. . . . Women's cries, the wail of children, drunken laughter, came in drifts of sound. But the colonel paced on imperturbably.

Suddenly his eyes narrowed and he stopped. A house surrounded by a high wall drew his attention. Snow-covered fir trees bent their branches over the wall. A small gate led into a yard. Apparently the homestead of a well-to-do peasant. A young girl was standing near the gate. Her long, shiny, smoothly-plaited braid came down below her waist. She wore a clean and rather a rich dress. The girl threw a frightened glance at the colonel and he noticed the slim crescents of her eyebrows and the tip of her powdered little nose. The next moment the girl disappeared behind the gate.

The colonel lost all interest in his tour of investigation, and turned toward the temple. Then he called the interpreter and ordered him to bring the girl immediately.

A little lamp suspended from the ceiling threw a dim light upon the ancestor tablets, the sacramental table and upon the broad sunburnt face of Wei-too, bent over his bowl.

The family was at supper; hot rice was glistening in the cups, a warm savor rose from the bowls. Chen-hua was busy at the table, her nimble fingers were refilling the emptied rice bowls, pouring wine into the china cups.

Her father and grandfather were looking tenderly at the fleet little housewife.

The supper was nearly over, when the dog in the yard barked and immediately afterwards unfamiliar footsteps were heard.

Chen-hua, frightened, flattened herself against the window. When the Japanese were in the village any trouble might be expected.

Wei-too, however, quietly continued his meal. The Japanese were not troubling him. He belonged to the respectable and honorable citizens of the district.

The door opened and the interpreter entered. Wei-too recognized him, having seen him in the village.

Wei-too threw an angry glance at the interpreter and thought: "It means nothing good when this fox in a tiger's skin enters my house."

Wei-too put aside his bowl and rose.

The interpreter glanced around the room with his narrow swift eyes. Wei-too looked frowningly and inquiringly at the interpreter. The wine cup dropped from the grandfather's trembling hands and broke with a clang. The opaque rice wine eddied over the floor.

The interpreter glanced at the frightened girl, then towards Wei-too.

"You are honored," he said with a smile on his thin, sly lips. "Your daughter has pleased the eye of the colonel. I am ordered to bring her to him at the temple."

For a minute stillness filled the room. Then the grandfather faltered:

"But she is only fifteen years."

The interpreter grinned. "The younger the better," he said, and held out his hand to the girl.

Chen-hua screamed.

Wei-too stepped forward and put himself between the interpreter and his daughter.

"Go," he said hoarsely. "I shall wash her, and dress her properly for the colonel. I'll bring her to him myself."

The interpreter glanced at the girl's dress, a plain house dress, and decided that her father was right

"Very well," he said. But added with a threat: "Don't be long. The colonel ordered me to bring her immediately."

Wei-too escorted the interpreter to the gates.

In the middle of the yard he stopped. His legs became suddenly heavy as though he had walked a thousand li.[1] He felt unable to step across the threshold of his house and sank heavily on a bench.

The moon in the pale wintry sky gave a wan light. The village was still.

Wei-too closed his eyes. His life passed before him, a life full of privations, the life of a captain of the North-Eastern Army, a life full of hazards and hardship.

Everywhere, on all the roads of his troubled campaign life, Wei-too had dreamt of the moment when he would return, bringing prosperity to his family; of the time when his sons would inscribe in exalted style his name on the tablet of ancestors and on his tombstone. He never smoked opium, never played mah-jong, saved every cent, bought a small plot of land and, finally being granted his discharge, came back to his family. It is true that his wife died before this happy event, but there were left to him his old father, two healthy sons and the daughter Chen-hua. Surrounded by his family he looked with pride upon his sons, upon his quiet, lovely daughter and from time to time threw glances at the ancestor tablets on which some day his name would be inscribed.

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[1] Li—half mile.

At the beginning of this new period of his life, it seemed to Wei-too, that the dream of his youth had come true. He could enjoy well-earned rest from his hardships. But soon he perceived that he had made a mistake. The Japanese did not leave his village in peace; they plundered the peasants, led away their cattle, violated their womenforlk. The peasants retaliated by running into the hills and forming guerilla bands. Wei-too was a military man. The guerilla bands were in great need of such a man and more than once they asked his help and offered him leadership.

Wei-too however had stubbornly declined these requests. He was respected in the village—and the Japanese spared his family and his possessions, and his devotion was given wholly to his family and kin and to his plot of land. But now the Japanese are invading his family, are dishonoring it, are taking away from him his sweet daughter Chen-hua.

Wei-too clenched his fists till the nails gashed the flesh. No, he will not stand it. But what is to be done? There, in the temple, the colonel awaits his daughter. This thought burns his brain like fire.

Finally getting up, he took a few faltering steps towards the house. A terrible shout startled him.

"Sister! Chen-hua!"

Wei-too ran towards the house. In the doorway stood his sons. Their eyes were dilated. Gripping the sleeves of their father's coat, the boys repeated chokingly: "Our sister! . . . Our sister! . . ."

Wei-too pushed the boys aside and entered the house.

Chen-hua's room was dim but he noticed her at once. She lay on the floor, her arms stretched out like broken wings. Alongside of her lay a pair of scissors.

Wei-too picked them up. They were smeared with blood. He threw them away and bent over the body of his daughter. A ghastly wound gaped in her neck.

Wei-too stood still a moment, bent as though under a heavy load. When he lifted his head he noticed the terrified boys.

"Go to bed," he ordered in a dull voice.

It is necessary to notify the old grandfather, Wei-too suddenly thought; he was so fond of his granddaughter.

Wei-too passed to the next room. The old man apparently was asleep. The room was dark. With outstretched arms Wei-too took a few steps in.

"Father, father," he called softly, but no one replied. "Father," he repeated once more and suddenly he drew back his groping hand.

When he lit a match and its tiny flame illuminated the room, Wei-too saw the corpse of his father. He touched it. It was gently swinging from a rope. Wei-too realized that the old man did not wish to survive the dishonor inflicted upon his family.

Silence filled the bereaved house. Only the soft breathing of the boys was heard from their room.

Wei-too went to the table and lit a candle. Afterwards he opened a trunk and rummaged in it for some time. Finally he found what he was looking for: it was his old sword so long unused. Wei-too tried its edge. It was still sharp enough. He put it on the table; the steel blade shone dully in the uncertain light of the candle.

Wei-too turned his face towards the tablets of his ancestors. There were written down the honorable names of those who could maintain the honor and the welfare of the family.

Thrice he bowed to them. Then he straightened his body, his face became intent and stern.

The candle now flared up, now died down; and with each gust a long black shadow oscillated between the floor and the ceiling.

"I, your unworthy descendant, could not maintain the honor of our family and was unable to bring it to prosperity. But I shall not dishonor our stock; neither I nor my sons will ever be slaves of foreigners."

The boys were sound asleep. Wei-too looked for a moment at their dimly lit faces.

"My sons will not be slaves of foreigners," he softly repeated.

Wei-too, flecked with blood, stood in the middle of the yard and thought every hair of his body was astir.

The air in the hut of the poor peasant called "Pockmarked Wang" was stuffy, its single room was crowded.

Here gathered the guerilla chiefs. The dissatisfaction and indignation of the peasants grew from day to day. It is true that the colonel spread rumors that he wanted the deeds to the land merely to affix his seal. But nobody believed him. The peasants knew that the Japanese were being settled on the lands of the Manchurian peasants and quit the stolen plots only under pressure of the guerilla bands.

The arrival of Colonel Ido and further depradations of the Japanese evoked a new wave of indignation among the peasants. The chiefs of the guerilla movement had met that evening to discuss the situation.

The lamp threw a dull glow upon the excited sweaty faces of the peasants. The pale lean face of the schoolmaster in the corner stood out among them, a student in a shabby blue suit sat at the table and was rapidly drawing with a brush on a piece of paper the proposed plan of campaign.

The peasants unanimously accepted "Pockmarked Wang's" proposal—to dig up the hidden arms and defend their land. But "Pockmarked Wang" and the schoolmaster and the student all knew well that they needed a trained soldier to lead them. Wei-too was the only one in the village. But he had stubbornly ignored all overtures.

And now when the schoolmaster again mentioned Wei-too's name "Pockmarked Wang" shook his head. But he had no time to voice his opposition. The door opened, letting in a blast of wind. The flame of the lamp blew out. The man who entered the room held up his hands, smeared with blood. All present jumped from their seats. At first nobody recognized him, so terrifying was his appearance. Finally Wang softly inquired: "Wei-too, what has happened?" Wei-too did not answer, but faced them with a look terrifying in its decision.

The peasants trembled before this man so suddenly changed. Wei-too slowly lifted his head.

"I am with you now," he said.

"This is very good, Wei-too," said Wang with joy. "We need a man of your ability." But the schoolmaster was an old and a very soft man. He put his small dry hand on Wei-too's shoulder. "You acted rightly, Wei-too," he said softly, and added: "But what about your family?"

Wei-too winced.

"I have no family now, schoolmaster," said he. "My thoughts are on other things now. We must not wait."

Dogs barked; the roosters were giving their salute to the morning. The dawn stars were dimming out.

The men marched in silence. They were armed with guns, spears, axes and spades. They were marching into the snow-covered woods.

The colonel got up in a bad temper. He slowly washed himself, swore once more at the interpreter, bowed three times before the emperor's portrait and summoned the village elders.

The day was gray; winter clouds lowered over the earth.

The colonel appeared on the porch hiding his chin in the fur collar of his greatcoat. The vast yard of the temple was full of people. The Japanese detachment of the colonel and the Manchukuoan soldiers were ranged on both sides of the porch. A few elders stood facing the porch. They bowed silently to the colonel. Behind the elders stood a crowd of peasants. Their faces were intent and sullen.

The colonel looked for a moment with displeasure at this crowd. But the peasants stood there silently awaiting his words.

The colonel lifted his head. Choosing his words with great effort and straining his voice against the wind the colonel began:

"It is known to me that you have hidden arms . . ." he began, but had no time to finish the sentence. A panting orderly approached him, his face white. He saluted the colonel and reported briskly:

"Sir, a crowd of bandits are advancing from the woods."

The plump flabby face of the colonel winced. He looked round the yard.

The elders were standing as before, their faces void of expression. But behind them the colonel noticed faces that were expressive enough, men with doubled fists, and further down the street a crowd moving like a dark wave that washes away everything confronting it.

A Japanese officer ran to the colonel, holding up his sword to keep from tripping over it.

"Please give the order to fire," he asked the colonel in an agitated voice.

"You fool," the colonel snarled. "That would be the worst thing we could do."

The officer began to say something in reply, but after looking at the enraged crowd, he understood that the colonel was right.

The gates shivered under the pressure of strong peasant bodies. The peasants broke into the yard of the temple with a terrifying shout, waving their spears, guns and axes.

The Japanese and Manchukuoan soldiers fired pellmell, retreating before this human flood.

"Pockmarked Wang" was among the foremost, using the butt of his gun with great effect.

Suddenly a familiar voice stopped him with his gun raised.

"Don't kill me, uncle. . . ."

Wang slowly lowered his gun. A peasant lad's round youthful face looked up at him from under the cap of a Manchukuoan soldier. He looked with embarrassment upon Wang.

"Join us if you have not entirely lost your conscience serving these blackguards," shouted Wang.

The student fighting alongside of Wang turned round and exclaimed:

"Chinese do not kill Chinese!"

The lad turned towards the retreating Manchukuoan soldiers and showing an example, threw himself on the Japanese, shouting to his old comrades:

"Boys, follow me against the devils from the Eastern Ocean!"

The peasants had surrounded the Japanese.

The puffy face of the colonel turned blue, then became white while strong peasant hands held his fat carcase.

"Turtle, how much land do you need now?"

"Assassin!"

"You dare to violate our daughters!"

The colonel saw for a moment the dilated eyes of Wei-too. It was the last thing he saw alive, and it was almost enough in itself to kill.

The next morning the guerilla fighters marched against the town. "Pock-marked Wang" and Wei-too led the troop. Their faces were stern.

It was a bright sunny morning.

The crests of the hills looked purple in the first rays of the morning sun.

Pla-y-Beltran

Lenin's Glory

In Spain the children
Lenin's glory sing:

"In January Lenin died
In April he was born;
April month of roses,
January month of shroud."

In bullet riddled Spain,
Spain gashed with civil war,
Choirs of Spanish children
Chant of Lenin's glory:

"Simple was his life,
In workers' gray went Lenin.
How good to say his name,
Glorious Lenin!

Oh rosy, rosy April,
Welcome, month of Lenin;
But not bleak January
That tore away our Lenin."

In April Spanish children
Lie awake and whisper:

"Keep off, bleak January
That tore away our Lenin."

English version by Isidor Schneider

John Lehmann

Two Poems Before War

Howling about the towers April comes
Swirling the rain-clouds over sun-washed hills,
Where roaming couples lift their laugh-flushed faces
Making unreal the thought that kills.
Lying in meadows at the city's edge
Girls finger daisies idly, and in dreams
Pair with the boys on bicycles, who swing
Down leafy paths, bare-kneed, in teams.
Not these alone the evidence of Spring:
Under the light green mist that veils the trees
Soldiers parade in pride of tank and gun,
By High Command dolled-up to please;
Policemen, too, put off their winter coats,
Eying the hungry with superb disdain,
Flaunt bulwark torsos to the food-puffed features
Glimpsed through the Bar's class-conscious pane.
Tanks and police cars throw from year to year
A huger shadow over branch and bloom,
And Spring-bathed eyes lose suddenly their light
Appalled by still fantastic doom:
This is the hour that clears the spirit's cloud,
That wakes the millions shout their "No" to fear,—
When death's well-opiumed lies no longer ease
Nerves tense for telegrams of war.

II

Bowed by head-waiters to their cushioned places,
Drinking the warmest wines red hill-slopes ripen,
Traveling in coupés curtained from the prying,
With memories of fillies pacing dew-white parks.
They go to their business;

Under the smile of the day's work, the trains
Starting to time, and typists' pause for lunch,
Evening with hooters and freed thoughts of dancing
When the children twitter home from public gardens,
They go to their business,—

While the discarded worker wanders, dreaming
Surely my luck will change, while in cathedrals

Bishops advising prayer depart to music,
And the sold police pursue their sworn destroyers
From rat-hole to rat-hole;

Ordered—with rake-off—by self-chosen rulers,
Paid for by peasants spider-sucked with debt,
Labeled as oranges, umbrellas, toys
With a gun to guard them set by every truck,
They have packed off their wares,

Ready to hold up, horror-faked, their hands
Taken from jingling pockets, cleaned to view,
Staging their innocence to well-duped millions,—
When in Eastern steppe and hills their toys turn deadly
Where freedom is fought for.

Mikhail Kalinin

To the Soviet Intelligentsia

(Speech Before Representatives of the Soviet Toiling Intelligentsia of Leningrad, Nov. 26, 1937)

Comrades, permit me, through you, through the city-wide meeting of representatives of the Soviet toiling intelligentsia, to thank all the Leningrad electors for the honor and trust you have shown me in putting forward my candidacy for the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. (*stormy applause*).

I am in a difficulty; the feelings of the audience seem to have reached such a height that it is difficult to bring them back to the prose of life. And I am more a man of prose than of poetry (*laughter, applause*).

Two weeks hence citizens of the Soviet Union will put their ballots into the ballot boxes. On the surface, this is not a complicated procedure. I should like that you all, representatives of the Soviet intelligentsia—the distinguishing feature of which lies in the fact that it is flesh of the flesh and bone of the bone of the Soviet people—that you do your utmost in order that each voter should realize that he is performing a tremendous political deed. It is a very responsible, a very great work.

I should like all the people to perceive inwardly, organically, the political importance of this act. The election to the Supreme Soviet is one of the most significant manifestations of Soviet democracy. You know that there was a time when the word democracy was used in our country in all its declensions and that particularly guilty of this was our pre-revolutionary intelligentsia which made West-European parliamentarianism into an ideal and literally turned it into a fetish. We Communists never made democracy a fetish, we always looked upon democracy as a means, not as an end. For us democracy is one of the important methods, one of the great means for drawing the masses into the administration of the state, for educating the masses. Democracy makes it possible to unite, rally and direct the masses in the strugggle for a common goal.

This does not in any way minimize the fact that Soviet democracy is a most valuable gain of the toilers, for only Soviet democracy is genuine democracy.

Only in the Soviet Union is there a real sovereignty of the people, real democracy. Recall, for example, ancient Russian history and the Novgorod Veche. On the surface it was the purest democracy: the whole people, gathered on the square, decided fundamental questions and its decisions were carried into effect. There were not a few people among the Slavophiles who, looking upon this superficially, proclaimed Russian antiquity the golden age of the Russian people. Way back, Belinsky and Chernyshevsky caustically ridiculed such sentiments of the Slavophiles. We, Communists, know full well that in the Novgorod Veche, in the popular assembly of Novgorod, it was money that essentially decided all the most important questions. The rich had at their disposal physical force, they had at their

disposal "good boys" who, on coming to the Veche, shouted louder than all others, and now and then made use of their fists. Historians know that questions were very often decided by fists in that "golden age." The Novgorod Veche was not, of course, a genuine people's power. Similar forms of democracy in embryo are to be found also in the history of other peoples. The Veche was by no means an exclusively Russian institution; such institutions are found at the same stage of historical development of almost all peoples.

Passing over to our own time, it must be said that bourgeois democracy, the democracy of bourgeois-capitalist countries, serves only as a fig leaf for covering up the power of capital. I believe that at this meeting there is no need for me to bring special proof in confirmation of this. While money played a role in the Novgorod Veche, the decisive role in modern bourgeois democracy is played by capital.

To all those who seek and are striving for a true democratic society, who desire to live in such a society, I must say: true democracy exists in the Soviet Union! (*Stormy applause.*)

You will, of course, be right if you put to me the question: But are these not empty words—how can you prove that genuine democracy exists only in our country? I shall try to answer this question.

The first thing that characterizes the democracy of our system is that we have no capitalists, that we have no exploiting classes. Here you have the first distinguishing quality of Soviet democracy. For it is clear to everyone that whatever "democracy" there may be, nevertheless where side by side there are a Rockefeller and a simple worker, democracy is nothing but an empty sound. A tremendous distance separates the simple worker—who lives only by the sale of his labor power, by his labor, who earns a pittance—and the billionaire; there, whatever form of democracy you may invent, inasmuch as the billionaire remains a billionaire, it will all the same come to nought. Consequently, the first distinguishing quality of Soviet democracy is that it is emancipated from the power of capital.

Further, class contradictions are absent in our country. In every capitalist country, in the solution of any state matter, the contradictory interests of various capitalist groups come into collision. Let us take the following example: In Moscow we are now pulling down a number of houses and are constructing new roads. It is not such a simple matter to do this in a capitalist country. Paris, London and New York are suffering very, very much from private capitalist interests. In planning such a city you have to buy every inch of land, you have to pay enormous sums to landowners. In bourgeois countries, each progressive step, both in town construction and in other fields of life, is hampered by interested groups of capitalists. It is, therefore, quite natural that in capitalist countries each measure comes into collision with private capitalist, self-seeking interests. It is this element that is absent in our country, insofar as we have no hostile classes, as we have no class contradictions. It is by no means an accident that the Stalinist Constitution has been promulgated precisely at present, when Socialism has been built in our country, when class contradictions have been abolished.

Our country is also distinguished by the fact that during the past twenty years—I think I am not boasting, but am simply stating a fact—that during these twenty years both the political and the cultural level of our masses have grown immeasurably. In my opinion, this is so (*applause*). While literally in the whole capitalist world we see at the present either stagnation or degradation of art and science, in the Soviet Union, art and science are flourishing

tremendously. The high political and cultural level of the masses is a distinguishing feature of Soviet democracy.

I consider the unity of purpose of our entire people the fourth distinguishing feature of Soviet democracy. Let us take, for example, even the most prospering capitalist state. The ruling classes of such a state have no aim which would unite all honest people, would inspire them with a readiness to sacrifice everything, even their life. Even in time of war, a large section of the ruling class in capitalist countries engages in marauding, speculation, seeks to enrich itself.

And in our country, the entire people have a common purpose. This purpose is the struggle for building Communism (*stormy ovation*).

There was a time when a certain section of our intelligentsia considered Communism a doctrine, and people who defended and carried out the ideas of Communism into life were considered dreamers. At the present time, after twenty years of the existence of the Soviet Union, Communism is not a doctrine for the Soviet citizen, for the entire Soviet people and its intelligentsia, but a definite goal which unites all of us (*stormy applause*).

There was a time when people who proclaimed the great slogan of Communism, from each according to his ability to each according to his needs, were even ridiculed. Yes, twenty years ago this goal seemed distant to some people. I said that I am a man of prose, but this great goal turns a prosaic man into a poet! (*Stormy applause.*)

At present a Constitution which guarantees to every one the right to work, the right to rest, the right to education, the right to a secure old age, is in force in our country. Now we see with our own eyes, feel with our own hands how our prosperity is increasing from year to year. Now every citizen of our country considers the Communist society fully achievable (*stormy applause*).

It is on this basis, on this foundation, that our Soviet democracy is developing. This is why Soviet democracy is genume democracy. It is understood however, comrades, that the further perfection of Soviet democracy depends upon us. We have to make it so flexible that every person, every member of our society, should feel his organic ties with this society, that the state should assist him to develop all his individual abilities. Of course, in the Communist society there will be no state apparatus in the present sense of the word. But our state must carry through tremendous work in the remaining historical period to be traversed on the road to Communism.

The Soviet intelligentsia is destined to play a tremendous role in this work, in the perfection of state forms, in the change of the attitude of man to man, in the transformation of the psychology of people.

We, ourselves, do not notice that the Soviet man is already becoming different from the man of capitalist society (*applause*). Well, he differs in that in capitalist society the main preoccupation of man, regardless of whether he is a miser or a spendthrift, bad or good, is the saving of money. That is but natural. If a man in capitalist society has not saved a certain amount of money he is lost; the first catastrophe, the first misfortune of his life will knock him out. And in our country no one is afraid to spend even his last ruble (*laughter, applause*). Our tomorrow is secure (*applause*).

Is it not clear that Soviet democracy is the most perfect democracy in the world? (*Applause.*)

The Soviet Government, the Party, Comrade Stalin, are striving to attract the widest masses to the direct management of the state. The task of developing Soviet democracy can be tackled only by the entire people. By participating in the elections to the Soviet organs the toiling masses are taking upon

themselves a grand task. They will cope with this task, for they are guided by the teaching of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin (*stormy applause*).

However, in order to cope the more easily with its great tasks, the united democratic people must look freely ahead. Therefore we will crush all renegades who are plotting behind the people's back, as enemies should be crushed (*stormy applause*).

Comrades, a great deal has been said here about the fact that we are living in a happy time. I also think so, and would only like to throw off some twenty years or so (*laughter, applause*), but being a man who takes cognizance of objective situations, I am reconciled to my age (*laughter, applause*).

And it seems to me that our intelligentsia are living in a particularly happy time. In olden days we classified the intelligentsia with the petty bourgeois sections of the population. In bourgeois society the upper stratum of the intelligentsia was knit together with the exploiting classes. In our country, there is not a very great difference between the earnings of an average engineer and the earnings of a worker. But this is not the only thing. Our intelligentsia is very closely bound up with the working class, with the collective farm peasantry. Our engineers, writers, actors, artists, poets, teachers, are being advanced into the ranks of the intelligentsia in accordance with their abilities. A secondary education, seven years of schooling, is obligatory for all in our country and upon graduating the seven-year school all roads are open to every one. The most active, most gifted, most capable, most skilled persons coming from the people are joining the ranks of the intelligentsia.

Our contemporary intelligentsia is the first generation of the Soviet intelligentsia. It is the flesh of the flesh of the Soviet people, it is an inseparable part of our people. One may even find on the brow of the Soviet intelligentsia characteristic features of both the worker and the peasant (*applause*). We will love our intelligentsia just as we love the Red Army (*stormy ovation*), and the Red Army we love very much (*applause*).

It was said here that the creative forces can only now be unfolded. That is true. The Soviet system alone gives the intelligentsia an opportunity to unfold its creative powers, capabilities, talent. And that is under the conditions of the Socialist state. But in Communist society we shall release such forces that the mere thought of it makes us breathless (*applause*).

I will mention a most commonplace example in the sphere of production. We build a subway in Moscow. Subways are also built abroad. Tell me, is our architect who plans subway stations in the same position as, say, an architect in Paris? Why, in Paris, too, the desire to create prompts the architect to offer the public beauty, elegance, comfort; why, he too would like to create a masterpiece, a beautiful, splendid work. That is natural. I think that every architect strives for that. But can he give free play to his creative abilities in bourgeois society? No, he cannot. Why? Because over there a capitalist is building the subway. And a capitalist builds a subway not for the purpose of creating a masterpiece, he builds a capitalist enterprise to derive profit. Besides, the capitalist, himself, is handicapped by the money involved; the fact is that if the building will be expensive for him, he will lose by it.

But here? Here everything is built by the Socialist State. There is not a single capitalist in the world who is as rich as the Soviet Socialist State (*applause*). When a task is given to an architect here he is told that it is necessary to build *such* an edifice as would correspond to the interests of the people, to their needs for comfort and their artistic tastes.

The difference in the position of the intelligentsia in bourgeois and in Socialist society comes as a result of the fact that over there the capitalists

are in power, while here it is the working people. Our people tell the architect: "Build me a subway, but since that subway will be used by the masses, do not think of profits but think of the fact that people will have to travel on this subway to work and from work, bear in mind that a man should not be exhausted by riding on the subway." That is the difference in the position of the intelligentsia in the capitalist world and here. This example which I gave may be applied literally to all creative manifestations of people engaged in mental labor.

I will tell you more than that. In the capitalist world all things are created with the motive of deriving profit. It is not surprising that in America, which is notorious for its extravagance, the making of all things is, in essence, standardized, so that it costs less. The so-called "average man" uses these things. There the whole orientation of life is determined by the capitalist class, for which only one thing counts—profit, profit and profit. That is the objective of any capitalist.

But here we shall make all things, houses, theaters, bridges, railway stations, articles of general consumption, with a view to their expediency, usefulness, beauty.

It may be confidently asserted that the beauty of our life in the future, its comforts and conveniences, largely depend upon us. Ugly houses, and we have built many of them, have been designed not by workers but by architects. The fact is that our state, in making decisions, relies in all questions on the opinions of specialists.

I think that the further we go and the more perfect our life becomes, the higher the level of technique, and the higher we raise the artistic requirements of the people, the greater will be the influence of specialists on the whole of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union.

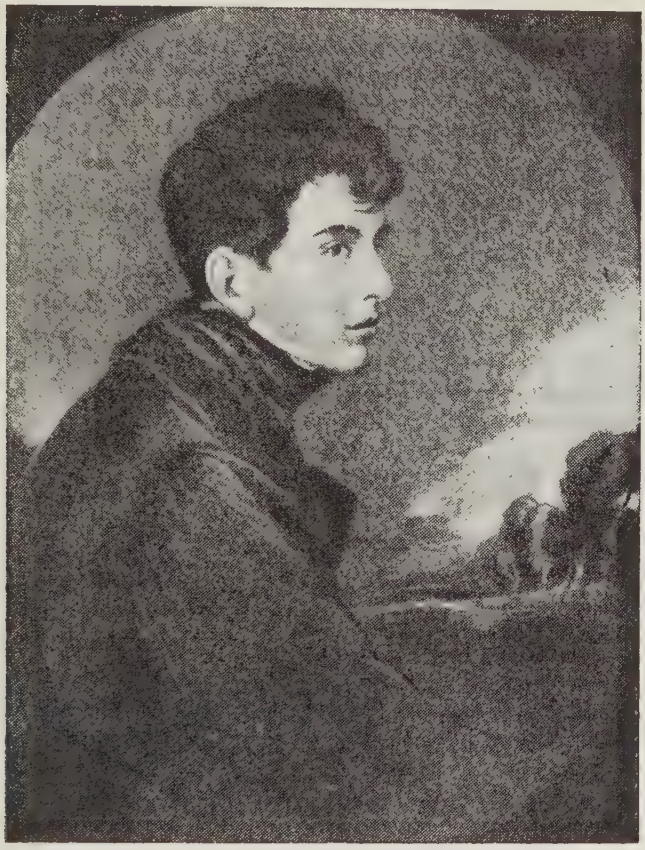
That, comrades, is what the Soviet order means, that is the role of the intelligentsia in this Soviet order. As you see, the role is even greater than you assume. This is a highly honorable role. We say that our country will be the first in the world in the sphere of art and science. I also think so. But for this it is necessary to work, to perfect our life and to perfect ourselves. And if you desire that the country should march forward at a greater pace, give full vent to your creative power (*prolonged applause*). I can assure you that the development of your creative power will fill the individual life of each of you with exceptionally rich content (*applause*).

Comrades, on Dec. 12 we shall all vote for the Communist Party, for him who expressed the aspirations of the people, Comrade Stalin (*stormy applause, turning into an ovation, shouts of "hurrah"*).

For the Soviet intelligentsia, for the creative work of the Soviet intelligentsia! (*Another outburst of applause and repeated shouts of "hurrah!"*)

GEORGE GORDON BYRON

Commemorating the 150th anniversary of his birth.



Byron and Byronism

It seems strange that Byron, born a lord, (1788-1824) should have become a revolutionary and his name the synonym for all that was revolutionary in Europe, a synonym for protest. One would think that belonging to the aristocracy he would inevitably have been drawn to protect the old order.

But it does not always happen so; the reasons which drove Byron from his narrow aristocratic circles are not far to seek.

Everything in Byron's life and character seems full of tormenting contradictions. He was born a lord, but his affairs turned out badly, for he inherited an almost worthless property. His pride, nurtured by the sense of belonging to the English nobility, was galled by his poverty, which made it

impossible for him to live in the style demanded by his rank. Moreover, Byron was an extraordinarily handsome man, and at the same time lame from birth, a fact which caused him much mental distress. Towards the end of his life he wrote a play, *The Deformed Transformed,* never finished, about the sufferings of a man of noble spirit cursed with physical deformity.

He was extremely sensitive, and such irreconcilable circumstances as noble birth and poverty, personal beauty and deformity set a strange melancholic stamp upon his mind from his earliest childhood. His sensitiveness was of a special character. From his forbears he inherited a tendency to gusts of anger, rising sometimes to real paroxysms of rage. On the other hand, how sensitive he was to the influence of beauty or sympathy is shown by his several times having gone into convulsions following upon some strong æsthetic impression. When he witnessed a performance by Keen, the celebrated actor, or if he had to be present while a wound was being dressed, he would weep like a woman.

This extraordinary impressionability, together with an exaggerated self-conceit and pride, made him peculiarly liable to come into conflict with society. And once the friction had begun, it grew more and more pronounced, till finally it turned Byron into that great revolutionary in outlook and political practice which he later became.

If English society had taken some step towards petting him a little, soothing him down, perhaps he would not have cut himself off so completely; but it insulted him, humiliated him, surrounded him with hostility and slander, interpreted his passionate outbursts as signs of horrible depravity, of criminality, till gradually he withdrew into himself, shut himself up in his pride, and was driven to the perverse declarations that the worst said of him was true, and less than the truth.

His first poetic works brought him great fame, but at the same time evoked the most unfriendly and caustic criticism from the upholders of established morality. Subsequently, to spite them, he wrote with ever increasing disregard for conventional morality and broke finally and decisively with English ruling opinion.

These circumstances compelled Byron to flee from England and seek refuge abroad. He had always felt attracted towards the eastern countries and especially the south-east. It seemed to him that life there was much freer, less hampered by prejudice; and he spent almost all the rest of his life in Italy and the south-east.[1]

And the eyes of Europe followed this strange personality with amazement, with admiration and at times with anger. His literary work brought him in a good deal of money which he spent recklessly. He had affectations of dress. When he appeared in a town nothing pleased him better than to astound the residents by some eccentricity; he loved to create a sensation, even though it were a scandalous one. And along with this challenging prankishness, went a great magnanimity, chivalry and readiness to support the weaker side, and a strong sympathy with revolutionary action. Byron, for instance, openly sided with the Italian Carbonari, the contemporary Italian revolutionary conspirators, publicly affirmed his participation in this movement, supplied funds towards all kinds of revolutionary attempts, in Venice for example, and so on.

Meanwhile from time to time he gave to the world amazing works, com-

[1] Byron's journey in the East lasted two years (1809-11), and for seven years (1816-23) he lived in Italy.—*Ed.*

pletely unprecedented, unlike anything that had been done in the past. His bitterest enemies were disarmed and could not but admit their superb brilliance of diction, their boldness of thought and imagination. At the same time each work as it appeared became the center of fierce controversy, for in this dark period of reaction they were veritable thunderbolts directed against the whole fabric of contemporary society. It is worth notice that Byron rarely touched directly on political questions, but practically confined himself to manners and morals. In this sphere he could not find words strong enough with which to accuse of every kind of perversity the upper classes and philistine lower classes of Europe, arguing that with them everything was reduced to terms of buying and selling, everything petty, everything an imitation, that the only thing one could do was to try to escape from it all so long as it was impossible to destroy it.

The manner of his death, at the age of thirty-six, had an effect, it was a fitting climax to his brief life. Like every Liberal of his day, Byron was strongly drawn towards ancient Greece. The first attempts of the Greeks to throw off the Turkish yoke aroused great enthusiasm in him, and he threw himself heart and soul into their cause. He became as it were its prime minister and commander-in-chief, and gave proof of great political ability. Byron became the recognized leader of the Greek revolt against the ruling classes of Turkey, and during the struggle lost his life in the swamps of Missolonghi.

Such was the life of this amazing man. Some would describe him as nothing but a lordly eccentric. An eccentric lord, a moody aristocrat, to a large extent he was. His lordly fancies never left him either in his works or in the escapades of his life. But everything has its limits. When the "nobleman" is a genius, when his eccentricities shake the foundations of established society in a period of the absolute victory of reaction, as was the case in the twenties of the nineteenth century, then he acquires enormous significance. This eccentric lord must unquestionably be numbered amongst the best people of his times.

His influence on world literature has been immense. In every body of literature reflections of Byron are to be found. On Russian literature too his influence has been highly marked. Some of our second-rate writers, Bestuzhev-Marlinsky for instance, were saturated with Byronism, and our great writers Pushkin and Lermontov fell under his spell to such an extent that the works of Pushkin's first period and even such outstanding ones as *Eugene Onegin* must be referred to the school of Byron, as must also the majority of Lermontov's works. Everywhere in literature we find traces of the spirit of this eccentric lord.

In what does Byron's literary activity most characteristically declare itself? In this, that he aspired to portray the upright and fearless man. And it seemed to him that he was most likely to find such a man in the East, that is, in those countries in which European civilization had not yet penetrated. He greatly idealized the East. These Greeks, these Turks of Asia-Minor, he knew little of them. Later, perhaps, he came to know them better. He idealized them and wrote brilliant tales which in reality belong nowhere, which certainly do not reflect the real East. But brilliant tales they were about great passions and Odysseys through the gorgeous East. All that extravagant, high-flown operatic East which was for long to bewitch men's imaginations was largely of Byron's creation. He gave it its scope and grandeur. Such works as the *Bride of Abydos* can still be read with pleasure, though naturally the interest in them has subsided somewhat. Pushkin's *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* is a purely Byronic poem written less from the actual Crimea

than from Byron's poetry. Byron too has these brooding, dreamy sultans who know how to keep their fickle wives in order, bold lovers who breast dividing seas to keep troth with their beloved ones, people in whose bosoms volcanic passions rise, who hurl themselves upon each other like wild beasts. It seems to him that the very atmosphere, the costumes, the arms, the simplicity of morals, the free play of passion, that all this has an eternal superiority over the fossilized, prosaic society of Europe.

In the second place, we constantly find in the literatures of societies which are conventional and cramped by traditions a tendency to idealize outcasts and renegades. To the Romantics all society is made up of domesticated, emasculated philistines and the stronger personalities are to be sought outside its confines. They must be sought amongst convicts, amongst bandits, amongst those who recognize no law, no church, no government, but want to build the world anew.

Certainly the idea of the highwayman as a revolutionary is very weak. Here we have an individualist completely cut off from society, a man without any moral or social aim. But Byron loved such people as Lara, the Corsair and so on. To him they seemed to be the only revolutionaries. He was even impressed by the fact that they would submit to no discipline nor subject themselves to any broad ideal. The proletarian movement would scarcely have been acceptable to Byron. He was attracted by the figures of the anarchistic rebels.

Such productions occupied in the main the first half of Byron's literary career. The poem *Childe Harold* also belongs here.

Though one can scarcely call *Childe Harold* a poem: it has no everyday human content whatever. Here we have just such a nobleman as Byron, in a picturesque cloak, and with plenty of money in his pocket, cursing his native land, treacherous England, and betaking himself off to wander about the world. Then, in marvelous verse, in phrases of meteoric brilliance, are described the places which Childe Harold visited. Apart from this extraordinary series of astonishingly vivid landscapes and renderings of local customs, he returns to his melancholy, to his conviction of doom, to the complaint that no one understands him, gives vent to diatribes and flies into a fury against all human kind, by which we understand that same "moral" and mannered English society which was so hateful to him. And all this is expressed with soaring eloquence, flung from above below, with lofty gesture. Here a higher type of human being fulminates majestically against the luckless common herd.

The poem made an extraordinary impression. Why? Every Romantic movement may be looked on as the outcome of the feeling from which the best people of their day, the most sensitive part of the intelligentsia, suffer, a sense primarily of being outcast. There is nowhere to go, no niche they can fit into, all roads are closed. And because all roads are closed they take refuge in philosophic, religious and poetical dreams. Or they furiously shake the bars of their cage. In Byron this same outcast laments, suffers, but at the same time declares that these my tears, these my sufferings, are the one worthwhile thing in the world. I weep and suffer because I am a giant, and you are pigmies, and you want to coop me in your pigmy world. I cannot destroy it, it is iron, I lack strength to smash it, but I remain a giant, my head is among the stars, and you remain insignificant parasites. We are of different kinds. And the more I sorrow, the more barren my life, the more incontestable the proof of how far I have outgrown the world and its conventions. The great cannot live with backward mankind, the great have no

place on earth. The one thing which can in the least satisfy my passions is nature, or perhaps, my passion for woman. But even here I note that in general woman can never reach the same heights, and thus disillusionment quickly follows. The best type of woman is she who is closest to nature, a gypsy perhaps, some wild bloom, having no pretence to the higher qualities, but simply beautiful, as the forest and the lily-of-the-valley are beautiful—only such a one may be loved, as a part of nature.

This is a very advantageous theory for him who holds it, and a very consoling one. For this reason it has been strongly criticized, and rightly so. Nekrasov wrote about the Childe Harolds that

About the world they race,
After heroic deeds they chase,
Thanks to the fortune of noble descent,
Freed from the burden of earning a cent.

We may say that Childe Harold traveled a long way in the history of humanity. He is the solitary hero. It is particularly interesting to follow his evolution in Russian literature, where first of all we have Onegin, who is a pure "Moscovite in a Childe-Harold cloak," an outcast. Then there is Pechorin [1] with his enigmatic skepticism, and then this same personality reappears both in the level-headed thinker P. L. Lavrov,[2] who was the forefather of the revolutionary movement of the intelligentsia, and in the rebel-Bakuninists. As soon as there apeared the slightest possibility of success in the practical field there begins the search for the means of that political struggle which is so characteristic of the Russian intelligentsia and which bore us forward to fruitful results, forward to the contemporary proletarian revolutionary movement, in which the revolutionary ferment stirred up by the rebellious intelligentsia played a more or less significant role.

In the same way, the history of the Great French Revolution cannot be written if we do not understand the fate and reactions of the revolutionary intelligentsia of the time, how they were frustrated, how as a result they took refuge in fantasy, in mysticism, how they often faced complete ruin and sought a way of escape in dreams, albeit splendid ones, eloquent of their talent and profound idealism but entirely estranged from life; and how, on the other hand, a certain proportion of them, with Byron, took up a revolutionary position. Pride, obstinate resistance, unwillingness to consider any compromise—in these consists the great service rendered by Byronism. In this sense Pushkin and Lermontov were the teachers of the Russian intelligentsia; beneath the ornamental drapings and high-flown style of their poetry they were teachers of real value, leaving behind them a fruitful heritage.

In the second period of his literary activity Byron developed tremendously in depth. His first works were veritable searchlights opening up new vistas to his imitators and setting a fashion; but in spite of their brilliance of form there is no denying that they are somewhat superficial. Such things as *Hebrew Melodies*, *Darkness* and *The Prisoner of Chillon* however are real masterpieces. *Darkness*, which stirred Turgenev to translate it, is a monumental work indeed. This apocalyptic vision of the break-up of a

[1] The chief character of Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*.

[2] A noted revolutionary leader of "populist" tinge (of the 'seventies), very moderate in tactics (as opposed to Bakuninists).

world is written with great pathos, and tremendous power. *The Prisoner of Chillon,* which has been translated into Russian by Zhukovsky, and well translated, is also an enthralling poem. What thirst for freedom, what imprecations against gaolers, and what an unexpected ending, when the Prisoner of Chillon, freed at last, looks back on his chains and his prison, for he has grown so used to them that in some obscure way he feels attached to them and loath to leave them. Through what a gamut of human experience he ranges, and what a wealth of imagery!

In this period too Byron wrote two masterpieces which are not only immortal but continually incite to new discussion. These are *Manfred* and *Cain.* Goethe considered that *Manfred* was *Faust* turned inside out. But *Manfred* is in truth considerably narrower in scope than *Faust.* For us *Faust* is a much more acceptable character. Mephistopheles tries to reconcile the philosopher with a trivial manner of life, but in Faust there is a thirst for something higher and finer and he finds satisfaction only in socially-useful work. He wins back land from the sea, he settles a free people there, pledges them to defend their freedom and says that only the man who loses his identity in that of developing humanity is really human. When he sees that all is flourishing around him, when he has brought mankind to happiness, only then he cries: "Halt, Time!" Faust is the great prophet of activity. Goethe, outstripping his times, created a Socialist hero in Faust.

In *Manfred* the hero has no desires; he knows that ruin awaits him, but he gives himself neither to nature, nor to spirit, to nothing having an existence outside himself. Here we have a man of prodigious pride. Byron depicts him somewhat enigmatically and somewhat indistinctly. We have before us a great man of indomitable will, a genius, a magus, whose wisdom is so fabulous that he gains ascendency to some extent over nature and spirits, but whose teeth are eternally clenched with insupportable suffering. He feels that he is of no use to the world nor the world to him. He rushes hither and thither, conscious of his doom, despising everything, except the beauty of nature, and we have the spectacle of the passing of a man who will yield neither to god nor death nor honor but maintains his resistance undiminished to the end.

If we should ask what social purpose could such an attitude serve either from Byron's point of view or that of the section of society whose mouthpiece he was, one may answer, that its best type, the intellectual, surrounded on all sides by stultifying reaction, adopted it as a means of self-protection, of immuring himself against the hostile influences about him. The intelligentsia withdrew into itself, stiffened into a pose of non-acceptance of the world and refused to consider any compromise with it, living in dreams of someday justifying itself by an inner moral victory if by no other.

Cain goes even further than *Manfred* in this direction. He hurls defiance at god. Byron modifies and gives his own interpretation of the bible story. He makes Cain a forerunner of Byronism, makes him feel as he himself, Byron, would have felt in his place. Cain is a man of profound thought who asks, for what purpose was the world created, has it been established on just principles or not? While Adam, Eve and Abel say that since the Lord so created it, it must be good, Cain is not satisfied with this; before the judgment bar of his own reason he must receive the answer to his question: What is the meaning of existence? Why is there above and below? Why is there a god, why must one serve him? Why is there pain, grief and death? He must know all. And when he looks searchingly into this reality and tries to know it and assess it, he comes to the conclusion that it must be assessed in a nega-

tive sense, that god must be seen in his true character as a criminal for creating such an abominable world, in a word, he condemns the creator for his creation. But Lucifer makes overtures to him, feeling in him a kindred spirit, and proposes that they enter into a pact. This pact they conclude and together Lucifer and Cain traverse all kinds of fantastic worlds which Byron uses to elaborate a completely pessimistic philosophy. Here space, time and the laws of nature are subjected to criticism aimed at demonstrating the absurdity of the world and the validity of universal protest. Now it is no longer a matter of protest against social injustice; Byron's condemnation embraces the whole scheme of things, he vilifies existence itself.

What conclusion can be drawn from this condemnation of the world?

Marx drew the conclusion that our business is not merely to interpret the world but to remake it. The only questions are, in the first place, is humanity capable of remaking it, and secondly, is the material suitable? We know now that the material is rich, and man to all appearances is capable of refashioning it to his own desire. But Cain cannot attain to such an optimistic outlook; he can only break himself against the absurdity of existence. In his philosophy god is the malevolant being, Lucifer is more beneficient and reasonable. He protests but it is beyond his power to change. People can only sorrow, fruitlessly and hopelessly sorrow, for there is no way out for anyone.

There is no idea here that man may be a creative force. None the less we must count this a revolutionary work, for its hand is raised against nature, against god, against all the common judgments of good and evil. It gave a great impetus to protest. And who knows, perhaps the greatest of the revolutionaries, Marx and the others, read Cain while they were still children and were stirred by it to their first criticisms of existence. By the way, there are too many dissertations in *Cain,* and not all of them of interest to us today.

Certainly all Byron's works should be re-evaluated in the light of subsequent history. But his influence in his own times was a positive one. His protest was couched in terms of great beauty, and he inspired many minds and restrained them from compromise, from regress into philistinism. For long he shone like a red star in the heavens, and acted as a force which deterred many from yielding to the corrupting influence of a decaying social environment.

Anatoly Lunacharsky

Pushkin, Belinsky and Herzen on Byron

Alexander Pushkin

From a letter to P. A. Vyasemsky, end of June, 1823

. . . . you were sad about Byron, but I am glad of his death as a lofty subject for poetry. Byron's genius declined with his youth. In his tragedies, not excluding even *Cain,* he is no longer the flaming demon who created *Giaour* and *Childe Harold.* The first two cantos of *Don Juan* are above the rest. His poetry evidently changed. He was created wrong side out; there was no gradualness about him. He suddenly matured and raised his voice—sang and became silent, and his first notes never returned to him. After the fourth canto of *Childe Harold,* we no longer heard Byron, but some other poet with great human talent wrote in his stead.

From a letter to L. S. Pushkin, first half of November, 1823

. . . . Verses, verses, verses. Conversations of Byron! Walter Scott! That is spiritual food. . . .

From a letter to A. A. Bestuzhev, March 24, 1825

. . . . You compare the first chapter (of *Eugene Onegin.—Ed.*) with Don Juan. No one has more respect than I have for *Don Juan* (the first five cantos —I haven't read the others), but it has nothing in common with Onegin.

From a letter to P. A. Vyasemsky, middle of April, 1825

. . . . Do you know why I don't like Moore? Because he is excessively oriental. He gives a childish and distorted imitation of the childishness and distortion of Saadi, Hafiz and Mahomed. A European must retain a European's taste and outlook even when singing of oriental luxury. That's why Byron is so splendid in *Giaour,* in *The Bride of Abydos,* etc. . . .

From a letter to P. A. Vyasemsky, around September 12, 1825

What a miracle *Don Juan* is! I only know the first five cantos. After I read the first two, I promptly told Rayevsky that this was Byron's *chef d'œuvre,* and I was very glad later when I saw that Walter Scott shared my opinion. I need English—and this is one of the disadvantages of my exile: I have no means of studying, it is high time, however. Shame on my persecutors! And I, like A. Chenier, can strike my head and say: *Il y avait quelque chose la* . . .excuse this poetic boasting and prosy spleen. . . . Why do you regret the loss of Byron's memoirs? To hell with them! Thank god they are lost. He confessed in his verses involuntarily, swept away by his delight with poetry. In cold-blooded prose he would have lied and schemed, trying now to shine with sincerity and now to besmirch his enemies. They would have exposed him the way they exposed Rousseau—and then anger and slander would again have triumphed. Leave curiosity to the crowd and side with genius.

From the article, "Excerpts from Letters, Thoughts and Comments" (1826)

Byron said that he would never undertake to describe a land that he had not seen with his own eyes. However, in *Don Juan* he describes Russia, and several transgressions against the locality are to be found. For instance, he speaks of the mud of the streets of Izmail, Don Juan travels to Petersburg in a covered sleigh, an uncomfortable conveyance without springs over a bad, rocky road. Izmail was taken in winter in a bitter frost. The enemy corpses on the streets were covered with snow and the victor rode over them surprised at the neatness of the city: "For god's sake, how clean it is." A winter sleigh is not bumpy, and a winter road is not rocky. There are other mistakes that are more important. Byron read a lot and asked a lot about Russia. He apparently liked Russia and was familiar with her recent history. In his poems he often speaks of Russia and our customs. Sardanapalus' dream recalls the well-known political cartoon published in Warsaw during the Suvorov wars. It pictured Peter the Great in the guise of Nimrod. In 1813 Byron intended to go to the Caucasus through Persia.

From notes on Byron (1826)

1) Not one of Lord Byron's works made such a strong impression in England as his poem *Corsair,* in spite of the fact that in merit it is inferior to many others:

Giaour in the flaming portrayal of passion; the *Siege of Corinth,* the *Prisoner of Chillon,* in the touching development of the emotions, *Parisina* in its tragic strength, finally the third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold* in the depth of meaning and lyrical strength and *Don Juan* with its amazing Shakespearean variety. *Corsair* owed its disproportionate success to the character of the main person, who secretly reminded us of the man whose tragic will ruled one part of Europe at the time, while threatening the other.

At any rate, English critics attributed this intention to Byron, but it is more likely that the poet brought on the scene the same person who appears in all his works, and whom he finally took upon himself in *Childe Harold.* In any case the poet never explained his intention: the approximation to Napoleon pleased his vanity.

Byron paid little heed to the plans of his work or even did not think of them at all: a few scenes weakly connected with each other constitute (illegible) (and) sufficed him for depth of thought, feeling and description. The critics disputed his dramatic genius and Byron was infuriated by that—the fact is that he achieved and loved only one character—etc.

This is why in spite of great poetic beauty his tragedies in general do not come up to his genius and the dramatic part in his poems (except for *Parisina* alone) lack all merit.

What are we to think of a writer who from the poem *Corsair* takes only the plan, worthy of a silly and vulgar (?) story—and by this same childish plan composes a dramatic trilogy, replacing Byron's charming and profound poetry with long-winded and ugly prose, worthy of our unfortunate imitators of the late Kotzebue? That is what Mr. Olin did when he wrote his romantic tragedy *Corsair*—an imitation (of Byron). The question arises: what was it that struck him in Byron's poem—was it really the plan? Oh, *miratores* . . .

2) The English critics disputed Lord Byron's dramatic talent; they were right, it seems—Byron who is so original in *Childe Harold, Giaour* and in *Don Juan* becomes an imitator as soon as he sets foot on a dramatic stage; in

Manfred he imitated *Faust,* replacing the folk scenes and sabbaths with others which in his opinion were nobler. But *Faust* is the greatest creation of the poetic spirit, he serves as the representative of the latest poetry just as the *Iliad* serves as the monument of classical antiquity.

In other tragedies Alfieri was apparently Byron's model. *Cain* is a drama in form only, but in the disconnectedness of its senses and abstract dissertations it really belongs to the same type of skeptical poetry as *Childe Harold.* Byron cast a one-sided glance at the world and human nature and then turned away from them and became concerned with himself. In *Cain* he attained, created and described a single character (his own) and he imputed everything, with the exception of (?) to this gloomy, powerful personality which is so mysteriously enthralling. When he began to compose his tragedy he distributed one of the component parts of this complex and strong personality to each of the characters and thereby broke up his magnificent creation into several small and insignificant characters.

Byron realized his mistake and subsequently again applied himself to Faust, imitating him in his *The Deformed Transformed* (thinking thereby to correct his *chef-d'œuvre).*

From a letter to P. A. Pletnyev, October, 1829

Our critics, in analyzing *Poltava,* referred to Byron's *Mazeppa.* They do not understand it. . . .

. . . They remark that the name of my poem is inappropriate and that I probably had not entitled it Mazeppa to keep from recalling Byron. This is partially true. Byron knew Mazeppa only from Voltaire's history of Charles XII. Byron was merely struck by the picture of a man tied to a wild horse and borne across the steppes. The picture is, to be sure, a poetic one, and look what Byron did with it! But do not seek here for Mazeppa or Charles, or for the gloomy, detestable and painful character who appears in almost all of Byron's works, but who (unfortunately for my critics) is missing in Mazeppa. Byron never even thought of him. He presented a series of pictures, one more striking than the next. That is all. But what a brilliant creation, what a masterful hand! If the story of the daughter who was seduced and the father who was executed had reached his pen then probably no one after him would have ventured to touch the subject.

From notes on early poems (1830)

The Fountain of Bakhchisarai is weaker than *Captive,* and like the latter is the result of reading Byron, over whom I went crazy. . . .

From "Table Talk" (1834)

Goethe had a big influence on Byron. Faust haunted the imagination of *Childe Harold.* Twice did Byron try to fight with the giant of romanticism and he remained lame like Jacob.

Vissarion Belinsky

. . . In what light are we to look upon Byron and Schiller?

The first expressed the period of transition from one century to another, the other heralded the new century. Both fulfill a definite role in the historical development of humanity. Neither could have appeared at any other time, or rather if he had appeared, his poetry would have had quite a different character, expressed quite other thoughts. Byron's poetry is a cry of suffering, a lament, but it is the lament of a proud spirit, that would rather

give than take, rather condescend than entreat; he is Prometheus chained to the Caucasus, a human personality rebelling against the universe, and, in the pride of his heart, relying on himself alone. Hence the giant strength, the lofty disdain and unyielding stoicism in his attitude to the universe, and the sorrowing love, gentle intimacy, tenderness and leniency when he has to do with the individual buffeted by undeserved misfortunes. Schiller is the spokesman of humanity, but is full of love for and faith in the universal; he is the herald of lofty truths, a voice calling on his brother man to turn his gaze from lower to higher things, his heart is full of inexhaustible love for humanity. Like Byron, he is the champion of the rights of the individual, and against the egoism of society, its prejudices and its ignorant tenets unlit by the ray of reason; but he is full of love and charm, full of hope; his poetry is clearly the precursor of Byron's, but expressed in the spirit of his own people.

Both stand on the threshold between the 18th and 19th centuries, and neither could be fitted in to any other period. Their poetry writes a page in the history of mankind; tear it out, and historical continuity would be broken; a gap would be left which nothing could replace.

(Belinsky V. G., *Coll. Works of A. S. Pushkin*)

France listened to the gloomy and sonorous lyre of Byron, sensing in its strains a prophesy of her own rebirth.

(Belinsky V. G., *Coll. Works,* Vol. XII, p. 335)

Goethe too, cannot be measured by the same standards as Byron, just as one cannot measure Byron by those used in estimating Goethe. They were diametrically opposed natures, and whoever would condemn Goethe for not living and writing as Byron did, or vice-versa, would be talking nonsense. One might just as well require from an elephant the speed and agility of a tiger, or vice-versa; the elephant and the tiger being each excellent in his own way and necessary in the scheme of things.

(*Ibid., p. 368*)

In reading Byron's poetry you are filled with awe and astonishment at the colossal personality of the man, his titanic courage and his pride both of heart and intellect.

(*Ibid.,* p. 377)

A Russian singer who found within himself words forceful enough, great enough, to express the nameless inner torments of despair so terribly and realistically depicted by England's great poet.

(Belinsky V. G., *Collected Works of A. S. Pushkin,* p. 132)

Alexander Herzen

Pushkin was familiar with all the sufferings of civilized man, but he had a faith in the future which had already been lost in Europe. Byron, a great untrammelled personality, solitary in his independence, wrapped about in his arrogance, in his proud skeptic philosopy, became ever more gloomy and irreconcilable. For him the future held nothing; burdened and soured against the world, he joined his fate with that of the Slavic-Greek race of sea pirates whom he took for ancient Greeks. Pushkin on the other hand became more and more reassured, delved into the study of Russian history, gathered materials for a monograph on Pugachev, wrote the historical play *Boris Godunov*; he is permeated with an instinctive faith in the future of Russia.

(A. I. Herzen, *Coll. Works,* Vol. VI, p. 354-355).

HOW WE SEE IT

In an essay by one of the leading æsthetes, unaware of all the significance of his statement, he spoke of the burdens of writers in recent generations who had to provide not only the creative writing of their period but most of the criticism. He might have added, and recently much of the editing and publishing as well, for the capitalist control of the periodical press, through which it has worked to standardize and degrade literature, had forced upon the self-respecting writers the task of creating a substitute press, through which they could reach at least that tiny marginal audience so devoted to literature that it would read expensive, irregularly issued and badly printed journals to satisfy its taste.

The era of the "little" magazines is coming to a close not because capitalist control has relaxed but because the revolutionary press has become available to the insurgent writers. There they have found better explanations for their discontent than they had been able to give themselves, and consequently better expressions, and in the working class vanguard they have found a better audience than the seekers after æsthetic sensations who were the majority of their previous readers. The writers' problems have thereby by no means been solved. The solution lies in the future with the achievement of the humanist and actual democracy of Socialism. Hospitable as the revolutionary movement is to culture, the outlets it can provide to writers in capitalist countries are still inadequate, and writers must still be their own editors, and sometimes even their own publishers.

This will account for the fact that the poet, John Lehmann, serves as editor of *New Writing,* a literary semi-annual of the greatest importance, as two essayists and a poet serve as the editors of the American literary annual, *The American Caravan.* Three numbers have appeared which have already given representation to English, American, Soviet, French, German, Hindu, Italian, Spanish, Polish and Chinese writing, a literary international. Moreover, this international has had a representation not only by nations but by literary trends. It has ably fulfilled, whether intentionally or not, the function of a United Front literary organ. One might almost say that the only tendencies not to be found here are the decadent and surrealist, both of which approach either cultural nihilism or that complete enemy of culture—fascism.

In the three issues thus far published there are many distinguished names but there are also new names posing valid claims to attention. Some of the

contributions are in my judgment too brief. For example, Egon Erwin Kisch's *A Woman on the Silk Front* in the first number concentrates so much in a short time, and consequently is so accented, that it gives an impression of theatricality. In the context from which it had been taken it has supporting background; but out of context it is a little stiff and sharp, like a poster cut out. And I had the same reaction to some of the other short pieces.

In some cases also craftsmanship overreaches itself. Take as an instance *I Have Been Drowned* by H. T. Hopkinson in No. 3; I found myself enjoying it and admiring it in detail, but being disappointed in the whole and even feeling a little deceived when I finished it. The means was excessive for the end. The same is true of the Soviet writer Yuri Olesha's story *Love* in the same number, the texture of which was even more delectable. In both cases I was left with the feeling that magnificent rhetoric had been abused.

Where there is so much to comment upon—there are in all nearly seventy contributions in the three volumes—it is impossible here to speak of more than a few pieces, bearing in mind that the general level is high, the disappointments few, and that the proved performers like Ralph Bates, Anna Seghers, James Hanley, Louis Guilloux, André Chamson and so on come fully up to expectations and therefore do not occur to the critic whose mind is poised for discoveries. Of what might be called discoveries though in this case its author has made a reputation, the Berlin sketches by Christopher Isherwood linger freshest in the mind. Except for the flatness of the self portrait, common to all autobiographical writing, here is character drawing sure and intimate and sensory, though impersonal, and kept at an ironic distance, character drawing a little more rarified and more careful, of proportion than the older masters of portraiture, but in their tradition. I presume that Isherwood is preparing a book of such portraits; it is a book to watch for.

Although some of the contributions are in no direct sense proletarian, the writing in all three volumes is on the whole proletarian, if we accept the definition that proletarian writing is that done from the point of view or in the interests of the proletariat. This would include then such an exposure of the eunuch-like non-partisanship of certain middle class intellectuals as C. Day-Lewis has done, with deft symbolism, in his story *Tinker*. However, there is rather too much absorption in these, as there is also too much absorption in the theme of the workers' frustration, and too much uncovering of misery. Silone's fatalism, eloquent and full-toned though it is, makes one restive. James Stern's *A Stranger Among the Miners* is moving; and Willy Goldman's *A Start in Life* is penetrating; but the reader finished one heavy with the hopelessness of the life of the miners, and the other downcast over the meanness and frustrations of life in the slums.

One longs instead for the positive note, for the worker as doer rather than as sufferer. That is why one feels such satisfaction in Mulk Raj Anand's story *The Barbers' Trade Union* where the courage and resourcefulness and love of life of a worker is the theme, done without a trace of romanticizing, and leaving a strong impression of the workers' endurance, ingenuity and power. The same impression is left by George Garret's *First Hunger March*. Vassily Grossmann's *In the Town of Berdichev* is an inspiring portrait of a heroic woman. Louis Guilloux in *A Present for the Deputy* personifies hatred and scorn for bourgeois hypocrisy with wonderful vividness. Here scorn, irony, are lifted from passivity, from merely being attitudes, to action.

To deny the misery and frustration of the workers' lives would be to falsify; to ignore it would be to make an incomplete presentation. But to leave unrecorded the hardihood and canniness and will of the worker is also to make an incomplete presentation. Further, in the intensifying struggle, when literature, whether by the author's design or not, is more used as an instrument of class struggle than in almost any previous period, the proletarian writer has a special responsibility.

Isidor Schneider

Artists in the Supreme Soviet

MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV

In the year 1905 a boy was born in a Cossack stanitsa (Krushlino) near Veshenskaya. His mother called him Mikhail. Her husband, Sholokhov (they were not legally married) was what was then termed an "alien," *i.e.*, the native of another city, for he came from Ryazan Province in the heart of Russia. He suffered the burden that all such "aliens" were made to bear then.

From his earliest infancy young Mikhail breathed the pure, exhilerating air of the steppe land, its hot sun burned him and the dry hot winds raised huge dust clouds which parched his lips. And the quiet Don dotted darkly with Cossack fishing-smacks, stamped itself indelibly on his heart.

He romped on the dusty, grass-grown streets with his Cossack playmates. As he grew older he joined the young Cossacks and girls in promenading the wide streets, singing as they went, the moon-filled air ringing with the laughter of the girls, the merry chatter and undying gaiety of youth.

The Cossacks are a happy, lively, good-natured people. Wherever they foregather there is laughter and jollity, as they poke good-humored fun at one another.

Their songs are beautiful, the poignant songs of the steppes which at once twinge and caress the heart. The haunting melodies resound from end to end of the land and they are unforgettable.

Mikhail imbibed with his mother's milk the Cossack tongue, vivid, pungent, colorful with its bright imagery and unexpected idioms,—the language which blossomed so magically in his writings where the life of the Cossacks is so powerfully depicted.

In due time young Mikhail's father took him to grammar school (or the gymnasium as it was then called).

His mother, an excellent woman, utterly illiterate yet possessed of a vivid perceptive mind, now learned to read and write in order to correspond with her son. From the correspondence between mother and son one can judge whence Sholokhov inherited his creative genius.

The October Revolution came and swept away the foul, stagnant, stubborn rural mode of life of the Cossacks. Suddenly the Cossack-land was torn asunder by a deep rift; the poor followed the Revolution, the rich went with the counter-revolution. The young Sholokhov, like everyone else, was faced with the burning question: which side? He had no thought for his studies. He left school and the broad wave of Revolution caught him and swept him into the thick of events.

Young Sholokhov sprung from the toilers, and in his breast burned the thirst to fight for the happiness of the toilers, the tortured. That is why he fought the kulaks who hid their stores of grain from the toilers, that is why

he took part in combating banditism. That is why he took the side of the revolutionary poor in his subsequent writings. The Party and the Young Communist League kindled in his heart the revolutionary desire to take part in the great struggle of the exploited against the exploiters. And he did his share at first with rifle and later with the pen.

During the Civil War Sholokhov knocked about the Don country. He took part for a long time in food requisition work, fought the bandits who operated on the Don until 1922.

When the Civil War abated and the bands which had ravaged the land were wiped out, Sholokhov began to write.

The Veshenskaya stanitsa stands on the very shore of the Don River. Its broad streets are bright with the white-washed Cossack cottages. There is much dust and few trees on the roads. Only the gentle river, curving round the village in a warm embrace, covers its sloping banks with soft green.

Not far from the river stands a new house with an attic. It belongs to Sholokhov. The attic is his work-room and study. "In summer it is too hot up there, and in wintor too cold," says the author.

Sholokhov works at night only. This habit has been necessitated by the great number of visitors who flock to see the writer. There are Cossacks, kolkhozniks, workers, commanders, students, tourists, foreigners, old women, children, journalists, writers, musicians, poets, composers. They come by car, on horseback, by boat, by steamer and by plane. Sholokhov receives them all warmly, talks, explains, helps and directs.

He passionately loves his steppe-land, with its dry winds, its bright sun, now scorching, now caressingly warm—the steppe with its ravines, copses, its beasts and birds. He passionately loves his quiet Don which gently meandering and tenderly encircling the stanitsa with its green banks, has created such an amazingly cosy, tranquil, pensive spot. In the Don waters sport fish, the sharp-nosed sterlet, and Sholokhov is an avid angler.

The Don engulfs him with impressions, characters, at times with unsuspected manifestations of folk art, original, primitive in the struggle with nature. The writer has a wide circle of acquaintances and his relations with the Cossack fishermen are warm and intimate. He learns from them, he observes them and takes from them of the ancient folk art.

Fishing in the Don and hunting from dawn to sunset in the steppe-lands dotted with collective farms are a source of enormous satisfaction to the writer in addition to furnishing him with a rich fund of material for his work. The Don, the steppes, the Cossacks, their history, life, psychology—all this tremendous field has become merged in the moods, the emotions of the writer himself.

Sholokhov was riding home after a gallop over the steppes. Beyond the stanitsa between the gardens wound the narrow road flanked by wattle fences. Round a bend in the road dashed a car at full speed. The horse reared. Another second and it would have crashed with its rider onto a heap of stones by the roadside. The driver of the car applied his brakes, the passengers leapt out and rushed to assist the rider and tender apologies. They offered to drive Sholokhov home and lead the prancing horse into the village.

"It's all right... never mind," declined Sholokhov, reseating himself in the saddle: it is humiliating for a horseman to ride in a car and lead his horse by the reins.

As he entered the stanitsa he noticed that the horse's muzzle was covered with blood. Nay, it would never do to appear in the village in such a condition! He turned back to the river, dismounted on the bank and leading the

horse to the water carefully washed its muzzle, cleaned its flanks and legs which had been grazed in stumbling. He worked with difficulty, wincing at a sharp pain in his leg which weighed heavy as lead. Climbing with a great effort into the saddle he returned to the stanitsa. On arriving home he was unable to dismount without assistance. He was carried into the room. To attempt to remove the riding-boot was unthinkable—the leg was blackened and swollen, heavy as a log. The boot had to be cut off. Sholokhov had showed himself the true Cossack; though injured himself his horse must be in perfect condition.

He frequently drops into a collective farm and gathering the old and young together sings with them, dances, and listens eagerly to their engrossing narratives about the war, the Revolution, the collective farm life, about construction. He has a thorough knowledge of agricultural work since he has not only observed it from afar but has himself lent a hand in the fields.

Sholokhov takes a lively share in the social life of the stanitsa. He is a member of the district committee of the Party. With his help the local theater has been organized.

He is an excellent family man, the father of three children.

Several years ago Sholokhov made a trip abroad and was almost overcome with nostalgic loneliness. He went to Berlin. The strange language, the peculiar severe tenor of life in the colossal city depressed him. He was haunted by visions of sun-filled steppes, stretching endlessly into the hazy blue distances. Before his eyes floated the azure waters of the Don, and the emerald tranquillity of his cosy spot below Veshenskaya stanitsa, collective farm meetings, merry gatherings, the singing and dancing of the Cossack youth. No, Sholokhov could endure it no longer. He drove to the station and took the next train to his beloved country, so dear and intimate that he could not leave it for long.

In 1935 he made another trip abroad, this time matured and now author not only of *Quiet Flows the Don,* but also of *The Soil Upturned,* books which had opened the eyes of the foreign reader to the amazing process unlike anything the world had seen, the transformation of the individual peasant, the petty owner, into a collective spirit, into a Socialist worker.

The truthfullness, sincerity, the inner beauty and artistic convincingness of Sholokhov's works, their color and penetrating psychological analysis elicited a warm response among readers abroad. His books have been translated into all the European languages.

By his splendid books and his visits to foreign countries Sholokhov has rendered a great service to the peoples of the USSR. He has done much toward destroying the lies and falsehoods with which the bourgeois press enmeshes Sholokhov's readers abroad.

Alexander Serafimovich

SHALVA DADIANI

The Makharadze Collective Farm nominated Shalva Dadiani its deputy to the Soviet of the Union from the Tbilisi rural voting area. Dadiani is a white-haired veteran of the Georgian revolution and ranks among the foremost Georgian writers. He has a record of thirty years as a playwright; his experience in social and literary work totals forty years.

Deep gloom settled on the homeland of the great Rustaveli when the tsarist colonizers invaded the country early in the nineteenth century. The

mournful notes of Baratashvili's lyre sounded in Georgian poetry. Thereafter until the great days of October pessimism weighed down Georgian literature.

But the deathlike silence was broken by one cheerful voice—the voice of Ilya Chavchavadze, wisest of Georgian poets.

"I hear the long awaited sound,
The clank of breaking chains."

As a lad, the future writer and dramatist Shalva Dadiani heard this living voice in the house of his father, Niko Dadiani, a prominent figure in Georgian public life during the 'eighties and 'nineties. Niko Dadiani's hospitable doors were open to all progressives. Here young Shalva listened to the verses of Ilya Chavchavadze and the folk bard Akaki Tsereteli. He heard scenes from Shakespeare's tragedies, translated by Ivan Machabeli, the first Georgian Shakespearean scholar. With his father's encouragement Shalva at the age of sixteen began to issue a home-made magazine of his own compositions in manuscript form.

He left home at eighteen with a troupe of strolling players and entered the Kutais theater then directed by Cote Meskhi, a producer of the French school and a prominent figure in public affairs.

In Georgia almost all gifted actors were at the same time either in public life or in playwriting.

Lado Meskhishvili, one of the most talented Georgian actors, who was well known to Moscow theatrical circles before the Revolution, added to his intense activity as an actor and producer; he delivered revolutionary speeches from the stage and took part in the barricade fighting in 1905. The young revolutionary enthusiast, Shalva Dadiani, was also to be seen in the battles with the gendarmes.

When the black years of reaction set in, Dadiani tried his skill as a dramatist. As manager of theatrical groups which he organized, he presented his own plays at workers' clubs and on country stages, with himself in the cast. He created a number of remarkable character interpretations such as Jean in the Mirbeau play *Jean and Madeleine,* Iliko in *Neighbors,* a revolutionary satire by the Georgian playwright Ramishvili, Gracchus in *Montis Caius Gracchus* and, finally the remarkable interpretation of the feudal despot Dadia in his own drama *Gegechkori,* which at the time became the most popular item in the repertory of almost all the theaters of Georgia.

The hero of the play *Gegechkori* is a revolutionary. His prototype is Utu Mikava, the famous leader of a peasant revolt in Mingrelia in 1857, although the immediate subject of the play is taken from the story of a young scholar by the name of Gegechkori, who incurs the enmity of a tyrant prince and is immured by the latter in an underground cell.

In the fantastic play, *In the Cavern,* Shalva Dadiani for the first time in the history of Georgian drama brings Georgian miners to the stage and sets the subject of the play in terms of bitter class struggle. Equal revolutionary significance attaches to his plays *When They Feasted* and *The Beginning.*

Dadiani organized the first "traveling theater" in Georgia; with a company of young actors he toured almost every corner of Georgia and Transcaucasia, playing for the most part to worker and peasant audiences. The company reached Novorossiisk, where Dadiani staged performances for the Georgian stevedores, sailors and longshoremen.

The most popular of Dadiani's revolutionary plays, which still enjoys suc-

cess today, was his comedy *Those of Yesterday,* a social satire on the representatives of feudal Georgia.

In our time, in his play *At the Very Heart,* he lampoons contemporary bureaucrats and chatterboxes in the state apparatus. This play was successfully staged in Moscow in 1930 at the theater olympiad, by the noted producer K. Marjanishvili.

In 1923 the thirtieth anniversary of Dadiani's literary and social activity was publicly celebrated. The title of People's Artist of Georgia was conferred upon him.

After the death of V. Mchedelov, who inspired and directed the Georgian Theatrical Studio in Moscow, Shalva Dadiani became its head; he directed also the House of Georgian Culture. He trained corps of future producers, actors and playwrights for the Georgian stage.

After his return to Georgia, Dadiani wrote one of the most noteworthy of his Soviet plays, *Tetnuld,* which employs the genre of tragedy to portray the struggle between the old world that is dying and the new that is being born.

In his new plays Dadiani departs from his accustomed literary traditions. This advance in skill is marked in *Guria Ninoshvili,* a play skillfully adapting stories by the writer Ignace Ninoshvili, and *From the Spark,* written in honor of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. It deals with the early days of the organization of the Bolshevik Party and the revolutionary struggle of the working class under the leadership of the young Stalin. *From the Spark* is now being performed in the leading theaters of Tbilisi and in almost all the large cities of the republic.

Faith in the strength and the triumph of the people runs like a red thread through all of Dadiani's writings. A man of remarkable personal charm, Dadiani has always and everywhere worked for the people. And the people answer him with their trust.

MIKHAIL CHIAURELI

Mikhail Chiaureli, one of the foremost masters of the Soviet cinema, was born in Tbilisi. His parents were too poor to provide him with a systematic middle education, in those days a privilege reserved for the very few. He was sent to a craft school. It was here that he scored his first stage success in a play put on by the students. After the performance the school principal walked over to him and sadly remarked:

"It looks as though Chiaureli will turn out an actor instead of a craftsman."

The principal was certain Chiaureli would ruin his life if he followed the stage. But Chiaureli did not heed the principal's admonitions. He devoted the whole of his life to drama and art, to the drama and art of his native Georgia.

It was not easy to become an actor in tsarist Russia. Acting did not provide a living. But Chiaureli's love of the stage was such that he worked by day and acted on the stage of the People's House in Tbilisi, at night, without pay. The People's House in Tbilisi staged performances at reduced prices, mainly for worker and student audiences. The Georgian aristocracy, the "upper crust," scorned the People's House; neither the performances nor the audiences appealed to its tastes. Here, on the stage of the People's House, as a young man, Chiaureli acquired a reputation as a gifted amateur actor, the favorite of the Tbilisi poor.

Afterwards, while playing alternately in Tbilisi and Kutais, on the pro-

fessional stage, Chiaureli worked out his self-education. He read a great deal; he studied drawing and tried his skill as a sculptor. By his persistent efforts he made himself a man of great culture. He displayed his abilities in various spheres of art.

Chiaureli's work is distinguished by a deep love for the people from whom he came and to whom he dedicated his skill as an actor and later his work as a painter and sculptor.

When the imperialist war broke out Chiaureli had just undertaken new and extremely interesting work. He had been engaged by the Archeological Committee to copy certain frescoes, remarkable specimens of mediaeval Georgian art so as to help to preserve these unique masterpieces for posterity. However Chiaureli chose to exchange the painter's brush for the cartoonist's pencil. He became involved in the active political struggle which developed on the eve of the revolution. His cartoons were printed in left-wing publications. They ridiculed the representatives of the tsarist autocracy and provided genuine samples of keen, pointed political art.

After the establishment of Soviet power in Georgia Chiaureli returned to the stage. Now at last his many-sided artistic nature found ample opportunities for expression. He played the main roles at the newly organized Georgian State Theater in Tbilisi and directed many of its performances.

When the Georgian State Cinema Studio was organized Chiaureli entered the cinema, first as an actor and then as a director. He played in the new studio's first production, *The Murder of General Gryaznov* and in other pictures. In 1927 he turned to directing.

In 1928 he went abroad to acquaint himself with the art of the West.

Chiaureli's name is not only well-known to the working people of Georgia who have nominated him as a candidate to the Supreme Soviet; it is also familiar to millions of movie goers as the name of one of the best representatives of Soviet art.

The picture *The Last Masquerade,* which was shown on all the screens in the Soviet Union, is a striking example of keen political satire in the cinema. In this picture Chiaureli directs the full force of his artistic ability against the enemies of the Georgian people, against the Mensheviks and bourgeois nationalists who tried to barter away their country to foreign capitalists.

In 1934, by decree of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., issued upon the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Soviet cinema, Mikhail Chiaureli was awarded the Order of Lenin.

His most recent picture, *Arsen,* had a great success throughout the Soviet Union. He is now working on *The Great Dawn,* a picture devoted to the Great October Socialist Revolution. Chiaureli plans to deal with Lenin and Stalin, the leaders of the working people of the whole world, in the days preparatory to the October Revolution.

As a true son of the working people and a splendid artist who, by his work, advances the cause of Lenin and Stalin, Mikhail Chiaureli is a worthy choice as a deputy to the Soviet of Nationalities.

THE ART EXHIBITION OF THE GEORGIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

An exhibition of Georgian art was opened, in December, in the halls of the famous Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow.

Thematically the exhibition divides into two sections: "The history of Bolshevik organizations in Georgia and the Caucasus" and "Views of Socialist Georgia."

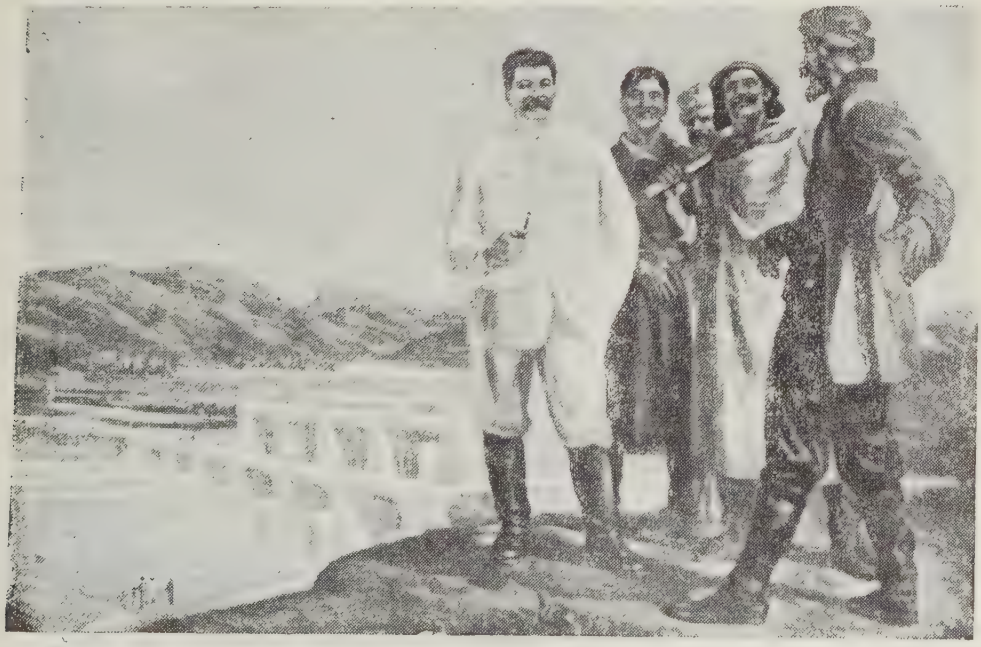
Included in the exhibition are paintings dealing with periods in the life and revolutionary road of Joseph Stalin. Such are: "House in Gori, Birthplace of Comrade Stalin" by the artists Giorgadze and Kopaliani, "Seminary Where Comrade Stalin Studied" by the artist Japaridze. M. Toidze's painting "Comrade Stalin Speaks in Defense of the Peasants in Kartalinia, 1895," records one of the opening events of Comrade Stalin's revolutionary activity.

The most vivid of the paintings are those covering the Batum period of Comrade Stalin's revolutionary course and his activities in the year 1905.

What might be termed the conclusive canvas in the exhibition is Ir. Toidze's large and interesting painting "Comrade Stalin at the Rion State Hydro-Electric Works."

Happy and abundant life, with bumper crops, dominates as the subject in the second section of the exhibition. The very titles mark the joy and the abundance which became the inspiration of the artist: "Life Is Happy" by M. Toidze, "The Happy Family" by Gigolashvili, "The Happy Mother" by Maisashvili, "New Kolkhida" (New Colchis) by Gzelishvili, "Tangerine Crop" by Vepkhvadze, and others.

The ideological and creative range is broad and vigorous in the landscapes as well. The sharp individuality of the Georgian land is reproduced in the bright and strong colors of the landscapes. Here are the magnificent panorama of mountains and valley; here are blooming gardens, rich fields of the kolkhozes, happy human labor.



Comrade Stalin at the Rion State Hydro-Electric Works *by Ir. Toidze*

Life is Happy *by M. Toidze*

A Strange Bird *by V. Bagrationi*

Art in the Soviet Arctic

The exploits of Soviet airmen during the past summer have turned the eyes of the world toward the North Pole and to the Soviet Arctic. Behind these achievements lies more than a decade of exploration and construction during which the Soviet Union has opened up the great Northern Sea Route around the Eurasian continent. Backing the flights themselves is the Northern Sea Route Administration, the government organ wielding power over an Arctic dominion stretching from the Finnish border to the Bering Strait and from the 62nd parallel north to the Pole. In this area a chain of radio stations and weather observatories has been established to service the sea lanes through ice-infested coastal waters. At the mouths of the great northward flowing Siberian rivers new port cities have been built. During the summer incoming ships bring provisions and building materials; outgoing ships carry away timber, coal, fluor spar, salt, furs, fish and other natural wealth of Siberia.

With Ust-Port founded on Tixie Bay near the delta of the Lena River, where almost the entire expedition of the American Naval Lieutenant De Long perished more than fifty years ago, one cannot write as Jack London did that "the interior of north-eastern Siberia is hidden in polar gloom, a terra-incognita, where few men have gone and none has returned."

Nor can the Soviet Arctic be called a second Klondike. "In the Yukon men gambled their lives for gold and those that won gold from the ground gambled for it with each other," writes Jack London. "Burning Daylight was not a drinking man," writes London further, "but since the sole social expression in the Yukon was the saloon, he expressed himself that way." In the Klondike, Jack London sums up: "Each worked for self and the result was chaos."

In the new cities of the Soviet North, on the contrary, provision is made for the culture and recreation of the workers who recently came there as well as for the natives. Here one finds workers' clubs without faro and crap tables, or grim men gambling at stud-poker. One finds the most intricate of non-gambling games—chess—played on shipboard and in chinked log-cabins, by radio. In these radio chess games, two distant stations compete, exchanging the moves by wireless. The clubs have concert and lecture halls, auditoriums for cinema and theatrical performances given in the summer by visiting metropolitan companies. There are schools for the children in the towns and boarding schools for youngsters from the tundra who formerly, ignorant and untaught, wandered with their nomad parents in the reindeer treks from pasture to pasture.

Not only does the Northern Sea Route Administration establish schools and clubhouses in the new centers which have recently risen; it also has organized a Traveling Arctic Theater, the only theater in the world performing exclusively in Arctic regions, mostly within the Arctic Circle. With a full equipment of costumes and make-up stored in trunks easily convertible into improvised stages, the theater set out in 1935. It has made three tours during as many summers, spending fifteen months on the road and traveling a total of 52,000 kilometers or a little more than the distance around the world along the equator. In

1935 during a four months' trip it traveled to Kransoyarsk, down the Yenesei to Dickson Island, and then by way of the Kara Sea to Murmansk. In 1936 during a six months' journey it traveled to Yakutsk, down the Lena River to Tixie Bay, from there by polar seas around the Chukot Peninsula through the Bering Strait and on to Kamchatka and Vladivostock. This year during a five months' tour it went down the Ob River to Dickson Island and returned up the Yenesei to Krasnoyarsk. Its travels have taken it along all the sea and river routes of the Soviet North with the exception of the stretch around the northernmost point of the Asiatic mainland from Dickson Island to Tixie Bay, which is likely to be the route for the 1938 tour. In these tours it has given 397 performances to 59,000 spectators, or an average of less than 150 persons per show, and approximately one half of the 120,000 native inhabitants in these areas where the density of population at places is as low as one person to 40 sq. km. Settlements here range from small villages of ten families to large towns like Igarka with 15,000 inhabitants. All the tours of the theater have begun and ended in Moscow, where during the winter months the troupe rehearses and prepares its repertoire for the following year.

This year through the medium of the Dickson Island radio center the concert trio of the Traveling Arctic Theater gave nineteen radio concert broadcasts, thus spreading its cultural services to Arctic stations on the islands and to steamships in the sea lanes of the Arctic Ocean. The concert programs were made up at the moment in response to requests sent in by radio from Papanin and his comrades at the North Pole Arctic Station, from the steamer *Toll* and other places outside the orbit of the theater's itinerary.

Among other interesting features of this year's tour was the performance given at the new saw-mill center, Belogorye, on the Ob River. The theater arrived during an inundation of the spring floodwaters of the river. Nevertheless a performance was given in a workers' clubhouse, the actors and spectators arriving by rowboat and raft. Another interesting industrial center reached during this year's tour was the Norilsk Polymetal Combinat, located in lower Yenisei at rich copper, nickel and coal deposits, and the northernmost polymetal plant in the world.

"Year by year our work improves," said director of the First Traveling Arctic Theater, in an interview. "As a result of our visit to Port Igarka on the Yenisei in 1935, a permanent theater has been established in this nine-year-old pioneer town above the Arctic Circle."

This theater in Igarka was organized with the assistance of a group of Maly Theater actors who, headed by Peoples Artist V. N. Pashennaya, visited Igarka in 1936. Upon their return to Moscow this group set to work training a company of sixteen actors for the new theater. In March 1937 they were flown to Igarka, and the new theater was officially opened. In its repertoire are the classic plays *Forest* and *Guilty Though Guiltless* by Ostrovsky, the Red Army Play *Glory* by Gusev and *The Marriage of Belyugin*. After initial setbacks the theater is now flourishing. It has made local tours to Dudinka. The plan is to use the Igarka Theater as a center from which to develop the national dramatic art of the Evenki, the Ketu, the Dolgans and other national minorities scattered far and wide throughout the tundra. Other theaters will be established at Cape Nordvik, Tixie Bay and other new Arctic centers.

During the past two summers the Northern Sea Route Administration has also sent out concert brigades formed of graduate students of the Moscow State Conservatory. These groups have gone eastward to the continent's end, to Kamchatka and the Chukot Peninsula, and beyond to Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean. The brigade has been on the road each summer from four to five months, and has covered up to 30,000 km. each tour. In 1936 the concert brigade consisted of ten performers. This year the brigade, increased to fourteen, five of them women, was headed by V. V. Malin, a graduate student of the Moscow Conservatory. The brigade this year consisted of two quartets (one of which had toured for two years in the new industrial centers of the northern Urals), a pianist, an accordion player, an elocutionist, and a ballet team. During the tour eighty-eight concerts were given, including

In this airplane the Maly Theater troupe did some of its Arctic touring

some in Vladivostock, some on board nine ships plying in the Arctic sea lanes, and on the *S.S. Anadyr,* the vessel in which the brigade traveled. At places the temperature was so low the musicians had to play with gloved hands.

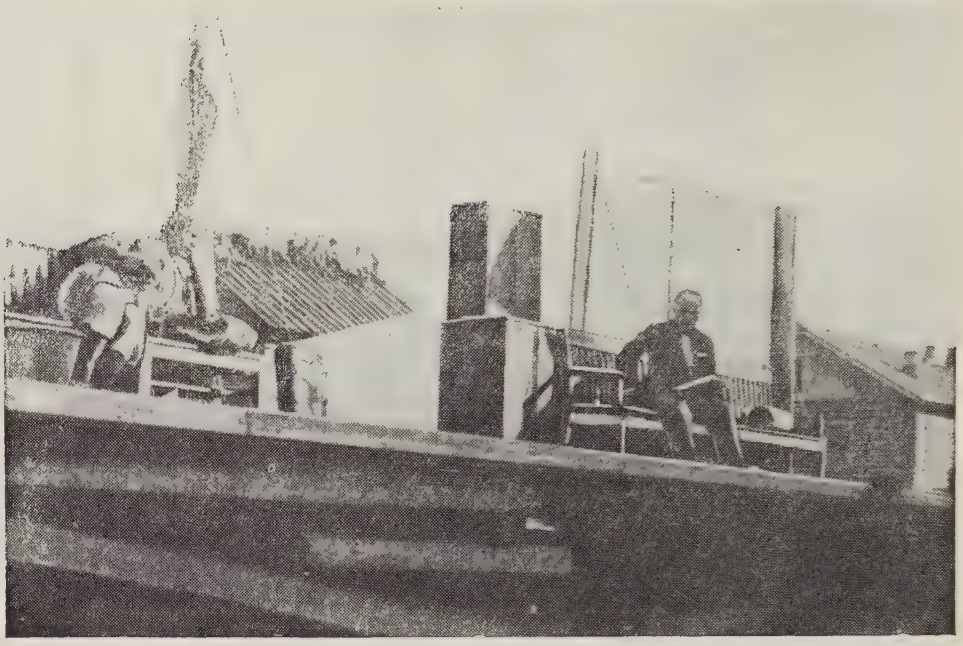
On the whole the concert programs were of classical and Soviet music, but this year an innovation was presented which delighted the natives immensely. In 1936 the brigade had made gramophone records of Eskimo [1] and Chukchi songs, which were arranged in Moscow and presented on this year's tour, along with Soviet songs translated into the Eskimo and Chukchi languages. Other recordings of native music were made this year. Many Chukchi and Eskimos asked that the records of the songs which they sang for recording be forwarded to them, since many of them have their own gramophones.

Speaking of the future plans of the Moscow Conservatory Brigade, the director said in an interview: "We plan in the future to establish a music school in the far north-east, to which we will send teachers to develop promising musical talent. Modern musical instruments amaze the Eskimos and the Chukchi, who were acquainted until our visit only with a primitive tom-tom made of walrus bladder stretched over a hoop. Now they want to learn to play on modern instruments."

In this process Soviet culture itself is enriched. During their two journeys the concert brigade recorded more than fifty Eskimo and Chukchi songs on gramophone records, a valuable addition to Soviet folk music. At the Ysaye International Violin Competition in Brussels last spring, Dyakov received an ovation for his performance of four Eskimo and Chukchi songs which he had collected during the Arctic tour of 1936.

The appreciation of the natives may be noted in the expression of the Eskimo Matsu in Providence Bay: "Under tsarism we were like wild animals, and now the Soviet Power sends us musicians. We feel the care of the Soviet Power in everything." "It seems as if

[1] Unlike the Chukchi and other natives herein mentioned, the Eskimos are not a Siberian tribe. They number about 30,000 and inhabit the Arctic regions of Canada and Greenland. About 1,300 Eskimos have crossed over from America and settled on the Chukot Peninsula.



Roof tops are the galleries of this open air theater.

we had enjoyed a great holiday," wrote the Chukchi Ryntyrlen from Cape Shelagsky. Another Chukchi wrote: "The musicians must come back and teach us to dance in the Moscow style."

While metropolitan artists travel to the hinterland, performers from the national republics come to Moscow, as for example the Nanaits wrestle-dancer who gave such a lively performance at the opening night of the Fifth International Theater Festival in Moscow last year.

This is a far cry from the days of tsarism, when these peoples were regarded as something like animals, being exhibited in circus sideshows, and advertised as follows: "See the Samoyed with his female and young ones. Take a sleigh ride and drive reindeers."

As a result of the heartless brutality to which these nomad races of the north were subject under tsarism, they were doomed to extinction. Now, however, such a people as the Nentsi, dwellers of the tundra, who dwindled seventy-one per cent in the thirty year period up to 1925, have increased more than five per cent since. An even greater growth is taking place among the formerly fast-dying race of Voguls; an evidence of the regeneration which the Revolution has brought to the Soviet Arctic.

During 1937 alone more than five hundred thousand rubles of state appropriations were disbursed in promoting theatrical and musical tours among the peoples of the Far North. In addition to these cultural services, the Institute of the Peoples of the North has been founded in Leningrad. Here three hundred young natives from twenty-six different peoples prepare themselves for leadership in the cultural and economic advancement of their peoples. Moreover, scores of boarding schools founded in the Far North train thousands of others at home.

Soviet cultural work among the northern peoples becomes significant when approached as the cultural renaissance of peoples on the trek from the Stone Age to modern civilization. These nomads of the north are now tending gradually to settle down. The trend is stimulated by the collectivization of the reindeers which allows for a division of labor.

Where the herds are collectivized, only the herdsmen need follow the deer from pasture to pasture.

The development of pictorial art among these peoples is of archeological interest. Receiving a pencil and paper for the first time in Soviet boarding schools native children, by making a single line starting from the antlers or forehead, have drawn a perfect contour of a running reindeer.

The promotion of Soviet health work, the training of native physicians and the establishment of hospitals has so far discredited the shamans that today when the frenzied shaman dance of exorcism is performed, it is regarded purely as a dramatic performance. Not only are the folk dances acquiring new significance, but the native dancers and singers are brought to Moscow and Leningrad where they are trained in modern theatrical art and return to found national theaters in their native regions. Thus six young Yakut actors, trained in the Central Theatrical College in Moscow, returned in 1936 to Yakutsk, where they founded the Yakut national theater. One of the outstanding plays in the repertoire of this theater is *The Red Shaman*, which portrays the effective work of Soviet medicine in combating diseases.

Furthermore, surprising as it may seem, the sophisticated play *Tartuffe* by Molière has proven during the tours of the Traveling Arctic Theater to be extremely effective anti-shaman propaganda among the simple, primitive but honest peoples of the north.

The Nanaits Theatrical Studio of the Institute of the Peoples of the North has been experimenting with dramatization of the folk dance and the folk games. The Nanaits people live along the northern banks of the Amur River as hunters and fishers. The young Nanaits who came to the Institute attracted attention by their folk dances, and were organized into a theatrical studio. They began first with folk games, then recalled and utilized songs, entire folk tales and legends, gradually developing dramatic improvizations. In this way they created their first play *Saila,* the story of an infant girl, who, when still in swaddling clothes, was sold to a rich hunter. The young girl falls ill of overwork and abuse. A shaman is called to exorcise the evil spirits supposedly causing her ailment, but friends abduct the girl and put her into a new Soviet hospital where she recovers. Developing thus from the northern folk dances and songs, native theaters are being established not only at the Institute in Leningrad, but also in the local centers. Recently, such a theater was founded in Turukhansk on the Yenisei.

Many folk songs easily lend themselves to dramatic presentation. For example, *The Trader and the Poor Mansi* records how a poor native hunter overcomes the rich trader who had swindled him.

"After three years' work in the Arctic, I have come to the conclusion that our introductory work must be simple in form, approaching the native art," said director of the First Travelling Arctic Theater. "Next year we plan to include a puppet show in our repertoire. With puppets impersonating the native kulaks (owners of many reindeers) and poor men, we can develop simple propaganda sketches agitating for collectivization of the reindeers. Likewise in simple dramatic episodes we can further the campaign for cleanliness and hygienic living, and the fight against shamanism. With this as an approach we would introduce modern dramatic culture, and raise the cultural level of the natives. Our regular plays are staged after the best experience of modern theatrical art; with but this difference, that before the performance we give introductory talks on the play itself and on theatrical art in general. During the performance we consciously retard enunciation of dialogue so that our diction is slow, clear and distinct. The plays go over, the natives understand and respond with enthusiasm."

In the folklore of these natives of the North, Soviet literary scholars have a unique opportunity to pry into the secret sources of folk creation. For while the cave-dwellings of prehistoric man can be unearthed to study his pictorial art, oral literary creativity leaves

no manuscripts to be exhumed and studied once the bards are dead. Here in the Far North are living minstrels, whose only medium of expression is the spoken word, and whose memories retain folk legends reaching far back into history. A study of the folklore of the north is like making a living archeological study of the dawn of literature. And Soviet folklorists are making ample use of the opportunity. During the past two years a dozen interesting books have appeared in the Russian language, books containing collections of the epic tales, songs, legends and proverbs of the Nentsi, the Mansi, the Evenki, the Vogul, the Khantsei, the Yakut and other peoples. Besides these studies made by folklore experts, Soviet philologists have made studies of the spoken languages of these unlettered peoples and four years ago the first alphabets of the northern languages were published by the Institute of the Peoples of the North. Now books and newspapers are being published in the native languages and the northern nomads are learning to read and write in their mother tongue.

Among the legends collected there is one of exceptional interest, written down and adapted from the words of native bards on the Kola Peninsula. It is called *The Sun Regained* and tells how Prince Chikailo, overwhelmed by fire-water, gambled with a Russian trader and lost the sun of the tundra. Many years and stormy winters passed, yet no sun returned to light the tundra darkness. Finally rumor spread that Lenin was coming and bringing back the sun. With Lenin, who had overthrown the tsar and traders, the sun returned to the moorlands of the Arctic. Then the good wise Lenin died and once more the sun vanished. Then another came.

From the sea to us he floated
On an iceberg like an island,
Held aloft the sun he brought us,
Placed the sun above the hill-tops,
Set it moving, loudly ordered:
"Shine upon the Arctic moorlands,
Make life flourish in the tundra,
Make the tundra people happy."
Far and wide throughout the tundra,
Old and young, Same, Nenets,
Nomads of the northern marshlands,
Know his name—beloved Stalin.

Through the land he went to Moscow.
Where he trod, he left his footprints:
Every footprint, a new city,
Here a bridge and there a railroad.
Where there was a sylvan mountain,
Khibin, lonely in the tundra,
There is now a city marvelous.
We collective reindeer breeders,
Live a new life in the tundra,
Sing in gratitude to Stalin.
He obeys great Lenin's orders,
Goes about to every people,
Brings them sunlight, joy unbounded."

A. J. STEIGER

A NOTABLE ANTI-FASCIST PAINTING

The exhibition of Peter Blume's anti-fascist painting, on which he has been at work for three years, is an event of international importance in art.

In this painting one sees a craftmanship so loving and at the same time so precise that one must return to the renaissance masters for comparisons. As a *Prix-de-Rome* student Peter Blume lived in Italy for a time and saw fascism in operation. Two influences entered his life there; one a love of Italy of the Renaissance, Italy of the founders of modern culture, the other hatred of fascism, the enemy of all culture. The first armed him against the other; it is as if, in Peter Blume, the mighty cultural tradition of Italy has found one of its avengers against the fascist interregnum that has reduced Italy to barbarism and seeks a new barbarian conquest of the world. For significant reasons the picture is given a German title, *Kennst Du Das Land?*

From one side of the painting, out of the dust and putrefaction of the imperial ruins of Rome uncoils the jack-in-the-box head of Mussolini making faces over the debris. Painted on the side of the device is that older morbidity, one of Mussolini's ancestors in terror mythology, the dragon.

In the dim crypts underneath, casting evilly contented glances upward, stand the fabricator and mechanic of the jack-in-the-box, the capitalist and the gangster.

Opposite the Mussolini head, on the left, encysted into another heap of ruins, is a shrine with the fascist christ inside. On his face there is a hypocritical grimace of agony. Across his knees lies a cavalry saber. Other swords gleam in the little shrine. In one beringed hand he holds the fascist cane. He is seated on a Roman senatorial chair. All around him are the rewards earned by the church for its alliance with and services to fascism, the offerings of its new devotees, imperial velvets, epaulettes, military orders, jewelry. Outside the crypt are two worshippers, with faces dulled in prayer, over clasped hands.

In the left foreground, at the foot of the shrine and the jack-in-the-box, lies a heap of ruins, torsos, heads, limbs of statuary, rounds of columns, slabs of mosaic, fragments of architectural fretwork. A contemporary living ruin, a beggar, sits with crippled leg and contorted face, on one of the fragments; nearby another omen of the general ruin, a scavenger dog, noses the heap.

In the center people emerge from the catacombs to a plaza on which demonstrators are being ridden down by the police. Even under the hooves of the horses the people appeal to the soldiers, one of whom has thrown down his gun. Here is a symbol of the future, the suffering and the disillusioned teaching the still deluded, the people discovering the truth.

Again, in balance to the squalid shrine on the left, on a balcony of a building on the extreme right, overlooking the plaza, some monks terrified by the demonstration are running to safety, the foremost holding his crucifix aloft. Like everything else in this canvas this small scene is vigorously dramatic.

Among the many distinctions of this extraordinary painting is the unity of the whole and the perfection of the parts. Like reproductions of the detail of renaissance painting, study of the detail of this painting reveal the most scrupulous workmanship. There is not one random brush stroke. There is not a patch half-painted or unpainted, the better to emphasize a focal figure. Instead there is an equality of all the parts. Each contributes equally to the whole. The unity is more than the unity of focus, though that is not ignored. The unity is in the whole and in every part of the whole.

Immediately however one of the most important comments that can be made about the painting is that a world famous painter has proved over again, and with the authority of a masterpiece, that the anti-fascist struggle can be carried on not only by lending a name to the movement, as other artists have done, but in the artist's creative work itself; further that this work need not be the literal recording of demonstrations, the repetition of muscular workers with raised fists, and more documents of capitalist misery. It can be work of the most powerful imagination; it can contain irony, indignation, misery, pathos, heroism, all the emotions of this heaving period of history.

All this indeed is to be found in Blume's painting, and along with a striking use of the symbol. His are symbols that comprehend reality, and his realities are presented with such adroit understanding that they immediately flower into the symbol. This is of importance in modern art. There is a need of just this sort of involvement of the whole mind. Most revolutionary painting in capitalist countries has sought starkness and overwhelming effect and has led to a peculiar monotony like that of a loud note repeated over and over. Gropper's work on one side, and Georg Grosz's on another, have been especially effective because they too have offered holds to the mind, essays in fantasy, ironical commentary that engages more than the eye, that outlasts first impressions, that evokes more than a gasp of horror or astonishment from the spectator.

Recently another and different group of artists have won success among the bourgeoisie by a resort to the symbol, the surrealist purveyors of narcotics in the form of art. In their hands the symbol suffers defilement. Their use of it is not to clarify but to obscure, not to enhance reality but to veil it under the mystical. The bourgeoisie of Europe and America was titillated and consoled by Dali's erotic dreams and Chirico's spaceless landscapes. They gazed at watches dripping over tables, at dead horses hurdling fallen columns, at fields seen through windows cut through men, at crutches leaning on cripples, at a phantasmagoria in which the image was considered successful in proportion to its morbidity. Here the nightmares of decadent art are united with the nightmares of Freudianism founded on the clinical study of hysteria, and the frenzies of the last dadaists seeking a restored sense of strength in magic incantations.

Against this degenerate use of the symbol drawn from the rejection of life Peter Blume's symbols are drawn from the midst of life. His symbols lead like banners.

Peter Blume is the son of a worker and a Socialist. His artistic gifts were revealed early. He has won a place among the foremost contemporary painters. He was a winner of the Prix de Rome. He won the Carnegie medal, the highest prize in American art. He has been awarded Guggenheim fellowships. Some of his canvases hang in museums and others in the collections of people regarded as the most discriminating collectors of modern art. His previous work had shown some social awareness of contemporary life. One, although it lacked a sense of the class struggle (to paraphrase Marx's remarks about the life of the peasant reduced to imbecile helplessness against the forces of Nature which he has not learned to control), showed the idiocy of factory life, of man reduced to imbecile helplessness among the machinery over which he has not won control. This canvas like all his work was marked by his beautifully finished painting.

After the first American Writers' Congress the American artists held an even more successful congress. And as out of the writers' congress emerged a permanent anti-fascist writers' organization, so out of the artists' congress arose a permanent artists' organization. Among its activities the organization conducts its own exhibition gallery assuring exhibitions for anti-fascist artists and its own art schools assuring the spread and development of revolutionary and anti-fascist ideas in art. In both the congress and the organization which rose from it Peter Blume has played an active part.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

BOOK-SHELF

HEINRICH MANN "THE YOUTH OF KING HENRY IV"

International Literature, Russian edition, No. 9-10, Moscow

Reviewer Georg Lukacz

"... In this case Heinrich Mann's great art lies primarily in the living image of the hero which he has succeeded in basing on the *positive* virtues of his character.

"... The artistic completeness of this image has considerable political significance today. This image is not only a more effective weapon than direct polemics or satire in exposing the falsity of fascist propaganda; it is also an effective artistic manifestation of the aspirations of the mass of the German people at large."

(*Literaturnoye Obozrenye,* No. 16, 1937).

Reviewer T. Motyleva

"... The novel unfolds in two parallel planes—historical and contemporary—wherein many strikingly pointed analogies, coincidences and allusions are given.

"... In the person of Henri IV not only has Mann for the first time in his creative life given the image of a militant and conquering humanist, not only has he for the first time realized a synthesis of will and action; but he has also for the first time aspired to create the image of a hero bound to the people. Henri IV conquers because he has the people behind him. Such is the great wisdom which Heinrich Mann acquired in emigration.

"... The structure and images of the novel give rise to that fine realistic simplicity and clarity which is always an evidence of profundity in content. In places Henri IV makes one recall the best images of the classical historical novel."

(*International Literature,* Russian edition, No. 6, 1937.)

HEINRICH MANN, "THE TEACHER UNRAT"

State Literary Publishers, Moscow, 1937

". . . In *Unrat* Mann has dethroned the image of the renegade, the extreme individualist, the moral transgressor, who was idealized by decadent literature, and formerly in some aspects by Mann also. He has shown that lack of morality and hatred for things human are requisite virtues not for capitalism's enemies but for its most faithful servants. By this very thing Mann has in *Unrat* not only struck a neat and powerful blow at the barrack-like spirit of pre-war Germany, but has also surmounted his own esthetic past.

"*Unrat* gives for the first time a striking expression of the strong points of Heinrich Mann's unmasking realism: the profound social treatment of the negative image, the sharpness and sequence with which one basic negative trait is drawn showing its development and diverse manifestations without lessening the intensity of the narration. Subsequently these very aspects of Mann's artistic method have been further developed."

(*Literaturnoye Obozrenye,* No. 9, 1937.)

EGON ERWIN KISCH, "LANDING IN AUSTRALIA"

United Magazines and Newspapers, Moscow, 1937

"Egon Erwin Kisch has succeeded in combining his gifts as a master reporter with scathing satire; with the passion of the fighter which is sometimes concealed by an anni-

hilating burst of contempt. And here, perhaps more then in any other work, Kisch the artist and Kisch the anti-fascist fighter are merged into one.

"Every line of this book is electric with the killing ridicule which the anti-fascist fighter heaps upon the snarling but impotent guardians of the decrepit British Empire and its Australian colony.

(*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, October 5, 1937.)

ARNOLD ZWEIG, "EDUCATION BEFORE VERDUN"

United Magazines and Newspapers, Moscow, 1937

Reviewer Georg Lucacz

"... The novel is based on the truth which Clausewitz pointed out, that war is the continuation of politics by other means. Arnold Zweig elaborates this thought in a most intriguing literary manner. He attempts to show that every separate individual (as well as class, stratum, and so on) fights in wartime for the same interests which he defended before the war. The fact that these interests are combined with the official chauvinist ballyhoo only deepens the degree of bourgeois hypocrisy.

"The author presents the war machine in all its ramification, at the front, behind the lines, in the heart of the country. He is justified in giving a detailed portrayal of the rear, of the war offices, staff headquarters and so on; for this is where the hideous features of the imperialist war are most directly and clearly revealed. The capitalist struggle for existence is shown here in all its crassness...."

"... *Education before Verdun* is an extremely interesting book. Zweig depicts the most diversified types of German militarists, ranging from the higher-ups down to the rank and file. At the same time he avoids the method of reportage and of piecing together separate scraps which is so much in vogue at the present time. He has hit upon an absorbing plot which establishes dramatic human connections and relations between the various characters."

(*Literaturnoye Obozrenye*, No. 10, 1937.)

". . . The book deals with events of the year 1917, but it is important not only as anti-war literature, but as a humanist work. It lodges a vigorous and honest protest against the violation of human dignity, rights and culture and against imperialist aggression. The book's literary merit and honesty are blows at fascism, dealt by a humanist writer."

(*International Literature*, Russian ed., No. 8, 1937.)

UPTON SINCLAIR, "NO PASARAN"

State Literary Publishers, Moscow, 1937

"This book of Upton Sinclair brings the talk with fascism into the open: war to death is declared on fascism. This position of the writer determined the whole tone of the narrative, a book for which a bonfire awaits in any fascist country.

"An irreconcilable hatred to fascism and the awareness that this pestilence menaces the entire world, have helped Sinclair to overcome the limitations of hackneyed toothless Christian socialism.

". . . The pages devoted to the struggle of the International Brigade are written with profound emotion, with a genuine admiration for the heroes who have rallied from all parts of the world to the walls of Madrid, so that with the experienced hands of former front-line fighters they would in a decisive struggle halt the offensive of the united forces of fascism.

"... When such an important writer as Upton Sinclair makes an open and eloquent challenge to solidarity with the Spanish people and to struggle *against* fascism, it reflects the rising force of the anti-fascist feeling among the intelligentsia of western Europe and America."

(*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, April 20, 1937.)

JIMMY COLLINS, "TEST PILOT"
State Literary Publishers, Moscow, 1937

The book *Test Pilot* by Jimmy Collins is an enormous success. Almost immediately after magazine publication it appeared as a book in mass printing (50,000 copies) and was promptly reprinted.

We print below comments by George Baidukov, hero of the Soviet Union and associate pilot with Chkalov in the second transpolar flight to America, and Mikhail Vodopyanov, chief pilot of the Schmidt Polar wintering expedition and author of the *Pilot's Dream.*

Baidukov writes:

"I read Jimmy Collins' book from cover to cover at a single sitting; this is how a test pilot, like myself, who lives through every page along with the author-aviator, is bound to read it.

"The American Communist Collins attracts the reader as an honest minded man, an able writer, an excellent test pilot and as a truly brilliant personality....

"Collins describes the most ordinary routine days of a professional flyer vividly and with humor. His short stories are fascinating in their simplicity and verisimilitude.

"These recollections of a skillful flyer can undoubtedly serve as object lessons for flyers in our country.

"For the broad reading public Collins' book shows how interesting, difficult, varied and dangerous is the work of a pilot and especially that of a test pilot...."

(*Literaturnoye Obozrenye*, No. 8, 1937.)

Mikhail Vodopyanov, noted pilot, hero of the Soviet Union, writes:

"... Every story of his is distinguished by sharp observation and subtle humor. He supplies each of the readers' questions with an answer which is not merely novel and intriguing but is full of truth. All his stories are written in a laconic style that observes much but with swift directness. As you read you are fascinated by the author's skill which enables him to describe in such condensed form episodes filled with so much drama and subtle humor."

(*Molodaya Gvardia*, 1937, No. 6)

ALBERT HALPER, "THE FOUNDRY"
State Literary Publishers, Moscow, 1937

"In this novel Halper is revealed as a master of subtle and stinging irony. *The Foundry* is a satire on the parasite existence of American businessmen. *The Foundry* also opens new, little known pages in the lives of American skilled workers, office workers,—"white-collar proletarians,"—students, unemployed, invalids, etc.

"Halper is interested primarily in people; he acquaints us with their intimate personal lives; he takes us to their houses and brings us into contact with the critical problems of their existence. Halper is a past master when it comes to drawing grotesque, slightly caricatured portraits; he speaks with a whimsical smile of his heroes' shadowy illusions; his figures of workers and bosses are unforgettable."

(*Literaturnoye Obozrenye*, No. 13, 1937.)

LOUIS GUILLOUX, "BLACK BLOOD"
Moscow 1937 (Published in America under the title of *Bitter Victory)*
Reviewer Anissimov

"The picture of French life given in *Black Blood* not only remains imprinted on the memory, not only alarms by its oppressive gloom, but it also gives grounds for serious and broad generalizations. This is a large-scale book.

"First of all *Black Blood* is a book with a great idea, a book aiming to tell the truth about capitalist reality...

"In the novel of Guilloux a joyless, currupted, parasitic world is with great power and

conviction contrasted to the dream of the future for which Lucien Brousseau and Francis Monfort struggle. This contrast is the measure of the range of the novel."

(*Oktyabr*, No. 7, 1937)

"Hitherto Louis Guilloux has been known for writings in which memories of his childhood and youth were linked with the life of the French working people. But his early works did not always give the impression of lofty creative flight; they reproduced autobiographical material too empirically without rising to big characters and problems. They have nothing in common with *Black Blood*, a book of subtle psychological nuances that raises and meets important problems, a book that is the product of a cultured and intellectual mind.

"... In the carefully elaborated figure of Cripure, Guilloux takes merciless vengeance on philistinism in the broadest sense of the concept. . . .

"*Black Blood* is an exceedingly keen book, skillfully written, although it is not free from an excessive 'literary flavor.' By destroying Cripure and providing a revolutionary solution for the problem of compromise, intellectual rebellion paralyzed by inaction, it has added a brilliant achievement to French literature of the left.

(*International Literature*, Russian ed., No. 6, 1937.)

JEAN CASSOU, "LACERATED PARIS"
Moscow 1937
Reviewer Ivan Anissimov

"... With great force Cassou reconstructs the setting of the Commune, that refreshing storm of revolutionary upheaval. In his narrative of its heroic days he achieves genuine drama. It is inspiring and unforgettable....

"History and historic personages are touched with the romantic concept. . . .

"Cassou's book reveals a true love for the people; it provides a direct answer to the question: with whom should his hero, Theodore Kisch, throw in his lot—with the bloody band of Thiers and his German masters or with the French people?

"Through his book Jean Cassou declares for the people, for the glorious descendants of the Communards, fighting in the ranks of the anti-fascist People's Front."

(*Pravda*, March 20, 1937.)

Reviewer Eugenia Galperina

"... Cassou avoided the oft encountered parallelism of themes wherein the theme of the intellectual usually becomes central, while the theme of the people is relegated to the background. In *Lacerated Paris* the contrary happens. The people's struggle occupies the foreground without crowding out the hero, for the very reason that his fate is completely merged with that of the Parisian proletariat.

"*Lacerated Paris* is not so much a history of the Paris Commune as it is a record of the feelings which it engenders. The book is remarkable for its youth and passion; it is vigorous with hatred for the butchers of the Commune; it is charged with the drama of struggle."

(*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, March 26, 1937.)

ROMAIN ROLLAND, "SELECTED WORKS" (in one volume)
State Literary Publishers, Moscow, 1936

". . . The appealing figure of a remarkable artist, an honest fighter for human destiny, an ardent anti-fascist and true friend of ours rises before us from the pages of this collection.... They provide a many-sided picture of Rolland the artist, in various spheres of literature; they give us those of his works which embody his creative concepts. We see Rolland over a period of more than thirty years of inspired literary creation.

"From among Rolland's earlier works, from among his *Dramas of the Revolution*, the play *July 14* included here, most completely expressed the idea of the people's theater, the appeal to heroic mass movements, the cult of great characters and lofty passions which Rolland contrasted to the degenerating bourgeoisie.

"The splendid biographies from the cycle *Heroic Lives* are linked with the latter; a good choice is *The Life of Michelangelo,* where Rolland reveals the agony of the great artist. Of Rolland's three biographies of Beethoven, *Goethe and Beethoven* interests us the most at the present time.

"Happy selections from *Jean Christophe* are *Youth* and *Rebellion,* wherein the drama of creative endeavor and its struggle for purity are revealed with Rolland's characteristic pathos and strong emotion, and *Fair on the Market Place,* a cutting satire on the decadent culture of the West. Here Rolland the accuser stands forth. Our readers' favorite book, *Colas Breugnon* is given in full. The collection includes an except from *Birth,* the last volume of the trilogy *The Enchanted Soul.* This is the chapter, entitled *Florentine May,* describing the murder of Marco by the fascists. It is the most powerful chapter of *Birth,* a book which reflects the latest stage of Rolland's writing, the remarkable work of a master, enriched by the ideas of revolutionary struggle."

RICHARD ALDINGTON. "ALL MEN ARE ENEMIES"

Reviewer T. Sylman

"... The more fantastic, the more baseless the utopias of Aldington... the more clearly the book speaks the hopeless confusion and decay of bourgeois culture.

". . .A momentary victory of Aldington's personages was necessary for the fulfillment of his intentions, as a victory of 'god's principle.' For the author hates to think—and we sympathize with him—that all that was good had disappeared irrevocably out of life. But in fact Tony and Kata are defeated—defeated by the logic of events, by the logic of reality. And this once more proves that beauty and joy in human existence are to be looked for otherwise and elsewhere than Aldington's characters are sent to seek them..."

Reviewer Leo Borovoy

"... and what is most striking—all this highly pathetic rhythm of the love poem to which the second half of the novel reduces itself has the closest relation to the great theme of war which still haunts Aldington.

". . . Formerly Aldington and his colleagues looked for the 'sublime' in classic art. A somewhat exaggerated interest in 'Greek beauty' is a characteristic feature of the literary school to which Aldington belonged as was the case with our symbolists. It was in quest of the 'sublime' that Aldington went to the front. But the war turned out anything but 'high' tragedy. . . . Now Aldington once more looks for the 'sublime.' Very carefully assorted, simple words are to make up a poem of a love elevated and divine quite in the classic style. It might seem somewhat childish in such serious times as we are going through. But Richard Aldington does not fear it. Well, others may not, he may! He has been through the war!

"This talented book of Aldington brings many things to mind. Chiefly the arrogance of some Western intellectuals who having sat awhile in the trenches suppose that the war has absolved them from all vows, all obligations. They think the war has opened their eyes to everything. But they give no valid reason for our agreeing with them. . . ."

(*Literaturnoye Obozrenye,* 1937, No. 11.)

Mikhail Zoshchenko

"Les Mariages Se Font Aux Cieux"

Today, dear reader, I have something particularly choice for you, something you won't be able to tear yourself away from. It is humorous and lyrical and at the same time grave and manly. It's something that will make your heart skip faster, I promise you.

My hero is an aviator and his story—well, it's a fine story, a fine story.

He entered the aviation school to satisfy his thirst for knowledge and his ardent desire to serve his country.

But before entering the school he visited his native village to ask his mother's advice. He spent two days there, a long time to get advice you'll say and I say so too. Here's how it went. He explained his plans to his mother and his mother said, fine. And what did he do with the rest of the time? He didn't waste it.

There was a girl living nearby in the same village, a nice girl. He liked her. He asked her some advice too. She agreed with him. What they agreed on was marriage.

As I said, he liked her. And she liked him. She was, as we Russians say, sympathetic.

He told her, too, of his aviation plans and she was proud of him but just a little nervous. I have to admit she cried a little. She was a young thing after all and it was terrifying for one so young to have her hope of happiness up in the air, so to speak, so much of the time.

But he was determined to be a pilot and she said bravely: "That's all right with me."

And they planned to register their marriage on his first holiday leave.

Well, he went off to his aviation school and I am glad to say he was a good student.

Time passed. The holidays came nearer and nearer. Our young pilot-to-be called on the director of the school and asked could he start off a day ahead? He wanted to register his marriage, and the bureau would be closed during the holidays. Would he, could he, etc.

The director of the school said: "I don't see why not? But wait a minute," and he looked through the files. "Ah, but there's a hitch. According to the records you haven't yet made your seven hundred meter parachute jump?"

"Couldn't I do that tomorrow morning?" asked the young fellow. "My train goes at noon. Couldn't I make the jump before that?"

"Yes, that could be arranged," said the director.

But I must be frank with you. Our young pilot-to-be was not particularly keen on making the leap.

For the last three days he had been thinking of his little friend back home. He had even inscribed a whole verse on her photograph. Awake and dreaming she had been in his mind; in fact she was quite settled there.

No, he was not in the least ambitious to make his leap just then.

What with this and that and the fact that he had not had too much experience on the parachute, was in fact still a novice at it, the coming leap bothered him by its unexpectedness. Or maybe it would be better to say that it didn't exactly coincide with his state of mind.

Nevertheless, next day, he got up before dawn and got himself ready. But he had to wait around a long time before that aviator who was to take him up showed himself.

And when the aviator did show up he didn't appear to be in a hurry. He even seemed bent on delaying things. He made two long calls to the school office. Surely those calls could have been made after the leap.

Not till a quarter after nine did he take our hero up and then he ascended to fifteen hundred meters—too high. And the pilot not only did not descend to the proper level, he showed no sign of attending to the business properly. For forty minutes they just flew as if it were an observation flight, not a parachute leap they were about, and our hero looked at the pilot in astonishment and rage.

I don't know what he might have done but just when he might have done it the pilot waves his hand—the signal to prepare for the leap.

Our hero walks out on the wing of the plane. When he gets the signal he leaps.

For several seconds he feels like a stone dropping in space. Then the parachute opens. And smoothly our young aviator drops to the ground.

He looks down and sees that his landing will be close to a village. For several meters he is dragged along the ground, then manages to get to his feet. He finds himself in a kitchen garden. From all sides people rush towards him.

He looks around. A miracle. All the faces are familiar. Here is Aunt Darya; over there Ivan Kuzmich; near him the chairman of the kolkhoz.

He rubs his eyes. He has never been told before that a parachute jump ends in a dream. But it isn't a dream. These are his own village folk. There, sure enough, is his own little Varya.

She certainly can't be dreaming. She utters a little gasp of delight and runs toward him.

And suddenly everything becomes clear. Now he understands what must have passed between the pilot and the school director in those long and maddening telephone conversations. He could almost hear the director giving the pilot instructions how to set him down on his own village grounds.

There and then in the kitchen garden he pulls off his leather cap and sends it on a little flight of its own into the air.

Well, do I have to go into detail about the cheering and hurrahs? Here's Varya kissing our hero on the cheek. I imagine he is paying no attention to anything else.

The spectators announce: "Here's the bridegroom," and give him a welcome suited to the occasion. And the bridegroom takes the bride on his arm and leads her to his home.

His old mother comes to the door and waves her hands in astonishment. At the same time Anton Mikhailov, the bride's father, appears.

Such joy few writers have had the privilege to describe.

The wedding was celebrated that very day.

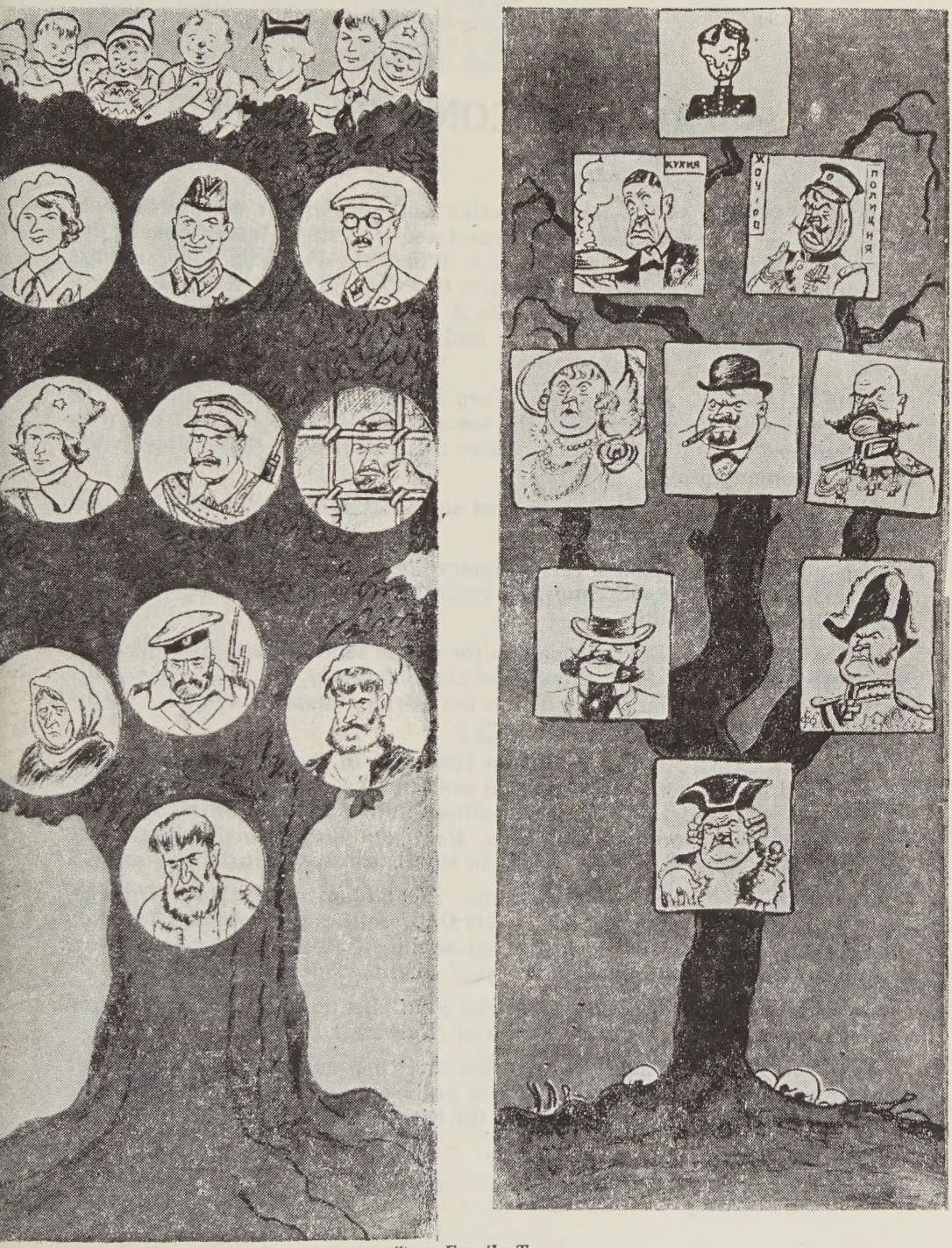
At the wedding supper the groom raises his glass enthusiastically and often. He toasts our great leaders who are guiding our people into glory and happiness. He toasts our beautiful Socialist fatherland. He toasts Varya and all her family.

Then Varya rises to propose a toast. Shyly, and in a low voice, she toasts the director of the aviation school who had found this modern way of having their marriage made in heaven.

And if the director was awake then, far away though he was, he might have heard the cheers.


GREAT IMPOSSIBILITIES
OTTO SCHMIDT IS SITTING IN THE BARBER'S CHAIR CALM AND UNPERTURBED WHILE REMNANTS OF HIS FAMOUS BEARD LITTER THE FLOOR.
BOTVINNIK AND LOEWENFISH PLAYING CARDS IN PUBLIC. TSS!... THE GROSSMEISTER FUMBLES AND PLAYS THE ACE OF SPADES!
СЕГОДНЯ
АННА КАРЕНИНА
Имеются билеты на сегодняшний спектакль
КАССА
PLENTY OF TICKETS FOR „ANNA KARENINA" AT THE MOSCOW ART THEATER BOX OFFICE AND NOBODY TO BUY THEM
THE FAMOUS KOKKINAKI, ACE OF HIGH ALTITUDE FLYING, IS OVERCOME WITH GIDDINESS FACING AN ASCENT OF THE MOSCOW METRO ESCALATOR.

("Krokodil")



Two Family Trees

A graphic portrayal of the genealogical careers of a proletarian family and a landlord-capitalist family. *("Krokodil")*

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

VALENTIN KATAYEV. Soviet novelist and playwright of international note. Four of his books have been translated into English, the novels *The Embezzlers, Time Forward,* and *Peace is Where the Tempests Blow,* a large section of which first appeared in English translation in *International Literature* (March, 1937 issue) under the title *A Lone Sail Gleams White;* and the play *Squaring the Circle,* which also had successful performances in New York.

JAMES HANLEY. Author of *The Fury Family* trilogy, *Sailor Burke, Boy* and other novels. He writes about the sea and the Liverpool waterfront with a realism new to English literature, where the treatment of these subjects has tended to romanticism.

EMI SIAO. Chinese revolutionary poet and short story wirter who has been in the Soviet Union for several years.

PLA-y-BELTRAN. Spanish revolutionary poet. Translations from his work were included in *And Spain Sings,* the recently translated anthology of Spanish revolutionary ballads.

JOHN LEHMANN. English poet, editor of the semi-annual, *New Writing.* His most recent book, *Prometheus and the Bolsheviks,* was a vivacious description and commentary of a trip to the Soviet Union, principally in the Caucasus.

ANATOLY LUNACHARSKY, died in 1933. One of the outstanding Marxist critics noted for his comprehensive and profound knowledge of literature. He was for a long time Commissar of Education in the Soviet Government. Three of his plays, *Faust and the City, The Magi* and *Vassilissa the Wise* were translated into English and published in the Broadway Translations series.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER. Author of the *Temptation of Anthony (Poems), Comrade Mister (Poems),* and the novels *Dr. Transit* and *From the Kingdom of Necessity.* Awarded Guggenheim fellowship in creative literature. Now visiting the Soviet Union and on the staff of *International Literature.*

ANDREW STEIGER. Young American journalist now in the Soviet Union. Has made an extensive tour of the Soviet Northeast.

MIKHAIL ZOSHCHENKO. One of the most popular contemporary Soviet humorists. A volume of his sketches was published in English under the title *Youth Restored,* and in America under the title *Russia Laughs.*